Education, Language and Sociology Research
ISSN 2690-3644 (Print) ISSN 2690-3652 (Online)
Vol. 2, No. 2, 2021
www.scholink.org/ojs/index.php/elsr

Original Paper

Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Experiences with Residential Schools and Sixties' Scoop, and their Impact on Emotional Knowledge for Pre-service Teachers

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Received: May 1, 2021 Accepted: May 24, 2021 Online Published: June 3, 2021

doi:10.22158/elsr.v2n2p50 URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/elsr.v2n2p50

Abstract

The purpose of this 2019-2020 exploratory study is to examine pre-service teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and how emotional knowledge could efficiently integrate this sensitive aspect of Canadian history into the B.Ed. Program. Shen et al. (2009) state that emotions improve learning and facilitate retention in long-term memory. Could emotional knowledge be a way of integrating Indigenous knowledge in the Bachelor of Education programs? Could Indigenous experiences with Indigenous Peoples make a difference in the perception of Indigenous Peoples in pre-service teachers? For this study, the sample available to the researcher consisted of 22 pre-service teacher students. The research instruments were a questionnaire about pre-service teachers' knowledge of Blanket Exercises, Residential Schools, and Sixties' Scoop, and reflection papers on the same topics. The results show that 72% of Canadian pre-service teachers, who attended elementary and secondary schools, had some, very little or no knowledge of these topics before the former Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, apologized to former students of Residential Schools for the harm inflicted to them. After listening to Indigenous Survivors and being part of Blanket Exercises, pre-service teachers' perception of Indigenous Peoples changed in a range of 26% to 100%.

Keywords

aboriginal, blanket ceremony, emotional knowledge, indigenous teaching, residential schools, sixties' scoop

1. Introduction

Research on Indigenous language, culture, and pedagogy has gained momentum after Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to students of Indian Residential Schools on behalf of Canadians in 2008 for the harm inflicted to them in the Residential Schools: "Two primary objectives of the Residential Schools system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions, and cultures and to assimilate them into the dominant culture. These objectives were based on the assumption that Aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal. Indeed, some sought, as it was infamously said, 'to kill the Indian in the child.' Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country. The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this Chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system." (Government of Canada, *Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools*, June 11, 2008).

To redress the wrongs made to Indigenous peoples, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created, and it functioned from 2008 to 2015. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2012) proposed calls to action in the following fields: Child Welfare, Education, Language and Culture, Health, and Justice. In the *First Nations Control of the First Nations Education Act* (2014), Prime Minister Harper proposes "adequate stable, predictable, and sustainable funding," which enables "First Nations to incorporate language and culture programming in the education curriculum." (p. 1). Some progress has been made, but there is still a long way to go.

Recognizing the importance of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) history, Canadian universities are trying to integrate indigenous knowledge in their B.Ed. Programs. Some have added courses; others have developed degrees in Indigenous Studies or programs, like Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, Indigenous Teacher Education, Leadership, etc. However, there is still the challenge of how efficiently they approach this sensitive aspect of Canadian history in their future classrooms.

Should there be a change in the teaching and learning practices? How could the course on Curriculum and Instruction in Social Studies be transformational? Could Indigenous experiences with Indigenous Peoples make a difference in the perception of Indigenous Peoples in pre-service teachers? Could emotional knowledge be a way to integrate Indigenous knowledge in the Bachelor of Education programs?

2. Literature Review

The history of the residential school system (Miller, 1996) shows that treaties prepared the framework for a devastating experience for Indigenous Peoples (White, Maxim, & Beavon, 2003). The Davin report (1879) encouraged the opening of numerous Residential Schools whose purpose was cultural assimilation into Canadian society. White and Peters (2009) state "that school attendance was

compulsory for ten months of the year for all Indigenous children over age six." (p. 17). "Residential Schools were places of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse. Students were taught to be ashamed of their culture." (p.19). "Few students progressed past primary grades regardless of how many years were spent in school." (p. 18). The 1940s-1950s was a re-evaluation period of government education policy. A government committee proposed that Residential Schools be closed, stating that they were not successful. According to the committee, students should enter the provincial school system (Bear, 2001). However, this change was not successful either as the dropout rates of Indigenous students from high school reached almost 94% (Canada Indian Affairs Branch, 1967). While the government initiated the closing of Residential Schools in the 1970s, the last one closed its doors in 1996. It is estimated that 150,000 First Nations, Metis, and Inuit children attended Residential Schools. Many did not survive the horrific conditions.

In 1951, the Indian Act was amended (Section 88) and stated that the provinces would have jurisdiction over the welfare of Indigenous children. This amendment created the framework for the "Sixties' Scoop" and facilitated the process of placing thousands of Indigenous children in foster homes for adoption (Blackstock, 2001). In 1981, 83% of First Nations children were adopted by middle-class Caucasian families (Bagley et al., 1993). Patrick Johnston (1983), in his report for the Canadian Council for Social Development, was the first one to use the term of Sixties' Scoop for this phenomenon. The impact of Johnston's report called for amendments to the Child Welfare Policy (Mosher et al., 2018). Priority of adoption for Indigenous children was given to extended Indigenous families, then to Indigenous families and, finally, to non-Indigenous families (Kimelman, 1985).

It is undeniable that the Sixties' Scoop adoptions had long-term effects on Indigenous adults: the loss of cultural identity, low self-esteem, shame, and the list could continue (Sinclair & Dainard, 2016). After Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to Indigenous students of Residential Schools for the wrong policy of assimilation, the United Church and Anglican Church asked for forgiveness for the abuse perpetrated by their pastors. However, the Roman Catholic Church, responsible for 70% of the Indigenous schooling population, has not yet asked for forgiveness. Following the apologies for Residential Schools, the provinces of Manitoba in 2015, Alberta in May 2018, and Saskatchewan in January 2019 also apologized to the Sixties' Scoop Survivors for the wrong Child Care Policies that undeniably affected their lives.

It is a challenge to integrate this historical knowledge and change perceptions based on the external behaviors of many Indigenous Peoples. Cultural and emotional knowledge could lead pre-service teachers to have a better understanding of Indigenous Peoples. Teachers, through education, can make a difference and help millions of children to understand Indigenous Canadian history with the support of Survivors of these two devastating and traumatic experiences: Residential Schools and Sixties' Scoop.

It is crucial to consider how learning and knowledge are both acquired and kept in the brain. Anderson (1983, 1985, 1992) proposes a learning theory, the Adaptive Control of Thought (ACT), in which he

describes three types of memory structures: *declarative*, *procedural*, and *working memory*. In this theory, knowledge begins as declarative information (what we know or static information) and becomes procedural knowledge (what we know how to do or dynamic information). The working memory (limited capacity) is associated with activating, or retrieving, or manipulating information. Tyng et al. (2017) add another dimension to knowledge and state that emotion has a crucial impact on the cognitive processes facilitating encoding and retrieval of information. Tyng et al. (2017) point out that emotions are critical in every aspect of cognition as they could increase or diminish learning and long-term memory retention. Therefore, Shen et al. (2009) also point out that the emotional aspect should be considered in designing educational courses to engage the students, improve learning, and facilitate retention in the long-term memory. The results of several studies show that human cognitive processes are affected by emotions, as well as attention, learning, and memory (Phelps, 2004; Um et al., 2012; Vuilleumier, 2005). Bratianu (2015) talks about three kinds of knowledge: rational knowledge, emotional knowledge, and spiritual knowledge. Even though these three notions are used in management and leadership, the concept of emotional knowledge will be retained because the emotional thought echoes the relationship between emotions and cognitive activities (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). Emotional knowledge can also be related to decisions (Hill, 2008). Bratianu (2015) states, "Breakthrough in brain science have revealed that people are primarily emotional decision-makers" (p. 2). Emotional thought is defined as a "large overlap between cognition and emotion. […] encompasses processes of learning, memory, and decision making, in both social and non-social contexts." (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007, p. 8). Research in the neurosciences and the affective domain has changed the established relationship where cognition is related to objectivity and emotion to subjectivity. These two domains should be seen as interrelated continuous processes (Damasio, 2012; Hill, 2008; LeDoux, 2002; Robinson, Watkins, & Harmon-Jones, 2013). It is essential to go beyond the cognitive and metacognitive activities for learning in education and add emotional knowledge to the curriculum (Chia & Holt, 2008; Miller, Wesley, & Williams, 2012).

It is reasonable to think that declarative knowledge is what pre-service teachers learn in a First Nations course through lectures; procedural knowledge is what they do with that knowledge, which is kept in their long-term memory. Now, regarding the emotional knowledge, it is how they will keep and transmit this knowledge. This is where the interaction between cognition and emotion takes place, and a decision is made on how pre-service teachers will approach the sensitive Indigenous history in their future classrooms.

2.1 Research Objective

The purpose of this two-year, 2019-2020, exploratory study is to examine pre-service teachers' knowledge and perceptions of Indigenous Peoples and try to find a way to efficiently integrate this sensitive aspect of Canadian history into the B.Ed. Courses.

2.1.1 Research Questions

- Should there be a change in the teaching and learning practices?

- How could the course on Curriculum and Instruction in Social Studies be transformational?
- How could pre-service teachers change their perception of Indigenous Peoples?
- Could Indigenous experiences with Indigenous Peoples make a difference in the perception of Indigenous Peoples in pre-service teachers?
- Could emotional knowledge be a way to integrate Indigenous knowledge in the Bachelor of Education Programs?

3. Methods

This research is a two-year (2019-2020) exploratory study that examines pre-service teachers' knowledge of First Nations history and how to prepare pre-service teachers to efficiently approach this sensitive aspect of Canadian history in their future classrooms. The sample available to the researcher consists of 22 pre-service teacher students; 15 of them were four-year B.Ed., and seven were two-year After Degree B.Ed. students.

Curriculum and Instruction in Elementary Social Studies course is delivered in the third year for the Four-Year B.Ed. Degree, and in the second year for After-Degree students. It is an intensive professional course, just before their first practicum.

The research instrument was a questionnaire about their knowledge of Sixties' Scoop, Residential Schools, and Blanket Exercises. The responses were supported with reflection papers written after listening to the stories on Sixties' Scoop and Residential Schools shared by two Elders, a married couple. The wife's family, middle-class, fostered and adopted Indigenous children during the Sixties' Scoop period. The husband is a Survivor of the Residential School system and witnessed the suffering of Sixties' Scoop Survivors. The 2019 presentation took place in a *teepee tent* where the students sat in a circle around a fire, and they had Indigenous blankets with them. It was a presentation in an Indigenous way of teaching and learning. At the end of the presentation, the students asked questions. After a period of questions, the students used the talking stick to share their perceptions and opinions. It was at the end of the course that the students completed the questionnaire. All the students of the 2019-2020 class agreed to complete the questionnaire. The 2020-2021 presentation took place online; because of COVID-19 regulations, and only four students completed the survey.

Out of 22 students, 18 accepted to participate in the survey; 21 participated in a Blanket Exercise. All watched the documentary movie: *We Were Children* and wrote reflection papers. All voluntarily agreed to participate in this study and signed a consent form. A code number has been used for surveys and reflections to protect their identity and any information that could otherwise identify them. The surveys were compiled by an assistant and verified by the researcher. The results were put into graphs.

4. Results

The results of this survey are presented in graphs. Comments will be added to each graph.

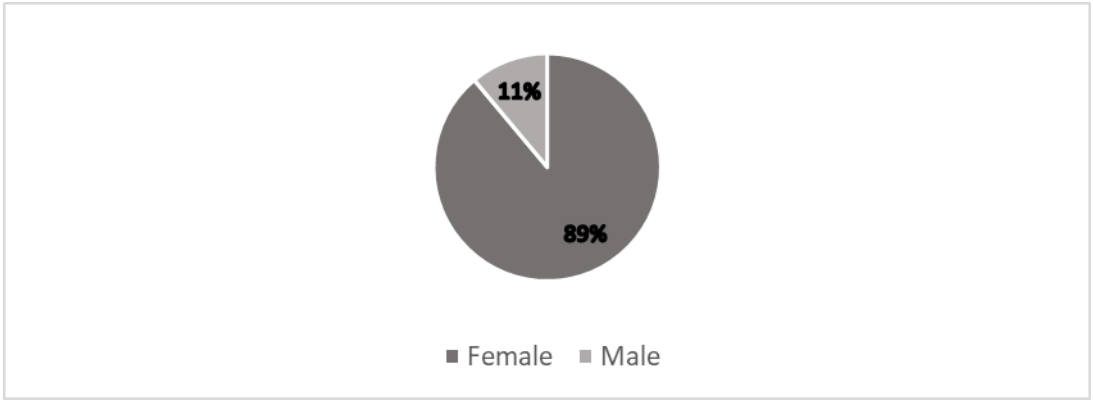

Figure 1. Gender

In Canada, in June 2014, the percentages were distributed as follows: 68% females and 32% males; in 2017-2019, 76% females and 24% males. The trend of most females in the Canadian education field is still in force.

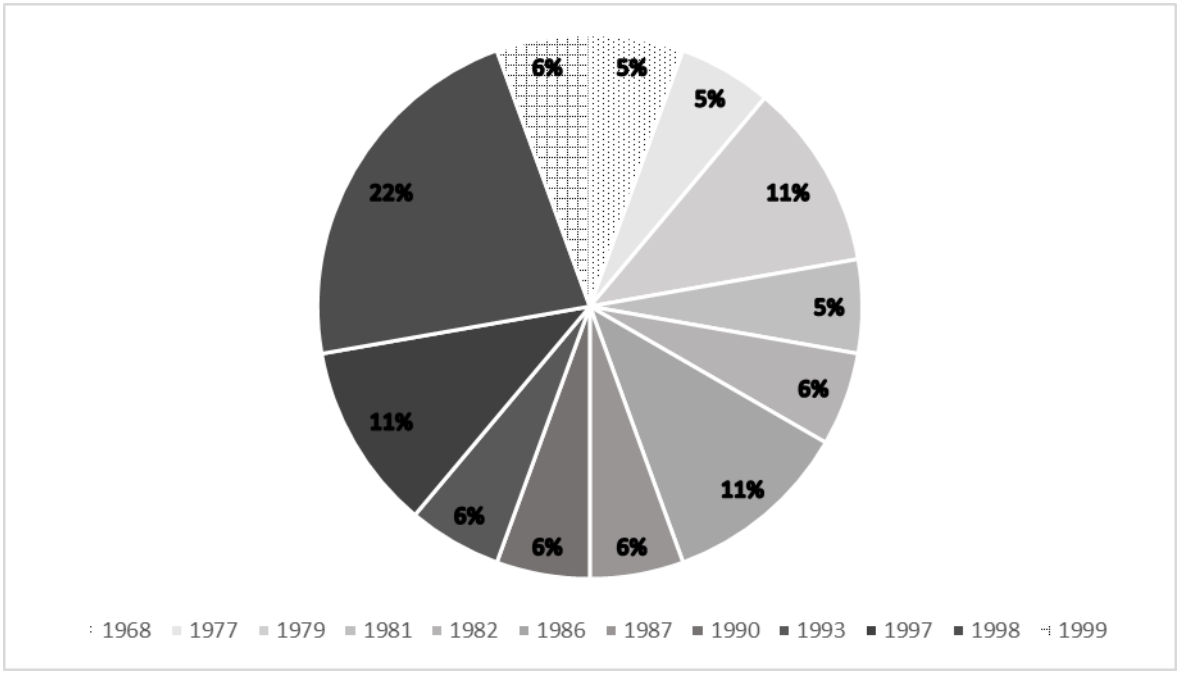

Figure 2. Year of Birth

As the graph shows, there is diversity in the years of birth. It is accurate to say that only one student was willing to become a teacher after finishing high school, and four students began to study one year

after finishing high school. More mature students are entering the teaching profession, and this is observed not only in the After-Degree students but also in the Four-Year B.Ed. Degree.

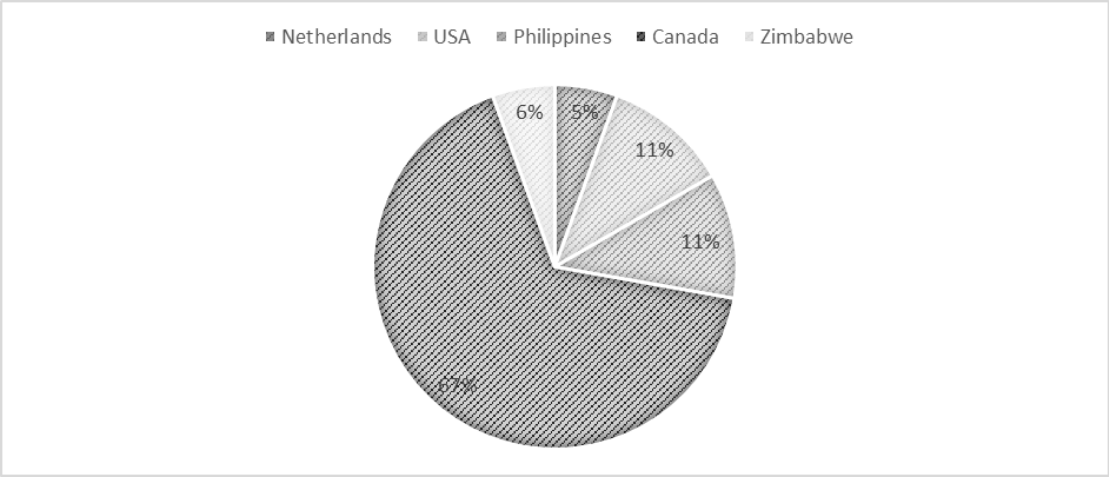

Figure 3. Country of Birth

Canada is a country where diversity is welcomed and valued. In this study, even though diversity is welcomed, the majority are Canadian students born in Canada.

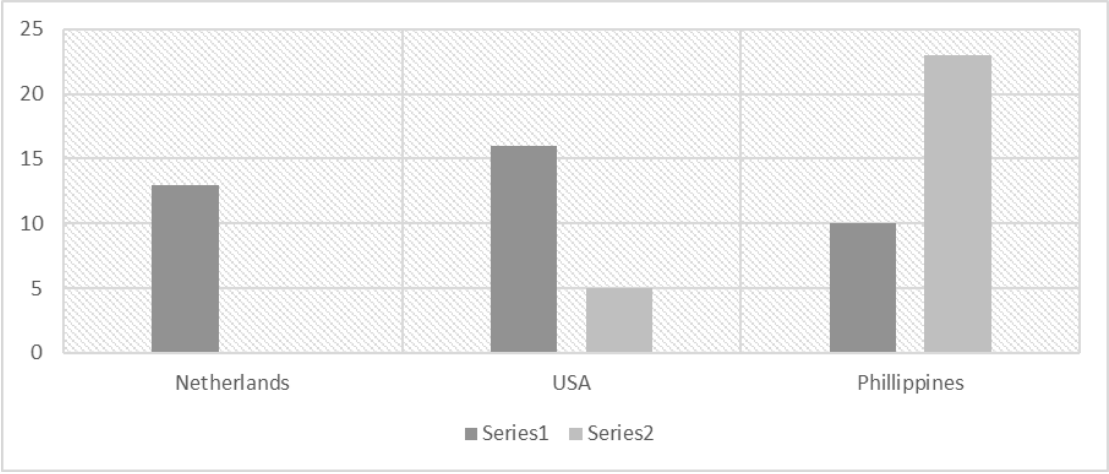

Figure 4. Number of Years in Canada If not Born in Canada

The number of students not born in Canada is all mature students, and they have been living in Canada between five and 23 years.

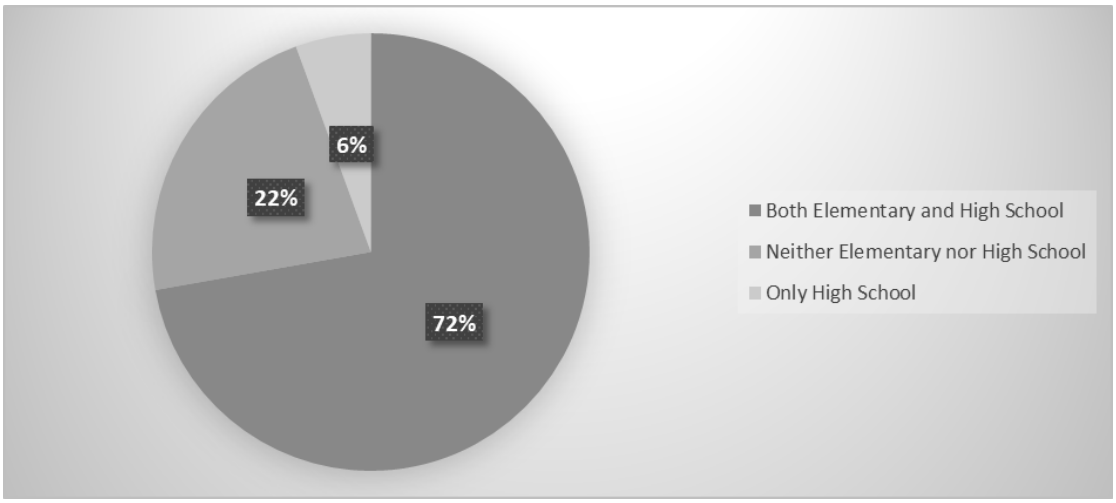

Figure 5. Attended Elementary or High School in Canada

The percentage of students who attended both elementary and secondary schools is high (72%). The 28% left were mature students who were pursuing a Four-Year B.Ed. Degree.

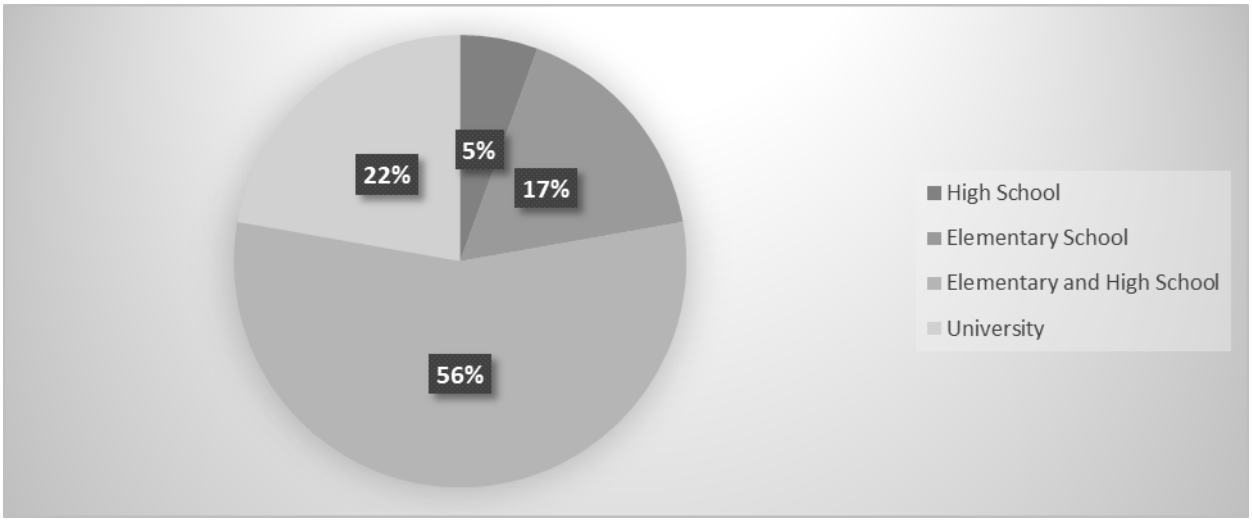

Figure 6. Where Did You Study the History of Indigenous Peoples?

Of all the students born in Canada and attended elementary and secondary schools, 70% indicated that they studied the Indigenous Peoples' history when they were in high school. The 30%, who learned about the Indigenous Peoples' history in elementary, were mature students. They studied the relationships of Indigenous Peoples and Settlers. The students who discovered the history of Indigenous Peoples at the university level were all Canadian immigrants, mature students, and pursuing a Four-Year B.Ed. Degree.

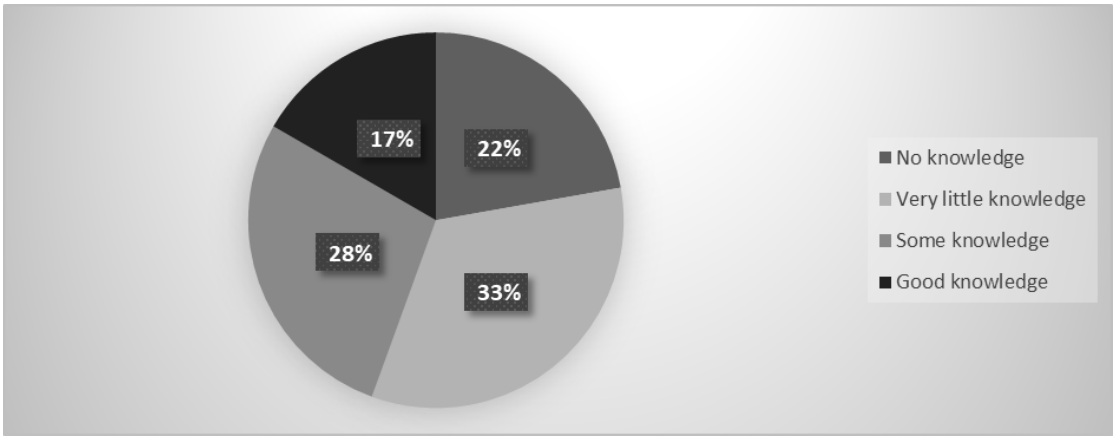

Figure 7. How Much Did You Know about Indigenous Culture before Former Prime Minister Harper Apologized to Students of Residential Schools?

The percentage of students who had good knowledge of Indigenous culture before 2008 is meager (17%) compared with the percentage of students born in Canada and attended elementary and high school (72%). It is reasonable to think that the historical background they had of Indigenous Peoples was more related to the commercial exchanges and relationships with the Settlers than the intended assimilation of the government through Residential Schools and the Sixties' Scoop policies.

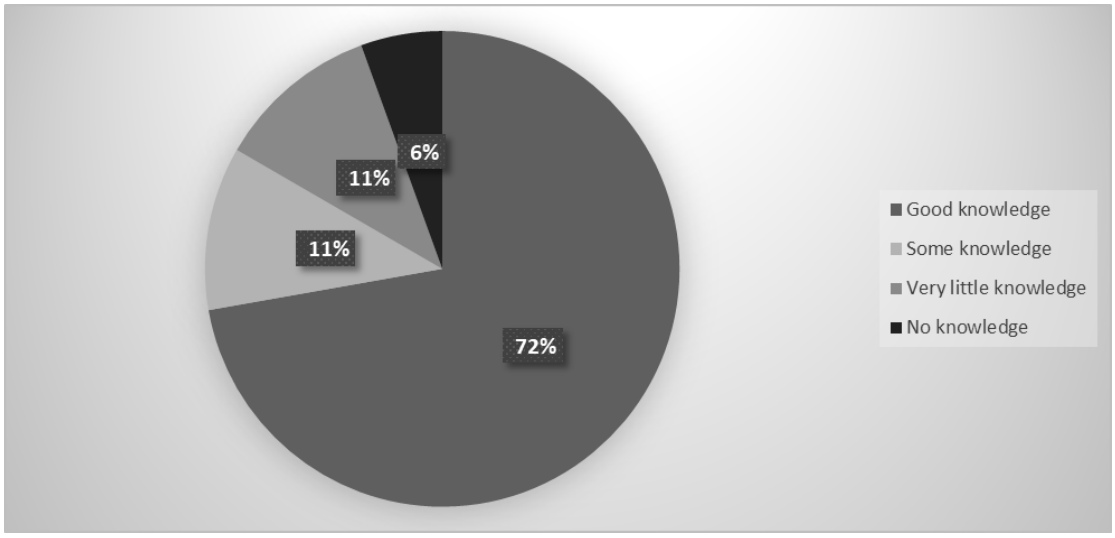

Figure 8. How Much Knowledge Did You Have about What Happened in Residential Schools before Watching the Documentary Movie "*We Were Children*"?

A change in Indigenous history knowledge is observed after former Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to Indigenous Peoples for the harm inflicted to them with the assimilation policy of Residential Schools. A new chapter of Canadian history has opened. This chapter reveals an Indigenous population who suffered from psychological, physical, and sexual abuse from religious institutions in charge of Residential Schools.

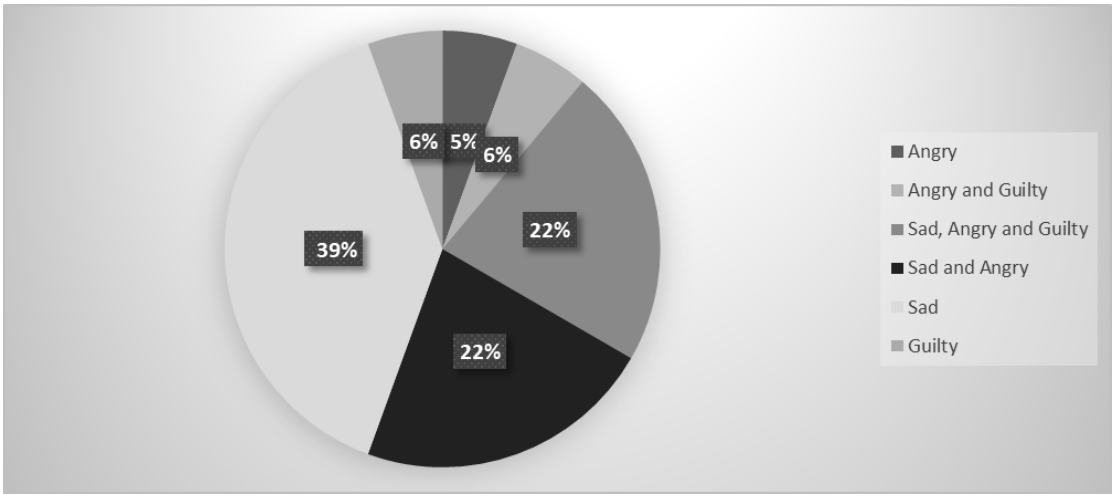

Figure 9. How Did You Feel after Watching the Movie?

A variety of emotions, but sadness has the highest percentage, reaching a total of 83%. The students who had two or more feelings were the youngest ones. The following comments were made in the reflection papers:

Student # 01

"This documentary is raw and authentic. […] This movie is made out of tears, horror, trauma, and struggles since these unfortunate events unfolded. […] I feel embarrassed, ashamed, and sad that this is part of our history."

Student # 02

"This movie was truly a roller coaster of emotions. I felt sad, angry, and disgusted with my own race."

Student # 03

"I felt extremely angry, causing me to sob uncontrollably at one point."

Student # 04

"It was a very sad movie because you got to see the atrocities that the First Nations went through."

Student #05

"For those who easily judge the Aboriginal people, […] they should watch this documentary."

Student # 06

"These stories were so raw and shocking that it hurt to listen to them and the way the people thought and felt at that time."

Student # 07

"The movies was very difficult to watch, and I really struggled with the visuals presented although their treatment of the rape scenes was sensitively portrayed give the terrible content they needed to depict."

Student # 08

"Watching this documentary was extremely difficult because as someone who works with children, I cannot comprehend doing such cruel things to children."

Student # 09

"It breaks my heart to know how those children were treated. […] While this movie is hard to watch, I think it was good to help me to actually picture what it was like in those schools and for the children."

Student # 10

"I just can't believe that people could justify institutions that would abuse, starve, rape, and molest children. Watching them take away their culture, their language, and their sense of home broke my heart."

Student # 11

"I remember hearing about Residential Schools for the first time in high school, and since then, I had a vague idea of what had occurred during the time and what atrocities the Indigenous Peoples had gone through."

Student # 12

"I had never heard of residential schools until I started university, even though the last residential school closed when I was a high school student. […] My heart aches whenever I think of what those children endured."

Student # 13

"I was born in the early 1980s in Calgary, and we absolutely never talked about Residential Schools or the mistreatment of Indigenous children."

Student # 14

"I found it very difficult to watch the film […]; my emotions have been in a concoction of disbelief, anger, and disgust."

Student # 15

"I felt sad, angry, and guilty."

Student # 16

"I felt sad! The individuals who lived through residential schools now suffer from low self-esteem, loss of spiritual values, depression, substance abuse."

Student # 17

"I felt guilty! No one deserves to be treated like how people were treated during the residential schools."

Student # 18

"I felt sad! The children were treated like laborers and taught to be submissive and obedient in shameful cruel ways."

Student # 19

"This is one of the saddest topics about the history of the Indigenous peoples."

Student # 20

"The Government wanted to erase the child's identity as a member of the Aboriginal people's community."

Student # 21

"Today, my eyes were opened even more to the concept of residential schools."

Student # 22

"I need time to process that heavy information."

All these comments show the impact of a documentary movie. Presenting the history of Indigenous Peoples considering their suffering could change the pre-service teachers' perception.

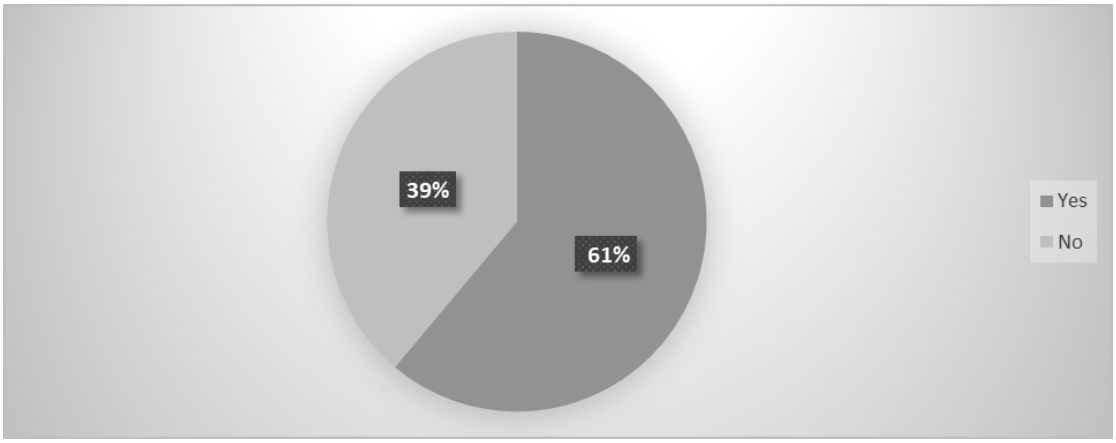

Figure 10. Has Your View towards Indigenous Peoples Changed after Watching the Movie?

This high percentage of 61% could show the interconnection between declarative and emotional knowledge. In the 39% of students whose view towards Indigenous Peoples did not change, there was a mature Canadian student and the four youngest students. These students were the same students who expressed two or more feelings after watching the movie. Two of them had good knowledge about what happened inside the walls of Residential Schools.

"I have previously heard an Elder about his story of sexual abuse at the hands of priests while he was a student."

"I would consider myself someone who is educated in the First Nations history, being Metis myself, I have been exposed to a lot of the culture."

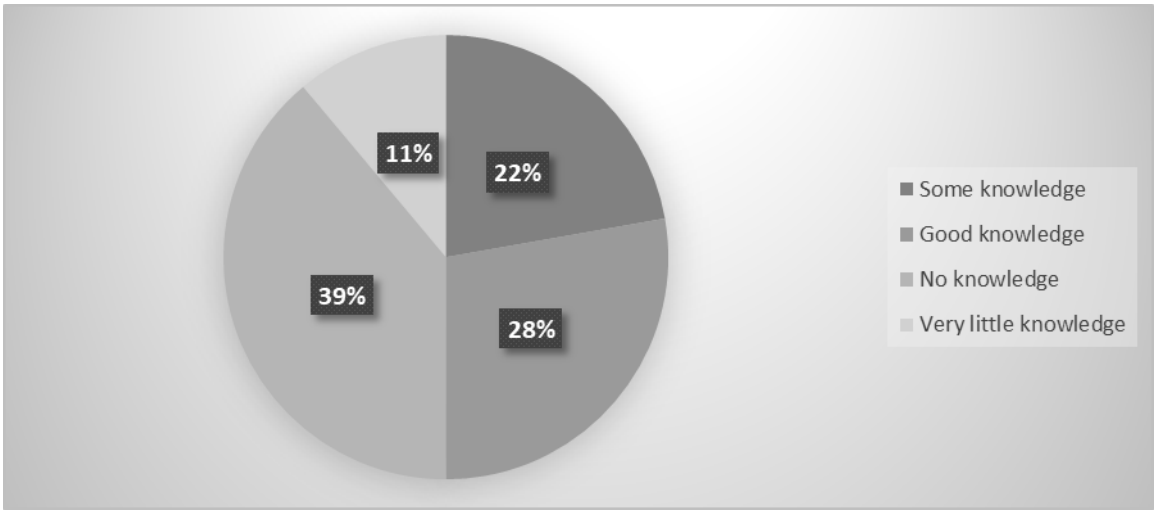

Figure 11. How Much Do You Know about Sixties' Scoop before Attending the Elders' Presentation?

Only 28% of the students had good knowledge of the Sixties' Scoop, even though 72% were born in Canada and attended elementary and secondary schools. Some of the reflection comments depicted this lack of knowledge about the Sixties' Scoop.

"I had never really heard of the Sixties' Scoop."

"I had never heard of the Sixties' Scoop before today."

"I didn't know much about the Sixties Scoop up until this presentation."

"In all honesty, this was the first time I've ever heard of the Sixties' Scoop in my life."

"The Sixties' Scoop came to my amazement because I had never heard about the situation until this day."

"I learned today that the Sixties' Scoop was just another version of residential schooling with the ultimate goal to assimilate these First Nations children into white culture."

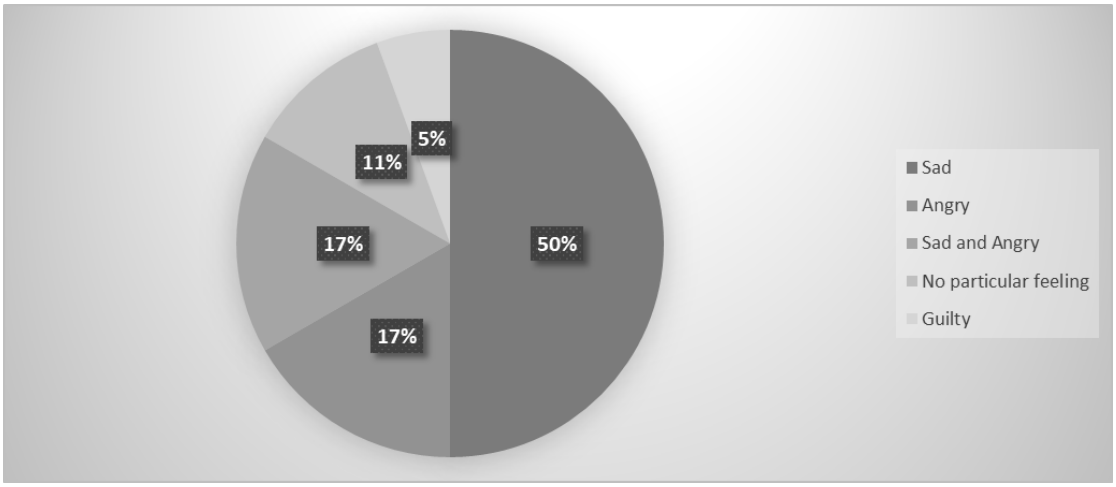

Figure 12. How Did You Feel after the Elders' Presentation on the Sixties' Scoop?

The emotion reaching the highest percentage about the Sixties' Scoop was sadness, and it was also the highest percentage for the movie "We Were Children."

Student # 01

"My initial thoughts were shock, anger, sadness, and how unaware I was of these horrendous events that took place in our very own communities."

Student # 02

"I feel like I developed so much more empathy for their people and a deeper understanding of the pain, loss, and suffering they endured."

Student # 03

"Babies desperately need love and physical touch to live; it is appalling that babies would be so neglected."

Student # 04

"I felt ashamed of the actions of the government."

Student # 05

"I find the Elders' stories so valuable for a future teacher like us. […] I have worked with an Indigenous student. After these stories, I realized that her drawings were her way of expressing her identity."

Student # 06

"I think the worst part about the whole scoop is that a large portion of the children and babies were taken away for no reason at all."

Student # 07

"Sitting around the fire with blankets was a special memory that I will remember and treasure. Hearing about the Sixties' Scoop from both an Indigenous Elder and also a family member who had adopted siblings was really eye-opening."

Student # 08

"Thinking about children being purposely ripped from their families because they wanted to 'take the Indian out of them' is so uneducated and inappropriate that my mind cannot even wrap around the concept."

Student # 09

"The whole presentation was very emotional, which just made it more meaningful to me."

Student # 10

"Not only was it sad to hear that the speaker's siblings felt out of place and confused, but it was more disheartening to hear that her family didn't even know that they were part of the assimilation plan."

Student # 11

"It deeply saddened my heart to know that so many people suffer from the Sixties' Scoop still today, and many of them have yet to find who they are and their own identity."

Student # 12

"My heart hurts for those mothers whose children were basically stolen from them and for those children who grew up missing a piece of their identity."

Student # 13

"As I listened, I couldn't help but think about how I would feel, behave, and ultimately what I would become if someone took my babies from me. I couldn't imagine."

Student # 14

"I couldn't marvel at the twisted thought process of the Canadian Federal and Provincial Governments in regards to their treatment of the First Nations. I feel disgusted."

Student # 15

"I felt sad, angry, and guilty."

Student # 16

"Canada's real history is no longer a secret, and we must educate ourselves on the truth."

Student # 17

"Today was quite an emotional class for me as I heard stories about the history of the Canadian Aboriginals."

Student # 18

"Having children taken away from their homes was devastating to their entire community and culture."

Student # 19

"It is important to understand the history to understand the pain and psychological warfare that has plagued the Indigenous Peoples for centuries."

Student # 20

"The Sixties' Scoop, it is so sad that so many children grew up without the understanding of their cultural heritage and the support of their family and communities."

Student # 21

"There are lots of Indigenous Peoples struggling to find their identity because they did not have the opportunity to connect with their families and their roots over time and develop a sense of belonging."

Student # 22

"It is so important to be aware of the history and have an awareness of what is still going on."

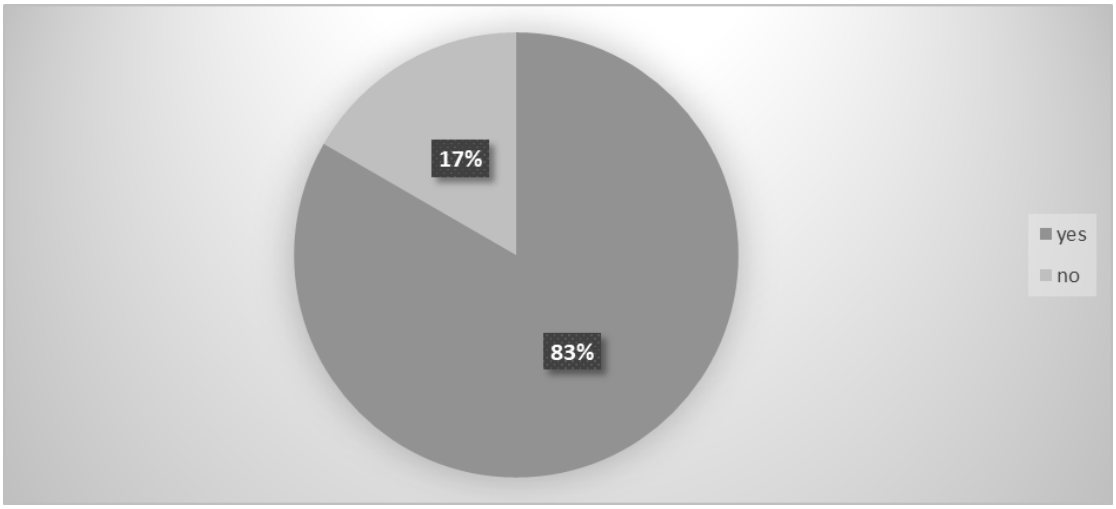

Figure 13. Has your vision towards Sixties' Scoop people changed after the Elders' presentation?

These results show, once again, a high percentage of how pre-service teachers changed the way of seeing Indigenous Peoples. This high percentage of 83% could show the interconnection between declarative and emotional knowledge. The following thought by one of the students synthesizes the vision of the 83% who declared a change in their way of seeing Indigenous Peoples.

"My Perception and my opinion have greatly changed. […] I now understand why so many people are still hurting, […] children suffering, […]in drugs and alcohol abuse, suicides, etc."

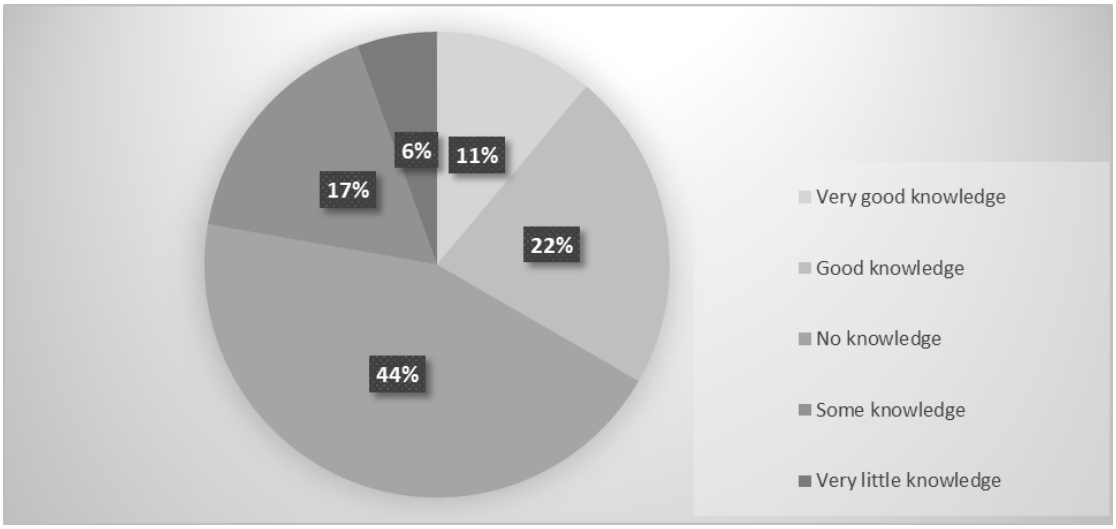

Figure 14. How Much Knowledge Did You Have about the Blanket Exercise before Attending University?

The percentage of students who knew about the Blanket Exercise before attending university reaches 33%. It is reasonable to think that the majority of students did not know much about this activity. This activity illustrates the history of Indigenous Peoples and how it affected their lives and land.

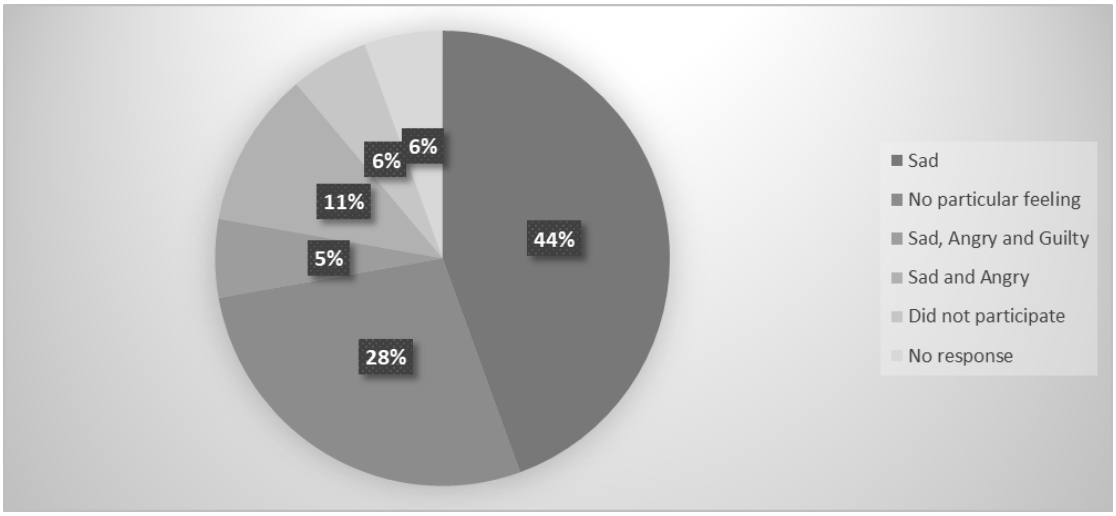

Figure 15. How Did You Feel after Participating in the Blanket Exercise?

Like in the other activities, i.e., the movie, Elders' presentation, and Blanket Exercises, sadness reached the highest percentage.

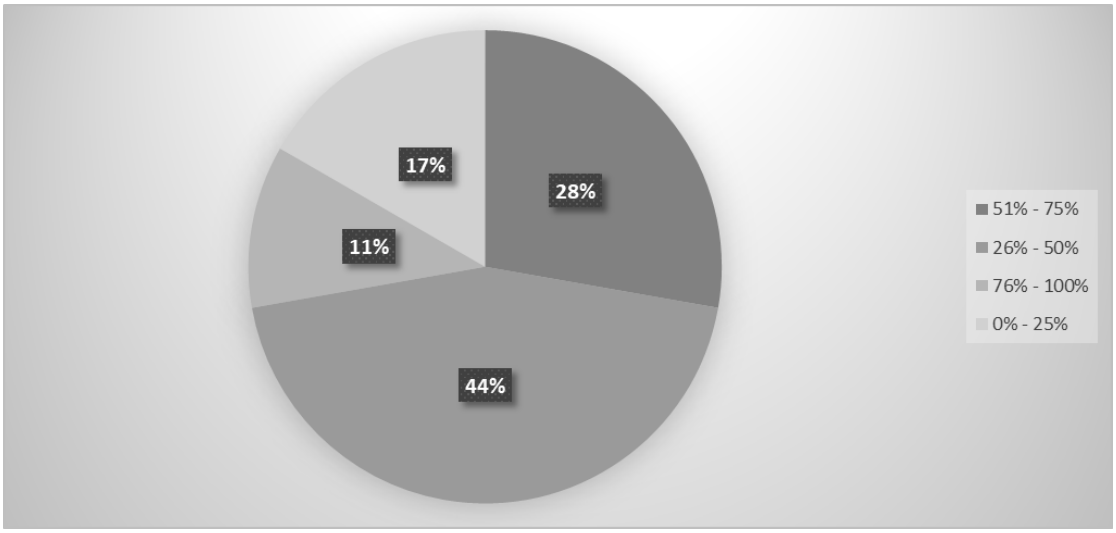

Figure 16. In Percentages, How Much Would You Say That Experiencing All the Aforementioned Indigenous Activities Have Changed Your Perception towards Indigenous Peoples?

The highest percentages on how much the movie, Elders' presentation, and Blanket Exercise have changed the students' perception varied between 26% and 100%. It is realistic to say that all three activities impacted most students and changed their perception towards Indigenous Peoples. It is also reasonable to think that the students who did not have particular feelings about the Blanket Exercise, and whose change of perception ranged between 0% and 26%, was because they had already experienced this activity and had close contact with Indigenous Peoples.

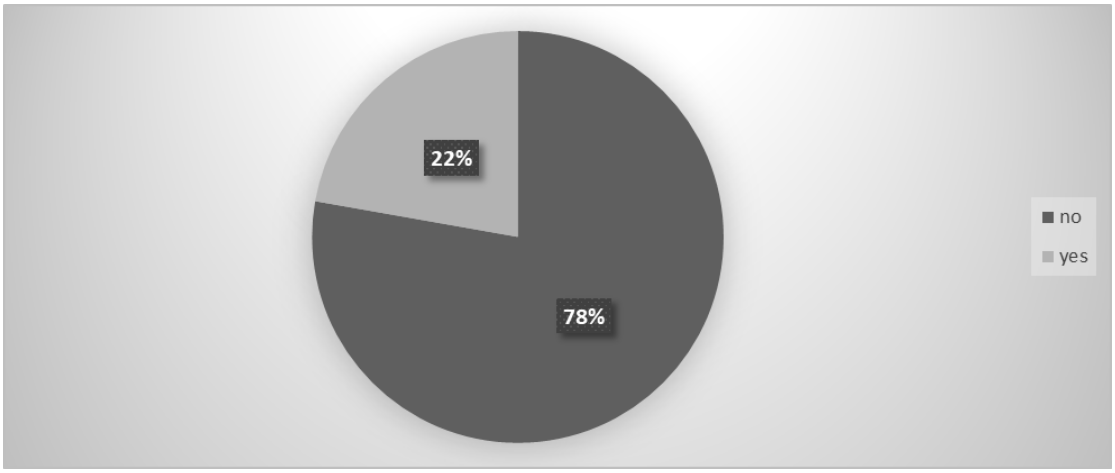

Figure 17. Have Your Perception toward Indigenous Peoples Changed if Knowledge Was Given only through Lectures without Experiencing Indigenous Activities?

The highest percentage regarding a change of students' perception of Indigenous history seems related to how the teaching is delivered to pre-service teachers. The results indicate a possible link between declarative and emotional knowledge.

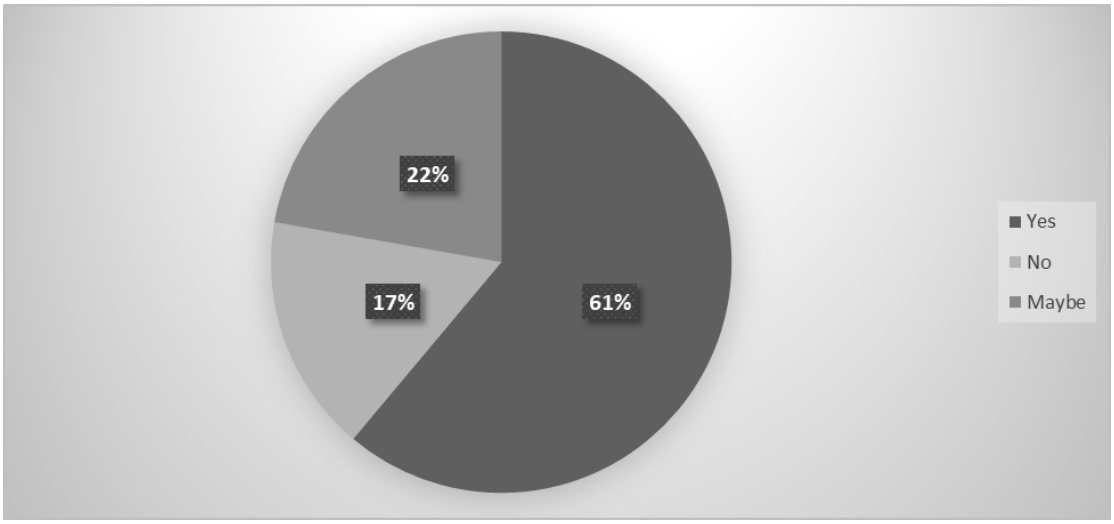

Figure 18. Would You Treat Indigenous Children/Students Differently now?

These results show how three different activities or Indigenous experiences have had a profound impact on pre-service teachers. Some of the comments in their reflections confirm even some decisions taken for their future classrooms.

"My goal as a teacher is to create a culturally sound environment where we talk about history not as something of the past but as something we are continually shaping. I want my students to understand the past so we, together, can create a better tomorrow."

"Our history is unfortunate and has some serious ugly parts in it, but I believe it is crucial to educate future students about mistakes we have made as a society."

"I hope that as a teacher, I can spread the light of love and culture to all my students."

"I think what I learned today has helped me become better prepared for teaching First Nations Students."

"As teachers, we need to be intentional about including Indigenous ways of knowing into our lessons."

"I want to be as understanding and educated as I can so that I can reach my First Nations students."

"I think it is important to educate our students on these topics so that it never happens again."

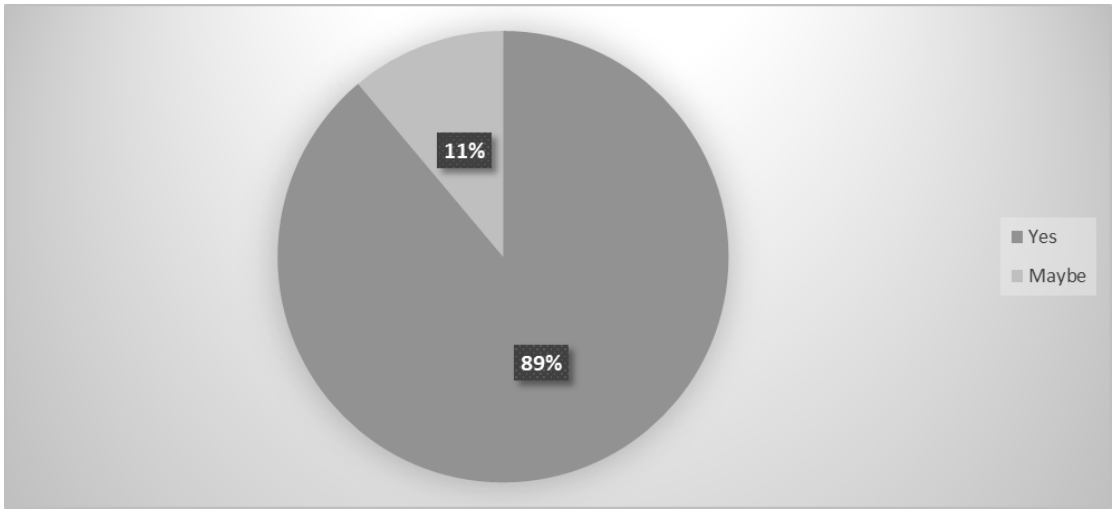

Figure 19. Would You Be Willing to Learn More about How Indigenous Children/Students Interact and Learn?

The results show that most pre-service teachers are interested in learning more about how Indigenous children learn. The students who said, "maybe" have already experienced close contact with Indigenous children.

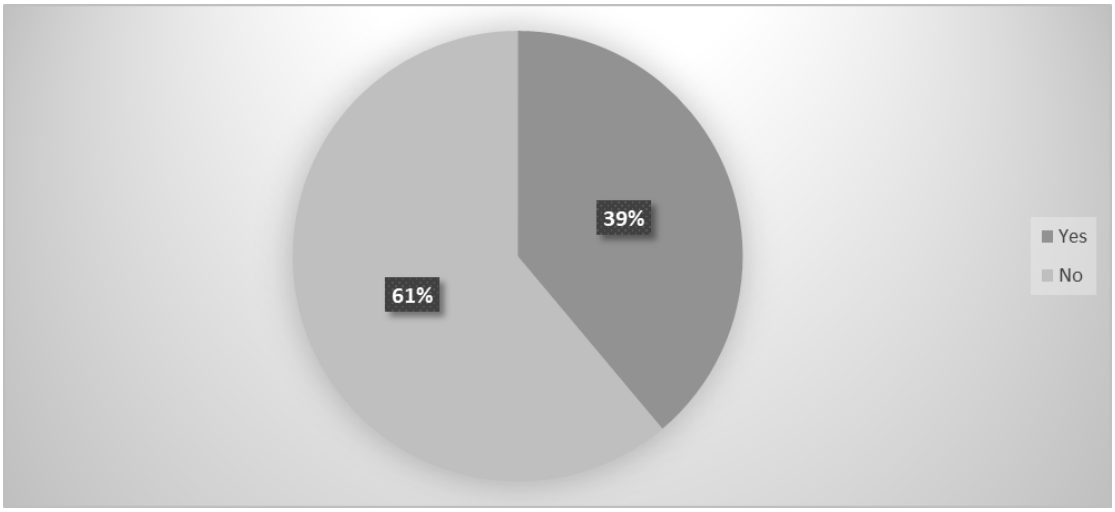

Figure 20. Have You Heard about the Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning?

The results show that a high percentage of pre-service teachers have not heard about the eight Aboriginal ways of learning, even though several studies have been undertaken on Indigenous pedagogy in the classroom (Barlett et al., 2012; McNally, 2004; Toulouse, 2011; Yunkaporta & Kirby, 2011). It is reasonable to think that the Eight Aboriginal Ways of Learning were not integrated into the B.Ed. method courses of the program. Pre-service teachers, however, have manifested their interest in learning more about Indigenous ways of learning.

5. Conclusions

The results of this study show a lack of knowledge of pre-service teachers regarding Indigenous Canadian history. Surprisingly, 72% of Canadians who attended elementary and secondary schools were not aware of what happened inside the walls of Residential Schools until former Prime Minister, Stephen Harper, apologized to Indigenous Peoples. Regarding the Sixties' Scoop, the percentages of pre-service teachers having some knowledge, little knowledge, or no knowledge reached 72%.

The three Indigenous experiences: the movie *We Were Children*, the Elders' Presentation in a teepee, sitting in a circle, around a fire, with Indigenous blankets, and the Blanket Exercise, deeply touched the pre-service teachers. From all students' emotions, sadness charted the highest percentage in all three activities. The results indicate that 78% of pre-service teachers would not have changed their perception of Indigenous Peoples if knowledge was acquired through lectures only (declarative knowledge). It is reasonable to think that experiencing Indigenous activities with Indigenous individuals could make a difference in their perception. These individuals were Survivors of Residential Schools or the Sixties' Scoop. The comments made on the reflection papers show that emotions played an essential role in grasping the history and changing their perception of Indigenous Peoples, which varied between 26% and 100%. This change is an indicator of how Canadian universities could make the Curriculum and Instruction in Social Studies course a transformational

course. It was beyond expectations their willingness to treat Indigenous children otherwise after learning Indigenous history differently.

The results also show that 89% of pre-service teachers are willing to learn more about how Indigenous children learn and to offer them a safe environment in their future classrooms. University professors can be specialists in social studies, but only Indigenous Peoples are specialists in emotional knowledge. It is their history.

It would be naïve to think that the results of this small sample could make Canadian universities overcome the challenge to integrate the Indigenous historical reality in the Bachelor of Education Programs. More research is needed. Still, it is reasonable to assume that experiential and emotional knowledge could potentially change the perception of Indigenous Peoples as demonstrated in this study.

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