MM: Welcome to the second episode of the Conversational Métis Sash! This episode took place virtually with Dr. Lucy Delgado. Dr. Delgado is a Métis scholar Canada Research Chair in Michif and Two-Spirit/Indigi-queer Education as Wellness and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Foundations, & Psychology out of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. Our conversation honours integrating Michif identity, and all its multiplicities within the classroom. In addition to this contribution, representation and honouring 2-spirit and Indigi-queer pedagogies, practices, and stories are important to include within K-12 classrooms and teacher education.

MM: Lucy, kih-chi maarsii for being able to meet with me today on this beautiful, well, sunny afternoon for me. How is it over there in Winnipeg?

LD: A little snowy. A little blustery, but typical Winnipeg in January. So, can't be too surprised.

MM: (Laughter), perfect. As a part of, I know with relationality and just how we like to introduce ourselves… Would it please be possible if you can introduce yourself?

LD: Sure. So taanshi, I'll introduce myself first in Michif. Lucy Delgado d'ishinikaashon. Winnipeg d'ooshchiin, Ma paraañtii kayaash St. Andrews, St. John's, Red River, Oxford House, Norway House, pi Orkney Islands oschiwak. Aen Michif daañ li miljeu niya. So, I'm Lucy. I'm a two-spirit Métis woman from here in Winnipeg. My paraañtii kayaash, or my ancestors, a long time ago came from Red River, St. John's, Manitoba, Oxford House, Norway House, and the Orkney Islands, as well. I also do have settler ancestors from Ireland as well. I want to acknowledge and honor them as well. And I am a member of the Manitoba Métis Federation.

MM: Beautiful kih-chi maarsii so much, Lucy. So, the basis of this wonderful research is to understand how teacher educators like yourself are addressing truth before reconciliation and further settler colonialism within your work. So, would it be also possible for you to just share a little bit about your research and your research and interests and all these wonderful things?

LD: Absolutely. So, I'm pretty, I wear a lot of hats. So, one of the hats I wear is as an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, and soon to be announced Canada Research Chair in Michif and Two-Spirit Indigi-queer Education as Wellness as well. Yes. So that's very exciting.

MM: Ahhh, Congratulations. Oh my goodness.

LD: Thank you! It'll be announced in the next month or so, which is exciting. Yeah, so that's cool. In my academic work, I try to align all of the community work that I also do. So, I'm, right now, I'm part of the Two-Spirit Michif local. I helped found the local at the Manitoba Métis Federation. I'm part of the executive as well cause I think it's important to step up and support our communities when we're when we're called to do that. I do a lot of kind of organizing in the two-spirit community as well, a part of the Two-Spirit Manitoba Board of Directors and I'm part of Les femmes Michif Otipemisiwak, has a two-spirit national council, so I'm part of that group as well. So, I try to bridge all of my worlds together in my academic work, which is great, but also kind of tiring because it means that you never are away from it, right? It's always on your mind all the time. You're never right. I think a lot of major people in academia and in teaching kind of feel that way too, because we can't separate ourselves from the work that we're doing. And so, it's always with us, right? Which kind of might be nice if I was studying, I don't know, dung beetles or something (laughter of MM). Maybe I can separate myself from that. Maybe not.

I can't speak to dung beetle scientists. Maybe that they also feel very tied to it. Quite possibly. But sometimes I think about, you know, how do we get that time to kind of give ourselves a break? How do we. I don't have any answer to that question. It's something I really struggle with, but making sure that we have the chance to rejuvenate and come back because we see so many of our leaders really sick or even die quite young, I think, because of that stress.
Right. Of walking the walk and doing all of the work in community, doing all the work in their work lives. And then when you're just at home, you're still - it's still your life. So, you have to really kind of designate that time for yourself.

MM: And how can we better take care of each other as well?

LD: Yeah, absolutely. Like, part of it, I think is also just paying attention to how much we're calling on people too, right? Sometimes it can be easy to, you know, once we have connections, say like, "Oh, I'll call on this person again and again" and maybe they won't tell you. Like, you know, "I'm at capacity." It can sometimes be on us to notice when somebody else might be too kind to say no or not able to say no, maybe to the money or whatever reason, but they might need that space themselves. So maybe that's another thing we could work on is the kindness to our kin, too.

MM: Yeah. Absolutely. And the beauty of saying no, it's okay to say no, no is a powerful word. It's okay to use it.

LD: Yes, for sure! I feel like I was socialized to feel like I'm being mean. If I say no, great. And not able to just kind of put up those boundaries. So, I'm working on it (MM & LD laughter)! Working on it and learning, limited progress so far. (MM & LD laughter)

MM: But we're getting there! (MM)
LD: Yeah!

MM: Ahh, maarsii for sharing that, too. That's so important and it's so real. I think for a lot of us in academia and who are Michif, it's a lot to handle. It's a lot to experience. So, thank you for sharing this, truly.

With all of this in mind too, would it also be okay to share what courses do you teach at the university?

LD: Yeah. So, I teach a real variety of courses. I teach some like BEd courses. So sadly, a lot of the Indigenous faculty kind of get stuck teaching the Intro to Indigenous Education course, which is what ours is called. So, I've taught that quite a few times. But I actually developed, a couple a year ago or so, I developed kind of like a second step course, which I think is missing in a lot of faculties of education, that the not just kind of introduction to Indigenous everything, which, you know, becomes so much to cover in those condensed weeks. But I developed this course based around (I don't know if I have it here, do I? Oh yeah). This framework which you should share with people, *Working in Good Ways with Indigenous People*. It was co-developed by Nikki Ferland, who is Michif as well as Annie Chen, who is a first-generation Chinese Canadian and Guadalupe V. Becerra, who is from Mexico, at the UofM. They spent like this huge amount of time working with different Indigenous communities in Winnipeg, in northern Manitoba and in Belize to kind of get their best practices really for working with Indigenous communities. And so, they've created this guide, which is amazing. So, like I helped they, they and I co-developed this course around the guide to help teacher candidates better understand not just intro to Indigenous everything, but how to actually build relationships and learn about reciprocity and remuneration and like the ongoing relationships and how they call it the work

before the work. So all the things that you need to do before you even engage with anybody from that community, all of the self-learning you need to do, and then also the work after the work, meaning like if you invite someone into your classroom, that doesn't mean once they leave that classroom, you're off the hook, and it's over, right?

MM: Right.

LD: Think if you're building a genuine bond like, you now owe that person. Like, how are you going to show up? How are you going to demonstrate reciprocity? How are you going to continue that relationship? And I also teach grad courses. So, I teach a lot of research methodologies, courses, which is really fun.

MM: That is fun.

LD: Yeah, my favorite courses to do because you get to learn about everyone's research interests. And I often have students from different disciplines in the same class. So, you have such like vivid conversations and then other grad courses in my area, which kind of focus on oppressive education. So, I try to bring a lot of Indigenous content into those courses as well. But I kind of focus on BIPOC authorship primarily, just kind of centering BIPOC voices in those ways where we can.

MM: Which is very, very important and should be done across all disciplines anyways, too, that's imperative.

LD: Mmm, absolutely.

MM: Wow. Thank you for sharing. As a part of being a professor, but further, just with you and your wonderful self, what does being Michif mean to you?

LD: Mmmm, good question, hey?

MM: Yeah (laughter of LD and MM).

LD: So like I said, I'm a citizen, I should say, not member a citizen because we a government of the Manitoba Métis Federation, which means I have my little blue book of all my genealogy that I keep close by in case I want to check out any cousins after a call. So, growing up, I always I knew I was mean to you from when I was little. We had my grandpa was very focused on kind of like the history aspect of it. He didn't, I think he is was part of that, like, distancing that people did from Indigeneity to kind of protect themselves. He had a lot of stories like that about him growing up and about cousins who were less visibly or more visibly Indigenous who didn't have

that opportunity to kind of distance themselves, right? So, he talked about it in this really like historical way, same as my I guess really, she's my aunty, but we called her cousin Barb. She was the Barb Johnson; she was the first female (I can't remember what the term is) head of the Lower Fort Gary National Heritage Park. She was she was the superintendent of the park, the very first woman in the 1950s, which was like never heard of.

But she was like massively into the history aspect. So, they tried, you know, she had boxes and boxes of documents, of artifacts of her house was like this, like walking museum, right? And so they really, it still felt kind of distance, like I knew about it and I knew things, but I didn't feel like I had inherent connection to Métis-ness, especially in this like image of meeting that I saw everywhere, which was like everyone jigging and speaking French, eating tourtière, playing the fiddle that my, my family, like I said, were like Orkney Islands or Scottish Métis, right? So, we didn't have any of those things in our family. We had like Christmas pudding, we did like all these typical kind of Scottish things like growing up, but we didn't talk about it as like Métis things.

When I started kind of like reconnecting with the nation, I got my membership or citizenship, I think I was like 17 or 18. My mom had it for a few years, but I kind of resisted for a while because I didn't feel that connection. And she's like, "Well, you should get it. And then you should just like start connecting with people and then you'll feel more like it fits you." So, I like really jumped into kind of like the material arts side of Métis culture because if I can bead, I am Métis. Or if I can sew, I am Métis or if I can embroider, I am Métis. I mean, so I learned all of those things, right? I learned how to finger weave. I learned how to bead, embroider, I made a couple of capots and got like really into, my grandma said it was Métis Finishing School.

MM: (Laughing) that's cute.

LD: Right? So, I felt like better about, more connected. But then now I guess as I'm older, I'm not 18 anymore, shockingly.

MM: Gaaah (more laughter).

LD: Darn.

MM: Dang it! (more laughter LD and MM)

LD: But last summer. As I got older and I became more connected to the nation through community, through building relationships with other people, through visiting sites and places and people and hearing stories and researching my own family history and community and like

really seeing those scrip documents. I mean, like, this makes sense. Like finding the places on the map that were our land. And it really became much more tangible to me. And I feel more secure in myself as a Métis person. I really know who I am and my connection to the nation. And so, I think as that shift happened, I kind of stopped being as performative. I also ADHD, so I lose interest in hobbies really quickly, which also could have been a factor. But I felt I kind of moved away from being as involved in like the material culture piece, but I still like have a deep appreciation for bead workers who have the energy to keep doing it, because I add a few big pieces and then, you know, here, now I make a pair of earrings or something that I'm not getting too involved for being Métis is just who I am, right? No matter what I was doing, I could move to England and work in some shop selling shoes and I'm still a Métis person.

MM: That's right.

LD: It has nothing to do with it. It's not actions, it's just like you're inherent, embodied right and heritage.

MM: So, with this all-in mind then too, in what ways have you infused your Michif, cultural identity into your teaching practices or pedagogy?

LD: Well, one thing I do, no matter the class, is use opportunity that I have to make sure that everyone understands our Nation and our ethnogenesis and who we are, because I think that's a huge gap. It's just a huge gap.

MM: Yeah.

LD: Especially, you know, any kind of class have when I'm teaching undergrads or like BEd students, you know, often there's still this misunderstanding of Métis as mixed or they just, just don't understand the, the current nature of our, our nation and who we are. So, yeah, just trying when I can to make sure people can understand that. When I teach graduate classes, a huge percentage of my students are international students who are coming here for the first time, and don't know, genuinely don't know and have never been told, right? So being able to take those opportunities to make sure people know who we are, I find is really important. No matter what the classes that I'm teaching, I find a way to get it in there and then also kind of prioritizing Métis scholarship within the course creation because everyone should be reading our scholarship. We have some brilliant scholars, right, like brilliant thinkers in a variety of topics. So, it's really relevant to, to most people. So, I really try to bring that in where I can and, you know, if I can give examples throughout the course, I try to just have some visibility to our people because we

are often invisible-ized. That's a word, I'll pretend it's a word, right now. You know, just the word Indigenous, as many scholars have said, hides us right. People will say Indigenous and Métis. Which is like, it just grates me so much (laughter from LD and MM). So that they can take away one thing from my class that Indigenous always includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit every single time.

MM: Yeah.

LD: Then, that's something.

MM: (laughter) Something.

LD: (Laughter) It's something. I'll take it.

MM: But I've also heard discourse about being just very specific when identifying us too. Like if, if you're veering away from Aboriginal then then as the use of Indigenous. But you know, let's be even more specific. Yeah, let's use Michif, let's use First Nations. Okay. Which nation are you from. Are you from Siksika, you know like let's be specific.

LD: So, tribute to our nations knowledge to where they come from.

MM: That's right.

LD: Because we too often, we just kind of lose everybody under this word. And you don't, you lose like the intricacies and the histories and the cultures that are so diverse across this country, in this continent, right? And we just have it's a comfortable right. It's easy for people to just say Indigenous without having to do the research and a lot of people probably don't even understand the difference between nations. So, they wouldn't think to look more deeply into it, right? But we wouldn't always say European for everything, right? If you're talking about people from France, if you just call them Europeans all the time, it wouldn't make sense. And same thing if you're talking about, you know, Anishinaabeg people versus Nêhiyaw versus, right? Like all these different communities, we have to use people's names and the names that they chose not the names that were imposed on them.

MM: Right. Oh, that's ooh. Oh yes. That was good (laughter from both LD and MM). Wow. Thank you.

And now that we're going into more of the specifications too, I know that when it comes to, for example, as an identifier with us is the Métis Sash. So, I'm curious, what does the Métis Sash mean to you, and are there other Michif-based cultural symbols that inspire you value wise?

LD: Mmmm. So, it's funny that the sash was also one of those things that when I was getting, when I was trying to feel connected, I wore it all the time, my friend. I wore it always to everything, no matter what. Because it also I think I was a little bit insecure about being like white-passing and feeling like I have to show that I'm Indigenous in this way. I just don't like working from that like deficit model, right? We have many different phenotypes in our nation and it's okay. But I did used to really use that a lot in my master's research. I used a metaphor of the sash in the discussion of the different stories, thinking about like the weaving together of the stories of the different participants into this like, singular thing.

I think the sash itself really like I love the representation of strength, strength and unity, right? It's all of us coming together. We are strong individually or just a thread, but as part of the sash, it's, it's strong. You could tie up a horse with it, right? Like you can. And there's all these things that I used to teach Métis 101, back in the day (laughter MM).

But. Right, there's all these different usage uses for the sash back in the Voyager days because it was so strong. But that comes from unity, and I think that like the multi-use thing, it also speaks to our nation, like the industriousness and the resilience of our nation that there's so many we can kind of be tumbled around and still, still be resilient, which is beautiful. So, I have a huge sash collection, FYI, but this is the sash that I am most attached to. So, this is the sash from our local. We had this made when our local was made in 2019… 2018… I can't quite remember but the Two-Spirit Michif local's sash. So, it's actually Etchiboy, the company that makes a lot of the sashes that we all get. Kind of designed this as our colours. So having the rainbow with blue on the outside as like representing our waterways, like I can't remember what the white represents… something important, I'm sure.

MM: (laughter).

LD: Something very important. But now if I wear the sash, it's usually the two-spirit sash because I want to make sure I'm representing my local and the people that that are part of that community. But another thing that's kind of interesting to me is like it's become like the

ubiquitous Métis symbol, but there's lots of other things that kind of have existed. So, one a couple of years ago for Pride, we designed this bandana. I'm not sure if you've seen like the pictures of like Gabriel Dumont and all those guys with, you know, the bandanas. So, we designed our own Two-Spirit Michif Local bandana. Oh, my gosh, you can barely see it.

MM: No way!

LD: Cute right?

MM: Oh, I love that!

LD: So. Yeah. So, I like to wear this a lot because it feels right, it feels fancy and is a Métis symbol without being or feeling like, you know, too, I don't feel like I'm trying too hard to be, right?

MM: Yeah.

LD: So sometimes when I'm wearing a sash, I feel like, am I trying really hard?

MM: (laughter)

LD: Although that said, I did… I went to the United Nations twice last year for different events, and I definitely wore a sash the whole time.

MM: Oh yeah.

LF: I was like, “In this place I am decking out. I am representing our community at a glance.”

MM: I love that. So, it really depends on the spaces.

LD: Yeah, totally.

MM: Mmmmm.

LD: And maybe it's those Indigenous umbrella spaces that were, but I feel like more inclined to represent with visibly Métis symbols just so that nobody gets it twisted. You know where I'm from, you know?

MM: That's right.

LD: You know, our people are here. You can, you know. Maybe you don't otherwise see us, but we're in the space, but very intimate spaces. I don't ever feel the need to wear right the same way.

Yeah, I'm just like, with my people.

MM: That's right. Yeah. Oh, it's beautiful. What a meaningful reflection with that, too. When we're with each other, we don't need to be forced to prove ourselves.

LD: Totally.

MM: We're with each other or with kin. There's love there.

LD: And doing it because you want to, right? Like I love a beaded earring. I can't really wear them because I have a two-year-old.

MM: (Laughter)

LD: But once he's older, I'll be back to wearing beaded earrings because I love them and I'm not going to give that up. I used to do it because I felt like they maybe they, they identified me, but now I just do it because I love them.

MM: Yes.

LD: So, it's just like the motivation behind it too.

MM: Thank you, thank you. Love this.

To get more into the educational framework yet again, as we are always living within it. What does Truth Before Reconciliation education research mean to you, and where do you see its place in teacher education, research or as its own field of study?

LD: Mmmm, well. I mean, we can't pretend to be moving towards reconciliation if we don't know and face the actual truth of what, not just what happened, but what continues to happen. Many learners know about residential schools on an academic level when they come into my teacher classroom because that's like the one thing that's been taken up by teachers, right in the K-12 system. But they don't know about scrip, they don't know about the reign of terror, they know about Inuit disc numbers, they don't know about ongoing colonial oppression. They don't know about the sixties scoop and the millennial scoop. They don't know like the ongoing trauma. And they also don't know about how incredible and resilient and amazing our communities are, either, right? They know a little bit of the trauma, and that's it. But how do we ever possibly even think about reconciliation isn't something that we can do if the majority of Canadians don't know what you're reconciling for. You don't know what the harm done was,

right? So, to me, it's really essential both within teacher education, research and its own field of study. I think that, you know, it needs to be grappled with by more than just Indigenous researchers and a few non-Indigenous allies right like this needs to be something taken up by everyone. No matter what your field is, someone might think that, you know, they're in an adjacent educational field that doesn't look at Indigeneity as a descriptor or something, but you are, whether or not you would to pay attention to it. It's part of what you do. So how can you utilize your position of power to move us towards the truth part? Because that's part of the reason, the reconciliation, where it just gets to me so much because we're so far away from the truth part being totally out.

MM: Right.

LD: Like, how are we ever going to get to the second half of.

MM: Right. No, you're so right about that because even recently too, I led a professional development with some grade seven teachers here in Gatineau area. And they didn't know about Métis scrip and one of my cousins, Paul Chartrand, he did a couple of articles and such, and one of them in particular was so meaningful because he shared our family's history in relation to scrip as well. So, I was able to put that forward as I taught my, I taught the teachers that too, and they're just so appreciative because now they know where they can start talking about colonialism in relation to Michif people, because there are factors and there are folks who have attended residential schools from our communities. That is true. And that is clear with the TRC. But not a lot of folks are actually aware of the depth of colonialism and how it impacted us. When Canada was becoming Canada and it was majority through scrip, road allowance and through these ways. So yeah, they, they just didn't know. They just didn't know.

LD: Yeah, and it's not just like ancient history, right? Like in one of the projects research projects I'm working on, one of the participants who's only in his sixties was talking about how when he was in school, he started off being in a majority Michif class. And then as his years went on before he got to grade ten, there's only one other Métis person left because everyone else was road allowance and they got they got moved out. Like this is not it's not 1800s like this is in the last 60 like 50 years. This is not ancient history, and people don't even know what happened.

MM: Right.

LD: Right? Or what the impacts of that like lack of intergenerational wealth. Well, we had in the fifties and sixties and seventies had road allowance communities being shuffled around like settlers had been here for over a hundred years in many communities. So, like, what does 100 years of stability do for your family's health and wealth, like un-immeasurable things, right? And so, there's just no kind of consideration of all of those impacts when we talk about the determinants of health for Métis people, for example, like us, like Métis people think about it, but like when non-Indigenous folks chat about Métis people or even non-Métis people because some Indigenous folks who don't know the history also right, just dismiss it.

MM: Mm hmm.

LD: Yeah. It's not ancient history.

MM: No, it's. It's real. And it still has their effects to this day.

LD: Absolutely.

MM: Wow. Thank you. Thank you so much for sharing this.

Now that, that's how you center teaching as a part of your pedagogy, at least the truth before reconciliation is the truth, which is key. How is that also connected to, you know, addressing settler colonialism in your curriculum pedagogy and/or within your teaching practice?

LD: Yeah, I mean, that's a big one, right? Like teaching in a settler colonial institution. Like there's only so much you can do to disrupt and dismantle when you're still within the confines of the system. Like also was I was raised through. Right? Like, that's the system I know too.

MM: Yeah.

LD: And so, I already mentioned like prioritizing Indigenous scholars and then also like, I mean, first prioritizing Indigenous women and Two-Spirit people scholars and the right.

MM: (laughter) Correct.

LD: And then black women scholars and women of color scholars and then moving on to the rest of the BIPOC community and then non-Indigenous or like white scholars after that.
Really, I think is important for everyone to see themselves seen in the classroom and dismantling

that hierarchy of like only reading dead white men, which happened in a lot of my classes when I was in grad school, and I've had numerous students mention it and notice it.

MM: Mmmmmm.

LD: Just, I don't talk about it, but if you go through my syllabi, you'll see like I try to have a maximum of two non-BIPOC readings per year, like per course and the rest… Like there's people have written about it. You can find it, right? It just takes a little bit of extra work sometimes. But then also like to speak to like the queer and the Two-Spirit piece of it because we get left out of a lot of the conversations around Indigenous inclusion, right? There's a lot of Elders who teach really heteronormative teachings about our people, about ceremony. And so, I really try to make sure that I'm… I'm not sure I'm quite at like actually queering my teaching practice. I think that's something I'm working towards.

Dr. Alex Wilson is like, she was my PhD advisor and she's an idol obviously, so I'm working towards more like Alex, but for sure, like prioritizing the inclusion of Two-Spirit and indigo-queer perspectives no matter the content of the course. It doesn't matter what course I'm teaching. If I'm teaching just introduction to qualitative research, we're going to read Two-Spirit and Indigi-queer people talking about being Two-Spirit because just representation matters, as they say, right? Just making sure people understand us a little bit better in whatever way I can. And even when I'm talking about, say, like settler connections to land that goes beyond… like one article I love to use is Sheila McClean's "*We Built a Life From Nothing*," which is a very easy, accessible short piece about her family's experience being settlers and having this land when other people did not. And she quite clearly like demonstrates that, I think, for white students. But then I had one student say, "Well, I'm a first-generation immigrant from Asia. I don't see myself in the story." That was like a big duh moment for me, like, what am I thinking? But I'm really thankful that student felt comfortable enough to tell me that because then I was able to go and find some amazing articles by scholars who talk about their experiences as first-generation or second-generation immigrants and what that kind of difference is. But at the same, you still the same obligations. You're still entering whether or not you came to a Treaty in 2025 or you came to Treaty in, you 1885… it doesn't matter. You are part of that now by living here. And so like, what are your Treaty responsibilities and what are your obligations to this place?

MM: I think we could have a whole conversation about treaty responsibility.

LD: Oh my gosh, right?

MM: But that's its own research! It's very important.

LD: Absolutely. I'm excited. This book that I'm co-editing that's coming out next year, which would be for me to inclusion in the K-12 classroom. One of the chapters is all about the Manitoba Act as Treaty. And this lesson plan for teachers to talk about how… how the Manitoba Act is a Treaty. So, look out for that book coming next year from Canadian Scholars Press. (Laughter). It'll be a good one.

MM: I love that. Thank you for sharing that.

LD: Yeah.

MM: Because I just recently had a conversation with one of my cousins, and this is an aside, but it's fun anyways. But they reminded me that technically, where we're located in St. Laurent (Manitoba), we have zone lots and those zone lots were a part of the Manitoba Act as well. So, I'm technically a part of that Treaty in relation to that.

LD: Totally.

MM: So, I thought that was really, really powerful.

LD: That's so interesting, hey?

MM: Yeah. Yeah. It's making me want to dig deeper and deeper and deeper.

LD: Right? This is not enough time to do all the learning that I want to do.

MM: Yes (laughter).

LD: I'm like. Yeah, but I just go back and do another degree, please.

MM: Please! (laughter from both LD & MM). Another PhD!

LD: Exactly. People on TV do it all the time. People with two PhD, why couldn't it be me?

MM: Right? (Laughter from LD & MM). Oh, that is so interesting. I will definitely look out for that, and I'm very excited that that is coming forward.

LD: Yeah, that chapter, it will be by Connie White Anderson, who's incredible. She'll have two different lessons in that book. So, look out for her and look out for that book.

MM: Fantastic. And as a Métis scholar, what kinds of philosophies, practices, and pedagogies are you teaching to your students as pre-service teachers? Are there key takeaways you hope that they're also taking with them from your course?

LD: Mmhmm. I mean, who we are is absolutely a key takeaway. I hope they… and the importance of naming nations. I hope they take away that there's some things they shouldn't be teaching. They shouldn't…

MM: Mmmmmm.

LF: They shouldn't be teaching ceremony, even things like sharing circles.

MM: Mmhmm.

LD: And I think it's a really easy pick up that lots of people do. So, like, always sit in a circle and talk. Like no, a sharing circle is ceremony if you're doing it in the proper way. And so, you could just do a like a sharing.

MM: Mmhmm.

LD: You can, absolutely. But calling it a sharing circle puts it into a different position. Right. And there's protocols to follow and if learning about it for the first time in an intro to Indigenous education class, you shouldn't be doing it in your class and then next fall, right? Like that's not okay. So, you know, you shouldn't be the one leading smudging in your classroom if it's not something that you do or have been taught how to do and kind of and told by an Elder, you can teach others neither, right? Like I think we missed this. Like Elders will tell you a story. That doesn't mean you've heard that story. Now I can go and share it. That means this Elder has told me the story, in this moment. You can ask them, "Can I share that somewhere else?" But they might just say, "No, you can't." Or they might say, "You know, only certain time of the year," or they might have different protocols about it, or they might say, "You can, but you have to tell them that this is the person that told me and this is the person that told them and this is the person that told them." Right? Tracing the lineage of the teachings back. Just because you hear something doesn't mean it's now yours to take up.

MM: Mmmmmmm.

LD: So, I think that's something really important that gets missed because it's like the antithesis to what the Western education system does, right? Like where we cite things. Yes, you know, knowledge is for access, but traditional knowledge is not for access. It's to be earned. You don't

go to one sweat lodge and then say, I want to learn how to conduct sweats. That's not how it works, right? Like those decades, decades of work that are supposed to go into these things and like, I'm someone who does ceremony. I don't talk about ton, but it's not a game.

MM: Yeah.

LD: And lots of people think of it as something for clout or something to do because they want to say, “Oh, I’m a sundancer.” But have you put in all of the work? I grew up being told, you know, you don't Sundance until you've dreamed about it, and we've dreamed about it. Then you go and volunteer for four years at least, and then you go and ask, maybe at that time, if you can dance, you would ask your Elders, tell them what your dream, and they'll tell you who can or can't, or if you should keep volunteering. It's not just a I want to do it, so I'm going to sign up kind of thing, which I think gets lost a lot in this like kind of world we live in where everything's at your fingertips versus grab, grab and have it grab and have it. So that's something that I try to impart a little bit of that I don't talk about the ceremony stuff as much if I'm only teaching non-Indigenous people because they don't need to know it's not for them. But I think it's really important to… to nuance things, right, and nuance ways that we're interacting and think about how much labour we're creating for Indigenous people. When you say I'm only going to include Indigenous content if I can bring an Elder in or if I could bring a community member in, like you're creating all of this often-unpaid labour for Indigenous people to avoid your own responsibility in teaching that content. I understand people are uncomfortable teaching Indigenous content, but I was uncomfortable teaching grade eight math. I still did it.

MM: (laughter).

LD: I still, I sucked it up. I studied. I did have to study because it’s been so long since I've calculated like the volume of a cylinder, all this stuff. I had to be like, “How in the frick do I do this? I don't remember…” But I worked my butt off, and I studied so I could teach it because you have to like you would do the same thing for any other class that you have to teach, and you have to teach Indigenous perspectives in most provinces anyway. You have to learn how to do it yourself and not just rely on outsourcing labour to Indigenous people.

MM: That is so important and such a key takeaway for the students to understand the depth of their responsibility. And it's okay if we say no, it's a-okay for us to say no, no, you shouldn't know this. No, this is the reason why, but share the reasons why I think is really key.

LD: It’s helpful.

MM: It's really helpful but understanding no means no.

LD: Totally.

MM: And, you know, shifting some ideas. I do appreciate the fact that you also brought up, too, about the sharing circle. I usually share with my students, “Use a discussion circle.” Like change it, just change the name.

LD: Totally, sit in a circle and talk.

MM: Sure, sure. But don't call it sharing circle!

MM: Don’t do it! (Laughter of LD & MM). Nor pass around an object that might have…

LD: Yes!

MM: You know, connotations in relation to. Don't do that. Don't you pass around the feather, you don't know where the feather’s been, but you don't know what kind of feather that is. Like that could be so disrespectful. And honestly appropriative. So don't do it. There's a lot with what you just shared that are very key and very important that I do really hope that the listeners take into key consideration, too.

LD: Totally. And to say no piece, I think ties back to like, you know, when you ask someone, especially an Elder, if you go to them and hand them tobacco and then ask them something, they are already in a relationship with you, they spiritually can't say no if they've already taken that tobacco from you. It's like you need to not put them in a position where they feel spiritually obligated to do something for you. But they didn't. Wouldn't have said yes to if you just asked ahead of time.

MM: Right.

LD: Right? So, like you need to really think about tobacco is a commitment. It's a contract. It's not just something you do is not just like a thing -

MM: Right.

LD: For no reason. It's a spiritual contract. And so, what are you how are you doing it? For what reason are you doing it in that way? Is it because that person has said, “This is my protocol, I

need you to give me this." Perfect, do it the way they want. But I think people just do it as a throwaway. Any Indigenous person will take tobacco. Right. And that's not true. Lots of Indigenous people don't use tobacco. Folks who are Christian don't do it, folks. Lots of folks who are Métis, don't do it and would rather have tea gifted to them or some other like symbol in that way. So, people just get comfortable, I think, like this is the way I do it. It's just the same as, you know, sending an email or texting someone. But it's not just a robotic action you follow. It's like meant to be a conversation in a relationship. So, like, how do you bring that back into the interaction?

MM: Building those relationships is fundamental.

LD: Yes.

MM: Alongside reading.

LD: Yes (MM laughter). Absolutely. I think we mentioned earlier as well, but like the reciprocity piece, it's not if it's a relationship, it's not just them coming to your classroom, and you give them a hundred bucks and some tobacco, that's not a reciprocal relationship. Like what are you what are you going to do for them?

MM: Right.

LD: To give equally of yourself to them as they are to you.

MM: Mmmmmm, loving this, this is fun (laughter from LD & MM).

LD: This is. I'm ranting a lot more than I thought it would. It's funny.

MM: (Laughter).

LD: And another thing!

MM: And another (laughter from LD & MM). I wouldn't even call it ranting. I would call it such passionate, like sharings. It's obviously so meaningful to you and so important to you that what you're also sharing too, is so valuable as well. So yeah, I wouldn't put it as a rant.

LD: I like that, I like that reframing.

MM: You're a professor you're professing! Come on!

LD: (Laughter of LD & MM) earning my title.

MM: Keep going, love it.

MM: In what ways are your students being influenced by your course syllabus, including course readings, learning experiences, pedagogies and practices about reconciliation, education, and addressing settler colonialism and preparation to become an in-service teacher? I know that you've also talked about this already in various ways, too, but perhaps, you know, I'm just curious still, too, about like the course syllabus itself, perhaps maybe touching a little bit more about some of the materials that you've already mentioned too, maybe a couple more if you'd like to share.

LD: It's a great question. I think I mean, I hope they're learning about meaningful inclusion. I hope they're learning about how to include us not just as tokens, not just in September, in June as week and mini-units, but throughout the courses throughout the year, not just in Social Studies, in English and art, but every course throughout the year and in ways that are not tokenistic but are empowering to those who hear it. I hear a lot of times, "Well, I don't have any Indigenous students in my class, or I won't." But you might not know, you might not have any idea if you have Indigenous students. And even if you don't, you have students that are going to meet Indigenous people. So how can you better help them understand the context that we're living in? I also hope that they're learning not just be an ally, but to be an accomplice, right?

MM: Mmmmm.

LD: Like moving from just blend allyship. We're like, "Oh, I observe Truth and Reconciliation Day, and I go to National Indigenous Peoples Day." Okay, but like, how are you using your position of power again to serve Indigenous communities to help leverage work that they're doing to make sure people know that it's not just Indigenous people asking for something or demanding rightfully the truth. Like how do you push for the truth to come out? How do you work with your principal, your superintendent, to prioritize that, to make sure they know they can't just have one poster and at the end of September, but like there needs to be more and just more than just that and a grad pow wow. Like there needs to be meaningful inclusion. What are you going to do if you bring in a community member to the school who says transphobic or homophobic things? How are you going to be an accomplice and stand up for t

kids that are hearing that and being told they don't belong in their community, right? So, like, what are you doing to put yourself on the line for people who might need you to?

MM: Mm hmm.

LD: It's hard work, right?

MM: It is.

LD: It's absolutely. It's taking on that hard work yourself too, right? Leaning into it, knowing like it's uncomfortable to not know how to do something as well as, you know, other things. Sure. But the only way you'll learn more is by doing it, by being in community, by building relationships, by showing up over and over and over again till people know you. Like, then you'll start to get it. But if you're not doing that work, you're not going to get it. You're always just going to be an ally. Self-proclaimed, probably, but that doesn't count, that's not enough, right? So, like, how do you do that hard work yourself?

MM: That's key. That is so important. And leaning into the un-comfortability of that.

LD: Yeah, one hundred percent.

MM: Maarsii for sharing, I love that.

MM: And Lucy, I have one more question for you. Just one more.

LD: Go for it.

MM: Which makes me a little sad, as I've loved this meeting.

LD: Me too, this has been really fun.

MM: Do you have any further thoughts you'd like to share with in-service Michif teachers who will be listening to this conversation? But other folks, too, who will be listening?

LD: Well, I'll tell those Métis teachers to hang on. Hang in there. I know it's hard work. I know it's isolating work. Lots of folks are the only Métis teacher in their school or their division, even in some places. And there's a lot of misinformation about us out there and untruths that are told. And it's really it can be really difficult to be that one person. But the work that you're doing is so meaningful for our people and our community and our kids who are going to hear you in that classroom. Just know that the work is really important and that you're valued and appreciated by

lots of us, even if it doesn't feel like it sometimes. Yeah, keep fighting the good fight. (Laughter from LD and MM).

MM: Aw, what a beautiful way to finish up our conversation for this. So, kih-chi maarsii Lucy from the bottom of my heart. With my whole heart. Not just the bottom, the whole heart, the whole thing (laughter from LD & MM). It's truly appreciated. Thank you so much.

LD: Thanks, Maddie. This was really fun.