Through my underlying whiteness, vulnerability and a willingness to learn, my visual creation represents who I think I am at this point in the term and in my teaching career.

As a settler, my whiteness cannot be ignored and contributes to my miskâsowin. My visual is on a white canvas, a literal representation of my white and guilty identity. The materials I used (paper, yarn and felt) show the layers on top of my whiteness attempting to cover it up, but also lead to acceptance that my whiteness will always be there. As well, the white canvas represents the world in which I live in, therefore, affecting my miskâsowin process as a constant battle against those with different beliefs than I. Multiple blog posts highlighted our whitewashed society (structural racism, stereotypes, residential schools, etc.) where I improved my critical thinking skills. My whiteness is further shown with the street sign, a European item, similar to Fort Qu’Appelle’s statues. My learnings are built on this foundation of whiteness.

My vulnerability stems from being white and has been suddenly exposed to me this term in a new way. I believe that this is due to the Treaty Event, a new experience of sharing my knowledge with the public. I entered the event with uneasiness and fear. I was worried about saying the wrong thing. The Treaty Event made all participants vulnerable, but I felt that I especially would have less answers and know less information than my colleagues. However, I was proved wrong. In my Treaty Event reflection, I wrote,

“Mostly I am afraid of saying the wrong thing, but the participants allowed me to be open minded and accepting of being corrected. The individual did so in a polite manner and seemed pleased to share knowledge with me. His ‘correction’ about the [ceremonial] information I presented [about Nakota peoples] seemed like less of a correction and more of a conversation … [And] trying my best to share information and then being corrected benefits everyone involved; I gain correct knowledge that I can continue to pass onto others, and the individual … was given an opportunity to share a part of his identity and culture that he identifies with, and these learnings are profound” (March 28, 2019).

Now, after the experience described, I see myself as being slightly less vulnerable, yet more accepting of vulnerability and the fear of not knowing, because the *best* that can happen is that I learn from it. I represented this vulnerability with the image to the left; I embody Saskatchewan’s diverse Indigenous peoples and stories by gaining knowledge about the place I call home, as well as, I embody the imperfectness and room for knowledge that I bring to Saskatchewan classrooms.

Despite these messy feelings, my willingness to learn is a powerful part of my identity as an educator. The braided yarn represents my identity and miskâsowin process as my learnings, experiences and evolving beliefs come together, imperfectly. The braid is twisted and improperly braided in some spots. My vulnerability was challenged with critique during the Treaty Event, as I mentioned earlier, however, the man who critiqued me acts as an ally alongside my miskâsowin process; this is represented by the blue footsteps coming from the left side of the canvas and then are placed alongside, and in relation to, the braid. I am willing to gain knowledge and accept being wrong. My identity is embedded in miyo-wîcêhtowin, the good relations I exhibit with others, such as during Treaty Event experiences. In my first blog post I wrote, “in order to find my belonging in a larger context, I must belong in a smaller circle first and gain respect; ‘respect is an essential pillar in which good relationships can be brought about’ (Cardinal & Hildebrandt, 2002, p. 21)” (January 11, 2019). A willingness to learn in this profession is insignificant if I have no one to share with and grow alongside. I feel that over the course of the term I gained the respect of my colleagues, professor and the participants at my Treaty Event session to help one another alongside our miskâsowin process.

I am a settler becoming unsettled as I navigate how to live treaties in and outside the classroom. My whiteness, vulnerability and willingness are embedded in my identity and miskâsowin process.

My personal miskâsowin process in relation to treaty responsibilities revolves around critical thinking, action and conversation.

Critical thinking about the stories and worldviews that are being told must be modelled for my future students, and be part my own experiences, as one of my treaty responsibilities. Being critical of my own beliefs and attitudes throughout my teaching career is another treaty responsibility, as this will help to improve myself, reconcile and decolonize lived experiences and my community. Furthermore, these results are also due to critical thinking about the Saskatchewan curriculum. These ideas are represented by the brain (left) and the magnify glass over the Saskatchewan curriculum (right).

Action can take many forms I believe, but for me it is the choice to accept what I hear instead of immediately refusing it. Often I find that I withdraw and prevent myself from learning if my initial reaction is uneasy. Instead, if I enter new situations about treaties I must go in open-minded and listen. If I had not done this during the Treaty Event, I would not have accepted the critique given to me nor learned from it. Within my miskâsowin process I am attempting to gain knowledge and hold onto new learnings, such as what treaties are within Saskatchewan. During the Treaty Event Audrey asked me to show a participant where treaty 2 is and I did so correctly. This was a very proud moment for me! Not long ago, I did not even know that I lived on treaty land. This small action is represented by the large treaty map in the background. Within my miskâsowin process there will be many more actions as part of embodying my treaty responsibilities.

Conversation goes a long way to contribute to my own miskâsowin process and encourage others during their own process. These conversations, shown with the megaphone, contribute to miyo-wîcêhtowin. The megaphone also acts as a reminder to myself to listen to the stories I am told by knowledge keepers and stories about missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW). In my blog post about MMIW I quoted Balfour (n.d),

“‘Every time we do take action, we create change, and it may not be change that happens that day, or that week, or that month, but it is change" (Balfour, n. d). As well, discussing these women's stories with friends and family to bring about uncomfortable feelings that will hopefully resonate with them may be enough at times to amplify these stories” (February 13, 2019).

Conversations are part of my miskâsowin process and treaty responsibilities, shown by the grey footsteps (mine) and the green footsteps (an individual that I encounter with their own experiences and beliefs). Amplifying stories and having uncomfortable conversations, or simply by listening to others’ stories, will continue to be part of my miskâsowin process.

My miskâsowin process largely takes place in education and is connected to my treaty responsibilities as a teacher.