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REFLECTING ON CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM: COMPLEXITIES OF NAVIGATING THIRD SPACES IN TEACHER EDUCATION
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Academic dissertation to be presented with the assent of the Faculty of Education of the University of Oulu for public defence in Savonsali (Auditorium L4), Linnanmaa, on 2 December 2011, at 12 noon

UNIVERSITY OF OULU, OULU 2011
Stevenson, Blair, Reflecting on culture in the classroom: complexities of navigating third spaces in teacher education.
University of Oulu, Faculty of Education, P.O. Box 2000, FI-90014 University of Oulu, Finland
Oulu, Finland

Abstract

The goal of this research is to develop a research process that explores the role Inuit teachers play in the development of Inuit culture in the classroom. A participatory action research approach was used with the objectives of: (1) examining how Inuit teachers view their cultural role; and (2) exploring how Inuit teachers teach their culture.

Research activities were grounded in Indigenous education, intercultural learning and postcolonial theories. From this frame of reference, two project activities were developed in partnership with the Kivik School Board in Nunavik, Canada: a teacher training course and a teacher survey. The teacher training course attempted to create a ‘third space’ in which decolonization could be discussed and teachers could reflect about cultural influences on their own practice. The teacher survey constructs a ‘snap-shot’ of Inuit teacher perspectives on the topic of Inuit culture in their classrooms.

Analysis of data involved qualitative methodologies including content analysis for the course and a series of verification interviews with senior stakeholders. A quantitative approach was used for analysis of the teacher survey.

Data suggest that Inuit culture is being taught in classrooms; however few opportunities exist for Inuit teachers to discuss the implications of their practice. Conclusions point to the need for further development of Inuit-specific and Inuit-led research spaces - third spaces - in which Inuit culture can be articulated, and reflected upon. Limiting factors exist, however, with regard to how these spaces can be developed including language used for dialogue, authority within the space and length of time for dialogue. Decolonizing cultural competency is introduced in concert with third space theory as a pathway toward articulating collaborative research spaces in which Inuit can work in their own language and construct Inuit-specific strategies and content to decolonize their educational systems.

Keywords: action research, cultural competency, intercultural learning, Inuit, teacher education, third space
Stevenson, Blair, Luokkahuonekulttuuri reflection kohteeena: kolmansien tilojen haasteet opettajankoulutuksessa.
Oulun yliopisto, Kasvatustieteiden tiedekunta, PL 2000, 90014 Oulun yliopisto
*Acta Univ. Oul. E 121, 2011*
Oulu

**Tiivistelmä**

Tämän tutkimuksen tavoite on paneutua natiivi inuiittiopettajien rooliin inuiittikulttuurin kehittämisessä kouluopetuksessa. Tutkimuksessa käytettiin osallistavaa toimintatutkimusta, jonka tavoitteena oli selvittää: (1) miten inuiittiopettajat näkevät oman kulttuuriroolinsa ja (2) miten inuiittiopettajat opettavat omaa kulttuuriaan.


Tutkimusaineisto analysoitiin kvalitatiivisina ja kvantitatiivisina menetelmina. Opettajankoulutuskurssin tutkimusaineiston analysointiin käytettiin kvantitatiivista sisällönanalyysia, jonka tuloksia validoidiin haastattelemalla kokeneita inuiittiasiantuntijoita. Opettajainkyselytutkimus puolestaan analysoitiin kvantitatiivisesti.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että inuiittikulttuuria opetetaan luokkahuoneissa mutta inuiittiopettajilla on harvoin mahdollisuus yhdessä pohtia työnsä merkityksiä. Tutkimustulosten perusteella voidaan tehdä johtopäätös, että olisi tarpeen kehittää inuiittikeskeisiä ja inuiittien johtamia tutkimusympäristöjä - kolmas tila - joissa inuiittikulttuuria voidaan arvostaa ja pohtia. Tätä pohdintaa rajoittavat tekijöt ovat kuitenkin dialogissa käytettävät kieli, kolmannen tilan auktoriteettikysymykset ja dialogiin käytettävä aika. Kulttuurikompetenssin dekolonisaatio ja kolmas tila esitetään tutkimuksessa keinoina kuvata yhteistoiminnullisia tutkimustiloja, joissa inuiittut voivat toimia omalla kielellään sekä kehittää inuiittikeskeisiä strategioita ja sisältöjä inuiittiopetuksen rakenteiden dekolonisaomiseksi.

*Asiasanat:* inuiitti, kolmas tila, kulttuurikompetenssi, monikulttuurikasvatus, opettajankoulutus, toimintatutkimus
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the following individuals and groups for their support and assistance in making the completion of this work possible.

Many thanks go to the commissioners, staff and teachers at the Kativik School Board for their openness and willingness to work as partners. In particular, I would like to thank the School Pedagogical Counsellors who participated and offered guidance during the project. I am also grateful to Valentina De Krom for making the project partnership work. Thanks also to Eva Ilisituk for translation support.

For sharing their perspectives on Inuit education, I would like to thank Johnny and Harriet Muniak, Betsy Annahatak and Fiona Walton.

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Rauni Räsänen of the University of Oulu for her unwavering support and guidance throughout this endeavour. Thanks to Ludger Müller-Wille of McGill University for his long-standing mentorship and encouragement to explore an interdisciplinary path. Thanks also go to Cash Rowe from the University of Calgary for his suggestions with the presentation of data and Vanessa Andreotti of the University of Oulu for offering helpful insights and seeing that this work reached its end.

For their constant support I would like to thank my family in Canada and Finland for encouraging me to keep going, particularly my parents Dave and Jane and my brothers John and Dave. I am especially grateful to my wife Johanna and my son Sampo for their endless patience and support.
Glossary of abbreviations and symbols

ACUNS  Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies
AREI  Aboriginal Research Ethics Initiative
CCL  Canadian Council on Learning
CIRCLE  Community Involvement to Renew Commitment, Leadership, and Effectiveness
JBNQA  James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement
KRG  Kativik Regional Government
KSB  Kativik School Board
ITK  Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
IQ  Inuit Qaujimajatungagiiit
NAHO  National Aboriginal Health Organization
NQIA  Northern Quebec Inuit Association
NRBHSS  Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services
NWT  Northwest Territories
OCAP  Ownership, Control, Access and Possession
PAR  Participatory Action Research
RCAP  Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples
REB  Research Ethics Board
TEK  Traditional Ecological Knowledge
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1 Introduction

1.1 Defining the Research Project

During the last decades, Indigenous peoples globally have been taking concrete steps to decolonize and take greater control of the institutions affecting their cultures, languages and livelihoods. The school is a key institution in which this process has been taking place and a growing number of efforts by Indigenous communities to support cultural and linguistic integrity have been meeting success through greater control of their own education systems. Examples of these efforts in Canada include building greater Indigenous control of school administration and authority, establishing Indigenous languages as languages of instruction, redesigning school curriculum to better reflect Indigenous culture and the training and hiring of Indigenous teachers (Bell, Anderson, Fortin, Ottoman, Rose, Simard, & Spencer, 2004; Fulford, Daigle, Tolley, Stevenson & Wade, 2007).

While the efforts outlined above point to significant and positive changes to education in Indigenous communities, questions remain regarding how colonial influences may still persist in schools. For example, Bell et al. (2004) and Fulford et al. (2007) state that the presence of Indigenous teachers is a key factor contributing to the success of schools in Indigenous communities. Yet, recent research (Hesch, 1995; Lipka, 1994; Stairs, 1995) suggests that Indigenous teachers can be conflicted when entering into a classroom with students from their own culture after receiving formal teacher training. This cultural conflict is influenced by colonial factors and relates to not only differences in language and curriculum content, but also teaching methods and how methods taught in teacher training programs may be ill-suited to the relationships and cultural connections Indigenous teachers have with students from their own communities. It is this problem between what methods a teacher is taught to use and what methods they believe are most culturally appropriate which forms the heart of this research.

While a growing body of research has been published on models of Indigenous education (Stairs, 1994; Hampton, 1995; Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Cajete, 2009), far less research has been devoted to specifically explore the teaching of culture and classroom teaching methodologies that support Indigenous cultures (Battiste, 2009). The aim of this research project is to explore this knowledge gap and reflect with Indigenous teachers with respect to teaching
methods that can bolster Indigenous culture as it is taught in the classrooms of Inuit communities in Nunavik, Canada. Specifically, this research aims to contribute to the literature through the development of a participatory action research approach that examines Inuit teachers’ perceptions of their cultural role and the teaching methodologies that they use to teach Inuit culture.

In recognition that I initiated this research from the position of a cultural and linguistic ‘outsider’ and that I work within a highly contested Indigenous education context, I have attempted to build a research methodology that allows for a more equitable relation between the Indigenous partners that I worked with and myself. This is done through the development of a participatory and self-reflective model constructed so that a ‘community of practice’ (Wenger, 1998) can be built with teachers to reflect on the role of culture in classroom practice. This approach is used in order to recognize “the plural voices of others and reveal [my] distinctive view of the situation” (Hui & Grossman, 2008, p. 3). By merging this action research approach into a teacher education environment, I am ultimately interested in supporting teachers to “reflect systematically about the terms and conditions that shape their practice” (Elliot, 2007, p. 2). In so doing, I have attempted to facilitate the emergence of a ‘third cultural reality’ as discussed by Stairs (1994a) or a third space (Bhabha, 1994; Soja, 1996; Kagle, 2008) through which concepts of culture can be negotiated between myself as the researcher and Indigenous teachers participating in the project. In order to explore the topic of culture in the classroom conceptually, I attempt to rework the concepts of third space and cultural competency to construct a theoretical framework for the specific context that I have worked within: Inuit teacher education.

Third space as defined by Bhabha (1994) suggests a space that is dynamic and “the ‘inter’ - the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space - that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the ‘people’. And by exploring this Third Space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves” (p. 35). However, within this text I draw more from conceptualizations of third space that include localities such as in Soja (1996) through which concepts can be negotiated and dialogue can be undertaken. In the Indigenous education context, I specifically draw upon how Stairs (1994a) envisions Indigenous schools as a ‘new cultural creation’, while Dudgeon and Fielder (2006) further articulate third space as trying “to break the simplistic logic where the dominant group tends to justify its ascendancy and the minority group
uses liberationist and utopian rhetoric to construct itself as pure, innocent and incapable of ever operating in the same way as the dominant group” (p. 400). These various conceptions of third space, when situated in an Indigenous context, all point to complexities related to issues of authority, power and voice, especially when a non-Indigenous researcher attempts to facilitate their emergence in recognition of legacies of colonialism. Consequently, reflecting on my role within this project will be a central theme within this dissertation and will be further explored in later sections when discussing third space and related topics.

In an attempt to more deeply explore the conditions and qualities necessary for individuals to navigate third spaces, the concept of cultural competency is used to describe the tools that can be used to create, navigate and make use of third spaces as places in a locality and as spaces conceptually within a historical context. While potentially problematic because of its essentialist underpinnings, I use the term cultural competency to represent an individual’s skills, knowledge and attitudes or as Cross (1988) states the “set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (p. 13). In the educational realm, cultural competency is most commonly associated with the teacher and their “ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than their own” (Diller & Moule, 2005, p. 2). In the field of multicultural education, cultural competency has been expanded upon through such terms as ‘cross-cultural competency’ as defined by Banks (1994a) and ‘intercultural communicative competence’ as introduced by Byram (1997). What each of these concepts has in common is a focus on the teacher and students coming from different cultures as in the case of the teacher education course developed for this research project with myself as facilitator and Inuit teachers as participants. Used in this way, one can explore the competencies necessary for either a non-Indigenous person or an indigenous person to navigate ‘third cultural realities’ (Stairs, 1994a) as they are encountered through dialogue.

But what happens when both the teacher and the students come from the same culture and must navigate an institutional culture that is not only inherently different, but colonial in nature? This scenario, as experienced in many Indigenous educational contexts in northern Canada, demands an expanded notion of both third space and cultural competencies that recognizes the need for Indigenous teachers to have the tools to navigate cultural aspects of a school or institution that may be different from their own. This is where the expanded concept of decolonizing cultural competencies comes in.
Decolonizing cultural competency as a concept is introduced for the purposes of this project as a way to conceive of cultural competency within Indigenous educational contexts both for non-Indigenous and Indigenous teachers in a particular locality. This term builds upon the concept of the Effective Teaching Profile in Indigenous contexts as outlined by Bishop (2008). For non-Indigenous educators like myself, this concept refers to the ability to understand one’s role and the complexities inherent in supporting the development of third spaces in an Indigenous education context. For Indigenous teachers, decolonizing cultural competencies can be defined as the awareness, knowledge and skills that enable Indigenous teachers to effectively teach their own culture in a colonized classroom environment. This concept draws upon similar terms such as indigenizing cultural competency currently in use by Carey (2008), sociocultural literacy used by Gutierrez (2008) or of navigating the ‘interface of knowledge traditions’ to become ‘educultural’ as described by Macfarlane (2004, 2006).

Common to all of the terminologies listed above is the assumption that schools are not culturally neutral or benign. In the Indigenous context, this translates to the notion that classrooms in fact may harbour colonial cultural forms that can limit an Indigenous teacher’s ability to teach their own Indigenous culture. Colonial cultural forms may be structural or methodological in nature and can be inherent in the physical spaces designed in a school building or the actual teaching methodologies used in the classroom. Dudgeon and Fielder (2006) describe these forms as dominant discourses. Ultimately, the concept of decolonizing cultural competency as it is interpreted in this work is based on the assumption that Indigenous teachers from the culture in question are best suited, as opposed to non-Indigenous teachers, to participate more fully in change that is decolonizing in nature because they are more likely to have the ‘competencies’ to navigate Indigenous culture and language necessary for effective teaching within culture-based curriculum (Jones & Jenkins, 2008). Based on findings from this research project, a model of decolonizing cultural competency and third space is outlined to link and expand upon current theory and research in the fields of intercultural learning, postcolonialism and Indigenous education.

1.2 Situating the Researcher

Formal schooling in Indigenous communities has been a contested space since its introduction as part of the colonial enterprise. First established by the church and later through the state, these schools have in most cases evolved in direct conflict
with the traditional forms of formal education existing within Indigenous communities. To this day in Canada, many schools located in Indigenous communities are still strongly influenced by their colonial roots and continue to rely on the input of a workforce of non-Indigenous teachers, especially at the secondary level, most of whom remain for only short periods of time in the community.

I began my career as an educator as one of these teachers. Unknown to me at the time, those early teaching experiences in Cree and Inuit communities would represent the beginning of my involvement in the field of education in northern Canada which would continue over the next 15 years. Based on my experience during this period as a teacher, teacher educator and researcher, I have come to recognize that I act within a system that is strongly influenced by colonization past and present, and that I hold a privileged position in this system characterized by racism, patriarchy and heteronormativity. My position is also grounded through my identity and heritage as a third-generation, non-Indigenous Canadian with Scottish, English and Irish ancestry.

During my time living, studying and working in Indigenous communities, I have been forced to recognize, question and re-evaluate the ontological assumptions that shape me. In doing so, I have come to question the reliability and validity of my worldview, especially as it relates to Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. As I have become more immersed in the field of education both professionally and academically, I have increased my efforts to become more critical and build what Kincheloe (2003) terms as ‘epistemological awareness’ in myself and the partners, students and teachers that I work with. This self-reflective process has led me to work toward an equality of knowledge systems and to question the assumptions behind the ‘Western’ academic tradition. This dissertation reflects my interest in more fully participating in the academic discourse on topics such as cultural difference, intercultural learning and teacher development. By engaging in the wider research community, I also wish to recognize the contestable nature of the work that I am presenting and, as a result, I welcome differing interpretations of the intercultural context within which I work and the concepts that are outlined in an attempt to better understand this context.
1.3 Thesis Structure

This document is structured into five chapters. Following the introduction, chapter 2 outlines the key assumptions, theories and concepts grounding this research. This chapter includes summaries of relevant concepts such as culture, Indigenous education, capacity building and intercultural learning.

Chapter 3 provides a summary of the research project developed with the Kativik School Board. An overview of the context in Nunavik is the initial component of this chapter. A description is then offered of the project design and methodology including sections on the two major research activities: a teacher education course and a teacher survey.

Chapter 4 summarizes the results and analysis of the research as well as an articulation of the concepts of decolonizing cultural competency and third space and a related model, while chapter 5 offers a conclusion of the project and addresses key challenges and possible next steps for education practice and research.
2 Theoretical Foundations

Before summarizing the context within which this research was conducted and delving into a more robust discussion of the methodologies used, I describe the assumptions, concepts and theories grounding this research.

2.1 Research Assumptions

The choice to develop a participatory action research project was deliberate and based on the assumption that taking a participatory action approach is ethically responsible in a context where a non-Indigenous researcher, such as myself, is working with Indigenous communities and organizations. This assumption focuses on action research as a paradigm that emphasizes collaborative inquiry. Practically speaking, by taking this approach, I involve members from participating Indigenous organizations and communities as full partners in all aspects of the project. I do this in order to enter into an intercultural dialogue and avoid having the Indigenous project partners become the “victims of the best intentions of white educators” (Hampton, 1995, p. 34).

Aside from the need for effective intercultural dialogue to support a partnership between Indigenous educators and a non-Indigenous researcher, it is also important to develop a theoretical frame of reference for the project. As a primary frame of reference, I have aimed to center this work in a critical pedagogy paradigm as defined by McLaren (1995) who suggests that critical pedagogy “commits itself to forms of learning and action that are undertaken in solidarity with subordinated and marginalized groups” (p. 32). Yet, as a result of both my cultural and academic background, I situate myself within the Colonizer/Settler ‘space’ making solidarity with Indigenous partners and communities from this space problematic to say the least. In the spirit of this critical viewpoint and as a member of a ‘Settler’ community, I believe solidarity must be actionable and tangible as demonstrated through the relinquishing of power and the recognition of limits and differences within my research by negotiating research objectives and activities instead of imposing, for example. By doing this within a research process, I am “learning to work without guarantees” or “unlearn privilege” (Andreotti & De Souza, 2008, p. 25). More specifically, I am allowing for partners to more equally participate in determining the design of the research process from the start. While this action does not fully ‘undo the privilege’ that I hold in the project, it does begin to make space for
negotiated decision-making and the emergence of a plurality of voices within the project. In this way, I am ultimately bidding to recognize the political impact of research and take sides by privileging the ‘Indigene’ and Indigenous epistemologies. By rejecting a positivist approach, I am attempting to listen to what Jones and Jenkins (2008) view as the ‘right spirit’. Jones and Jenkins (2008) suggest that in Colonizer/Indigene collaborations working in the ‘right spirit’ means rejecting conventional research assumptions of entitlement to knowledge.

“Ignoring a right spirit, the Western university encourages researcher, students and teachers to assume the happy position as potential knowers on an open epistemological territory awaiting anyone with the desire to explore. Pedagogy and research, especially at university, becomes predicated on the possibility of and entitlement to an accessible and shared terrain of knowledge. When this fantasy of entitlement is disrupted…settler inquiry experiences a threat. The threat has particular emotional force for those who feel it, I think, because it threatens the dominant group at the very point of our/their power – our ability to know” (Jones & Jenkins, 2008, p.481-482).

With this frame of reference in mind, the epistemological assumptions of this research place Indigenous forms of knowledge and ‘Western’ scientific knowledge in equal standing and assume that the search for a theoretical framework includes delving into the current discourses from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholarship as well as giving due weight to the separate voices of Inuit Elders and Inuit educational practitioners that are scholars of Inuit traditional knowledge. In attempting to engage Indigenous discourses, I do so from a ‘Settler’ space and therefore I believe that it is not my role to articulate Inuit or Indigenous ways of knowledge. Instead, I have worked to look for ways to dialogue with those within Indigenous communities, not so that I may learn about them, but so that I may learn from the process. Jones and Jenkins (2008) describe this process as “what I learn is not about you, but I learn from you about difference” (p. 482).

From my position as Colonizer/Settler/Researcher, I begin with the recognition of having a critical perspective and building from critical discourses such as those described by Foucault (1972) who states that “the problem is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits; it is no longer one of lasting foundations, but one of transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations” (p. 5). Understanding that this recognition of differences and limits only scratches the surface of what is
discussed within postmodern discourses, I have undertaken this research with the expectation that it will be as much an exercise in generating knowledge within the ‘academy’ as a process of personal development and change.

2.2 Key Concepts and Theories

With the above assumptions in mind, the following section provides an overview of the key concepts and theories relevant to the content of this research as drawn from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academic literature. Concepts to be discussed include: culture, Indigenous education, capacity building, postcolonialism and intercultural learning. Key concepts relating to methodology such as participatory action research, and qualitative and quantitative methods are discussed in the following chapter.

2.2.1 Culture

The central theoretical concept explored in this research is that of culture. While culture as a concept is frequently referenced in public policy and academic communities, it holds a diversity of interpretations with no one commonly agreed upon definition. And yet, even more problematic aside from its vagueness as a concept, is the notion that culture is strongly recognized across disciplines as a key factor in educational contexts and an “important part of the dynamics of the teaching-learning process in all classrooms, both bilingual and monolingual” (Saravia-Shore & Arvizu, 1992, p. xviii).

In recognition of the ubiquitous nature of the term and the wide range of interpretations, the following section focuses on definitions and descriptions of culture as they relate to the contexts of education and especially Indigenous education.

Definitions of Culture

Evolving from its Latin beginnings, the term culture in its most general sense has come to symbolize things distinctly human or, as the Oxford dictionary (Thompson, 1995) defines it, the “customs, civilization, and achievements of a particular time or people” (p. 575). And yet, particularly in the last few decades, the concept of culture is increasingly being explored throughout academic circles to the point that at present it is in use in virtually every field in the social sciences.
with each discipline within the ‘western’ tradition developing its own definition and corresponding theories.

For example, from the field of sociology Bourdieu sees culture as the “material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition” (Bourdieu, In Miller & Branson, 1987, p. 211) introducing this idea under his term ‘habitus’, while Alasuutari (1995) views culture as the “way of life or outlook adopted by a community or a social class” (p. 25). An anthropological view of culture can be taken from the work of Barth (1969) who sees culture as “nothing but a way to describe human behaviour” (p. 9). To Barth, ethnic groups carry culture and act as “categories of ascription and identification by the actors themselves” (p. 10). In his later writings, Barth (1994) goes on to view that culture “is continuous, it does not partition neatly into separable, integrated wholes. In any population we may choose to observe we will also find that it is in flux, it is contradictory and incoherent, and it is differentially distributed on variously positioned persons.” (p. 14). This anthropological vision of culture is echoed by the psychological viewpoint as exemplified by Bruner (1996) in which culture is “the toolkit by which we construct not only our worlds but also our very conceptions of ourselves and our powers” (prelude p. 10). This view of culture also resonates with Cohen (1985) who sees the construction of culture as a “symbolic, rather than a structural construct” and that culture “exists in the minds of its members” (p. 98). In this way, culture can be seen as what Featherstone (1990) deems as a community’s mask.

Due to the social nature of the concept of culture, we must also view culture through a relational lens. In this way, Giroux (1983) suggests that we must ‘politicize the notion of culture’ and view culture “as a political phenomenon [that refers] to the power of a specific class to impose and distribute in society specific meanings, message systems, and social practices in order to lay the psychological and moral foundations for the economic and political system they control” (p. 196).

And the above definitions of culture represent only a few. Within this conceptual maze, exemplified by the breadth of definitions outlined above, there seems to be, however, at least one characteristic common among ‘Western’ definitions of culture: culture is constantly changing. From this perspective, culture, and by extension its close relative ethnicity can be seen as never static. Definitions of culture grounded in critical discourses tend to emphasize the idea that every culture can be viewed as the product of a constant movement of languages, ideas and people within landscapes whether they are mental, historical
or geographic, while the belief that a culture can be pure and constant is described as positivist myth. More specifically from the postcolonial perspective, culture has been described as a strategy of survival “rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement” and as “an uneven, incomplete production of meaning and value, often composed of incommensurable demands and practices, produced in the act of social survival” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 247). Taken to its further theoretical underpinnings, this viewpoint speaks to the fundamental hybridity and heterogeneity of all cultures as explored in depth by postcolonial theorists such as Bhabha (1994) and Spivak (1999).

When attempting to define the concept of culture as drawn from Indigenous perspectives as opposed to ‘Western’ discourses, it is important to first recognize what Ermine (1995) describes as Western science’s propensity toward the “fragmentation of the constituents of existence…into neatly packaged concepts” (p. 103). Ermine (1995) goes on to suggest that this process of division has led to a “vicious circle of atomistic thinking that restricts the capacity for holism” (p. 103). It is this circle of atomistic thinking that many conceptualizations of culture from an Indigenous perspective move beyond. For example, Cajete (1994) emphasizes the dynamic nature of human relations by writing that:

“…culture is an environment subject to the same ecological principles and truths as a physical environment. Culture is a dynamic human creation that is always in process at one or several levels simultaneously. Each generation of a People is their culture. Just as the life of a person can’t be frozen in time, so it is true of living cultures. As individuals and groups of people in a culture reassess, revitalize, reaffirm and recreate themselves, the culture as a whole transforms. It is an active and perpetually creative process” (p. 192).

It is this idea of the ability of a people to ‘make’ culture as a creative process in the face of displacement and limiting factors such as colonization that I wish to explore further through international definitions of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. The 1989 International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention no. 169 and the 2007 United Nations (UN) Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples are prime documents to view in this regard. The ILO Convention (1989), for example, recognizes that the “social, cultural and economic conditions [of Indigenous peoples] distinguish them from other sections of the national community” (Article 1) whereby national communities are the product of colonization incorporating Indigenous peoples’ lands and territories. In a similar manner, the United Nations [UN] (2007) identifies that:
“Indigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests” (p. 12).

**Culture and Knowledge**

In order to further explore the concept of culture and move beyond definitions, it is important to survey the literature referring to the relationship between knowledge and culture. When discussing knowledge in the context of Indigenous cultures, the term Indigenous knowledge is often used as well as other variants such as the term traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) or Indigenous environmental knowledge (Johnson, 1992). However, not unlike the term culture, it is difficult to define Indigenous knowledge. Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) view Indigenous knowledge as “sacred relics” (p.143), whereas Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) remind us that “most definitions of Indigenous knowledge have been given by non-Indigenous scholars” (p. 38). Instead, they offer a definition from an Indigenous perspective in which Indigenous knowledge can be viewed as both scientific in the sense that “it is empirical, experimental and systematic” and differing from ‘Western’ scientific knowledge by way of Indigenous knowledge being “highly localized and by being social” (p. 44).

Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) further elaborate on this situation by outlining three problems inherent in trying to understand Indigenous knowledge from an academic standpoint.

“The first problem in understanding Indigenous knowledge from a Eurocentric point of view is that Indigenous knowledge does not fit into the Eurocentric concept of ‘culture’...the second problem is that Indigenous knowledge is not a uniform concept across all Indigenous peoples; it is a diverse knowledge that is spread throughout different peoples in many layers...the third problem is that Indigenous knowledge is so much a part of the clan, band, community or even the individual” (p. 35-36).

By being aware of the three problems outlined above, we can see that there are severe limitations to theorizing about Indigenous knowledge within the concept of culture. Indigenous knowledge is not easily bound under the term culture. It is complex and strongly tied to the context within which it is being discussed and cannot be all encompassing.
Based on this epistemological stance, I attempt to give privilege to the context from which each set of knowledge is drawn and produced. Since this research project works in the context of Inuit communities in Nunavik, Indigenous knowledge is therefore referred to more specifically as Inuit knowledge as shared or expressed by individuals from communities in northern Quebec. Nutall (1998) summarizes this situation well when he states that “Indigenous knowledge systems can only make sense within local contexts of social relationships and productive activities” (p. 21). This view of knowledge also resonates with what Bruner (1996) describes as the “cultural situated-ness of meanings” (p. 1) and points to how Indigenous knowledge systems depend on a continuity of knowledge production within a community or people (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008).

Nakata (2002) more specifically identifies this process by noting that “continuity of culture (knowledge and practice) and identity rests on being able to make and keep coherent pathways through the passage of time, through disruptive chaos of events like colonial contact and periods of rapid change so that the historical knowledge that has contributed to current knowledge systems can carry through” (p. 8). This vision of Indigenous knowledge production suggests that for Indigenous discourses the problem is, in fact, contrary to the challenges faced by ‘western’ science as described by Foucault (1972) – for Indigenous discourses the problem is about tradition and the necessity of ‘tracing a line’.

As a result of the complications outlined above when discussing the concepts of knowledge and culture together, I will endeavour to use the term ‘Indigenous knowledge systems’ when speaking generally of this concept in order to recognize the heterogeneity of knowledge systems and refer to ‘Inuit knowledge’ specifically when speaking of Nunavik as a locality keeping in mind the diversity of knowledge inherent even within this region and other Inuit communities.

Another issue to consider with respect to Indigenous knowledge systems is the relative status of these knowledge systems in any particular context. Despite being highly valued in the Indigenous communities from which they come, Indigenous knowledge systems may be at the same time disregarded in other areas of discourse, such as the formal education system or academia, in favour of ‘officially-sanctioned knowledge’. In this way, Indigenous knowledge systems can be viewed as Semuli (1999) defines them as “unofficial knowledge” (p. 309) which are not often recognized by official policy as a legitimate form of knowledge.
One area where this is clearly evident is in the context of formal education since the formal educational system represents a set of institutions that are fundamental to the distribution and production of knowledge (Apple, 1995). And it is those formal education systems established in Indigenous communities that have historically ignored local Indigenous knowledge in favour of colonial forms of knowledge or more specifically ‘Western’ scientific forms of knowledge. As a result, Indigenous knowledge systems have until recently made very few appearances in officially sanctioned curricula, often substituted in favour of ‘outside’ forms of knowledge. A more detailed exploration of education’s place in this discussion is obviously necessary and will be added later in this section. First of all, though, at this stage I wish to bring the role of language into the picture. I do this because any discussion of knowledge and culture must also at the same time look at language since as Teasdale (1994) reminds us language and culture are highly interdependent.

**Culture and Language**

Fairclough (1989) suggests that language is the means through which cultural knowledge is transmitted between generations and reflects the unique context of each culture. Within Indigenous contexts, Indigenous languages play no less a significant role as noted by Battiste (2000) who states that “Aboriginal languages are the basic media for the transmission and survival of Aboriginal consciousness, cultures, literatures, histories, religions, political institutions, and values” (p. 195). The notion of survival is important to emphasize since most Indigenous languages are severely threatened with linguistic genocide (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) as a result of having been systematically discouraged and actively suppressed by governments. Faced with this legacy, Indigenous communities have increasingly begun to reclaim their cultural spaces through the revitalization of their languages. One example of how this is being done is through the use of an Indigenous language as the language of instruction in schools.

In many of the cases in which Indigenous languages are now being used in schools, cultural vitality has been brought to not only the schools, but to the communities housing those schools (Kipp, 2000). Ovando and Gourd (1996) suggest that by using an Indigenous language of instruction greater power can be gained over the entire educational process. Many minority linguistic groups have tried to institutionalize and legitimize their languages within mainstream society in this way. In the case of Inuit in Canada, the use and transmission of their
language is publicly encouraged in the jurisdictions where they reside (Dorais, 1995) and efforts have been made to support Inuit language as the language of instruction as seen with the recent introduction of a bilingual education policy in Nunavut (Government of Nunavut, 2004). Ultimately, this example points to language being used as a “means for practicing or claiming self-determination, locally, nationally, and in international settings” (Dahl, 1999, p. 241).

Dorais (1995) goes further to suggest that the use of Indigenous languages is “useful in the management of ethnic identity” (p. 303). It is this idea of ‘managing’ ethnic identity that I wish to discuss in more detail as I continue to further articulate the concept of culture.

**Ethnicity, Culture and the Nation**

Within this research, I concentrate on a specific Indigenous educational context - Inuit schooling in Nunavik - in which, at least at the elementary level, both the Indigenous teacher and students are members within the same culture or ethnicity. While efforts have been made to have the curriculum used in the schools of Nunavik more appropriately reflect Inuit culture, there still remain the vestiges of a ‘national’ and colonial culture.

Before elaborating on the context outlined above, I first wish to situate the terms ethnicity and national culture. When referencing the term ethnicity or ethnic culture, which I use interchangeably, I am referring to the culture of an ethnic group such as Inuit as it is viewed from an anthropological perspective. However, ethnicity as a concept itself is highly problematic and loaded with epistemological and ontological biases. From its early beginnings, ethnicity has been applied to marginal peoples outside the culture of ‘civilization’ or with cultures not worthy of mention. Tracing this term back historically, we can see that it originates from the Greek, *ethnikos*, for ‘heathen’. Furthermore, these historical connotations still mingle with contemporary uses of the term ethnicity.

More recent uses of the term tend to emphasize how a people can be defined. For example, Barth (1969, 1994) defines an ethnic group as a form of social organization and synonymous with a self-organizing people based in a locality, whereas Featherstone (1995) builds on this definition to state that ethnic culture originates from a homogenous people with a common ethnicity and language. Featherstone’s notion of a ‘homogeneous’ people, however, conflicts with the assertions of Indigenous theorists such as Cajete (1994) and postcolonial theorists such as Bhabha (1994) who state that culture and corresponding identities are
inherently heterogeneous and changing. These differing perspectives of group identity point to the paradoxical nature of definitions of culture. How then can a people be both heterogeneous and homogeneous at the same time? This question is especially poignant when contrasting what is often referred to in contemporary discussions as national cultures and the cultures of ‘ethnic’ minorities (Thompson, 1995).

At this point, the idea of a national culture further complicates the issue since the culture of a nation is often seen as a reflection of its ethnic majority, while the term ‘ethnic minority’ implies a culture or people that have been systematically marginalised through social exclusion, dispossession, and deficit theorizing. Used in this way, the term ethnic majority suggests that majority populations are entitled to their culture, language and political power. In the case of Canada, the national culture is in most cases representative of and controlled by the Colonizer/Settler population.

When using the term national culture, I wish to describe those cultures that are constructed and maintained by the state and have as their starting point the culture of the majority or dominant ethnic group. The concept of a national culture is significant in the educational sphere because it is the concept most notably justified and enshrined in formal school curricula. For example, one can equate a national culture with Quebec culture (la culture Québécoise) in the Inuit region of Nunavik since education in Canada falls under provincial jurisdiction and Nunavik is a region within the province of Quebec.

The Quebec curriculum, or education program as it is referred to, is the principle framework through which teaching is organized in all schools across the province, including those in Nunavik. This curriculum includes the organization and the selection of specific content to be taught in all Quebec schools. One aspect of this curriculum that is strongly connected with culture is the offering of a history and citizenship education program with a purpose “to contribute to the education of citizens who are capable of well-informed, open-minded social participation, in accordance with the principles of democracy” (Quebec Ministry of Education [QME], 2004, p. 295). Interestingly, the curriculum document does recognize that a curriculum traditionally has included “historical narratives used to instil a national identity and a belief in the validity of the existing social and political order” (QME, 2004, p. 295). While the current curriculum makes note of the Quebec government’s efforts to move beyond this paradigm, I would argue that the process by which provincial curricula is developed in Canada is still firmly situated in a non-Indigenous context and grounded in non-Indigenous
knowledge systems. As a result, the culture supported within the curriculum can be seen to be strongly influenced by Quebec culture officially and ethnically with only token recognition of and participation from the Indigenous communities located in the province.

By making use of the concepts of ethnic culture and national culture and making a distinction between them, I wish to emphasize that in formal education contexts in Indigenous communities the ethnic culture of Indigenous students and teachers is distinctive and often at odds with the cultural traits of the colonial school system which have been officially sanctioned by the state (Quebec in the case of Nunavik). In this context, then, the curriculum has traditionally favoured the “imagined community of the nation-people” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 200) with non-Indigenous languages of instruction and curriculum content based on the national culture being imposed giving raise to cultural conflict and continuing colonialism. This conflict can be illustrated in relation to curriculum content whereby, as Churchill (1994) outlines, the content of the curriculum often directly or indirectly challenges the traditional culture(s) of local communities.

Education, official language support and socio-economic supports for culture are just some of the areas from which Indigenous peoples in most cases are marginalized. As a result, Indigenous peoples and their cultures have and continue to be subjected to the assimilating force of colonial culture. And this majority/minority, Colonizer/Indigene cultural power imbalance has only continued to grow in the rapidly expanding context of globalization.

The growth of cultural imbalances can be further explained theoretically by citing Bruner (1996) who suggests that the rate of change in a culture becomes greater as our lives become increasingly intermingled through migration, trade and exchange of information. And since globalization has been equated with an increase in the rate of social and economic change (Featherstone, 1990), we can therefore theorize a corresponding increase in the rate of change in many Indigenous cultures. In this way, issues of intellectual property rights, land rights and language revitalization become the cultural battlegrounds of globalization which in turn can be viewed as the contemporary manifestation of a long legacy of colonialism gripping Indigenous peoples. It is in this political and economic context of globalization that we must continually ground any contemporary discussion of Indigenous culture as described by Benham and Cooper (2000) who state that:
“The single most pressing issue facing...Native communities is the question of how to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student population in a quickly advancing global society” (Benham & Cooper, 2000, p.11).

Another way to view this cultural conflict is by more closely exploring the processes involved in the creation of national cultures themselves. When trying to understand how a national culture is constructed and how it manifests itself in schools, I first look at how the cultures of the peoples within nations have been used and constructed for nationalist purposes. I do this in order to contextualize the efforts of Inuit in Canada to settle modern land claims agreements and articulate the process through which Inuit delineate their own political and cultural organizations from those in Quebec and the rest of Canada.

If the notion of Indigenous peoples’ rights is to be acknowledged, as signatories to the UN declaration have done, Indigenous peoples can be recognized as “political outsiders whose identities do not fit the criteria defining political membership in the sovereign jurisdiction on whose territory they reside” (Preece, 1998, p. 10). Preece (1998) goes on to suggest that Indigenous peoples are “none other than ethnonations who have failed to secure the ultimate goal of ethnic nationalism – independence in their own nation-state” (p. 29). And yet, describing ethnic nationalism as the ultimate goal for Indigenous peoples as Preece does is fraught with challenges since nationalism continues to be “a deeply problematic enterprise” (Said, 1988, p. 295). In order to counter the suggestion that Indigenous peoples have ethnic nationalism as their goal, it is important to first detail the concept of the nation further.

By historical standards, the concept of a nation is very young. During the 18th century through the work of theorists such as Herder (1744-1803), the concept of a ‘national character’ became highly influential. This idea was originally based around the concept that the nation consisted of ‘one people with one national character’. Each nation, then, was by nature and history a distinct organic unity with its own unique culture (Wilson, 1976).

Herder suggested that it is in its “language, traditions and customs, folklore and folksongs” that a nation distinguishes itself (Barnard, 1969, p. 32). Herder also recognized the tendency of peoples to protect their national characters and how preservation of traditions plays a part in a people’s efforts to navigate the ‘borderlines of cultural differences’: 
“The more a group is threatened, the more it will turn in upon itself and the closer will be the ties of its members. To avert dispersion, they will do everything to strengthen their tribal roots” (Herder in Barnard, 1969, p. 173).

Herder’s assumptions of a common national character have contemporary counterparts such as in the conceptualization of ethnic revitalization movements detailed by Banks (1994a). From this multicultural education perspective, Banks (1994a) explains that the idea of preserving and articulating the culture of minority groups is a positive outcome that reaches the “delicate balance of ethnic, national and global identifications and attachments” (p. 55). And yet, he goes on to suggest that this ethnic revitalization is enacted less as a means for self-determination, but rather in service of “a unified nation-state in which all groups have strong national identities and allegiances” (p. 50). Churchill (1994) similarly asserts that education is “often based on the view that the school is an instrument for nation-building and should emphasize a single national culture or cultural viewpoint” (p. 138).

The concept of ethnic revitalization is explored here, however, not to argue in favour of better integrating minorities, or Indigenous peoples for that matter, into the nation-states in which they reside, but instead as a way to discuss the process through which Indigenous peoples and Inuit in particular are attempting to reaffirm their own cultures as distinct and valid from how it is defined by colonizing structures – defining the differences. I place the efforts of Inuit to distinguish Inuit culture in contrast to what Jester (2002) describes as ‘difference as deficit’ and perceive it more in line with the ethically ambiguous histories of national self-determination.

For example, the role played by cultural knowledge is significant in the development of early imaginings of nations under colonial rule such as Finland. In the Finnish context leading up to its independence in 1917, the documentation of traditional folklore was used “to kindle the spark of national awareness” and the collection of folklore was nationalists’ “patriotic attempt to ennoble their nation’s past” (Wilson, 1976, p. 27), in an attempt as Herder might have said to uncover the ‘national character’ of the Finnish. Wilson (1976) states:

“In Finland, then, as well as in other countries seeking historical justification for separatist policies, romantic nationalism and folklore research were initially the same thing...had it not been for the wealth of poetry these aspiring young nationalists brought to the attention of their countrymen, their
hopes for a renewed future greatness would have died for lack of tangible evidence of a Finnish heritage” (p. 31).

In this way, it can be suggested that a Finnish national heritage was constructed in large part through the use of folklore, and the Finnish national epic poem the Kalevala in particular, as part of the process of imagining the nation. Furthermore, schools were used to build a common sense of what it meant to be ‘Finnish’ (Vento, 1992). And yet, we are warned by Laugrand and Oosten (2009) of the dangers of emphasizing essentialist values in schools or making cultural narratives “monumentalized and sanctified” (McLaren, 1995, p. 98) since this process may lead to a strict essentialism or ultimately to what Said (1988) describes as the “appalling pathology of power” (p. 303).

Ultimately, if culture is formalized within a school environment or curricula, potential benefits and possible challenges should be weighed. From this standpoint, it can be argued that any community including those that are Indigenous must guard against essentializing tendencies or similarly a nativism that calls for the return to a traditional way of life. As Said (1988) reports, the progression from nationality, nationalism to nativism is more and more constraining. It is for this reason that I do not believe that an ethnic nationalism or a nativism is the end result of a process of cultural revitalization. In order to further analyze this problem and discuss alternative discourses, it is useful to delve further into the contemporary academic field of inquiry central to the question of colonization: postcolonial theory.

2.2.2 Postcolonial Theory

The term, postcolonial, has grown to describe studies that are focused on the legacy of colonialism. A number of fields have informed postcolonial theory ranging from cultural studies to philosophy. Since the 1970’s, this term has been gaining traction to explore the connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations and the power relationships between those peoples and their corresponding worldviews, structures and ideas. Understanding the roots of colonialism and exposing the on-going structures of colonialism is a central effort within this research. To that end, postcolonial theory is referenced here briefly in order to better detail the colonial process as it applies to Inuit communities and schools.
As a starting point, I would like to continue the above discussion on nationalism grounded this time, however, in postcolonial theory instead of focusing on discourses about the nation as drawn from the ‘Western’ academic tradition. This is done to explore the possibility of a post-nationalist framework through which cultural development in Indigenous contexts can be viewed or to recognize as Bhabha (1994) reports that the “currency of critical comparativism, or aesthetic judgement, is no longer the sovereignty of the national culture” (p. 8).

Said (1988) posits the concept of liberation as one way to view the post-national such that:

“Liberation, and not nationalist independence, is the new alternative, liberation which by its very nature involves…a transformation of social consciousness beyond national consciousness” (p. 303).

By placing this view into the contemporary context of Inuit in Nunavik, we can infer that Inuit are attempting to promote Inuit language and Inuit culture in schools as a creative process with liberation as its theoretical goal. Ultimately, this suggests that the articulation of culture can be framed by what Bhabha (1994) further details as the “creative heterogeneity of the enunciatory ‘present’” (p. 266).

Another postcolonial concept relevant to this discussion is the term, strategic essentialism. Spivak (1999) outlines this concept as a process whereby a minority population could take an essentialist approach and construct formalized traits of their group identity in order to achieve certain goals whether they are political, educational or cultural. In short, a minority would attempt to culturally define themselves to confront the ways that a nation or majority population would define the culture of that minority.

This leads us to question whether Inuit and other Indigenous groups are strategically defining their culture. Recent efforts at redesigning curriculum as used in Inuit regions point in this direction. For example, the Nunavut government has begun to articulate “Inuit concepts as moral principles” (Arnakak, 2002) and includes these principles in a redesign of the territorial curriculum. I would argue that this ‘formalizing of Inuit cultural knowledge’ represents a form of strategic essentialism. Moreover, I see the development of a ‘culturally representative’ curriculum as a tacit attempt to create a postcolonial document that privileges Inuit epistemology and ontology.

The concepts of liberation and strategic essentialism are discussed above in large part because of the light they shed on the power relations between Indigenous teachers and the colonial legacy of the formal education structures.
they still work within. Keeping this in mind is important especially as I continue to explore other concepts relevant to the Indigenous education context. This leads me in particular to the concept of third space as primarily drawn from postcolonial theory as a pathway for defining and redefining the place of Indigenous culture in education.

Third space can be seen as a socially-constructed hybrid cultural space in which dialogue can take place between ‘Colonizer’ and the ‘Indigene’ (in the case of my research, a non-Indigenous researcher and Indigenous teachers) and their respective discourses, with discourses seen as the “artifacts, experiences, and practices shared by a particular community” (Gutierrez et al, 1995, p. 448). More specifically, Bhabha (1994) suggests that a third space is dynamic and “between fixed identifications [which] opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (p. 5).

Foundational to the concept of third space is the assumption that “cultures are never unitary in themselves, nor simply dualistic in the relation of Self to Other” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 52). Seen in this way, all culture is hybrid and fluid and “there is no pure, homogeneous cultural space—even within an ostensibly unitary and coherent culture. Communication always takes place (or, more precisely, makes space) in-between (Dudgeon & Fielder, 2006, p. 400). It is within these borderlands of culture, the boundaries, where critical and transformative dialogue can be undertaken and where differing epistemologies can meet.

And yet, I draw more from conceptualizations of third space that are concerned with the localities and conditions within which a third space can be established. In this way, I agree with Gutierrez et al (1995) who suggest that third space is a “social space within which counter-hegemonic activity, or contestation of dominant discourses, can occur for both students and teachers” (p. 451). Additionally, I draw upon Soja (1996) who describes third space as “a constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances and meanings” (p. 2). Or in other words in the educational realm, third spaces allow for the respective cultures of students and teachers to be recognized, reflected upon and re-articulated in a common space. Dudgeon and Fielder (2006) further suggest that third spaces in Indigenous contexts are:

“many and varied, they shift, they are spaces rather than places. They’re often risky, unsettling spaces—where the security and familiarity of our own place of belonging has to be left behind. We have to be prepared to shift, to be open, to listen, to change” (p. 407).
Put into practice in an Indigenous research setting, third space would require that researchers are open to changes to the objectives and processes of the actual research itself through dialogue with the Indigenous community. I also equate third space with what Kincheloe and Steinberg (2008) view as an ‘intercultural synergistic dialogue’ that “allows for conditions where both intra- and intercultural knowledge traditions can inform one another” (p. 154) as well as what Jones and Jenkins (2008) define as “working the hyphen” (p. 473) between Indigene and Colonizer.

Overall, I believe the concept of third space is a useful model for how to envision educational spaces in Indigenous contexts, including the efforts within my research to enable such a space. If third spaces call for transformative relationships and dialogue, then a critical question is - what are the tools necessary for one to navigate the requisite change? In an attempt to explore this question, the concept of cultural competency is added to the discussion at this point as a way of describing the tools to be used by either students or teachers that are necessary to create, navigate and make use of third spaces.

2.2.3 Cultural Competency

If what Inuit and other Indigenous peoples are involved in is a creative process to formalize cultural knowledge through decolonizing efforts such as the design of culturally appropriate curriculum, then exploring the specific role of teachers is essential to understanding how this endeavour is to be accomplished. More specifically, it is the place of Inuit teachers that is to be emphasized in my research. With this focus and the preceding discussion on culture used as a theoretical foundation, the following section explores the cultural role of teachers and how teachers individually support and participate in the formalizing of Indigenous cultural knowledge systems. I will do this by using the term cultural competency as a focal point and demonstrate that as a concept it can be used to further situate the necessary tools for navigating the concept of third space and the Inuit education context being discussed.

The concept of cultural competency has been increasingly used over the last two decades and can be found in an expanding body of literature, especially in the field of medicine and public health (Byram, 1997; Cross, Bazron, Dennis & Isaacs, 1989; Davis, 1997; Feng, 2009). In order to speak toward the concept of a cultural competency however, it is important to first define a competency. In its most general form, a competency can be seen as a capacity relating to
performance of an individual or organization. Marrelli, Tondora and Hoge (2005) define competency as:

“a measurable human capability that is required for effective performance...A competency may be comprised of knowledge, a single skill or ability, a personal characteristic, or a cluster of two or more of these attributes...Competencies are the building blocks of work performance” (p. 534).

Accordingly, competencies are often broken down as sub-components such as knowledge, skills and attitudes. In order to more specifically define competency I principally draw from Marrelli et al. (2005) and Byram (1997). As viewed by Marrelli et al. (2005), knowledge competency can be seen as the awareness, information, or understanding about “rules, principles, guidelines, concepts, theories, or processes needed to successfully perform a task” (p. 534), while Byram (1997) sees knowledge competency in the cross-cultural context as specifically addressing social groups and their products and practices as well as the “general processes of societal and individual interaction” (p. 50). Skill competencies have been defined as a capacity to perform mental or physical tasks with a specified outcome (Marrelli, 1998), whereas Byram (1997) breaks this component of competency down to “skills of discovery and interaction” (p. 50) and “skills of interpreting and relating” (p. 52). Attitudes, or personal characteristics, as Marelli et al. (2005) describe them, refer to the enabling behaviours that contribute to effective work performance. Byram (1997) includes awareness and political education in this category.

With regards to the related concept of a cultural competency, the term has been broadly defined as a “set of congruent behaviours, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (Cross et al., 1988, p. 13). Okayama, Furuto and Edmondson (2001) suggest that cultural competence “moves towards successful integration of personal awareness and professional cultural growth” (p. 90). In other words, cultural competency speaks to the capacity to navigate in intercultural spaces and create a culture-specific approach to interactions (Minor, 1992). Byram (1994) builds on this stance by focusing on intercultural spaces as a “relationship between host and visitor” (p. 34). Deardorff (2006) articulates the concept of intercultural competency further still by offering a process orientated model for the acquisition of intercultural competency that emphasizes the long-term and on-going nature of
attaining this competency. I agree that cultural competence is a life-long process and I wish to specifically emphasize the components of Deardorff’s model that speak to the “informed frame of reference shift” as a desired internal outcome.

Extrapolating this concept to the specific context of my research project, I can be described as taking on the role of ‘visitor’, whereas the Inuit partners from the Kativik School Board can be seen as the ‘host’ or in other words, I am the ‘outsider’ and the Inuit participants are the ‘insiders’. Using these terms in this way contrasts with the traditional concepts of insider/outsider relations in which the Indigene is often the ‘outsider’. Cultural competency then becomes that which is developed within an intercultural space, a third space for those on both sides of the ‘Indigene-Colonizer hyphen’ (Jones and Jenkins, 2008). Both the host and visitor are developing cultural competencies which in turn become the tools used for furthering dialogue. Therefore, as a result of undertaking this research, I am attempting to become a more culturally competent researcher/educator, while facilitating a space in which Inuit teachers can become more culturally competent teachers with the ultimate goal that together we are building rapport across differences and self-reflecting on our own biases (Endo, Joh & Yu, 2003).

By using the term cultural competency in this way, I am aligning myself with the concept of educultural as described by Macfarlane (2006) who refers to it in an Indigenous education context as “a foundation for learning that includes building upon students’ cultural and experiential strengths to help them acquire new skills and knowledge” (p. 41). Similarly, I use the term cultural competency in an Indigenous education context building upon what Bishop (2008) defines as the Effective Teaching Profile which “creates a learning context that is responsive to the culture of the child and means that learners can bring who they are to the classroom in complete safety and where their knowledges are acceptable and legitimate” (p. 455).

Ultimately, I wish to recognize cultural competency as a pathway through which to enter and learn from third spaces within which Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies can be supported and emphasized and to participate in what Macfarlane (2006) describes as “interfacing the knowledge traditions” (p. 41).

Before further expanding the discussion of cultural competency into Indigenous contexts, I would first like to recognize the concept of intercultural learning and other related concepts used in the literature to describe intercultural spaces and relationships. I do so in order to recognize theoretical groundwork already laid within intercultural education spaces.
Competency and Intercultural Learning

A key field of study that explores the intersection of cultures is that of intercultural learning. The concept of intercultural learning has been gaining traction in the past decades in areas such as international development, diplomacy, and business. In these cases, intercultural learning has been necessary when individuals are more frequently in contact with individuals or populations from other cultures. This concept is closely associated with the terms of intercultural communications, which generally describes the ways in which individuals from different cultures communicate with each other, and intercultural training, which covers how individuals can be trained to more effectively work in other cultures. By viewing intercultural learning in this way, the classroom environment can be seen as demanding intercultural learning on the part of the teacher and students as it may occur between the cultures of the teacher, the students and the institutional and formal culture inherent in the school itself.

In the field of education, a number of terms have been articulated that merge the concepts of intercultural learning and competency. These include terms such as intercultural competency (Feng, 2009; Lundren, 2009) and cross-cultural competency (Banks, 1994a). Byram (1997) introduces the concept of intercultural communicative competence, while the terms cross-cultural literacy (Saravia-Shore and Arvizu, 1992), intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993) and cultural therapy (Spindler & Spindler, 1994) have also been used. The term Indigenous cultural competency has even been used in the health sector (Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency, 2008). Granting that each of these concepts have a contextual justification for their use, all similarly have at their base the assumption that the teacher comes from a culture that is different than the majority of the students. This opinion is reinforced by Diller and Moule (2005) who define cultural competency as the teacher’s “ability to successfully teach students who come from cultures other than their own” (p. 2).

Another concept related to cultural competency in both the health and education fields is that of cultural safety. Cultural safety as it relates to the health sector is predicated on the idea that a professional is able to communicate competently with a patient in that patient’s social, political, linguistic, economic, and spiritual realm (Nursing Council of New Zealand, 2005). The concept of cultural safety can also be applied to education such that an educator can be viewed as teaching through the use of culturally safe pedagogy.
Despite there being many terms in use, it can be concluded that cultural competency and relevant concepts revolving around competency, relate to the capacity of the practitioner, whereas cultural safety relates to the outcomes of that practice.

And yet, Banks (1994a) suggests that educators:

"have not clarified, in any adequate way, the minimal level of cross-cultural competency we consider appropriate and or satisfactory for teacher-education students or for elementary and high school students. Nor have we developed valid and reliable ways to assess levels of cross-cultural functioning" (p. 48).

If this is the case, then it is important to emphasize what effective cultural competency should look like since cultural competency is ultimately theorized as a notion that can be measured. One place to start is to recognize that, conceptually speaking, the idea of a competency and its sub-components outlined above are firmly rooted in the ‘Western’ tradition of what Ermine (1995) warns as the ‘fragmentation of the constituents of existence’ (p. 103). And yet, I would argue that the definition of specific capabilities that can be measured does not preclude taking a holistic vision for what it means to be a doctor, a teacher or any other professional. The concept of a cultural competency is used here from the perspective of a teacher educator who is interested in articulating a way in which a teacher’s training and performance can be evaluated in a more holistic manner. I subscribe to the view that a competency can be defined as “moving beyond the essentialist or reductionist approach to theorizing culture” (Feng, 2009, p. 75).

In the Indigenous context, intercultural learning outlines a way of representing relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities since, to this day, the ability to effectively navigate cultural difference has been a precursor to positive relations between these communities. However, the legacy of colonialism and its lingering asymmetrical power relations is a strong limiting factor in bringing about effective or equal learning. This legacy in many ways inhibits the development of equal relations between parties in an intercultural environment as it is assumed in many contemporary applications of intercultural learning such as in business and diplomacy. Jones and Jenkins (2008) clearly describe this legacy and the problematic agenda behind intercultural learning such that:
“It is rarely recognized that learning about the Other may not be required for Indigenous groups in classrooms. They have achieved this learning simply as members of a colonized society. They are already deeply familiar with the language, experiences, and views of the dominant group” (p. 476).

Furthermore, Jones and Jenkins (2008) state that

“Indigenous access into the realms of meaning of the dominant Other is hardly required: members of marginalized/colonized groups are immersed in it daily. It is the colonizer, wishing to hear, who calls for dialogue” (p. 478).

In other words, what Jones and Jenkins (2008) are suggesting is that intercultural communications and learning are rarely equal and more likely to perpetuate power relations, especially when initiated from an non-Indigenous position.

At this point, it must be noted that my research does not attempt to articulate a generalized set of competencies since I believe that these are ultimately defined by the individual contexts within which an individual works. Instead, I attempt to reconceptualise the use of cultural competency alongside descriptions of the factors that are important to consider when navigating third spaces. I do so in an attempt to reach a definition of effective cultural competency that recognizes the legacy of Colonizer-Indigene relations, This will be done through the introduction of an expanded conception of cultural competency in an Indigenous context in the results section of this dissertation.

Before moving to a discussion of the context for my research, I wish to discuss two more key concepts grounding this research: Indigenous education and capacity building that I believe are equally important to help define the conceptual and theoretical foundation for my project.

2.2.4 Indigenous Education

As outlined in the section above, we can see that culture as a concept is inextricably linked to education and is pervasive in all education systems. However, culture in educational contexts, like in so many other areas, can have varying connotations and uses. For example, there is the concept of a ‘school culture’, which has been used to describe the values of a school community displayed in the everyday workings of the school (Sarason, 1971). There is also the more recent arrival of multicultural education (Banks, 1994) and bicultural education (Kasten, 1998) both of which address issues of cross-cultural
communications and literacy and have been used to describe school environments and curriculum within Indigenous communities.

Culture as seen in Indigenous education has further meanings. For example, it has been discussed at the international level in documents such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which speaks of an Indigenous peoples’ right “to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning” (UN, 2007, Article 14.1). Seen in this way, controlling the process of cultural production and the education system are inseparable within an Indigenous context. Additionally, Indigenous peoples in Canada have taken significant strides to control their own education systems, including Inuit. In fact, the concept of Indigenous control of Indigenous education as policy was introduced as early as 1972 with the publishing of a National Indian Brotherhood report, titled \textit{Indian Control of Indian Education}. And yet control is not the end point. As Mohatt (1993) suggests, taking control of an education system must involve reflection on “what control and power change, how complete is the work, and at what levels do school communities fashion a setting that reflects their consensus on how they want their society to develop and their children to be educated” (p. 183).

In the following section, I wish to focus on the concept of Indigenous education and the intersection of culture and education as it applies to Indigenous communities. Specifically I discuss the ways in which Indigenous cultures manifest themselves at the school level in order to draw attention to how the culture of Indigenous teachers may or may not be reflected in an educational environment. While this summary section draws from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous academic literature in an attempt to evoke a picture of education in general, I privilege Indigenous perspectives when discussing education as it exists in Indigenous communities and contexts.

\textbf{Definitions of Indigenous Education}

Before specifically discussing the school context and Indigenous teachers, it is necessary to ground the discussion in a vision of what Indigenous education may be. Hampton (1993) reminds us that “no aspect of a culture is more vital to its integrity than its means of education” (p. 267). I begin with Hampton’s words to emphasize how Indigenous peoples have long known that the school is a cultural
battleground and in order for their cultures to thrive on their own terms, Indigenous communities must take control of their own schools and redefine them.

From the beginning of the establishment of formal education systems, Indigenous children have been thrown into schools with the understanding that they were being immersed into a foreign culture and were to be dispossessed of their own culture. Historically and in many cases still today, schools in Indigenous communities have been schools formed and controlled by a different culture (Hampton, 1993). I acknowledge this legacy as the first step into a further discussion of Indigenous culture and education.

Battiste (2009) advises that Indigenous education has developed under a specific set of conditions with the ideal purpose being to transmit culture to new generations, but that commonly the real purpose of Indigenous education has been to “affirm the political and social status quo” (p. 196). Cajete (2009) further advocates that “Indigenous education is, in its truest form, about learning relationships in context” (p. 183).

According to Hampton (1993), there are five ways in which Indigenous (Indian) education can be defined. The first way in which the term Indigenous education has been used according to Hampton is to describe a traditional Indigenous education. In this way, Indigenous education can be seen as the education systems of Indigenous peoples before European colonialism. This education was locally based and focused on traditional livelihoods built on a cultural continuity uninterrupted by later European notions of education. Examples of traditional forms include oral histories, teaching stories, ceremonies, apprenticeships, learning games, formal instruction, tutoring and tag-along teaching” (p. 8). Additionally, Archibald (2008) points out how the practice of storytelling plays a key role in these forms.

The second and third uses of the term Indigenous education as outlined by Hampton (1993) come in the form of schooling for self-determination and schooling for assimilation once intense colonization began. These two forms of education refer to Indigenous schools that were set up by European colonists with the only subjective difference being whether they served the Indigenous community and used the Indigenous language (self-determination) or negatively impacted upon it (assimilation).

The last two visions of Indigenous education that Hampton outlines arise from the context in which Indigenous peoples have begun to take control of formal schooling. As a result, his fourth definition of the term refers to education by Indigenous peoples in which schools are controlled by Indigenous peoples, but
still maintain non-Indigenous structures and methods. This vision of Indigenous education still reflects many Indigenous schools today. The final definition for Indigenous education refers to self-determined Indigenous education in which education is controlled by Indigenous peoples using models of education structured by Indigenous culture with Indigenous methods, structures, content and personnel. It is this last definition of Indigenous education that Hampton regards as the ideal and it is the one that I will relate back to in further discussions on the process of decolonizing Indigenous schools.

A critical component of the vision for self-determined Indigenous education outlined above is that Indigenous culture becomes the formal culture, or the ‘sponsoring culture’ (Bruner, 1996) within the school, as opposed to the officially sanctioned ‘national’ culture of the state. However, this vision does not entail a segregation (Hampton, 1993) or nativism, but rather it signifies the establishment of a cultural interface as proposed by Nakata (2007) which allows for an Indigenous people to “make and remake themselves” (p. 198) or to develop an ‘Indigenous philosophy proper’ (Turner, 2006).

Stairs (1994) expands on this vision by suggesting that:

“Indigenous schools...do not directly reflect either a formal education ideal or the local community, but are new cultural creations...School becomes a forum for negotiation among surrounding cultures, between itself and the community, and in the personal negotiations of students with their cultural worlds, including the school culture, as they construct and reconstruct identity” (p. 156).

This idea of Indigenous education suggests that the school would act as a space in which culture is redefined and actively constructed – or from a postcolonial perspective – a third space. In this way, it reflects what Mohatt (1993) describes as ‘culturally negotiated schooling’ and represents “an alternative to the culture versus power dichotomy and to the dilemma of being both modern and traditional” (p. 183).

One of the key factors in supporting this process has been the use of Indigenous languages as the language of instruction in schools. Battiste (2009) suggests that “by introducing language and cultural education in First Nations-operated schools, Aboriginal people are attempting to retain and sustain their languages, cultures, and tribal knowledge (p. 197). It can also be seen that by using Indigenous languages in school, the primary medium through which culture can be constructed is Indigenous-controlled. It is this concept of Indigenous
control through the use of Indigenous languages within education spaces that is central to this research as it is adapted for teacher education and research spaces in general.

Specific examples of how this is taking place can be found internationally; for example Indigenous culture can be seen entering education systems in Australia through the concept of ‘two-way learning’. This concept parallels Stairs’ view that schools become centres for cultural negotiation. Teasdale (1994) refers to two-way learning as:

“children learning ‘both ways of life’ – the Aboriginal and the contemporary Australian – through sharing and exchange between the two sides. This is achieved through Aboriginal decision making, close integration of school and community, the strengthening of teaching/learning relationships between older and younger members of the community, and the development of flexible school structures” (p.215-6).

Teasdale (1994) continues:

“The concept of ‘two-way’ or ‘both-ways’ schooling developed by Australian Aboriginal communities offers a potentially powerful way of dealing with the dilemma posed by the fundamental differences between the teaching-learning process of modern and Indigenous cultures” (p. 222).

Another related path toward a self-determined Indigenous education is through what is referred to as bicultural education. As observed in Siberian Indigenous communities, Kasten (2002) explains how bicultural education “permits us to combine native cultural content with so-called modern knowledge in the school curriculum and teaching materials, and in the education within the family as well” (p. 2).

However, these approaches should not be confused with superficial changes to components of the education system in Indigenous communities. Corson (1990) describes these types of changes as ‘tinkering’ and outlines how superficial changes have been in many cases more pervasive than successful examples of real cultural change in Indigenous schools. Corson (1990) goes on to suggest that “attempts to tinker with the curriculum, by providing multicultural features, disguise the more pervasive impact on minority educational opportunities of culturally incompatible features that manifest themselves throughout the organization of European forms of schooling” (p. 217). Similar concerns are voiced by Banks (1994, 1994a) regarding the addition of the culture of minority
populations to curriculum without transforming the curriculum or changing the 
basic assumptions, perspectives and goals. In other words, the core or ‘sponsoring’ 
culture reflected in the curriculum stays the same in spite of attempts to change it. This disconnect between the traditional culture of schools and those of Indigenous communities has also been described by Nieto (2000) as more than just ‘cultural mismatch’ between the school and community, but more holistically involves the interplay between “personal, familial, interactive, political, and societal issues” (p. 246).

Indigenous teachers, or all teachers for that matter, can be seen as having a critical role in this context since “teachers are at the heart of the transmission and development of culture” (Churchill, 1994, p. 133). When looking at the cultural role of teachers, Churchill (1994) sees teachers as “facilitators of cultural development” and proposes that teachers’ “day-to-day activities shape the environment in which learning occurs and affect the impact of education on the learner and on the social milieu of the learner outside the school” (p. 133).

In expanding upon the idea of a cultural role of teachers, I wish to emphasize that teachers are not passively involved in culture, but are, as Goodlad (1984) puts it, significant actors. By being actively engaged in culture, teachers have a related political role as well. Freire (In Shor, 1987) clarifies this idea by stating that “when the teacher is seen as a political person, then the political nature of education requires that the teacher either serve whoever is in power or present options to those in power” (p. 212). By situating Indigenous education within this political perspective, it can be put forward that Indigenous teachers are fundamentally political when engaged in developing Indigenous culture in the school.

Having focused on aspects of culture at the theoretical level, I wish to now move the discussion to the level of the individual school. I do this to examine specific factors that influence culture in a classroom. This discussion is divided into three areas: 1) school structures, 2) teaching methods, and 3) teaching content.

School Structures

The term ‘school structures’ refers to the way in which schools, including classrooms and the teaching conducted in them, are physically set up. This is the ‘when’ and ‘where’ of teaching and, in most instances, the way schools have been structured has changed little over the last decades. Goodlad (1984) infers this when he states that “the business of schooling is everywhere very much the same”
This uniformity can be found in most modern school buildings – classrooms, hallways, gymnasiums, etc. This uniformity can also be observed in different countries and in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous schools. Goodlad (1984) suggests that schools, in their most general sense, are structured to reward for individual accomplishments, support the dominant role of the teacher, provide limited opportunity for student-initiated activity and reinforce a quiet passivity within the class group with the major organizational structure supporting these conventions being the age-grade structure.

Recognizing this uniformity may go a long way to explaining the historical failures of schools in Indigenous communities. For example, in describing the age-grade structure, Goodlad (1984) notes that:

“Subject matter is arranged by grades; each grade is to take up two semesters, or an academic year. To this is added at the secondary level and sometimes at the elementary level a further division into subjects, each in turn delivered up in periods of from 30 to 60 minutes per day, one or more days per week. This structure not only retains the characteristics summarized, it virtually negates any changes in them. The age-grade division encourages a short-term view of what is to be learned-topics and facts rather than basic concepts and relationships; focus on what can be acquired in a week or semester and then measured rather than the long-time maturation of intellectual capabilities; observing rules rather than becoming increasingly self-disciplined. The division into subjects and periods encourages a segmented rather than an integrated view of knowledge. Consequently, what students are asked to relate to in schooling becomes increasingly artificial, cut off from the human experiences that subject matter is supposed to reflect” (p. 265).

The above description of school structures outlines well the basic structure in which most children, whether they are Indigenous or not, are taught to this day. By looking at these structures through the lens of culture, one can suggest that they reflect a particular culture: one which emphasizes individualism and the economic role of the learner. If this is the case, then it can be argued that the culture being supported through the type of school structures outlined above is ‘Western’ culture since it is from this culture where the structures originated.

The concept of individuality and economic production is not new to the debate surrounding education. Russell (1934) outlines a theory of education in which the practice of education is constantly in flux between an emphasis on the
anarchistic and critical traits of the individual on one side and the communalizing influence of citizenship on the other. However, the individualism that Goodlad (1984) refers to above is far from Russell’s idea of the concept; individualism in the schools of Goodlad’s study refers to an unquestioning and conforming individual separate from one’s classmates within a system of competition rather than collaboration.

This emphasis on the individual is also related to the concept of economic productivity which Russell (1934) refers to as “probably being the principal motive in the minds of those who first introduced universal education” (p. 125). Viewed in this way schooling emphasizes economic production by embracing compartmentalization and punctuality, two significant factors in the age-grade structure. By training to work according to time constraints, or in other words ‘work by the bell’, students are groomed early for industrial or service orientated types of work. Obviously, then, this structure supports a culture that values these types of roles for its adults, - namely Eurocentric urban-industrial cultures.

In contrast, the school structures outlined above in many ways have been seen to run counter to traditional Indigenous ways of being, teaching and relating. Many Indigenous cultures, in contrast, have relied “on informal processes, with learning taking place in the context of everyday activities” (Teasdale, 1994, p.213). Teasdale (1994) goes on to note that “traditionally, children in most Indigenous cultures learn through real-life performance in concrete situations” (p. 213) or in other words as Weenie (1998) describes, Indigenous structures follow a “holistic approach” (p. 59).

Expanded to the Indigenous context, one can suggest that by developing school structures that better reflect Indigenous ways of being, teaching and relating, Indigenous schools can move toward providing more culturally-appropriate programming. Referring back to Hampton (1993), “it is the tension felt by Native educators, teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers as they attempt to fit their practice into non-Native structures that generates the creativity necessary for the development of the new native education” (p. 270).

**Teaching Methods**

Just as the structures of a school provide insight into how culture influences education, teaching methods also hold a key relevance. In this case, I refer to teaching methods as the ‘how’ of teaching. Lipka (1998) defines the cultural aspects of teaching methods as the “cultural frame of reference for understanding
what, how and why [a teacher] organizes the social and academic portions of [his or her] lesson” (p. 123). It is this idea of a ‘cultural frame of reference’ that I wish to emphasize in this section.

The culture from which a teacher comes greatly determines how they teach. When teaching students from the same culture, teachers will invariably have common ways of relating. In the case of Indigenous teachers teaching in a classroom with students from the same culture, issues arise with respect to how their common culture may differ from the way teachers may have been taught to teach or are officially expected to teach. Churchill (1994) notes that “teacher’s room for personal innovation is usually limited to adapting their own teaching methods and to choosing support materials for use in the classroom... Teachers who are aware of their cultural roles can – and do - take many practical measures in their daily work to adapt curricula to meet the needs of learners (p. 138). These types of adaptations are usually made in spite of the requirements on a teacher to teach within the frame of reference of a ‘national’ culture. Churchill (1994) goes on to note that:

“in almost all countries, teachers are given a primary role for ensuring that citizens are acquainted with the broad outlines of the nation’s cultural heritage and the main aspects of knowledge considered useful to being a citizen... By and large, this knowledge constitutes an officially-defined ‘national culture’ which is the central component of teachers’ work in all countries” (p. 142).

This situation is a far cry from a learning environment that takes Indigenous knowledge into consideration. As Lipka (1998) suggests, “learning emanates from a shared context that exists within the classroom and within the community” (p.134). Faced with having to teach a ‘national’ culture, Indigenous teachers must often reconcile between their own culture and the culture they have been trained in and / or in many cases are being asked to promote in the classroom.

Stairs (1995) proposes that the responses of Indigenous teachers to this context can be characterized under three stages. The three stages are:

- a ‘chaotic’ stage of mismatch between traditional informal teaching and the formal education structure;
- a ‘cookbook’ stage in which Indigenous teachers adopt the formal methods demonstrated to them; and
a ‘reconstruction’ stage in which Indigenous teachers integrate at least some aspects of schooling back into their culturally valued processes of learning.

It is within the ‘reconstruction’ stage that Indigenous education can begin to take shape as determined by Indigenous culture. In the Inuit context, Stairs (1995) views the reconstruction stage as being “exemplified by an Inuk teacher who takes his class out into the community to help Elders with repairs and getting water in exchange for legends and stories, old words no longer in common use, and demonstrations of sled-making and string games” (p. 148). However, until recently few Indigenous educators had reached this stage and usually involved “exceptional individuals who were able to maintain their cultural grounding despite long periods of training time away from their roles and identity base in the native community” (Stairs, 1995, p. 148).

Lipka et al. (1998) have undertaken research into Indigenous teaching methods that further articulate the cultural ‘reconstruction’ work of Indigenous teachers. In their case, the cultural roots of teaching methods have been researched by Yup’ik teachers pointing to significant differences in the way Yup’ik teachers teach and the ways that mainstream non-Indigenous teachers teach (Lipka & Stairs, 1994). Key differences revolved around the discourse between the teacher and students, and their kin and social relations. It was observed that during lessons that were seen as more ‘Indigenous’ by Indigenous teachers, students were not following typical classroom discourse patterns and instead reflected more the Yup’ik discourse context and values. Other aspects of teaching methods in which differences were observed included the control of talk, responsibility for learning, pace of learning and use of peer-teaching. Examples of some of the Yup’ik values observed were the belief to not waste things, do things the right way the first way, look up to elders, and have no time constraints on activities (Lipka et al., 1998, p.124).

Efforts to reconstruct Indigenous education methods such as the one outlined above suggest that an Indigenous teaching methodology can be explored and articulated under certain circumstances. They also speak to the necessity, especially in Indigenous education, to contextualize teaching and learning methods, not only with what is being taught, but how it is being taught. Based on research associated with the teaching of culturally based math curriculum in Alaskan schools, Kagie (2008) takes this concept of contextualizing teaching and learning methods further by emphasizing the need for the “pedagogical strategies that are congruent with [Indigenous] cultural norms for the transmission of
knowledge” (p. 3) in order to teach within what she deems ‘an effective third space’. It is within this confluence of ‘pedagogical strategies’ and third spaces that my research focuses with continued discussion on this topic in further sections.

**Teaching Content**

The content of teaching, or the ‘what’ of teaching, is often encapsulated in the curriculum. A curriculum document also commonly includes other components along with the content to be taught including a rationale for the school program and instruction on how to plan, implement and evaluate the program (Marsh, 1986). Grundy (1987) defines a curriculum as a cultural construction since it is fundamentally a document that is developed by individuals whether at the local or systems level. By viewing a curriculum from this constructivist perspective, it can be inferred that the development of a curriculum is grounded in a particular cultural context and that some epistemologies will be stressed in a curriculum at the expense of others (Marsh, 1986). And with different epistemologies come different forms of knowledge, methodologies and ways of knowing (Kinchloe, 2003, p. 91).

Some curriculum documents may explicitly articulate their underlying epistemologies, cultural concepts and values, whereas in others it may be only implicit in the hidden curriculum (Synder, 1971). The idea of the hidden curriculum is important to discuss at this juncture since it represents the undeclared social and academic norms that students are expected to abide by and found in every curriculum document. Furthermore, since a curriculum in use at the elementary and secondary education levels is sanctioned by the national or, as in some countries, the provincial/state level of government, then the epistemologies, cultural values and concepts to be included in the curriculum will also be those that are government sanctioned. Alexander (2000) writes that aspects of the curriculum such as the national educational goals, and subject teaching with citizenship, foreign languages and religious education, serve as ‘indicators’ or ‘weather-vanes’ of the national cultural and political intensions for education.

Churchill (1994) adds to this vision of culture in the curriculum by asserting that:
“The basic structure of the curriculum used in most countries in the world is largely based upon models of public schooling which originated in the European cultural sphere in the nineteenth century. Many of the assumptions of that schooling system remain unchanged, in spite of adaptations for national differences. The traditional definition of culture inherent in the curriculum reflects a view of what, at that time, were important values for middle class and upper-middle class societies of Europe and North America...Both official curricula and prevailing opinion tend to stress what we have called a national cultural heritage, often defined as involving only one dominant cultural viewpoint” (p. 140).

This quotation speaks to the fundamental cultural assumption within most school curricula: teaching is to be grounded in a national culture and Eurocentric thought (Battiste & Youngblood, 2000). In response to this orthodoxy, many Indigenous communities are adopting an Indigenous curriculum to take the place of or at least partially take the place of, national curricula (Archibald, 1995; Bishop, 2008; Corson, 1999). Battiste (2009) suggests that an Indigenous curriculum, in contrast to a non-Indigenous curriculum, is “based on the language, thematically taught, and aligned to the cycles, relationships, and rhythms of [Indigenous] existence” (p. 202). Consequently, as reported by Archibald (1995), the development of these types of curricula, has “facilitated the practice of First Nations [Indigenous] cultural teaching and learning patterns” (p. 310).

One key factor in the successful implementation of Indigenous curriculum as noted by Archibald (1995) is the establishment of on-going support services and professional development for teachers. This factor speaks to the importance of the role of Indigenous teachers and that “the curriculum beyond the labels and inside the classrooms is far more important” (Alexander, 2000, p. 156) than the document itself. In this way, emphasis can be placed on the teachers as the ones who must ultimately choose the curriculum content to be covered and implement the ways in which a curriculum is to be taught. Teachers, therefore, can be viewed in the way Posner (1992) sees them - as “active shapers of curriculum change to meet local needs” (p. 218).

2.2.5 Capacity Building

The concepts explored in the sections above point to the need for teachers to become actively engaged in efforts to decolonize their schools and the specific
curricula, methods and structures in use in those schools. While many individual Indigenous teachers are already taking steps to indigenize their schools, Bishop et al (2010) suggest that a lack of teachers in these roles is a key challenge to bringing about lasting decolonizing change:

“The problem is there are just not enough of these teachers / leaders to bring about effective change on their own. Nor are there enough that can spread such innovations across their institutions in a way that provides coherence and continuity across the organization without assistance, hence the importance of a systematic means of providing professional learning opportunities for teachers and leaders. This approach is necessary in order to develop a systematic means of identifying and spreading the number of leaders who are both more certain of where the school needs to go and also more selective when considering offers of support from external agencies” (p. 157).

The approach outlined in the quotation above suggests the need for training and professional development opportunities for teachers in support of decolonizing strategies instituted at the system level. This approach can also involve supporting teachers to address “power imbalances within their practice prior to the introduction of new pedagogical strategies and as a fundamental precondition of raising teacher expectations (Shields et al., 2005, p. 152). Overall, this is a central concept to my research and points to the question of what type of professional development opportunities for teachers can support learning with regards to having teachers engage in decolonizing strategies.

Training for teachers falls under different names in different contexts; terms such as professional development, learning opportunities or capacity building have been used. In the following section, the term capacity building is used to describe learning opportunities for teachers. I use this term since it is commonly used in the contemporary Canadian research context, however, I also use it with the express rejection of deficit theorizing or what Brant Castellano (2004) calls “colonialist perceptions of Aboriginal incapacity” (p. 102-103). Therefore, I will discuss the term ‘capacity building’ in its most general sense in order to more fully articulate the process of teacher development expressed above by Shields et al. (2005) and Bishop et al. (2010), while using the more specific term of ‘professional learning opportunities’ to describe the specific instances through which teachers participate in training. Within the Indigenous education context, the term capacity building is integrated conceptually within the larger discussion
on cultural competencies to represent a method of designing and implementing professional learning opportunities for teachers through which teachers can become more actively engaged in decolonizing their school environments.

**Definitions of Capacity Building**

The term capacity building is in wide use especially in the not-for-profit and international development sectors to describe supports that develop skills and competence. Philbin (1998) defines capacity building from a social justice perspective as the "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive" (p. 4). While not specifically targeted to the development of cultural competency, the concept of capacity building is used here to articulate how these competencies may be developed.

**Forms of Capacity Building in Indigenous Contexts**

A capacity building approach associated with the development of cultural competency is finding a growing number of applications in fields as diverse as critical intercultural education (Lundgren, 2009) and public health (Brown & Gundersen, 2001). In the Indigenous context, capacity building efforts point to the importance of having Indigenous peoples participating more fully in the academic community. Smith (1999) details the emergence of a “burgeoning international community of Indigenous scholars and researchers” (p. 4) or what Turner (2006) describes as an “Indigenous intellectual community” (p. 101). Swisher (1998) describes how the development of an Indigenous academic community has its roots in the 1970’s as more Indigenous people received Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees leading to the development of “a contemporary cadre of Indian [Indigenous] professionals and practitioners” (p. 195). As a result, Indigenous academics have begun to conduct research and write about Indigenous education from their own perspective from within the traditional university setting.

At the same time, institutional models have also been established to train and support Indigenous scholars and researchers at Indigenous-controlled post-secondary institutions such as Wānanga in New Zealand (Durie, 1999), the Sámi Allaskuvla in Norway (Kuokkanen, 2004) and the Ciulistet group in Alaska (Lipka et al., 1998; Lipka, 2005). Based on the development of these Indigenous academic cadres and institutions, postsecondary level training, and more
specifically the attainment of university degrees, can be seen as an important addition to an Indigenous community’s ability to affect change to Indigenous education systems in general. This leads me to look at the current state of academic training among Inuit in Nunavik in order to explore capacity needs in its most general terms among Inuit communities.

In Canada, Statistics Canada data from 2006 on the highest level of educational attainment indicate that 2% of Inuit between the ages of 25 and 64 who reside in Nunavik hold a university degree (Statistics Canada, 2008b). These levels are in contrast to 8% of Inuit between the ages of 25 and 64 who live outside of Inuit regions. And yet, these levels are still lower than the 23% of all non-Indigenous Canadians who hold a university degree. Overall, these data indicate a significant gap between the number of Inuit with university level qualifications and non-Inuit Canadians.

Of those Inuit that do hold post-secondary level qualifications, 2006 Census data also suggest that education is one of the most common disciplines (Statistics Canada, 2008b). This would make sense especially in Nunavik since one of the few university level academic qualifications that can be gained while still residing in Nunavik is the Bachelor of Education earned through the teacher education programs offered through the Kativik School Board. This trend is supported by Swisher (1998) who emphasizes that “of all professions, more [Indigenous] people entered the field of education than any other discipline” (p. 195). It also closely reflects the early stages of the movement described by Swisher (1998) in which the discipline of education acts as an entry point for Indigenous peoples into academia. With this trend in mind, Inuit educators seem well positioned to promote and participate further in any Inuit research and education agenda.

However, focusing solely on developing a larger cohort of Inuit with Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees may only be a partial solution since, as Johnson (2000) indicates, “effective Indigenous education programs can also be created by individuals who are not formally trained” (p. 132).

Schnarch (2004) also warns that if:

“capacity building is fundamental to nation building, not just career building... increasing the number of [Inuit] with PhDs related to research, while laudable, does not by itself necessarily result in any benefit to the community. In fact, the individuals are often lost to their communities as they pursue careers in the mainstream. Government and university departments and industry are the actual beneficiaries. The potential for Aboriginal
communities to benefit from their people working within the system is unclear at best. Meanwhile, opportunities to work directly for the community in a research capacity are rare” (p. 87).

If creating opportunities for Inuit to work directly for the community is a key goal of research as Schnarch (2004) suggests, then research and educational projects must take on a form that works to this end.

Informed by the literature discussed in the above sections and based on an assumption that the development of Inuit research capacity (informal and formal) is a critical component to decolonizing efforts, I situate my research project as an attempt to enter into what Brant Castellano (2004) describes as an “effective partnership” between a non-Inuit researcher and Inuit ‘partners’. Accordingly, this research project develops a capacity building approach by which Indigenous teachers can become self-reflective of their practice and engage more fully in a research process relating to how Indigenous culture manifests itself in their classroom. This project does not attempt to define differences in the concept of culture between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. Instead, it attempts to build a space – a third space – within which Indigenous teachers and I as a researcher can together explore our own perspectives of cultural difference (Bennett, 1993). And as Diller and Moule (2005) indicate, this approach first involves the development of self-awareness since “all efforts to define cultural competency to date begin with acknowledging the importance of self-awareness in the teacher” (preface p. 9).
3 Overview of Research with the Kativik School Board

3.1 Background on Inuit in Nunavik

This chapter provides a brief summary of the cultural, linguistic, socio-economic, political, physical and educational environments for Inuit in Nunavik, Canada. It has been provided as a context for later sections covering current education practices in Nunavik and my research project conducted with the Kativik School Board.

3.1.1 Status of Inuit in Canada

Indigenous peoples in Canada are often referred to as Aboriginal peoples. The term Aboriginal, however, obscures the distinctiveness of the First Peoples of Canada as specified in Canada’s 1982 Constitution Act — First Nations, Inuit and Métis. The First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. Regarding linguistic differences, for example, there are more than 50 distinct groupings among First Nations alone. Among Inuit, there are several dialects of the Inuktitut language (RCAP, 1996).

The most widely used national data-set on population in Canada is the Canada Census.¹ Based on 2006 Census estimates, the Aboriginal population of Canada reached approximately 1.1 million people (3.5% of the 31.6 million Canadians). First Nations represent the largest group (under two-thirds) followed by Métis (approximately one-third) and Inuit (4%). Overall, the Aboriginal population is growing significantly faster than the non-Aboriginal population in Canada (Government of Canada, 2007). The Inuit population is the youngest in Canada, with 39% under the age of 14, while the Inuit birth rate is twice as high as the Canadian average birth rate (Statistics Canada, 2010).

The approximately 55,000 Inuit in Canada primarily live in 53 remote Arctic communities in four geographic regions spanning two provinces and two territories: the Inuvialuit region in the Northwest Territories; the Territory of

¹ Note: Census estimates for Aboriginal population are seen by some organizations as somewhat problematic based on non-participation by some Aboriginal populations and differences of definitions for Aboriginal peoples.
Nunavut; Nunavik in the province of Quebec and Nunatsiavut in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador with a notable urban population as well in cities such as Ottawa.

Each of the four Inuit regions is administered through provisions outlined in their individual land claims, with education being delivered differently in each area. This complex jurisdicational reality has engendered unique regional approaches to Inuit education.

3.1.2 Inuit in Nunavik

The following paragraphs briefly describe the physical, cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and political environments in Nunavik. A section is also included that summarizes the history and current status of the formal education system in the region.

**Physical environment**

Nunavik is located north of the 55th parallel in the Arctic area of the province of Quebec stretching across a roughly 507,000 km$^2$ territory. The region is bordered by the Hudson Bay to the west, the Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay to the north with the rest of Quebec to the south and the province of Newfoundland and Labrador to the east. The region’s physical landscape can be characterized as tundra in the north and boreal forests at its southern limits including widespread permafrost and ancient geology. The tree line extends roughly across the southern edge of the region, with the region’s vegetation classified as tundra: from forest tundra in the south (a transition zone between open boreal forest and arctic tundra) to arctic tundra in the north (marked by lichen, low-growing plants, and the absence of trees). Topography, altitude, geological structures and proximity to the sea are all factors that affect the biological environment and support the region’s ecosystems. Common land and ocean animal species found in the region are caribou, polar bear, arctic char, seal and whales (Nunavik Parks, 2010).

Not until the 1950s did the majority of Inuit begin establishing residence in permanent villages. Today, fourteen coastal communities are located across the Nunavik region with all but four of these communities having less than 1,000 inhabitants (Makivik Corporation, 2010). The largest community, Kuujjuaq, has a population of roughly 2000 and acts as a regional centre. Communities in Nunavik are accessible year-round only by air since no roads connect them with
the road system in southern Canada. In 2006, the population of Nunavik was 10,485 with 91% (9,565) being Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2008d), while the Inuit population in this region represents 19% of the total Inuit population in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2010). Overall, the population of the region is relatively young. Based on 2006 census data, the median age was 20 years, with 13% of all Inuit in the region aged 4 and under. Nunavik had the fastest growing Inuit population, with a 25% gain since 1996 (Statistics Canada, 2010).

![Map of the Nunavik Region.](image)

**Cultural and linguistic environment**

Inuit have a unique cultural and linguistic identity, significantly different from other Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Before the middle of the 20th century, Inuit in
Nunavik lived on the land, as their ancestors did with their extended family in small, transient camps that moved according to wildlife migrations and the seasons (Salokangas & Parlee, 2009). Men and women held their respective roles as hunters and care-givers, and Inuit identity was strongly tied to the natural environment with traditional knowledge and cultural values passed from Elders to youth (Mannik, 1998; Vick-Westgate, 2010).

Up to the 1950’s, contact with southerners such as missionaries and traders was only sporadic at sites such as the first Hudson's Bay Company trading post which opened in Kuujjuaraapik in 1829 (Callaghan, 1992). After this period, Inuit have experienced dramatic socio-cultural changes based on the movement from a traditional way of life to a modern industrialized one as a result of efforts by the Canadian and Quebec governments to actively encourage Inuit to settle in permanent communities. Today, fewer Inuit live solely off the land and many Inuit have become dependent on the limited job opportunities in communities and social assistance within a wage economy. With movement from traditional forms of subsistence to participation in a wage economy, Inuit social and environmental relationships have dramatically changed (ITK, 2004). This change is recognized as contributing to factors such as social marginalization, stress and higher incidences of suicide (Kirmayer et al., 1998; Wexler, 2006).

There are approximately 16 dialects spoken by Inuit across the circumpolar region with a number of those dialects spoken in Canada. The language as it is spoken in Canada is most often referred to as Inuktitut. However, in Nunavik the Inuktitut dialect used is referred to as Inuttitut. As a result, when making reference to Inuit language in this document, the term Inuttitut will be used.

Relative to other Inuit regions, Inuttitut in Nunavik remains a highly functional and vibrant language with roughly 90% of Inuit indicating it as their first language (Wright & Taylor, 1995, p. 244). While Statistics Canada (2008c) suggests that the rate of language use remained stable between 1996 and 2006, Dorais (1995) has noted recent trends in the use of Inuttitut suggesting that spoken and written English has become commonly used among the younger generation, while spoken Inuttitut is used for dealing with older people and to express feelings and thoughts linked to their cultural and local identities. Dorais (1995) also notes that written Inuttitut use seems to be limited to the classroom and the church, while for the older generation, “spoken and written [Inuttitut] still constitutes the principal—if not the only—means of communication” (p. 298).
Socio-economic environment

The current socio-economic environment in Nunavik is challenging and can be characterized by high rates of unemployment, inequalities in income distribution and substandard infrastructure (ITK, 2004). For example, based on 2006 Census data, the national rates of labour market participation among Inuit was 63%, while unemployment rates for Inuit men (22%) are three times higher than those for non-Inuit Canadian men (7%) (Senecal, 2006). As seen in the 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey conducted by Statistics Canada, 79% of Inuit respondents cited unemployment as the main problem in their communities (Little, 2006).

This relative lack of jobs in Nunavik brings few opportunities for generating income (Hull, 2005). Income disparities are particularly pronounced between regional centers and small outlier communities. This context can be viewed by contrasting the median annual income in Kuujjuaq, the administrative capital of Nunavik, at $25,700, with that found in the smaller community of Puvirnituq at $15,900 (Hodgins, 1997).

Housing shortages and poor quality housing are another critical factor influencing the socio-economic environment in Nunavik. The majority of Inuit in Nunavik live in social housing units with Inuit as a group suffering the worst overcrowding in Canada such that it is estimated that 53% of Inuit households are overcrowded (ITK, 2004). In Nunavik, the Regional Board of Health and Social Services reported in 1998 that the housing situation posed a major risk to the population’s psycho-social and physical health. Bryant (2004) reports that insufficient housing can lead to overcrowding, deficient sanitation and ventilation, the spread of infectious diseases, psycho-social stresses, and violence, while housing problems have also been associated with low achievement levels in schools, spousal abuse, respiratory tract infections among infants, depression, and substance abuse (ITK, 2004; NTI, 2005).

Political environment

By the late 1960s, Aboriginal peoples in Canada including Inuit were becoming increasingly politically active at the national and regional levels. At the national level, Inuit established a national, political organization in 1971 now referred to as Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). Today, this organization represents all Inuit in Canada at the national level as mandated by an Inuit board of directors.
At the same time, Inuit began to initiate legal processes to help bring about the establishment of land claims agreements within their respective territories. These efforts have ultimately led to the negotiation of four land claims agreements between Inuit and the Government of Canada: the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement (JBNQA) (Inuit in Nunavik) in 1975; the Inuvialuit Final Agreement in 1984 (Inuit in the Northwest Territories); the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement in 1999; and Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement in 2005.

The James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement provided for the settlement of comprehensive Inuit land claims in Northern Quebec (Nunavik), and established structures for the economic and social advancement of the Inuit population in the region (Makivik Corporation, 2010). This agreement included provisions to establish Inuit self-government in the form of a new regional government in Nunavik, the Kativik Regional Government (KRG), whose legal establishment is still pending. This new regional government will ultimately not be an Inuit government but a public government, representing all citizens of Nunavik and giving Inuit control by nature of their majority status. The agreement also provides for an elected assembly with representatives from each of the 14 communities and amalgamates the three institutions created under the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement - the Kativik Regional Government (KRG), the Kativik School Board (KSB), and Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS) - into a new Nunavik regional government structure.

Fig. 2. Kativik Regional Government Offices in Kuujjuaq (Photo: B. Stevenson, 2007).
3.1.3 Educational Environment

Jurisdiction for Education

Commissioned reports such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and the Berger Report on Implementation of the Nunavut Land Claim (2006) have called attention to the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within Canada. These reports draw attention to the need for education systems in regions where Indigenous people reside to be designed, implemented and controlled by Indigenous people. Education in Inuit regions is no exception, with Inuit having been advocating this approach to education for many decades (Laugrand & Oosten, 2009).

Under current policies in Canada, education for Aboriginal learners is covered under multiple constitutional jurisdictions. For example, the Canadian Constitution states that education is generally a provincial / territorial responsibility, however “Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians” including Inuit fall under federal jurisdiction. Today, jurisdiction over Inuit education at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels is based on provisions in land claims agreements and characterized by joint-funding arrangements between territories / provinces, Inuit organizations and the federal government.

In the case of Nunavik, education is presently the exclusive responsibility of the Kativik School Board (KSB) which was established in 1978 as part of the land claims process covering the region to provide education programming from pre-school to adult education. This board plays an important part in defining Inuit educational affairs for Inuit in Nunavik, thus a more substantial summary of the Kativik School Board is offered in the next section along with a brief history of education in the region.

History of Formal Education in Nunavik

For millennia, the forms of education used by Inuit imparted all that was necessary to survive and perpetuate Inuit culture, language and livelihoods. McGregor (2010) offers a detailed account of Inuit education prior to colonization as preparation of young Inuit to be successful adults and that this involved the development of skills and knowledge necessary to perpetuate a productive relationship with their environment. In this way, education was not separated from day-to-day living (Vick-Westgate, 2002) and involved learning by
observation and experiential learning during work activities (Armstrong, 1987) especially as it related to the acquisition of competency in survival skills (McGregor, 2010).

This experiential form of traditional education can be drawn together under the Inuit term, isumaqsajuq which represents one of two different concepts of education recognized by North Baffin Inuit (Wenzel, 1987). Stairs (1995) summarizes the concept of isumaqsajuq as “the way of passing along knowledge through the observation and imitation embedded in daily family and community activities…with integration into the immediate shared social structure being the principal goal. The focus is on values and identity, developed through the learner’s relationship to other persons and to the environment.” (p. 140). This concept is markedly different than another form of education recognized by Inuit as ilisajuq or “teaching which involves a high level of abstract verbal mediation in a setting removed from daily life” (Stairs, 1995, p. 140).

Isumaqsajuq education has been referred to as informal learning (McGregor, 2010) because it takes place in daily settings outside of a school environment, whereas ilisajuq education has been referred to as formal since it is often offered in institutional settings such as classrooms. However, I do not subscribe to this description and instead assume that both forms of education are formal because they each have an intentional goal, specific methods and support systems. As an alternative, I refer to isumaqsajuq as traditional Inuit education in reference to its connections and continuity with traditional Inuit worldviews, knowledge and livelihoods and ilisajuq as classroom-based education. These two Inuit concepts are used to describe the divide between traditional Inuit education and colonial forms of school-based education. Even with isumaqsajuq forms of experiential education continuing to be offered within the traditional settings of Inuit homes and communities today, the more abstract forms of ilisajuq education have expanded since the initial establishment of schools and the ‘southern’ style of schooling they brought.

During the late 19th century, Christian Moravian, Anglican and Oblate missionaries began periodically visiting the region. These missionaries brought their own visions for what education should be: an education grounded in the goal of conversion to Christianity (McGregor, 2010). Reading and writing skills were also introduced by Anglican missionaries through the use of the syllabic writing system adapted to Inuktut. Inuit became exposed to these skills as they visited Hudson Bay Company trading posts and the missions set up in the same location at various sites in Nunavik such as the one at Little Whale River (near present day
Kuujjuarapik) (Laugrand et al., 2006). As this mission activity increased, it ultimately led to the establishment of mission schools within Nunavik with the first being in Kuujjuaq in 1932 (Callaghan, 1992). Inuit children from across the region attended these residential schools for nine months of the year and stayed in small or large hostels built near the schools (King, 2006). They were disconnected from their families, communities, language and culture, and were forced to follow southern norms (Kirmayer et al., 2003; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1995).

As a result, a rift was created between Elders and youth, inhibiting the intergenerational exchange of traditional knowledge, cultural values, parenting skills and language. Physical, sexual, and mental abuse of pupils was also not uncommon at residential schools. Even though the residential school system essentially ended in Canada in the mid-1970s, it is often cited as a source of ‘community trauma’ with a legacy of cultural repression, assimilation and abuse that continues to affect Inuit health and mental well-being today (ITK, 2007; Kirmayer et al., 2003; RCAP, 1995; Wexler, 2006). For example, the 2006 Aboriginal Peoples Survey conducted by Statistics Canada showed that 16% of Inuit children aged 6 to 14 in Nunavik had parents who reported attending a residential school (Statistics Canada, 2008a).

With the Canadian government showing a greater interest in the North after the Second World War, the few mission schools in Nunavik were replaced by a more comprehensive system of schools built and operated by the federal Department of Northern Affairs (now referred as the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) between 1955 and 1970 (King, 2006, p.1). This period can be characterized as a time when the number of Inuit enrolled in school significantly increased. At the start of this period in 1955, a relatively small number of Inuit across the North were enrolled daily in schools. At this time, less than 15% of school aged children were enrolled in schools in contrast to the roughly 75% of Inuit across the North who were enrolled by 1964 (King, 2006, p.10). These schools were run as day schools with a number of them acting as boarding schools. This system was modeled on southern education systems with English as the language of instruction and a curriculum taught by southern trained teachers often based on the Ontario curriculum. By the early 1960’s, the federal government had established and built schools in ten Nunavik communities: Inukjuak (1949), Kuujjuaq (1949), Salluit (1957), Kuujjuaraapik (1957), Puvirnituq (1958), Quaqtaq (1960), Kangirsuk (1960), Kangiqsujuaq (1960), Ivujivik (1960), and Kangiqsualujjuaq (1962) (Callaghan, 1992). Attendance was
compulsory at these schools with many former Inuit residential school students stating that parents were threatened with the loss of Family Allowance payments if they did not send their children to the federal hostels (King, 2006).

At this same time, the Quebec provincial government became increasingly interested in the region in large part based on its desire to build hydro-electric developments in the region. This interest led to the province asserting its jurisdiction and developing provincially run schools in many of the same communities where federal schools were present. Even with the establishment of a new provincial school district in 1968, by the mid 1970’s four times as many Inuit children were still enrolled in federal schools in contrast to provincial schools (Callaghan, 1992).

This period was also noteworthy for the growth of a stronger and more formal Inuit political voice as seen in the development of the Inuit political organization, the Northern Quebec Inuit Association (NQIA). A key goal of this organization was greater Inuit control of education. This increased political activity by Inuit was instrumental in the development of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement. With the signing of this agreement in 1975, the Kativik School Board was established to serve the educational needs of Inuit in the region and to empower Inuit to take control over their own education (Annahatak, 1994). The official transfer of students, staff and infrastructure took place in 1978.

Today, the education program administered by the KSB is directed by Quebec provincial legislation, The Education Act for Cree, Inuit and Naskapi Native Persons with the KSB receiving its operating funds from both the province of Quebec (75%) and the federal government (25%) (Kativik, 2010). Governed by a council of commissioners elected by their respective communities, the Kativik School Board currently administers schools in each of the region’s 14 communities which offer programming at the Kindergarten to secondary school level. As of 2010, there were roughly 3000 students enrolled at KSB schools, with no school having a student population of more than 500. Educational programs delivered at these schools are designed to meet objectives under the Quebec Ministry of Education as well as supply curriculum content and instruction adapted to reflect Inuit culture and language (Kativik School Board, 2010). As part of its role, the KSB also develops supplemental programs and teaching materials, trains Inuit teachers, and provides support to Inuit for post-secondary education studies.
Three languages are in use at these schools: Inuktitut, English and French. The language of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 2 is Inuktitut at which time parents are given the choice of having their children placed in English or French immersion for the remaining years. More specifically with regards to the prevalence of instruction in Inuktitut, 71% of Inuit in Nunavik aged 15 and over indicated in 2006 that they had been taught in Inuktitut in their last year of school (Statistics Canada, 2008a). While registration in the French primary sector now surpasses that in the English primary sector as reported by the Kativik School Board (2010), Dorais (1995) observes that English currently operates as the “dominant second language in contrast to French” (p. 298).

With regards to teacher education, the Kativik School Board has supported a teacher training program in partnership with McGill University since 1975. This community-based program allows student teachers to be taught primarily in their home community while continuing to work in schools throughout their period of study. Courses within the program are also taught by an extensive network of Inuit instructors. In large part as a result of these factors, a significant number of the teachers working in the region are Inuit. These numbers have increased to the point where 65% of Inuit aged 15 and older indicate that they had an Inuk teacher in their final year of school (Statistics Canada, 2008a).²

Current Inuit Education Outcomes

In an attempt to situate the capacity building efforts undertaken in my research within the current context of Inuit education, I wish to briefly summarize education outcomes among Inuit as described by nationally available statistics on educational attainment. I do so in order to discuss the effectiveness of the current school-based education system as measured by the most commonly used tools keeping in mind the qualification that quoted statistics are an incomplete measure of educational success at best.

The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) (2009) reports that a notable education achievement gap exists between Aboriginal (including Inuit) and non-Aboriginal populations in Canada and that this gap extends across all education levels. Recently, this gap has been shrinking. And yet, educational attainment

² Note: Further information regarding the numbers and background of Inuit teachers in Nunavik will be provided in later chapters.
among the Aboriginal population remains well below the levels achieved by their non-Aboriginal peers as measured by graduation rates (Canadian Council on Learning [CCL], 2009; RCAP, 1995). Statistics compiled by Statistics Canada (2008a, 2008b, 2010) indicate that, at the secondary level in 2006, 23% of non-Aboriginal Canadians over the age of 14 had not yet completed high school while among Aboriginal peoples the secondary school non-completion rate was 44% (Sharpe et al., 2009). Specifically for Inuit, Statistics Canada (2008b) reports in 2001 that 59% of Inuit aged 20 to 24 had not completed secondary school. Responses from the 2006 Aboriginal Peoples survey (Statistics Canada, 2008a) indicate that the most common reasons given by Inuit men for not graduating from secondary school were that they wanted / had to work (28% of respondents), while women cited pregnancy, taking care of children or helping at home (34% of respondents) as the major reason for leaving school.

The issue of low rates of secondary education attainment represents a significant challenge since roughly the same proportion of those Inuit students who complete high school and receive a graduation certificate, go on to complete some form of post-secondary education as do secondary school graduates in the non-Aboriginal population (Mendelson, 2006). At the post-secondary level, the 2006 Census indicates that roughly 41% of Aboriginal people in Canada aged 25 to 64 had completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree in contrast to 56% of the non-Aboriginal population. In relation to Inuit, Census data suggest that 36% of the Inuit population in Canada, between ages of 25 and 64 had completed some form of post-secondary schooling, 17% of which was at the college level (Statistics Canada, 2008b).

Although these rates are significantly below that of the non-Aboriginal population, Inuit are closer to an equal footing with their non-Aboriginal counterparts at both the college and trade levels of attainment (Mendelson, 2006). As a result, it is the significant and continuing gap in university level post-secondary education attainment between Inuit and non-Aboriginal Canadians that remains a significant challenge with only 4% of Inuit between 25 and 64 years of age having received a university degree (Statistics Canada, 2008b).

### 3.2 The Research Project

The following chapter describes the methodology undertaken to develop a participatory action research project with the Kativik School Board and a group of Inuit teachers from Nunavik, Quebec, Canada. This chapter has been structured
into six sections: a theoretical background behind the methodology, project initiation and design, research objectives, project governance, project activities and research methodology.

3.2.1 Theoretical Background on Methodology: Participatory Action Research

The following section provides a brief description of the participatory action research (PAR) approach used in this research project. I use this methodology since it is this form of research that I believe most closely encapsulates the approach necessary in order to design and implement an effective research project that involves a non-Indigenous researcher and Indigenous research partners. Specific attention is given to how the participatory action research has been defined, how it has been conducted within Indigenous contexts and how it represents a frame of reference for my research with the Kativik School Board.

Definitions of Participatory Action Research

Changes have been taking place with respect to the way research is conducted in Indigenous contexts in large part as a response to growing criticism about how research in Indigenous communities has traditionally marginalized those very communities. Smith (1999) notes that “the word itself ‘research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary” (p. 1). Alternatives to these traditional forms of research have emerged under the title of ‘community-based’, ‘multi-disciplinary’, ‘partnership’ or ‘participatory’ with a common thread to all of these types being a recognition that Indigenous peoples must have the power “to determine what is investigated, how the research is to be conducted and how the results are interpreted and used (Mertens, 2009). When applied, these forms privilege the Indigene as ‘insider’ and demand a level of participation that enables Indigenous communities to more fully benefit from all facets of the research process. Based on their common participatory assumptions, I generalize these terms under the term participatory action research.

Introduced as a term over 50 years ago by Lewin (1958), action research can be viewed in its simplest form as research leading to social action. Hart and Bond (1995) see action research as a problem-focused approach based on the central tenet of critical reflection, grounded in everyday practice. Kemmis and
McTaggart (1982) agree with the focus on self-reflection when they define the major aim of action research as:

"the establishment of conditions under which self-reflection is genuinely possible: conditions under which aims and claims can be tested, under which practice can be regarded strategically and 'experimentally', and under which practitioners can organize as a critical community committed to the improvement of their work and their understanding of it" (p. 6).

More generally, Carr and Kemmis (1986) define action research:

"as a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out” (p. 162).

In its more recent applications within the education sector, participatory action research has been grounded in critical pedagogy. Freire (1985) describes the aim of these forms of action research as breaking a “culture of silence…between the dominated and the dominators” (1985, p.72) suggesting that researchers are co-learners along with those involved in the research project.

Specific outcomes from this type of participatory research project have been observed by Macaulay et al. (1999) including “increased local knowledge and capacity, self-empowerment…and community planning” (p. 777). Based on the collaborative nature of the approach and the potential to reach outcomes such as those noted above, it is a participatory action research approach that I use for my research. For the purposes of my research, I use the expanded term, participatory action research with the intention of emphasizing the participatory nature of this approach in contrast to forms of research commonly used in the past in Indigenous communities.

**Participatory Action Research in Indigenous Contexts**

A growing number of Indigenous scholars are calling for fundamental change to the way research is done in Indigenous communities (Bishop et al, 2010; Brant Castellano, 2004; Smith, 1999; Swisher, 1998) since it has been “inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism” (Smith, 1999, p. 1). Expanding on this idea Brant Castellano (2004) writes that “research under the control of outsiders to the Aboriginal community has been instrumental in rationalizing
colonialist perceptions of Aboriginal incapacity and the need for paternalistic control” (p. 102-103). Keskitalo (1994, originally published in 1974) further suggests that research can be viewed as an “inter-ethnic relation” and argues that “it is vital for an ethnic group in a minority situation to be able to legitimate its policy and claims through scientific documentation of its own history and rights” (p. 29).

Viewing research in this way exposes the monopoly of ‘Western’ research institutions over the research process and situates the need to remedy asymmetrical relations between these institutions and Indigenous communities. Smith (1999) further advocates that:

“Research in itself is a powerful intervention... which has traditionally benefited the researcher, and the knowledge base of the dominant group in society. When undertaking research, either across cultures or within a minority culture, it is critical that researchers recognize the power dynamic which is embedded in the relationship with their subjects. Researchers are in receipt of privileged information. They may interpret it within an overt theoretical framework, but also in terms of a covert ideological framework” (p. 176).

As discussed above and demonstrated in Fisher and Ball (2002), a key factor influencing the effectiveness of research in Indigenous communities is the potential role of researchers and their relationship with those involved in the research. Therefore, as an outsider or Qallunaaq (the Inuit term for ‘non-Inuit’, pl. Qallunaat) attempting to conduct a research project in Inuit communities, I must be highly aware of the inherent power relations and connotations with past research associated with being a researcher in those communities. Any researcher, for that matter, working in Inuit communities must be prepared to answer the question as it was recently posed by Akulukjuk (2004), “What benefits does it bring to Inuit?” (p. 211).

In an attempt to address this question, notable institutional efforts do exist. For example, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) (2007) published a document that outlines a series of recommendations directed at researchers suggesting ways in which they can address the concerns of Inuit regarding the type of research that should be done in Inuit regions and who should be controlling and conducting this research.

At the national level in Canada, one of the first significant attempts by the academic community to address this ethical dilemma and find a “more
appropriate and enforceable protection of Aboriginal Peoples’ interests” (Castellano, 2004, p. 109) came from the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS). As drawn from a 1978 discussion paper (Environment Canada, 1978), ACUNS in 1982 published ethical principles for the conduct of research in the North, including research as it pertains to Inuit communities (ACUNS, 1982). This research protocol laid the ground work for later development of national ethical protocols and policy such as the section of the Canadian Tri-Council policy on ethical conduct for research involving humans relating to Indigenous Peoples (Aboriginal Research Ethics Initiative [AREI], 2008).

Developed by the three government research funding councils in Canada, the Tri-Council policy is the latest framework used by Research Ethics Boards (REBs) at universities in Canada to assess research planning that involves collecting data on humans (AREI, 2008). Embedded in the Tri-Council policy is the principle of OCAP which refers to the ownership, control, access and possession by Indigenous peoples over research conducted in their communities. This principle recognizes the participatory approach and advises that “guidance and taking direction from local community members is essential for ensuring the use of appropriate research processes, maximizing participation of local people and producing meaningful research results” (AREI, 2008, p. 37). With regards to its application in Indigenous communities, this concept represents a complete sea change in the way research is to be conducted compared to how it has historically been done. Schnarch (2004) describes this concept as ‘self-determination applied to research’.

One of the key aspects of the OCAP approach to conducting research is ensuring a capacity building component in order that Indigenous peoples can conduct their own research and become more fully involved in the research process. While the practice of having Indigenous community members involved in research projects as community-based researchers and advisors has become more of a common practice within Canadian research projects, progress has been slow in developing Indigenous capacity within the academic community itself, especially in the hiring of Indigenous academic faculty and researchers.

This lack of Indigenous participation within the academy suggests the need for more targeted measures to build Indigenous participation in academic communities. Similarly, Holmes (2006) suggests that this dearth of Indigenous academics is “largely because of the small pool of qualified candidates - those with or close to obtaining PhDs” (p. 15). If this is the case and the number of
Indigenous people in Canada who have received a university degree is used as an indicator of the potential for increasing the numbers of Indigenous people taking part in university sponsored research, the picture is not promising. This trend can also be assumed for Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2008a) and points to the relative lack of Inuit-specific institutional structures devoted to developing Inuit research capacity. If the answer lies in greater efforts to support Inuit to participate and thrive in the academic community, the question to ask is ‘how is Inuit research capacity to be further developed?’ It is this underlying question that influenced my decision to initiate the project with the Kativik School Board. This question also led me to investigate the concept of “collaborative communities of practice” (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001; Wenger, 1998) as a possible pathway to attaining greater levels of research capacity in the area of Inuit education.

In order to expand upon the notion of a collaborative community of practice, I principally draw from what Carr and Kemmis (1986) see as the intention of participatory action research to develop a “self-critical community of action researchers who are committed to the improvement of education” (p. 184). It is the development of such a ‘self-critical community of researchers’ within an Inuit education context specifically that is a central aim of my research. Similarly, the idea of a community of researchers within education closely parallels the concept of ‘teachers as researchers’ outlined by Stenhouse (1980) and the concept of ‘educational research’ discussed by Elliot (2007). In the end, it is the vision of educational research described by Elliot (2007) that most closely articulates the kind of research that I pursue such that my research project involves “external researchers collaborating with teachers to construct knowledge” (p. 6). In effect, I attempt to develop a self-reflective community of Inuit educators as a process of capacity building in itself.

This idea also has precedents in Indigenous contexts (Bishop et al., 2010; Chino & DeBruyn, 2006; Walton et al., 2010). For example, the research of Chino and DeBruyn (2006) outlines a capacity building model used in the Indigenous public health sector in the United States under the Community Involvement to Renew Commitment, Leadership, and Effectiveness (CIRCLE) project. Within this project, Chino and DeBruyn (2006) develop research projects to create a mechanism “for building essential skills the Western scientific community may take for granted and, conversely, for educating the Western scientific community about Native science and Indigenous ways of knowing” (p. 598). Their approach involved four steps: 1. Building relationships; 2. Building skills; 3. Working together; and 4. Promoting commitment.
In the Inuit context, Walton et al., (2010) developed a Master’s of Educational Leadership program with a cohort of Inuit from Nunavut. Many of the objectives and outcomes of this program closely relate to those associated with my own research. Because of these similarities in context and content, it is important to further discuss this program in greater detail. However, before doing so, I wish to detail my own research first.

3.2.2 Project Initiation and Design

Since embarking on the path of becoming a teacher myself, I have grown increasingly preoccupied by the question of how my teaching practice has been influenced by my own cultural background and how I interact with the cultures and communities within which I teach. This preoccupation was heavily influenced by my earliest teaching experiences in Indigenous communities with both Cree and Inuit students at the elementary and middle school levels. As a teacher in these communities, I ultimately became aware of how my role as a non-Indigenous teacher was linked to the legacy of colonialism in those communities and how education had been and continues to be used as a tool for assimilation. The ways in which my students and their parents and relatives viewed me was strongly influenced by their own experiences with schools. For example, many of the parents of my students had gone to residential schools, the results of which have been widely attributed to many lasting challenges. At the same time, many of my students were accustomed to having ‘southern’ teachers fly-in only to have them leave within a matter of a few years – myself included. As a result, I could not help but feel that, in many ways, I was part of an education system grounded in a culture that was separate from the cultures imbedded within the communities it was meant to serve, a system that ultimately was not culturally appropriate or representative of the students enrolled in that system. What was a culturally appropriate education system for Indigenous communities to look like then?

This question is by no means new as demonstrated by the wealth of academic research published over the last decades in fields such as educational anthropology, multicultural education, intercultural learning and Indigenous education. As a result of becoming more familiar with this literature and the various approaches used to explore culture as it is embodied in education systems, I endeavoured to initiate a research project. More specifically, I chose to employ a participatory action research approach that focused on qualitative methods and a
case study with Inuit teachers in the region of Nunavik. This approach was multi-disciplinary in nature and grounded in theory derived from the key fields of Indigenous education and intercultural learning. In an attempt to document this project, I now construct a personal narrative within this dissertation that describes the learning derived from a process of interaction and sharing between Inuit teachers and an outside researcher.

In terms of the research subject matter, it was both my professional and academic experience that led me to focus on the professional development of teachers as a focal point for systematic education development. This focus mirrors Bishop et al. (2010) who note that teachers in classrooms are the engine room of educational reform, and Elmore (2004) who suggests, the key to change is teacher action supported by responsive structural reform. Recognizing that it is only one part of the school change process, I nonetheless advance that teacher development and teaching practice is central to educational reform and decolonizing efforts in the Indigenous education context. Grounded in this assumption, I have come to believe, as reported by Fulford et al. (2009), that one of the key factors permeating successful Indigenous education systems has been the recruitment, training and retention of Indigenous teachers to teach in Indigenous classrooms.

One example of an Indigenous education system in Canada that has been able to consistently recruit, train and retain Indigenous teachers is the school system offered in the region of Nunavik as administered by the Kativik School Board. Aside from being known as a long-established organization, I had become familiar with the work of the Kativik School Board (KSB) earlier in my career. It is this familiarity and its reputation for building a community of Inuit teachers that led me to approach the KSB in the winter of 2005 to gauge the possibility of working with them on a research project.

I give the above description about my relationship with the Kativik School Board and the topic in general not so much to emphasize the development of my personal learning journey, but rather to outline the context into which I have become a researcher and to set the background for why I have pursued a participatory action research approach. Being participatory in nature, undertaking the project called for the development of long-term relationships between all partners. Before continuing my summary of the research project, it is important to first describe the specific program of teacher training at the KSB in greater detail.
Kativik School Board Teacher Training

Currently, Inuit teachers in the region are trained through a teacher training program offered by the Kativik School Board in partnership with the faculty of education at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. Originally initiated in 1975 as the first Inuit teacher training program in Canada, this program consists of a community-based delivery model involving courses taught at sites throughout the region and practical work teaching in classrooms based in a trainee’s period of study. Inuit enrolled in the program are either classroom teachers in the early primary grades where the language of instruction is Inuttitut or subject specialists who teach in Inuttitut at the upper primary and secondary levels.

A minimum of 60 credits is required to complete the program with courses taught in Inuttitut by senior Inuit instructors in collaboration with academic staff from McGill University. Academic courses are generally offered twice a year. In the summer, a three and a half week session is offered during which a trainee can accumulate up to eight credits. In the winter, a three-credit course is offered in a seven or eight-day intensive session. Commonly, teacher trainees take up to four 3-credit courses in their first year after which they may be eligible for available teaching positions. During their practical teaching time, teachers-in-training are supported by pedagogical counsellors located in each school and are placed with an experienced Inuk teacher in their first year (KSB, 2010a).

Through this partnership model, program graduates receive both a provincial teaching diploma and a McGill Certificate in Education for First Nations and Inuit. This teaching diploma officially certifies Inuit trainees to teach in Nunavik schools. Graduates may also continue their studies towards a McGill University Bachelor of Education for Certified Teachers in a community-based program (KSB, 2010a).

3.2.3 Research Approach and Objectives

What differentiates my research from other participatory action research projects conducted in Indigenous communities is that it is unique to the Canadian education sector and specifically involves Inuit educators. Moreover, this research offers a vehicle through which Inuit teachers can become more self-reflective of their practice while at the same time building academic and professional skills. As a result, it builds on what Elliot (2007) recognizes as “the need to help teachers reflect systematically about the terms and conditions that shape their practice” (p.
This process also builds upon the idea of critical reflection as described by Howard (2003) who further suggests that the development of culturally relevant teaching strategies is contingent upon this type of critical reflection. Additionally, through the development of a project targeting a specific cohort of teachers (Inuit teachers enrolled in the KSB certificate program), a ‘collaborative community of practice’ (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001) or third space (Gutierrez et al., 1995) was initiated in which teachers were encouraged to share reflections on practice with the ultimate goal of supporting teachers’ success in innovating classroom practice.

The capacity building aspect of my research is based on my interest as a teacher educator to offer professional learning opportunities to teachers that are grounded in principles of effective capacity building as noted by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (2000):

- Broad-based participation and a locally driven agenda;
- Building on local capacities;
- Ongoing learning and adaptation;
- Long term investments; and
- Integration of activities at various levels to address complex problems.

The listing above summarizes well the key principles intrinsic to my methodological assumptions for this project. For instance, methodological components of my project included: a negotiation process directing research activities (using a locally-driven agenda); establishing a teacher training course within an existing program (building on local capacities); and being responsive to local needs for changes to methodologies and activities (ongoing learning and adaptation).

And yet, limitations did exist relating to the extent to which the research could develop capacity fully under all of the five principles listed above by CIDA (2000). These limitations centred on the fact that a narrowly focused approach was used to establish a relatively small cohort (six teacher trainees) for participation in capacity development. While integrating the activities of this cohort with other activities at the KSB would have been advantageous, the development of a broader-based approach across the entire KSB system was beyond the scope and budget of my research project. Ultimately, policy decisions supporting system-wide capacity development and sustained funding at the regional level are needed in order for the results of this project to be lasting and broader in scope. This is necessary in order to counter what Glennan et al. (2004)
observe; “new teaching methods are doomed to fade if not supported by school and district wide policies and infrastructure” (p. 29).

Fortunately, the Kativik School Board is continuing with capacity development efforts in the area of research beyond the scope of this project. For example, it is including opportunities for Inuit to participate in current educational research projects such as a federally funded research project initiated in 2009 looking into parental involvement in education in Inuit regions across Canada (De Krom, 2010). This project points to a long-term commitment at the Kativik School Board to support research capacity development among its educators and to have this increased capacity inform overall teaching practice and programming at the Board.

Research Objectives

As outlined in my original project proposal submitted to the Kativik School Board in January 2006, the overall goal of this research project was to develop a research process that explored the role Inuit teachers play in the development of Inuit culture in the classroom. Fundamental to reaching this goal was the use of a participatory action research approach with the objectives of:

1. Examining how Inuit teachers view their cultural role; and
2. Exploring how Inuit teachers teach their culture beyond the use of their language by looking at the methods they use, the content they cover and the structures they create in their classrooms.

It should be noted that these research objectives were the ones that I brought to the process from my own research agenda and ultimately approved by the Kativik School Board.

3.2.4 Project Governance

Official approval for the research was granted by the KSB Council of Commissioners in July 2006 after a review based on ethical guidelines used by the Board to evaluate prospective research projects and partnerships. From its inception, the research administrative structure involved project decisions being negotiated between the researcher and the KSB Assistant Director of Training and Research, Valentina De Krom. The Kativik School Board’s technical committee of pedagogical counsellors became the ad hoc project committee to review
methods, activities and results. This committee was made up of pedagogical counsellors from each of the 14 schools in the region. Project reporting to the committee was conducted by either the researcher or the Assistant Director of Training and Research at regular committee meetings.

3.3 Project Activities

The following section outlines the specific activities undertaken to achieve the project objectives. Activities were designed within the scope of this project based on an informal negotiation process between the researcher and the KSB. Key conditions informing this negotiation as articulated by the Kativik School Board were that the activities should support teacher development and that they include teachers in the research process. This negotiation process resulted in the development of a capacity development and research model involving two projects to be undertaken between 2006 and 2008. The two project activities were:

1. **Capacity development**: through the design and delivery of a unique accredited teacher training course to build capacity among Inuit teachers focusing on the project topic of Inuit culture in the classroom; and
2. **A teacher survey**: through the design and delivery of a questionnaire distributed to a sample of Inuit teachers in Nunavik to explore teachers’ perceptions of their cultural role as teachers.

### 3.3.1 Capacity Development Project: Teacher Training Course

The first activity of the research project was established as a result of interest expressed by the Kativik School Board to have this project support capacity development for Inuit teachers. Furthermore, it was suggested that a participatory action research approach could provide an appropriate venue to support Inuit teachers in becoming more involved in research relating to educational issues relevant to them. This suggestion ultimately led to the planning, design and delivery of a one-time course within the teacher education certificate program at the KSB.

It was agreed that I would become the instructor and developer of the course in consultation with the KSB. This course was accredited under the McGill University code EDEE 340 with the title, *Special Topics: Cultural Issues*. Ultimately, six teachers from separate communities in the region agreed to take
part in this 3-credit course in recognition that the credits would go towards them achieving their certification. These teachers were also pedagogical counsellors within their respective schools.

While the course coding was pre-existing, the content for this course was new. The overall goal of the course was to increase students’ awareness of how culture influences their teaching methods and the structure of their classroom. The course content and dialogue was structured around two key assignments: 1. a self-reflective piece in which teachers recorded their classroom practice with the use of video; and 2. a presentation of the teacher’s self-reflection process to the class through the use of presentation software. The second activity was specifically requested by the Kativik School Board to offer introductory technical skills for making presentations using the software, PowerPoint. Teachers were also asked to keep journal notes of the topics discussed and explored within the course. In all cases, these notes were written in Inuktut. Ultimately, face-to-face time during the course involved dialogue between teachers focusing on the topic of culture as the group viewed it from their assignments. Critical to this dialogue was the participation of community Elders who visited the group during the course to discuss topics relating to learning and education.

In their final form, the course objectives were to:

- Use technology to document and communicate ideas about their teaching practice;
- Develop research skills and access educational research literature;
- Apply the knowledge from the course in their classroom, school, professional and personal life;
- Discuss issues such as culture-based curricula and differing learning/teaching styles; and
- Research the place of culture in the Nunavik classroom.

The face-to-face time for the course was made up of two sessions: one held on November 26 and 27, 2007 and the other on May 21 and 22, 2008. The schedule for the course was organized such that a period was available to teachers in between sessions in order for them to complete assignments introduced in the first session and to be presented in the second. As previously negotiated, flight costs and accommodations were paid for by the Kativik School Board under its teacher training budget. Both sessions were held at the Kativik School Board offices in the Nunavik community of Kuujjuaq.
Ultimately, this course led to six teachers receiving three credits towards their certificate studies. In this way, these six teachers were supported in their efforts to build their formal teaching qualifications and to develop their professional skills and knowledge.

Results from the course that relate to my research topic focus on the discussion held during the course sessions and the assignments completed by participating teachers. Discussions were held during both the first and second sessions. These discussions were in most cases held in Inuttitut with simultaneous translation offered to the researcher. Discussion during the first session centred on an assignment given to the teachers to chart ways in which they were taught in contrast to how they believed their grandparents had been taught. Questions given to the teachers included: where they and their grandparents had been taught, by whom, in what language were they taught; and through which methods had they been taught. Teachers were placed into groups and asked to write their comments on chart paper and then present the results to the group. Trends appeared in the details offered by teachers and are summarized in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Grandparents generation</th>
<th>Current generation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Where were they taught?</td>
<td>On the land / At home</td>
<td>Generally At School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whom were they taught by?</td>
<td>Family members / Elders</td>
<td>Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In what language were they taught?</td>
<td>Inuttitut</td>
<td>English, French and Inuttitut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through which methods were they taught?</td>
<td>By completing activities in daily life</td>
<td>In classrooms / Using curriculum and texts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This assignment outlined the significant changes that had taken place within the region in the last three to four generations. The change described by teachers was one in which earlier generations had been taught on the land and in daily-living situations. As well, the individuals who were doing the teaching had changed. Traditionally, older family members and Elders with the required skills and knowledge were the ones to instruct, whereas today professional teachers were the key person expected to be instructing young people. The transition to teaching in the classroom was also described in which young people were now taught not only in Inuttitut in the early years (Kindergarten to Grade 3 immersion), but in English and / or French in the later years. This transition to the classroom was also characterized by in-class teaching methods with an emphasis on text-based
learning as opposed to more traditional methods that were based on the completion of activities in the daily life of an Inuit family. The above contrast between traditional and modern methods of teaching and learning, as described by teachers, was used as the basis for further discussions throughout the course.

Discussions during the second session were primarily held as part of the viewing of video assignments submitted by each teacher, which documented their teaching practice. Each video was viewed as a group with participants asked to reflect on what they were seeing during and after each video. Discussions during and after the viewing of videos focused on exploring specific facets of classroom practice with questions posed to participants in an attempt to describe the teacher-student interactions, classroom configurations and methods for teaching an activity observable in four of the five videos submitted (one video was submitted after the second session). The final question posed to participants after viewing each video was whether it was possible to uncover facets of classroom practice that were overtly derived from Inuit or non-Inuit culture. And yet, posing questions in this way was not necessarily expected to lead to definite answers, but instead act as a method through which teachers could begin to fashion their own opinions about the cultural influences on their practice.

The following list outlines the key facets of teaching practice that were most commonly discussed by course participants during the viewing of videos:

- **Student-teacher interactions**: Dialogue between course participants focused on the perceived differences between Inuit and non-Inuit teachers’ interactions with their students. The most commonly voiced difference was how praise was offered to students. All participants suggested that praise given to students by an Inuk teacher is given as a group, not to an individual student.

- **Evaluation of students**: discussion on how the evaluation of students was conducted by the participants focused on whether an activity or project was done correctly. Participants noted that if the project was not done properly, it would have to be redone. One teacher specifically stated that “a young person was told to redo something, when not done right the first time”.

- **Teaching methods**: Course participants outlined that the use of observation and repetition were components of their practice. All teachers noted how observation by students of the work of someone who knew how something was done was a key aspect of how skills and knowledge were gained in Inuit settings.
Another activity held during the second session was a discussion with two Elders from the community of Kuujjuaq, Johnny and Harriet Muniak. This couple was asked to come to the second session and speak with the group about how they had been taught when they were young. They shared stories in Inuttitut with simultaneous translation made available for myself, the researcher. While a considerable amount of the time of their visit was devoted to sharing about the history of the area and the changes they have seen in the community, they did share specific points regarding how they had been taught. What they shared focused on the idea that they learned from their family and they learned by observing what others were doing and then attempting to do what they saw once they were given the opportunities by older family members. For example, Johnny Muniak gave the illustration of how he learned how to build a kamutiik (traditional sled made of wood), whereas Harriet Muniak gave the example of how she learned how to make kamik (traditional boots made of caribou or seal skin). Also noted was the fact that Johnny Muniak suggested that excursions on the land with school groups these days are mostly “for fun” and not “for survival”.

Another notable outcome of this course was the introduction of technical skills, which most participants had not been exposed to before. The presentation of results through the use of PowerPoint presentations meant that a considerable amount of time was necessary for teaching the introductory skills of this software, as well as reinforcing basic computer skills for some teachers. As well, a number of teachers were learning to use video recorders for the first time as well. These aspects of the course point to a key challenge experienced during the delivery of the course: the considerable amount of time needed to devote specifically on the teaching of the technical skills for the specific assignments. Ultimately, this allocation of time limited the extent to which dialogue could be held covering the research topic.

3.3.2 Teacher Survey Project: Questionnaire of Teachers’ Perspectives on Inuit Culture in the Classroom

The second activity of the research project was the development of a survey of Inuit teachers’ views of how Inuit culture is taught in the classroom. This activity was deemed relevant by the Kativik School Board since the Board would benefit from a survey of a number of the key systemic efforts previously undertaken to support the teaching of Inuit culture in classrooms such as modified curriculum, the development of teaching materials in Inuttitut and the offering of specific
teacher training courses focusing on Inuit cultural skills. A survey, therefore, could act as a tool for understanding and evaluating these efforts and reviewing how Inuit teachers are currently incorporating Inuit culture into the classroom. And yet, effectively evaluating teachers’ practice at a systems level is a challenge since teachers generally work in relative isolation (Fullan, 2001). While examples of evaluation activities do exist that are currently in use at the Kativik School Board including peer support from mentor teachers and pedagogical counsellors and evaluations as part of the teacher education program, few are conducted on a system-wide scale.

One way to broadly gauge teachers’ perspectives on the topic of teaching Inuit culture in the classroom is through the conducting of a survey. Since this option can offer a general view of teachers’ perceptions relatively quickly and with relatively few resources, the development of a survey of teachers’ views was pursued to inform the Board’s current activities and explore how Inuit culture was being taught in the classroom. This survey also intended to explore how Inuit teachers are fundamentally reshaping their classroom practice in the face of educational structures with colonial origins.

As a result of negotiations between the KSB Assistant Director of Training and Research and myself, it was agreed in 2006 that a survey be conducted to offer a general ‘snapshot’ of the current practices and perspectives held by Inuit teachers. Central to the development and delivery of this survey tool was an attempt to specifically explore the ways in which Inuit traditional knowledge was integrated into individual teacher’s classrooms. Ultimately, the KSB would use the results from this tool in part to assess the effectiveness of its on-going strategy to encourage the teaching of Inuit culture in the classroom.

The overall goal of the survey was to document teacher’s views on how they were teaching Inuit culture in the classroom. Therefore, questions were drafted through a collaborative process between the researcher and the KSB to focus on the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of their teaching practice - the forms and sources of traditional knowledge that informed the type of Inuit culture they brought into their classrooms and the methods they used to teach Inuit culture. A first draft of the survey was submitted to the KSB in November of 2006 for review. At that time, discussions were held between the researcher and the Assistant Director of Training and Research to decide on appropriate survey questions which would be both useful to the Board and instructive toward the objectives of the research project. Once the final survey format and content was agreed upon, the survey was then translated into Inuktitut syllabics by translators at the KSB. Once the
survey was translated, packages with English and Inuktitut copies of the survey were sent to the pedagogical counsellors in May 2007 along with instructions and support material to facilitate distribution. Surveys were distributed by the pedagogical counsellors in twelve of the fourteen Nunavik schools participating.

The survey was distributed to Inuit teachers in Inuit at schools in 12 communities in the region (two schools declined to participate). This survey involved 18 questions in total. As noted earlier, data from the initial survey was collected at the KSB offices and then supplied to the researcher. Completed surveys were returned to the KSB offices by July 2007 and stored there as a central collection point. All data collected through this process was stored at the KSB with copies sent to the researcher for analysis.

A preliminary analysis of the data was reported back to the pedagogical counsellors in November of 2007 at a regular meeting of the technical committee in Kuujjuaq. Preliminary results were presented and discussed at this meeting. Within the initial survey version, 47 responses were collected of the 154 Inuit teachers in teaching positions in the 2008-2009 year (response rate of 30.5%).

A number of key limitations were seen regarding the distribution of the first survey. These limitations were:

- Distribution of the survey at the end of the school year: the survey was distributed to pedagogical counsellors in the month of May at a time when schools and teachers were scheduled with end-of-year activities such as report cards and class performances. By distributing the surveys at this time, many pedagogical counsellors reported difficulty in obtaining responses from some teachers to complete the survey as a result of the teachers being involved in a “busy time of year” before the summer break. In order to minimize the effects from this scheduling issue, the survey could have been distributed at a time with less pressure for completion such as the early or late winter months.

- Expanded piloting of the survey to clarify translation of terminology: while the translations and verifications of survey questions were completed by multiple Kativik School Board staff before surveys were distributed, difficulties were still experienced after the collection of data. This issue could have been minimized if an expanded piloting of the survey had taken place, for example, distribution, collection and analysis of the survey at one school first before efforts were made for distribution at all sites in the region.
Need for a more robust system to inform teachers about the survey objectives: the low response rates for both versions of the survey relative to the total teacher population in the region may also demonstrate a relative lack of “buy-in” from the respondents with regards to the survey tool. This factor could have been minimized by developing more specific communication tools for the teachers directly discussing the objectives of the survey.

Based on discussions at the 2007 meeting with pedagogical counsellors, agreement was reached by the counsellors that some results pointed to inconsistencies in how a number of questions were answered. In general, the counsellors believed that these inconsistencies were based on translations that were too ambiguous. This led the committee to suggest that, in order to have confidence in the survey results, it would be necessary for some questions to be re-translated and the survey conducted a second time. These requests were based on differing opinions about the translation of certain Inuttitut concepts in a number of the questions. In general, pedagogical counsellors viewed that the possibility of differing opinions would be significant enough to affect the results of the survey based on potential for multiple interpretations of the same question by teachers.

As a result, revisions were made to the Inuttitut wording in 11 of the 18 original questions in February 2008 and the revised survey was redistributed in July 2008 by the Assistant Director of Training and Research during summer teacher training courses in Kuujjuaq attended by a cohort of Inuit teachers from across the region. The revised survey was redistributed in July 2008 to a smaller sample of teachers. Responses were provided while teachers were in Kuujjuaq completing course work for the teacher training program with copies of the completed surveys passed on to the researcher for analysis.

Twenty-five surveys were completed in this second round translating into a response rate of 16.2% (25 of 154 Inuit teachers in teaching positions in the 2008-2009 year). While statistically not representative of the entire Inuit teacher population in the region, responses from this second version are presented in this dissertation to serve as a ‘snapshot’ of how teachers perceive their work and view the role of Inuit culture in the classroom. Data from the first version of the survey are not included in this document with the exception of responses to the final two open-end questions (27 responses) which were viewed by the technical committee as still being valid.
Twenty-one respondents to the second version of the survey were female and three were male (one non-response). Five taught at the Kindergarten level, seven at the elementary level, six at the secondary level, one was a culture class teacher, four were Inuktitut language specialists, one was a special education teacher and one responded as other. The median number of years that the respondents had been teaching was 10 with a range of one year of experience to 32 years of experience. When asked about their level of qualifications, 13 of the 25 respondents stated that they had completed the certificate program, with the remaining respondents indicating that they were in the process of completing the certificate program.

Further results relating to the responses focusing on the teaching of Inuit culture are outlined in the following findings section.

3.4 Analysis Methodology

Data from three sources were collected, analyzed and interpreted in order to explore the two research objectives outlined above. The first source of data was from the two project activities designed and implemented with the Kativik School Board: the capacity development course and the teacher survey. Qualitative content analysis was undertaken of data drawn from the course such as researcher notes taken during class discussions, text from student assignments and video sessions taken by teachers of their own practice. The content analysis of these data focused around the articulation of key themes discussed by participating teachers during course sessions as well as those derived from discussions with community Elders. Data from the teacher survey was collected, collated using the statistical software SPSS and then analyzed to determine response rates and distributions. Results from the teacher survey were used to develop multiple lines of evidence for topics explored within the discussion of key themes during the course.

It is important to note that I base the analysis and interpretation of the data collected during the course on the epistemological and ontological premise that the participants and I were engaged in ‘knowledge work’ as defined by Kincheloe (2003) through a process of dialogue and self-reflection and that a third space was being developed through which together as a group we could explore the topics of culture in the classroom. This process of dialogue and self-reflection was based on our experiences and perspectives and was informed and guided by observations made by the group of classroom practice as seen in the videos made
by participating teachers. By collecting data in this way, I was engaged in a group process of social research grounded in the tradition of ethnography. More precisely, I was utilizing ‘poststructuralist ethnography’ as described by Kincheloe (2003) who states that this type of ethnography “proposes a dialogue between researchers and researched that attempts to undermine traditional hierarchical relations between them” (p. 233). Challenges are inherent in this type of data collection, however, relating to the issues of language, interpretation and authority. With respect to language, attempts were made to have discussions in both English and Inuttitut, especially during those times when Inuit participants were speaking among themselves and with Elders. This afforded the opportunity for participants to discuss topics and concepts within their own language in order to minimize the amount of translation necessary. However, English remained the principle language for use between myself and the course participants, making it the privileged language. I therefore recognize that this context greatly influences the ultimate interpretation of these dialogues as summarized in this dissertation. In other words, I will have a very different interpretation of the course compared to the participants. The relationship between my position and the interpretation of the course was also influenced by my role as the ‘instructor’ in the course since I was the one who would be ultimately giving them a grade. The power relations inherent in the teacher/student relationship, therefore, were omnipresent during the course and influenced the conditions for authority. The issues of language, interpretation and authority as they relate to the teacher training course developed for this project will be discussed in more detail in the findings section.

The second source of data included semi-structured telephone interviews conducted with three key stakeholders. Stakeholders were chosen based on their experience as senior professionals or academics specifically familiar with Inuit teacher education in Canada. These interviews were conducted with Inuit scholar Betsy Annahatak, KSB Assistant Director of Training and Research, Valentina De Krom and Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Prince Edward Island, Fiona Walton. Because of their expertise and experience, these individuals were well placed to comment on the current status of Inuit education in general and speak to the success of on-going efforts at incorporating Inuit culture in the classroom. Content analysis of the responses from these interviews was also completed. Methodologically, these interviews were conducted at the later stages of data analysis and used as an alternative qualitative data source to verify and critique the initial analysis of data drawn from the teacher survey and course.
The third source of data accessed as part of this research involved key literature drawn from recent policy and practice in the field of Inuit education in Canada. This literature was scanned and analyzed for similar themes to those explored in the project activities. Examples of the literature used include policy documents such as the recent reports on education from the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK, 2004; Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, 2007), policy documents from the Government of Nunavut (Nunavut Department of Education, 2006) and the Kativik School Board (KSB, 2010c) and reports tabled from recent initiatives such as the Akitsiraq Law School Program (Akitsiraq Law School Society, 2007) and the Masters of Leadership in Education Program in Nunavut (Walton et al., 2010).

Overall, the scope of the data analysis is limited to current factors that may influence the way in which Inuit teachers teach Inuit culture in the classroom in Nunavik schools specifically and schools in all Inuit regions in general. Based on this analysis, the hypothesis is tested which supposes that Inuit teachers play a critical role in constructing and teaching Inuit culture.

The ultimate target audience for this dissertation is the academic community, and more specifically those individuals involved in the fields of education research and intercultural learning. However, the research is also undertaken in order to support on-going efforts at the community and institutional levels to support Inuit education outcomes. This has been attempted through the sharing of results from this research to individuals working at those levels in organizations such as the Kativik School Board and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.
4  Key Findings

The following section outlines key findings drawn from the research. These findings are structured under two sub-sections that correspond with the two research objectives of this project:

– To examine how Inuit teachers view their cultural role; and
– To explore how Inuit teachers teach their culture beyond the use of their language by looking at the methods they use, the content they cover and the structures they create in their classrooms.

The first sub-section presents results addressing how Inuit teachers view their cultural role. These results point to a definition of teachers as: 1. Agents of cultural development; 2. Facilitators of cultural transmission; 3. Translators of traditional knowledge; and 4. Intercultural informants. Findings under this theme are structured within sections corresponding with each of these four definitions.

The second sub-section corresponds with findings relating to how Inuit teachers teach their culture in the classroom. It covers the goals of teaching Inuit culture, the sources of teachers’ knowledge of Inuit culture, the forms of culture taught, teaching methods and structures and teachers’ perspective on the influence of culture. The findings summarized in this sub-section rely heavily on the responses from the teacher survey and related documentation that focus on Inuit education.

A third sub-section is included in order to introduce a model of Indigenous-controlled third space to coalesce the learning garnered from the analysis of data discussed in the first two sub-sections. This model is detailed in an attempt to outline the intercultural dialogue and capacity building process initiated within this project as it relates to a decolonizing agenda and to concisely depict how this process can contribute to the academic literature to date.

4.1  The Cultural Role of Inuit Teachers

Since the 1970’s, Inuit have been working as teachers in Nunavik schools. The number of Inuit teachers has grown as more Inuit graduate from the teacher training program. The fact that the vast majority of these teachers are women must also be taken into consideration when looking at their overall role supporting their families, working within schools and acting as community members above their work as teachers.
When considering the overall cultural impact of Inuit teachers, one must be mindful of the multi-faceted roles and responsibilities they play. Inuit teachers hold roles such as classroom teachers, Inuttitut language instructors, Inuit culture instructors and administrators. They also support work on curriculum by providing content support and advising at all levels of development. And because their work inside of schools does not happen in a vacuum, Inuit teachers hold important roles outside of the school in their capacity as family and community members. Expanded to the context of culture, Inuit who work as teachers may play just as important a role outside of the school as they do in it with respect to their cultural impact by teaching in traditional settings in the home and on the land for example. Gaining a complete picture of this overall cultural impact would demand research with a much broader scope than my research since I focus only on the role Inuit teachers play in a classroom setting.

Overall, an Inuit teacher’s cultural role inside the school is pervasive and in flux. This role is pervasive in the sense that the efforts of teachers to teach Inuit culture can be felt throughout a school environment; the classroom, the curriculum as well as connections with the surrounding community. It is in flux given the rapid cultural changes on-going within the communities in which they work and the changing expectations for the types of culture that are to be taught both from formal curriculum document and expectations from the community.

Based on an analysis of data collected during this project and as adapted from relevant sources in the educational research literature, a teacher’s cultural role is defined in four ways as:

- An agent of cultural development through the production of cultural products, acts and concepts;
- A facilitator for the transmission of cultural knowledge, skills and values;
- A translator of traditional knowledge between the school and community; and
- An intercultural informant by acting as a teacher trainer that supports reflection in other teachers.

The following discussion will further expand upon these four components of a teacher’s cultural role in an Inuit context.

4.1.1 Teachers as Agents of Cultural Development

For this discussion, I wish to draw from definitions of culture that suggest that all individuals have the capacity to act as agents of cultural production (Bruner,
1996). If this is the case, then this definition applies to teachers as well. Teachers participate in cultural activities and often hold considerable cultural knowledge. They are also in a unique position at the centre of schools. As a result, the ways in which teachers develop cultural products, perform cultural acts and conceive of culture have a profound impact on the school and students.

In the case of Nunavik, Inuit teachers in the region are at the front line of maintaining and developing Inuit culture in the face of raising societal pressures. Pressures such as acculturation from mainstream culture through southern media, language loss as a result of the ubiquitous nature of the English and French languages in all sectors of Inuit society and socio-economic challenges such as poor housing and unemployment are ever-present in communities and by extension the school. Cultural pressures in the formal structure of the school focus on the nature of southern or ‘Western’ expectations present in the provincial curriculum that the Kativik School Board uses as its foundational document. In fact, Aylward (2009) suggests that many Inuit students view school as a process of “becoming non-Inuit” (p. 84). This cultural context is described well by Maguire and McAlpine (1996) who state that “staff and community members struggle to maintain a linguistic and cultural Inuit identity and traditions while still meeting the challenges of mainstream Qallunaat notions of school achievement and normative standards” (p. 228).

A critical part of a teacher’s role as an agent of cultural development in the school is the creation of personal teaching materials. The Inuit teachers participating in the course component of this project confirmed that they were often developing or adapting their own materials to have classroom activities and instruction to better reflect Inuit culture. As a result, in the absence of formal region-wide definitions of Inuit culture, teachers are often defining their own. Ultimately, this teaching materials work by Inuit teachers represents efforts to develop what Stairs (1994a) describes as a “third cultural reality”. The third cultural reality, or third space that is being created, is a dynamic and emerging vision for what schools are teaching students about what it means to be an Inuk.

In many instances, however, teachers develop these materials in relative isolation leading to an individualized approach to formalizing Inuit cultural knowledge or skills. Consequently, few efforts have been made to develop a more systematic region-wide approach to defining Inuit culture for use in the classrooms of Nunavik schools. Responses from the teacher survey support the conclusion that times when teachers can get together to discuss these topics are
infrequent. One teacher respondent specifically addressed this issue when stating that:

“It would be better if there would be some annual sessions for planning of instructions and also if the teachers would get together more than once a year” (Teacher respondent).

This comment suggests that some Inuit teachers see benefit in more systematically discussing, at the institutional level, how Inuit culture is to be taught. If this is to be done, how are the dangers of cultural essentialism and institutional attempts to define culture, as discussed in postcolonial theory, to be avoided? This question will be a central focus as I continue to discuss the cultural role of teachers and will focus on the concept of third space as a mechanism through which to discuss and articulate Inuit culture.

4.1.2 Teachers as Facilitators of Cultural Transmission

Related to their work as cultural actors and developers of culture, teachers can also be seen as facilitators of cultural transmission. Cultural transmission is defined here in the educational context as the ways in which cultural knowledge, skills and values are passed on to individuals (students). Adapted from the concept of teachers as facilitators of cultural development (Churchill, 1994) and coalesced with what Fullan (1994) describes as ‘boundary spanners’ in a changing school environment (p. 44), the concept of teachers as facilitators of cultural transmission emphasizes the facilitation role that teachers play to bridge the divide between the community and the school. Adapted to the cultural realm, the term of boundary spanners is discussed here to describe those individuals that are able to conduct cultural negotiations and work within epistemological boundaries. Using this term as a base, this role is defined as one of negotiation as described by Mohatt (1993), not one of simply inculcating students into ‘a culture’. Overall, teachers are viewed in this way as individuals who are capable of working within and between the cultures inside and outside a school.

In the Inuit context, Inuit teachers are being asked to act as a bridge between the Inuit community and the school by transmitting Inuit culture as part of the school program. As a result, schools in Inuit communities are becoming a key space for the transmission of Inuit culture in contrast to the traditional spaces within family households and on the land. Inuit culture is not only being taught to the students, but it is also feeding back into the community. In fact, some schools
are becoming centres for Inuit cultural revival. As an example of this I wish to discuss the case of Nuiyak School.

Nuiyak School is located in the Inuit community of Sanikiluaq, Nunavut. Sanikiluaq is situated at the northern end of the Belcher Islands, which is approximately 100 km off the western coast of Nunavik. Even though residing in the territory of Nunavut, the approximately 815 Inuit living in this community are culturally and socially (kinship) related to the Inuit of western Nunavik. The school in Sanikiluaq has recently been cited as a successful model for integrating Inuit culture (Fulford et al., 2007) and I had the pleasure of being asked to visit Nuiyak School and conduct a case study in 2006. Based on what I observed, Nuiyak School was a strong model of an Inuit school that was taking on the challenge of acting as a hub for the development and transmission of Inuit culture.

As reported by Laugrand and Oosten (2009), “Inuit are still highly critical of educational methods” (p. 27). And yet, Nuiyak School, like other schools in Inuit communities, is expected by many in the community to teach Inuit culture in part as a reaction to the process of acculturation that previous generations endured during the era of residential schools. Based on research at Nuiyak School, Pulpan (2006) additionally observes that:

“Though the current parental generations were removed from the everyday life through which Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit [Inuit traditional knowledge] is acquired, their children are learning it through school programs and activities. This new educational situation creates an important opportunity to understand the processes by which schools are becoming main sites where Traditional Knowledge and culture are passed on to younger generations” (p. 85).

Pulpan (2006) goes on to note that Nuiyak School is beginning to take on the role of transmitting and maintaining Inuit culture since many adults who attended residential schools have become dislocated from the process. For example, one parent from Sanikiluaq describes how:

“I was in [the] middle. I didn’t have enough schooling and I didn’t have hunting. In those days you were expected to be good. Parents expected us to be fluent in English. We were kind of in the middle... I am still in the middle... I can’t go back to being Inuk” (Inuit respondent from Pulpan, 2006, p. 83).
Based on the teaching of traditional knowledge in schools, Pulpan (2006) further suggests that children may also be teaching their parents what they have learned in school.

4.1.3 Teachers as Translators of Traditional Knowledge

Teachers play an important role to not just facilitate cultural transmission but to act as translators of traditional knowledge as it is negotiated within a school setting. The translation that takes place is not only the translation of Inuit terminology, but the translation of concepts and content bound within the traditional knowledge held within members of the community, and especially Elders. The disruption of cultural transmission between generations described in the section above is what Inuit teachers are now attempting to bridge in an intermediary role between Elders that still hold Inuit traditional knowledge and the current generation of school-aged children. While describing the pathway for transferring traditional knowledge as one from Elders through teachers to the school somewhat oversimplifies reality, it does help to outline how Inuit teachers play a key role in supporting the translation and ultimate transmission of traditional Inuit knowledge.

It is a community’s Elders who, in most cases, represent the richest source of traditional knowledge. This statement is supported by Inuit teachers, as interviewed by Pulpan (2003), who suggest that “Elders are even more knowledgeable than themselves in matters involving Inuit culture” (p. 137). Elders are commonly invited to visit schools and asked to share their knowledge during classroom sessions, with many Inuit Elders acknowledging that schools have a role in transmitting their knowledge” (Laugrand & Oosten, 2009a, p. 123). Elders’ knowledge is personal and rooted in practice. Traditionally, the transfer of this knowledge was a gradual process in which knowledge was offered at the appropriate time such that “children were sent out when serious things were discussed” (Laugrand & Oosten, 2009a, p. 121). This practice corresponds with how Cajete (2009) describes knowledge transfer by suggesting that “knowledge comes to us when we need it” (p. 190). As a result, “when Elders pass on their knowledge in schools to young children, they tend to limit what they say as they feel that their audience still has much to learn before the more serious things of life can be discussed” (Laugrand & Oosten, 2009a, p. 121). Ultimately, Inuit teachers support the appropriate transmission of that knowledge since they commonly develop and facilitate sessions whereby Elders can meaningfully
support day-to-day classroom instruction – limiting who has access to the knowledge and at what times they should be exposed to it.

As part of the teacher survey, Inuit teachers provided specific responses relating to the role of Elders in the school. When asked to describe the goals of teaching Inuit culture in the classroom, six teacher survey respondents specifically suggested that Elders should come into the classroom more and have a more meaningful role in the teaching process. Three stated that Elders’ stories should be recorded, with one stating that “it would be beneficial if there would be an Elder inside the culture classroom to talk about Inuit culture and traditions”.

Another teacher continued by suggesting that:

“Elders should visit the school and students should see events in the community with them, go out on the land doing excursions instead of just knowing about it” (Teacher respondent).

These and other comments by respondents point towards one of the overarching concepts of Inuit ways of teaching that came up numerous times throughout the project - learning by doing. One teacher participant specifically outlined this method of teaching:

“It is best to teach Inuit students by showing some actual materials, have them visit and watch a person who’s working on building a kayak or tent making for example - participating in the making” (Teacher respondent).

The idea of having Elders as an integral part of the teaching environment was also echoed by Annahatak (2010) during a verification interview. She suggests that teachers themselves should also be gaining from the knowledge that Elders hold such that:

“Teachers should be taught by Elders about how children used to be raised, how families should behave. According to Elders, there are lots of rules about how we should be a member of family. So I think the teachers could get a lot of help from that - about how Inuit society used to be structured, about learning and how children had been raised” (Personal communication, September 9, 2010).

In the teacher education context, what Annahatak (2010) suggests is in fact the offering of professional learning opportunities between teachers and Elders to discuss and articulate Inuit culture and pedagogy. It is precisely the inclusion of Elders in teacher training programming as Annahatak (2010) suggests that is also
a critical aspect of the delivery methods used in recent community-based, post-secondary programs involving Inuit such as the Akitsiraq Law School program (Akitsiraq Law School Society, 2007) and the Nunavut Masters of Educational Leadership program (Walton et al, 2010). These programs recognized the importance of developing long-term relationships between Inuit professionals being trained and Elders with a depth of knowledge in the areas in question by ensuring that Elders were given a long-term and meaningful role in educational instruction. For example, the Akitsiraq Law School program developed an Elder-in-Residence component over two years with an Elder brought in on a part-time basis to instruct relevant sections of the program curriculum. This component was seen as “essential in meeting the objectives of incorporating Inuit knowledge into the curriculum, providing wellness and counselling from an Inuit perspective, and delivering Inuktitut language training” (Akitsiraq Law School Society [Akitsiraq], 2007, p. 27). Reflections from the Masters of Educational Leadership program in Nunavut demonstrate a similar conclusion with respect to the importance of having Elders working as instructors in the post-secondary environment. Walton et al (2010) write that:

“The presence of Elders is vital to the success of each course, but their involvement needs to be carefully considered so the topics and content of the particular course are addressed. In addition, depth of knowledge can only be accessed when Elders have extended periods of time to engage in discussion of complex ideas and raise theoretically difficult issues rooted in what are increasingly and regrettably becoming buried epistemologies” (p. 75-76).

Specifically, the Masters of Educational Leadership program is a notable example of a post-secondary program that created spaces in which Inuit can explore notions of Inuit education and Inuit culture. This three-year graduate program had a first cohort of 21 Inuit educators and administrators from Nunavut enrolled for three years between 2006 and 2009. It was offered through a partnership between Nunavut Arctic College, the University of Prince Edward Island and St. Xavier’s University in Canada. Courses were delivered on a part-time basis through both face-to-face sessions and distance learning. Inuit co-instructors were also involved in four of the ten courses (Walton et al., 2010).

As a post-secondary program, the Masters of Educational Leadership program explored many of the same issues and at roughly the same period as the course for the Kativik School Board within my research. However, it is also noteworthy that, in scale and length, this program represents a significantly more
robust model for the development of Inuit capacity in contrast to the single course offered during this research project. And as a result of this program entering its second iteration, it represents one of the few institutional projects continuing to build Inuit graduate-level academic and research capacity that focuses on topics of education and Inuit culture.

While having Elders in schools represents a critical pathway for traditional knowledge to reach today’s Inuit youth (and teachers), it is ultimately the teachers that are involved in the negotiation of how this knowledge is offered and translated in the school environment. This translation role also encompasses the translation between languages as well – principally between English or French and Inuttitut. Considerable challenges exist, however, with regards to the translation of Inuttitut to and from English or French based on terminologies for some specific knowledge and skills not being commonly used and often only known by a limited number of Elders. Teachers often have to research the proper terminology for various concepts and activities. In facing this challenge, one teacher respondent stated that:

“I would like to see more of the real Inuttitut language used [in class]. We all have two languages combined when we talk these days and we don’t always know how to say some words [in Inuttitut] and so replace them by an English word. It is also hard to answer students’ questions that way” (Teacher respondent).

Archibald (2008) further details this challenge by recognizing that “cultural meaning and humour is lost in the translation into the English language” (p. 29). This view is mirrored by Dorais (1995) who, based on his interviews with Inuit in the two Eastern Arctic communities, notes that it is important to use Inuttitut since it is a privileged instrument for conveying traditional culture, communicating with the Elders and thus helping preserve one’s own deepest identity” (p. 297).

4.1.4 Teachers as Intercultural Informants

In any discussion about the development of teachers, it is important to consider the place of teacher trainers, especially since many senior Inuit teachers in Nunavik are also instructors in the Kativik School Board teacher training program. These experienced teachers are an important component in the overall effort to train teachers as actors in cultural development and as facilitators in the transmission of Inuit culture. Through courses such as those titled, Cultural Skills
(course no. 426-242), Cultural Values and Socialization (course no. 433-291), as well as the Special Topics in Inuit Culture developed within this project (course no. 433-340), the Kativik School Board teacher training program has initiated training experiences that allow for the creation of spaces where Inuit culture can begin to be discussed by Inuit educators. These courses are critical avenues through which Inuit culture can be reflected upon since there is no other institutional setting or process through which KSB teachers can discuss topics relating to their practice and how it relates to Inuit culture (De Krom, 2010).

In order to further articulate the role of Inuit teachers as teacher trainers in this context, I draw from the field of intercultural learning and use the term ‘intercultural informant’ to describe the way in which a teacher educator can facilitate the self-reflection of teacher trainees within a culturally contested environment. By adapting the term as defined by Hinchcliff-Pelias and Elkins (1995), I see teacher trainers as facilitating teachers-in-training to become more aware of their own cultural context. Thus, an effective intercultural informant would be one who is able to navigate between cultures and demonstrate strategies that teachers can use to uncover the cultural forms within their own classrooms. More specifically, I apply this concept to situate how Inuit teacher trainers can work to support decolonizing efforts.

Overall, this concept is grounded in the assumption described by Walton (2010) that:

“If you don’t know who you are, in the sense of having had time to explore and decolonize aspects of your own subjugation or shaping, then it is very difficult to talk about anything to do with the culture you are bringing into the classroom” (Personal communication, August, 31, 2010).

Annahatak (1994) similarly states that once teachers “face the questions of who they are now and where they are going, it is within the real life stories of Elders that they can make meaning of [Inuit] culture and of themselves as Inuit living in the present” (p. 17).

In the context of Inuit teacher education in Nunavik, efforts have been ongoing to initiate an awareness of colonial impacts on the education system as Annahatak (2010) describes.

“As an instructor to the young teachers, I find our younger colleagues have gone through the southern system of education, it’s very hard to decolonize their thinking skills, their way of creating methods or content. One has to go
back for them not to see a framework of a southern way of writing on the
board or Southern way of focusing things like in a new program. They would
always be looking for English words and English ways of framing their
teaching or curriculum. But, let’s leave that – let’s leave the school system.
Let’s go out into the camps. Go out where we see Elders. What is the
competency there?” (Personal communication, September 9, 2010).

Walton (2010) confirms the same challenges of addressing colonization within
Inuit education as does Annahatak when she describes the process of discovery
that many of the Inuit educational leaders went through within the Nunavut
Masters of Educational Leadership program. As noted during a verification
interview, Walton (2010) reports that it was found during the Masters of
Educational Leadership program that many participants were not initially able to
articulate their colonization.

Annahatak’s (2010) suggestion above to ‘leave the school system’ with Inuit
teachers in training is ultimately a suggestion to ground teacher teaching through
a reflection on an ‘Inuit education’ not necessarily in the confines of the
classroom; an education that is based in a dialogue with Elders, not one which is
influenced by ‘Western’ ways of knowing and practicing. Enabling teachers-in-
training to ‘go back’ is essentially a process of facilitated reflection on what
culturally grounds them. This point can be viewed in the same light as comments
made by Nakata (2008) referenced earlier that refer to the ‘coherent pathways
enabling the continuity of culture and identity’. Walton (2010) goes on to detail
what the possible end result would be of grounding Inuit education in Inuit ways
of knowing and practicing when she notes that:

“…The real challenge is to see how we could make sure that we have Inuit
going through a school system that is culturally-based and then we don’t have
to have the bifurcation between Inuit and Qallunaaq knowledge. Instead we
are talking about looking at multicultural competencies and simultaneously
at holding very high levels of competency as an Inuk that is a multicultural
global citizen.” (Personal communication, September 9, 2010)

The concept of a teacher trainer as an intercultural informant is introduced here to
incorporate the concepts described above: supporting Inuit teachers to be well
grounded in Inuit culture, while at the same time having competencies to navigate
through other cultures. I focus on Inuit teachers as teacher trainers at this point in
order to emphasize their significant impact on how decolonizing and intercultural
competencies can be developed in teachers especially as it relates to the Nunavik context, and also since this research project focuses on the teacher training environment.

4.1.5 Further Support to Teachers

The articulation of a teacher’s cultural role discussed in the previous sections is highly conceptual in nature. This is done in order to formulate a vision of teachers that is referenced with contemporary theory and to inform actionable ways in the future that may support the teaching of Inuit culture in the classroom. Therefore, in concert with this conceptual work, practical examples of ways in which Inuit teachers can be supported at the school level were also explored in the teacher survey conducted within my research. In the first version of the teacher survey, Inuit teachers were asked to offer suggestions with respect to how the teaching of Inuit culture in their classroom could be improved and supported. Twenty-six responses, written in Inuktitut syllabics, were received and then translated into English. Even though these responses were offered in the first version of the survey, the KSB still viewed them as valid in the overall data collected. Therefore, an analysis of these data was conducted by coding responses and then organizing these into common themes. The following listing summarizes the key themes drawn from responses:

- More teaching materials focusing on Inuit culture;
- Curriculum change to reflect Inuit culture and language;
- More involvement of Elders in schools; and
- Further support to Inuktitut as the language of instruction.

With regards to teaching materials, fifteen teacher survey respondents (58%) stated that more teaching materials should be available in their language as well as materials relating to Inuit culture. One respondent detailed this need clearly by suggesting that:

“There are old guidebooks on teaching of science and social science. They need to be reviewed and renewed since they seem to be very easy for the students these days. It would also be ideal to have workbooks for them about science and Inuit social science” (Teacher respondent).

Another teacher similarly noted that:
“We need to get more of the everyday use workbooks that are appropriate for the lower levels: for example, social life, eating healthy, family, ones that they could use to understand about their identity better” (Teacher respondent).

Calls for additional teaching materials were not all focused on texts. Other teachers suggested the need for the production of physical and visual materials that could demonstrate specific cultural products or activities. For example, one teacher suggested that traditional artefacts should be built for use in classrooms so that “curriculum materials can have some physical materials to go with them” similar to the community museum concept in use at the Nuiyak School (Fulford et al., 2007).

Four respondents also mentioned the need to include more Elders in the schools in order to support the teaching of Inuit culture. These responses support the themes discussed in the previous section on the importance of involving Elders. All responses focusing on this theme demonstrated a sense of urgency in relation to the need to record Elders stories and knowledge while it is still possible. One respondent voiced this concern when stating that schools should “record Elder’s stories to keep them alive.”

Curriculum change was another theme discussed by respondents to the question of what supports are necessary to encourage more Inuit culture in the classroom. In the area of curriculum change, three teacher survey respondents noted that curriculum change is necessary in order to place a larger emphasis on the teaching of traditional Inuit cultural activities. For example, one respondent stated that:

“I would like to have the curriculum relating to culture be modified to include some activities” (Teacher respondent).

Another respondent outlined how Inuit cultural activities should be more integrated into the curriculum:

“Students should be learning to make an amautik [traditional parka designed to carry babies] with modern materials and caribou skins by making ones” (Teacher respondent).

With regards to calls for Inuttitut to be used more as the language of instruction, it is important to recognize the inter-relatedness of Inuit language and culture within the classroom. For example, three survey respondents specifically stated that more support should be given to better teach Inuttitut language in the classroom.
in order to also teach about culture. The following quotation exemplifies the challenges of integrating cultural knowledge, in this case through stories, when terminology is not clearly articulated:

“When I’m telling Inuit stories to students, I sometimes get to a word that I don’t understand, and it can be very difficult” (Teacher respondent).

The suggestions noted above by teachers point to specific areas in which teachers can be supported to address areas within their own practice. These suggestions also demonstrate that teachers are highly aware of the challenges involved in teaching Inuit culture in their classrooms. They also represent tangible ways in which the cultural role of teachers can be supported.

4.2 How Inuit Teachers Teach Inuit Culture

The second research question focuses on the perceptions of Inuit teachers in relation to how they teach Inuit culture in the classroom. In order to explore this question, my research looks not only at the methods of teaching, but also at the sources of teachers’ knowledge about Inuit culture. Before I embark on detailing these facets of practice, it is useful to explore the expected role as it is outlined in formal definitions from the education program in use in Nunavik schools.

4.2.1 Goals of Teaching Inuit Culture

For teachers in Nunavik, the formal program is ultimately defined by the mission statement of the organization set with the responsibility for education in the region: the Kativik School Board. In 1994, the KSB initiated a consultation process that, among other things, led to the development of the Board’s current mission statement.

This mission outlines the guiding principles and four objectives for the Board’s education program. The fourth objective specifically outlines the student expectations relating to Inuit culture. This objective states that “students are expected to develop an appreciation for their culture and a strong sense of identity as well as respect for other cultures” (KSB, 2010c). The KSB mission also indicates that “basic education shall enable students to:

- Understand Inuit traditional values and take pride in their culture;
- Understand traditional skills;
Recognize Inuit collective identity as a means to cope with a changing society;
- Recognize cultural diversity and the values of other people; and
- Understand and appreciate art, music and literature” (KSB, 2010c).

The first three objectives in the above listing (Inuit values, Inuit traditional skills and Inuit collective identity) outline the areas of Inuit culture to be taught by teachers in the region. If these statements represent the formal areas within Inuit culture about which teachers are required to teach, then it would be useful to ascertain if teachers actually agree that these reflect the areas that they in fact teach.

In order to explore this notion, Inuit teachers were asked a second open-ended question within the first version of the teacher survey to describe, in their own words, what they felt were the goals of teaching Inuit culture in the classroom. Similar to the first open-ended question, twenty-six responses were received in Inuit syllabics and translated into English for analysis. In many cases, responses from teachers also included descriptions of key challenges that are faced when teaching Inuit culture. The following listing summarizes the key themes drawn from responses:

- **Inuit culture as the foundation of education**: Eleven survey respondents (42%) stated that Inuit culture should act as the foundation of the education system and that it should be the primary goal of the education program in Nunavik schools. One teacher articulated this concept well by stating that:
  
  “Inuit culture is the core and it needs to be promoted more; it needs to be worked on by all Inuit.”

- **Preserving the Inuit language in connection with Inuit culture**: Seven survey respondents (27%) cited the importance of teaching both Inuit culture and the Inuit language together. The idea of both Inuit culture and language as an integrated whole was a common theme discussed among course participants and survey respondents alike. One survey respondent noted, for example, that:
  
  “Inuit culture and language are very much the foundations if they are used to teach”.

Another respondent detailed this concept further by suggesting that:

“the most important thing is teaching the language since it keeps our identity as Inuit alive”.
Preserving Inuit traditional knowledge and skills: Five survey respondents (19%) specifically stated the importance of preserving traditional Inuit knowledge as a goal for teaching the culture. Two of these respondents mentioned the need to include Elders more in the teaching process, while four teachers specifically indicated the need to teach traditional skills such as hunting and qajaq making.

The above responses display a strong belief from teachers in the importance of maintaining Inuit culture and language. Accordingly, based on this apparent value one would assume that Inuit teachers then are teaching as much Inuit culture and language in their classrooms as possible. As part of the second version of the teacher survey, Inuit teachers were asked to indicate if they felt that they were teaching enough Inuit culture in the classroom. Responses were mixed. Just over half (13 of 24 respondents) stated that they were teaching enough, while the remainder suggested that they were not teaching enough.

Ultimately, these results point to the underlying message that almost half of Inuit teachers surveyed believe that they need to be teaching more Inuit culture in the classroom. What is keeping Inuit from teaching more Inuit culture and language in the classroom? One possible reason may be that further efforts are needed to ensure that teachers have the support, tools and/or knowledge in order for them to be teaching ‘enough’ culture in the classroom. The perspective of the roughly half of teachers surveyed that stated that they are not satisfied should especially be recognized with the understanding that more work needs to be done in order to address their concern and the issue of what one teacher specifically identified; “…students are not really learning about their Inuit culture in school.”

Having briefly discussed the formal goals for teaching Inuit culture in the classrooms of Nunavik schools, I would like to move on to further explore more specific facets of the teaching practice taking place in Inuit classrooms as noted by Inuit teachers. The following three sections look at three areas: the sources of cultural knowledge and skills that teachers draw upon; the perceptions of what forms of Inuit culture are actually being taught; and the methods used to teach culture in the classroom. Stated in another way, I will cover from where teachers draw information regarding Inuit culture, what forms of Inuit culture they teach, and how they teach it.

While each of these facets for teaching culture is a critical component of an integrated whole, this research has placed a special emphasis on the methods used by teachers. This has been done deliberately in the recognition that any deep
examination of the sources of Inuit culture and observable forms of Inuit culture, including clearly articulated definitions of Inuit culture, should take place in an Inuit-led environment in which Inuttitut language is the primary language used.

I also believe that my ability to conduct research into Inuit culture is limited because of my role as an outsider. As a result, this research project only explores the sources and forms of Inuit culture as they were discussed in the spaces created during the project activities in which Inuit participants could discuss the topics in Inuttitut. Ultimately, any further research that attempts to examine and articulate Inuit culture in deeper ways should be initiated and led by Inuit.

### 4.2.2 Sources of Teachers' Knowledge of Inuit Culture

Results from the teacher survey offer a view into teachers’ perceptions of the forms of Inuit culture that are being taught in the classroom. As a starting off point, teachers were asked about the sources of their knowledge about Inuit culture. More specifically, teachers were asked from where they draw their knowledge of Inuit culture. Respondents were offered response options of ‘never’, ‘infrequently’, ‘sometimes’, ‘often’, and ‘always’ with these options then translated into a Likert-style scale from 0 to 4 with 0 corresponding with ‘never’ and 4 corresponding with ‘always’. Overall, results from this question suggest that teachers are drawing information from curriculum materials the most, followed by teacher training courses and their own personal knowledge.

The following table summarizes response frequencies and mode scores associated with this question.
Table 2. Results from teacher survey question 7: Where do you get your information about Inuit culture?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>never</td>
<td>infrequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum documents</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ parents</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elders</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training courses</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The source of information most frequently referred to as ‘always’ used by teachers were curriculum documents (13 responses) followed by books (8 responses) and themselves (7 responses). The source most frequently cited for use ‘often’ was teacher training courses (8 responses), while 15 respondents noted that they draw from other teachers ‘sometimes’. The source most frequently noted as ‘infrequently’ used for information about Inuit culture was Elders (9 responses). The source most frequently noted as ‘never’ used was the internet (7 responses).

These results suggest that teachers are most heavily dependent on curriculum materials, teacher training courses and books supplied by the Kativik School Board for their sources of information about Inuit culture when they are not relying on their own previously gained knowledge. These responses also point to the potentially strong impact from any changes to materials and training from KSB on the knowledge levels of Inuit teachers regarding Inuit culture since many teachers are relying on these sources. On the other hand, results relating to Elders indicate that concerns voiced by teachers to have more Elders in the schools are well founded since many teacher respondents state that they are infrequently to never drawing from Elders.

There may be a number of reasons behind why responses indicate a low use of the Internet. Possible reasons for why this is the case range from lower availability and familiarity with the Internet to a paucity of resources relating to Inuit culture on-line.
Teachers were also asked a related question with respect to the extent to which they used the information learned from the ‘Inuit Skills’ teacher training course offered during the KSB teacher certificate program. Results from the 18 respondents who answered this question indicate that teachers see this course as a useful source for Inuit cultural knowledge in their classroom practice with a majority stating that they ‘always’ or ‘often’ (12 respondents) used this information.

The following figure summarizes responses to this question.

![Graph](image)

**Fig. 3. Results from teacher survey question 8.**

### 4.2.3 Forms of Inuit Culture Taught

Having established that the sources of Inuit cultural knowledge that teachers draw from are varied, it is important to consider what forms of knowledge are found in the classrooms. I use the term ‘forms of knowledge’ at this point to describe those themes and topics that are culturally defined. One question was included in the survey to ask teachers about the thematic ‘forms’ of Inuit cultural knowledge they were teaching and how frequently they were teaching them. Examples of knowledge themes offered as response options included: Inuit values and beliefs, relationships to people; relationships to the land; relationships to animals; medicine and healing; laws and leadership; family and Elders; and names and
naming. These options were included based on discussions with KSB staff about those themes that would offer a range of choices for cultural themes taught in curriculum content. They also correspond with thematic areas in Inuit-specific curriculum documents from other regions such as the Northwest Territories Inniqatigiit document (Government of Northwest Territories, 1996).

Responses from the 20 teachers that at least partially answered this question demonstrate that teachers were in a majority of cases including Inuit cultural knowledge in all themes at least ‘sometimes’ within teaching content. The most commonly taught themes based on the highest mode scores along a Likert scale from 0 to 4, with 0 corresponding with ‘never’ and 4 indicating an answer of ‘always’, were ‘names and naming’ with a mode of 4, followed by ‘relationships to animals’, ‘Inuit values and beliefs’ and ‘relationships to people’ all with a mode of 3. The themes which were most frequently being ‘always’ used, were ‘names and naming’ (8 responses), followed by ‘relationships to the land’ (6 responses). ‘Relationships to animals’ as a response (10 responses) was most frequently given by teachers as ‘often’ used, while ‘family and Elders’ were most frequently noted (8 responses) as being ‘sometimes’ used. ‘Medicine and healing’ were most frequently cited as used ‘infrequently’ (4 responses) or ‘never’ (3 responses).

The following table summarizes results from this question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Response Options</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>never</td>
<td>infrequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuit values and beliefs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships to people</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships to land</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships to animals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine and healing</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laws and leadership</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Elders</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Names and Naming</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Overall, results to this question suggest that teachers are for the most part including a diversity of Inuit cultural knowledge themes in their teaching practice. Certain themes seem somewhat more accessible to teach such as students’ ‘relationship to animals’, ‘Inuit values and beliefs’ and ‘Inuit names and naming’
practices. An example of a topic that seems somewhat less accessible is the theme of traditional medicine and healing. Challenges with respect to accessing this type of knowledge may be a possible reason for it entering the teaching content less frequently. For example, one teacher’s response points to this possibility by suggesting that:

“It would be beneficial for us if the older teachers would be teaching us while we’re watching their work and hearing what they have to say concerning what they used to use as medicines and what they used to do while they were hunting. I would also like to have Elders talk about terminology” (Teacher respondent).

4.2.4 Teaching Methods and Structures

With a rudimentary picture taking shape that outlines teachers’ sources of cultural knowledge and the themes that they most commonly integrate into their teaching, I would like to bring in a brief discussion of the methods and structures within which they teach these forms of knowledge as described through teacher responses to an additional set of questions in the teacher survey. These questions focused on the classroom arrangements used by teachers and the cultural activities integrated into classroom practice. By classroom arrangements I mean the ways in which a teacher physically organizes the teaching and learning environment with desks or tables for students and including the ways in which students may be grouped.

The first of these questions asked teachers to identify how often they used particular classroom configurations for teaching. Configuration options included configurations possible in traditional classroom settings such as students sitting at individual desks, students sitting at large tables, students’ desks in groups, students and teacher sitting together at one big table and students sitting on the floor with the teacher, as well as classroom time outside such as excursions on the land and in the community. As observed in the mode scores within a scale from 0 to 4, results from this question suggest that the most commonly used classroom configurations are students sitting at individual desks based on the mode of 3 and 4 and students and the teacher sitting together on the floor with a mode of 4. The configuration of students and the teacher sitting together on the floor were most frequently noted by teachers (8 responses) as the configuration they ‘always’ used, followed by students sitting at individual desks (7 responses), and students sitting
at large tables (5 responses). The configuration most frequently noted as being ‘often’ used was students sitting at individual desks (7 responses), while six teachers each suggested that they ‘often’ sit with students at either large tables or on the floor.

The following table outlines responses from this question.

Table 4. Responses from teacher survey question 9: What types of classroom configurations do you use and how often?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>infrequently</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students at individual desks</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple students at large tables</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ desks in groups</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together at one big table</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together on the floor</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions on land</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions in the community</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

The data above outlines how, overall, a majority of teachers (14 responses) responded that they both had students sitting at individual desks and sitting on the floor ‘always’ or ‘often’, while alternatively a large group (10 responses) indicated that they ‘sometimes’ use students’ groups in desks. These data also suggest that teachers are using a diversity of configurations in their classroom teaching with no one configuration preferred by a strong majority of teachers one way or the other. This mixed use points to a number of possible scenarios. At the most basic level, one can infer that there are a number of teachers that commonly have students sitting on the floor, while there is another group of teachers that commonly have students sitting individually at their desks with both groups open to rearranging the configuration at times when it is needed.

A more in-depth exploration of the use of classroom configurations could provide more clarity about the contexts in which these configurations are used.
since the sample size for this survey is too small to breakdown the data into more defined and statistically valid groups. Future research must be conducted in order to explore the relationship between the use of specific classroom configurations and other factors such as grade level and teaching experience. An exploration of this nature could assess whether certain configurations were more readily used at specific grades such as in the early elementary years as opposed to the senior level. In fact, the examples of teaching practice provided by course participants in their videos point to such a distinction since videos provided from the secondary level involved students at individual desks, while videos from the elementary level had students on the floor. Further research could also explore whether the older generation of teachers tended to use one type of configuration in contrast to the younger generations of teachers.

Suggestions from the survey of a mixed use of classroom configurations could also reflect changes in the ways that Inuit teachers set up their classrooms. Could there be a movement away from having teachers and students on the floor, which was suggested by course participants as a more traditional way of working together, to having students working at individual desks? De Krom (2010) suggests that there may be some validity to this idea when she states that:

“Some Inuit teachers tend to follow the Qallunaaq way of setting up a classroom. Yes, they do more work on the floor and offer cultural based activities in the classroom, yet, in terms of the classroom set up, more and more are following Qallunaaq ways” (Personal communication, September 10, 2010).

However, De Krom (2010) goes on to suggest that:

“In terms of methods, we are realizing that the Qallunaaq way of teaching is not working” (Personal communication, September 10, 2010).

This scenario leads to the next question asked of teacher survey respondents. This question asked respondents to indicate which classroom configurations were well suited to teaching Inuit cultural knowledge. Sixteen of 19 respondents or 84% point to the classroom configurations of students and the teacher sitting on the floor as being appropriate, while a smaller majority of teachers, 13 of 19 respondents or 68%, suggested that students at individual desks was a suitable configuration. And yet, the options that were seen by the highest percentage of respondents as well suited to teaching Inuit cultural knowledge were excursions
on the land at 85% (17 of 20 respondents) and excursions in the community at 94% (17 of 18 respondents).

The following table summarizes responses relating to how well suited different configurations were to teaching Inuit cultural knowledge.

Table 5. Responses to teacher survey question 10: Are the following classroom configurations well suited to teaching Inuit culture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students at individual desks</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple students at large tables</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' desks in groups</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together at one bid table</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together on the floor</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions on land</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions in the community</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in the above table, a significant majority of Inuit teachers stated that excursions in the community and on the land are highly suited to teaching Inuit cultural knowledge. This viewpoint is supported by the findings of Dorais (1995) who found that Inuit in the Nunavik community of Quaqtaq suggested that excursions on the land for hunting, fishing and trapping, referred to as maqainniq in Inuktitut, are the activity most essential to the preservation of Aboriginal identity and that without maqainniq, Inuit would not be Inuit any more (Dorais, 1995, p. 299).

It is noteworthy to mention, however, that far fewer teachers stated that they use excursions as a teaching method with any regularity within their own practice. Responses from survey question 9 (figure 5) with respect to when teachers were using particular teaching configurations suggest that teachers are most likely only ‘sometimes’ teaching with these methods as seen in the mode score of 2 for both excursions on the land and excursions in the community. It is also noteworthy that a significant number of respondents (9 respondents) were either ‘infrequently’ or ‘never’ using excursions on the land to teach. While there may be several factors limiting teachers’ access to excursions on the land such as limited school resources and few opportunities in the timetable, or difficulties as a subject teacher to have extended periods with students, it nonetheless suggests that
teachers view time on the land and in the community as a critical way to teach Inuit culture, and yet many teachers do not frequently teach in this way.

Since not all teachers may be able to take their students out on the land or in the community with any regularity, then teachers must find ways to teach Inuit culture while remaining in the classroom. This notion leads me to ask the question then, ‘what types of activities can be effectively taught in the classroom?’

With this question in mind, the teacher survey included a question asking how much teachers integrate Inuit cultural skills into the content of their classrooms. The types of activities given as options for this question included: hard crafts such as carving and tool making; soft crafts such as sewing and working with hides; Inuit games; and Inuit storytelling.

The table below summarizes responses to this question.

Table 6. Responses to teacher survey question 14: How much of the following Inuit cultural activities do you teach with your classroom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>infrequently</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soft crafts</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hard crafts</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses to the above question suggest that teachers are sometimes integrating cultural activities into their classroom. The activity of storytelling was most frequently noted by teachers (7 responses) as the activity they ‘always’ use. Responses also indicate that games and soft skills such as sewing and work with hides are also sometimes taught with hard crafts such as carving and tool making the most infrequently taught based on a mode of 1 within a scale of 0 to 4. One possible reason for the infrequent teaching of skills such as carving and tool making is the likelihood that these types of activities have been traditionally worked on by men, while the large majority of the respondents were women. It is also noteworthy that the activity most frequently used by teachers was Inuit storytelling with all respondents with the exception of two (21 of 23 respondents) stating that they ‘always’, ‘often’ or at least ‘sometimes’ included this activity in their classroom practice.

Another factor affecting the types of Inuit cultural activities that are taught in classrooms is the fact that all schools have a designated ‘culture class’ in which
students regularly go to be instructed in specific cultural skills by designated culture class teachers. This division of tasks allows for regular instruction in Inuit cultural skills within the weekly schedule of schools by separate subject teachers. Results from this question suggest the possible existence of an informal division of tasks made by teachers themselves, between those teachers that teach cultural activities specifically in the cultural classroom and those that teach within a ‘regular’ classroom environment. As well, storytelling may be the ‘easiest’ to integrate into classroom activities since it does not require specialized materials or tools to complete in the classroom setting. This leads one to ask, how are those Inuit cultural activities that are taught in the ‘culture class’ integrated into the regular classrooms of the school? Further research is necessary in order to explore this question more fully.

4.2.5 Perceptions of the Influence of Culture

In contrast to the majority of questions within the survey that explored the influence of Inuit culture on teachers’ classroom practice, one question asked teachers to share their perspective on whether certain aspects of the way they manage the classroom and relate with their students were more influenced by Inuit culture or non-Inuit (Qallunaaq) culture.

Respondents were asked to reflect on aspects of the way they relate with their students such as: tone of voice, rhythm of speech, relations between teacher and student and teacher comments to students. Respondents were given the option that these aspects of their teaching were done more in an Inuit way, a non-Inuit (Qallunaaq) way, or that these aspects of their teaching were influenced to the same degree by both Inuit culture and Qallunaaq culture.

The following table summarizes responses for these four categories.
A large majority of responses to each of the four categories outlined in the above table indicate that teachers view their relations with students as being through an Inuit cultural style with, for example, 95.5% of respondents suggesting that the ‘tone of their voice’ was Inuit in style. With regards to the topic of ‘teacher comments to students’, 85.7% stated that they offered these comments in an Inuit style, while 78.3% stated that their ‘student - teacher relations’ were conducted in an Inuit style. The remaining responses in these categories were noted as ‘same’ suggesting that those teachers that responded this way believed that the ways in which they were relating to students were informed equally by Inuit and non-Inuit ways. A majority of respondents (77.3%) stated their rhythm of speech was influenced by Inuit ways, while two respondents (9.1%) suggested that their rhythm of speech was more influenced by Qallunaaq ways and three respondents (13.6%) noted that their rhythm of speech was equally influenced by Inuit and non-Inuit styles.

A second grouping of teaching aspects was also offered as response options in this survey question. These options focused on ways in which teachers organized learning within the classroom for students such as students’ turns at talking, grouping of students, participation of the students, students’ movement in the classroom, student ways of learning and evaluating students.

The following table summarizes responses to these options.
Table 8. Responses to survey question 15 (relating to organization of the classroom): Do you feel that the following things you do in your classroom are more in an Inuit or Qallunaaq style?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Inuit</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Qallunaaq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Same</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students’ turn talking</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grouping of students</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation of the students in activities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ movement in the classroom</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ learning</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating students</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responses outlined in the above table indicate that at least half of teachers suggested that they organized their classrooms more in an Inuit way under all categories. The categories with the highest majority were participation of students in classroom activities and the evaluation of students at 75.0% and 71.4% respectively.

Results from other categories were more mixed. For example, roughly a third of respondents (36.4%) stated that the ways in which students were grouped, the ways that students were expected to learn (36.4%) and the ways in which students moved around the classroom (30.0%) were influenced equally by Inuit and non-Inuit styles.

Overall, responses summarized in the two tables above suggest that teachers believe that the ways in which teachers interact with students is strongly influenced by Inuit culture and that a majority of responding teachers indicate that they work in an Inuit ‘way’. However, it is noteworthy that roughly a third of respondents stated that both Inuit and non-Inuit culture influences aspects of teaching such as the grouping of students and students’ ways of learning. These responses point to an awareness among these teachers that both Inuit and non-Inuit culture can influence their classroom practice.

4.3 Toward a Model of Third Space and Decolonizing Cultural Competency

The results presented in the above sections paint a general picture of how Inuit culture is taught in the classroom and outline findings related to the two research objectives of this project. In its most simplistic terms, Inuit teachers are acting as
significant agents in the development and transmission of Inuit culture in the classroom. This cultural role is supported by institutional efforts from organizations such as the Kativik School Board that are developing curriculum and teaching materials that include Inuit-specific content. At the same time, Elders represent a critical source of Inuit knowledge that teachers believe should be further linked with the work that goes on in classrooms. And yet, answers to the specific question of how Inuit teachers are integrating this knowledge into the classroom remain elusive.

With respect to teaching methods, my analysis suggests that Inuit teachers in Nunavik are integrating Inuit culture to varying degrees in their teaching practice with some teachers including Inuit content and activities more readily than others. However, opportunities for teachers to discuss this topic and develop tangible pathways and strategies for integrating Inuit culture to a greater extent, while present, are infrequent and limited in their scope. This leads us to ask the question of how to further support Inuit capacity towards the decolonization of the educational system that they work within.

Before moving on to explore possible approaches to tackle this question, I would like to clarify my underlying assumption that education as it is offered in Inuit communities is still in need of decolonizing. I hold this assumption because I am in agreement with those individuals in academia and at the community level who call for more coordinated and institutionalized efforts to make Inuit education more strongly based on Inuit language and culture, especially those that I interviewed as part of this research. For example, Annahatak (2010) argues that:

“It would be very good if decolonization of Inuit classrooms and teacher training classrooms was done in a formal form” (Personal communication, September 9, 2010).

Walton (2010) echoes this call by suggesting that:

“Until you collectively decolonize your system you will fail to have an Inuit education system. It has to be done in a more organized way” (Personal communication, August 31, 2010).

If one recognizes that decolonizing efforts must be more formalized, one should also be cognizant that the context may be such that many teachers may not be in agreement that decolonization as it is conceptualized here is the principal goal, or even be familiar with ‘Western’ concepts of decolonizing for that matter. I, therefore, use the term third space to describe the process through which Inuit
could begin to ask these questions and explore the concept of decolonization increasingly on their own terms. In other words, Inuit teachers can begin to construct their own spaces, their own terminology. Additionally, I suggest that Inuit should be the ones ultimately initiating and facilitating decolonization efforts. I say this based on the conclusion that Inuit are in the best position to have access to Inuit knowledge and dictate a reconceptualization of that knowledge in schools. Similar to what Jones and Jenkins (2008) view as an ‘unintentional disability’ of non-Indigenous researchers working in an Indigenous context, I “remain only partially able to hear and see” (p. 479) the Indigene voice. Referencing this view to the Inuit context, I as a non-Inuit researcher will not have necessary competencies in order to effectively sustain or lead decolonizing efforts. Alternatively, these efforts as they play out in Inuit schools should be led and dictated by Inuit researchers or scholars based on their ability to have greater authority and insight into Inuit knowledge. On this point, I concur with Jones and Jenkins (2008) who describe this ability within a Maori/Pakeha (non-Maori) context:

“What determines this ability is not merely indigeneity…it is an issue of access to knowledge. One’s experience, knowledge, and recognition by one’s own people provide an indigenous person with the authority and insight to contribute as Maori to research on Maori things. With enough immersion in Maori language and culture, it may be logically possible for me as a Pakeha/settler to interpret past and current events “from a Maori point of view.” But in practical terms, outside such complete immersion, it is unlikely...as a Pakeha subject engaging in cross-cultural work, then, I am limited...Even as an accepted collaborator, I know that, from a Maori perspective, if the settler collaborator is not of some use, she or he is politely abandoned” (p. 479).

It is the idea of limits suggested by Jones and Jenkins above that I believe helps to explain a number of the findings from my research. More specifically, I venture to state that my research project attempted to create a third space in which Inuit culture could be discussed by Inuit, however I believe that this took place up to a limit. The teaching/learning environment established especially during the teacher training course developed for this research project represents an initial step in the direction toward having Inuit teachers reflect on culture and consequently on the way they view their teaching. However, because it was initiated by myself, a non-
Indigenous researcher, its effectiveness was muted in large part for the reasons offered by Jones and Jenkins above.

A number of factors can be highlighted based on the findings from my research to further discuss these limitations. These factors include: Indigenous language used for dialogue, control over the choice of participants, technology and physical space, and appropriate strategies for encouraging dialogue including sufficient length of time to carry out Indigenous protocols for knowledge transfer. Each of these factors in turn is influenced by a key determinant – the degree to which Indigenous participants maintain authority within that space. It is through a discussion of this key determinant that I wish to expand on all the factors listed above.

Alongside the goal of discussing Inuit culture in the classroom, the teacher training course developed during this project also represented an attempt at initiating a third space in which teachers could reflect on decolonizing efforts within their education system. While findings point to the initiation of a third space that involved ‘borderlands’ communication between facilitator and participants (between Inuit-Qallunaaq), the efficacy of the project to facilitate mechanisms and strategies through which Inuit ‘voice’ can be sustained remains uncertain. It can be said that the process was effective to a degree because Inuit voiced that they should be in control of overall efforts to conceptualize Inuit culture. However a number of limitations, nevertheless, were observed and encountered during the course. These limitations focused on the key determinant of who maintained authority within that space. More precisely, if an Indigenous controlled third space is to be established, then the degree to which Indigenous participants maintain authority within that space will be a key determinant of success.

By authority, I speak of two categories of authority: one that is concerned with the control of methodology and another with control of the content. With regards to the first category of authority concerning control of methodology, I refer to the overall ability to make decisions about the logistics of how a third space is developed and used – where it takes place, the strategies employed to encourage dialogue, language used, who participates, etc. Control of content, alternatively, refers to who has authority over a particular knowledge system within the dialogue and, more significantly, who is recognized to have authority over a particular ‘voice’. Let me articulate these concepts further by using observations from the teacher training course as examples.
The teacher training course was designed in partnership through a process of negotiation between myself and the Kativik School Board. Conditions such as how many instructors, the timing of the course, where it was located, who participated and the length of time committed was principally determined by the resources that the KSB was able to allocate to this course. Consequentially, available resources determined that there could be only one instructor, the course would be interspersed over the academic year, the location would be central (Kuujjuaq) to save on travel expenses, participants would be made up of available teachers who needed the credits within their program and could spare instructional or work time. Furthermore, the time constraints and content requests by the KSB for video and computer technology instruction lead me as the instructor to choose a particular format for the course. Relating back to the theme of authority, I would suggest that the above decisions were made (controlled) by both myself and the KSB. However, as Clark (2008) indicates “facilitators should recognize that the researcher voice has the power to both terminate dialogue and legitimize the practitioner perspective” (p. 221). In Clark’s (2008) work, dialogue in the third space is strongly determined by the authority held by the facilitator. I as the facilitator/instructor of the course was in a position of authority because I was the one who was ultimately grading their performance and who was initiating the dialogue concerning decolonization. In this way, I would argue that the dialogue was not completely collaborative in nature or equal.

4.3.1 Indigenous Language and Third Space

Regardless of attempts to create a more equal space for dialogue within the teacher training course, authority was still held by a non-Indigenous researcher/instructor. This authority was nowhere more present in the fact that English was the de facto language for dialogue instead of the local language, Inuttitut. Being instructed by a non-Inuit teacher trainer and having only limited use of Inuttitut as the language of instruction, significantly restricted the teachers’ ability to conceptualize their own visions and terminology for culture. This suggests that in order for a third space to be fully Inuit-controlled and Inuit-led the language of dialogue should be in their own language.

The need to recognize language contexts was also observed in how surveys were conducted during this project on topics relating to Inuit culture. Specifically, challenges were experienced with respect to the translation of concepts such as ‘culture’, ‘cultural knowledge’ and ‘cultural activities’ from English into Inuttitut.
Even though considerable time was spent discussing Inuititut equivalents for these terms for inclusion into the survey, it was evident that more effort should be made to agree upon Inuititut terms that are recognizable and workable. An additional piloting phase of the survey is one option that most likely could have aided the translation process by allowing for a more robust testing of the appropriateness of translated terminology. Greater awareness among survey respondents of the Inuititut terminology used in turn could have possibly led to greater confidence in the results and subsequently a higher response rate from teachers.

Annahatak (2010) comments on these difficulties with translation and related gaps of knowledge by suggesting that:

“They should create a course so that teachers get a feel of the Inuit way. Not translating into English, but maybe the reverse. Our colleagues are very colonized. A course should be full of Inuit content and culture” (Personal communication, September 9, 2010).

Annahatak’s comment above implies that efforts which attempt to decolonize and reshape concepts relating to Inuit education systems should ultimately be controlled and led by Inuit themselves. While this idea may be somewhat straightforward in theory, its implementation in a context where non-Indigenous researchers still dominate is problematic and multi-faceted. Firstly, spaces must be developed in which Inuit can lead and work together on their own and accordingly these types of spaces must be Inuititut-speaking environments. Being able to work in Inuititut is critical because, as Battiste (2009) reminds us, “Aboriginal languages are the basic media for the transmission and survival of Aboriginal consciousness, cultures, literatures, histories, religions, political institutions, and values” (p. 199). By working together in an Inuititut-speaking environment, Inuit can discuss concepts of Inuit culture connected to appropriate terminology and on their own terms. This was only partially the case in the teacher training course during sessions such as with Elders and amongst themselves on project work. Therefore, I suggest that the teacher training course was only a partially Indigenous-controlled third space.

If one accepts that any effective and lasting conceptualization of a decolonized, Inuit-specific education system must be conducted in Inuititut, then one must recognize that there are limitations to the role that any ‘outsider’ and non-Inuititut speaking researcher can have in this process. How then does one facilitate the development of skills and knowledge in teachers to deconstruct
colonial forms in their classrooms? Can I as a non-Inuttitut speaker realistically take part? I would venture that it is possible for a non-Inuttitut speaking teacher trainer or researcher to facilitate this process to a limit. I suggest this because I differentiate between the ability to conceptualize and articulate Inuit culture on the one hand and the acquisition of the skills, knowledge and attitudes to better deconstruct one’s cultural milieu on the other. One is a goal (conceptualization); whereas the other is a tool to help individuals reach that goal (acquisition of the skills, knowledge and attitudes). Stated in another way, the former is a culture-specific (intracultural) domain that should be initiated and led by Inuit, the latter can be supported within an intercultural space that works within boundaries of language and culture.

When discussing the importance of Inuit leading decolonizing efforts, I do so while at the same time recognizing the need to guard against essentializing tendencies within Inuit communities themselves. This critical stance is summarized well in the Maori context by Webber (2009) who speaks to the need to “challenge the continuing development of hegemonic orthodoxies in Maori research, grounded in essentialist notions of Maoriness” (p. 8). I would suggest that the development of such a hegemonic orthodoxy is possible to occur within the emerging Inuit research community as well. Furthermore, it could be said that to view fluency of Inuttitut as a necessary competency in order to participate in discussions about Inuit culture or to participate in the Inuit research community is to potentially exclude those Inuit that do not speak Inuttitut. That is a valid point. However, what I wish to emphasize is that knowledge of Inuttitut affords one access to a specific area of traditional Inuit knowledge. In this way, I focus on language as a toolkit that can facilitate access and dialogue, not as a marker of identity or orthodoxy.

Ultimately, this issue points to the need for intracultural dialogue that ultimately recognizes heterogeneity within Inuit communities and questions different conceptualizations of what it means to be Inuit. As research into this area continues, I believe that these discussions are more the domain of Inuit academics and better explored by Inuit themselves.

4.3.2 Location and Third Spaces

Along with language, another specific factor that was observed to have influenced the effectiveness of the efforts to establish a third space included the physical location of where the dialogue was to take place. In the case of the teacher
education course, sessions took place in the Kativik School Board offices in Kuujjuaq. This represented a relatively ‘safe’ environment since the participants were familiar with the surroundings and were used to travelling to Kuujjuaq for work and visiting family. I believe this location facilitated the process of intercultural dialogue and represented a place that was ‘culturally safe’ in contrast to a location outside of Nunavik for example. Furthermore, I would offer that if the course had been located at another site such as in the city of Montreal it would have represented an environment that would have privileged the researcher, the ‘outsider’.

Another way that location can influence the effectiveness of a third space is with regards to being able to encourage participation from Elders. For example, the Elders invited to participate in the teacher training course agreed to come to the Kativik School Board offices to speak with the students because it was close by and familiar. And yet, while they demonstrated a willingness to join our group within that space, others may not be as willing, especially if the choice of location is less familiar or represents a space that is not safe. In some Indigenous communities in northern Canada, the local school in fact may represent such a space because the school may represent a connection to the colonial legacy of residential schools. In particular, efforts that attempt to bring together survivors of residential schools specifically or Indigenous community members in general to participate in third spaces should be aware of the potential for a school or any other local location to have similar influences on whether or not they wish to participate.

4.3.3 Timing, Indigenous Protocols for Knowledge Transfer and Third Spaces

The amount of time given to establish a third space is another critical factor observed during this research. More specifically, the teacher training course only offered a limited and brief opportunity to discuss concepts and share ideas. I believe that the brevity of the actual face-to-face time significantly limited the ability of all participants including myself to develop our awareness and knowledge of the concepts under discussion relating to decolonization and intercultural discourse. The corresponding ‘shallowness’ indicates that in general sufficient time is necessary in order that meaningful and lasting awareness can be built and articulated among participants of third spaces. Within the Inuit context, the issue of timing takes on an added meaning when attempting to carry out
Indigenous protocols for knowledge transfer. By Indigenous protocols I refer to the procedures and codes used to maintain what Nakata (2002) terms the “coherent pathways through the passage of time” (p. 8) involved in the transfer of Indigenous knowledge. In the Inuit context, a key procedure as described by Inuit teachers is seeking guidance and direction from Elders on matters of culture and language. During the course, for example, Inuit participants would often speak to the need for “getting Elders to talk”.

Effectively performing this type of procedure often takes time and resources since it involves building relationships with individual Elders and taking the time and space to have them participate in a meaningful way. This concept of Indigenous protocols for knowledge transfer helps to explain a key challenge observed during the teacher training course: limited integration of Elders into the teaching process.

Efforts were made to include Inuit Elders in course delivery. These Elders were invited to participate based on their knowledge of traditional practices and concepts and willingness to support the training process. The time that they were actively involved and present, however, was limited. This led to the challenge of not being able to defer to Elders during discussions when their input would have been useful to clarify terminology or concepts associated with topics such as traditional child-rearing practices or ways of teaching. The challenge of fully integrating Elders in the teaching and learning environment is an issue also noted by both the Akitsiraq Law School program and the Nunavut Masters of Educational Leadership program which also incorporated Elders into course delivery as instructors. These programs point to the need for participating Elders to have a stated interest in the topic under discussion. For example, in the case of the Akitsiraq Law School Program, the Elder-in-residence had a strong background in justice issues and traditional concepts of Inuit law.

Allowing for relationship building between instructors and Elders over multiple meetings is another factor recognized by both programs. In contrast, the Kativik School Board teacher training course developed for my research allowed for only one session with Elders due to time and resource limitations. Still on the topic of Elders, it is important to recognize that gender issues should also be considered when having Elders in the classroom since as McIssac (2000) indicates, it must be recognized that many traditional roles were gender-specific and there may be significant differences in the types of traditional knowledge that men or women have. This raises critical questions when initiating future efforts at
developing third spaces with respect to how Elders should be involved in environments that may include gender-specific roles.

While the teacher training course did have Elder involvement, it was substantially less than other similarly-themed educational projects such as in the research work of the Ciulestet Group (Lipka, 1998), the delivery of the Nunavut Masters of Educational Leadership program (Walton et al, 2010) and the Akitsiraq Law School program (Akitsiraq, 2007). These programs developed long-term relationships and dialogue with Elders over a matter of years rather than days as was the case with the teacher training course. Examining similarities and differences between the KSB course and these other examples suggest that the integration of Indigenous protocols in third spaces is a critical factor and one which relies on taking the appropriate time to perform protocols meaningfully and respectfully. In the Inuit context, this means that effective navigation through protocols involves building long-term relationships between Elders and research spaces.

### 4.3.4 The Use of Technology and Third Space

An additional factor that can influence the development of third spaces is the use of technology within that space. More precisely, the knowledge of and familiarity with technologies used within a third space can similarly influence the ability of group members to participate. As technologies such as internet communications, video conferencing and computer data management are increasingly used, so does the potential for these technologies to act as barriers to intercultural dialogue. In the case of this research project, the teacher training course had concurrent goals of building skills in the use of video and computer technology. However, most participants previously had only basic skills. This context necessitated the use of considerable time during course sessions for instruction in the use of these technologies before dialogue could turn to a more conceptual discussion of epistemologies, ontologies or discourses.

This practical aspect of the course format had three related effects. Firstly, it put authority over knowledge relating to these technologies in the hands of the non-Indigenous instructor further reinforcing the teacher/student relationship and privileging dialogue in English. Secondly, it put a significant emphasis on instruction of technologies to support dialogue rather than on the dialogue itself and limited the potential for more face-to-face discussion in Inuktut between teachers or expanding sessions between teachers and Elders. And thirdly, the
emphasis on these technologies, while introducing new tools to teachers for potential use during their own teaching practice, dictated the location of the third space within the confines of a classroom setting and disallowed the option to have the third space take place in a more unconventional location such as a traditional on-the-land camp. I suggest the possible establishment of on-the-land third spaces based on suggestions by Annahatak (2010) and participating Inuit teachers who indicate that learning about Inuit culture is facilitated when the learning opportunity is located on-the-land and is activity based.

Overall, the technology used during the teacher training course strongly influenced how and where dialogue was to take place and limited the amount of time available for discussion on a conceptual level. Findings further indicate that the types of technology used should complement dialogue rather than restrict it as was the case here. Understanding these effects more deeply as they relate to third spaces in different context necessitates further study.

**4.3.5 Decolonizing Cultural Competency and Third Space**

Having discussed some of the factors observed to influence and limit the effectiveness of third spaces, I would like to change my focus and discuss ways in which individuals can gain the knowledge and / or skills necessary to navigate third spaces. In order to do so, I would like to expand on current notions of cultural competency from the field of education. I begin with this term in recognition of other concepts that focus on teaching skills and culture such as the Effective Teaching Profile introduced by Bishop (2008). This concept as defined by Bishop (2008) “creates a learning context that is responsive to the culture of the child and means that learners can bring who they are to the classroom in complete safety and where their knowledges are acceptable and legitimate” (p. 455). In the end, I focus on the term cultural competency, instead of Effective Teaching Profile for example, in order to highlight differences between my own conceptualization of the term and common references to competency as it is used in the contemporary literature of intercultural learning.

And yet, the term remains vague and somewhat inappropriate. I believe that cultural competency or even intercultural competency for that matter does not adequately describe the context within which Inuit teachers work in Inuit classrooms since, in this context, instead of a teacher and students coming from different cultures, both the Indigenous teacher and the students come from the same culture. It can be argued that this scenario exists in many Indigenous
classrooms in which an Indigenous teacher is teaching Indigenous students from the same culture within a formal institution which represents a different colonial culture. This situation can be described not so much as cross-cultural between teacher and student, but as cross-cultural between teacher and institution. As a result, these types of circumstances demand an expanded notion of cultural competency; one that recognizes the need for teachers to have the tools to be critical of and navigate cultural aspects of a school that may be different from their own and their students’ and find third spaces. Therefore, I would like to introduce an expanded concept in order to better articulate the Inuit education context: decolonizing cultural competency.

Decolonizing cultural competency as a concept is defined for the purposes of this project as the awareness, knowledge and skills that enable teachers to navigate a colonial institutional culture in order to support the teaching of Indigenous culture in a classroom environment. Related to the concept of indigenizing cultural competency currently being developed in Australia (Carey, 2008), this concept assumes that schools are not culturally neutral or benign and that they in fact harbour colonial cultural forms and eurocentrism (Berger, 2009) that can limit an Indigenous teacher’s ability to teach their own Indigenous culture. Colonial cultural forms may be structural or methodological in nature and can be inherent in the physical spaces designed in a school building or the actual teaching methodologies used in the classroom. It is teachers’ efforts to transform these colonial cultural forms that are to be highlighted through the use of a concept such as decolonizing cultural competency.

To be more precise, this research explores what a process toward decolonizing cultural competency might look like for Inuit teachers and Indigenous teachers in general. It draws from the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) (2008) which reports that effective cultural competence has practitioners “understanding their roles and willing to examine their own values, ethics and epistemologies, and recognize that they may have conscious or unconscious conceptions of cultural/social differences…[Practitioners would also] identify pre-existing attitudes and be willing to transform their attitudes by tracing them to their origins and see their effects on practice through reflection and action” (p. 16). In this way, teachers with effective cultural competence “can understand, internalize, reflect on and work toward changing the power imbalances of which they are a part” (Shield et al., 2005, p. 153).

It is from this theoretical grounding that this project encouraged Inuit teachers to explore the “cultural myths of the dominator” (Freire, 1985, p. 73) and begin
the process of reflecting on Inuit culture as it relates to teaching practice in the classroom. Overall, a primary component of decolonizing cultural competency is being aware of one’s own cultural influences through self-reflection and to explore how these influences may be present in a school, classroom or teacher training program. Not unlike Freire’s concept of conscientization in Shor (1987) in which students become aware of the political and cultural underpinnings of what it is that they are learning, Indigenous teachers can articulate their own decolonizing cultural competencies in the face of conflicting cultural norms often imposed through ‘Western’-based schools and teacher education programming. Shields, Bishop and Mazawi (2005) expand on our understanding of the need for this process by stating that:

“Teachers must learn to identify and legitimate alternative discourses and to challenge those power imbalances that are manifested as cultural deficit theorizing and that, in turn, support the retention of detrimental classroom interaction patterns and relationships” (p. 153).

Drawing from the descriptions outlined in Byram (1997), Marelli (1998) and Marrelli et al. (2005), decolonizing cultural competency can be viewed as an inter-related matrix of knowledge, skills and attitudes. And yet, the concept of decolonizing cultural competency does not refer to the actual knowledge attitudes or skills associated with teaching. Instead, it refers more to those which are specifically associated with the deconstructing of colonial forms in an education system and the abilities and knowledge to engage in a personal or group action initiated and sustained by teachers themselves. In this way, decolonizing cultural competency does not attempt to take an essentialist approach and qualify those aspects of an Indigenous culture that should be taught, but rather helps support a process through which an Indigenous teacher or Indigenous education system can navigate the negotiation of culture within the classroom; or in other words, finding third spaces.

Ultimately, the goal of decolonizing cultural competency is to have teachers deconstructing colonial cultural forms and reconstructing Indigenous cultural forms within the school, classroom and in teacher training programs. By doing this, teachers do not only act as a broker or intermediary of culture in which cultural knowledge simply passes from a cultural source through the teacher to the students, but act in an active role in the development and formalizing of Indigenous cultural knowledge systems in the classroom. This concept also embraces the notion of culture as contested, and emphasizes the need for teachers
that possess the “ability to challenge the culture of positivism...[and] expose the origins of many of the constraints which obstruct their ability to implement educational strategies that respond to the experiences and lived worlds of students” (Kincheloe, 2003, p. 90).

This concept follows in the tradition of approaches such as ‘cultural therapy’ with teachers as introduced by Spindler and Spindler (1994), the ‘self-monitoring ability’ of teachers as discussed by Elliot (2007) and ‘culturally effective instructional principles’ outlined by Cartledge and Kourea (2008) all of which include reflection to bring about culturally responsive teaching. However, I am highly aware that I am yet another non-Indigenous researcher attempting to conceptualize ways in which Indigenous peoples and teachers can reflect on their own culture. In the end, decolonizing efforts in partnership with non-Indigenous researchers such as myself are fraught with challenges, as Walton (2010) reminds me:

“When we tread into these cultural domains we have to do so with such care. Our role should be to help Inuit to get the credentials so they can do this work, and more importantly, lead this work” (Personal communication, August 31, 2010).

Even the term, decolonizing cultural competency, has its limitations in this process because it is an English term firmly placed within the ‘Western’ academic tradition. It is not expected to be used as a culture-specific term recognizing that “even with the term competency, everything is forever translating Qallunaaq terminology” (Annahatak, 2010). Instead, decolonizing cultural competency represents only one mechanism through which a more systematic decolonizing process could be initiated in Inuit schools. Culture-specific efforts to apply this concept and re-imagine teaching must be done by Inuit. In this way, Inuit would ideally expand upon the term to construct their own concepts, models and terminologies similar to how the Te Kōtahi Tanga Effective Teaching Profile (Bishop, 2008) has been constructed for and by Maori. This concept, for example, is based in a locality and contextualized specifically for Maori schools.

At this point, I would like to bring in a graphical representation of the decolonizing process, which includes the concept of decolonizing cultural competencies. The following model articulates how decolonizing cultural competency could support a decolonizing agenda in educational settings.
Fig. 4. Diagram of a model for using decolonizing cultural competency.

The above graphic is not designed as a competency model which would allow Inuit teachers to understand, discuss, and apply specific, or some would argue essentialized competencies to their classroom performance (Marrelli et al., 2005). Instead, it offers a general format through which one can describe the process of developing a decolonizing learning environment or space in which teachers and teacher trainers can discuss Inuit culture and its place in education. It is loosely based on the cognitive psychological tool known as a Johari Window, described by Luft (1969), and commonly used in the field of intercultural communications. In this way, the four quadrants of the square each represent varying levels of decolonization within a learning environment, while the axes represent two critical factors in the development of effective decolonizing efforts: the development of decolonizing cultural competencies on the vertical axis and the establishment of spaces in which Indigenous teachers can work together in their own language on the horizontal axis. The range on the vertical axis describes the movement from a low level of competency to a higher level among the agents involved in the decolonizing process. On the horizontal axis, the range suggests a movement from a completely non-Indigenous language environment on the extreme right to an environment which is conducted fully in an Indigenous language on the extreme left.
The bottom right sector represents a context in which minimal effort is made to develop decolonizing competencies in teachers and few spaces are offered in which teachers can reflect on their own culture and practice in their own language. Sadly, this sector reflects the current state of many education systems, which, as Battiste (2009) reports, continue to “affirm the political and social status quo” (p. 196).

In the case of those organizations that are willing to move beyond the status quo, the remaining sectors of the model provide paths to confront colonial structures and practices within their systems. The first of these paths is reflected in the bottom left quadrant of the model referring to the translation of colonial forms of education. This section of the model represents efforts, which take place within an Indigenous language environment, yet do not attempt to decolonize the environment itself. As a result, colonial structures are translated, not transformed and minimal time is given to develop decolonizing cultural competency among teachers. An example of this type of effort would be the direct translation of a non-Indigenous curriculum without structural or content changes. This reflects what Banks (1994) describes as a situation in which the ‘sponsoring culture’ of a curriculum stays the same even when cultural content is added. It would also reflect an ineffective third space in which colonial discourses dominate.

While decolonizing efforts have been initiated to some extent in the Nunavik teacher education system, moving beyond current efforts can be difficult since the Quebec provincial government remains a strong influencing factor in the delivery of education, including teacher education. De Krom (2010) summarizes the situation when she states that:

“There is constant pressure from the province to have Inuit teachers follow the same training as Qallunaat teachers. So, it’s a constant battle to push why our program needs to be different” (Personal communication, September 10, 2010).

In contrast, the top right sector represents a context in which teachers may have built a higher level of decolonizing cultural competency, but control few spaces in which to discuss a decolonizing agenda in their own language. Capacity building in this form allows for rudimentary critique of colonial structures and can support an individual’s awareness of their own culture and an institutional culture. But, it is limited in its ability to reconstruct and articulate concepts that are based within the Indigenous culture. This section of the model most closely reflects what the teacher education course accomplished – a first step at building decolonizing
cultural competency with teachers which also offered limited spaces in which
dialogue could be grounded in Inuittut. However, even though this course may
have reflected a space in which decolonization could be discussed and explored, it
did not represent the type of third space that can prove effective in
reconceptualising Inuit culture. In order to do so, a teacher education environment
must move beyond the periodic use of Inuittut-speaking Elders and the inclusion
of a limited number of assignments in Inuittut. This context is reflected in the last
sector of the model in the top-left and represents a fully Indigenous-controlled
third space.

The optimal context in which decolonizing efforts can be effectively achieved
is represented in the top-left quadrant in which Indigenous teachers themselves
can construct decolonizing structures that are culturally-specific and based on a
high level of decolonizing cultural competency. It also represents the creation of a
space in which the Indigenous language is the principle language used for
dialogue. In the Inuit context, this optimal context would be a teacher training
environment in which Inuit would work in Inuittut and would have a high level
of decolonizing cultural competency to be able to deconstruct and reconstruct
Inuit-specific structures and content within their educational spaces. To refer back
to the Johari Window structure in relation to working with teachers in relation to
reflective practice that looks into culture in the classroom, the optimal area of this
model reflects a domain in which teachers would be able to reflect on knowing
what they know and knowing what they do not know. A further way to view this
area is as a third space in which the necessary conditions exist for a deep dialogue
to take place with respect to the cultural negotiation of education that privileges
Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies. Thus, the outcome of this type of
dialogue would be to construct new forms and structures in education - structures
and forms at the level of cultural values and beliefs or as Stairs (1994) states at
the “psychological level of cultural negotiation” (p. 162).

In the Inuit context, an optimal decolonizing effort would have Inuit dictating
the construction of their own Inuit-specific response to colonial forms. As
previously noted, this response would include the formalizing of Inuit culture to a
greater extent within the education program and curriculum. Annahatak (2010)
similarly suggests that:

“There needs to be a more formal [decolonizing] process in Nunavik...Inuit
culture should be formalized in the content of teacher training. If they are
being taught about [Inuit] education, they should have something in the
course recognizing all the cultural competencies that a student should achieve in Inuit culture. It’s not very different from the skills competencies in schools...but the basics of Inuit competencies to achieve” (Personal communication, September 9, 2010).

Annahatak (2010) goes on to detail how this could specifically look in a teacher training context:

“One learning outcome would be ‘tautuangaittuq’; a student that would not pass by a struggling Elder. It means ‘ready to help’. Tautuangaittuq is an outcome in Inuit culture. Our parents worked on us to make us a person like that. We had to be taught how to be tautuangaittuq. That is a learning outcome in Inuit culture. ..The outcome is different because the student becomes Inuk, not Qallunaaq. We’ve been too colonized. We know the Inuit words, but we haven’t formalized them or conceptualized them in a form for learning. Young teachers don’t know them, because [Inuit learning outcomes] haven’t been gathered up and formalized.” (Personal communication, September, 9, 2010)

What Annahatak outlines in the above quotation is an example of the steps to be taken by Inuit within a space that they control and lead with the expressed goal of decolonizing current practices. In the teacher education context, these spaces would rely on teacher educators who are Inuk that act as intercultural informants – individuals that could support teachers “navigating cross-cultural space” (Walton et al., 2010, p. 63). This is where deeper discussions on what Annahatak calls an ‘Inuit learning outcome’ should take place. Further expanding on specific Inuit concepts and values such as tautuangaittuq, however, is not within the scope of this research, nor should it be. This is a realm for Inuit to lead, not a Qallunaaq researcher.
5 Conclusions: Knowing When to ‘Get Out of the Way’

While conducting this research and working in the field of Inuit education in general, I am constantly advised to be mindful of the boundaries associated with pursuing research as an outsider. The most common boundaries I experience involve language barriers (my inability to speak Inuktitut) and the related barriers of access to knowledge and information. I feel that it is the barriers of language and to knowledge and information that are not as often recognized as a critical factor in determining effective research in Indigenous communities and the development of third spaces. In fact, I believe this is just as important an area to focus on when considering the potential outcomes of a research project. As an outsider I must constantly ask myself, should I be the one doing this research? What aspects of this type of inquiry could be better served by an Inuk researcher who speaks Inuktitut and accordingly has more direct access to Inuit knowledge?

As a result of reflecting on these questions, I have come to believe that I, as a non-Indigenous researcher, have a limited role in research that takes place in Indigenous communities. As it has been previously communicated to me by Elders when I was a classroom teacher, there is a time and place for asking questions and for getting answers. In other words, the sharing of information, knowledge or stories is context driven and therefore offered at the appropriate time. This theme is certainly understandable in light of the legacy of research in Indigenous communities which can be characterized by ‘southern’ researchers coming to take what they can and never returning. Jones and Jenkins (2008) articulate this point well in the Indigenous context when they state that knowledge is “not made available to those who simply want to know” (p. 481).

For the purposes of this project, I have focused on developing a participatory action research methodology. I have done so in order to use an approach that involves the community as a partner and by extension ensures that the context of the research is front and centre. Linkages between knowledge and the context are also emphasized since this project takes the form of a case study in which the community is involved in the collection and analysis of data and the knowledge gained is fed back into the on-going development, evaluation and monitoring of institutional programming. As a result, I believe that the level of reliability of the data is increased since a wider spectrum of project participants observe and comment on the process beyond the principal researcher. The participatory nature of the project also ensures validity since it has been deemed of use by the
community involved: the Kativik School Board and the teachers and professionals who have participated in interviews to validate the concepts explored.

Through this participatory approach, two project activities were developed in partnership with the Kativik School Board: a teacher training course and a teacher survey. Both of these activities explored the cultural role of Inuit teachers. The teacher training course attempted to create a third space in which decolonization as a concept could be discussed and participants could take part in a self-reflective exercise to explore the cultural influences on their own practice. This course represented a one-time offering to teachers. In order to further explore the place of Inuit culture in the classroom, further efforts at developing third spaces must be developed to allow teachers to continue the reflection process. These spaces must be developed with a long-term view in mind and be cognisant of the local protocols for access to Inuit knowledge and influence of participants and the types of technology used. At the same time, responses from the teacher survey indicate that Inuit culture is being taught in classrooms, but further integration of Inuit culture and language is deemed necessary by teacher respondents. In the end, results from both the teacher training course and the teachers themselves clearly point to the need for further development of Inuit participation in research contexts so that Inuit can expand decolonizing work within their classrooms and the teacher education system as a whole.

How is one then to support capacity building that ensures that Inuit can lead future efforts to decolonize their own classrooms? In short, I have taken the advice of Walton (2010) who states that I and other Qallunaaq researchers should “get out of the way”. This statement is similar to what Kovach (2009) recognizes as an effective strategy for non-Indigenous educators working with Indigenous students: a strategy in which non-Indigenous researchers are “able to step up and step back at the right time” (p. 166). I focus on this term because I believe that it eloquently describes how my role as researcher and teacher educator should diminish while the role of my Inuit counterparts should increase. Fundamentally, this means that there needs to be more Inuit researchers to take on explorations of culture in the classroom, more Inuit teacher educators to develop courses that expand dialogue around decolonization of classrooms and more Inuit academics to ensure that Inuit epistemology and ontology are given voice in the fields of education and in the academy in general. This view is supported by Berger (2009) who states that “the power of Inuit working together…holds great promise for moving schooling toward Inuit ways and values” (p. 67) and further articulated by Walton (2010) who suggests that:
"When Inuit are working on their own together as a group and Inuit are leading the process, things start to change, it looks different, it feels different and it sounds different. I think that is where the future lies” (Personal communication, August 31, 2010).

The model offered in the results section articulates how third spaces can be developed that allow for dialogue on Inuit culture. It must be stressed however that this model is outlined as a simplification as put forth by a non-Indigenous researcher and thus must be taken, not as a definite description of the circumstances surrounding a context-based decolonizing process, but as a contribution to a dialogue that is well established and on-going among Indigenous academics, Inuit educators and researchers alike.

The ultimate goal of my research is to explore how third spaces can be initiated through which Inuit can build decolonizing cultural competency and construct culture-specific responses to colonial structures within their education system, especially through an Inuititut-speaking environment. It is the notion of developing third spaces using an Indigenous language such as Inuititut as the language for dialogue that I wish to emphasize. By doing so, Indigenous orthology (language) as it is interconnected with ontologies and epistemologies are privileged. I draw attention to the actual language used in third spaces in an attempt to highlight its importance in contrast to the observed lack of discussion about the place of language within contemporary literature about third space such as in Soja (1996) or in Kagle (2007) and Clark (2008). As a result of conducting this research, I conclude that attempts to create third spaces within teacher education programs in Indigenous communities will be more effective when they take into account potential limiting factors such as the role of authority, the use of Indigenous languages, and the location, timing and use of technologies within the third space. Within third space dialogue that specifically focuses on concepts of Indigenous culture, the place of language becomes an even more significant factor. More specifically in the Inuit context, I suggest that the creation of an Inuititut speaking environment is a prerequisite for entering dialogue about the re-conceptualization of Inuit culture. By emphasizing language in this way, language becomes a pathway through which to reconstruct academic spaces and avoid what Ladson-Billings and Donner (2008) see as the “complicity of [academic] intellectuals with the current social order” (p. 79). Third spaces that use language in this way in effect become “borderline engagements of cultural difference” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 3) that are Indigenous-controlled.
The reality in Nunavik is that few opportunities exist for the development of these types of spaces beyond the teacher education program of the Kativik School Board. The progression from the current status quo to the development of Indigenous-controlled third spaces described above suggests that Qallunaaq researchers, such as myself, may still have a supporting role in the process, but that we increasingly should be taking a backseat in decolonizing efforts that go beyond critique. In other words, we could be part of the community which discusses decolonization, but we should not lead this community as it begins to construct alternative discourses. Inuit teachers must take ownership over that process. This is similar to what Glennan et al. (2004) refer to in any educational change such that “deep changes in practice will not be sustained over long periods without ownership by teachers and others in the education system” (p. 30). This point ultimately represents one of the key personal lessons that I take away from having been involved in this research.

5.1 Third Spaces, Next Steps

My research project has taken place during a time when a number of important developments are occurring in Inuit education in Canada which I have had the opportunity to observe or take part in. For example, a number of ground-breaking events and programs are re-shaping the educational landscape in Inuit education today such as the National Summit on Inuit Education in 2007 and the continuation of promising post-secondary programs such Nunavut Sivuniksavut, the Akitsiraq Law School program and the Nunavut Master’s of Educational Leadership program. Efforts are also being taken to approach Inuit education on a national scale in Canada as seen in the National Strategy on Inuit Education released in 2011 by the national Inuit organization, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. This strategy lists a number of recommendations relevant to the topics discussed in this document such as the development of a “national initiative to promote post-secondary learning for Inuit including education programs that reflect Inuit language and culture” (ITK, 2011, p. 88). This recommendation specifically points to the need for increasing graduate and post graduate opportunities as well as the establishment of a northern university based on Inuit culture and language. The ITK strategy further recommends the establishment of a “national capacity for standards and applied research in Inuit education, such as a research institute with a university” (ITK, 2011, p. 91).
The examples mentioned above point to the importance of affecting change not only at the school level, but the territorial / provincial and national levels. Decolonization of Inuit education as a process in Canada demands inter-jurisdictional methods. Therefore, re-imaging education to more fully reflect Inuit culture and language is not just a challenge for the schools of Nunavik, but it is one faced by all Inuit regions and by all Indigenous people for that matter. As a result, useful ideas and efforts will be potentially drawn from across this spectrum.

Overall, this research project has attempted to support Inuit efforts to build a more appropriate education system. As drawn from a participatory process developed with Inuit teachers in Nunavik, the concepts of third space and decolonizing cultural competencies are articulated as a decolonizing approach to be expanded in Inuit teacher education. I believe that the present group of Inuit teacher trainers within the Kativik School Board system represents the group most likely and capable of taking on such a decolonizing approach. The establishment and long-term support of Inuititut-speaking research spaces/third spaces for use by Inuit teacher trainers is recommended to encourage the development of teacher trainers’ decolonizing cultural competencies and dialogue on the place of Inuit culture and language in the classroom. The initiation of such spaces and relevant teacher learning opportunities can support the professional development of this group such that as De Krom (2010) states “the cohort of Inuit instructors will only get stronger” (Personal communication, September 10, 2010).

Additionally, providing long-term support toward the development of Inuit-led third spaces can be offered through different pathways: both intracultural and intercultural. Recognizing as Dungeon and Fielder (2006) do that third spaces “cannot be manufactured in a formulaic way” (p. 407), one possible pathway these spaces can be initiated in an intracultural context is through Inuit organizations themselves. In particular, as the number of Inuit engaging in the academic community grows and especially as more Inuit become academics within the existing university system in Canada, they will be able to access critical research funds to build long-term research spaces and networks that are grounded in Inuit culture and language. This pathway is exemplified by the recommendations of the National Strategy on Inuit Education that point toward the development of graduate opportunities and research capacity that is Inuit-specific. Walton (2010) also speaks to the need for more Inuit scholars to take on this intracultural role by suggesting that:
“Until we get larger numbers of Inuit scholars, then we aren’t going to see a change. There needs to be individuals who are able to discuss theoretical issues. My experience is that people’s voices have been taken. Some Inuit educators lack voice and strong academic skills. Some are totally silenced” (Personal communication, August 31, 2010).

In response to what Walton (2010) views as the ‘taking of Inuit voices’ or what Jones and Jenkins (2008) similarly view as ‘consuming the indigene-colonizer hyphen’, non-Indigenous researchers must be wary if they are to be involved in the development of third spaces. These spaces would be inherently intercultural and dependent on “listening to, validating and engaging with each other’s personal narrative” (Dungeon & Fielder, 2006, p. 407). If done in this way, I surmise that third spaces can be initiated through joint research projects between Inuit and non-Inuit scholars as long as the principle of having research Inuit-specific and Inuit-led is maintained. Furthermore, I suggest that non-Inuit researchers can have a supporting role, especially in the initiation and funding stages of research spaces within the academic community. While limited in how much of a role I, as a non-Indigenous researcher, can have in capacity building among Inuit teachers or researchers, this form of support can alternatively include capacity building for non-Inuit researchers to better develop their awareness of their own epistemological and ontological biases and how these influence their work in Inuit contexts.

One mechanism through which this type of research and learning can increasingly take place is through the recently established Inuit Knowledge Centre (Inuit Qaujisarvingat). Initiated in 2010, this centre represents a new mechanism through which an Inuit-specific and Inuit-led research agenda can be achieved. The goal of this centre is to “bridge the gap between Inuit knowledge and western science — to provide the tools to help Inuit access the systems of western science and aid southern-based scientists to interact fully and appropriately in Inuit communities and with Inuit knowledge” (Inuit Qaujisarvingat, 2010). While it is too early to evaluate the outcomes of this initiative, it will be important to remain attentive to its future efforts.

In conclusion, I am drawn to a declaration of a decolonized Inuit classroom as described by Annahatak (2010):

“I’ve learned how to teach using Qalunaaq methods. But the real long-lasting things that I’ve learned that help the students in the long-term and even in the short-term are in the Inuit way; those hidden ways of being Inuk
in the classroom, being an Inuk teacher. “You have to know what counts and what doesn’t” (Personal communication, September 9, 2010).

Using similar words, Walton (2010) articulates this vision as one in which:

“Specific aspects in Inuit classrooms would have to reflect the Inuit way – the Inuit way of knowing, doing and being on a daily basis continuously” (Personal communication, August 31, 2010).

Ultimately, I believe that the quotations above offer us a clear path forward in relation to the fundamental goal of decolonizing Nunavik classrooms. This path is through the building of spaces to explore the place of culture in the classroom or uncovering ‘those hidden ways of being Inuk in the classroom’ and that efforts to uncover and articulate those hidden ways should be Inuit-specific and Inuit-led. And as a result, it is this goal that should ultimately guide educational research and action in third spaces in the future.
References


Nuttall, M. (1998). Critical Reflections on Knowledge Gathering in the Arctic. In L-J. Dorais, M. Nagy & L. Müller-Wille (Eds.), *Aboriginal Environmental Knowledge in the North* (pp. 21-35). Québec: GÉTIC, Université Laval,


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### Question 1
Are you male or female?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Question 2
At which level do you presently teach?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten Classroom Teacher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Classroom Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary Classroom Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture Class Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inuititut Language Specialist Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Question 3
How many years have you been teaching in a classroom?

### Question 4
What level of teacher training have you completed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Year 2</td>
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<td>Year 3</td>
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<td>Year 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 5 or more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completed Bachelor of Education</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Question 5**
Do you feel that you teach enough Inuit culture in your class?

Circle your answer

Yes

No

**Question 6**
How much do you use information from the following sources in all your classroom teaching? Fill in the appropriate boxes with a √.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Elders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student’s parents</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books</td>
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<td>Videos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Question 7**
From where do you get your information about Inuit culture that you use in your classroom teaching? Fill in the appropriate boxes with a √.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yourself</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Elders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student’s parents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher training courses</td>
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<td>Books</td>
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<td>Videos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
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<td>Your family</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other – please specify</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Question 8
How often do you use information that you learn from your Inuit cultural skills course in teacher training in your classroom teaching?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Question 9
How often do you use the following teaching configurations in your teaching? Fill in the appropriate boxes with a \( √ \).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students at individual desks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple students at large tables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student’s desks in groups</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together at one big table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together on the floor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions on the land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question 10
Do you feel that the following teaching configurations are well suited to teach Inuit cultural knowledge?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students at individual desks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple students at large tables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student’s desks in groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together at one big table</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students and teacher sitting together on the floor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions on the land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question 11
Overall, how much do you integrate Inuit cultural knowledge into your classroom teaching?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

159
Question 12
How much do you integrate Inuit cultural knowledge into the following classroom subject areas that you teach? Fill in the appropriate boxes with a √.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
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<td>Science</td>
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<td>History</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Education and Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art and Crafts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question 13
How much of the following Inuit cultural knowledge do you teach with your class? Fill in the appropriate boxes with a √.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inuit Values and Beliefs</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships to People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships to the Land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationships to Animals</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Medicine and Healing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laws and Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family and Elders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Names and Naming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other – please specify</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question 14
How much of the following Inuit cultural activities do you teach with your students? Fill in the appropriate boxes with a √.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Infrequently</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soft Crafts (eg. sewing, making hides)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Hard Crafts (eg. carving, making tools)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inuit games</td>
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<td>Inuit stories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside Activities (eg. fishing and hunting)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Question 15**

Do you feel that the following things in your classroom happen more in an Inuit way or Qalunnaat way?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Inuit</th>
<th>Qalunnaat</th>
<th>Same</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tone of your voice speaking with students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rhythm of your speech</td>
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<td>Students’ turns at talking in class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grouping of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation of students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student movement in the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher – student relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher comments to students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student ways of learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluating students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other – Please specify</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2 Copy of 2010 key stakeholder interview questions

Question 1
Based on your experience, how would you describe the cultural role of Inuit classroom teachers?

Question 2
How does Inuit culture influence teaching methods and content in the classroom?

Question 3
Which specific aspects of classrooms in Inuit communities should decolonizing efforts be applied?

Question 4
As part of this research, a questionnaire was conducted in Inuititut with a small sample of Inuit teachers in Nunavik. The following two tables are drawn from this questionnaire. Do you have any comments or interpretations of these results? Figure 9 and Figure 13 from above text provided in document to interviewees

Question 5
As a result of this research, the term ‘decolonizing cultural competencies’ is being used to describe the skills and knowledge that teachers have to decolonize their teaching practice. Do you have any comments or interpretations of this term?


111. Udd, Anssi-Pekka (2010) Pedagogikan konstruktivistinen orientaatio opettajaksi opiskelijoiden kokemana

112. Manninen, Sari (2010) "Iso, vahva, rohkee – kaikenlaista": maskulinisuudet, poikien valtahierarkiat ja väkivalta koulussa


116. Bluemink, Johanna (2011) Virtually face to face: enriching collaborative learning through multiplayer games

117. Suorsa, Teemu (2011) Keskustelu ja myötäelämän fenomenologinen tulkinta

118. Strauss, Hannah (2011) For the Good of Society: public participation in the siting of nuclear and hydro power projects in Finland


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