

The Conversational Métis Podcast

Methodology

An Approach to Truth Before Reconciliation Educational Research

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Abstract

This article presents the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* as a methodology, weaving together the recorded voices of Métis teacher educators and teacher(s) (Métis academic Aunties) as guided conversational support for in- and pre-service teachers across Canada who seek to learn more about taking on *Truth Before Reconciliation* education with Métis-specific truths and (counter)stories. It stands as an anti-colonial resistance-rooted conversational methodology, used in educational contexts and research, that can strengthen future generations of Métis teachers, researchers, thinkers, and leaders who are grounded in a shared responsibility to carry forward Métis worldviews in practices, pedagogies, and truth-centred research in conversational ways.

Keywords: Truth Before Reconciliation; Podcasting; Conversations; Métis Academic Auntie; Teacher Education; Resistance; Métis Methodology

Métis-Specific Contributions in *Truth Before Reconciliation* Educational Research

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action (Calls) and their final reports were released in 2015. It has now been over 10 years since teacher educators, educational researchers, and universities have been encouraged to implement and reflect on their commitments to respond to the Calls, particularly 62 and 63, which are related to education. As a Michif curriculum scholar and teacher educator, I seek to fulfil these responsibilities by collaborating with others to co-design "age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada and to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" (TRC, 2015a, p. 7).[1] I do so in part by preparing and co-creating the curriculum

with pre-service teachers in the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Education: Historical Experiences and Contemporary Perspectives course at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa.[2] I teach in Métis-based ways through story-sharing, truth-telling, humour, joy, honesty, and cultural pride, while also using podcasting as a pedagogical and methodological medium.

Métis-specific educational research remains underrepresented within the broader field of teacher education (Forsythe et al., 2025; Poitras Pratt & Markides, 2024). In response, I suggest that a Métis-led podcast methodology can respond to these calls and aims to contribute to the growing body of *Truth Before Reconciliation* scholarship in Canada (Jurgens, 2020; Stein, 2020).[3] I refer to this approach as the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* methodology.[4] It was first used in my doctoral research and further developed through generative Métis ways of expressing ourselves as Métis academic Aunties at co-created kitchen tables.[5] These conversational sites honour our kinship relations, which are explained through visiting via keeoukaywin later in this article, and are vital to truth-telling and (counter)story-sharing within the broader field of *Truth Before Reconciliation* education.

In this methodologically focused article, I also acknowledge the cultural and historical significance of the Métis sash, including its intergenerational cultural and political role as a symbol of identity, collective resistance, and connection within the Métis nation, presently.[6] Such historical and ongoing cultural and political significance informs its inclusion in the title of both the methodology and the podcast, alongside Kovach's (2010) conversation method, as integral components of this emerging approach. In the following sections, I trace the development of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* educational research approach, which is woven from multiple methodological forms. In doing so, I hope to build on the scholarship of noted Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and extend the work of Métis Peoples by weaving a distinctly relational, recorded-conversational approach into Métis-specific *Truth Before Reconciliation* educational research.

Métis-Specific Truth-Centring from Pedagogical Practice: The Emergence of Podcasting as an Approach to Educational Research

The main report of the TRC (2015b) states that “no process of reconciliation or decolonization can take place without first recognizing and addressing the legacy of colonialism” (p. 24). It is only by understanding colonialism and countering it, as the TRC (2015b) final report stresses, that educators can respond to the Calls.[7] Settler colonialism is a violent individual and societal mindset that operates through social and political systems responsible for intergenerational harm and genocide against ethnic, racialized, and/or culturally distinguished groups (Cox, 2017). Such historical and contemporary injustices against Indigenous Peoples are neither adequately nor accurately addressed in the storying of Canada's history or in its historical retellings from Métis perspectives in Canadian curricular contexts (Gillies et al., 2025; Kearns & Anuik, 2015; Tupper, 2020). Tupper (2020) reminds us that settler historical consciousness centres and affirms settler experiences in the Canadian history curriculum, which can limit future possibilities for responsibly engaging in reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. Moreover, as Tupper (2020) stresses, if pre-service teachers hold this mindset and do not actively participate in

a “critical practice of remembrance and learning,” they will continue to reproduce a settler-colonial curriculum with their future students (p. 89). Like Tupper (2020), I take responsibility for teaching the truth of Canada’s conception as a settler-colonial nation-state in my pedagogical practices as a Métis teacher educator. I understand such truth through the first-hand accounts, documents, primary sources, testimonies, and lived experiences of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, drawn from the legacy of the Indian Residential School System (IRSS) and ongoing experiences of discrimination, racism, sexism, colonialism, and other systemic inequities and forms of injustice. These truths can inform educational conversations and are reflected in pedagogies, curriculum development, and implementation across K-12 and teacher education post-secondary contexts.

To do so, I explain to students that a Métis identity is not simply the result of First Nations-European intermarriage (Gillies et al., 2025). Instead, it is a nationhood rooted in political will, shared histories, community stories, and relational kinship obligations with living members of our communities (Chartrand, 2007; Dickason, 1982; Macdougall, 2006, 2010, 2014). These aspects of Métis identity are carried by both those living in the North-West Métis homeland and those with ancestral ties who continue to be and are still claimed by living members of historic Métis communities across the region, even if they now reside elsewhere (Macdougall, 2006, 2010).[8] As Forsythe (2025) maintains, when pre-service teachers develop a meaningful understanding of who we are as Métis, they are better positioned to select appropriate resources and design lessons that respectfully teach Métis histories and present-day experiences. This process of learning in truth-centred ways can address settler historical consciousness and colonialism. For Patel and Eger (2026), such “anti-colonial scholarship calls for new conceptual frameworks rooted in a deeper understanding of humanity and ethical responsibility” (p. 1). I use this terminology in the emerging podcast methodology because it resonates with Métis-rooted resistance. The following section describes how I use podcasting as a pedagogy of anti-colonial resistance.

Podcasting as Methodology: A Form of Anti-Colonial Resistance

Research examining podcasting as a pedagogical tool in educational and post-secondary contexts has been conducted by numerous scholars across Turtle Island and globally.[9] These scholars observe that integrating podcasts into their courses supports student practices, enhances lecture comprehension, and provides a more cohesive understanding of course concepts (Besser et al., 2022; Fernandez et al., 2009; Sharma & Eizadrad, 2026; Van Zanten et al., 2012). I integrate podcasting into my pedagogical practice by including it in my course syllabi, at times replacing course readings. Therefore, in the course curricula I prepare, I include my personal and academic-led podcast, *Research Time*, and now the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast*, alongside other vetted media such as films, YouTube videos, and other podcasts, given the truth-centred story-sharing they enable. Podcasts also serve as an assignment in which pre-service educators are asked to submit a podcast conversation recorded with their peers, outlining what they have learned during the semester and how they aim to address *Truth Before Reconciliation* in their future teaching practices. Their preparation for creating a podcast is guided by Copeland and McGregor’s (2021) *Guide to Academic Podcasting*. Not only do I view podcasting as a pedagogical practice, but it also serves as a research methodology in my doctoral work.

According to A. D. Smith (2022), podcasting is a “decolonizing methodology and a form of resistance,” whereby conducting recorded conversational research that is not constrained by institutional standards of qualitative studies constitutes a stance against colonialism (p. 6).[10] Similarly, the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* is founded on Métis-specific, resistance-based, and truth-centred experiences within the context of teacher education across the North-West Métis homeland. It is freely accessible to all, making both my and A. D. Smith’s (2022) podcasts structurally similar and aligned in their aims to support truth-telling, story-sharing, and community-specific stories in educational ways.[11]

The term “resistance” is not new to the Métis, given its historical ties to the Red River and North-West Resistances. The Red River Resistance (1869–1870) and the North-West Resistance (1885), from an educational stance, were not a single event, but a series of interconnected episodes that emerged in response to the disruption of Métis ways of living across the North-West Métis homeland (Dorion, 2011; Teillet, 2019). A major reason that ignited the resistance was the transfer of Rupert’s Land from the Hudson’s Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada, a transaction carried out in 1870 without Métis or First Nations consultation, agreement, or consent (Dorion, 2011; Gaudry, 2014, 2016; McKenzie & Mosby, 2024; Teillet, 2019). This act of colonialism contributed to the formation of the Convention of Forty and the eventual passing of the Manitoba Act, under which Louis Riel was elected to protect Métis land, governance, and political rights (Barkwell, 2011; Dorion, 2011). Despite these collective assertions of Métis self-determination, Métis Peoples were still dispossessed of their hard-fought river lots and other land due to fraudulent practices surrounding Métis scrip, which functioned as a tool of colonial removal, displacing many Métis families (see Association of Metis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, 1979; Chartrand, 2007).[12] When legal and political avenues continued to be ignored, resistance escalated into armed conflict (as had occurred several times since 1816; see Dorion, 2011; Teillet, 2019). It is, therefore, not rebellion (Préfontaine, 2009; Préfontaine & Dorion, 2003); rather, it was resistance to colonialism directed against us.

On November 15, 1885, Louis Riel was executed by the Government of Canada, an act that silenced a leader and harmed the continuation of our way of life. This execution is widely regarded as the end of resistance (Dorion, 2011). However, I argue that resistance persists and continues to address it in my teaching and research. For LaRocque (2015), Métis “resistance scholarship entails and requires ethical and critical study, engaged research and intellectual freedom” (p. 13). What thus remains authentic to me as a Michif woman and scholar was to conduct my doctoral research by inviting the voices of Métis academic Aunties, and as guided by Macdougall (2006), those with whom I already hold kinship ties to discuss truth-telling as outlined in the Calls to address our shared responsibility in responding to numbers 62 and 63 via podcasting. Collectively, this research is informed by a resistance-based, anti-colonial approach to ensure that our voices are not silenced. The next section outlines how such truth-centring shapes this methodology.

Anti-Colonial Resistance as a Theoretical Framework

Such resistance-based and truth-centred guidance is already being led by Métis and non-Métis scholars in reconciliatory education-based scholarship. Looking through the lens of the

Extended Infinity Model, it “grounds the whys and hows of truth-telling and reconciliatory practices in education: colonialism and settler colonialism (the whys); and decolonization, Indigenization, positionality, and relationality (the hows)” (Bodnaresko & Poitras Pratt, 2023, p. 20). Such framing addresses the core of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* methodology: voicing Métis-specific truths to enable accurate storytelling and representation of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis perspectives and experiences in *Truth Before Reconciliation*-based teacher education. Whereby *truth* comes first *before* any actionable process of *reconciliation* can take place, and such truth-telling enables anti-colonial resistance-based logics.

Figure 1. Poitras Pratt’s Extended Infinity Model, illustrated by Keeta Gladue. Adapted from *Truth and Reconciliation Through Education: Stories of Decolonizing Practices*, chapter two, “Reconciliatory Education: An Extended Infinity Model,” p. 21. Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt and Dr. Sulyn Bodnaresko to use the model’s image in this article, and this permission has been granted for it to be used in an ethical and good way.

The model centers on the pursuit of truth in reconciliatory educational processes, reflecting the dynamic and evolving nature of truth itself. This focus is evident in the TRC (2015a) Calls and their final reports, which emphasize truth as a core element. Additionally, the testimonial foundations of Métis survivors of the IRSS (TRC, 2015c) underscore this commitment, extending to our anti-colonial resistance as Métis (Gaudry, 2014, 2016; LaRocque, 2015; Teillet, 2019).[13] It is through such truths, alongside our ongoing lived experiences of intergenerational colonial harms as Métis Peoples, that educators across Canada can be encouraged to enact reconciliatory educational practices and pedagogies by listening to Métis truth-telling and (counter)stories through podcasts. As Madden (2019a) asserts, the process of counter-storying is “a method for exposing, analyzing, and challenging narrow accounts. Counter-stories make space for multiple, nuanced stories of under- and misrepresented peoples and experiences” (p. 41).[14] The use of this methodology brings these forms of Métis-specific truths to light and can be viewed as a form of resistance. The next section explains why the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* was created as a methodology in collaboration with Métis academic Aunties. It also acknowledges their contributions to this field and related fields of study.

Conducting Women-Led Scholarship through the Conversational Métis Sash Podcast Methodology

With the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* methodology being theoretically framed as anti-colonial, truth-focused, and resistance-based, the following sections centre on who was invited to the podcast and how each Métis academic Auntie voice was profiled by outlining the relational Métis-specific processes of *keeoukaywin* and *lii taab dii faam Michif*, both of which are integral to leading conversational methodologies in educational research.

Who is a Métis Academic Auntie and Why Were They Invited?

The *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* methodology, as developed in my doctoral dissertation, contributes to Métis auntie scholarship. Geraldine King describes an “auntie” as holding a role that is “almost ancestral ... something that’s sacred, filled with honour and responsibility, and not always connected by blood” (Cityline, 2022, 0:42–0:51). In First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, aunties are understood as both related and non-related women

who walk alongside others. They care for others, listen deeply, offer guidance, share hard truths, and teach those around them while also being willing to receive hard truths in return (Forsythe & McCracken, 2025). One example is Forsythe and Markides's edited collection (2024a), which invited Métis women and gender-diverse people who identify as Aunties to contribute chapters, poems, and stories. Together, these contributions mobilize Métis knowledge across diverse fields of study and lived experiences, which brings Métis Aunties' voices into relationship with one another and publishes their words side by side.

Framed by that approach, I held podcast conversations with five Métis academic Aunties, each invited for specific reasons related to Métis-specific and *Truth Before Reconciliation* educational research considerations. Guests were invited based on their contributions to Métis scholarship, pedagogy, and community-engaged educational work. Among them, Markides has played a significant role in advancing Métis-specific scholarship through her research, publishing initiatives, and efforts to create intellectual and relational spaces that support the realization of the Calls within our lifetime (Forsythe & Markides, 2024a, 2024b; MacDonald & Markides, 2018, 2019; Markides, 2023). Complementing this work, Delgado brings perspectives that centre student wellness and inclusion while foregrounding Two-Spirit and Indigiqueer realities in educational spaces, an approach also reflected in the creative rendering of the Métis sash in their doctoral thesis (Fowler, 2021, 2022). Similarly, Poitras Pratt's scholarship has focused on digital story-sharing as a means of amplifying Métis voices in Alberta, alongside the development of reconciliatory pedagogical approaches (Poitras Pratt, 2020; Poitras Pratt & Bodnaresko, 2023a, 2023b; Poitras Pratt & Danyluk, 2019, 2023; Poitras Pratt & Grant, 2025; Poitras Pratt & Hanson, 2020). Forsythe's contributions further extend this landscape by co-creating relational spaces with Métis women, aunties, and grandmothers, along with her Métis-focused contributions to K-12 education (Delgado & Forsythe, 2025a, 2025b; Forsythe & Markides, 2024a, 2024b; Forsythe, 2022, 2023, 2025). In addition to these invited scholars, Chaulk (2025) participated through public recruitment; she is a Métis in-service teacher and doctoral student who has recently published on Métis-specific leadership and its representation in K-12 educational environments.

The following section introduces the methodological foundations of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast*. This approach draws upon keeoukaywin, often described as the visiting way (Gaudet, 2019; Gaudet et al., 2020), and lii taab di faam Michif, the Métis women's kitchen table methodology (Gaudet et al., 2024). Together, these relational frameworks centre conversational spaces of co-creation, emphasize the responsibilities Métis women hold toward one another through visiting, and inform the development of accessible conversational outputs through podcasting. In this sense, the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* is not treated as interview-based data extraction but as a relational process grounded in conversation, reciprocity, and ethical practice. The sections that follow, therefore, outline the relationships, conversations, and preparations that unfolded prior to recording the podcast episodes with the Métis academic Aunties who participated in this doctoral research.

Keeoukaywin and How It Was Embodied

Gaudet's (2019) and Gaudet et al.'s (2020) scholarship on the visiting way, *keeoukaywin*, informed the framing of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* as a kinship-based, relational, vocal, and accountable educational research methodology.[15] The concept of *keeoukaywin* combines the Cree and Cree-Métis concepts of *wâhkôhtowin* (kinship) and *kiyokewin* (visiting) to pass on "knowledge, teachings, dreams, and stories" (Gaudet et al., 2020, p. 60). Both ways of living and doing together were necessary for this research because of their conversational resonance and the relational ties they create among participants.

Michif Elder and author Maria Campbell (2007) describes *wahkotowin* as follows:

The whole of creation. And our teachings taught us that all of creation is related and inter-connected to all things within it. Wahkotowin meant honouring and respecting those relationships. They are our stories, songs, ceremonies, and dances that taught us from birth to death our responsibilities and reciprocal obligations to each other. Human to human, human to plants, human to animals, to the water and especially to the earth. And in turn, all of creation had responsibilities and reciprocal obligations to us. (Para. 8)

When taken up in research practice, *wahkotowin* places responsibility on Métis scholars to create and lead meaningful academic work that supports community-based aims. Macdougall (2006) further emphasizes its familial dimensions, noting that although the term is often translated as "relationship" or "relative," such translations do not fully capture the depth of meaning the concept carries (p. 433). For this reason, I use these terms carefully and intentionally in enacting *keeoukaywin* within the podcast methodology.

Keeoukaywin was practiced throughout this study, beginning with the invitation of the Métis academic Aunties to participate. Letter invitations were created to document each scholar's contributions to educational research, alongside their commitments to, with, and for Métis community members, as reasons for inviting their voices into the study. I knew each scholar prior to the research through shared time at conferences, events, and other gatherings, and they had also met and worked together in scholarly and community-specific contexts.[16]

Following the invitations, I held a pre-conversation with each guest to review the study. These exchanges were grounded in our relationships with one another and our communities through distinct and/or connected family relations, where applicable (Macdougall, 2006). We discussed the topics to which participants would be invited to respond, such as *Truth Before Reconciliation*, colonialism, settler colonialism, and Métis-specific contributions, as well as the time commitment required (one hour for the pre-conversation and two hours for recording the podcast episode). It was collectively recognized and affirmed that the podcast itself would serve as the study's output. As a result, guests were also offered the opportunity to review and provide feedback on edited episodes after recording (Day et al., 2017). Reciprocity was enacted through handmade gifts, including paintings and ribbon skirts. Hand-making each gift provided a relational opportunity to recognize the intentionality of participants' contributions and served as a form of self-care and cultural expression, giving something back to my relations. *Keeoukaywin* was thus embraced throughout the pre-conversations and the recording of the podcast episodes, during which truths and educational responsibilities were both articulated and enacted for the

duration of the study and continue to this day. The next section recognizes the moments when we gathered to honour our relations and co-create podcast episodes.

Lii Taab Di Faam Michif: Where We Gather

Kitchen tables surrounded by Métis women (lii taab di faam Michif, Gaudet et al., 2024) are sites where keeoukaywin is enacted through sitting, talking, drinking tea or coffee, sharing food, and making things together (for its multi-disciplinary uses, see Allard, 2023; Farrell Racette et al., 2023; Flaminio et al., 2020; Lindquist et al., 2024; Mattes, 2021). Moreover, it centralizes Métis women's work as we come together. Although earlier iterations of kitchen table methodology are "not expressly Métis – or even Indigenous," the Métis-specific kitchen table centres Métis methodologies and emerges from Métis worldviews (Mattes & Farrell Racette, 2019, para. 2). Therefore, when gatherers around the table are Métis, the kitchen table becomes Métis-specific. Drawing on Gaudet et al.'s (2024) framing of the context for my doctoral research, kitchen tables served as sites for co-leading and co-constructing conversations as interwoven threads that could only be created together. When used in this way, the Métis women-led kitchen table can constitute an "everyday act of resistance" (Allard, 2023, p. 41), where we are not asked to be anything other than who we are as we bring ourselves to the table (Poitras Pratt & McCracken, 2025). To reaffirm anti-colonial and truth-focused resistance-based sentiments that were put forward earlier, as Métis (not just as women), we refuse to comply with the ongoing logics of settler colonialism and historical consciousness that seek to erase us as a People within Canadian provincial and territorial curricula. Thus, sharing our truths precedes reconciliation, and conversations at Métis kitchen tables with keeoukaywin relations remain central to this podcast methodological approach.

Collectively, women-centred Métis scholarship focusing on gathering and co-creating, which seeks to determine Métis women's sovereignty over our ideas and knowledge and can thus be seen as an act of "women's governing authority" (Gaudet et al., 2024, p. 174), to which this study responds directly. Such a gathering can occur on a one-on-one basis. As Forsythe noted in a personal communication, "Many conversations happen individually at the table, but they bring in the voices of others as we chat about what we know and what we have heard from others." I led such conversations one-on-one and in two stages: pre-conversations (all conducted virtually) and podcast recordings (two held in person in Calgary, Alberta, and three conducted virtually). Woven together, lii taab di faam Michif and keeoukaywin frame the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* as a Métis-specific methodology. The unique aspect of this Métis-specific podcast methodology for *Truth Before Reconciliation* and Métis scholarship is its conversational approach to anti-colonial, truth-focused resistance in educational research. The next section examines the naming of this methodology and explores its potential use in other academic fields.

Naming the Conversational Métis Sash Podcast Methodology

"La ceinture fléchée" has a documented history of over two hundred years and was predominantly purchased and worn during the fur trade era (Farrell Racette, 2016; Podruchny, 2018; Trudel, 2024; Vien & Barkwell, 2011).[17] These sashes from L'Assomption, Québec, were later adopted by French Western Métis and produced by various Métis communities, with many weaving their own styles into them; thus, they became a symbol of our national identity

(Trudel, 2024; Vien & Barkwell, 2011). Today, the Métis sash is finger- or loom-woven by many across the Métis nation (Vien & Barkwell, 2011). Currently, various Métis communities, organizations, and families create their own sashes to reclaim or express nationhood (Les Femmes Michif Otipimisiwak, n.d.; Seven Oaks Métis Council, n.d.; Two-Spirit Michif Local, n.d.).[18] These modern sashes affirm Métis identity and its living threads to this day. Notably among the listed educational researchers, historians, governments, and organizations is the use of woven techniques to create a physical sash.

Trudel (2024) traces the origins of finger weaving and looming techniques used to create a Métis sash, noting that these practices draw on both First Nations and French-derived methods. Given the methodological relevance of Trudel's (2024) master's research, I acknowledge the conversational capacities of her work and how she weaves her own sash, Arvien, to physically represent the threads of Métis Elders' stories. Although physically making a sash is quite different from the oral-based methodological contribution outlined in this article, it is still woven in a similar way, with (counter)stories represented as threads.

In comparison to my own master's research, we, as a research team, sought to understand elementary public school teachers' perspectives in relation to taking up the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society's educational resources for *Truth Before Reconciliation* with students in their classrooms (Blackstock et al., 2022; Howell & Ng-A-Fook, 2023; McCracken, 2021). I was tasked with analyzing the teachers' responses by weaving their stories together. I interwove the five colours of my Métis sash teachings with the five guiding values of the *Touchstones of Hope* (Blackstock et al., 2006).[19] By combining these values with the teachings of the Métis sash, I conceptualized the sash as an anti-colonial, reconciliation-based, principled approach (McCracken, 2021). At that time, I was inspired by Donald's (2009, 2012) Indigenous métissage, which unsettles settler logics by telling stories about artifacts or places, and by Chambers et al.'s (2008) literary métissage, which braids stories from anti-colonial perspectives. Using métissage in these ways centres the positionality of voices and enables the co-creation of collective works or the reimagining of artifacts and/or places to tell histories and stories that might otherwise remain unheard.

However, it is important to be mindful of the roots of the term métissage in a Canadian context, as noted by Chambers et al. (2008):

Métissage comes from the Latin word *mixtus* meaning "mixed," primarily referring to cloth of two different fibers. Its Greek homonym is *metis*, a figure of skill and craft, as well as wisdom and intelligence.... Metis, the wife of Zeus, was gifted with powers of trans-formation. Thus, métissage carries the ability to transform and, through its properties of mixing, opposes transparency and has the power to undo logic and the clarity of concepts. In various colonial contexts, such as Canada, métis became a racial category translated as "mixed-blood" or "half-breed" with the negative connotations of animals (and humans) breeding across species. (p. 141)

Such transformation and braiding, as Chambers et al. (2008) propose, is not merely metaphorical; it carries anti-colonial aims through the weaving of narrative positions and offers ways to address colonialism in the academy (see Butler et al., 2015; Ng-A-Fook et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research with “métis” in its name can be taken up by any scholar seeking to “interweave realities and lived experiences” to identify both similarities and differences across authors’ perspectives, stories, and lives (Burke & Robinson, 2019, p. 152).

However, in Canadian educational research contexts, framing braided stories through literary or Indigenous métissage may not always fully attend to the cultural, historical, and relational roots of Métis identity, nor do they necessarily have to.[20] At the same time, Métis scholars have thoughtfully taken up Indigenous, literary, and ecological métissage in their work as a means of reconfiguring and re-envisioning these methodological concepts and their possibilities in Métis-based ways (see Fowler, 2021, 2022; Lowan, 2011; Lowan-Trudeau, 2012; McCracken, 2021, 2024). It is in this productive tension between methodological uptake and the need to remain grounded in Métis-specific relations and histories that the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* methodology emerges.

The *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast*, as a methodology, intentionally re-centres Métis-specific voices, truths, and (counter)stories as acts of anti-colonial, truth-based resistance; thus, its creation is also guided by the Extended Infinity Model to continue truth-telling. As previously noted regarding the Métis sash, stories are carefully woven into each conversation and grounded in our points of view. In this way, the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast*, as a methodology, affirms Métis identity as relational, situated, and lived, ultimately honouring who we are and what makes us who we are today. To readdress, the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* methodology offers an analogy between the weaving of strands and the physical form of the Métis sash (Trudel, 2024; Vien & Barkwell, 2011). Doing so seeks to emulate the intimate and reflexive process of weaving and conversational loops, approaching the responsibility of joining voices together via podcast, with careful attention to support varied yet related perspectives in *Truth Before Reconciliation* educational research. Therefore, this framing explains why the methodology of Métis-specific conversational research emphasizes (counter)stories, truths, and lived experiences, and (in this case) foregrounds the voices of the Métis academic Aunties within the context of teacher and K-12 education across the North-West Métis homeland.

In most Métis practices, we are gifted sashes by our families, kinship, and/or our respective Métis governments at times of great celebration or life events. Receiving my sash in this way, through a kinship connection, after graduating with my Bachelor of Education, felt like a torch being passed to me to recognize my educational responsibilities and pass them on to others. I present the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* in the same spirit, aiming to inspire Michif to share their voices via podcasting in support of community-based educational goals. This methodological approach is particularly suited to *Truth Before Reconciliation* education, given its focus on truth, anti-colonial perspectives, and resistance in conversations. However, it can also be adapted by Métis scholars engaging in conversational studies in various fields, recognizing its potential to co-create in Métis-led ways through recorded podcast episodes.[21] The following section expands on its conversational focus.

Kovach (2010) invites Indigenous researchers to employ the conversation method on the foundation of its use as "a dialogic approach to gathering knowledge that is built upon an Indigenous relational tradition" and reminds us that it utilizes "open-ended, semi-structured interview questions to prompt conversation where participant and researcher co-create knowledge" (p. 44). I wanted to honour the conversational foundations of this work by reflecting them in the title of the emerging podcast and its methodological framing. The podcast became a space where the study's full conversations could be shared through complete episode recordings. In doing so, I also felt compelled to honour my Michif roots. This led me to conceptualize the approach as a Métis sash of conversations being woven together, which came to be known as the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast*. The next section outlines the relevance of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* as methodology and its Métis academic Auntie intentions as a shared conversational contribution to the growing body of *Truth Before Reconciliation* education research.

Steps Taken to Practice the Conversational Métis Sash Podcast Methodology

Just as with the art of weaving any Métis sash, collecting materials is as vital as the loom and/or finger-weaving methods used to craft it (Trudel, 2024; Vien & Barkwell, 2011). The materials are a metaphor for how I invited the Métis academic Aunties to the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast*. As already noted, I had already held relationships with all teacher educator participants before the start of the study, an ethical research practice needed before engaging in research alongside First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples in Canada (Ermine, 2007; Kovach, 2010, 2021; L. T. Smith, 2021; Panel on Research Ethics, 2022). To locate Métis in-service teachers, I publicly invited Dana Chaulk, along with two other Métis teachers, via social media and emails to Indigenous/Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs across the North-West Métis Homeland. The two other noted Métis teachers could no longer participate in the study due to limited capacity (L. T. Smith, 2021; Tuck & Yang, 2013, 2014). Dana Chaulk and I then formed a new relationship that we continue to tend to around the kitchen table. We held meaningful discussions before, during, and after the study, and these conversations continue to this day. The next section outlines the reflexive analysis of the five podcast conversations.

Conversationally Weaving the Podcast Episodes Together

To analyze each conversation, I used Kovach's (2010) conversation method, which positions the analysis by "providing a condensed presentation of the participant's story followed by reflective analysis" (p. 45). I have positioned reflection to reflexivity. Reflexivity asks for researchers "[t]o explore their assumptions, biases and value judgment" when engaging in research processes (Russell-Mundine, 2012, p. 87). My positionality as a Métis woman and podcast host-researcher-educator is inseparable from this scholarship, as I participate as an insider witnessing the conversational truths shared (Kovach, 2021; L. T. Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2008). As Usher (1996) explains, "reflexivity does therefore involve finding out about ourselves but primarily in the sense of our immersion in the historical and the social," reminding us of "the inscription or the 'writing' of the self that researches through language, discourses and interpretive cultures in the practice of research" (p. 38). In this sense, my interpretations seek to

support the telling of Métis-specific educational truths in service of collective self-determination through anti-colonial, truth-focused resistance, as embodied in the Extended Infinity Model. This work also engages with *Truth Before Reconciliation* by challenging settler-colonial misconceptions about Métis Peoples in education while remaining attentive to the TRC Calls 62 and 63.

I was an active participant speaking to and with podcast guests as they shared their (counter)stories, truths, and reflections surrounding various topics of Métis-ness, *Truth Before Reconciliation* educational research, addressing settler colonialism, and sometimes the pressures of being a Métis woman in the academy (Bodnaresko & Poitras Pratt, 2023; Markides, 2023). It is not a cultural point of expression for a researcher who is also Métis and a pre-service teacher educator to remain silent. I was both an insider, “active agent,” and a co-participant (Kovach, 2010, 2021; L. T. Smith, 2021; Wilson, 2008). I therefore engaged reflexively as a member of our shared Métis culture and histories to uncover the underlying meanings of each conversation (Kovach, 2010; Usher, 1996). Knowing my ethical obligations through keeoukaywin and at each lii taab di faam Michif, I remained highly intentional and reflexive in my analysis of their storied contributions, informed by the process I used to listen to each conversation.

I treated each episode as a story being told, as if I were learning directly from grandmothers and Elders (Forsythe, 2022, 2023), interpreting meaning through stories shared among one another and from our communities, informed by my own experiences and cultural understandings. I listened to and read each conversation five times on different days, creating detailed notes and synopses for each episode. For analysis, I was careful not to reduce the gifted body of conversations shared by the Métis academic Aunties, leaving the podcast episodes intact.[22] However, in this study, their (counter)stories are interpreted through my reflexivity as a Métis teacher educator and researcher in this field of education (Kovach, 2010; Madden, 2019a, 2019b; Usher, 1996). Drawing on the Calls, the Extended Infinity Model, and Kovach’s (2010) conversation method as guides (Bodnaresko & Poitras Pratt, 2023; TRC, 2015a), I identified emerging *Truth Before Reconciliation* and Métis (counter)stories from each academic Auntie and began weaving some conversational strands together for the final episode, *Weaving Together* (McCracken et al., 2025), alongside many additional threads presented in the study’s subsequent findings article. This process functioned as a relational exchange with each participant, honouring keeoukaywin and lii taab di faam Michif as co-made practices, and collectively forming the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* as a working methodology of anti-colonial truth-focused resistance.

Now That It Is All Said...

By centring Métis-specific voices, (counter)stories, and truths, this article contributes to the growing emergence of Métis academic Auntie scholarship now in *Truth Before Reconciliation* education research. Within that context, the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* methodology seeks to honour the interwoven conversational threads of Métis-centred truths, pedagogical guidance, and safeguarding Métis identity and self-determination to support generations to come (carrying the sash forward), and serves as an anti-colonial, truth-focused form of resistance. The *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* as a methodology does not separate

the researcher from participants and honours the intentionality of conversations and their co-creation, thus honouring the conversational aims of this research, alongside the Métis academic Aunties, Markides, Delgado, Poitras Pratt, Forsythe, and Chaulk, by way of podcasting, prioritized Métis ways of knowing and being through keeoukaywin, and holding truth-centred conversations at our co-created kitchen tables, to ultimately guide Métis educators, and all who choose to listen to the podcast, to hear what we have to say about *Truth Before Reconciliation* education.

The emergence of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* as a methodology was organic and fluid. It came with the recognition that we were putting forward Métis academic Auntie-based guidance in *Truth Before Reconciliation* education research as a form of conversational, anti-colonial, truth-based resistance to make our voices heard. By prioritizing such research practices within this methodology, it acts as a form of resistance, ensuring that Métis voices are represented (not silenced) and, in response, are listened to in accessible ways. Through weaving the conversational threads of Métis educators and scholars, the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* creates space for truths that do not fit easily within academic environments yet are central to living *Truth Before Reconciliation* in practice by sharing our conversations and stories to inform possibilities in responding to the Calls and Métis-specific educational outcomes.

The methodology is both academic and personal in its positioning. It seeks to live the relational intentions of keeoukaywin by creating kitchen table conversational spaces grounded in relationality, where Métis women gather, understand what we owe to one another, and invite listeners to witness with respect and in recognition of their responsibilities to *Truth Before Reconciliation*. In this way, the methodology is also a way of living for its Métis listeners, one that upholds truth in conversation and responds to ethical obligations through relational responsibility and resistance. It invites listeners to recognize that reconciliation cannot occur without ongoing truth-telling and a willingness to listen to truths that continue to emerge. Truth-telling, keeoukaywin, and the creation and protection of Métis-specific spaces and scholarship thus remain central to this work and to its methodology. Such relational ways of gathering and engaging in this work can strengthen future generations of Métis teachers, researchers, and leaders who share responsibility for safeguarding and carrying forward Métis-specific knowledges for present and future generations, but always resisting. The *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* contributes to this work by recording and sharing conversation-based resistance and the stories that are woven in these relational kitchen table conversations, calling listeners to educationally respond to the hows and whys of reconciliatory education (Bodnaresko & Poitras Pratt, 2023), all in the spirit of honouring and living our *Truths Before Reconciliation*.

Acknowledgements

The creation of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast* and its subsequent methodology, outlined in this work, would not have been possible without the conversational contributions of Métis academic Aunties, including Dr. Jennifer Markides, Dr. Lucy Delgado, Dr. Yvonne Poitras Pratt, Dr. Laura Forsythe, and Dana Chaulk. This work is also dedicated to all Métis academic Aunties who have walked before, blasting through the barriers of ivory towers, educational, and community spaces to ensure our voices and truths are not only heard but also listened to. I also

want to recognize that this research would not be possible without the support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Doctoral Canada Graduate Scholarship from 2023 to 2026.

[1] "Michif" is another word to identify Métis/Metis as Peoples. I use the terms interchangeably.

[2] Pre-service teachers are those in post-secondary and going through the process of becoming certified teachers. In-service teachers are those who are certified and teaching in K-12 educational environments across Canada.

[3] *Truth Before Reconciliation* is capitalized and italicized throughout the article to honour its use directly from the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and the educational guides, events, and workshops it leads with the public.

[4] This research was made possible by a Canada Graduate Research Scholarship – Doctoral Award from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) from 2023 to 2026.

[5] This research would not have been possible without the wisdom and relational sharing of the Métis academic Aunties. With deep care and appreciation, I acknowledge their invaluable contributions to this work and to Métis education. The term "academic Auntie" is described later in the article.

[6] The historical and contemporary resonance of Métis sash(es) is addressed later in the article.

[7] Such anti-colonial work is addressed in the theoretical framing of this research.

[8] While Métis and Metis are sometimes used interchangeably, whether or not the accent appears on the 'e' can reflect someone's regional roots and identity. The North-West Métis homeland covers parts of British Columbia, Northwest Territories, and northern parts of the United States and Ontario, and completely encompassing Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba:

[https://www.metisnation.ca/about/about-](https://www.metisnation.ca/about/about-us#:~:text=Distinct%20Métis%20communities%20developed%20along, and%20the%20northern%20United%20States)

[us#:~:text=Distinct%20Métis%20communities%20developed%20along, and%20the%20northern%20United%20States](https://www.metisnation.ca/about/about-us#:~:text=Distinct%20Métis%20communities%20developed%20along, and%20the%20northern%20United%20States)

[9] Turtle Island refers to North America.

[10] Using podcasting as a form of decolonial and resistance-based methodology has given Dr. A. D. Smith a public platform to make her Black-focused research accessible to a broad audience and is rooted in her community-based principles.

[11] There are other podcast-as-scholarship examples I could draw from, even in a Canadian context, but such similarity in structure, goals, and community-based aims is present in A. D. Smith's (2022) research.

[12] My great-great-great grandfather, Norbert Larence, took Métis scrip in the Parish of St. Norbert, Manitoba and also represented St. Norbert in the Convention of Forty.

[13] Many Métis were not mandated to attend residential schools; some chose to attend. This depended on the location of Métis communities. Chartrand et al. (2006) has more detail on this point.

[14] For the purposes of this article, I continue to honour the stories shared by the Métis academic Aunties on their own terms. As such, I place 'counter' in brackets to acknowledge that, although these stories may be understood as (counter)stories in the literature, that label might not fully reflect the stories themselves or how they were shared, respectively. Like Madden (2019a, 2019b), I posit it as a form of resistance, which is what the presented methodology is rooted in.

- [15] I have adapted its use for the context of this study.
- [16] In the case of Dana Chaulk, I did meet her in the recruitment phase of the study. However, we still hold our keeoukaywin relations to this day.
- [17] The Metis sash is also known to some as “la ceinture fléchée” due to its arrowhead markings.
- [18] As noted, I was recently gifted my second sash, the Zheun sash (“Zheun” means “young” in southern Michif) from Les Femmes Michif Otipimisiwak at their Métis Youth Summit held on unceded and unsurrendered Algonquin territory in early October 2025. Its primary colours are blue, purple, and white, blue being a representation of water, purple to honour our grandmothers, and white connecting us with the Creator.
- [19] The *Touchstones of Hope* is a set of reconciliation-based principles aimed at addressing how everyone in Canada can address systemic racism and discrimination against Indigenous Peoples through the guiding values of “self-determination, culture and language, holistic approach, cultural interventions, and non-discrimination” (Blackstock et al., 2006, pp. 10-11). On the day I graduated, an Elder gave us the teaching of what each colour on the red-based Métis sash represents. I have since adapted their renderings to represent my pedagogical and educational values to address colonialism and Métis resistance in education. Red ensures that we teach the truth, blue honours the gifts (i.e., children) we teach, white encourages open-mindedness, green sustains humility, and yellow emphasizes the brilliance of personal and collective growth (McCracken, 2021).
- [20] This is also in acknowledging that Chambers et al. (2008) recognize that their emergence of métissage is from Caribbean and various other literary studies as they also posit in their chapter, from Haug & Carter (1987), Lionnet (1989), De Souza & Murdoch (2006), & Zuss (1997), among other inspirations.
- [21] Ethically, it is to only be used by Métis scholars, researchers, educators, practitioners, and community members because of what the sash represents to our nation’s members. It should be used ethically, responsibly, and in culturally responsive ways. Consequently, it is inappropriate to be used by anyone who is not Michif. When attending the Metis Scholars Symposium hosted at the University of Winnipeg in September 2023, Dr. Sherry Farrell Racette sat on a panel addressing the kitchen table methodology and noted that as Métis, we need to be the ones to say when it is and it is not appropriate for others to use our research methods.
- [22] The study’s duration, methods, analysis, findings, and discussion are noted in an article connected to this one. The present study deals only with the methodological employment of the *Conversational Métis Sash Podcast*.

Biography

Madelaine McCracken (She/Her) is Red River Métis and holds Manitoba Métis Federation citizenship. She is currently located on the unsurrendered and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg Nation, where she is a PhD candidate at the University of Ottawa’s Faculty of Education and is Indspire’s Métis Youth Award Laureate for 2025. Madelaine is passionate about researching Truth Before

Reconciliation Education and how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit rights, perspectives, and stories can be respectfully and truthfully shared through teacher education and curricula expectations across Canada. Madelaine also hosts a podcast from her doctoral research, the Conversational Métis Sash, which was led alongside brilliant Métis academic aunties, and personally hosts Research Time, which aims to make educational research more accessible, one conversation at a time.

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