Ecosystems of Teaching and Learning: An Ethnography of Iñupiaq Song and Dance

by

David E. K. Smith

Bachelor of Arts, Bates College, 2014

Master of Arts, Middlebury Institute of International Studies, 2017

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

School of Education in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2023

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This dissertation was presented

by

David E. K. Smith

It was defended on

April 4, 2023

and approved by

Dr. Michael G. Gunzenhauser, Professor, Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy

Dr. Noah Theriault, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Carnegie Mellon University

Dr. Sean Asikłuk Topkok, Associate Professor, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks

Dissertation Director: Dr. Maureen K. Porter, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Foundations, Organizations, and Policy

Ecosystems of Teaching and Learning: An Ethnography of Iñupiaq Song and Dance

David E. K. Smith, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2023

There is a jarring dissonance between Alaskan educational policy and Alaska Native ways of teaching and learning, a divide especially visible in how cultures interact with nature. As policymakers reconcile the colonial history of education in Alaska, they should look to how education has always happened among Alaska Native people. One foundational Native educational practice is song and dance. This dissertation is an ethnography of Iñupiaq Alaska Native song and dance, drawing from decolonial participatory action research and extensive interviews of Iñupiaq Elders, educators, and youth. These groups are what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as communities of practice: groups that learn situated within a shared interest. Exploring how teaching and learning happen in Indigenous arts-based communities of practice, I (1) reconceptualize Wenger's (2002) community of practice to allow for Iñupiaq understandings of animals and the land as integral interlocutors in the learning process, creating what I term an *ecosystem of practice*; (2) outline what is taught and learned including cultural heritage, practical skills, and values; and (3) investigate how the arts can be used as a culturally responsive pedagogical model for addressing pressing social issues. I find that Alaska Native song and dance functions as a holistic pedagogical strategy that simultaneously teaches and intergenerationally transmits critical cultural knowledge while fostering a sustainable ecosystem through engaging with all teachers and learners, the human and other-than-human. As an expansion into the growing field of arts-based culturally responsive pedagogy, this research has important implications for

educational policy across cultures and borders, through better understanding the transmission of

Indigenous knowledge and elucidating the relationship between education, humanity, and nature.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Preface

To my family:

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and inspiration of my parents. Mom and Dad, thank you both for setting an example to follow. Matt and Sijo, thank you for always being there for advice and making ridiculous faces. Grandma and Grandpa, thank you for supporting my lifelong education, being an inspiration, and stoking my curiosity. To the rest of the Smiths, Kancewicks and Nixes, thank you for always believing in me as a person and a scholar.

To my mentors:

Maureen, thank you for helping set me on this path. How you weave people into your life and family and become invested in theirs is an inspiration to me. I cannot thank you enough, both personally and professionally. Noah, thank you for always being available to lend an ear and a mind. Mike, thank you for supporting me in all phases of my work. Asikłuk, quyanaqpak for your constant support and guidance in helping me navigate the Alaska Native dance and academic landscapes. Keith, thank you for helping nurture my research and writing skills. Henry, thank you for your mentorship. The best ideas and discussions happen while hiking. Fred, thank you for your constructive and thoughtful feedback in finishing this project. Anne, thank you for inspiring me to continue in academia.

To my friends and colleagues:

Max, thank you for reading and giving me feedback on every single word of this dissertation. As a friend, you have helped get me through these last few years. As a colleague, you

have made me a better writer. I do, however, continue to struggle with commas. To my extended writing family, thank you all for your feedback and encouragement.

To the Alaska Native dance community:

I want to thank deeply and profoundly all of you who talked, shared, and laughed with (or at) me. Quyanaqpak to the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage and the Taġiuġmiut Dancers. Greg, without your continued support and introductions I would not have gotten half as far. Roy, your artistry inspires me.

To my funders:

Thank you to the National Academy of Education, the Spencer Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the University of Pittsburgh Nationality Rooms for funding my research.

To my other-than-human teachers:

I am also grateful for the other-than-human support for my research and writing: the mountain bowl of the Meadow Creek Valley where over half of this dissertation was conceived and ruminated upon, both forks of Eagle River and their respective valleys, and Ella, hiking companion, supreme conversationalist, and the greatest of all work dogs.

To Melissa:

Melissa, I would not have even started this journey without you. I owe you thanks for every aspect of this dissertation—even the term ecosystem of practice is yours. Without your love, support, editorial guidance, and ability to help me order and structure my thoughts I would still only have a blank page. Thank you. I love you.

1.0 Introduction

The steady heartbeat of the sealskin drums is made visible by a dancer in a bright teal summer parka. The pulsing and consistent rhythm is emphasized by bent knees and strong shoulders as he rows with confidence and force to the opening lyrics of "Ooo've'look Pook'took'qwee'look". The Iñupiaq words are stretched with the starting syllables of each phrase moving quickly and the ending syllables held over multiple drumbeats. After rowing his audience out to sea, the dancer contracts inwards and motions upward with his hands directly in front of his body, depicting bubbles rising to the surface. He has fallen into the water, and as the bubbles climb to the surface, he puts his hand over his nose to protect it briefly before spreading his arms outward, treading water. As the dancer works to keep his head above water, once again the singers share the refrain "Ooo've'look Pook'took'qwee'look," or in English, "children do not float". Treading water in the frigid arctic climate, however, is often a futile endeavor as the hypothermia sets in and the dancer slips below the surface again, bubbles marking his submersion. But all is not lost as the lyrics shift to "Ooo'vaa! Knee'elk'sulk'poke," and with outstretched arms the dancer is handed a life jacket. Arms now comfortably bobbing out to the side, the dancer floats with head above water through the end of the song.

As thunderous applause reverberates around the Big Dipper Ice Arena in Fairbanks, Alaska, the audience at the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics calls for a repeated encore. The dancer grins happily out at the audience as the drums begin again and the first lines of the "Float Coat" song draw him back to rowing his canoe. Listening in the stands, I find myself thinking back to the first time I heard this particular song, a moment that brought me back home to Alaska and ultimately here to this arena.

It was an email from my mother with the subject line "Have you seen this?" Curious, I opened the email to find a YouTube link telling the story of the "Float Coat" song with a full performance. Reeling back from the computer, I experienced an almost visceral reaction. There are two distinct reasons I felt such a strong reaction. First, my primary research interest is transformative musical traditions. I have traveled to geographically and culturally diverse Indigenous communities to understand the different ways music is used within education. In Bolivia, learning the charango from a Quechua musician, I played along as his daughter sang the Quechua alphabet. On an island in Lake Victoria, I learned traditional drum rhythms and watched a friend from the more urban Kampala reconnect with his culture through dance. Near the Boudhanath Stupa in Kathmandu, I was taught how to play the Nepalese sarangi as part of a larger lesson on how animals are used in the community. In Germany, I listened as a rap group mixed hip hop with Plattdeutsch to help the endangered dialect survive by engaging youth listeners. Now, here was an example of the exact phenomenon that sparks my passion and curiosity coming from the place I still call home.

The second reason I gazed stupefied at my computer screen is fundamental to my identity, the song is working to address the cause of death of my namesake. My middle name is Elikak, a name that means "one who stands by your side." A close Yup'ik Eskimo family friend asked that my parents name me in honor of her brother who had recently drowned. The Yup'ik people believe that loved ones are reincarnated in those who are named after them. She calls me brother. Had Elikak worn a life jacket, a safety tool that wasn't a part of Native life at the time of his death and is still underutilized today, we might have lived at the same time.

The best way I can think of to describe my reaction to my first viewing—a feeling that persisted across subsequent viewings immediately afterward—is gut-wrenching. I do not mean

this in its traditional definition of appalling or unpleasant, but to say that I felt as though someone put a hook into my gut and physically wrenched me back toward Alaska. I knew deeply and profoundly in that moment that I needed to honor the meaning of my name and stand by the side of the Alaska Native groups creating and performing these songs and dances.

Returning to the present I watch two Native children, I would guess to be around 10 years old and wearing jeans and graphic t-shirts with cartoon characters, grinning ear to ear while doing the bubble motion along with the dancer on the floor of the arena. Gregory Tungwenuk Nothstine, one of the originators of the "Float Coat" song ends the performance by shouting in English, "Kids always wear your float coats," an unofficial lyric of the song, as every time I have heard it performed it ends with this English encouragement. With the dance performance having come to an end, the bleachers in front of me clear. As the two children run off weaving through the crowd, I hear one of them yell/sing to the other "Ooo'vee'look Pook'took'qwee'look".

The impact I witnessed in this moment is the inspiration and motivation for this dissertation. In the following chapters I explore the educational function and importance of Alaska Native song and dance. Previous study of Alaska Native song and dance groups and traditions has focused on a wide variety of ethnomusicological and anthropological understandings (e.g., John, 2010; Senungetuk, 2017; Williams, 1997). Limited investigation exists, however, focusing explicitly on exploring how teaching and learning happen within these groups. Thus, the research question guiding my inquiry is:

How do teaching and learning happen in an Indigenous arts-based community of practice?

By answering this question, I connect Indigenous pedagogical approaches and community of practice theory. Throughout this process I look to unpack the nature of teaching and learning in this complex cultural context by examining the role of other-than-human actors. My findings

transcend the specific context of the Iñupiaq song and dance groups I work with to illuminate culturally responsive pedagogical approaches, arts-based ways of transmitting culture and addressing social problems, as well as further defining and reconceptualizing community of practice theory.

I place this study at the confluence of several key strands of scholarship: (1) research on decolonizing the Alaskan education system, (2) music education for social change, (3) expanding upon community of practice theory, and (4) anthropological explorations of Indigenous wisdom. This framework combines research in the fields of Indigenous studies, environmental education, music education, ethnomusicology, and anthropology showing how these distinct and diverse fields can all move toward the same place. A confluence is where rivers show they are interconnected, sharing the same water as they flow together toward the sea. It is a gathering place for people, animals, water, and land. I conceptualize my research within this moment and place of merging, weaving together the varied and often meandering theoretical strands I investigate to provide a framework for reconceptualizing a culturally responsive, arts-based pedagogical approach.

1.1 Educational Oppression in Alaska

This framework must address the deep and problematic history of colonialism in Alaska. To briefly clarify the use of Alaska Native over Indigenous peoples, the term predominates in the state because of its legal use in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The collective term references the various Indigenous peoples who populate the state, including the Iñupiaq, Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan, and Southeast Coastal Indian peoples. The Alaska Native Studies Council

Writing Style Guide (Topkok, 2018a) recommends using each group's name for itself when speaking of a single cultural group.

The history of the Western education of Alaska Native people follows the same deeply colonial and oppressive pattern as much of the United States. Education in rural Alaska shifted dramatically following the acquisition of Alaska by the United States from Russia in 1867 to become a tool for "assimilating" Alaska Natives into Western society through "English Only" education (Freed & Samson, 2004). Conscripted into schools and required to speak only English in an attempt to "civilize," Alaska Native families were threatened with violence and the withholding of resources if they did not comply (Williams, 2011). This official attitude is shown as recently as 1967 in a State of Alaska Regional Secondary School System report saying, "Residence in urban areas appears to accelerate the breakdown of old village patterns, patterns which may retard the development of rural folk into a disciplined and reliable workforce" (State of Alaska Regional Secondary School System, 1967, p. IV-9-12).

These policies have had a ripple effect that still affects the way education is conducted in Alaska Native villages. Dauenhauer (1997) expresses this longevity, writing, "Irreparable damage has been done to the mental health of the Native community and individual. As a teacher, I have to deal with the impact of this every day, and it makes me angry" (p. 44). The rage against the effects of Western colonial education is also felt by Williams (2011) as she refers to what she calls "neo-colonial melancholy", in which the Alaska educational system actively negates Indigenous identity and mutes the Alaska Native voice. My research works against this silencing and erasure, aiming to help illuminate Alaska Native voices and practices.

As Alaskan educational policymakers reconcile this highly problematic past and work to eradicate these structures, they should look towards the way that education has always happened

among Alaska Native people. Learning happened before Alaska Native children were forced into schools under threat of withholding food and resources. Rob Picou, the superintendent of the Bering Strait School District, points to this oversight writing, "there's a distinction between an education and school. Education is what Native people have been doing for their children since the beginning of time. School has been what has been imposed on people from outside. We need to get in the business of education again" (Garland, 2013, p. 22). The distinction Picou makes, echoed by other Alaska Native scholars (John, 2010; Okakok, 1989; Ongtooguk, 2010), has not been represented over the last 150 years of educational policy in Alaska. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) argue that the necessary curricular change must be place-based, grounded in the local culture, and the Indigenous knowledge systems need to be documented, articulated, and validated. This push for educational reform to challenge colonial structures in Indigenous contexts is not unique to Alaska; scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and activists in Indigenous communities around the world have argued for culturally relevant pedagogical approaches (e.g., Cajete, 1994; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018). I place my scholarship as part of this refocusing effort to help document, articulate, and validate these Indigenous understandings of knowledge and methods of transmission and ensure that the learning is relevant and considerate of Alaska Native culture.

1.2 Indigenous Music and Dance

Music and dance in Alaska Native communities are used as one of these key educative experiences, and as such were subject to policies that restricted or outright banned Alaska Native cultural expressions (Williams, 1997). The restrictions were compounded by the influx of

6

Christian missionaries who viewed song and dance as worship of false idols and banned singing and dancing in many Alaska Native villages to "civilize" and convert the population (Johnston, 1975; Qassataq, 2020). As a result, from the early 1900s until the 1970s, Alaska Native dance was often a hidden practice or not practiced at all. In many communities these bans persisted until very recently, with the town of Noorvik only ending their ban in 2009 (Yack, 2009). During this time many songs and dances were lost along with the educational knowledge they carried.

Most research on Alaska Native dance focuses on exploring the forms, practices, and outcomes through an ethnomusicological or historical lens (e.g., Johnston, 1975, 1980, 1992; Kaplan, 1988; Kingston, 1999; Wallen, 1990). Dangeli (2015) shows how Indigenous dance directly confronts settler coloniality and reaffirms Native sovereignty through what he terms "dancing sovereignty", the self-determination carried out through performances that expand and affirm the laws of the performers' Nation. In one of the most comprehensive explorations of Alaska Native dance, John (2010) identifies 20 Yup'ik dance types and categories, describing them as an essential part of the Yup'ik social system, and connecting them to the Yup'ik yuuyaraq, their epistemic worldview. Other critical studies have framed music and dance practices in Alaska Native communities as a symbol of cultural identity (Sakakibara, 2010; Williams, 1997), as an expression of individual identity (Willett, 2017), as a way to maintain connection to ancestry (Senungetuk, 2017), as a critical social and emotional tool for expression (Ikuta, 2010), and as a way to share knowledge for healing and wellness (Qassataq, 2020; Topkok & Green, 2016).

While many of these scholars brush the borders of the relationship between education and Indigenous music and dance, there is limited direct engagement. Outside of Alaska, there is a growing body of work relating the two fields. Indigenous arts practices have been linked to cultural transmission (Colín, 2014; Lidskog, 2017); conservation, coexistence, and community education

(Kallio & Westerlund, 2016); identity formation and socioemotional development (Shelemay, 2006); and language learning and persistence (Campbell, 2012). Writing about a similarly colonial context, West African studies scholars have developed pedagogical strategies for dance focused on combating the effects of colonialism through affirming Indigenous body practice and knowledge (Banks, 2007), fostering inclusion and building community (Mabingo, 2020), and reflection (Mabingo et al., 2020). Weaving these strands and fields together, I push back on the colonial history of education in Alaska by connecting international understandings of music, dance, and education with Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching to fill the critical gap in research into arts-based pedagogical approaches among Alaska Native communities.

1.3 Communities of Practice

Most arts-based learning in these communities, however, happens outside of the formalized Western school system. As a framing theory to explore how teaching and learning happen outside of the formal school system—and have happened for generations upon generations—I draw on, critique, and expand Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice (CoP) theory.

The academic concept of a community of practice is a response to John Dewey's (1916) call for educators to find the middle ground between "academic and aloof knowledge" and "a hard, narrow, and merely 'practical' practice" (p. 205). CoP theory was born at the intersection of education and social anthropology from Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave (1991), respectively, in their book Situated Learning, first describing a CoP as a "group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (p. 17). Drawing from Vygotskian (1978) psychology, which emphasizes how the mind cannot be

8

understood in isolation from society, Lave and Wenger place learning as a result of the activity, context, and culture in which it is situated. This is a clear conceptual shift away from traditional understandings of knowledge as true justified belief.

Justification of belief and the source of this justification remains a critical and contentious discourse. Internalist and externalists disagree on how beliefs and knowledge are created and justified. Feldman and Conee (2001) argue the internalist side of knowledge justification, claiming that only that which is directly or introspectively available can justify beliefs and create knowledge. This individualist, cognitive, evidence-based approach emerging from Piagetian psychology places the burden of knowledge on the individual. The counterargument of externalists claims that factors other than those which are specific to an individual can also justify individual beliefs (Goldman, 2009). While this allows for a broader range of interpretations, it still places the onus on the individual to be the mediating source of what is and is not knowledge. Under these conceptions, knowledge is either an object independent of human action or embedded in an individual (BonJour & Sosa, 2003).

The theory of situated learning, however, contends that knowledge is embedded in a community. This places the justification for believing something as emergent from interactions. Instead of defining knowledge as justified true belief, or justified belief through internal and/or external factors, situated learning places knowledge as justified belief constructed by shared practice. This perspective views knowledge as a public good that is socially generated, maintained, and exchanged within emergent communities of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Under this conception, formal learning spaces no longer hold exclusive rights to knowledge production and dissemination, as entwining learning with context opens all interactions to become potential learning spaces. Important to note is that situated learning still

applies to formal learning spaces such as schools but asks educators to consider factors beyond the curriculum such as the potential influence of school culture on learning (Suchman, 1987).

Situated Learning (1991) introduces CoP theory by looking at how learning happens in context, specifically in communities. Lave and Wenger describe the process of learning through "legitimate peripheral participation" in communities, focusing on the interplay between novices and experts within a CoP and how these interactions foster identity formation. As a new approach to learning, CoP theory expanded out of education and anthropology to be applied across numerous academic disciplines including organizational studies (Gherardi, 2009), disaster relief (Miles, Burton, & Kang, 2019), public policy (Bicchi, 2013), music (Snell & Hodgetts, 2007), art (Noble, 2021), and architecture (Green et al., 2013).

Through this expansion the theory began to cloud as the different fields redefined and focused on different pieces of a CoP to suit their individual purposes. Wenger, as one of the founders of the theory, exacerbated the muddied waters by swirling new theories on top of the original explanation in Situated Learning. The shift begins in Wenger's second book explicitly titled Communities of Practice (1998), looking more closely at the composition and characteristics of a CoP. In a 2014 interview, Wenger described this shift saying: "In the first phase of theory development, we took the concept of community of practice for granted, and we theorized learning as moving into the community. In the 1998 book, I really switch that: I take learning for granted and then I say, 'If people learn together, the result is a community of practice'" (Omidvar & Kislov, 2014, p. 269). Wenger expanded on this application of his theory in 2002 with McDermott and Snyder, further describing boundaries and identities within and across CoPs. In Landscapes of Practice (2015), the newly Wenger-Trayner continues beyond looking at a single CoP to explore the intricacies in interaction between CoPs, what he terms a landscape of practice (LoP). Whereas

the CoP model involves a journey from outsider to insider, the LoP model involves a journey between communities. This model, however, struggles to explain how learning can happen alone, independent of other humans.

Freire (1970) frames his understanding of education saying, "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (p. 72). Using the three-part set of actors in the end of Freire's definition—in the world, with the world, and with each other—I argue that situated learning and community of practice theory address the inquiry pursued in the world and with each other but omit the learning that happens with the world.

1.4 Learning with the World

In contrast to the predominantly Western perspective on knowledge detailed in the previous section, many Indigenous epistemologies decentralize humanity. Weenie (2009) places the source of Indigenous knowledge as sacred stories, songs, ceremonies, and teachings from communities and Elders. This is an epistemology that relies on the connection between the community and its spiritual beliefs and traditions supporting what Cajete (1994) terms an 'ecologically-informed consciousness'. Within this conception, the community is a sacred place, a center for teaching and learning supported by every community member toward the betterment of the community as a whole. What comprises a community, however, extends beyond an individual, a family, or a village as whole, to encompass relationships between people, plants, animals, natural actors, and phenomena; more concisely described by a Lakota metaphor, 'we are all related' (Cajete, 1994). This way of knowing requires appreciation, understanding, and empathy of the natural (Suzuki &

Knudtson, 1992). Cajete details the source of American Indian knowledge through this ecological

lens:

> American Indians symbolically recognized their relationship to plants, animals, stones,
> trees, mountains, rivers, lakes, streams, and a host of other living entities. Through seeking,
> making, sharing, and celebrating these natural relationships, they came to perceive
> themselves as living in a sea of relationships... With this awareness, tempered by intimate
> relationships with various environments over a thousand or more generations, Indian
> people accumulated and applied their ecological knowledge. (p. 74)

The longevity of this theory of knowledge and its view that knowledge can be received directly

from other living and non-living entities, both human and other-than-human, contrasts sharply with

Wenger's anthropocentric Western epistemology. Pierotti and Wildcat (2000) place Traditional

Ecological Knowledge in this same framework, including all aspects of physical space as part of

a community, including animals, plants, and landforms.

In discussing this collection of entities, scholars have differed in chosen terminology. Non-

human, more-than-human, other-than-human, posthuman, anti-human, and transhuman are all

used loosely and often interchangeably in discussions of posthumanism in the humanities and

social sciences. I find that non-human, the simplest and most commonly used term (e.g., Nash,

2005; Rosiek, Snyder, & Pratt, 2020; Soper, 1995), presents a fixed and flawed dichotomy of what

is and is not human. Ecosystems are diverse and interrelated and do not rely only on interactions

between humans and non-humans. More-than-human, a term that often attributed to David Abram

(1996) that has grown considerably in recent popularity (e.g., de La Bellacasa, 2017; Lynch &

Mannion, 2021; Jukes & Reeves, 2020; Whatmore, 2006) expands this dichotomy to allow for a

more multitudinal understanding of these interactions, but it adds a level of hierarchy to the

relationships between the human and the more-than-human by insisting that one is more than the

other. I use the term other-than-human to describe a collection of entities and allow for the

description of the specific ecosystem to create the necessary hierarchy or lack of hierarchy as

pertains to the individual context. This framework allows for the human to be interchangeable with any other entity, as my research could address the raven and the other-than-raven. Other-than-human, while less prominent than non-human and more-than-human, is often used in Indigenous research (e.g., Higgins, 2014; Howey, 2020; Lien & Pálsson, 2017; Virtanen, Apurinã, & Facundes, 2021).

Regardless of terminology, environmental education scholars have long pushed toward the concept of nature as teacher (Ford & Blenkinsop, 2018; Hall & Clover, 1997). Indigenous education scholars place land as a requirement for Indigenous education, a stance succinctly summarized by Simpson (2014) as 'Indigenous education is not Indigenous or education from within our intellectual traditions unless it comes through the land' (p. 9). Land-based learning centers Indigenous land-based perspectives, counteracting entrenched settler colonial perspectives of the role of the land in education (Bang et al., 2014). Cajete (1994) notes that in Indigenous education the "teacher was not always human but could be an animal, plant, or other natural entity or force" (p. 211). By including other-than-human entities as potential and perhaps essential members of a community of practice, learning can happen communally without another human being. A community of practice can exist between different environmental factors and an individual or groups of individuals.

This learning *with* the world fundamentally reimagines the centrality of human actors within a community of practice and places added emphasis on other-than-human actors as members of the learning process. The inclusion of other-than-human actors, however, signals a significant departure from Wenger's (1998) original conception. He places anything other-than-human as passive resources to be taken from and used. Although this anthropocentric perspective may appear plausible in corporate environments, as a general description of human learning it is

contextually and culturally biased. The delineation of anything other-than-human as a resource becomes increasingly problematic in the settler colonial tradition of viewing Indigenous peoples as less-than-human, and thus a resource to be abused for material gain (Hughes & Highwater, 1983).

Indigenous Alaskan knowledge relies heavily on interacting with and understanding natural forces. Yup'ik Elders view animals and natural actors such as rivers, trees, and the ocean as co-inhabitants of a sentient world, other-than-human persons responsive to thoughts, words, and deeds (Fienup-Riordan, 2020). Animals are said to have "ears through the ground" and will not come to hunters who disrespect them. Athabascans express a similar relation with fish who are only caught when they choose to give themselves to the fisherman (Kofinas et al., 2010). Canadian Inuit take the very shape of the land to be an indication that it is teaching them where to look for caribou or where to be wary of wolves (Raffan, 1993). Alaska Native Elders and community members from across the unique and varied communities and cultures consistently describe what Lave and Wenger would identify as a novice-expert relationship between a human and the environment around them as it teaches through extended and deep ecological roots how to live. Practice within this community includes learning how to fish by watching a bear standing in a stream and understanding river patterns by watching ice flow through eddies in a glacial river. The bear and the river are certainly experts in these fields in much the same way an expert fisherman may teach a novice how to tie a lure in a specific manner. This perception is not unique to Indigenous groups in Alaska. The many roles of the other-than-human members as active participants of these learning ecosystems have been illustrated through scholarship in a plethora of Indigenous settings including among the Haudenosaunee (Kimmerer, 2013), the Cree and Metis (Styres, 2011), the Runa (Kohn, 2013), and the Māori (Manning & Harrison, 2018).

14

This conception shows education as situated and communally derived, similar to Lave and Wenger's (1991) conception of a community of practice, but it diverges by considering other-than-human participants to be key actors within the community. This is a significant gap in how CoP theory can be considered and used.

1.5 Alaska Native Modernity

The confluence of these many different rivers of scholarship comes through exploring how Alaska Native dance and music ecosystems of practice function as key educational experiences. These experiences draw on traditional ecological knowledge but are also expressions of modernity. Senungetuk (2019) elucidates the Iñupiaq word *pakmami* which describes "something that is modern and of the present… regardless of the era or point in time" (p. xiv). Alaska Native dance and music exists in the present while invoking past and future generations and interacting with issues that are, were, and will continue to be pressing.

In the beginning of this introduction, I painted a picture of a dancer in a traditional parka performing in front of drummers hitting seal skin drums. What was omitted from this description, for the vain hope of dramatic imagery, was that this all took place under harsh florescent lights on the rubber floor of a converted hockey arena in the midst of a global pandemic with over half of the attending audience, and many of the performers, wearing disposable masks. The stitching on the parka was sewn with an electric sewing machine, and it covered a plain white t-shirt and the top of cargo shorts. Even looking at the drums, only half were made of seal skin with the other half made from stretched airplane canvas, a material that is cheaper to come by and easier to maintain but still retains the same sound. But none of this makes the performance any less Native

nor any more modern. The content of the songs and dances themselves is similarly seemingly contradictory. The "Float Coat" song itself is particularly emblematic of this amalgam: an arts-based, place-based, Indigenous, traditional, and modern educational experience.

1.6 Outline

In this dissertation, I explore teaching and learning in Iñupiaq ecosystems of practice. The dissertation is written as a three-article dissertation, meaning that each of the three body chapters (Chapters 1-3) is written to be targeted and submitted to an academic journal. This structure requires the articles to follow the specific formatting requirements of the journals and results in slight amounts of repeated text as portions of the introduction, literature review, and methodology sections are reproduced and adapted to fit the necessary sections of a journal article. Material that I find to be important that does not fit in the limitations imposed by the journals I have added as supplemental material at the end of each chapter, which will not be included when the articles are submitted for publication. Each body chapter also has an introductory page indicating and justifying the intended journal of publication.

I begin by examining the methodological approach of this extended ethnographic study. I demonstrate how I compiled a rich and complex data set through participatory action research including interviews with Elders, dance group members, and local community members as well as participatory observation. This ethnographic work is grounded in decolonial research methodologies with a focus on reciprocity and ensuring the work has clear benefit to the research communities. I also draw on multispecies ethnography to include other-than-human participants in the research through engaging directly with animals and the land. I then discuss the data analysis

process using iterative coding cycles and NVivo qualitative data analysis software. Finally, I illustrate my methodology for how I choose to present this dissertation, focusing on the importance of Indigenous storywork.

Chapter 1 reconceptualizes community of practice theory to place other-than-human actors, including animals and the land, as integral interlocutors, thus expanding from a community of practice to an ecosystem of practice. I ground this new theory through a structural example of what an ecosystem of practice looks like in an Alaska Native context, drawing on Alaska Fish and Game interviews from 1991 of nine Gwich'in Elders looking into hunting and fishing practices and recent interviews I conducted in 2021 with two of these same Elders. This expansion from community of practice to ecosystem of practice has lasting and important implications for understanding the transmission of indigenous knowledge and the relationship between humanity and nature. This chapter as an article was written for and published by *Environmental Education Research*.

In Chapter 2, I examine the educational properties of the Iñupiaq songs and dances. After an exploration of the complex history of Iñupiaq dance and current revitalization efforts, I utilize a series of vignettes to show how Iñupiaq songs and dances convey critical cultural knowledge, practical skills, and teach the value system of the Iñupiaq people. Given the clear importance of these songs and dances, I argue for their inclusion in both formal and informal curricula. This push toward Indigenous educational sovereignty is framed through a discussion of the difference between segmented Western education and holistic Indigenous education. Alaska Native song and dance is an example of this holistic Indigenous education as it teaches how to be an Alaska Native as a whole being all at once. This chapter is written to be submitted to the *Comparative Education Review*.

Chapter 3 expands on Chapter 2 by delving into the specific educational outcomes of the Iñupiaq song and dance the "Float Coat" song. In this chapter I explore how this song and dance presents an arts-based pedagogical model for addressing pressing modern problems. I begin with a close reading of the song and dance before exploring the multitude of ways that the arts have been used in education to solve problems through building, strengthening, and maintaining cultural identity, as well as illuminating problematic facets of this identity and working to address these issues. I then turn to the "Float Coat" song, discussing its composition and the need it addresses, drowning deaths caused by not wearing a personal floatation device. While it is early to determine the long-term impact of the song, I address its potential success through being a culturally appropriate means of dissemination of information combined with being memorable and enjoyable. This presents a decolonial and culturally responsive pedagogical model for solving enduring social problems using cultural expression, especially in Indigenous contexts, noting the importance of specificity in this effort. Supporting materials in this chapter present a typology of interventions commonly found within arts education for social change scholarship. Chapter 3 is targeted at the *Journal of American Indian Education*.

In my conclusion I tie together the three body chapters to create a conceptual framework for the role of song and dance in an Alaska Native ecosystem. This framework shows the membership within an Alaska Native ecosystem, identifies the learning outcomes of Alaska Native song and dance, and shows how these outcomes contribute to a sustainable ecosystem through fostering intergenerational cultural transmission and health, safety, and security. I then discuss areas of future research, including pedagogical strategies of Alaska Native dance and expanding investigations of arts-based ecosystems of practice to other Indigenous and non-Indigenous contexts.

This dissertation as a whole represents my aim to live up to the name Elikak. As a non-Indigenous scholar-educator I work to support and stand by the side of Indigenous scholars, educators, and communities. I fundamentally believe that music and dance give Indigenous wisdom tangible form. They can provide transformational educational tools that could be better integrated into formal and informal schooling. If my work can shift the perception of policymakers, educators, or the public to better understand the importance of these critical tools, I will consider this dissertation a success.

2.0 Methodology

Walking into a community center in Anchorage, I am clearly the tallest and whitest person in the room. I am unfamiliar to the gathered Alaska Native dance group and immediately asked to introduce myself. I begin my prepared spiel with my name, position, and reason for entering the room, but I am interrupted right after saying my name. An Elder, voice crackling with age, asks where I am from. Iñupiaq introductions call for more than just your name (Topkok, 2018b). Where you are from is more than a place, you are also from your ancestors. While it may not be customary in Western academic settings such as this dissertation, I share my full answer here in text as it provides important context and motivation behind this project and how I was able to conduct fieldwork in Alaska.

My name is David Elikak Kancewick Smith. My father is Eric Smith, and my mother is Mary Kancewick. I am from Eagle River. I am not Alaska Native, but I grew up in Alaska and I still call it home.

While I spoke more nervously than the text above, and doubtfully gave such a concise and clear answer, the names of my parents carry weight in the room, especially among the older generation, and nods come back to me. With the acceptance of the Elders, I am not challenged again. My father, Eric Smith, was an environmental and Native rights lawyer in Alaska for 15 years before becoming a superior court judge. As a lawyer his principal client for many years was the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAL CAP), an organization dedicated to empowering low-income Alaskans. He worked with RurAL CAP on improving hunting and fishing and tribal sovereignty rights in Alaska Native communities and was heavily involved in debates over the reauthorization of the Native Claims Settlements Act. My father's other focus

was on co-management of land between the US government and Native communities, working to establish structures for Alaska Natives to have more power in decision making regarding the land and subsistence. In recognition of his contributions, commitment, dedication, and service to the Alaska Native community he was awarded the Denali Award in 1996 by the Alaska Federation of Natives, the highest award given to a non-Native. My mother, Mary Kancewick, spent three years as the field attorney for the Alaska Native Review Commission, an initiative of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (now the Inuit Circumpolar Council, a multinational non-governmental Indigenous Peoples' Organization representing the Inuit, Yup'ik, and Chukchi peoples people living in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka), to assess at the 10-year mark the effects of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and she was a part of the editorial committee that produced the report in the form of the book *Village Journey*. She then taught courses and designed curricula for the University of Alaska on Indigenous issues and served on the board of Alaska Legal Services. Together my parents wrote seminal law review articles on tribal sovereignty and hunting and fishing rights (Kancewick & Smith, 1990; Smith & Kancewick, 1990).

As a child I traveled with my parents to different Alaska Native communities. One of my father's favorite stories from this time is when we visited Tuluksak, a village on the Kuskokwim River in western Alaska. I was three years old and happily sitting in the corner of the community center playing with a new Lego set I had brought, seemingly oblivious to everything else going on in the world while my father met with local Elders. My play was interrupted by an older woman who yelled across the room "Elikak come over here!"—in Tuluksak, a Yup'ik village, everyone calls me by my Yup'ik name, Elikak. Without hesitating I dutifully set down my Legos and marched right over to her and the surrounding group of women. My father was floored. He had never seen me set down my Legos for any reason, much less to go interact with unfamiliar people.

Whenever he tells the story he smiles wryly and says that I must have known it was important and the right thing to do.

The commitment of my parents and their contributions to the Alaska Native community was instilled in me from this young age. It is a part of my identity, something that I have carried with me, and a driving force behind this dissertation and my future research and career. It also afforded me the beginning of a network in rural Alaska. I am let into more rooms, questioned less, and my intentions are assumed to be better simply by being the son of proven entities. This has influenced all aspects of the methodology described below, from how I chose the communities to work with, to how I conducted the interviews, to how I analyzed and presented the data. I am grateful to have this advantage but also conscious of the weight and responsibility I carry to live up to the work of my parents.

2.1 Decolonial Research in Alaska

In approaching ethnographic research in Alaska, I constantly work to ensure that my research is decolonial and beneficial to the Alaskan communities. An important critique of traditional Western ethnography is that it relies on a framework that is fundamentally Eurocentric and is continually reinforced by non-Indigenous researchers working in Indigenous settings (Leonard, 2012). Working to challenge this foundation, Indigenous scholars have called for new methodological strategies and conceptual frameworks (e.g., Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Kawagley, 1995; Smith, 2021). The importance of these strategies in developing my research is especially paramount, as research in Alaska Native communities has often been exploitative and

had no benefit or caused damaging effects (Parker Webster & John, 2010). As a non-Indigenous researcher, I strive for methodological strategies to confront this problematic and complex history.

Lightfoot (2016) defines decolonial research as work which "privileges Indigenous voices, experiences, knowledge, reflections, and analyses" (p. 72). This requires working within Indigenous paradigms, epistemologies, and cosmologies. As I describe in my introduction, this study relies heavily on Indigenous and specifically Alaska Native epistemologies and cosmologies in considering what constitutes knowledge and who is involved in the knowledge construction process. Zanotti et al. (2020) add that decolonial research must also "change dominant rationalities and practices, especially Western scientific paradigms and institutions" (p. 46). Throughout this dissertation I work to disrupt Western norms: in my first chapter I complicate the Western scientific paradigm of a community of practice by introducing other-than-human participants, in the second chapter I argue for an Indigenous holistic shift in Western education policy, and in the third chapter I present an Indigenous pedagogical model for solving pressing societal problems, challenging existing Western frameworks.

These efforts, however, are only the first step of decolonial research, as the research methodology and means of dissemination must similarly privilege Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing (Smith, 2021). The multispecies ethnographic methodology described above is intended to align better with Indigenous ways of knowing and conducting research. Building on this framework, I draw extensively on the lived experiences and narrative prowess of Alaska Native Elders, centering their words in my research and analysis. Conversations with Elders are invaluable for history and context as their roles as orators and culture bearers are critical to the Alaska Native traditional knowledge system (John, 2010). In presenting this research, I work to create what Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith (2008) call "dialogical counternarratives," stories embedded

in the landscapes of the Alaska Native peoples. These are stories of resistance, struggle, and hope, stories that create space for multicultural conversation. In creating these stories, I center the experiences of Alaska Native communities through narrative vignettes and Indigenous storywork, a process detailed in a later section of this chapter.

Decolonial research does not stop at the end of the project, because, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2014) argues, the goals, methods, and outputs must be shared with the involved Indigenous community. As part of the process to receive the necessary funding for this project, I was required to go through the National Science Foundation's Principles of Conducting Research in the Arctic, a set of protocols to ensure that my research benefits the communities I work with. Everything you have read and will read in this dissertation has been shared with every interviewee. All individuals and groups that are mentioned by name have approved their inclusion by name, while those referred to more generally did not give me explicit permission to cite them by name.

After the completion of the project, all data, reports, and analysis will be submitted to the Exchange for Local Observations and Knowledge of the Arctic (ELOKA). ELOKA provides data management for Indigenous communities and works to foster collaboration between Indigenous communities and visiting researchers. Placing the data in this publicly available database ensures that the research will be readily accessible for all community members interested in the outcomes and methods. The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage will be given control of this data—a decision that has been discussed with all participants—to ensure that it remains accessible regardless of membership changes or a group dissolving. This allows for future researchers to draw from my methods and findings, and for policymakers to easily access my recommendations and their basis. This also allows for the data to be controlled by Arctic residents while still recognizing intellectual property rights.

Outside of the academic space, it is also critical to me that the outcomes of my research are accessible and beneficial to the communities I work with. To build relationships of reciprocity requires shifting and expanding the meanings of reciprocity to center sustainability and community perspectives (Porter & Monard, 2001). Toward this end, I am working with several of the members of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage on a collectively designed project intended to help the group preserve and share their songs and dances. This project has two parts: the first is a set of recordings, videos, and writings documenting the songs and dances of the group to be used by the members of the dance group to pass on their traditions and teach new members. The second part of the project is a children's book drawing on these same songs, written for Alaska Native and Indigenous audiences. This book will be illustrated by an Iñupiaq artist and include ways to digitally view and experience Alaska Native song and dance. The goal of this second part of the project is to encourage youth participation and provide increased public resources on Iñupiaq language and culture. While this project is not discussed in this dissertation, a chapter about this collective creation process and the importance of this type of work as a reciprocal tool in academic research contexts has been solicited to be included in a book titled *Community and Activist Reclamation in the Americas: Indigenous Language Education in Critical Times*. The chapter will take the form of a conversation between myself and several Iñupiaq Elders involved in this project.

2.2 Virtual Fieldwork During the Pandemic

Beginning dissertation fieldwork in 2021 was a complicated process. Instead of meeting face-to-face and shaking hands to create connections in person, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the beginning of this project to be virtual. While I struggled to make connections virtually as

individuals and communities coped with the new world state, it was important to me to not conduct fieldwork that introduced or increased harm and stress, mental or physical. With family members and community members experiencing sickness and loss, my research was not what is important. Cooped up and antsy, I discovered that my father had a stack of interviews from part of a 1991 Alaska Fish and Game study that he was involved in sitting in our family basement. These were, as far as he knows, the only transcripts of these interviews and nothing had ever come from them. Excited, I had him digitize the paper transcripts and email them to me, discovering a fount of knowledge and wisdom from 30 years ago. The interviews are of nine Gwich'in Elders discussing hunting and fishing practices, conducted and transcribed by familiar local Gwich'in community members.

I was immediately fascinated by these interviews as, despite the Alaska Fish and Game interviewers primarily targeting their questions at hunting and fishing practices and potential regulations that would best fit with Alaska Native cultural understandings, the interviewees also spoke extensively about the importance of other-than-human members in their teaching and learning. Over multiple coding rounds with this data using NVivo qualitative data analysis software I created a preliminary framework for an ecosystem of practice, a foundational part of this dissertation discussed heavily in Chapter 1. This framework, however, felt incomplete without a comparison with the current state of these same practices and understandings. To help clarify some of these perceptions and explore changes over time, I interviewed two of these same Elders 30 years later in 2021, building on the initial interviews, but focusing more heavily on educational practices and outcomes. I was fortunate to be able to conduct these follow-up interviews virtually which allowed this entire project to happen in the midst of the pandemic. At the same time as I

was doing this work, I was also beginning conversations to lay the groundwork for in-person fieldwork once it became possible.

2.3 An Ethnographic Comparative Case Study

With medical advances and improved understanding of the pandemic, it finally became safe for me to come to Alaska and begin in-person ethnographic fieldwork. I chose to conduct a thorough and detailed ethnography of two Alaska Native song and dance groups, one from Utqiaġvik in the far north, and the other also an Iñupiaq community, but removed from their traditional lands around Wales and now based in Anchorage in south-central Alaska. Beyond access and connections, I chose to work with these two Iñupiaq groups for two major reasons. First, ethnographic investigation of these two groups provides a direct window into Iñupiaq song and dance practices including teaching and learning. Both groups are established ecosystems of practice that draw from both traditional and modern expressions of Iñupiaq song and dance. Despite being founded relatively recently, membership ranges from children to Elders—with several generations in between—and teaching and learning within these communities pairs experts with novices aligning with Lave and Wenger's (1991) traditional interpretation of a community of practice. This intergenerational process also provides an avenue into explorations of cultural transmission, continuity, and revitalization.

My second reason for selecting these two groups is how they differ. Despite drawing from similar Iñupiaq traditions, the groups' settings are drastically different. Utqiaġvik, a town with a population of roughly 4,000 is remote, isolated, and only accessible by plane. The far north climate is extreme, with temperatures typically hovering around -20°F in the winter, and the sun does not

rise for the entire month of December. The majority of the population (~60%) is Iñupiaq (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Anchorage, on the other hand, is the largest city in Alaska with around half of the total population of the state, around 300,000, and only ~7% of the population identifies as Native American or Alaska Native. While still extreme by most US standards, the Anchorage climate is considerably milder with average winter temperatures staying between 10-20°F, and the swings in daylight do not reach the all-day darkness point even at the winter solstice. The lifestyle differences between Utqiaġvik and Anchorage are stark and pronounced, and looking at how each group's teaching and learning practices vary (or don't vary) in the two settings allows for a robust understanding of the nature of Alaska Native song and dance ecosystems of practice. Using this "comparative case study" approach to explore differences and similarities between the communities increases the generalizability of the findings and allows for the development of more sophisticated descriptions and more powerful explanations (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

2.4 The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage

The whirs and pings of a golf ball being struck sound strange when muffled in the background of a phone call. It is my first conversation with Gregory Tungwenek Nothstine, one of the founders of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, a dance group of Wales, Alaska, but based out of Anchorage. I was first connected with Greg through my mother, who met him when an artist friend of hers was doing Greg's portrait and asked my mother to write an accompanying poem. After a set of email exchanges, we have this first phone call, and I begin my connection with the Alaska Native Dance community in Anchorage. Pacing back and forth in my living room in Pittsburgh, I anxiously try to simultaneously explain my proposed project in a calm

28

manner and express my enthusiasm and excitement. Greg is on his lunch break from his job as the

Program Manager of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's Food Distribution Program

and multitasking, hitting balls at the driving range of the Moose Run Golf Course and talking with

me. Trying to quell my nervous energy I contort myself into a cushy floral-patterned chair beneath

the windows in my living room, listening intently over the speakerphone while attempting to jot

coherent notes. In between golf strokes, Greg tells me the story of how the Kingikmiut Dancers

and Singers of Anchorage began. While it is not word for word the account he gave me over the

phone in our first conversation, below is how he told me the story again in a later recorded

interview. In keeping with the importance of story in Iñupiaq culture, I present the entire story as

he told it this second time, reduced slightly with his permission for brevity and clarity. In a later

section of this chapter, I elaborate on Indigenous storywork as a foundational methodology for this

dissertation. For now, these are Greg's words:

> *My grandfather was buried in Anchorage. He suffered from cancer in the fifties. He was flown to Anchorage for observation and unfortunately passed away. They never flew his remains back to Nome and they were never able to mourn his passing. He was buried in the Anchorage Bowl in the fifties in an unmarked grave. And he had seven daughters and a son, and they never were able to mourn his passing.*
>
> *So, the Indigenous population suffers greatly in its own process to adopt social norms. And one of the social norms that pretty much cripples every Indigenous population is drinking alcohol, right? Because when you drink alcohol and you look at Western society from an outside perspective, it seems to be encompassing all life activity. Babies being born, job promotions, job demotions, teams winning, teams losing, the sun shining, the raining: you drink. Everything is about consumption. I know that our population of Indigenous people have had their challenges with that, and this includes me. I adopted this and internalized these standards on the basis of the glamorization that I saw that was reinforcing other people's behavior, and I bought into it thinking, "Yeah, you can't trust anybody that doesn't drink." But this got me in trouble. I ended up trying to look for my grandfather's grave before I sobered up and I couldn't find it.*
>
> *I went to all three cemeteries in Anchorage, and I couldn't find it. I didn't know that he could have an unmarked grave. I just was looking for names and I didn't see anything. Three years after I sobered up, I had the presence of mind to call. I called the first two, nothing. Then I called the last one and they said, "well, let me check," and then I guess I held on for like 3 minutes—seemed like it lasted longer—but he came back and said, "yeah, there seems to be some remains of that particular name here in the cemetery." I said,*

"great, I'm coming down." So apparently, he was buried in an unmarked plot. We found it, of course, and being named after him, I wittily thought to myself, well, I found myself.

I brought my mother to the grave and she was happy. She thanked me for finding it and she mourned his passing. She said she was never able to mourn her dad's passing. Well, he was buried in '55 or '56 and I found his grave in '90. It was 45 years later that she was able to finally find his plot and at least weep for him. Then there was this inspiring thought that said it's now a time to sing and dance. You got to learn how to sing and dance. I don't know where that thought or experience came from.

So, then I went to talk to Paul Tiulana and I said, "I found my grandfather." Straight away he says,

"I remember your grandpa. I remember going to your grandpa's village when I was about four or five years old, we used to ride and get excited because we got a ride in the boat from King Island to Wales, and we'd spend about two weeks in Wales because your village would catch a whale and there'd be lots of dancing and celebration. Yes, good that you want to learn. There are some elders that I think that were my age now that were kids like me when we used to watch all those drummers in your village. Real strong. The women, real graceful. Your village has a lot of good songs, you know, I bet you if you go back, you'll probably learn some. Might be a good idea."

I told that to my mother and she said, "Well, maybe it's the ancestors telling us to start reclaiming our songs. We should go back and try it." Me and my cousin we thought, yeah, let's do that. So, the three of us, we went to Wales and we learned one song, the invitational, and we sang it at the high school graduation for the graduating class of 1990. I remember feeling how awkward it is that they these kids were being cloned in ties and suits. They didn't have any traditional songs celebrating their achievement—their certificate of assimilation, as I see it. But we sang at the graduating class and then we did record some of those songs. We started practicing and for like six years we were real sheepishly trying to reclaim them. That's how we started.

Armed with the recordings and songs, Greg, his mother Sophie Nothstine, and his cousin Richard Atuk founded the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage to connect to these ancestral roots of dancing and singing, but also to promote healthy living in Anchorage. Emerging from the concerning history of alcohol and consumption among Alaska Native communities, this group actively promotes a drug and alcohol-free environment at all gatherings, even adding this requirement as a policy in their by-laws. Now an established group in the Anchorage area, the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage perform locally for public and private events, and travel to perform at festivals across Alaska.

The word Kingikmiut means people of Kingigin, a village now called Wales—as Greg calls it in his story above—that sits at the far edge of the Seward Peninsula, the portion of mainland Alaska closest to Russia. The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage are distinct from the Wales Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers who are based in Wales, though both groups draw from similar traditions and perform many of the same songs. Paul Tiulana, a King Island dancer who played an important role in the creation of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, was one of the most important figures in Alaska Native dance for many years. Phillip Blanchett, a Yup'ik dancer famous for being a member of the successful touring rock group Pamyua, described Paul Tiulana to me as the "Michael Jordan of dancing." Tiulana's story and legacy are well document in stories and oral histories across Alaska as well as in book form (Senungetuk & Tiulana, 1987).

Greg finishes his story, interrupting the ensuing silence to tell me he just hit one of his best drives of the day. He takes a few final swings, polishing off the end of his bucket of balls, as we finish up our conversation. I ask him about dance rehearsals resuming after pandemic lockdowns; he tells me that he is hopeful that things will be back to normal soon with the group but that it may take a bit. Before we finish our first phone conversation, he tells me that he will keep me in the loop on when rehearsals will resume and that I am welcome to come anytime. Many more conversations followed, eventually moving to be in person as the pandemic allowed, which led me to center my research in this dissertation on the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage.

2.5 The Taġiuġmiut Dancers

A uniform line of bright blue summer parkas moves in harmony, hands rising and falling in time with light drum beats and undulating song. The energy shifts suddenly, the song rising in volume and the drums jarring from hypnotic to powerful. The dancers react, postures stooping lower, hands growing sharper, and feet stomping to build on the sound of the drums. The final drum stroke comes in time with the final note and the dancer in the middle of the formation punctuates this moment descending to one knee. In the breath that follows before the thundering applause, the Taġiuġmiut Dancers stare out proudly, taking in this moment as they share songs of their ancestors that were thought to be lost for many years.

For this performance at the 2022 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, I watch from the rubber floor of the converted ice rink. Having seen many other performances from the bleachers, I realize that this is the intended viewing angle as the facial expressions and subtlety of movement are more evident from a closer and lower vantage point. I am excited as this is the first time that I am finally able to see and meet with members of this group in person after being repeatedly stymied in my attempts to travel to Utqiaġvik by pandemic concerns and the suspension of dance activities for various cultural reasons.

After the performance ends, I sit tucked away in a back hallway in front of the hockey dressing rooms with Vernon Elavgak, one of the founders and leaders of the Taġiuġmiut Dancers. We sit on old, folded tumbling mats, the only available option in this makeshift interview set up, and our conversation is repeatedly interrupted by children, who, thinking they had escaped adult supervision, run, scream, and play back and forth down the hallway. Vernon has a calm and stern demeanor that only softens in two instances: when the children pass and when he talks about Iñupiaq song and dance.

The Taġiuġmiut Dancers are based in the far north of Alaska in Utqiaġvik, the northernmost city in the United States and the hub for the region. Utqiaġvik boasts anywhere between three and five Iñupiaq dance groups, depending on who you ask, and the Taġiuġmiut Dancers are one of the newest. The group came about as part of a project to repatriate a set of songs thought for many years to be lost back to Utqiaġvik. Laura Boulton, a self-proclaimed ethnomusicologist who collected music from all over the world with the express intention of preserving culture that she viewed as too uncivilized to survive in the modern world, traveled through the villages around Utqiaġvik in 1947 recording Iñupiaq songs (Boulton, 1969). These recordings ended up as part of an archive at Columbia University where they sat untouched for fifty years. What makes these recordings especially unique is that they took place at a time when Alaska Native song and dance had been banned by missionaries who swept through rural Alaska converting the population. Vernon tells me that it is likely that these recordings happened in secret. The result is a series of recordings of songs that were thought to be lost for many years as, due to the bans, they were never passed down intergenerationally. The other ramification of being recorded in secret, Vernon speculates, is that very few people were even aware that the recordings existed and were hesitant to speak about them for fear of punishment.

After the bans were lifted, however, Vernon says he started to hear rumors from Elders: "But toward the ending of their lives as they got older and passed on, they, you know, have given clues that there are CDs, there are songs that you've never heard, that you never heard in your whole entire life." Pursuing these whispered leads, and in collaboration with Aaron Fox, the director of the Columbia University Center for Ethnomusicology, Vernon was able to repatriate these recordings to Utqiaġvik. The songs, however, are only half of the cultural practice which meant that Vernon had to create the motions "from pretty much scratch… so it was quite a long

process." For six winter months Vernon hibernated and worked on these motions, finally emerging with a revitalized repertoire in hand, and founded the Taġiuġmiut Dancers. A longer description of the formation of the Taġiuġmiut Dancers can be found in Chapter 2.

Unfortunately, reaching Utqiaġvik has been a consistent struggle as weather combined with deaths and pandemic complications have stymied my repeated attempts to observe rehearsals with the Taġiuġmiut Dancers in person. As a result, the interviews with this group took place either virtually or when members were traveling through Anchorage or Fairbanks. I was only able to virtually attend two dance practices. The inability to go to Utqiaġvik also limited my ability to interact with the other-than-human participants of the Taġiuġmiut Dancers' ecosystem of practice.

2.6 Multispecies Ethnography

We need human endeavor and intelligence, but we also need the intelligences of the wild— the millennial authority of redwood trees, the forbearance of bison, and the lyrical sermon of a wood thrush at dawn. – Terry Tempest Williams (2019, p. 177)

The educational and artistic practices of Alaska Native dance groups are complex and rooted in deep cultural traditions and understandings. This makes an ethnographic comparative case study approach the best fit to illuminate this multifaceted phenomenon. Ethnography allows for a holistic approach to explore the cultural texture of social relations providing a detailed window into cultural practices (Yin, 2015), and ethnographic case studies help generate the necessary nuance for Geertzian (1973) "thick descriptions'' from rich narratives and multiple data points. Traditional ethnography, however, can be highly anthropocentric and struggle to include other-than-human entities. My approach more closely aligns with multispecies ethnography, which

allows for the inclusion of other-than-human actors and better aligns with Indigenous epistemologies (Ogden, Hall, & Tanita, 2013).

The foundation of multispecies ethnography is the idea that "we cannot adequately understand humanity in isolation from nonhuman species implicated in human life" (Locke, 2018, p. 1). The concept has been primarily used in environmental studies, science and technology studies, and animal studies, working to bring the other-than-human into anthropological discourse (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010). This necessitates recognizing the agency of the other-than-human and the interplay between all members of an ecosystem or ecology. Engagement with the other-than-human in this way is an expansion of the posthumanist work of Donna Haraway (2004; 2008; 2013), who argues that the biological entanglements of humans with other species must fundamentally influence how we as a species move forward. Humans must reshape their perspective of the other-than-human to move away from seeing it as a resource to be manipulated and extracted and instead explore the myriad of ways in which we interact and interplay with the other-than-human. Foundationally this problematizes several dualisms of humanism including nature and culture, subject and object, and human and animal. Eduardo Kohn (2007) builds on these ideas in How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human, laying the foundation for multispecies ethnography as he argues for an "anthropology of life" as part of exploration of the interconnectivity of trees, animals, and humans among the Runa people of Ecuador's Upper Amazon. Kohn posits that our anthropological tools are distinctly human, and that anthropology requires a consideration of the methodologies of the other-than-human.

Placing this dissertation as a part of this emerging field means attuning my research methodology to the other-than-human, exploring the power of other-than-human subjects in shaping the world, and to the ways in which learning and becoming are shaped by the relations of

all entities. In conducting an ethnography, I do not consider life or culture as bounded in bodies, but instead as vibrant and present everywhere (TallBear, 2011). I attend to these other-than-human participants through constant awareness and attention to other-than-human detail throughout my different data collection methods, including simply observing and spending time in nature (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010). I cannot study the role of the other-than-human in an ecosystem of practice without considering the perspectives of these entities. Immersion and observation are the central data gathering strategies I draw from to explore these perspectives. In practice, this involves spending time with the other-than-human, but also making sure to consider their role and be aware of my surroundings in every setting.

Sitting amidst a rock field looking out over Eagle Lake, it takes me half an hour to realize that I have become mesmerized by the motion of the water. My notebook lies empty in front of me. The serene grace of the lake surface is rippled slightly by a light wind, moving the water toward the enclosing mountain bowl and away from the outlet stream. This contrary motion of the water on the surface hides its desire and drive to move out of the valley and speed toward the ocean. My eye is caught suddenly by a patch of moving sunlight on the edge of the rock field on the edge of the closest mountain. I squint through the glare to discover the dazzling gleam is the full and impressive antler rack of a moose. As he walks along the edge of the valley, the sun splays off his headgear, casting light and shadow across the lake. This motion brings my attention back to the water as the wind shifts and dances, creating new hypnotic patterns.

Before I can be too drawn in again, I jot a set of quick notes in my field notebook, stow it in my backpack, and walk down to the water's edge. Being on land simply will not do, so I unfurl a packraft out of my backpack. Catching the wind in the inflation bag, I transfer it to my glacier

blue boat, and in five minutes I have a vessel. I snap together a fiberglass kayak paddle and wade into Eagle Lake. As I paddle out through the water, the wind gently rocks my boat, looking to push me with the ripples toward the middle of the lake. But the undercurrent, invisible from above, holds me in place meaning that I control my own movement with my paddle. After exploring the lake, I take out (and quickly jot down a new set of notes) with the realization that I still do not have the full picture. Boat in one hand and paddle in the other I move toward the outlet stream. Eagle Lake flows into what eventually becomes the south fork of Eagle River after it moves down the valley, gathering water from creeks and streams running down the bordering mountains. I snap on my helmet—faster moving water necessitates more safety gear—and zip the spray skirt of my boat into place to prepare for the class 2-3 rapids ahead. Adrenaline courses through my body as the river pushes me toward the ocean, uncaring of throwing me into and over rocks and fallen tree branches. Despite eyes blurred by the splashing water I finally see clearly. I move with the water and for the first time glean an edge of what it has to teach me.

The following Monday evening in the lower room of the Central Lutheran Church, I watch the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage rehearse. One of the motions, previously unfamiliar to me, is now clear as I see the water of Eagle Lake move into Eagle River and flow toward the ocean. Several songs later the moose walks across the valley.

2.7 Data Gathering

Situating my research in multispecies ethnography, I additionally draw from anthropological and ethnomusicological lenses—anthropologists investigate social relations and significance while ethnomusicologists more often focus on description and structure of artistic

practices—and add a third lens of educational inquiry to holistically explore how teaching and learning happen. In this multifaceted decolonial framework, I use detailed observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis as my main data sources (Krueger, 2020). The vast array of resulting data, including observational fieldnotes, semi-structured interviews, documents, and artifacts, allows for triangulation to enhance trustworthiness and ensure validity (Guba, 1981). This methodology has gone through the IRB approval process to ensure that my research meets the necessary rigorous ethical standards.

2.7.1 Participatory Observation

I don't believe that at any point in my life has anyone referred to me as a good dancer. I have been playing music since I was three years old, so music and dance have been an integral part of my life longer than I have memories, but the music was always participating, and the dance was always watching. I have been in the band for swing dances, barn dances, square dances, ballroom dances, musicals, and rock concerts. Standing on stage or to the side but limited in required movement to what one can do while holding an instrument or sitting behind a drum set. That is not to say I have not danced or do not enjoy dancing; it is to make clear that I am vastly more comfortable playing for others.

With that paragraph in place, I now hope that it is understandable why it took a great deal of pride-swallowing courage for me to stand up and dance an Iñupiaq invitational dance during a Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage rehearsal. Iñupiaq dance always ends with the invitational, a song where everyone, including audience members, is invited to join in on the dancing. There are no specific motions required for this song. It is the first song that most children

learn and, in the case of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, the first song they relearned when they travelled to Wales.

Roy Roberts, the group leader, makes eye contact with me as he invites anyone who wishes to dance to join in the end of dance rehearsal. We are sitting in the lower section of the Central Lutheran Church in Anchorage, the drummers arrayed near the entrance under a large hanging decorative quilt with the dancers standing in front of them. On the other side are a set of plastic chairs arranged in three haphazard rows where the dancers sit when they are not dancing a specific song (my first contribution to dance practice was helping set up and take down these chairs). The first practice I attended I attempted to sit behind these three rows, hoping to be as unobtrusive as possible, but I was immediately shooed into the rows by an Elder. By the second practice, it was made clear to me that I should be sitting in the front row, and in the third practice I was the recipient of Roy's pointed eye contact.

I balk slightly under the pressure of his eyes but realize quickly that I had been misinterpreting the invitation as a ceremonial gesture, a part of how the invitational is always introduced instead of a polite way of inviting me to join without calling me out specifically. The problem was that I had heard this same invitation in every performance, so I had jotted it down in my notes that way and subsequently (and foolishly) dismissed it. I missed this cue the last two practices, but now it is more overt. I am expected to dance. With my sudden epiphany comes panic. It is a low attendance day which means that there are six drummers and about seven dancers. Everyone else in the room is Alaska Native and I, standing at six feet four inches, am close to a foot taller than everyone else. Under the expectant pressure I unfold my gangly frame and nervously leave the relative safety of the rows of chairs and enter the dancing space before the drummers. The invitational begins and everyone dances. I attempt to mimic what I have seen other

male dancers do during invitationals, moving to the beat of the drums with arms up and bent, first pointing to one side than the other, simultaneously trying to not look at anyone else and make eye contact while also looking at everyone else to make sure I'm not making a complete fool of myself. In the middle of this nervous and frenetic mess, I realize that no one really cares. This is not the point of the invitational. The point of the invitational is to dance, no matter how poorly. I have been invited to join, to take part to the best of my abilities, regardless of how low a ceiling that might be. And so, I dance.

It isn't until later that I find out that my nervousness—and poor dancing—were clearly noticed. The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage are performing at the Alaska State Fair, and I am in the audience. I sit in the refuge of the rows of wooden benches, half full of fair goers, watching songs and dances that have started to become familiar. On the Dena'-People's Stage, the newest stage at the Alaska State Fair created specifically for performances related to Alaska Native culture, Roy leads the group in song. We make eye contact, and as we nod to each other in acknowledgement a worrying glint lights the corner of his eye. I tense, unsure of what might happen, but nothing comes of it. After the performance I walk up to the stage to chat with the group, and Roy starts laughing. Looking down at me, a new experience as our height difference usually goes the other way, he tells me he almost called me out by name to make me stand up and dance. The couple of surrounding group members who heard the comment start to laugh as Roy smiles and finishes "but that would have been too mean." I then am subject to substantial teasing from everyone in the vicinity about my dancing. Knowing that they felt comfortable enough around me to tease me, a staple of the culture of the group, is the first moment I feel accepted as a part of the community.

These stories detail pieces of my participatory research experience, the first data gathering method of this ethnography. As a researcher I act as a participant observer, taking part, when possible, with the song and dance groups. While I participate, I am the scribe as well as the explorer and quasi-insider of the group and their culture (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2001). This role in the community of study provides the best possible lens into understanding contexts that would otherwise be closed to a stranger but requires constant awareness and reflection (Angrosino, 2007). Over the course of my research, I participated in 22 one-to-two-hour dance practices. Participating in these rehearsals provided a detailed look into Iñupiaq dance practices and helped me to progress past the point of unfamiliarity. Expanding on these rehearsals, I attended seven different performances by the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage in different settings around the Anchorage area. I also attended the 2022 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, where I had the opportunity to watch both the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage and the Taġiuġmiut Dancers perform, along with a number of other Alaska Native dance groups. Beyond the practices and performances, I opened myself to continued interaction both before and after, and for all potential interactions that emerged outside of the formal practice time including meals and social gatherings. I catalogued these experiences with extensive fieldnotes, taken either during or after the event depending on what was least obtrusive. These fieldnotes were transcribed digitally and catalogued using NVivo.

The final piece of participatory observation is engaging with the other-than-human. Throughout my research I purposefully placed myself in nature and sought out activities that involved interaction with natural actors. Toward this end, I went out on rivers and lakes, hiked through the mountains, spent time in forest and on tundra, and watched moose, bears, crows,

ravens, eagles, porcupines, and all other other-than-human entities go about their lives. These experiences were included in my fieldnotes and served as important time for reflection.

2.7.2 Interviews

The second data gathering method of my ethnography is semi-structured interviews with dance group members, Elders, and community members. Here I focused primarily on the human members of these dance ecosystems. I began the interviewing process by conducting hour-long interviews with key dance group members before expanding outward by asking my first interviewees who they recommended I speak with next. This snowball method for interviews makes the research process more collaborative and helps generate knowledge which is emergent and interactional (Noy, 2008). My initial impression based on my pilot research placed dance group members, including drummers and singers, community/audience members, and Elders as the human members of dance ecosystems of practice, creating my interview pool. Through this interviewing and sampling process I was able to interview members from each of these categories. I interviewed members of varying ages and genders, as the impacts of the colonial history of Alaska—religion, assimilative policies, language loss, technological growth, and commercial development, etc.—have affected each gender and generation differently. My goal was also to actively seek out interviews with Elders in both Utqiaġvik and Anchorage as their roles as orators and culture bearers are critical to the Alaska Native traditional knowledge system (John, 2010).

The initial interviews, due to the timing and global circumstances of the pandemic, ended up being conducted virtually either over the phone or through Zoom. This continued for many of the interviews with interviewees living in Utqiaġvik and other more remote communities as they were difficult to reach in person, especially given changing schedules and how often people move

around. The largest set of interviews happened during the 2022 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics and included interviews with four different dance group leaders and the mayor of the village of Kaktovik, who has been heavily involved with both dance and education in her community. Ultimately, I completed 36 hour-long interviews. All interviewees were compensated for their time using funds provided by a National Science Foundation Arctic Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant.

During these interviews, I worked to collaborate with the interviewee to collectively determine meaning instead of viewing the interviewee as a "vessel of answers" (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Here, all experience, even the smallest reaction, requires interpretation and must be coded and understood through differences in language, culture, context, and emotion (Bresler & Matsunobu, 2014). Asking open-ended, expansive, and clarifying questions allowed for theory to emerge inductively from the members of the Iñupiaq culture and did not limit the potential answers within the outside Western perspective I brought to the interview. My initial interview protocol included questions around who is involved in the teaching and learning process, what is being taught, and what the educational outcomes are of the educational process. This protocol was adapted over time to add specific questions around other-than-human actors and cultural revitalization as many interviewees, especially Elders, spoke extensively about these topics.

I found, however, that many of the most interesting and formative answers emerged from questions I did not ask, and in fact from moments where I initially felt that the primary thematic thread of the interview had been lost. My interview with Willy Topkok epitomized this experience. Willy invited me to sit with him at his vendor booth at the 2022 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, the plastic folding table hidden by a black tablecloth covered in various works of Alaska Native art. As we talked, we were consistently interrupted by potential customers passing by looking over

the art on his table and occasionally buying. I began the interview with my established protocol, explaining who I am and what I am doing before asking about where and how he first learned Alaska Native dance. In response Willy told me a 10-minute story about what he described as a "Siberian Russian Eskimo ship captain" who was stranded for months on Little Diomede Island in the Bering Strait and became obsessed with a specific WWII movie and afterward called anyone who spoke perfect English a Nazi, not understanding much of the cultural context. Without pausing he segued into a tale of a how a polar bear saved the life of a friend of his after the friend fell through the ice one winter. Next, without pausing or any further prompting from me, I learned of how the village of Wales hid their song and dance practice from missionaries. I learned after this interview that Willy worked for many years telling stories on cruise ships, an unsurprising fact, especially as he often punctuated his stories by striking a drum that he was selling at his booth. While I was overwhelmed by the stories at the time, reading back over the transcript as I analyzed the interview, I came to realize that each story shared important context to my questions and in the end this interview is one of the most informative, fruitful, and referenced in my dissertation. Openness to difference and process, especially as an early-career scholar steeped in rigorous methodology from the books and sources mentioned above, became a foundational methodological framework for my interviews.

2.7.3 Archival Data

My third source of data comes from existing documents and artifacts. Extensive archives of Alaska Native song and dance exist in video and audio formats. The Alaska Federation of Natives has filmed and created a database of all the major dance festivals over the last ten years. This database is publicly available online and provides important context, especially for the

analysis and exploration of the songs that accompany the dances. Over the course of my fieldwork, I gathered additional artifacts and documents including photos and videos.

2.8 Data Analysis

To compile and analyze my data I used NVivo12 qualitative data analysis software. The use of computer assisted qualitative data analysis software has become standard and commonplace among qualitative researchers, especially ethnographers (Yin, 2015). Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) describe this software as "indispensable for longitudinal, large-scale, or multisite studies and studies with digital photographs and video data" (p. 59), a list of categories that all apply to my research. With the digital tools available through NVivo software I have substantially increased my capacity to "retrieve, sort, and interrogate unstructured data in ways that were unimaginable with pencil and paper" (Bazeley, 2013, p. 18).

A key consideration for the use of software as part of my data analysis process is carefully considering both language and context. Ethnographic work pushes toward the descriptive, reaching across multiple data sources to condense them. Analysis lies in the decisions of what to report and why (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña 2014). Three of my interviews included responses in Iñupiaq, and many fieldnotes from observations included Iñupiaq language. Translation is a form of data analysis in and of itself, in that the translator is constantly condensing and expanding language and deciding what to report. Sherry Simon (1996) describes this process, writing, "translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhabit are 'the same'" (p. 137). A translation cannot come from a neutral position (Temple & Young, 2004). Running software queries based on

translated text removes the data a second step further from its original context. Because of this, I worked with native speakers for validity checks to make sure the translations are accurate. I cannot reproduce aspects of a language I do not speak and made no attempt to do so.

Similar to attention to language, my data analysis process is highly focused on being situated in the context of the Iñupiaq communities. I attempted to connect with the highly place-based and environmentally-driven nature of life in northern Alaska through detailed memoing and constant double checking with notes and memos (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Videos, pictures, and audio recordings provided physical representations that I was able to combine with the memories and emotions evoked through field notes and memos. In conducting ethical research, especially in the research analysis phase, Yin (2015) cautions against "leaving the impression that you might have selectively analyzed your data" (p. 185). This holistic approach to data analysis, constantly considering the interconnection between data sources, land, language, culture, and context helped keep me centered on accurately representing the lived experiences of the Iñupiat (plural form of Iñupiaq, three or more).

Bazeley (2013) describes transparency within qualitative research analysis as a "clear explanation of process that allows the reader to understand how you, as researcher, progressed from initial purposes, assumptions, and questions through data analysis to the results, interpretation, and conclusions of your study" (p. 407). Toward this end, transparent research must be publicly accessible and able to withstand close scrutiny. Any reader or participant should have access to your data and procedures to scrutinize your work and the evidence used to support your findings and conclusions (Yin, 2015). As mentioned above, all data and data analysis methods will be shared and publicly available through storage in the ELOKA database. Transparency also

requires constant and critical self-reflection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2012), a process assisted by my time spent in nature and with my research communities.

This (non-exhaustive) litany of needs for transparent qualitative research is not easy and asks much of a researcher. Transparency, however, allows me to discuss the validity, applicability, and relevance of my data, contextualizing my inferences and conclusions, while simultaneously highlighting the "extraordinary preparation that engaging in research requires" (Kapiszewski and Kirilova, 2014, p. 703). In this light my research becomes more valuable and citable in both academic and public spheres. The clearer my process, the more confidence that policymakers will be able to have in shaping policy based on my findings (Moravcsik, 2014). This is especially important for my study as I hope for any outcomes relating to arts-based pedagogical approaches to be actionable and create lasting structural change in education policy. As I work to carefully document my data collection and analysis process, I will be able to place my eventual report as part of a dialogue toward improving research methods (Kapiszewski & Kirilova, 2014).

Transparency, here, allows for my scholarship to be collaborative with both those I work with in the Iñupiaq communities and future scholars engaging with my work. To ensure transparency across all phases of my analysis process, I used NVivo software to create what Bringer, Brackenridge, and Johnston (2004) refer to as an "electronic audit trail." An electronic audit trail allows for a highly systematic approach to qualitative research analysis, following a clear, predetermined (but flexible), and iterative plan to draw conclusions supported by the data, not solely by my opinions (Yin, 2015). The center of this audit trail is a research journal detailing my "personal thoughts, theoretical ideas, and any concerns relating to the research project" (p. 14). Storing and updating my research journal within the NVivo software allowed to link my writing and notes to other documents including transcripts, photos, videos, and other memos.

Beyond the research journal, my electronic audit trail shows all the phases of both data generation and analysis through extensive reflective memoing. This includes the documentation of the coding process and regular exports of my evolving node trees to fully illuminate the theory generation process. As a part of the analytical process, my audit trail allows for the development of abstract thoughts into clearly articulated theories (Bringer, Brackenridge, & Johnston, 2004).

With the NVivo software I compiled my many different data sources, organizing them into two distinct cases, one for each dance group, subdivided around individual interviews, performances, and fieldnotes. I then used a series of cumulative coding cycles and reflective analytical memos to develop major categories for theory generation (Saldaña, 2016). This began by running a series of NVivo word frequency queries to identify major categories within and across the two cases followed by text search queries to home in on these potential themes for further examination. The initial queries brought forth central themes of knowing, animals, spirit, Elder, and community. I then turned to a first round of *en vivo* coding to allow all future codes to be drawn from the lived experiences of the communities (Saldaña, 2016). This approach allowed me to rapidly establish base nodes between different data sources as the foundation for future coding cycles and more expanded node trees. The subsequent rounds of coding compared, sorted, and expanded the codes inductively until no further conceptual variables were generated and I could sufficiently support and justify the inclusion of each thematic code.

The final coding trees emerged from these continuous cycles of coding and refinement and were fluid throughout the analysis process as more data was added. Ultimately, the majority of codes coalesced into three central themes: learning outcomes, learning source, and pedagogical strategies. Learning outcomes included codes depicting the different types of outcomes described as emerging from Alaska Native song and dance practices. The most important subcodes in this

48

tree are cultural heritage, practical skills, and values. These subcodes lay the foundation for Chapter 2 of this dissertation. The second major tree included codes under the title "learning source" which describe the different major teachers in Alaska Native song and dance. By far the most mentioned and deep of this set were discussions of the importance of Elders as the central learning source in the three-generation educational practices of Alaska Native communities (learning is consistently described as requiring children, parents, and grandparents). The final tree details the different pedagogical strategies for learning Alaska Native song and dance. Here, repetition commanded the most attention, and there was a fascinating divide across groups and individuals in teaching the song first or teaching the dance first.
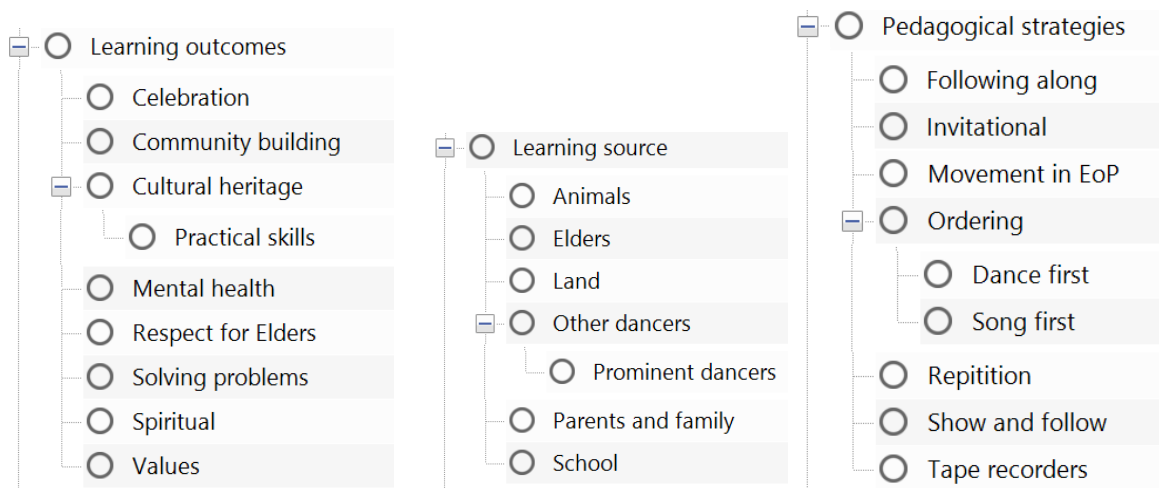
Figure 1 Final Reduced Coding Trees.

Several other codes did not fit into one of these three trees but were still important and strongly influenced my analysis. The largest of these additional smaller trees centers around data relating to colonialism and Western influence. Data categorized under this tree included discussions of loss, difference, interactions with Western technology and culture, and the influence of religion. These discussions of religion especially fascinated me as they presented a self-aware,

seemingly contradictory relationship between Christianity and belief in Alaska Native spirits. While there is a short discussion of these themes in Chapter 2, I look forward to exploring them more in future articles. The other prominent set of codes that do not fit in the above framework included where songs come from and the importance of respect for and deference to Elders.

To ensure that my interpretations are consistent with the lived experiences of the Iñupiaq community members I work with, I engaged in constant member checks throughout the analysis and reporting processes. During the coding process these types of checks contribute to the validity of any conclusions drawn from the codes (Bazeley, 2013). This was especially important in interacting with the few translated interviews. Through the member checks I had some participants work with me to adjust, or as they described, "improve" their words. Other interviewees asked me to reduce descriptions of their expertise; many Alaska Native communities are culturally modest and claiming expertise, even if one is an expert, can be viewed negatively. Whether or not quotes are attributed by name throughout this dissertation was also decided through the member checking process. Some interviewees were willing to have certain quotes directly attributed but asked for other quotes to be anonymized. A couple of interviewees requested their names to be removed entirely but were willing to have their words included. This process shows a more robust demonstration of data, allowing for increased confidence that I am faithfully summarizing interviews and experiences (Bazeley, 2013). Marshall and Rossman (2006) accurately summarize my research and data analysis process as "confusing, messy, intensely frustrating, and fundamentally nonlinear" (p. 24). Both data gathering and analysis did not go exactly as I expected, which reinforced the importance of fluidity and flexibility in my research.

2.9 Vignettes and Indigenous Storywork

The following three chapters summarize elements of this research and analysis. Each chapter utilizes vignettes as a primary form of presenting data and theory. As a narrative tool, vignettes allow access to important contextual richness and act as a way to portray both the mundanity of everyday life (Humphreys, 2005) and to shed light on unique, unexpected occurrences (Johanson & Glow, 2015). Langer (2016) points to the elaborate vignette as an innovative way to work toward decolonizing and decentering qualitative research by connecting with Indigenous methodologies such as representing research through storytelling. He continues by identifying four functions of research vignettes: 1) contextualizing research findings to an unfamiliar reader, 2) helping the reader understand the interpretation process, 3) encouraging reflexivity of the researcher, and 4) emphasizing essential results. All four of these functions are critical to the way I present data and best honor the storytelling practices of the Iñupiaq people.

All qualitative writing, especially vignettes, seek the Geertzian (1973) thick description intended to bring the scene to life (Humphreys, 2005; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Vignettes have the power to move readers to sense some of the evocative power, embodiment, and understanding of life through concrete details of narrative (Ellis, 1998). Narrative requires literary, metaphoric, and artful writing, but not at the expense of the detail required of scholars (Stauffer, 2020). I attempt to relate the context and culture of the Iñupiaq dance groups in the tradition of Margaret Wolf (1992) to, "not speak for them but about them, even though I occasionally use their voices to tell my story" (p. 11).

The use of vignettes is explicitly reflexive (Humphreys, 2005). The autoethnographic approach allows for me, as the researcher, to look inward creating a reflexive dialogue with the reader (Rosen, 1991). I aim to intimately integrate the reader into my research by creating a

dialogic space between the researcher and the reader, inviting them to become a critical partner in the interpretation process (Langer, 2016). Together we work to emphasize essential results, as vignette writing builds on storytelling to be "scholarly engagement with stories of experience as a means of interrogating critical matters in education, in music, in the world" (Stauffer, 2020, p. 185).

These vignettes also represent examples of Indigenous storywork, an Indigenous research methodology introduced by Stó:lō scholar-educator Jo-ann Archibald (2008). As Archibald describes, "The words story and work together signal the importance and seriousness of undertaking the educational and research work of making meaning through stories" (p. 374). Using Indigenous storywork as the foundational theoretical and methodological framework, I draw from its seven principles—respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, wholism, interrelatedness, and synergy—to center the lived experiences of the Alaska Native communities in a manner that fits within their epistemological understandings. I strive to meet Archibald's criteria of effective storywork, which "grows out of the actions of interrelatedness and synergy formed by the storyteller, the story, the listener, and the context in which the story is used" (p. 374). With this aim I place emphasis in the vignettes used throughout this dissertation not only on the story itself, but also on the participants in the storytelling process and the context in which the stories were told. Without rich descriptive language and reflection on my own experience as a listener, the stories might lose some of their transformative educational potential. Cajete (1994) puts it simply: "Humans are storytelling animals" (p. 115).

As a non-Indigenous researcher working in Indigenous spaces, I remain continually conscious of ensuring that my findings and the way they are shared has value and is accessible to Alaska Native communities. This is the other reason I center vignettes throughout this dissertation.

The stories of fellow community members situated in the descriptive context of a familiar environment allows for members of my research communities to best understand and relate to my research output. As part of my writing process, several members of the dance communities whose voices I share have urged me to write as simply and legibly as possible, working to remove the esoteric and arcane from my writing. In this way the research can be held within the community and benefit multiple audiences.

This is another key facet of Indigenous storywork, working to "strengthen storied impact through reciprocity" (Archibald & Parent, 2019, p. 2), with one important aspect of reciprocity being "sharing this learning with others" (Davidson, 2019, p. 39). The following chapters are the best possible representation I can produce of a shared understanding of teaching and learning in Alaska Native song and dance practices, firmly entrenched in ethical, decolonial research practices, and told in compelling narrative form.

3.0 Chapter 1: Look to the Ravens: Reconceptualizing Communities of Practice into Ecosystems of Practice

This chapter was written for and published in *Environmental Education Research*. This journal is a good fit as previous publications contain the main themes of this article: communities of practice, land-based education, and Indigenous epistemologies, though no scholarship bringing the three together. Additionally, I had not yet published in the environmental education space, an academic community that follows closely with my research interests and that I believe is doing important work. Since publishing this paper, I have had several scholars, both US based and international, as well as one policymaker in Malaysia reach out to me looking to collaborate or learn more about my research, showing that this was the correct journal in which to position my research.

The article is heavily influenced and improved by the peer review process and two rounds of revisions and resubmissions. Reviewers gravitated toward the merit of my argument and the importance of my proposed reconceptualization but pointed correctly to an overemphasis on Western epistemologies of education and limited interaction with Indigenous ways of knowing. This helped me restructure the theoretical framework of the article to better emphasize Indigenous scholars. The reviewers also asked me to truncate the methods section to focus more heavily on the theoretical lens and add a concise positionality statement. Going through this process—and drawing from some of the scholars recommended by the reviewers—helped me settle on the term other-than-human, a foundational decision for the entire dissertation.

3.1 Introduction

"When hunting we always looked up. Easier to find the caribou if you look to the ravens. They dip, you see, the wing. It's like a salute then you know that's where to look." A Gwich'in Elder and culture bearer explains the hunting practices of the Gwich'in people of Arctic Village to interviewers from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in 1991. When I ask this Elder about the same thing 30 years later the response is similar: "Yeah, the only difference now is that after they show us where to shoot, more ravens will come at the sound of the gun. They've figured out when they get some food too. It works out for everyone." Our conversation mirrors the Fish and Game interview but we focus less on regulation and more on how Gwich'in hunting practices are learned, taught, and passed on from generation to generation. The Elder outlines for me an approach that is very close to the academic concept of a community of practice (CoP), a group of people who come together to share and learn from one another (Dubé, Bourhis, & Jacob, 2005). But there is a key difference in the shared Gwich'in practice and the highly theorized definition of a community of practice: it is not just humans that are participating, the ravens are key members.

To locate the ravens and frame their importance I argue for an expansion from a community of practice to an *ecosystem of practice*. Previous scholarly work around communities of practice is deeply rooted in Western epistemologies leaving a significant gap in scholarship considering communities of practice through Indigenous epistemologies. Using an Indigenous epistemological lens sheds light on the limited consideration community of practice literature has given to anything that is not human. This fixation on humanity leaves critical gaps in how to define membership, roles, and participation within a community of practice, especially in considering other-than-human actors.

In this article, I first identify the Western underpinnings of community of practice theory, before exploring how current conceptions misalign with many Indigenous epistemologies, justifying the need for a change in terminology to move away from anthropocentric language and human exceptionalism. I then begin an exploration of how we might define an ecosystem of practice, addressing issues of membership and inclusion of other-than-human actors. To contextualize this definition, I look to a Gwich'in hunting and fishing ecosystem of practice drawing from two sets of interviews with the same Gwich'in Elders conducted 30 years apart.

My interest in these interviews and the role of the ravens is generational. My father was part of the initial Alaska Fish and Game study, and our family has maintained deep connections with the Arctic Village Gwich'in community which allowed me to conduct the follow-up interview. Growing up in Alaska makes me a native Alaskan, but I am not an Alaska Native. I write this article conscious of my position as a white settler man, working to collaborate through interviews and discussions with Elders to help further illuminate Alaska Native beliefs and understandings.

3.2 Communities of Practice

The academic concept of a community of practice (CoP) was born at the intersection of education and social anthropology from Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave, respectively, in their book *Situated Learning* (1991). Drawing from Vygotskian psychology which emphasizes how the mind cannot be understood in isolation from society (1979), Lave and Wenger place learning as a result of the activity, context, and culture in which it is situated. This is a clear conceptual shift away from traditional understandings of knowledge as true justified belief. Justification of belief and the

source of this justification remains a critical and contentious discourse. Internalist and externalists disagree on how beliefs and knowledge are created and justified. Feldman and Conee (2001) argue the internalist side of knowledge justification, claiming that only that which is directly or introspectively available can justify beliefs and create knowledge. This individualist, cognitive, evidence-based approach emerging from Piagetian psychology places the burden of knowledge on the individual. The counterargument of externalists claims that factors other than those which are specific to an individual can also justify individual beliefs (Goldman, 2009). While this allows for a broader range of interpretations, it still places the onus on the individual to be the mediating source of what is and is not knowledge. Under these conceptions, knowledge is either an object independent of human action or embedded in an individual (BonJour & Sosa, 2003).

Situated learning, however, contends that knowledge is embedded in a community. This places the justification for believing something as emergent from interactions. Instead of defining knowledge as justified true belief, or justified belief through internal and/or external factors, situated learning places knowledge as justified belief constructed by shared practice. This perspective views knowledge as a public good that is socially generated, maintained, and exchanged within emergent communities of practice (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Now, formal learning spaces no longer hold exclusive rights to knowledge production and dissemination, as entwining learning with context opens all interactions to become potential learning spaces. Important to note is that situated learning still applies to formal learning spaces such as schools but asks educators to consider factors beyond the curriculum such as the potential influence of school culture on learning (Suchman, 1987).

With situated learning as a foundation for understanding how learning happens, Wenger (1998) asserts that when people learn together the result is a community of practice. As a new

approach to learning, CoP theory expanded out of education and anthropology to be applied across numerous academic disciplines including organizational studies (Gherardi, 2009), disaster relief (Miles, Burton, & Kang, 2019), public policy (Bicchi, 2011), music (Snell & Hodgetts, 2007), art (Noble, 2021), and architecture (Green, Hibbins, & Haughton, 2013). Despite the wide array of fields and applications of CoP theory, the academic world appears to agree on using Lave and Wenger's (1991) original definition as the baseline: "people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis" (p. 4). Regardless of specific language, the pieces present in every definition are a group of people, a shared domain, and interaction. Here is where we find misalignment, where do the ravens fit into this model?

3.3 From Communities to Ecosystems

In contrast to the predominantly Western perspective on knowledge detailed in the previous section, many Indigenous epistemologies decentralize humanity. Weenie (2009) places the source of Indigenous knowledge as sacred stories, songs, ceremonies, and teachings from communities and Elders. This is an epistemology that relies on the connection between the community and its spiritual beliefs and traditions supporting what Cajete (1994) terms an "ecologically-informed consciousness". Within this conception the community is a sacred place, a center for teaching and learning supported by every community member toward the betterment of the community as a whole. What comprises a community, however, extends beyond an individual, a family, or a village as whole, to encompass relationships between people, plants, animals, natural actors, and phenomena; more concisely described by a Lakota metaphor, "we are all related" (Cajete, 1994).

58

This way of knowing requires appreciation, understanding, and empathy of the natural (Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992). Cajete details the source of American Indian knowledge through this ecological lens:

> American Indians symbolically recognized their relationship to plants, animals, stones, trees, mountains, rivers, lakes, streams, and a host of other living entities. Through seeking, making, sharing, and celebrating these natural relationships, they came to perceive themselves as living in a sea of relationships... With this awareness, tempered by intimate relationships with various environments over a thousand or more generations, Indian people accumulated and applied their ecological knowledge (p. 74).

The longevity of this theory of knowledge and its view that knowledge can be received directly from other living and non-living entities, both human and other-than-human, contrasts sharply with Wenger's anthropocentric Western epistemology. Pierotti & Wildcat (2000) place Traditional Ecological Knowledge in this same framework, including all aspects of physical space as part of a community, including animals, plants, and landforms.

Environmental education scholars have long pushed toward the concept of nature as teacher (Ford & Blenkinsop, 2018; Hall & Clover, 1997). Indigenous education scholars place land as a requirement for Indigenous education, a stance succinctly summarized by Simpson (2014) as "Indigenous education is not Indigenous or education from within our intellectual traditions unless it comes through the land" (p. 9). Land-based learning centers Indigenous land-based perspectives, counteracting entrenched settler colonial perspectives of the role of the land in education (Bang et al., 2014). By including other-than-human actors as potential and perhaps essential members of a community of practice, learning can happen communally without another human being. A community of practice can exist between different environmental factors and an individual or groups of individuals.

This learning *with* the world fundamentally reimagines the centrality of human actors within a community of practice and places added emphasis on other-than-human actors as

members of the learning process. The inclusion of other-than-human actors, however, signals a significant departure from Wenger's (1998) original conception. He places anything other-than-human as passive resources to be taken from and used. Although this anthropocentric perspective may appear plausible in corporate environments, as a general description of human learning it is contextually and culturally biased. The delineation of anything other-than-human as a resource becomes increasingly problematic in the settler colonial tradition of viewing Indigenous peoples as less-than-human, and thus a resource to be abused for material gain (Hughes & Highwater, 1983).

As I have a specific focus on the Alaska Native communities, I will highlight some examples of as to how Indigenous Alaskan knowledge relies heavily on interacting with and understanding natural forces. Yup'ik Elders view animals and natural actors such as rivers, trees, and the ocean, as co-inhabitants of a sentient world, nonhuman persons responsive to thoughts, words, and deeds (Fienup-Riordan, 2020). Animals are said to have "ears through the ground" (p. 11) and will not come to hunters who disrespect them. Athabascans express a similar relation with fish who are only caught when they choose to give themselves to the fisherman (Kofinas et al., 2010). Canadian Inuit take the very shape of the land to be an indication that it is teaching them where to look for caribou or where to be wary of wolves (Raffan, 1993). Alaska Native Elders and community members from across the unique and varied communities and cultures consistently describe what Lave and Wenger would identify as a novice-expert relationship between a human and the environment around them as it teaches through extended and deep ecological roots how to live. This perception is not unique to Indigenous groups in Alaska. The many roles of the other-than-human members as active participants of these learning ecosystems have been illustrated through scholarship in a plethora of Indigenous settings including among the Haudenosaunee

(Kimmerer, 2013), the Cree and Metis (Styres, 2011), the Runa (Kohn, 2013), and the Māori (Manning & Harrison, 2018).

This conception shows education as situated and communally derived, similar to Lave and Wenger's (1991) conception of a community of practice but diverges by considering other-than-human participants to be a key actors within the community. This is a significant gap in how CoP theory can be considered and used. I propose to reconceptualize CoP theory to place other-than-human actors, including animals and the land, as integral interlocutors, thus expanding from a community of practice to an *ecosystem of practice*.

3.4 Defining an Ecosystem of Practice

An ecosystem of practice is a community of practice that considers other-than-human actors to be participants in the situated learning process. The first step toward clarifying this larger term is defining its composite parts. The term ecosystem originally stems from ecology and refers to a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment (Ayres, 2012). More recently, the term has been claimed by a variety of different academic disciplines and has been generalized to refer to any type of network or system. Business management has redefined an ecosystem to refer to "an interdependent network of self-interested actors jointly creating value" (Bogers, Sims, & West, 2019, p. 4). Occasionally these newer definitions harken back to the physical environment in which they are situated, such as Grandstrand and Holgersson (2020) who refer to an innovation ecosystem as "the evolving set of actors, activities, and artifacts, and the institutions and relations, including complementary and substitute relations, that are important for the innovative performance of an actor or a population of actors" (p. 1). None of these definitions,

however, attribute any agency or interconnection of other-than-human actors beyond use as an artifact or resource. This subversion of ecosystem creates a flawed anthropocentric model of what should be a deeply interconnected and natural concept. In my use of ecosystem, I return to Pierotti and Wildcat's (2000) conception of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, placing a community of interacting organisms and their physical environment on level footing and considering all members important.

In defining practice, I align closely with Wenger's (1998) framework of practice as activities or sets of activities. Activity comprises the actions of and interactions between different actors as they exist within a community. Practice refers to patterns of activity across multiple actors within the community to bring meaning to a set of otherwise commonplace activities (Jarzabkowski, 2005). These activities embedded in or subsumed by practice simultaneously draw on and build communal knowledge. As Akoumianakis et al. (2008) describe, "practices represent the collective wisdom, rules of thumb and common ground (i.e., processes, tools and artefacts) characterizing a community" (p. 369). To be a community or ecosystem of practice is to share, learn, and grow through this collective wisdom and knowledge. The necessary expansion beyond traditional CoP conceptions of practice is to reconsider what constitutes an actor to also include other-than-human actors.

A critical aim in defining both the parts of an ecosystem of practice and the term itself is working to remove anthropocentric language. The pieces present in most definitions of a community of practice can be expanded and adapted with this change in language. A clear example of this is that while one the central characteristics of a community of practice is a group of people, an ecosystem of practice has a group of actors, which could include both human and other-than-human. Other common central characteristics such as a domain, community, and practice (Wenger

et al., 2002) need to be expanded to use ecosystem instead of community. Domain, the area of knowledge inspiring members to participate, guiding their learning, and giving meaning to their actions, allows for other-than-human interlocutors. Within an ecosystem of practice domain is expanded to include the interests and purposes these other-than-human members. As defined above, practice easily can be shifted to incorporate all members of an ecosystem. These types of small but critical adjustments also work for Wenger's (1998) three interrelated parts of the structure of a community of practice: mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire. Mutual engagement is how members (for ecosystems of practice both human and other-than-human) participate, establish norms, and build relationships. Joint enterprise is how shared understanding is created through these interactions. Shared repertoire is the outcome of the practice, the set of communal resources that are produced through interaction and learning. Again, ecosystem of practice theory adheres closely to community of practice theory with a few key distinctions.

3.5 On Other-Than-Human Actors

With the cardinal distinction for an ecosystem of practice being the inclusion of other-than-human actors, the question then becomes: how do these other-than-human actors function in an ecosystem of practice? Members of communities of practice traditionally move on a trajectory from novice to expert as they practice and interact. It is difficult to frame a river as a novice on the movement of fish, so the immediate temptation is to place many, if not all, other-than-human actors as experts within an ecosystem of practice. This is in line with the way many Indigenous groups speak of other-than-human actors within their world. As Kimmerer (2013) writes:

63

> [I]n Native ways of knowing, human people are often referred to as 'the younger brothers of creation.' We say that humans have the least experience with how to live and thus the most to learn—we must look to our teachers among the other species for guidance. Their wisdom is apparent in the way that they live. They teach us by example. They've been on the earth far longer than we have been, and have had time to figure things out. (p. 9)

This mentality, while not referring to a specific ecosystem of practice, depicts other-than-human actors as teachers and experts. But hidden in this description is the idea that these other-than-human actors have also learned and grown themselves over time. The implicit assumption is that time and experience can provide wisdom and knowledge, and that this is not specific or unique to humanity. Kohn (2013) provides an example of the difference in scale of how long this learning process can take noting how tree characteristics and special orientation over time "form relatively more nuanced and exhaustive overall representation[s] of the surrounding environment" (p. 81). We can also assume growth and learning by other-than-human actors through examining existing hierarchies in Indigenous knowledge systems of natural forces.

As an example, we can return to the words of the Gwich'in Elder from the opening, we see ravens learning within an ecosystem of practice over the course of 30 years. The technological advent of hunting with guns caused the ravens to learn and adapt their practices. Learning continues to be bi-directional between the humans and the ravens within the ecosystem of practice. What we can ascertain from this is that other-than-human actors are most often experts, but also have the capacity to learn and grow through shared practice. This bi-directional learning can also extend to what most Western culture conceives of as non-sentient forces such as rivers or mountains. The river learns as we learn. When I place a rock into the river, I learn quickly that I should not build my boat out of rocks. As I try other options the river discovers that bark is not rock. My purpose here is not to say that learning within an ecosystem of practice must inherently be bi-directional, as Simpson (2017) describes an ecosystem of practice where humans were reliant

on deer, the learning relationship only going in one direction, after which the deer ultimately chose to leave the ecosystem of practice. Instead, I aim to highlight ways in which the bidirectionally of an ecosystem of learning is possible.

Here, however, we run into concerns over how to limit and define what other-than-human actors are members of an ecosystem of practice. It could be possible to attribute agency and membership to every grain of sand on the beach or air molecules floating around us. A member in a community of practice must be an active practitioner. Membership is dependent on some level of expertise or experience in the role or subject area of the community of practice (Wenger, 1998). There is a simple process to determine membership among human participants as you can ask and ascertain practice, expertise, and experience. But who are we to judge the practice, expertise, or experience of a maple tree in a syruping ecosystem of practice? Membership and limitation must be defined by members of the ecosystem of practice. While it may be difficult for the other-than-human members of an ecosystem of practice to make their needs and preferences known to the human, this does not necessarily create a structural flaw. It is not uncommon for members of larger communities of practice to not know every other member, or even the total number of members (Wenger et al., 2002). Knowledge generation and transmission can still come from these unacknowledged or unknown members; indeed, awareness of full membership is not a condition of participation. Scope in an ecosystem of practice can be actively fluid and undefined.

3.6 A Gwich'in Hunting and Fishing Ecosystem of Practice

I now ground of these theories through a structural example of what an ecosystem of practice looks like in an Alaska Native context. This section draws on Alaska Fish and Game

interviews from 1991 of nine Gwich'in Elders looking into hunting and fishing practices. Despite the Alaska Fish and Game interviewers primarily targeting their questions at hunting and fishing practices and potential regulations that would best fit with Alaska Native cultural understandings, the interviewees spoke extensively about their ecosystems of practice, including how teaching and learning happen. To help clarify some of these perceptions and explore changes over time, I interviewed two of these same Elders 30 years later in 2021, building on the initial interviews, but focusing more heavily on educational practices and outcomes. I undertook these interviews as a white settler man entering an Alaska Native space, working to be conscious of the inherent biases and power dynamics that come with that relationship. The interview data was analyzed using NVivo qualitative data analysis software with multiple rounds of coding trees developed and improved through consultation with the Gwich'in Elders. The following analysis was also member checked by the participating Gwich'in Elders to ensure that I accurately represent their words and meaning.

The Gwich'in Elders defined their domain, or shared area of knowledge, as the gathered hunting and fishing wisdom grown through generations of experience. Elders discussed specific strategies they have learned for hunting and fishing. Mentioned examples of this shared knowledge base include the importance of properly cleaning fish, only hunting for as much food as is needed, and how to make tools from different parts of animals.

Building and drawing on this shared domain is the second piece of an ecosystem of practice, what conventionally would be referred to as the community. This ecosystem is the set of members, both human and other-than-human, that participate in the learning and practice. Elders described learning their hunting and fishing practices from five primary sources: Elders, parents, peers, animals, and the land. The first three sources closely match most considered membership in

a community of practice, with experts and novices, all human. Elders and parents were often described as these experts, transmitting cultural knowledge through generations with important experience to be shared. One Elder discussed learning from their parents saying, "Our parents brought us up straight, they taught us how to hunt, fishing and gathering." Another delved more deeply into the role of the Elders in learning, "As times progressed, as we grew, we always follow the law. Our Elders teaches us to have respect and obey what the Elders say."

But learning was also described as coming from animals and the land, entities that would traditionally be described as resources instead of active members of a community of practice. For best fishing practices one Elder mentioned looking to bears, "If you watch the bear they know where is best. After they leave you put your nets there." Another discussed being respectful to moose and caribou, "They say, when a person runs down a caribou or moose, they shouldn't laugh, brag, or make fun of it, people don't like that. We shouldn't be saying that kind of a things to the animals, we should just be quiet, and be happy about it. The moose knows and won't come." Bears, moose, caribou, ravens, eagles, and rabbits were all mentioned as key sources of knowledge. The land itself was also described as an active participant, including mountains, trees, and rivers, with one Elder noting, "The river says when the eels are coming. If you listen or don't listen you will miss the whole thing." The tone and frequency in which animals and the land were mentioned as members of the ecosystem was similar to Elders, parents, and peers. There was no distinction between the five members. The words of the Alaska Native Elders here show why the term community is insufficient and inaccurate in describing and defining membership. Ecosystem of practice more accurately describes the Alaska Native context.

The final requisite piece of both a community and an ecosystem of practice is the practice itself. One Elder detailed the series of activities and interactions around hunting ducks:

> Then in the spring, there's a lake, we go there and hunt for duck. If the lake is wide it says to come. After bunch had been taken, they start to plucking the feathers off the duck and say 'Oh, we'll be sleeping warm this winter.' Bags of feathers are piled. After they take it all home, then start with making some big blankets (goose down). They even made parka with them. And in the smoke cache, all cut, ready to dry ducks are hung, this will feed the family in the winter… dad said the ducks know to stay warm and keep us warm.

The described ecosystem of practice includes participation from the speaker, their peers and human community, their father, the lake, and the ducks themselves. The pattern of activities that take place across all of these different actors shows interaction and learning, in addition to resulting in other important practical outcomes for the human participants such as food and clothing. As we only have the human perspective here, it is unclear what, if any, practical outcomes may emerge for the ducks and the lake. Making sense of this practice, however, requires inclusion of other-than-human actors—the lake and the ducks. Omission of these critical participants does not accurately represent the hunting and fishing ecosystem of practice. The shared wisdom of the Gwich'in Elders maps clearly onto the proposed structure of an ecosystem of practice with a shared domain, an ecosystem, and practice.

Having established how this case study demands classification as an ecosystem of practice, the above excerpt also sheds light on the structure of an ecosystem of practice. Here we look to Wenger's (1998) structural criteria of mutual engagement, joint enterprise, and shared repertoire, but with active and intentional attention to and inclusion of other-than-human actors. Mutual engagement is happening between all of the different ecosystem members including established norms of annual hunting practices at a specific time, dictated by both human interpretations of time and the lake's indication of readiness. Through the joint enterprise of hunting, understandings of warmth and subsistence are created. Finally, emerging from this consistent pattern of practice is the shared repertoire of how and when to hunt, how to clean and store the ducks, and the uses

of the different parts of the ducks. Once again, inclusion of all members is necessary to elucidate the complex structure of the ecosystem of practice.

3.7 Adapting to Changes and Challenges

Membership, participation, and practice have all changed in the 30-year period between interviews. The Gwich'in hunting and fishing ecosystem of practice has not existed in a vacuum and has undergone considerable change and upheaval. Understanding the change in the ecosystem of practice over this 30-year period requires a complete picture of all members, including other-than-human members. All members participate in the changes and adaptions, reacting to the many challenges facing this particular ecosystem of practice.

Elders in the 1991 interviews were already expressing concern for the intergenerational transmission of their culture and practices. One Elder articulated their concern saying "Talking to younger generation is pretty hard. We should get them together and talk to them… to understand the meaning of how we live. Maybe they will remember it in the future." Even 30 years ago, outmigration of Alaska Native youth from the villages to the larger cities was threatening the continuance of the ecosystem of practice. Even some of the remaining youths were reluctant to learn traditional practices, a situation one Elder described as "frustrating… half the kids don't listen."

Reacting to the fear of loss of critical cultural knowledge, several Elders in the initial 1991 interviews mentioned the importance of setting up a systematic and sustainable way of preserving their culture and passing down knowledge. One Elder suggested a concrete plan:

Yes, look to me that we have to teach them with it. We should talk and write down everything what our people did in the past. We should go to fish camp to talk about this and write it down. Without any hesitation, we should build a house here in Arctic Village and start to teach each other. This question you had asked me. We should start with all our knowledge and stand for it then start teaching ourselves to read and write in our language. We should start gather in that building and teach each other, we will accomplish many things in our traditional way of life.

The Elder continued by placing significant emphasis on the importance of this proposed schoolhouse in Arctic Village, as only in this specific context would the learning make sense. How could you learn from the Chandalar river without sitting at its bank? Removing the knowledge from context would remove important teachers and students among the other-than-human members of the ecosystem of practice. Talking again with this same Elder 30 years later many of the steps suggested above have happened. The schoolhouse in Arctic Village focuses on teaching Gwich'in traditions, including hunting and fishing practices, and many new physical and digital archives have been created with the express intent of storing cultural knowledge. When I asked about the Elder's thoughts on these efforts he replied, "We started now, and it is better. But still the kids don't all want to learn or see." The concerns have not been fully alleviated, but the ecosystem of practice continues, changing and adapting to the world around it.

The animals and land were also noted to be reacting to the changes in hunting and fishing practices. One Elder in 1991 attributed the then recent scarcity of game to this change in practice saying "The people never ran out of any animal even there was many people on the land. This is because they know how to handle the animal. There were more animal in their days." Another Elder placed the same scarcity as based on decisions made by animals and the land, lamenting that "the river gets mad more often now… sometimes the fish do not come… they are not treated right the caribou so don't show themselves." Without proper attention to the animals and respect shown to their importance as a member of the ecosystem of practice, the other-than-human participants

adjusted both their interest in participating and the way they choose to interact. As another Elder described, "that's how it is and that's why the balance of animal nature is disrupted, that goes for moose, caribou, bull. Because of all this, things are not the same as always." The recent interviews showed similar changes in the way that other-than-human actors participated in the ecosystem of practice. Mirroring the 1991 description of the river, in 2021 one Elder said "the river breaks angry now in spring. Too warm too fast." Following this up with a discussion of caribou migration patterns noting that the animals "don't know the right place to go now."

Under the existing—but flawed—lens of community of practice theory, these two critical and complex challenges to the Gwich'in hunting and fishing ecosystem of practice could be summarized quite simply: kids don't want to participate anymore, and there aren't as many animals anymore. Unpacking the nuances of these problems, however, insists on the inclusion of other-than-human members. Concerns with out-migration and disinterest in cultural practices cannot be addressed without the place-based contextualization of Arctic Village and all the human and other-than-human interactions that comprise the ecosystem of practice. Understanding why the animals' migration patterns and population density have changed is impossible without the perspectives of the animals themselves and the necessary respect for the animals to continue to participate in the ecosystem of practice.

Examining the changes and trajectory of the Gwich'in hunting and fishing ecosystem of practice over the past 30 years illuminates a living, learning, vibrant, fluid ecosystem, maneuvering its way through many difficult challenges by adapting to the shifting tangible and intangible landscapes. Membership and practice of both human and other-than-human participants evolved, and Elders seem certain will continue to evolve. This ecosystem of practice is not static but dynamic. Indigenous communities and practices can often be erroneously viewed by Western

societies as fixed, old-fashioned, and antiquated when they are in fact modern and evolving (Levine & Robinson, 2019). To fully understand the complex dynamics of an ecosystem of practice, it is critical to include the important contributions of other-than-human members.

3.8 Conclusion

While unfamiliar with the academic concept of a community of practice, the two Elders I spoke with in the recent interviews both audibly laughed when asked directly whether there are other-than-human participants in their hunting and fishing practices. In an amused tone one Elder followed up their chuckle by asking the simple question, "how could we hunt without animals?" The Western slant of my question and the incredulity of the answer from the Alaska Native perspective highlights a distinct and important contrast in worldviews. In this Indigenous context the anthropocentric idea of a community of practice does not align. In order to explore meaning within this culture, the theoretical lens must adapt to engage and consider the ontological and epistemological understandings of the culture. Expanding to an ecosystem of practice allows for this necessary flexibility.

Ecosystems of practice better align with Alaska Native understandings and many other Indigenous worldviews. The new conception fits within the growing push for Traditional Ecological Knowledge to be combined Western science (Pierotti & Wildcat, 200). Future research should explore the potential for ecosystems of practice outside of Indigenous contexts. Urban environments have their own ecosystems with often different other-than-human actors playing critical roles. A considerable portion of the literature on communities of practice comes from the

management science field, and investigating how ecosystems of practice may be used in these settings could point to improvements in business outcomes.

In this time of wild disregard for nature there is a fundamental moral imperative for both academics and practitioners to push back against anthropocentric cultural norms. Actively redefining and reconceptualizing community of practice theory shifts overall cultural perspectives to better embrace other-than-human entities. If we understand what we learn from the river, the tree, and the raven and how they connect and participate in our ecosystem we build environmental empathy. Many Indigenous groups have found and fostered sustainability through respect for the land because they exist within the perspective of an ecosystem of practice. Highlighting these viewpoints in bastions of Western culture such as the academy, the boardroom, and the classroom builds a more ecologically connected younger generation while simultaneously urging older generations to shift their mentalities. We have a lot to learn from the ravens.

4.0 Chapter 2: Resetting a Heartbeat: Cultural Transmission and Holistic Learning

through Alaska Native Dance

This article is written to be submitted to the *Comparative Education Review* (CER), a journal sponsored by the Comparative International Education Society (CIES). I have been a member of CIES for five years, presented at several of their conferences, and I am an active member of the Indigenous Knowledge and the Academy Special Interest Group. As this is an academic community this is important to me, it is an excellent place for my scholarship to be published. Beyond my connection to the community, the CER is a prestigious, indexed journal that will promote my research to an international audience.

Manuscripts submitted to the CER must be 8,000 words or fewer, including references. The wordcount of the following chapter is 7,941. I have chosen to focus the space in this article on vignettes and Indigenous storywork. This limits the extended discussion of holistic learning toward the end of the article, but I believe that the stories and experiences of the communities I work with—and sharing those stories in the words of my colleagues—is critical, especially when approaching Alaska Native song and dance. To fit the requirements of the journal I have made sure to include and spend time on an explicit theoretical framework in Indigenous storywork and have added clear sections acknowledging relevant literature and detailing my methods. The CER asks for authors to go beyond connecting with debates and instead advancing them, preferably in interdisciplinary ways. I believe that this article draws together a wide range of disciplines in education to argue for culturally responsive curricular and philosophical change.

4.1 Introduction

The finals of the one foot high kick at the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics are nearing a dramatic conclusion as I wait nervously to talk with Yup'ik Elder John Waghiyi. I sidle up to his vendor booth, a folding table displaying small ivory carvings contrasting sharply against a draped black tablecloth, just as the crowd roars approval to what I assume was a successful kick. I turn my head too late to see the athletic feat, and when I look back at the table John is clearing finished plates of whale off a white plastic chair to make room for me to sit down next to him. He nods wordlessly to me, and I sit.

I had been introduced to John an hour earlier by a member of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage who spoke reverently of John as one of the foremost experts on Alaska Native Dance including both Iñupiaq and Yup'ik practices. John eyed me with considerable skepticism and immediately asked my introducer why he should bother talking with me. As the situation was being explained, John was served dinner by his teenage daughter. After being handed a plate of whale and seal meat, he turned to me and, addressing me directly for the first time, said to come back in an hour after he had finished his dinner. I smiled, nodded, and skittered off, hoping to squeeze in another interview before I came back. Instead, I found myself watching the games while nervously looking from the stands down to the vendor area on the floor of the arena every couple of minutes to see if John might be ready for me. Finally judging the moment to be right, I go down to the floor and as I sit in the chair recently occupied by whale scraps I am peppered with questions. Before being willing to speak with me, John asks about my funding, IRB status, number of interviews completed, and where the data from this interview would be stored. I am both overwhelmed and elated by these questions and fortunately able to provide clear and thorough answers to each one. While John is my first interviewee who asked for this level of clarification,

his skepticism is not surprising given the complex and problematic history of outside research among Alaska Native people. Previous research in Alaska Native communities has often been exploitative and had no benefit or caused damaging effects (Parker Webster & John, 2010). John's fears are assuaged when we realize a shared connection, a mentor of mine and friend of his, who through association gives me credibility.

His final question is around the compensation I could provide for his time. I tell him the honorarium given to other interviewees, funding from an external grant, and he looks me dead in the eye and straight faced tells me he wants double. I freeze and he continues saying, "I deserve double. I'm going to blow your mind." After a tense couple of seconds that feel closer to a couple of minutes as I struggle to figure out the best way to respond, his serious face breaks for the first time into a mischievous smile through which he says, "I'm joking. We joke. Ask me my name and we will get started." My tension bursts, I mirror his smile, we begin to talk, and he blows my mind.

While I will draw from much of what John shared with me, two moments drive the structure of this article. The first moment is the first thing he told me about Alaska Native dance: "It's inherent. It's in our blood. It's intertwined. It resets our heartbeat. It helps us heal. It helps us to pass time. It helps to come of age. It helps us to have the knowledge to create." This is the beginning of a list detailing the different roles of song and dance in his community, highlighting the multifaceted experience of dance among Alaska Native people. John's perspective consistent with that of others I've interviewed, observed, and interacted with. Alaska Native dance is not only an important cultural practice but also a fundamental pedagogical strategy for teaching and learning cultural heritage, values, practical skills, mental health, and spirituality—a collective curriculum succinctly summarized by John as, "Oh, you know, it just reinforces really our Indigenous way of life."

The second moment comes toward the end of his interview as we discuss the current system of education in rural Alaska. Here, John's demeanor changes again as the shadow from his furrowed brow casts a darker pall over the rest of his features. The timbre of his voice deepens, and he begins to clip the ends off his words as he tells me, "Well, you know, education is so Western, Western European culture oriented, they have specific criteria that they use... They just need to forget the textbook approach and start implementing this Indigenous style of sitting with the kid and singing and dancing with it. Learn everything at the same time." As he mentions singing and dancing his inflection softens again and a warmness returns to his face and voice, even just for the few words.

His overarching message, clarified further in the discussion that followed, points to a one of the most profound differences of Western education from Alaska Native education: Western education's highly compartmentalized nature. Specific subjects are taught in isolation with set time blocks in a fixed curriculum. This represents a significant misalignment with Alaska Native understandings of education which view learning as a holistic process in which one learns subjects, values, skills, and culture simultaneously. In reaffirming how to approach culturally responsive education among Alaska Native communities, this holistic conception of education is key.

Lurking ever-present in the background of both these moments, however, is the tension hinted at in the beginning of the interview when John said "I'm joking. We joke." —a tension addressed more outwardly as he checked my credentials and preparation. John was unsure I would understand his joke, or even know that Alaska Native people tell jokes at all. This worry placed the burden on him as part of the non-dominant culture—despite being in the predominantly Indigenous setting of the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics—to explain himself and make sure I would understand. Since Western influence first permeated Indigenous Alaska, this same burden

has been placed on Alaska Native peoples, adding weight to the oppressive colonial mass that enforced measures including English-only education and banning of cultural practices such as dance in Alaska Native communities. Because of this history, colonial oppression and continued Western cultural misunderstandings underlie any consideration or discussion of Alaska Native education and song and dance. Acknowledging this tension and its influences on my interviewees, in this article I expand on these two key moments from my interview with John to first outline several critical educational outcomes of Iñupiaq dance and then elucidate how this educative practice requires a holistic, non-compartmentalized approach to learning.

4.2 Educational Outcomes of Iñupiaq Dance

Most research on Alaska Native dance focuses on exploring the forms, practices, and outcomes through an ethnomusicological or historical lens (e.g., Johnston, 1975, 1980, 1992; Kaplan 1988; Kingston, 1999; Wallen, 1990). There is, however, a small but growing body of scholarship which investigates different outcomes of Alaska Native dance and the critical roles it plays for both the community and self. Dangeli (2015) shows how Indigenous dance directly confronts settler coloniality and reaffirms Native sovereignty through what he terms "dancing sovereignty", the self-determination carried out through performances that expand and affirm the laws of the performers' Nation. In one of the most comprehensive explorations of Alaska Native dance, John (2010) identifies 20 Yup'ik dance types and categories, describing them as an essential part of the Yup'ik social system, and connecting them to the Yup'ik yuuyaraq, their epistemic worldview. Ikuta (2022), in the first book published specifically on Alaska Native dance, builds on John's framework exploring the sociality of dance in both Yup'ik and Iñupiaq communities.

78

Other critical studies have framed music and dance practices in Alaska Native communities as a symbol of cultural identity (Sakakibara, 2009; Williams, 1997), as an expression of individual identity (Willett, 2017), as a critical social and emotional tool for expression (Ikuta, 2010), and as a way to share knowledge for healing and wellness (Qassataq, 2020).While many of these scholars brush the borders of the relationship between education and Indigenous music and dance, there is limited direct engagement.

Outside of Alaska, however, there is a growing body of work relating the two fields. Indigenous arts practices have been linked to cultural transmission (Colín, 2014; Lidskog, 2017); conservation, coexistence, and community education (Kallio & Westerlund, 2016); identity formation and socioemotional development (Shelemay, 2006); and language learning and persistence (Campbell, 2012). Writing about a similarly colonial context, West African studies scholars have developed pedagogical strategies for dance focused on combating the effects of colonialism through affirming Indigenous body practice and knowledge (Banks, 2007), fostering inclusion and building community (Mabingo, 2020), and reflection (Mabingo et al, 2020). I place this article at the intersection of these two bodies of work, linking existing scholarship on Alaska Native dance with work in arts-based cultural revitalization in education through Indigenous artistic practices to focus specifically on the educative outcomes of Iñupiaq dance.

4.3 Reciprocity Through Indigenous Storywork

The vignette presented in the introduction to this article is an example of Indigenous storywork, an Indigenous research methodology introduced by Stó:lō scholar-educator Jo-ann Archibald (2008). As Archibald describes, "The words story and work together signal the

importance and seriousness of undertaking the educational and research work of making meaning through stories" (p. 374). Using Indigenous storywork as the foundational theoretical and methodological framework, I draw from its seven principles—respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, wholism, interrelatedness, and synergy—to center the lived experiences of the Alaska Native communities in a manner that exemplifies epistemological understandings. I strive to meet Archibald's criteria of effective storywork, which "grows out of the actions of interrelatedness and synergy formed by the storyteller, the story, the listener, and the context in which the story is used" (p. 374). With this aim I place emphasis in the vignettes used throughout this article not only on the story itself, but also on the participants in the storytelling process and the context in which the stories were told. Without rich descriptive language and reflection on my own experience as a listener the stories might lose some of their transformative educational potential.

As a non-Indigenous researcher working in Indigenous spaces, I remain continually conscious of ensuring that my findings and the way they are shared has value and is accessible to Alaska Native communities. This is the other reason I center vignettes throughout this article. The stories of fellow community members situated in the descriptive context of a familiar environment allows for members of my research communities to best understand and relate to my research output. As part of the writing process of this article, I have worked with several members of the dance communities whose voices I share and they have urged me to write as simply and legibly as possible, working to remove the esoteric and arcane from my writing. In this way the research can be held within the community and benefit multiple audiences. This is also a key facet of Indigenous storywork, working to "strengthen storied impact through reciprocity" (Archibald & Parent, 2019, p. 2), with one important aspect of reciprocity being "sharing this learning with others" (Davidson, 2019, p. 39).

4.4 Methods

This article presents one pair of catalytic findings from a much larger ethnography of two Alaska Native song and dance groups, one from the Iñupiaq community of Utqiaġvik situated in the far north of Alaska, and the other also an Iñupiaq community, but removed from their traditional lands in the city of Anchorage in south-central Alaska. Both groups are established, long standing ecosystems of practice— "communit[ies] of practice that consider[ ] other-than-human actors to be participants in the situated learning process" (Smith, 2022, p. 4) —that draw from both traditional and modern expressions of Iñupiaq song and dance. The research question guiding this piece of the ethnography asks: what are valued educational goals of these ecosystems of practice?

To answer this question, I draw from interviews with Alaska Native dance group members and Elders as well as observations of dance group rehearsals, performances, and festivals. I have conducted 31 interviews with dance group members and an additional 5 with local Elders. All the interviews were conducted in English, though three of the interviews with Elders had another person present to help interpret and translate small parts of the interviews. While dance group members can actively speak to their experience, conversations with Elders are invaluable for history and context as their roles as orators and culture bearers are critical to the Alaska Native traditional knowledge system (John, 2010). In this article I highlight several specific interviews and interviewees. All who are referred to by name asked for their names to be included. Participatory observation of 22 song and dance rehearsals and performances, detailed through extensive fieldnotes, helped contextualize our interviews. The vignettes also allow me to provide my perspective as a non-Indigenous participant in the two ecosystems of practice.

4.5 Cultural Heritage

Vernon Elavgak's normally slow pattern of speech accelerates as he tells me the story of how a wealth of Iñupiaq songs, thought to be lost to the Utqiaġvik community many years ago were found, buried in a Columbia University archive. Over the course of several years, these songs were repatriated to Vernon's people. The beginning of our interview has been slow and methodical, both of us facing the wall of the hallway we ducked into while trying find a quieter place to talk. The only available seating option is folded tumbling mats, which sag under our collective weight. But the sag seems to straighten with Vernon as he explains how a woman traveled through the villages up and down the coast around Utqiaġvik in 1947 recording the songs of the Iñupiaq people. Though he doesn't name her, this was Laura Boulton, a controversial ethnomusicologist who in her autobiography *Music Hunter* (1969) describes her goal as "to capture, absorb, and bring back the world's music; not the music of the concert hall or the opera house, but the music of the people" (p. 17). Boulton collected music from all over the world with the express intention of preserving culture that she viewed as too uncivilized to survive in the modern world. She ultimately sold a considerable part of her collection to Columbia University where it became the foundation for their ethnomusicology program. Among the artifacts catalogued in this archive were Boulton's 1947 recordings of Iñupiaq songs. But knowledge of the existence of these recordings was not passed down among the Iñupiaq people who sang the songs until many years later. Vernon speculates that this may be because these recordings were made during a time when missionaries had banned singing and dancing in Iñupiaq villages in an attempt to civilize and convert the population.

From the early 1900s until the 1970s, Iñupiaq dance was often a hidden practice or not practiced at all. What I mean by a hidden practice is best described in the words of storyteller and

Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage member Willy Topkok, recounting his childhood in the village of Teller. I share this story in its entirety as Willy has told me several times that a story must be fully told. As he told me the story, Willy held a drum and ceremoniously struck it to punctuate moments in the narrative. These moments are indicated by the phrasing [drumming] in the story:

> *In my village where my mother grew up, we were singing and dancing for the spirit world [drumming]. Just for the spirits [drumming]. When the missionaries came, because Christianity, now we have in my village two churches, Catholic and Lutheran, we go to both churches because there's both the same Christian religion. But they were trying to stop us singing and dancing because we're singing and dancing for animal spirits, and that's not the Holy Spirit of the Christian world. So, the missionaries tried stopping us. They tried to stop us from singing and dancing. But when the missionaries went to go see, we would have a guard. We have a big cultural place where people gathered for doing the work and teaching other Natives what to do. After the missionaries left then we would get our drums and do our singing and dancing [drumming]. So, we have a guard, maybe north four or five miles from the dance because he sees the missionaries coming. He will signal missionaries are coming [drumming]. So, the Natives will hide the drums under the ground. We would hide it or put something over it and then we get our sewing material because there was a lot of people, and we would be pretending to show them how to sew. We had to because the dancing it was not Christian, because we were singing for the raven, the walrus spirit, the whale spirit, [drumming] you know, for all spirits.*

From how Willy describes it, this type of deceit and hidden practice was common during the early and mid-1900s and was often the only way that any type of dance happened as missionaries preaching Christianity swept across rural Alaska.

This was where my conversation with Willy moved after he told me the story recounted above. The perception I began my fieldwork with was one steeped in scholarship lambasting Christianity as a settler colonial construct among Alaska Native people and detailing its many negative impacts (e.g., Barnhart, 2021; Burch Jr., 1994; Dombrowski, 2001). With my fists balled up and my jaw set I was ready to approach my research from as anti-colonial a perspective as possible and focus on the words of the Native communities. My conversation with Willy, and many others that followed, challenged me as they did not fit neatly into the mental framework I

had pre-constructed from the literature. After explaining how his people hid their cultural practices, Willy went on to talk extensively about his strong Christian beliefs and his joy in being a Christian. Listening back to the transcript I noticed that even in the story shared above he did not use any negative language or a negative tone in describing the missionaries. Instead, Willy describes the missionaries as well intentioned but lacking an understanding of what they were doing by enforcing English-only education and banning many cultural practices. Gregory Tungwenuk Nothstine of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage eloquently summarizes this viewpoint, saying "the assimilation process of the missionaries and churches were trying to do a good thing, but were just misunderstanding and incorrectly interrupting and suppressing the songs of the Indigenous population in Alaska."

Differing perceptions of missionaries emerged as a stark divide among the Alaska Native people I interviewed. Around half share a similar perspective to Willy and Gregory, seeming to harbor no or limited resentment toward the missionaries. The other half, however, hold considerably more bitterness with one Elder describing their influence as "a removal of who we are as a people". These mixed reactions toward missionaries are perhaps understandable considering that Christianity has become the dominant religion among the Alaska Native population, including in dance groups (Burch Jr., 1994). In fact, many dance groups, including the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, practice in churches. Watching their rehearsals, I feel the strange and incongruous contradiction of a song and dance to the walrus spirit being sung under a crucifix. While I am not focused on the impacts and influence of Western religion on Iñupiaq dance, I find it critical to highlight these perceptions as they lay the foundation for how Iñupiaq dance struggled, adapted, and changed to exist as it does today.

Regardless of a positive or negative perception of missionaries, the common ground across everyone I spoke with is that this period was what Gregory calls a "cultural interruption". From his description, a "cultural interruption" is a moment in time where cultural practices are unable to be passed down from parent to child, and this gap in generational transference can often lead to a loss of these cultural practices. During the early and mid-1900s, as Alaska Native populations were forced to hide or abandon singing and dancing practices, they experienced a clear cultural interruption which did result in the loss of many of these songs and dances (Johnston, 1975).

It was during this extended moment of cultural interruption that Laura Boulton travelled among the Iñupiat. Her recordings could very well have been recorded in secret with guards posted, watching in case the missionaries came. Vernon Elavgak believes it is possible that very few people were aware the recordings existed. After the bans were lifted, however, song and dance returned, and as the people who made these recordings and their children aged, Vernon said he started to hear rumors: "But toward the ending of their lives as they got older and passed on, they, you know, have given clues that there are CDs, there are songs that you've never heard, that you never heard in your whole entire life." He was eager to find these songs and eventually, working with Dr. Aaron Fox, the director of the Columbia University Center for Ethnomusicology, unearthed the recordings. In 2006 the lost reservoir of culture was repatriated to the Utqiaġvik community.

Suddenly Vernon had the songs of his ancestors but no motions to go with them. Even sixteen years later I could hear the excitement in his voice as he described his process after finally receiving the rights to the songs:

> When I found these, I would do what a teacher does. You practice these songs, and you teach so it was like a six-month long practice. It took so long to learn and make the motions to them from pretty much scratch having to reconstruct the wording of a song word for word. I tried to make the dance according to the song. It was a quite a long process.

From this foundation of songs and dances Vernon founded the Taġiuġmiut Dancers in 2007. Together they brought the songs that no one had heard for more than 50 years to the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics and won first prize in the dance competition in Taġiuġmiut Dancers' inaugural year. Their inspiring story speaks to the remarkable cultural importance of the Iñupiaq song and dance. At the close of our interview as Vernon returned to a calm demeanor, he looked me directly in the eyes and said, "these songs are in our blood. The will to learn is about doing the best you can. That's how I share what I know with my grandson. That's how like you progressed the culture and values to the younger generation." Here Vernon provides a concise summary of one of the critical learning outcomes of Iñupiaq dance: intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage.

From my interviews with Iñupiaq dance group members and Elders, this intergenerational transmission of cultural heritage happens through storytelling. The song and dance work together to tell a history of a moment or practice and each collective expression carries significant educational value. The stories transmit culture in two distinct but interconnected ways: practical skills and values. Written in other words, these two categories could be described from the Iñupiaq perspective as what we do and who we are, a blueprint for Iñupiaq life. Each of these categories represents a piece of the learning afforded through passing down culture and each piece is critical to the continuation of Iñupiaq beliefs and practices. As I break down and elaborate on the two categories, I focus primarily on the content of the songs and dances themselves and less on the pedagogical models around how the songs and dances are taught and learned.

4.6 What We Do (Practical Skills)

Truly one of the most impressive things I have ever seen in my life was a woman elegantly and efficiently cutting up a salmon with an ulu. In under twenty-six seconds she removed the head, filleted the fish keeping the tail attached, removed the backbone, and cut a notch to hang the fish for drying. Watching from the stands I felt as though I blinked once, and it was over. I had just witnessed a World Eskimo-Indian Olympics games record, breaking the previous record of twenty-seven seconds set in 2009. Two weeks later I sat in the Central Lutheran Church watching the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers dance how to cut a fish. Their motions mirrored what I had witnessed at the games, albeit in a considerably slower fashion. A specific hand angle of the women dancing indicated the specific angle to cut the head off the salmon. Each chop stroke was accompanied by a matching drum stroke as the dancers cut seven slashes into the filet to prepare it to be hung. The rules of the fish cutting competition at the games require these same seven cuts. The song and dance not only teach how to perform this specific critical cultural skill but codify it as a set curriculum to be passed down from generation to generation.

The fish cutting song is not alone in teaching how to prepare animals. There is a caribou butchering song, one for moose, walrus, and whale. There may be more songs among different communities, but these were the songs I either had the opportunity to watch or were mentioned during interviews and casual conversation. One Elder also lamented what he views as a certainty that many songs around animal preparation and the cultural knowledge they contained have been lost. He mentioned a specific way his mother used to butcher duck and saying, "she learned it from the dance, but that dance is gone. It is lost. Now we do it different." From a Western perspective this loss of practical knowledge equates to someone coming into my home, ripping a page out of

a textbook, holding it up to catch the wind, and together we watch as it flutters away on the breeze. Knowledge I needed was there, held away from me, and slowly and tantalizingly vanished.

This metaphorical textbook of song and dance also has chapters for hunting and fishing practices. Roy Roberts, the group leader of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, describes a song telling the story of fishing for flounders with a spear in ice that's five feet thick, saying "it's a women song. It's women who are fishing. They're fishing with spears and there's one motion they're just moving the spear. So, yeah, it is educational. It's showing you how to how to do a certain technique." This song is a favorite of one of the younger dancers in the group. A girl who has never fished with a spear but assured me in the very confident tone often reserved for children with limited experience that, given the opportunity, she would know exactly what to do and would catch "all the fish". While Elders are explicit in noting that these songs and dances do not replace actual experience hunting, they do provide important frameworks and base knowledge for how to hunt. Gregory Tungwenuk Nothstine of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage laughingly described this phenomenon to me as a "Mr. Miyagi situation," claiming that when children first actually go out hunting, some of the motions are already in their muscle memory from performing the dance countless times.

Hunting songs often depict the animals and how they move, invoking their spirit. Songs under this classification include the caribou, polar bear, wolf, walrus, bowhead whale, minke whale, killer whale, seal, sea otter, and spotted ring seal. The walrus song and dance is a particular favorite of many dancers and audience members, myself included, as it ends with the dancers barking out at the audience like walruses. Talking with one of the Kingikmiut dancers about this specific song, he mentioned to me that it wasn't until he went out on his first walrus hunt that he really understood the movements and the sound. Now he is much better at the barks and teaches

others how to make them as realistic as possible. He demonstrated during our interview, moving his head side to side as he barked at the ceiling with what I can only describe as a very walrus-y expression on his face. John Waghiyi describes these songs as helping to "know the mannerisms of the animal we hunt. We know the spirit, you know, the personality traits, and we show it in the motion… we know the manner and how to harvest based off that." These songs are also described as helping carry the significance of the animal and teach respect for the animals. I delve more deeply into how respect is taught through song and dance in the following section.

Beyond hunting and fishing, other practical knowledge songs include to how to harvest plants, how to move on shifting ice, how to chop wood, and how to make peace. Discussing the wealth of practical knowledge Gregory told me:

> Coming from a hunting gathering society that knew all of the different weather forecasts and had 200 different words for snow, types of snow and weather patterns were always somebody else's specialty. Everybody had a common knowledge of what to do and what not to do, when certain environmental changes occur, and how to subtly know how to hunt different animals in a particular environment.

I followed up by asking "and you think a lot of this lived in songs and dance?" Before I had even finished the question Gregory, in a tone of utmost confidence, answered "all of it did."

4.7 Who We Are (Values)

Now we turn the page to another chapter of our metaphorical textbook, working to make sense of the information despite the missing pages. The wealth of practical knowledge carried in song and dance is enhanced and complemented by the norms and values taught through the artistic practice. John Waghiyi summarizes how the Alaska Native way of life is brought forth through song and dance saying, "we have specific rules and values that these show a kid, behavior-wise,

89

respect-wise, creator, and how to interact with other kids and to show respect to adults, Elders. How we, you know, we live that kind of a life." John's list of values transmitted through song and dance that lead to how to live an Alaska Native "kind of a life" is by no means exhaustive but provides a concrete starting point.

The importance placed on respect is present in all aspects of Iñupiaq song and dance. In John's words, "the song itself will help show you our value system, which is respect we can hear it and we expect from our children and grandchildren. And it shows the love of our people. We love our resources. We love each other." At every dance practice and performance, preference is given to the Elders for what songs are played first. The Elders who wish to dance take to the floor ahead of the rest of the dance group and community, though they are almost always joined by other members in their chosen dances. As the band leader of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, Roy Roberts learned this practice from another dance group leader, he tells me "I learned from him that he'll do the Elders first. He'll let them dance first. So, I started to implement that. Letting our Elders go first." These types of practices are subtle but important ways to implicitly imbue critical cultural values into a community. In Iñupiaq culture you must respect the Elders, and this is shown through both the structure of how the songs and dance are taught and learned, as well as the content of the songs themselves.

This respect is especially important generationally. It is common for specific people to have songs they always dance to, songs that start resonating with them and their bloodlines. Sometimes these songs come from a specific place or were written by ancestors, and in these instances, it is expected that when that song is played the corresponding person will dance. Gregory Tungwenuk Nothstine of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage came to Iñupiaq dance later in life under the guidance of Inupiaq dance legend Paul Tiulana (King Island do not utilize

the tilde above 'n'). Early in his journey, as he tells it, Paul Tiulana motioned him over during a specific song and told him, "This comes from Wales, this is a Wales song. Oh, we sing it in honor of your village. I know you don't recognize it, but in the future, if you do, it's customary to dance that song from your village." Gregory took this message to heart, and every time the Kingikmiut Singers and Dancers play the song from his village he dances, honoring his village and ancestors. One Elder explains the importance of this phenomenon to me as a "great way to honor our oldest and youngest… It's keeping this relationship, that ancestral relationship alive." Here, respect is shown as continuing past the living Elders to also be given to the ancestors going back for generations.

Respect is also to be given to animals and the land. As we watched the walrus dance be performed by the Taġiuġmiut Dancers, Roy distractedly shared a story he heard: among the King Islanders if they come across a pack of walruses and feel the presence or spirit of a dancer in the middle of them, they are not allowed to hunt that pack. The different animal songs are intended to help in hunting practices, but also connect with the animal spirits. In Iñupiaq culture, an animal gives itself to a hunter, and without proper respect for the spirit and proper hunting practices the animals will not come. Dances for spirits of the land serve a similar purpose to help Iñupiaq people commune with the other-than-human. Phillip Blanchett, a Yup'ik dancer who has also been a part of several Iñupiaq groups, views Iñupiaq song and dance as involving how "we are related to the environment or where our place is in the universe in a natural way. Honoring this relationship of understanding our power, the power we have on things outside of ourselves." Song and dance help Iñupiaq people locate themselves and their role in the larger ecosystem. A considerable piece of this self-discovery is respecting and honoring the other-than-human.

Iñupiaq song and dance teach the correct way to behave. Many of the songs tell stories of mistakes that were made in the past, instructing future generations on behaviors to avoid. Talking about a song where the dancers' motions depict falling into ice, one Elder laughingly told me, "Well now we know. This is how not to do it." John Waghiyi addressed the behavioral educational value of songs in a more somber manner succinctly sharing, "These were ways in which our Indigenous population reinforced correct behavior and discouraged incorrect behavior." Echoing John's sentiments, another dance group member describes the songs and dances as intergenerational social reinforcement, "They see adults exemplifying the behavior and enjoying the activity. They're going to want to emulate that. They see the value in it and they're going to emulate it." As kids participate in the dance practices and performances, they mirror the cultural values displayed by their parents and community.

After every song during my first time watching the dance practice of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, Roy, as the group leader, told me the name of the song and a bit of history around the song. I worried about this interrupting the flow of the rehearsal as I hoped to interfere as little as possible, but it seemed important to the group that I knew at least this much about each song. As I jotted this information down into my field journal, adding other notes around the margins as I watched each song be performed, I was able to follow from the dance motions what the songs are intended to depict, helped by a friendly neighbor occasionally filling me in from the side. This enables me to understand the practical skills taught through the dance, but I began to wonder how the values are portrayed through motion. At the end of the rehearsal, I asked Gregory this question, and I will share his entire answer as his words succinctly and eloquently provide an answer:

> Songs and dances commemorate successful hunts, relationships, experiences, and nature. They are a poetic body and language of story and suffering through song. There's lots of

motions. You see the motions and you want to know how do you interpret those? You can see someone and say, well, that's when they were walking. That's when they're, of course, looking. You can probably figure that out by just observation alone. But there are some other very subtle movements of the hand and the arms and the gestures of the women that denote certain story telling moments. If you're not aware of them, you're not going to pick them up. And they're supported by incantations and words, so, in this way songs and dances communicate mores, social values, attitudes, and behaviors.

Many of the meanings of these small and subtle movements are lost on me as I don't have the cultural background or understanding, but among the Iñupiaq they are passed down through dance from generation to generation. Over the course of my fieldwork Elders and dance group members have described some of these important details including the angle of the hand, the placement of a gesture in relation to the drums, the reaction of a gesture to a phrase or melody, the tilt of the head, facial expressions, and the angle of the back. Each detail can imply a completely different thing depending on the context of the song, but for those who know how to look these subtle movements give tangible form to the Iñupiaq system of values.

Iñupiaq song and dance is meant to be shared. It is a celebration and a school. Passing down this cultural heritage requires a community and participation with and performance in front of this community. Phillip Blanchett believes that the most important thing to harness the educational value of Iñupiaq dance is for it to happen "in ceremony". Our conversation takes place with the soundtrack of Iñupiaq songs and drumming as the Taġiuġmiut Dancers provide accompaniment for a blanket toss. After a brief pause to watch as a woman is thrown 30 feet in the air, posing dramatically at the height of her jump, Phillip clarifies his idea of ceremony: "You can dance in your living room, or you can do it in front of all these people, in front of your community. It changes every dynamic of it, and it intensifies it to become more powerful." I can feel the intensity he refers to as I listen to the drums echo around our conversation. Without performance and

community involvement the messages held within Iñupiaq dance are not passed on and the cultural heritage they carry is not taught. This was what was lost when the missionaries halted singing and dancing among the Iñupiaq. The public displays were impossible. The community building ceased. Cultural heritage was lost, and through it, practical skills and fundamental values. The educational value of Iñupiaq song and dance relies on its ability to be shared. In the words of John Waghiyi, "It teaches you our ways of life. Our singing and dancing, it tells you a story of how to continue. So, I'm hoping if we can continue to teach this in the future. Yes. We'll keep the tradition. We'll keep going."

4.8 Iñupiaq Dance as Holistic Education

Here is where the metaphor of a textbook breaks down. A textbook is linear. Pages are numbered and move in an orderly manner from one to the next. When you finish chapter one you read chapter two. This is a common Western approach to learning and thinking, a mindset that informed my choice of metaphor. In the pedagogical approach of Alaska Native dance ecosystems of practice, instead of learning chapter by chapter in a rigid linear approach, all the information in the textbook is taught simultaneously.

Starting from the first Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage rehearsal I attend, this simultaneous holistic pedagogy is clear. I had helped set up the room at the beginning of the rehearsal using the tall stacks of plastic chairs in the back of the church, two rows for the dancers with a space in front for dancing and then a third row on the other side of the gap for the drummers. I sit in the front of the two rows of dancers, having been called forward from the back. As Roy announces the name of each song, its history, and what some of the motions represent I note that

every song seems to teach something different. The group moves from a song about fishing for flounders (practical skills), to the raven song (spirituality and respect for nature), to a song about how to make peace (values), to a song about seeing the masts of the first missionaries sail into Point Hope (history). In the space of ten minutes the group taught about a multitude of aspects of Iñupiaq life. Referring to a more formal classroom setting but sharing the same message, John Waghiyi summarizes this holistic learning through Alaska Native dance, saying, "I had kids that came to my classroom, and they came to sing and dance. And now, well, they're learning literacy, the culture."

Holistic education is an approach that has grown in popularity, especially in North America, since it first gained traction in the mid-1980s (Mahmoudi et al., 2012). Though primarily written about by white Western scholars, much of the epistemological foundation of holistic education is rooted in Indigenous worldviews. Holistic education aims to "challenge the fragmented and reductionist assumptions of mainstream culture and education" (Miller, 2000, p. 19). While it has been used and defined broadly, here I focus primarily on two interpretations or aspects of the paradigm: connecting learning to the self and interrelating subjects and concepts (Miller, 1992). These two aspects coalesce in pedagogy that connects multiple subjects in relation to what the student already knows. In many ways this can function as an extended form of culturally relevant pedagogy by adding another layer of interrelation of subjects, moving away from compartmentalized education.

Alaska Native song and dance functions as a prime example of this form of holistic education. Subjects including cultural heritage, practical skills, and values are all taught alongside the artistic practice itself in a simultaneous fashion that also directly draws on the heritage and life experience of the Alaska Native peoples. Student, self, and subjects come together through dance.

There is no separation between any part of this educative experience. It is not simply dance practice, it is simultaneously how to learn, what to learn, and learning itself.

There have been a number of recent culturally responsive curricular efforts in the Alaskan state educational system (e.g., Alaska Native Knowledge Network, n.d.; Barnhardt, 2008; Jester & Fickel, 2013), and more in education systems across many other Indigenous contexts (e.g., Aguilera et al, 2007; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Rigney & Hattam, 2018). What has been described as lacking, however, by several Elders I interviewed is a recognition of and appreciation for Alaska Native song and dance as a foundational educative experience in and of itself. Instead of attempting to teach the many educational outcomes of Alaska Native song and dance through more compartmentalized approaches rooted in formalized curricula, even culturally responsive curricula, these Elders wish to sit with the kid and sing and dance. As one Elder concisely describes, "we learn this way. Through the dance. Through the song… We need more time for this." Since formalized schooling consumes a large portion of the day, the critical holistic educative practice of song and dance needs to be integrated into this time.

The disconnection between Indigenous education and compartmentalized education stretches far beyond the Alaskan context. Artistic educational practices that function as critical holistic pedagogical strategies exist around the globe in both Indigenous and Western communities. Future research should explore the educational outcomes of these international artistic practices and identify new ways to subvert Western educational structures through holistic artistic pedagogy. There is a gap in both the perceived importance of this pedagogy and in the resources and attention it receives from the dominant powers who dictate what is and isn't taught in formal education settings. This is not just about deciding what goes in a textbook, it is about giving space for communities to reset their heartbeat. After generations of working to force the

Western pulse on Indigenous communities, accepting and valuing these artistic pedagogies allows

for continued transmission of the cultural heritage which carries this heartbeat. If you listen to the

drums, you can hear it. If you dance, you can feel it.

5.0 Chapter 3: The "Float Coat" Song: An Arts-Based Pedagogical Model for Solving Pressing Societal Problems

The article contained in this chapter is written to be submitted to the *Journal of American Indian Education* (JAIE). This journal asks for empirical research on Indigenous education, preferably grounded in Indigenous research methodologies. The following article fits these criteria and provides a novel pedagogical model for consideration by this scholarly community. JAIE is highly respected both nationally and internationally, and publishing here will allow my research to reach a wide and appropriate audience. The editors of the journal, in particular Bryan Brayboy, are scholars I admire greatly and engage with in much of my work. The larger editorial committee also contains many scholars who I have found to be very influential, including K. Tsianina Lomawaima, Ray Barnhardt, Megan Bang, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith. I have yet to publish in an explicitly Indigenous-focused journal and, as this is the direction my scholarship continues to move, actively contributing to the Indigenous education field will raise my profile and help me establish myself in a desired scholarly community.

I have written this article to follow the specific requirements of JAIE submissions of feature-length manuscripts: original scholarly manuscripts must be between 7,500-8000 words total, including references, using APA citations. This word limit has caused me to move some interesting but more tangential discussions to appendices. They will not be included in the journal submission, but I believe they are interesting and important to include in this dissertation. I also shortened what would have been a longer methodological discussion to fit with conventions of qualitative articles published in this journal which frequently do not have separate methodology sections. The following article has a word count of 7,945.

5.1 Introduction

The steady heartbeat of the sealskin drums is made visible by a dancer in a bright teal summer parka. The dancer's pulsing and consistent rhythm is emphasized by bent knees and strong shoulders as he rows with confidence and force to the opening lyrics of "Ooo'vee'look Pook'took'qwee'look". The Iñupiaq words stretch with the starting syllables of each phrase moving quickly and the ending syllables held over multiple drumbeats. After rowing his audience out to sea, the dancer contracts inwards and motions upward with his hands directly in front of his body, depicting bubbles rising to the surface. He has fallen into the water and as the bubbles climb to the surface, he seals his nose with his hand so water does not enter in the unexpected moment of immersion before spreading his arms outward treading water. As the dancer works to keep his head above water, once again the singers share the refrain "Ooo'vee'look Pook'took'qwee'look," or in English, "children do not float." Treading water in the frigid arctic climate, however, is often a futile endeavor as the hypothermia sets in. Emphasizing this omnipresent risk, the dancer slips below the surface again, bubbles marking his submersion. But all is not lost as the lyrics shift to "Ooo'vaa! Knee'elk'sulk'poke," and with outstretched arms the dancer is handed a life jacket. Arms now comfortably bobbing out to the side, the dancer floats with head above water through the end of the song.

As thunderous applause reverberates around the packed stands of the Big Dipper Ice Arena in Fairbanks, Alaska, the enthusiastic audience at the 2022 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics calls for an encore. The dancer grins happily out at the audience as the drums begin again and the first lines of the "Float Coat" song draw him back to rowing his canoe. The "Float Coat" song is a new Iñupiaq song and dance written by the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage with the express intent of promoting the use of personal floatation devices (PFDs), especially among

99

children. Many Alaska Native communities rely on the frigid waters of the arctic for transportation and subsistence. PFD use is limited in these communities, partially for cultural reasons, making falling into the water especially deadly (Morgan et al., 2022). As a result, drowning deaths are a critical problem in Alaska Native communities.

Looking for a culturally responsive way to address this pressing issue, the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage wrote the "Float Coat" song. Its official debut came at the Wales Kingikmiut Dance Festival in December 2016. Gregory Tungwenuk Nothstine, a member of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage and one of the creators of the song, described the debut saying, "there was like a hem-haw hem-haw response but then I had the presence of mind to ask the kids to come out and when the kids started having fun doing it the whole room erupted." Greg told me that in this moment the members of the dance group looked at each other wide-eyed and realized simultaneously that "we have something here." In the years that followed, the "Float Coat" song has been performed across Alaska, raising awareness for the use of PFDs and attempting to slowly shift the cultural practices of Alaska Native communities to include wearing a PFD.

The success of this culturally responsive and appropriate means for conveying critical safety knowledge provides a novel arts-based pedagogical model for addressing pressing societal problems. In this chapter I investigate the use and basis of this model by first elucidating ways that music has been used in education to solve problems. I then turn to the "Float Coat" song, exploring its origin and the need it arose from, before discussing its use and efficacy. Finally, I identify the unique facets of the "Float Coat" song as a decolonial pedagogical model of cultural expression and propose ways this model could be used in other contexts, especially Indigenous contexts. This article emerges from a larger ethnographic study of Alaska Native dance, drawing on interviews

with Alaska Native Elders, dance group participants, and community members as well as participatory observation of dance practices, performances, and festivals. I use the collective term Alaska Native to reference the various Indigenous peoples who populate the state, including the Iñupiaq, Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan, and Southeast Coastal Indian peoples, but use each group's name for itself when speaking of a single cultural group (Topkok, 2018a). I undertook this fieldwork conscious of my position as a White settler man in an Alaska Native space and constantly consulted with the community members to ensure that my words accurately reflect their lived experience.

5.2 Using Music in Education to Solve Problems

I have long been fascinated by the diverse and complicated power of music to inspire, connect, teach, structure, terrify, and accomplish many other verbs. Music lies at the heart of cultures' most profound social practices and experiences (Turino, 2008). We use music to learn our ABCs, to radicalize terrorists, to protest against tyranny, and to torture. In this way music operates at all levels of society, from the individual to the universal, and influences the way many people live their lives (Hallam, 2010).

How music is used and taught varies greatly by context both geographic and cultural. As international scholarship grows to examine these varied contexts, a subset of music education research has emerged discussing how music has been used as a vehicle for addressing social issues particular to a culture. By studying how music education adapts within each different societal context, we can understand exactly how it contributes to our understanding of social change and to the change itself (Johansen, 2014).

Within the intersectional field at the boundary of ethnomusicology, education, and anthropology, scholars define and consider music education differently. In this article I use an expanded view of music education that includes schooling, training, socialization, and enculturation (Jorgensen, 1997). This advantageous definition transcends both the formal-informal dichotomy (Folkestad, 2006) and the acquisition-participation dichotomy (Sfard, 1998). I consider music education to include learning through music in community gatherings, festivals, classrooms, concerts, virtual spaces, and many other settings. Amalgamated, this places music education as a part of lifelong learning both outside and inside institutions.

Using this definition allows for exploration of a diverse body of international scholarship, responding to the call from Hallam et al. (2011) for expanding the focus of research into music's social functions beyond Western culture. I do, however, focus the literature considered in this article to only include scholarship addressing how the arts are used in education to address societal problems specific to their context. This does not include more overarching research examining arts-based interventions not directed at specific societal problems, most notably eliminating the large body of music therapy literature.

Music has long been tied to identity formation (Rice, 2007) as it is a significant and constitutive part of many cultures (Lidskog, 2016). For generations music has been used to build and maintain foundational cultural structures through providing a crucial strategy for identity formation and continuance. Music builds, strengthens, and maintains cultural identity. This effect is most easily evidenced in situations in which this cultural identity is threatened or must be built from a time of change or loss. Ethnic identity formation in the current age of mobility and transnational movement continues to be a highly contentious and important issue in understanding global processes (Höijer et al., 2004; Ong, 1999). Refugees, immigrants, and even dual citizens

102

interact with and encounter a hodgepodge of shifting cultural influences and identities. Even geographically stable communities face internal and external strife in navigating racial, gender-based, and religious differences. As such, music can act as a binding agent within a culture to create shared experience and a sense of belonging (Dawson, 2002). Upon the foundation of music, emotional, social, and cognitive ties can be built, linking an individual to their society through a shared social identity and social memory (Shelemay, 2006).

Using this identity formation framework, many scholars have explored how music is used in marginalized populations, especially diasporic populations, negotiating new identities between home and current country. For these groups, music has been shown as a symbolic identifier through which members can express and maintain their identity or construct new identities as they negotiate their new context (Stokes, 2004). Kyker (2013), asserts that live performances of traditional Zimbabwean music in a diasporic Zimbabwean American society help members of this society navigate and articulate their transnational identity by symbolically repositioning themselves within their remembered home. Connecting to a home culture in this way is also possible through modern music, as Jung (2014) finds similar outcomes among Korean-Americans' experience through shared practice of Korean pop music. Connections in this way to home countries can foster cohesion among diasporic communities (Erol, 2012). Boura (2006) in his study of Greek immigrants in Germany notes that this population assimilated into German society but maintained Greek identity through shared musical practice, simultaneously building local community while continuing to interact with other Greek musicians still in Greece. This finding builds on a similar study with Algerian immigrants in France (Gross et al., 1994). In these instances, music is used as a foundation in diasporic contexts to form, strengthen, and/or reshape both individual and collective identity.

103

Identity formation can work alongside music as a tool for bringing people together to help build community. Lewis (2010) finds that among UK immigrant populations of multiple ethnicities, music events can work toward new community formation, integration, and adaptation. In an unfamiliar environment, music has been shown to build trust among refugee communities (Baily and Collyer, 2006). Refugees displaced by natural disasters can find solace and social connection through musical performance as both spectators and participants (Grams, 2013). This social connection is described by Hassler and Nicholson (2017) as a result of music education connecting resources of music-making and shared culture, helping the participants rediscover the "joy of community" (p. 14). Music in these displaced populations provides social cohesion, allowing groups to unite around shared music practices.

In examining a Maltese Australian group of immigrants, Klein (2005) found that music can work against cultural displacement through allowing what he terms, "re-membering," creating a cultural collective memory through which all group members can share and pass down traditions and culture. Roberson (2010) expands on this idea, viewing music as a way to pass down a historical consciousness that is integral to a group's cultural identity. An important distinction is that music is not just functioning as a part of the culture, but also as a vehicle for its transferal. This is echoed by Lidskog (2017), who writes, "this view of the meaning and function of music should not be interpreted to mean that music primarily works to preserve a culture… [music] mainly functions to stabilise and fix a cultural belonging and collective identity" (p. 31).

Recognizing the vulnerability of different Cambodian cultural traditions, Kallio and Westerlund (2016) posit that music as a central characteristic within a Cambodian arts education program can work to help with conservation, coexistence, and community education of Cambodian culture. Campbell (2012) explores a unique approach to combating cultural displacement through

melding traditional Australian Aboriginal music with modern jazz music to teach culture and revitalize an Aboriginal language. There has been a notable rise in other musical groups working to revitalize languages through modern musical styles, and while this has been extensively covered by media outlets, almost no scholarly research exists on the subject. Music in these contexts can work to connect cultural traditions to modern problems, allowing for both cultural revitalization and navigating identity in the globalizing and culturally homogenizing world.

Beyond providing a pedagogical strategy to help groups form identity, build community, and strengthen cultural practices, music also allows communities to take a closer look at these identities, understandings, and practices, and to identify problems and work at solving them. Here, music has been used to illuminate structures of oppression, direct societal focus toward important issues, and create spaces for addressing complex political issues. Recently, this has been used to counter rising pockets of fascist and authoritarian thinking; music is used to spotlight and work against these oppressive ideologies. Responding to increasingly frequent gatherings of neo-Nazis in Rostock, Germany, groups of teenagers and students spontaneously staged a counter demonstration of pro-peace music that attracted a much larger audience. As the movement grew it transformed into the annual Rostock Peace Festival (Sweers, 2010). Similar approaches have been used in street festivals in Brazil (Sézérat, 2019), Israel and Palestine (Arieli, 2019), and the US (Garofalo, 2011).

Throughout recent history music has been used to protest violent action such as warfare (Manuel, 2017; Petrus & Cohen, 2019). In the United States and United Kingdom, intentional songwriting and performance is used to bring attention to systemic racism (Hess, 2019a; Scott, 2020), and similar poignant artistic expressions illuminate socio-economic inequality in Brazil and South Africa (Ilari, 2007; Peterson, 2004). Musicians and artists play a prominent role in

105

community organizing and building spaces in which song and dance can address complex political issues and foster identity construction through shared musical experience and performance (Hess, 2019b).

Music, however, is a neutral tool not a panacea, and as such has been harnessed to cast darkness, or intentionally filtered light, toward nefarious purposes. In a study of white power music in contemporary neo-fascist movements, Eyerman (2002) points to how music is used as a tool by all social movements regardless of their position or agenda. Music served as a uniting focus in Nazi Germany (Reinert, 1997) and for nationalism among the countries of former Yugoslavia (Hudson, 2003; Pettan, 1998). Irrespective of political perspective, music can be used to illuminate a specific group or viewpoint, increasing visibility within the wider society (e.g., Eyerman 2002; see also Klein 2005; Macias 2004).

Having established the capability of music to build, strengthen, and maintain cultural identity, as well as illuminate problematic facets of this identity and work to address these issues, I now turn to the "Float Coat" song, an example that does all of the above. Before this transition, however, I want to draw out one critical similarity among all the examples addressed above: the way that music is used to address each problem must be specific to its context. While there may be similarities between the experiences of Greek immigrants in Germany and Algerian immigrants in France, and both groups may use music to help form identity, the way music is used and the musical practices themselves differ greatly. Not all cultures and contexts view music the same way. Not all cultures and contexts have the same problems. In each unique case, specificity is essential for even identifying and addressing a pressing problem, to say nothing of successfully solving that problem. In discussing the "Float Coat" song, I first look to the context from which it

arose to show how this unique solution stems from both the musical traditions of Alaska Native peoples as well as the cultural context and problems of these same groups.

5.3 The Beginning of the "Float Coat" Song

Falling into the water in Alaska is a problem of temperature. Unlike more tropical climates, if you end up in the arctic waters of Alaska you are likely to go into hypothermic shock within minutes, rendering you unable to swim. Submersion is especially fatal if you are not wearing a PFD. The frigid lakes and rivers that run throughout the state and the ocean that surrounds it are both deadly and critical parts of life in Alaska. Gregory Tungwenek Nothstine, Iñupiaq with heritage in the rural northern Wales, Alaska, describes how this is especially true for Alaska Native communities, noting that "most of our subsistence way of life is based on our ability to traverse through the water."

The hazards of this way of life, however, have resulted in Alaska having one of the highest rates of unintentional drowning deaths. A study of drowning deaths in Alaska from 1988-1992 found an incidence rate of 20 in 100,000, close to ten times the national rate (Lincoln et al., 1996). This improved from 1996-1998 with a report from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2000) finding Alaska's drowning rate to be 6.45 in 100,000, a rate that is still the highest in the US and three times higher than the national average. From 2000-2006 this rate increased to 8.9 in 100,000, a number drawn from a comprehensive study by Strayer et al. (2010) which also disaggregated the data to show differences in gender, race, and use of a PFD. Two critical findings emerged from this study: Alaska Natives had a drowning rate almost triple that of non-Natives (43 vs. 15 per 100,000 population per year), and only 17% of people who drowned wore a PFD, with

PFD use especially low among Alaska Native children. In short, the drowning epidemic is especially severe among Alaska Native populations and, given the proven effectiveness of PFDs, could be substantially reduced with the use of safety equipment.

The Alaska Office of Boating Safety, one of the last state-run boating safety offices to be created anywhere in the US, is working to respond to this worryingly high number of drowning deaths. In 1996, building on a grassroots effort, they began the "Kids Don't Float" campaign which includes different types of public outreach and life jacket loaner stations—stations or "loaner boards" at harbors and public boat access areas throughout the state where life jackets can be borrowed at no cost and returned after use. As evidenced by the above drowning statistics, however, these different efforts appeared to be struggling to reach the Alaska Native population. Looking for creative ways to reach the Alaska Native people, the Alaska Office of Boating Safety turned to a long-standing pedagogical strategy among Alaska Native communities for sharing information and conveying cultural messages: dance.

Greg was first approached in 2016 to create the "Float Coat" song by members of the Alaska Office of Boating Safety, part of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium where he works. The goal of the program, as described by Ingrid Stevens, an Injury Prevention Program Manager with Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, is to "make safety messages translatable, not only culturally but linguistically." Following the creation and performance of the song, two videos were released on the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium YouTube account, one detailing the origins of the song and the other teaching viewers the dance motions.

5.4 Performance Rights and Dissemination

The "Float Coat" song is performed by the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage but is also offered by this group to any other dance group interested in learning and performing the song and dance. This in some ways goes against tradition as songs are considered the sole property of the individual, community, or dance group that performs them and are normally deeply tied to a specific culture and community. It is a grave insult to appropriate and play a song from another community without express consent. Vernon Elagvik of the Taġiuġmiut Dancers describes this cultural taboo in a way intended to help me understand by likening it to academic plagiarism and intellectual ownership saying "You wouldn't just take someone else's paper and go out and call it your own. It's like that. Sometimes playing another group's song is like claiming it." Song ownership must also be claimed and continued. Greg learned this from a longtime icon of Alaska Native Dance, Paul Tiulana, and recounts the ongoing approach to distinguishing one's proprietorship to me saying that he was told "This comes from Wales. This is a Wales song... It is customary to dance that song from your village. Otherwise, the other dance groups can claim it for themselves. If you don't claim it, it gives them permission to keep it."

There are some songs, however, that do seem to carry across groups and are claimed by multiple groups, a type of common repertoire. Some of these songs, such as the Raven Dance—which the Kingikmiut Singers and Dancers of Anchorage call "Kakazaruuk"—are long-standing favorites where multiple villages claim original writing credits. This creates almost a canon of what could be considered Iñupiaq standards that are in the public domain and fair game. These standards, however, similar to how I understand many Western musical standards, are all songs that have been played for generations. The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage offering the "Float Coat" song into this public domain is unprecedented and speaks to the unique goals and

nature of the song as an educational tool. This offering has been viewed favorably, and other dance groups, even Yup'ik dance groups that perform with a different style and language, have learned the song and dance. The "Float Coat" song has become a signature song for Greg who always dances it in performances (ending with his signature "Wear your float coats!") and teaches it on a regular basis to Alaska Native communities, as well as to other Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups across the US and internationally as part of different cultural workshops. (For a larger discussion of performance rights and dissemination see 5.10)

5.5 Effectiveness of the "Float Coat" Song

The hope of the creators of the "Float Coat" song was that it would raise awareness for the wearing of PFDs in Alaska Native communities and ultimately culturally normalize the use of PFDs. At the time of this writing, the success of this education campaign is inconclusive, and an ultimate determination is perhaps premature. Despite the recency of the effort, we can still learn from the trends following the first performance of the song and dance. I first look to drowning statistics in Alaska, focusing especially on the Alaska Native population. Drawing from a collection of data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022), the Alaska Office of Boating Safety (n.d.), and the earlier study by Strayer et al (2010), Table 1 compares drowning deaths in Alaska between 2000-2006, soon after the Alaska Office of Boating Safety began their Kids Don't Float campaign, and 2016-2020, the years after the "Float Coat" song was first performed.

Table 1 Drowning Deaths in Alaska 2000-2006 vs. 2016-2020.

	Average Total Deaths	Deaths per 100,000	Average Native Deaths	Native Deaths per 100,000	National Average per 100,000	% Deaths Wearing PFD
2000-2006	60	8.9	43	35.8	2.1	17%
2016-2020	35	4.8	17	14.2	1.3	10%

The average total deaths in this 20-year span dropped by 42% from 60 to 35, and when adjusting for population change this change improves to a 46% decrease. This is slightly better than the national average which decreased 38% in the same period. The starker comparison is the percentage of Alaska Native deaths to non-Native deaths. From 2000-2006 Alaska Natives accounted for 72% of the total drowning deaths in Alaska, an already alarming statistic that becomes even more drastic when considering that the Alaska Native population only accounts for around 15% of the total population of the state. When adjusting for population difference, from 2000-2006 Alaska Natives were more than four times more likely to drown than non-Natives. From 2016-2020 Alaska Natives accounted for a considerably lower 49% of drowning deaths in the state, down 23% in the 10-year gap. While still overrepresented in these deaths, in this later period Alaska Natives were around three times more likely to drown than non-Natives. An important caveat in considering this overrepresentation is that Alaska Native people are more likely to spend time on or around the water than non-Natives as many Alaska Native communities' subsistence lifestyles rely on rivers, lakes, and the ocean. Confirming this are Alaska Office of Boating Safety findings that over half of Alaska Native drowning victims are ages 30 and under, and Alaska Native men are six times more likely to drown than Alaska Native women. Men ages 30 and under are traditionally the population most likely to be out hunting and fishing.

While there has been a clear decrease in drowning deaths, especially among Alaska Native populations, it is hard to attribute this success directly to the "Float Coat" song or other efforts of

the Alaska Office of Boating Safety. Table 2 looks more specifically at drownings related to boating accidents from 2017-2021.

Table 2 Five Year Summary of Boating Accident Data in Alaska 2017-2021

Number of Fatal Accidents					*Deaths*					*Deaths per 100,000*				
2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
13	17	8	15	12	20	22	11	24	14	2.70	2.99	1.50	3.28	1.91

U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2021 Recreational Boating Statistics

Looking at change over year in the period after the "Float Coat" song was first performed, specifically in instances where PFDs should always be used, it appears that the number of drowning deaths were decreasing before a spike in 2020. This spike could potentially be attributed to an increase in paddle sports during the COVID-19 pandemic with many amateurs looking to new outdoor activities such as kayaking, rafting, and packrafting which can be dangerous without proper knowledge and preparation. While the data is not available disaggregated by race, it is reasonable to assume that if this spike can be partially attributed to recreational activities it is more likely that these additional deaths were non-Native. Regardless, while drowning deaths in boating accidents do appear to be on a downward trend, it remains difficult to statistically correlate this success with the "Float Coat" song. The importance of wearing a PFD and efforts to increase PFD use, however, is emphasized by the drowning rate of those wearing PFDs decreasing to 10%.

The pedagogical model of the "Float Coat" song, however, is not a model that necessarily is intended to offer immediate statistical results and is instead aimed at longer-term cultural change. Awareness and use are not something that can change overnight. For generations upon generations, Alaska Native peoples have gone into the water while PFDs are a recent invention. Drowning has always been a concern and a common cause of death, but this type of safety measure was never an available or applicable part of Alaska Native life. Suddenly PFDs are available, but

they are also inconvenient, Western, and unfamiliar. This is not to say that modern tools, techniques, and technology are not used and embraced in Alaska Native cultures, but more that these changes take time to happen, as they would in any culture. The amount of outreach and cultural shift necessary to convince people in the US to wear seatbelts was monumental, despite the clear and convincing evidence of safety, and still faces backlash and non-compliance today.

Contrary to the common exoticization of the far north and Alaska Native communities specifically by the rest of the United States—and the world at large—much of rural Alaska has electricity and uses many common technological conveniences. Alaska Native people watch TV, use the internet, and have cellphones. Even many practices that would be viewed as traditional take advantage of these improvements in technology. A friend told me a story of visiting one of the most highly respected canoe builders in Alaska with a colleague of his who was unfamiliar with many Native practices but eager to meet this artisan. As they walked into the workshop the colleague gaped openly, aghast that the canoe builder was using power tools to shape the body of the boat. In his astonishment, he asked "What would your ancestors think of you using power tools?" To which the Alaska Native artisan blithely replied, "If they had had them, they would have used them." Senungetuk (2019) elucidates the Iñupiaq word *pakmami* which describes "something that is modern and of the present… regardless of the era or point in time" (p. xiv). This canoe building practice embodies this idea as it is simultaneously traditional and modern. The "Float Coat" song functions similarly, existing in the present while invoking past and future generations and interacting with an issue that is, was, and will continue to be pressing.

Earlier in this article, I painted a picture of a dancer in a traditional parka performing in front of drummers hitting seal skin drums. What was omitted from this description, for the vain hope of romantic imagery, was that this all took place under harsh florescent lights on the rubber

floor of a converted hockey arena in the midst of a global pandemic with over half of the attending audience, and many of the performers, wearing disposable masks. The stitching on the parka was sewn with an electric sewing machine and it covered the dancer's plain white t-shirt and the top of his cargo shorts. Even looking at the drums, only half were truly made of seal skin with the other half made from stretched airplane canvas, a material that is cheaper to come by and easier to maintain but still retains the same sound. But none of this makes the performance any less Native nor any more modern. Similarly, the song, by working to inform and shift cultural expectations looks to make wearing a PFD Native, modern, and traditional. This shift is only possible through this type of culturally responsive pedagogical strategy.

5.6 Being Culturally Sticky

The question then becomes: what makes the "Float Coat" song culturally responsive and effective? The success of the song and dance stems from its ability to be specific to its context, a finding that is consistent with many of the other music-based pedagogical strategies presented earlier. Alaska Native song and dance have historically been a critical way for communities to share, transmit, and establish cultural norms, values, and practices (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed explanation of how this happens). In this setting, the "Float Coat" song is a culturally consistent mode of disseminating important safety information. If the Alaska Office of Boating Safety was looking to encourage use of PFDs among non-Native communities, turning to song and dance may not have been the most successful or appropriate strategy, as Western society in Alaska is less accustomed to learning cultural norms, values, practices, and safety lessons through song and dance. In the Alaska Native context, however, song and dance are perhaps the only culturally

appropriate pedagogical tool for this specific goal. When approaching the use of music toward solving pervasive societal problems, it must be the correct mode of dissemination, and this may differ drastically depending on context.

Being the culturally correct mode of sharing information, however, does not guarantee that the song and dance will be effective. To create any sort of impact the "Float Coat" song must be memorable and enjoyable. These criteria are not unique to this specific situation, as most successful music is memorable and enjoyable, but because the "Float Coat" song is intended to pass along a message, these two attributes are even more crucial. If no one wants to perform the song, if the audience is not compelled to join in the dance, if everyone doesn't leave smiling, and if the song does not stick in peoples' heads, the message of the song similarly won't be sticky. This, ultimately, is the goal of the "Float Coat" song: for wearing a PFD to be culturally sticky. The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage want this new facet of the culture to adhere to the existing cultural norms and harden until it is distinguishable from any other cultural norm and is an inherent part of Alaska Native life today.

One of the ways the dance especially is able to be memorable and enjoyable is that it is accessible to its audience. The motions are visually reminiscent of the actions described in the song while also easy to perform and learn. This was an intentional choice by the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage as they wanted the song be appealing especially to children. To do this they combined existing motions that are used in other dances to describe similar things such as a rowing motion: two hands extended like you are gripping an oar which move rhythmically downward to each side with the beat of the drums to emulate oar strokes. This motion is also found in the song and dance "Naghoogutah". The familiar motion is combined with new motions such as the bubbles motion: two hands extended vertically with bent arms taking turns

drawing down across your face tracing bubbles emerging from your mouth. Another new motion emulates the common Western swimming motion the breaststroke. Heidi Senungetuk (2017), an ethnomusicologist and member of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, mentions that while the group was coming up with the motions, they felt that this movement would be understood by Alaska Native people today despite swimming motions not being used previously as traditional dance moves. Collectively, the motions of the "Float Coat" song are simple and enjoyable to perform, regardless of age and physical ability.

When I first watched the "Float Coat" song performed live at the World Indian-Eskimo Olympics, I was distracted by two Native children, I would guess to be around 10 years old, wearing jeans and graphic t-shirts with cartoon characters grinning ear to ear while doing the bubble motion along with the dancer on the floor of the arena. When the performance ended, as the two children ran off weaving through the crowd, I heard one of them yell/sing to the other the refrain of the song: "Ooo'vee'look Pook'took'qwee'look." This has been a consistent experience across all the times that I have seen the song both rehearsed and performed. Children especially gravitate toward the "Float Coat" song, and the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage explicitly encourage and coax younger dance group and audience members to participate in this specific dance. As Greg once explained to me, "We want the kids up and dancing with us. That way they keep the culture going but also learn something." This is a secondary facet of the "Float Coat" song; it is intended to increase youth participation in Alaska Native song and dance.

Alaska Native Elders worry about intergenerational participation in Alaska Native cultural practices including song and dance. One Elder tells me "the kids just don't want to do it anymore," a sentiment that is echoed by another Elder who attributes this disinterest to the influence of Western culture, saying, "[kids] just want to watch TV and so they do that and stop showing up to

dances and it's hard to get them to join our dance group anymore." This is not to say that there is no youth involvement in song and dance practices and performances since all the dance groups do have youth involvement. The difference that Elders describe to me is that youth interest level and overall participation level has noticeably decreased, and they remain worried that this will continue to decrease over time.

Having both the desired outcomes of a cultural shift toward using PFDs and increasing participation in cultural traditions is what allows the "Float Coat" song to achieve community buy-in. The model pairs an existing worry of the community that does not require any cultural change with an important problem that does require a new cultural norm. By working to solve both problems simultaneously, the "Float Coat" song gains support from all community members. This is how the "Float Coat" song succeeds, by being culturally sticky as evidenced by its continued performances, following, and buy-in in the Alaska Native community.

5.7 Reclamation of Educational Sovereignty

Since the acquisition of Alaska by the United States from Russia in 1867, the means of education in Alaska Native communities have been controlled by Western society. From the "English Only" educational philosophy of the General Agent of Education in the Alaska Territory Sheldon Jackson which intended to "civilize" Alaska Native communities through withholding of resources (Williams, 2011), to Christian missionaries banning cultural educational practices such as music and dance (Williams, 1997), Alaska Native communities lost their educational sovereignty. The effects of this loss continue to affect the way education happens in Alaska Native communities—despite promising efforts for curricular and policy change such as the Alaska

117

Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1998)—given the continued and entrenched structures of Western school systems. The important difference between these structures and education in Alaska Native communities is concisely described by Rob Picou, the superintendent of the Bering Strait School District: "There's a distinction between an education and school. Education is what Native people have been doing for their children since the beginning of time. School has been what has been imposed on people from outside" (Garland, 2013, p. 22). While pedagogical models such as the "Float Coat" song do not fundamentally look to shift the curricular structure of Alaskan schools, they serve as a return to and continuation of Picou's definition of education, how Alaska Native people have always learned.

Considering learning in this way has important implications in who controls and holds what is taught and learned. Greg describes the goal of the song, increasing the use of PFDs, saying he wants to "instill it in our culture and that way we can lay claim and ownership of the message." This reclamation of educational sovereignty, where both the message and dissemination are controlled by Alaska Native communities, is critical to the success of the song and dance while also providing a potentially transferable model for addressing pressing societal problems through education in a decolonial way. The "Float Coat" song is culturally responsive, created and shared through Indigenous channels, and addresses a critical social problem in a manner consistent with Indigenous practices.

To understand the unique and Indigenous nature of this approach, let us imagine a scenario where the problem was solved using a Western lens. The state government of Alaska had decided that the best way to solve the drowning problem was to hire a massive corporate consulting firm, to invest substantial amounts of money into creating and disseminating a strategy that has increased PFD use in other settings in the US, and to press this policy down on Alaska Native

communities. This new initiative, well received and successful in Western communities, may struggle considerably to receive Alaska Native community buy-in as it could interfere with local practices, or simply be misunderstood.

In 1989, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game was attempting to keep track of how many bears were hunted in Kotzebue Sound region (Loon & Georgette, 1989). The Western officials asked Iñupiaq hunters to report when they were going bear hunting. After a couple of years, the Fish and Game employees were confused as the numbers seemed remarkably low. After consulting with local experts, they learned that as far as the hunters were concerned it was a terrible idea to fill out a report saying how many bears you were planning to hunt as this would be both disrespectful to the bears and let them know that you were coming. If you filled out one of these reports then a bear would not show itself to you to be hunted. So, no one was following the policy and the intended controls put into place by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game were accomplishing nothing. After adjusting the reporting policies to be after the hunt, suddenly the number of reports skyrocketed and became a considerably more accurate representation of the actual hunting statistics.

Local problems cannot be solved without understanding the specific intricacies of each individual context. This is especially true when individuals or organizations coming from a Western cultural context attempt to solve the problems facing Indigenous communities. These efforts can often be actively detrimental or attempt to solve a problem that is not, in fact, a problem. Sheldon Jackson's "English Only" education system is an example of these two mistakes coalescing, attempting to solve a problem that does not exist in an actively detrimental manner which reinforces problematic power dynamics and attempts to remove agency and sovereignty from Indigenous communities. That is what makes the "Float Coat" song an important model for

educational problem solving. It gives control and ownership of the message to Alaska Native people in a way that is consistent with their specific context and problem-solving methods.

5.8 Pedagogical Models Using Cultural Expressions

Beyond the important ethical ramifications of educational sovereignty and ownership of problem-solving strategies, the need to increase the use of PFDs in Alaska Native communities appears to be a problem that cannot be solved in any other way. Other strategies employed by the Alaska Office of Boating Safety appear to have been less successful. This implies that in this instance, music and dance have the potential to not just be a tool but in fact be the primary tool capable of solving pervasive problems through education. What allows the arts to function in this way are the criteria presented above: culturally relevant in topic, culturally appropriate in mode of dissemination, and memorable. These categories would imply that music or dance, in this instance may not be the critical facet. Instead, cultural expression as a more general category would allow for general application and attribution. The key criterion remaining is that the educational practice needs to be taught in the way that it is traditionally taught, or in other words, through the relevant cultural expression. In the Alaska Native context, a relevant cultural expression is music hence the success of the "Float Coat" song. In many cultures music and dance may be the correct tool but widening the scope to include all types of cultural expression allows for a more inclusive application of this type of pedagogical model.

Cultural expression-based pedagogical models, often music or arts-based, tend to fall into one of four categories (see Table 3). The first category in my typology are *outside interventions*, when a person or group not from the specific context of a problem creates and facilitates an

intervention. In these instances, the outside intervener is the party that identifies the problem and decides that it can be helped or solved through their intervention (e.g., Beckles-Wilson, 2007; Storsve et al., 2012). The second category of intervention is *collaborative interventions*, when resources and/or expertise come from an external source who partner equally with a local group. They address problems identified by either an external or local group depending on each community's unique context (e.g., Bergh & Sloboda, 2010; Pettan, 2010). Third, *local interventions* are interventions run entirely by local actors. These actors identify the problem, create, and facilitate the responsive intervention. Often this arises organically responding directly to a local need. The final category, *transplantable interventions*, differs slightly from the earlier three as the other types of interventions are applied broadly across local manifestations of a common problem. They are intended to address problems in multiple contexts by creating an intervention intended to be ubiquitous—the "plug and play" style of problem solving (e.g., Baker, 2016; Banks, 2004). Transplantable interventions, however, have been extensively critiqued as colonial, universal approaches that imply that a single solution is possible in different contexts. (For an in-depth exploration of these intervention categories see 5.11)

Table 3 Typology of Cultural Expression Educational Interventions

Intervention type	Problem identifier	Intervention founder	Intervention administrator
Outside intervention	External group	External group	External group
Collaborative intervention	External or local group	Co-created by external and local groups	Primarily local group, external group only provides resources and expertise
Local intervention	Local group	Emerges organically from local group	Local group, limited or no outside influence
Transplantable intervention	External group	External group	Local group with help from external founders

The "Float Coat" song lies somewhere between a collaborative and local intervention. The involvement of the Alaska Office of Boating Safety makes the project have more than only local actors, but the full ownership and direction of the song and its means of dissemination are controlled by the local group. This classification would normally make the "Float Coat" song not a transplantable intervention, as it responds to a specific problem unique to its context. Adding nuance, I believe the "Float Coat" song serves as a different type of transplantable intervention, one that suggests a method for responding to many different problems with a focus on method over problem. The key piece that makes this type of pedagogical model potentially applicable in a multitude of contexts is that it inherently respects and draws from the differences in context and problem. This allows the opportunity for a transplantable model that is decolonial and considerate of individual context. The model provides inspiration for local interventions to draw on whatever appropriate cultural expression is best suited to solving the local problem as the means of educating. There is also potential for collaborative interventions to build on this model, similar to the involvement of the Alaska Office of Boating Safety, an external body, assuming that the external body is working directly with local actors to create and disseminate the appropriate cultural expression. Future scholars should look to whether similar interventions exist in other settings. Policy makers should take inspiration from this model for collaborative problem solving in unique contexts, especially Indigenous contexts, given the decolonial structure which allows for Indigenous populations to retain educational sovereignty.

5.9 Conclusion

The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, buoyed by the success of the "Float Coat" song, are considering adding more songs addressing other pressing social problems facing Alaska Native communities. One of the most pervasive and dangerous problems, particularly in rural Alaska, is alcoholism. Beyond the individual health risks, substance abuse in Alaska Native communities compounds other societal issues by increasing rates of suicide, domestic abuse, drowning, and sexual assault (Gray & Nye, 2001). Addressing this problem is consistently a priority among both Alaska Native and state-run health groups and is the subject of a new song and dance in development by the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage. Their effort would join many others across Alaska (e.g., Rasmus et al., 2019; Whitesell et al., 2012)—headed by both Native and non-Native groups—but Greg believes theirs would be the first to approach solving the problem using the cultural expression of song and dance. Other types of what Greg refers to as "prevention songs" have been considered, including addressing the importance of clean air, wearing helmets, and using wheelchairs, but a song addressing alcoholism and consumption, an issue that is very personal for several members of the group, is currently their most developed idea.

As Alaska Native culture evolves and interacts with outside influences such as alcohol, studying how their artistic practices adapt sheds light on the use of music and cultural expression as a method for addressing enduring social problems. The "Float Coat" song provides a window into a potentially transplantable pedagogical approach aimed at educating multiple generations in critical knowledge. As culture evolves and changes, while still maintaining traditions and norms, I am drawn back to thinking of the Iñupiaq word *pakmami* referring to something modern and present while seemingly contradictorily unattached to a specific temporal frame (Senungetuk,

2019). Alaska Native dance exists in this simultaneous certainty and ambiguity, practiced in the present while invoking past and future generations and interacting with issues that are, were, and will continue to be pressing. Examples such as the "Float Coat" song are emblematic of this amalgam: an arts-based, place-based, Indigenous, traditional, and modern educational experience.

5.10 Supplemental Material: Ownership of Songs

Ownership of songs is tied to how songs are passed down generationally. Certain songs come from specific villages and are viewed as the property of these places, only to be shared and performed by the members of the specific village of origin. This is also a responsibility of members of these villages as Carl Topkok of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage describes being grabbed by Elders while out at a community center and told that there were some songs from Teller, the village he grew up in, that he did not know and needed to learn immediately. Carl was given the entire history of these songs, who performed them (including in this case his grandfather), and then taught the songs and expected to carry their tradition. He was, at the time, with a friend who is not from Teller, and this friend was not invited or included in this education. Roy Roberts, the group leader of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, had a similar experience being given a body of songs by having an Elder ask him to come to his kitchen and record all the songs on a tape recorder. This passage of songs was so important to the Elder's community that after his death Roy was given his name as part of carrying on his songs. Performing someone else's song is considered improper without express permission from the composer or bearer of the song.

Even performing with other dance groups in public settings can be viewed as problematic. Roy explains to me how sitting in with a different dance group during the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics created friction and drama in his group, "I was really nervous before I went out, and even to ask my group about performing with [the other dance group]. They worry I will leave them and go sing with someone else and bring our songs too. That's why they didn't want me to do it." As Roy performed, another member of his dance group pointedly filmed him, moving closer during the filming to make sure to get his face and performance up close. This video was then shared in the Facebook group of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage as evidence, and what was described to me as a type of insurance so that everyone knew what had happened to ensure that Roy would stay with the group. After the performance Roy asked me if I saw him being recorded, laughing nervously and saying "He got so close. Now everyone will see. I hope no one is too mad." While I did not witness or hear about any fallout of this performance, the tense cultural boundaries placed on Roy exemplify the importance of maintaining both membership and ownership of songs within the individual dance groups.

5.11 Supplemental Material: Modes of Interventions

In this section I present a typology of interventions commonly found within arts education for social change scholarship and identify potential problems with each approach. Arts education interventions intended to help solve problems and bring about social change are written about in a variety of different academic fields including peace education, K-16 education, music education, art education, visual arts, ethnomusicology, anthropology, and sociology. Across this ranging and inclusive literature, the wide array of different cultural expression interventions can be placed into

one of four possible methodologies: outside intervention, collaborative intervention, local intervention, and transplantable intervention. The primary differences between these interventions are who identifies the problem being addressed, who creates the intervention, and who facilitates the intervention. A breakdown of this typology can be found in Table 4.

Table 4 Expanded Typology of Cultural Expression Educational Interventions

Intervention type	Characteristics	Notable examples	Field(s)
Outside intervention	Problem identified by external group with power and resources; external group founds intervention; external group administers intervention	Kallio & Westerlund (2016); Storsve, Westby, & Ruud (2012); Urbain (2008)	Peace education; music education; K-16 education; art education
Collaborative intervention	Problem identified by external or local group; intervention is co-created; external group acts only to provide resources and expertise	Campbell (2012); Odunuga (2013); Pettan (2010)	Peace education; music education; visual arts; art education
Local intervention	Problem identified by local group; intervention emerges organically from local group; limited outside influence	Boura (2006); Erol (2012); Kyker (2013)	Ethnomusicology; anthropology
Transplantable intervention	Intended to address problems in multiple contexts; intervention created by one source to be used in multiple contexts	Banks (2004); Bresler (2007); Booth & Tunstall (2016)	Peace education; music education; K-16 education; ethnomusicology; sociology

Outside interventions are when a person or group not from the specific context of a problem creates and facilitates an intervention. The outside intervener is the party that identifies the problem and decides that it can be helped or solved through their intervention. They then provide the resources and external expertise necessary to found the intervention, often working with local participants but maintaining the sole decision-making power. The intervention is facilitated by either members of the external group or by local stakeholders operating under guidelines set by

the external group. A clear example of this is a program run by the Norwegian health organization NORWAC written about by Storsve et al (2012). NORWAC envisioned the program as providing music-based cultural activities as an important part of their larger mental health program in Lebanon. They identified the problem of mental health among Lebanese youth and determined that their arts education program could solve this problem. Members of the Norwegian Academy of Music then went to Lebanon and conducted music classes "in cooperation with local musicians and social workers" (p. 72). Facilitation continued when the Norwegian educators were not present but using their developed curriculum.

The NORWAC program and other similarly structured programs report considerable success and are often lauded by both academics and the media. These programs can be thoughtful, well intentioned, carefully researched and backed by data, and often constructed in a sustainable fashion. There are, however, concerns around the outside intervention approach, namely biased motivations, lack of specificity, and imbalanced power dynamics. There has been increasing criticism over the proliferation of external NGOs and foreign actors in conflict zones, who dominate resources and take agency and capacity from indigenous populations (Lockhart & Ghani, 2008). These organizations also are prone to being heavily influenced by strong political or sectional interests, polarizing instead of coalescing key local figures (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010). Approaching highly complex problems with unique cultural contexts and intricacies with an outside solution can exacerbate problems, and, even if the intervention helps alleviate the problem, it moves the local context in the direction of the external intervener. This is especially problematic when considering that Western and colonial perspectives could remain dominant and be forced onto every other culture. Lumsden and Wolfe (1996) caution against purely analytical approaches for arts-related methods of creative problem solving for this very reason, as this manner of thinking

is prone to ignoring the specific context of problems. An external intervention brings with it an inherent level of power as the interveners possess and provide resources not otherwise available in the setting. Haskell (2005) in a study of NGOs and international cultural aid in Bosnia insists that interventions and studies that involve patronage must centralize issues of power and control. Exploring the relationship between one international NGO and a local folklore group, Haskell notes that the external resources provided by the NGO forced the local group to transform their practices to fit the NGO's guidelines. Similar worries are expressed by Beckles-Wilson (2007) in noting the power imbalance between a foreign conductor working with an Israeli and Arab youth orchestra. Ultimately, the outside intervention approach, while simple from a Western perspective, carries with it several key problems to consider when designing a study or intervention.

Collaborative interventions work to address some of these problems by providing resources and/or expertise from an external source but working equally with a local group. This second type of intervention can address problems identified by either an external or local group depending on the context, but these interventions fall into fewer of the pitfalls presented above when they emerge from a local context and local stakeholders. The collaborative intervention is co-created by the local and the external, with both emic and etic perspectives. Most of the literature that falls into this category shows either an equal representation of facilitation by local and external actors, or primary facilitation by local actors. Final decision-making power in this form of intervention can rest in a shared decision or a local decision. This last piece is crucial as partnerships between external groups and local organizations work better if decision-making is shared (Bergh & Sloboda, 2010).

Let us once again look to a clear example of this style of intervention, but this time juxtaposed against an outside intervention, both conducted by the same researcher Svanibor Pettan

(2010). Both projects are related to the succession of wars in former Yugoslavia and show how music was used to divide communities in war and subsequently to reunite these same communities in peace. Pettan describes music in both contexts as a powerful tool to "empower minority groups and at the same time enlighten majority groups" (p. 178). The first project works with Bosnian refugees in Norway and was created by Norwegians to help assimilate the refugees into the broader society while maintaining cultural connection with Bosnia. It was designed, implemented, and controlled by the Norwegian government, Norwegian NGOs, and Norwegian scholars with limited consultation with the refugees themselves. The second project examines the experience of Romani musicians in Kosovo as cultural mediators in a multiethnic, multireligious, and multilingual society. These musicians requested resources and expertise from Pettan, and he worked with them to create lasting music education programming in Kosovo, run and controlled by the Romani musicians.

Both cases are informed by practices in applied ethnomusicology and music education, such as developing new performance frames, feeding back musical models to communities, providing communities with access to strategic models and techniques, and developing structural solutions to complex problems. The Bosnian refugee project, however, is designed so the external interveners control the parameters of execution and evaluation, while the Kosovo Romani project finds the external actors working to empower local groups by providing relevant ethnomusicological data, tools, and methods, ultimately leaving power and decision-making to the local group. Through inclusion of the local voice, collaborative interventions circumvent some of the issues around power dynamics: locals are placed as possessing equal or superior importance and knowledge, specificity; (when requested by a local actor) the solution is specific to the problem; and biased motivations, the motivations and drive behind the intervention, stem from the

local people and context. This is not to say that collaborative interventions are inherently better than external interventions, but to illustrate that the metrics for determining success vary between the two styles of intervention. External interventions' success is decided by the external sources in their voice. Collaborative interventions' success is reported through the experience and voice of the local context.

Local interventions share the same method for reporting and determining success as collaborative interventions. In fact, the two methods carry a number of similarities as they both rely more heavily on internal voices than external voices. For a local intervention all parts of the process are conducted by the local group. This group identifies the problem and creates and facilitates the intervention as a response. Often this style of intervention arises organically responding directly to a local need. There is limited outside influence on a local intervention and any external participants are invited by the local group. Researchers writing about this type of intervention fall into one of two categories: they are either writing entirely as outsiders/observers of an intervention (e.g., Boura, 2006; Erol, 2012; Grams, 2013), or they are a part of the local group creating and facilitating the intervention (e.g., Garofalo, 2011; Sézérat, 2019).

Between these first three types of interventions there is consistency in methodology depending on the field of scholarship. Education researchers tend to look more at creating interventions and write about outside and collaborative interventions, while anthropologists and ethnomusicologists focus on exploring the workings of existing interventions. The confluence comes in considering transplantable interventions.

5.11.1 Transplantable Interventions and El Sistema

Transplantable interventions differ substantially from the other three categories described above as they inherently do not adapt to problems specific or unique to a context. They are intended to address problems in multiple contexts by creating an intervention intended to be ubiquitous—the plug and play style of problem solving. This approach is especially present in handbooks for certain types of music education approaches (e.g., Banks, 2004; Bresler, 2007). Despite concerns around universality, transplantable interventions arguably still work to solve problems specific to a context. In a conflict zone, for example, a music peace education program can be put in place using internationally determined best practices to solve the specific problems of conflict and violence. Inherently this approach is a type of outside intervention that succumbs to the critiques presented above, especially concerns of losing the nuance of a problem. Advil lowers all types of pain but does not heal a broken bone.

One particularly prominent and heavily researched example of a transplantable intervention is the El Sistema program. Originally created in Venezuela by musician and economist José Antonio Abreu, El Sistema began as a space for impoverished or otherwise challenged youth to gather for choral and orchestral ensembles to provide necessary life skills to young people that may not have other avenues to gain these skills. The Venezuelan government refers to this as an ethical salvation of children and young people, especially focused on the most vulnerable groups in the country (Borzacchini, 2010). At this beginning stage El Sistema was a local intervention, but since its inception the program has swept across the world to become one of the largest and most famous music education programs in the world (Baker, 2016). Tunstall & Booth (2016) attribute the program's success to its ability to effect change quickly and noticeably everywhere it goes. One of the key distinctions the authors make about how El Sistema transitions

successfully from country to country is a focus on addressing local problems and contexts, making each country's chapter specific to its environment and participants (Cortese, 2019; Uy, 2012). Bergman, Lindgren, & Sæther (2016) provide an example of this attention to local detail discussing how the Swedish El Sistema chapter addresses segregation problems typical for Swedish urban areas. Despite clearly being a transplantable intervention, El Sistema's success appears to stem directly from its ability to transcend the critical flaw of traditional transplantable interventions: working to solve problems specific to a local context.

This success has led to a high volume of media attention and scholarship, as well as substantial criticism—much of which mirrors critiques of outside interventions. Dobson (2016) argues that the El Sistema model recapitulates authoritarian modes of education, leading to the marginalization of the children's creativity and empathy. Baker et al (2018) cast doubt on the program's efficacy and assert that the program's reliance on European classical music reinforces the colonial structures of Venezuela's past. This scathing review is taken one step further by Bull (2018) who refers to El Sistema as a bourgeois social project. Regardless, the El Sistema model merits considerable attention due to its unique ability to adapt and mold to specific contexts.

Spanning geographic and cultural borders, the arts are used to help navigate an incredibly diverse array of societal problems. Research on arts education in this context sheds light on critical pedagogical opportunities for considering the potential of music and provides compelling arguments for continued inclusion of the arts as an invaluable change-making tool. Wielding this tool, however, requires careful consideration of intervention methodology to avoid prescriptive approaches that are prone to creating power imbalances and potentially exacerbating contentious

problems. The key to effective interventions lies in working to understand the unique nature of a problem, which requires an equal or greater inclusion of local perspectives.

While ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have heavily researched local interventions in arts education for social change, there is limited research exploring these interventions from an education perspective. Conversely, ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have space to explore the consequences of outside interventions more robustly. More research is necessary in considering how the arts are used for cultural revitalization, especially research including Indigenous perspectives (Chapter 2 works to help fill this gap). Despite being both a global and specific problem, little to no scholarship exists around arts education and environmental and climate concerns.

6.0 Conclusion

"Now is a good time to do this work and to get more children involved and excited," Iñupiaq Elder Richard Atuk tells me, sitting at a table at Ray's Place, a Vietnamese restaurant in Anchorage. With us are Richard's wife Jane and cousin Gregory Nothstine, all central members of the Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage. Ray's Place has become our weekly meeting location as we work on a project with two goals: first, to help document the songs and dances of their dance group as well as the stories and composers behind these songs, and second to create a children's book about these songs with the hope of engaging more Alaska Native youth with their culture. As we sip tea out of small porcelain cups, all eyes and ears are directed toward Richard as he elaborates on the importance of our project, "Our language and culture is our way of life and if the kids stop doing it they won't understand anymore." The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage are experiencing a time of loss, as one of their great teachers and culture bearers recently passed away. As our conversation continues Greg shares part of his last interaction with her, "She told me we have to keep practicing." I sit quietly at a loss for how to contribute to the conversation, deciding that perhaps the right contribution is attention and silence. Feeling the impact of the loss of a foundational member, the conversation at the table moves on to discussing how to keep practicing and engaging younger members to join the group. Here, Richard draws me back into the discussion by telling me that part of what they need is "more credibility" in both the public and academic spheres.

That is what I aim to do by writing and publishing this dissertation. I chose a three-article dissertation in part to ensure that my research would be best prepared to be quickly added to academic discourse. The included articles intended for publication work against the colonial

history of education in Alaska by further legitimizing Indigenous ways of knowing and teaching. My research affirms the ways in which effective education has always happened in Alaska Native communities as a complement to formalized schooling. Improving our understanding of how teaching and learning happen in Alaska Native song and dance points to ways to incorporate artistic practices as culturally relevant pedagogical strategies within both formal and informal curricula. As an expansion into the growing field of arts-based culturally responsive pedagogy, especially concerning Indigenous populations, my findings have implications for educational policy across cultures and borders.

In this dissertation I reconceptualize community of practice theory to ecosystems of practice through considering the participation of other-than-human entities and help illuminate potential uses of the arts within education as a means for cultural revitalization, as a culturally responsive pedagogical approach, and as a strategy for addressing enduring social problems. This expansive ethnographic study helps bring attention to ongoing critical educational and artistic practices, expanding the understanding of Alaska Native culture both outside and inside Indigenous communities. My research focuses on the Iñupiaq culture's strengths over its deficits, illuminating cultural depth and resilience. This approach contributes to broadening intercultural understanding within Alaska and the United States while simultaneously helping lay the groundwork to attract more financial investment in Native educational and artistic practices. In this conclusion I first present brief summaries of each of the chapters then connect the chapters in a conceptual framework for song and dance in an Alaska Native ecosystem before exploring areas for future research.

6.1 Look to the Ravens: Reconceptualizing Communities of Practice into Ecosystems of

Practice

My first article critiques and expands on existing community of practice theory (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger 1998; Dubé, Bourhis, & Jacob, 2005) arguing for a change in terminology to ecosystem of practice. Previous conceptions of a community of practice relegate other-than-human entities to be passive resources, drawn upon and used by humans instead of acting as critical interlocutors. These understandings, while seemingly fitting for the corporate environments where many scholars who write about communities of practice have recently focused, skew the definition of situated learning—and education as a whole—to be contextually and culturally biased. Drawing on Indigenous epistemological understandings, I work to align the idea of a community of practice with existing scholarship on place-based education, land education, and Indigenous education. Many Indigenous groups view natural forces including, but not limited to animals, plants, mountains, rivers, and spiritual forces to be vital teachers and learners. Using this shifted theoretical foundation for community of practice theory I argue that a more accurate term is what I call an *ecosystem of practice*: a community of practice that considers other-than-human actors to be participants in the situated learning practice. I build out this definition reclaiming the term ecosystem from business management scholarship to return to biological interpretations of ecology that define an ecosystem as interacting organisms and their environment.

To help contextualize and provide backing to my new term, I turn to a Gwich'in hunting and fishing ecosystem of practice, drawing my findings through comparing a set of interviews conducted in 1991 with a nine Gwich'in Elders with two follow-up interviews in 2021. These Elders describe their sources of teaching and learning as Elders, parents, peers, animals, and the

land. While inter-human interaction is a vital part of the learning process, especially learning from Elders, learning also comes from animals and the land. For example, one Elder mentions looking to bears for where to lay fishing nets, and another says the river tells him when the eels are coming. Bears, moose, caribou, ravens, eagles, rabbits, mountains, trees, and rivers are all described as active participants in learning in this ecosystem.

Shifting this terminology and conception of what constitutes a community or ecosystem of practice reframes broad Western-dominated understandings of teaching and learning to be less anthropocentric and more consistent with Indigenous epistemologies. In Alaska Native education these types of shifts are critical as the dominant influence of Western culture and educational practices continues to influence the way Alaska Native youth are learning and viewing the world. The Gwich'in Elders interviewed for this article, once again corroborated by the lived experiences of Alaska Native dance group members, worry that Alaska Native youth are less interested in learning from the other-than-human. By operating under a Western lens and using Western terminology we continue to slowly but fundamentally lessen the importance of the other-than-human as these beliefs and words seep into Indigenous contexts. There are also substantial concerns among these Elders around climate change and how the other-than-human are changing, adapting, and, unfortunately in the case of some animals, dying off.

Looking to answer these questions requires input from all members of the ecosystem of practice. How can we understand why the river runs angry without the perspective of the river? This work and these questions also help build environmental empathy by placing the other-than-human at the same level as the human. This type of environmental empathy is evident in many Indigenous groups around the world who have coexisted in a sustainable manner in their respective ecosystems. Shifting theoretical frameworks and terminology in education, especially in bastions

137

of Western culture such as the academy, the boardroom, and the classroom, has the potential to build a more ecologically connected younger generation while simultaneously shifting the mentality of older generations.

6.2 Resetting a Heartbeat: Cultural Transmission and Holistic Learning Through Alaska Native Dance

Having established the theoretical underpinnings of learning and membership within an ecosystem of practice, in my second article I turn to the educational outcomes and learning practices of Iñupiaq song and dance. The majority of research on Alaska Native dance focuses on form and function, usually through an ethnomusicological or historical lens (e.g., Johnston, 1975, 1980, 1992; Kaplan 1988; Kingston, 1999; Wallen, 1990). This article joins the small but growing effort to explore the lived outcomes of Alaska Native dance (e.g., Dangeli, 2015; John, 2010; Ikuta, 2022; Senungetuk, 2017), contributing a unique educational lens. Here, I draw heavily on Indigenous storywork, an Indigenous research methodology introduced by Stó:lō scholar-educator Jo-ann Archibald (2008). Through Indigenous storywork I center the lived experiences of Alaska Native communities in a manner that fits within their epistemological understandings: stories and the storytelling process. These stories emerge from an extended ethnography of Alaska Native song and dance including participatory observation and interviews with dance group members, Elders, and community members.

The first story I tell is a vignette of meeting Yup'ik Elder and educator John Waghiyi, a foremost expert in Alaska Native dance, at the 2022 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics. John explains how Alaska Native dance is not only an important cultural practice but a fundamental

pedagogical strategy for teaching and learning cultural heritage, practical skills, and values—a collective curriculum succinctly summarized by John as "reinforc[ing] really our Indigenous way of life."

Using John's framework of outcomes, I begin by looking at how cultural heritage is taught through song and dance, and how the songs themselves carry critical cultural heritage. Vernon Elavgak tells me about the formation of his dance group, the Taġiuġmiut Dancers, through the repatriation of Iñupiaq songs back to Utqiaġvik from a Columbia University archive. The recordings of these songs happened during a complex and problematic period of loss of Alaska Native cultural practices. From the early 1900s until the 1970s, missionaries banned singing and dancing in Iñupiaq villages in an attempt to civilize and convert the population, resulting in song and dance either being a hidden practice or not practiced at all. Because of this ban and subsequent taboo, the existence of the recordings, most likely recorded in private, only recently began to be rumored before finally being discovered and repatriated. Vernon took the songs and spent six months working to develop new dance motions as the original motions were lost. From these songs and dances he founded the Taġiuġmiut Dancers. He describes these songs as part of his blood, the critical means to "progress the culture and values to the younger generation." This intergenerational transmission happens through the storytelling practices of the songs themselves as they transmit culture and teach practical skills and values.

Practical skills taught through song include how to properly clean and butcher animals, hunting and fishing motions, how to harvest plants, how to move on shifting ice, how to chop wood, and how to make peace. The motions of a dance can teach specific angles for how to butcher, or how build muscle memory for the correct motions for hunting. While these songs and dances do not replace actual experience, they do provide important frameworks and base knowledge,

especially for those who are too young to take part in the actual activities. The same songs simultaneously teach what John describes as "the specific rules and values" of Alaska Native life. This includes respect for adults, Elders, and the land and love of others. How to behave is also taught through song and dance, often in the form of songs depicting mistakes made by others that should not be repeated. This is the way that positive behavior is reinforced, and incorrect behavior discouraged in Alaska Native culture.

Seeing all these important educational outcomes laid out, the effects of the ban on song and dance become even more horrifying. Elders describe to me that the culture, history, and practices of the Alaska Native people lived, and still lives, in song and dance, and removing this practice for a generation broke the integrational transmission and much was lost. Given this importance, I argue for the inclusion of Alaska Native song dance as a critical educational in both formal and informal contexts. As a pedagogical tool, song and dance function holistically, as the learning of cultural heritage, practical skills, and values all happens simultaneously. This is a departure from much of Western compartmentalized education but is a more culturally responsive approach to education in many Indigenous contexts, specifically Alaska Native contexts.

6.3 The "Float Coat" Song: An Arts-Based Pedagogical Model for Solving Pressing Societal Problems

In my final article I expand on the educational outcomes of one specific song, the "Float Coat" song, exploring its potential as an arts-based culturally responsive pedagogical model for solving enduring social problems. Many Alaska Native communities rely on the frigid waters of the arctic for transportation and subsistence. Personal floatation device (PFD) use is limited in

these communities, partially for cultural reasons, making falling into the water especially deadly. As a result, drowning deaths in Alaska in 2010 were nearly four times the national average, with Alaska Natives being three times more likely to drown than non-Natives. The Kingikmiut Dancers and Singers of Anchorage, working to solve this problem, wrote the "Float Coat" song, a new Iñupiaq song and dance written to promote the use of PFDs, especially among children. The song emerged as part of an effort by the Alaska Office of Boating Safety which turned to song and dance to work to increase PFD use, as song and dance are a long-standing pedagogical strategy among Alaska Native communities for sharing information and conveying cultural messages.

The "Float Coat" song has been a hit through all its performances at Alaska Native dance festivals and in other Native and non-Native settings across Alaska. I propose that the effectiveness of this type of arts-based culturally responsive pedagogical model is driven by two criteria: being the culturally appropriate means of dissemination and being memorable and enjoyable. In the Alaska Native context, song and dance are an understood cultural structure for learning and transmitting critical cultural knowledge. This makes the "Float Coat" song the current means of dissemination for informing Alaska Native communities about the importance of PFD use. The other key criterion driving the success of this model is that it is memorable and enjoyable. What helps children be especially drawn to the song is that its motions are intentionally familiar and easy to perform, making it accessible. This allows the song to be culturally sticky and helps greatly with increased dissemination.

Beyond being culturally responsive, I argue that considering learning in this way has important implications in who controls and holds what is taught and learned. Gregory Tungwenuk Nothstine, one of the creators of the song, describes its goal saying he wants to "instill it in our culture and that way we can lay claim and ownership of the message." This reclamation of

educational sovereignty allows both the message and dissemination to be controlled by Alaska Native communities.

This article builds on existing literature in the use of the arts to solve problems through means such as identity formation (e.g., Hoijer et al., 2004; Stokes, 2004; Kyker, 2013), community building (e.g., Roberson, 2010; Rice, 2007), cultural revitalization (e.g., Campbell, 2012; Kallio & Westerlund, 2016; Lidskog, 2017), and promoting peace (e.g., Sézérat, 2019; Sweers, 2010). The arts in this way function to identify problems, direct societal focus toward potential solutions, and work at solving the problem. To categorize this scholarship, I present a typology of cultural expression-based pedagogical models for solving problems, delineating the categories of outside interventions, collaborative interventions, local interventions, and transplantable interventions. The "Float Coat" song is between a local intervention and a collaborative intervention as the problem was identified by the local community, and they also facilitated the intervention as a response, but the involvement of the Alaska Office of Boating Safety includes an outside perspective. The song is also potentially a transplantable intervention, though a unique type of transplantable intervention as it is transferable to other circumstances but must be adapted and modified extensively to fit each unique context. Ultimately, I argue that the "Float Coat" song is an example of when cultural expression is the only tool capable of solving a pervasive social problem through education. This research enhances current dialogues around the ways that arts-based educational strategies interact with modern problems by including Indigenous perspectives.

6.4 A Conceptual Framework for the Educational Practices of Alaska Native Song and Dance

In the introduction to this dissertation, I posed the research question: how do teaching and learning happen in an Indigenous arts-based community of practice? To answer this question, I present the following conceptual framework that draws together the findings of each of the three articles with the connecting gaps filled in through my extended ethnographic field work.
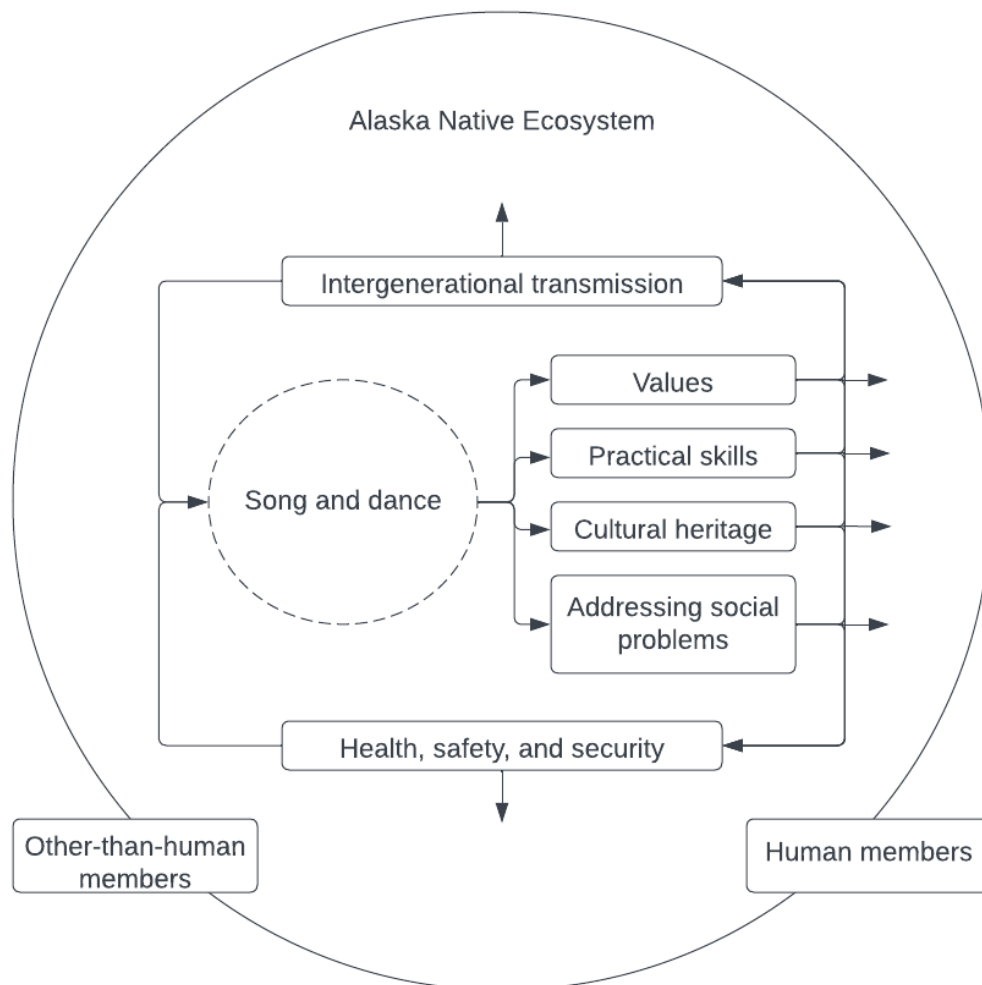

Figure 2 Conceptual Framework for Song and Dance in an Alaska Native Ecosystem

Alaska Native song and dance happens within the larger Alaska Native ecosystem. Crossing the line of this larger ecosystem are the members, both human and other-than-human. These members extend both into and beyond Alaska Native life and are all critical pieces of the ecosystem and how learning happens within it (as described in Chapter 1). While membership and practice are distinct from the larger ecosystem, the borders are represented as porous to indicate that movement in and out of song and dance is common, and song and dance as an integral part of Alaska Native life is not fully separated or compartmentalized from the ecosystem as a whole.

Emerging from song and dance practices, the arrows represent educational movement. Song and dance teach values, practical skills, and cultural heritage (as described in Chapter 2) as well as ways to address social problems (as described in Chapter 3). The song and dance outcomes are learned holistically. Placing these outcomes together shows how they happen simultaneously, not separate from each other. These distinct learning outcomes then direct outward into the larger Alaska Native ecosystem, as the knowledge is used and benefits the ecosystem. Simultaneously, the learning outcomes lead to two key societal outcomes: intergenerational transmission of culture and health, safety, and security. These societal outcomes are critical for the continuation of the larger Alaska Native ecosystem as they help sustain both members and the culture. This sustainability extends back to the song and dance groups, allowing them to continue in the cycle. The framework viewed in its entirety shows the crucial role of cultural expression in a vibrant, living, and sustainable Indigenous ecosystem.

This framework is also intended to be a decolonial effort working toward the reclamation of Indigenous educational sovereignty. Fundamentally, I show through the framework how learning happens within an Alaska Native Indigenous ecosystem of practice. This does not consider Westernized views and perspectives on learning. There is no need for an arrow pointing

144

to achievement. Instead, the model explains how learning happens through Indigenous epistemologies. Including this type of framework in the highly Westernized and academic setting of this dissertation further legitimizes these understandings and surrounding rhetoric. It promotes and highlights a thriving, sustainable model for learning and makes clear that this knowledge and practice emerges directly from the words and understandings of Alaska Native Elders, centering their voices in academic educational conversations.

6.5 Future Research

There is a crucial linking chain in this framework that I have not discussed: the teaching process itself. Throughout my interviews and field work I gathered data on the pedagogical strategies used in Alaska Native song and dance ecosystems of practice, but these findings are not discussed heavily in the three articles of this dissertation. The importance of repetition was found in every group that I spoke to, with interviewees mentioning how they learned both songs and dances by repeating them over and over again. This strategy, however, was also described by some of the older dance group members as a more recent phenomenon, where in the past both children and adults were expected to be able to learn a dance after doing it once. Similarly, there was disagreement between groups on whether a song or a dance should be learned first, though regardless of order, this teaching happened through a leader performing the song or dance and the other members following along to learn. Future research should expand on these pedagogical strategies to further build out the above conceptual framework by explicating the links between song and dance and the learning outcomes.

In looking at teachers there is also important work to be done in mapping the movement within arts-based Indigenous ecosystems of practice. Alaska Native dance has both formal and informal rites associated with movement from student to teacher, or, to use terms common in discussing a community of practice, from novice to expert. For example, in many groups a younger male member begins by dancing before being invited, usually as a teenager, to pick up a drum and join the singing and drumming. After this stage, several group leaders discussed how they were chosen by Elders to learn the songs and dances and become the culture bearers of their group. This process, however, is messy and can differ greatly between ecosystems of practice. Similarly, how do the other-than-human make these same transitions? I establish in Chapter 1 that other-than-human participants are capable of being both student and teacher within an ecosystem of practice, but how they progress from one to the other requires further exploration.

My study draws primarily on perspectives from the Gwich'in, Iñupiat, and Yupiit, three of the five primary metacultures of Alaska which include the Iñupiat, Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan (of which Gwich'in is a part), and Southeast Coastal peoples (Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian). Alaska Native song and dance is not limited to these two peoples. In Anchorage alone there are Iñupiaq, Yup'ik, Tsimshian, Unangax̂, and Dena'ina dance groups. Each group and each culture have unique practices, epistemologies, and pedagogical strategies, and while similarities can be found, the specificity of each context must be explored. Building on the groundwork from this dissertation, which is most heavily focused on Iñupiaq song dance, future studies should explore the ecosystems of practice all over Alaska.

This expansion of research into arts-based ecosystems of practice should not stop with Indigenous communities in Alaska. The framework and methodology of my dissertation could be applied to look at artistic practices in other Arctic Indigenous contexts. Arctic Indigenous

communities in North America are connected and linked across the border between the US and Canada. Canadian Inuit and Alaskan Inuit are primarily distinguished by Western borders. Similarly, the Bering Strait, which used to be a land bridge connecting North America with what is now Russia, holds Alaskan Yup'ik on one side and Siberian Yup'ik just miles away on the other. These groups are represented in the Artic Council—a collection of Arctic Indigenous organizations that gather to discuss issues related to the Arctic environment—whose permanent members are the Aleut International Association, Arctic Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in International Council, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, and the Saami Council. Drawing from this existing body, comparative studies across Arctic Indigenous communities are needed to expand our understanding of teaching and learning in Indigenous arts-based ecosystems of practice. While the Arctic Indigenous ecosystems share many similarities and are a logical expansion of this dissertation, future research on Indigenous ecosystems of practice around the world can continue to shed light on critical role of the arts and cultural expression in education and expand our understanding of the relationship between humanity and nature.

This expansion of research into ecosystems of practice also opens the door to explore how ecosystems of practice may exist in any context where communities of practice are currently studied. A close extension could explore ecosystems of practice in rural educational settings using similar methodologies to those described in this dissertation. Further afield, future research might include examining business ecosystems of practice or medical ecosystems of practice. In addition to traditional conceptions of nature, technology and urban settings could be considered and potentially framed as participating other-than-human interlocutors in an ecosystem of practice. Reconceptualizing a community of practice to include the other-than-human reframes Western

contexts to be less anthropocentric and has the potential to unlock new avenues of learning or even change the existing rigid frameworks.

Academic writing remains one of these rigid frameworks, a perhaps ironic way to begin the final paragraph of a dissertation. Regardless, the esoteric and arcane nature of most academic writing limits the readership and impact of important research. Repeatedly as I discussed my research with dance group members and community members, I was told that no one would bother to read my dissertation because academic writing is simply not understandable or worth reading. What would have an impact, however, is translating these findings into actionable, intelligible outputs that can be shared with the community. This was the driving force behind the children's book mentioned at the beginning of this conclusion. I hope that future researchers draw on these strategies for sharing out the important work that they do, especially when working with Indigenous communities, and publish about the importance of this type of accessible work. Together I hope that we can ultimately shift what is considered academic writing to be useful to all our communities, in and out of the academy. In this way, our writing and work will be reciprocal and sustainable.

Bibliography

Abram, D. (1996). *The spell of the sensuous: Perception and language in a more-than-human world.* Vintage.

Aguilera, D., Lipka, J., Demmert, W., & Tippeconnic, J. (2007). Special issue on culturally responsive education for American Indian, Alaska native, and native Hawaiian students. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 4-10.

Akoumianakis, D., Vellis, G., Milolidakis, I., Kotsalis, D., & Alexandraki, C. (2008). Distributed collective practices in collaborative music performance. In *Proceedings of the 3rd international conference on Digital Interactive Media in Entertainment and Arts* (pp. 368-375).

Alaska Native Knowledge Network. (1998). *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*. https://uaf.edu/ankn/publications/guides/alaska-standards-for-cult/

Alaska Office of Boating Safety. (n.d.). *Promoting Safe and Enjoyable Boating in Alaska*. https://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/boating/

Angrosino, M. (2007). *Doing ethnographic and observational research*. SAGE.

Archibald, J. A. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit.* UBC press.

Archibald, J. A., & Parent, A. (2019). Hands back, hands forward for Indigenous storywork as methodology. In *Applying Indigenous Research Methods* (pp. 3-20). Routledge.

Arieli, I. (2019). Syncopation Against the Occupation: Handling High-Risk Situations as an Activist Street Band in Israel-Palestine. In *HONK!* (pp. 250-261). Routledge.

Ayres, P. G. (2012). *Shaping ecology: the life of Arthur Tansley*. John Wiley & Sons.

Baily, J., & Collyer, M. (2006). Introduction: Music and migration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32(2), 167-182.

Baker, G. (2016). Editorial introduction: El Sistema in critical perspective. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, 15(1), 10-32.

Baker, G., Bull, A., & Taylor, M. (2018). Who watches the watchmen? Evaluating evaluations of El Sistema. *British Journal of Music Education*, 1-15.

Bang, M., Curley, L., Kessel, A., Marin, A., Suzukovich III, E. S., & Strack, G. (2014). Muskrat theories, tobacco in the streets, and living Chicago as Indigenous land. *Environmental Education Research*, *20*(1), 37-55.

Banks, J. A. (2004). Handbook of research on multicultural education.

Banks, O. C. (2007). *Decolonizing the body: An international perspective of dance pedagogy from Uganda to the United States*. The University of Arizona.

Barnhardt, R. (2008). Creating a place for indigenous knowledge in education: The Alaska native knowledge network. *Place-based education in the global age: Local diversity*, *113*, 133.

Barnhardt, R., & Oscar Kawagley, A. (2005). Indigenous knowledge systems and Alaska Native ways of knowing. *Anthropology & education quarterly, 36*(1), 8-23.

Barnhart, G. (2021). A Historical and Contextual Review of the Adverse Psychological Effects of the Trauma of Colonialization on Alaska Native Peoples. *Psychology from the Margins, 3*(1), 2.

Bazeley, P. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: Practical strategies.* Sage.

Beckles Willson, R. (2009). Whose Utopia? Perspectives on the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra. *Music and Politics, 3*(2).

Bergh, A., & Sloboda, J. (2010). Music and art in conflict transformation: A review.

Bergman, Å., Lindgren, M., & Sæther, E. (2016). Struggling for integration: universalist and separatist discourses within El Sistema Sweden. *Music education research, 18*(4), 364-375.

Bicchi, F. (2013). The EU as a community of practice: foreign policy communications in the COREU network. In *The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy* (pp. 55-72). Routledge.

Bogers, M., Sims, J., & West, J. (2019). What is an ecosystem? Incorporating 25 years of ecosystem research.

BonJour, L., & Sosa, E. (2003). Epistemic justification: Internalism vs. externalism, foundations vs. virtues.

Booth, E., & Tunstall, T. (2016). *Playing for their lives: The global El Sistema movement for social change through music.* WW Norton & Company.

Borzacchini, C. (2010). *Venezuela en el cielo de los escenarios*. Fundacioń Bancaribe.

Boulton, L. (1969). *The music hunter: The autobiography of a career*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Boura, S. (2006, May). Imagining homeland: Identity and repertories of a Greek labour-immigrant musician in Germany. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 7, No. 3).

Bresler, L. (Ed.). (2007). *International handbook of research in arts education* (Vol. 16). Springer Science & Business Media.

Bresler, L., & Matsunobu, K. (2014). Qualitative Research in Music Education: Concepts, Goals and Characteristics. In *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education*. Oxford University Press.

Bringer, J. D., Johnston, L. H., & Brackenridge, C. H. (2004). Maximizing transparency in a doctoral thesis: The complexities of writing about the use of QSR* NVIVO within a grounded theory study. *Qualitative research, 4*(2), 247-265.

Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (1991). Organizational learning and communities-of-practice: Toward a unified view of working, learning, and innovation. *Organization science, 2*(1), 40-57.

Bull, A. (2016). El Sistema as a bourgeois social project: Class, gender, and Victorian values. *Action, criticism and theory for music education, 15*(1), 120-153.

Burch Jr, E. S. (1994). The Iñupiat and the christianization of Arctic Alaska. *Etudes/Inuit/Studies*, 81-108.

Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of indigenous education*. Kivaki Press.

Campbell, G. (2012). Ngariwanajirri, the Tiwi "Strong Kids Song ": Using Repatriated Song Counterpoints, 379, 189-196. Recordings in a Contemporary Music Project. *Yearbook for Traditional Music, 44*, 1-23.

Castagno, A. E., & Brayboy, B. M. J. (2008). Culturally responsive schooling for Indigenous youth: A review of the literature. *Review of educational research, 78*(4), 941-993.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Drowning Data*. https://www.cdc.gov/drowning/data/index.html

Colín, E. (2014). *Indigenous education through dance and ceremony: A Mexica palimpsest*. Springer.

Cortese, P. A. (2019). Changing Social Perspectives: Teaching Artists and Transformative Learning in an El Sistema-inspired After-school Music Program.

Dangeli, M. L. (2015). *Dancing sovereignty: protocol and politics in northwest coast First Nations dance* (Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia).

Dauenhauer, R. (1997). *Conflicting visions in Alaskan education*. University of Alaska Veniaminov Bicentennial Project.

Davidson, S. F. (2019). Following the song of k" aad'aww: using Indigenous storywork principles to guide ethical practices in research. *Decolonizing research: Indigenous storywork as methodology*, 23-39.

Dawson, A. (2002). 'This is the Digital Underclass': Asian Dub Foundation and Hip-Hop Cosmopolitanism. *Social Semiotics, 12*(1), 27-44.

de La Bellacasa, M. P. (2017). *Matters of care: Speculative ethics in more than human worlds* (Vol. 41). U of Minnesota Press.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). *Qualitative Research Strategies: Qualitative Research Manual. Vol. III* (Vol. 3). SAGE.

Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S., & Smith, L. T. (Eds.). (2008). *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies.* Sage.

Dewey, J. (1966). Democracy and education (1916). *Jo Ann Boydston (ed.). The Middle Works of John Dewey, 9*, 1899-1924.

Dobson, N. (2016). Hatching Plans: Pedagogy and Discourse within an El Sistema-Inspired Music Program. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education, 15*(1).

Dombrowski, K. (2001). *Against culture: Development, politics, and religion in Indian Alaska* (Vol. 1). U of Nebraska Press.

Dubé, L., Bourhis, A., Jacob, R. (2005). The impact of structuring characteristics on the launching of virtual communities of practice. *Journal of Organizational Change Management, 18* (2): 145–166.

Ellis, J. (1998). Narrative inquiries with children and youth. Teaching from understanding: *Teacher as interpretive inquirer*, 33-56.

Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2001). Participant observation and fieldnotes. *Handbook of ethnography*, 352-368.

Erol, A. (2012). Identity, migration and transnationalism: Expressive cultural practices of the Toronto Alevi community. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 38*(5), 833-849.

Eyerman, R. (2002). Music in movement: Cultural politics and old and new social movements. *Qualitative Sociology, 25*(3), 443-458.

Feldman, R., & Conee, E. (2001). Internalism defended. *American Philosophical Quarterly, 38*(1), 1-18.

Fienup-Riordan, A. (2020). *Nunakun-gguq Ciutengqertut/They Say They Have Ears Through the Ground: Animal Essays from Southwest Alaska.* University of Alaska Press.

Folkestad, G. (2006). Formal and informal learning situations or practices vs formal and informal ways of learning. *British journal of music education, 23*(2), 135-145.

Ford, D., & Blenkinsop, S. (2018). Learning to speak Franklin: nature as co-teacher. *Journal of Outdoor and Environmental Education, 21*(3), 307-318.

Freed, C. D., & Samson, M. (2004). Native Alaskan dropouts in Western Alaska: Systemic failure in native Alaskan schools. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 33-45.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the oppressed.

Garland, S. (2013, February 28). In Remote Alaskan Villages, Teachers Struggle to Make School Meaningful. *The Atlantic*. https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/02/in-remote-alaskan-villages-teachers-struggle-to-make-school-meaningful/273596/

Garofalo, R. (2011). HONK! Pedagogy: A New Paradigm for Music Education?. *The Radical Teacher*, (91), 16-25.

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures* (Vol. 5019). Basic books.

Gherardi, S. (2009). Community of practice or practices of a community. *The Sage handbook of management learning, education, and development*, 514-530.

Goldman, A. I. (2009). Internalism, externalism, and the architecture of justification. *The Journal of Philosophy, 106*(6), 309-338.

Grams, D. M. (2013). Freedom and cultural consciousness: black working-class parades in post-Katrina New Orleans. *Journal of urban affairs, 35*(5), 501-529.

Granstrand, O., & Holgersson, M. (2020). Innovation ecosystems: A conceptual review and a new definition. *Technovation, 90*, 102098.

Gray, N., & Nye, P. S. (2001). American Indian and Alaska Native substance abuse: co-morbidity and cultural issues. *American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Research: The Journal of the National Center, 10*(2), 67-84.

Green, W., Hibbins, R., Houghton, L., & Ruutz, A. (2013). Reviving praxis: stories of continual professional learning and practice architectures in a faculty-based teaching community of practice. *Oxford Review of Education, 39*(2), 247-266.

Gross, J., McMurray, D., & Swedenburg, T. (1994). Arab noise and Ramadan nights: rai, rap, and Franco-Maghrebi identity. *Diaspora, 3*(1), 3-39.

Guba, E. G. (1981). Criteria for assessing the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiries. *Ectj, 29*(2), 75-91.

Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (2002). From the individual interview to the interview society. *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*, 3-32.

Hall, B. L., & Clover, D. E. (1997). The future begins today: Nature as teacher in environmental adult popular education. *Futures, 29*(8), 737-747.

Hallam, S. (2010). The power of music: Its impact on the intellectual, social and personal development of children and young people. *International Journal of Music Education, 28*(3), 269-289.

Hallam, S., Cross, I., & Thaut, M. (Eds.). (2011). *Oxford handbook of music psychology*. Oxford University Press.

Haraway, D. (2008). Companion species, mis-recognition, and queer worlding. Queering the non/human, xxiii-xxxvi.

Haraway, D. (2013). *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of nature*. Routledge.

Haraway, D. J. (2004). *The haraway reader*. Psychology Press.

Haskell, E. (2005). International Cultural Aid and the Case of Guca Gora, Bosnia. In *ICTM World Conference*.

Hassler, L., & Nicholson, C. (2017). Cello Lessons and Teargas: War, Peace and Music Education. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Global Arts Education* (pp. 417-429). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Hess, J. (2019a). Teaching Back: Navigating Oppressive Encounters in Music Teacher Education. *Visions of Research in Music Education, 34*.

Hess, J. (2019b). Singing our own song: Navigating identity politics through activism in music. *Research Studies in Music Education, 41*(1), 61-80.

Higgins, M. (2014). Rebraiding photovoice: Methodological métissage at the cultural interface. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 43*(2), 208-217.

Höijer, B., Lidskog, R., & Uggla, Y. (2006). Facing dilemmas: sense-making and decision-making in late modernity. *Futures, 38*(3), 350-366.

Howey, M. C. (2020). Other-than-human persons, Mishipishu, and danger in the Late Woodland inland waterway landscape of northern Michigan. *American Antiquity, 85*(2), 347-366.

Hudson, R. (2003). Songs of seduction: popular music and Serbian nationalism. *Patterns of prejudice, 37*(2), 157-176.

Hughes, J. D., & Highwater, J. (1983). American Indian ecology.

Humphreys, M. (2005). Getting personal: Reflexivity and autoethnographic vignettes. *Qualitative inquiry, 11*(6), 840-860.

Ikuta, H. (2010). *Sociality of Dance: Eskimo Dance Among Yupiget on St. Lawrence Island and Iñupiat in Barrow, Alaska* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Aberdeen).

Ikuta, H. (2022). The Sociality of Indigenous Dance in Alaska. Routledge. *Iñupiat in Barrow, Alaska*

Ilari, B. (2007). Music and early childhood in the Tristes Tropiques: The Brazilian experience. *Arts Education Policy Review, 109*(2), 7-18.

Jester, T. E., & Fickel, L. H. (2013). Cross-cultural field experiences in Alaska native villages: Implications for culturally responsive teacher education. *The Teacher Educator, 48*(3), 185-200.

Johansen, G. (2014). Sociology, music education, and social change: The prospect of addressing their relations by attending to some central, expanded concepts. *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education, 13*(1).

Johanson, K., & Glow, H. (2015). A virtuous circle: the positive evaluation phenomenon in arts audience research. *Participations, 12*(1), 254-270.

John, T. A. (2010). *Yuraryararput kangiit-llu: Our ways of dance and their meanings* (Doctoral dissertation).

Johnston, T. F. (1975). Alaskan Eskimo dance in cultural context. *Dance Research Journal, 7*(2), 1-11.

Johnston, T. F. (1980). Alaskan Eskimo Music and Dance. *Current Anthropology, 21*(3), 370-371.

Johnston, T. F. (1992). A Historical View of Inupiat Eskimo Dance. *Anthropologie (1962-)*, 269-279.

Jorgensen, E. R. (1997). *In search of music education*. University of Illinois Press.

Jukes, S., & Reeves, Y. (2020). More-than-human stories: Experimental co-productions in outdoor environmental education pedagogy. *Environmental Education Research, 26*(9-10), 1294-1312.

Jung, E. Y. (2014). Transnational migrations and YouTube sensations: Korean Americans, popular music, and social media. *Ethnomusicology, 58*(1), 54-82.

Kallio, A. A., & Westerlund, H. (2016). The ethics of survival: Teaching the traditional arts to disadvantaged children in post-conflict Cambodia. *International Journal of Music Education, 34*(1), 90-103.

Kancewick, M., & Smith, E. (1990). Subsistence in Alaska: Towards a Native Priority. *UMKC L. Rev., 59*, 645.

Kapiszewski, D., & Kirilova, D. (2014). Transparency in qualitative security studies research: Standards, benefits, and challenges. *Security Studies, 23*(4), 699-707.

Kaplan, L. D. (1988). Ugiuvangmiut Quliapyuit= King Island Tales. Eskimo History and Legends from Bering Strait.

Kawagley, A. O. (1995). Incorporation of the World Views of Indigenous Cultures: A Dilemma In the Practice and Teaching of Western Science.

Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). *Braiding sweetgrass: Indigenous wisdom, scientific knowledge and the teachings of plants*. Milkweed Editions.

Kingston, D. M. (1999). *Returning: twentieth century performances of the King Island Wolf Dance*. University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Kirksey, S. E., & Helmreich, S. (2010). The emergence of multispecies ethnography. *Cultural anthropology, 25*(4), 545-576.

Klein, M. L. (2005). *Intertextuality in western art music*. Indiana University Press.

Kofinas, G. P., Chapin, F. S., BurnSilver, S., Schmidt, J. I., Fresco, N. L., Kielland, K., ... & Rupp, T. S. (2010). Resilience of Athabascan subsistence systems to interior Alaska's changing climate. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research, 40*(7), 1347-1359.

Kohn, E. (2013). How forests think. In *How Forests Think*. University of California Press.

Krueger, P. J. (2020). Doing ethnography in music education. *Approaches to Qualitative Research: An Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education, Volume 1*, 94.

Kyker, J. W. (2013). Listening in the Wilderness: The Audience Reception of Oliver Mtukudzi's Music in the Zimbabwean Diaspora. *Ethnomusicology, 57*(2), 261-285.

Langer, P. C. (2016). The research vignette: Reflexive writing as interpretative representation of qualitative inquiry—A methodological proposition. *Qualitative Inquiry, 22*(9), 735-744.

Lave, J. (1988). Cognition in practice: Mind, mathematics and culture in everyday life. *Cambridge University Press*.

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation. *Cambridge University Press*.

Leonard, W. Y. (2012). Framing language reclamation programmes for everybody's empowerment. *Gender & Language, 6*(2).

Levine, V. L., & Robinson, D. (2019). *Music and modernity among first peoples of North America*. Wesleyan University Press.

Lewis, H. (2010). Community moments: Integration and transnationalism at 'refugee' parties and events. *Journal of Refugee Studies, 23*(4), 571-588.

Lidskog, R. (2016). The role of music in ethnic identity formation in diaspora. *International Social Science Journal, 66*(1), 23-38.

Lien, M. E., & Pálsson, G. (2021). Ethnography beyond the human: the 'other-than-human'in ethnographic work. *Ethnos, 86*(1), 1-20.

Lightfoot, S. (2016). *Global indigenous politics: A subtle revolution*. Routledge.

Lincoln, J. M., Perkins, R., Melton, F., & Conway, G. A. (1996). Drowning in Alaskan waters. *Public Health Reports, 111*(6), 531.

Locke, P. (2018). Multispecies Ethnography. University of Canterbury, New Zealand. *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology. Edited by Hilary Callan*.

Lockhart, C., & Ghani, A. (2008). *Fixing failed states: A framework for rebuilding a fractured world*. Oxford University Press.

Lomawaima, K. T., & McCarty, T. L. (2006). *"To remain an Indian": Lessons in democracy from a century of Native American education.* Teachers College Press.

Loon, H., & Georgette, S. (1989). *Contemporary Brown Bear Use in Northwest Alaska*. Technical Paper No. 163. Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Lumsden, M., & Wolfe, R. (1996). Evolution of the problem-solving workshop: An introduction to social-psychological approaches to conflict resolution. *Peace and Conflict, 2*(1), 37-67.

Lynch, J., & Mannion, G. (2021). Place-responsive Pedagogies in the Anthropocene: attuning with the more-than-human. *Environmental Education Research, 27*(6), 864-878.

Mabingo, A. (2020). *Ubuntu as Dance Pedagogy in Uganda*. Springer Singapore.

Mabingo, A., Ssemaganda, G., Sembatya, E., & Kibirige, R. (2020). Decolonizing Dance Teacher Education: Reflections of Four Teachers of Indigenous Dances in African Postcolonial Environments. *Journal of Dance Education, 20*(3), 148-156.

Macias, A. (2004). Bringing music to the people: race, urban culture, and municipal politics in postwar Los Angeles. *American Quarterly, 56*(3), 693-717.

Mahmoudi, S., Huda, N., & Behnia, M. (2021). Multi-levels of photovoltaic waste management: A holistic framework. *Journal of Cleaner Production, 294*, 126252.

Manning, R., & Harrison, N. (2018). Narratives of place and land: Teaching indigenous histories in Australian and New Zealand teacher education. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 43*(9), 4.

Manuel, P. L. (2017). World Music and Activism Since the End of History (Sic).

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2014). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage publications.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. SAGE.

Miles, S. B., Burton, H. V., & Kang, H. (2019). Community of practice for modeling disaster recovery. *Natural Hazards Review, 20*(1), 04018023.

Miller, R. (1992). *What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture. Revised*. Holistic Education Press, 39 Pearl Street, Brandon, VT 05733-0328.

Miller, R. (2000). Beyond reductionism: The emerging holistic paradigm in education. *The Humanistic Psychologist, 28*(1-3), 382-393.

Moravcsik, A. (2014). Transparency: The revolution in qualitative research. *PS, Political Science & Politics, 47*(1), 48.

Morgan, E. R., Hitchcock, W., Sakamoto, I., Stempski, S., Rivara, F., Vavilala, M., & Quan, L. (2022). Disparities in adolescent reported drowning prevention strategies. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 71*(6), 757-760.

Nash, L. (2005). The agency of nature or the nature of agency?. *Environmental History, 10*(1), 67-69.

Noble, K. (2021). 'Getting Hands On with Other Creative Minds': Establishing a Community of Practice around Primary Art and Design at the Art Museum. *International Journal of Art & Design Education, 40*(3), 615-629.

Noy, C. (2008). Sampling knowledge: The hermeneutics of snowball sampling in qualitative research. *International Journal of social research methodology, 11*(4), 327-344.

O'Connell, J. M., & Castelo-Branco, S. E. S. (Eds.). (2010). *Music and conflict*. University of Illinois Press.

Odunuga, A. F. (2013). Preventing socio-political conflicts and building peace block: The role of music. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(2), 703.

Ogden, L. A., Hall, B., & Tanita, K. (2013). Animals, plants, people, and things: A review of multispecies ethnography. *Environment and society, 4*(1), 5-24.

Okakok, L. (1989). Serving the purpose of education. *Harvard Educational Review, 59*(4), 405-423.

Omidvar, O., & Kislov, R. (2014). The evolution of the communities of practice approach: Toward knowledgeability in a landscape of practice—An interview with Etienne Wenger-Trayner. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 23*(3), 266-275.

Ong, A. (1999). *Flexible citizenship: The cultural logics of transnationality*. Duke University Press.

Ongtooguk, P. (2010). Education and cultural self-determination. *Alaska Native education: Views from within*, 313-316.

Parker Webster, J., & John, T. A. (2010). Preserving a space for cross-cultural collaborations: an account of insider/outsider issues. *Ethnography and Education, 5*(2), 175-191.

Peterson, A. B. (2004). *A Multicultural Approach to Music Education in South Africa: A Model from the Western Cape Province* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Fort Hare).

Petrus, S., & Cohen, R. D. (2019). Folk Music and Political Activism in Greenwich Village and at the Newport Folk Festival, 1935–1965. In *Sounds and the City* (pp. 279-302). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Pettan, S. (1998). Music, politics, and war in Croatia in the 1990s: an introduction. *Music, politics, and war: views from Croatia*, 9-27.

Pettan, S. (2010). Music in war, music for peace: Experiences in applied ethnomusicology. *Music and conflict*, 177-192.

Pierotti, R., & Wildcat, D. (2000). Traditional ecological knowledge: the third alternative (commentary). *Ecological applications, 10*(5), 1333-1340.

Porter, M., & Monard, K. (2001). " Ayni" in the Global Village: Building Relationships of Reciprocity through International Service-Learning. *Michigan journal of community service learning, 8*(1), 5-17.

Qassataq, A. (2020). *When Uŋalaqłiq danced: stories of strength, suppression & hope* (Doctoral dissertation).

Raffan, J. (1993). The experience of place: Exploring land as teacher. *Journal of Experiential Education, 16*(1), 39-45.

Rasmus, S. M., Trickett, E., Charles, B., John, S., & Allen, J. (2019). The qasgiq model as an indigenous intervention: Using the cultural logic of contexts to build protective factors for Alaska Native suicide and alcohol misuse prevention. *Cultural diversity and ethnic minority psychology, 25*(1), 44.

Reinert, K. C. (1997). Music and the Nazi Party Congress: its role in spectacle, festival and ritual.

Rice, T. (2007). Reflections On Music and Identity In Ethnomusicology. 17-38.

Rigney, L., & Hattam, R. (2018, April). Toward a decolonizing Australian culturally responsive pedagogy. In *American Education Research Association Annual Meeting*. New York.

Roberson, J. E. (2010). Singing Diaspora: Okinawan songs of home, departure, and return. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power, 17*(4), 430-453.

Rosen, M. (1991). Coming to terms with the field: Understanding and doing organizational ethnography. *Journal of management studies, 28*(1), 1-24.

Rosiek, J. L., Snyder, J., & Pratt, S. L. (2020). The new materialisms and Indigenous theories of non-human agency: Making the case for respectful anti-colonial engagement. *Qualitative Inquiry, 26*(3-4), 331-346.

Sakakibara, C. (2010). Kiavallakkikput Agviq (Into the Whaling Cycle): Cetaceousness and climate change among the Iñupiat of arctic Alaska. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 100*(4), 1003-1012.

Saldaña, J. (2016). The coding manual for qualitative researchers. SAGE Publications Limited. *Science Journal, 66*(1), 23-38.

Scott, C. D. (2020). Policing Black sound: performing UK Grime and Rap music under routinised surveillance. *Soundings, 75*(75), 55-65.

Senungetuk, H. A. (2017). Creating a Native space in the city: An Inupiaq community in song and dance.

Senungetuk, V., & Tiulana, P. (1987). *A place for winter: Paul Tiulana's story*. Ciri Foundation.

Sézérat, L. (2019). Autonomous Street Carnival Blocos and Reinventing Citizenship in Rio de Janeiro. In *HONK!* (pp. 84-99). Routledge.

Sfard, A. (1998). On two metaphors for learning and the dangers of choosing just one. *Educational researcher, 27*(2), 4-13.

Shelemay, K. K. (2006, June). Music, Memory and History: In Memory of Stuart Feder. In *Ethnomusicology Forum* (pp. 17-37). Taylor & Francis.

Simon, S. (1996) *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*. London: Routledge

Simpson, L. B. (2014). Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation. *Decolonization: indigeneity, education & society, 3*(3).

Simpson, L. B. (2017). *As we have always done: Indigenous freedom through radical resistance*. University of Minnesota Press.

Smith, D. E. (2022). Look to the ravens: reconceptualizing communities of practice into ecosystems of practice. *Environmental Education Research, 28*(9), 1348-1358.

Smith, E., & Kancewick, M. (1990). The tribal status of Alaska Natives. *U. Colo. L. Rev., 61*, 455.

Smith, L. T. (2014). Social justice, transformation and indigenous methodologies. *Ethnographic worldviews: Transformations and social justice*, 15-20.

Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Smith, L. T., Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (Eds.). (2018). *Indigenous and decolonizing studies in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Snell, D., & Hodgetts, D. (2007). Heavy metal, identity and the social negotiation of a community of practice. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 17*(6), 430-445.

Soper, K. (1995). What is nature: Culture, politics and the non-human.

State of Alaska regional secondary school system: implementation plan. (1967). Falls Church/Va.

Stauffer, S. L. (2020). Narrative inquiry and the uses of narrative in music education research. *Approaches to Qualitative Research: An Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research in American Music Education, Volume 1*, 125.

Stokes, M. (1994). Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The musical construction of place. *Providence, RI: Berg*.

Storsve, V., Westby, I. A., & Ruud, E. (2012). Hope and recognition. A music project among youth in a Palestinian refugee camp.

Strayer, H. D., Lucas, D. L., Hull-Jilly, D. C., & Lincoln, J. M. (2010). Drowning in Alaska: progress and persistent problems. *International journal of circumpolar health, 69*(3), 253-264.

Styres, S. D. (2011). Land as first teacher: A philosophical journeying. *Reflective Practice, 12*(6), 717-731.

Suchman, L. A. (1987). Plans and situated actions: The problem of human-machine communication. *Cambridge University Press*.

Suzuki, D., & Knudtson, P. (1992). *Wisdom of the Elders: Honouring Sacred Visions of Nature*. Bantam Books.

Sweers, B. (2010). Music against fascism: Applied ethnomusicology in Rostock, Germany. *Music and conflict*, 193-213.

TallBear, K. (2011). Why interspecies thinking needs indigenous standpoints. *Cultural Anthropology, 24*, 1-8.

Temple, B., & Young, A. (2004). Qualitative research and translation dilemmas. *Qualitative research, 4*(2), 161-178.

Topkok, S. (2018a). *Alaska Native Studies Council Writing Style Guide*. Alaska Native Studies Council. http://alaskanativestudies.org/writing_style/

Topkok, S. A. (2018b). Supporting Iñupiaq Arts and Education. *Journal of Folklore and Education, 5*.

Topkok, S. A., & Green, C. (2016). Following the pathways of the Ancestors: Well-being through Iñupiaq dance. *Indigenous perspectives on education for well-being in Canada*, 173-186.

Turino, T. (2008). *Music as social life: The politics of participation*. University of Chicago Press.

Urbain, O. (2008). Art for harmony in the Middle East: The music of Yair Dalal. *Music and conflict transformation: Harmonies and dissonance in geopolitics*, 201-11.

Uy, M. S. (2012). Venezuela's national music education program El Sistema: Its interactions with society and its participants' engagement in praxis. *Music and Arts in Action, 4*(1), 5-21.

Virtanen, P. K., Apurinã, F., & Facundes, S. (2021). Amazonian worlds of other-than-human beings and the Apurinã through the materiality of oral stories. *Multilingua, 40*(4), 565-582.

Vygotsky, L. S., & Cole, M. (1978). Mind in society: Development of higher psychological processes. *Harvard University Press*.

Wallen, L. A. (1990). *The face of dance: Yup'ik Eskimo masks from Alaska*. Glenbow Museum.

Weenie, A. (2009). Toward an understanding of the ecology of Indigenous education. *First Nations Perspectives, 2*(1), 57-70.

Wenger-Trayner, E., Fenton-O'Creevy, M., Hutchinson, S., Kubiak, C., Wenger-Trayner, B., eds. Learning in Landscapes of Practice: Boundaries, Identity, and Knowledgeability in Practice-Based Learning. London: Routledge; 2015.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems thinker, 9*(5), 2-3.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. and Snyder, W.M. (2002), Cultivating Communities of Practice, *Harvard Business School Press*, Boston, MA.

Whatmore, S. (2006). Materialist returns: practising cultural geography in and for a more-than-human world. *Cultural geographies, 13*(4), 600-609.

Whitesell, N. R., Beals, J., Crow, C. B., Mitchell, C. M., & Novins, D. K. (2012). Epidemiology and etiology of substance use among American Indians and Alaska Natives: Risk, protection, and implications for prevention. *The American journal of drug and alcohol abuse, 38*(5), 376-382.

Willett, A. Y. (2017). *Movement and Pedagogy: Multiple Ways of Understanding Dance in Southcentral Alaska* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Alaska Anchorage).

Williams, M. D. P. (1997). Alaska Native music and dance: The spirit of survival.

Williams, M. S. T. (2011). Neo-Colonial Melancholia: Alaska Native People, Education and Oil.

Williams, T. T. (2019). *Erosion: essays of undoing*. Sarah Crichton Books.

Wolf, M. (1992). *A thrice-told tale: Feminism, postmodernism, and ethnographic responsibility*. Stanford University Press.

Yack, P. (2009, November 19). Noorvik to Bring Back Native Dancing. *Alaska Public Media*. https://alaskapublic.org/2009/11/25/noorvik-to-bring-back-native-dancing/

Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. Guilford publications.

Zanotti, L., Ma, Z., Johnson, J., Johnson, D., Yu, D. J., Burnham, M., & Carothers, C. (2020). Sustainability, resilience, adaptation, and transformation: tensions and plural approaches. *Ecology and Society, 25*(3).