

MM: Welcome to the first episode of the Conversational Métis Sash. This episode took place in Calgary, Alberta, on Treaty 7 territory and a part of the historic Northwest Métis homeland, with Dr. Jennifer Markides. Dr. Markides is a Métis Scholar and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Tier II Canada Research Chair for Indigenous Youth Well-Being and Education. Dr. Markides works out of the Werklund School of Education and Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. Our conversation honors integrating Métis values and curriculum, expectations and pedagogy in thoughtful ways. In addition to this contribution, when Métis are able to gather, co-create scholarship, and build meaningful relationships, it makes us stronger.

As Michif, I know that the way that we are able to introduce ourselves the best is with our own voice. So, I was just wondering if you could please introduce yourself and share a little bit about what you do here at the University of Calgary.

JM: Thanks, I'm Jennifer Markides, I'm a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta. My Métis family are McKays, Ballentines, Labelles, and McDurmots. I am also Swedish, Scottish, Irish, English and Coast Salish. I am an associate professor in the Werklund School of Education and Faculty of Social Work and a Tier II Canada Research Chair and Indigenous Youth Wellbeing and Education (MM air clapped and MM & JM laughed). Thanks, I am also a mom of two teenagers who are 13 and 15, and just wonderful kids. I feel really lucky that we get to work here and that I have the support of the CRC and faculty, and our One Child, Every Child Canada First Research Excellence Fund grant to fund a lot of the research I do that is community based and I have a team that's now grown to 14 people.

MM: Wow (with laughter).

JM: So, we are running all the time on a lot of things, and I feel so fortunate that this is my job and my life.

MM: That's brilliant, maarsii for sharing. And with the work you are also doing to what would be the research within it. And also, what's your research interests in general?

JM: Sure, I kind of work in a few different areas, of course, like Indigenous related research, critical studies and pedagogy, that sort of thing, as like arts based research, focus on the three areas in different ways. And I'm always advancing work in all those three areas

simultaneously. So, it keeps me satisfied. Like I think if I were to let go of any, I feel like that loss of community in each of those spheres and so I just, you know, make it all work, even if even if it means a lot of a lot of pots on the stove.

MM: (Laughs) I love that. (More laughing from MM/JM).

JM: Particularly my community-based work and I work with school divisions and Indigenous community leadership where I'm invited in and that we establish in relationships and then develop questions together. Most of the time, so far, I've been interviewing Indigenous youth primarily. Sometimes there's non-Indigenous youth in the study as well. You know, don't exclude people from the study. We're getting the youth voice, but these are often communities where the populations are majority Indigenous students and families. The work I do is asking students what would support their goals and dreams for life after high school, what kind of cultural teaching they want (if any) I don't want to impose or assume that they do. But most often and most often they do ask for more cultural teaching, learning more of their language and stories to do that cultural revitalization. So that's what we do.

And I and because the relationships are long term, I don't just hand over a report and I certainly don't make recommendations. I share the data. Anonymous, but in a compiled kind of raw form. And then we talk it through together with the leaderships and they set the priorities and then we work together towards actioning all the things that the youth are asking for.

MM: Ah. That's beautiful. Wow.

JM: It feels so good and it's feels like the best research I could possibly do.

MM: That makes my heart so happy to hear, that's gorgeous. And what would be some of the courses that you're currently teaching?

JM: Because I'm a CRC, I teach two courses a year. One in social work and one in education, and typically, and in a typical year, I would teach Indigenous education. And this last year I taught in the Calls to Action program alongside my colleague Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt. Who is also Métis and come from Métis families. (laughter from MM and JM).

MM: That's gorgeous.

JM: Yeah, so we did the Calls to Action program in the summer and I did that on purpose. I was looking for courses that would free me up for the within the school year, the time of the school

year for all the research trips because it is so intensive and lots of community partners are remote. And so it's harder to get so I'm heading next week up to High Level and that's in Edmonton and it's a small plane up to High Level. And then we drive, you know, 45 minutes to an hour in each direction from the communities, where the research happens. And so it's just a big window of time to get there, and flights only go at certain times.

MM: Yeah... (with sympathy laughter).

JM: And then over the other few weeks we head to the Yukon to start a partnership there. And so again, like eight or nine days gone, and so it's just, you know, hard to juggle both. And I do love teaching. I mean, I was a classroom teacher for 15 years, so I'm not trying to shirk my responsibilities, you know.

MM: (laughter) No!

JM: Just making it work, everything. And that all of my responsibilities in the research life, so. My other course in social work is one that I just love and I taught it as an elective over the past few years and it's intergenerational trauma and Indigenous pathways to healing. The heart of that course is the message that Indigenous communities have practices already, so it's important in social work to create space for those to happen. So that, you know, any Elder-led feelings or goals or ceremony, or whatever that that needs to be for the person or the family and making it work for the people within the system rather than making a few people fit the system that exists. So not thinking that people have the answer already or that they're going to pull something else, which is just more colonization...

MM: Right.

JM: Upon Indigenous people.

MM: Right.

JM: Because, you know, 75% of the youth in care in Alberta are Indigenous, so the practices need to reflect Indigenous values and practices.

MM: That's right, that's right. And what an interesting term "in care". I know that this is more of a social work conversation or, you know, but it's, it's so it's all connected. It really just is. But I've always been curious about what's "in care" rather than, you know, different kind of language that actually speaks to what is going on. It's very interesting.

JM: Yes. And I do not come from any kind of social work background.

MM: Yeah.

JM: And so, the two CRC positions, as well as one CRC position posted and shared between two faculties, and they ended up having two hires, and I was the second of the two. The first being Marla Menis, who has a social work background and who also teaches here in education.

MM: Brilliant.

JM: So, I am very upfront that I don't have a social work background but I do know like I work with a lot of social workers. And so also when I teach that course, I bring in so many experts, everyone from our vice provost Indigenous engagement to Dr. Michael Hart to, you know, people who have social work backgrounds that are working in school divisions.

MM: Yeah.

JM: You know, the child and family services type positions and everyone is like, there's so many experts that can speak to the profession. And, I bring that Indigenous education background and my history and context to share resources and bring in Elders to lead ceremonies well, so students can have those experiential learning opportunities and know what it's about before I'm saying "Here, this is what you should be doing with children or families in healing process."

MM: Right.

JM: So that they get a sense of it for themselves and hopefully see its value.

MM: That's right and that's beautiful, and that's very important to distinguish and to also honor as well. I appreciate immensely how you're bringing community in. I tend to hear that a lot. It's so good, though. It's so important because that's how we teach, right? So, you bring other voices in another other folks to share their stories.

And so, I think that connects to my next question is in what ways do you infuse your Michif cultural identity into your teaching practice and/or philosophy?

JM: I certainly introduce myself at the start of the course. You know, often students will also let me know if they're Métis, which is great, and everyone is at various stages of the journey if they're being raised Métis or learning later in life that they're Métis and kind of reconnecting and I'm trying to learn more. So, there's kind of, and sometimes people of course have misconceptions of being Métis or not, but it's all learning. And so, just being Métis I think in the

classroom is important, and for people to see themselves and to have that (laughter of JM) opportunity to have conversations with other Métis scholars. And then in Indigenous education, there's one week of the whole eight-week course to share about our own teachings, our own communities, if we're Indigenous, which many of us, of the course instructors are. And so, I've developed like this Métis Amazing Race that I like to do.

MM: Oh (laughter), oh, tell me more (laughter of JM & MM). That's cool!

JM: What you can do in a classroom for like with the teachers when I can. And I find that a lot of the discussion in that course is pretty heavy because we're addressing topics that maybe they haven't heard before and they don't know. And so same thing, Métis. The first one is to define who the Métis are, and the second one is identify some misconceptions of the Métis are, and often what's written in the first box gets an arrow drawn over to the second box because what the definite how people are defining who Métis are is mixed or the products of marriage between an Indigenous person and a settler person or non-Indigenous person makes me a Métis person that's a common misconception. And so, addressing that, right on the nose!

MM: Mmmmm.

JM: In the first box even, you what are some terms that are not used anymore that have been used to describe the Métis that would be less favorable. So, half breeds...

MM: Yeah.

JM: Or, you know, there's quite a few not good ones.

MM: Yes, yes.

JM: Just calling those terms out, right?

MM: Yeah.

JM: There's lots of different things they have to do. They have to run up to the library and find a Métis resource, right? And they get up there and realize there's a whole section and there's so much, right? And get a picture with the bring it down, sign it out, bring down, share it with the class. Learn a Michif word, jig, like there's all this fun stuff. I'm actually putting it in a resource book that Laura, Lucy and I are at the late stages of getting ready for publication.

MM: Right.

JM: And that's for classroom educators. And so, I'm going to share the whole activity and like, it really is like other than the preparation in advance the actual like, being able to do the Amazing Race is really fun. And the students get like they get a lot all in a very tight compact amount of time and they can see that like it'd be really easy to put up a jig on your smart board in the classroom. And on those days when you don't get the gym, like if you need to do your daily physical activity...

MM: Yeah.

JM: You can stand up a jig and you're going to get your heart rate up and your smiles on their faces. And I always do it with the students. So, I go around as each group and they can go in any order when they do this right so.

MM: Mmmhmmm.

JM: So, some of them do it early, some of them do it late. But I'm always like when they have to do it all together. And, so I do it with them. So, it's kind of like takes the nervousness out or embarrassment. Our teachers doing it, we are all doing it together, we're kinda all in this awkwardness together.

MM: (Laughing).

JM: We can all make it work. And teachers need to push themselves and try new things and out of their comfort zones, and in those gentle and supported ways, like no one asked to do it by themselves. And certainly no one has to teach like we're all just learning together alongside the instructors on that, with whatever video they choose.

MM: That's right.

JM: And you don't have to be good at it to get exercise or to have fun.

MM: That's right. Oh, I love this. This is fabulous and instructional for other folks listening.

(Laughter from both JM/MM). That's wonderful.

JM: Thank you, well I've enjoyed it, and I hope they have/the students have, too. I feel like it's one of the things they say is, "Oh, I'm going to use that assignment or activity in another class."

MM: Yeah!

JM: And it'll take a run and do it for science or in their own teaching. So that makes me happy, too.

MM: That's right. Because I can imagine this also working too, for really cold recesses. And if (laughter from both JM/MM) they're really stuck, they can even do the jigging during recess time too.

JM: They could, they could start a club.

MM: Yeah! (Laughter from both JM/MM).

JM: There's a lot of opportunities.

MM: The opportunities are limitless! That's brilliant.

JM: And I have to think if they have to list three Métis Nations. So that's, they're like realizing okay so maybe you people have like contributed to science and other fields by creating things and so that's good learning for them and sometimes and also, who are the famous Métis people? Right? So, that's another one. A Métis instrument and they have to draw it. So, there's art built in. Oh, and sometimes you learn a Michif word and teach someone and then but I say, of course you can't pick something easy like "Taanishi". At least go a little further to find a word and learn it.

MM: Yeah.

JM: Yeah. Just try to incorporate as much as possible across all curriculum areas, knowing that the people we have in the class are all age ranges and curriculum areas. And for them to know that like there are Métis hockey players, artists, and filmmakers, musicians and like be able to know that, that they can follow any one of these threads based on the interests of their students and the connections they're trying to make in their own classroom. So, a whole world of possibilities once they realize, who Métis people are, who they are and who they are not (laughter of JM/MM).

MM: That's a really beautiful and what a creative way to engage in this. And what I also appreciate, too, is living people today.

JM: Yes.

MM: Not just the past historical figures, but current day folks.

JM: Yes, and sometimes they've written down people like I say, "Who is a famous Métis person alive today?" And they'll write someone down and I'll say, "Sorry to let you know but they passed away. You need to find another person." But they can move to another section of an author (laughter of JM and MM), or whatever because I want to celebrate everybody that's Indigenous. And, the future.

MM: That's right, and that's right (more laughter from JM/MM). Just curious if you could further share what does being Métis mean to you?

JM: Well, it means a lot of things. It means a lot of learning, I grew up in BC in a northern community with lots of Indigenous views on this, like knowing we're Indigenous and that and knowing that we just didn't belong to any of the Indigenous communities there. And so that was just how it was, learning more about Métis every day and then having that responsibility to, to Métis people and our Métis community to do things in service of Métis people so. And we do that in a lot of ways. Personally, me raising kids. I try and go to different Métis events when they're hosted in the area. If I can take my kids and they can participate, I also, we also participate ceremony that's not Métis but is like a Cree ceremony or Blackfoot ceremony. And for them to be exposed to that as well.

MM: Mmmhmm.

JM: The more we learn about our kin...

MM: Yes.

JM: And show up for each other. So, it means learning and it means responsibility. And I'm lucky to be part of a pretty active Métis scholar community. And we have published Métis-specific books or Métis-created or the first Métis journal in existence.

MM: Mmmhmm. (Laughter from both JM/MM).

JM: Pawaatamihk, and I worked as part of the planning committee and now we'll be hosting Mawachihitotaak, which is a first Métis conference of its kind that has had huge success in the



last year and in the previous iteration when it was online as well.

MM: Mmmhmm.

JM: Huge numbers of attendees who were paid by registrants and was over, over 1500 participants in the first run. So, and then we have a cut off, and we've 300 participants in the face-to-face gathering in Winnipeg this last year. So, being part of organizing those events and organizing those opportunities and places for Métis things to exist.

MM: Mmmhmm.

JM: You know, it's not without its pitfalls. Sometimes criticism that comes with the work.

MM: Mmmmm.

JM: Like you know how things are framed exclude or include. We have to navigate again the identity politics of it all. Sometimes deal with publishers at times that want to exclude less academic voices for publications. And there's, there's not one way to be Métis. But that's our most recent book, actually, is Métis Coming Together. The whole introduction is about how we are incredibly multi-dimensional, and that... it's not, it's not jiggling and sashes that makes us Métis.

MM: No, that's right.

JM: We are so much more than that. And for people to know that, that all these ways of living, being Métis are possible.

MM: Right.

JM: You just are, you just are Métis. And how did you handle that? Can you? Depends on your family, your community, your values and the values you were raised in. I was thinking about this going back to the earlier question about the classroom, too. And I often will feed my class.

MM: Oh! You will? I love that!

JM: Because our class was over lunchtime, and I would feed every single day of class until the very last day when the students insisted that I not bring any single thing, and they brought every single one of them brought food. And it was amazing and beautiful and just a reflection of just the care we do, and how we show up for each other.

MM: That's right, that's right. Oh, I love hearing that. Food really does bring folks together. I

love that. And it's so funny that you shared this as a part of sharing what being Michif, what being Métis means to you. I'm really curious about how folks are reimagining the Métis sash, because of course, there's multiple ways that folks now where it present day. But in the past, it was used for various purposes, and it was also weaved by our grandmothers and matriarchs too. So now I think it's maybe perhaps time to reclaim it and to rethink about it in different ways, not just as this symbol that would just wear across our hearts and around our waists. But what more could it also represent? So, I'm curious about what it also could mean for you and or are there other Métis-based cultural symbols that inspire you, also value-wise? Because again, it's multidimensional.

JM: Yeah, I think for me, I'm very careful about the symbolism...

MM: Mmm.

JM: Right? Because I don't, I don't want people to think, you know, I think how (pretendian) Thomas King actually...

MM: Ahhhh.

JM: Ironically described it: bone collars to feather that you put on as a signal to people that you're Indigenous, that you're part of the nation, right? And so I, you know, I wonder about people's perception of, of putting on seeing somebody, wearing the sash. I love it when I see people wearing. But I have this hesitation of people thinking it as performative.

MM: Ahhhhhh.

JM: But I also only received mine as a gift when I graduated with my PhD. That was my first sash.

MM: Mmmm.

JM: And so, I got instructions from Elder Doreen, and she gave like how what it symbolizes and how to care for it. And it so, to me, to receive that and to be blanketed, and the other beaded medallion, and the pin they give, like there's so many pieces that are so special that I like... and the feather too, as you can see in the box beside us. So, to have, to have those gifts, they feel just so important that I want to keep them safe.

MM: Yeah.

JM: But I would like to get to a place of wearing the sash. I would love, I would love to. I like the idea of thinking it more... because I wear beaded earrings all the time. That's another one. Like, I just I try and support Indigenous artists, Métis artists in particular. Of course, I go crazy (laughter from both JM/MM) at all those events.

MM: We all do. (Laughter from JM/MM). That's fab.

JM: And when we got to the event at the WAG for, it wasn't for Mawachihitotaak, it was for an event at the WAG for Métis methodologies.

MM: Fantastic.

JM: And there was all these vendors. Oh, my goodness. I have tuft earrings and so many beaded earrings, other pieces that just all came from there, like greeting cards that were Métis artists' art on the front and anyways, that I could support and bring more Métis things into other people's experiences and just even, for me, for that, that I love. But to have the sash be worn, like one of those pieces, and maybe it's time for it to like the fashion world and maybe there will be like a Métis designer (laughter from both JM/MM) and kinda take it from where it is, like you said it, where it's really kind of two ways to, to, to give it, you know, a pop of new life and reimagining it as for the now. Cause if the purposes have shifted it and also to have it be present but not so on the nose, example?

MM: Yeah, yeah.

JM: Of culture... And because of pretendianism...

MM: Ahhhh. Thank you.

JM: Like you just have to be so careful, and like unfortunately, in the academic world, there are, there have been so many cases of people who walk the walk (laughter from JM).

MM: Mmmhmmm.

JM: Especially in the in the ways where it's very visible and performative and for, for personal gain, and who aren't doing the work necessarily in connection to or for or with Métis people, First Nations or Inuit people. So yeah, I think that's kind of soured a little bit too, for me, that I've seen people who are not Métis and wear the Métis sash, saying they're Métis.

MM: Ahhhhh, that's hard. That sucks, it sucks (laughter of JM). But it's the reality too, and a really important sharing. It's so important to still share it. It speaks to the work I think we still need to do, and that's why our gatherings are very important. The people we know, our families, checking in. That's why, as kin, we also share our families (laughter of MM).

JM: We do!

MM: We're very familial that way. That's how we know, because then we might be cousins (laughter MM).

JM: Yes, and often we are. I do love the sash.

MM: Yeah.

JM: And the Amazing Race, I have incorporated it as a math question based around the Métis sash. And so, connecting it to fractions, or colors. You know, different, different students come up with different questions do it for different grade levels. And they have, have people answer the question from a different group. And it's another way...

MM: Mmm.

JM: Just to think about the side of it and to have it recognized as the symbol. Absolutely, and that I want students to at least see it as like can be part of the studies. Other than making like paper towels totem poles...

MM: Oh golly... (laughter of MM).

JM: Yes. Like to actually use like for them. I bring the sash down.

MM: Right.

JM: As reference and the information cards. It describes what the different colours mean, what it represents, and it is in a lot of the picture books as well.

MM: Yeah.

JM: That so that continuity like having a classroom would be a great artifact but like example, exemplar from a culture.

MM: Yeah. And perhaps the values it could also carry too, I find, because I'll just speak from personal example to when I wear my sash. I was also gifted it when I crossed the stage for my Bachelor of Education on Treaty 7 territory, where we're located right now. And it was also gifted to me by Elder Edme Comstock, who is also my family relation through the Bruce line. So, it's really a beautiful moment because I knew that when I was gifted my sash, it was for my educational responsibility. So, when I wear my sash. Usually, I wear it when, I when I speak about my family or when I feel that I need ancestors with me for a conversation that's really big, that's usually when I'll wear my sash. I think I led a talk a couple of weeks ago where I was speaking about my ancestors, so I wore it then. But other than that, it's been very sporadic here and there. Yeah, but not too often. So, it's all the more special. And I get to wear it too, which is

kind of nice.

JM: And that could be just what I need to reclaim in the same.

MM: Ahhh.

JM: And I'll say, okay enough, this can't be associated with the thoughts or assistance to be... that this is in relation to all those who came before, and you need to wear it today.

MM: That's right.

JM: I think that you're, you're, you're making me think about it and reflect differently about it and how I will wear my sash in the future.

MM: Muahahaha (with laughter from MM/JM). Oh, that makes me happy. And, you've also spoken about the work that you did with Yvonne as well with the TRC. So that's really important for the summer program. I was curious, what does *Truth Before Reconciliation* education research mean to you, and where do you see its place in teacher education and or as a field of study?

JM: That's an entire research project, all in one question.

MM: Yep. (Laughter MM)

JM: It's all it's all the work we're doing.

MM: Yeah.

JM: Every, everything is it is a piece of this exact conversation. So, I started my PhD in 2015. The Calls to Action were just released. And a colleague of mine, Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, who's now at the University of Regina, she, we were in a course together and we were known as the Jens. And she asked if I wanted to read through that with her for one of our assignments. And so, we did a do with the graphic reading of the 94 Calls to Action and recorded each conversation. And it took us weeks and weeks because it was 10 hours worth of recorded conversation. And each one, like I think I got into it thinking it's going to be like, "Oh, that's ninety-four things to read about." But each one, you know, you kind of unpack it and learn about it. Like, what was Jordan's Principle? What is that? And you know, that was a whole day, just like digging into the court case and why it came to be and why it needed to be. And, and, yeah, just a lot of learning. And both are published, one Canadian Journal of Education and the other one is in Alberta Journal of Educational Research. And we've done lots of talks and presentations as well. But you know, just personally that, that has informed everything in my personal life and in my professional life, having a grounding of having read those 94 *Calls* so closely and intimately and realizing that we are listening for, "What are we being called to do as

individuals?" But it's really calling society...

MM: Mmmm.

JM: And in particular different levels of government that really everyone to account. And so, it's hard to know what you need to do as an individual in response, but it's holding everybody to account in these 94 Calls. And pushing for those changes to be made. And we have students that get really up in arms that so few have been accomplished. But, you know, these, these Calls were written so thoughtfully and intentionally that that in order for them to be achieved, there has to be substantial change. There has to be a lot of effort and time and relationship building and reparations and change made. And so, it's not an easy, quick checkbox like a lot of things that people would anticipate (laughter JM), a list like this would be. It's really not. It's going to take a long time, and constant effort and everyone holding people to account... each other and governments.

MM: Beautiful. Wow.

JM: It doesn't, it doesn't touch the surface of your question.

MM: It does. But it's so important. I love the two articles that you did both co-published together. That's actually what originally brought me to you (laughter of MM/JM), and knowing about your work. Reconciliation. But truth. It's the truths of it all too, and sharing it in child-friendly ways, in ways that are understandable but also actionable, I think, for the kiddos.

JM: And it's tricky because the way it's taught in schools is done in age-appropriate ways. But when we teach in the university, the Indigenous education course, we go deeper than, than typically is done in schools. And so, then people are still upset because they think they know stuff and then they learn even more and then they're more mad or they feel guilty or they feel just angry that this is this has happened and they didn't learn sooner. So, I don't know. I don't know how to address that necessarily.

MM: Mmmm.

JM: Because it is really really difficult learning. This is not a pitch for things I've written, but I have written about that in that course in a couple of articles as well, reflecting like, self-study. But because it is such a challenging course to teach, to have to take people through all that history and context to, to, to have a better understanding of where we are now and why we're here.

MM: Right.

JM: And it's not just one thing. It's not just residential schools. It's a pass system. And the Indian Act, all the other oppressive structures that have led to, you know, systemic racism and having to be tacit, like where people don't even recognize that it's racism. It's just how everyone is when it comes to Indigenous people. And so, you need all, you need to share a lot of the pieces before we start to see that this is a huge, huge systemic problem in order for them to feel that push to make the make the change also systemic and to do their part in education as educators. And, and often, you know, it bleeds into the family and personal spheres as well. Because when you're faced with that much information that disrupts those previous conceptions, those misconceptions are disrupted, and people feel compelled to act. And to help others learn what the things that they didn't know also.

So, it's making a difference. I think like little by little, like I see people come in with more knowledge all the time and more experiences, right? Whether they hear the acknowledgement at a hockey game, or if they have watched a series of television series on CBC, think they're learning more all the time. And so, it's good that progress is happening. But we still have to meet people where they are on that path, and there has to be some readiness. And we still face racism in the teaching. But the truth is important, as you say, and people deserve it. And for me, they deserve to have the truth, and Indigenous people deserve to have their truths told. We're connecting with schools. We're creating space for culture and language to be taught in the school day as education because it is education. And for so long, the Western education systems existed and taught and continue to recolonize through the privileging of curriculum that's Eurocentric and still centered around the holidays.

MM: Yeah. Yeah. Like what's not.

JM: It's national holidays it's centered around; we are not going to dance around it.

MM: That's right. That's right.

JM: And so, for us to, you know, for students to have this and to have their culture privileged within the education system to have space for it is what's needed in reconciliation. And it's also a responsibility of the government to create space within more space, within the curriculum and within education for Indigenous teachings. Indigenous values, Indigenous languages, because they're the reason that they're in a precarious state. Right. The colonization worked in most in many ways. It's been very effective at wiping out culture, Indigenous cultures and language. So, knowing that culture is housed in language, is one of those heartbreaking things about the history

of residential schools and that... everything else associated with it that is meant to wipe us out.

So yeah, there's a responsibility in reconciliation to create more space and to create more supports for these teachings to have as education. It can't fall on the communities to do this outside of the school day and evenings, weekends, that kind of thing. It's not we're not an event. We're not a special day or a week or an extracurricular. Like, this is learning. This is education. This matters to, to the Indigenous communities and to the youth in particular. They want to learn these things. And so that is truth.

MM: Yeah.

JM: Before reconciliation research and hopefully leading to action and change.

MM: Mmmmmhmm. (Laughing from JM/MM).

JM: On a rant, you get all my thoughts. (Laughter from MM).

MM: Oh, it's so important. It's just so important. So, with your sharing as well, you also noted the - everyone is at a different place and that space. You've also written about this, too, that it also needs to be welcomed. So, for them to navigate it themselves, because this is reconciliation, it's personal, but it's also societal, as you've mentioned, too. So, with that is how do you address settler colonialism in your curriculum, pedagogy and or in your teaching practices?

JM: By centering relationships. So, everything that we do relational because that value guides everything we're doing. Doesn't matter if it's an undergraduate class or a master class, or PhD students, postdocs, or colleagues (laughter from JM/MM) or anyone who you know, it presents different ways. And so just, knowing that people, giving people the benefit of the doubt, knowing they are coming in with good hearts, and encouraging them to have open hearts and minds in the learning and being gentle to and respectful and honest.

MM: Mmmm.

JM: And they're not shying away from hard topics, but also showing care as we take people through difficult learning, not having always be my voice too, it can be easy to sound preachy (laughter from MM). And entering into a relationship and being and recognizing that we're on this journey together and creating experiences that will hopefully open people's eyes and open their hearts and minds to, to seeing the experiences that Indigenous people have lived through and continue to live through in our systems and systems and society, right? That ongoing examples of racism within particularly public systems that were meant to serve everyone but tend to oppress or disadvantage or... we're not just an "or but and", and discriminate against Indigenous people in very, very detrimental ways. So,



the racial profiling that goes on when people enter stores. Differences in care people receive when they walk into emergency rooms, like being able to talk very openly about this and call it out to support people and what to do when they see it. Like I have a colleague in nursing who messages from her, from her past students that say, “I knew what to do in this moment because of your class and because I see that within the medical system.” And, we see that for teachers too, then they are teaching differently than the teachers we had when it was our... Not to say we're the same generation, but like the generations before.

MM: Yeah.

JM: I'm feeling more hopeful and grateful for the work that they're doing for children that are coming through the systems now, including my own. (Laughter of JM).

MM: I love that, hope. That's beautiful.

And, as a Métis scholar, what kinds of philosophies, practices, and pedagogies are you teaching your students as pre-service teachers, and what are the key takeaways you hope they keep from your courses, as you just shared about your colleague? What do you hope that they're taking from you?

JM: That they don't have to be the expert.

MM: Mmmm.

JM: Right? Like, I'm very upfront like I'm Métis and I only know a little bit about Métis, Métis teachings, Métis knowledge, Métis... I didn't study like I didn't do Indigenous studies. I didn't you know, I did education research. And so, like the depth of knowledge some people have is really admirable, mind-blowing. I deeply respect the work that people have done in other fields. And, you know, I come in and I'm very honest with what I know, what I don't know and you know there's so many, there's hundreds of Indigenous communities, languages across the country. And we just because we're teaching Indigenous education does not make us an expert in all of those communities.

MM: Right, right.

JM: Let alone our own. And so, that, we are all unique like that, that we need to avoid pan-Indigeneity, and so when we're talking to our students in the elementary schools or high schools or university classrooms, being as specific as possible, when we're introducing different speakers, different teachings and different theories and where they come from, sharing where

they come from. This might be the beginning of another sneak preview of what's to come. (Laughter of MM). But there is another journal article in process with the Canadian Journal of Education, and we're talking about Métis scholarship and calling away from umbrella scholarship.

MM: Mmmmmm.

JM: Because what happens is and you've heard me in the interview here talking about Indigenous this an Indigenous that, then people start to think, okay, then this applies to all Indigenous groups and whenever we can, we can be as specific as possible. Talking about Métis. These are Métis things, talked about Métis researchers and meeting Métis people, Métis Elders. Then, then people will have a stronger sense of who Métis people are. And what are our views about our pedagogies and things like that. Specifically, you give the example in the paper about how when I was writing my own dissertation, I went to my Linda Tuhiwai Smith who is Māori, her Decolonizing Methodologies. And then you work with like Shawn Wilson and you bring in scholar Jo-Ann Archibald and pretty soon you've got kind of a hodgepodge of Indigenous theories and methodology, some review, reviews as well. And even though there are overlapping values, often, these are not all the same. And so, really working where we can and we're in a place now like for a long time there was just there was one Blackfoot scholar on campus, there was one Métis scholar on campus. And we're not in this case anymore. We have many, many amazing scholars that we can look to in our work.

And so, if we want to talk about Métis things and Métis thinking and Métis research in particular, then we can draw upon a wide scope of Métis scholars and use this to draw on work and we can critique it. We don't have to get along with everybody. We don't have to agree with everything everyone else is saying. But we can lift it up and then we can discuss it and be in dialogue around Métis things together. And so, some of the ones that we've, and I say we we because we're always co-published, you know, co-authoring, co-organizing and co-conspiring Around the Kitchen Table. That book features a few different chapters written by different Métis scholars, including Cindy Gaudet's work, as well with Anna Flaminio, and a few others as well, including Sherry Farrell Racette. These are not these are some of the just a few of the scholars of many who talk about Kitchen Table methodology. It's central, and so there's examples of how it's a place of contributing to households, commerce, where the politics are discussed. It's where the women maybe influence what's said at the tables for where we are at. And there's just so many beautiful examples. And I think that that's why we live.

MM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, it's beautiful. Thank you. Thank you.

In what ways are your students being influenced by your course syllabus, including course reading, learning, experience, pedagogies and practices about reconciliation, education, and/or addressing settler colonialism in preparation to be teachers?

JM: (Laughter of JM) Now, that's a very fulsome question. But as you were reading it, it reminded me that Yvonne (Poitras Pratt – who I mentioned earlier). In the summer, we took the students down to The Confluence, which used to be called Fort Calgary but now it is called The Confluence.

MM: Ahh, I didn't know that they changed that. Very cool. Thank you.

JM: It's a very good name-shift and apt because it does describe where the rivers come together.

MM: Right.

JM: So, the confluence is perfect, that's where people come together as well. So, the first is where the people come to the river so that they were hosting an event that was Métis specific. It was all Métis vendors, Métis performers, Métis activities. So, there was jigging under like a tent outside. They had like, you know, ground for people to put sashes down on and things like that. And, and music and Dr. Craig Ginn.

MM: Oh, yes, yes.

JM: He did a talk as well. He was talking about stories revisiting some of the history of Louis Riel and just reframing how that can be reframed. He did his talk and he played some music as well. And there were like just so many things. There was an Elder that spoke before him was phenomenal, and he just shared his stories and one of the one of the students had their daughter with them and she sketched him, and it was just incredible like so beautiful. She's so talented for one, but also just the gift of capturing that moment and with that Elder.

I mentioned the vendors, and I mentioned I bought a few things. (Laughter of MM/JM). And our students, they appreciated it so much. And the Elder we had with us, she said she learned a lot too. So, in previous years we had a Métis Elder and this year, we had a different, a different Elder who was not Métis, but she learned, she said that she learned so much about her Métis kin being there and just that her heart was full. And, and she connected, of course, with the Elders there that she knew. But then just, you know, just to have that strengthening of the relationship by being there for each other. But, you know, it's not an exclusive thing. Like we don't it's not

this is a Métis event and you're not Métis so don't come. No, it's a Métis event, everyone come.

MM: Everyone come.

JM: And so yeah, it was just a really beautiful opportunity. I hope they host it at the same time next year when the course is running (laughter of MM). So, we can all go again.

Yeah, just such a beautiful learning and just joyful opportunity.

MM: Mmmm.

JM: Right where some of the learning is hard. And it's nice to have the joyful and living cultural experiences as well and to see how it's open to everybody and can be, you know, if it's something that happened during the school year like plan ahead, bring your class. Like they're going to have fun, they're going to enjoy this, all these activities and, and the kids tend to learn a lot, and have hot dogs, you know (laughter of MM and JM).

MM: You know, they're going to enjoy that. Yeah. (More laughter of JM/MM). I love that.

But you have any further thoughts you'd like to share with in-service teachers who will be listening to this conversation alongside other folks who will also be listening?

JM: Let your students know that you are Métis! (Laughter of MM/JM).

So they, so they know that we're living in the present and that if they're Métis that they see themselves reflected in their education system, that you're - you're there as a Métis person in the real. And that if you're Michif and you speak language or if you are on your very whatever stage of your learning journey that you're sharing that with them in a proud way that reflects who we are as Métis people, which is strong and caring and hardworking and very giving and, and, and in all the multiplicity, the ways that Métis present themselves, right. That whether you ever put on a sash or not you're Métis.

And that Métis people walk in the world in all these different ways and that we're here doing so much good work like I'm not just speaking about me, but about all the people I know that are Métis that are often doing a lot of heavy lifting within different systems. Just about everyone I work with in the school systems, all of the Indigenous leads on teams, who fight for a lot of change in institutions. Often those teams are led by, or majority made up of, Métis people, and you know, we've had to fight really hard to have publishers say, "Well, why do you need a Métis book?" Or some institutions for Métis courses to exist. And they're saying, "Well, why? Why do you need this? Why/what will come? Will it be read? Will it be bought? Will people sign up?"

MM: Yeah.

JM: And as soon as you offer it, it's full. And there's a waitlist.

MM: Right.

JM: And as soon as you create it, it's sold out like it's there's a there's a real need. We're very numerous and just be able to connect with each other. We need to, to know that each other out there.

MM: Right.

JM: And I keep finding ways to, to be part of those large, Métis community that is really thriving. I would say now. We're across the Homeland, there's sometimes Zoom gatherings, sometimes in-person gatherings. It's not just the like the once your homeland visits, there's stuff going on year-round that people can become part of. And that being in those places, I think just will make you more well-connected...

MM: Mmmm.

JM: And all the richer in your, you know, in your heart. I just touched my heart. And you can't see that on the mic (laughter of JM/MM). All the richer in your heart. And that's something you can share with your students and pride of our current existence and the knowledge of the generations that have fought really hard to continue to exist in this country despite so many challenges, hardships, and intentional pursuits to make Métis disappear or enveloped into other groups... that we're still here. There's a lot of us. So just look around and connect to each other (laughter of JM/MM).

MM: Jennifer, kih-chi maarsii so much, from the bott-with my whole heart, not just my bottom (laughter of JM) but the whole thing (laughter of MM/JM).