INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION FOR WELL-BEING IN CANADA

Frank Deer and Thomas Falkenberg

Editors

ESWB Press
University of Manitoba

INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION FOR WELL-BEING IN CANADA

Edited by

FRANK DEER
THOMAS FALKENBERG

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Introduction

FRANK DEER and THOMAS FALKENBERG

In discussing the notion of well-being that provides privilege for an Indigenous perspective, it has been customary to concede that this may be a very personal discourse (Ross, 2014). Academic objectivity, the process of eliminating personal biases from research or other scholarly discourse, has been regarded by many Indigenous scholars as something of a myth (Deloria, 1997). As contemporary and historical issues of Indigenous nationalism have informed this personal discourse, perhaps they require discussion as well. Let us briefly consider some manifestations of Indigenous ethno-national identity, and then make some connections to the way in which the chapters in this book thematically link to such manifestations.

I (Frank) grew up on a First Nation in Quebec called Kahnawake. This community, identified by many as a constituent part of the Kanienkeha'ka (popularly referred to as "Mohawk") nation, represents a rich environment of Indigenous heritage and language that has facilitated cultural revitalization and affirmation. Kahnawke's potential as a focal point for understanding the possibilities of Indigenous activism and cultural assertion is perhaps supported by its geographical location adjacent to a major urban centre on the southern shore of the St. Lawrence River (Simpson, 2014). The Kahnienkeha'ka have much in common with other Indigenous nations in this region of the world. Like other communities, we have transmitted creation stories from one generation to another that infer that their people have inhabited a particular place since time immemorial. One such story tells of a pregnant woman from the sky world who fell to the earth and came to rest on a turtle's back, upon which earth from the ocean depths was used to develop a land mass (to this day, Indigenous peoples refer to North America as *Turtle Island*). Although popularly regarded by non-Indigenous peoples as mytho-historical in nature, these stories have survived for centuries and have proven resilient to colonial activities, attempts of assimilation, and school programming that has provided very little space for Indigenous perspectives and culture. Although many may question the utility of such stories as evidence of the first peoples as inhabitants of North America from time immemorial, the stories tell us of the peoples for whom these stories represent their beliefs, supporting an assertion of nationhood that may be every bit as "real" as the archaeological evidence that supports the antithesis of human migration through Beringia.

How does a legacy of story-telling through oral discourse fit in with a conception of well-being? In regard to matters of collective identity, the sense of self across a community is a very important consideration in terms of social affirmation (Ferguson, 2005). Also important to this discourse is how a strong collective identity provides Indigenous peoples with an opportunity to distinguish themselves from other peoples and nations in a celebratory way (Holder, 2006). A distinct communal and/or national identity may be regarded as the fundamental dimension of cultural well-being for Indigenous peoples (Lawrence, 2004).

When I first began working in Indigenous education contexts in Manitoba, I began to hear of something called *mino-pimatisiwin*. Being of Kanien'keha:ka ancestry, my familiarity with the ancestral

languages of Manitoba was not strong and it took some time before I began to appreciate what this phrase means. Many who are knowledgeable in the spiritual dimensions of *mino-pimatisiwin* have informed my understanding of what is *the good life*. In working with others on one particular project, I learned that the imperatives associated with *mino-pimatisiwin* could be regarded thusly: "the good life we all strive for to benefit ourselves, our families and all peoples" (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2008, p. iii). These imperatives were further articulated by Michael Anthony Hart (2002) in a discourse that affirms the importance of community-based perspectives on healing and cultural revitalization:

> We have to recapture our peoples' language, history and understanding of the world, take and live those teachings which will support us in this attempt to overcome oppression and reach *mino-pimatisiwin* – the good life. On a spiritual level, we must learn and understand the values and beliefs of our people and freely decide those which we will internalize. We must validate these values and beliefs through our spiritual expression and daily practices. (p. 32)

The principal tenets associated with *mino-pimatisiwin* might be best understood not only as it applies to individual contexts but also that of communities as well. Appreciating the importance of relationships that are explored in all dimensions of *mino-pimatisiwin* gives some life to the idea that collective balance, health, harmony and growth, to name a few, is essential to the notion that what is desired is a life that is experienced in its fullest, healthiest sense. Essential to understanding how such a life might be achieved in contemporary Canadian society might be consideration to the core values of *respect*, *sharing*, and *spirituality*. Although the first two can be readily understood for its application to how we treat one another, other forms of life, the environment, and the issues associated with spirituality might require further discussion in the context of the unique manifestations of spirituality that may be associated with a given community.

Mino-pimatisiwin (literally means "the good life" in Cree) is the realization/acquisition of healing, balance, and life-long learning. The realization of the good life, particularly for First Nations peoples, may be reflected in the following principles (Gray, Coates & Yellow Bird, 2008, pp. 134-135):

- The concept of **wholeness** is about the incorporation of all aspects of life and the giving of attention and energy to each aspect within ourselves and the universe around us.
- **Balance** reflects the dynamic nature of relationships wherein we give attention to each aspect of the whole in a manner where one aspect is not focused on to the detriment of the other parts.
- All aspects of the whole, including the more than world, are related and these **relationships** require attention and **nurturing**; when we give energy to these relationships we nurture the connections between them. Nurturing these connections leads to health while disconnection leads to disease.
- **Harmony** is ultimately a process involving all entities fulfilling their obligations to each other and to themselves.
- **Growth** is a life-long process that involves developing aspects of oneself, such as the body, mind, heart and spirit, in a harmonious manner.

- *Healing* is a daily practice orientated to the restoration of wholeness, balance, relationships and harmony. It is not only focused on illness, but on disconnections, imbalances and disharmony.
- *Mino-pimatisiwin* is the good life or life in the fullest, healthiest sense. *Mino-pimatisiwin* is the goal of growth and healing and includes efforts by individuals, families, communities and people in general, in fact, all living forms, including the more than human world.

Core Values:

- *Respect* or the showing of honour, esteem, deference and courtesy to all, and not imposing our views on others.
- *Sharing*, including the sharing of all we have to share, even knowledge and life experiences, which show that everyone is important and helps develop relationships.
- *Spirituality* is the recognition that there is a non-physical world. It is all-encompassing in Aboriginal life and is respected in all interactions, including this helping approach, and is demonstrated through meditation, prayer and ceremonies that guide good conduct.

These manifestations of Indigenous perspectives on (education for) well-being will serve us as the centre around which we want to thematically cluster the chapters of this collection.[1] Nicole Bell (**chapter 1**), drawing on Anishinaabe elders, makes the concept of "the good life" the core of her inquiry, in which she provides an Anishinaabe perspective on *mino-bimaadiziwin* and how it is achieved through the different life stages and ceremonies.

Two clusters of chapters address each a different aspect of the wholeness of "the good life". The first cluster focuses on the health of Indigenous children and youth, using an Indigenous perspective on well-being. Leisa Desmoulins (**chapter 6**) uses the concept of *meno-bimaadiziwin* to study and make recommendations on the question of "healthy weights" of Indigenous children in early years. Elaine Greidanus and Lauren Johnson (**chapter 7**), on the other hand, focus on mental health of Indigenous youth as it is addressed in a youth treatment program that is grounded in Indigenous cultural spiritual teachings. The second cluster focuses on Indigenous perspectives of well-being as they relate to the natural environment and the living on and off the land. Gail Lafleur (**chapter 10**) explores the Anishinaabek/Ojibwe worldview on the spiritual relationship with "Mother Earth", while Cidro, Martens, and Guilbault (**chapter 3**) explore "traditional Indigenous food upskilling" for *urban* Indigenous people to support the development of urban Indigenous food sovereignty in response to food insecurity.

Linked to these clusters of chapters, which explore specific aspects of Indigenous cultural heritage, is Cyr and Slater's (**chapter 4**) focus on the culturally embedded practice of making bannock, a specific type of bread. What distinguishes the focus of this chapter from the previously

---

[1] While the title of the book speaks of Indigenous perspectives of education of well-being *in Canada*, which was also the title under which we called for submissions, we were pleased about a submission from colleagues from Alaska (now chapter 11 in this book). The border separating Canada from Alaska is of colonial heritage, so we felt we could more flexibly interpret the notion of "in Canada" to support and be in line with the overall purpose of this book project.

discussed chapters is that the cultural practice of making and consuming bannock might link traditional Indigenous cultural practices with those of early settlers.

Four chapters focus on Indigenous perspectives of (school) education for well-being. Rita Bouvier, Marie Battiste, and Jarrett Laughlin (**chapter 2**) report on a research project that took the stance that understanding "school success" for Indigenous students needs to be grounded in *Indigenous* perspectives and that inquired into the question what such (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) perspectives look like and, hence, how school success for Indigenous students should be conceptualized. The lack of appropriate cultural context and content of current school education for many Indigenous students is also the focus of Frank Deer's (**chapter 5**) contribution. In his chapter he draws on interviews with Anishinaabe elders and educational professionals to identify missing Anishinaabe cultural dimensions (e.g., language and spirituality) in the current school system, undermining, Deer argues, the ethno-cultural well-being of Anishinaabe students and communities. As it stands right now, changing the school educational experiences of many Indigenous students in the way these two chapters suggest will require the willingness and ability of non-Indigenous school educators to ground their educational practices and the implementation of the curricula in the Indigenous perspectives discussed in these two chapters. Yatta Kanu (**chapter 9**) explores the sources of resistance by non-Indigenous teacher candidates (i.e., future school teachers) to integrate Indigenous perspectives into their teaching and what teacher education programs might need to do to change that. Linked to Kanu's chapter on the integration of Indigenous perspectives in school education by non-Indigenous teacher candidates, the chapter written by Jennifer Hardwick, Konwanonhsiyohstha, Kanonhsyonne, and Jill Scott (**chapter 8**) explores the way in which the Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre together with one Canadian university has been trying to "build healthy learning communities, and foster deeper knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, teachers, and the broader community" (this volume, p. 123). The relational approach taken in this endeavour – grounded in the core value of relationship in the Rotinonhsyón:ni culture – expressed "the importance of continuously renewing, strengthening, and valuing existing relationships for the health and well-being of families, communities and nations, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous" (this volume, p. 135).

Finally, the chapter written by Sean Asiqluq Topkok and Carie Green (**chapter 11**) links with a number of the themes addressed by the chapters introduced so far. As chapter 1 lays out an Anishinaabe understanding of "the good life", Topkok and Green's chapter shares with the reader a system of Inuit (Iñupiaq) cultural values, which, internalized, relate to Iñupiaq well-being. This system of values is holistic and community-embedded as those discussed in the previously introduced chapters. Similar to the perspectives presented in those chapters, the Iñupiaq well-being perspective is also kept by and drawn from community Elders. Another theme that draws across the previously introduced chapters is the sense of urgency with which Indigenous cultural heritage is in danger of disappearing and, thus, in great need to be passed on to and re-discovered by next generations. This urgency and need is expressed in a very personal way in Topkok and Green's chapter, where the personal journal of one of the chapter authors of re-discovery of his cultural heritage is portrayed.

We are so pleased to see such a range of approaches to the theme of the book. Our hope is that this volume will contribute to the discourse on Indigenous perspectives on "the good life" and the education that is to come with it, but also to the reconciliation process (Truth and Reconciliation

Commission of Canada, 2015), for which the appreciative understanding of Indigenous perspectives by non-Indigenous people is so crucial.

References

Deloria, V. (1997). *Red earth, white lies: Native Americans and the myth of scientific fact*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Ferguson, J. (2005). Anthropology and its evil twin: "Development" in the constitution of a discipline. In M. Edelman & A. Haugerud (Eds.), *The anthropology of development and globalization: From classical political economy to contemporary neoliberalism* (pp. 140-153). Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.

Gray, M., Coates, J., & Yellow Bird, M. (2008). *Indigenous social work around the world: Towards culturally relevant education and practice*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate.

Hart, M. A. (2002). *Seeking mino-pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal approach to helping*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Holder, C. (2006). Culture as a basic human right. In A. Eisenberg (Ed.), *Diversity and equality: The changing framework of freedom in Canada* (pp. 78-96). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Lawrence, B. (2004). *"Real" Indians and others: Mixed-blood urban Native peoples and Indigenous nationhood*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre. (2008). *First Nations teachings and practices*. Winnipeg, MB: Author.

Ross, R. (2014). *Indigenous healing: Exploring traditional paths*. London, GB: Penguin.

Simpson, A. (2014). Mohawk interruptus: Political life across the borders of settler states. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciliation for the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. [Winnipeg, MB]: Author. Retrieved from the TRC website: http://www.trc.ca

Chapter 1

Mino-Bimaadiziwin: Education for the Good Life

NICOLE BELL

Education from an Indigenous perspective inherently involves education for wellbeing. Anishinaabe worldview and teachings of mino-bimaadiziwin (living a good life) and the life stages which inform that life path provide insight into achieving balanced and healthy living. Traditional Anishinaabe philosophy of holistic education articulates how mino-bimaadiziwin is manifested with children at their life stage. Teachings of the medicine wheel, and how those teachings can be actualized with pedagogy in education provide further guidance on living a good life that creates wellbeing. This chapter describes mino-bimaadiziwin from an Anishinaabe perspective and how it is achieved through the life-stages and respective ceremonies. Traditional Anishinaabe education is then explored with a focus on medicine wheel teachings and pedagogy.

According to Elders[1], Anishinaabe worldview and values are what Anishinaabe[2] people call Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin (an Anishinaabe way of living), which involves a recognition of themselves as spiritual beings that have a unique and respectful relationship to the land and all of Creation. Mino-bimaadiziwin (living a good life) communicates that one's spirit and relationships must exist in good, healthy ways. Mino-bimaadiziwin are given to Anishinaabe people as their original instructions from the Creator. Included in these instructions and teachings is the conceptualization of the individual as having a spirit, heart, mind, and body and therefore capable of connecting, feeling, thinking, and acting, which lead to healthy relationships with the self and others. The Anishinaabe teachings of the gifts of the four directions provide guidance for personal wellbeing.

> The teaching and healing process is evolutionary and cyclical in nature, as is the continuum of the medicine wheel [or four directions teachings]. It begins with a desire to understand and identify with the balance, wholeness, and interconnectedness expressed in the medicine wheel. (Graveline, 1998, p. 182)

This chapter provides an introduction to various Anishinaabe teachings regarding wellbeing or healthy living. The teachings introduced are mino-bimaadiziwin, or living life in a good way, followed

---

[1] A group of four Anishinaabe Elders I worked with in 2005 with ethics approval.
[2] The word used by Algonquian speaking nations to name themselves in their language.

by teachings of life stages and their respective ceremonies to aid the person in living a good life and navigating their life path. Education from an Anishinaabe perspective is then presented to illustrate the significance of holistic education and its role in educating in a good way, resulting in healthy individuals. Holistic education, from an Anishinaabe perspective, includes using teachings of the medicine wheel that support the development of the mind, body, spirit, and heart. A presentation of medicine wheel teachings is discussed along with medicine wheel pedagogy to promote wellbeing.

This chapter is informed by my work as a mother, educator, community worker, and cultural learner. I[3] am Anishinaabe from the bear clan of Kitigan Zibi First Nation. I have dedicated my life to improving the educational experience of Indigenous students and public education about Indigenous peoples, which includes opening and operating an Anishinaabe culture-based school. I have also worked extensively in the healing field including opening an Indigenous healing service. My greatest teachers have been my five sons who I have tried to raise with Anishinaabe cultural teachings and practice. I believe education from an Indigenous perspective inherently involves education for wellbeing.

Mino-Bimaadiziwin

Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin (an Anishinaabe way of living) and *mino-bimaadiziwin* (living a good life) are ways-of-being[4] given to Anishinaabe people as part of their original instructions, which are reflected in the Creation story[5]. It tells us how we were created from the earth and lowered to the earth; how the Creator had such incredible love for us, and therefore gave us gifts from Creation (such as wind/air, fire, and water) to house within our bodies. This incredible love is re-enacted in our children, as they are not to take life for granted; they are to appreciate life and be affirmed through cultural traditions and practices that they are the life of the people.

When the first being was created, s/he[6] looked back through each of the four levels of Creation to always remember where s/he came from – the incredible love of the Creator. The one first lowered to earth had such incredible respect for the earth when s/he touched down upon all her beauty that s/he didn't even want to bend one blade of grass. S/he teaches the Anishinaabe people to have the utmost respect for the earth, as they depend on her for their survival. Respect is, therefore, spirit given. It is important for Anishinaabe children to know that they come from the Creator. The Creation story illustrates this for them and provides them with all of the values they need in order to fulfill the Creator's instructions of living in a good way (mino-bimaadiziwin) and celebrating life. When life is disrespected there is a belief that that disrespect will come back to you and something will happen to you – termed as *oohjine* in the Anishinaabe language. There is good and bad in everything – water gives life, yet you can drown in it. Everything must be respected for this reason.

---

[3] As an Anishinaabe person, I use the first person in this paper.

[4] Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin and mino-bimaadiziwin are two different ways used to state the same concept: living an Anishinaabe good life.

[5] The version of the Anishinaabe Creation story shared here is from Elder Edna Manitowabi.

[6] The Anishinaabe language does not have male and female pronouns. While I have heard some Elders state that it was a male human form that was first lowered to the earth, I have also heard that spirits (of which the first being is highly representative of) do not have a gender.

Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin is the relationship the Anishinaabeg[7] have with everything around them, being aware that there is something more than us, something that is very powerful. Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin is an understanding that everything is alive and that everything is related. Anishinaabe worldview speaks to the human relationship with the land, establishing a relationship with Creation. Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin is knowing you are a spirit. When you know this, you have a worldview. You are then able to grow, and not just exist in life, when you acknowledge that you have a spirit. Having spirit speaks to a worldview that, as a people, we are of the land, the four winds, the directions, the seasons, and the great circle of life. *Mother Earth* is therefore an easy concept to understand.

Living a good life or mino-bimaadiziwin is sometimes referred to as striving to always think the highest thought:

> Thinking the highest thought means thinking of one's self, one's community, and one's environment richly. This thinking in the highest, most respectful, and compassionate way systematically influences the actions of both individuals and community. It is a way to perpetuate a good life, a respectful and spiritual life, a wholesome life. (Cajete, 1994, p. 46)

The process of coming to know bimaadiziwin requires taking responsibility for one's own healing (Hart, 2002). Mino-bimaadiziwin "is seen by many people as the overall goal of healing, learning and life in general" (Hart, 2002, p. 44). Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin is recognizing your gifts, and recognizing that you have answers. The search for who you are is internal. To recognize your gifts you need nurturance and love, as these supports help bring the gifts to fruition. Reaching the good life, therefore, involves the family and community in addition to the self. Herring supports this idea of self-actualization when he states that Indigenous[8] "cultures emphasize cooperation, harmony, interdependence, the achievement of socially oriented and group goals, and a collective responsibility. Thus the goal [of self-actualization] is more akin to family and tribal self-actualization" (as cited in Hart, 2002, p. 74).

Anishinaabe Life Stages and Ceremonies

The self and community nurturance and love needed to recognize and develop our gifts are connected to teachings of the *path of life* (Dumont in Stigelbauer, 1992), the *four hills* (Johnston, 1976), or the *life stages* (E. Manitowabi, personal communication). These Anishinaabe teachings are combined with teachings of the four directions (which are discussed later in the chapter) in the following diagram (see Figure 1 below) and chart (see Table 1 below).

---

[7] This is the plural form of "Anishinaabe".
[8] While Anishinaabe is a specific group of First Nations, Indigenous encapsulates all First Nations.
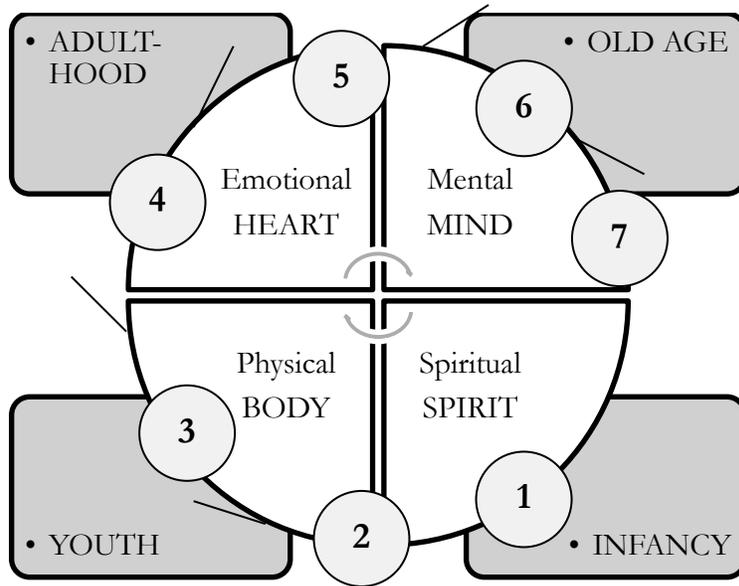
Figure 1: A compilation of the path of life, life stages, four hills, and medicine wheel teachings.

The *path of life* is described as beginning in the East and moves through the years to the West. This path provides the individual perspective in terms of life experiences, and what those experiences say about where s/he is and how s/he should be treated at that point in her/his life. This is life on a personal plane. As one Elder[9] states:

> When we walk this path, we carry with us all we have learned and are about to learn. We may walk this path as individuals, but we are never alone. We experience with others and learn from others. How we interpret and make use of this learning is called experiences. How we learn from our experiences and use it in a good way is called wisdom. (Stigelbauer, 1992, p. 4)

The path of life is sometimes described as the *four hills* of life (Johnston, 1976), which are: infancy, youth, adulthood, and old age. The path of life has seven stages: the good life, the fast life, the wandering and wondering life, the truth life, the planting life, the doing life, and the elder life (E. Manitowabi, personal communication, 1992-2010). Within these stages different ceremonies mark the transition from one life stage to another, while other ceremonies occur over a number of life stages. Ceremonies also identify to the individual the community's cultural expectations.

> The ceremonies that pervaded every aspect of Aboriginal life served not only to focus, amplify and reinforce teachings about the nature of reality but also to communicate culturally sanctioned rules of behavior. Ceremonies marking the transition from one life stage to another were particularly effective in inculcating proper attitudes and norms of behavior. (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1986, p. 641)

---

[9] This Elder was not specifically named in the Stigelbauer study.

Life stages	1 Good life	2 Fast life	3 Wondering & wandering life	4 Truth life	5 Planting life	6 Doing life	7 Elder life
Physical being	baby	child	teen	young adult	adult	Grand-parent	elder
Behaviors or abilities	spirit	power	awareness	Compre-hension	application	Syn-thesis	Evalu-ation
Actions	be	do	are	think	do	have	believe
Character-ized by	Lots of kindness, everything around the baby is good	Question parents' honesty, very busy (moving fast)	Figuring out the world, discover-ing nature, essence, and purpose through a vision of life	Standing on own, making decisions, determin-ing own truth in life	Creating life, busy serving the people	Should be grown up by now, have lots to offer	Have obtained a 360 degree vision of life, wise
Hills	First infancy	Second youth		Third adulthood		Fourth old age	
Aspects of being	spirit	body		heart		mind	

Table 1: A summarization of teachings presented in Figure 1.

The *good life* represents the years of life between birth and age seven. The Anishinaabe child is considered sacred as "children hold the centre spot in the circle of humanity" (Hart, 2002, p. 48). The Anishinaabe child is also considered a gift from the Creator (Cherubini, Niemczyk, Hodson, & McGean, 2010). From the time of birth to age seven the groundwork is laid for later learning through experiences. It is the time when only good things should happen; when we are kept safe by caregivers. It is also the time of giving, when we receive all the good things our parents give us. We have the instinct, freedom, and need to express and explore for ourselves, and we require the world to let us do that in good and safe ways (Cherubini et. al, 2010). Life should be easy, as one Elder states:

> When we are born we are taught to walk the 'path' by our parents. This starts for all of us, ideally, when we are between the age of one and seven years. During this time in our life we learn and want to experience for ourselves. We are taught by our parents and Elders. They steer us toward the 'path' and give us their experience, the best of what they have gained through their lives is offered to us. (Stiegelbauer, 1992, p. 4)

It is during the good life stage that children obtain their spirit name. This is done through ceremony when an Anishinaabe name that was intended for the child by the Creator is found and announced to all of creation. It is by this name that the Creator and all the spirit helpers know the child. Some ceremonial leaders require the parents of the child to find four human helpers for the child, two male and two female.

The fast life occurs between the ages of seven and puberty. Children at this time take on more responsibility for their learning by gathering different teachers/helpers. Boys and girls at this stage are very busy, and their mental capabilities develop at a fast rate. It is at this stage that children begin fasting when they spend time alone and refrain from eating and drinking. They begin with one day and work up to four days of fasting once they reach puberty. The purpose of fasting for young men is to quest for a vision – some guidance from the spirits as to what their purpose, or role, is in life. The lack of food and water heightens the senses so that messages can be received either in dreams, vision, sightings, or sounds. The solitude while in the bush, and sleeping in a small lodge, teaches the child how to be with their original mother – the earth. They learn about her beauty and come to love and respect her. There is definitely an increased appreciation for the water she gives to drink and the food she provides to eat.

The vision questing process also teaches the young how to be disciplined. They come to know themselves as a strong and worthy person, yet they are humbled by the magnitude of Creation. Because there is such strict protocol to follow in the fasting process, they learn how to be disciplined. Learning discipline provides a great asset to their life that is to follow.

The teenage years comprise the next stage – the wondering and wandering life – which is one of rebellion and testing where the focus on sexuality and physicality create strife for young people. This is a time when a different path is journeyed upon and when other teachers are sought out to learn from. Many external pressures make this time a challenging one. Even though the young person may venture off the good road they had been following, the strong roots of the good life provide the support they need to find their way back (E. Manitowabi, personal communication, 1992-2010). This phase may last until the individual is in their early twenties, and is a time of seeking and solidifying the truth of their individual selves. It is a time of wandering and wondering.

The truth life begins in adulthood when the individual starts to show evidence of what they have learned. The time of intense searching experienced by youth is usually over as one begins to settle with supporting a family and taking on concrete responsibilities in society. An appreciation for the reality of adult responsibilities and adult life begins to set in. Those who veered off the path to pursue sometimes unhealthy endeavors usually come back to the healthy path as they come to know the truth about what life is all about, and take on the responsibility of creating new life. Fasting is continued to maintain the connection with mother earth and Creation. Marriage ceremonies also usually happen in this stage where two people announce to the Creator and the four directions their choice to walk with each other on the remainder of their path of life.

The planting life involves creating a life for others, usually family, and the self. It is a time of concretely deciding what kind of life is desired for the present, and the future, and making it happen. An individual begins to actualize what they have learned and what they have to offer themselves and their community.

The doing life focuses on doing what is needed for the self, family, and community. It is the time of actively engaging in the plans that have been created. As the individual approaches the midlife years, they begin to experience the process of letting go of some of their prior responsibilities such as raising young children. This is a powerful time when men and women are more alike, and

family responsibilities are not as great. With so much knowledge and experience gained by the time one reaches this stage, the individual is actually doing more for others than for themselves.

The Elder life is the time of grandmother-hood and grandfather-hood.

> You are alone for the first time, because your parents and your grandparents have passed on to the land of spirits. People now come to you for advice and guidance and you realize that having followed the life path accordingly, you are in the unique position of passing on all that you have learned. (Dumont in Stigelbauer, 1992, p. 146-147).

At this point, it is the responsibility of the community to value and care for the Elder. One returns to the good life of the young child, but with the wisdom of experience. As an Elder, the individual has the opportunity to be a beacon for others.

> One Elder stated that there are two basic intentions for living a good life. The first is to grow in our own life and spirit; the second is to share life with others, to be 'helpers to everyone and everything,' all people and all creation. Actions taken in life would be both for the benefit of our own life and the people. The seven stages of life as presented in the path represent 'seven stones,' or important moments, given to each individual in their life. In what they do with them they are in turn responsible for the effects seven generations to follow. (Stigelbauer, 1992, p. 6)

The metaphor of the feather teaches the Anishinaabeg that there will be branches or divergences from the path (represented by the spine that runs through the center of the feather). This straying from the path is shown in Figure 1 above as branches off the circle representing these digressions. A feather is constructed by the many tinnier spines branching off the center spine, thus representing divergences from the true path of life, or as the Anishinaabe say, 'the good red road.' Individuals may lose their path as a result of outer temptations, or trauma, but the opportunity is always there to return to the path of the teachings. For a traditional Anishinaabe person, this may mean turning to the sacred medicines and traditional teachings. What remains important in the Anishinaabe culture is that balance is maintained between the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of one's being, and recognizing that as individuals we have a spirit, a body, a heart, and a mind.

Traditional Anishinaabe Education

Traditional Anishinaabe education was, and still is, implemented in a holistic manner. *Holistic* education is the positive development of the whole child in relation to his/her world. *Positive development* is the ongoing progression of the child's mind, body, spirit, and emotion in a good way. Because it is an ongoing progression, it is never complete. Therefore, this growth or development is a life-long process, which is only started as a child and then fostered in a positive way through the school, home, and community.

The word *good*, or "mino" in the Anishinaabe language, holds a lot of meaning in Anishinaabe culture whereas in English it is somewhat neutral to other terms that are synonymous such as 'great,'

'fantastic,' and 'amazing'[10]. *Living a good life,* or *following the good red road,* or *doing things in a good way* requires a great deal of energy from a person, and results in many rewards. The word *good* should not be taken lightly when considered from an Anishinaabe perspective. *The good way* means fostering the child's development using the seven sacred values of honesty, wisdom, love, respect, bravery, humility, and truth, which result in great things for the person receiving the teachings. For many people it takes a whole lifetime to learn how to live according to these values, from an Anishinaabe worldview. This is why Elders are often respected for their wisdom; they have come to know sharing, humility, kindness, caring, strength, and respect. Again, these words cannot be taken lightly. Each one involves a great deal of work on the part of the person to come to a true understanding of what these words and life ways really mean.

In Anishinaabe culture, the *whole child* is a child who is a person with a heart, a body, a spirit, and a mind. This idea is supported by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) when a framework was presented to address "lifelong, holistic education from an Aboriginal perspective. Each of these aspects must be addressed in the learning process" (pp. 445-6). Each aspect should not only be addressed, but should be addressed in balance. The child must grow in a balanced way in order to be a healthy person and contribute to his/her life in a healthy way.

The child's *world* begins from the inside and then extends to the family, community, nation, and his/her multi-verse, which includes the world/place that cannot be physically seen. The child must have a strong sense of positive identity in order for him/her to develop into a healthy person who will contribute to a society (Antone, 2000). Healthy individuals will create healthy families, communities, and ultimately nations and world. Spirituality has a lot to do with the *inner world* of the child. There must be a spiritual connection at an internal level with the self but also at an external level with the cosmos. For traditional Anishinaabe people, spirituality (the interconnectedness and interrelatedness between the self and the external world) is in everything they do; it is a part of them; it is a life-way. Spirituality can, therefore, exist in every aspect in the education of their children.

All of the characteristics of *holistic education* that have been described are interdependent and all must be developed in balance. This means that there is an ongoing interconnected relationship that exists amongst the child and his/her world. These relationships must be fostered both at home and in the education system to develop whole and healthy children, and ultimately adults.

This concept of *holistic* education is not new to Indigenous people. Traditional Anishinaabe education is based on a premise of holism. The theory and practice of holistic education discussed by Miller (1993) is not that different from the Anishinaabe understanding of *education*. Miller (1993) speaks of an ecological interdependent perspective within a social context, the body and mind connection, and the connections between the self and the community. The common theme is connection and inter-relationship rather than setting up binaries such as the mind/body split. All students need to be able to put the *whole* together with the *parts*. Therefore, they need the methodology to be able to put the parts together. Stating that students need to learn on a physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual level, is speaking of interconnectedness. Holistic education teaches a child that they do not exist without the trees. The scaffolding of holistic education is, therefore, the teaching of interconnections.

In an education system that does not plan, design, or deliver from a place of balance between all aspects of a person (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual) or a place of balance between that individual and all of Creation, fragmentation is ultimately the result – fragmentation of the person and their relationship to Creation. This is why so many Indigenous people believe that "the public

---

[10] According to an Elder I have worked with.

school system is limiting the knowledge base of [their] children, [that] they are being denied access to knowledge bases that they need to sustain themselves and the planet in the future" (Battiste, 2000, p. 202). Therefore, the requirement is to provide a holistic education that draws on the Anishinaabe knowledge system that educates a child's mind, body, spirit, and heart. Teaching of the medicine wheel, and the gifts of the four directions contained therein, provide insight into the significance of the four aspects of being (mind, body, spirit, heart) and educating for the good life.

Medicine Wheels

In many Indigenous cultures the medicine wheel[11] metaphor contains the traditional teachings and can be used as a guide on any journey, including the educational process. While there is some variation in its teachings and representations, the underlying thread of meaning to the web, or uses and significance of medicine wheels, remain the same: the importance of appreciating and respecting the ongoing inter-connectedness and inter-relationships of all things. Therefore, there are different ways to represent or use medicine wheels: all forms hold particular meaning to the various culture groups while all transmit a common understanding of the inter-connectedness and inter-relationship of all things.

The wheel drawing simply begins by making a circle. Superimposed on the circle are four equidistant points. These points symbolically identify the power/medicine of the four directions using four different colors. The final drawing resembles a compass for human understanding. Around the spirit world of the four directions is the Creator above and Mother Earth below whereby "a three dimensional sphere is created which mysteriously contains, reflects, and possesses within itself the perimeters and powers of the entire universe, indeed of reality itself" (Sanderson, 1991, p. 51).

According to Anishinaabe Elder Edna Manitowabi, the number four is considered significant among Indigenous peoples. There are many different ways that Elders and traditional teachers have expressed the four directions: the four teachings, the four winds, the four cardinal directions -many other relationships that can be expressed in sets of four.

> Just like a mirror can be used to see things not normally visible (e.g. behind us or around a corner), medicine wheels can be used to help us see or understand things we can't quite see or understand because they are ideas and not physical objects. (Bopp, Bopp, Bown, & Lane, 1985, p. 9)

"Medicine wheels can be pedagogical tools for teaching, learning, contemplating, and understanding our human journeys at individual, band/community, nation, global, and even cosmic levels" (Calliou, 1995, p. 51).

Within medicine wheels there are many, many, *rings* of teachings that exist with significant meaning independently but they are all the more powerful when understood as a collective of interdependent knowledge teachings and practices. Some of these rings include: seasons (spring, summer, fall, winter), times of day (morning, afternoon, evening, night), stages of life (infant, youth, adult, Elder), and life givers (earth, sun, water, air).

---

[11] The term 'medicine wheel' was established when stone constructions in the shape of wheels were found on Medicine Mountain in Wyoming, Wisconsin.

Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin addresses the concept of the individual as having a spirit, heart, mind, and body and therefore connects, feels, thinks, and acts which leads to respect, relationships, reciprocity, and responsibility, as the individual lives on the planet with all other living things. Central to this framework is also the Creator's four gifts to the individual – vision, time, reason, and movement. "Vision addresses the inner insight of the child and the way they see his/her external world. Time is created in a spatial sense but also fosters relationships. Reason establishes the child's feelings and attitudes while movement reflects behaviours" (Douglas, Thrasher, & Rickett, 1995, p. 3). These Anishinaabe teachings of the four directions are consolidated in Figure 2.

According to Absolon (1994), "The fourth direction involves creating a healing movement toward change – this is possible only when the other components have been acknowledged" (p. 18). In the East the gift of *vision* is found where one is able to *see*. In the South one spends *time* in which to *relate to* the vision. In the West, one uses the gift of *reason* to *figure it out*. In the North one uses the gift of *movement* in which to *do* the vision.
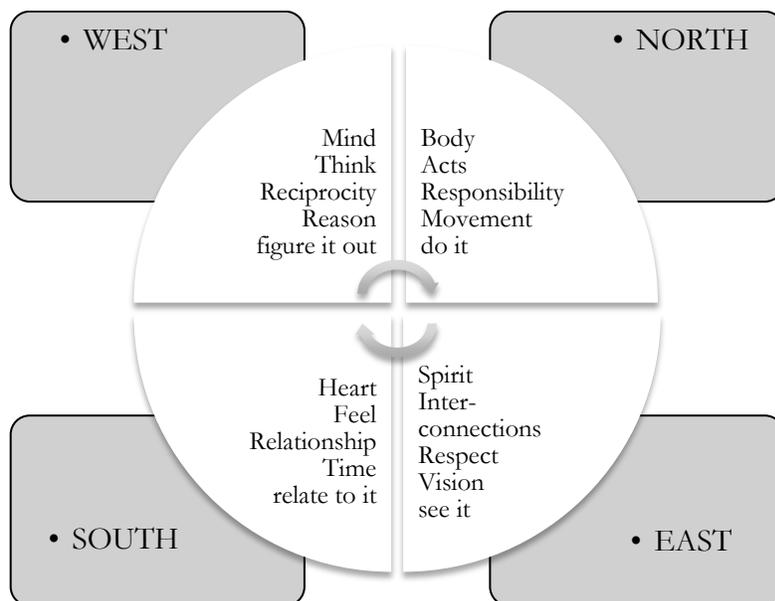
Figure 2: Gifts of the Four Directions[12]

The Anishinaabe teachings of the gifts of the four directions provide direction for wellbeing. Moving into the *doing* phase of the North requires that one take the knowledge gained from all the directions and enact it. This form of praxis makes the balance achievable. Using the four directions tool for analysis in healing and learning demands the continuous and ongoing reflection of oneself in relation to the natural world, thus balance must be maintained while embracing change.

---

[12] This is a compilation of teachings I have learned through Elders who I have worked with.

Using Medicine Wheel Pedagogy

In order to create the *movement* required by the northern direction, one must re-visit the other directions to achieve a 360-degree vision (Dumont as cited in Stigelbauer, 1992). By going to the East where one *visions* transformations, one can actively create a better life for oneself and others. "Vision can inform our thinking, willing, feeling, and doing. As such, to be visionary is to be reacting, enacting, and pro-acting" (Graveline, 1998, p. 279). Indigenous people can vision how they can be active in the "creation of oppositional analytical and cultural space" (Mohanty, 1994, p. 148). Visioning allows them to engage in the hopeful utopian thinking necessary for radical transformation (Benhabib, 1992). Once a guiding vision is achieved, strategies can then be planned to help actualize it. Each person then has the responsibility to do the work required to fulfill the vision (Cajete, 1994).

Understanding Anishinaabe knowledge and worldview begins with medicine wheel teachings previously discussed: the gifts of the directions (vision, time, reason, movement), and the actions of those gifts (see it, relate to it, figure it out, do it). Building from these understandings (see Figure 3 below), Anishinaabe knowledge embraced by the medicine wheel can be defined as wholeness, interrelationships, interconnections, and balance/respect. *Wholeness* requires that one look in entireties; that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, yet the parts cannot be fully seen until the shape of the whole can be seen. *Interrelationship* requires that one establish a personal relationship with the 'whole' - with all that surrounds them. In addition, one must establish a relationship with their whole being; this includes one's spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional aspects. *Interconnections* create an environment which is mutually sustaining; where there is a transcending of logic and linear thought to reveal synthesis and dynamic interdependence. *Balance* and *respect* provide an order and structure to the whole and all its relationships and interconnections while providing an appreciation for the 'awe' of it all.

It is necessary to consider Indigenous knowledge as a collection of knowledges from different Indigenous nations. Anishinaabe knowledge is culture specific, contained within the *local knowledge* and *worldview* of the nation. It also has to be *ecological*, where the knowledge is contained within the land of the geographic location of the nation. Knowledge is also contained within the people of the nation. Anishinaabe knowledge becomes personal and *generational* as there is a process of generational transmission. Anishinaabe knowledge is *epistemological*, in that, each nation culturally determines for itself how it knows what it knows.

While Anishinaabe worldview articulates that Anishinaabe people need to develop themselves, including their children, in a holistic way, which addresses their spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental capacities, they need to address how to transmit learning through all of those personal aspects. The *spiritual* can be touched through *ceremony*, *teachings*, and *stories*. The *physical* can be transmitted through the *land*, while the *emotional* aspect can be developed through a balanced connection between the *heart and the head*. *Mental* capacities can be developed through *ancestral languages* and *integrative learning*.

Wisdom then becomes the goal of any educational process, including living - to say that one is truly knowledgeable as a person is to say that he/she not only knows what is valued by a nation, but

- INTER-
  CONNECTED
  NESS

WEST
emotional
personal,
generational
reason
"figure it out"
heart & head
knowledge

NORTH
mental
epistemological
movement
"do it"
language
wisdom

- BALANCE/
  RESPECT

SOUTH
physical
ecological
time
"relate to it"
land
understanding

EAST
spiritual
cultural, local
knowledge,
worldview
vision
"see it"
ceremony,
teachings, stories
awareness

- INTER-
  RELATION-
  SHIP

- WHOLENESS

Figure 3: The transmission of Indigenous knowledge through education.

that he/she has lived his/her life in such a way that he/she has experienced what he/she knows, and can therefore be considered wise. Anishinaabe knowledge and worldview is attained by choosing to do what is necessary to obtain multiple perspectives from which to view the world. This in-depth searching for knowledge is what leads to wisdom. Wisdom is achieved by first becoming *aware* of the learning through all the senses requiring the learning to be introduced to the students in multiple modalities. *Understanding* is achieved by providing students with enough time to solidify the learning such that they are able to replicate the learning. A deeper understanding is achieved by students relating to the learning at a deeper level to become *knowledgeable* to the point that they are able to apply the learning in any situation. To say that the students have achieved *wisdom* requires that they are able create some action with the learning, and teach it to others.

Conclusion

> Life is a path on which the traveler is invited by the Creator to grow and develop in all aspects of life, so that each one can find his/her true identity, become aware and respectful of his/her inherent dignity and manifest his/her inner goodness along the way. (Loiselle & McKenzie, 2006, p. 3)

Walking in balance requires all essential parts of the self (mind, body, spirit, and heart) to be developed and satisfied equally (Johnston, 2013). Being balanced is synonymous with being healthy,

or well, which includes facing issues concerning all aspects of the self (Verniest, 2006). Wellbeing from an Anishinaabe perspective can consequently be defined as "achieving balance between the parts of the self – emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual; finding one's place in relation to other hum

> The Medicine Wheel concept from Native American culture provides a model for who we are as individuals. We have an intellectual self, a spiritual self, an emotional self, and a physical self. Strength and balance in all quadrants of the Medicine Wheel can produce a strong, positive sense of wellbeing, whereas imbalance in one of more quadrants can cause symptoms of illness. (Montour as cited in Twigg & Hengen, 2009, p. 14)

Anishinaabe worldview and teachings of mino-bimaadiziwin, living a good life, and the life stages which inform that life path, provide insight into achieving balanced and healthy living. Traditional Anishinaabe philosophy of holistic education articulates how mino-bimaadiziwin is manifested with children at their life stage. Teachings of the medicine wheel, and how those teachings can be actualized with pedagogy in education, provide further guidance on living a good life that creates wellbeing.

References

Absolon, K. (1994). *Building health from the medicine wheel: Aboriginal program development.* Paper presented at the meeting of the Native Physician's Association, Winnipeg, MB.

Antone, E. (2000). Empowering Aboriginal voice in Aboriginal education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 24*(1), 92-101.

Battiste, M. (2000). Maintaining Aboriginal identity, language, and culture in modern society . In M. Battiste (Ed.). *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 192-208). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Benhabib, S. (1992). *Situating the self: Gender, community, and post-modernism in contemporary ethics.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Bopp, J., Bopp, M., Bown, L., Lane, P., & The Four Worlds Development Project. (1985). *The Sacred Tree.* Lethbridge, AB: Four Worlds Development Press.

Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of Indigenous education.* Skyland, NC: Kivaki Press.

Calliou, S. (1995). Peacekeeping actions at home: A medicine wheel model for a peacekeeping pedagogy. In J. Barman & M. Battiste (Eds.). *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 47-72). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Cherubini, L., Niemczyk, E., Hodson, J., & McGean, S. (2010). A grounded theory of new Aboriginal teachers' perceptions: The cultural attributions of medicine wheel teachings. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 16*(5), 545-557.

Douglas, V., Thrasher, M., & Rickett, L. (1995). *First Nations school of Toronto: A culture based perspective on the development of a curriculum framework.* Toronto, ON: Native Child and Family Services of Toronto.

Graveline, F. J. (1998). *Circle works: Transforming Eurocentric consciousness.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Hart, M. A. (2002). *Seeking mino-pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal approach to helping.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Johnston, B. (2013). *Walking in balance: Meeyau-ossaewin.* Wiarton, ON: Kegedonce Press.

Johnston, B. (1976). *Ojibway heritage.* Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart.

Loiselle, M. & McKenzie, L. (2006, May). *The wellness wheel: An Aboriginal contribution to social work.* Paper presented at the First North-American Conference on Spirituality and Social Work. Waterloo, ON.

Miller, J. P. (1993). *The holistic curriculum.* Toronto, ON: Ontario Institute for Studies of Education Press.

Mohanty, C. T. (1994). On race and voice: Challenges for liberal education in the 1990's. In H. Giroux & P. McLaren (Eds.). *Between borders: Pedagogy and the politics of cultural studies* (pp. 145-166). New York, NY: Routledge.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal peoples; Volume 3: Gathering strength.* Ottawa, ON: Canada Communication Group.

Sanderson, J. (1991). *The Cree way: Traditional paths to learning* (Unpublished Master's Thesis). University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

Stigelbauer, S. (1992, April). *The individual is the community; the community is the world: Native elders talk about what young people need to know.* Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Twigg, R., & Hengen, T. (2009). Going back to the roots: Using the medicine wheel in the healing process. *First Peoples Child and Family Review, 4*(1), 10-19.

Verniest, L. (2006). Allying with the medicine wheel: Social work practice with Aboriginal peoples. *Critical Social Work,* 7(1). Retrieved from http://www1.uwindsor.ca/criticalsocialwork/allying-with-the-medicine-wheel-social-work-practice-with-aboriginal-peoples

Chapter 2

Centering Indigenous Intellectual Traditions on Holistic Lifelong Learning

RITA BOUVIER, MARIE BATTISTE, and JARRETT LAUGHLIN

The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL), in collaboration with the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ABLKC), and First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples, created three Holistic Lifelong Learning Models (HLLM) that reveal an Indigenous framework for understanding individual and collective well-being among these groups. The models have shown to have the potential for measuring success in learning in many learning environments. While both CCL and ABLKC no longer exist, the models were disseminated widely through a virtual resource online without an adequate context of how they were developed. From the perspectives of the authors who were involved with CCL and ABLKC when the models were developed, this essay provides a brief historical context of how the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning models were developed, the purposes and principles of learning that generated them, their utility as community planning tools, their use as foundational frameworks for creating educational assessments, and the potential for their use in reporting and monitoring lifelong learning outcomes in a variety of educational systems. These models demonstrate what holistic, lifelong learning means from a First Nations, Inuit and Métis perspective, and provide frameworks for how Indigenous Peoples in Canada understand their learning for success, and how success is understood as being integrative and supportive of their collective identities, knowledges, languages and cultures. Several examples are offered as to how these models have been introduced in workshop format and used by published scholars. Finally, we show how they can potentially be used as theoretical and methodological foundations for schools, scholars, and research in Indigenous health and collective well-being.

Human beings are innately curious. Thomas King's Massey Lecture Series (2003) begins with an ancient Haudenosaunee story of an ancestor he called 'Charm,' whose curiosities lead to a whole new paradigm of multiple world knowledges on which the first peoples and first animals learn from each other. "Learning," asserts Saulteaux Elder, Danny Musqua, "is the purpose of life" (as cited in Knight 2001). The ancient stories of tricksters, superhuman heroes, and animals, as revealed by Raven, Napi, Wesakechak, Rougarou, Nanabozho, Kluskap, and other Indigenous legendary spirits, frame lessons in life to help humans to understand that the life journey is holistic, lifelong, and relational. Their insights frame the foundations of learning as a holistic, lifelong enterprise for all

human beings: to make sense of the world, to provide social cohesion, to solve changing circumstances in our environments, and to live joyfully (Hoppers & Richards, 2012).

As they entered into treaties and other agreements with the settlers, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples had hoped that they would not only benefit from, but also develop equally with, the settlers. First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have not benefitted from learning in formal systems within Canada. Their learning has been overshadowed with assimilative and punitive practices intending to destroy their languages, their cultures, and the holistic relationships that have been integral to their knowledge traditions. Colonialism and Eurocentrism have been the leading issues framing their unease with education and learning.

Colonial interaction with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada was gradual, starting early in the 1500's through the present, wherein settler governments have entered into various treaties with First Nations across Canada, and into other agreements with the Inuit that provide the legal structures of politics in Canada, and the structures of education for Aboriginal peoples.

Under section 93 of the British North America Act (BNA) of 1867, it is Canada's provinces and territories that hold jurisdiction in education. Implementation of the treaties were framed in Canada's confederation through the BNA of 1867 and later affirmed in Canada's Constitution of 1982. The BNA divided legislative authority for treaties and "Indians and lands reserved for Indians" to Parliament to be administered through a federal ministry now called Indigenous Affairs and Northern Development Canada (Henderson, 1995). Consequently, First Nations living on reserves have a separate arrangement in education often directed through various programs and policy directives of the federal government or then sub-agreements with First Nations and provincial authorities. Unique is a land claims agreement with the Inuit in northeastern Canada that created Nunavut. Like the provinces and territories, Nunavut has its own authority to make decisions in education.

The effects and processes of over 400 years of colonization and associated Eurocentric thinking from this period continue to challenge First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples as individuals, communities, and self-governing nations. Many subsequent reports and testimonies of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have revealed the prolonged, devastating, and traumatic effects of assimilative education imposed on them (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). When compared to non-Aboriginal people on almost all social indicators in Canada, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are on the bottom of the national statistics in education, employment, and health, while also being on the top for rates of incarceration, foster care, and mental and physical health issues. While much research has offered some conclusions and recommendations for what these statistics reveal, little research is available about First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples' successes when their language, knowledge systems, and ways of knowing are included in their education. Perhaps doing so would contest the Eurocentric policies of colonial languages and their knowledge system being applied indiscriminately. Indigenous Elders, scholars, and educational leaders have been steadfast in claiming that Indigenous intellectual traditions and knowledges have an important place in contemporary learning environments, and perhaps more so in the context of the 21st century as we rethink and reimagine sustainable relationships with each other and all life (Cajete, 2015).

We, the authors, believe we have something of value to add to conversations on understanding First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning, and the metrics and outcome disparities among First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples that come from our research and experiences working on assessing Indigenous learning. At this point, we wish to acknowledge the integral roles and knowledges we, as authors, have had in the emergence and implementation of the CCL and the Aboriginal Learning

Knowledge Centre, which was hosted both at the University of Saskatchewan under the leadership of Dr. Marie Battiste and at the First Nation Adult and Higher Education Consortium under the leadership of Dr. Vivian Ayoungman. The authors' locations are first important to this story.

Rita Bouvier is a Métis teacher who has served in various leadership, administrative and researcher roles in the K-12 system, and in post-secondary education. She continues to provide leadership by facilitating community/organizing learning, supporting the conceptual design and content strategies to Indigenizing and decolonization efforts in organizations and institutions. Rita is a published writer and poet. Rita served as AbLKC's Coordinator at the University of Saskatchewan.

Marie Battiste is a Mi'kmaw educator and professor at the University of Saskatchewan (U of S), the founding director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the U of S, and one of the founding Board of Governors for the CCL in its beginning years. She would then later become a co-director of the AbLKC at the University of Saskatchewan.

Jarrett Laughlin is an education and policy researcher, who has worked with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), CCL, and the Ontario Ministry of Education. Jarrett's role as CCL researcher in the Ottawa office generated new and innovative education assessments, identified innovative approaches to measuring success in lifelong learning, and translated research into action through socially innovative, community-based projects that support the overall well-being of communities.

This paper captures a narrative of the collaboration and development of the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models (HLLM) that were developed through the cooperation of the CCL, AbLKC, and First Nations, Inuit and Métis people through their national organizations and leadership. We believe the potential value for the philosophical models continues for monitoring Aboriginal learning in Canada beyond their first (and last) monitoring report on Aboriginal learning in CCL's 2009 report. The models have also provided a useful framework for community planning, research and the creation of educational assessments in learning. Despite the closing of CCL, the HLLM continue to be widely disseminated through CCL's on-line website through 2015, but without a narrative of them there is little context for them. Our narrative seeks to offer an understanding of the creation, context and actual and potential applications of the HLLM. We assert that, while CCL no longer exists as a structure in Canada, the HLLM continue to have value, validity, and resonance because they reflect the thinking of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people to describe learning in, and through, their worldviews and conceptual frameworks that are epistemic to all forms of learning, and are among those epistemological products developed by First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples themselves. We explore the potential and the actual unfolding of diverse applications of the models in the context of at least one partnership between First Nations communities and provincial school divisions.

Monitoring and Measuring Success in Learning

Before we share the story created by and for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada through the CCL, we seek to elaborate on how success has been discursively used in shaping a discussion of metrics in learning. In the last decade, many schools have begun to use various metrics for assessing outcomes, and in so doing have found several important factors that need discussion. Some of these issues result from provincial, federal, and band-operated systems of education having diverse methods and purposes associated with their metrics. Most have not created a mechanism for sharing their student data arising from school outcomes across jurisdictional boundaries, although we are aware such discussions are occurring between provincial school systems and First Nations'

education systems. What we view as problematic is the lack of coherence across diverse educational systems for assessing *what* First Nations, Inuit and Métis people are learning, *how* they are succeeding, and what the future looks like for them when education systems are not resourced with parity, are measuring different outcomes, and do not share data on students and learning with each other.

Despite separate structures of education for First Nations and Inuit from provincial citizens (including the Métis), federal and First Nation-controlled schools have had to parallel and accept, by federal mandates, the provincial and territorial curricula, partly for making the transition between First Nations and provincial controlled schools easier for First Nations students. Yet, First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities have worked persistently to address the systemic curricular omissions in their western education systems. First Nations, Métis and Inuit histories, experiences, languages, knowledge systems, and perspectives have not been systematically included in provincial and territorial curricula in K-12. While some efforts are currently underway in adding treaty education and Indigenous content across Canada, the uptake of First Nations, Inuit and Métis knowledges in the curriculum is uneven, fragmented (Ouellette, 2011), and slow, with little research and data to measure the veracity of efforts for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike. Likewise, the advocacy of parity of funding has not changed what First Nation schools on-reserve receive, which has contributed further to uneven successes emerging from schools educating First Nations students. The urgency and importance of working across education systems and reconciling the Constitutional Aboriginal and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada is another important consideration for the 21st century, as more than half of First Nations and all Inuit attend K-12 provincial schools. Most have to attend provincial secondary institutions or provincially affiliated First Nations, Inuit or Métis institutions (AFN, 2012).

While variable national statistics are offered on First Nations, Inuit and Métis students' high school completion, there is little information shared nationally about youth in schools and their successes. This information is either nonexistent or held and not shared among the respective education authorities and systems. One of the objectives of CCL was to bring the provinces, territories, First Nations schools, and educational authorities together on this point; however, its closing due to loss of funding, abruptly ended this effort. Some First Nations schools have collected their own educational data, some of which may be shared with the federal government; but with no sharing mechanism achieved nationally it makes it difficult to bring all this information together. While schools often parallel each other within legislated boundaries, they do not have the same needs across boundaries. Thus, coalescing data on First Nations, Inuit and Métis students and learning outcomes has presented a challenge for an informed discussion on the successes of Aboriginal students and further monitoring of learning for First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners across Canada. At best, Canada's census data provide only limited details of the percentages of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students who have attained a high school diploma, or who have continued with formal schooling beyond high school.

Building a case for sharing monitoring schemes and reporting mechanisms, among and across diverse governmental and institutional jurisdictions, is a sensitive business. While all jurisdictions have some data gathering and monitoring going on, these have not been shared for various reasons. Monitoring has many purposes. Not all governments, institutions, and groups use their data similarly, or collect their data in standard ways. Their purposes may be involved in resolving many local or regional issues dealing with their local resourcing, staffing, curriculum changes, professional development of their staff, student enrollment, financing and resource effective management of schools and systems. Sharing of local data monitoring students or schools also has evaluative consequences, which often carry the risk that the data will be used inappropriately, such as to critique

jurisdictions, schools, teachers, or even the learners themselves. Hence, decisions need to be made about what kind of monitoring of students, schools, programs, funds, and other output measures are required. Monitoring and reporting also raise the problematic issue of governance of research involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, wherein ethics, frameworks, roles and responsibilities, and processes must also be considered.

While the provinces and territories in Canada have historically developed their own systems of education, the issue of learning was thought to have larger ramifications beyond schools that would impact long-term learning patterns and future successes for Canada. This focus on life-long learning is particularly apparent when one compares First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners to non-Aboriginal learners in Canada. With the population of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Canada reaching more than 1.4 million, and growing, they now represent 4.3% of the Canadian population. Of those, 61% are First Nations, 32% Métis, and 4% Inuit (Statistics Canada, 2011). The Aboriginal population is young, with nearly five out of 10 people under the age of 24.

Using indicators based on retention and completion rates, provinces and territories have identified First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners as having different outcomes from the Canadian averages in schooling. In Saskatchewan, for example, only 33% of Aboriginal students are graduating from high school, compared to 72% of all students (Government of Saskatchewan, 2012). British Columbia reported that only 47% of Aboriginal learners are graduating from high school, compared to 80% of non-Aboriginal learners (Ministry of Education, 2006). With graduation rates being one of the primary indicators of student success, First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples represent a concern for Canada's future.

To improve its competitive edge in the global economics and social scales, Canada recognized that with the fastest growing demographic in Canada being First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, more inclusive measures of learning success, and potential, must be addressed in Canada (Avison 2004). To achieve this, Canada would have to address the other forms of non-formal and informal learning and tie diverse jurisdictions together to arrive at a larger, more holistic, picture of learning for Canadians, and in particular First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

The government of Canada began such a discussion with key people who would eventually become part of the board of governors of the new Canadian Council on Learning, funded in 2004 by the Ministry of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Its mandate was to monitor and report on lifelong learning in Canada beyond, but in conversation with, the then-structured provincial education systems involving elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions. The CCL began in 2005 as an independent corporation; "its mandate was to promote and support evidence-based decisions about learning throughout all stages of life, from early childhood through to the senior years" (Aboriginal Education Resource Centre, n.d.) and to provide information to governments and the Canadian public on how Canada might improve learning as a lifelong enterprise.

In its first five-year strategy, the CCL chose to highlight and examine five areas of learning in Canada. Priority areas that needed to be addressed, and were represented by centres located strategically across Canada included: early childhood learning in Quebec, adult learning in New Brunswick, work and learning in Ontario, Aboriginal learning in Saskatchewan/Prairies, and health and learning in British Columbia. These national centres were to inform a national picture of the nature of learning among these diverse areas, with monitoring and reporting occurring across all knowledge centres, including a separate project across all provinces with the educational authorities of the Ministries of Education. These aims included how evidence-based monitoring, and decisions about learning throughout all stages of life (from early childhood through to the senior years), could

improve overall learning processes, how coordinating with provinces and territories across Canada could support each of the provinces' overall measures of success, and begin building an independent and objective measuring process for improving learning in Canada.

Background and Context of the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models

As the CCL's first five-year strategy unfolded, and the first Canadian monitoring report on lifelong learning was being prepared, a discussion ensued about how First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning might be included, and a concern raised about the appropriateness of conventional indicators used to monitor learning for Indigenous people. In the status quo metrics applied to Indigenous peoples' learning, Indigenous peoples often, if not usually, performed lower than the average Canadian populations, reinforcing a litany of prescribed pathologies and stereotypes inferring that these represented their innate deficiencies not the adverse situations that created these statistics. Absent from those statistics were the contexts of colonization, and patriarchal and racist polices throughout their colonial relationships that created poverty, overcrowding, poor housing and water, lack of health care and services, lack of schools on reserve, the dire social circumstances facing families and communities, and a dysfunctional relationship with governments. The leading discourse among the media, and many Canadians, is that Indigenous peoples themselves are the sole cause of their lower performance and not the thinking reinforced institutionally or through systems protected by the laws and the processes applied to them (Battiste, 2013; Longboat, n.d.). The programmatic application to resolve these perceived deficiencies is often addressed through supports for individual students, such as language and culture programming, mentoring, tutoring, counseling and the like, with few long term solutions for the systemic issues. The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (AbLKC) leadership recognized that this approach was problematic because it reinforced an individual solution to a systemic problem. Our challenge then was to help Canada understand the context in which First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples were situated in those metrics.

In a study of the systems and their metrics for identifying Aboriginal learners progress across diverse areas, education consultant Scott Tunison (2007) found that Indigenous peoples' learning goals and outcomes identified by provincial and territorial systems were 'indistinct,' meaning not identical, and unclear, thereby making the articulation of standards very difficult. He noted in the comparison of goals and programming for Aboriginal students that

> there appeared to be an uneasy relationship between the educational objectives typical of a Eurocentric culture (i.e. high school graduation rates, attendance, etc.,) and the culturally expressed outcomes of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples (e.g., ancestral language efficacy, cultural knowledge, etc.). (p. 26)

While Aboriginal peoples have long acknowledged that both of these broad goals are important to their success, Tunison (2007) concluded that little could be found in literature on what success meant among First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and what it meant to the provincial or federal institutions providing education to them, including which factor was more important to a success outcome or what form the relationship should take when there was no agreement on the goals of the program, or on the standards they would take. Until this discussion among all parties had taken place, he concluded, the definition of success in its broadest sense across Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities remained problematic (Tunison, 2007).

Pushing further on this topic, Tunison urged a broader conversation about what a desired future would look like when First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples' goals were included in education systems. AbLKC agreed. Systems must consider how to identify those learning goals valuable for assessing progress among diverse groups as well as identify the nature of the relationship between the learning objectives (standards, goals, measures, definitions of success, etc.) for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike. In the present context, and in the spirit of reconciliation and reciprocity, we further asked, how do schools and education systems in Canada reconcile Indigenous peoples' value for Indigenous knowledges and languages within their institutions?

As a result of many troubling and difficult questions across diverse jurisdictions, the CCL postponed its full reporting on the State of Aboriginal Learning for 2007 until it had concluded consultations in identifying how First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples define success from their perspectives. This was to be achieved through a series of workshops and conversations in collaboration with AbLKC and with First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples through their national and regional organizations, and enacted with other stakeholders in government and public institutions who had an interest in, and responsibility for, meeting the mandate for Indigenous peoples in the outcome of these discussions.

In its first report on Aboriginal learning, the CCL (2007) noted that, most frequently, studies of Aboriginal youth focused on indicators that measured their deficiencies or deficits as compared to non-Aboriginal learners, rather than their assets and potential as reflected within their understandings of a successful educational system. Furthermore, it was noted "indicators of Aboriginal learning must be broadened to measure more than simply years of schooling and performance in standardized assessments" (CCL, 2007, p. 81).

The Holistic Lifelong Learning Models, Areas of Learning, and Indicators of Success

After releasing the 2007 State of Learning in Canada report, which identified the need to redefine how we measure success in learning for First Nations, Inuit and Métis, the CCL (with support from the AbLKC's Co-directors, Animation Theme Bundle Leads, and staff) began the journey toward identifying the aspects of lifelong learning that define learning success for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. A brief background paper and draft frameworks were commissioned by the CCL to serve as a catalyst for identifying the sources and domains of learning and possible indicators for learning within the workshops in Edmonton, Alberta in February of 2007.

Indigenous peoples represent a wide range of diversity as distinct peoples with definitive cultural and political affiliations within specific relations with their ecologies and regions, having distinctive languages and knowledges drawn from living in broad contexts throughout the world. This distinctiveness is captured in Canada within Treaties, compacts, and agreements made between the Crown, the federal government, and the provinces or territories. To receive the broadest insight, representatives and leaders from the Assembly of First Nations, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, the National Métis Council, and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, as well as the Native Women's Association of Canada were critical partners in this initiative.

Arriving at a consensus of themes required each of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis working groups to meet separately. They were tasked with creating and improving the draft models based on their discussion and further elaborating on success in lifelong learning. Each group was asked to

consider what national indicators could measure progress based on the refined Holistic Lifelong Learning Models. The groups then shared their findings and discussions with each other.[1] In March of 2007, the CCL presented the revised Holistic Lifelong Learning Models for First Nations and Métis at the AbLKC's first annual conference held in Edmonton, Alberta, where it received further feedback, and extended conversations were held on metrics that might be available with various stakeholders, including government departments with a responsibility for the well-being of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. On June 21st, 2007, Aboriginal Day, the CCL released the results of the workshops, including the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models, and launched three interactive portals using the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models as a gateway to research, data, and indicators for First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning. It also released the first annual thematic report on Aboriginal Learning focusing on the initiative of "Redefining Success in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning" (CCL, 2007, p. 1). The graphics and icons chosen by the groups for each of the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models are in Figures 1, 2 and 3 below.

The models provide a concrete representation of how First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada understand the value and importance of learning and education, especially as they relate to their communities. It is significant that the models first link Aboriginal peoples' perceptions and interests in learning to macro processes involving a community, and not just individual success as defined often as material success and associated with employment. Success as a people rather than as individuals is an important perception, just as having an identity as a First Nations, Inuit and Métis is deeply lodged in one's connection to a people and a place and is, for most, inseparable from their languages, cultural and place-based connections, families, and communities. Therefore, improved learning is not achieved by identifying individual successes, as is often reported among Canadians. In the case of Aboriginal peoples', successes in learning are intimately tied to the overall community orientations and collective well-being demonstrated from the applications of their learning.

The learning models are also representative of diverse cultures, histories, and geographies of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, and of the distinctive conversations in creating their models that capture a shared vision of learning resonating as a purposeful, holistic, lifelong process. An integrated perspective of the overarching principles or key conceptual attributes evident in each of the HLLM follows, reinforced with insights by other Indigenous authors.

- *Learning is holistic.* Learning engages and develops all aspects of the individual (emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual), the community (cultural, social, economic, and political spheres), and stresses the interconnectedness of all life (CCL, 2007). Effect begins with intention. Our thoughts create and shape the observable world (Meyer, 2008). The values for regenerating the learning spirit are that...we each have a purpose, we fulfill life's purpose through the Creator's [Creation's] gifts, we influence other life forms with our energy or in turn are influenced by them, and feelings, words, thoughts, actions impact on us and those around us (George, 2008).

---

[1] Due to a severe winter storm a few Inuit were unable to participate at this initial meeting. It was agreed that a second workshop would be conducted in the north to continue the conversation with them. This workshop was eventually held in May of that year in Iqaluit, Nunavut.
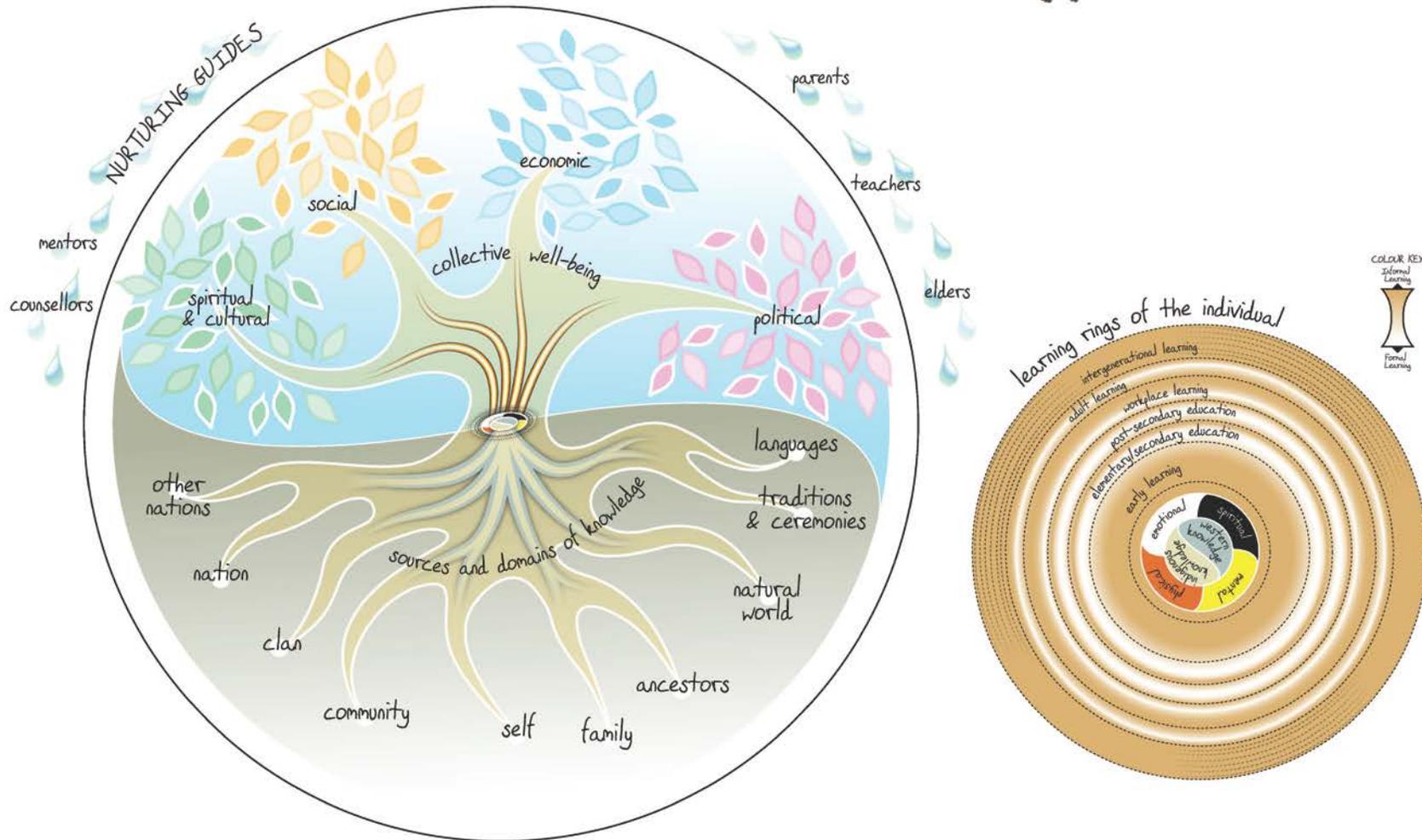
Figure 1: First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (CCL, 2007, p. 19; reprinted with permission).
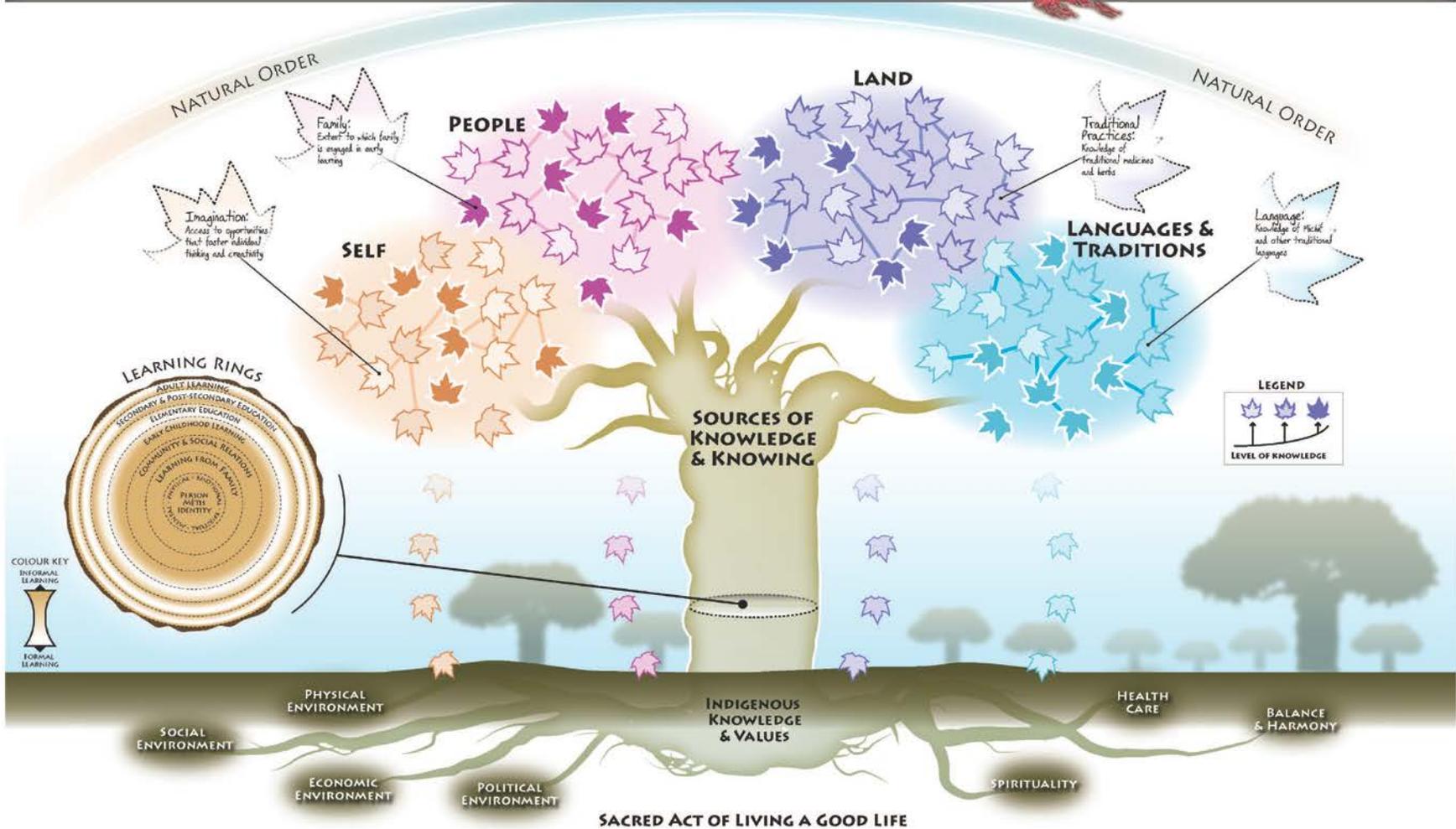
Figure 2: Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (CCL, 2007, p. 21; reprinted with permission).
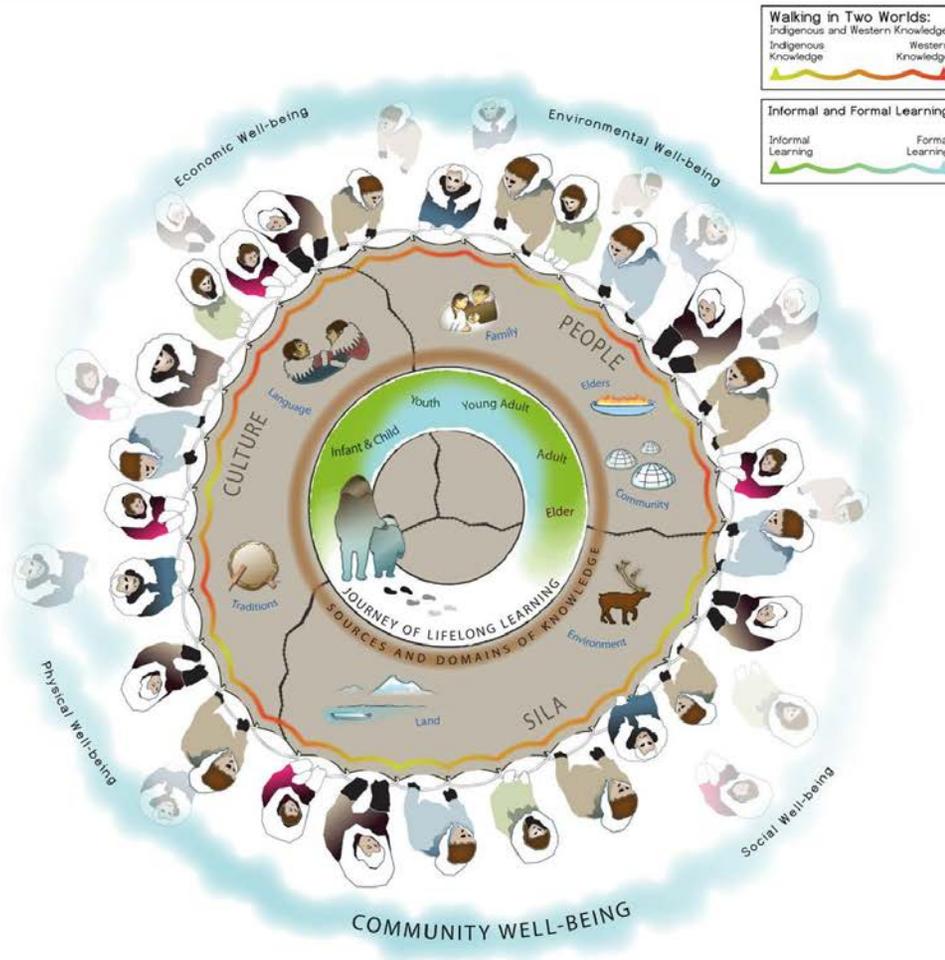
Figure 3: Inuit Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (CCL, 2007, p. 21; reprinted with permission).

- *Learning is lifelong.* Learning begins before birth (Knight, 2001; Relland, 1998) and continues through old age, and it involves the intergenerational transmission of knowledge, relationships, and responsibilities. This requires a structure that allows for Elders and knowledge holders of the land, plant and animal life, and ceremonial teachers, to be integral to the appropriate teachings received during one's lifetime and ways to share and build upon these teachings.

- *Learning is experiential.* Learning thus is connected to a lived experience and is reinforced by traditional ceremonies, spiritual meditation, storytelling, observation, and imitation (CCL, 2007). Tewa educator Gregory Cajete (1994) adds dreaming, tutoring, and artistic creation to the list.

- *Learning is rooted in Aboriginal languages and cultures.* Language is the essential vehicle that conveys an Aboriginal community's unique worldview and values, makes sense of things and ensures cultural continuity (CCL, 2007; Makokis, Steinhauer & Lamouche, 2009). Indigenous languages also frame a theory of knowing through an ontology expressed in the languages, sharing a way of being and behaving that have become known as processes for living a good life (Atleo, 2004).

- *Learning is placed based.* Learning is "nestled in wider and wider space . . . as wonderment and truth in deeper and deeper dimensions" (Meyer, 2008). Place is multi-dimensional, relational, experiential, local, and land-based (Michell, Vizina, Augustus & Sawyer, 2008). Learning shapes thinking, being, and priorities of what is of value (CCL, 2007). The land and the ecology come with responsibilities of stewardship and care, as well as a knowledge of what needs to be done in each season.

- *Learning is spiritually oriented.* Spiritual experience and development (manifested in prayer, meditation, vision quests, dreams, ceremonies, and community gatherings) is fundamental to a learner's path to knowledge; without the spiritual dimension, learning is problematic. Spirituality is not religion (although religion can hold aspects of it); it is intentionality of process, the value and purpose of meaning, and the practice of mindfulness to life's diversity and brilliance. It is an act of consciousness that reaches beyond the mundane and is renewed with each generation (CCL, 2007).

- *Learning is a communal activity.* Learning is a process by which parents, family, Elders and extended community all have a role and responsibility (CCL, 2007). A child moves from home to school to community to reenact the life events as adults with their own children and grandchildren and communities. Knowledge, then, is a by-product of a slow and deliberate dialogue with an idea, with other's knowing, or with one's experience with the world (Meyer, 2008).

- *Learning integrates Aboriginal and Western knowledges* [and other knowledges]. Learning is an adaptive process that draws from the best of traditional and contemporary knowledge. The use of "texts" (oral, audio, visual, cinematic, and electronic media works as well written works) by Indigenous peoples, the participation of local First Nations or Métis communities in learning is encouraged (CCL, 2007).

In Aboriginal languages, the purposes for learning or education were expressed in ideas or concepts that fostered a vision of good living, to live a good life, to become human, and to protect the earth to ensure sustainability of all life.

In summary, the three HLLM provide an imbedded understanding of how First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in Canada assign priorities to their lives in holistic terms and in ways that represent their local ecological contexts represented in their Indigenous languages and knowledges. Land, the knowledge and skills in and from place, and language and culture, are all integral parts of the learning and education process among Aboriginal peoples, as well as the active involvement of parents, elders, and community to build a successful learning continuum and healthy, resilient communities in all areas of their development, from infant throughout life. Aboriginal people must actively participate in all aspects of education and curriculum development, including in what languages it is to be delivered.

HLLM Applications within the CCL

Reporting and Monitoring on the State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada

In 2009, the CCL reported on the *State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada* in which, for the first time, Indigenous peoples' cultural aspirations and needs were reflected in the indicators and results. The report acknowledged that prior efforts measuring successes in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities were deficit-based and had focused largely on what Indigenous communities lacked (i.e. graduation rates, employment, etc.). CCL advanced the Holistic Lifelong Learning Measurement Framework, drawing on the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning models, and sought to illustrate the indicators that, to date, were not known, and drawing attention to areas where further development of indicators were required.

The three main components of the framework included: Sources and Domains of Knowledge, the Lifelong Learning Journey, and Community Well-being Indicators. Each of the components included a set of indicators to provide a more comprehensive assessment of Aboriginal learning in Canada (see the online document for a complete list of indicators) (CCL, 2009). The list of indicators originally published online illustrated the range of learning opportunities that occurred throughout the circle of life (from infancy to the senior years) and in a variety of settings (home, school, community, workplace, and the land). Community well-being indicators provided a contextual backdrop creating a stronger connection between learning and community well-being.

The result of this report was a new narrative on the state of Aboriginal learning that highlighted the strengths in the community and measured *what matters most* to the communities – their culture, language, and traditional and ceremonial activities. The section "Sources and Domains of Knowledge" highlighted that learning within an Aboriginal perspective is a highly social process that serves to *nurture relationships in family and in the community*. It depicted the central role that Elders play in the promotion of lifelong learning, passing on the importance of responsibility and relationships within family and community life, reinforcing intergenerational connection, a strong relationship to *place* (a physical, spiritual-emotional, geographic space) and strong identities as human beings.

We learned from "The Lifelong Learning Journey" that early childhood programs based in FNMI cultural traditions provide the potential for a solid foundation for holistic development of children, and that concerted efforts to create more learning spaces need to be taken to maximize

early learning opportunities. In K-12, low high-school completion rates remain an important part of the picture of Aboriginal learning, given the importance of a high school diploma in the pursuit of further education, training, and employment (CCL, 2009).[2] The findings showed strong growth in post-secondary education, where an increased proportion of Aboriginal people are completing their credentials in universities, colleges and technical institutes. Aboriginal people were far closer to an equal footing at the college level and in their participation in the trades, with a wider discrepancy occurring at the university level.[3] Again, participation in informal social, cultural, and recreational activities foster a desire to learn and forge relevant and meaningful foundations and relationships that encourage youth to gain new skills.[4] Research reveals that most adult learning is work- related, but it also occurs informally at home and in the community. This is also true for Indigenous communities. Volunteer community-based activities contribute to social cohesion and serve to foster a strong sense of attachment to where people live.[5] The Internet, which provides improved access to distance education, has also become an essential part of the lifelong learning infrastructure that connects people, communities, and organizations. Such services are important to people living in northern, rural, and remote communities. First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities in these contexts experience a wide discrepancy in access and services; according to an Industry Canada report, "only 17% of First Nations communities had access to broadband services in 2007 compared to 64% of other cities and small towns in Canada" (CCL, 2009, p. 6).

As stated earlier, the "Community Well-being Indicators" served as a contextual backdrop for indicators in the "Sources and Domains of Learning" and the "Lifelong Learning Journey" components. To provide a full picture of the "Sources and Domains of Learning," indicators of housing conditions, social well-being and learning and residential schools were integrated as part of the information in this component. Indicators of family living arrangements, health and learning, low-income families, learning and employment, demographics and geography, and racism and learning, were presented as integral factors affecting the "Lifelong Learning Journey."

The report and the Holistic Lifelong Learning Measurement Framework marked a significant achievement of providing the most comprehensive report to date for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. It encompassed what Indigenous communities viewed as success and it provided a

---

[2] Based on 2006 Stats Can Census (as cited in CCL, 2009), 40% of Aboriginal people aged 20 to 24 did not have a high-school diploma, compared to 13% among non-Aboriginal Canadians. The rate was even higher for First Nations living on reserve (61%) and for Inuit living in remote communities (68%).

[3] Based on 2006 Stats Can Census (as cited in CCL, 2009), 41% of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 had completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or a degree; this rate was lower than that of non-Aboriginal people (56%). Aboriginal people were on more equal footing when it came to rates of attainment at the college level (19% vs. 20%) and the trades (14% vs. 12%). The wider discrepancy in PSE attainment is a direct result of differences in attainment at the university level, where only 8% of Aboriginal people had completed a degree compared to 23% of non-Aboriginal Canadians (as cited in CCL, 2009).

[4] Based on 2006 Stats Can Census (as cited in CCL, 2009), Aboriginal youth living off-reserve participated in extracurricular social activities at rates equal to or above Canadian youth. Almost one in three (31%) Aboriginal youth reported participating in social clubs or groups on a regular basis and 37% in art or music activities—compared to 21% and 27% of Canadian youth, respectively. A large majority of off-reserve Aboriginal youth (70%) actively participated in sports outside of school and at least once a week—similar to the finding of 71% of Canadian youth in a similar survey.

[5] Based on 2006 Stats Can Census (as cited in CCL, 2009), one-third (34%) of Aboriginal youth, and more than half (56%) of Aboriginal adults living off-reserve, volunteered in their community on a regular basis; while 70% of First Nations adults living on a reserve volunteered within the last year.

balanced picture of strengths and weaknesses in a manner that was informative to counter-weigh years of incomplete reporting and negative stereotypes. The report underscored the importance of Aboriginal communities, governments, and researchers forging "a common, balanced understanding of what constitutes success in Aboriginal learning," and an inclusive conceptual framework that could inform effective social policy (CCL, 2009, p. 7). The consequences of having a disconnect between Aboriginal concepts of success and status quo metrics are "potentially harmful and can lead to, for example, assessments of Aboriginal learning that focus exclusively on failure—when in reality, many successes may exist" (CCL, 2009, p. 7). We would also add that not attempting to reconcile that disconnection violates the rights of Indigenous people protected in the Canadian Constitution of 1982 and the principles embedded in UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples (United Nations, 2007).

Community [and School] Strategic Planning

Based on the strength of the relationship made between Aboriginal lifelong learning and community well-being in the First Nations HLLM, the next opportunity to apply the models was a strategic planning session, sponsored through a partnership with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the CCL, and the AbLKC. With the assistance of the Chiefs Committee on Education and the National Indian Education Council, the AFN's regional network of education technicians and leaders, four communities were identified to participate in Community Dialogues: Council of Yukon First Nations, Whitehorse, Yukon; Onion Lake Cree First Nation, Onion Lake, Saskatchewan; Nipissing First Nation, Nipissing, Ontario; and Timiskaming First Nation, Notre-Dame-du-Nord, Quebec.[6] A *Community Dialogue* was viewed as a culturally responsive means for community planning and development. The objectives of the Community Dialogues were as follows: to bring together key learning partners in each community who had a stake in influencing learning outcomes for First Nations across all ages; to apply the First Nations HLLM for purposes of identifying where and how learning occurs within the First Nations community; to reinforce the importance of learning to enhance community well-being; to identify the conditions in the community that impact on learning; and to identify how each community partner potentially contributes to learning.

The AFN served as project coordinator, fulfilling responsibilities of organizing, planning, and implementing meetings with the four communities and their core working groups, producing summary reports, distributing them to communities and developing a Facilitator's Guide, evaluation form, and agenda for communities to use in the future on their own.[7]

The Community Dialogue (AFN, 2009) was structured with a half-day pre-event workshop with community representatives, providing an overview of the planning event and familiarizing people with the tools and materials that had been created based on the First Nations HLLM. The final report, mapping the results and the tools created for applying the model as a planning tool for communities, was shared publically as an on-line document through 2016.

---

[6] Unfortunately, the visit with the Timiskaming First Nation in Quebec had to be cancelled due to a severe winter storm.

[7] The AFN guide can be found on the AFN Education website at www.afneducation.ca.

Applications Beyond the CCL

The following is a sampling and description of the how the HLLM have been applied beyond the CCL's programming. They demonstrate that the HLLM can be used as both theory, as in explaining the overall well-being conceptualization of First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and also as an applied method for enacting educational strategies or strategic planning in a community framework.

Holistic Assessment for Early Learning in Saskatchewan

In 2010, Darren McKee, the Assistant Deputy Ministry of Education in Saskatchewan at the time, approached Jarrett Laughlin[8] and a team of innovative education leaders in the province (Greg Miller, Regina Public Schools; Maureen Taylor, Saskatchewan Rivers School Division; Mark Williment, Northern Light School Division; and Lon Borgerson, Ile-a-la-Crosse School Division) to look at a new approach to measuring success for First Nation and Métis learners in Saskatchewan. The Government of Saskatchewan had identified that the existing tools they were using were not working and that more culturally relevant tools were required to better improve our understanding of First Nations and Métis learning in Saskatchewan. They decided to use the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models as the underlying frameworks to ensure that any new assessments would be culturally relevant and appropriate.

Over several years working with First Nation organizations, school divisions, the Ministry of Education and a digital strategy company (bv02.com), two assessments have emerged. The *Help Me Tell My Story* is a holistic, community based, culturally rooted assessment tool that measures oral language development among pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children in Saskatchewan.[9] In 2014-15, the assessment was taken by nearly 8,000 students across 120 schools, and has helped improve success in early childhood language development. The *Help Me Talk About Math* assessment builds on the same holistic assessment approach and focuses on the seven mathematical processes[10] that help develop a deeper understanding of mathematics for grade 1, 2 and 3 students in Saskatchewan.

Both assessments were rooted in a holistic approach to lifelong learning and developed with the notion of stimulating change in attitudes and behaviours inside and outside the classroom. They utilize the technology of an iPad and a puppet to conduct assessments, as well as a series of online portals to provide important and timely information to teachers, parents, and Elders.

Prior to both assessments, through a series of locally and culturally-relevant print and digital resources along with a hand puppet, the online interactive programs work with parents, Elders, and teacher with a child, introducing them to a loveable turtle puppet named *Askî* (*Askî* is a Cree concept that equates in meaning to land). *Askî* acts as the online assessor and delivers an assessment with an iPad to each child, asking them to share their stories about literacy and numeracy in a holistic framework. However, *Help Me Tell My Story* and *Help Me Talk About Math* are more than just assessment tools. The assessment results are directly linked to a series of learning activities that help

---

[8] Jarrett Laughlin was on staff with the CCL at the time, and was instrumental in the work leading to the creation of the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models and subsequently a Holistic Lifelong Learning Measurement Framework applied in the CCL's Report on the State of Aboriginal Learning.

[9] An overview of this project can be found at www.holisticassessment.gov.sk.ca.

[10] See https://holisticassessment.gov.sk.ca/about-the-assessment. The seven mathematical processes are visualization, mental math, estimation, reasoning, communication, problem solving, making connections, and technology.

stimulate language development and math skills in the home, in school, in the community, and on the land.

In 2014, both *Help Me Tell My Story* and *Help Me Talk About Math* were made available to all schools across Saskatchewan. Both of these assessments are reflective of the holistic, community approach to learning as exemplified in the First Nations and Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Models. For Saskatchewan, this was an easy step since much of work at the provincial level has reflected the intentions of this direction in policy. The holistic learning models and framework developed to create the tools provide the opportunity to make a policy direction tangible.

Research: A Framework for Theorizing and Analysis

In a master's thesis submitted to the University of Saskatchewan, Métis scholar Yvonne Vizina (2010) applied the Métis HLLM in the construction, design, and analysis of her research on Métis Traditional Environmental Knowledge (MTEK) and Science Education. The purposes of her study were: to begin to develop a body of research on Métis traditional environmental knowledge, to examine the ideological premise of science education in schools and reasons why MTEK was not reflected as a modality of science education, and ultimately to support the preservation of biological diversity and perpetuation of Métis traditions. Her research produced new themes that included the importance songs, laughter, marriage, prophecies, community involvement, Métis institutions, and sharing knowledge. She also concluded that current "infusion" of Métis cultural knowledge in science education was still assimilationist in nature. Her study reinforced the importance of building relationships and getting to know the Métis community and culture, working with Métis communities to identify activities that are of importance to them, observing ethical protocols and respecting the intellectual property rights of Métis and sacred processes, and above all, instilling the love of science. Learning Western science concepts through traditional Métis environmental knowledge can serve to expand our knowing, and at the same time create a place and value for Indigenous languages and traditions in the curriculum.

In Closing: Potential and Possibility

The result of this first and only monitoring report, issued by the CCL in 2009, was a new narrative on the state of Aboriginal learning. The framework created an opportunity to shift policy and program development from one "that reacts to learning deficits alone, to one that recognizes, builds upon and celebrates strengths" (CCL, 2009, p. 6). The report anticipated further applications of the HLLM and the assessment framework for Indigenous organizations, governments, and researchers that would extend beyond reporting and monitoring to other areas such as policy development, community planning, curriculum and assessment development or training programs. It was also the beginning of "bridging the gap" on the proper nature of the relationship between the learning objectives (standards, goals, measures, definitions of success etc.) for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike--a path to reconciliation. We believe that it also contributes significantly towards a shared understanding and appreciation for [Aboriginal] learning that is holistic, lifelong, and beneficial to all.

Members of the AbLKC Consortium, National Advisory Committee, and Associate members in attendance at the national conference held in Vancouver, British Columbia in 2008, in partnership

the British Columbia's First Nations Education Council, valued the working lifelong learning models configuring success for Aboriginal communities and provincial and territorial systems across Canada. Aboriginal communities engaged in consultative processes with provinces and territories, and the federal government could use the models. The models also served to deepen the understanding of holistic learning, the understanding and role of spirit, language, and land to learning. Participants noted that the models could inform policy efforts of institutions involved in decolonization of education (AbLKC, 2008).

The Assembly of First Nations renewal of the foundational principles of 'Indian Control of Indian Education,' in *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* embraced the framework as an aspirational document to guide federal and provincial/territorial governments action to guarantee that First Nations learners have access to education systems grounded in First Nations languages, values, traditions, and knowledge (AFN, 2010; National Indian Brotherhood, 1972;).

Because the frameworks originated with, and were articulated by, First Nations, Inuit and Métis, giving value to their aspirations and needs, they have provided a valuable springboard for dialogue, opening and extending the conversation as each community and organization has *rethought* the premise of success and considered the domains of learning that contributes to holistic well-being of individuals and communities. They have proven to be a valuable tool for integrated community planning, to rethink and expand indicators for student assessment that are inclusive of Indigenous goals and values, in theorizing in research, and decolonizing efforts in teaching. Their continued potential can be found in their support in building indicators of success or as frameworks in program and curricular development that contributes to strategic planning for the envisioned successful outcomes and learning for Indigenous students. The models also have the potential of contributing to the renewal of education systems that embrace and respect multiple ways of knowing, especially as educational institutions embark on processes of decolonization and indigenization in response to a call for reconciliation in the relationship between Canada and Indigenous peoples. We hope our modest attempt to share this story will ignite interest as a way of rethinking what constitutes success in learning. The HLLM are still available online and continue to circulate widely with new applications; some of the HLLM have been used in essays, thesis, and reports. In keeping with the closing, patterned refrain of each chapter in Thomas King's (2003) *The Truth about Stories*, we conclude: It's yours. Do with it what you will. Tell it to friends. Turn it into a book. Forget it. But don't say in years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story. You've heard it now.

References

Aboriginal Education Resource Centre (n.d.). *Past projects.* http://aerc.usask.ca/research-projects-planning-activities/past-projects-activities.php#2006

Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. (2008). *Seeing ourselves in the mirror: Giving life to learning.* Saskatoon, SK & Calgary, AB: University of Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Education Research Centre & First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium. Retrieved from http://eboulearning.com/ccl/ablkc/AbLKCConf2008_Mar302009_SUMMARY_EN.pdf

Assembly of First Nations (2009). *Community dialogues on First Nations holistic lifelong learning: Learning as a community for renewal and growth.* Retrieved from http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education2/community_dialogues_on_first_nations_holistic_lifelong_learning,_2009.pdf

Assembly of First Nations. (2010). *First Nations control of First Nations education*. Retrieved from http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/3._2010_july_afn_first_nations_control_of_first_nations_education_final_eng.pdf

Assembly of First Nations. (2012). *A portrait of First Nations and education*. Retrieved from http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/events/fact_sheet-ccoe-3.pdf

Atleo, E. R. (2004). *Tsawalk: A Nuu-chah-nulth worldview*. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Avison, D. (2004). *A challenge worth meeting: Opportunities for improving Aboriginal education outcomes*. Prepared Report for the Council of Ministers in Education, May 2004.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Press.

Cajete, G. A. (1994). *Look to the mountain - An ecology of Indigenous education*. Durango, CA: Kivaki Press.

Cajete, G. A. (2015). *Indigenous communities: Rekindling the teachings of the seventh fire*. St. Paul, MN: Living Justice Press.

Canadian Council on Learning. (2007*). Redefining how success is measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning*. Retrieved from http://eboulearning.com/ccl/RedefiningSuccess/Redefining_How_Success_Is_Measured_EN.pdf

Canadian Council on Learning (2009). *The state of Aboriginal learning in Canada: A holistic approach to measuring success*. Retrieved from https://www.eboulearning.com/ccl/StateAboriginalLearning/SAL-FINALReport_EN.PDF

George, N. P. (2008). *Aboriginal adult literacy: Nourishing their learning spirits*. Saskatoon, SK & Calgary, AB: University of Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Education Research Centre & First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium.

Government of Saskatchewan. (2012). *Ministry of Education plan for 2012-13*.

Henderson, J. Y. (1995). Indian education and treaties. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 245-261). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Hoppers, C. O., & Richards, H. (2012). *Rethinking thinking: Modernity's "other" and the transformation of the university*. Pretorial, South Africa: University of South Africa.

Longboat, D. (n.d.). *Soul of sovereignty: The impact of culturally responsive education on the academic achievement of First Nations student*. Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations. Retrieved from http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/soul-of-sovreignty.pdf

King, T. (2003). *The truth about stories: A native narrative*. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press.

Knight, D. (2001). *The seven fires: Teachings of the bear clan as recounted by Dr. Danny Musqua*. Saskatoon, SK: Many Worlds Publishing.

Makokis, L., Steinhauer, D., & Lamouche, J. (2009). *Naturalizing Indigenous knowledge – Our language guides our relationships*. St. Paul, AB: Blue Quills First Nations College.

Meyer, M. A. (2008). Indigenous and authentic: Hawaiian epistemology and the triangulation of Meaning. In N. K. Denzin, Y. S. Lincoln & L. T. Smith (Eds.), *Handbook of critical Indigenous research methodologies* (pp. 217-232). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Michell, H., Vizina, Y., Augustus, C., & Sawyer, J. (2008). *Learning Indigenous science from place: Research study examining Indigenous based science perspectives in Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis Community Contexts*. Saskatoon, SK: Aboriginal Education Research Centre, University of Saskatchewan.

Ministry of Education (2006). *Aboriginal report 2005/2006- How are we doing? Province – Public schools only*. Retrieved from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/perf2006.pdf

National Indian Brotherhood. (1972). *Indian control of Indian education*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Ouellette, R. F. (2011). *Evaluating Aboriginal curricula using a Cree-Métis perspective with a regard toward Indigenous knowledge* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Laval University, Laval, Québec.

Relland, M. R. (1998). *The teachings of the Bear Clan as told by Saulteaux Elder Danny Musqua* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* 5 vols. Ottawa: Canada Communication Group.

Statistics Canada. (2011). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada: First Nations people, Métis and Inuit. Statistics Canada.* Catalogue no. 99-011-X2011001. Retrieved from http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2015). *Honouring the truth, reconciling the future: Summary of the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.* Winnipeg, MB: Author. Retrieved from http://nctr.ca/assets/reports/Final%20Reports/Executive_Summary_English_Web.pdf

Tunison, S. (2007). *Aboriginal learning: A review of current metrics of success.* Saskatoon, SK & Calgary, AB: University of Saskatchewan, Aboriginal Education Research Centre & First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium.

United Nations. (2007). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* Retrieved from https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/512/07/PDF/N0651207.pdf?OpenElement

Vizina, Y. (2010). *Métis traditional environmental knowledge and science education* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Chapter 3

Traditional Indigenous Food Upskilling as a Pathway to Urban Indigenous Food Sovereignty

JAIME CIDRO, TABITHA MARTENS, and LANCE GUILBAULT

Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) helps us better situate our links to colonialism, our commitment and connection to land and our relations, and the need to have self-determination over the food we grow, harvest, hunt, fish, and gather. This chapter details two phases of our research in the inner city of Winnipeg, in partnership with local Indigenous and community organizations, to look at how Indigenous people in the city access cultural or traditional food. Our respondents shared that growing, harvesting, preparing, and eating cultural food was a part of a ceremony for them. As well, cultural food provided a conduit to land and relations through reciprocity for these participants. Indigenous Food Sovereignty was considered a pathway to reclaiming food production, but there was a critical aspect that was challenging: traditional and cultural food skills. As urban Indigenous people, often disconnected from land and culture, food provided a means to understand the larger social, political, and economic forces that have disrupted, shaped, and formed our current experiences with traditional food and culture. Rebuilding traditional food skills is about restoring our relationship with food as well as our identity.

The connection between poverty, marginalization, and urbanization to food insecurity is well known across Canada (Smoyer-Tomic, Spence, & Amrhein, 2006; Sinclaire, 1997; Peters & McCreary, 2008). Researchers have focused on the increasing food deserts, the proliferation of food banks, and other measures to address food insecurity, particularly in inner city areas (Che & Chen, 2001; Donkin, Dowler, Stevenson, & Turner, 2000). Food sovereignty has also received a great deal of attention as an intervention to address not only food insecurity, but a larger attempt to regain control over food systems and health (Kamal & Thompson, 2013; McIntyre & Rondeau, 2009). The North End of Winnipeg, one of the most economically challenging locations in Winnipeg, faces significant food insecurity. Underneath the limited access to grocery stores and cultural food lies an important strength that challenges notions of food insecurity. Indigenous people in Winnipeg have been working towards "Indigenous Food Sovereignty" (IFS) with regards to cultural food specifically. The four principles guiding IFS, described by Morrison (2011), include: the recognition that food is sacred; participation in food systems; self-determination; and supportive legislation and policy. These principles have been at work by organizations in Winnipeg such as Food Matters Manitoba and the Winnipeg Traditional Food Guide (Food Matters Manitoba, 2015) and in Manitoba (e.g., Four Arrows Regional Health Authority). Indigenous people in urban centres face a

wide range of food insecurity issues from limited quantities of healthy and affordable food, to limited access to cultural food. Food security, while a separate concept from food sovereignty, is certainly aligned, however in an Indigenous context, it is mostly discussed in the context of remote, rural communities. Food insecurity certainly exists in urban centres for Indigenous communities. In 2013, we conducted preliminary research which focussed on access to cultural food in the city. We found that Indigenous people in the city experienced food insecurity, but also were working towards the larger goals of "Indigenous Food Sovereignty" with regards to cultural food specifically (Cidro & Martens, 2014).

The second phase of our research explored the ways in which urban communities and organizations can "upskill" Indigenous food practices such as food growing, harvesting, and production to diminish food insecurity and promote principles of Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) within an urban context. Our research looked at how to move from IFS principles to IFS practice, or operationalizing, by undertaking a series of traditional food preparation, cultivation, and procurement workshops followed by focus groups to talk about IFS principles. The goal was to provide insights into how urban organizations, specifically Indigenous organizations that focus on food security, can better develop programs and policies which support traditional and culturally based food production and food preparation. This second phase of our project explores the ways in which IFS can be understood as operational also within an urban context. We explored how, when Indigenous people have the skills to practice IFS, a whole range of positive benefits to their social and economic well-being will unfold. This chapter explores both phases of the research with a particular focus on the North End of Winnipeg. It begins by identifying the concepts that guided this second phase of our project. It is followed by the methods we utilized for both phases of the project, followed by our main findings. A discussion of these findings as it relates to the larger literature is provided, followed by a conclusion.

Concepts Guiding the Work

Culture and Food Consumption

The relationship between culture and food consumption is not well understood in academic literature beyond a small number of research projects (Abdel-Ghany & Sharpe, 1997; Adekunle, Filson, & Sethuratnam, 2010, 2012; Adekunle, Filson, Sethuratnam, & Cidro, 2011; Wang & Lo, 2007). Some literature has emerged in recent years attempting to examine the complex relationships between ethnicity[1], consumption, and acculturation in Canada (Abdel-Ghany & Sharpe, 1997; Adekunle et al., 2010). Food consumption plays a central role as a cultural foundation for Indigenous people. Members of the Yukon First Nations who were interviewed about their consumption of cultural food indicated that it provided them with an ability to stay "in tune" with nature. They also described eating cultural food as supporting basic cultural values (such as facilitating sharing), as a way for adults to display responsibility, and for their children to practice spirituality (Receveur, Kassi, Chan, Berti, & Kuhniein, 1998, p. 118). Staying "in tune" with nature was described by the interviewee indicated that eating traditional food supported basic cultural values (including as well as

---

[1] It is important to note that we do not see Aboriginal or Indigenous people as an ethnic group. However, some of the literature on ethnicity and food preferences may be useful in providing a background for the proposed research.

facilitating sharing), was a way for adults to display responsibility for their children and to practice spirituality (Receveur, Kassi, Chan, Berti, & Kuhniein, 1998, p. 118). According to Wilson (2003), Anishnabek people in Ontario consider plants to be a form of medicine: "certain plants, berries, and animals . . . are not only consumed for nutritional reasons but can also be used in the production of medicines" (p. 88). Lambden, Receveur, and Kuhniein's (2007) study of Yukon First Nations, Dene/Metis and Inuit women found that they considered traditional foods to be culturally beneficial. A 2012 Vancouver study identified traditional knowledge as the key to Aboriginal empowerment for participants, and that incorporating Aboriginal perspectives and worldviews is necessary in understanding food security (Elliot, Jayatilaka, Brown, Varley, & Corbett, 2012). Beyond the work of Elliot et al. (2012), there has been little work on urban Aboriginal people's preferences and attitudes toward traditional foods.

Food Security:

The experience of food insecurity exists on a spectrum which ranges from "food anxiety to qualitative compromises in food selection and consumption, to quantitative compromises in intake, to the physical sensation of hunger" (McIntyre & Rondeau, 2009, p. 188). Making compromises in food selection and consumption is an important element of food insecurity. Sinclaire (1997) describes how Indigenous people are required to make food compromises when it comes to foods they would normally consume, which are inaccessible due to availability or price. Impoverished communities and families have increased financial burdens when providing food that is high in nutrient content while still paying high rent. As a result, money used to pay rent often comes directly out of their food budget, and the result is cheaper food with lower nutrient content. In their study based on the 1990/99 Canadian National Population Health Survey data, Che and Chen (2001, p. 18) found that the prevalence of food insecurity was high among Indigenous people living off reserves, with more than one-quarter (27%) reporting at least some food insecurity, and 24% experiencing a compromised diet. Indigenous people were about one and a half times as likely to live in a food insecure household than non-Aboriginal people.

Power (2008) however, has argued that cultural food security is an additional level of food security, and suggests that additional research is required to understand Aboriginal perspectives on food security. She suggests, for example, that "in terms of access, food security may be affected by access to traditional/country food, as well as access to market food" (Power, 2008, p. 96). Milburn (2004) noted that national food guides are often based on Western ideas of categories of food and do not reflect Indigenous realities. Willows (2005) identified a knowledge gap concerning Indigenous beliefs about food (p. 34). Existing research has focussed primarily on rural areas, and there is very little research available concerning urban Indigenous people.

Food Deserts and Inner City Access

Researchers have found that inner cities or areas with low-income populations often have less access to supermarkets (Cummins & Macintyre, 2006). This means that residents are more dependent on smaller food and convenience stores which are more expensive and less likely to offer a range of healthy foods (Donkin et al., 2000). Accessibility to food retailers that provide healthy foods at low prices affects the dietary choices that individuals make (Wrigley, Warm, & Margetts, 2003). While there has been relatively little research on supermarket accessibility in Canadian cities, two recent studies suggest that high need and inner city neighbourhoods often have less access to

supermarkets (Peters & McCreary, 2008; Smoyer-Tomic et al., 2006). It may be that the lack of access to supermarkets also means that there is less access to culturally important foods. It is important to note that in Winnipeg, Neechi Foods, which is an inner city Aboriginal co-op, provides access to many of these foods, for example fish, bison, and blueberries.

Indigenous Food Sovereignty

Having more control over your food systems as a means of addressing food insecurity is known as food sovereignty. Food sovereignty places control over how, what, and when food is eaten with the people, and encourages a close relationship between production and consumption. Indigenous Food Sovereignty (IFS) has been described as a "living reality" for thousands of years. However, colonial impacts and landscape changes have threatened traditional and local food systems resulting, in part, in high levels of food insecurity and a need to reconnect people to their food systems (Morrison, 2011). IFS is guided by four main principles. These include the recognition that food is sacred; participation in food systems; self-determination; and supportive legislation and policy (Morrison, 2011). These IFS principles recognize that food has an historical element for Indigenous people. Indeed, many IFS initiatives are centered on traditional food practices. In Manitoba, researchers are well connected to the Indigenous land-based food movement. Kamal and Thompson (2013), for example, have documented the food movement in O-Pipon-Na-Piwin, Manitoba. Rudolph and McLachlan (2013) have also explored IFS initiatives in northern Manitoba. In remote and rural communities, getting onto the land is much more accessible, urban communities have also participated in the Indigenous land-based movement. However, the documentation of these experiences in an urban context is limited. The Urban Aboriginal Garden Project at the University of British Columbia, one urban example, found the garden to be a decolonizing experience for participants because it helped reduce dependence (Mundel & Chapman, 2010). The second phase of our project describes ways in which urban Indigenous people can participate in the land-based food movement to engage in Indigenous Food Sovereignty, through workshops on food skills, and the conversations that support the journey.

Methodology for Both Phases

Indigenous people have challenged academic researchers to decolonize their research relationships with Indigenous people so that academic research begins to meet the needs and priorities of Indigenous people themselves (Pualani 2007). Collaborative research practices involving Indigenous organizations may begin to address some of these concerns (Howitt, 2001). We began the first phase of the research by working initially with Winnipeg Indian and Metis Friendship Centre (IMFC) personnel to identify participants and ensure our methodology supported cultural values.

Our primary data collector was an Indigenous graduate student from Winnipeg who had an extensive network of friends, family, and peers who were either working in food related areas, or who had a vast knowledge of food security/food sovereignty issues in the city. Because of her network and pre-established relationship with participants, issues around trust and access were not barriers, however protective measures were offered, including the control and review of transcripts. Individual interviews were conducted with the blessing of the participants, and at the location of their choosing. Three focus group interviews were held with six participants in the first FGI, seven in

the second, and eight in the third. The questions focused on access to cultural foods in the city, but also facilitated a discussion of the connection between cultural food and larger well-being. These questions are included as Appendix A. Focus group participants were different from the individual interview participants. In addition, ten individual interviews were held with participants answering similar questions. In some cases, participants were from communities near the city, but in other cases, participants were from rural and remote communities far from Winnipeg. The individual interviews were transcribed and coded. The findings from the first phase helped us shape the research question and subsequent methodology for the second phase of our project. Most of these individuals were participating in urban, land-based Indigenous food movements and were familiar with approaches used across the city. Many of the participants were from Winnipeg's North End.

The second phase of our research also took place in the Winnipeg's North End, which comprises a large urban Indigenous population. In partnership with the North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC) through the North End Food Security Network (NEFSN) and the IMFC, we developed a series of six traditional food skills workshops designed to build skills and awareness (upskilling) around traditional foods. A series of six workshops were offered beginning in June and ending in early fall which included: (1) growing three sisters (corn, beans and squash); (2) harvesting and preparing wild teas; (3) fishing (and filleting); (4) re-inventing bannock; (5) cooking with bison; and (6) cooking with three sisters. These workshops were co-directed by two Indigenous researchers and the NEFSN's Food Security Coordinator. The workshops were designed based on the NEFSN's experience working with Indigenous people in the North End, as well as findings from our phase one project. There was no overlap in participants from the first phase of the project to the second phase. The workshops were facilitated by researchers and the NEFSN Food Security Coordinator, and local Indigenous knowledge keepers were brought in for some workshops. Participants in the project were also program participants from the IMFC and NEFSN who conducted the recruitment. Each day-long food skills workshop was followed by a focus group interview. At the end of the series a final feast was held and this was followed by a lengthier focus group interview with questions of a culminating nature. These questions are included in Appendix B. Participants were also provided with a gift certificate to a local Aboriginal food cooperative (Neechi Foods). Questions in the focus group interviews focused on their experiences learning traditional food skills, and whether there was any consciousness shifting around access to cultural foods in an urban context. Focus group interviews were recorded and transcribed.

Some principles of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1994) methodology were used in this project because this approach is particularly suitable when little is known about a topic, such as operationalizing IFS principles. Grounded theory is an approach in which the collected data is the foundation of the theory which leads to the development of concepts. Grounded theorists start with "data and construct these data through observations, interactions and materials gathered about the topic or setting" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 3). Beginning early in data collections, using the process of coding, we sorted, separated, and synthesized data. Preliminary findings presentations were done which allowed for fuller distillation of themes (Charmaz, 2014).

A photographer was present to capture some of the food demonstration activities. At the end of the workshop series, participants were provided with hard copies of the photographs they were in, along with a recipe book. There was high participant retention and enthusiasm for this project, which was expected given the hands-on and participatory nature of the research, as well as our partner connections to the community. Our participants were eager for this type of "program" to continue, although we explained that it was a research project with the aim of developing evidence that organizations could use to develop similar food skills programming, especially in inner cities.

Findings

This section describes the findings from both phases of the research because they are closely connected and inform each other. Overall, we found in both phases that food, culture, and health are linked. The impacts of colonialism on Indigenous food systems is well noted in the literature within a rural, remote, northern and reserve context (Elliot et al., 2012; Lambden et al., 2007; Power, 2008) and were validated by the participants and their experiences. The findings for both phases will be presented in two sections.

The three key areas identified by phase one participants as being pertinent to Indigenous food security in Winnipeg include: (1) growing, harvesting, preparing, and eating cultural food as ceremony, (2) cultural food as a part of connection to land through reciprocity and (3) re-learning IFS practices to address food insecurity.

Growing, Harvesting, Preparing, Eating, and Sharing Cultural Food as Ceremony

Participants described a spiritual connection to cultural food. They reminisced about participating in food production and consumption; however, these stories went beyond a nostalgic return to the "old ways." Respondents identified the process of growing, harvesting, or catching of food as having a spiritual element, which is consistent with the work by Receveur et al. (1998) describing the role of mentoring cultural practices and spirituality to children. This is also aligned closely with the work of Baskin et al. (2009) where urban Toronto Aboriginal women made the connection between cultural food and cultural knowledge transmission to children. The knowledge and understanding associated with growing and nurturing your own food is connected to a larger understanding of the relationship between the environment, spirituality, and people. This was described by a participant:

> *That understanding is something that I would like people to have – the cycle of the food, and where it comes from, and why we do what we do. It's about respect – especially the respect - and respect of the growth. It's another life that you're bringing and growing, and you're harvesting that life form in a respectful way and putting it in your body. There's that circle of life happening.*

One of our respondents described the relationship she has with fish: "with salmon, it's kind of like going to communion because it's the one food that I feel the spirit in." Another respondent described the process of cooking and eating food as a part of a ritual:

> *to me that is a cultural food, and there is a ritual that goes with it. Whenever a relative would come by and give my mom deer meat, moose meat or fish, it was always a big deal to cook that up and have everybody come over and eat.*

The ceremony described by participants related also to the experience of relationship building that comes with sharing traditional food. As one respondent noted "I think it's the way people enjoy it, and come together to enjoy it. With cultural food come community, fellowship, family and ritual." The ritual and ceremony around eating was described extensively by one participant.

> *The elders where I come from were very strict about the ritual; how the food came out, how things happened, how you came in, how you left, how you sat, where you sat, how you held a sacred item or what*

you did with it, or how you said something. When everyone was together and the elders started talking, everyone stopped, and was quiet and listened. The young people had to get up and serve the elders, and there were tiny offerings of food that we would make to the spirits. It's symbolic, and it shows gratitude. It says thank you for looking out for us, we appreciate and we give this thanks.

Developing a relationship with food as a spiritual process was described by a participant: "It wasn't the food itself that was important; it was what we did with it, how we interacted with it, how we learned about it, and how we were thankful for it. It became a spiritual process."

When food harvesting, preparation, and consumption contain an element of ceremony and spirituality, a different kind of intention becomes embodied. Careful consideration of techniques, and an appreciation for the broader connections between food, land, and past and future generations become a part of the connection to food. This intention is evident in the description of one participant's observation of her mother's cooking techniques:

When my mom prepared food for ceremonies, like bannock or stew, she would take the ingredients, even the peas, and she would hold on to them, she would pray with them, and then put them in. She would take the greatest care with every single item.

The principles of IFS are embedded in the theme of sacred food described by these participants (Morrison, 2011). Another participant described participating in ceremonies, the role that cultural food plays, and how it connects people:

I *do a lot of traditional work with traditional people – sweat lodges, Sundance, and other ceremonies – and a lot of it involves food, specifically traditional foods. I do have a lot of access in that regard, not as food security but as my own path if you want to call it that. At powwows they have foods – a "wild feed" they call it in the States. It's a feast.*

Participants also described the places in which they consumed cultural foods. At many gatherings and feasts, cultural foods are highly valued. One participant describes what a family gathering looks like in terms of cultural food:

The majority of the time I bring something like berries. It's like a potluck, and maybe the host would have the meat, usually a stew of some sort. Somebody else brings bannock. It doesn't mean you have to always eat traditional food, as long as you acknowledge the ceremony and put that spirit plate out. But the majority of the time we do have at least one wild food, what we call traditional food. And most of the time that's me bringing the berries. Blueberries are my favorite. I eat one cup every day.

Cultural Food as a Part of Connection to Land through Reciprocity

Obtaining access to traditional food for people living in the city is different than for people living in rural and reserve communities. Being in the city has meant that many participants act as a host to family and friends who are visiting the urban centre. Participants described being "gifted" with food such as wild meat (bison, moose meat, or fish) or as a part of larger family exchange. One participant described this:

> *There is an assumption about people in the community, that if you are no longer hunters or gatherers or fishers, you are totally disconnected from your traditional food. I say that's not true because I get it through my relatives, and I am still connected through them. I don't go personally shoot a moose, but I will eat moose when my relatives hunt and they send me some.*

Participants also discussed participating in urban gardening programs or Community Shared Agriculture programs (CSAs). Informal economic transactions were also discussed, including the role of bartering. As one participant described, the practice of bartering is also related to traditional teachings around reciprocity:

> *I also barter now instead of taking cash for my teachings. People will bring me meats or yarn, and then there's less of the "I bought you" attitude. The person asking or the teachings has to go out and actually participate in getting that product for me. That tells me that they actually respect the knowledge enough to do so. I found that it made the teachings too commercial. People love it. I had a guy last year that dries rabbit and he loved dried peaches, so I dried a bunch of organic peaches and other fruits for him in exchange for two rabbits.*

In an urban context, being able to access cultural foods is a challenge. As one participant described: "My access to traditional foods comes from both of my parents. So even if I worked at McDonalds, I would still have the exact same access to traditional foods." For our participants who were working in areas of food, they found accessing cultural foods less of a challenge. Other participants described being creative in developing networks:

> *I don't have family or friends at all, but I find it still happens because you're in food. When you're on the bus and you start a conversation about the crate of onions you're carrying, you find out that the other person has a friend that has a whole bunch of this or that and they want to trade. Facebook is good too.*

Participants also described the importance of relationships not only to those who harvested the food, but for the larger process of food giving up its life to support people. Understanding the importance of reciprocity between the provider and receiver of the food is about cultural exchanges. One respondent describes this reciprocity: "Are we respectfully honouring and giving thanks to that food and where it comes from? Those are the most important parts."

Participants identified the consumption of traditional food as facilitating cultural values such as sharing and responsibility, which was also identified by Receveur et al. (1998).

Re-learning IFS to Address Food Insecurity

Access to cultural food in the city is about alleviating food insecurity, but also about a larger reclamation and connection to food and food production. One participant describes the sacred element of IFS: "the spirit of the food is very different. I think it connects with your body in a way that is genetic. I believe that we have a genetic memory of eating, especially fishers." Respondents discussed the relationship between control over food sources and cultural connections as distinctive elements of IFS.

One respondent described how IFS has been impacted by larger forces of assimilation. She described the connection between Indian Residential Schools and food:

> *That was the piece that really interrupted our food sovereignty (residential schools), and our relationship to growing what we eat, and even the hunting. I look around now and there are hunters on the reserves and in the community, but I don't have that kind of connection to them anymore.*

Another respondent described the shift to urban centres as being one of the forces that limits food sovereignty, not only because of the loss of land to practice land based harvesting, but also because:

> *the move to the city is a downward trend where you're deskilling and you don't have access to land for gardening…I see my generation as completely de-skilled and totally dependent on commercial source of food and on having money to buy food.*

This "de-skilling" as described by participants is something that they described as needing to be taught at earlier ages: "how do you re-reteach these cultural connections to the younger generations? How do we teach them about food and how it's part of their ancestry and culture? These things are significant." One focus group participant described an experience of trapping with his daughters:

> *When I took my daughters out trapping, one daughter put her snare up high – about a foot and a half off the ground. I tried to encourage her to put it lower because it would have to be a really big rabbit to get caught in it! As it turned out it snowed that night – all the way up to that trap – and she was the only one who ended up catching a rabbit! There was something inside of her that just knew…it was in her genes.*

Several participants described the need to start developing an awareness of IFS with children. The role of children involved in IFS was described by a participant: "we need to re-involve children in the miracle and circle of life and understanding, so they will see the importance of traditional foods, and what is traditional to them." Another participant described the need for children to be better connected to food systems:

> *Every child should plant things, and they should be aware of the whole process leading up to eating it. If you have a relationship with your food, like peas, beans or squash, you have a new way of being grateful and showing that gratitude when you eat. People need to really understand the circle of life, and that we are a part of it. We are not more important than plants, fish, birds or animals; we are part of it all, and every part is important. Until that respect is there, traditional foods will continue to die. Part of tradition is who we are inside, and those plants can only nourish us totally if we are part of that circle of life. To bring back traditional ways, we need to show our kids how to plant gardens, whether it's what was planted 200 years ago, or a new kind of food that the Europeans brought…We need our children to understand the habitats of animals, and to learn to live in harmony with them.*

Another participant describes operationalizing IFS principles in an urban context. He describes how harvesting practices, like harvesting maple syrup, are possible in an urban context:

> *I know of guys that actually tap the maples in the city. There is a misconception that if a plant is inside the city then you can't eat it because of contaminants. But those plants take those contaminants and convert them into good medicine for the body. Our Native tea plants will take arsenic from the soil and convert it into selenium, which is what we need. Just because the soil is bad, doesn't mean what you plant in it is going to be bad. It matters in how it's cared for.*

While the methodology for the second phase was different in that the participants were largely unknown to the researchers, the relationship that developed over the summer and fall resulted in rich conversations in the focus groups. From these guided conversations, there were four key findings which emerged from thematic coding process: food as reclaiming identity, food memory, practicing culture in the city, and food as relationship building.

Food as Reclaiming Identity

Cultural food and food skills were considered as a conduit to culture, and subsequently to identity. In an urban context, formulating and maintaining cultural identity can be challenging. Participants felt that the food skills they learned had deeper links to understanding culture. The food skills demonstration not only provided an opportunity to learn tangible skills, but also provided an opportunity for facilitators to share some of the history and cultural knowledge around the food, and food skills. Personal stories about farming practices, and the colonial impacts of policies, as they pertained to limits on food production, were an important source of cultural knowledge reclamation for participants.

Participants also shared and learned about the larger forces that undermine their ability to make choices that support their culture and identity. One participant describes the issue of self-determination and food: "You know, the Aboriginal people had been…had their choices taken away and it's [food] just one more way to make a choice."

Intergenerational knowledge transfer around food practices was also discussed by the participants. The role of food harvesting, gathering, and preparation is embedded in culture, and participants were concerned over the diminishing knowledge base around food. As one participant described: "give our kids healthy food, traditional knowledge, and pride in their tradition. Did they even know that these things are tradition? Like cooked corn is traditional, farming is traditional, a lot of kids…. you know I wasn't taught that."

Food Memory

Participants initially described their food skills as limited prior to the food demonstrations. The food demonstration workshops were designed to not only provide hands-on learning opportunities, but to also be informal in nature, so there was a great deal of conversation and story-telling. Participants described feeling like they had learned these skills before. Once they had their hands on the fish, or in the soil of the garden, they described being overcome by memory, what we refer to as food blood memory. Participants also described the challenges of forgetting these food skills once relocating to an urban community, and the lack of acknowledgement of these skills as being valued. As one participant describes:

> *You know this is for me… just reconnecting…like my great grandpa, my Auntie Jean's grandpa. He takes me out in the bush and we go pick medicines. I remember this stuff, the fishing. I have that memory of this, but reconnecting again. . . because when you come to the city, all those skills are not acknowledged as skills. They are put aside and now it's time for books and school and city life and getting street smart. You put those traditional skills away and you just lose them. So to learn this stuff again . . . actually I still do make wicked bannock!*

Practicing Culture in the City

Participants described the importance of maintaining cultural connections in the city as being critical to their identity. Winnipeg's North End has numerous organizations that provide cultural programming, including feasts, which often have cultural food. Participants felt that there was a disconnection in the city between culture and food, other than being able to eat it at certain events and gatherings. Through the food skills demonstrations, participants discussed the importance of learning how to practice their culture in the city through food. The ability to fish in the city, to grow cultural food, and in some cases, purchase cultural food, is about practicing culture in the city.

One participant described how to incorporate the gratitude that he learned from his family in an urban context. The participant describes the practice of offering tobacco in her garden in the city as akin to how her father offered tobacco when hunting:

> *I like the traditional aspect…like when you get a fur, or that sort of thing. My dad hunts and when he hunts, if he kills a moose he puts down tobacco. It's the same thing you know, when you're taking plants, you have to be thankful to the earth and to give back so it's nice to incorporate that.*

Another respondent describes the connection she has for the food in her garden and the importance of connecting to the land even in an urban context:

> *Just getting my hands dirty [is good] . . . It's kind of weird, but I feed them [the plants] and check up on them. To have that connection, you know . . . that's what I get out of gardening. I've been gardening for a couple of years and it's just that connection.*

Food as Relationship Building

For the most part, the project participants did not know each other prior to participating in the food skills demonstrations and focus groups. Over the course of four months, participants got to know each other and shared stories about themselves and their families. Food provided an opportunity for people who may not have met one another to share important bonds, and build relationships.

Participants described the process of growing, harvesting, and preparing food as a social connector. By learning about tangible skills that were closely connected to their own culture and identity, participants felt connections to one another that were significant. The communal nature of food skill building was discussed by one respondent:

> *I feel like cooking together and "doing it up" before we do anything else is a really good way to get to know each other. That's something people don't really do in groups anymore, but historically that is how people ate. They ate in groups and cooked in groups. Everybody participated, which is something that was kind of cool for me to watch us all do. Everyone had a little task, a little job, a little something to do and it was sort of a good way for strangers to get to know each other.*

Discussion

Food insecurity is very narrow in scope, and discounts the strides that communities take in regaining control over their food systems (Cidro & Martens, 2014). Inner cities are synonymous with food deserts, and access to cultural foods is limited to trade networks and small numbers of market providers. Operationalizing IFS must be done at a very tangible and practical level. In urban settings, IFS is often encumbered by lack of access to traditional territories outside of the city, but it doesn't have to be. The principles of IFS are such that they can be practiced and honoured elsewhere. Certainly, this will look different in the city than in the bush or on reserve, but the underlying values and goals of IFS remain the same. The teachings around food as ceremony are often still practiced in urban areas, and participants felt that this represented part of their own cultural identity and ability to practice their Indigenous culture in the city. For example, participants and researchers spoke of, and chose to offer, tobacco when planting or harvesting food on the land. Ultimately, this is reciprocity in action. Morrison (2011) has presented the sacredness of food as one of the four principles of IFS, and indeed, this value and perspective on food was important to participants in the city. The practice of prayer, or offerings, around food in the city is one example of how Indigenous food sovereignty is, and can be, operational in an urban context. Likewise, re-learning food skills creates opportunities to practice culture and reclaim Indigenous identity in the city. Both the ceremonial practices around food, and the ability to participate in Indigenous food systems demonstrate that Indigenous food systems can be self-determined in an urban setting.

Urban IFS must be approached with the viewpoint that food skills are at the heart of regaining control over food systems. Our findings indicate that participants felt an important cultural connection, using cultural food skills development as the conduit. The importance of inter-generational knowledge transfer, and the close link between food and the natural world, discussed by participants resounds closely with the work done by Receveur et al. (1998) and First Nations people in the Yukon. The link between cultural foods and practicing culture described by participants is also closely linked to Lambden et al.'s (2007) work with Yukon First Nations, Dene/Metis and Inuit women. Elliot et al.'s (2012) work had some similar findings in terms of the "empowerment" of urban Indigenous people through traditional food practices.

Indigenous organizations, particularly ones that have programs and services focusing on health issues such as Type II diabetes and gestational diabetes and heart health, often offer healthy cooking programs. Additionally, other organizations offer poverty alleviation programs that focus on food economics. These programs and services can integrate the principles of IFS by focusing on cultural food and provide participants and clients with the necessary skills to integrate these foods into their programming. Several participants described the need to start developing an awareness of IFS with children. The role of children involved in IFS was described by a participant: "We need to re-involve children in the miracle and circle of life and understanding, so they will see the importance of traditional foods, and what is traditional to them."

There is an important opportunity to operationalize IFS principles as a means to not only address food insecurity, and chronic disease, but as a pathway for cultural reclamation. It is often challenging to "practice" Indigenous culture in an urban setting because the environment is often not conducive to many land based activities. However, our research indicates that cultural food skills can be adapted to an urban setting, and can have a tremendous impact on how urban Indigenous people consider their food systems, their identity, the relationships they have with one another, and practicing culture in ways that may have been considered inaccessible.

Winnipeg's North End is a unique part of the city and boasts an important source of cultural knowledge that has been adapted to an urban Indigenous environment. While not immediately apparent, cultural food needs are increasingly being met with the expansion of Neechi Commons, an Aboriginal operated, and worker owned, community grocer, restaurant, and gift store. There is also an increased number of local merchants providing access to market cultural food. Winnipeg's Indigenous community also participates in trade networks as an important way to access foods. Cultural foods, particularly land based foods, are highly rich in nutrients, and can provide an important mechanism to offset urban food insecurity, especially in areas experiencing food deserts. To rebuild a culture of urban Indigenous food, more than simple access is needed. This research demonstrated that traditional or cultural food "upskilling" is central to operationalizing IFS principles, and in an urban context, creativity is required to adapt these food skills. The benefits to traditional food upskilling extend well beyond addressing some food insecurity needs, but are more deeply embedded in connection to culture, community, and relationship building.

In order for urban IFS to be fully operational, a re-building of urban Indigenous food must take place. Winnipeg's Neechi Commons is a great example of how the community has addressed the needs for market foods as well as cultural foods. It provides access to cultural foods like fish, bison, wild rice, and blueberries as well as a restaurant with culturally influenced food. Indigenous organizations, or those who serve urban Indigenous communities may consider incorporating traditional food skills into their skill building programming as a way to enhance self-esteem building as it relates to cultural knowledge and development.

Currently, a third phase of research is underway focusing on cultural identity in youth. When we began working with the teachers from the school where research later took place, we developed research questions. The teachers recommended using the term "self-esteem" (as Indigenous youth) rather than "cultural identity," as the two concepts are interrelated. This phase of research focuses on food and the surrounding cultural teachings, with an emphasis on hands-on knowledge, and will run for a school year. Research activities will include cooking, ice fishing, Elder teachings, and seed starting. Preliminary findings echo the themes of previous phases of research: practicing food as a means of practicing culture in the city; gathering to celebrate food and identity as creating a sense of belonging for Indigenous students; and food memory as students share stories of family.

Conclusion

This project has explored both access to cultural food in the city, and the role of skill building in order to operationalize IFS. Participants describe access to cultural food as including: (1) growing, harvesting, preparing and eating cultural food as ceremony, (2) cultural food as a part of connection to land through reciprocity and (3) re-learning IFS practices to address food insecurity. This phase also highlighted the importance of skills associated with access to cultural food. Using a set of skill building food sessions, our participants indicated that cultural food was also about reclaiming identity, that participants experienced food memory, that cultural food was associated with practicing culture in the city, and that food was important in relationship building. Participants also described food knowledge and culture as being important for younger generations and as being a potential way to encourage youth in more positive directions. The third phase of this research is currently underway with Indigenous high school students at Garden City Collegiate and Neechi Commons. The research is looking at the connection between self-esteem and cultural identity and traditional

Indigenous food skills. Students will engage over a full school year in food "upskilling" workshops and sessions both in the kitchen and the classroom. We hope to determine whether youth participation in traditional food "upskilling" will result in any transformational shifts in how the Indigenous youth consider their culture and identity.

References

Adekunle, B., Filson, G., & Sethuratnam, S. (2010). *Preferences for ethno-cultural foods in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA): A market research.* Unpublished manuscript, Guelph, ON: University of Guelph. Retrieved from http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1738475

Adekunle, B., Filson, G., Sethuratnam, S., & Cidro, D. (2011). Acculturation and consumption: Examining the consumption behavior of people of Afro-Caribbean descent in Canada. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 2*(1), 297–313.

Adekunle, D., Filson, G., & Sethuratnam, S. (2012). Culturally appropriate vegetables and economic development. A contextual analysis. *Appetite*, *59*(12), 148-154.

Abdel-Ghany, M., & Sharpe, D. L. (1997). Consumption patterns among ethnic groups in Canada. *Journal of Consumer Studies & Home Economics*, *21*(2), 215–223.

Baskin, C.A., Guarisco, B., Koleszar-Green, R., Melanson, N., & Osawamick, C. (2009). Struggles, strengths and solutions: Exploring food security with young Aboriginal moms. *Escurio: Journal of Hunger and Poverty, 1*(1), 1-20.

Charmaz K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory.* London, England: Sage Publications.

Che, J., & Chen, J. (2001). Food insecurity in Canadian households. *Health Reports*, *12*(4), 11-21.

Cidro, J., & Martens, T. (2014). Eating Indigenous in the city: The limited scope of food sovereignty for Indigenous people in urban contexts. *International Journal on Biodiversity Watch*, Special Edition, 53-64.

Cummins, S. C. J., & Macintyre, S. (2006). Food environments and obesity: Neighbourhood or nation? *International Journal of Epidemiology, 35*(1), 100-104.

Donkin, A. J. M., Dowler, E. A., Stevenson, S. J., & Turner, S. A. (2000). Mapping access to food in a deprived area: The development of price and availability indices. *Public Health Nutrition, 3*(1), 31-38.

Food Matters Manitoba. (2015). *Traditional Food Guide.* Retrieved from www.foodmattersmanitoba.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/TradFood-Guide_2015_online.pdf

Elliot, B., Jayatilaka, D., Brown, C., Varley, L., & Corbett, K. K. (2012). "We are not being heard": Aboriginal perspectives on traditional foods access and food security. *Journal of Environmental and Public Health*, *2012*. doi:10.1155/2012/130945

Howitt, R. (2001). Constructing engagement: Geographical education for justice within and beyond the tertiary classroom. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education, 25*(2), 147-166.

Lambden, J., Receveur, O., & Kuhniein, H. V. (2007). Traditional food attributes must be included in studies of food security in the Canadian Arctic. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health, 66*(4), 308-319.

Kamal, A. G., & Thompson, S. (2013). *Recipe for decolonization and resurgence: Story of O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation's Indigenous food sovereignty movement.* Paper presented at the Yale University International Conference on Food Sovereignty, New Haven, CT. Retrieved from www.tni.org/files/download/46_kamal_thompson_2013_0.pdf

McIntyre, L., & Rondeau, K. (2009). Food insecurity. In D. Raphael (Ed.), *Social Determinants of Health* (pp. 188-204). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars Press.

Milburn, M. P. (2004). Indigenous nutrition: Using traditional food knowledge to solve contemporary health problems. *American Indian Quarterly, 28*(3/4), 411-434.

Morrison, D. (2011). Indigenous Food Sovereignty: a model for social learning. In H. Wittman, A. Desmarais & N. Wiebe, (Eds.) *Food sovereignty in Canada: creating just and sustainable food systems* (pp. 97-113). Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Mundel, E., & Chapman, G. E. (2010). A decolonizing approach to health promotion in Canada: The case of the Urban Aboriginal Community Kitchen Garden Project. *Health Promotion International, 25*(2), 166-173.

Peters, E. J., & McCreary, T. A. (2008). Poor neighbourhoods and the changing geography of food retailing in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1984-2004. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 18*(1), 78-106.

Power, E. M. (2008). Conceptualizing food security for Aboriginal people in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health, 99*(2), 95-97.

Pualani Louis, R. (2007). Can you hear us now? Voices from the margin: Using Indigenous methodologies in geographic research. *Geographical Research, 45*(2), 130-139.

Receveur, O., Kassi, N., Chan, H. M., Berti, P. R., & Kuhniein, H. V. (1998). *Yukon First Nations' assessment of dietary benefits/risks.* Montreal, QC: Centre for Indigenous People's Nutrition and Environment, McGill University.

Rudolph, K. R., & McLachlan, S. M. (2013). Seeking Indigenous food sovereignty: Origins of and responses to the food crisis in northern Manitoba, Canada. *Local Environment, 18*(9), 1079-1098.

Sinclaire, M. B. (1997). *Barriers to food procurement: The experience of urban Aboriginal women in Winnipeg.* (Doctoral thesis). Winnipeg, MB: University of Winnipeg.

Smoyer-Tomic, K. E., Spence, J., & Amrhein, C. (2006). Food deserts in the prairies? Supermarket accessibility and neighbourhood need in Edmonton, Canada. *The Professional Geographer, 58*(3), 307-326.

Strauss, A., Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Wang, L., & Lo, L. (2007). Immigrant grocery-shopping behavior: Ethnic identity versus accessibility. *Environment and Planning A, 39*(3), 684–699.

Willows, N. D. (2005). Determinants of healthy eating in Aboriginal peoples in Canada: The current state of knowledge and research gaps. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, Supplement. *96*(3), 32-36.

Wilson, K. (2003). Therapeutic landscapes and First Nations peoples: An exploration of culture, health and place. *Health & Place, 9*, 83-93.

Wrigley, N., Warm, D., & Margetts, B. (2003). Deprivation, diet, and food-retail access: Findings from the Leeds 'food desert' study. *Environment and Planning A, 35*(1), 151–88.

Appendix A: Phase One Focus Group Interview Questions

1.   Please discuss what you know about country foods. What do you consider to be country foods? Do you think there are enough of these foods in your environment? How do you access them? Are they affordable? Do you consume country foods?
2.   Do you think easier access to country foods locally increase consumption?
3.   How do you rate the importance of availability of country foods from 1 to 5 (*1 very unimportant* to *5 very important*)?
4.   On a scale of 1to 5 (*1 being Extremely Positive* to *5 being Extremely Negative*), rate your experience in getting involved with country foods (either acquiring it yourself such as hunting, or distributing it to others).
5.   If you are not involved in acquiring or distributing country foods, why?
6.   What do you feel, if anything, interferes with your ability to get country foods?
7.   What policies or practices do you think will assist in the development of a sustainable country foods market?
8.   Do you think eating country foods has health implications?
9.   If Yes, what are the implications? If no, why not?

Appendix B: Phase Two Final Focus Group Interview Questions

1. Often we think about traditional food as something that is inaccessible in urban communities for Aboriginal people. Now that we have introduced new skills or ways to grow, harvest, and prepare your own traditional food, do you think you have access to traditional foods in the city? Do you perceive access to these foods differently now that you have participated in these workshops?

2. We know that food and culture are tied closely together. For example, traditional feasts will often have food like wild rice and moose meat. Since we have learned about how to use traditional skills for growing, harvesting, and preparing cultural food, has your perception on how you can practice traditional culture in the city changed? Has your relationship with your culture changed?

3. The foods that we have learned about over the last few months are healthy and good for our body and mind. Has participating in these food skills workshops changed the relationship you have with food? Are you more likely to eat healthy food now that you have participated in these workshops?

4. Do you feel more comfortable around traditional foods and healthy eating? What would you need to continue?

5. What challenges will you face continuing to incorporate these foods into your diet?

6. Would you feel comfortable sharing what you've learned with others? Who will you share it with?

7. What would you like to see in the future to continue cultural food skills workshops in and around the city?

Chapter 4

Got Bannock?
Traditional Indigenous Bread in Winnipeg's North End

MONICA CYR & JOYCE SLATER

Bannock is a flat quick bread made with few ingredients. It has a reputation for being delicious. The bread is often associated with Aboriginal culture, yet its origin stems from Scottish settlers. This article examines the meaning of bannock to the Aboriginal people of the North End neighbourhood in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Aboriginal people are the Indigenous inhabitants of Canada; however, colonialism has resulted in the breakdown of their way of life, negatively impacting the lives of Aboriginal people. More recently, there has been a cultural revival among Aboriginal communities across Canada. Indigenous ways of life, including food-ways, are being re-discovered, explored, and celebrated. In this qualitative study Aboriginal participants (N=25) participated in focus groups and in-depth interviews about their experiences with bannock. Transcribed interviews were analyzed for themes and sub-themes. Results indicate that bannock is viewed as an important food for Aboriginal residents of Winnipeg's North End neighbourhood, despite its historical associations with European settlers. Bannock is associated with family histories, cultural events and ceremonies, and food security. Bannock is seen as having a deep connection to identity. The future of bannock, however, is uncertain due to inconsistent teaching in homes, schools, and communities. We argue that bannock is a traditional Aboriginal food whose creation, sharing, and consumption have deep connections to Aboriginal identity and sustainable well-being. Opportunities to learn about bannock should be incorporated into formal and non-formal educational programs in schools and communities.

Bannock is home-made bread that is generally consumed by the Aboriginal[1] First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada (Ingram & Shapter, 2002*)*. It is defined as dough that is kneaded into a shape and baked, or fried, and cut into wedges, or squares (Kuhnlein, Receveur & Ing, 2001). In addition, "There are almost as many words for [the bread] as there are ways of cooking it. Known also as *bannaq, bannuc, galette, gallette de mischif* and *sapli'l*, it plays a vital role in the lives of Aboriginal Canadians" (Blackstock, 2001, p. 11). Regional differences also exist; in Winnipeg, Manitoba, if

---

[1] *Aboriginal peoples* refers to the descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people – Indians, Métis and Inuit (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2002). These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs.

bannock is fried in oil it is called "fried bannock" while in Wisconsin-Madison, south of Winnipeg, fried bannock is referred to as "fry bread" (Vantrease, 2013).

At first glance, bannock appears to be a simple bread, made of flour, fat (lard or oil), salt, and baking powder; however, it is far more than just these few ingredients. For example, as the literature shows, bannock is a contested food because of its colonial roots. Consistent with this idea, Devon Mihesuah (in press) argues that bannock is not 'traditional' food in Indigenous[2] cultures, because its ingredients are not indigenous to the North American hemisphere, and therefore bannock cannot be considered authentic. Conversely, Bell (n.d) argues that bannock's origins predate European contact as Aboriginal peoples have long consumed flat-like "breads" from various plant foods that were indigenous to the land, and that bannock, as it is known today, was simply integrated into an existing food system. Furthermore, Vantrease (2013) reports that, for some American Indigenous students at her university, there are mixed feelings associated with bannock. For example, the bread is symbolic of pride because of its association with sharing and community; however, bannock also serves as a painful reminder of the less-than-nutritious commodity foods that were delivered to reservations by government officials as a means to assimilate Indian tribes in the United States. Hence, the bread serves as a reminder of its associations to poverty and marginalization (Vantrease, 2013, p. 55). Yet bannock is also viewed as worthy of celebration due to its cultural connections within Aboriginal communities (Blackstock, 2001). In spite of the controversies surrounding the bread, one thing remains relatively clear: bannock represents a distinct part of Aboriginal cultural identity, and encompasses several important meanings.

Food selection is based primarily on choices driven by sociocultural values and factors such as social prestige and health, but also age, gender, education level, and employment income (Twiss, 2003). In addition, various cultures preserve specific meanings associated with food that are deeply personal, culturally-binding, and highly unique. According to Fischler (1988), food is complex and has a number of dimensions which can contain different meanings. Many people prefer to consume foods that are symbolically associated with their own culture in order to reinforce their sense of belonging (Cantarero, Espeitx, Lacruz, & Martín, 2013). An example of symbolism associated with food and culture are Métis families who, according to Barkwell, Dorion and Hourie (2006), enjoy consuming fresh bannock served with soups and stews. The scholars propose that the experience offers a sense of comfort and family connectedness. Essentially, understanding what food means to people is an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the differences between (and similarities within) cultures.

Our project proposes that the long-evolved food systems of Aboriginal peoples amount to a treasure trove of knowledge that is typically overlooked and undervalued. Examining these food systems has potential benefits for the well-being of not only Indigenous peoples, but also industrialized populations (Kuhnlein et al., 2006). Furthermore, exploring the meaning of bannock in Winnipeg's North End (WNE), where the Aboriginal population is highest in the city, is important because bannock is more than just bread; it is representative of Aboriginal culture. Moreover, in Manitoba the proportion of Aboriginal peoples compared to non-Aboriginal people is greater than any other Canadian province (Statistics Canada, 2010). Although there are a number of articles about bannock in the popular press and scientific journals; to our knowledge, there are very few studies that seek a deeper understanding of the meaning of bannock through the lens of Aboriginal people in Canada.

---

[2] *Indigenous* refers to any population that has experienced the fate of colonialism, that seeks self-determination, and that is distinct in its own right (Smith, 2012).

Methods

This exploratory study used a qualitative, inductive approach. Adult male and female participants were purposively recruited through community-organizations, word of mouth, and advertisements placed in community spaces. All participants were Aboriginal/Indigenous and had knowledge of bannock, either through making it and/or consuming it. Consulting these "experts" allowed for the collection of unique and informed perspectives of food practices and their relationship to ethno-cultural (Aboriginal/Indigenous) identities (Bisogni, Connors, Devine & Sobal 2002). Ethical approval was granted by the Joint Human Research Ethics Board, at the University of Manitoba.

In-depth, semi-structured interviews (n=11) and 1 focus group (n=14 participants) were conducted using guiding questions. Questions were determined collaboratively with the staff of two community-based food organizations. Of the 25 participants (F=21, M=4) 8 were Elders[3] (F=5; M=3). Some of the Elders expressed emotions and told stories that could have only been captured through an interview process. The interviews and focus group took place in community-friendly spaces in Winnipeg's North End neighbourhood, which has the highest proportion of Aboriginal residents in Winnipeg (Canadian Electronic Library, 2012).

The interviews and focus group were conducted by a trained interviewer, who is a member of the Winnipeg Indigenous community and who possesses insider insights into cultural meanings and practices; this enhanced data collection. However, residing outside Winnipeg's North End, she also had outsider status, which positioned her as an informed questioner (D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011). Each interview and the focus group was 40 minutes in length, on average, and were digitally recorded and transcribed. Data was analysed thematically using an inductive, content-driven approach (Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E., 2011). Transcriptions were reviewed by the researcher for initial themes, and then coded for first level codes. Concept maps were developed, and the data was further analysed for second level codes, which became major themes. Further analysis yielded subthemes. Analytical memos were kept throughout the process, and negative cases were noted where they emerged. A sample of coding and transcription were reviewed by two other researchers. Data were collected until theoretical saturation was reached and no new themes emerged.

Results

Bannock was part of most participants' personal histories, and is still a commonly consumed food in Winnipeg's North End (WNE) neighborhood. Participants had overwhelmingly positive perceptions of bannock as an important food for Aboriginal culture, and for building community.

Bannock Is an Important "Traditional Food" in Winnipeg's North End Aboriginal Community

Our findings demonstrate that, for the Aboriginal people of Winnipeg's North End, bannock is considered a Traditional Aboriginal food. Participants expressed a great deal of pride with respect to bannock, and felt that it has become a "traditional food" for Aboriginal people. All participants

---

[3]An Elder is defined as an individual who has attained a particular status of honour, wisdom, and respect, regardless of age.

related stories of making and/or eating bannock as children, using phrases such as "it was always there" when describing childhood memories. Indulging in bannock whenever possible was common because of the bread's delicious taste, which was viewed as another element that made the bread a favorite traditional food. In addition, the knowledge of making bannock was passed down by family members.

Bannock is Aboriginal bread. When asked if bannock was considered an Aboriginal bread, participants used phrases such as "it's part of our native meals," "it's the traditional bread of our people," and "it's the way of our people." A few participants said that bannock originally derived from Scottish settlers, whereas others understood that it was bread that had been passed down through generations. An Elder man stated,

> *Bannock came from Scottish people, and show[ed] it to the Aboriginal people, and they like[d] it, so the Indian people sort of picked it up and this is what they used because it is simple to make, cheap to make right, it's not very expensive and they just basically took it as their own I guess. They make it a traditional way.*

One participant recalled that her "kookum" (grandmother), who lived to be 120 years old, shared stories of eating bannock as a young girl. Some participants recollected watching people within their community make bannock over camp fires in cast iron pans, or wrapped around a stick. Others were unable to recall an exact memory of bannock's presence beyond the fact that it was the bread that was always around. "My first memory, specifically no, it's just something that was always there. It was on the counter fresh, it was on the table fresh, it was with every meal."

The interviews also revealed that non-Indigenous "outsiders" identified bannock as a traditional cultural food. In particular, participants reported that in some instances bannock was banned because it was identified as an Aboriginal bread. Two Elder participants recollected a gap in their bannock consumption during their time in residential school as children. They stated that eating bannock was forbidden due to its Aboriginal connection. "I never seen bannock for ten months when I was in school, and I come home, when I come back to the reserve that's when we had bannock," and "when we were sent to the school, I never seen bannock there, nobody ever made bannock; they made homemade bread, white bread." As adults, both Elders resumed eating bannock, and became teachers of bannock in their community. In addition, the same Elder referred to bannock as "pahkwêsikan", a Cree term which was understood to mean "we are what we eat" (L. Cook, personal communication, May 20, 2014).

Many participants discussed positive childhood memories and relationships between families and bannock. One young woman reminisced: "It reminds me of being home. You know, like when I eat bannock, those two go together cause my mom always had bannock, she always made bannock. So it was just, you know that's home…" Many stated that bannock had been a part of their life for as long as they could remember. One participant stated that they had "been eating it since day one" and another reported that "[bannock] was one of the first things I ever ate - that I ever cooked myself".

Results showed that participants learned to make bannock from different teachers. While many participants learned from their mothers, bannock making was not solely matriarchal. Both women and men made bannock, and several participants recollected that their fathers taught their first lesson in making bannock. Others learned from extended family members such as grandparents or aunts. In addition, several participants reported that their families currently have a designated bannock maker.

Culinary technique and ingredients. Ingredients and recipes varied among participants. Some insisted that flour, water, salt, and lard are the original ingredients of bannock, and if the recipe is altered the product will no longer be authentic. One participant felt that Elders would not approve of veering away from the original ingredients. In addition, many participants believed that the one making traditional bannock did not measure the ingredients. Instead they would "eye-ball" the amounts. One man said about his grandfather:

> *He never could give me the proper recipe. I don't think he actually knew it, it was all an eye thing to him,*
> *ya, like he'd been doing it so long I guess he didn't use the measurements he just did it by eye.*

Some participants reported various ways to prepare and serve bannock, depending on the individual making it; whereas others felt that bannock made with ingredients other than white flour, lard, salt and baking powder was not "traditional." Conversely, a female participant contested that "white flour" is not a traditional ingredient, although interestingly she regarded bannock as traditional food. One man said bannock "goes a long way" because of the number of cut, or torn pieces it yields from a round loaf. Another participant stated that, cut properly, one can produce up to "…seventy pieces out of one bannock."

Participants stated that, while bannock is a flat bread, it should be fluffy. Excessive kneading and over handling of the dough will result in hard bannock. As one woman put it, "You know some people make that mistake that they play with it, or knead it too long, and then when they put it in the oven, their bannock comes out hard." Several participants preferred using their hands over utensils in order to handle the dough to avoid distorted consistency. Participants did not go into detail in regards to cooking methods.

Cultural pride and ceremony. All of the participants expressed pride in the association between bannock and Aboriginal cultural. For example, one Elder said, "And I'm telling my grandkids and whoever will listen, their friends you know I tell them, that bannock is a good food. It's our staple food, like the rice is to the Chinese people." The same participant went on:

> *Bread - white, store bought bread is not the way of our people, it's not! Bannock is the way. It's a staple*
> *food, it gives you strength it gives you energy. It just makes you strong. It's so important to eat bannock, to*
> *have bannock.*

Participants frequently expressed pride when talking about individuals who were able to make good bannock for a large number of people, and also teach about it. Bannock was found to be an important food for the community. For example, many participants identified individuals in the community who were well-known for making delicious bannock in large quantities, or for teaching many others in their community how to make the bread. Terms such as "bannock lady," "bannock maker," and bannocologist" were used to denote the philanthropic work of participants who had these characteristics. One man stated, "I would make bannock wherever I go; I would make bannock for people. They called me the bannock maker, lots of people." Another stated, "gatherings for native people - for sure there'll be bannock there." In addition, sharing bannock represented an aspect of Aboriginal pride. As one woman vocalized, "bannock is considered bread that should be shared." She went on to say that there is "Something to do with our people that likes to give it, like you know, to share it." A strong element of pride, recognition, and community building was identified when talking about bannock.

Results also showed a link between pride and sustenance. Many participants expressed a sense of pride and appreciation because bannock often provided sustenance when food was scarce. One woman confided that bannock was the only food she and her sister had to eat at times because her family was impoverished; "it holds us…when we had no food a long time ago, my mom used to make bannock and buns…it used to fill us up at lunch when we came home…we didn't care as long as it was bannock." Many participants also reported that bannock was less expensive to make as opposed to buying bread, therefore it was often made fresh daily; "it goes a long way compared to a loaf of bread," and "bannock fills you up faster than bread would." In addition, most participants strongly expressed their love for the bread. For our participants, as long as bannock was present, a level of food security existed.

When participants were asked if bannock had any spiritual meanings associated with it, the majority answered that it did not. However, they did state that bannock was often present at ceremonial events in the community. Bannock was reported to be at pow wows, wakes, funerals, and sweat lodges. Some explained that bannock is often given as an offering during ceremonial events. For example, one woman remembered her mother placing bannock by a tree:

> *Sometimes she puts whatever is left over too and puts it under the tree. That's what she does, she gives bannock to the - I don't know how to say it - to the Mother Earth. She gives it back to Mother Earth whatever is left over. She doesn't just chuck it out, [she] puts it under the tree.*

Another recalled that her grandson often would eat bannock before he sang because he believed there was a ceremonial connection between the bread and his ability to sing. She recalled him saying, "it gives me power, it gives me strength." Yet another woman found she was able to overcome her fears and intimidation of making bannock only after she prayed for guidance.

Bread with Purpose

The frequency and location of consumption, and the versatility of uses, differed from one participant to the next. Bannock was described as multipurpose bread due to the number of ways it can be prepared, eaten, and shared. One woman explained, "I eat it whenever I get a chance, as soon as I can, and I try a piece a day" which was echoed by most participants. Another participant stated, "I try a piece a day. I try not to, it's just so good! …. it's like, once you start you can't stop." An Elder woman enthusiastically said, "Ya, I just go crazy about the bannock!"

Bannock is a staple food for many participants partly because of its inexpensive ingredients and ease of making, as well as its sensual qualities and delicious taste. As one woman said,

> *You can make lots of it at one time, you can feed a lot of people, it's so readily available and easy to make...lots of it...it can go around and feed lots of people. It's uh, it's a good thing, it can go with many foods.*

Yet another participant said, "It's a staple food for me…I'm teaching my granddaughters how to make bannock… it's good food. I love bannock." Accessing bannock was not a problem for the participants of this study because bannock is offered so frequently at family and community Aboriginal gatherings. In addition, participants recalled bannock often accompanied other "country" or "traditional" dishes, such as stews, soups, and wild meats. Eating traditional dishes is still a

practice for many participants; however, they also reported eating bannock with "Western" and/or modern dishes.

Moreover, bannock was viewed as a highly versatile food which could be a main dish or a side dish. In addition to being fried or baked as an "everyday" food accompanying soup or stew, other uses were reported. Bannock was combined with other ingredients, wrapped on hotdogs for children's birthdays, and even served as a dessert with jam. A female participant listed the ways in which her mother used the bread: "She makes bannock dogs, bannock tacos, bannock pizza pops, like you can do anything with bannock." Another participant made bannock shepherd's pie. It was also frequently altered when made for special occasions, adding different ingredients (e.g. yeast, berries). One participant referred to bannock with yeast as "different bannock."

Bannock was felt to be superior to store-bought white bread; "it goes a long way compared to a loaf of bread;" "Bannock fills you up faster than bread would;" and "It's cheaper than bread." One Elder said, "Once or twice a week, especially if we're gonna eat soup or if we're gonna have fried fish, or moose meat or any kind of wild meat, I make bannock cause I can't eat bread with my food, store bought bread, it's not the way. . . . it doesn't taste right, so I always throw a batch of bannock in the oven."

Some of the participants interviewed in our study travelled back and forth from their home communities (reserves) to Winnipeg and reported that bannock is eaten frequently in both locations. Furthermore, participants identify bannock as an "accessible" traditional food in this urban neighbourhood, where other foods such as fish and wild meat are expensive or unavailable.

The Future of Bannock

Many participants expressed concern about whether bannock will continue to have an important place in Winnipeg's North End among Aboriginal families. This was because interviewees expressed that they were too busy and did not have enough time to bake, and that youth have not learned how to make bannock at home. There is some teaching, however, happening in community centers, and a local bakery also makes bannock. Additionally, participants also relayed that bannock has an effect on their health.

Bannock and health. Several participants reported having diabetes and were advised by health practitioners to avoid bannock. While some reduced their consumption to an "occasional" meal, others refused to cut back on the bread. One participant stated, "I [have] been a diabetic for a long time, since I was fourteen. I still eat bannock, no-one's gonna stop me from eating bannock." Some felt it was an unhealthy food because of the high refined carbohydrate content; however, several participants reported substituting various ingredients in order to make it healthier. One participant used spelt flour and soy milk in order to keep the bread in her diet. Others reported having tried and enjoyed "half whole wheat and half white" flour mixtures. Some participants omitted salt, or used oils such as canola or coconut instead of lard, to make their bannock healthier. One woman said, "Bannock is so easy to make that everybody can make it and you can add anything you want to it, like you can make healthier bannock."

Bannock and the passing on of knowledge. Participants felt that passing the knowledge of "traditional bannock" is important for future generations; however, several expressed concern that young people in the community do not know how to make it because it is not being made in many homes. A concerned Elder reported:

I've been here for a long time right, and a lot of people that are coming here. What amazes me, most of these young people, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen, twenty, they don't have a clue how to make bannock. And I asked "Don't you guys do this at home?" No, they don't know how to make bannock. And to me that's really sad, you know!

In addition, not all participants had learned how to make bannock. One woman shared that she "always wanted to learn to make bannock!" A male participant reported that city life has impacted his ability to make bannock, especially challenges related to time.

The city [has] changed me. Since we came to the city, I don't bake as much as I used to and I don't make nothing hardly, like Tuesday I come here, I make it here, so other than that I don't.

Bannock in community. Neechi Commons is the name of an Aboriginal owned community bakery that offers bannock for sale and is known for donating loaves of day-old bannock to surrounding community centres, increasing the availability of the bread. One female participant reported eating bannock solely because it is served in the Women's Centre she visits daily. "I come to the Women's Centre and they always have bannock here from Neechi's store." Bannock making workshops are occurring in community centres in Winnipeg's North End, which many participants were pleased about. One woman stated, "I never made bannock. I'm not a bannock maker until I came here to Hope Centre." These workshops were viewed as very important for passing knowledge and building confidence:

I mean bannock baking has saved us in the community. It's like teaching the community. We have lots of young ones here who do not know a thing about it, maybe due to family dynamics and they have their reasons that we know, so for them to come in here and be able to bake the bannock is incredible for them, to get some self-confidence.

Discussion

This study examined the role of bannock in the lives of Winnipeg's North End Aboriginal residents, as well as the broader community. Despite its links with Scottish settlers and colonization, bannock was found to be a highly versatile and a critically important food for participants and their community, and was associated with many positive childhood memories. These findings have important considerations for the Aboriginal community with respect to maintenance of culture and identity through food traditions, which contribute substantially to overall well-being.

Pahkwêsikan (We Are What We Eat)

One of the major results of this study is that bannock appears to be a traditional bread and is very much a part of Indigenous identity in Winnipeg. This is likely because of the strong familial connections that were formed during the process of preparing, sharing, and eating the bread, historically and contemporarily. It was understood by the participants that learning to make bannock at a young age was representative of positive familial connections. Despite impacts of colonialism,

strong family bonds are a distinctive characteristic among Aboriginal families (Shantz, 2010). The participants in this study felt that bannock affirmed who they are, as it provided the comfort of knowing they would be fed, even in times of limited food resources. They did not feel that bannock was imposed on them even when they were directly asked. In fact, for participants, making and eating bannock has become a way individuals proudly identify themselves as "Indigenous."

Furthermore, bannock has been transformed over time and, as such, embodies Aboriginal values. "Incorporation" may explain how bannock (ironically, introduced by European settlers), has been transformed into a traditional food that symbolizes what it is to be an Aboriginal person in Winnipeg in the 21st Century. Claude Fischler (1988), a social scientist and anthropological food expert, eloquently states "to incorporate a food is, in both real and imaginary terms, to incorporate all of its properties: we are what we eat. Incorporation is a basis of identity" (p. 279).

In the social sciences, there is plethora of literature on how food is selected, and then becomes an integral part of one's identity. For instance, research done by Cantarero, Espeitx, Gil Lacruz, and Martín (2013) determined that food is selected based on a number of characteristics including; whether or not food is edible, if and how it can be cooked, the relationships that form due to eating, and lastly the behaviours that relate food to eating. Identity stems from these food selections, conveying "meanings such as cultural belonging, social prestige, health, etc." (p. 889). This implies that food selections provide meaningful insight into understanding cultural identity.

Similarly, bannock held various meanings, most of which have positively impacted our participants. Not only does food describe identity, but it also effects to what extent a person is willing to go in order to keep that food in their diet. For instance, Bisogni, Connors, Devine, and Sobal (2002) describe conflicts that arose for participants of their study who reported consuming foods that were forbidden, or best avoided due to health complications; however, despite potential health consequences they chose to continue eating the foods with which they identified. This same resistance was exhibited by a participant in our study when describing her experience of continuing to eat bannock despite being diabetic, and despite her doctor advising against it. It was clear that the participant places high value on maintaining bannock in her diet as it represents a part of who she is.

There is little literature that discusses when bannock was first introduced to the Aboriginal communities. It likely arrived with early colonial immigrants. According to Maudlin (2007), larger numbers of British immigrants, which included a constant influx of Scottish settlers, emigrated to Canada, specifically to Nova Scotia, after the American War of Independence (1830s – 1850s). Nonetheless, participants acknowledged that bannock was Scottish bread given to the Aboriginal people during the time of settlement. Regardless of its provenance, participants acknowledged that bannock has become absorbed into the cultural food practices of Aboriginal people, which makes bannock traditional for the participants in our study. This is consistent with Alison Bell's (n.d.) position, as she fittingly described bannock as the 'Aboriginal Staff of Life' because of its cultural transformation from Scottish settlers to Aboriginal identity (para. 1).

Simply put, bannock is a traditional Aboriginal food because the participants in our study say it is, despite its ties to early colonialism. Currently, there is no accepted definition of Aboriginal "traditional food," however, one definition suggests that traditional food, or country food, is defined as "wild-harvested foods such as wild meat, fish, birds, sea mammals, berries and other plants" (Power, 2008, p. 95). In all probability, bannock may have become a traditional food as a result of sharing knowledge with Scottish settlers. After all, Aboriginal people had a strong tradition of sharing medicines, lodging, hunting and other pertinent knowledge with non-Aboriginal people. When Aboriginal families were forced onto reservations, which caused a significant loss of culture, the disconnection from the land and traditional foods negatively impacted Aboriginal communities

across Canada (Vantrease, 2013). The expropriation of land resulted in lofty gestures made by government agents who would deliver low nutritional refined foods including ingredients to make bannock, which inevitably left families food insecure (Shkilnyk, 1985). What began as a friendly exchange among European settlers and Aboriginal communities resulted in future generations of despair for the latter families (Mclean, & Goulet, 1985). Bannock appears to have emerged from this hardship as a symbol of survival, positive identity, and pride.

Bannock in the Big City

The growing urbanization of Aboriginal families, in centres such as Winnipeg, has provided a juxtaposition of cultural revitalization and the breakdown of culinary skills. For instance, our study showed that there is a concurrent "revitalization" of bannock in the community through workshops and classes offered at community centers. In Canada, there is "cultural revival" sweeping throughout Aboriginal families and communities, restoring what has been disrupted in traditional culture, visions, and ultimately, health (Ross, 2014, p.2). Cultural languages, customs, and traditions are flourishing and becoming reestablished once again, and food is central to this movement. This study demonstrates that bannock is part of this revitalization. It has been argued that Aboriginal urbanization is a means of further disconnecting the people from their cultures and traditions (Senese & Wilson, 2013). Contrary to this notion, bannock is still consumed in both urban and rural locales; and therefore, it has maintained a traditional role within Aboriginal families.

Concern expressed about the diminishing "passing on of knowledge" of bannock to youth reflects the concern in the rest of the community about culinary de-skilling, and the impact it has on health, well-being, and identity (Lang & Caraher, 2001). Blackstock (2001) observes that food is an integral component of one's identity; and for centuries, nations, communities, and families identify with foods which are often unique to their own culture. Furthermore, he suggests that food holds special meaning and therefore should be passed down, otherwise a part of our history is at risk of being lost.

Unfortunately, the escalating consumption of highly processed foods, fast foods, and soft drinks has resulted in loss of cultural food knowledge around the globe, and is associated with growing rates of obesity and poor nutritional health (Monteiro, Moubarac, Cannon, Ng, Popkin, 2013; Swinburn et al., 2011). In addition, families have become bogged down with busy schedules which further threaten family traditions within the home unit. For instance, some participants rely on bannock's presence at community events as a way to ensure access to the bread because it is not made at home as often anymore; if not for such opportunities, it is uncertain whether bannock would be consumed as often.

For Winnipeg, and its large population of Aboriginal families, incorporating relevant food teachings in the formal kindergarten to grade 12 curriculums would be very meaningful. This goes beyond just learning how to "cook" bannock. This would contribute to "Indigenizing" the curriculum, and would serve as an opportunity to bridge gaps among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. To "Indigenize" includes focusing efforts on the present and moving forward, away from terms such as "colonization" that are painful reminders of the past (Smith, 2012).

The Darker Side of Bannock

Although participants expressed a love for bannock the bread reminded some participants of painful memories. Those who were sent to the colonial residential schools were not allowed to eat

bannock because it was viewed as Aboriginal food (TRC, 2015). Two female participants in our study recall that bannock, along with other cultural foods, was strictly forbidden while they were in the custody of the Indian Residential school system; it was only when they returned to their communities that they were able to eat bannock with their families. Laforme (n.d.) states (as quoted in Rogers, Degagné, Lowry, Fryer, & Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2014) that a number of tragedies stemmed from Residential schools and government oppression. He states that the systemic introduction of Reservations and Residential schools (1880s and 1960s) began the familial, cultural and spiritual breakdown that swept the communities of Aboriginal families across Canada. Residential Schools were one of many ways in which the Government of Canada and the church sought to take care of the "Indian problem;" attempting to eliminate any traces of Aboriginal culture. These damaging effects were reaffirmed on June 2nd, 2015, in Ottawa by Justice Murray Sinclair, the Chair of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who stated during the executive summary of the landmark report that, "The Residential School experience is clearly one of the darkest and most troubling chapters in our collective history. Canada clearly participated in a period of cultural genocide" (as cited in *For the Record*, 2015).

Furthermore, Aboriginal peoples' of Canada are impoverished as a direct result of colonization and marginalization and as such, rely on inexpensive foods and ingredients, such as the ingredients in bannock, to survive (Bhawra, Cooke, Hanning, Wilk & Gonneville, 2015; Elliott & Jayatilaka, 2012). For Aboriginal students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, "fry bread" (similar to bannock), is considered a commodity food because it, along with other ingredients, was provided by the Government as food rations and serves as a reminder of colonialism (Vantrease, 2013). At the same time, the students of the University of Wisconsin-Madison identified fry bread as symbolic and representative of Aboriginal identity. It is a reminder of the widespread diseases, such as diabetes, that plague their people, and more importantly, it is a reminder of the government's ploy to eradicate Aboriginal identity. Food deprivation has long been disregarded by government officials, and poverty continues to strike Aboriginal communities. In a recent Podcast, Ian Mosby, a University of Guelph historian, states that:

> Food has often been used as a weapon against Aboriginal people and when you look at something like bannock, white settlers feel a lot of guilt, because this is food we see as being imposed on Aboriginal people and reflecting this problematic colonial relationship. (Mosby, 2015).

Clearly food, and in this case bannock, is intertwined with the socio-political and economic history of Canada's first peoples, and as such, its role is varied and complex. Results of this study suggest that bannock may be a 'food of resistance.' It is ironic that in spite of the government officials' attempt to eradicate Aboriginal culture indefinitely, in part through the introduction of cheap food subsidies such as flour and lard, bannock has become a "signature food" for Aboriginal people; and it is still being consumed, and transformed in Winnipeg's North End today. This is evident in the ongoing healing process that is underway as culture, stories, and foodways are honored, including the making of bannock.

Bannock Provides Sustainable Well-being

This study shows that despite its provenance, bannock continues to embody important Aboriginal traditions, values and food security, which are key to individual, family and cultural well-

being. The challenge is to support formal and non-formal education initiatives to ensure that the knowledge of bannock, and other traditional foods, is passed on to future generations in culturally appropriate ways. This includes sharing practical knowledge of how to make bannock, such as recipes and culinary techniques, as well as sharing the spiritual and philanthropic teachings that accompany the making and serving of food.

For this study's participants, making and eating bannock has been transformed to embody Aboriginal values. As such, bannock is an important part of contemporary Aboriginal culture for many Winnipeg's North End residents. Participants knew that the bread had been passed down throughout generations and that it was symbolic of home. Intergenerational teachings about the bread have been contextualized, shared and passed on mostly by watching how the bread was made by immediate and extended family members. Childhood memories of food are important and significant because they are a link between "familial wisdom and insights into cultures" (Waxman, 2008).

In addition, sharing bannock was considered to be a philanthropic gesture, which is a distinguishable characteristic of Aboriginal cultural food security, and social belonging. As stated by Elaine Power (2008), "'Cultural food security' is an important component of food security because it is more than just eating food to abstain hunger; rather, it is about the social holistic well-being garnered from the bonds that are formed through sharing" (p. 95). Furthermore, bannock was often enjoyed at community events and ceremonial functions. In fact, several participants made light-hearted jokes when referring to community gatherings where bannock was sure to be present.

Future of Bannock

This study found that the future of bannock has an element of uncertainty in terms of its potentially negative impact on health, as advised by health providers. In particular, bannock may negatively impact individuals with diabetes, a disease that affects a disproportionately high number of Aboriginal people (Hackett, 2005). However, as this study shows, people are continuing to "renew" and "revise" bannock to suit contemporary lifestyles and tastes. This mirrors trends in other "traditional" foods such as "western" breads which were once a simple wholesome food, and are now full of fibre and flax, chemical preservatives, or even gluten free. Although several participants preferred to keep the "original" recipe, Blackstock (2001) advises that, in today's health conscientious society, it is important to consider alternative ingredients in order to prevent consequential impacts on health. He suggests that people "consider healthier substitutions for some of the ingredients in [the] traditional recipes" (p. 4). This is supportive of the participants' decisions about maintaining the bread in their diet, as well as their willingness to experiment with healthier recipes. This is particularly important for health practitioners to take note of because bannock is an important part of Aboriginal culture, values, and identity. Therefore, suggesting healthier ingredients instead of advising to entirely eliminate consumption of the bread is a more respectful approach.

In Canada, federal and provincial governments, ministers of health and educators alike are working toward promoting healthy habits for Canadians including creating healthy eating initiatives and strategies, both of which nurture the importance of cultural environments (Public Health Canada, 2011). By the same token, nurturing cultural environments can extend to support strategies that reintroduce and increase culinary skills within families and communities. For some study participants, making bannock was an opportunity to share more than just a recipe with kin; it was an endeavor that combined rich discussions, fostered social relations, and enhanced a pleasurable eating experience –which, after all- is the basis of a healthy cultural environment. As Joyce Slater (2013) put

it, cooking is not dead, but rather in desperate need of revitalization. Slater argues that cooking skills and nutrition literacy can equip today's youth, and tomorrow's leaders, to make better eating choices, to eat healthier, and to enjoy food in a holistic manner - the way food was meant to be enjoyed.

As Canada continues to support immigration and multiculturalism, there will be much to learn from one another, including Canada's First Peoples. As Blackstock (2001) states,

> food is a fundamental aspect of our humanity and this common bond is a good place to start learning about each other's culture. Symbolic among the First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and settlers, bannock bridges many cultures and is not only a favorite food of native peoples, but of all Canadians. (p. 53)

In addition, by engaging with Elders and Aboriginal organizations that have wisdom and expertise to share, teachers can become culturally competent in order to teach about Indigenous foodways. Similarly, teaching strategies that are useful and specific to curriculum should be organized in post-secondary teacher training. The blending of Aboriginal and Western approaches to teaching and learning in a respectful manner honours both ways of "seeing things differently" (Ross, 2014, p.2). Such approaches increase the likelihood of promoting well-being in students and the wider community.

Conclusion

This study, the first of its kind, examined the importance of bannock in an Indigenous community, and has revealed how traditional foods can take on new meanings, values, and significance over time, and become integrated into Aboriginal culture and identity. This study contributes to the growing literature attempting to understand the deeper interaction that Aboriginal people have with food.

We believe that bannock will survive as an important Aboriginal food not only because it symbolizes identity, past and present struggle, and familial connections, but also because it is so delicious, affordable, and accessible. Hence, encouraging the use of "traditional foods" in modern contexts is important for food security as a determinant of health and sustainable well-being. Indeed, celebrating bannock as an important Indigenous food tradition. The cultural teachings it embodies are vital to urban neighbourhoods, such as Winnipeg's North End, where other traditional foods, such as wild fish and wild meat, are expensive or unavailable.

Results of this research will be of interest to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers and community members and organizations, and add to the growing discourse and scholarship on traditional Aboriginal foods and health.

References

Barkwell, L., Dorion, L., Hourie, A., & Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies Applied Research. (2006). *Metis legacy II: Michif culture, heritage, and folkways* Saskatoon, SK: Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Bell, A. (n.d). *Bannock and Canada's First Peoples.* Retrieved from http://fooddaycanada.ca/articles/bannock-canadas-first-peoples/

Bhawra, J., Cooke, M., Hanning, R., Wilk, P., & Gonneville, S. (2015). Community perspectives on food insecurity and obesity: Focus groups with caregivers of Métis and off-reserve First Nation's children. *International Journal for Equity in Health, 14*, 96.

Bisogni, C. A., Connors, M., Devine, C. M., & Sobal, J. (2002). Who we are and how we eat: A qualitative study of identities in food choice. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 34*(3), 128-139.

Blackstock, M. D. (2001). *Bannock awareness*. Retrieved from https://www.for.gov.bc.ca/rsi/fnb/bannockawareness.pdf

Canadian Electronic Library, & Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. Research Evaluation Unit. (2012). *Winnipeg Regional Health Authority community health assessment 2009-2010*. Winnipeg, MB: Research and Education Unit, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority.

Cantarero, L., Espeitx, E., Gil Lacruz, M., & Martín, P. (2013). Human food preferences and cultural identity: The case of Aragón (Spain). *International Journal of Psychology, 48*(5), 881-890.

D'Sylva, A., & Beagan, B. (2011). 'Food is culture, but it's also power': The role of food in ethnic and gender identity construction among Goan Canadian women. *Journal of Gender Studies, 20*(3), 279-289.

Elliott, B., Jayatilaka, D., Provincial Health Services Authority, & Canadian Electronic Library. (2012). *Healthy eating and food security for urban Aboriginal peoples living in Vancouver a case study* (Canadian Electronic Library. Documents collection). Vancouver, B.C.: Provincial Health Services Authority.

Fischler, C. (1988). Food, self, and identity. *Social Science Information, 27*(2), 275.

For the record: Justice Murray Sinclair on residential schools. (2015, June 2). *Macleans'*. Retrieved from http://www.macleans.ca/politics/for-the-record-justice-murray-sinclair-on-residential-schools/

Guest, G., MacQueen, K., & Namey, E. (2011). *Applied thematic analysis*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Hackett, P. (2005). From past to present: Understanding First Nations health patterns in a historical context. *Canadian Journal of Public Health/Revue Canadienne de Sante Publique, 96*, S17-S21.

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (2002). *Words first: An evolving terminology relating to Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada.

Ingram, C., & Shapter, J. (2002*). BREAD:The breads of the world and how to bake them at home*. London, England: Hermes House.

Kuhnlein, H., Erasmus, B., Creed-Kanashiro, H., Englberger, L., Okeke, C., Turner, N., & Bhattacharjee, L. (2006). Indigenous peoples' food systems for health: Finding interventions that work. *Public Health Nutrition, 9*(8), 1013-1019.

Kuhnlein, H., Receveur, O., & Ing, A. (2001). Energy, fat and calcium in bannock consumed by Canadian Inuit. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association, 101*(5), 580-581.

Lang, T., & Caraher, M. (2001). Is there a culinary skills transition? Data and debate from the UK about changes in cooking culture. *Journal of the Home Economics Institute of Australia, 8 (2),* 2–14.

Maudlin, D. (2007). Architecture and identity on the edge of empire: The early domestic architecture of Scottish settlers in Nova Scotia, Canada, 1800-1850. *Architectural History, 50*, 95-123.

McLean, D., Goulet, K, & Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies Applied Research, & North West Centennial Advisory Committee. (1985). *1885, Metis Rebellion or government conspiracy?* Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications.

Mihesuah, D. (in press). Indigenous health initiatives, frybread, and the marketing of non-traditional "traditional" American Indian foods. *Indigenous Eating*. Retrieved from

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1126520914055540&id=478119175562387

Monteiro, C., Moubarac, J., Cannon, G., Ng, S., & Popkin, B. (2013). Ultra-processed products are becoming dominant in the global food system. *Obesity Reviews, 14*, 21-28.

Mosby, I. (2015). *The legacy of nutrition experiments in residential schools*. [Audio podcast]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T28TZiEC98s

Power, E. (2008). Conceptualizing food security for Aboriginal people in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Public Health / Revue Canadienne De Sante'e Publique, 99*(2), 95-97.

Public Health Canada. (2011). *Creating a Healthier Canada: Making Prevention a Priority.* Retrieved from http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/declaration/index-eng.php

Rogers, S., Degagné, M., Lowry, G., Fryer, S., & Aboriginal Healing Foundation. (2014). *Reconciliation & the way forward*. Ottawa, ON: Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Ross, R. (2014). *Indigenous healing. Exploring traditional paths*. Toronto: ON: Penguin Group.

Senese, L., & Wilson, K. (2013). Aboriginal urbanization and rights in Canada: Examining implications for health. *Social Science & Medicine (1982), 91*, 219-28.

Shantz, J. (2010) 'The foundation of our community': cultural restoration, reclaiming children and youth in an indigenous community. *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law, 32*:3, 229-236, DOI: 10.1080/09649069.2010.520515

Shkilnyk, A. (1985). *A poison stronger than love: The destruction of an Ojibwa community*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Slater, J. (2013). Is cooking dead? The state of Home Economics food and nutrition education in a Canadian province. *International Journal of Consumer Studies, 37*(6), 617-624.

Smith, L. T. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). London, England: Zed Books.

Statistics Canada. (2010). *Census 2006: Aboriginal peoples in Canada in 2006*. Retrieved from http://www12.statscan.ca/census-recensement/2006/as-sa/97-558/p16-eng.cfm

Swinburn, B. A., Sacks, G., Hall, K. D., McPherson, K., Finegood, D. T., Moodie, M., & Gortmaker, S. L. (2011). The global obesity pandemic: Shaped by global drivers and local environments. *The Lancet, 378*(9793), 804-814.

Truth Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Canada's residential schools: The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.* Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Exec_Summary_2015_05_31_web_o.pdf

Twiss, K. (2003). Archaeology of Food and Identity. *Anthropology News, 44*(8), 17.

Vantrease, D. (2013). Commod bods and frybread power: Government food aid in American Indian culture. *Journal of American Folklore 126*(499), 55-69.

Waxman, B. F. (2008). Food memoirs: what they are, why they are popular, and why they belong in the literature classroom. *College English, 70*(4), 363-383.

Chapter 5

Anishinaabe Perspectives: A Study of the Cultural Dimensions of Well-Being in Primary and Secondary Education in Manitoba

FRANK DEER

This study explored normative and prescriptive perspectives on the inclusion and utilization of Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) teachings and practices in contemporary K-12 education. Participants in this study were Anishinaabe Elders and Anishinaabe education professionals. Using a qualitative approach, the principal investigator conducted interviews with participants. This study found that the gap between normative and prescriptive perspectives on the inclusion of Anishinaabe perspectives in schools is considerable, particularly in the areas of stories, history, and experiential opportunities. The narratives of the study's participants revealed that language, and issues associated with spirituality, were important dimensions of the Anishinaabe experience, although they were not initially a focus of the study. The following includes a discussion about how the inclusion of such teachings and practices may be vital to the ethnocultural well-being of Anishinaabe students and communities.

Well-being has been an integral component of the Indigenous peoples' movement in recent decades (Audlin, 2005). Within the discourse of Indigenous well-being are essential themes related to perspectives on Indigenous knowledge, heritage, and consciousness (Deer, 2014). In order to realize a desired state of well-being in community settings, Indigenous peoples in Canada have recently become more active in affairs that lend to their own self-betterment (Murphy, 2009). Although Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, and throughout the world, are making efforts toward rectifying inequalities that have represented barriers toward their own socio-cultural progress and thus this desired state of well-being (Moeke-Pickering et al., 2006), the marginalization of Indigenous people in Canada is still a reality (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Reimer, 2006).

Canada's Indigenous population has experienced significant growth in recent years, especially in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2009b); it may be important to note that this growth is occurring in environments where unemployment, lack of education and opportunity, criminal activity, and racism are creating barriers for social development (Deer, 2008; Friesen & Friesen, 2002). Traditionally, the task of correcting such social ills has been, in large part, placed upon Canada's education system (Emberley, 2007). Although schools are accessible in virtually all urban areas, and to children in many First Nations communities, serious social problems remain prevalent for Indigenous peoples in Canada (Battiste, 2013). Education can serve an essential role in addressing such problems by

incorporating cultural programming, raising awareness of important social issues, and providing environments where students can develop mutual respect with one another regardless of racial or ethnic background; how such a process is enacted may be subject to further thought and discussion (Castellano, Davis, & Lahache, 2000).

Writers such as Timpson (2009), Battiste (2013), and Fiola (2015) have characterized the effects of colonization, such as loss of identity, estrangement from other Canadians, and lack of trust in government, as resulting in a position where Indigenous peoples find themselves at a critical juncture. This critical situation, if not adequately addressed, may result in the loss of elements of Indigenous identity, heritage, language, and continue to marginalize Indigenous people. In recent years, literature developed by respected scholars from Canada and around the world has explored situations of marginalization and disenfranchisement related to Indigenous people. In referring to Aboriginal peoples specifically, Schissel and Wotherspoon (2003) wrote:

> Aboriginal people's expectations are high that education carries with it the means to improve their life prospects, and they are clearly aware that schooling as they know it must be retooled to enhance the chances that their aspirations can be achieved. (p. vii)

The improvement of life prospects, reaffirmation of identity and heritage, and the transcendence from a state of marginalization are a few of the goals stated in the literature on Indigenous education; the general implication is that there is a gap between such goals and the current state of affairs. This gap may be closed through the acquisition of education, but such an assertion should be made with one important caveat: education is, and should be, a means to prepare children to be effective contributors to society (Au, 2012). In addition to the prospective improvements that a civically active Indigenous population may bring to Canadian society, such developments should reflect those identities that are prevalent amongst Canada's Indigenous peoples (Grammond, 2009). Developments in the area of Indigenous cultural revitalization can also enrich Canada's social mosaic (Christensen & Poupart, 2013) while simultaneously strengthening the identities of Canada's Indigenous peoples (Battiste & Semaganis, 2002).

Minnis (2006) suggests that changes have been made in Indigenous communities, particularly in First Nations schools, that have made these institutions culturally appropriate. As encouraging as these developments have been over the last few decades, First Nations schools have not yet realized a form of education that is congruent with traditional ideals of learning and is respective of spiritual, environmental, and cultural aspects of First Nations communities; such an education would need to be localized and unique to the specific community in which it is employed (Malott, Waukau, & Waukau-Villagomez, 2009). It is problematic to assert that sufficient changes have been made in the area of First Nations education in respect to cultural appropriateness (Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). Cultural discontinuity is perhaps the most plausible reason for these difficulties, and such discontinuities merit further research.

For Anishinaabe communities in the Province of Manitoba, addressing cultural discontinuity in a way that positively impacts educational success, and increases self-esteem for students, can be done by offering students the opportunity to explore aspects of their own culture and identity in a safe, celebratory manner (Armstrong, Corenblum, & Gfellner, 2008). The research study reported herein investigated the incorporation of Anishinaabe perspectives into educational programming in select Manitoba schools and communities.

The Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate normative and prescriptive perspectives on the inclusion and utilization of Anishinaabe teachings and practices in contemporary K-12 education. The study involved a series of interviews with 10 Anishinaabe Elders as well as ten Anishinaabe educators who were working in schools; two of the Elders occupied professional positions in education. Additionally, the researcher observed classroom activities delivered in an effort to explore the Canadian Anishinaabe experience. Upon completion of the data collection, the researcher analyzed the data for emergent themes with reference to the general questions of the study's guiding questions, as well as the study purpose. Those research questions were:

1. How are Anishinaabe perspectives currently being employed in primary and secondary education in Manitoba?
2. What is the potential for Anishinaabe perspectives as a means of improving how the Anishinaabe experience is reflected in primary and secondary education in Manitoba?

These themes, and the narratives that informed them, were used to comment on how Anishinaabe teachings and practices are currently being explored in primary and secondary education in Manitoba. These themes were also used to develop an understanding of how Anishinaabe teachings and practices can be more appropriately infused in contemporary primary and secondary education. This study was developed with the principles of Appreciative Inquiry in mind. These principles include: the importance of an affirmative approach to interviewing and research, the avoidance of problem-based inquiry and deficit perspectives, and a respect for the knowledge that may be acquired (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). The primary researcher employed these principles by negotiating "initial intentional empathy" with the participants, and attempted to establish a climate of individual and social affirmation (Elliot, 1999, p. 12).

Participants in this study were community-based Anishinaabe Elders and education professionals in Manitoba. Participants were recruited from the respective education professionals, teachers and administrators, in order to explore the integration of Anishinaabe teachings and practices. Education professionals (e.g., teachers, administrators) associated with this study were essential, as it is their perspectives on the delivery of such subject matter that may refine the curriculum. Elders for this study were recruited through an established Elder's network facilitated by a provincial government organization, as well as through an educational organization that is responsible for supporting First Nations' schools. Teachers were recruited for this study by contacting Aboriginal focused public schools and First Nations' schools. In most cases, interviews took place in the communities in which participants were situated. All other interviews took place elsewhere.

Findings

The findings of this study will be organized in two sections. Firstly, the normative perspectives of participants on Anishinaabe views on primary and secondary education will be on the current state

of their integration. Secondly, prescriptive perspectives on how the Anishinaabe experience may be explored in schools will be presented.[1]

Normative Views on Integration: The Current Time

The ways in which normative perspectives on education for Anishinaabe peoples were articulated by participants in this study varied and may be categorized by two principal issues: that of *institutional practices,* and of *inclusionary practices.*

Institutional practices. Institutional practices related to the administrative dimensions of service provision were frequently mentioned by participants. Within the contexts of public schools, participants suggested that the standard to which institutional practices are, and have been, inclusive of the Anishinaabe peoples of Manitoba has been, in numerous ways, of a similar standard to that of non-Anishinaabe peoples. Many participants cited that a generic institutional approach toward the provision of education was of high concern and may be regarded as a proxy for understanding the relationships between the educational establishment and Anishinaabe peoples. As one participant stated:

> Schools are just schools. School divisions are just school divisions. Today, in whatever community, schools are just buildings. The teachers who are there are there because they will teach content. When you ask what you think of when you think of a school, you think of these things. This is not necessarily a bad thing. It's just the way it is.

Participants affiliated with First Nations schools suggested that the existence of band management of schools did not necessarily mean that institutional practices were more appropriate for the delivery of culturally relevant programming. Many of the generic dimensions of provincially-controlled education are, perhaps understandably, prevalent in First Nations due, in part, to the Eurocentric model of modern schooling that continues to be employed. As one participant stated, "being on the reserve, the school is just like the ones in the city in a lot of ways. The school [on the reserve] might be worse off, but it still looks and acts the same way."

There were participants who felt that administrative issues such as school district policy, and hiring practices, are important dimensions of educational realities for Anishinaabe students and families. Considering how institutional imperatives, informed by policy, may guide school operations as well as how hiring practices might condition the sort of school and class environments in which Anishinaabe students may find themselves, these issues may be perceived as crucial. As one participant cited:

> There have been a few instances when [Anishinaabe] teachers have been hired recently. The people in charge seem to think that this is better. I am aware of how the schools are seeing Aboriginal education in a good way. This is important.

---

[1] The term *normative* is used to describe the perceived standard of institutional, professional, and relevant practices and social mores associated with education relevant to the Anishinaabe experience. The term *prescriptive* is used to describe those perspectives related to the possibilities, hopes and desires of Anishinaabe peoples and other stakeholders.

It is important to cite that a number of participants discussed the relationship between primary/secondary education and the provincial authorities who oversee provincial education and have programmatic influence over band-managed schools. Of the relatively small number of appropriately focused curricula and teacher resources that explore Indigenous education, it was suggested that all were pan-Manitoban or pan-Canadian in scope. This was of concern because of the alleged affect that such discourses may have on the exploration of the unique manifestations of Anishinaabe experiences. As one participant stated: "there's lots of Indigenous materials out there for teachers to use. A lot of these materials are on Indigenous peoples from across Canada. There aren't enough resources that specifically explore the Anishinaabe experiences and history."

One of the prevailing sentiments amongst participants was that the institutional practices employed in primary and secondary education may be important to consider, but were not of principal importance when considering the current state of education for Anishinaabe students. What were described by one participant as "front line" practices that inform students learning, such as choices in curriculum and pedagogy in the classroom, were more frequently cited and labelled as of higher importance. These inclusionary practices, those that function to cause learning in a desired or morally appropriate way, merit focus here.

Inclusionary practices. Inclusionary practices, those related to teaching, learning and pedagogies, were frequently cited by participants in terms of *worldviews*, *spirituality*, and *languages*. Anishinaabe worldviews, those that reflect the epistemological and ontological underpinnings of Anishinaabe ways of being and knowing, were of principal concern. Many of the classroom teachers who are responsible for educating Anishinaabe children are alleged to employ curricular and pedagogical practices that are not responsive to Anishinaabe worldviews. As one participated from a First Nation, speaking about the First Nations' schools context, stated:

> Many of the teachers who work in our schools are not from our communities. Because they are not from our communities, they don't have a good understanding of who we are. They don't always teach in a way that is best for us.

There was some opportunity for participants to go into detail about how Anishinaabe worldviews were not being adequately represented. For some, the best way of conceptualizing the presence (or lack thereof) of Anishinaabe worldviews was to consider content in particular curricular contexts. There were a number of participants who had rather specific curricular examples which they felt would be helpful to explore these worldviews. In discussing the prevalence of Anishinaabe worldviews in science, one participant stated:

> Our way of science is not about measurement or just about observing things. It's about understanding where we are and how we can work with nature. It's about seeing how we can protect the land and what the land can give us. I wish my grandchildren explored science like this.

The theme of lost opportunities to integrate Anishinaabe worldviews was extended to the area of language and literacy. Books, poetry, digital media, imagery, and the narratives and symbolism that may be reflected through these sources, were areas of concern for at least a small number of participants. One asserted that:

> Many of the books and other resources for reading don't reflect who we are. They don't tell us of our histories. Many don't have any Indigenous perspectives in them. Most of the books in the classrooms and libraries are of non-native topics.

There was noticeable overlap in the responses from participants between issues of Anishinaabe worldviews and Anishinaabe spirituality and how these two areas have been, and continue to be, represented in contemporary primary and secondary education. One of the more frequently cited instances of improvement in regard to Anishinaabe spirituality is the increase in the presence of Anishinaabe Elders in provincially-controlled and band-managed schools. One participant, a reputable Elder herself, commented on the importance of Elder contributions in primary and secondary education thusly:

> We're doing better at making room for older people to come into classrooms to share their knowledge. In the past, there was very little chance for Elders to take part in schools. Now, I see more of this and it gives the school a chance to learn about teachings and practices. Smudging, ceremonies and the teachings.

According to some participants, the support that may be offered from Elders was potentially similar to that of Indigenous community support workers. These individuals, classified as non-teaching support staff, may not be regarded as Elders by their respective Indigenous communities. However, it was clear from these participants' testimonies that there is a potential for these individuals to provide direction and content in an effort to explore Anishinaabe spirituality in schools. In describing some of the initiatives that have involved explorations of Anishinaabe spirituality as facilitated by community support workers, one participant commented, "most of our spirituality and ceremony knowledge lies with our support workers. They support our teachers with the seven teachings and storytelling. This helps students understand ceremony."

Perhaps due, in part, to the roles that many of the study's participants served in their respective schools and communities, many cited the importance of *Anishnaabemowin* – then ancestral language of the Anishinaabe peoples. Participants asserted that Anishinaabemowin, sometimes cited at the principal source for understanding Anishinaabe worldviews, spirituality and experience, was lacking in provincially-controlled and band-managed schools. There were a number of realities that were mentioned as reasons for this lack of ancestral languages in schools, principal amongst those was the lack of classroom teachers fluent in Anishinaabemowin, as well as the fact that the language does not have the status of linguae franca in Canada. One participant, an Elder who has a professional presence in the schools of his respective community, stated the following about the lack of Anishinaabemowin in primary and secondary education:

> Our language is our most important asset. But we don't have enough language in our schools or our communities. Part of it has to do with the teachers our schools have. They are not [Anishinaabe] and they can't help our students with our language. With every passing generation, our language becomes more distant.

Language, as participants in this study described it, appeared to be a rather essential proxy for understanding the educational struggles of Anishinaabe peoples. Central to this idea is the understanding that Anishinaabemowin is a language that preserves, and provides the means for acquiring and maintaining, an appropriate understanding of the Anishinaabe self. Anishinaabemowin

was also cited as important for the affirmation of personal, familial, communal, and national self-concepts. Without language, the cultural identity of Anishinaabe peoples is adversely affected, as is the case in primary/secondary education. Other aspects of the Anishinaabe experience such as spirituality, history, and communal ties are as important as language to the retention, revitalization, and celebration of their identities. The testimony of participants in regards to how Anishinaabe teachings and practices are situated led to discussion about what is needed in order to facilitate the improved integration of these teachings and practices into primary and secondary education.

Prescriptive Views on Integration: Paths to Well-Being

There were a number of examples that were cited as paths for change in regards to primary and secondary education for Anishinaabe peoples of Manitoba. Participants in this study advanced three principal areas of focus: those of *worldviews, spirituality,* and *language.* Much of the information acquired from participants was closely aligned with narratives associated with normative perspectives of Anishinaabe teachings and practices in primary and secondary education. Unlike the data associated with normative perspectives of the participants, where responses to questions were more explicitly associated with single thematic areas, the data on prescriptive perspectives of participants was more cross-thematic in nature. Because of the overlap of themes in the participants' discussions, the data has been aggregated accordingly.

For most participants, the incorporation of Anishinaabe worldviews in primary and secondary education is still a work in progress. For those citing provincial school contexts, this was particularly important. Many of the participants suggested that the current professional and political climates have developed in such a way that there are opportunities for school districts and staff to respond to the developing area of Indigenous education. As one participant stated:

> We [Anishinaabe people] have our own ways of seeing the land and ourselves. They're tied to the experiences we've had in our territories. They're also tied to how we've been affected by people who have settled here. We see the world differently and that should be respected in schools.

Many participants who spoke of how important it is to incorporate Anishinaabe perspectives emphasized the importance of traditional and/or cultural dimensions of the Anishinaabe and their potential contribution to education. Some participants have suggested that the need to incorporate Anishinaabe perspectives into education requires exploration of these traditional and/or cultural dimensions as well as recognition of the fluidity of tradition and culture. In a sense, a sort of traditionalist position (i.e., affirmation and employment of traditional ways and views) was cited although the balance between traditionalist and non-traditionalist perspectives was affirmed. For some, exploration of worldviews should be regarded as traditional and fixed. As one participant stated, "being Anishinaabe is respecting our ancestors and how they saw things. We have to understand this and act in good faith." The notion of acting and seeing as their ancestors once did was a topic that emerged for a number of participants. However, others felt that this ancestral adherence was not necessarily essential. One participant, in opposition to the idea that worldviews are static, offered this:

> Our world has changed. Canada is changing. I think we have to understand this in order to do well by our children. We're living closely in our communities and in the city with

others. So of course we're going to learn and be affected by each other. In order to have a good life now, I have to have modern ways of looking at the world. That doesn't make me less Ojibwe (Anishinaabe).

In most cases, participants affirmed the importance of interventions such as professional development and initial teacher education that ventured to avoid obfuscating history and narrative. Going beyond the generalized approach to the Canadian Indigenous experience, participants called for the exploration of the unique manifestations of Anishinaabe knowledge, heritage and consciousness for educators and students.

It's important to be clear about what it is to be Anishinaabe. But that may be one of the more difficult things to do. For schools to explore these things, you need to have authentic knowledge that is relevant to the students. Community-based knowledge is what is called for.

With the call for the exploration of unique manifestations of Anishinaabe teachings and practices was, for some participants, the need to recognize regionalism. Although one may consider unique manifestations of Anishinaabe teachings and practices to envelope regional manifestations, it may be important to concede a distinction, since those affirming regionalism were those who cited the importance of treaty knowledge. As one participant explained, "an important part of who we are is our treaty relationship. The children have to learn about that because it's important to understanding the lands." The issue of treaty affiliation was affirmed by participants but also understated by others

There were a small number of participants who appeared to make deliberate distinctions between Anishinaabe worldviews and spirituality. However, most participants' discussions were marked by an overlap between spirituality and worldviews. Otherwise stated, many participants felt that it was their respective spiritual orientation that informed their worldviews. The primacy of a spiritual orientation was, for a considerable number of participants, a fundamental governing principle associated with their views of how Anishinaabe teachings and practices may be explored in schools.

For those participants who championed spirituality as a fundamental dimension of prospective integration of Anishinaabe perspectives in primary and secondary education, the adherents to views and beliefs associated with their respective communities was paramount. Many of the participants in this study who asserted points such as this were, reputably, Elders in their respective communities. These participants, Elders and non-Elders, advanced the notion that eldership in schools was an important part of such integration. As one participant stated, it is from Elders that knowledge about spirituality may be best acquired:

The sort of knowledge we need is not just something to be found in books. The experience and perspectives of our elders is what is needed. Many need knowledge of our people because of residential schools for instance. Elders can provide this.

Although only stated a few of times, a more focused commentary on the sort of Elder was cited by participants. Specifically, these participants were referring to formalized roles frequently held by Elders that require specific training and assent by others. It emerged in discussions with these same participants, on the subject of formalized roles such as those of the Midewin (a

spiritual/ceremonial society of the Anishinaabe), that being a member of the Midewin does not necessarily entail being a recognized Elder. It was these discussions that lead into the opportunity, and in some cases the necessity, to draw upon non-Elders to provide knowledge and guidance on spiritual matters. In order to do this, some participants suggested community support workers and family centre workers might do well with this provision of support. Some participants have commented that this is already a development in some schools. As one participant stated, "there are [teacher assistants] that have done a good job of talking about our people's traditions. They aren't teachers and haven't gone to university. But they have the experiences that can help kids learn about the Ojibwe (Anishinaabe)."

The manner in which spirituality is explored in primary and secondary education was frequently cited by participants. For some, as already stated earlier, eldership was a part of many views of prospective spiritual intervention in schools. Activities associated with the Seven Sacred Teachings and the importance of the medicine wheel were occasionally cited as ways in which spiritualty may be explored.

The importance of Anishinaabemowin, the ancestral language of the Anishinaabe, was an often cited, but relatively unarticulated aspect of prospective school changes. For many participants, the integration of Anishinaabe perspectives would benefit from increased incorporation of ancestral languages. Many affirmed the importance of Anishinaabemowin in schools whilst conceding that this may be the most difficult dimension of the integration of Anishinaabe perspectives. As one participant stated:

> We're in crisis. We have to try to give our children an opportunity to learn the language. If we lose our language, we lose a big part of ourselves. So schools would have a tough job because there's not that many speakers left. I'm afraid for our people after our languages disappear.

In spite of the alleged lack of speakers, and the potential challenges that would lie ahead, participants felt that the importance of Anishinaabemowin means that it merits attention in primary and secondary schools. According to participants, the reason why language is important is because it is one of, if not the most, appropriate ways to understand Anishinaabe worldviews and spirituality. The manner in which a verb-based language such as Anishinaabemowin explores the ecological dimensions of Anishinaabe life makes it an important part of their ethnocultural identity. In speaking of worldviews, one participant reflected on the importance of language thusly:

> Our language tells the stories of our lands and our peoples. It's no accident that the words for our communities reflect the natural environment. It's no accident that our language contains meanings that are associated with creation. It's no accident that our language is a doing language. You can't get this understanding [through] English.

Discussion

Anishinaabe education has become an important social issue in Canada for a number of reasons. Generally speaking, Indigenous peoples have been one of Canada's fastest growing segments of the population (Statistics Canada, 2009a). It has been projected that the Indigenous populations will experience an increase of up to 60% by 2021; a population increase for Indigenous

peoples is projected to be particularly prevalent in the province of Manitoba (Statistics Canada, 2009b). In regard to Manitoba's Anishinaabe population, a similar increase is projected (Service Canada, 2006). Growth in the Manitoba Anishinaabe population is not just an on-reserve phenomenon, many Anishinaabe peoples in Manitoba, like other Indigenous peoples, have relocated to cities such as Winnipeg (Brandon & Peters, 2014). It is essential that Anishinaabe youth have access to appropriate educational programming that will allow them to assert and celebrate aspects of their own culture and to prepare themselves to take an active part in their communities and the broader Canadian society.

Since the settlement of the regions on which they resided, education for Anishinaabe peoples has been a problematic issue. Unfortunate conditions in Canada's residential and Indian day schools have had a detrimental impact upon many Indigenous peoples in Manitoba, including many Anishinaabe peoples (Milloy, 1999). Education was administered by church and government authorities for many years, a situation that prevented the Anishinaabe from having any genuine influence in the education of their own children (Miller, 2004). Following the development of the White Paper, the Canadian government's attempt to abandon Treaty obligations and facilitate all First Nations peoples into Canada's mainstream society (Dickason, 2006), Manitoba's First Peoples collectively took a stand and developed their response to this assimilative effort through *Wahbung*, an affirmation of inherent and Treaty rights that asserted that the *status quo* would no longer be tolerated (Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1971), triggering a movement in Manitoba to assert control of numerous aspects of social life, including education. As encouraging as these developments have been over the last few decades, Anishinaabe education has not yet realized a form of education that is congruent with traditional ideals of learning and is respective of spiritual, environmental, and cultural aspects of Anishinaabe communities; such an education would need to be localized and unique to the specific community in which it is situated.

The ancestral language of the participants, Anishinaabemowin, may have a rather important role in the development of educational programming and relevant pedagogies that can facilitate the establishment of culturally-relevant programming for Anishinaabe students and families. It became clear from the participants that there was an ecological dimension to the importance of Anishinaabemowin in so far as their language reflects Indigenous understandings of their respective natural environments.

In discussion with participants, *ecological dimensions* appeared to refer to the relationships that a particular language has with its respective traditional territories, its respective human and non-human life, and the ecological contexts that have come to be reflected by ancestral forms of communication. Thus, one might characterize the potential for achieving well-being through language as a means of supporting the principles of environmental stewardship and, subsequently, human sustenance and survival. However, perhaps more important to this notion of ecological flavour is what this tells us about the Anishinaabe peoples. Thomas's work (2010) suggests that a similar phenomenon occurred throughout many First Nations communities in Manitoba. In a study that examined the linguistically correct names of First Nations communities in the Province of Manitoba, Thomas showed that many of these communities had been assigned non-Indigenous names, many of which are still in use today. Many of these communities are attempting to put into use their original Indigenous names – virtually all of which had an ecological dimension. As Thomas wrote:

> One of the unique characteristics shared amongst all of the language groups is that they are descriptive: meaning that the basis of the language is grounded on the interpretation

> of the landscape….All of the interpretations reference an animal, geographic description of the land or identify a person or symbol. (Thomas, 2010, p. 61)

It is the ecological dimensions of these locations that inform the Indigenous names that have been assigned to them by their First Nations inhabitants. First Nations peoples' Indigenous names, as well as the Indigenous names they have assigned to their communities, provide an understanding of an ecological context that is frequently an organic part of their ethno-cultural identity.

The findings of this study raise an important issue for the field of education and its interface with Anishinaabe and other Indigenous peoples. Spirituality, a term here that incorporates spiritual practices, observances and principles that are informed, in part, by beliefs of an otherworldly entity frequently referred to as the "creator," is a theme and content area that is becoming prevalent in the discourses of Indigenous education in Manitoba. For participants in this study, Anishinaabe worldviews were frequently explored with reference to spirituality. This observation is in keeping with how Anishinaabe worldviews are explored in relevant scholarly literature of recent years, and in school-based forums – aspects of spirituality appear to be a rather important part of how many Anishinaabe peoples see and understand the universe. Although this is a not a unique phenomenon, as many people of a variety of different ancestral backgrounds observe spiritual and/or religious beliefs, the prevalence of spirituality for the Anishinaabe worldview may be particularly important for Anishinaabe perspectives in education. This may be due to the relatively new field of educational discourse that venture to include historical and socio-political truths that involve the forced obfuscation, or complete oversight, of Anishinaabe perspectives. As Indigenous education is seen, in part, as a means for cultural revitalization and decolonization, then it may be reasonable to recognize the importance that Anishinaabe worldviews and spirituality have toward these means. For the purposes of Indigenous identity development and revitalization, Anishinaanbe spirituality is, for most of the participants in this study, an important dimension of individual and collective well-being.

Although not articulated in the findings section above, there was some evidence in the testimony of participants of conceptual, and perhaps fundamental, overlap between Anishinaabe spirituality and that of Catholicism and/or Christianity. Participants' references to religious activities associated with Catholic piety, various manifestations of penitence (e.g., through prayer), and general privilege assigned to faith as opposed to reason, lead to potential questions on the content of Anishinaabe spirituality and its inclusion of latent non-Indigenous religious principles. Although the importance of religious belief and adherence may be rather important toward the realization of a state of well-being for some, what is of interest here may be the quality of Indigenous spirituality in light of potential influence of Catholicism and Christianity in a post-colonial Canada.

Education is a critical area of collective focus for Indigenous people in Canada (Friesen & Friesen, 2002). The colonial activities of European arrival, settlement, and confederation took place long ago; the impacts of those activities are prevalent today and have had a serious legacy for Indigenous peoples ethno-cultural identities – including language. Rather than maintaining their ways of life on the traditional lands of their ancestors, Canada's Indigenous peoples have been marginalized with little in the way of respectful space, political voice or resources to live in the way that they wish (Ray, 2005). These impacts, the results of colonial activities of the past, can be referred to as post-colonialism.

The social well-being of Indigenous peoples has come to depend upon, in part, culturally-responsive educational programming – addressed through processes of decolonization related to such programming and manifested in innovative curricular content and pedagogical practices. Armstrong, Corenblum, and Gfellner (2008) employed the use of traditional forms of art in First

Nations' schools in order to help students affirm and practice traditional cultural mores and improve academic achievement. Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) espouse a form of education that incorporates connections to language and the teachings that are relevant to the students in question. Saunders and Hill (2007) called for the inclusion of traditional pedagogies and culturally-sensitive curriculum that includes language exploration as a remedy for educational underachievement on reserves.

The field of Indigenous education has moved to support the melding of contemporary educational processes to be commensurate with the distinctive cultural realities of the students and communities in question. The unique manifestations of Indigenous knowledge, heritage and consciousness that are prevalent amongst a particular community, should inform the development of educational programming developed and delivered to Indigenous children; the inclusion of such components of culture can have important benefits to academic achievement as well as language retention (Jonk, 2008).

References

Armstrong, H. D., Corenblum, B. S., & Gfellner, B. M. (2008). An initial report of a community-university research alliance: Community-based Aboriginal curriculum initiatives – implementation and evaluation. *First Nations Perspectives: The Journal of the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 1*(1), 1-18.

Au, W. (2012). *Critical curriculum studies: Education, consciousness, and the politics of knowing.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Audlin, J. D. (2005). *Circle of life: Traditional teachings of Native American elders.* Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit.* Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing.

Battiste, M., & Henderson, J. Y. (2000). *Protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage: A global challenge.* Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing.

Battiste, M. & Semaganis, H. (2002). First thoughts on First Nations citizenship: Issues in education. In Y. M. Hebert (Ed.), *Citizenship in transformation in Canada* (pp. 93-111). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Brandon, J., & Peters, E. (2014). *Moving to the city: Housing and Aboriginal migration to Winnipeg.* Winnipeg, MB: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Castellano, M. B., Davis, L., & Lahache, L. (2000). Introduction. In M. B. Castellano, L. Davis, & L. Lahache (Eds.), *Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise* (pp. xi-xviii). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Christensen, R. A., & Poupart, L. M. (2013). *Connective pedagogy: Elder epistemology, oral tradition and community.* Winnipeg, MB: Aboriginal Issues Press.

Cooperrider, D. L., & Whitney, D. (1999). Appreciative inquiry. In P. Holman, & T. Devane (Eds.), *Collaborating for change*, (pp. 4-16). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Deer, F. (2008). Aboriginal students and Canadian citizenship education. *Journal of Educational Thought, 42*(1), 69-82.

Deer, F. (2014). The institutional and community capacity for Aboriginal Education: A case study. *In Education, 19*(3), 3-16.

Dickason, O. P. (2006). *A concise history of Canada's First Nations.* Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Elliot, C. (1999). *Locating the energy of change: An introduction to appreciative inquiry.* Winnipeg, MB: International Institute for Sustainable Development.

Emberley, J. V. (2007). *Defamiliarizing the Aboriginal: Cultural practices and decolonization in Canada.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Fiola, C. (2015). *Rekindling the sacred fire: Metis ancestry and Anishinaabe spirituality.* Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.

Friesen, F. W., & Friesen, V. L. (2002). *Aboriginal education in Canada: A plea for integration.* Calgary, AB: Detselig.

Grammond, S. (2009). *Identity captured by law: Membership in Canada's Indigenous peoples and linguistic minorities.* Montreal, PQ: McGill –Queen's University Press.

Greenwood, M., & de Leeuw, S. (2007). Teachings from the land: Indigenous people, our health, our land, and our children. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 30*(1), 48-53.

Jonk, L. B. (2008). How do young children learn language? Perspectives of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal mothers. *First Nations Perspectives: The Journal of the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 1*(1), 74-97.

Malott, C. S., Waukau, L., & Waukau-Villagomez, L. (2009). *Teaching Native America across the curriculum: A Critical inquiry.* New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Manitoba Indian Brotherhood. (1971). *Wahbung: Our tomorrows.* Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre.

Miller, J. R. (2004). *Lethal legacy: Current native controversies in Canada.* Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart.

Milloy, J. S. (1999). *A national crime: The Canadian government and the residential school system – 1879 to 1986.* Winnipeg, MB: The University of Manitoba Press.

Minnis, J. R. (2006). First Nations education and Rentier economics: Parallels with the Gulf States. *Canadian Journal of Education, 29*(4), 975-997.

Moeke-Pickering, T., Hardy, S., Manitowabi, S., Mawhiney, A., Faries, E., van Marrewick, K., Tobias, N., & Taitoko, M. (2006). Keeping our fire alive: Towards decolonizing research in the academic setting. *WINHEC Journal, 2.*

Murphy, M. (2009). Civilization, self-determination, and reconciliation. In A. M. Timpson (Ed.), *First Nations, first thoughts: The impact of Indigenous thought in Canada* (pp. 251-278). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Ray, A. J. (2005). Introduction. In A. J. Ray (Ed.), *I have lived here since the world began: An illustrated history of Canada's Native People* (pp. xii-xvii). Toronto, ON: Key Porter Books.

Reimer, B. (2006). Profile of effective practice: Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre. *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development, 5*(1) 14-21.

Saunders, S. R., & Hill, S. (2007). Native education and in-classroom coalition-building: Factors and models in delivering an equitous authentic education. *Canadian Journal of Education, 30*(2), 1015-1045.

Schissel, B., & Wotherspoon, T. (2003). *The legacy of school for Aboriginal people: Education, oppression, and emancipation.* Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Service Canada. (2006). *Aboriginal peoples of Manitoba.* Winnipeg, MB: Author.

Statistics Canada. (2009a). *Aboriginal peoples: Diverse, growing, and young.* Ottawa, ON: Author.

Statistics Canada. (2009b). *First Nations people: Selected findings of the 2006 census.* Ottawa, ON: Author.

Thomas, A. (2010). The significance of creating First Nation traditional names maps. *First Nations Perspectives: The Journal of the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 3*, 48-64.

Timpson, A. M. (2009). Indigenous thought in Canada. In A. M. Timpson (Ed.), *First Nations, first thoughts: The impact of Indigenous thought in Canada* (pp. 1-20). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Chapter 6

Meno-Bimaadiziwin: Healthy Bodies

LEISA DESMOULINS

The prevalence of obesity in Aboriginal communities and for children in the early years (birth to age 6) is well documented, showing a higher prevalence among Aboriginal children than their non-Aboriginal peers. Yet, interventions to support Aboriginal children's healthy weights have received scant attention among health researchers. Few studies address community interventions for Aboriginal children, and none consider these issues within centres and for Early Child Educators (ECE) that serve the growing population of young Aboriginal children who live in communities off reserve. This community-led study pushes beyond health as physical, and considers healthy bodies as meno-bimaadiziwin – the Ojibway philosophy of living well – for off-reserve, Ojibway children living in an urban, a rural, and a remote community, all located in northwestern Ontario. This case study draws upon Indigenous approaches, with Elders guiding the process. Using design-based research methods, the study describes four instances of knowledge creation. Researchers apply a retrospective analysis to illuminate the theoretical and practical applications and implications of meno-bimaadiziwin as healthy bodies for children and their families in three communities in northwestern Ontario. Conclusions follow.

This article describes a community-based case study to foster and support healthy weights for young, off reserve, Aboriginal children in the early years (birth to age 6). It was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and led by Mishko Bimaadiziwin - Family Support Services (hereafter referred to as Mishko) in 2011. The study was conducted in three communities in northwestern Ontario. Mishko named the study *Meno-bimaadiziwin: healthy weights*. *Meno-bimaadiziwin* is an Ojibway philosophy of living, which roughly translates to 'the way of a good life' that can be achieved through the balance of all four aspects of being – mind, emotion, body, and spirit (Lane Jr., Bopp, Bopp, & Brown, 2004). Gross (2002) adds that *meno-bimaadiziwin* is a unifying concept of the Ojibway way of life. Debasssige (2010) further adds that it guides daily living for sustainability (p. 14). This chapter describes *meno-bimaadiziwin* as an approach to foster young Aboriginal children's healthy development holistically, and for sustainability.

The purpose of this study was to understand how to foster and support Aboriginal children's healthy weights from Aboriginal perspectives within the contexts of their families and communities, and to use these perspectives to inform the development of contextualized training and resources for Early Child Educators (ECEs) who work with young Aboriginal children.

For ECE workers within Indigenous communities, the literature on young Aboriginal children's weights confirms what they already know through observation. Aboriginal children are

developing early onset diabetes at younger ages than previously (Ng, Marshall & Willows, 2006; Willows, Marshall, Raine, & Ridley, 2009; Young, Dean, Flett, & Wood-Steiman, 2000) as well as other related mental health consequences, such as low self-esteem and negative body image (Bazinet, Di Buono, Sievenpiper & Kendall 2004). In a review of effective strategies for overweight and obesity prevention in young children, Olstad and McCargar (2009) found that recent studies have shown the effectiveness of community-based interventions for young children (p. 560), and that parental involvement is central for interventions aimed at young children (p. 56). Other researchers say more information is needed on parents' roles in interventions (Flynn, McNeil, Maloff, Mutasingwa, Ford, & Tough, 2006).

From the literature, no studies on interventions for young, off reserve, Aboriginal children's healthy weights in Canada existed at the time of this study. To address the gaps in the literature, this study worked with three off-reserve communities to center their concerns, practices, and needs for children's healthy weights and use what was learned to design training and resources with, and for, ECE staff and communities. Notably, all of these communities exist on traditional Ojibway land and community members were predominantly Ojibway. Also, the design of the study needed to align with Aboriginal research approaches.

Maori researcher Linda Smith (2012) writes that an Indigenous research approach, "privileges indigenous concerns, indigenous practices and indigenous participation as researchers and researched" (p. 111). Within the Canadian context, Castellano (2004) highlights the centrality of First Nations' control of First Nations' research through four principles: ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP). The National Aboriginal Health Organization developed these principles to guide health studies with Aboriginal peoples. Thus, Indigenous approaches center research by, for, and with Aboriginal peoples.

Some Indigenous researchers have turned to Design Based Research (DBR) to center Indigenous concerns, practices, and participation, and to generate Indigenous knowledge for learning situations (see Bang, Medin, Washinawatok, & Chapman, 2010; Hermes, Bang & Marin, 2012). An application of this method is described in further detail below.

Design Based Research (DBR) is planned through several iterations, which means that each phase of the study is designed to build on the knowledge created in previous phase(s) of the study. Ultimately, DBR seeks to develop theory and practices to resolve concerns through learning within the communities under study (diSessa & Cobb, 2004). Following Indigenous methodologies and DBR, this study had two objectives, to: 1) Illuminate how Aboriginal communities develop knowledge to create locally-designed training and interventions for young children (ways of doing), contextualized within communities, and 2) Deepen insights for understanding healthy weights as *meno-bimaadiziwin*, as a daily approach for Aboriginal children's sustainable well-being (ways of knowing).

Ka:nen was ideally suited to lead this work. As an Aboriginal organization, they oversaw the work of the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC) and the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) for off-reserve Aboriginal children (from birth to age 6) and their families. (The Public Health Agency of Canada revised Aboriginal CAPC and CPNP programs after this study). At the time of the study, Ka:nen supported Early Childhood Educators' (ECEs') work at 77 CAPC and CPNP sites in 40 communities across Ontario. In 2011, Ka:nen received funding from PHAC to develop interventions to reduce obesity in Aboriginal children who attend CAPC and CPNP programs in off reserve communities. Ka:nen conducted the study through its charitable arm, Mishko Bimaadziwin-Family Support Services, which works with communities that are "passionate

in developing programs to assist families, in particular children, to have a healthier life" (Mishko Bimaadiziwin Family Support Services, 2012).

Mishko gathered the people they needed for the study. First, they met with the Elders that they worked with. They sought their guidance and gained their commitment to the study. Their guidance is described further on, in the section titled *Indigenous Knowledge Creation*. Next, they solicited Leisa Desmoulins to join the study. To introduce myself as the author of this chapter: I am an educator and researcher who gained Indian status through marriage. This status connected me to my husband's community, the *Biigtigong Nishnaabeg* First Nation. These connections to family and communities inspire my research. My research focuses on community-led initiatives in the areas of education and justice with urban Aboriginal community organizations, most recently in Thunder Bay over the past 10 years. For this study, I served as the lead researcher. Then, Mishko formed a Steering Committee. They invited community leaders, youth, educators, and child-care workers from three communities, as well as public health workers from the local Thunder Bay unit where Ka:nen was located. Along with the Elders, this group comprised the Project Steering Committee (PSC). They guided the study through all its iterations.

This article describes several iterations of Indigenous knowledge creation that led to the production of resources for training. These are:

1. the holistic frame of *meno-bimaadiziwin* that shaped the study;
2. sharing circle participants' conceptualizations of *meno-bimaadiziwin*-healthy bodies;
3. ECE workers' survey responses to gaps in their knowledge and their abilities to support children's healthy bodies in their programs; and
4. healthy bodies training and resource kit development.

These descriptions are followed by a retrospective analysis (diSessa & Cobbs, 2004). Cobbs, Confrey, diSessa, Lehrer, and Schauble (2003) write, "a primary aim when conducting a retrospective analysis is to place the design experiment in a broader theoretical context, thereby framing it as a paradigm case of the more encompassing phenomena specified at the outset" (p. 13). Next, a review of the literature contextualizes the study and encompassing phenomena, which is Aboriginal children's healthy weights.

Considerations for Aboriginal Children's Healthy Weights

Scholars contend that children's early years are important for healthy development (Fitzgibbon, Stolley, Schiffer, Van Horn, KauferChristoffel & Dyer 2004; Flynn, McNeil, Maloff, Mutasingwa, Ford, & Tough, 2006). Fitzgibbon *et al.* found that interventions for children in the early years provide a critical window to foster healthy development. Researchers provide key considerations to guide the design, approach, and substantive elements, of these interventions.

For design, Towns*,* Cook, Rysdale, and Wilk (2014) state, "An important aspect of most of the interventions was *community control and involvement of community members* [emphasis added] in the implementation and evaluation of the interventions" (p. 129). They add a caution for interventions with young, Aboriginal children:

> Although interventions designed for the general Canadian population may also be effective for Aboriginal children, *adapting* interventions to be more culturally appropriate

or otherwise *targeting the specific needs and contexts of Aboriginal children, families, and communities appears to be critical to their success* [emphasis added] [4, 7]. (p. 126; see also Willows et al., 2009)

Furthermore, in their systematic review of physical activity for Aboriginal peoples, Tuefel-Shone, Fitzgerald, Teufel-Shone, and Gamber's (2009) findings suggest that interventions be designed from Aboriginal community perspectives and be "acceptable to the community and practical *for local personnel to implement* [emphasis added]" (p. 31). Thus, successful health interventions are grounded in learning with children, families, and communities.

Health researchers often use a social approach drawing on families and educators to nurture and model children's healthy development (Greenwood & deLeeuw, 2012; Towns et al., 2014: Willows et al., 2009). Many Aboriginal researchers support an approach that engages all aspects of being for learning (Battiste, 2009; Debassige, 2010; Lane, Bopp, Bopp & Brown, 2004; Ray & Cormier, 2012). There are also fundamental elements for health interventions within the literature to consider.

Researchers include fundamental elements for health interventions with Aboriginal peoples (not expressly for children), within contexts and relationships. These elements are:

1. the relationships between healthy weights and the land, to promote and sustain holistic well-being (Hodgson, 2011);

2. an understanding of the broader contexts of health, referred to as social determinants, particularly poverty and the food insecurity that often hinders young Aboriginal children's healthy development (Ledrou & Gervais, 2005; OFIFC, 2003; Willows, Veugelers, Raine & Kuhle, 2011);

3. activating food sovereignty within communities to address food insecurity (Socha, Zahaf, Chambers, Abraham & Fiddler, 2012); and,

4. an emphasis on the emotional aspects of one's being, for healthy weights as sustainable well-being, as an essential but often overlooked aspect (Nadeau & Young, 2006; Poudrier & Kennedy, 2008).

Thus, despite the lack of interventions in the extant literature, we can infer six key themes from the literature presented above to design and implement interventions for young, Aboriginal children's healthy weights. The first is interventions that are designed from Aboriginal perspectives, that include a holistic approach that engages mind, emotions, body, and spirit. The second is that interventions use Indigenous methodologies and methods that engage the communities of the study, and use materials that are designed for, and stay within, the community for its members' use. This implies that any resources that are created are written for community members to be accessible to them. The third is interventions that are implemented by, for, and with Aboriginal peoples. The fourth is interventions that incorporate learning from the land for sustainable well-being. The fifth acknowledges that some families have food security needs that prevent them from meeting the requirements of young growing bodies for healthy development, and presses for interventions that promote food sovereignty for families and within communities. The sixth asserts that interventions nest children within families and communities for success. Thus, a novel approach is advocated for initiatives for Aboriginal children's healthy weights.

Design-Based Research (DBR)

As a novel approach, McKenny and Reeves (2012) explain, "What sets educational design research [also called DBR] apart from other forms of scientific inquiry is its commitment to developing *theoretical insights* and *practical solutions* simultaneously, in real world (as apposed to laboratory) contexts, *together with stakeholders* [emphasis added]" (p. 7). DBR has two additional characteristics; DBR is (McKenny & Reeves, 2012, pp. 14-16):

1. grounded in the literature, the participants, and field testing of materials and teaching models;
2. iterative in that the final product emerges from the processes, or methods developed through the study.

As a research method, it "pairs the design of learning environments with research on learning" (Hermes, Bang, & Marin, 2012, p. 384). Hermes, Bang, and Marin (2012) used DBR methods to gain a "wider understanding of community, education, and Indigenous knowledge production" as it relates to language revitalization within community (p. 381). In their study they developed and produced interactive multimedia materials collaboratively with community members.

Hermes, Bang, and Marin (2012) identify a gap in DBR studies. They write, "DBR has been relatively quiet on the impacts of culture or sociohistoric context in schooling and design" (p. 384). The authors see the potential for DBR to address cultural ways of doing, knowing, and researching that emerge from community and give back to community. This study echoes their use of DBR for learning with, by, and for three Ojibway communities in northwestern Ontario to create Indigenous knowledge about healthy weights as *meno-bimaadiziwin.*

There is a gap between researchers' calls for community-led studies for Aboriginal children's healthy weights that include key elements for successful interventions, and the lack of interventions found in the literature. Further, DBR provides a design that embeds learning within the cultural contexts of communities. *Meno-bimaadiziwin* offers an example of the design of such a study, through four iterations of Indigenous knowledge creation for healthy weights for young off-reserve Aboriginal children.

Indigenous Knowledge Creation

There were four iterations of Indigenous knowledge creation for this study. First, Mishko sought out Elders and community members to guide the work to develop an intervention. Second, researchers facilitated seven sharing circles to understand healthy weights from the perspectives of participants from three communities. Third, from the two previous iterations, researchers created a needs assessment survey for ECE workers at 76 CAP-C and CPNP sites in Ontario, for off-reserve Aboriginal children. Fourth, data from previous iterations informed the production of a toolkit of resources and a training session, for early childhood educators who worked in three communities. These instances of iterative knowledge creation to produce training and resources are described below.

Knowledge Creation through Protocols

Aboriginal ways of doing describe how the study is carried out following protocols for research. Mishko followed the global principles of OCAP (Castellano, 2004). As well, Mishko and the researcher (hereafter referred to as 'we') followed local principles. To begin, Mishko approached a male and a female Elder and offered them tobacco before describing the study. The Elders listened. They cautioned not to use shaming to teach about children's healthy weights. The Elders explained, "The adults must take the lead in healthy weights as they are the ones responsible for the children." They asked Mishko to seek out members of communities who carry traditional teachings about how to live well.

As well, Elders gave guidance on a process. They described a respectful approach that emerges through relationships with people and communities. First, the Elders asked Mishko to engage the parents and their young children where they were at with regard to engaging with healthy weights. Second, they asked Mishko to work with ECE workers directly; to engage them to better understand their needs as they hold responsibility for supporting children's healthy bodies in their daily relationships with children and their families. Third, they asked Mishko to invite non-Aboriginal community members in to the process as a way for them to learn from, and with, Aboriginal communities, because many public health workers are non-Aboriginal and they work within these communities. Fourth, the Elders said that everyone involved in the study needed to 'walk the talk.' They asked Mishko to model healthy approaches throughout the study. Finally, the Elders asked Mishko to give back to those who share their knowledge. This is a concept called reciprocity. To heed the Elders' call for reciprocity, Mishko provided healthy foods and activity breaks during all research sessions and ensured that the Elders were available to participants for their self-care, as needed. This shows an acknowledgement that the participants' stories may have involved sorrow, loss, or other impacts of colonization and racism that participants may have experienced historically, and currently, within the off-reserve contexts of this study.

Furthermore, we gave the research results back to participants as the study unfolded. Mishko shared all of the results and electronic resources that they developed with project participants by posting them on their website. Participants could see our reports and could clarify, or request changes, as the study progressed, and as needed. Further, Mishko gifted activity kits and training manuals to communities for their use.

Seeking Elders' help is essential for Indigenous research. Castellano (2004) explains: "The persons who are the most knowledgeable about physical and spiritual reality, the teachings and practices of ceremonies, and the nuances of meaning in Aboriginal languages are Elders" (p. 101). Hermes, Bang, and Marin (2012) explain how Elders enrich research: "The acts of engaging with elders and following traditional protocols establish networks of meaningful relationships that serve as a form of validity" (p. 389).

Thus, the Elders provided protocols for us to do the research: not to use shaming, have the adults from communities take the lead, 'walk the talk,' and offer reciprocity. Their protocols provided relational validity. Following their guidance, the next step was to engage parents and community members to learn how they perceived healthy weights.

Knowledge Creation through Sharing Circles

We sought local understandings of healthy weights through seven sharing circles—five urban, one rural, and one remote – held in three Ojibway communities in northwestern Ontario during

March and April 2011. Mishko contacted local urban Aboriginal organizations, explained the study, and invited them to participate. Organizations used local protocols to find an Elder to guide the sharing circles. They invited participants—health and wellness workers, ECE workers in CAPC and CPNP programs, parents and caregivers of young children, and interested community members. In all, 77 participants attended the sharing circles. Participants were mostly urban (65%), Aboriginal (93%), and female (87%). Organizers offered healthy, local foods for snacks, active breaks for participants, and had Elders available for participants to talk with.

At each sharing circle we asked four questions: 1. Is obesity a problem for off-reserve Aboriginal children? 2. What is a healthy body weight? 3. What barriers prevent healthy weights? 4. How can we support children's healthy bodies? Participants' responses to the first two questions are shown below.

Sharing circle participants shared unanimous concerns about childhood obesity in their communities. They rejected the word 'obesity' as a shaming word. Many participants asked researchers to shift from obesity prevention (focused on size and weight), to 'healthy bodies' (focused on children's health and well-being), as a way to avoid shaming and allow for a respectful conversation about living well. "Begin with positive messages and then the negative stuff can come after" (Elder, Sharing Circle 5). Community members agreed that a positive, holistic approach was best. This shifted our perspectives as we transitioned from children's 'weights' to children's 'bodies'. An Elder explained that healthy bodies include: "Our feelings, our knowledge, our physical self, and life outcome" (Elder, PSC).

Mental aspect of healthy bodies. One participant called healthy bodies "a state of mind." Participants discussed the mental aspect of healthy bodies as body awareness, body image, and how you present yourself to the world. They advocated that what constitutes a healthy body was a personal decision and a personal choice.

Many participants acknowledged that body image is linked to self-esteem and may change depending on where you live. To illustrate, in several urban circles participants shared stories of their heightened sense of body awareness and self-consciousness when they moved from the reserve to an off-reserve, urban community. Their stories of body image connect to emotional aspects of healthy bodies.

Emotional aspects of healthy bodies. Many participants believed that emotional aspects of healthy bodies challenge 'the way of the good life' for children and adolescents. Participants in several circles shared stories of young Aboriginal men and women who had developed eating disorders. They saw the need for children to develop self-confidence and self-esteem, to accept oneself as a way to foster sustained healthy body development. Participants noted how 'feeling low' about your body may lead to eating comfort foods. They believed that one's positive mental-emotional health affects physical health. "Parents don't have time to play outside with children and few families have activities that they all participate in outdoors" (Elder).

Physical aspects of healthy bodies. Participants described the physical aspect of healthy bodies as one's physical appearance (which connects to size and weights) as well as overall energy levels. They explained it through behaviours that they could monitor for themselves:

- I can climb the stairs without huffing;
- Knowing when your clothes start feeling too snug, it's time to get more active;
- If your legs and joints don't hurt from carrying excess weight;
- Eating only what you need;
- Being able to keep up with children.

Participants' examples highlight self-monitoring and behavioural indicators to know one's body is well, rather than external measures of one's weight and size, such as tape measures and BMI. Most participants were adamant that:

- BMI and scales shouldn't be used, depends on what weight you're comfortable at;
- Measurements cannot only include what's on a doctor's chart;
- You should avoid the scales—trust yourself.

Yet, some participants described the physical aspects through measurements of arms, legs, tummy circumference, and weight on a scale. Most participants rejected these measures in favour of healthy practices to sustain one's body. One participant said, "no doors should be closed to you because of your body's physical limitations." As well, participants in sharing circles suggested that children engage their physical aspect through ceremony. "We need to feast food, eat traditional foods, and walk to get food to eat" (Elder, Sharing Circle 7).

Spiritual aspects of healthy bodies. Participants explained that the spiritual aspect of healthy bodies includes ceremonies, such as sweat lodges for adults, naming ceremonies, and other birth traditions for children, to help them learn about their bodies and selves. They believed that participating in ceremonies offers strength to be role models for children, and teaches children about spiritual connections. Also, participants emphasized traditional teachings as a guide to respecting and knowing one's body and self. Examples include:

- Elders' teachings for women about pregnancy and raising babies;
- Ceremonies to celebrate girls' entry into womanhood;
- Helping new mothers develop practices for self-care and child-raising;
- Eating and gathering foods in season.

This final example connects to teachings on the significance of heart berries (strawberries) for young women as they move into womanhood ("Strawberry Teachings," n.d.). An Elder explained that strawberries are a sacred food for the Ojibway people. He reminisced about harvesting strawberries, for a taste better than candy, which children could pick and enjoy in his community (Elder, PSC). Thus, participants described the spiritual aspect of healthy bodies, as an integral component of *meno-bimaadiziwin*.

To sum, sharing circle participants did not offer a unified approach for healthy bodies, as seen in the dialectic between some advocating for mainstream medical approaches to weight and size, and others advocating for behavioural approaches to healthy bodies. Yet most participants believe that true and sustained balance comes from within the self, through family, and the land. They agree that the aim was to "help children to feel good about their bodies and selves." Their descriptions of

healthy bodies echoes Findley's (2011) description of well-being: "The well-being of Aboriginal people may have not only physical and mental components, but also emotional and spiritual aspects based on a holistic approach" (p. 6).

When we brought back findings from the sharing circles to PSC members, they saw that women were over-represented (87% of participants) and felt that the findings did not offer a balanced perspective. They directed researchers to interview five or so men using the sharing circle questions, to strengthen male perspectives on healthy bodies. We interviewed five men who were fathers and mental health workers. These participants echoed the importance of mental health for young children's healthy bodies. They did not add any new information. The PSC's direction to researchers provides a strong example of how iterative processes of DBR encourage researchers to make changes to the design of the study while it is ongoing, as a way to address limitations that may arise unexpectedly. Their guidance aided in soliciting more balanced perspectives of both men and women for the study.

Researchers analyzed data from the sharing circles with the literature. Importantly, sharing circle (SC) participants pushed beyond overweight and obesity studies in the literature, particularly the obesity prevention research, that use a physical approach based on size and weight. They shifted to a holistic approach that activates the frame of *meno-bimaadiziwin*, through all four aspects of being, and connected to children's healthy bodies. They focused on behavioural indicators and knowing healthy bodies for oneself. From the deepened understanding of *meno-bimaadiziwin* provided by participants, we designed a needs assessment survey for ECE workers in CAP-C and CPNP sites for off reserve Aboriginal children.

Knowledge Creation through Needs Assessment Survey (NAS)

The purpose of the NAS was to ask ECE workers about their challenges to support healthy bodies with children and families in their centres, and their needs for training and resources. PSC members pilot tested the NAS for clarity of questions and comprehensiveness, while balancing the length. Researchers modified the NAS to address the PSC members' suggestions, returned it, and PSC members approved its use.

Researchers sent the surveys to coordinators at 76 sites as an attachment to an email message. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. The survey had 27 questions on healthy eating, physical activities (indoor, outdoor, and traditional), mental/emotional health and well-being, and challenges for programming. Most questions were closed (22 of 27 questions, or 81%), meaning respondents chose answers from the options provided. Seven closed questions had added space for a written response.

Respondents returned 57 of the 76 surveys sent, for a response rate of 75%. This rate exceeds the accepted rate of 65% for mailed surveys (Kelly, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003). For anonymity and confidentiality, a summer student received the completed, returned surveys, removed identifying information, coded the surveys as urban, rural, or remote, and as a CAP-C or CPNP site, assigned a numeric code for data analysis, and passed them on to the researchers.

Researchers purposively selected a sample of 25 of the 76 returned surveys, to mirror the types of sites at the three communities for the training. Specifically, we selected: two CAPC and two CPNP surveys from remote sites, for a total of four surveys; five CAPC and three CPNP surveys from rural sites, for a total of eight surveys; and six CAPC and seven CPNP surveys from urban

sites, for a total of thirteen surveys. The sample over-represented rural and remote sites intentionally so that trainers could identify and respond to their unique needs.

The researcher coded and analyzed data with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Open questions were hand-coded and analyzed. Respondents' perceptions of the barriers and the needs for training and resources needs are described below.

Barriers to Providing Programming for Healthy Bodies

Respondents perceived several barriers to supporting children's healthy bodies at their program sites, including a lack of: land as a space for physical and traditional activities or to grow food to promote food sovereignty, a built environment to support healthy bodies, available childcare, and parental interest in supporting their children's healthy bodies. Respondents indicated that land constrained their programming through lack of safe, appropriate outdoor space for physical activities (48%), lack of useable land for community gardening (64%), and lack of land and resources for traditional activities for families (48%). Still, many respondents (64%) did traditional activities with children and families wherever and whenever possible.[1]

Related to land, respondents perceived challenges such as a lack of resources for traditional and other physical activities. Respondents from rural and remote sites described unique challenges. Because of the lack of built environment, programs spent money for bus tickets to travel to nearby towns to access swimming pools, arenas, and grocery stores (to do tours to learn about healthy foods).

Notably, few sites grew food with children (32%) or worked with families to create community gardens (36%). Community gardens are plots of land that are maintained and harvested by community members. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) indicated that land was not accessible to them or not appropriate for growing food. It is worth exploring if more sites could create community gardens, especially respondents working in sites without access to local grocery stores or to fresh fruits and vegetables at a reasonable cost. Community gardens support food sovereignty.

Nearly ¾ (72%) of the participants perceived a lack of childcare services as a barrier to parents' participation in healthy bodies activities. Over half (55%) of the respondents perceived parents' interests in healthy bodies programming for their children as a barrier. ECEs ground their programming in families' expressed needs.

After identifying barriers, respondents ranked them. Their top four barriers were:

1. Offering childcare while parents attend events for healthy weights (72%);
2. Families' interest in healthy weights programming (56%);
3. Staff time to plan healthy weights programming (56%);
4. Lack of transportation (60% rural and remote only).

Less than 1/4 of the respondents selected these barriers: staff confidence (16%), staff knowledge (12%), and healthy bodies not a priority for the program (8%). Thus, respondents' top barriers related to resources available for programming.

Two studies from the literature describe healthy weights interventions within childcare centers (Ammerman, Ward, Benjamin, Ball, Sommers, Molloy, & Dodds, 2007; Fitzgibbon, Stolley, Schiffer,

---

[1] Percentages do not add up to 100 because respondents could choose all options that applied to their respective site.

Van Horn, KauferChristoffel & Dyer, 2004). Both used site policies to promote healthy weights. Ammerman et al. (2007) assert that site policies are crucial to successful healthy weights programs in centers. We asked NAS respondents about policies for healthy bodies at their sites.

Policies as a Potential Barrier

When asked, 64% of respondents reported that they had no written policies to promote healthy weights at their site. Of the remaining 46% of respondents with site policies, 12% ranked the policies as 'addressing the need', and no respondents (0%) ranked the policies at their site as 'useful.' Notably, seventy-five percent (75%), of the rural respondents reported having no site policies for healthy bodies. Like community gardens, site policies represent potential gaps in programming to foster children's healthy bodies and are worth exploring in future studies.

Unanticipated Barriers

Finally, one respondent added the comment, "The biggest challenge to children's healthy weights here [at the site] is underweight children." Another respondent views healthy bodies as less pressing for families than other more urgent issues of food security, housing, and addictions. These respondents connected to larger issues of poverty and wellness for families. Researchers acknowledged that structural factors, such as poverty and the resulting food insecurity, affect children's health and well-being. A fully developed model of *meno-bimaadiziwin: healthy bodies* for young Aboriginal children needs to be framed within broader contexts of familial and community well-being. Researchers acknowledged the importance of addressing these gaps for children's healthy bodies and explained that these larger contexts were beyond the scope of the current study.

Needs Identified

For training, ¾ of respondents (76%) indicated a need for training to support participants' healthy bodies. This contrasted their responses on barriers, for which they did not list staff knowledge and abilities as a barrier. For training needs:

- 92% of respondents requested training to provide healthy eating workshops;
- 76% of respondents requested training on managing stress;
- 68% of respondents requested training on self-esteem.

Respondents' needs focused on healthy eating and mental/emotional health, specifically stress and self-esteem. Mental/emotional needs echoed sharing circle participants' stories of mental health needs for Aboriginal children. Respondents identified a need for more resources, because available resources were often not family-friendly. They asked for resources contextualized to the area, Ojibwe language, and their communities. Fourteen respondents added that they needed:

- Guidelines to use with program participants to explain healthy bodies;
- Print resources that are easy to read;
- Role modeling ideas for parents to take up healthy bodies;
- Healthy cooking with food from the food bank;

- Virtual shop smart sessions (as grocery store is inaccessible);
- Traditional games and activities.

Thus, respondents provided information for Mishko to develop training and resources on healthy bodies for young Aboriginal children.

Respondents' perceptions of existing site barriers such as time, money, and space prompted Mishko to conduct an environmental scan in each community pre-training, to contextualize the training using available site and community resources and food pricing. This example illustrates another instance of how researchers used unanticipated findings to inform future iterations of the study. Thus, the training and resource kits became more responsive to the communities.

Knowledge Production for Resources and Training

Researchers reviewed the literature, and participants' and respondents' data to develop a resource manual and tool kit for the training session. They used knowledge created in previous iterations to develop the training and resources.

The PSC members, SC participants, and the NAS respondents expressed the need for culturally appropriate responses to healthy bodies, which they described mostly as traditional foods and land-based activities in communities. The SC participants and NAS respondents expressed different priorities by location. For example, rural and remote participants expressed that the lack of facilities and transportation affected their ability to promote physical activities in community. The SC participants and NAS respondents also requested Aboriginal-specific electronic resources that they could access on Mishko's website. Mishko developed training kits for communities.

Kits included resources on: healthy eating, physical activity on the land, and mental and emotional health. The kit had posters, books, games, instructional guides (e.g. how to set up a grocery store tour and a community garden to promote food sovereignty), and active songs and activities for children and families. Mishko chose, adapted, and created materials and images that were culturally and age appropriate for the kit. To illustrate, they created two posters. The first portrays healthy eating. The poster used the letters of the word 'wolf' to form an acronym, —whole, organic, local, and fresh—and featured an image of a wolf on the poster. The poster uses teachings on how to eat off the land—wild berries and game as well as food from gardens—and local, Aboriginal ways of trapping, netting, snaring, as well as canning and preserving for sustenance. The poster supports physical and spiritual aspects of healthy bodies. Hodgson (2011) explains that land is vital to well-being: "Community consumption of traditional foods has been shown to be associated with lower rates of obesity among First Nations children"(p. 21).

The second poster describes self-esteem, with accessible language and an image of the medicine wheel to organize the text. It uses five images designed for younger children to understand self-esteem, and text that older children can read. Mishko also produced two DVDs on healthy bodies, narrated by an Elder. The DVDs feature footage from communities in northwestern Ontario to enhance relevance. Mishko used resources from the kits to train.

Mishko staff trainers, Elders, the researcher, and 12 trainees met for three and a half days in November 2011. They began by sharing dinner together. Training culminated with trainees using resources from the kits to develop lesson plans for their sites. Trainees shared lesson plans, leaving on the final day with 12 lessons to support healthy bodies for children and families at their sites.

Retrospective Analysis

The goal of retrospective analysis is to understand phenomenon as it is situated within the design and the approach for learning (diSessa & Cobbs, 20004). DBR methods consider theory and practices through the iterations of the study. We asked: What theories and practices of healthy bodies did we learn through the process of creating materials in an intervention to train ECE workers to support young, off-reserve Aboriginal children's healthy bodies in three Ojibway communities in northwestern Ontario?

Theory Development

Simpson (2014) describes theory, in its simplest form, as an explanation. She continues,

> 'Theory' is generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice and within each family, community and generation of people. 'Theory' isn't just an intellectual pursuit – it is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence and emotion, it is contextual and relational. It is intimate and personal, with individuals themselves holding the responsibilities for finding and generating meaning within their own lives (p. 7).

Simpson begins with epistemology (ways of knowing), as do many other Indigenous researchers who use DBR to generate Indigenous knowledge to produce contextualized resources (Hermes, Bang, & Marin, 2012) or to conduct health studies to learn within the contexts of communities and nations (Adelson, 2007; Graham & Stamler, 2010; Hovey, Delormier, and McComber, 2014).

When Mishko undertook this study, they named it *meno-bimaadiziwin: healthy weights*: an approach intended to recognize 'the way of a good life.' From Indigenous scholars we understood m*eno-bimaadiziwin* as a unified approach (Gross, 2002) that engages all aspects of being—mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual (Lane et al., 2004)—that is intended to sustain one's self in an ongoing manner through daily living (Debassige, 2010).

The approach for the study centred the research within Indigenous communities' concerns (Smith, 2012) and applied OCAP principles (Castellano, 2004), especially through knowledge creation instances, shared findings, and reciprocity. The Elders shaped our study through: protocols, which provided relational validity; understandings about healthy bodies within traditional and contemporary ways of knowing and ways of doing; and through contexts and relationships with communities.

The approach to support children's healthy bodies was an epistemology grounded in families and communities. This approach follows the literature, which recommends that studies draw upon families and educators for nesting children's healthy development (Greenwood & deLeeuw, 2012; Towns et al., 2014: Willows et al., 2009). Other health studies show ways of working within community to gain perspectives on health (Graham & Stamler, 2010). These contextual and relational frames allowed us to learn about local practices to support children's healthy bodies, and connect back to the literature.

Through the iterations of knowledge creation, we came to explain children's healthy bodies as maintaining a healthy balanced weight, eating healthy foods (especially traditional foods) to meet the body's needs, purposefully active living through regular, active transport and participating in traditional land-based activities, seeking spiritual connections through ceremonies, and parents and

caregivers supporting children to know their bodies and feel good about themselves. Thus Elders, SC participants, and NAS respondents shaped how we understood healthy bodies for children in these communities and how we designed the learning environment, content, and resources for ECE workers through knowledge creation.

Practices of Knowledge Creation for Training and Resources

Turning to knowledge creation, practices emerged from instances of Indigenous knowledge creation, both planned and unexpected. Two unplanned instances were: the PSC members' guidance on interviewing men to balance the findings from the sharing circles that were dominated by women participants; and the NAS respondents' perceptions that lead Mishko staff to do environmental scans in their communities to contextualize the training. These instances strengthened the design of the study and deepened our learning. Planned instances of knowledge creation include the guidance that the Elders provided before and during the study (i.e. with guiding the research, narrating DVDs, being available for participants' self-care, and leading sharing circles), and pilot testing the NAS for cultural responsiveness of the survey.

Knowledge creation occurred intentionally through the sharing circles and survey. Sharing circle participants' knowledge creation shaped the study significantly. Their discussions shifted our thinking from the original focus on healthy weights (based in size and weight) as obesity prevention to a broader focus on children's holistic development through healthy bodies. Participants drew upon cultural and socio-historical contexts that shaped the design of future iterations (Hermes, Bang, & Marin, 2012). They activated *meno-bimaadiziwin* in ways that follow Finlay, Hardy, Morris and Nagy's (2010) *Mamow Ki-en-da-ma-win* (well-being through partnerships and resource development) and Adelson's (2007) 'being alive well' as embodied knowledge. These are social-relational understandings of health as well-being that exist in researchers' relation to and within communities (Hovey, Delormier, & McComber, 2014).

Participants in sharing circle sessions flagged Aboriginal children's mental health as a priority. NAS respondents requested training on the mental-emotional aspects of children's healthy bodies. The literature shows the need for mental health components (Bazinet, Di Buono, Sievenpiper & Kendall 2004; Nadeau & Young, 2006; Poudrier & Kennedy, 2008). Importantly, participants' stories of the need for mental health resources for young children extended the literature.

Participants and respondents also emphasized connections between well-being and land. Sharing circle participants told us that true and sustained balance came from within the self, through family, and on the land. Survey respondents described land-based challenges that constrained healthy bodies. They had examples of geographic constraints for land-based traditional activities, and to grow food. Few sites grew community gardens. These challenges were exacerbated in rural and remote communities. In the literature, Hodgson (2011) connects land to well-being. Further, Socha, Zahaf, Chambers, Abraham, and Fiddler (2012) assert that food sovereignty derives from the land. They write in the context of remote communities, underscoring the importance of access to food: "healthy food is necessary for wider social change and healthy living" (p. 5). It also connects people back to the land (p. 11) and to community gardening (p. 12).

These influential examples from the iterations of knowledge creation gave Mishko direction on resources to source, develop, purchase, adapt and create about young Aboriginal children's healthy bodies for the training. Mishko gathered pre-existing resources for the kits (e.g. First Nations, Metis, and Inuit food guide); yet, many existing resources did not meet communities' requests for resources in the Ojibwe language, images that children could identify with, and simple child-friendly language.

Resources for mental/emotional aspects for children and land as integral to well-being were not available. Mishko staff was surprised by the amount of time needed to develop these resources; particularly the DVDs. They had confidence that the resources they produced for the kits and used for training would continue to support sustainable well-being for the children, their families, and their communities. This confidence came from the iterative knowledge creation used for learning in this study.

Conclusions

This article describes a case study of *meno-bimaadiziwin* healthy bodies for young, off-reserve Aboriginal children that used Indigenous methodologies and DBR methods and activated six key elements from literature on interventions. The study was grounded in the contexts of families and communities. We gained theoretical insights that explain healthy bodies from knowledge created in communities. We used iterative methods to design a learning environment for ECE workers and produce culturally responsive resources for them to support young, off-reserve Aboriginal children's healthy bodies within three communities in northwestern Ontario.

References

Adelson, N. (2007). *Being alive well and the politics of Cree well-being.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Ammerman, A., Ward, D., Benjamin, S., Ball, S., Sommers, J., Molloy, M., & Dodds, J. (2007). An intervention to promote healthy weight: Nutrition and physical activity self-assessment for child care (NAP SACC) theory and design. *Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy*, *4*(3), 1-12.

Bang, M., Medin, D., Washinawatok, K., & Chapman, S. (2010). Innovations in culturally-based science education through partnerships and community. In M. Khine & I. Salah (Eds.) *New Science of Learning: Cognition, Computers, and Collaboration in Education* (pp. 1-23). New York, NY: Springer.

Battiste, M. (2009). Maintaining Aboriginal identity, language, and culture in modern society. In M. Battiste (Ed.). *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 193-208). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

Bazinet, R. P., Di Buono, M., Sievenpiper, J. L., & Kendall, C. W. C. (2004). *Obesity in Canadian children*. BDSK Consulting Inc.

Castellano, M. (2004). Ethics of Aboriginal research. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, 1(1), 98-114.

Cobbs, P. Confrey, J. diSessa, A., Lehrer, R., & Schauble, L. (2003). Design experiments in educational research. *Educational Researcher*, *32*(1), 9-13.

Debassige, B. (2010). Re-conceptualizing *meno-bimaadiziwin* (the Good Life) as research methodology: A spirit-centred way in the Anishinaabe research. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *33*(1), 11-28.

diSessa, A., & Cobbs, P. (2004). Ontological innovation and the role of theory in design experiments. *The Journal of Learning Sciences*, *13*(1), 77-103.

Findley, L. (2011). Physical activity among First Nations people off reserve, Métis and Inuit. *Health Reports*, *22*(1), 47-54.

Finlay, J., Hardy, M., Morris, D., & Nagy, A. (2010). Mamow Ki-en-da-ma-win: A partnership approach to child, youth, family, and community wellbeing. *International Journal of Mental Health and Addictions*, *8*(2), 245-257.

Fitzgibbon, ML, Schiffer, L., Van Horn, L., KaufferChristoffel, K., & Dyer, A. (2004). Two-year follow-up results for hip-hop to health Jr.: A randomized controlled trial for overweight prevention in preschool minority children. *Journal of Pediatrics*, *146*(5), 618-25.

Flynn, M., McNeil, D., Maloff, B., Mutasingwa, D., Wu, M., Ford, C., & Tough, S. (2006). Reducing obesity and related chronic disease risk in children and youth: A synthesis of evidence with 'best practice' recommendations. *Obesity Reviews*, *1*(supplement), 7-65.

Graham, H., & Stamler, L. (2010). Contemporary perceptions of health from an Indigenous (Plains Cree) perspective. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, *6*(1), 6-17.

Greenwood, M., & deLeeuw, S. (2012). Social determinants of health and the future well-being of Aboriginal children in Canada. *Paediatric Child Health*, *17*(7), 381-384.

Gross, L. (2002). Bimaadiziwin, or the "Good Life," as a unifying concept of Anishinaabe religion. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 26(1), 15-32.

Hart, M. (2002). *Seeking Mino-Pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal Approach to Helping*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.

Hermes, M., Bang, M., & Marin, A. (2012). Designing Indigenous language revitalization. *Harvard Educational Review*, *82*(3), 318-402.

Hodgson, C. (2011). *Obesity in Canada: A joint report from the public health agency of Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information*. Retrieved froma https://secure.cihi.ca/free_products/ Obesity_in_canada_2011_en.pd

Hovey, G. Delormier, T., & McComber, A. (2014). Social-relational understandings of health and well-being from an Indigenous perspective. *International Journal of Indigenous Health*, *10*(1), 35-54.

Kelly, K., Clark, B., Brown, V., & Sitzia, J. (2003). Good practice in the conduct and reporting of survey research. *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, *15*(3), p. 264.

Lane, P., Jr., Bopp, M., Bopp, J., & Brown, L. (2003). *The sacred tree: Reflections on Native American spirituality*. Lethbridge, AB: Four Worlds Institute for Human and Community Development.

Ledrou, L., & Gervais, J. (2005). Food insecurity. *Health Reports*, *16*(3), 47-53.

McKenny, S., & Reeves, T. (2012). *Conducting educational design research*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Mishko Bimaadiziwin Family Support Services (2012). *About Us*. Retrieved from http:// mishkobimaadziwin.com

Nadeau D., & Young, A. (2006). Educating bodies for self-determination: A decolonizing strategy. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 29*(1), 87-101. Ng, C., Marshall, D., & Willows, N. (2006). Obesity, adiposity, physical fitness and activity levels in Cree children. *International Journal of Circumpolar Health*, *65*(4), 322-330.

Olstad, D., & McCargar, L. (2009). Prevention of overweight and obesity in children under the age of six years. *Applied Physiology, Nutrition, and Metabolism*, *34*(4), 551-570.

Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC). (2011). *Food insecurity among urban Aboriginal families in 2011*. Retrieved from the OFIFC website: http://ofifc.org/

Poudrier, J., & Kennedy, J. (2008, January). Embodiment and the meaning of the "healthy body": An exploration of First Nations women's perspectives of healthy body weight and body image. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, *4*(1), 15-24.

Ray, L., & Cormier, P. (2012). Killing the Weendigo with maple syrup: Anishnaabe pedagogy and post-secondary research. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *35*(1), 163-176.

Simpson, L. (2014). Land as pedagogy: Nishnaabeg intelligence and rebellious transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, education, and society*, *3*(3), 1-25.

Snarch, B. (2004). Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) or self-determination applied to research: A critical analysis of contemporary First Nations research and some options for First Nations communities. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, *1*(1), 80-95.

Socha, T. Zahaf, M., Chambers, L., Abraham, R., & Fiddler, T. (2012). Food security in a Northern First Nations community: An exploratory study on food availability and accessibility. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, *8*(2), 5-14.

Smith, L. (2012). *Decolonizing methodologies: research and Indigenous peoples* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Zed Books.

Strawberry Teachings. (n.d.). Retrieved from www.wabano.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Strawberry-Teachings.pdf

Teufel-Shone, N., Fitzgerald, C., Teufel-Shone, L., & Gamber, M. (2009). Systematic review of physical activity interventions implemented with American Indian and Alaska Native populations in United States and Canada. *American Journal of Health Promotion, 23*(6 supplement), S8-32.

Towns, C., Cooke, M., Rysdale,L., & Wilk, P. (2014). Healthy weights interventions in Aboriginal children and youth: A review of the literature. *Dietetic Practice and Research*, *75*, 125-131.

Willows, N., Marshall, D., Raine, K., & Ridley, D. (2009). Diabetes awareness and body size perceptions of Cree schoolchildren. *Health Education Research*, *24*(6), 1051-1058.

Willows, N., Veugelers, P. Raine, K., & Kuhle, S. (2011). Associations between household food insecurity and health outcomes in the Aboriginal population (excluding reserves). *Health Reports*, *22*(2), 1-6. Retrieved from http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-003-x/2011002/article/11435-eng.htm

Young, N., Dean, J., Flett, B., & Wood-Steiman, P. (2000, March). Childhood obesity in a population at high risk for type 2 diabetes. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, *136*(3), 365-369.

Acknowledgements

Chapter 7

Knowledge as Medicine:
The Use and Efficacy of a Youth Treatment Program Integrating Aboriginal Cultural Education

ELAINE GREIDANUS and J. LAUREN JOHNSON

Programs built on Aboriginal teachings incorporate the language, relationships, and wisdom of the local Aboriginal traditions into every aspect of program development and implementation. One such program is found in an Aboriginal organization whose mission is to assist at-risk Aboriginal girls (ages 8-17) to regain a healthy sense of identity and develop the skills necessary to create harmony and balance in their relationships with self, family, and community. The treatment program is based on Aboriginal cultural and spiritual teachings and incorporates Western best practices in the healing of individual and historical trauma. This cultural education includes: participation in spiritual activities such as sweat lodges and pipe ceremonies; the integration of Aboriginal ontologies and axiologies (i.e., the Cree Seven Traditional Values) into individual and group therapy sessions; and, the integration of traditional healing methodologies, such as the Medicine Wheel, to assess and direct youths' healing journeys. Formative assessment was used within the treatment program to determine how treatment for individuals may be improved. The individual assessment results were also analyzed over time, providing outcome-based evidence for the effectiveness of the treatment. Scores on measures of post-traumatic stress, anxiety, and resilience moved from clinical levels to normal levels.

There is a practice in many Aboriginal communities of sharing children with those who can best care for them (Bennett, 2011). Traditionally, this sharing took place within the community and children were not estranged from their extended family, place of birth, or culture. However, in the structure of the child and family services system, Aboriginal youth often find themselves outside their community of origin, where they traditionally develop an understanding of themselves as part of an Aboriginal culture with strong, positive traditions and knowledge (Wekerle, Waechter, Leung, & Leonard, 2007). This estrangement from place and culture can deeply impact Aboriginal children who already shoulder the burden of historical trauma, systemic shame, and ethnocide that they have inherited from Canada's history of colonialist perspectives and practices, including forced attendance at residential schools. This history was recently acknowledged as genocidal by Justice Murray Sinclair, the chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Pember, 2013).

Due to this burden of both current and historical trauma, cultural care has been an increasing focus for child welfare agencies in Canada (Sinha & Kozlowski, 2013). Strategies to ensure cultural

connectedness have included the development of delegated First Nations child and family service agencies, and changes to policies to include the development of cultural care plans within province-run child and family services. One residential program that is attempting to achieve a higher level of cultural education is offered by a multi-site residential treatment program for Aboriginal girls aged 8-17. Located in Western Canada, it was developed from, and is run with, the philosophies, values, and practices of Aboriginal culture deeply integrated into its organizational fabric. In 2013, this organization began assessing client outcomes in order to determine if their unique approach, one in which cultural education is considered a central tenet of healing, was helping their clients heal. In this chapter, we describe the ways in which this organization engages in cultural education within the context of their mandate as a treatment facility for at-risk Aboriginal girls, and we discuss how this organization utilized client outcome data to inform treatment and examine evidence related to the effectiveness of the treatment. Finally, we address some areas for future research such as residential care and cultural education.

Before we begin, we feel it is important to address our use of terminology in this chapter. The authors are using the term "Aboriginal" as a working term throughout the document to refer to people from First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) communities, and the term "First Nations" to refer to Canada's original peoples, regardless of status in relation to the Indian Act, who are neither Métis nor Inuit. However, we acknowledge that these terms are not universally accepted and are, to some, problematic. Our choice to use these terms is functional, to allow us to efficiently distinguish between the larger group (Aboriginal) and one smaller group within it (First Nations), and to maintain consistency throughout this document. The use of these terms was discussed with, and accepted by, the authors' First Nations partners at the Aboriginal organization from which this research originated.

Further, we must give some attention to the impact of, and possible connection with, Canada's residential school system. It is important for us to acknowledge the historical context of indigenous education in Canada, specifically the intergenerational impacts of the residential school system, wherein generations of Aboriginal children were taken from their families and communities and educated (indoctrinated and abused) by church-run, state-sanctioned schools. The issues that clients bring to the treatment centre, and are the focus of the treatment program, stem from the intergenerational impacts of the residential school system including family breakdown, physical and sexual abuse, and exposure to violence. Critics may argue that the structure of group treatment programs like the one discussed in this chapter may at least superficially look like residential schools, wherein clients have been taken from their homes by Child and Family Services and placed into residential care outside their home communities. However, there are many important distinctions between this particular residential treatment program and the residential schools of yore, such as their respective missions (i.e., to provide holistic healing from personal and historical trauma in a safe and healthy environment at the treatment centre versus the assimilation of Aboriginal children into the dominant, white, Christian society at residential schools). In addition to the differences in mandates, these two types of residential care differ substantially in many other ways, such as in their respective organizational values, treatment of the children, inclusion of the children's culture and family, and collaboration with the children's family and community of origin, among many others. The many important ways that the studied residential treatment program distinguishes itself through its cultural integration will be discussed in a later section; nevertheless, we felt the need to address this possible criticism and note that the organization's sensitivity to the impact of residential schools is part of the reason that cultural integration and input from Elders has been a crucial part of its history and ongoing operation.

Aboriginal Cultural Education

Prior to discussing the structure and programming at the organization that we are highlighting, it is helpful to first address the context of Aboriginal cultural education within which it resides. The clients who attend treatment here have all experienced some form of physical, emotional, spiritual, and/or relational trauma. The vast majority of these children are in the care of the state and have personal histories rife with estrangement from family and community. Despite their commonalities, each of their healing journeys are unique. Along the way, they face the realities of their experiences and learn to form new ways of being to continue the journey. They learn new ways to deal with depression, anxiety, addictions, and symptoms of trauma. By learning these skills within the context of reconnecting with Aboriginal culture, and within a group setting surrounded by similar minded peers, they develop strength within themselves and as a part of their cultural communities. This connection with culture, and the development of a positive cultural identity, is the ultimate goal of integrating cultural education into this treatment program.

Cultural Education

Cultural education is being increasingly emphasized as central to both education and healing programs when working with Aboriginal people (e.g., Antone, 2000; Bell, 2013; Witt, 2008). Programs built on Aboriginal teachings incorporating the language, relationships, and wisdom of the local Aboriginal traditions into every aspect of program development and implementation. This can be difficult for an organization such as this, which was founded by a small group of First Nation and non-Aboriginal people, is run by a CEO from one Cree nation, and services clients who hail from a great diversity of First Nations across Canada. Staff and clients at the treatment centre speak Cree, Blackfoot, and Ojibwe, among other Aboriginal and European languages, and represent cultures that are categorically distinct from each other. Given this diversity, it is a challenge for an organization to provide a cultural education that is relevant to each client. However, Aboriginal Elders and communities know that Aboriginal youth need to know their language and culture in order to heal from historical and personal trauma (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003). As such, though the cultural education provided at this treatment centre is inevitably guided by the culture of its CEO, cultural coordinator, and staff, the Elders of the organization understand and value the necessity of appropriately tailored cultural education for its clients, and take measures (as described later) to address this concern.

Components of Cultural Education

The form that cultural education takes varies widely depending on the context, program goals, and the input of cultural knowledge holders. Components of cultural education may include emphasis on "surface" components such as the creation of artifacts (e.g., beading, constructing a medicine wheel, making drums, etc.), relationships (e.g., working with Elders and other cultural knowledge holders), or activities (e.g., smudging, sweat ceremonies, etc.). In contrast, other components of cultural education may include deeper integration related to cultural values, language, and specific ways of knowing and being within a culture. Language and culture are closely related, as is acknowledged by Blue Quills First Nations College when it states:

> Rightfully the ultimate goal of the college is to educate students in such a manner that their Cree identity or "onehiyâwiwiniyiw" emerges free from a colonial mentality. In addition, the cycle of assimilation through education stops with the emphasis on Cree language and culture. ("Indigenous Knowledge", n.d., para 6)

While descriptions of cultural programming may appear to emphasize surface-level learning objectives, transmission of important ontological and epistemological wisdom is the actual goal of cultural education. These surface components of cultural education are often necessary to identify when describing curriculum, as they provide context and focus for deeper integration of those cultural understandings that shape worldview and identity. In relation to the treatment centre program, both surface and depth components of cultural education are addressed through its focus on topics such as cultural activities (surface level) as well as teachings by Elders about cultural values (depth level).

The Role of Cultural Education in Reducing Cultural Shame

It is important to address the issue of cultural shame and its relation to cultural education. Cultural shame is a debilitating phenomenon experienced by many Aboriginal people in Canada as a result of the direct, indirect, and intergenerational legacy of the residential school system. The goal of residential schools was to forcibly assimilate children into Western, white, Christian traditions and ensure the rejection and eventual destruction of their language and culture. Gone (2010) states that due to the physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual violence suffered at these schools, in addition to the widespread loss of language, culture, and ceremony within the communities, there exists among Aboriginal people a "collective, cumulative, and intergenerational transmission of risk for adverse mental health outcomes that stem from the historical unresolved grief or 'soul wound' inflicted by experiences of colonization" (p. 752).

Given this, improving well-being for the treatment centre's clients ought to include some effort to counter the cultural shame that accompanied the forced rejection and near annihilation of their culture. To this end, the cultural curriculum focuses on reducing cultural shame by improving knowledge about culture, as cultural education is key to healing the cultural shame that underlies some of the core symptoms of mental health that affect the centre's clients. Further, the centre takes a strengths-based approach towards Aboriginal cultural identity that emphasizes relationships with family, community, and ancestors, and that acknowledges the systemic trauma of Canada's genocidal history and how this impacts Aboriginal families.

In the studied treatment program, cultural education is conceptualized as meaning-making, in which the meaning made by each individual is unique to them, is lifelong, and is contextualized. In this way, the components of the cultural education are integrated into many aspects of the program, rather than outlined in a structural curriculum (as it is often the case in school systems). With this context in place, we may now turn to a description of the organization and practices of the organization in question, followed by an overview of the evidence supporting the effectiveness of the treatment.

An Introduction to the Organization

The organization, from which this chapter's data originated, is an Aboriginal multi-site residential treatment facility that specializes in providing culturally informed treatment for at-risk girls. Its mission is to "assist at-risk youth in regaining a healthy sense of identity and the skills necessary to create harmony and balance in their relationships with self, family, and community" (Policy and Procedures Manual [P&P], 2013, p. 9). Working with girls in care ranging in age from eight through 17, the treatment program is based on Aboriginal cultural and spiritual teachings and incorporates Western best practices in the treatment and healing of personal and historical trauma.

The organization was founded by a small group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, who were committed to developing a treatment centre that not only served Aboriginal children, but did so in a way that honoured their cultures and communities. They believed that in order for this to occur, their entire organization – not just the treatment program itself, but the philosophy and structure of the company – ought to be grounded in, and informed by, Aboriginal philosophies and practices. Some of these philosophies and practices include the integration of traditional values into every facet of the organization, the inclusion of Elders in the treatment process, emphasizing cultural connection and education throughout each client's stay, and the use of culturally relevant counseling strategies. Each of these will be described briefly below.

The organization adopted the Seven Traditional Values (as interpreted from the CEO's Cree nation) as the organization's core values, and used these as the axiological foundation for their policies, procedures, and programming. The traditional values appear at the beginning of the Policy and Procedures Manual (P&P, 2013) as part of the organization's Vision and Values, which illustrates the importance of these values in the overall structure of the organization. These Traditional Values of honesty, caring, respect, courage, sharing, humility, and kindness do not simply exist in the policy manual, but rather are a dynamic part of the organization. In practice, these values are introduced to all staff during their job orientations and are referenced as evaluation criteria during formal employee evaluations. The management team strives to practice these values and model them to their staff and clients, encouraging both staff and clients to provide the management team with feedback if their behaviours do not match these stated values.

Further, these values are integrated into the treatment process, as clinical staff, consisting of one female Elder and one male Elder, provide regular teachings focusing on one value at a time. In consultation with other program staff, the clinical staff choose which value to teach based on the particular needs of the clients at the time. For example, the staff recently chose to provide a teaching on the value of honesty despite the fact that this value had already been taught because some clients were continuing to struggle with integrating this teaching into their daily practices. Clinical staff typically cycle through these value-based teachings so that clients receive at least one teaching on each value during the course of their stay in the program, giving more attention to teachings that prove particularly difficult for clients to integrate into treatment than others. By focusing on these Traditional Values, and providing teachings on them to both program staff and clients, they ensure that these cultural values are seamlessly integrated – and, indeed, integral – throughout the organization.

Another way that the treatment centre's policies and practices reflect Aboriginal ways of being and knowing is through the organization's inclusion of First Nations Elders. The CEO of the organization is a pipe-carrying female Elder from a Cree First Nation, and despite her administrative role she promotes an involved and hands-on working approach with clients. She frequently connects

with clients during lunch or snack breaks and cultural activities, personally runs the monthly Full Moon Pipe Ceremony, and sometimes joins group therapy sessions to offer her perspective as a woman, mother, grandmother, Elder, and social worker. Clients look to her as a kokum (grandmother) in the treatment houses, and she refers to the organization – including the clients – as a family. Given the disconnection from family that many children in care experience, this family orientation is both a natural result of her care for the children and also a deliberate effort to bring clients the stability, love, and positive attachment that they need to complete their healing journeys.

For the CEO, it is important that Aboriginal culture is not referenced on a surface level but rather integrated into the structure and everyday practices of the organization. As such, she encourages all staff – regardless of their own beliefs and backgrounds – to participate in the cultural activities offered at the treatment centre, promotes practice of the Seven Traditional Values amongst her staff, provides staff in-service professional development on topics such as how to avoid reproducing colonial relations between staff and clients, and includes the evaluation of openness to and respect for Aboriginal culture in annual employee evaluations. Further, under the guidance of the CEO, the organization engages in a number of family and community-building activities with the youth, including inviting the youths' family members to sweat lodge ceremonies and providing them opportunities to speak and perform at community events with local Elders.

In addition to the CEO, both of the clinical staff members are Elders. One of them is male while the other is female, contributing to a deliberate balance of the two spirits within the clinical team. The male counselor also works as the cultural coordinator for the organization, providing clients with cultural teachings, such as the meaning of the sacred rocks in ceremonies, and running on-site sweat ceremonies on a bi-weekly basis. For some clients, these teachings are comforting traditions they have participated in since birth; for others, this represents an introduction to their own cultural history and identity. With Elders as guides and a vast array of cultural activities available, as outlined below, the organization strives to provide Aboriginal cultural education as a central tenet of their treatment program.

Encouraging clients to explore and develop their cultural and spiritual identity is an integral part of the treatment program, and to this end, in addition to the Seven Traditional Values and the inclusion of Elders in the organization, the treatment program emphasizes participation in spiritual and cultural activities. According to their policy and procedures manual, the treatment program "is designed to encourage the client to develop knowledge and pride in his/her heritage. The client is assisted in developing an appreciation of his/her identity that will add vitality to the definition of his/her Aboriginal identity and culture" (P&P, 2013, p. 19). As such, they run bi-weekly on-site sweat lodge ceremonies, open every staff meeting and group therapy session with a prayer and smudge, and have on-site Full Moon Pipe Ceremonies every month. In addition to the spiritual activities provided on-site, cultural activities including rattle making, beading, and dancing are planned for evenings and weekends, and off-site activities include day trips to pow-wows, week-long interprovincial ceremonial rock-picking excursions, and the opportunity to participate in fasting ceremonies. Staff are encouraged to participate in these events, regardless of their own backgrounds and beliefs, and are encouraged to participate in other ways if their own beliefs preclude their presence at the ceremonies (i.e., some staff may not feel comfortable entering the sweat lodge but are happy to help prepare the feast that follows).

Given that both the CEO and the cultural coordinator are from the same Cree community while clients represent a great diversity of Aboriginal and Métis backgrounds, care is taken to ensure that this diversity is acknowledged, respected, and accommodated. Clients are encouraged to pray in their own tongue during the prayer and smudge that opens each group session, and clients from

particular Nations are encouraged to connect with staff who share their background to ask specific questions about their culture. Furthermore, clients who prefer to explore other religions rather than traditional spiritual beliefs are encouraged to talk about their burgeoning beliefs with staff members and are accompanied to off-site places of worship upon request. Though the organization itself operates from an Aboriginal perspective and reflects the traditional knowledge and practices of the Plains Cree individuals who developed the program, the management team promotes clients' spiritual and cultural identity development regardless of what form that might take. According to their manual:

> At the [centre], the most important element of the treatment program is the cultural component. It is important to provide the client and family (if requested) access to Traditional Healers. The use of Traditional Healers (in addition to other Aboriginal treatment personnel) is an excellent way of providing the youth with an opportunity to interact, individually and collectively, with positive Aboriginal role models. Access to other male and female Elders for specialized knowledge (i.e. gender-specific issues) [is also] arranged as required. (P&P, 2013, p. 19)

Finally, the treatment centre demonstrates its Aboriginal policies and practices through its use of culturally relevant counseling strategies. The treatment process itself is described in four stages, each of which corresponds to the four directions of the medicine wheel as well as the Seven Traditional Values (see Figure 1). Every month, each client is evaluated by her counsellors and peers on her progress through these four stages, and her treatment is considered completed once she has met the goals of the fourth stage.

In addition to the structure of the treatment program, the counseling practices are also steeped in Aboriginal philosophies and practices. In combination with Western counseling practices, such as elements of the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step program, and practice approaches such as Self-Regulation Therapy (SRT), culturally relevant practices play a significant role in the clinical treatment program. These include providing Elder teachings in group therapy (as mentioned previously), using a specially modified version of the medicine wheel to enable clients' therapeutic self-evaluations and goal-setting in relation to the four needs as represented above, and the practice of smudging as a grounding strategy. For example, when a client dissociates during a group session, a counselor or peer may get the smudging bowl and smudge around the dissociating client until the client is grounded again and able to proceed. Sometimes this smudging is accompanied by Western grounding strategies such as verbally instructing the client to focus on sensory stimuli associated with the smudge, and other times it is accompanied by prayer, the singing of sweat songs, or silence.

The treatment centre is an organization that not only incorporates aspects of Aboriginal culture and cultural education into its treatment practices, but is as a corporate entity also borne from Aboriginal philosophies and practices that are deeply integrated into the entire organization. It is this deep integration, described more accurately as a synthesis wherein the original elements of Western and traditional philosophies and practices can no longer be separated from each other, that sets it apart from other treatment centres. Given this uniqueness, the centre's management team set out to provide evidence regarding the effectiveness of the treatment in producing positive treatment outcomes for their clients and to learn what aspects of the program are working and what may be improved.

STAGE 4:
PRACTICE
    -    Caring

STAGE 1:
AWARENESS
        -    Honesty
        -    Humility

Mental   Emotional

Physical   Spiritual

STAGE 3:
LEARNING
    -    Sharing
    -    Kindness

STAGE 2:
OWNERSHIP
        -    Respect
        -    Courage
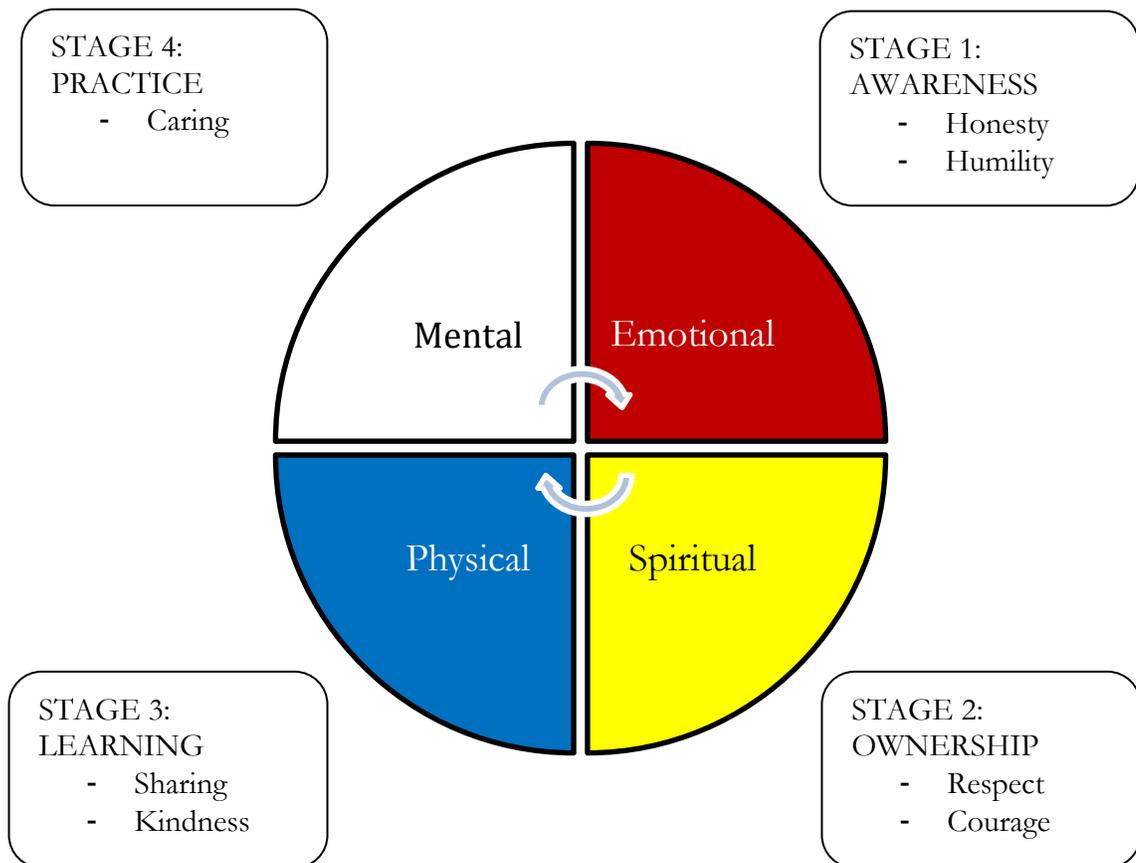
Figure 1. Graphic Representing the Treatment Program (from the centre's "Treatment Plan Template"; used with permission).

Methods

Ongoing assessment of client outcomes informs treatment and provides direction to adjusting treatment approaches based on the client's needs (Miller, Duncan, Brown, Sorrell, & Chalk, 2006). Analysis of client outcomes can also inform the evaluation of a program (Schalock, 2001). While the analysis of the outcomes discussed in this chapter do not constitute a program evaluation, the pattern of change in the outcomes were requested by the management team and considered one type of evidence to support the effectiveness of the program.

The treatment centre has been engaging in pre- and post-treatment measurement of certain indicators since the organization's inception. Indeed, doing so is a requirement for ongoing accreditation as a care facility. However, the management team determined that ongoing and regular formative assessment – not just pre- and post-measures – would allow them to assess each individual client's progress and adjust treatment to each client's particular needs. Analysis of the changes in scores would also provide evidence supporting the effectiveness of the treatment.

In the fall of 2013, the treatment centre engaged one of the authors to update the existing basic pre- and post-treatment outcomes measures and procedures. She reviewed the instruments that were already being used, compared them to other available instruments, and worked with the clinical team to develop a new assessment tool that could be easily administered to all clients every two months. In November 2013, the organization began collecting outcomes using this updated battery of instruments.

When we consulted with two universities' research ethics boards, we were advised this examination of outcomes was exempt from human subjects research ethics review. As such, we did not apply to the community research ethics board for ethics approval for the production or publication of this research. However, ethical considerations were undertaken; for instance, consent forms are signed by clients' caseworkers upon their arrival, and all data collected was treated as confidential and private in their handling and storage. The cultural appropriateness of the evaluation was also considered by the Aboriginal members of the management team, who agreed that the outcomes were appropriate for clinical assessment and would provide meaningful information about the clients and the effectiveness of the cultural-based treatment.

Assessment Instruments Used

The instruments that were included in the final assessment battery were chosen based on several criteria. Each instrument was simple to administer, requiring no special training, and was based on clients' self-reports. This ease of administration allowed clinical or house staff to administer the instruments in groups so as not to interfere with the treatment centre's tightly scheduled programming. Each instrument was evaluated for its appropriateness for adolescents. Given that the clients are 8-17 years old, it was imperative that we found instruments that could reasonably be used with this fairly wide developmental range. Each instrument was reviewed in terms of the psychological construct that it addressed and the relevance of that construct to the clients' treatment goals. Each of these instruments was chosen in close consultation with clinical staff to reflect the particular issues and challenges that commonly arise amongst the client population. As clinicians, they were interested in not only tracking psychological well-being (e.g., symptoms of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress), but they also wanted a good indication of overall well-being (i.e., the Global Check Set measures well-being across seven constructs) and positive psychological traits such as self-esteem and resilience.

Six instruments were identified, and the authors reviewed the published research on each instrument's validity and reliability to ensure these psychometric properties were adequate for the use of the instruments in this context and for this purpose. The six instruments used in the bi-monthly outcomes assessment battery were: (a) Beck's Depression Inventory – Short Version (BDI-SV); (b) Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale; (c) Global Check Set; (d) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Checklist – Civilian Version (PCL-C); (e) Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; and, (f) Screen for Child Anxiety-Related Disorders (SCARED).

In practice, these six assessments provided information for clinicians to track not just symptom reduction but also clients' positive growth, providing a good balance between the most information about the centre's clients with the least amount of distraction from treatment.

Data Collection

Every two months, the clients completed the assessment battery, while staff remained available throughout to answer any questions that arose. Upon completion of the instruments, clinical staff collected the packages and delivered them to the clinical coordinator. The clinical coordinator scored each instrument and recorded the data in a database along with other treatment related information (e.g., sessions each client received in the last two months, what stage of treatment the client is in, etc.). A Front Sheet was created, summarizing the database information for each client. The Front Sheet included information about which treatment centre location the client was residing in at the time of the assessment, how many individual and group sessions the client had in the past two months, the client's most recent scores, graphs comparing the most recent scores against past scores, and information about how to interpret the scores in relation to clinical cut-offs.

The clinical coordinator maintained an Outcomes Binder at the treatment centre that was updated every two months with the following information: a print-out of that month's outcomes data, the completed and scored assessments that were administered that month, and the Front Sheets for each client. Additionally, each client's individual binder was updated with a copy of her assessments and Front Sheet from that month. Periodically, the clinical coordinator met with clinical staff and management to discuss the meaning and analysis of results for particular clients, and every two months the clinical coordinator provided a brief write-up on each client's progress according to the outcomes scores that are included in clients' bi-monthly Clinical Progress Reports. These Clinical Progress Reports are delivered to clients' caseworkers every two months and are also included in individual client's binders.

Analysis

The analysis of the data was undertaken by the authors using One-way repeated measures ANOVA and was completed using the statistical software SPSS. Analysis of the data was limited by the number of participants who completed the assessment instruments at multiple time points within the 15-month data collection timeframe. There was no comparison sample utilized in this study because the intent of the analysis was to describe the improvement on treatment-related variables within subjects. The change in symptom scores was calculated for each participant and the change in symptom scores was aggregated. The results of the six outcome measures were analyzed over five time points at two-month intervals.

Results

Based on the analysis described in the previous section, we summarize the changes in outcomes below. The process of utilizing the outcome scores as formative assessment is also described.

Symptom Improvement

Over the 15 months of data collection, repeated measures were not available for some of the participants who completed, or were moved from, the program. For those participants where at least

ten months (five time points) of data was collected, statistically significant improvements on symptoms were observed. Participants demonstrated significant decreases in symptoms of depression (BDI-SV, N=9, p = 0.009), anxiety (SCARED, N=8, p = 0.005), and post-traumatic stress (PCL-C, N=16, p = 0.05). Global symptoms (Global Check Set, N=12, p = 0.008) also decreased significantly over this time. While every effort was made to collect data for participants in the program, non-participation or incomplete participation resulted in some data loss.

While no statistically significant change in resilience or self-esteem was noted over the five time points, it is unclear at this time whether change may be detected with a larger sample size. Average resilience scores for clients in Stage 1 of the program were 53.8, which is substantially lower than the normal average of 80 (Connor & Davidson, 2003), and is similar to the average score of grieving, traumatized adolescents (Chen, Shen, Gao, Lam, Chang, & Deng, 2014). By Stage 4, clients' average resilience score increased to 75.6, which is only nominally lower than normal, and is indeed higher than some normative samples (i.e., the normal high school graduates who averaged a score of 73 in Clauss-Ehlers & Wibrowski's 2007 study). We interpret this change in resilience score as a result of the treatment program with its heavy focus on cultural education.

Outcome Informed Treatment Planning

One of the main functions of symptom measurement was to inform formative assessment and guide treatment planning. Based on the interpretation of the results, therapists routinely adjusted the focus of individual and group therapy sessions to focus on those areas where the client indicated they continued to experience clinical symptoms. The therapists and clients viewed the results together to discuss how the clients' reporting of symptoms translated into which "stage" of treatment they were in. As described previously, treatment at the centre progresses through four stages, which can be briefly summarized as moving from developing an awareness that they do indeed have a problem (Awareness), then taking responsibility for one's choices and actions (Ownership), then learning new coping skills and strategies to replace unhealthy old ones (Learning), and finally mastering the use of these new skills and becoming a leader to other clients (Practice). In addition to these four stages of treatment, the treatment centre also operates a transition to semi-independent living (T-SIL) program, and for the purposes of our analysis we described this post-treatment program as "stage 5."

Because a client's stage of treatment is co-determined by a client, her peers, and her therapists, and is partially based on self-reported symptoms, it is not seen as a measure of the outcome. However, therapists and staff indicated that the data from the instruments provided a basis for discussion with the clients when developing agreement on goals and treatment choices.

Over time, clients reported a reduction of symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and global symptoms. Although clients tend to progress along the stages in a sequential order from stage one to stage five, clients may also move back a stage or two if something happens in their life that sets them back. Future analysis may further inform the relationship between stage of treatment and clinical symptoms. Additionally, the treatment centre will be adding a scale of cultural connectedness (Snowshoe, Crooks, Tremblay, Craig, & Hinson, 2015) to the outcomes measures and future analysis will comment on the impact of the program on cultural connectedness and the degree to which symptom change is related to cultural connectedness.

Discussion

In this chapter, we have identified the ways that the treatment centre has worked to provide a holistic healing journey for Aboriginal girls that is steeped in both traditional Aboriginal values and healing strategies as well as Western best practices. In general, First Nations people in Canada experience higher risk of mental health concerns than non-First-Nations people in Canada (FNIGC, 2012), and this higher risk concentrates among the most vulnerable of the population, such as its youth, and especially its girls, who contend with multiple oppressions stemming from race, gender, and age. This concentration of risk occurs within the context of a history of marginalization and oppression of Aboriginal cultures. While culturally imbued living has been known by Elders and Aboriginal community members to promote health and well-being, the intergenerational impact of policies regarding Aboriginal people have left many disconnected from their culture and communities. Meanwhile, significant barriers, such as cultural disconnection, limited access to services, and a lack of culturally relevant intervention options, prevent Aboriginal people from obtaining effective mental health services (McCabe, 2007).

In providing a residential treatment program for Aboriginal youth in care that integrates cultural education into its philosophies and practices, the treatment centre examined in this chapter broke down some of those barriers in an effort to help the at-risk girls who comprise its clientele and contribute to the health and healing of the clients themselves as well as the communities from which they hail. Below, we discuss some of the pertinent issues that came out of our analysis, particularly in relation to personal and cultural trauma, culture and healing, culture and resilience, and positive cultural connectedness.

Personal and Cultural Trauma

Trauma has been defined as "the experience of an event or enduring conditions where the individual's ability to integrate his/her emotional experience is overwhelmed, or the individual experiences (subjectively) a threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity" (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p. 60). Recent changes in the diagnosis of trauma have expanded our understanding of trauma to include directly experiencing a traumatic event, witnessing a traumatic event, hearing that a close friend or family member has experienced a traumatic event, and being exposed to extreme description of the trauma of another (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Given this definition, the youth who attend the treatment centre can be seen as having experienced trauma on many fronts. In addition to the personal traumas they may have experienced related to sexual and physical abuse, family breakdown, and the violence they may have witnessed, many Aboriginal youth in Canada grow up without a sense of where, and who, they are in Aboriginal communities and culture. Snowshoe (2015) notes that this cultural loss and oppression of Canadian First Nations peoples is implicated in the higher proportion of mental health issues amongst First Nations youth. As a result, the sense of cultural identity that First Nations youth develop is varied and often based on colonial perceptions of Aboriginal culture. These representations are internalized and can result in negative perceptions of self, leaving Aboriginal youth in enduring conditions of duress. Further, youth in care experience separation and loss on a daily basis. These loss experiences can have devastating effects on an individual's ability to recover from trauma. Although not all losses can be avoided, strengthening healthy connections to community and culture bolster resilience.

The population of Aboriginal adolescent girls at the treatment centre have life stories that include numerous personal traumas that put them at high risk for mental health problems and addictions, in addition to experiencing cultural trauma that puts them at even greater risk. To counteract these traumas, it may be helpful to address not only the personal aspects of trauma but cultural trauma as well. Anderson (2000) outlines a theory of the development of cultural identities that can be used as a guideline for treatment that addresses these issues. Anderson proposes resisting imposed definitions of one's culture, rejecting negative stereotypes, reclaiming Aboriginal traditions, translating traditions into a contemporary context, and acting to create positive new identities. There are some clear overlaps between the centre's current programming and Anderson's proposed action for positive cultural identity development. The results presented here suggest a significant shift towards mental health and resilience amongst participants in this program. The results appear to support the connection between positive cultural identity and healing. However, despite this general trend, it may be valuable to make the connection with positive cultural identity development at the treatment centre more explicit by discussing some of these issues out loud, such as in group therapy sessions, to ensure that they are being explicitly acknowledged and addressed.

Culture and Healing

In addition to the connection between trauma and culture as described above, another theme that arose from the results is the connection between culture and healing. As described previously, the treatment centre uses Aboriginal cultural education to inform, guide, and deepen the healing journey of Aboriginal girls in care. This in turn is meant to lead to positive overall health and mental health outcomes.

In their book on Aboriginal health in Canada, Waldram, Herring, and Young (2006) describe the attachment of Aboriginal people to their culture as a significant health determinant. Meanwhile, Wilson and Rosenberg (2002) determined that Aboriginal peoples' participation in traditional activities, and their proximal connection to the land, were both associated with self-rated measures of good health. These findings correlate with one theory of health that is rooted in cultural identity. This theory posits that disconnection from culture directly impacts mental health by increasing anxiety, and indirectly impacts mental health through lowered resilience factors and weakened systems factors. This theory is supported by our findings that clients reported decreases in clinical mental health symptoms over time in treatment. While the treatment effects of cultural programming cannot be separated from other components of clients' treatment experience, the integrated cultural treatment program is effective in reducing clinical symptoms for the clients.

Culture and Resilience

The connections between culture, trauma, and healing are clear. Another theme that arose in our analysis was the connection between culture and resilience. One factor that stood out to us was clients' scores on resilience, which improved from the clients' initiation into the program and their participation in its final treatment stage. Resilience is commonly defined as "positive adaptation despite adversity" (Snowshoe et al., 2015, p. 250). Inherent in the definition is the notion that there is something to be overcome and there are aspects of the individual that facilitate their ability to move through the difficulty. In the area of resilience in Aboriginal youth, the development of positive internal representations of culture is essential for the development of resilient identities (Carrière, 2007).

Collective continuity, the sense that one's core values, beliefs, traditions, and mentalities are coherent and shared among those of one's cultural group, has been found to improve social well-being (Sani, Bowe, & Herrera, 2008). However, Sani et al. (2008) also found that the collective self-esteem mediates this relationship. This means that the role that cultural connectedness plays in improving factors of resilience in part depends on whether the shared culture is perceived as positive. Therefore, healing from trauma by connecting to culture is intrinsically connected to healing the cultural trauma that some Aboriginal people experience. This may mean that the healing journey is both healing for the girls and allows them to play an important part in healing the intercultural trauma and redefining Aboriginal culture. Indeed, the CEO has witnessed clients returning to their communities after treatment, bringing with them a cultural knowledge that has, in the past, made community Elders weep with renewed hope for the survival of their culture and community.

It is worthwhile to acknowledge that there are deficit-based and strengths-based conceptualizations of the ways in which resilience and cultural-identity interact. A deficit-based conceptualization might view the lack of cultural identity as a risk factor for youth. The strengths-based perspective reframes this as the role that cultural connectedness plays in helping youth to overcome adversity. Although there is certainly merit in observing that disconnection with culture and attachment trauma play a role in myriad mental health issues for Aboriginal youth, the strengths-based conceptualization provides more clarity in designing programming that facilitates healing and hope with Aboriginal youth (Snowshoe et al., 2015).

Positive Cultural Connectedness

Snowshoe et al. (2015) use the term "cultural-connectedness" to refer to the extent to which a First Nations youth is integrated within his or her First Nations community (pg. 249). Components of cultural-connectedness include attachment, relatedness, property of a relationship system, feelings of closeness, sense of belonging, and/or engagement with groups of processes (Barber & Schluterman, 2008). In the context of Canadian First Nations, Showshoe et al. (2015) propose a framework of positive cultural connectedness that includes identity, traditions, and spirituality.

Cultural connectedness, by extension, can refer to myriad aspects of adolescent experience. The Elders at the treatment centre emphasize the aspect of cultural connectedness that fosters healing of trauma and the formation of a positive sense of identity that is grounded in Aboriginal teachings. Looking at the results, we could see evidence of healing from trauma in the significant changes in clients' scores on depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and global symptoms.

Future Research

The results discussed provide evidence in support of the effectiveness of the treatment provided within the context of the culture-based treatment program. Future studies may consider a comparison with non-culture based treatment to provide evidence of the comparative efficacy of this treatment approach. Future research may involve comparing the efficacy of different treatment approaches, including the cultural education program, and determining which approaches result in the largest improvements. Conversely, one may want to engage in more causal studies to determine whether the existence of a cultural education component appears to directly cause the difference in outcomes. For instance, one may conduct repeated measures or controlled variable studies wherein programs without cultural education components are compared to the same programs with a cultural education component added in.

Potentially fruitful areas of further inquiry include answering questions related to whether aspects of cultural education may be detrimental to clients, and if so, how and why; whether cultural education provides long-term changes in well-being and/or worldview; and, whether/how cultural education is transmitted from individuals to communities, and whether this promotes health and healing at a community level.

Conclusions

The treatment program discussed in this chapter is innovative in its approach to integrating cultural education into every aspect of program design, treatment planning, and implementation. The examination of program outcomes indicates its effectiveness in decreasing symptoms of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and global symptoms. The results supporting the effectiveness of the culturally integrated program in improving resilience are also promising. The next steps in the examination of the treatment program centre will include measuring cultural-connectedness as a construct to further evaluate the role of cultural education in the efficacy of this approach.

References

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

Anderson, K. (2000). *A recognition of being: Reconstructing native womanhood.* (Women's issues publishing program). Toronto, ON: Second Story Press.

Antone, E. (2000). Empowering Aboriginal voice in Aboriginal education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 24*(2), 92-101.

Barber, B., & Schluterman, J. (2008). Connectedness in the lives of children and adolescents: A call for greater conceptual clarity. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 43*(3), 209-216. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.01.012

Bell, N. (2013). Just do it: Anishinaabe culture-based education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education, 36*(1), 36-58, 148.

Bennett, M. (2011). Exploring complexities in the research involving First Peoples children, families and communities. *First Peoples Child & Family Review, 6*(1), 5-8.

Carrière, J. (2007). Maintaining identities in First Nations adoption. *First Peoples Child and Family Review, 3*(1), 46-64.

Clauss-Ehlers, C., & Wibrowski, C. (2007). Building educational resilience and social support: The effects of the educational opportunity fund program among first and second generation college students. *Journal of College Student Development, 48*(5), 574-584. doi:10.1353/csd.2007.0051

Chen, Y., Shen, W., Gao, K., Lam, C., Chang, W., & Deng, H. (2014). Effectiveness RCT of a CBT intervention for youths who lost parents in the Sichuan, China, earthquake. *Psychiatric Services, 65*(2), 259-262. doi:10.1176/appi.ps.201200470

Connor, K., & Davidson, J. (2003). Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC). *Depression and Anxiety, 18*(2), 76-82. doi:10.1002/da.10113

First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) (2012). First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) 2008/10: National report on adults, youth and children living in First Nations communities. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Gone, J. (2010). The red road to wellness: Cultural reclamation in a native First Nations community treatment center. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *47*(1-2), 187-202. doi:10.1007/s10464-010-9373-2

Indigenous Knowledge. (n.d.). In *Blue Quills First Nations College*. Retrieved from http://www.bluequills.ca/indigenous-knowledge/

Kirmayer, L., Simpson, C., & Cargo, M. (2003). Healing traditions: Culture, community and mental health promotion with Canadian Aboriginal peoples. *Australasian Psychiatry*, *11*(1), S15-S23. doi:10.1046/j.1038-5282.2003.02010.x

McCabe, G. (2007). The healing path: A culture and community-derived indigenous therapy model. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *44*(2), 148-160. doi:10.1037/0033-3204.44.2.148

Miller, S. D., Duncan, B. L., Brown, J., Sorrell, R., & Chalk, M. B. (2006). Using formal client feedback to improve retention and outcomes. *Journal of Brief Therapy, 5*(1)*,* 5–22.

Pearlman, L., & Saakvitne, K. (1995). *Trauma and the therapist* (1st ed.). New York: Norton.

Pember, A. (2013, June 3). 'Cultural genocide,' truth and reconciliation commission calls residential schools. *Indian Country Today Media Network*. Retrieved from http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/06/03/coming-full-circle-truth-and-reconciliation-calls-residential-schools-cultural-genocide

Policy and Procedures Manual [P&P]. (2013). *Policy and procedures manual.*

Sani, F., Bowe, M., & Herrera, M. (2008). Perceived collective continuity and social well-being: Exploring the connections. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *38*(2), 365-374. doi:10.1002/ejsp.461

Schalock, R. L. (2001). *Outcome-based evaluation* (2nd ed.). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Sinha, V., & Kozlowski, A. (2013). The structure of aboriginal child welfare in Canada. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, *4*(2), 1-22. doi**:**10.18584/iipj.2013.4.2.2

Snowshoe, A. (2015). *The Cultural Connectedness Scale and its relation to positive mental health among First Nations youth* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. (Paper 3107).

Snowshoe, A., Crooks, C., Tremblay, P., Craig, W., & Hinson, R. (2015). Development of a Cultural Connectedness Scale for First Nations youth. *Psychological Assessment*, *27*(1), 249-259. doi:10.1037/a0037867

Waldram, J., Herring, A., & Young, T. (2006). *Aboriginal Health in Canada*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Wekerle, C., Waechter, R. L., Leung, E., & Leonard, M. (2007). Adolescence: A window of opportunity for positive change in mental health. *First Peoples Child & Family Review, 3*(2), 8-16.

Wilson, K., & Rosenberg, M. (2002). Exploring the determinants of health for First Nations peoples in Canada: Can existing frameworks accommodate traditional activities?. *Social Science & Medicine*, *55*(11), 2017-2031. doi:10.1016/s0277-9536(01)00342-2

Witt, N. (2008). Promoting self-esteem, defining culture. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, *22*(2), 260-273.

Chapter 8

Honouring the Kahswéntha:
Renewing the Relationship Between
the Kanyen'keháka and Queen's University

Jennifer Hardwick, Konwanonhsiyohstha (Callie Hill),
Kanonhsyonne (Janice Hill), and Jill Scott

This paper tells the story of the efforts of Tsi Tyonnheht Onkwawenna Language and Cultural Centre (TTO), Kenhtè:ke, and Queen's University, Kingston, to work together to build healthy learning communities, and foster deeper knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing for Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, teachers, and the broader community. The partnership is informed by Rotinonhsyón:ni worldview, specifically the Two Row Wampum or "Kahswéntha" Treaty between the Rotinonhsyón:ni and Dutch settlers, which recognizes the importance of the non-interference of one nation in the business of the other. Continually renewing and reaffirming this relationship has been central to the work done by Queen's University and TTO, whose mission and mandate is to revitalize Kanyen'kéha (Mohawk language) and culture through rich multi- and intergenerational experiential learning. This paper tracks the development of these learning partnerships over several years, demonstrating the importance of informal and non-formal learning in addition to curricular and programming initiatives. Ultimately, we argue that building relationships and developing educational programs that respond to the need for Indigenous people and settlers to coexist in healthy ways will help us all remember who we are, where we come from, and where we are going.

Relationships are the foundation of the Rotinonhsyón:ni[1] worldview. According to the original instructions given to them by the Creator, the Kanyen'keháka[2] have a duty and responsibility to live in harmony with all elements of the natural world. The teaching of gratitude is embedded in this worldview. The Kanyen'keháka approach to relationships has informed educational development at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and at Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre (TTO) in Kenhtè:ke (Tyendinaga). Guided by the Kahswéntha Treaty, TTO and the

---

[1] Rotinonhsyón:ni refers to the "People of the Longhouse", the Iroquois Confederacy of which the Nations include Oneida, Mohawk Onondaga, Seneca, Cayuga and Tuscarora.
[2] Kanyen'keháka translates in Kanyen'kéha (the Mohawk language) to "people of the flint", commonly referred to as "Mohawk."

Aboriginal Council at Queen's have worked separately and collaboratively to develop educational and cultural programming aligned with Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. "Kahswéntha" is a Kanyen'kéha word that describes the Two Row Wampum Treaty between the Rotinonhsyón:ni and Dutch settlers on Turtle Island. The treaty, which was formalized in 1613, was built upon the principles of peace, friendship and mutual respect (Otto, 2013, p.110). It is a treaty that recognizes the dignity and integrity of each nation, and stresses the importance of the non-interference of one nation in the business of the other. Continually renewing and reaffirming this relationship has been central to the work done by Queen's and TTO.

At Queen's University, the goal has been to increase the visibility of Indigenous cultures, and create safe spaces and a welcoming environment for Indigenous[3] students, staff, and faculty, and to provide meaningful opportunities to promote engagement and understanding among settler[4] groups on campus. Recent research by the Government of Canada (2015) has shown that few educational organizations – whether in K-12 schools or post-secondary institutions – have even begun to integrate Indigenous ways of learning and knowing into their curricula. Indigenous people have not seen themselves reflected in either the program content or instructional methodologies in schools or post-secondary institutions. Additionally, settler learners have not had the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the histories, cultures, and languages of Indigenous nations. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recent *Calls-to-Action* document emphasized the urgency of moving quickly to indigenize education at all levels (TRC, 2015).

Integrating Indigenous ways of knowing and learning into academic programming is but one piece of the puzzle. Informal learning opportunities are just as important. This chapter will tell the story of the efforts of one Rotinonhsyón:ni community and one university to build healthy learning communities, create welcoming spaces, and foster deeper knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing for Indigenous, and non-Indigenous learners, teachers, and the broader community, thereby encouraging a sense of well-being for all who participate.

There are many other programs and projects that further Indigenous studies at Queen's University, such as the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program in the Faculty of Education and a land-based course offered by Global Development Studies, but this paper focuses on specific examples of initiatives with which the authors have been involved. It should also be noted that many other Canadian universities have similar stories to tell, and that Queen's University is by no means at the forefront of the movement to increase the presence of Indigenous knowledges or build partnerships with local communities. Trent University, for example, has provided good models for Queen's in Indigenous education and community participation, and has provided a model for program development and institutional change.[5] For reasons of space, this paper will focus on recent local initiatives and some lessons learned.

---

[3] For the purposes of this paper, the word Indigenous is used as a generic term to refer to Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

[4] For the purposes of this article, "settler" will refer to all non-Indigenous peoples who reside on the lands now known as Canada. The term is used with an understanding that settler Canadians are a diverse group, and that, while "settler" often denotes privilege, numerous power structures – such as gender, sexuality, race, and socioeconomic status – qualify this privilege.

[5] Trent University was the first universities in Canada and only the second in North America to offer a Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies, a program that was founded in 1999 (Trent University, n.d.).

The ways in which the four authors of this contribution have worked together reflects our strong commitment to Indigenous research methodologies, and perhaps more importantly, our commitment to strengthening relationships in the spirit of the Kahswéntha. Two of us are Rotinonhsyón:ni from the community of Kenhtè:ke, and two of us are settlers living in Kingston; all of us work in the field of education. Together we have pursued both research and educational projects in the spirit of the Kahswéntha, with the goal of improving the well-being of our students and communities. We view relationships — as outlined by the Two-Row Wampum and Rotinonhsyón:ni teachings — as central to this goal. It is through peaceful, friendly, and respectful relationships that we learn about ourselves and our world, and come to find belonging in the way the Kahswéntha envisions.

As we wrote this paper, we met several times to develop ideas and to build a shared vision. We endeavoured to reflect on the relationship building between Indigenous people and settlers and to lay groundwork for future collaboration. Building and maintaining relationships was, and continues to be, central to this process; there was tea and food, laughter, and even a few tears as we shared stories, found inspiration, and encouraged each other to speak our truths. Beyond the formal partnerships that we have been developing on the basis of educational programming and educational research, we want to stress the importance of friendship and informal social gatherings. Relationships are built over time by developing a shared vision, shared goals, and shared values. This cannot be done through formal meetings alone. Fun is a powerful catalyst!

We should explain that the pronouns "I" and "we" shift frequently throughout the narrative. Sometimes these pronouns convey a Rotinonhsyón:ni perspective, and sometimes they are spoken from a settler perspective. We try to provide signposts for the reader throughout the document in order to preserve the immediacy of the storyteller's perspective, to acknowledge the differences of perspective, and to contextualize the voices and experiences they express. The challenge in creating a unified voice for this article while reflecting difference is symbolic of the larger struggle that Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, activists, and friends face when working together to affect change. In many ways, the dance of voices you hear in our chapter is the Kahswéntha in action.

Togetherness: Language Is Our Very Being
(Konwanonhsiyohstha [Callie Hill] writes about revitalizing Kanyen'kéha)

> This language is not just mere gibberish. It is our very being, what we are, who we are. We are people set aside from all else. When we lost our language we lost our very identity – the togetherness, the laughter, the happiness, the spirituality, the giving, the healing. But when we start talking we'll find all of this again and it will start from the inside out, the good feeling, the happiness, the humour, the enjoyment of once again knowing who we are.
> Kenhwenhnonken (1926-2008)

Kenhtè:ke is a Kanyen'keháka community in eastern Ontario. It is a very sacred place for all Rotinonhsyón:ni, being the birthplace of the great leader, known as the Peacemaker. He was born in the early fifteenth century and was the founder of the Iroquois Confederacy and the Kayenerakowa — known as the Great Law of Peace — that continues to govern the traditional people to this day.

Years ago, a monument to honour the Peacemaker was erected in Kenhtè:ke by the Akwesasne Mohawk Counselor Association. In more recent history, Rotinonhsyón:ni from within Canada and the United States gather on Eagle Hill in Kenhtè:ke to burn tobacco prior to the annual recitation of the Great Law.

Today in Kenhtè:ke there are no mother-tongue speakers of Kanyen'kéha, but there is a growing population of second language speakers and an emerging second generation of second language speakers. It is not by chance that this has happened, but through the dedication and commitment of the community, lead by Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre (TTO). It was 1997 when some people in the community began to realize the impact that the loss of the few remaining Elder speakers would cause. It was difficult at this time to know how many speakers were left in the community because those who could speak were not using the language. Maybe they chose not to speak because there was nobody to speak to, or maybe they chose not to speak because they could no longer speak the language proficiently. Or maybe they chose not to speak because of associated trauma inflicted by Western thought that treated the language as useless. Concerned community members — who were parents, advocates and educators — began a campaign to increase the profile of Kanyen'kéha. They began to co-ordinate fun family events and short-term language learning opportunities.

In 2002, TTO conducted a strategic planning session that resulted in a solid 5-year plan. Very simply put, the multifaceted plan was to teach the adults to speak, provide them with teacher training, develop curriculum, and open an immersion school for the children in the community of Kenhtè:ke. Realizing the need for full-time staff to see the plan through to fruition, TTO applied for, and received, charitable status through Revenue Canada, which allowed it to independently apply for program funding. That same year, funding was obtained to hire a full-time coordinator. It was also at this time that the inaugural full-time adult language program was launched in the community.

Shatiwennakará:tats ("they are standing the words back up"), the adult language program, was developed by TTO as a community-based program, but the benefits of being affiliated with a post-secondary institution soon became apparent. Accreditation would provide the students with the opportunity to earn post-secondary credits while simultaneously making them eligible to receive a monthly stipend from the community's post-secondary education department. The accreditation and stipend ended up playing a huge part in making it possible for the adult students to attend the program. Brock University provided an instructor to teach the program and having the institutional support allowed a partnership agreement to move ahead very quickly. TTO continued to retain control of program development and delivery, which was an important factor for the community-based program. Local funding was obtained to hire three part-time student mentors — who were also students enrolled in the program — to lead the class through drills and exercises two days a week. A Certificate in Mohawk Language was awarded to the successful students of the ten-month, eight-credit program and it was delivered in this format from 2004 to 2007. However, after the first year, students voiced their concern that one year was not long enough to gain any proficiency in the language.

In September 2008, after many months of meetings, development work, and planning, the first two-year Diploma in Mohawk Language was offered in partnership with Trent University. At this time, TTO had subsequently received funding to deliver an immersion program for preschoolers: Totáhne ("at Grandma's house") Language Nest. The Nest was very fortunate to hire two fluent speakers from another Kanyen'keháka community who would move to Kenhtè:ke to work in the program. This was an exciting time for language regeneration in the community as speakers were being produced across two generations concurrently. Children who had a parent enrolled in

Shatiwennakará:tats were given priority to attend Totáhne. The parents supported the program in many ways, including relieving the teachers daily at lunchtime, which also furthered the goal of intergenerational transmission of language in the community. As the first group of Totáhne children approached school age, the TTO Board of Directors and staff, along with the parents, began planning for a primary immersion school.

The leadership of TTO attended a few meetings with the local Band Council to investigate the possibility of obtaining funding for the primary immersion school. From there, the Band Council arranged tripartite meetings with TTO and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), now known as Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. It very quickly became apparent that there was a clear difference in the intended culturally-based vision for the school and the curricular requirements from INAC for core funding eligibility. Several graduates of the 2008 Shatiwennakará:tats cohort had subsequently enrolled in the Immersion Teacher Education Program offered by Queen's University, and therefore exceeded the desired qualifications to teach the program. In September 2011, operating independently as a private school, Kawenna'ón:we ("the original words") Primary Immersion School opened, accepting children from Kindergarten to grade four.

The curriculum for Kawenna'ón:we was developed by the teachers and in consultation with a network of fluent teachers and speakers from other Kanyen'kehá:ka communities. While the Ontario curriculum standards were consulted, for the most part the curriculum is centered on the Rotinonhsyón:ni worldview and encompasses the teachings of the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen[6] and the Rotinonhsyón:ni cycle of ceremonies. The children learn through culture-based education; language, culture, and traditional teachings are embedded in every aspect of the school.

Today, all three levels of language programs are taught by graduates of Shatiwennakará:tats. The traditional community can conduct the cycle of ceremonies aóskon Kanyen'kéha ("entirely in the Mohawk language") with speakers who are graduates of Shatiwennakará:tats. Attending ceremonies at the Longhouse is part of the school curriculum and the children understand the ceremonies and the speeches — in most cases, at a deeper level than their parents and grandparents — because of the knowledge they have gained at school.

The Mid-Winter Ceremony of 2012 marked the first time ever in Kenhtè:ke that three young boys, five and six-year old students of Kawenna'ón:we, crossed the floor of the Longhouse, chanting their Atón:wa, their personal song of thanks. The Atón:wa is a personal spiritual song sung by men to acknowledge the gifts of the Creator, and to acknowledge the people for all that they have contributed and achieved in the interest, protection, and preservation of the language, culture, and the four sacred ceremonies. The songs may come in a dream or a vision, but normally in communion with Creation. These songs are the way in which it is said the men humble themselves before the people and remind everyone of the importance of preserving Onkwe'hon:we'neha ("the way of the people") for everyone's continued existence, health, and well-being.

Over the past fifteen years, Kenhtè:ke has gone from having a few older speakers not using the language to a growing population of speakers of all ages. The children are taught that the knowledge and the language being given to them is a gift they must respect and nurture. As a novice speaker of the language myself, the children far exceed my ability to carry out a conversation. However, as the Director of TTO, it is my responsibility to role model the importance of staying in the language in

---

[6] Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen refers to "the words that come before all others" and is the Rotinonhsyón:ni way of greeting and acknowledging the interrelatedness of creation and the Creator. This ceremony is typically done to open and close gatherings of people.

our protected school area. Recently, two children entered my office carrying trays of potted seeds, speaking to me aoskon Kanyen'kéha. When they realized I could not fully understand their question, they began to debate back and forth in Kanyen'kéha, which I could understand: "You talk to her in English," "no, you talk to her in English," "I'm not talking to her in English." I quickly reminded them not to talk to me in English but to help me understand, which they did. I finally figured out that they wanted to put their tobacco seeds in my office window, which had the right light to promote germination. This instance indicates the understanding the children have in regards to the importance of spoken Kanyen'kéha; they respect the language and the school environment, and act accordingly.

The challenge now being faced in the community is how to continue to build the base of Indigenous knowledge found in the language without mother tongue speakers. In a relatively short period of time, the children have demonstrated the capacity to surpass their teachers and parents. The goal of being certain that Kanyen'keha'néha[7] thrives in Kenhtè:ke will not be met until, once again, there is a complete generation of speakers who understand the language, culture, and traditions. It is possible that once again partnering with a post-secondary institute, such as Queen's, is the way forward for this community in their continued language revitalization efforts.

> Every language contributes something to the world but the teachings in our language have the power to change the world, I absolutely firmly believe that. (Tayohserón:tye, as quoted in Hill, 2015, p.82)

Modelling on the Kahswéntha: Building New Structures

Kanonhsyonne [Janice Hill] Writes about Indigenous Initiatives at Queen's University

In order for learning to be meaningful and impactful it is necessary to experience it on many levels including intellectually, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. This cannot be accomplished solely through the delivery of academic curricula; it must also include experiences that engage human beings with each other, and with the philosophies, arts, cultures, and knowledge being shared. These experiences need to engage all of the senses in order for the depth of the gift of learning to be truly understood. Relationships, partnerships, and collaborations have been at the very core of building Indigenous programming, student support, and an inclusive learning environment at Queen's. The challenge at Queen's has been knitting together relationships that reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and learning.

The university is made up of a plethora of silos, each of which operates autonomously and primarily independently of one another. Within these silos there are also attitudes of ownership which hamper the ability to work collaboratively. In many instances, money speaks; the budget model of the university does not necessarily encourage collaboration and partnerships. This is a big hurdle to overcome.

In the summer of 2010, a longstanding vacuum of leadership for Indigenous student support at Queen's eventually lead to outrage among the Indigenous student population and their allies. When the crisis came to a head, the position of Director of Four Directions Aboriginal Student

---

[7] Kanyen'kehaka'néha refers to the ways of the Kanyen'kehá:ka.

Centre had been vacant for almost three years. The Queen's Native Student Association (QNSA) publicly protested the situation at the Centre, voicing their primary concerns regarding perceived misappropriation of funds intended for Indigenous programming, lack of support, lack of staff, and lack of Indigenous leadership.

The protest — illustrated by a photo of Indigenous students with Queen's tape over their mouths, representing their feelings of having their voices silenced or unheard by senior administration — garnered national media attention. The QNSA President read a statement to a room full of Aboriginal Council of Queen's University (ACQU) members and senior administrators who had gathered in response to an invitation from the Principal. Following the statement, the students, all silently, with their mouths taped, left the room. It was a very impactful protest. The immediate outcome was a review of the issues, which the Provost delegated to the Equity Office. This resulted in a comprehensive report including several recommendations to address the main concerns raised by the Indigenous community at Queen's. At the crux of the situation was the lack of communication and positive relationships between the students and the university.

A new Director for Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre was hired in 2010. Early in 2011, the university began to revitalize the ACQU, a body which had been in existence since 1992 but which had atrophied due to years of neglect. A review of the available literature from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and other available documents provided a model for how the Council could be structured such that it would provide opportunity for Indigenous community members (urban, First Nation, Inuit, Métis) to have a voice in decision-making that affects the lives of Indigenous people at the university.

An Indigenous Vision Gathering, was held in February 2011 in an effort to revitalize the relationship between the university and the Indigenous community by encouraging and engaging dialogue about the way forward. Entitled, *Looking back to look forward*, the gathering reviewed progress at Queen's with regard to the Indigenous agenda from the mid-90s to 2011, and identified desired outcomes for the next five years. The Gathering began with a thought-provoking keynote address by Amos Key Jr. (Cayuga) who offered "kind encouraging words" as is the custom of the Rotinonhsyón:ni. He also offered these words:

> *When I give thanks and use my language Gayohgohono' or Cayuga….it runs right through my soul and spirit, and it's like wrapping one's favourite blanket about one's shoulders…and is as "electric" as my favourite melody or song….   And remember, no one is ever angry when they sing!*

His whole keynote address was offered as "kind encouraging words" meant to paint a picture of the current landscape and potential future of the Aboriginal Council and Indigenous education at Queen's University based on partnership and collaboration. He shared further and reminded us all of our roles as educators from his Onkwe'hòn:we ("original people") perspective, and modelled after

> *extended and immediate families, my Faith Keepers and Elders, who all have been so generous in helping me develop and shape my strengths, my character traits, my quiet diplomacy, my balance, deal with my weaknesses and helped shape my moral, civil, emotional, social, spiritual and artistic intelligences, intellect and compasses.*

In all, he laid the groundwork for thinking about why we had gathered together and what our task would be over the coming days and years. Specifically, he asked us to consider,

Why we do what we do? And hopefully it will give meaning to why as First (Indigenous) Peoples, Ontarians and Canadians, we should strive to forge strategic partnerships with external partners and with our stakeholders, so we might leave a healthy legacy for the coming generations.

Jennifer Hardwick Writes about Improving the Climate at Queen's

The Vision Gathering emphasized several things: restructuring and revitalizing Aboriginal Council, appropriately resourcing Indigenous student support, and Indigenizing the curriculum. A small committed group began to work immediately on developing courses and programs focused on Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing. As a result, Queen's University launched an interdisciplinary Bachelor of Arts in Indigenous Studies in September of 2013. The program, which originally included 35 courses from across 14 departments, was developed by the Aboriginal Council's Indigenous Knowledge, Curriculum and Research Working Group (Indigenous Knowledge WG). The Indigenous Knowledge WG is an Indigenous-led committee made up of staff, students, faculty, community members, and administrators who recognized that educational programming that reflects Indigenous ways of knowing would be central to ensuring the well-being of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty, and to improving Indigenous-settler relations on campus and in the broader community.

The Indigenous Knowledge WG also realized that language is the foundation and receptacle of culture. With this realization came the understanding that a program inclusive of Indigenous language(s) was necessary. Kanyen'kéha was the most logical language to begin with due to the proximity of Kenhtè:ke and the availability of suitable instructors. Inuktitut became an offering through the serendipitous arrival of a fluent speaker in the Ph.D. program in Cultural Studies who volunteered to teach. There are continual and resounding requests to extend the Indigenous languages to include Anishinabemowin (Ojibway language) due to the significant population of Anishinaabe (Ojibway, Algonquin) people in the area, and also because Queen's recognizes that it sits on the traditional lands of these two groups of Indigenous people.

The degree program in Indigenous Studies was an important step in decolonizing and indigenizing the curriculum at Queen's. The program sends a clear message that the University recognizes the value of Indigenous knowledge and the importance of providing opportunities for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to learn about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories.

The excitement about the Indigenous Studies program was somewhat mitigated by a concern that, without appropriate support, it could merely recreate and reaffirm the colonial relationships that have a long and celebrated history at Queen's and in surrounding areas. Queen's is one of the oldest universities on the northern half of Turtle Island, and it is situated in Kingston Ontario, the original capital city of Canada, and the home of Canada's first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. Symbols and narratives of Canadian settlement, expansion, and nationhood surround the university, and they are deeply embedded at both cultural and institutional levels[8].

---

[8] Plaques, parks, statues, and buildings commemorating Sir John A Macdonald and confederation are located throughout downtown Kingston, and Queen's has several rooms and buildings boasting the former Prime Minister's name. Additionally, the presence of Canadian Forces Base Kingston, the Royal Military College of Canada, Fort Henry, and several federal and provincial penitentiaries serve as continuous physical reminders of the Canadian state.

Unsurprisingly, studies show that ignorance and racism are common among Queen's student population. In 2013, a research project conducted by Anne Godlewska, Jennifer Massey, Jones Adjei, and Jackie Moore found "pervasive unawareness [of Indigenous issues], with rare exceptions" among 926 first-year students at Queen's (74). The study tested students on "information Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators who are paying close attention to Aboriginal issues in Canada today consider critical knowledge" (Godlewska, Massey, Adjei & Moore, 2013, p.75) including history, geography and culture. Participants averaged just 27.7% and over 50% scored below 26.5% (Godlewska, Massey, Adjei & Moore, 2013, p.74). Perhaps even more disturbingly, numerous students showed an inability to connect Canada's history of colonialism to present day problems, and others responded with blatant racism, as this comment illustrates:

> I don't give that much of a damn about which-impossible-to-pronounce Native peoples [*sic*] tribe lives closest to me, no matter how diverse or varied each type of aboriginal group is from one another. It's irrelevant. No culture in Canada has been preserved completely, and we should stop trying to artificially prolong theirs. . . . The idea that somehow, by having greater knowledge of totem animals or "sacred plants," we will be better equipped to bring the aboriginals into the 21st century is about as coherent as the idea that we could have better dealt with the cold war if only we had had a better grasp on Russian dancing [*sic*] (Study participant as quoted in Godlewska, Massey, Adjei, & Moore, 2013, p. 85).

This comment exemplifies racist, assimilationist and paternalistic ideologies. The student is unable to connect Canada's colonial history to the current issues facing Indigenous communities, and s/he views Indigenous life-ways as "irrelevant" and anachronistic artifacts that need to be brought into the 21st century by settlers.

The impact of this ignorance and prejudice on the health of Indigenous students, staff, and faculty is detrimental, and it requires careful intervention. While the creation of an Indigenous Studies program was an important step, the Indigenous Knowledge WG members were deeply aware that it would take far more than access to courses to counter colonial narratives, improve understanding, and foster appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing.

Working Group members were also concerned that the Indigenous Studies program would not be able to fully and ethically engage with Indigenous knowledge, language, and culture within the confines of a post-secondary, classroom-based, curriculum. Land-based and experiential learning were absent for the first iterations of the program, and there were few Indigenous scholars, Elders and/or Knowledge Keepers at the University who could share language and culture, support students, and guide teaching and learning. As outlined elsewhere in this paper, relationships are foundational to Indigenous ways of knowing and learning, and without access to relationships with these individuals and communities, learning and health will suffer. The Working Group recognized that co-curricular support would be necessary in order to ensure that Indigenous Studies developed in a good way.

In order to address these concerns, members of the Indigenous Knowledge WG created the Kahswéntha Indigenous Knowledge Initiative (KIKI). In the spirit of the Two Row Wampum Treaty, and with the intent of improving the cultural climate at Queen's University, KIKI was given a mandate to:

1. raise awareness among non-Indigenous students, staff and faculty about Indigenous people, culture, worldview, and history;

2. encourage knowledge sharing and dialogue among Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, faculty, and students who are interested in Indigenous issues;

3. provide opportunities for co-curricular and experiential learning that are not often available within classroom settings; and

4. foster relationships between Queen's University and local Indigenous communities.

Since 2013, KIKI has operated as a collective of students, staff and faculty. It is Indigenous led, but committed to inclusivity and collaboration; settler students, staff, and faculty are welcome. A variety of short and long-term partnerships have been formed among academic units, campus groups, and community organizations in order to ensure successful events that meet the needs of the communities they seek to engage. KIKI governs itself according to Indigenous concepts of consensus-building; different viewpoints are welcome, and members and partners strive to reach accord about decisions. While there is no hierarchy in place, the voices of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and more experienced members tend to carry more weight, and the group is careful to consider the talents and experience of its members. As a result of the structure, members of the Kahswéntha Initiative are engaged in the kinds of informal learning they seek to facilitate. They learn through ongoing dialogue, hands-on experience in envisioning and conducting events, and, perhaps most importantly, forming interdependent relationships.

The topic of KIKI's inaugural teach-in event, held on the Queen's campus, focused on the importance of language (locally, Kanyen'kéha). Speakers from TTO discussed how, through their immersion programming, the significant tie between Indigenous identity and knowledge of Kanyen'kéha leading to well-being was embedded in their curriculum. The teach-in successfully highlighted the relationships between language, culture, and well-being, supported Indigenous and settler learners at Queen's, and strengthened relationships between the University, TTO, and the broader community. It was the result of the work that TTO and Queen's had been doing separately and together for years.

Foregrounding Relationships: Creating a Welcoming Climate
(Kanonhsyonne [Janice Hill] Writes about Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre)

Much like Indigenous learning, learning at Queen's University's Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre (Four Directions) is taking place through the process of observation and mimicry. The women of Four Directions are all strong Kanyen'keháka women, committed to providing a home-like, safe, supportive, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all those who choose to engage with us. We bring many perspectives to our Centre and to our relationship building with the rest of the community. We are in our 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, and 60s, so we carry a broad range of experience, understandings, and perspectives. We are sisters, mothers, aunties, and grandmothers as well as teachers, and as such we are able to relate to students on many levels. The way we engage with each other also offers teaching to those who observe us. We are truly a strong and tightly-knit team who relate to each other respectfully, diplomatically, and collaboratively.

Much of the decision making at Four Directions is done collectively through dialogue and consensus building, to honour the fact that we come with differing perspectives and view issues through different lenses. Students who engage with us observe this work in action and tend to mimic our way of communicating and relating to each other, especially as they become more involved in the work of Four Directions. Those of us who have even a rudimentary knowledge of Kanyen'kéha utilize the language in our daily communications with each other. Students and visitors alike tend to pick up and adopt our words, regardless of their own background – sometimes in a teasing way, but always respectfully. When we are aware of other nations' words, we also utilize them when engaging with students of that nation.

We are also cognizant of the diversity of Indigenous students within our community and work to ensure that culture, traditions, and teachings from many nations become a part of our programming in honour of them. This demonstrates reciprocity and respect for one another's ways of knowing and being, even on a small scale. We believe this has a great impact on our ability to engage with each other, and provide a warm and welcoming environment.

The ability to engage has been further demonstrated since an Elder-in-Residence joined our team. The Elder's work has extended the breadth and depth of our engagement and the demand for her time, knowledge, and presence has greatly superseded capacity. There is a constant demand for the Elder's participation in academic and community events, conferences and beyond. This exhibits a thirst for knowledge and presence, as well as a curiosity and willingness to learn about Indigenous cultures, or at least to listen.

In many cases, the work that has been done to create understanding, and safe spaces in the broader Queen's community has been a series of conversations with the converted. The challenge in many cases has been to get to audiences that are not currently like-minded — or perhaps even aware of the issues — and to present information about Indigenous experience and culture in a way that is understandable or even appealing to them. This work has required engagement and relationship building outside of our norm and within committees, working groups, and units we may not have necessarily engaged with previously on a regular basis.

Sometimes, though, institutional change just takes asking a question. Recently, and with the encouragement of a law student, in my role as Director of Four Directions, I appealed to the University Secretariat to include an acknowledgement of territory at the beginning of Senate. The student and I had strategized ways, and means, of moving this agenda forward, expecting some resistance. We were delighted when the Secretariat responded positively, thankfully, and encouragingly. The University Secretary thanked me for the wonderful recommendation and suggested additional ideas. His reaction was a pleasant surprise, especially as he suggested the acknowledgement be done at the beginning of Senate, the University Council, and the Board of Trustees! All we had to do was ask. However, I also believe that it was important *how* we asked – diplomatically and respectfully, worded as an encouragement and not as a challenge.

In the instances of reinvigorating the Aboriginal Council and acknowledging territory, the issue at the core is that of relationships, and the need to identify and build collaborative and harmonious partnerships designed to acknowledge the experience and expertise of all parties. It has also been important to undertake an environmental scan to determine gaps that may contribute to the building of a more inclusive, safe, and welcoming environment for the Indigenous community. This included early discussions around the need for curriculum and programming in Indigenous Studies, which was vastly insufficient at the university. Efforts to move this type of agenda forward in the past had been unsuccessful, due in part to the fact that it was largely an individual endeavour; either one faculty member, staff member, or a sole faculty or department pushing the agenda. Change of this

magnitude required many voices, and collaboration among many departments and faculties, as well as the input both from Indigenous voices and university voices, community and academic.

We needed to consider what type of Indigenous Studies program was most pertinent to the community at Queen's and also what was most feasible given the current social and financial climate. Additionally, we needed to consider whether we were building an Indigenous Studies program that would speak to Indigenous students, settler students, or both, and if it would provide cultural knowledge, historical knowledge, traditional knowledge or a combination. Above all, in order to create healthy and sustained human beings, we need to remember that it is important for everyone to know who they are, where they come from, and where they are going – Indigenous and settler alike. Particularly as Kanyen'keháka, it is important that we remember that.

Onkwe'hòn:we civilization instills in each of us who are her citizens several living tenets, or creeds, which we are responsible to hand on to the next seven generations:

> We all have a name and clan
> We all have a Nation
> We all have a Mother and Grand Mothers
> We are born with gratitude and thanksgiving
> We are the Children of the Creator and born without Sin.
> We are given by Him a certain number of days to walk and dance on earth
> And we all have a Song.
> (Amos Key Jr, personal communication, February 8, 2011)

Expanding Learning Outcomes – Climate and Relationships
(Jen Hardwick Writes Again about Indigenous Initiatives)

Over the last two years the Kahswéntha Initiative has hosted a variety of events in order to support its mandate. These have included teach-ins on language, art, sovereignty, and history; film screenings and performances; land-based student retreats; research symposia; and community-building events such as feasts, talking circles, and ceremonies. These events have facilitated unique, and at times unexpected, moments of learning and connection. For example, in March of 2014, KIKI was able to host *A Tribe Called Red* (Tribe), an Indigenous electronic music group that mixes dubstep and pow-wow music to create what they have called "Electric Pow Wow" (A Tribe Called Red, n.d.).

In order to plan the event, KIKI partnered with local established music promoters and publicized the event heavily in surrounding Indigenous communities. Additionally, KIKI members reached out to the Royal Military College's Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year Program (ALOY) and to TTO in order to arrange opening acts. The children from TTO's Kawenna'ón:we Primary Immersion school agreed to give the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen to open the event and the ALOY drummers — led by Elder Bernard Nelson— were the opening act.

Before the show, Four Directions hosted a Feast, which was attended by Queen's students and faculty, children and staff from TTO, and members of Tribe. Since the members of Tribe had already had a long day, their manager, DJ Budda Blaze, insisted that the band needed to have enough time for a sound check and a rest before the show. It was expected that they would stop by the Feast, eat, say hello to guests, and then leave. Instead, when members of Tribe entered Four Directions and found the children in their regalia, eating dinner and speaking amongst themselves in

Kanyen'kéha, Budda Blaze immediately sat down and joined them. He had taken Kanyen'kéha immersion as a child in Kahna:wake, and he wanted to encourage the young language speakers. Members of Tribe stayed until dinner was over, and Budda remained with the children for the duration, asking them questions and helping them rehearse the Ohén:ton Karihwatéhkwen. Instead of showing up right before they were set to perform, Tribe came early in order to watch the children give their opening address!

There are the learning outcomes that are intended and there are the ones that occur spontaneously. In the case of Tribe's performance, the impromptu meeting between the young Kanyen'kéha speakers and Tribe's manager, Buddha Blaze, led to delightful and unexpected learning and community building. Those children may never forget meeting Tribe members, and Tribe was equally moved by interacting with the children, who were fluent speakers of Kanyen'kéha. Also, settlers were no doubt taken with Tribe's contemporary music, which challenges colonial perceptions that Indigenous cultures are historical artifacts. As Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice has argued, these "essentialist notions of unchangeability . . . are rooted in primitivist Eurowestern discourses that locate Indigenous peoples outside the flow and influences of time" (2008, p. 151). Electric Pow Wow highlights the strength and adaptability of Indigenous art and music, and firmly places Indigenous people within the flow and influences of time.

Additionally, Tribe's performance was a way of claiming space at Queen's, and challenging colonial narratives of Eurowestern settlement that are privileged at the university, and in Kingston. Despite the fact that the Queen's is situated on traditional Anishinaabe and Rotinonhsyón:ni Territory, Indigenous peoples, cultures, and histories are notably absent from the space, with minor exceptions. The performance, which involved loud music and projected images, claimed the 15,500 square feet of the central gym in the Queen's Athletic and Recreation Centre – one of the largest and most notable spaces on campus – reminding students, faculty, and staff of Indigenous presence. Finally, and most importantly, the event was a way to build relationships by encouraging faculty, staff, and students from different campus communities, members of the Kingston and Royal Military College communities, and members of local Indigenous communities to share space, food, and culture.

Sometimes, the learning outcomes that are the most unexpected are the most powerful. The conversation between the children and DJ Budda Blaze, for example, strengthened language learning, with Budda becoming an impromptu mentor and the children receiving encouragement from a role model. The conversation also increased interest in Indigenous languages among university students, once again highlighting Indigenous cultures as living and breathing.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, we have emphasized that relationships are at the core of our approach to Indigenous education, as they are at the core of Rotinonhsyón:ni culture and history. The Kahswéntha expresses the importance of continuously renewing, strengthening, and valuing existing relationships for the health and well-being of families, communities and nations, whether Indigenous or non-Indigenous. All aspects of life – social, economic, environmental, legal, and governmental – enjoy continued well-being if relationships are founded upon trust, openness to new learning, and mutual understanding.

Education is equally dependent upon strong relationships, networks between individuals, and groups that foster learning. Oppressive colonial structures – including the Indian Act and Indian Residential Schools – have damaged relationships between both Indigenous and settler groups, and cause/caused stressed relationships within Indigenous communities. But the most serious consequences of colonial practices include the harm done to Indigenous ways of learning and knowing, threatening formal and informal education for future generations of Indigenous learners.

The value placed upon relationship building in Rotinonhsyón:ni culture, language and history has guided the programming of TTO and the Kahswéntha Indigenous Knowledge Initiative at Queen's, and the growing relationship between these two organizations. In many respects, the relationship between TTO and Queen's is symbolic of the Two Row Wampum; the two organizations work in parallel without interference in the affairs of the other. However, there is a strong relationship founded on friendship and mutual respect that allows for continuous overlap, collaboration, and dialogue. Through our partnership we have learned that the strength and health of one community only adds to the strength and health of the other. As such, we are committed to further expanding and deepening the relationship between our communities of learning through a variety of means. In the near future, we hope to partner on an intensive Mohawk language immersion program, which would take place in Kenhtè:ke, sponsored by TTO with academic credit awarded by Queen's University. We also plan to expand our research in the areas of language acquisition materials, educational policy, and program assessment in order to add value to existing programs and ensure an evidence-based approach to the development of new programs.

Rotinonhsyón:ni culture teaches us that we are responsible for ensuring that the Earth and her bounty are left intact, or better, for the next seven generations. Building relationships and developing educational programs that respond to the need for Indigenous people and settlers to coexist in a healthy way will contribute to ensuring we all remember who we are, where we come from, and where we are going. It will ensure our strength and health as individuals, communities and nations, and it will provide a foundation for generations to come.

References

Aboriginal Council of Queen's University Working Groups (Indigenous Knowledge, Curriculum and Research Working Group). (2012). *Terms of reference*. Queen's University. Retrieved from http://www.queensu.ca/aboriginalcouncil/working-groups

Godlewska, A., Massey, J., Adjei, J., & Moore, J. (2013). The unsustainable nature of ignorance: Measuring knowledge to effect social change. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies, 33*(1), 65-95.

Heath Justice, D. (2008). "Go away water!" Kinship criticism and the decolonization imperative. *Reasoning together: The Native Critics Collection* (pp. 147-168). Nebraska: University of Oklahoma Press.

Hill, C. (2015). *Kanyen'kehá:ka: awakening community consciousness* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from https://www.uvic.ca/education/assets/docs/Hill_Callie_MEd_2015.pdf

Kahswéntha Indigenous Knowledge Initiative Planning Document. (2014). Queen's University, Kingston, ON.

Key Jr., A. (2011) Encouraging kind words. Unpublished lecture.

Otto, P. (2013). Wampum, Tawagonshi, and the Two Row Belt. *Journal of Early American History*, *3*, 110-125

Statistics Canada. (2015). *The educational attainment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.* Retrieved from https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-012-x/99-012-x2011003_3-eng.cfm

Trent University (n.d.). *Ph.D. Program Indigenous Studies: Program history – history and overview of the program.* Retrieved from https://www.trentu.ca/indigenousstudiesphd/programhistory.phd

A Tribe Called Red. (n.d.) *Bio.* Retrieved from http://atribecalledred.com/bio/

Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2015). *Calls to Action.* Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre. (2002). *Strategic planning document.*

Chapter 9

Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives for Educational Wellbeing: Minimizing Teacher Candidate Resistance

YATTA KANU

Despite empirical evidence that the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into schools and classrooms positively impacts academic achievement and socio-emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal students, resistance to integration has been observed and documented among teacher candidates in mainstream teacher education programs across Canada. In this paper, the author attempts to map out the sources of this resistance and proposes three focal practices in which faculties of education must engage in order to minimize teacher candidates' resistance and increase their potential for meeting the learning needs of Aboriginal students.

School is not a culture-free environment. Indigenous students must navigate their home culture and that of the classroom. The ability to function within both environments will help students embrace a positive relationship with both home and school and promote better mental health and successful educational outcomes. Where the school finds itself in conflict with that of the home, there is a greater risk that the negative relationship will contribute to poor mental health, depression, violence, suicide or substance abuse.

Culturally competent teachers have tremendous potential to impact academic achievement and social-emotional wellbeing of Indigenous students. . . . (However) significant shifts in attitude must occur through pre-service teacher education and in-service education for practising teachers. (Assembly of First Nations, 2012, p.7)

Wellbeing is an intangible concept of several human dimensions. While there is no unanimous definition of human wellbeing, wellbeing is most usefully thought of as the dynamic process that gives people a sense of how their lives are going, through the interaction between their circumstances, activities, and psychological resources. It can be defined as an expression of life satisfaction emanating, for example, from the ability to mould one's world through naming and constructing modes of preferred social and personal life, or freedom to act and contribute to collective and collaborative social life.

Education is generally seen as a vital contribution to, and investment in, both the quality of life and wellbeing of people and sustainable societies. However, a Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW, 2011) literature review revealed that current indicators of educational attainment reflect educational

priorities that do not necessarily, or always, further wellbeing. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory of education, formal education serves to prepare students for the workforce, with the idea that high grades in school, participation in post-secondary education, and the attainment of a lucrative career will improve individual wellbeing as well as grow and strengthen the economy. The ultimate goal in this conventional paradigm is a materially comfortable lifestyle that personally maximizes wellbeing.

Critics of Human Capital Theory, however, have noted that when the emphasis is on material gain, the focus of education becomes narrowed, and the central challenge of sustainability, which is linked to wellbeing, is not addressed. For example, in a discussion paper on the impact of culturally responsive education on the academic achievement of First Nations students, Assembly of First Nations (AFN, 2012) lamented that existing federal programming and policy in Canada touts mainstream skills such as literacy and numeracy (defined broadly) as the panacea for First Nations success in the educational realm. Such skills, the government believes, ensure that Indigenous people are able to compete in the labour market and, thereby, improve their socio-economic circumstances. By contrast, the report continued, First Nations peoples take a broader perspective on student success to identify educational success as including social and emotional factors, culturally based curriculum, culturally responsive pedagogy and assessment, civic engagement or service to one's people, and a positive relationship between school and community as key factors in the formal education of Aboriginal students (AFN, 2012). In other words, from a First Nations perspective, doing well academically is not the same as being well. As suggested in the opening quote at the beginning of this paper, sustainable educational success involves a synergy between the two where the ability to function well in the school and home environments will promote better mental health and excellence in academic education.

The pivotal role of higher education institutions in the creation of this synergy, in particular the education of culturally competent teachers, has been highlighted in numerous reports over the years – from The final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), to the more recent *Cultural Competency Report* by the Assembly of First Nations (2012), and most recently the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation* (TRC, 2015) and UNESCO's Post-Decade Global Action Plan on Education for Sustainable Development (2014) seen as a roadmap for continued action following the UN decade for sustainable development (2005 – 2014), which had the objective of integrating the principles and practices of sustainable development in all aspects of education and learning. According to the Assembly of First Nations *Cultural Competency Report* (2012), "The teacher is both navigator and motivator in the First Nations elementary and secondary classroom and as such has tremendous potential to create a classroom environment of optimal learning conditions for learners" (p. 7).

Canada must take these reports seriously because of its international obligations, (a) as a signatory to the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1990) which states that "education of the child shall be directed to . . . the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values" (Article 29) , and (b) as a recent endorser, in 2012, of the United Nations' *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008), which calls on nation states to take measures to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples "to revitalize, use, develop, and transmit to future generations their histories, oral traditions, philosophies and . . . to work with Indigenous peoples to provide education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning" (Article 13, p. 7). In 2010, the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (ASCD) formulated a historic *Accord on Indigenous Education* (ASCD, 2010) with a commitment that Indigenous identities, cultures, languages, values,

and ways of knowing and knowledge systems will flourish in all Canadian learning settings. To facilitate this intent, faculties of education across Canada have increased their hiring of qualified Aboriginal personnel as faculty members who teach courses that increase teacher candidates' knowledge of Aboriginal histories and perspectives, and how to incorporate this knowledge in school curricula and teaching practices.

In addition, many faculties of education (e.g., the University of Manitoba) encourage and support faculty research, and other initiatives, on the preservation of the knowledge of Canada's Aboriginal peoples and the application of this knowledge in education for sustainable development. As one of two provinces with the fastest growing Aboriginal population in Canada (Sinclair 2014), Manitoba is at the forefront of these initiatives. The mission statement of Manitoba Education and Training (Manitoba's ministry of education) is "to ensure that educational policy and practice in Manitoba are guided by the principle of inclusion" and "to significantly increase achievement levels of those students who have been historically less successful" (Manitoba Education and Training, n.d.) In this regard, the Ministry's top priority action areas include "Aboriginal Education" and "Education in Low-income Communities" (Manitoba Education and Training, n.d.).

These pronouncements reveal a convergence of interest between Manitoba Education and me (a researcher in the area of educational access and equity for minority students) in the sense that we both want students to have equal access to the full benefits of citizenship through inclusive and appropriate educational programming that is cognizant of students' places of origin, wellbeing, and fulfillment of their aspirations for themselves, their families, their province, and their country. My scholarly work since 1993 has, therefore, focused on increasing educational access and equity for minority students in the K – 12 system, specifically exploring educational institutions, processes, and practices as sites of capital to which students have unequal access. Theoretically informed by socio-cultural theories of learning and cognition, which makes an intricate connection between children's cultural socialization patterns and their learning, thinking, communication, and motivational styles (e.g., Bruner, 1996; Cole & Wertsch, 2001; Evans, 2009; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003; Ramirez & Castenada, 1974; Vygotsky, 1981; Winzer & Mazurek, 1998) and given the paucity of minority cultural knowledge and perspectives in school curricula and among a large number of public school teachers in Canada, my research has focused on the integration of minority perspectives into the school curriculum and teacher education programs. I have focused particularly on the perspectives of Aboriginal students and African refugee students from war-affected backgrounds. These are two groups of students whose populations are rapidly increasing in Manitoba's public schools but for whom the playing field is not level, resulting in high dropout rates among them (Kanu, 2013).

This paper focuses on the education of one of these two groups, Aboriginal students. I begin by summarizing a six-year research program on the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum in Manitoba, which I consider as critical to the attainment of educational access and equity, and psycho-social wellbeing for Aboriginal students. Despite the existence of strong empirical evidence that the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into school curricula positively impacts academic achievement and psycho-social wellbeing of Aboriginal students (Ezeife, 2001; Kanu, 2011; Schissel &Wotherspoon, 2003; Simard, 1994) tremendous resistance to integration has been documented among teacher candidates in mainstream teacher education programs across Canada. I attempt to map out the sources of this resistance and propose three focal practices in which faculties of education must engage in order to minimize resistance and better prepare teacher candidates for meeting the learning needs of Aboriginal students.

Researching the Integration of Aboriginal Perspectives
into the School Curriculum

The equity problem that sets the urgency and rationale for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives in schools and classrooms is well known and needs no rehashing here, especially the exclusion and/or misrepresentation of Aboriginal cultural knowledge and perspectives in the school curriculum which partially accounts for a disproportionately high dropout rate among Aboriginal students. Suffice it to say that in 2008 our faculty received a letter from Manitoba Education mandating the inclusion of Aboriginal worldviews, traditions, pedagogical strategies, and other Aboriginal perspectives in our pre-service teacher education courses in order to prepare teacher candidates for meeting the learning needs of Aboriginal students in Manitoba's public schools. Prior to this mandate, however, three issues had convinced me of the need to incorporate Aboriginal cultures, traditional knowledges, histories, values, beliefs and accompanying behaviours in school curricula and teachers' pedagogical practices: my personal observations of teacher candidates' poor pedagogical interactions with Aboriginal students during the teaching practicum (due mainly to their lack of cultural knowledge about Aboriginal students); my readings in socio-cultural theories of learning, including theories about the mediating role of prior cultural socialization patterns in student learning; and calls from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars for culturally sustainable education for Aboriginal students. This conviction led me to develop a research program spanning six years (2004-2010) and funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council in which I, with research assistance from two Aboriginal graduate students, investigated the following research questions:

1. Recognizing the rich diversity within and among Aboriginal groups, are there elements of Aboriginal culture sufficiently common among them which teachers can include in their classrooms to enhance learning for Aboriginal students?

2. If so, how can such knowledge/perspectives be effectively integrated into the school curriculum and instructional repertoires of public school teachers and teacher educators, the vast majority of whom have little or no knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, their cultures, histories, and worldviews?

3. Does such integration produce positive outcomes such as increased academic achievement/attainment, class attendance, psycho-social wellbeing, and school retention among Aboriginal students?

4. If so, what are the critical elements of the integration processes that account for these outcomes?

5. Considering the pivotal role of teachers in any change in the classroom, what are teachers' perceptions of the integration of Aboriginal perspectives?

To find answers, we conducted three studies (over a period of six years) in four inner-city high schools with a mix population of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and predominantly non-Aboriginal teachers (who make up the majority of the teaching population in Manitoba's public schools). Research question 1 was explored in an alternative high school with 80% Aboriginal students (from Cree, Ojibway, Dene, Sioux, and Metis nations) where, during one academic year, we extensively observed the classroom practices of teachers who had been identified by their school

principal, and their colleagues, as incorporating Aboriginal content, and as being effective with Aboriginal students (as judged by the rate of retention of these students in those teachers' classes). We took field notes of what we observed in these teachers' classrooms—for example, teaching methods, teacher-student and student-student interactions, and curriculum materials used. Next, we interviewed the Aboriginal students in these classrooms about what they saw as aspects of Aboriginal culture that contributed to their learning in these classrooms. Effective practices identified by the students included: Story-telling (their teachers consistently used inspiring stories to introduce and frame each lesson); use of examples and illustrations from their cultural backgrounds to explain concepts; learning by observing and doing/experiencing; working in small groups where they felt supported; clear communication of teachers' expectations; infusion of Aboriginal content into the curriculum topics; and teacher warmth and respect towards Aboriginal students.

For our next study, which investigated research questions 2, 3, and 4, we worked with grade 9 social studies teachers in three public high schools to integrate these findings and other culturally appropriate materials and practices identified in the scholarly literature and by our collaborators from the Aboriginal Education Directorate and Aboriginal resource centres in Winnipeg. We chose Grade 9 because Aboriginal students in grade 9 consist mainly of those who are first experiencing transition from small band-controlled community schools to large, urban secondary schools, and generally respond with silent withdrawal and frequently drop out of school (Kanu, 2011; Sinclair, 2014). Since instructional problems at this stage are most acute, the effects of different teaching processes are likely to be visible. We selected social studies because social studies derives its content from diverse social science disciplines and offers opportunities for the use of a variety of curriculum materials, teaching strategies, and learning tasks that apply across different academic subjects.

We visited libraries and trusted websites in search of materials that were accurate and written from an Aboriginal perspective. In collaboration with the social studies teachers, we integrated these materials into every unit of the Manitoba grade 9 social studies curriculum. Where appropriate for enhancing students' understanding of particular social studies topics, we brought in Aboriginal elders and other knowledgeable Aboriginal personnel as guest-speakers/teachers. As part of experiential learning, we took the students on field trips to the Manitoba Museum (to observe and analyze the displays on Aboriginal histories represented in the museum), an Aboriginal art gallery, and a pow-wow. Care was taken to ensure that lesson activities provided opportunities for critical and creative thinking, decision making, and collaboration/cooperation. We collected data on class attendance and participation, academic achievement/attainment, psychosocial wellbeing (e.g., sense of trust and feeling of belonging in the school environment), and school retention among Aboriginal students in these enriched classrooms. We compared these data with the performance of the Aboriginal students from the regular/non-enriched classrooms.

Our third study, which investigated research question 5, consisted of interviews through which we explored teachers' and teacher candidates' perceptions of the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum—their experiences, successes, challenges, and self-efficacy beliefs about integrating Aboriginal perspectives (see Kanu, 2011 for an extended description and discussion of these studies). Below I present a summary of our findings:

Impact on academic achievement: Aboriginal students in the enriched classrooms significantly out-performed their counterparts in the regular/non-enriched classrooms. Consistently on social studies tests, exams, and assignments the pass rate among Aboriginal students who were regular attendees was above 80% (scores ranged between 61% and 83%), compared to a pass rate of around 44% in the regular or non-enriched classrooms (overall scores were between 40% and 60%). In addition, students in the enriched classrooms demonstrated a better understanding of social studies concepts

and content material, higher level thinking, and improved self-confidence as the academic year progressed.

Impact on school retention: No correlation was found between Aboriginal students' attrition rate and the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. In one school, there were 39 Aboriginal students in two social studies classrooms and 8 left during the first two months of enrolling in grade 9. In the other school, there were 40 Aboriginal students and 9 left during the academic year. Their reasons for leaving varied, including: parents relocating elsewhere in the city, province, or country; transfer into special transition (remedial) programs to prepare them better to cope with high school work; and pregnancy.

Impact on class attendance: In terms of raw numbers, no remarkable differences were found between the Aboriginal students in the enriched classrooms and those in the regular classrooms. There was a steady group of Aboriginal students (about 10 students) who regularly attended social studies classes in the enriched classrooms, and a similar number (about 8 or 9) of regular attendees in the non-enriched classrooms. Attendance among the rest of the Aboriginal students was sporadic and this was reflected in the lower test scores of these students. However, a clear difference emerged when we asked the students to provide reasons for their regular attendance, participation in class, and psycho-social wellbeing. The regular attendees in the enriched classrooms overwhelmingly cited the integration activities going on in their classes as the main reason for their attendance. As one student interviewee stated ". . . you hear about your own stories in class and they are good stories about your people, and you feel good and proud as an Aboriginal person. . . . so you want to be here more." By contrast, students in the non-enriched classrooms cited other reasons for attending social studies classes—for example, one student from a non-enriched classroom said: "I attend because I am required to be in every class to get my attendance slip signed so that I can continue to get my financial allowance while I am going to school." Another said: "My parents drop me off every morning and once in school, the teachers on duty patrol the hallways to make sure we are in class and no students are hanging out in the hallways. . . ."

We then interviewed the sporadic attendees for reasons for their absenteeism. In both schools, frequent or prolonged absences were attributed to the following reasons: having to take care of younger siblings at home; poverty, so students have to work; problems at home with parents/foster parents/guardians; incarceration at juvenile centers; returning home on the reserve for funerals, weddings, or just to be with families

What is remarkable about these data on class attendance and school retention is that they revealed factors, other than the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, which accounted for attrition and absenteeism among Aboriginal students. This complex array of reasons/issues causing educational under-achievement among so many Aboriginal students requires us to go beyond the integration of Aboriginal cultural knowledge/perspectives, important as it is, and take into account macro-structural explanations of Aboriginal students' chronic educational underachievement. Several factors are lead suspects in this area, including poverty perpetuated by the low participation of Aboriginal peoples in the labour market, frequent mobility due to lack of good-quality affordable housing, and lack of well-resourced secondary schools on many Aboriginal reserves, which forces Aboriginal students to leave their home communities and live in dormitories or with guardians and extended family members in the city in order to further their education.

Our research finding, which showed that consistent integration of Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum increases academic achievement and "feeling good" (a sign of psycho-social wellbeing) among some Aboriginal students (for example, those from stable homes, stable socio-economic backgrounds, and who attend school regularly), gives cause for optimism. I highlight this

finding because it is consistent with those of previous research on culture and Aboriginal student learning, not only in Canada but also in other countries with high Aboriginal populations, such as New Zealand, Australia, and the United States (see, for example, Bishop, Berryman & Cavanagh, 2009; Munns, O'Rourke & Bodkin-Andrew, 2013; Deyhle, 2013; AFN 2012 report on culturally responsive teaching and Aboriginal student achievement). It is, therefore, no longer a question of whether educational interventions, such as the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, positively impact academic achievement and socio-emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal students. Instead, the question becomes: What conditions foster these positive outcomes for Aboriginal students? I endorse the AFN's view, (expressed in the opening quote at the beginning of this paper) that culturally competent teachers have tremendous potential to impact academic achievement and socio-emotional wellbeing of Aboriginal students, and I posit teacher education as the starting place for the development of this potential. Teaching is a primary factor driving student learning trajectories and appropriate teacher preparation makes a positive difference, especially targeted preparation and support for teachers in reaching students whose socio-economic class, linguistic tools, cultural practices, and racial and ethnic backgrounds may differ markedly from those of their teachers. Faculties of education must, therefore, engage in certain focal practices that will increase the effectiveness of teacher candidates in teaching Aboriginal students. What are these focal practices?

First off, faculties of education must minimize teacher candidates' resistance to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives observed in teacher education classrooms across Canada, documented in numerous studies (see, for example, Cherubinni and Hodson, 2008; Dion, 2012; Kanu, 2011; Mansford-Pringle and Nardozi, 2013; Nardozi et al., 2014). According to our study, the reasons for this resistance are diverse, including: (a) the perceptions which many teacher candidates have that they cannot teach Aboriginal perspectives authentically because they are not Aboriginal (e.g., "I'm not an Aboriginal person, how can I teach from an Aboriginal perspectives?"[1]; (b) their discrediting of some of the Aboriginal perspectives they are taught in Native Studies classes (e.g., "I find it hard to accept and teach the various Aboriginal myths about how Aboriginal people came to be on this land they call Turtle Island, the stories are preposterous" or "The information we receive in our Native Studies classes are so one-sided it's mind boggling in a university setting and any contrary views are usually seen as being racist toward Aboriginal people"); (c) lack of awareness of the privileges teacher candidates enjoy as white, middle-class, and members of the dominant cultures in Canada—privileges which explain why many teacher candidates lack the understanding that systemic barriers like racism, cultural and social marginalization, personal and structural poverty, and powerlessness can hinder the progress and wellbeing of those who are less privileged because of their racial and ethnic identity.

Convincing such privileged teachers to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into their classrooms can be a real challenge because they are too blinded by their privilege and by their unexamined institutionalized educational practices to believe that integration of students' cultural socialization patterns can necessarily make a difference in terms of students' interest, motivation, engagement, positive self-image, and hence wellbeing. Teacher candidates were usually quick to attribute their success to their own hard work and that of their parents, insisting that it had nothing to do with the powers and privileges of white society from which they have historically benefitted. Although they acknowledged that a high proportion of Aboriginal students do poorly in school and drop out, they attributed these conditions to unstable family situations or lack of motivation to succeed. Hence they

---

[1] These quotes are from our third study during which we conducted interviews with teachers and teacher candidates about their perceptions of the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into schools and classrooms.

tended to see the demand for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives in classrooms as another special privilege and concession that other cultural minority students do not get.

Whatever the source of the resistance, I agree with Indigenous scholars (e.g., Donald, 2010; McLaughlin & Whatman 2008; Ottman & Pritchard, 2010) that we need to do a better job at providing a strong theoretical base that signifies the importance of embedding Indigenous perspectives into curricula. A strong theoretical base provides not only a rationale for the integration of Indigenous perspectives but also the conceptual platform that illuminates our understanding and shapes our action with regard to this curriculum reform. Conceptual change theory (Strike & Posner, 1985) suggests that changing teachers' beliefs depends on their recognizing discrepancies between their own views and those underlying new visions of learning and teaching. It also doesn't help to coerce people into doing something they don't see as important. Therefore, in a previous publication (Kanu, 2011), I drew on a broad range of literature to propose four conceptual platforms which will help educators to better understand the rationale and context for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives in schools and classrooms. These platforms are rooted in: (a) emerging ideas about human learning and development as psycho-social and cultural processes; (b) contemporary critical discourses of citizenship for meaningful participation in a democracy; (c) collective intelligence in a knowledge society; and (d) the functioning power of the school curriculum in shaping students' identities and social and economic circumstances.

In the next section, I summarize these platforms because of their potential for minimizing teacher candidates' resistance to integration by helping them to understand that the integration of Aboriginal perspectives is not simply an Aboriginal treaty right as traditionally presented to teacher candidates. While a rights-based approach emphasizes the legal aspects of integration and is enough to satisfy politicians and policymakers, it forgets to meet the goal and moral significance that underlie the right, namely, expanding the capabilities of Aboriginal peoples to achieve the kind of lives they desire for themselves. As the Indian philosopher and economist, Armartya Sen, argues in defense of his Capability Approach to human development (now employed extensively by the United Nations Development Programme), it is best to see human rights such as education as a set of ethical claims which must not be identified with legislated legal rights (Sen, 2005). In order to claim their rights, individuals and communities need a quality education which enables them to know these rights.

Quality education requires competencies such as cultural competence, critical thinking, and the development of agency/empowerment for decision making and action for change—competencies that lead to building the capabilities of individuals and communities to achieve the kind of lives they have reason to value. Presenting the integration of Indigenous perspectives not simply as a treaty right but also as a means to capability enhancement protects against the assumption that the holding of formal entitlements is sufficient for them to be exercised in practice (McCowan, 2011). It is best, therefore, to minimize teacher candidates' resistance by helping them see integration as part of a wider program about teaching for social and economic justice, capability expansion, cultural sustainability, and socio-emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal students. In the remainder of this paper, I describe how I have incorporated the four platforms—which I see as the embodiments of these values— in the teacher education courses that I teach. I conclude by briefly presenting the reactions of the teacher candidates taking these courses.

Four Conceptual Platforms

Human learning and development as psycho-social and cultural processes: Cultural historical psychology begins with the assumption of an intimate connection between the special environments that human beings inhabit and human psychological processes, positing human learning and development as psycho-social and cultural processes (Bruner, 1996; Cole & Wertsch, 2001; Vygotsky, 1981). According to this theory, the mind develops through an interweaving of biology and the appropriation of cultural heritage. Higher mental functions are, by definition, culturally mediated, involving an indirect action in which previously used artifacts and rules are incorporated as an aspect of current action (Cole & Wertsch, 2001). Simply stated, students' prior cultural socialization patterns influence, or mediate, how they learn in school. Because of prior cultural socialization students come to school with differing learning styles and cultural practices for relationship building, communication, conflict resolution, and interactions with adults who directly influence teaching and learning. Difficulties in classroom learning and interactions arise when there is a mismatch, conflict, or discontinuity between a child's home culture, and all the intricate sub-sets of that culture, and the culture of the teacher and the classroom, setting up that child for failure if the school or the teacher is not sensitive to the special needs of that child. Conversely, success in school is enhanced when there is congruence and continuity between the home culture and the culture of the school. The primacy of cultural mediation in learning and development behooves us, as educators, to provide opportunities for our most disadvantaged students to draw on their cultural capital—what they bring from prior cultural socialization from their homes and communities—to support and enhance classroom learning and psycho-social wellbeing for them.

Critical discourses of citizenship: Contemporary critical discourses of citizenship draw attention to issues of membership, identity, engagement, and participation in productive ways in a society. These discourses broaden the agendas of human freedom by focusing particularly on exclusions based on race, ethnicity, gender, nationality, sexuality, and socio-economic class. Two critical discourses of citizenship of relevance to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives are intimate citizenship (Plummer, 2003) and cultural citizenship (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Intimate citizenship refers to the idea that the exercise of effective citizenship presumes a series of positive underlying emotions such as trust, confidence, and security; similarly, negative emotions of fear, envy, and shame will seriously undermine the capacity of citizens to exercise their rights and responsibilities. Positive emotions, self-awareness, and the ability to fashion life in accordance with one's own view of what is deepest and most important are, therefore, central to civic participation in a successful democracy.

Cultural citizenship discourses interrogate how ethnic, language, and other cultural minority groups have found citizenship "to be a role and identity purchased at a high price" because, for these groups, "citizenship identities can require assimilation and thus prove inhospitable and harmful . . ." (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006, p. 667). Historical analysis shows that intimate citizenship, as positive emotions, has not been fully experienced by most Aboriginal peoples in Canada, thus their full participation as Canadian citizens has been seriously undermined. For example, the experiences of Aboriginal people—from the Indian residential school system to other blatant forms of colonization—illustrate ample evidence of harmful cultural citizenship.

Collective intelligence in a knowledge economy: Hargreaves (2003) has argued that successful knowledge economies depend on their societies' ability to create and pool together what he calls 'collective intelligence'. Collective intelligence suggests that all are capable rather than just a few, and that intelligence is multi-dimensional rather than a matter of solving puzzles with only one right

answer. Important, then, for education systems in knowledge societies is the understanding that intelligence is not singular, fixed, or the property of one cultural group. A knowledge society is a learning society where continuous innovation depends on the capacity of people to learn from one another. Canada, as a knowledge society, should be drawing on its pool of collective intelligence, including the indigenous knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, not only for more success in a competitive global environment, but also because collective intelligence represents the collective, holistic knowledge that a society holds and acts upon in order to enhance social wellbeing.

The functioning power of the curriculum: The school curriculum functions in overt, covert, and insidious ways to shape students' identities and their social and economic circumstances. Dei, Mazzuca, McIsaac, and Zine (1997) remind us that what counts as curriculum is socially determined and, therefore, representative of power relations between different groups in society. This assertion, they write, becomes clearer when we consider that the arguments behind particular curricula carry more than the intention that students gain particular academic knowledge and skills. These arguments are also imbued with notions about distinct social outcomes, that is, notions of the body of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and dispositions students should gain in order to be able to live well in a particular social order. To the extent that the requirements for success in school involves mastering the school curriculum and exhibiting appropriate school behaviours, the curriculum is often interpreted as designed to deprive certain students of their identities—for example, Aboriginal and other ethnic minority students—while exalting and validating dominant culture students.

My contention is that using these broad platforms to rationalize the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into classrooms will help teacher candidates to develop the critical sensibilities and contextual awareness needed to provide educational access, participation, and positive outcomes for Aboriginal students.

A second focal practice with which faculties of education must engage is to help teacher candidates to expand their understanding of the meaning of curriculum itself. This involves helping teacher candidates to move beyond their current, narrow understanding of curriculum as the subject matter or the topics selected for directing learning, to an expanded understanding of curriculum through metaphors which have the potential for transforming pedagogical relations with students and with the school curriculum. Three such metaphors are curriculum as currere, curriculum as conversation, and curriculum as community.

Curriculum as "currere": Pinar and Grumet (1976) interpret curriculum as the personal experiences of the educational journey of each student, postulating that these experiences are shaped and mediated by race, gender, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and other markers of difference. In a pedagogical sense, the notion of currere invites teachers to pay attention to the educational experiences of students (e.g., Aboriginal students) by asking them questions such as: What does this curriculum topic/classroom activity/experience mean to you? How does this make you feel? Do you find it relevant for your life and your future aspirations? In these personal, probing questions lie the beginning of a dialogic and transformative curriculum which moves experience from being moulded and controlled by others to that of reflective dialoguing with oneself and with significant others to make sense of experience, especially as it relates to expanding one's capabilities to be and do what one has reason to value.

Curriculum as "conversation" is the place of learning where we meet with others (e.g., our marginalized students), exchange ideas, and transform ourselves as our differing views converge on the topic we are trying to understand. As Hans-Georg Gadamer (1993/1960) writes, true conversation does not impose prepackaged answers on others as this closes off the possibility of arriving at genuine understanding. Instead, our task in a conversation is not only to speak well but,

more importantly, to listen well to hear back our own words and those of others (e.g., our Aboriginal students) and allow ourselves to learn and become transformed as a result of the encounter.

Curriculum as "community" invites teachers to think about curriculum/education relationally, that is, to develop awareness that to understand education is to situate it back in the unequal relations of power in the larger society and the relations of dominance and subordination generated by these relations (Apple, 2006; McLaren, 2015). Thus instead of simply teaching the curriculum for mastery of subject matter reflected in test scores, curriculum implementation should be an interpretive process that is attentive to questions such as: Whose knowledge is this curriculum? How did it become mandated as 'official knowledge' for all, to the exclusion of other ways of knowing and being? What is the relationship between this knowledge and those who have cultural, social, and economic power in this society? What can we do as critical educators and activists to change these inequalities and help create a more just society through our curriculum and pedagogy?

Metaphors matter because they have material effects, structuring not only how we think and act but also our systems of knowledge and beliefs in a pervasive and fundamental way (Fairclough, 1992).

Mainly as a result of the work and leadership of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit, policy frameworks on Aboriginal education are emerging across Canada which demonstrates that, theoretically at least, the principle behind the integration of Aboriginal perspectives is accepted in public educational policy. However, data from our teacher interviews showed that actual implementation of these policy reports is fraught with tensions and challenges ranging from teachers' and school administrators' lack of knowledge about Aboriginal cultures, histories, and worldviews, to concerns over whether, in fact, Aboriginal students will perceive mainstream teachers as credible teachers of Aboriginal perspectives. How can teacher education programs help teachers integrate into their teaching practices a culture and community they do not understand and about whom they know so little?

Addressing this problem requires a third focal practice on which many faculties of education are currently embarking, namely, increased hiring of Aboriginal faculty members, many of whom teach courses such as "Aboriginal Studies for Educators" and "Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula" in the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, which all teacher candidates take as a graduation requirement. Care is taken to ensure that positive, progressive messages about Aboriginal peoples are infused in these courses because, as Donald (2010) points out, inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in curricula has often meant the offering of outdated cultural study of Aboriginal people, thereby perpetuating the assumption that "Aboriginal peoples and their societies are *unable* to adjust to present circumstances, comprehend civilization, and conform to new ways of living" (p. 4). Donald argues that balanced approach to tradition and innovation would require an understanding that Aboriginal peoples' traditional knowledge is what provides them the framework for interpreting and making sense of new experiences and new situations.

Discussions about the educational needs of Aboriginal students also tend to focus more on the problems they face (for which they are often blamed) and less on positives such as the resiliency of Aboriginal peoples and the cultural strengths they have that should be used to support their academic learning and wellbeing in school. Knowledge that balances the strengths of Aboriginal peoples with the challenges they face and analysis of the social, economic, and political roots of these challenges will provide teacher candidates with a much more accurate understanding of the educational contexts of Aboriginal students.

From Theory to Practice:
Incorporating the Platforms to Change Hearts and Minds

I teach curriculum and instruction courses in social studies and history to teacher candidates in the secondary route of their initial teacher education program in a province with the fastest growing Aboriginal population in Canada. The teacher candidates who enroll in these courses are mainly white, heterosexual, and middle-class, an identity that is typical of teacher candidates in mainstream teacher education programs across Canada (Mansford-Pringle & Nardozi, 2013). Apart from an apparent lack of awareness of the privilege that white supremacy affords them, many of these teacher candidates also appear ignorant about the role of the education system in the production and reproduction of exclusions and inequalities based on race, national origin, gender, and other markers of difference. For example, race is not a biological given but racial categorization determines how we are treated and how we treat others. It profoundly structures our access to rights and resources and regulates our representation of ourselves and others. In education, representation includes practices such as (a) inaccurate characterizations of the 'other' (usually non-Western and non-dominant cultural groups) and their truth, knowledge, and histories in the school curriculum; (b) photographic images and illustrations which become representations of identity, especially when reprinted in textbooks; and (c) invisibility where you are hidden in plain sight—as Edgerton (1993) put it, "you are there (e.g., in class) but they wouldn't see you because they don't expect you to know anything since they believe they've taken care of that" (p. 64). Racial categorization is also responsible for the existing hierarchy of knowledge systems in which the cultural knowledge, values, and practices of the dominant groups are represented and prescribed as curriculum knowledge for all students while alternative knowledges, values and practices are omitted, misrepresented, or given only token mentioning in the curriculum.

Teacher candidates are usually unaware of this power-knowledge nexus with regard to the curriculum and enter faculties of education fully expecting to acquire technical competence to teach this "objective", taken-for-granted curriculum and its colonizing practices instead of questioning and challenging how curriculum privileges some students and marginalizes others. They also appear to be unaware that Eurocentric knowledge is only one form of knowledge and, therefore, they need to learn to create curricular spaces that value and nurture multiple ways of knowing and being in the world. Similarly, although their teacher education program includes a course in the psychological foundations of human learning and development, their learning from this course does not appear to inform them about the role of cultural mediation in higher mental functions such as classroom learning.

Fully cognizant of the extent of unawareness among the teacher candidates, I begin my social studies and history methods courses with the question "What is curriculum?" Invariably, teacher candidates' response to this question reveals a limited understanding of curriculum as the document listing the topics they are required to teach, sometimes with suggestions about how to plan and implement lessons on the topic, and how to assess student learning at the end of the lessons. Beginning with an acknowledgement of this understanding of curriculum, I move the class into the interrogation of the relations imbued in the curriculum. We do this by exploring the critical analysis questions listed earlier in my discussion of the metaphor "curriculum as community": Whose knowledge/perspectives are represented in this curriculum? How and why did it become mandated school knowledge? What is the relationship between this knowledge and those who have cultural, social, and economic power in this society? What can we do as educators to change this situation?

Discussion of questions such as these helps the teacher candidates to understand the cultural power and unequal relations behind the knowledge and worldviews represented in the curriculum which they initially saw as objective, neutral, and free of cultural values.

To better understand the notion of cultural power, we explore the meaning of culture more deeply. From teacher candidates' initial understanding of culture as the foods, dances/performances, art, and traditional attires they see at multicultural festivals, we expand the meaning of culture to include the system of shared meanings from which people belonging to the same community or social group draw to interpret and make sense of the world, including the world of curriculum/education. If culture is what helps people to make meaning, I ask my teacher candidates, is it not appropriate and productive to include students' culture in their learning experiences in school? At this point, I present the teacher candidates with research articles documenting higher academic attainment/achievement and emotional wellbeing among Aboriginal students when the histories and worldviews of their cultural communities have been included in the curriculum and other schooling processes. Class discussion of these articles usually lead to a heightened interest in the Aboriginal histories and worldviews they are studying in their Native Studies classes and how to incorporate these in the history and social studies curricula in schools.

We conclude this part of the course with a discussion of the following expanded definition of curriculum by Nora Allingham, excerpted from a keynote speech on Anti-racist education and the curriculum, which she delivered to Ontario Teachers' Federation in 1992 but still relevant today:

> First of all, we should define what we mean by curriculum: it is not just textbooks, story books, and course outlines. The Ministry definition suggests that curriculum consists of everything in the school environment. Children learn from what surrounds them—not just what the teacher points them to. So the curriculum is the textbooks and the story books and the pictures—and the seating plan and the group work and the posters and the music, the announcements, the prayers and readings, the languages spoken in the school, the food in the cafeteria, the visitors to the classrooms, the reception of parents in the office, the races (or race) of the office staff, the custodial staff, the teachers, the administration, the display of students' work, the teams and sports played, the clubs, the school logo and emblems, the field trips, the assignments and projects, the facial expressions and body language of everybody, the clothes everybody wears. . . it is the whole environment. I would not for a moment suggest that we can control all of this, but we'd better be aware of it. We can be sure our students are. If we don't start thinking of what the effect of all this environment is on all our students, we'll never develop the strategies that will work.

Discussion of this definition takes us into the hidden curriculum and the institutionalized forms of discrimination, exclusions, and oppression built into taken-for-granted norms, rules, and practices which teachers typically do not question or challenge because of their naturalized status. Practical implications of Allingham's definition of curriculum are then delineated by the teacher candidates working in small groups.

I introduce the platform of intimate and cultural citizenship during our class discussion of one of the main goals of the history and social studies curricula in Manitoba, namely, "Educating for democratic citizenship". An enlightening piece of reading we use for this discussion is the article by Westheimer and Kahne (2004) titled *What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy.* This article is based on an analysis of a two-year study of ten educational programs in the United States that aimed to educate for democratic citizenship participation. I use it to introduce the teacher

candidates to three different conceptions of the "good citizen" in a democracy, each with implications for how we educate citizens for participation in a democracy. These conceptions are: (a) the personally responsible citizen who acts responsibly in his/her community (e.g., pays taxes, volunteers, and contributes to a food drive); (b) the participatory citizen who is an active member of community organizations and promotes community development (e.g., helps to organize a food drive); and (c) the justice-oriented citizen who critically assesses social, political and economic structures to see beyond the surface and seeks out and addresses areas of injustices and how to effect systemic change (e.g., explores the root causes of hunger and acts to solve the problem). Significant as a rationale for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, but missing from Westheimer and Kahne's (and most) analysis of educating for democratic citizenship participation, are questions about the conditions which underpin the desire for citizenship participation of any kind. This is where I introduce the notions of intimate and cultural citizenship as prerequisites for citizenship participation and belief in the democratic process itself. As explained earlier in this paper, positive underpinning emotions such as trust, confidence, and security, foster the exercise of effective citizenship and negative emotions of fear, distrust, shame, and envy, profoundly undermines the capacity of citizens to participate. Historical analysis shows that intimate and cultural citizenship as positive emotions has not been fully experienced by Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Cultural practices and belief systems which provide emotional security, confidence, and spiritual sustenance for Aboriginal people are ignored in formal education, thereby divorcing the education of Aboriginal students from their cultural roots. Experiences of assimilationist models of citizenship, racism, discrimination, unequal organization of social structures, and, until relatively recently, the lack of Aboriginal voice in the determination of Aboriginal affairs, have produced negative emotions that have profoundly undermined the capacity of Aboriginal peoples to exercise successful citizenship. From the perspectives of intimate and cultural citizenship, the case for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives in schools and classrooms cannot be stated any more clearly (Kanu, 2011).

The final platform I discuss in order to make the case for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives and, indeed, for multiple and trans-disciplinary perspectives, is that Canada, as a knowledge economy and multicultural society needs to draw on its pool of collective intelligence, including the indigenous knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, not only for more success in a competitive global environment, but also because our collective knowledge represents the holistic knowledge our society holds and acts upon to enhance our social wellbeing. For example, traditional ecological knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, based on detailed, local, long-term observation, is now one of the new frontiers of knowledge making great contributions to scientific understanding of marine eco-systems. Also, increasingly in the 'race' for knowledge to cure various diseases, we are noticing a convergence of Indigenous knowledge and Western science where, in ethnobotany for example, botanists and biologists are working closely with Indigenous communities to collect and document plants and medicinal remedies. After we discuss these examples of Indigenous knowledge in class, teacher candidates are asked to research and present more examples of Indigenous knowledge and technology that have enhanced the wellbeing of Canadians and people around the world. Examples presented by the teacher candidates have included birch bark canoes and snow shoes which helped Europeans when they first arrived in North America, the growing of corn, and medicinal remedies for scurvy, coughs, and upset stomach. In the end, teacher candidates acknowledge that it is ethnocentric and stupid for education systems in a knowledge society to continue to dismiss traditional Aboriginal knowledge as inconsequential and unfounded, in favour of Western intellectual traditions. Intelligence, after all, is not singular or the property of one cultural group.

Teacher Candidates' Reactions

Teacher candidates' reactions to our discussion of these platforms to help minimize resistance to the integration of Aboriginal perspectives have been generally positive. A major assignment for the history and social studies methods courses is the requirement for the teacher candidates to plan a unit which includes Aboriginal perspectives substantially and to share their unit plans orally in class and electronically with their classmates. I also require the teacher candidates to attach to their unit plans a two-page reflection which includes consideration of the following questions: How was my unit plan enhanced by the integration of Aboriginal perspectives? What challenges did I experience with integrating Aboriginal perspectives in my unit, and how did I address this challenge? To what extent were our class discussions useful in helping me understand the mandate/requirement to integrate Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum?

Teacher candidates' two-page reflections have included comments such as the following:

> *Yes, the platforms have helped me see the bigger picture for integrating Aboriginal worldview . . . I get motivated to do something if I know why I am doing it, not simply because I am told to do it.*

> *Now I want to learn more about Aboriginal histories and worldviews and how I can integrate these in my classes.*

> *This assignment (unit planning) inspired me to look for more materials, what we have in the grade 11 history textbook about Aboriginal people is inadequate.*

> *It seems not too difficult to include Aboriginal perspectives in history and social studies but as a math major, I don't know how to integrate Aboriginal perspectives in math. Does culture have anything to do with math teaching and learning?*

> *One challenge I faced in planning my social studies unit was where to find Aboriginal resources to fit the topics. I had to change the topics for my unit plan several times because I just could not find appropriate Aboriginal resources . . . I plan to talk with my CT (cooperating teacher) about this challenge. Maybe she can help me with Aboriginal materials during my practicum.*

These illustrative comments suggest that sound theoretical platforms that provide hitherto unexplored reasons for the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, an expanded understanding of the meaning of curriculum, more informed knowledge about Aboriginal peoples through courses such as "Aboriginal Studies for Educators," and familiarity with the research base on what works when teaching Aboriginal students are useful for providing teacher candidates with a point of departure for learning on the job about how to teach Aboriginal students. Learning on the job requires newly minted teachers to engage in specific activities such as continually educating themselves about Aboriginal issues, developing a reliable resource pool for classroom use, and pushing for professional development. These activities will provide the kind of targeted mediation necessary to successfully facilitate Aboriginal student learning.

None of these efforts by teachers and faculties of education, however, is enough to level the educational playing field for Aboriginal students. As I stated earlier, schools or teachers alone cannot overcome social and economic disadvantages such as chronic poverty, lack of secondary schools or the existence of under-resourced secondary schools on many Aboriginal reserves, and lack of access to good-quality, affordable housing which causes families to move frequently, thereby interrupting

the education of their children. These disadvantages bring into sharp focus the reality that educational equity for Aboriginal students requires holistic and systemic reform—that is, successful intervention requires efforts from schools and teacher education programs on one hand, and government action and resources on the other. It would be interesting to research the impact of such synergistic effort on the academic success and psycho-social wellbeing of Aboriginal students in Canada's public schools.

References

Abowitz, K. K. & Harnish, J. (2006). Contemporary discourses of citizenship. *Review of Educational Research,* 76 (4), 653-690.

Apple, M. (2006). *Educating the right way.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Assembly of First Nations (2012). *Cultural Competency Report.* Retrieved from www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/8.1pdf

Association of Canadian Deans of Education. (2010). *Accord on Indigenous Education.* Retrieved from http://www.csse-scee.ca/docs/acde/ACDE_Accord_on_Indigenous_Education.pdf

Bishop, R., Berryman, M., Cavanagh, T.m & Teddy, L. (2009). Te Kotahitanga: Addressing educational disparities facing Maori students. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*, 734-742.

Bruner, J. (1996). *The culture of education.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Canadian Index of Wellbeing (2011). *Technical Report 1.0.* Waterloo, ON. Canadian Index of Wellbeing and University of Waterloo.

Cherubinni, L., & Hodson, J. (2008). Ontario Ministry of Education policy and Aboriginal learners' epistemologies: A fundamental disconnect. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 79*, 1-33.

Cole, M. & Wertsch, J. V. (2001). *Beyond individual-social antimony in discussions about Piaget and Vygotsky.* Retrieved from http:/www.massey.ac.nz/~alock/virtual/colevyg.htm

Deer, F. (2013). Integrating Aboriginal perspectives in education: Perceptions of pre-service teachers. *Canadian Journal of Education, 36*(2), 175 – 211.

Dei, G. S., Mazzuca, J., McIsaac, E., & Zine, J. (1997). *Reconstructing dropout: A critical ethnography of the dynamics of Black students disengagement from school.* Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Deyhle, D. (2013). Listening to lives: Lessons learned from American Indian youth. In J. Reyhner, J. Martin, L.Lockard, & W. Sakiestewa Gilbert (Eds.), *Honoring our children: Culturally appropriate approaches for teaching Indigenous students* (pp. 1-10). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University.

Dion, S. D. (2012). *Our place in the circle: A review of Metis content in Ontario Faculties of Education.* Retrieved from www.metisnation.org/media/328915/our_place-report-usb.pdf

Donald, D. (2010). *Why are Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum?* Retrieved from http://erlc.ca/resources/resources/aboriginalperspectives/aboriginalperspectives_discussionpapers.pdf

Edgerton, S. (1993). Love in the margins. In L. Castenell, Jr. & W. Pinar (Eds.), *Understanding curriculum as racial text: Representations of identity and difference in education* (pp. 55-82). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Evans, N. (2009). *Dying words: Endangered languages and what they have to tell us.* Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ezeife, A. N. (2001). Integrating the learner's schema, culture, and environment into the science classroom: Some cases involving traditional and Aboriginal societies. *Canadian and International Education*, *30*(1), 17-44.

Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Gadamer, H.-G., (1993). *Truth and method*. New York, NY: Continuum. (Original published 1960)

Gutierrez, K. D., & Rogoff, B. (2003). Cultural ways of learning: Individual traits or repertoires of practice? *Educational Researcher*, *32*(5), 19 – 25.

Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the knowledge society: Education in the age of insecurity*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Kanu, Y. (2011). *Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the school curriculum: Purposes, possibilities and challenges*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Kanu, Y. (2013, February). *Equity matters in a flat world: Taking Indigenous education reform seriously in Manitoba.* Invited paper presented at the Thinkers Conference, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Manitoba Education and Training. (n.d.). *Mandate, mission, vision, overarching goals and priority action areas*. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/edu/mandate.html

Mansford-Pringle, A., & Nardozi, A. G. (2013). Aboriginal knowledge infusion in initial teacher education at OISE. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, *4*(4). Retrieved from http:/ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj/vol4/iss4/3

McCowan, P. (2011). Human rights, capabilities, and the normative basis of Education for All. *Theory and Research in Education, 9*(3), 283-298.

McLaren, P. (2015). *Life in schools* (6th ed.). London, UK: Paradigm Publishers.

McLaughlin, J., & Whatman, S. (2008). Embedding Indigenous perspectives in university teaching and learning: Lessons learnt and possibilities for reforming/decolonizing curriculum. In R. W. Heber (Ed.), *Indigenous education: Asia/Pacific* (pp. 123-146). Regina, SK: Indigenous Studies Research Centre, First Nations University of Canada.

Munns, G., O'Rourke, V., & Bodkin-Andrew, G. (2013). Schools that work for Aboriginal students. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education, 42*, 1-11.

Nardozi, A. G., Restoule, J-P, Broad, K., Steele, N., & James, U. (2014). Deepening knowledge to inspire action: Including Aboriginal perspectives in teaching practice. *In Education, 19*(3), 108-122.

Ottman, J. (with Pritchard, L.). (2010). Aboriginal perspectives and the social studies curriculum. *First Nations Perspectives, 3*(1), 21-46.

Plummer, K. (2003). *Intimate citizenship: Private decisions and public dialogues*. Washington, DC: University of Washington Press.

Ramirez, M., & Castenada, A. (1974). *Bicultural democracy, bi-cognitive development and education*. New York, NY: Academic Press.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *Gathering strength: Report of RCAP, Vol.3*. Canada Communication Group.

Sen, A. K. (2005). Human rights and capabilities. *Journal of Human Development, 6(2), 151-166*.

Sinclair, M. (Justice) (2014). Interview with CBC about the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. May 4th, 2014.

Schissel, B., & Wotherspoon, T. (2003). *The legacy of school for Aboriginal people: Education, oppression, and emancipation*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Simard, L. (1994). Curriculum adaptation: Just do it. In P. K. Binda (Ed.), *Critical issues in First Nations education* (pp. 78–86). Brandon, MB: BUNTEP.

Strike, K. A,. & Posner, G. T. (1985). A conceptual change view of learning and understanding. In L. H. West & J. A. Pino (Eds.), *Cognitive structure and conceptual change* (pp. 163-188). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Final report of the TRC: Calls to action.* Retrieved from http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Honouring_the_Truth_Reconciling_for_the_Future_July_23_2015.pdf

United Nations. (1990). *Convention on the Rights of the Child.* Retrieved from http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

United Nations. (2008). *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.* Retrieved from http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

UNESCO (2014). *Roadmap for implementing the global action programme on Education for Sustainable Development.* Paris, France: Author. Retrieved from unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf

Vygotsky, L. S. (1981). The genesis of higher mental functions. In J. V. Wertsch (Ed.), *The concept of activity in Soviet psychology* (pp. 144-188). Armonk, NY: Sharpe.

Wertsch, J. V. (1991). A sociocultural approach to socially shared cognition. In L. S. Resnick, J. M. Levine, & S. D. Teasely (Eds.), *Perspectives on socially shared cognition* (pp. 85-100). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Westheimer, J., & Kahne, J. (2004). What kind of citizen? The politics of educating for democracy. *American Educational Research Journal, 41*(2), 237-269.

Winzer, M. A. and Mazurek, K. (1998). *Special education in multicultural contexts.* New York, NY: Prentice-Hall.

Zurzolo, C. (2007). An exploration of the experiences of non-Aboriginal teachers integrating Aboriginal perspectives in Manitoba. Retrieved from https://umanitoba.ca/faculties/education/media/zurzolo-2007.pdf

Chapter 10

Ojibwe Elders' Experiences of Our Peace as Worldview Demonstrated: To Teach Our Well-Being with Earth

Gail Sarah Lafleur

This chapter focuses on exploring the Anishinaabek/Ojibwe *worldview, founded upon the spiritual relationship with Mother Earth, as the* Anishinaabek *view of peace to teach our well-being with earth. This connection to* Shkagamik-kwe*, Mother Earth, is the* Anishinaabek *worldview of respecting Earth's way of life: Earth's way-*akii-bimaadizi*. Respecting Mother Earth and respecting earth's way-*akii-bimaadizi *are revealed through elders' shared experiences of earth as teacher and elder. In this chapter, contemporary elders, who support the* Anishinaabek *traditional ways of knowing and of being, share their experiences in creating an understanding of today's* Anishinaabek *traditional worldview. Through this understanding, a meaning of a respect and peace with the natural world for our well-being, is explored. Ten themes are described in this chapter. These themes include (a) going back to our original gifts and instructions/building your sacred bundle/sharing your sacred bundle, (b) wisdom-*nbwaakaawin*, connecting the dots/original instructions/medicine-*mshkiki/*environmental consciousness, (c) sacred teachings/learning from the elders, (d) relationships/honouring elders/eldership, (e) political experiences and awareness, (f) a way of being in* Anishinaabek *research, (g) survival, (h) peace is our worldview demonstrated, (i) be aware of colonialistic thinking, and (j)* Akinomaage*, earth as context.*

The Study

Purpose and Research Questions

In this chapter, I share excerpts of my doctoral thesis, which explores the experiences of four 21st century traditional *Anishinaabek* elders − *Chi Anishinaabek Akinomaagewag* (Lafleur, 2013). Since the *Anishinaabek* worldview is presumptive and foundational to this article, I invite readers to refer to my doctoral thesis for further elaboration. I explore traditional *Ojibwe* elders' experiences of our worldview of peace with Mother Earth, as well as identify further understanding of cultural experiences as foundational to implicit teaching and learning. Informed by their experiences, elders have described a peaceful worldview as it relates to Mother Earth, and a respect for *akii-bimaadizi* which promotes a harmonious survival of self, society, and our planet, as a way of life. The

Anishinaabek worldview, shared by our elders, promotes teaching a way of life which demonstrates our well-being with the earth for present and future generations in order for us to respect our way of life, our people, ourselves, and all life on our planet. This chapter explores what constitutes an *Anishinaabek* view of peace in the 21st century as passed down by our *Anishinaabek* elders and ancestors. It is also a contribution to Indigenous Knowledge (IK).

In the beginning, three research questions informed the focus for this study:

1. What is the traditional *Ojibwe/Anishinaabek* relationship with our planet: Mother Earth, and how can this assist us in developing harmonious relationships with the Earth, ourselves and each other?
2. How can the traditional *Ojibwe/Anishinaabek* elders' experiences be used to articulate and create an understanding for a spiritual harmony and balance with the earth?
3. How can such an understanding support and embrace a worldview of living peacefully with nature, ourselves, and our communities?

Methodology

I utilized the foundation of the hermeneutic phenomenological research method based upon an interpretive inquiry methodology. Hermeneutic phenomenology is based on interpreting the described phenomena of lived experience (Moran, 2000). I am an *Anishinaabekwe* interpretivist researcher who focuses on *Anishinaabek* people, places, and times, and situates our journeys within the "specific social, political, cultural, economic, [and] ethnic" contexts (Schram, 2003, p. 33).

All participants are co-researchers. I used the term 'co-researcher' within my study, interchangeably, with the terms 'participant' and 'coinvestigator' (Cohen, Kahn, & Steeves, 2000; Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Co-researchers were selected by using criterion sampling. "Criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experienced the phenomenon. All individuals [met] this criterion" (Creswell, 1998, p. 118). The first criterion for the sample included having an identity as an *Anishinaabek* who has experience with *Anishinaabemowin* and understands the worldview within the language (i.e., has studied *Anishinaabemowin* and/or is a speaker of *Anishinaabemowin*). The second criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* person who has an awareness and experience of the traditional *Anishinaabek* worldview, and understands the importance of eldership. The third criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* who has worked within *Anishinaabek* education and is dedicated to preserving the traditional teachings and worldview for future generations. The fourth criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* who has been successful in bicultural development and intercultural competence, who can shift well between worldviews of Indian and non-Indian, and who has an understanding and efficacy in the dualities of this experience. And, the last criterion included being an *Anishinaabek* who represents one of the four directions of the Medicine Wheel in the *Anishinaabek* territory (of Ontario): East, South, West, and North, with one representative for each direction representing their home community. The aspiration to have participants from multiple locations came from a desire to present a balanced representation of the *Anishinaabek* in Ontario. Therefore, there was a total of four co-researchers participating in this study.

With this said, it was important that the co-researchers had an established relationship with the researcher and a relationship with the *Anishinaabek* traditional education community. To restate, "the

epistemology [of this research was] based upon relationships" (Wilson, 2008, p. 73). Therefore, I located three traditional *Anishinaabek* elders, with whom I had had previous relationships in *Anishinaabek* education, and who I knew well. The fourth co-researcher was referred to me through another participant in this study. We knew each other as acquaintances, but we did not have a well-established relationship as I did with the other three participants. All participants supported the elements of the criterion sampling. I knew three of the four participants quite well as mentors and colleagues in *Anishinaabek* education for many years. From this, all of the co-researchers and I were privy to the general personal demographics of one another as required for this study and study sample. Even though there was an attempt to obtain elders in the Eastern, Southern, Western, and Northern directions (doorways) in Ontario, three of the four co-researchers originated from central Ontario, while one co-researcher came from Northern Ontario.

The Co-Researchers

Mskokii Kwe: Red Earth Woman. In her fifties, *Mskokii Kwe* is from a First Nation in central Ontario. She is part of the Loon, *Mong,* Clan. She received her spirit name in a ceremony during a spring fast. She has a Bachelor of Science degree, a professional designation degree, and a graduate degree. She also belongs to a professional association for her specialization. *Anishinaabemowin* was not her first language, but she learned the language from a family of which she was a part. She has worked for a variety of First Nation education communities, both on and off reserve, in central Ontario. She has worked as an educator for over 25 years. She uses *Anishinaabe-kwe* to identify herself as an *Anishinaabe*. I have known *Mskokii Kwe* for the past eight years.

Adik Giigik: Caribou Sky. *Adik Giigik* is from a First Nation in Northern Ontario. In his fifties, he is from the Caribou, *Adik,* Clan. He mentioned that in *Anishinaabe* culture, you follow your father's clan and it is passed on. His mother was Moose Clan. His name was given to him by the name giver, that is, his grandfather's brother (great uncle). He has a Bachelor of Science degree. He also belongs to a variety of professional Native and non-Native associations and community clubs. He has worked for First Nation communities in Northern Canada and in the United States. He works in educational administration and has worked in Native education for 27 years. *Anishinaabemowin* is his first language. He uses the following terms to identify himself as *Anishinaabe*: (a) *Anishinaabe Ninni* (*Ojibwe* man), (b) by his traditional name and clan, known as *Adik Giizhik*, Caribou Sky, and *Adik dodem*, Caribou Clan, and (c) where he is from, that is, his First Nation community. All of these are used to identify himself as an *Anishinaabe*. I have known *Adik Giigik* for 17 years.

Makade Nimkii: Black Thunderbird. *Makade Nimkii* is from a First Nation in central Ontario. In his sixties, he is from the Red Tail Hawk Clan, *Giibwaanisii Dodem*. He received his spirit name at a naming ceremony during a four-day fast. He was informed of his clan name from a family member. He is an *Anishinaabemowin* (*Ojibwe*) language teacher who has his Native language instructor's diploma, a Bachelor of Arts degree, a Bachelor of Education degree, and a college diploma. He is an Ontario certified teacher (OCT) and a certified *Anishinaabemowin* language teacher. He mentioned that there was not a Native Teacher or Native Language Teacher Association in Ontario. *Anishinaabemowin* is not his first language, but he did learn the language from family, that is, from his paternal grandmother, friends, and teachers. He has worked for a variety of First Nation education communities, both on and off reserve, in central Ontario. He has worked in Native

education for 10 years. He identifies himself by the term, *Anishinaabe*. I have known *Makade Nimkii* for 25 years.

Aandek: Crow. *Aandek* is from a First Nation in central Ontario. In his sixties, he is from the Deer Clan, *Waawaashkeshi Dodem*. He mentioned that the clan system is paternalistic. He received his name in the medicine lodge. He told me that the *Anishinaabek* receive their name seven generations before we are born and that someone helps you find it (before it is known to creation). He said that information and knowledge is passed down inter-generationally. He has a Bachelor of Arts degree and a teaching certificate (OCT). He has worked for a variety of First Nation education communities, both on and off reserve, in Ontario and in Michigan. He has taught for forty-five years. He uses the term, *Anishinaabe*, to identify himself as *Anishinaabe*. *Aandek* is an *Anishinaabemowin* teacher and most of our conversation focused on the importance of the language; the teachings in the language; and the education, politics and history in the teaching of the *Anishinaabek* language and worldview. I have known *Aandek* for the past few years.

Findings

Data were collected using demographic questionnaires, co-researcher interviews, reflective discussions shared in final interviews, and a reflective journal, which I kept. Data analysis revealed 10 emergent themes within this study. Discussions with the elders revealed essential themes describing the meaning of their journeys of lived experiences. These 10 themes are:

(1)   Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle/ Sharing Your Sacred Bundle/Original Teachings
(2)   Wisdom−*Nbwaakawin*/Connecting the Dots/Original Instructions/Medicine – *Mshkiki*/Environmental Consciousness,
(3)   Sacred Teachings/Learning from the Elders,
(4)   Relationships/Honouring Elders/Eldership,
(5)   Political Experiences and Awareness,
(6)   A Way of Being in *Anishinaabek* Research,
(7)   Survival,
(8)   Peace is Our Worldview Demonstrated,
(9)   Be Aware of Colonialistic Thinking, and
(10) *Akinomaage*: Earth as Context.

From these 10 themes, reframing the research questions from a personal and meaningful experiential point of view elicited the following questions, which will be addressed in the subsequent discussion of each of the themes:

- What are the lived experiences and shared traditional *Ojibwe* teachings (i.e., oral traditions, sacred stories, ceremonies, and values) of 21st century *Anishinaabek* elders who have a spiritual connection with nature and Mother Earth?
- How can *Ojibwe* elders' experiences of a worldview of peace with *Shkagamik-kwe,* Mother Earth, be articulated to be shared with others?

Discussion: Themes of Elders' Journeys

Going Back/Building Your Sacred Bundle/Sharing Your Sacred Bundle/ Original Teachings

The first of these themes focused on "going back to our original gifts and instructions"; "building your sacred bundle" and sharing your sacred bundle. These themes referred to grounding oneself through taking the initiative, having the intentionality to develop and understand one's identity as *Anishinaabek*. This was done through self-awareness and through reclaiming, or maintaining, one's *Anishinaabek* identity: *Ninayaawin* —My Being, and cultural identity–*Yaayang*/Our Being. This included reclaiming and sharing the *Anishinaabek* language, culture, and worldview, and nurturing a connection to *Shkagamik-kwe*. Building your sacred bundle was described as active and experiential.

The sacred bundle has been in existence for tens of thousands of years, and it is still very much alive and important, as described by all of the participants. Having a sacred bundle also consists of having a place to go in order to reflect and to develop self-awareness of this connection to *Shkagamik-kwe* and is important to sustaining the *Anishinaabek* way of life. Participants shared that collecting your sacred bundle is a way to reclaim your unique and special status as a First Nations person. Sharing your sacred bundle is also important because sharing the knowledge is a way to keep the sacred bundle alive. It is also a way for humankind to reclaim its status and connect to the earth: for nature persons who are learning more about their earth identity. Nature persons are people who understand that their well-being is connected to the well-being of *Shkagamik-kwe*. Keeping the sacred bundle alive – earth identity, earth-centred worldview, and a spiritual connection to earth – sustains life, not only for the *Anishinaabek* but for all cultures through this sharing.

Reclaiming your relationship with self as part of a larger whole enables you to come full circle in recognizing how you were born into the world: as a part of creation. This is something that we are all a part of, and it is an experiential (mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional) awareness of our meaningful connection to *Shkagamik-kwe* that results from the process of knowing who you are. As shared by *Aandek* when speaking of waking up — *shkozin*:

> When we first open our eyes in the morning, we find ourselves in this beautiful creation and we see the sunrise and we see the blue sky, we see people. The fire is there. How should you feel? You should be in awe.

Anishinaabemowin, our language, contains the worldview that connects us to recognize our well-being is connected to the well-being of *Shkagamik-kwe*.

In the literature, there have been past accounts referring to the "sacred pack." In an example of Fox Clan ceremonials, "each Fox clan has at least one ceremony centering around a 'sacred pack' or bundle that belongs to it and that by tradition originated in a direct revelation" (Eggan, 1955, as cited in Tooker, 1979, p. 165). As further explained by a Fox Clan man,

> This sacred pack does not belong to me alone. We alike own it, even a little baby. It owns it in just the same way that we own it. I have been instructed with regard to it, but nevertheless I do not myself own the sacred pack. (Eggan, 1955, as cited in Tooker, 1979, p. 200)

This supports the concept of sharing and passing along the teachings from old to young, and as a part of the *Anishinaabek* worldview, peace is part of that sacred bundle. This sharing is tantamount to earth's survival and to understanding our well-being with earth: the state of being in peace with the planet, oneself, and one another.

Unfortunately, most people today have become displaced with their connection to earth due to modernity. Technology and the fast-paced life in modern times, in addition to a lack of a healthy relationship with earth, encourages a disconnection between people and the earth, disrupting well-being in favour of the Western worldview of progress. Today's relationship in modern times with Earth is based upon a commodification of Earth's resources and is based on a unilateral, utilitarian relationship. Furthermore, it takes time spent in nature to become reconnected and to see one's well-being as being connected with *Shkagamik-kwe*. As well, time is needed for reflection of this connection, and it must be taught.

In this rekindling, and through recognizing the consistency over different studies, stories, and centuries, it becomes apparent that the elders have supported timeless truths regarding the existence and importance of the "sacred bundle." The maintenance of the *Anishinaabek* worldview as one of peace is demonstrated through sharing and teaching a responsibility in our duty to preserve and contribute to the growth of our "sacred bundle."

In this study, all participants nourished their "sacred bundle" with purpose and with intentionality. They pursued and shared the traditional knowledge that they found and maintained, and developed a conscious awareness of themselves within the sacredness of creation. Participants saw their health as related to the health of the earth, so to nurture your sacred bundle is also to nurture yourself as part of creation. The theme of going back to your roots or returning back to nature is part of our view of reconnecting to Mother Earth. All people have to (re)develop a relationship with the earth to complete themselves through the spirit of nature for peace to occur. It is time for humankind to become aware of our connection to *Shkagamik-kwe*, and to learn how to rebuild their connection to earth in a peaceful way. It is time to heal the violence done to the planet, and hence ourselves, through identification with Mother Earth as elder.

The worldview of the *Anishinaabek,* and of earth within this definition, is based upon our ways of knowing and of being, because it is an earth-centred worldview which exemplifies peace as a spiritual relationship with Mother Earth. This idea has been encouraged by Synott (1996), who encourages the inclusion of Indigenous worldviews in peace discussions; Bowers (1999), who encourages attention to the knowledges of earth-centred cultures to preserve the ecosystem and bring awareness to a more intimate relationship with the earth; and Sandy and Perkins (2002), who subscribe to the importance of the "condition of smallness" and seeing ourselves as a smaller part of the larger whole (p. 4). The elders demonstrate this reclaiming and maintaining of a spiritual connection to *Shkagamik-kwe*, and through this reclamation it is hoped that others can learn from these experiences.

In this study, food, place, *Anishinaabemowin*, and traditional knowledge of the land are all central components of *Anishinaabek* identity. These are also all important components of an earth identity. Co-researchers stressed that all of these elements were necessary in connecting them to Mother Earth. Historically and traditionally, food was what brought them to where they resided, and this told them who they were, and their identity was in relation to the land. Being in tune with what is around you is important for obtaining sustenance, your earth identity, and understanding the cycles and patterns in nature. Celebrations and ceremonies were always centred on food because the *Anishinaabek* know that it is important to respect and be thankful through celebration. Not taking

sustenance for granted is consciously strived for, because it is of utmost importance in supporting our life, respecting nature, and our connection to *Shkagamik-kwe.*

Within an *Anishinaabek* worldview, people need to learn what it is that brought them to their place and territory. How can people think about their relationship to surroundings in terms other than residence, occupation, and personal history? A change in understanding their relationship to nature is necessary. We need to be encouraged to be open to ideas and experiences that promote a change of consciousness. The process of rethinking how we talk, identify, view, and relate to nature needs to be taught proactively as it helps us learn that our well-being with earth is important.

This research has demonstrated that the *Anishinaabek* language and culture promotes a worldview that educates our well-being with earth through, for example, the way in which we refer to the rocks as *Mishomaag* – our grandfathers, and *Akinomaage* – earth as teacher (and elder). One of our original gifts is our language and how we use it. We need to carry our language as one of our original instructions, because this will help us think well about our relationship with all things, especially in our development to earth connection, ourselves, and each other. We have to learn our language through earnest and concentrated effort. What is more, today *Anishinaabemowin*, the *Ojibwe* language, is perilously close to becoming extinct, and our language needs to be defended and preserved, more than ever, as part of the sacred bundle.

The *Anishinaabek* language is founded on using nature as the central teacher of all things. Today, the formalization of a traditional knowledge base has been used as a vehicle to share the *Anishinaabek* worldview. The importance of maintaining the language and traditional knowledge is also shared by Battiste (2010):

> Indigenous languages enable the transmission of knowledge from elders to families and to children. Therefore, without language proficiency, it is impossible for families and communities to sustain IK [Indigenous Knowledge] for the next seven generations. (p. 33)

Through this, we can see that teaching *Anishinaabemowin*, and all Indigenous languages, would be beneficial in preserving, and understanding, a worldview which preserves an appreciation for learning and understanding a positive relationship and connection to nature. Just as we need to preserve the indigenous rainforests, we need to preserve the languages of the indigenous people in order to preserve our life force. *Anishinaabemowin* still exists, and so do the *Anishinaabek* in Canada. Indigenous languages and, more specifically in this instance, *Anishinaabemowin*, could be taught within peace studies, environmental worldviews, the *Anishinaabek* worldview, and/or traditional knowledge studies/Native studies as part of an interdisciplinary approach to understanding different ways of knowing and of being in the world. This diversity would also enable an appreciation for the First Peoples of Canada (and all Indigenous peoples of the world), and for Mother Earth, as it could be taught to both Native and non-Native peoples, as an example of trans-cultural education.

As *Anishinaabek* who have lived for thousands of years on Turtle Island (North America), we base our identity on territory and place because of our connection to nature, our spirit in nature and in landscapes. Our territories are our ancestors, and we are the children and future grandfathers and grandmothers of the territory to which we have been born and to which we will return. In understanding this, your sacred bundle is a collective community concept, and is continuously shared between and across generations.

Wisdom: Connecting the Dots / Original Instructions /Medicine

The second theme that emerged from the data focused on the concept of wisdom. Wisdom was described as "connecting the dots*,*" as "original instructions*,*" and as "medicine." These synonyms refer to having the ability to make purposeful connections, towards a larger vision, through reflecting on why things are happening and what responsibilities come with these events. This wisdom occurs through awareness of *Anishinaabek* ways of knowing and being, bicultural awareness between mainstream and *Anishinaabek* cultural values, and the modern day context and application of the *Anishinaabek* worldview. This also occurs through traditional and spiritual awareness of our worldview−*kii-inendamowin*, and knowledge of traditional and spiritual teachings, issues, and concepts. It also includes energy, cycles of life, the seven grandfather teachings−*Anishinaabek* traditional virtues, and *Anishinaabek* cultural values and observations of *yaayang,* our being.

Co-researchers spoke of obtaining wisdom through lived experiences and applying the teachings through lessons learned. *Mskokii Kwe* spoke of the seven grandfather teachings and of her traditional experiences learning honesty, truth, and critical reflection. These are all virtues developed through the *Anishinaabek* worldview. She also spoke of the formalization of the teachings of the elders in the Medicine Wheel workshops, which focused on healing, that was founded upon the old ways. It is important to understand that the Medicine Wheel teachings are very old instructions that are now being presented in a contemporary format for contemporary *Anishinaabek* and for sharing with all peoples. Teachings of the Medicine Wheel and teachings of the earth are parallel in that both the earth and the Medicine Wheel are mirrors, and teachers for reflection, to humankind and for all of life. They both encompass each other, depending on the context. For example, the grandfather teachings are virtues that apply to the state of a well-being with all of life. Medicine Wheel teachings are "not of themselves Medicine Wheel teachings," but, are a contribution in contemporary form in passing on the *Anishinaabek* worldview from past to present century. This shows the consciousness in preserving the old ways for future generations. It demonstrates a contemporary way to honour the teachings of our ancestors which can be applied to our lives today.

Further formalization of these ancient teachings is being done in the arena of traditional knowledge and indigenous knowledge. All of these teachings, as they relate to our connection to *Shkagamik-kwe,* can contribute to our understanding of the *Anishinaabek* worldview in teaching our well-being with earth. This formalization can contribute to a positive transcultural understanding of the *Anishinaabek* worldview for *Anishinaabek* and non-*Anishinaabek* peoples.

All participants spoke about the cycle/circle of life and nature's patterns. Terms for the earth were "Mother Earth" and "*Mamanan akii.*" They spoke about pre-set patterns, and the sequences in nature's cycle as "original instructions" for creation's existence. Learning our responsibility in maintaining our part in this cycle of life, on a spiritual level, can and must be taught. We must also learn instinctual awareness. We need to relearn the value of our instincts and teachings as gifts given to us by the creator. The virtues discussed in this study were the importance of wisdom, truth, respect, honesty, humility, thankfulness, and sharing knowledge, especially with young people.

Adik Giizhig spoke about the importance of ceremony in the cycle for successful harvesting and the necessity to give respect and thanks to encourage a successful harvest for the following year. This encouragement was, not only important, but necessary in doing our part in maintaining the cycle of life. He shared the *Anishinaabek* word for the English word "environment": *Kiimiinigowin*−that which was given to us by the creator. *Kiimiinigowin* is our gift and it needs to be respected at every turn, with every harvest, with every meal, with every day, and so on.

Aandek demonstrated how animals were role models that taught us virtues. Therefore, they are our elders. He discussed the characteristics, knowledge, and behaviours of the crows as an example. Through his discussions, we learn that animals have also been dispossessed and displaced of their territories. His discussions of the importance of the clan system also acknowledge that we still need to respect and look to the animals to learn how to live. They teach us how to behave well and to survive well. Seeing animals and nature as teachers is a skill of insight, which becomes more developed with practice. It is part of learning, implicitly, through observation and through our senses in the world that we are experiencing and are a part of. We are a part of Mother Earth, and she is a part of us. Since she communicates implicitly, the *Anishinaabek's* cultural style of communication is through implication. Implicit communication, learning, and instruction, encourages reflective thought and is instinctive. It also encourages a respect for multiple interpretations, which are gifts we share with others of our thinking, hearing, watching, feeling, honouring, connecting, and observing of what we interpret has taken place: the interpreters. All interpretation is valued, appreciated, and can add to our insight.

To teach our well-being with earth as an *Anishinaabek* view of peace, based upon earth's way, is important as it presents an alternative worldview that is linked to survival. A presence of this worldview is important to demonstrate and to share in order to nurture our earth identity. Although people in the world are all part of different, distinct, and diverse cultures, we all need to respect ourselves as people of the earth, because "all directions meet in the middle, so everything is apart and everything is together at the same time … everything is related …. And, that's what *Anishinaabe* worldview is based on, relationship" (*Makade Nimkii*). All people, especially young people, need to be taught *Waasa Inaabidaa*, we look in all directions. The circle of life is "created to honor our relationship with all the natural elements of the earth: the four seasons of the year, the four races of people, and the four directions, referred to in prayer as our four grandparents" (Peacock & Wisuri, 2002, p. 6).

To teach our well-being with earth involves understanding our connection to our Earth Mother, *Mamanan akii,* and our obligation to look after the life cycle with wisdom. We need to pay attention by "seeing what the land is doing" and by participating in a way to honour earth's harvest. We need to learn how to respect *Kiimiinigowin*, our gift, and the privilege of living on this planet through re-establishing a personal relationship with the planet as mother and as elder, and to have humility and respect for her and the Great Mystery (the great energy called Creation). The *Anishinaabek* know and respect that the rational mind cannot understand all of what creation is. This is very important in understanding the *Anishinaabek* worldview and our spiritual ways of knowing and of being that are tied to earth's way of peace. This requires a faith in creation for its own sake: that wisdom lies in creation, and to become aware of this wisdom as respect for the earth because she has inherent value for her own sake.

Sacred Teachings/Learning from the Elders

The third theme to emerge from the data was sharing the sacred teachings and learning from the elders. The third theme focused on relationships with ceremony and sacred teachings through learning experiences such as participating in ceremonies, rituals, and sharing stories and knowledge from our ancestors. This also included teachings in ceremonies, being thankful, respect and sharing, the cycle of life, energy, and healing which included reflection, meditation, and mediation.

Relationships/Honouring Elders/and Eldership

The fourth theme included intergenerational relationships with family: parental relationships, relationships with childhood experiences, and traditional family, including Mother Earth. This traditional family consists of friends and others who respect and honour the ancestral teachings. We are an ancient people guided by nature and the original instructions to honour "our gift." The mentorship and role modelling of elders for youth and community were also a part of this theme. It is critical to respect your elders and listen to what they say even when you think you know better or different.

The elders who had *Anishinaabemowin* as their first language blended themes 3 and 4 together throughout their conversations. These elders spoke about how they used the teachings and what they did as it related to sharing. The other co-researchers, who did not grow up with *Anishinaabemowin* as their first language, tended to share their personal experiences of learning the language and about their learning journey to pick up the gift of language as well as their experiences learning from elders. They also spoke of their experiences sharing the teachings.

Aandek and *Adik Giizhig* shared the teachings and what they did in the community. They both spoke about the importance of recognizing the beauty of the new day, and the need for offering and gratitude. It was important to have a way to appreciate and recognize this. They spoke about the importance of offering something to creation when you took something from her (i.e., through a harvest). For example, the consistent ritual offering of tobacco has, historically, been performed for thousands of years. Through this process, we learn that we need to make ourselves aware of when we take something from Mother Earth, and that something must always be given back in return for something taken from her. This makes one cognizant of the process of asking permission, offering, and taking, as this relates to being respectful of the planet and the concept of reciprocity.

All participants spoke about the importance of ceremony as part of *Anishinaabek* life, because Indigenous knowledge and worldview is "rooted in ceremony." *Mskokii Kwe* said it best when she said, "we're all part of creation and it's all our truth. Like, this is our truth, this is who we are, this is what we do now." Ceremony was also seen as a way to regain lost messages and teachings from our ancestors (e.g., through reflection and meditation). Ceremony is also a way to connect with other like-minded traditional people who respect *Shkagamik-kwe,* and it encourages us to remember that we are an "ancient people." To connect and honour creation, it is important to have rituals of recognition in order to give us time to do so. It is important to recognize that Mother Earth is our elder that has been here for a very long time and that, as her children, and as those who respect her, we must remember this. The Haudenosaunee's (Iroquois) Thanksgiving address, which gives thanks to creation at the beginning of any formal gathering, was also mentioned as an example of others who see things the same way.

In this study, the co-researchers discussed the elders that influenced their lives. They believed that we are accountable to our ancestors. Relationships with elders were not utilitarian; they were based upon respect and mentorship. Questioning elders was rarely done, as this was seen as rude and impatient. Being patient with elders was a virtue. One important concept that was introduced by *Makade Nimkii* is that eldership and mentorship can occur through research and literature. He spoke of the works of Dr. William Jones, the first *Anishinaabe* (Fox Indian) who graduated with a PhD in Linguistic Anthropology from Columbia University in the United States, and who collected stories from the elders in the late 1800s, early 1900s. The main focus of the stories was the teaching of morality and respect for the elders (Michelson, 1917).

Having time for reflection in nature was also viewed as an important part of ritual. Reflection must be encouraged and role modelled. For example, preparation of a spirit dish for Mother Earth enables reflection. What is more, the opportunity to go into a natural setting, with guidance for reflection, would give people the opportunity to participate in this actively so they could become reconnected with the earth and themselves. People learn from reflection. Elders give you things to reflect on for present and future awareness.

In this study, reflection was also discussed as a way to bring about meditation in order to relax oneself and to learn how to cope for better health. Meditation as mediation provides the opportunity to experience a peaceful place in nature to create a sense of solace and balance. It helps to connect you to the energy of our ancestors and the source of this energy and the virtues and gifts of our ancestors (i.e., the seven grandfathers). Reflection was mentioned as something we do as part of our culture.

All participants spoke of learning things from their parents through actively observing and listening to them. They also learned from parents from reflecting on past things that they were told as children about life and the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Things that were learned from parents were taught by demonstration and observation. Reflection was encouraged by parents, and lessons were encouraged for children to learn through thinking things through on their own. Eldership encourages critical reflection and awareness, and these virtues allow for growth. All participants talked about a strong connection to learning from family and learning from a traditional person(s) and/or traditional family like-minded in *Anishinaabek* traditional thought.

Political Experiences and Awareness

The fifth theme to emerge from the data was political experiences and awareness. This theme focused on the concepts of educational experiences, regeneration, accommodation, colonization, decolonization and resistance, globalization, the planet, people, self, economy, and technology.

In this research, all participants spoke of their personal educational experiences: residential school experiences (of themselves and their families), linguicide, abuse and frustration, stereotyping and ridicule, the war in OKA, the neglect of acknowledgement as First Peoples, and the importance of learning more about who they are as *Anishinaabek*. Most *Anishinaabek* had to break out of mainstream perceptions of themselves by battling and unlearning negative stereotyping, giving voice to their academic and cultural needs, and realizing and affirming their potentialities and gifts as *Anishinaabek* peoples. Learning more and/or maintaining their *Anishinaabek* identities provided positive opportunities to realize the beauty of the *Anishinaabek* worldview, culture, language, and themselves. It was important to connect and learn from the traditional knowledge and language keepers.

Elders saw themselves as supporting and sharing the traditional knowledge of the people in the work that they did at all of the levels that they were working in. These levels included: administration and communications with government for cultural programming, and classroom applications of the culture and the language with both Native and non-Native students. All reclaimed their culture and language and were passing this on to future generations. This was also seen as decolonizing and revitalizing, because *Anishinaabek* culture is a thing of the present and it continues to have life. They wanted the next generation to have better schooling experiences than they had experienced through recognizing that our culture is important and is part of today's reality. This way, the younger people would have an education that could be more "in sync with the way we do things as *Anishinaabe* . . . go into things holistically . . . [not] step by step." Reclaiming and maintaining one's identity as

Anishinaabek was a way to reclaim their connection to creation and a connection to themselves. They felt compelled to share this with others in their work as educators. Passing on traditional knowledge is being accountable to those that came before, elders. And, the *Anishinaabek* worldview promotes the teachings of the elders and grandfathers as the utmost of importance in our survival− mentally, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

Globalization was viewed as an opportunity to open the doors to share the *Anishinaabek* worldview. Our place as First Peoples can inform other nations as to where they are in relation to our "history of the land, and the people and the place … [that] it's not just random and never acknowledged" who First Nations people are (*Mskokii Kwe*). First Peoples can now be globally represented to the newcomers to Canada and to the global history of Canada. It was thought that our worldview is more readily accepted now, and not discriminated against, as it was in the past. Viewing our teachings as a nature thing, and not just as a Native thing, where it had been historically discriminated against in the past in Canada, would also make our teachings more invitational to others. Therefore, to teach our well-being with earth is invitational to others worldwide.

A Way of Being in *Anishinaabek* Research

The sixth theme to emerge from the data was revealed through discussions of engaging trust, respect, and humility with elders when discussing traditional ways and teachings. The protocol for speaking with elders is based upon elders knowing what you need to hear at a particular time. This is because "they know what you are ready to hear and understand. And they pick the most salient things that are important at that particular moment" (*Mskokii-Kwe*). Having trust comes from "being in the moment" and listening to what an elder is sharing with you. As shared by Wilson (2008), "[Indigenous] ways of knowing are based upon relationships . . . respect, reciprocity and responsibility are key features of any healthy relationship," (p. 73) and these are to be included in indigenous research (p.77). To teach our well-being with earth is to listen to our elders and to put our relationship with them first before asking our own questions and to not impose. Also, respect to all of creation is the recognition of ourselves as being "present" when sharing with her.

Continuation and Survival

The seventh theme that emerged from the data was continuation and survival. We have been given *kiimiinigowin*, our gift, which gives us life and our source for life's continuation. Our gift is *Mamanan akii*, Mother Earth, and she is our elder (*Adik Giizhik*). All of our ceremonies acknowledge our gratitude and obligation to ensure our continuation, and our well-being, with *Mamanan akii*. We all have a responsibility, and a spiritual obligation, to maintain our relationship with Mother Earth, which encourages us to do the right thing in our rituals of ceremony to honour our gift, our source of life. *Anishinaabek* worldview is about continuation. As described by McNally (2009), the open-endedness stresses the "'continuity of knowledge' . . . Life itself is a cycle, within which individuals grow up listening to their grandfathers, come to be old themselves, teach their own grand-children, become one of the ancestors" (p. 142). There is an expectation to pass on the teachings to the next generation while being adaptive to current times.

The concept of "survival" is not an *Anishinaabek* concept. It is a colonized term, a reactive terminology to oppression and genocide. Our language does not have a word for "survival" or the "survival of the planet." These are colonized terms. The *Anishinaabek* view of peace is about

continuation and *mino bimaadziwin*: "the art of living the good life" and "continuous rebirth" (Simpson, 2011, p. 26).

Peace is Our Worldview Demonstrated

The eighth theme that emerged from the data is that peace is demonstrative and exemplifies our worldview. For continuation, there must be peace, and this is founded upon the continuance of our worldview. "Peace is about peace of mind, not the absence of war. You won't know peace of mind without language and culture, your identity" (*Makade Nimkii*).

Our language and our culture are all part of our worldview. We need to have our traditional worldview passed on, and we need to see our traditional worldview demonstrated. The *Anishinaabek*, and others, need more opportunities to learn of our worldview through political will and purpose. The traditional elders have demonstrated how the *Anishinaabek* worldview can be shared in contemporary times. Our worldview needs to be supported in order to flourish, as this will create an opportunity for our continuance.

As shared by McNally (2009):

> *Ojibwe* children … are taught skills of active watching and listening, not simply of the content of what to look for or listen for. They are taught to take in cultural lessons experientially, to take them in over time, and not to expect spoon-fed segmented units of knowledge. (p. 143)

Observation and demonstration are essential to learning and teaching. Nature is an implicit teacher, and we are taught to look and listen in order to hear and see what we are to learn. As a cultural pedagogy, the *Anishinaabek* teach implicitly in order to encourage self-awareness, self-reflection, and patience. It also teaches one's responsibility for learning and sharing through observation and example. This is how *Shkagamik-kwe* teaches. She has taught us that our well-being is connected to her well-being. She is our elder and our teacher, and she does so implicitly.

Be Aware of Colonialistic Thinking

The ninth theme that emerged from the data was to think in *Anishinaabemowin*. This would include conducting research using the *Ojibwe* language as part of our thinking processes. The intended purpose would be to promote our way of knowing and of being and to prevent thinking using a "foreign language, [or] a foreign way of thinking." Concepts such as decolonization, globalization, and sustainability can all be seen as colonized terms because they are economic and political terms. It was suggested that future research with our people be done without this foreign way of thinking and be based on the *Anishinaabek* way of knowing and worldview. Participants also discussed teaching *Ojibwe*. Concern was shared regarding the teaching of the language from a colonialistic worldview. This colonialistic worldview lacks cultural context and meaning, and hence it lacks transmission results between and across generations for the creation of future *Anishinaabemowin* speakers. This means that a lack of context interferes with the language being properly preserved. It was also suggested that *Anishinaabemowin* be taught from the *Anishinaabek* worldview; unfortunately, of the very few speakers that exist today, very few have this awareness.

Akinomaage: Earth as Context and Teacher

The tenth theme included the co-researchers' perceptions of earth as an elder and teacher. All co-researchers believed in the concept of Mother Earth as elder and teacher. The word "to teach" is *Akinomaage*, and it means the realm of living things, the earth, where you go to obtain knowledge. Learning our well-being with earth would include going to our elder, Mother Earth, in order to obtain this knowledge. To learn and to teach, from our elder Mother Earth, is of prime importance to knowing our view of peace. We need her as context to know who we are and how to live well, and we all need this from our mother.

Conclusion

Through honouring implicit instruction and learning, the *Anishinaabek* worldview provides a collective understanding of our relationships and responsibilities as members of creation. We all have our learning journeys, and implicit instruction and implicit learning honour these experiences through respecting our unique interpretations and gifts. Because *Shkagamik-kwe,* Mother Earth, communicates through implication, the *Anishinaabek's* cultural style of communication is through this implication: *Akinomaage.* Implicit communication, learning, and instruction, encourages reflective thought and is instinctive. It also encourages a respect for multiple interpretations which are gifts of the interpreters. All interpretation is valued, appreciated, and can add to our insight. Through this process of sharing, we learn that something must always be given back in return for something taken from *Shkagamik-kwe. Kiimiinigowin* is that which was given to us by the creator. The gifts of creation are our gifts and they need to be respected at every turn: with every harvest, with every meal, with every day, and so on. Both our Mother Earth and the Medicine Wheel, mirror and teach for reflection for humankind and for the well-being of all of life. The *Anishinaabek* worldview also honours our collective wellness and well-being through promoting the teaching of the elders and grandfathers. *Shkagamik-kwe* has taught us that our well-being is connected to her well-being. She is our elder and our teacher, and our actions to honour earth's way of peace preserves our own peace and well-being.

References

Battiste, M. (2010). Indigenous knowledge and indigenous peoples' education. In S. M. Subramanian & P. Pisupati (Eds.), *Traditional knowledge in policy and practice: Approaches to development and human well-being* (pp. 31−51). Tokyo, Japan: United Nations University Press.

Bowers, C. A. (1999). Why culture rather than data should be understood as the basis of intelligence. In J. Kane (Ed.), *Education, information and transformation* (pp. 23-40). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Simon and Schuster.

Cohen M., Kahn D., & Steeves, R. (2000). *Hermeneutic phenomenological research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Lafleur, G. S. (2013). *Ojibwe elders' experiences of peace: To teach our well-being with earth.* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: https://dr.library.brocku.ca/bitstream/.../Brock_Lafleur_Gail_2013.pdf?

McNally, M. D. (2009). *Aging, authority, and Ojibwe religion: Honoring elders.* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Michelson, T. (Ed.). (1917). *Ojibwa texts collected by William Jones.* Leyden, Holland: E. J. Brill Publishers and Printers.

Moran, D. (2000). *Introduction to phenomenology.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Peacock, T., & Wisuri, M. (2002). *Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We look in all directions.* Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press.

Sandy, L. R., & Perkins, R., Jr. (2002). The nature of peace and its implications for peace education. *OJPCR: The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution, 4*(2), 1-8.

Schram, T. H. (2003). *Conceptualizing qualitative inquiry: Mindwork for fieldwork in education and the social sciences.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Simpson, L. (2011). *Dancing on our turtle's back: Stories of Nishnaabeg re-creation, resurgence and a new emergence.* Winnipeg, MB: Arbeiter Ring.

Synott, J. (1996). Australian Aboriginal constructions of humans, society, and nature in relation to peace education. *Peabody Journal of Education, 71*(3), 84−94.

Tooker, E. (Ed.). (1979). *Native North American spirituality of the eastern woodlands: Sacred myths, dreams, visions, speeches, healing formulas, rituals and ceremonials.* Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.

van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* London, ON: Althouse Press.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods.* Black Point, NS: Fernwood.

Chapter 11

Following the Pathways of the Ancestors:
Well-Being through Iñupiaq Dance

SEAN ASIQŁUQ TOPKOK and CARIE GREEN

In this chapter, we unravel the meaning of well-being through the holistic internalization of Iñupiat Ilitqusiat *(Iñupiaq values), demonstrated and enacted through a healthy and happy state of mind, body, spirit, and the environment. We portray a parallel journey of traditional and contemporary understanding of Indigenous well-being expressed through Iñupiaq Dance by comparing Tuulik's journey in the* unipkaaq*(legend)* The Eagle Wolf Dance *with Asiqłuq's personal journey of well-being in rediscovering his cultural heritage through the formation of the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers of Fairbanks. We turn inwards and outwards to show how healing begins as an introspective process and moves from the individual, to the family, to the community, and beyond. The drumbeats' steady rhythm grounds us in the purpose of following the pathway of our ancestors and celebrating and sharing being Iñupiat through cultural dance.*

This chapter explores mind, body, and spiritual wellness regenerated through Iñupiaq dance. Specifically, we describe how participation in traditional Indigenous dances, stories, and songs can promote health and well-being. The Iñupiat are a western (present day Alaska) branch of the Inuit peoples who inhabit the circumpolar regions across northern Canada, Nunatsiavut, Nunavik, Nunavut, Nunatukavut, Denmark, and Siberia (Schweitzer, Berman, Barnhardt, & Kaplan, 2008). Like Canadian Indigenous peoples, Alaskan Indigenous peoples continue to experience negative effects from European and American-European colonization (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Napoleon, 1996; Oquilluk, 1973; Schaeffer & Christensen, 2010). Early Russian fur traders, Christian ministries, and later American gold miners exploited the land and transmitted new illnesses, bringing death and devastation to nearly every Alaska Native community (Napoleon, 1996). Early educational efforts were aimed at making Alaskan Indigenous children "civilized" (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2010). Some teachers perpetrated physical and emotional abuse upon children; other children were orphaned or sent away to boarding schools. These devastating events combined had an intergenerational impact amongst the Iñupiat and other Alaskan Indigenous communities, resulting in a loss of cultural identity and well-being.

Nakuuruq and *Aarigaa*[1] are two Iñupiaq expressions of wellness, described by community members as "feeling good, experiencing a healthy body, and having inner harmony" (Reimer, 1999, p. 6). Iñupiaq well-being is related to a holistic internalization of *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* (Iñupiaq values*),* demonstrated and enacted through a healthy and happy state of mind, body, spirit, and the environment (see Figure 1). The bird in the middle of Figure 1 is the Iñupiaq Raven. The Iñupiaq Raven has a drum on its tail. For many Alaska Native creation stories, the Raven is the main

Iñupiat Ilitqusiat

With guidance and support from Elders,
we must teach our children Iñupiaq values

(Northwest Iñupiaq Elders)

Kaŋiqsimauraałiq Irrutchikun
Spirituality

Anayuqaaġiich Savaaksranich
Family Roles

Kamaksriłiq Utuqqanaanik
Respect for Elders

Kamakkutiłiq
Respect for Others

Quvianniułikun Tipsisaaġiłiq
Humor

Atchiksualiq
Humility

Ilisimałiq Ilaġiitiġmik
Knowledge of Family Tree

Aatchuqtuutiłiq Avatmun
Sharing

Kiŋuniġmi Suraġatlasiñiałiq
Domestic Skills

Asiqłuġlu Ahnauġhuġlu

IÑUPIAQ

Ilisimałiq Uqapiatiġmik
Knowledge of Language

Paaqsaaqatautaiłiq
Avoid Conflict

Savaqatigiiyutiq
Cooperation

Kamaksriłiq Nutim Iñiqtanik
Respect for Nature

Aŋunialgutiq
Hunter Success

Savvaqtutiq
Hard Work

Piqpaksriłiq Iliłgaanik
Love for Children

Iñuuiaqatiunik Ikayuutiłiq
*Responsibility to Tribe*

by Sean & Amy Topkok

Figure 1. Iñupiat Ilitqusiat - Iñupiaq Values.

---

[1] Nakuuruq translates to "s/he is fine." Aarigaa has many translations depending on the context it is taken (MBNDC, 1979).

character. Asiqłuq and his wife Ahnaughuq slightly modified this Raven from the Alaska Native Knowledge Network logo, which Ahnaughuq was the original artist. Because of the historical trauma experienced by Alaska Native peoples, such an internalization of Iñupiaq well-being requires a concentrated effort and often entails a journey filled with states of varying discord and harmony.

In this cultural narrative we portray a parallel journey of traditional and contemporary understanding of Indigenous well-being represented and demonstrated through Iñupiaq Dance. We begin by relaying an *unipkaaq* (legend) *The Eagle Wolf Dance* (Kakaruk & Oquilluk, 1964), to unravel the meaning of well-being through the lens of Iñupiaq cultural values. Then we turn inwards and outwards by examining Asiqłuq's personal journey of well-being in rediscovering his cultural heritage through the formation of the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers of Fairbanks. The concentric circle of healing for Asiqłuq began as an introspective process and moved outward from the individual, to the family, to the community, and beyond. We show how his journey parallels that of Tuulik's in *The Eagle Wolf Dance* and how healing begins through a spiritual connection among all living beings. The drumbeats' steady rhythm grounds us in the purpose of following the pathway of our ancestors and celebrating being Iñupiat through cultural dance.

The Eagle Wolf Dance: Tuulik's Journey

The *unipkaaq* (legend) of *The Eagle Wolf Dance* reflects *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* (Iñupiaq values), demonstrating reconciliation and healing both in the physical and spiritual realm. The dance itself was inserted into the celebration of the Messenger Feast allowing neighboring villages, which were generally hostile towards each other, opportunities to trade goods and celebrate a feast (Kingston, Koyuk, & Mayac, 2001). Historically, preparation for the Feast took a year or more and was not only meant to facilitate friendly trade but also organized as a celebration of traditional Iñupiaq and Yup'ik religious beliefs, namely the reciprocal relationships between humans and other living beings (Kingston, Koyuk, & Mayac, 2001). According to the *unipkaaq* (legend), "human beings in the past did not know how to sing and dance and feast" (Kingston, Koyuk, & Mayac, 2001, p. 264). The legend tells how singing, dancing, and feasting emerged to promote health and well-being among humans, other creatures, and the spiritual world.

The legend begins when Tuulik, a great hunter, kills a Giant Eagle (Kakaruk & Oquilluk,1964). The Giant Eagle's mother mourns for her son and tells Tuulik he will be visited by spirit people to teach him how to dance in order to pay respect to the fallen Eagle. As Tuulik returns to his village, spirit people visit him, teach him several dances, and does not allow him to continue his journey until he learns all of the dances and the ceremony (the Messenger Feast) properly. Once he learned the dances and ceremony, he returned to his village, told his people about the ceremony, and taught them the dances as he was taught. When the villagers learned all of the dances correctly, Tuulik sent out some of their best runners to go to the neighboring villages to teach them how to perform the Messenger Feast, and all of the dances, properly. Tuulik and the villagers prepared meals for the neighboring villagers and told them to come at a specified time to begin the days of celebration, gave the specific order of the dances, and described other rituals to follow for the gathering. Once everything was done properly, the Mother Eagle and the spirit of the fallen Eagle knew the villages respected Nature and were finally at peace.

Away from the Sea Towards the Mountains: Asiqłuq's Journey

Below, Asiqłuq's tells how his journey parallels that of Tuulik's in *The Eagle Wolf Dance* (Kakaruk & Oquilluk, 1964) in regenerating cultural well-being through dance:

Uvaŋa atiġa Asiqłuq. My Iñupiaq name is Asiqłuq. My white fox name is Charles Topkok; and I go by my middle name, "Sean." I am Iñupiaq, Sámi, Irish, and Norwegian. My parents are the late Aileen and Clifford Topkok from Teller, Alaska. When I was growing up, other children harassed me for being Indigenous, and my relatives teased me for being White. I grew up being ashamed of who I am. I did not feel like I belonged to any cultural group. I felt lost. There was one point in my childhood that I even tried to commit suicide. It is not an easy thing to talk about, but if we want to help our youth we have to share our stories. My father was an alcoholic, my brothers were all physically abusive with each other, and I had identity confusion. So I tried to poison myself, unsuccessfully thank goodness, and I never tried it again.

Tuulik also felt uneasy the night before he decided to go to the Sawtooth Mountains to hunt; he tossed and turned while "his wives were sound asleep, one on either side of him. He lay there and wondered at his uneasiness" (Kakaruk & Oquilluk, 1964, p. 5). Like Tuulik, Asiqłuq experienced uncertainty about who he was and where he belonged.

Beginning a Personal Journey

For several summers in the late 1980's, Chief William Tyson, a Yup'ik Elder from St. Mary's, Alaska, and his wife taught Yup'ik dances at cultural camps for urban Native youth. I was working as a counselor at the cultural camp when I first met Mr. and Mrs. Tyson and members of their dance group: the Greatland Traditional Dancers. The counselors were learning the motion dances along with the campers. After getting to know the Elders informally throughout the camp, Mr. and Mrs. Tyson began paying attention to how well I was learning the dances. I eventually joined the Greatland Traditional Dancers. Even though I am Iñupiaq, the group welcomed me, and Mr. and Mrs. Tyson informally adopted me. The Iñupiaq way of learning and teaching is similar to the Yup'ik way. Children or students would learn through observation, repetition, humor, and so on, for both the Iñupiat and Yupiit. This introduced me to a foundation of my cultural heritage and how it can be a part of my life.

After butchering the fallen Eagle, Tuulik was encountered by a spirit-being that guided him towards spiritual wholeness and a ceremony that establishes his cultural tradition.

Soon after Tuulik walked away from the Giant Eagle's body he heard a voice call out, commanding him to turn about. Tuulik turned, and there he saw a man. This person was a spirit-being. Tuulik knew, though outwardly he resembled a real human being.

"You've heard a drumming sound," the spirit man said, "That sound is the heartbeat of the giant bird's mother. You see, she was so shocked when she found you had killed her son that her heart began to pound. Now, you must do certain things in order to return the bird's spirit to its mother, then she will be consoled. You'll see other persons like me. Look and listen carefully, and you'll remember everything. We'll assist you to learn. In turn, you'll teach the people of Qaviraq that which we have taught you." (Kakaruk & Oquilluk, 1964, p. 9)

Like Tuulik, Asiqłuq was introduced to the concept of Native dance to help him rediscover and acknowledge his cultural identity. The Elders who recognized his potential in becoming a Native dance group leader are like Tuulik's spirit visitor who directed him on the path of healing.

Learning and Practice

I continued to practice and perform with the Greatland Traditional Dancers for seven seasons. Whenever I made a mistake, Mr. and Mrs. Tyson made the whole group practice the song all over again from the beginning. They wanted to make sure that I learned the songs and motions properly.

"Repeat all that you saw," the spirits told Tuulik, "Begin preparations a year in advance in order to get all of your needs. Practise [sic] the songs and dances until your people have memorized them perfectly" (Kakaruk & Oquilluk, 1964, p. 13).

Like Tuulik, I (Asiqłuq) was introduced to the concept of Native dance, which helped me acknowledge and gain respect for my own cultural identity. I was challenged to learn the dances properly, even when making a mistake, before sharing them with my own community.

For My Family and Community

The wolves played an important part of showing respect for the eagles. Kakaruk and Oquilluk (1964) write,

> When the eagle was after prey, the wolves often stayed inside the den until the eagle flew past. When the eagle made a kill, the wolves watched closely. They came from their den and watched until the eagle flew away. Then the wolves went to the eagle's kill and ate whatever remained of the carcass, because those wolves were sometimes hungry for lack of good luck in hunting. For this reason, the spirits of wolves wanted to take part in the dances, to show their appreciation of the food the eagles sometimes provided for them. (p. 17)

The eagles and wolves are part of the natural community. Their role in the hunt demonstrates the familial relationship they have with each other.

When I first moved from Anchorage to Fairbanks, I continued to work with urban Native youth in the field of education. I taught the Yup'ik songs and dances that I learned from the Tysons. I was encouraged to do so by Mrs. Tyson in order to share what I learned and to do so freely. However, since I am Iñupiaq, I wanted to learn Iñupiaq songs and dances. My wife and I were being asked by other Iñupiaq community members in Fairbanks to start an Iñupiaq dance group. I had always replied that I was too busy with work to organize a group.

When I worked as a Home-School Liaison (counselor) *for the Alaska Native Education Department in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, I continued to teach the Native dances to students and teachers, while yearning to learn more about my own cultural heritage. When my first son was born, a Tlingit Elder suggested to me to play any type of Indigenous music to my baby, so that he can grow up appreciating Indigenous songs and culture.*

During this time, I was taking college classes at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and one of them was Elementary (Beginning) *Iñupiaq Eskimo. My Iñupiaq language instructor was from Anaktuvak Pass, Alaska, and knows all of their songs and dances. I helped him sing at a potluck and asked him to teach any Iñupiaq sayuun* (motion dance) *but the instructor replied that I needed to make up my own songs and dances.*

Needless to say, I became very frustrated and disappointed. I wanted to learn more Iñupiaq sayuun dances passed down for generations. After all, I am a part of the next generation of future cultural-bearers. At an elementary school, a teacher asked me if I knew any dances about Raven. I took my Iñupiaq language instructor's advice and created an Iñupiaq sayuun. He decided to create a motion dance from an Iñupiaq unipkaaq (old legend) passed down for thousands of years: the Fox and the Raven.

Eventually, my first son started pre-school, attending a program sponsored by the Fairbanks Native

Association. My son grew up listening to all types of Alaska Native music through the exposure to major Indigenous cultural yearly events held in Fairbanks. One day, my son came home singing an Athabascan song all on his own accord. Though I felt very proud that he knew an Indigenous song and felt compelled to sing it by himself, I also felt an urgency to have him learn and sing from our Iñupiaq cultural heritage. I knew that it is ultimately my responsibility as an Iñupiaq parent to be actively involved in my son's Iñupiaq education. Even though I had been too busy to start an Iñupiaq dance group, I decided to make time so that my children would grow up singing Iñupiaq songs all by themselves.

Kakaruk and Oquilluk (1964) share about Tuulik's first spirit visitors and how they guided him to help the spirit return:

> 'Send two men, dressed alike as we are, to a village round about Qaviraq. We'll help you, as we promised. Imitate us exactly and you will help to return the spirit. Your human messengers will request other villagers to take part in a dance. At the same time, they will bring requests for things from four headmen of Qaviraq to four headman of the other settlement [*sic*]. The painted bands on the messengers' staffs will remind them of the requests and each man will recite the requests of the two headmen. The headmen of the invited village will then make requests and the messengers will memorize these and tell the proper headmen at Qaviraq, in order that these men will be able to exchange goods at the time of the dance. By exchanging these things, the headmen will be helping to return the bird's spirit,' the spirit men then disappeared. (p. 9)

Like Tuulik, Asiqłuq started an Iñupiaq dance group. There are typically 10-25 members, though some move away while new members are always welcome. As the group practiced, whenever a dance member made a mistake, Asiqłuq made the whole group dance the song again to teach each song and dance correctly. As dance members moved away, permission to perform the dances was given to share with others.

For Future Generations

In 1999, I sought out other Iñupiat people living in Fairbanks. During the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics (WEIO), there are usually several Iñupiaq dance groups performing. This is the time of year when I had previously been asked to start an Iñupiaq dance group. I was able to re-generate interest during WEIO, gathering contact information for those interested in Iñupiaq dance and culture. After having a couple of potluck meetings to find out about the experience level of potential members, to get acquainted with each other, and to arrange the best practice schedule, we started to have regular meetings. At one point, the newly formed dance group had four generations from one family.

After a few months, our group was asked to perform for an Indigenous Youth Leadership conference in Fairbanks. Just by word of mouth, our Iñupiaq dance group performed at several meetings and conferences. When our group was formed, the members wanted to make sure that learning Iñupiaq dance and culture was a fun experience. We also wanted to involve children as much as possible with our cultural heritage. After about one year of practicing and performing, I felt that we needed to identify and establish our own name for the group. I offered several suggestions for the whole group to decide. The group decided on "Pavva," Kawerak dialect meaning, "away from the sea; towards the mountains." The group chose this name because we live away from the Coastal region where our parents and grandparents had originally lived.

Our dance group, the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers of Fairbanks, encourages anyone, Native or non- Native, interested in learning about Iñupiaq culture to join. Members of the group represent Iñupiaq people from various places

in the Iñupiaq region; we have members from the Seward Peninsula, Northwest Alaska, and North Slope regions. We have learned at least one song from each region to honor our ancestors. We also perform songs that we have written and composed. One song that we perform is the Iñupiat Ilitqusiat, the Iñupiaq Values. The motions represent each Iñupiaq value and are adaptations from words and phrases in American Sign Language.

Over the last 16 years, I have seen personal and cultural growth in members of the dance group. Members are able to present the difference between Iñupiaq and Yup'ik styles of dance and drumming. We can explain the meanings behind the sayuun dances. Some members can even identify where the dances originate just by listening to the songs. There are some members who used to be extremely shy, unable to dance in front of people or even say his or her own name in front of an audience. I have seen all the youth involved with Pavva, including my own three sons and grandson, express pride in our cultural heritage through dance and interaction with the audience.

Pavva is a fairly young dance group, compared to some of the dance groups that have been around for generations. Hence, some of the dance group members were hesitant to perform when other Iñupiaq dance groups were participating. However, the group members received cultural validation, particularly at two separate events. In 2007, Pavva performed for the Alaska Federation of Natives Elders' reception at the University of Alaska Museum. All of the Iñupiaq Elders expressed gratitude that there is an Iñupiaq dance group in Fairbanks for the Iñupiat living here. One Elder said, "Keep it up!" In 2009, Pavva performed at WEIO for the first time. Other Iñupiaq dance groups said to Pavva, "The more, the merrier," expressing that they were glad there is an Iñupiaq dance group available in Fairbanks.

Kakaruk and Oquilluk (1964) share about the importance of Iñupiaq dance in preserving cultural identity and well-being:

> Tuulik lived to be very old. One morning his wives found him sick. Villagers came to Tuulik, to visit with him before he died. He asked his people to try to keep up the Eagle - Wolf Dance, and to see that it was passed on just as the spirits intended to the following generation. Once the knowledge of the Dance was lost, Tuulik said, that would be its end, forever. So the last day of this great man, Tuulik came. And he died. This is a true story from ancient times. (p. 25)

Like Tuulik, Asiqłuq encourages others to share dances. Historically, there is evidence of missionary influences, particularly regulating Alaska Native cultural practices. Some communities were forbidden by the missionaries to perform any Indigenous dances, which were considered by the Christian missionaries to be a demonic practice. This may have created a group of Iñupiat who still feel that they cannot participate in any Iñupiaq dancing, either due to religious beliefs, or due to the lack of coordination to even attempt to learn. Fortunately, this is not true for every community.

In September 2009, the community of Noorvik lifted a ban by the missionaries on Iñupiaq dancing (Arctic Sounder, 2009). The missionary in Noorvik banned Iñupiaq dancing about 100 years ago. Throughout that time, the community had not been involved with any Iñupiaq dancing. The Noorvik Elders' Council and Noorvik Friends Church recently lifted the ban, and members of the community have been re-learning their cultural heritage by inviting neighboring villages to help teach them. The opportunity to form an Iñupiaq dance group is not just limited to the urban environment; it is also relevant to rural communities, re- introducing dance as an essential part of the Iñupiaq cultural heritage.

Well-Being for the Spirit

  I am very grateful to the late Chief William Tyson for adopting me into his dance group and family. I have learned a lot from him and hope to honor him by continuing to celebrate my cultural heritage. Like Mr. Tyson and the Greatland Traditional Dancers, Pavva invites anyone interested in learning to participate, with no pressure on performing in front of people. Pavva encourages the youth to learn about who they are and about their ancestors. Whenever a Pavva member makes a mistake, I make the whole group practice the song again from the beginning, not to humiliate or belittle the dance member, but to promote strength through perseverance. Pavva continues to be involved with educational organizations, volunteering their time to teach both the young and old about the Iñupiaq culture and dancing.

  Like Tuulik, Asiqłuq encourages the continuation of cultural practices and dances to contribute to the community well-being and identity. Table 1 shows how *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* are portrayed in Tuulik's and Asiqłuq's journey towards Indigenous well-being.

Table 1

Iñupiat Ilitqusiat *Values of Well-Being Observed in Tuulik's and Asiqłuq's Journey*

TUULIK'S JOURNEY	ASIQŁUQ'S JOURNEY
Iḷisimałiq Uqapiałiġmik: Knowledge of Language	
Through visitation from the spirits, Tuulik learned the proper ceremonies and traditions, along with new vocabulary.	Driven by the desire to teach his children their language and culture, Asiqłuq established the Pavva dance group. The dance members practice their language in everyday situations and during dance practices.
Iḷisimałiq Iḷagiiḷiġmik: Knowledge of Family Tree	
Tuulik knew his place among his people and gained his position through sharing the Eagle-Wolf Dance	In regaining his cultural identity, Asiqłuq has gained knowledge about his family tree and passes that knowledge to his children.
Aatchuqtuutiłiq Avatmun: Sharing	
Tuulik taught his and neighboring villages the Eagle-Wolf Dance, sharing food, dance, rituals, and ceremony.	Asiqłuq was taught to share his cultural heritage with others through dance.
Atchiksuałiq: Humility	
In the story, Tuulik did not know he hunted a Great Eagle; he humbled himself and persevered to learn from his mistakes.	Asiqłuq humbly learned to dance properly when the Elders pointed out his mistakes.
Kamaksṛiłiq Utuqqanaanik: Respect for Elders	
Tuulik learned respect for the spirit visitors as Elders of cultural understandings.	Asiqłuq interacted with Elders who nurtured and taught him to embrace his Iñupiaq identity.

Kamakkutiłiq: Respect for Others	
Tuulik listened to the spirit visitors, showing respect for the Mother Eagle and her son.	Yup'ik Elders invited Asiqłuq, although he is Iñupiaq, to embrace Indigenous dance and culture. Similar, the Pavva dancers openly invite all to learn Iñupiaq dance and cultural heritage.

Savaqatigiiyułiq: Cooperation	
The Mother Eagle required that Tuulik's village cooperate with the neighboring villages.	Asiqłuq's establishment of the Pavva dancers promoted cooperation between Iñupiat people in Fairbanks and Elders from rural Iñupiaq villages.

Savvaqtułiq: Hard Work	
Tuulik demonstrated commitment and hard work in learning, and later teaching, the proper ceremonies and dances.	For Asiqłuq, learning to dance first in Yup'ik, then in Iñupiaq, was not easy; it required commitment and hard work.

Piqpaksriḷiq Iḷiḷgaanik: Love for Children	
The Eagle-Wolf dance was established with the purpose of passing cultural knowledge to future generations.	Asiqłuq's motivation to form the Pavva dancers was prompted by his desire for his children to learn their Iñupiaq heritage.

Paaqsaaqatautaiḷiq: Avoid Conflict	
Tuulik chose to appease, or make amends, with the conflict that emerged when he shot down the Giant Eagle.	Asiqłuq faced conflict in his personal life and received healing through recognizing and appreciating who he is.

Aŋayuqaaġiich Savaaksraŋich: Family Roles	
Tuulik lived his role as a hunter for his family and a leader for his community.	Asiqłuq accepted his role as a parent and continues to act as a cultural bearer in his community.

Kaŋiqsimauraałiq Irrutchikun: Spirituality	
Religious traditions were established among the villages through the Eagle-Wolf Dance and the Messenger Feast.	Asiqłuq and the Pavva dancers draw from the spirit of their ancestors for strength.

Quvianniułikun Tipsisaaġiḷiq: Humor	
The Eagle-Wolf Dance feast and celebration established friendly relations among the villages.	Asiqłuq and the Pavva Dancers make *Katimarugut* enjoyable with humor, and they do not make learning about the Iñupiaq values too serious.

Kamaksriḷiq Nutim Iñiqtanik: Respect for Nature	
New dances, songs, and traditions were established to respect and honor the fallen eagle.	Through dance and songs Asiqłuq and the Pavva dancers continue to demonstrate respect for all living beings.

Kiŋuniġmi Suraġatlasiñiałiq: Domestic Skills	
Tuulik set out on his hunt to provide for his home and his family.	Asiqłuq desired to instill Iñupiaq cultural traditions in his children.
Aŋunialgułiq: Hunter Success	
Tuulik was known as a great hunter; however, hunter success was only achieved after Tuulik obtained the wisdom of the spirit visitors.	Asiqłuq celebrates hunter success through subsistence dance movement and song.
Iñuuniaqatiunik Ikayuutiłiq: Responsibility to Tribe	
Tuulik had the responsibility to teach the Messenger Feast to his people and to continue the tradition to maintain Iñupiaq identity and well-being.	As Tuulik and his Elders advise, Asiqłuq continues to teach and create dances for others to further continue the heritage and well-being.

Iñupiat Ilitqusiat (Northwest Iñupiaq Values) Observed

The Northwest Iñupiat promote health and well-being through living out the *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* in everyday life. It is culturally responsive to examine how we connect our *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* with the Iñupiaq dances. It is also a new way of conducting research and highlights the strengths of a culture and heritage. For example, the ways in which our ancestors held dances and lived their cultural values is adapted from Asiqłuq's (2015) Iñupiaq methodology in his dissertation. Table 2 lists the *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* on the left side. The right describes a view of how each Iñupiaq value is observed by the Pavva dancers.

Table 2

Cultural Values Observed through Dance

IÑUPIAT ILITQUSIAT	HOW IÑUPIAQ WELL-BEING IS OBSERVED THROUGH DANCING
Iḷisimałiq Uqapiałiġmik: Knowledge of Language	*Knowledge of language provides a link to Indigenous values and traditions.* We have an understanding of the Iñupiaq language at various levels. Some dancers are fluent speakers, while some are just beginning to learn. We speak our language in everyday situations, including using our heritage language during dance practice.
Iḷisimałiq Iḷagiiḷiġmik: Knowledge of Family Tree	*Learning another's culture promotes learning one's own family tree and cultural heritage.* There are dancers who are related to each other. We draw on shared family experiences and family knowledge during dance practice. We also recognize our relation to all beings.

Aatchuqtuutiłiq Avatmun: Sharing	*Sharing encourages happiness and establishes harmony with others.* When we share stories and experiences with each other during dance practice, we learn from each other. We do not have the same experiences and views for each Iñupiaq value. We may remember an experience when someone shares a story.
Atchiksuałiq: Humility	*Setting aside pride allows oneself to learn and relate to others.* No one Iñupiaq person knows everything about the Iñupiaq heritage. No one puts or sees themselves as higher than others, during dance practice or anytime.
Kamaksriłiq Utuqqanaanik: Respect for Elders	*Elders are the keepers of cultural knowledge, when you treat them with respect you honor their experiences.* We listen and learn from our Elders during dance practice when they have information they want to share.
Kamakkutiłiq: Respect for Others	*Respect for others means recognizing and respecting that all are on a journey of cultural and spiritual well-being.* There are non-Iñupiaq members in our community, including parents or foster-parents of Iñupiat children. They are included in dance practice so they can learn more about the *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat*.
Savaqatigiiyułiq: Cooperation	*Cooperation can take many forms and can establish healthy relations and interpersonal connections.* We need to cooperate with each other during dance practice, making it a group effort to learn from each other.
Savvaqtułiq: Hard Work	*Maintaining a healthy lifestyle requires a commitment and hard work.* We acknowledge that learning is not an easy task. Learning many songs and dance motions is hard work. Scheduling practices to share our *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* is challenging due to various responsibilities, but we continue to make time.
Piqpaksriļiq Iļilgaanik: Love for Children	*The well-being of our children is essential for maintaining life and our cultural heritage.* We are having practices, because we want to pass our Iñupiaq values to our future cultural bearers. We encourage all children to have fun while learning, showing our love for them.
Paaqsaaqatautaiļiq: Avoid Conflict	*Conflict is not always avoidable; it is a matter of how it is dealt with. Dealing with conflict supports healthy well-being.* During dance practice, we do not fight with each other. We try to work together with respect to better understand our cultural heritage.

Aŋayuqaaġiich Savaaksraŋich: Family Roles	*Care for family is essential for nurturing well-being and inner harmony.* Our Iñupiaq cultural protocols have older family members share first during dance practices. This also recognizes their role as teacher and mentor to younger group members.
Kaŋiqsimauraaɫiq Irrutchikun: Spirituality	*Dancing is a traditional and contemporary form of celebrating spiritual beliefs.* A lot of what we as dancers do involves spirituality. During dance practices, we remember the knowledge from our ancestors. Spirits from the eco-animus[2] is a part of the *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat*.
Quvianniuɫikun Tipsisaaġiɫiq: Humor	*Humor promotes happiness and well-being.* Dancers make *Katimarugut* enjoyable with humor, and we do not make learning about the Iñupiaq values too serious. Humorous stories may be more memorable when recalling experiences.
Kamaksriɫiq Nutim Iñiqtanik: Respect for Nature	*Inupiaq well-being relies on recognition of humans as a part of, not apart from nature.* During dance practices, we remember where they come from. A lot of what we have learned about the *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* is through observations from nature and the acknowledgement that humans are still a part of nature, not apart from nature.
Kiŋuniġmi Suraġatlasiñiaɫiq: Domestic Skills	*Our Iñupiaq way of life that we have learned from our ancestors need to continue.* When a task needs to get completed during dance practices, everyone pitches in. All of our ancestors' skills continue to be passed down regardless of gender roles.
Aŋunialguɫiq: Hunter Success	*A subsistence lifestyle continues to promote health and well-being among Iñupiaq peoples.* While we have dance practices, we often share food from subsistence activities. This is our way of celebrating *Aŋunialguɫiq*.
Iñuuniaqatiunik Ikayuutiɫiq: Responsibility to Tribe	*If we do not continue our Iñupiaq dance, part of our heritage and well-being will fade away.* Dance practices are not only for the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers, but also for other Iñupiat, other Indigenous groups, and other people wanting to better understand the *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat*.

---

[2] Asiqluq defines eco-animus in his Master's project and in his dissertation in Chapter 5 when talking about *Kaŋiqsimauraaɫiq Irrutchikun* (Spirituality).

Implications for Formal and Informal Education for Well-Being in Canada

There are many implications for informal and formal education in this *unipkaaq* (legend) and *uqaaqtuaq* (personal story). For example, Pavva Iñupiaq dance members are asked and teach dances at local elementary and middle schools. Pavva has given their songs to an Iñupiaq man living in Southeast Alaska to start his own dance group. Asiqluq's oldest son was hired as lead cultural bearer at the Fairbanks Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitor's Center. He introduced himself as the future leader of the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers. He taught several youth to perform Pavva's dances for the summer visitors. Asiqluq's second son taught the *Iñupiat Ilitqusiat* dance to his classmates in one of his high school classes and received a grade of 110%. Another teenage Pavva dance member was invited to be the keynote speaker at a statewide Elders and Youth conference and shared one of the dances.

Through these and other examples, the Pavva Dance Group is preserving Iñupiaq values and traditions for future generations. The group's songs and dances reflect the culture, traditions, heritage and well-being of the Iñupiaq people passed down from generation to generation. Asiqluq continues to create songs and dances for the group to perform, and he shares dances from Yup'ik and Iñupiaq groups. The group performs many times at Alaska Native cultural and non-Native events throughout Alaska including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, North Pole, Nenana, Bethel and St. Mary's. The group, or members of the group, have also performed in California, Hawai'i, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Florida, Washington, Oklahoma, Utah, Maryland, and Washington D.C., as well as in Calgary, Malaysia, and Iqaluit in Nunavut. Pavva has been filmed by BBC for the program Blue Peter, and filmed by other film companies. We will continue passing our Indigenous knowledge to future generations.

Conclusion

It is recognized that deep-rooted cultural knowledge is conveyed through the stories of our ancestors and passed down through the generations (ALKC, 2007; Archibald, 2008; Cram & Phillips, 2012; Garrett, 1999; John, 2009; Northwest Alaska Elders, 1989, 1990, 1992; Reimer, 1999; Topkok, 2010). In this chapter we outlined how traditional stories, including those conveyed through drumming and dance, can provide a meaningful educational approach for transmitting cultural knowledge, wellness, and identity to youth and future generations. We invite others to share in our story and listen to our experience promoting health and well-being of the heart, the mind, the body, and the spirit. In this way, we follow the pathway of our ancestors and live and celebrate our cultural heritages and values, radiating outward to the community and beyond. Our *unipkaat* (legends) provide the guidance we receive from our ancestors to achieve a state of personal and community well-being.

References

Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (Producer). (2007). *Inuit holistic lifelong learning model: Inuit values and beliefs*. Retrieved from http://www.cclcca.ca/pdfs/RedefiningSuccess/CCL_Learning_Model_IN.pdf

Alaska Native Knowledge Network. (n.d.). *Iceberg analogy.* Retrieved from http://ankn.uaf.edu/IKS/iceberg.html

Anchorage School District (n.d.). *William Tyson elementary.* (Online). Retrieved from http://www.asdk12.org/schools/williamtyson/pages/william_tyson_website/William_Tyson.html

Archibald, J. (2008). *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Arctic Sounder (Publisher) (2009). *Ban on Native dancing in Noorvik overturned.* Retrieved from http://thearcticsounder.com/article/0947ban_on_native_dancing_in_noorvik_overturned

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (2005). Indigenous knowledge systems and Alaska Native ways of knowing. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly, 36*(1), 8-23.

Barnhardt, R., & Kawagley, A. O. (2010). *Alaska Native education: Views from within.* Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Cram, F. & Phillips, H. (2012). Claiming interstitial space for multicultural, transdisciplinary research through community-up values. *International Journal of Critical Indigenous Studies 5*(2), 36-49. Brisbane, Australia: Queensland University of Technology.

Garrett, M. T. (1999). Understanding the 'medicine' of Native American traditional values: An integrative review. In *Counseling & Values, 43*(2), 84-99.

John, T. (2009). *Yuraryaraput kangiit-llu: Our way of dance and their meanings.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, AK.

Kakaruk, J. A., & Oquilluk, W. A. (1964). *The Eagle wolf dance (Messenger feast).* Privately printed.

Kingston, D.M., Koyuk, L. T., & Mayac, E. A. (2001). The story of the King Island Wolf Dance: Then and now. *Western Folklore, 60*(4), 263-278.

Napoleon, H. (1996). *Yuuyaraq: The way of the human being.* Fairbanks, AK: Alaska Native Knowledge Network, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Northwest Alaska Elders. (1989). *Lore of the Iñupiat: The Elders speak* (Vol. 1). Kotzebue, AK: Northwest Arctic Borough School District.

Northwest Alaska Elders. (1990). *Lore of the Iñupiat: The Elders speak* (Vol. 2). Kotzebue, AK: Northwest Arctic Borough School District.

Northwest Alaska Elders. (1992). *Lore of the Iñupiat: The Elders speak* (Vol. 3). Kotzebue, AK: Northwest Arctic Borough School District.

Oquilluk, W. A. (1973). *People of Kauwerak: Legends of the northern Eskimo.* Anchorage, AK: AMU Press.

Reimer, C. S. (1999). *Counseling the Inupiat Eskimo.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Schaeffer, J., & Christensen, S. (2010). Iñupiat Ilitqusiat: To save our land and our people. In R. Barnhardt & A. O. Kawagley (Eds.), *Alaska Native education: Views from within* (pp. 59-72) Fairbanks, Alaska: Alaska Native Knowledge Network.

Schweitzer, P. P., Berman, M., Barnhardt, R., & Kaplan, L. (2008). Arctic social indicators application. In J. N. Larsen & P. Schweitzer (Eds.), *Arctic social indicators.* Copenhagen, Denmark: Arctic Council.

Topkok, C. S. (2010). *Iñiqpaġmiut Iñupiat quliaqtuaŋit (Iñupiat urban legends): An analysis of contemporary Iñupiat living in an urban environment.* Retrieved from http://ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/Masters_Projects/Sean_Topkok/

Conclusion:
Learning from Indigenous Perspectives

THOMAS FALKENBERG

There are a number of themes running throughout the different chapters of this book. In this section I would like to draw on some of these themes to argue that Indigenous perspectives on (education for) well-being can, and should, be intentionally integrated into what is currently the mainstream, i.e. European-settler discourse on (education for) well-being.

Before I argue for this thesis, I want to clarify in what sense I mean "integrating into mainstream discourse on (education for) well-being." "Integrating" often implies – conceptually and practically – a dilution, even dissolution, of the original perspectives, and scholars rightly warn of "cultural (mis-)appropriation" (e.g., Cameron, 2005; Young & Brunk, 2009). I like to draw on the metaphor of a woven blanket to illustrate in what sense I talk about "integration into mainstream discourse." For what follows, I want to emphasize three features of this metaphor. First, "integration" (weaving together) means that after the weaving together, the threads are recognized and recognizable as independent threads – it is the very quality and strength of the *individual* threads themselves and of the way in which they are inter-woven that are essential to the overall quality and strength of the blanket. The usefulness of this feature of the metaphor finds its support in complex living systems research, where it is found that complex dynamic systems – like social systems – are more resilient to (existential) disturbances to the system if the system has more diverse, rather than assimilated, sub-systems (e.g., Norbert, Wilson, Walker, & Ostrom, 2008). The second feature of the metaphor I want to emphasize is that the artful weaving together of the different threads contributes to the quality and strength of the woven blanket overall. Finally, the third feature is that one type of thread (here: Indigenous perspectives on (education for) well-being) supports the strength of other types of threads (here: the European-settler perspectives) as part of the woven blanket overall.

It is in particular this last feature that I want to expand on in this conclusion. I want to do so as a non-Indigenous person, who is concerned for, and with, (education for) the capacity of all those living now on the traditional Indigenous territories that make up what is internationally referred to as Canada, to live a flourishing life. My understanding of the current mainstream discourse on (education for) well-being is such that – to stay in the metaphor – this discourse has been weaving a blanket (European-settler well-being discourses) that is lacking in strength and that is in dire need of strengthening *because* it does not involve the strength of Indigenous perspectives on (education for) well-being. While it is not my place to speak uninvited to the reverse, I have come to understand the importance of Indigenous perspectives on (education for) well-being for the quality of the mainstream discourses on well-being in Canada more generally. An "Indigenization" of mainstream Canadian institutions, like schools and universities, and of Canadian society more generally, thus, should also be envisioned as a process to benefit the quality of life of the European-settler side of

the (treaty) relationship. As Battiste (2000) writes, in her argument for the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge into school and university curricula:

> The real justification for including Aboriginal knowledge in the modern curriculum is not so that Aboriginal students can compete with non-Aboriginal students in an imagined world. It is, rather, that immigrant society is sorely in need of what Aboriginal knowledge has to offer. We are witnessing throughout the world the weaknesses in knowledge based on science and technology. It is costing us our air, our water, our earth; our very lives are at stake. No longer are we able to turn to science to rid us of the mistakes of the past or to clean up our planet for the future of our children. Our children's future planet is not secure, and we have contributed to its insecurity by using the knowledge and skills that we received in public schools. Not only have we found that we need to make new decisions about our lifestyles to maintain the planet, but we are also becoming increasingly aware that the limitations of modern knowledge have placed our collective survival in jeopardy. (pp. 201-202)

In the following, I argue along the same lines that the integration of Indigenous perspectives on (education for) well-being into the weaving of a more relational mainstream blanket *can and should* influence the quality and strength of a such woven blanket.[1] In other words, I will argue that and how these Indigenous perspectives – as, for instance, represented in the chapters in this book – complement, often expand on, and sometimes challenge prominent European-settler discourses on (education for) well-being.

Learning from Indigenous Perspectives

One of the main approaches to well-being in the Western discourse is the one linking well-being to virtues (e.g., Anscombe, 1958; MacIntyre, 1984). This discourse is generally grounded in the academic discipline of philosophy and, in one way or another, goes back about 2500 years to Aristotle's virtue ethics (Aristotle, trans. 1976). Simplified, one can say that this approach suggests that in order to live well, one needs to live a virtuous life, that is, one needs to live in accordance with the virtues. The discourse is then generally about what "living virtuously" means and what kind of virtues are there to be considered. For instance, Aristotle (trans. 1976, p. 104) considers the following qualities to be moral virtues: courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, magnanimity, proper ambition, patience, truthfulness, wittiness, friendliness, modesty, and righteous indignation.

This link between living a virtuous life and well-being can also be found in Indigenous traditions: Anishinaabe (Bell, Chapter 1)[2]; Cree (e.g., Greidanus & Johnson, Chapter 7; Hart, 2002); and Iñupiat Inuit (Topkok & Green, Chapter 11). Bell (Chapter 1) characterizes this link as follows (see also Deer & Falkenberg, Introductory Chapter):

---

[1] I am sensitive to the distinct meanings of "inclusion" (Battiste) and "integration" (Falkenberg), so I do not want to make the claim here that Battiste and I are necessarily talking about the same vision; but I do sense that with my qualification of the meaning of the term "integration" to the metaphor of the woven blanket there is some affinity of notions.

[2] Any chapter reference refers to chapters in this book.

> *Living a good life,* or *following the good red road,* or *doing things in a good way* requires a great deal of energy from a person, and results in many rewards. The word *good* should not be taken lightly when considered from an Anishinaabe perspective. *The good way* means fostering the child's development using the seven sacred values of honesty, wisdom, love, respect, bravery, humility, and truth, which result in great things for the person receiving the teachings. For many people it takes a whole lifetime to learn how to live according to these values, from an Anishinaabe worldview. This is why Elders are often respected for their wisdom; they have come to know sharing, humility, kindness, caring, strength, and respect. Again, these words cannot be taken lightly. Each one involves a great deal of work on the part of the person to come to a true understanding of what these words and life ways really mean. (Bell, Chapter 1, p. 14)

In several ways, this Indigenous perspective on (education for) well-being can, and should, complement and expand on the European-settler discourse on the role of virtues for (education for) well-being. First, it complements the discourse by siding with the arguments for a central role of virtues for conceptualizing well-being and for virtues education. In many Western approaches to well-being, virtues do not play any role (for an overview, see Falkenberg, 2014); the character and virtues approach within positive psychology (e.g., Peterson & Seligman, 2004) is an exception to that rule. In the context of schooling in North America, virtues education is generally referred to as "character education" (e.g., Lickona, 1991; Ryan & McLean, 1987), a specific and wide-spread version of which has been strongly criticised as "a particular style of moral *training*, one that reflects *particular* values as well as *particular* assumptions about the nature of children and about how people learn" (Kohn, 1997, p. 154; emphasis added; see also Noddings, 2002). Indigenous perspectives on the role of virtues for well-being can greatly *enrich* the discourse for a possibly more acceptable version of virtue education in schools. Indigenous perspectives on virtue education would clearly *expand* on the European-settler discourse on virtues education by emphasizing, as Bell (Chapter 1) suggests in the above quotation, that "for many people it takes a whole lifetime to learn how to live according to these values" (p. 14). In the European-settler discourse, virtues education is, if addressed at all, limited to school education; the adult education literature is lacking any substantial discussion of a role of virtues in adult education.

The literature on deep ecology (e.g., Drengson & Inoue, 1995) and other approaches to ecopsychology (e.g., Kahn & Hasbach, 2012b; Pickering, 2007) emphasizes the importance of "nature for our physical and psychological well-being" (Kahn & Hasbach, 2012a, p. 1). Ecopsychology, however, is an approach to well-being more on the periphery of the European-settler discourse on well-being, which itself rarely considers a link between human well-being and the state of the natural environment. For instance, the capabilities approach to well-being gives an important role to relationship that humans have with other species and the "world of nature" more generally (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34), while the mainstream positive psychology approach to well-being (e.g., Lopez & Snyder, 2009) does not do so at all. It is here were Indigenous perspectives on well-being *complement* the ecopsychological approach to well-being and *challenge* the mainstream European-settler discourse on well-being by emphasizing "a spiritual connection with nature and Mother Earth (Lafleur, Chapter 10, p. 160), "the concept of Mother Earth as elder and teacher" (p. 170), and the "the worldview that connects us to recognize our well-being is connected to the well-being of *Shkagamik-kwe* [Mother Earth]" (p. 161). Canadian anthropologist Wade Davis (2009), growing up in a European-settler culture and professionally immersing himself into Indigenous cultures, describes

the challenge that Indigenous perspectives on the role of forests pose to mainstream European-settler perspectives as follows:

> As a young man I was raised on the coast of British Columbia to believe that the rainforests existed to be cut. This was the essence of the ideology of scientific forestry that I studied in school and practised in the woods as a logger. . . .
>
> This cultural perspective was profoundly different from that of the First Nations, those living on Vancouver Island at the time of European contact, and those still there. If I was sent into the forest to cut it down, a Kwakwaka'wakw youth of similar age was traditionally dispatched during his Hamatsa initiation into those same forests to confront Huxwhukw and the Crooked Beak of Heaven, cannibal spirits living at the north end of the world, all with the goal of returning triumphant to the potlatch that his individual spiritual discipline and fortitude might revitalize his entire people with the energy of the wild. (pp. 121-122)

A similar *challenge* to the mainstream European-settler discourse on well-being is posed by Indigenous perspectives on well-being through the latter's emphasis on the importance on place:

> Land has always been a defining element of Aboriginal culture. Land contains the language, the stories, and the histories of a people. It provides water, air, shelter, and food. Land participates in the ceremonies and the songs. And land is home. Not in an abstract way. (King, 2012, p. 218)

In her book contribution, Lafleur (Chapter 10, pp. 162, 163) describes territory and place as the base for *Anishinaabek* identity, and the First Nations', Métis, and Inuit learning models introduced by Bouvier, Battiste, and Laughlin (Chapter 2) identify learning as place-based: "The land and the ecology come with responsibilities of stewardship and care, as well as a knowledge of what needs to be done in each season" (p. 32). This focus on the role of place for well-being *expands* the community-based view that can be found in some European-settler discourses on well-being (e.g., Prilleltensky & Prilleltensky, 2007).

Another aspect of Indigenous perspectives on well-being that *expands* and even *challenges* the European-settler discourse on well-being is the role given to older people ("elders") in conceptualizing well-being. Bell (Chapter 1), Deer (Chapter 5), and Lafleur (Chapter 10) all draw for their studies on well-being on community elders in their respective inquiry into Indigenous perspectives on (education for) well-being. This approach is grounded in a view of the status of elders in connection with well-being and well-becoming, as for instance Bell (Chapter 1) illustrates:

> For many people it takes a whole lifetime to learn how to live according to these values, from an Anishinaabe worldview. This is why Elders are often respected for their wisdom; they have come to know sharing, humility, kindness, caring, strength, and respect. (p. 14)
>
> As an Elder, the individual has the opportunity to be a beacon for others. (p. 13)

Two additional features of the approaches in these three chapters are important in light of their contrast to many European-settler approaches to well-being. First, elders are not research "subjects" that provide data to the researcher, who in turn interpret the data as they see fit to arrive at their (the researchers') understanding of well-being, but rather elders serve as "informants" who share with the

researcher their (the elders') understanding of well-being. Second, all elders consulted in each study are from the same cultural community, who speak of the concept of well-being in their particular cultural tradition only, without any claim about the understanding of well-being in any other culture or tradition.

These three features are in stark contrast to a number of prominent European-settler approaches to well-being. The positive psychology approach to well-being might serve here as an example. First, in positive psychology – as is more generally reflected in the European-settler discourse on the role and status of scholarly research – the view is taken that it is the research undertaken in this field of study that is to guide and inform the general population or culture in living a flourishing life. Christopher Peterson, one of the early and prominent proponents of positive psychology, expresses this as follows:

> The task of positive psychology is to provide the most objective facts possible about the phenomena it studies so that everyday people and society as a whole can make an informed decision about what goals to pursue in what circumstances. (Peterson, 2006, p. 16)

As a cursory look through *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Lopez & Snyder, 2009) illustrates, positive psychology studies its phenomena generally using inferential statistics methods, which consider study participants as interchangeable subjects (within the selected sample parameters). Second, as is common in European-settler research traditions, the development of the theoretical framework – for instance the conceptualizing of "well-being" – is a matter of assumptions made by the respective researcher and can change quite radically if the researcher changes their assumptions. Martin Seligman's change of his concept of well-being provides a telling example of this phenomenon (see Seligman, 2011). Third, among positive psychologists there is "one camp [which] proposes that some strengths [relevant to well-being] exist universally across cultures" (Pedrotti, Edwards, & Lopez, 2009, p. 50); and in their critical analysis of the epistemological assumptions generally made in positive psychology, Christopher and Hickinbottom (2008) content "that positive psychology is doomed to being narrow and ethnocentric as long as its researchers remain unaware of the cultural assumptions underlying their work" (p. 565).

In terms of (school) education, Indigenous perspectives on education for well-being challenge European-settler approaches to education in two ways. They do so, first, by giving well-being a central role among the purposes of education, while provincial school education does not do so.[3] For instance, well-being has been explicitly listed as a goal for education in two of the three Indigenous life-long learning models introduced by Bouvier et al. (Chapter 2, pp. 29-31). The virtue-based education approach discussed in several of the chapters (e.g., chapters 1, 2, and 11, and in the Introductory Chapter) also makes explicit reference to well-being (living a virtuous life) as a core purpose of education. Second, the Indigenous perspectives on education for well-being challenge European-settler approaches to (school) education by suggesting a *holistic* perspective on education grounded in a holistic concept of well-being approach to the purpose of (school) education (e.g., chapters 6, 7, and 11).

---

[3] An exception is Ontario's recent Well-Being Strategy (Government of Ontario, 2016), which identifies "promoting [student] well-being" as one of the government's four "renewed goals for [school] education" (Government of Ontario, 2014, p. 3).

Weaving a Blanket for Living Sustainably Flourishing Lives

A few years ago my past research interests merged into an overarching focus: sustainable well-being and the role of education in helping people live well – that is, to live a sustainably flourishing life. The more I engaged with the Western scholarship on well-being in quite different disciplines – a scholarship that has tremendously ballooned over the last two decades (Falkenberg, 2014) – the more I came to understand that, and particularly why, the dominant perspectives on purpose and practice of living in the West is so counterproductive to people's well-being and their living a sustainably flourishing life.[4] It was not that I had not already been aware of the destructive effect of a solely profit-oriented corporate capitalism on the living conditions of humans and other living beings and, at least as importantly, on the life orientation of those living in Western and Western-oriented societies. The engagement with the literature on well-being brought into sharper focus what to be concerned *for* and not just what to be *against*.

From the beginning of this new professional and personal phase of my life, Indigenous perspectives on living "the good life" (Bell, Chapter 1) – and more generally, the Perennial Philosophies of traditional societies (Jaspers, 1953; Miller, 2007) – were an integral part of my thinking about education for well-being. (This book project resulted from this thinking, and I am so grateful to Frank Deer that he was willing to develop the project with me.) I learned how much traditional Indigenous teachings align with what the European-settler well-being literature generally suggests are more promising approaches to living a sustainably flourishing life. I understood that non-Indigenous people, like myself, need to learn from Indigenous traditions and the knowledge keepers of those traditions about living sustainably flourishing lives – as the subtitles of two books I read suggest: "What can we learn from traditional societies?" (Diamond, 2012) and "Why ancient wisdom matters in the modern world (Davis, 2009). Indigenizing Canadian society in general, and the education systems in particular, seems to me to have to include this understanding. From my non-Indigenous perspective, providing space for, and learning from, Indigenous traditional understandings and practices of living a sustainably flourishing life will strengthen all inter-woven threads of the blanket – and I see the chapter contributions in this book having the potential of doing exactly that.

References

Anscombe, G. E. M. (1958). Modern moral philosophy. *Philosophy, 33*, 1-19.

Aristotle (1976). *The ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean ethics.* (J. A. K. Thomson, Trans.; rev. ed.). London, England: Penguin.

Battiste, M. (2000). Maintaining Aboriginal identity, language, and culture in modern society. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp. 192-208). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.

Cameron, M. (2005). Two-spirited Aboriginal people: Continuing cultural appropriation by non-Aboriginal society. *Canadian Woman Studies, 24*(2/3), 123-127.

---

[4] For instance, the consumer and materialism-oriented economic systems of the West – which are now spreading around the world – undermine our psychological and social well-being (e.g., Jackson, 2008; Kasser, 2002; Schwartz, 2001) and the ecological systems upon which human and other life forms depend for survival (e.g., Jackson, 2009; Schor, 2010; Victor, 2008).

Christopher, J. C., & Hickinbottom, S. (2008). Positive psychology, ethnocentrism, and the disguised ideology of individualism. *Theory & Psychology, 18*(5), 563-589.

Davis, W. (2009). *The wayfinders: Why ancient wisdom matters in the modern world.* Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press.

Diamond, J. (2012). *The world until yesterday: What can we learn from traditional societies?* New York, NY: Viking Penguin.

Drengson, A., & Inoue, Y. (Eds.). (1995). *The deep ecology movement: An introductory anthology.* Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.

Falkenberg, T. (2014). Making sense of Western approaches to well-being for an educational context. In F. Deer, T. Falkenberg, B. McMillan, & L. Sims (Eds.), *Sustainable well-being: Concepts, issues, and educational practices* (pp. 77-94). Winnipeg, MB: ESWB Press. Retrieved from www.ESWB-Press.org

Government of Ontario (2014). *Achieving excellence: A renewed vision for education in Ontario.* [Toronto, ON:] Author. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/excellent.html

Government of Ontario (2016). *Ontario's well-being strategy for education: Discussion document.* [Toronto, ON:] Author. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/WBDiscussionDocument.pdf

Hart, M. A. (2002). *Seeking mino-pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal approach to helping.* Halifax, NS: Fernwood.

Jackson, T. (2008). The challenge of sustainable lifestyles. In The Worldwatch Institute (Ed.). (2008). *State of the world 2008: Innovations for a sustainable economy* (pp. 45-60). New York, NY: Norton.

Jackson, T. (2009). *Prosperity without growth: Economics for a finite planet.* London, England: Earthscan.

Jaspers, K. (1953). *Origin and goal of history.* London, England: Routledge & K. Paul.

Kahn, P. H., Jr., & Hasbach, P. H. (2012a). Introduction to Ecopsychology: Science, totems, and the technological species. In P. H. Kahn, Jr. & P. H. Hasbach (Eds.), *Ecopsychology: Science, totems, and the technological species* (pp. 1-21). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Kahn, P. H., Jr., & Hasbach, P. H. (Eds.). (2012b). *Ecopsychology: Science, totems, and the technological species.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Kasser, T. (2002). *The high price of materialism.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

King, T. (2012). *The inconvenient Indian: A curious account of Native people in North America.* [Toronto, ON:] Doubleday Canada.

Kohn, Alfie (1997). The trouble with character education. In A. Molnar (Ed.), *The construction of children's character: Ninety-sixth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (pp. 154-162). Chicago, IL: The National Society for the Study of Education.

Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for character: How our schools can teach respect and responsibility.* New York, NY: Bantam Books.

Lopez, S. J., & Snyder, C. R. (Eds.). (2009). *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

MacIntyre, A. (1984). *After virtue* (2nd ed.). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Miller, J. P. (2007). *The holistic curriculum* (2nd ed.). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Noddings, N. (2002). *Educating moral people: A caring alternative to character education.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Norbert, J., Wilson, J., Walker, B., & Ostrom, E. (2008). Diversity and resilience of social-ecological systems. In J. Norberg & G. S. Cumming (Eds.), *Complexity theory for sustainable future* (pp. 46-79). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Nussbaum, M. C. (2011). *Creating capabilities: The human development approach.* Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Pedrotti, J. T., Edwards, L. M., & Lopez, S. J. (2009). Positive psychology within a cultural context. In S. J. Lopez & C. R. Snyder (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive psychology* (2nd ed.; pp. 49-57). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Pickering, J. (2007). Is well-being local or global? A perspective from ecopsychology. In J. Haworth & G. Hart (Eds.), *Well-being: Individual, community and social perspectives* (pp. 153-166). Houndmills, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Prilleltensky, I., & Prilleltensky, O. (2007). Webs of well-being: The interdependence of personal, relational, organizational and communal well-being. In J. Haworth & G. Hart (Eds.), *Well-being: Individual, community and social perspectives* (pp. 61-78). Houndmills, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ryan, K., & McLean, G. F. (Eds.). (1987). *Character development in schools and beyond*. New York, NY: Praeger.

Schor, J. B. (2010). *Plenitude: The new economics of true wealth*. New York, NY: Penguin Press.

Schwartz, B. (2001). *The costs of living: How market freedom erodes the best things in life* (new ed.). Xlibris. (Fist published 1994)

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Victor, P. A. (2008). *Managing without growth: Slower by design, not disaster*. Cheltenham, England: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Young, J. O., & Brunk, C. G. (Eds.). (2009). *The ethics of cultural appropriation*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Battiste

Dr. Marie Battiste is a Mi'kmaw educator, a member of the Potlotek First Nations, Nova Scotia, and full professor in the Department of Educational Foundations at the University of Saskatchewan. With graduate degrees from Harvard and Stanford, she is a senior Indigenous scholar, whose work in Indigenous knowledge and decolonizing pedagogies has opened new areas of research and inquiry in Canada and beyond. She is an international speaker and widely published author, including books *Living Treaties: Narrating Mi'kmaw Treaty Relations* (CBU Press, 2016); *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit* (Purich Press, 2013), *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge* (Purich Press, 2000), co-authored with J. Youngblood Henderson, *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision* (UBC Press, 2000), and *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (UBC Press, 1995). She can be reached at marie.battiste@usask.ca

Bell

Dr. Nicole Bell is Anishnaabe from Kitigan Zibi First Nation in Quebec and is from the Bear Clan. Nicole is a certified teacher and has a Master of Education degree from Queen's University and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Trent University. Nicole is the mother of five sons and is the founder of an Anishnaabe culture-based school (Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin Cultural Healing and Learning Program) for Indigenous children in junior kindergarten to grade 12 which provided traditional Anishinaabe worldview and values in a contemporary educational context. Nicole is also a founder of an Indigenous healing service in Peterborough (Niijkiwendidaa Anishinaabe Kwewag Services Circle). Nicole is currently an Assistant Professor at Trent University with the School of Education and Professional Learning.

Bouvier

Rita is a retired Métis educator who has served in various leadership roles as an administrator, a writer/researcher and supporter of Indigenous education in K-12 and post-secondary education. She continues to provide leadership by facilitating and supporting decolonization efforts of organizations and institutions. She also does volunteer work in the arts and in community organizations addressing larger systemic issues confronting society. Rita is a published poet with three collections of poetry: *nakomowin'sa for the seasons* (2015); *papîyâhtak* (2004); and *Blueberry Clouds* (1999). *nakomowin'sa for the seasons* is the 2016 winner of the Saskatchewan Rasmussen, Rasmussen & Charowsky Aboriginal Peoples' Writing Award. Bouvier's poetry has appeared in literary anthologies, musicals and television productions, and been translated into Spanish, German and Michif.

Cidro

Dr. Jaime Cidro is an Associate Professor at the University of Winnipeg in the Department of Anthropology. She looks at Indigenous health issues through a socio-cultural lens with a specific focus on socio-cultural determinants of health such as cultural identity, and cultural based health interventions. She was the principal investigator in a community based NEAHR grant through CIHR on cultural based oral health interventions in Norway House Cree Nation and a co- investigator on a CIHR grant on oral health interventions for early childhood tooth decay, and is the lead site

investigator for Norway House Cree Nation. Dr. Cidro is currently the principal investigator on a CIHR funded community-driven project looking at repatriating birthing to a First Nation community in northern Manitoba. She is also working with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs on developing research toolkits with Manitoba First Nation communities. She is the Associate Director of the Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network Prairie Research Centre (SSHRC) and has led several projects on inner city food security in Winnipeg in partnership.

Cyr

My name is Monica Cyr, and I am a proud Métis-Cree woman born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is important that I thank the participants of this research because without them, this research would not have been possible; but also, for taking the time out of their lives to share their knowledge, memories and bannock recipes with me, which has transformed our understanding of the bread. When I was first approached in 2014 to conduct research regarding bannock, I had to chuckle to myself because at that time bannock to me was nothing more than bread that was regularly eaten in my family when I was growing up. I had never given much thought to the subject until I began to ask more questions. As it is, bannock is far more than the constituent ingredients that make up the fluffy-oval shaped bread. It is with hope that the readers enjoy the collective knowledge that has been shared by the Indigenous community within Winnipeg's Point Douglas area.

Deer

Frank Deer is an Associate Professor and Executive Lead for Indigenous Achievement at the University of Manitoba. Frank holds a PhD in Educational Administration from the University of Saskatchewan and is published in the area of Indigenous education. Frank has been awarded funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for his work in the area of ancestral languages. Frank has previously served as a classroom teacher in Northern Manitoba and in the Inner City of Winnipeg.

Desmoulins

Leisa Desmoulins is an Assistant Professor at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. She teaches undergraduate and graduate students in the Faculty of Education, mostly within the area of Indigenous education. She gained Indian Status through marriage to an Anishnaabe man originally from Biigtigong Nishnaabeg (Pic River First Nation), and with whom she has three children. Family and community relations ground her teaching and research work. She has been invited to do community-based research work with Aboriginal groups in Thunder Bay for the past ten years. She can be reached at: ldesmoul@lakeheadu.ca

Falkenberg

Thomas Falkenberg was born and raised in Germany and has been a settler on Indigenous traditional territory since 1993, first on the traditional territories of the Salish peoples and now on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, and Dene peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. Thomas is currently Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, Canada. He is the editor or co-editor of a number of books, including the *Handbook of Canadian Research in Initial Teacher Education* and *Sustainable Well-Being: Concepts, Issues, Perspectives, and Educational Practices.* He is also the editor of a special journal issue on *Philosophical Perspectives on*

Education for Well-Being. From 2011-2016 Thomas was the coordinator of the interdisciplinary Education for Sustainable Well-Being Research Group at the University of Manitoba (www.eswbrg.org). More details about his research and academic background can be gleaned from http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~falkenbe/index.html

Greidanus

Dr. Greidanus is an Assistant Professor in counselling psychology at the University of Lethbridge. She has been a Registered Psychologist in Alberta since 2010 and has worked in private practice in Edmonton, at Dreamcatcher Nature Assisted therapy, and in Northern Alberta First Nations communities. She conducts research in the areas of collaborative practice in health care and online counselling technologies.

Green

Carie Green, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. She teaches introductory and field study research methods, place-based education, and child development in the School of Education Graduate Programs. Her research interests center around children's Place and Environmental Identity Development (EID), focusing particularly on an Alaska Native context. She is interested in how young children construct their understandings, relate with, and interact with the natural world. Methodologically speaking, her research aims to embrace participatory phenomenological methods to engage children as active researchers of culture and change.

Guilbault

Lance is an Adult Education teacher with Frontier School Division in Little Black River Anishinaabe Nation. He graduated from the Community-Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) with a BA and BEd at the University of Winnipeg. Lance has lived a life of ceremony and of Anishinaabe and Cree traditional ways of being, and has shared his knowledge as a community-based researcher with the University of Winnipeg for the last three years.

Hardwick

Jennifer Hardwick is a settler scholar and Alfred Bader Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities. She currently resides in Kingston, Ontario on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg Territory where she teaches Indigenous literature and media at Queen's University and the Royal Military College of Canada, and coordinates community events with the Kahswentha Indigenous Knowledge Initiative.

Johnson

Dr. J. Lauren Johnson is a Registered Psychologist in Edmonton, Alberta, who splits her time between the Psychosocial and Spiritual Resources Department of the Cross Cancer Institute and her private practice. Dr. Johnson has worked extensively with Indigenous clients, including spending three years as a psychologist on reserves in Northern Alberta and another two years as the Clinical Director of a residential treatment program for Indigenous girls. In addition to her practice experience, Dr. Johnson has researched and written about counselling Indigenous populations, and has taught this topic and others at Athabasca University. Dr. Johnson appreciates being able to work with and advocate for the rights and well-being of Indigenous people in her various areas of work.

Kanonhsyonne

Kanonhsyonne (Janice Corinne Hill), Turtle clan mother, single mother of two sons, Director of Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre, is Mohawk. Born in Messina, NY and raised at Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Jan has spent her life working for the revitalization of the Mohawk language and the culture, traditions, and spirituality of her ancestors. Grandmother, mother, auntie, sister, political and spiritual activist, and teacher, she believes in the power of knowing who she is and where she comes from. Jan acquired a B.A. in Native Studies from Trent University and a Bachelor of Education from Queen's University. Jan is currently pursuing a M.A. in Gender Studies at Queen's University.

Kanu

Yatta Kanu is Professor in the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning, Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. Her research and publications focus on educational equity and access for ethnic minority students, culture and student learning, teacher education, and history/social studies education.

Konwanonhsiyohstha

Konwanonhsiyohstha (Callie Hill) is the Executive Director of Tsi Tyónnheht Onkwawén:na Language and Cultural Centre in Kenhtè:ke (Tyendinaga), Ontario. She grew up and has lived in Kenhtè:ke for her entire life where she has worked for band administration and community organizations since 1989. Callie holds a Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration and Governance from Ryerson University and a Master of Education, Indigenous Language Revitalization from the University of Victoria.

Lafleur

Gail Lafleur, Ktaningkwe-Garden Woman, is a member of Nipissing First Nation, Mink Clan. As the first Indigenous PhD to ever graduate at Brock University, Gail recognizes the importance of traditional knowledge and culture in motivating Anishinaabek people to continue their studies to completion in education. Her understanding of the importance of learning from our original teacher and elder-Shkagamik-kwe, comes from many years as a child, picking blueberries with her brother, Johnny, in Northern Ontario. Gail has worked as an outdoor educator as well as fulfilled most duties in education (teacher, counsellor, administrator, researcher, and professor). She is a grass-roots advocate, and humbly and gratefully appreciates the opportunity to share the knowledge of our elders and ancestors in passing on our foundation of well-being to future generations. Chi-miigwech to my family, and the creator of all things, Gzhe Manito.

Laughlin

Jarrett Laughlin comes from a family of educators and has been engaged in education research and policy development for over 15 years. He has worked for the Assembly of First Nations, Canadian Council on Learning, Ontario Ministry of Education, and as an Education Associate for bv02. Jarrett currently works with organizations across the world developing holistic and innovative approaches to measuring success in education. Jarrett has extensive experience working with Indigenous organizations and communities, school administrators, teachers, parents and Elders. His recent passion has involved mobilizing his research into action through socially innovative, community-

based projects through his new company Ebou Learning. When Jarrett is not working, you can find him at home in Ottawa enjoying time with his family and four children.

Martens
Tabitha Martens is a mixed ancestry Cree researcher, educator, and student. She is a PhD student at the University of Manitoba, studying Indigenous Food Sovereignty. She spends much of her time on the land, working with her people, and learning traditional Cree food practices. For the past four years, she has been working as a researcher at the University of Winnipeg on a study examining traditional food access, skills, and relationships for Indigenous people in the city of Winnipeg. Tabitha also works for the Four Arrows Regional Health Authority as an Indigenous Food Sovereignty Specialist.

Scott
Jill Scott, a settler scholar, is Professor in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Cultures and Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) at Queen's University, which is located on Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabeg Territory. She is co-author (with Alana Fletcher) of *A Poetics of Forgiveness* (Palgrave, 2010), *Electra after Freud* (Cornell UP, 2005) and "Polishing the Chain: Haudenosaunee Peacebuilding and Nation-Specific Frameworks of Redress," in *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (ed. Keavy Martin and Dylan Robinson, Wilfrid Laurier, 2016). Her current research is divided between Indigenous Studies and educational research.

Slater
Joyce Slater is an Associate Professor of Community Nutrition in the Department of Human Nutritional Sciences, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, at the University of Manitoba, where she teaches nutrition education and public health nutrition. Joyce's research interests include the role of food literacy in well-being; food and identity; nutrition and food security; and nutrition surveillance. Using mixed method approaches, Joyce conducts applied research in partnership with several community-based organizations. Joyce is also a Registered Dietitian, who worked in various public health organizations for 18 years before obtaining her PhD and joining the University of Manitoba.

Topkok
Sean Asiqluq Topkok, PhD., is Iñupiaq, Sámi, Irish, and Norwegian. His family is from Teller, Alaska, and currently lives in Fairbanks. He currently is an Assistant Professor for the School of Education at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). Sean earned a Ph.D. in Indigenous Studies at UAF. Sean is the founder and leader of the Pavva Iñupiaq Dancers of Fairbanks. He continues to work closely with Alaska Native communities and educators, as well as other Indigenous groups worldwide. He has been informally adopted by Yup'ik Elders, and formally adopted by the Tlingit and giving him the name Deikeejaakhw.