

Tensioned Interfaces: Unsettling Settler Spaces and Places in Online Education



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Abstract:

In mid-2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada released 94 Calls to Action focused on Canada's 150-year legacy related to Indian Residential Schools. Several Calls recommend education for non-Aboriginal Canadians – Settlers – on topics such as Aboriginal rights and title, treaty rights, and Crown-Indigenous relations. The TRC also advocated for research into vital concepts, principles and practices of reconciliation, which may contribute to transformative social change. However, the TRC also argued that educational institutions are responsible for many current challenges in relations between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians – through what these institutions have taught, or failed to teach.

The main purpose of my doctoral research is critically investigating and interrogating notions of social justice and change in online distance education as framed by some of the TRC Calls along with recent research exploring concepts of social justice within online education. My research is being conducted through critical self-reflection on my Settler (non-Aboriginal) Canadian identity and close to 20 years of experiences in online distance education as a student, instructor, and curriculum developer. This is complimented by over 20 years working for and with Indigenous communities. My current research is embedded in these multiply tensioned interfaces through narrative inquiry and autoethnography.