CREATIVE WRITING, PUBLISHING AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF INUIT ADULT LEARNERS

BY

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ABSTRACT

This small-scale, qualitative, instructional study examined creative writing, publishing and empowerment of Inuit adult learners in Baker Lake, Nunavut. I studied whether instruction in culturally relevant topics in English and Inuit songs in Inuktitut motivated the learners to write. In addition, I examined whether having their creative writing published led to empowerment for the learners. This was a participatory action research project, and a Project Advisory Committee of community members helped in planning and carrying out the study. I examined concepts of orality and literacy and discussed how Inuit have historically practiced many types of literacy—such as reading snowdrifts and Inuksuit to navigate.

The project took place in Baker Lake, an Inuit community that has experienced the colonization of the South. Thus, throughout the project, I examined my positionality in terms of culture, colonialism, disability and its affect on my research.

I taught a creative writing workshop at the Nunavut Arctic College, along with the local Elders, who taught songs from the Baker Lake area. In the process of curriculum planning, the Elders asserted their right to teach the songs in Inuktitut, which is the way that they originally composed or learned them. In this context I explore the work of Fanon (1963) concerning the role of storytellers in the decolonization of cultures. After the workshop, in February 2006, *The Sound of Songs: Stories by Baker Lake Writers* (Utatnaq, 2006), an anthology of the adult learners' writings, was published. This small book was then launched at the Community Centre in Baker Lake, where community members listened to learners' readings.

In the course of the project, the Project Advisory Committee and I examined the meaning of the term “empowerment” in the context of Inuit culture. Each of the nine learners who took part in the workshop published at least one piece in the book. The majority of the nine learners who took part in the study reported some degree of empowerment, in the area of confidence about their own writing, in gaining the respect of community members, especially the Elders, and also in learning to be a “real Inuk” from the Elders who taught songs from the Baker Lake area. Most of the learners had not heard these songs before and thus this was an opportunity for Elders and younger people in their twenties and thirties to better understand each other. Indeed, the community itself may have been empowered in the process of doing participatory action research for this project and in seeing its young people take an interest in their heritage.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS vi

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION 1

Background 1

Purpose 6

Research Questions 7

Positionality and Research with the Inuit 7

Significance of the Study 11

Scope of the Study 14

Definitions of Terms in the Study 15

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW 18

Orality and Literacy—On a Continuum 18

Literacy and Multiliteracies 23
A Definition of Literacy 24
Inuit Literacy and Writing 26
Songs 28
Oral History 29
Inuit Written Literature 32

Paulo Freire: Writing as Empowerment 43
Conscientization 43
No Banking, Problem-Solving Instead 46
Praxis Equals Reflection Plus Action 50
A Northern Critique of Freire 50

Research in Composition **53**

Literacy and Empowerment Studies **56**

Literacy, Publishing and Empowerment **63**

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY **69**

Purpose **69**

Research Questions **69**

Action Research--A Rationale **70**

Study Participants **76**

Instruments and Procedures **76**
Project Advisory Committee **77**
Interviews and Focus Groups **77**
Participant Observation **78**
The Study Setting **80**
The Creative Writing Instructional Programme **81**
Data Collection Procedures **82**
Ethical Considerations **83**
Colonization **83**
Ownership of Cultural Property **84**
Confidentiality and Informed Consent **85**
Teacher as Researcher **86**
Data Analysis Procedures **89**

CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS **92**

1. What were culturally appropriate teaching methods and curricula that were successful in motivating adult learners to write stories from their own experience? **93**
The Curriculum Planning Process **93**
The Creative Writing Workshop **98**
Culturally Appropriate Curriculum and Instruction **102**
English Instruction **102**
The Elders' Instruction **105**

2. What did Inuit adult learners write in response to the English instruction and the Elders' songs? 108

Editing The Sound of Songs (Utatnaq, 2006) Publication **115**

3. How did writing in English and Inuktitut affect the empowerment of Inuit adult learners? 117

Problematic Aspects of the Term Empowerment **117**

Interviews **124**

Focus Groups with Learners **131**

4. How did members of the community perceive the learners when they became published "authors"? 132

Conclusion 135

CHAPTER FIVE
AN (AUTO)CRITIQUE 137

My Positionality 137

Conclusion 145

CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS 146

Results and Implications of the Instruction 147

The Empowerment of Inuit Adult Learners—Results and Implications 151

The Implications of the Study as a Participatory Action Research Project 151

Conclusion 153

REFERENCES 154

APPENDICES 169

Appendix A:
Project Interview Questions

Appendix B:

The Sound of Songs: Stories by Baker Lake Writers **(Utatnaq, 2006)**

(Names have been blanked out to preserve the anonymity of the

learners. Certain pages have been blanked out due to lack of copyright holders' permission).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Many people have seen creative writing as a tool in their journeys of self-discovery. This was particularly true in the 1960s and 1970s when some scholars and writing instructors viewed creative writing as a way to encourage self-expression (Berlin, 1987). To a lesser extent, they have discussed the issue of empowerment. That is, how does creative writing change or not change a person's sense of self-efficacy? Beyond the issue of empowerment and writing is that of writing and publishing and its affect on the empowerment of an individual. Researchers and instructors have provided anecdotal evidence of empowerment in writing and publishing projects. However, this has not been studied in a systematic manner.

This dissertation delves into writing, publishing and empowerment and their link to educational empowerment theories about writing. This study looks at how Inuit adult learners from the Hamlet of Baker Lake, Nunavut wrote creatively after being instructed in Inuit songs from the Baker Lake area and in English creative writing.. In the process, I crafted a curriculum in conjunction with the Elders in Baker Lake. Finally, this project examined how the writing and publishing affected the empowerment of the adult learners from their own perspective and also from the perspective of the members of the Baker Lake community.

Background

My previous experiences in teaching creative writing and in publishing the works of adult learners have informed and motivated this current study. My own personal

journey, particularly with the works of Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire (1970), had led me to this point. About twenty years ago I read *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and it resonated with my community work. In 1984 I was working with an international self-help organization of persons with disabilities, Disabled Peoples' International (DPI). The organization, newly formed in 1981, had just embarked on leadership training seminars in the developing regions of the world—Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and South America. The purpose of these seminars was to sensitize people with disabilities to the inequities they faced in their societies and to educate them in methods to organize into groups to promote change. To me, the philosophy of these DPI seminars was similar to Freire's ideas about learning the "word" and using it to free oneself from oppression, whatever form that oppression may take for an individual or group.

The idea of the "word" liberating people was intriguing and thus, began my own odyssey of examining the "word" in my own life and the lives of others. Initially, I was caught up in the energy of the disability movement, and this led me to promote the writing and publishing of the stories of women with disabilities internationally. Within the movement itself and society as a whole the voices of women were rarely heard until the mid-1980s. The women had many stories to tell about their life experiences. They were starting to tell these stories orally in self-help organizations and within the greater women's movement. Women with disabilities had been isolated in their homes because they were prevented from participating in society due to barriers such as society's attitudes that they were to be pitied and helped. In the mid-1980s they started to speak out.

To help alleviate the isolation of women with disabilities, I applied Freire's theories about speaking one's "word" in written form. Having women's views about their lives published could mean that more people would be able to hear the voices of women with disabilities—women who did not have the resources or personal power to leave their homes or participate in society. At the time, I myself did not have a disability and considered myself as an ally in the disability movement. I saw the disability rights movement as a natural extension of my interest in the feminist movement as well. My co-editor, Susan Gray, and I collected personal stories from women with disabilities around the world and published *Imprinting Our Image* (Driedger & Gray, 1992). The editing process was a seven-year odyssey of editing manuscripts with women through the mail. I realized in the process that many of the women were writing an essay for the first time and we, in fact, became teachers in the process of preparing submissions. We were careful to look at language usage and not to change it to the standard North American English to which we were accustomed. We wanted the cultural rhythms of English to be apparent, whether a piece was written by a Japanese person writing English or an Italian woman whose work was submitted to us in translation.

The publication of the anthology had ramifications for the disability community. Eileen Giron Batres of El Salvador credits the anthology process with showing her that speaking out through writing was empowering (Driedger, Feika, & Batres, 1996). This enabled her to galvanize a self-help group of women with disabilities in her country. At this juncture, I saw that writing one's word as a person who was considered marginalized seemed to be important, and not only for self-esteem, but also for feeling that one can

change one's circumstances and contribute to society. That is, one can increase one's self-efficacy.

Around the same time as the release of the anthology, I returned to my own creative writing that I had put behind me to pursue academic life and social change work with the disabled people's movement. I realized that I also needed to use the "word" to liberate myself and to establish my own identity. That is, one cannot just help everyone else and remain silent. This view was definitely one from my Mennonite church background of service to others. I had in fact been a volunteer with the Mennonite Central Committee for a year while DPI was being formed in 1981-82. I wondered why people finding their voices resonated so much with me. Did I not already have a voice, that of a middle-class, white, twenty-something female in North America? In my own writing I discovered that my own journey had silences related to being female, white, middle class, and educated. Emotions were sublimated in the process of learning in a university setting and taking on male-led social change agendas. I wrote poetry, performed poetry, and discussed poetry with other poets, and was intrigued by the poetics of marginalized writers in the Canadian context: people of color and Aboriginal writers in particular. I saw the passion of empowerment in their works.

In the late 1990s, I taught creative writing to adult learners and discovered that writing appeared to have an effect on the empowerment of learners. First, I worked as a volunteer advisor with the Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO) at the invitation of the Adult Literacy Tutors Association of Trinidad and Tobago. I taught creative writing workshops in eight locations around the two-island nation, collected students' stories, poems, and calypsos, and edited the anthology, *At Last! Adult Learners*

Write (Driedger 1999a). Through this experience I saw how creative writing and its appearance in the public arena, in a published book, affected learners' self-esteem and their confidence as writers and members of their communities. They passed from a feeling of stigmatization because they were not able to read and write as adults to published authors with status. In addition, I instructed members of the Disabled Women's Network of Trinidad and Tobago. These participants also wrote creatively and published an anthology (Driedger, 1999b). Again, I noted that women with disabilities felt empowered in their communities to speak out further after their work was published.

As a result, I decided to study further the effects of this process on marginalized peoples. As a poet and person with a disability myself (since 1992), I have understood the impact of writing on my own sense of self-esteem and identity. My ideas developed further in 2001-2002 when I worked with the University of Manitoba Northern Medical Unit. I undertook a feasibility study for a training programme for Inuit to become rehabilitation assistants in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. I visited three communities in the Kivalliq region and noted that people were very enthusiastic and hopeful about the new territory of Nunavut. I sensed that Inuit felt there were possibilities for Inuit to embark on new projects. The existence of the new territory of Nunavut is an important backdrop for this creative writing, publishing and empowerment project. The new territorial government of Nunavut was composed primarily of Inuit at the territorial and hamlet levels. In essence, because Inuit were the majority in Nunavut, they had Inuit negotiated what was in effect self-government with the Government of Canada. This agreement entitled Inuit to more decision-making, control and remuneration from the vast resources of Nunavut's land:

> The Nunavut Land Claims agreement should not be seen as a gift. It is a contract in which Inuit exchange Aboriginal title to all their traditional land in the Nunavut Settlement Area for the rights and benefits set out in the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. These benefits include: Ownership of about 18 per cent of the land in Nunavut, including mineral rights to two per cent of these lands. A cash settlement of $1.173 billion, and the creation of the territory of Nunavut with an elected government to serve the interests of all Nunavummiut (Nunavut Tungavik Incorporated, 2004, p. 3).

When I visited communities in the Kivalliq region, I had the opportunity to talk to people in the adult literacy community. There was enthusiasm in Nunavut about working on a creative writing and publishing project with adult learners, as Inuit wanted to improve their overall literacy skills for work in their own territory. I understood that in addition to honing job related skills, my writing project could contribute to the Inuit sense of power in their new territory. Through contact with the Nunavut Literacy Council and Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) Campus in Rankin Inlet in 2003, I started discussing my possible dissertation project with Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator at NAC in Baker Lake.

Purpose

This project studied how writing and publishing their own experiences and stories influenced the empowerment of adult learners in Baker Lake, Nunavut.

Research Questions

1. What were culturally appropriate teaching methods and curricula that were successful in motivating adult learners to write stories from their own experience?

2. What did Inuit adult learners write in response to the English instruction and the Elders' songs?

3. How did writing and publishing in English and Inuktitut affect the empowerment of Inuit adult learners?

4. How did members of the adult learners' communities perceive the learners when they became published "authors"?

Positionality and Research with the Inuit

Central to my project was the identification of my own positionality vis-a-vis the Inuit community in Baker Lake, Nunavut. This was an important issue, as it helped me to understand how I was "other" to the Inuit with whom I worked.

Edward Said, in his important work, *Orientalism* (1978), reiterated the importance of positioning oneself or understanding one's own role as a researcher, an intellectual:

> Modern thought and experience have taught us to be sensitive to what is involved in representation, in studying the Other, in racial thinking, in unthinking and uncritical acceptance of authority and authoritative ideas, in the socio-political

> role of intellectuals, in the great value of a skeptical critical consciousness. (p. 327)

In Said's (1978) case he was addressing Western people's construction of the Oriental, the othering of people from the Orient. This has also happened with Aboriginal peoples in the West; according to Said, there were similarities between how the West experienced Aboriginal peoples and how it experienced the Orient. Said also reiterated that the entire Western way of thinking in both science and literature constructed itself as a superior system of thought, while the Orient was an inferior "other".

Indeed, Smith (1999) addressed indigenous peoples' issues, specifically Maori and Western research and how they have interacted in the past. Her contention was that the West has had methodologies, which usually position the white Europeans as the experts who observed from a distance and therefore saw the Aboriginal person as the exotic "other." The fact that I am a researcher from outside the Aboriginal community and from outside Baker Lake, then, has been a primary ethical consideration in my research in Nunavut. In addition, my position as a middle class female also had an impact on how I saw the world, as well as my worldview in terms of how I viewed education.

The question can be posed then, why did I embark on this research? I have had an interest in peoples who have been colonized and are working to take control of their own destinies after years of education in ways that are not theirs. For example, I have been involved in literacy work with disabled persons and adult learners in Trinidad and Tobago in the West Indies. In that context, many adult learners did not learn to read and write effectively in a mostly British education system, which emphasized a rote approach

to learning (Liverpool, 1990). This type of education has not always been successful, as many references in literature involved the terrain of Britain and the people of Trinidad and Tobago may never have seen that country. Rather, according to Liverpool, students in Trinidad and Tobago needed education based in the things that they knew such as the steel pan and traditional calypso music.

In my work in Trinidad and Tobago I situated myself as a white Canadian woman with a disability. Here, I shared two positionalities with the women from the Disabled Women's Network (DAWN), being a woman and having a disability. At the time, I undertook both of these projects because I was invited to do so by the local organizations. They had expressed confidence that I could assist them in achieving their goals.

It is important to understand where one is situated as a white person in working with communities to which one does not belong. McKeever (2000), commenting on her experience of being white and a British Ph.D. student doing her project in South Africa, said:

> I am in a position to record the history of the Workers' School, and the disadvantages of my whiteness need to be weighed against the advantages of having this aspect of black South African working-class educational history recorded and analyzed. Incidentally, nobody in the school has questioned my suitability. I am voicing concerns that have arisen in my reading of the literature on race and research. (pp. 108-109)

Indeed, a researcher can have skills and ideas which can benefit a community of which she is not part. In my case, the skills and experience that I have gained in my work in the West Indies may have benefited a Northern community, Baker Lake. I noticed while I was in Nunavut that there are many of the same issues of isolation, “smallness” and community dynamics that exist in a small island country such as Trinidad and Tobago.

As I was not Inuit, I emphasized community participation in my project to ensure the participation of Inuit. This included discussions with Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator of Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) in Baker Lake. It included consulting with Elders Winnie Owingayak and Thomas Qaqimat to construct a curriculum that was suited to the learning needs of the adult learners in the community. These discussions included how to teach Inuktitut songs and I enlisted the Elders to teach with me in the course.

In addition, I consulted the learners about their past writing experiences in a focus group held prior to the workshop. I also discussed with the Elders concepts of empowerment and their meaning in the context of Inuit culture in Baker Lake. My definition of “empowerment’ was indeed somewhat different from an Inuit one. As an initial guide for my research, I consulted the theory of Ritchot (2004) that looked into empowerment models for Aboriginal women. She found that empowerment does not happen on an individual level, the way empowerment is usually viewed in the West. All the participants in her study on leadership and Aboriginal women found that they were empowered within their Aboriginal communities to contribute and this is how their communities also view empowerment. I discussed the Inuktitut term for “empowerment” that Alexis used in translation for our Project Advisory Committee meetings. He used the

word *mapitturaliurpata* which is based on the concept of a person making her or himself stand out, or to make oneself visible.

I consulted the Elders concerning Ritchot's (2004) model and its appropriateness in analyzing empowerment among the adult learners. They responded that they were unsure of how to define "empowerment" and that it was a difficult concept to grapple with. Indeed, the definition of "empowerment" was problematic in this study. I have explored what a definition of empowerment from an Inuit point of view would be, as this was a question that I asked myself throughout the project. I will discuss empowerment at length in the results chapter of this dissertation.

Finally, I analyzed the data from the focus groups with the adult learners and individual interviews after the creative writing course. I shared my findings with the learners, Elders, and the Adult Educator at NAC as a "member check" to ensure the accuracy of my interpretation and of the quotes I used. The Tri-Council Policy Statement (2003) in fact listed the "availability of a preliminary report for comment " (p. 3) as an important element of good ethical practices when working with Aboriginal communities.

Significance of the Study

This study had some significance to the persons involved in the study as well as to the community of Baker Lake. This study promoted songs of the Baker Lake area through the Elders' teaching and it also attempted to demonstrate how a curriculum can be constructed using these songs. In the process, I have postulated an Inuit definition of empowerment that I saw at work in this project. Potentially, the empowerment of learners will reach beyond their own lives to that of their community, where they can make an

enhanced contribution. This study may also have implications for other communities in Nunavut that wish to establish creative writing and empowerment curricula for adult learners. Finally, my study's findings are an addition to the literature on writing and publishing and their effect on the empowerment of adult learners.

First, the learners themselves benefited to some extent from taking part in the study. The community of Baker Lake is going through changes— a gold mine is being constructed north of the community. According to Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator at Nunavut Arctic College (NAC), in order to be considered for jobs in this new economic venture, people must know English. Thus, a portion of this project involved learners writing in the English language and I hoped that it would encourage the learners to write more confidently. The Bathurst Mandate (Government of Nunavut, 1999) laid out Nunavut's social, economic, and political goals, and it recognized that English will be an operating language, particularly in the economic future of Inuit. As the Elders emphasized to me, it is important for Inuit to speak Inuktitut as well to maintain the connection with their heritage language. The Elders asserted the right to teach their portion of the workshop in Inuktitut and that the learners write songs in Inuktitut. Here, the theory of Fanon (1963) became important to my data analysis. Fanon emphasized that the oral storytellers keep the stories for a culture, waiting for the time to reintroduce them to a culture that has been colonized. I will discuss this theory throughout this dissertation.

In addition, the possibility of empowerment through writing might have improved the self-efficacy of the adult learners. These individuals may be in a better position to make choices for their own future, that of their families and their community.

The community of Baker Lake potentially benefits, as this project worked towards training citizens for future employment opportunities.

The study has some significance for the territory of Nunavut overall. Prior to undertaking this study, I had preliminary discussions with the Nunavut Literacy Council in the Kivalliq region, and it may be interested in the results of this study. The Council may be interested in working with me to train adult educators across the region to guide similar creative writing programmes and publications. In future, then, the findings of a Kivalliq-wide project may ultimately indicate that it would also be a useful programme for the rest of the territory of Nunavut.

The creative writing project that I initiated adds to the literature on the effect of writing and publishing on the empowerment of adult learners in an Inuit community specifically. More generally, it may provide an analysis of writing and empowerment in a small isolated community that may be generalizable to similar communities in the North.

Finally, I analyzed the data from focus groups with the adult learners and individual interviews after the creative writing course. I shared the findings with the learners, Elders, and the Adult Educator at NAC as a "member check" to ensure accuracy of interpretation and of the quotes I have used. The Tri-Council Policy Statement (2003) in fact lists the "availability of a preliminary report for comment " (p. 3) as an important element of good ethical practices when working with Aboriginal communities.

Overall then, this study has some significance to individual adult learners in the community of Baker Lake who, I postulate, gained some empowerment within their community, skills towards economic betterment, and a better understanding and

appreciation of the Elders' songs. Baker Lake as a community may find some significance in this study as it shows how creative writing may affect the empowerment of members of the community according to a culturally based Inuit definition of the term empowerment. This study demonstrates the potential effectiveness of crafting a writing curriculum with Elders tailored for the community and may lead to further training of adult educators within the larger region of Kivalliq, Nunavut. Finally, this study adds to the literature on writing and publishing and their effect on the empowerment of adult learners.

Scope of the Study

The study discusses the writing, publishing, and empowerment of adult learners in Baker Lake specifically. Its findings may also relate to the wider Kivalliq region, as well as Nunavut more broadly. The study may be generalizable to other Inuit in other communities around the world.

The conclusions may be generalizable to adult learners in Baker Lake, first of all. It can be assumed that if a similar creative writing and publishing programme were undertaken again, similar results could be found. Whether holding the course at another time would produce the same results may be questionable. At another time the appearance of creative writing published as a chapbook (a book 50 pages and under) in the community may be something that is not unique, as this first chapbook has been. Thus, later, learners may not feel the same empowerment benefits as such a book has appeared in the community already.

The Kivalliq region of Nunavut and the larger territory of Nunavut may look to the conclusions of the study for an indication of how such a study would work in those communities. All Inuit communities are unique; however, there would be cultural and linguistic similarities between the different groups that live in those communities. The Baker Lake community is the only inland Inuit community, so there may be some differences in how they may work with this project and how coastal communities might work on the project.

This study's conclusions may also have ramifications for teaching writing to Inuit in other parts of the world such as Greenland, Alaska, Quebec, and the Northwest Territories. There are similarities among their cultures way of life and the stories that they tell.

Definitions of Terms in the Study

Several terms are important to this study: "empowerment", "Inuit", and "creative writing". First, "empowerment" is a process whereby individuals gain a greater sense of self-efficacy, control, and self-esteem about themselves. Individuals begin to see themselves and their lives in the context of their environment and learn how to participate in decision making about their own lives. What is important to this study is that definitions of empowerment usually employed in psychosocial literature have been about European peoples, not Aboriginal peoples (Ritchot, 2004). Ritchot's study of women Aboriginal leaders showed that their concept of empowerment was one of feeling part of the community, feeling that one could contribute more to the Aboriginal community. She

has outlined a Becoming Whole Model which views empowerment as a circle, a process. This Model was constructed because:

> . . . the motivator and catalyst towards empowerment (of both the community and the self) within the participants, was the drive towards improving the community. They made contributions to the community, which often began with small scale changes and, over time, with more successes, the improvements became greater in magnitude. These community encounters and contributions proved healing in and of themselves, for both the participant and the community. Also, the participants' recognition that they could make a difference empowered them and simultaneously aided their own healing (p. 163).

As related earlier, the Adult Educator, Alexis Utataq, translated "empowerment" in the Project Advisory Committee's meetings as *mapitturaliurpata*, in Inuktitut, which focuses on a person making her or himself visible and thus standing out. When I embarked on this study, I defined empowerment as an increased feeling of self-efficacy that one can then use among one's family and greater community to make an increased contribution. As the study progressed, I discussed the concept of empowerment with the Elders and Project Advisory Committee and I also consulted previous studies about the personal development of Inuit. In the end, I have put forward an Inuit definition of empowerment in evaluating the findings of this project.

"Inuit" is an Inuktitut word meaning "the people." Inuit are people who live in Canada's North—Nunavut, Northern Quebec and the western Arctic, as well as in other

countries such as Greenland and the US (Alaska). In the case of this study, Inuit reside in the Kivalliq region of Nunavut, which came into being in 1999, in the Eastern Canadian Arctic.

"Creative writing" includes poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction writings, which include life writing. In the case of this study creative writing encompassed individual life writing and retelling through traditional song forms. With the definition of the preceding terms, "creative writing," "Inuit" and "empowerment," this study can be better understood.

Chapter 2 of this dissertation discusses relevant research literature around Inuit literacies and written literature, power, empowerment, colonialism, writing curricula, self-confidence and writing, and research in written composition. Chapter 3 lays out the action research methodology of this study. My methodology included the use of tools from ethnography such as interviews and participant observation, in addition to focus groups. I asked Alexis Utatnaq to recruit a Project Advisory Committee, comprised of members of the community, to assist in my project in Baker Lake. Chapter 4 discusses and analyzes the findings of the project in Baker Lake, Nunavut. This includes a discussion of the process of constructing and teaching the creative writing workshop curriculum with Elders and the nine adult learners. Subsequently, I discuss the findings of my participant observation, interviews and focus groups during the different stages of the project. Chapter 5 is an (Auto)critique of how my positionality may have affected the project and its results. Chapter 6 will discuss the implications and conclusions of my findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Inuit have inscribed meanings in many ways and the concept of “literacy” will be discussed as a process of meaning making. Literacy is on a continuum—orality and written literacy are not necessarily discrete categories. Inuit have largely had an oral culture and Inuit have transcribed the Elders’ stories into text. In addition, Inuit are writing and publishing life stories and fiction. In what follows, I will review the empowerment theory of Paulo Freire (1970, 1973), the Brazilian educator, and the teaching techniques of Ira Shor (1992). In addition, this section will review the studies done concerning literacy, writing and empowerment and look at how empowerment was measured and whether learners were indeed empowered through writing. The literature revealed that studies on the effect of writing and publishing on the empowerment of students have not been undertaken in a systematic way. In addition, Inuit have done some publishing, but there has not been either a course designed with Elders and students or a course that works on publishing learners’ writings.

Orality and Literacy—On a Continuum

I also need to discuss “orality” and “literacy” for the purposes of my study. There has been the Western divide of “written” versus “oral” cultures and Western culture has viewed the written as more advanced. Scholars have debated the issues. Axtell (1988), in his examples from Eastern Woodlands peoples, especially the Huron from 1630-70, argued that the Huron equated writing with shamanism, because it duplicated a spiritual

ability that only great shamans could achieve "namely, that of reading the mind of a person at a distance and thereby, in an oral context, foretelling the future" (p. 93). Axtell saw that the peoples had a sense of awe toward writing. He also credited the power of writing to be the reason that the Indians converted to Christianity—especially because text was immutable and therefore they saw it as superior to oral communication.

Wogan (1994), however, pointed out the ethnocentrism informing the notion of the superiority of writing. He explained that writing, "is a pervasive Western cultural symbol, especially as a representation of Western cultural superiority. . ." (p. 410). Wogan posited that in the West we have tended to view the written word as having more worth than oral traditions and as being the pinnacle of achievement: "The exalted view of writing in Western culture is said to be supported by deep-seated views of technological determinism and fetishism . . . , as well as the central significance of writing in the Judeo-Christian tradition" (p. 410). This notion, according to Wogan, had led researchers to posit that Aboriginal peoples have historically been in awe of the written word and seen it as a kind of magical power that Europeans brought to them. Wogan disagreed that this was always the case for Aboriginal people and their encounters with Europeans, including Jesuit missionaries. Aboriginal peoples had their own writing systems in some cases, and had their own ways of making meanings. Some Aboriginal peoples did find writing magical in that it could convey messages at a distance, without the speaker being present, but not all.

The idea of writing being magical and Europeans relating that Aboriginal people were in awe of it relates to my own Western notion of writing. It is important to clarify my relationship to writing and the importance that I place on the written word in my own

life and academic studies. I have had to keep my own overvaluation of writing in mind as I have worked with the Baker Lake Elders in conducting my workshop using both written and oral teaching strategies. This will be related in upcoming chapters.

Chamberlin (2000) saw that colonialism has set up the oral and written against each other and claimed that there are oral or written cultures. He questioned whether there needs to be a line between the oral and written at all. All cultures read signs and listen to stories:

> Every culture has eyes and ears, as it were, and the woven and beaded belts and blankets, the carved and painted trays, the poles, doors, veranda posts, canes and sticks, masks, hats, chests that are variously part of many oral performances among Aboriginal peoples, especially those central to sacred or secular traditions . . . *these* forms of writing are often just as important as the stories and songs. Every culture not only sees things but also *reads* them . . . . (Chamberlin, 2000, p. 138)

Battiste (1986) reiterated further that the Europeans who came to the Americas set up the dichotomy between the literate European and the illiterate “savage” who relied only on oral tradition. However, in fact, MicMac people had been practicing their own written literacy through a series of pictographs, petroglyphs, wampum and notched sticks. The Europeans missionaries and colonial government officials continued to assert that MicMac should use European written language. This eroded traditional forms of literacy, but Battiste argued that the images and concepts of this literacy have remained:

"Micmacs had no need for authoritative or recorded human opinion since each person determined what was wisdom" (p. 27). Micmacs saw that the spiritual world and the material world were all one and thus: "Everything that Micmac youths learned extended their knowledge of the world and guided their ability to fit harmoniously into it" (p. 29).

Indeed, according to Stairs (1992), Inuit also viewed learning as part of life, not as a separate process, like Western-style schooling: "*Isumaqsayuq (sic)* [traditional learning] is the way of passing along knowledge through observation and imitation embedded in daily family and community activities, with integration into the immediate shared social structure and ecology as the principal goal" (Stairs, p. 122). In contrast, Western-style schooling for Inuit involved a high level of abstract verbal learning that is removed from everyday life.

Cohen (1989) defined orality as a social process, unlike text. He found that the orality of the Busoga peoples of Uganda was not delivered word-for-word; it was a working knowledge of the subject matter. Sometimes different clans would tell stories differently for political reasons, such as the clan's property claims. He concluded that oral societies do not hand down oral texts that are rigid—they change with the social context within which they are being told in a community.

Ong (1988) held that writing was not removed from discourse when it is written on the page, in fact: "This is precisely what putting utterance into writing or print cannot do. There is no way to remove utterance from discourse. Writing and/or print only delays the discourse, which the reader resumes" (p. 264). This notion has informed this project, as I have taught the workshop with this in mind—writing one's story is just the beginning of the discourse. Others can read one's story, even if one is not present. Writing has this

in common with orality—they are both contributing to the discourse of the community. The conversation never ends, as people will relate one's writing to their own experience. People will bring their own experiences to reading print and this will inform how they interpret what is written for themselves.

Fanon (1963) emphasized the importance of the oral storytellers in decolonization in an Algerian context. Culture was a process and colonization had caused it to become static and unchanging: "By the time a century or two of exploitation has passed there comes about a veritable emaciation of the stock of national culture. It becomes a set of automatic habits. . . . Little movement can be discerned in such remnants of culture; there is no real creativity and no overflowing life" (Fanon, 1963, p. 191). The idea that colonization ossifies creative culture and that colonized peoples must retell their stories in a new way to work towards decolonization was important to my study in Baker Lake. While reading for this literature review I encountered a lot of discussion about younger people hearing the stories of the Elders and of also writing them down to preserve them for future generations, as Mannik (1998) has done in Baker Lake. The discussion between the Elders and the readers thus continues the storytelling process, as Ong (1988) reiterated. In my project, the Elders, Winnie and Thomas, sang the songs indigenous to the area around Baker Lake and encouraged the learners to compose their own songs about their lives. The Elders' songs were about activities in their everyday lives, and they asked the learners to write a song from their own experiences.

Here, Fanon (1963) had contributed an important idea about the role of orality and oral storytellers in the struggle against colonialism. He noted that in Algeria the

storytellers began to use the stories of the past as frameworks for telling new stories of the current social and cultural context of the nation:

> The storytellers who used to relate inert episodes now bring them alive and introduce into them modifications that are increasingly fundamental. There is a tendency to bring conflicts up to date and to modernise [sic] the kinds of struggles that the stories evoke, together with the names of heroes and the types of weapons. The method of allusion is more and more widely used. (Fanon, p. 193)

In my Baker Lake study Fanon's (1963) idea of storytelling as resistance to colonization appeared to be evident in the way that the Elders promoted the kind of teaching they wished to embark upon in the creative writing workshop. They, in fact, modeled the songs that they had learned and encouraged the learners to write their own song from their own life experiences.

Literacy and Multiliteracies

Inuit in Nunavut have always sought to make meanings and inscribe texts in order to communicate with one another, the land and the spirits. Inuit have practiced "literacy," but not according to the traditional definition that only counts reading and writing text as literacy. Inuit have produced texts over the millennia through clothing, tattooing, inuksuit, reading the land, naming children and telling stories through song. Recently, after European contact, Inuit have transformed their stories into print, television

and film. The teaching of "creative writing" in this study related to the notion of writing being just one more form of literacy for Inuit, that, in the case of Baker Lake, Nunavut Arctic College was interested in pursuing with adult learners.

A Definition of Literacy

First, a definition of literacy must be dealt with before discussing the transformation of literacy for Inuit over time. "Literacy" has traditionally been viewed as the ability to read and write. As Emig said, literacy is "the ability to comprehend through reading the texts of others, what is new information," (1983 in Fleming, 1990, p. 54). This definition, however, has a problem in that it does not account for the origin of text. Definitely, literacy has to do with making meaning and with a writer sharing meaning with a reader, through the reader decoding text. This notion of literacy had focused only on "texts" written on paper and how a person can be literate in society.

Kress (2000) maintained that semiotics only partially deals with written text. We must expand the notion of literacy to "meaning-making" and thus see that there are many kinds of literacies. That is, we now talk about "computer literacy," "visual literacy," in terms of different technologies and our ability to make meaning with them in society. Individuals made meaning in a society and this meant that:

> An adequate theory of semiosis will be founded on a recognition of the 'interested action' of socially located, culturally and historically formed individuals, as the remakers, the transformers, and the re-shapers of the representational resources available to them" (Kress, 2000, p. 155).

Thus, Kress reiterated that literacy was really “socially made forms of representing and communicating” (2000, p. 157) and these are undergoing rapid changes in our current electronic age.

Ong (1988) maintained that, in fact, literacy was not a proposition of all or nothing in which a person was literate if they could read and write text, and if one could not, then the person was not literate. Rather, literacy was on a continuum, according to Ong. To say then, that Aboriginal peoples in North America were not “literate” is incorrect. As Straw (1990) maintained, functional literacy needed to be viewed as that which people need to carry out the activities in their everyday lives. In the case of the Inuit of Nunavut, there are many kinds of “texts” that they have inscribed on or proscribed to objects, nature, clothing. Thus, through this process, Inuit have left messages for each other that could be interpreted by other Inuit. This has been taking place over thousands of years in the case of some of the representational systems Inuit have employed, such as inuksuit (Hallendy, 2000), stone cairns built to show others where there is a cache of food or to navigate.

In fact, Freire and Macedo (1987) emphasized that no true learning in the critical sense would take place unless the words and texts learned were relevant to the culture and reality of the people who were learning: “Literacy must be seen as a medium that constitutes and affirms the historical and existential moments of lived experience that produce a subordinate or a lived culture” (p. 142). This means that in the case of the Inuit, stories from their past must be shared and modeled in the process of learning to write. They will then be writing from the lived experience of their people.

Inuit Literacy and Writing

Inuit have historically been involved in multiple literacies—reading snowdrifts and clothing, telling stories in song and through television, film, radio and newspapers. Inuit have also portrayed their stories in written form. This section will review these communications and the Inuit.

Alia (1999) argued that, historically, the media—publishing in newspapers, TV and radio have been initiated and dominated by non-Inuit in the North. This is beginning to change as Inuit are beginning to have their own radio and TV programmes and more Inuit are starting to write for the non-Inuit-owned newspapers. She supported the development of Inuit communications, as this was important for the identity and preservation of the northern Aboriginal peoples and their own culture. Most detrimental to Aboriginal ways of life was the fact that southern media tended to separate politics and everyday life. For Inuit, politics was part of the way of life where everyone in the community used the media as a way to discuss issues in the community. Thus, one can extrapolate that Inuit in Nunavut need to use different media, whether it is radio or the printed word to communicate with their own communities in their own words.

Roth (2005) discussed the process that First Peoples were involved in to gain more access and control over television broadcasting and posited that in this way they have gained control of their own voices. This has involved working with the federal government on appropriate legislation to establish First Peoples' programming, including the Aboriginal Peoples' Television Network (APTN). Roth emphasized that the process of gaining control over programming has meant that First Peoples, including Inuit, were able to use broadcasting as a community development tool. Indeed, they used

broadcasting to educate their own people about their own lives and their place in democracy and to also put forward their own images to non-native Canadians. She also saw broadcasting as an anti-colonial tool that has contributed to Aboriginal peoples' development, as defined by Aboriginal peoples:

> . . . societal development is neither a rupture with the past nor an abandonment of supposedly archaic cultures for the sake of achieving standards of ‘elsewhere.’. . . development occurs when the formerly colonized transform their consciousness from that of powerless objectified beings to subject-agents who can publicly act and speak in the language of their choice . . . . (Roth, 2005, p. 227)

Indeed, this counters the notion that Inuit will continue to have others speak for and represent them. In fact, the film *Atanarjuat*, The Fast Runner (Angilirik, Cohn, and Kunuk, 2000) was an important way in which Inuit are asserting their right to speak their own stories. This first full-length feature film produced by Inuit told the legend of Atanarjuat, The Fast Runner. Elders had been telling this legend to Inuit in the Igloolik area for centuries. The film reclaimed issues such as shamanism. Zacharias Kunuk, the director and a co-producer related: “Four thousand years of oral history silenced by fifty years of priests, schools and cable TV! This death of history is happening in my lifetime.” (Angilirik, Cohn, D’Anglure, p. 13) The re-telling of *Atanarjuat* through film thus became a way of renouncing colonization and reclaiming Inuit stories for Inuit. Indeed, Inuit culture has had a rich tradition of sharing stories in many ways.

Songs

The Inuit culture contains narrative stories and oral songs, poems set to music and dance, about the land and the Inuit (Petrone, 1988). The Elders who taught with me in my project chose songs traditional to the area to impart to the learners. The Elders chose songs, as these were forms they were familiar with, especially when accompanied by the drum. One of the songs that Winnie shared with the class was also included in *Harvaqtuurmiut Heritage: The Heritage of the Inuit of the Lower Kazan River* (Webster, 1999), about one of the groups of Inuit that settled in Baker Lake. Webster's compilation highlighted two songs that Elders sang in the area. The book did not highlight any other storytelling forms. In addition, The Inuit Heritage Centre of Baker Lake has produced compact discs of songs from the Baker Lake area.

Inuit have constructed texts for all aspects of their living on the land and living together. These texts were not written down; however, they were passed from generation to generation through oral storytelling. These were often sung as songs, *pihiq*, and some researchers, such as Rasmussen and Jenness, wrote down and taped the songs between 1912 and 1925 (Wiebe, 1972).

Songs told histories of the people, told about spirits, death, hunting prowess and sometimes Inuit composed them while passing the time on the land. These songs had a large musical component to them, so when these songs appeared on the page, something was lost that the reader could not "hear" (McGrath, 1990).

Inuit also used songs as a way of settling disputes. Two people would "word duel" in front of an audience. They would insult each other and express their rage. The individual who was the wittiest and provoked the most laughter would be the winner

(Lowenstein, 1973). This was an important social mechanism for solving disputes and keeping conflicts from becoming worse within the community. It provided a formal mechanism for solving a dispute and it also provided time for the contestants to think about what the nature of the dispute was and what they would say in their songs: “This tended to prevent sudden, impulsive actions that might further jeopardize the peace and stability of the band. Thus the duel acted to clear the air of aggressive feelings in a relatively safe manner” (Boult, 1990, p. 9).

Inuit see words as a raw material to build something out of, like snow and, “. . . the words are carved at a distance from the self, thus preserving what the self would otherwise lose” (Lowenstein, 1973, p. xxii). For Inuit, speaking a word means that the reference gains an existence in the material world. Indeed, McGrath (1990) reiterated that Inuit see poetry as a practical aspect of life: “Inuit poets believed that if they got the words of their poems just right, they could actually affect the weather” (p. 27). These words were texts that were passed on from person to person and generation to generation.

The persons who composed the songs, *pihiq*, usually owned them. And one could not just claim a *pihiq* as one’s own. If one was going to borrow it and if one was a relative of the composer, that would permissible.

Oral History

Inuit oral tradition was a precise one, and stories were retold precisely as they were passed down. Stories were recorded on tape and written down in collections such as *Tales from the Igloo* (Metayer, 1972) and *Uqalurait* (Bennett and Rowley, 2004). These were stories from the Inuit about interactions between the Inuit, land and animals. They

were traditional stories that in a sense told moral fables that were both humorous and violent.

Evo (1999) interviewed the Elders of Baker Lake about the traditional music of the area. And, indeed, most of the songs that Inuit sang were passed down from their parents and grandparents. While the songs sometimes told of historical and spiritual events, Inuit have begun to compile oral histories of their communities. In 2001, a booklet was published by the Inuit Heritage Centre in Baker Lake (Webster, 2001), based on oral interviews with Elders. The book provided some of the traditional songs and stories and the history of the peoples who have historically lived in the Kazan River area of Nunavut around Baker Lake. In addition, there is a more comprehensive book of Elders' stories from those who lived in this same area (Mannik, 1998). These narratives contained the themes of starvation and the techniques used to catch fish and caribou. The survivors' starvation narratives pointed to the resiliency of the people who lived in the area of Baker Lake and also why government moved Inuit off of the land into settlements—a story of colonization.

Several Inuit visual artists have also published their own stories. Tulurialik, along with David Pelly, (1986) published a book of her drawings with accompanying stories about life on the land, before she and others settled in Baker Lake. Pelly talked with Tulurialik about each drawing and wrote the text from her point of view.

Pitseolak (2003) published a book of her drawings and prints with accompanying stories from her life done through interviews. She discussed life on the land, including traditional games and hunting. In addition, she discussed how she became involved in the art co-op in Cape Dorset in the 1960s.

The Elders offered other hints about hunting, herbal traditional medicines and traditional spirituality and traditional storytelling at Elders' Meetings held in Rankin Inlet (Inuit Cultural Institute, 1984a), Pelly Bay (Inuit Cultural Institute, 1984b), Nunavik (Avataq Cultural Institute, 1998) and Northern Quebec (Avataq Cultural Institute, 1983a, 1983b, 1985). Elders were also interviewed about traditional medicine in a Northern Quebec project (Avataq Cultural Institute, 1983c)

In a Nunavut-wide effort, Inuit initiated a project in 1993 to publish a history of Nunavut while the Elders who knew the ways and stories were still alive. Bennett and Rowley (2004) worked together with a committee of Inuit from across Nunavut who proposed to create their own history book using the words of the Elders from the 1920s to the present. The texts were compiled from traditional ethnographies and it appears that the editors or others did not conduct original interviews for the book. According to the editors, this book project took place because:

> [i]n the past, Inuit history was transmitted orally from generation to generation. The fundamental changes in Inuit life since the 1950s-—schools, wage employment, and the move to permanent communities—badly damaged this chain of transmission. Thus, the main goal of the project was to create a history of Nunavut for the people of Nunavut—written from their perspective. Such a history would help today's and tomorrow's generations understand the achievement and legacy of their ancestors . . . and it would help guide them in their individual searches for identity. (Bennett & Rowley, 2004, p. xxvii)

Inuit Written Literature

McGrath (1984) traced the development of Inuit writing and discussed how Inuit used pictures in traditional oral storytelling. For example, in Alaska, girls used a technique called “storyknifing” (p. 17) where they told a story and drew accompanying pictures in the snow or mud. Illustration of stories did not cease through European contact. Rather, as McGrath pointed out, the European appreciation for illustration led to the founding of the print-making movement in Cape Dorset. James Houston, who spearheaded print-making in Cape Dorset, noticed one Inuit woman telling a story to her children with cut out seal skin shapes. She stuck them to the walls of the snow house and used them as illustrations for her story. Houston then encouraged Inuit to cut out similar types of shapes and to apply them to the technique of print-making.

Anglican missionaries introduced syllabics, a system of writing Inuktitut, to the Inuit in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The syllabics system to write Inuktitut is based on a system that had already been developed to write Cree which in turn was based on a shorthand system. Inuit became literate in syllabics through the instruction of missionaries until the 1950s. Some Inuit were moved into residential schools in the 1950s and 1960s and then received their literacy instruction in English. Inuit in the Baker Lake area would have attended the Churchill Vocational School which operated in the 1960’s. Overall, though, the federal government developed day schools for Inuit in the North.

McGrath (1984) contended that the first Inuit written literature was the autobiography. Missionaries encouraged Inuit to keep journals about their experiences and the written autobiography is an offshoot of this practice. McGrath noted that people who have recently learned to read and write often find the autobiographical form

accessible. She related that this is because everyone knows about him or herself and thus has material to write about. Indeed, I decided to ask the learners to write from their own personal experiences in the creative writing workshop.

One of the earliest written autobiographies was *The Diary of Abraham Ulrikab* (Lutz, 2005; Petrone, 1988). Ulrikab originally wrote this diary in Inuktitut, which has been lost, during 1880 when he and eight other Inuit from Labrador were convinced by merchants to travel to Germany. There, the merchants exhibited them in zoos and ethnographic shows. Ulrikab described the climate, the people who came to see them and the churches they visited, as they had been converted by Moravian missionaries in Labrador. The sojourn in Germany ended tragically with all Inuit dying from smallpox by January 1881 (Lutz, 2005).

Inuit also participated in another autobiographical form—writing letters about their lives. Laugrand, Oosten, Kakkik, Kublu and Elders (2003), bring together letters that Inuit converts wrote to their missionary leader Peck in the early 1900s. Inuit had learned to read and write syllabics through the Anglican Church's missionary work. The Anglicans taught Inuit to read the Bible, which was published in Inuktitut syllabics. Peck had established an Anglican mission at Blackhead Island in South Baffin and then left the North a few years later. Inuit Christian leaders continued to write him. Their letters described tragedies that befell their family on the land, such as people freezing to death or babies dying of disease. They also thanked Peck for bringing Christianity to them and relate stories of how they shared the Gospel with other Inuit. Laugrand et al. emphasized that these letters helped the Anglican Church to understand the Inuit representation of Christian concepts. In addition, there was a high rate of written literacy among Inuit a

hundred years ago: “The degree of literacy among the Inuit at Cumberland Sound was probably higher than that of many European countries at the beginning of the 20^{th} century (Laugrand et al., p. 6). Many letters included a request for a new rifle or a new knife. More importantly, the Inuit wrote letters to members of their families that lived far away. Inuit wrote letters to convey news about everyday life and they gave the letters to any available traveler who could deliver the letter to the person on their way.

Tagoona (1975), who was also an Anglican minister until he left to set up his own denomination, continued the autobiographical tradition with a book of drawings and writings about his own life before and after he arrived in Baker Lake from the land. He also told traditional stories that he heard in the camps. He always saw himself as an artist and in fact used a bullet as a pencil: “I used to use a bullet as a pencil. The point of a bullet is lead, and that lead made good marks. I drew many things with it, human beings and animals and birds. Even adults used to use bullets for pencils when they were writing to each other” (p. 6). Indeed, Laugrand et al. (2003) commented that pencils were scarce and sometimes a whole community would share a small stub.

McGrath (1990) pointed out that both men and women have written and published autobiographies, however, women have written fewer. This is because it is more appropriate culturally for men to put themselves forward. There is an Inuit taboo against women speaking about themselves. McGrath claimed that the women’s autobiographies, thus, were about their early or later years, and thus they did not violate the taboo of making oneself centre stage as an adult. A good example of such an autobiography was that of Alice French (1977). She wrote about her experiences from birth until she turned fourteen. She discussed her Anglican residential school experience in the Western Arctic

at Aklavik, where she spent seven years. Her language was simple and understated, especially when discussing the school's punishments of Inuit students.

In contradiction to McGrath's theory, however, was Freeman's (1978) autobiography which told of her adult life employed as a translator in the South, in Ottawa, as well as her life growing up along James Bay. Her writing was a very mature reflection on the effect of contact with the South on her own life. In fact, her writing about her life among white people in the South was a "writing back", the terminology of the postcolonial studies classic *The Empire Writes Back* (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002). Writing back, not, " 'back' in the sense of 'for' the centre, but 'back' in the sense of 'against' the assumptions of the centre to a prior claim to legitimacy and power" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002, pp. 244-245). In this way, Freeman was countering a Southern viewpoint of Inuit with an Inuit point of view. I maintain that Freeman's story was the first ethnography of white people from an Inuit point of view. She commented on how the federal government provided all the comforts of home to Southerners when they worked for the federal government in the North. Conversely, the federal government did not supply any comforts or training about what to expect for Inuit who worked in the South:

> The department [of Indian and Northern Affairs] has taken families out of the North to employ as translators. Before coming out, the family had no training whatsoever or any kind of preparation on how to survive in the South . . . . There is no programme for them to follow to find out where, how and what kind of living quarters are suitable, where and how to shop for groceries, what kind of

> entertainment is available to them . . . . They are expected to know all this for themselves as soon as they step off the plane (p. 63).

The Southerners, who have been colonizers and who have written about Inuit over the years, assumed that Inuit should know all of this, as this was the correct way of doing things. After all, it was the colonizer’s ideas which were at the forefront and others must fit in. This can be interpreted as when the Southerners travel in the North they are working with “the other” (Said, 1978).

In addition, Thrasher’s (1976) book *Skid Row Eskimo* discussed his years growing up and his life in the South, in Alberta. His story was one of dislocation as he arrived in Edmonton to take a government-sponsored training course in operating heavy machinery. He moved about Alberta, and came into contact with the underbelly of society and soon was involved with drinking to his own detriment. Eventually, he was charged with a murder that he did not remember committing and ended up in prison. His story was one of a person’s disintegrating identity when out of his traditional Northern setting. Several editors worked with him in compiling his story that was written on scraps of paper while he was in prison.

Dreque (2007), with the help of an editor from the South, also discussed his experiences in the youth justice system and his eventual imprisonment in the South. *Iliarjuk* told of how he was orphaned at an early age when both of his parents died. He lived with an auntie in a small Baffin community and experienced poverty as he grew up. His story was very raw and honest, as it described his sexual and substance abuse experiences as a teen, as well as his experiences hunting on the land. Both Dreque’s and

Trasher's narratives provide first hand accounts of the devastating consequences of Southern colonization in an Inuk's life.

Nuligak (1966) wrote *I, Nuligak* for Maurice Metayer, a Roman Catholic missionary who then edited the work. It told the story from Nuligak's point of view of growing up, living and hunting around Herschel Island in what is now the Northwest Territories. It also included stories of drinking and encounters with white people. Nuligak wrote this text in Inuktitut and it was edited and translated by a white person living in the North, who claimed that he eliminated unnecessary repetitions about different hunts and included traditional poems that Nuligak quotes, that the translator calls "primitive but undeniably a poem" (Nuligak, p. 190). Perhaps this says more about the white translator's view of "Eskimo" literature than anything about the poem.

Saqiyuq (Wachowich, 1999) is also an autobiography told from the point of view of three Inuit women from around the Pond Inlet area in the area that is now Nunavut, all related, of different generations. The women here have told their life stories to Wachowich and worked on their transcribed conversations with her. However, Sandra, the granddaughter, asked to write her life story in notebooks before talking to Wachowich. Sandra started out talking with the interviewer and discovered that she wished to organize her thoughts on paper first. Indeed, Sandra did her own writing, as Wachowich reported:

> she told me that she wished to write out her life history, privately on paper, as she would an assignment at school, and present it to me in sections. An avid reader of English literature, she has strong writing skills, and had been recording her

> thoughts in diaries for years. She spoke of using portions of her diaries to structure her contribution. (p. 8)

However, in the chapter on Sandra's life story, Wachowich did not indicate which portions of text were actually Sandra's own written words. It would have been good to hear Sandra's own voice in her writing and to know how she expressed herself, unmediated by Wachowich. In contrast, my dissertation project was aimed at enabling Inuit learners to feel confident about writing and publishing their own words.

The stories in *Saqiyuq* (Wachowich, 1999) spanned the women's entire lifetimes. What strikes one is the early age that the women were married, often in their early teens, and the power that the husbands had over them and the family unit. These marriages were arranged in the grandmother's time, but the daughter and granddaughter could choose their own mates in the 1960s and 1980s respectively. This book raised issues for me around gender within my project such as why did more women choose to take the writing workshop than men? This will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Julie Cruikshank's (1990) book, *Life Lived Like a Story*, was helpful in constructing the methodology in my project. It included a series of life stories by Dene women Elders in the Yukon. Cruikshank taped interviews with the women and then fashioned them into written narratives. She learned in the process that our Western way of interviewing is to ask questions throughout and wait for answers, but she just needed to not ask questions thereby avoiding breaking the flow of the woman telling the story. She found that when she listened to the tapes later her questions would usually be clarified. If not, she would ask her questions at the start of the next interview. The Dene

women told their stories in their culture without interruption. This was an important issue for me to keep in mind as I worked with the Advisory Committee and Elders in Baker Lake. That is, I tried to not ask too many questions and wait for the clarifications of meanings. However, at times, I know that I was impatient to know certain things and did ask outright.

Cruikshank also made the point that the women tell their stories differently than she expected from her Western perspective. She became impatient when the women wanted to tell traditional myths or stories as part of their life histories. She saw these as tangents and would try to get the women back on track. The women asserted that these stories illustrated the points they were making about their own lives. They used the traditional stories as a way of interpreting meaning to what happened to themselves. This was an important point for my research project. The Elders who taught the songs emphasized that they were stories that their ancestors told in song form. They encouraged the learners in the creative writing workshop to write their own songs in the same tradition.

Indeed, *Paper Stays Put* (Gedalof, 1980) was an anthology of Inuit writings that discussed how people interpreted past myths with an eye on the present—that is, they adapted the stories to have meaning for the cultural change that has come through the encounter with Southerners. The pieces were reprinted from Inuit magazines and northern newspapers from the 1970s and either were written originally in English or were translations from Inuktitut. This shows the rise in written literacy among Inuit, who quickly adapted to and used the magazine style of writing. Gedalof's work included a few poems, as well as non-fiction discussions about the future of Inuit.

Petrone (1988) produced an anthology of Inuit writing in English. Many of the pieces were translated from the original Inuktitut. She traced how contact with whites resulted in the evolution of Inuktitut syllabics. Her work encompassed many of the primary texts that I have reviewed in this dissertation. Inuit originally wrote and published many of the pieces in Petrone’s book in magazines and newspapers in the North. Most of these are non-fiction narratives about their lives and Petrone also included a few poems and songs.

There are fewer examples of Inuit literature, that is, poetry or short stories. *Nunavut Writes 2000 and 2001* (Nunavut Literacy Council, 2001) is an anthology of the entries from the Nunavut Literacy Council’s writing contests. People of all ages contributed short stories, poems and personal reflections.

Early writings included Akeeko, an Elder’s (1962) life story in a federal government Northern Welfare publication. He, like others, focused on the theme of starvation and how his family survived when they could not find animals to hunt. Panegooshoo (1962) had a poem published in these same proceedings. Her poem told of waking up in the morning as a child, ready for a new day filled with her grandmother’s and mother’s love. In 1969, Nungak and Arima (1969) published a book of traditional stories and accompanying sculptures from Povungnituk, Quebec. Many of the accompanying texts were written in Inuktitut and translated into English for this volume.

Ipellie (1993) wrote in a literary fashion and drew upon Inuit stories of the past to construct a series of short stories. Ipellie described himself in the introduction as an in-between person who moved from the land to a city, and he was thus, finding an Inuit way in the present world. Ipellie’s stories had many of the same themes that the Inuit songs

tackled: male hunting prowess. Qitsualik's (2004) short story, "Skraeling," actually drew upon the oral history of stories about her people, the Inuit, or Thule. In her story, the Thule (Inuit) met the Tunit (Dorset) who encountered the Vikings in 1000 A.D. In her introductory remarks, she explained that this is what might have happened if all three groups had met in one place. The scene that unfolded was one of Viking violence against the Tunit.

Michael Kusugak (with Munsch, 1988; 1992; 1993) has written several children's books modeled after Inuit stories with which he grew up. For example, the *Northern Lights Soccer Trails* story (Kusugak, 1993) was based on the Inuit belief that the souls of the dead were playing soccer as they did when they were alive. These souls were the northern lights, who are chasing a walrus head soccer ball. These books have appeared in both English and Inuktitut syllabics. His work demonstrates the ongoing development of the Inuit storytelling tradition as he writes stories into the settlement context.

Nappaaluk (2002) originally wrote her novel, *Sanaaq*, in Inuktitut syllabics and it was translated into French. It is the story of an Inuit woman's life on the land and after the arrival of white people, with all its ups and downs. The author wrote this novel over 20 years and started it without having been exposed to the novel as a writing form. She was also self-educated in Inuktitut syllabics.

Several writing projects in the past have had similarities and differences to my creative writing project. Freeman (1990) outlined the purpose and progress of the Baffin Writers' Project. The goal of the Baffin Writers' Project was similar to the goal of my project—to record Elders' stories and to encourage self-expression and the practice of literacy skills, especially writing in Inuktitut. In 1989, the first year of the project,

students published literary magazines and began translating them into Inuktitut. This self-publishing enterprise was similar to the anthology published during my Baker Lake project. The Baffin project had been organized in 1988 and was initially run out of the Baffin Educational Board. The project differed in its organization and location from my project. Freeman's project took place only in Baffin, one of the three geographical areas of Nunavut, and writing workshops were held in four communities, while the Baker Lake project took place only in one community. Inuit and Aboriginal writers taught creative writing in the communities of Baffin Island. In my project, the Elders and I, a Southerner, taught. My project also involved a community committee local to Baker Lake, while the Baffin project involved an Inuit project coordinator and a board composed of Inuit proficient in writing. The Baffin Writers' Project promoted self-expression as a goal; however it did not study the impact on the writers in terms of their own empowerment or the impact on the communities.

Russell (2006) discussed how she taught ten learners in Nunavut Arctic College's Teacher Education programme in 2002 and 2003 about culturally appropriate music instruction for children. She had her learners draw upon Inuit musical games and songs that they knew. In the process, she found that learners were able to construct culturally relevant curriculum for children. They were able to combine the Inuit traditions and Western musical traditions to produce songs that would relate to the children's sense of the land: "For Inuit children, the stories that allow them to express real land-based experiences through words and movement resonate with the truths of their home and community experience" (p. 28).

These projects were, in a way, a forerunner of the project that I envisioned for my dissertation project. Russell's (2006) curriculum did not have input or instruction from Elders in the community. I wondered if her learners knew enough of the traditional songs to represent them fully. My project included the Elders in course design and in instruction, which allowed for a direct interface between the youth of the community and the Elders.

Paulo Freire: Writing as Empowerment

Several of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's (1970, 1973) concepts such as conscientization, problem-solving education and praxis, were key to laying a theoretical foundation for my instructional project in Nunavut. His teaching methods arose in the context of a Brazil that felt the legacy of colonialism in the 1950s and early 1960s. The community of Baker Lake, Nunavut also has a colonial past and therefore, Freire's pedagogy was relevant to my project. He had proscriptions for both teachers and learners in the literacy learning process which I kept in mind when constructing and teaching my creative writing workshop. Shor (1992) also provided ideas about empowering teaching methods. This section will also include Rasmussen's (2001) critique of Freire's theory in relation to Inuit in the North.

Conscientization

First, Freire's well-known concept, so aptly explained in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, was the notion that the oppressed must be conscientized *(conscientizao* in

Portuguese) (Freire, 1970). This notion arose out of the need for Brazilians to begin to think about themselves as Brazilians, and not part as a Portuguese colony, that waited to hear what it must think and do. According to Freire (1973), Brazilians, both the elites and the peasants had no experience of responsible government or democracy before Brazil became independent from Portugal. Thus, teachers needed to be sent to the Brazilian countryside, to help the peasants understand their own oppression. The peasants would become "conscientized"--they would realize their oppressive conditions. Freire pointed out that among these oppressive conditions were that the oppressors controlled education and wealth. In addition, the vision of culture and education for society was that of the elites, who held that power: "Only those who have power, for example, can define what is correct or incorrect. Only those who have power can decide what constitutes intellectualism. . . The intellectual activity of those without power is always characterized as nonintellectual (Freire, in Macedo, 1994)." And those with power created the illusion that what they had, everyone should want for themselves.

The image of the oppressor permeated the minds of the oppressed and in the process, both oppressed and oppressors were dehumanized (Freire, 1970). According to Freire, this system did not work to the advantage of the oppressed or those who were the oppressors. Those who were oppressing others needed to free themselves from that role to become fully human. It was the role, then, of the oppressed to free themselves and their oppressors as well.

Freire's educational ideas arose out of the need to break both the oppressed and the oppressors out of the mindset of colonialism in the 1950s and early 1960s. Even

though Brazil had become a republic in the late 19th century, its citizens did not think of themselves as Brazilian, but looked to Portugal:

> Elite and masses alike lacked integration with Brazilian reality. The elite lived 'superimposed' upon that reality; the people, submerged within it. To the elite fell the task of importing alien cultural models; to the people, the task of following, of being *under,* of being ruled by the elite, of having no task of their own (Freire, 1973, p. 8).

In order to encourage critical thinking, conscientization about their own lives, teachers needed to be sent to the countryside to impart literacy tools to those who were oppressed, the peasants in Freire's case. This cadre of teachers needed to listen to the voice of those oppressed and enable them to free themselves through their own words. Here, the teachers were not do-gooders who knew what was best for the oppressed, as Freire reiterated:

> No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption (p. 39).

No Banking, Problem-Solving Instead

Freire (1970) claimed that traditional education was concerned with “banking” knowledge. The teacher deposited knowledge into the student who was expected to accept it whole and not question it. This banking education did not contribute towards people freeing themselves. People who were oppressed needed to be involved in problem-solving education. Again, this concept of banking was particularly relevant for Brazil’s experience of colonization in the 1950s and 1960s:

> Our traditional curriculum, disconnected from life, centered on words emptied of the reality they are meant to represent, lacking in concrete activity, could never develop a critical consciousness. Indeed, its own naïve dependence on high-sounding phrases, reliance on rote, and tendency toward abstractness actually intensified our naivete (Freire, 1973, p. 37).

The banking method of teaching is in opposition to problem-solving, as teachers have tended to view students as objects to be acted upon (Freire, 1970). In Freire’s problem-solving education model, the teachers discovered what students knew already and taught to their reality.

In Freire’s model, the teachers in the countryside listened to the reality of their students and helped them to learn through local examples. The teachers were not the experts; they were the facilitators in the learners’ quest to understand their social, political and physical environment. Literacy was seen as not only learning to read and write in the technical sense, rather it was,

> to understand what one reads and to write what one understands . . . Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or syllables—lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe—but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context (Freire, 1973, p. 48).

Freire's intent was for educators to develop a curriculum as they entered into dialogue with their students. This meant that students must learn to understand that they were able to dialogue and contribute something to the education process. This was an aspect that banking education, and that colonialism and its stagnation of the creation of new culture did not encourage. Through this process, the teacher was encouraging the students to construct their own curriculum.

In fact, Freire and Macedo (1987) contended that for real learning to take place, students needed to deal with texts that were relevant to them in their culture and reality. I have interpreted this in the Inuit learning context to mean that Inuit would learn to write better if they dealt with stories of their own past and present . They will then be writing from the lived experience of their people. In addition, Freire reiterated that one never should just learn to read and write to only raise one's self-esteem. Rather, empowerment meant that the students could begin to understand their social situation, and their own relationship to the dominant culture and its language.

Ira Shor (1992) fleshed out the teaching methods that were key in the planning and teaching of my creative writing workshop. He emphasized that teachers must create

an atmosphere of learning where both the teachers and the students learn from each other. According to Shor, the teacher did not know the reality of the students, as he/she was in the authoritative position of teacher, which was part of traditional teacher-centered education. That is, the teacher both posed and answered questions in lectures and students were expected to learn in this manner. The students were in a passive position and teachers did not expect them to have their own questions or answers. The teacher held authority over what constituted knowledge.

In addition, particularly, if the teacher is of a different cultural background than the students, as in my case, the teacher needed to discover the students' realities to better teach and learn from their perspective. While I did not have the power to grade or pass or fail the learners in my course, I postulate that I still represented the Western educational system that the Inuit learners had experienced in their public schooling. In my observations of the GED (General Education Development) class at the NAC, I noted that students felt a discomfort with the material they were studying for their English subject: *The Old Man and the Sea* (Hemmingway, 1986). The instructor of this course indicated to me that students were frustrated with a story that they could not culturally relate to, particularly as they did not live next to the sea, as Baker Lake is an inland Inuit community. The students needed to pass this curriculum to gain their GED. Thus, Southern colonization represented by the GED played a powerful role in determining whether they would succeed in their job aspirations or not.

To begin to share power with his students, Shor (1992) asked students to write about why they were taking the course and what suggestions they had for running the course. He said that this always provoked a lively discussion as students' shared from

their own experiences about the educational process and their expectations of it. Immediately, the teacher began to learn the perspectives of the students and the students began to think critically about their educational experience. This dialogue between students and teachers became a new culture, a "third idiom", according to Shor: "That new culture is a two-way discourse, a democratic achievement of dialogue that I call the third idiom. With a new language for learning and mutual communication, they can begin transforming their alienation from each other" (p. 203). And this third idiom created a zone of proximal development, which he takes from Vygotsky (1962 in Shor, 1992) and this zone was where teachers and students met in empowering education.

The teacher's "dialogic lecture" was important to the process of meeting in this zone. This meant starting to lecture from the words and perspectives of the students—listening to them first, and then integrating the teacher's knowledge into that perspective:

> The dialogic lecture is a valuable and delicate moment in problem posing. The teacher, backloading her or his comments, has earned the right to speak by honoring the student-centred, dialogic process . . . Mutual dialogue is not a know-nothing learning process. . . It is not permissive, nondirected, unstructured. It is interested in skills development and systematic knowledge. . . The dialogic lecture allows the teacher's knowledge an important place in the study as long as the students' idiom, perceptions, and right to disagree have been established first (p. 247).

Praxis Equals Reflection Plus Action

Freire (1970) defined "praxis" as reflection and action happening together for students:

> Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action in such radical intervention that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world" (Freire, p. 75).

That is, teachers encouraging students to write from their own experience led them to reflect on their lives and analyze which parts they were contented with and those areas where they felt oppressed in society. To what extent this actually occurred in my project is hard to ascertain. Perhaps the learners began this process. This will be discussed further in my Results chapter.

A Northern Critique of Freire

A critique of Freire's empowerment theory was important for me to consider throughout my project. Rasmussen (2001) called the pedagogy of Freire and his followers "a pedagogy of the oppressor," especially when used with Inuit in the North. Rasmussen, a policy advisor with Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., an Inuit land claims organization, wrote that for too long "Euro-Americans" (his term) have been importing written literacy to the North as the way to solve the "knowledge" problems of the Inuit. This knowledge was

that of the colonizer in the first place, and then that knowledge became part of the current global assimilation process in the world. He emphasized that whites have only brought destruction of traditional knowledge and the land with them when they have brought education that masks as “development”. Inuit already had their own traditional knowledge that was suited for the land where they had lived for thousands of years. The problem was that Euro-Americans had now moved in to exploit the land and have destroyed traditional ways of Inuit life.

However, he claimed that literacy and the written word were not the way to “empower” Inuit. It was just another tactic for enslavement in the current exploitative economic system run by 20% of the world’s people, those whose ancestors were the Euro-Americans who populated North America when their own land ran out in Europe.

However, I argue that Freire did not hold that the only kind of literacy was written. He emphasized that marginalized peoples, the peasants in the case of his work, could become part of the dialogue of those with power (the oppressors) through using the skill of writing. Thus, those who were dispossessed became empowered through learning the oppressors’ tools. Rasmussen did not validate this view—he seemed to believe that Inuit cannot enact any change against a large exploitative colonizer, the whites, using the tools of the oppressor. It is true that to date, the experience of Inuit in Western-based education has not been positive. However, there was recognition among Inuit, through The Bathurst Mandate (Government of Nunavut, 1999), that for Inuit to become self-determining in their own land, they must selectively incorporate some outsiders ways into their traditional pursuits. Otherwise it gives the sense that traditions are not evolving To

in the face of change and this would surely mean that Inuit would not have a place at the decision-making table.

Rasmussen (2001) stated that, he, as a “Euro-American” must stop thinking that he can be the rescuer of the Inuit and “help” them. Instead, he needed to acknowledge that he has been part of the system that has colonized people with Euro-American education and therefore that he must work on changing the systems of society that are oppressing Inuit. Indeed, this would be a good solution if all oppressors would voluntarily embark on this mission. Freire (1970) said it was the job of the oppressed to free themselves and their oppressors. Whether this is the way it should be or not can be debated. However, Inuit should have access to written literacy as well. Inuit have traditionally practiced many types of literacy long before white contact. This ranged from reading snowdrifts and stars to navigate, to inscribing meanings in clothing styles, to singing hunting songs. Written literacy is just one more tool for Inuit.

Rasmussen also made the point that silence was not encouraged in Western cultures:

> For pedagogy rooted in alphabetized communication, blank pages typically say nothing to the reader—silence is similarly disdained. For in Euro-American education blank pages and silence are signs of social dysfunction: time to call in the counselors and break down the silence—convert it into confession or journal entries. (p. 111)

That is, what if Inuit did not want to write their stories and thoughts in print? He claimed that often silences were important in Inuit culture. This was an important point to consider and I think this is where being empowered as a people will aid Inuit in deciding when and if to write something down or not. It is up to Inuit to assert when there needs to be silence.

In conclusion, in this research, I attempted to employ Freire's (1970, 1973) and Shor's (1992) teaching methods and analysis which include conscientization, problem-solving education and praxis concerning how to achieve empowerment through literacy. I considered Rasmussen's (2001) critique as my dissertation research and analysis took shape in Nunavut.

Research in Composition

This study is placed within the current trends in the field of composition studies. Smagorinsky's (2006) overview of research on composition provided an encapsulated view of the research in the area from 1984 to 2006. The trend of research is away from quantitative studies that measure the elements of written composition such as planning, revising and writing. Studies have focused much more on the social aspects that affect the way people learn to compose, that is, the social context of the person in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disability. Scholars have studied workplace writing practices and community literacy programmes for those learning basic skills. Over the past twenty years, the idea of "composition" has also changed, from referring only to written text in school settings, to looking at how people use literacy and different texts in their everyday lives.

The literature about constructing a writing curriculum in an Inuit community was meagre. However, Kesey (2000) discussed a writing project that he constructed with his high school students and a college class at the University of Alaska Southeast. The high school students from Golovin, Alaska wrote pieces about places that were important to them and the college students wrote more research-based papers about places. The two classes then exchanged their pieces with a partner in the other class for feedback and editing purposes. In the end, all the papers were published in an anthology of both classes: "Seeing their own work published along with college students' work gave the village high school students a definite sense of pride and accomplishment . . ." (p. 45).

There was also a dearth of material on the effects of creative writing on empowerment, and those few studies that have been carried out have been with the effect of creative writing on children in the elementary and junior high school years and how they developed a sense of self in the classroom (Smagorinsky, 2006). There were several articles that discussed the importance of the creative writing workshop for students. Hoff (1994) conducted an action research project when she realized that the teaching of writing was boring her high school students: "They seem to transfer their boredom with our dedicated lecturing about reading and writing to the reading and writing itself and, before you know it, any creative sparks that may have gone off initially quickly become extinguished." (p. 46).

Hoff (1994) reported that teaching "mini-lessons" of about ten minutes at the beginning of the class focusing on one aspect of reading and writing was effective in engaging students to read or write. They had the opportunity to put the lesson into practice. The teacher circulated among the students to help them, if they required it. The

workshop method also enabled students to have more choice about what they would write about and what they would read. They wrote pieces and compiled a class anthology and they were proud of their work:

> Watching their expressions and listening to their comments while reading their own anthology was all the proof I needed to convince me that they were becoming addicted to reading, writing and learning and that they felt good about their roles as assessors of their own work. (p. 49)

In the process, the students at all levels entered into the magic of writing and began to develop confidence and a sense of freedom.

Hollis (1992) discussed the teaching method of the writing workshop from a feminist perspective in the university setting. She discussed the workshops on writing pedagogy that were offered to new instructors, teaching assistants, or faculty members. She posited that although feminist perspectives "are designed with women in mind, the pedagogy works well with other silenced groups and encourages all students to explore and develop the many different facets of their human nature" (p. 341). She claimed that the classroom pedagogies of peer review, small group discussion and journal writing were compatible with women's strengths. Hollis examined how focusing on writing exercises from the women's own experiences would help students to move from "invisible silence to public writers" (p. 343). That is, the students started from the personal perspective, gained confidence in writing and then moved on to more academic types of writing.

However, these creative writing studies were all conducted with a different purpose than that of Freire's and Shor's work with adult learners. In their pedagogy, they focussed on deconstructing people's societal circumstances and how this affects when and how they write. In addition, they had the idea that teachers should:

> empower students to take responsibility for their own learning, and while doing so, to teach not only reading, writing and thinking, but also a more critical, sophisticated political analysis and a higher level of engagement in action for social change. (Smagorinsky, 2006, p. 92)

In addition, the role of literacy in how power is enacted in our societies is examined—that is, what types of literacy are privileged? Those who know a certain Western-based, linear, written literacy are those who will have access to power in Western societies.

Literacy and Empowerment Studies

In reviewing the literature, I noted that scholars have conducted two types of studies about empowerment and literacy. First, there were studies that discussed self-esteem or self-confidence and empowerment together. Second, there were studies that dealt with writing and a wider social empowerment of adult learners. I found both of these types of studies pertinent to my project.

Several studies addressed pedagogy in literacy and empowerment. Kim (2006) found that teaching English as a second language to her class with the view to empower

them was problematic. She had taught them about current issues in American society and asked them to take a critical stance in the classroom. She found that students did not experience empowerment because they felt a disconnect with American culture and issues. The students' learning goals were to improve their skills in English, not to develop critical thinking skills. She concluded that teachers need to understand students' background in terms of pedagogy and adapt pedagogy to the needs of the students in the class.

Indeed, Weinstein (2004) emphasized that teachers need to teach writing using the students' current knowledge. In her study, she looked at how youths in Chicago used poetry, rap lyrics, graffiti and imaginative prose to enter into public discourse. She examined the youths' writing, interviewed them and found that the young people felt connected to their writing, as they were writing in a style from their own experience and context.

Rada (1991) claimed that teachers must ask students to write about their own experiences in order for young students to gain self-esteem and to know that others are interested in their ideas. She concluded that dysfunctional families reinforced low self-esteem and powerlessness, but this can be changed though inner conscientization. Indeed, her conclusions confirm Freire's own findings on conscientization.

Costantino's (2001) qualitative study of Italian immigrant women and literacy found that the literacy programme attracted the women because they wanted to gain more self-confidence. The programme itself did result in an improvement in self-confidence of the women, as well as an improvement in their English language acquisition, which resulted in the women feeling less isolated in their homes.

Sumner (1998) studied the adult literacy experiences of learners in the Bahamas. She found that literacy enabled learners to gain a sense of self-confidence from their involvement in the programme and the participants saw that reading and writing made them more active in their communities. Browne (1991) discussed a union-sponsored literacy programme in St. Vincent, also in the Caribbean. The study found that literacy could not be separated from vocational goals and consciousness-raising.

On the other hand, Novek (1991) claimed that it was important for adult learners to have self-esteem before they actually started a literacy programme. She found this in her study of adult learners in Philadelphia.

Prins (2003) studied a non-governmental adult literacy programme in El Salvador, and found that participants gained self-confidence and increased their social networks. However, collective empowerment did not happen to any degree, that is, ideas about how to change social and gender injustice. Part of the problem was that some of the teaching methods reproduced social and gender inequities.

Shafer (2001) discussed an academic writing course he taught in a women's prison in Michigan. He concluded that writing essays about one's own experiences could be cathartic and self-actualizing. He found that the act of writing itself, of sharing one's voice, was empowering to the learners. His definition of empowerment was never clearly stated. However, it is apparent that the women wrote about important issues in their lives. To me, the women appeared to be empowered through gaining self-confidence, finding their voices and stating their concerns.

Crichton and Kinsel (2001) studied a literacy programme in British Columbia and found that the seven learners they interviewed definitely felt a higher sense of personal

empowerment, that is, self-esteem through the process of improving their reading and writing skills. However, the learners tended to report that their literacy did not help their integration into society to any great degree, especially into social groups.

On the other hand, Mancina (2005) found that students in her high school felt empowered through sharing their writing with the community. The students reacted to a newspaper article that depicted their school in a negative light. Mancini realized that she needed to give the students their choice of genre and topics in dealing with their feelings about this article. In the end, students wrote a letter to the editor, drew a comic strip, and wrote letters to others explaining what their school was really about. Mancini found that her students were empowered because they saw that they could possibly change someone's mind through writing.

Hopfer (1997) studied the impact of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia and found that there was a social and psychological effect for the individual learner and upon the community, as the evaluation of the programme stated:

> Some learners show more interest and understanding of what goes on around them, listen to radio, and better understand information on e.g. health and political issues. Learners very frequently describe their feeling of coming out of darkness, e.g. 'My eyes are open', and testify the positive impact of literacy on their self-confidence . . . At the community level the main findings were that learners feel more respected by community members. The effect of this, and greater self-esteem, led to more active participation in e.g. meetings and organisations [sic] or projects. (p. 55)

Hopfer concluded that a democratic society can only reach its potential when its citizens have belief in their own abilities and potential to contribute to society. Here, he agreed with Freire’s (1970) ideas about conscientization and praxis.

In contrast, Riemer (1998) examined Botswana's national literacy programme in an ethnographic study. She found that the adult learners found safety and guidance in the literacy programme, but it did not provide skills beyond decoding text. She also found that the literacy programme did not help students in their upward mobility. In addition, Maruatona (1996) discussed the reasons that the Botswana literacy programme was not promoting the empowerment that it could. She cited the lack of Freirean teaching methods as a reason. She stated that the government-sponsored programme was not consulting learners about the curriculum or encouraging them to look at the realities of their everyday lives, which included poverty and unemployment. She recommended that Freire’s (1970) theory be used as the template to improve the literacy programme in Botswana.

Hornberger (1996) studied Quechua literacy programmes in Peru, where Quechua is a minority language. She talked with three adult learners who felt empowered through learning Quechua literacy. She explained different views of empowerment and said she did not know where on the continuum her three learners fell. She cited Freire (1970) as advocating a radical view in that the students perceived oppression in their everyday lives and began to take action against that oppression. On the other hand, she claimed Delgado-Gaitan has pointed out that, “. . . some have used empowerment to mean the ‘act of showing people how to work within a system from the perspective of the people in

power . . . " (quoted in Hornberger, 1990). She then offered the reformist perspective of Kaestle: '. . . literacy efforts must be aligned with social reform, with a vision of a more participatory society' (1990:67)" (quoted in Hornberger, p. 231). To some extent, I found this continuum a useful tool for analyzing empowerment data for this dissertation.

There were many studies on women, literacy and empowerment (Dighe 1995; Dighe 1996; Joyappa, 1998; Khalil, 1998; Kothari, Chand, Vijaya, & Sharma, 1999; Luitel, 1996; Mathieu, 2001; Parajuli, & Enslin, 1990; Samant, 1995; Stromquist 1995; Subasi, & Kehrberg, 1998). Most of these have taken place in developing countries and provide anecdotal and generalized evidence of women's empowerment. The women in these studies gained self-confidence, job skills or worked to change inequitable situations in their communities.

Samant (1995) examined how empowerment took place in a qualitative systematic manner. Her study of Bombay slum women and literacy classes showed that of the four communities she studied, the women in the two communities where the women met in classes experienced empowerment. By empowerment, she was referring to Freirean-like learning, in that learning to read was also learning to read the world. The materials used in teaching the classes related to the current circumstances and the world of the Bombay women, again demonstrating the effectiveness of Shor's and Freire's teaching methods.

In this case, women, in one slum in particular, organized themselves around the common concern of the drinking and gambling of the men in their community which was leading to abuse in the family and the squandering of family funds. They organized and banned gambling and alcohol in their community. They gained enough self-esteem from

learning to read and write that they began thinking they could have an impact on how things were run in their community. Interestingly, the younger men in the community supported the women's calls for changes and this reinforced the changes. The two remaining communities that took on a "each one teach one" model of children teaching their parents how to read did not result in the same kinds of empowerment, as a place to hear each other's common concerns in class was not provided.

Samant's discussion of her role as both insider and outsider in her research was instructive concerning my own role in Baker Lake. Her position was different than mine in Baker Lake where I was an outsider. She was a middle-class Brahmin Indian woman who lived in Bombay. This served to separate her from the slum women because she was of a different class and caste. However, because she was an Indian she was treated as an insider and this meant that her mobility was restricted by people in the community worried about her travelling about as a woman. Samant maintains that if she had been strictly an outsider, some of these kinds of rules could have been relaxed as she would be from the outside anyway. I think that my position as an outsider may have benefited me in working in the community as a woman. Being a white woman from the South meant that I did not have to fulfill expectations of Inuit women in the community. However, I was certainly seen as a guest, as the people who rented me their home were concerned about my safety and comfort. They "checked in" on me during the two blizzards that took place while I was there. I was living in the house on my own, as the family was living with the husband's father.

Thus, studies linking self-esteem, empowerment and literacy and those linking literacy and wider social empowerment have been plentiful. These studies, however, did not discuss the empowering aspect of writing and publishing in their communities.

Literacy, Publishing and Empowerment

It was important to this dissertation for me to examine the publishing of adult learners' work for a wider outside audience and the effect on the adult learners' empowerment in the sense of self-efficacy, that is, reflecting on their lives and taking action. This was the definition of empowerment with which I embarked on my project.

Mathieu (2001) did her doctoral dissertation research with homeless people and their community newspaper in Chicago. Her main question was whether writing and publishing was empowering for homeless people. She provided a good overview of theoretical perspectives on writing and empowerment, which included Freire (1970). She cited Ira Shor's *Empowering Education* (1992) as having an important definition of empowering education 'as a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change' (p. 15 in Mathieu, 2001). She held that there were perspectives on empowerment from the right and from the left, quoting Cruikshank:

> '[T]he left uses empowerment to generate political resistance; the right, to produce rational economic and entrepreneurial actors. Yet, the tactics for empowerment mobilized in innumerable programs [sic] . . . share a political strategy: to act upon others by getting them to act in their interest. It is the

content of powerless people's interests over which the right and the left disagree.' (Cruikshank, p. 68 in Mathieu, p. 48)

Mathieu, therefore emphasized that, as Macedo has argued in *Literacies of Power* (1994, in Mathieu), it was important for students to decide for what purpose they were empowering themselves. It was also important to understand that the teacher of writing did not convey power to others, but created a way that students could begin to empower themselves. That is, a teacher should not reserve the power to deposit, as Freire (1970) would say, the knowledge that he or she deemed important. Students must be empowered to understand their own lives and to decide the meaning of "empowerment" for themselves.

Mathieu (2001) also provided a useful overview of the history of the community publishing movement around the world in the context of the homeless writers' group that she studied. Learner-focused, community-based publishing ventures started in the late 1980s and the first goal was to have learner-produced materials available for other learners to read. In this context, publishing of learners' texts had the goal of creating relevant texts and inspiration from other learners who have published. Some of the community publishing groups had an outside audience in mind, especially in the UK and South Africa where they published books and magazines of learners' writings. This was a way for people who had not been heard to enter public dialogue. In Chicago, in addition to the homeless newspaper at StreetWise, there was a Neighborhood Writing Alliance that included an adult writing group in low-income neighborhoods. The Alliance produced a journal of writings each year.

Mathieu’s (2001) StreetWise, of which she was also director, published a newspaper that homeless people contributed to and sold on the streets to earn income. She claimed that in 2000 she conducted a survey and discovered 35 homeless people’s newspapers in Europe, Africa, South America and Asia. In North America, she found that there were groups of writers who met to produce newspaper articles and also to publish books and do performance-based projects.

The Chicago writing group started meeting in 1998 and it had as its mandate to both promote written expression and to cover homeless people’s issues. She found that the group became a place for homeless writers to meet, socialize and produce work that made them feel they had a voice. In addition, the group took on wider social action with a series of articles in their newspaper about the case of a homeless man who they felt police shot unfairly. Mathieu concluded that the writing did not affect the outcome of the court case against the police officer, as a judge decided that. Therefore, she saw that the newspaper was a place to air opinions, but whether it could create real social change for people who were in the margins she was doubtful and concluded: “This is the heart of the critical utopian approach to writing: one works for and hopes for change in the powerful systems that script our society, but one does not rely on change as a needed extrinsic exchange for the act of writing” (p. 181).

Fitzpatrick (1995) wrote as an editor at an adult basic learners’ press, Gatehouse, in the UK. She highlighted the experiences of five adult learners who published their work at the press. She found that the main theme in their publishing experiences was the tension between the reward of publishing and the danger of exposing oneself as an “illiterate” person publicly in a learners’ anthology or with a learners’ press like

Gateway. She emphasized that publishing one's work did validate the accomplishment of a learner—i.e. to publish work: "When a book goes out which reveals the author's lack of education there is a collision between the acclaim awarded to a published writer in our culture (as evidenced by the literary prizes and the popular signings in bookshops) with the shame of semi-literacy" (p. 7).

In addition, Fitzpatrick emphasized that the process of preparing pieces for publication within writers' groups of peer adult learners was a way of creating safety for the adult learners. This safety provided a place for sharing their writing and publishing experiences. These were points that I kept in mind as I recruited learners for my project and taught my workshop in Baker Lake.

Hayler and Thomson (1995) discussed QueenSpark, a community-based publishing group in the UK. This was a group of people who wish to improve their creative writing and to experience the running of a press. The group worked collaboratively to publish the voices of those who had been marginalized in some way, due to gender, race, disability, age, ethnicity or sexuality. They believed that everyone's stories were important and needed to be heard:

> Violet Pumphrey summarizes the common theme of recognizing that 'everyone has a story to tell.' Learning that 'everyone has a history and that anyone can be a writer' is a liberating experience when you have always been taught that history is about those with power and influence . . . .(p. 55)

Thus, by inference, the writers will be empowered in the process, although Haylter and Thomson do not use this term.

I (Driedger, 2004) provided an overview of two adult literacy creative writing and publishing projects in Trinidad and Tobago. I argued that the process appeared to be empowering, as there were anecdotes such as a disabled woman seeing that she was viewed as an "author" as people in her town as a result of her work being published in an anthology. I also explored teaching techniques based on the traditional song form of calypso and discussed how this motivated students to write. Finally, at the end I speculated on the upcoming writing and publishing project with Inuit, that this dissertation discusses. I suggested that traditional songs and poems would also be a way for Inuit to be inspired to write about their own experiences for publication.

Creed and Andrews (1994) explained how their publication project in Alaska, among Alaskan Natives, including Eskimo, had been successful in training writers to be journalists at the same time as earning college credits in writing. The Chukchi News and Information project was a long-distance one that encouraged students to write towards publication. It operated out of Chukchi College, a branch of the University of Alaska in Kotzebue. Their project was a news service that sent the articles out to mainstream and native media, including Eskimo, in Alaska. The project was empowering, as writers transmitted traditional ways of life to their own group and also to those not in their culture. This became a way for writers to preserve their culture and to educate others. In addition, the writers seeing their bylines served as an incentive for them to rewrite their articles and improve their writing skills.

Creed and Andrews (1994) explained that writing made certain Aboriginal writers aware that they were “authors” when their non-Native coworkers read their articles in the newspapers. This was important as Geri Reich, an Inupiaq Eskimo, found: “She said many of the non-natives now seem to look at her as a real person and with respect for the first time. She wasn’t, in her words, ‘just a dumb Native anymore’” (p. 9). The effect of writing and publishing was not, however, studied in a systematic way in this project. The authors concluded that other multicultural or minority classrooms should undertake writing and publishing projects. This project was, indeed, similar to my research project in Nunavut. These studies on writing, publishing and empowerment pointed to the positive correlation between writing, publishing and empowerment for adult learners—the goals of my research project.

Thus, this overview of the communications, writing and publishing of Inuit pointed to the need for Inuit to continue to tell their own stories. Freire’s (1970, 1973) and Shor’s (1992) theories on constructing curriculum with learners were ideal in the context of this project. I consulted with Inuit about what constituted empowerment and how it might have impacted them. I investigated this through qualitative research methods. My study, unlike previous studies on publishing and empowerment sought to systematically study the affects of writing and publishing their work on the adult learners.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This study was a small-scale qualitative one that utilized ethnographic methods (Spradley, 1980) such as participant observation and interviews. In addition, I convened focus groups as part of the data collection process. The study was an action research one, in that the methodology of the study was to involve members of the community in outcomes that benefit the empowerment and education of adult learners in Baker Lake. In addition, I hope that the study points to ways that curricula may be constructed in other Inuit communities to enable learners to become empowered in their communities through the creative writing and publishing process.

Purpose

This project studied how writing and publishing their own experiences and stories increased the empowerment of Inuit adult learners in Baker Lake, Nunavut. In addition, the study included constructing a curriculum along with Elders songs and the learners' personal experiences.

Research Questions

1. What were culturally appropriate teaching methods and curricula that were successful in motivating adult learners to write stories from their own experiences?

2. What did Inuit adult learners write in response to the English instruction and the Elders' songs?

3. How did writing and publishing in English and Inuktitut affect the empowerment of Inuit adult learners?

4. How did members of the adult learners' communities perceive the learners when they became published "authors"?

Action Research—A Rationale

Action research is a research method that is self-reflective and practitioner-, or teacher-based. It calls for working with the people one is researching, rather than the scientific paradigm of studying outside the situation and looking in. One also studies one's own teaching practice, as well as enabling the community of learners to learn more about themselves. Thus, there is a two-fold action of learning to teach better through research and helping learners to see how they can learn better.

There are two types of action research. The first is practical action research that involves a teacher inquiring about his or her teaching practice or school situation. How can I teach this better? Or how can I help my students learn better? This kind of research is focused on the teacher/researcher and his/her practice, as well as the outcomes of the students (Mills, 2003). The teacher's role here is as an autonomous individual. This perspective does not take a critical stance towards the overall social context in which the

teaching is taking place, it looks to bolster technique, but does not advocate social change as its goal.

On the other hand, critical action research sometimes referred to as emancipatory action research (Mills, 2003) has as its goals: "1. A shared interest in processes for enlightenment. 2. A shared interest in liberating individuals from the dictates of tradition, habit and bureaucracy. 3. A commitment to participatory processes of reform" (Kemmis in Mills, 2003, p. 6). This critical approach arose out of the Frankfurt School, a group of scholars, including Habermas, who held that the current research methodologies of the 1930s were not adequate for the social sciences, because ". . . they failed to recognize the historical, cultural and social situatedness of researchers. People could not comment on their experience unless they understood how that experience was shaped by their own situatedness" (McNiff, 2002, p. 33). Researchers needed to locate themselves in their contexts so that they knew what the power relations were between themselves and their research subjects. No longer could the academic look on and judge what was happening in a research situation without understanding where he/she stood in relation to those people in society. In addition, there was no objective truth to be observed as in an empirical experiment. Researchers only understood and interpreted from the perspectives of what they knew and who they were socially, culturally, politically, and economically.

This thinking relates to the work of various educational theorists, such as Kemmis (in Mills, 2003), who laid out the aims and patterns of action research. First, action research views education as a living practice where a researcher identifies a problem in his/her everyday practice. The researcher looks at how his/her practice can be improved and then can take action with others to improve that practice.

Other action research theorists discuss “participatory” and “emancipatory” research almost interchangeably (e. g., Usher, Bryant & Johnston, 1997). Emancipatory research arises from Freire’s (1970) maxim that to name the world is to become empowered. And emancipatory research is a research that involves praxis: ‘Praxis is an ongoing, dialectical process in which the validity of the research is assessed according to the value of its outcomes rather than by its adherence to sets of empirically derived rules’ (Beder, 1991 in Usher et al., 1997, p. 194).

Emancipatory research is actually constructed as research for empowerment, as it focuses on questions of power and knowledge and “. . . knowledge for whom, for what and in whose interests” (Usher et al., 1997, p. 195). In this process all knowledge, including the processes of doing research, becomes demystified for research participants. And this reflective type of research leads to what Freire called “naming of the world” and thus, research participants are able to think about changes that are needed.

Related to this is the concept of “voice”. Part of the job of the emancipatory (action) researcher is to enable participants to gain their voice that is to name their world:

> the idea is to ‘name’ and by so doing foreground the oppressive weight of a ‘culture of silence’. Naming serves as a kind of guarantee against any replication, albeit in emancipatory guise, of the oppressive and alienating social conditions of more conventional research approaches . . . .” (Usher et al., 1997, p. 199)

Creative writing and publishing, as outlined in my research programme, is definitely a "voice" project in that the instruction and publishing promoted Inuit using writing to express themselves and be heard.

As such, my programme of research with Inuit adult learners in Baker Lake, Nunavut was located along the social change continuum of action research. That is, I was interested in looking at my own teaching practice in terms of developing curriculum, and also I was looking to empower learners in the process of their being taught and being part of my project. The project was participatory in that Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator at NAC, organized a Project Advisory Committee with representation from community members. The Elders in the community and the Project Advisory Committee constructed the curriculum with me. In addition, the Elders taught in my creative writing workshop. In terms of the study and how it was structured, Alexis Utatnaq and I worked to shape the project in its formative stages through phone calls and faxes. In addition, Utatnaq and other members of the NAC staff participated in the recruitment of participants for the project and Utatnaq invited the Elders, Winnie Owingayak and Thomas Qaqimat to participate in the project. In addition, Utatnaq took this project to the Baker Lake's hamlet education committee which approved it as part of the overall literacy plan for the Nunavut Arctic College.

Working with the people that one is researching and their input into the research process is central for those utilizing action research as a method. This can vary in degree along a continuum of little participation up to complete control of the project. My project, by its very nature, had a certain amount of control allocated to me. That is, I needed to produce a certain type of product, a research project that would satisfy the

regulations of the University of Manitoba. However, there was quite a bit of room for decision-making and input from the community of Baker Lake and its adult learners. In the Project Advisory Committee we discussed the curriculum for the project, planned the publication of the chapbook, *The Sound of Songs* (Utatnaq, 2006), talked about the organizing of the book launch, and then debriefed about what could have been done better in the project. The Committee has also vetted the final draft of this dissertation and has expressed satisfaction with it.

In addition, I consulted the learners about their writing experiences beforehand in a focus group. I also discussed concepts of empowerment and their meaning in the context of Inuit culture in Baker Lake with the Elders. My definition of "empowerment' was somewhat different from an Inuit one. Initially, I consulted Ritchot's (2004) work concerning Aboriginal women. She discovered that empowerment did not happen on an individual level, as empowerment is usually viewed in the West. All the participants in her study on leadership and Aboriginal women found that they were empowered within their Aboriginal communities to contribute, and this is how their communities also view empowerment. I consulted with Elders concerning this model and its appropriateness in analyzing empowerment among the adult learners. They said that empowerment was a very difficult concept to define and we discussed the notion of becoming more visible in the community. The Elders always returned to the idea that learning Inuktitut should be the prime objective for young Inuit.

One of the main criticisms of action research in the research literature is that a teacher cannot objectively evaluate his or her own practice. This criticism comes from a scientific paradigm that believes that there is an objective view that can be recorded.

This, however, is not the premise of action research. Its premise is that the only way to truly learn and know about practice and where it is successful is to immerse one's self and study from the inside of the process of teacher. Action research, as a process, also enables a community to examine itself and decide where it would like to go in the future.

Finally, I analyzed the data from the focus groups and individual interviews after the creative writing course. I shared the findings with the learners, Elders, the Project Advisory Committee, and the Adult Educator at NAC as a member check to ensure accuracy of interpretation and quotations used. The Tri-Council Policy Statement (2003) in fact lists the "availability of a preliminary report for comment" (p. 3) as an important element of good ethical practices when working with Aboriginal communities. In this process, the Tri-Council cautions that researchers need to listen to all views of the community about the research and reflect that in the final research report as:

> Aboriginal peoples may wish to react to research findings. It is inappropriate for researchers to dismiss matters of disagreement with the group without giving such matters due consideration. If disagreement persists, researchers should afford the group an opportunity to make its views known, or they should accurately report any disagreement about the interpretation of the data in their reports and publications. (p. 4)

In future, the Committee and the adult learners will be involved in deciding the types of academic articles I should submit and to which journals. I will send drafts to them for their input. The Project Advisory Committee and I did not discuss issues around

authorship of these articles. I assumed that as an academic, I would be the author of the articles. In hindsight, I see this as a mistake which I perpetuated based on remnants of my assumptions about the traditional role of the academic—the very role that I did not want to perpetuate. This will be discussed further in ensuing chapters.

Study Participants

My programme involved teaching creative writing to adult learners at the Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) in Baker Lake. The Adult Educator, Alexis Utatnaq, and other staff at the NAC helped recruit Inuit volunteer participants in Baker Lake to participate in this study. There were two men and seven women involved in the project.

Instruments and Procedures

The study utilized one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. The study was set in Baker Lake, Nunavut, where I taught a creative writing workshop in consultation with the Elders. We formulated and taught the workshop in February, 2006 over a three and a half-week period. An anthology was compiled, edited by Alexis Utatnaq, and published. It was launched at the end of May 2006. I returned to Baker Lake for the launch and again in June 2007 to meet with the Project Advisory Committee and my research assistants about how the project was proceeding.

Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator, assisted in the formation of an Advisory Committee to advise me on the project throughout all stages. I solicited their opinions about the success of the curriculum and the empowerment of the learners. In all of these procedures, I attempted to be aware of ethical concerns around ownership of cultural property, confidentiality, and consent, and my role as teacher and researcher.

Project Advisory Committee

A Project Advisory Committee was set up with the assistance of Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator at NAC in Baker Lake. This group was composed of two Elders, a young person, Utatnaq and an editor of a book of Inuit Elders' interviews. This Committee provided direction to my project at all stages, from beginning to end. At the end, the Committee provided feedback on the success of the course and its curriculum, as well as their observations about the empowerment of the learners in the community. They also read the final dissertation and were satisfied with my findings.

Interviews and Focus Groups

I conducted one-on-one interviews with the Elders involved with the curriculum planning and instruction, with the individuals in the Advisory Committee and with the Adult Educator. These interviews were a combination of using an interview guide (Patton, 2002) and of having some set questions that all would be asked. This ensured that certain questions were asked of each of the groups of people to be interviewed. However, having a guide, and not having all questions set, allowed for more freedom in the interviews.

Another of the research tools was the focus group. First, I held a learners' focus group about the learners' attitudes and experiences towards writing before the creative writing workshop. The possible power imbalance between myself, as teacher, and the students was important for me to address to obtain more valid results from the research participants. While it was important for me to observe which practices worked best in

teaching Inuit creative writing, it was also important for me to solicit comments from participants without them being hesitant to say what they thought. As teacher, I did not have the power of pass or fail, or of grading, however, I was a teacher-researcher who came from a Western-style intellectual tradition, and all the learners had experienced Western-style colonization in their public schooling. This course was a workshop for the continuing education of the adult learners in Baker Lake. However, because of my Western, outsider status, if I had led a focus group about what the participants thought about my course, they might have all just said that they were empowered because that is what I expected them to experience or they may have been uncooperative as a form of resistance against traditional style, teacher-centred teaching (Shor, 1992). To avoid this possibility, I enlisted research assistants, Hattie Mannik, a member of the Project Advisory Committee, and Alexis Utatnaq to do on-on-one interviews and to organize the focus group.

Participant Observation

Ethnography often utilizes the research instrument of participant observation (Spradley, 1980). This tool was a valuable one for me, as I was a researcher from outside Inuit culture and the community and needed to understand the context of my research project.

Participant observation is a means of research whereby the researcher immerses him or herself in a culture that is not his or hers. Cultures have been defined as not only ethnically different cultures, like Inuit, but also as any culture of social interaction, such as how a club works or how a business runs. There are three aspects of human experience

that researchers look at: "what people do, what people know, and the things people make and use. When each of these are learned and shared by members of some group, we speak of them as *cultural behavior, cultural knowledge,* and *cultural artifacts*" (Spradley, 1980, p. 5). This means that the researcher must look at how these aspects are carried out in a culture, and they usually are carried out simultaneously. The notion of cultural knowledge is important to this study, as there is both implicit and explicit knowledge in a culture. This is where I needed to observe what was going on and also have the benefit of consulting with key informants in the community. Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator at Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) in Baker Lake, was a key collaborator.

In addition, I visited the Inuit Heritage Centre in Baker Lake to review the publications and exhibits of the Centre. These included exhibits on the history of Inuit in the area and also local publications about Inuit. During my three stays in Baker Lake I visited at least one public place a day. I shopped at the local Northern Store and ate in the coffee shop, I also visited local art galleries, the high school and its library, the elementary school, local hotel restaurants and stores. I also paid several visits to the Health Centre as a patient. I took notes on the interactions that I saw taking place as well as observations of the settings. In my notes, I used the technique of thick description, describing in as much detail as possible the sights and sounds of my experiences.

I was in Baker Lake on three different occasions to observe the effect of constructing a curriculum together with the Elders, as well as to observe the impact of writing and publishing on the empowerment of the study participants. These field notes included a daily diary of my thoughts on what I observed, notes from informal

conversations and interactions I had, as well as notes from meetings I held with the Adult Educator, Project Advisory Committee, the Elders and the adult learners

The Study Setting

The study took place in Baker Lake which is situated in the barrens of Nunavut. It is the only inland Inuit community in Nunavut and has 1,500 residents (Webster, 2001). The community of Baker Lake is part of the Kivalliq region of Nunavut. There are three regions in the territory of Nunavut that came into being in 1999. Inuit created the territory in negotiations with the Federal Government to be self-governing. Thus, there is openness in the new territory to promote new initiatives to improve the social and economic lives of its citizens, who are mostly Inuit. The majority of residents of Baker Lake are Inuit.

The Inuit of Baker Lake are from nine cultural groups, with different dialects of Inuktitut (Webster, 2001). The common language that many can understand is English. There is a tendency though, for Elders to only speak Inuktitut and for some young children to know English more than Inuktitut. Winnie, one of the Elders emphasized at a Project Advisory Committee meeting that she would hear mothers call to their children in English, rather than Inuktitut in the Northern Store and she found this was disturbing as she felt that the Inuktitut language was being lost. The community has been active in the art of printmaking and felt embroidery since 1959 and has nurtured well-known artists such as Jessie Oonark and Simon Tookoome (Tookoome, 1999; Blodgett & Bouchard, 1987).

The Hamlet of Baker Lake discussed this project and approved it at the Council level. The community has a strong sense of itself and the direction in which it wants to head. There will be a goldmine opening just outside the Hamlet, and many people hope to gain employment in this mine. English proficiency will be required to gain employment in administrative and clerical positions.

The Creative Writing Instructional Programme

The territory of Nunavut has identified the preservation of their indigenous language as a priority. However, in the current world there is also a need for English, even though it is the language of the Southern colonizer. The *Bathurst Mandate* (Government of Nunavut, 1999) suggests a marriage of the two languages in the new territory. English is needed for communication with the rest of Canada and for accessing knowledge that is only printed in English at this time, as very few books are published in Inuktitut. In addition, English is required for government and mining jobs in the region. Nunavut Arctic College in Baker Lake has been offering adult upgrading classes in English.

I looked to this situation as a mandate for teaching the adult learners to write creatively in English in Baker Lake. I was concerned that I do not speak Inuktitut. However, the Elders spoke in Inuktitut to the class in their instructional portion. I enlisted the assistance of Alexis Utatnaq as a translator for the workshop. The nine students who were recruited all understood Inuktitut and English. I taught creative writing in English in the mornings, as this was not only a lesson in literacy, but also in communicating one’s story to Baker Lake and the wider community in English.

Data Collection Procedures

In the first phase of this project, I traveled to Baker Lake to meet with the Adult Educator at NAC, Alexis Utatnaq, the Elders and a Project Advisory Committee that Alexis had recruited for the project. We discussed the structure and content of the creative writing workshop. I relied on the expertise of the Elders, Winnie and Thomas, in the community to model the song forms of the area for the workshop.

In this project I played the role of teacher-facilitator for the workshop, and I was also an observer of the process of constructing curriculum and teaching, and of their effects on the adult learners. I took field notes in this process. At the end of the two-day, five hours a day workshop, I assisted the learners in choosing pieces to be published in a small book. In this process I worked on small edits with the learners and ensured that each learner produced written work that they could be proud of. I attended the book launch in May 2006 to observe and to meet with the Project Advisory Committee about whether they observed empowerment in the adult learners and about what they thought constituted the community's reaction to the book. After the launch, I waited for some time to pass before the research assistants from Baker Lake conducted one-on-one interviews with the learners on my behalf. I wanted there to be time for the learners to see whether their writing had an impact on their lives and that of others. Unfortunately, due to my own health challenges, being diagnosed with breast cancer and undergoing successful treatments in Winnipeg, the process of hiring the Research Assistant was delayed and did not happen until October, 2006. There were then challenges for the research assistants in scheduling interviews with the learners. The whole process took until March 2007.

When I returned to the community in June 2007, I myself investigated the impact that the writing and publishing had on the learners. I met with some of the Project Advisory Committee members about whether their perceptions of the adult learners had changed as a result of their becoming "authors." I then returned to Winnipeg to transcribe and analyze the data. I wrote my dissertation and shared it with the Project Advisory Committee, Alexis Utatnaq and the adult learners before I defended it. This was a member-check to ensure that I had understood what people had said and that my interpretation of cultural issues was correct. In addition, any academic articles that arise from this project will be shared with the learners and the Advisory Committee for their input before submission to journals.

Ethical Considerations

Colonization

Colonization is related to the cultural concepts involved in my research in Nunavut. Smith (1999) in her book about research methodologies and indigenous peoples was an invaluable resource. She, in fact, made the case that Edward Said's (1978) ideas about how orientalism was constructed in the European world also shed light on the construction of the indigenous person. She saw that non-indigenous people have viewed indigenous people as "other". In addition, European people have constructed indigenous people in their minds in a certain way, and the vehicle for this construction has been the Western act of research itself:

> The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world's Indigenous peoples. . . . This collective memory of imperialism has been perpetrated through the ways in which knowledge about indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized. (pp. 3-4)

The question then arose for me in considering the ethics of research with Inuit, what were the colonized research legacies in Baker Lake? It was important to be aware of research that has been done before and the experience of the people in the community. This information was sought out through discussions with members of the community, Elders, and the adult learners as part of the process of action research. The action research process was an opportunity to empower the community to think about research, in addition to the writing and publishing project that I introduced.

Ownership of Cultural Property

According to the Tri-Council Policy statement (2003), ethical considerations to consider when working in Aboriginal Communities include information about the "Protection of the aboriginal group's cultural estate and other property" (p. 3). That is, I informed them that the copyright for the creative writing produced and the book produced lies with the adult learners themselves and the Nunavut Arctic College, which is mandated by the Baker Lake Community to deal with adult education issues. I will

author any articles produced from the study. As mentioned earlier, perhaps this was an assumption on my part arising from my education in the Western research paradigm.

For me to understand the process of what was going on in the community, I needed to remember, as Nandy (1989 in Smith, 1999) reiterated, that I was part of the colonial equation. Both sides of my family have been in North America since the 1870s and in fact, took over Aboriginal land in Southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Oklahoma. That is, the colonized have learned their role in the process, and so have I as being part of the colonizers' culture. Thus, I have been examining my reactions to the Inuit with whom I have worked and applying a "decolonizing methodologies" (Smith, 1999) model to everything that I did in my research to the best of my ability at the time. These included issues such as are the research participants telling me what I want to hear, or what they think southerners have wanted to hear in the past?

I circulated a summary of my research findings to all participants in the project. In addition, a full version of my dissertation will be housed where the Hamlet of Baker Lake deems most appropriate, whether it be Nunavut Arctic College or the Hamlet library. In addition, I will provide copies of any articles that are published to each of the participants.

Confidentiality and Informed Consent

Both the "Tri-Council Policy Statement" (2003) and the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies (ACUNS) "Ethical Principles for the Conduct of Research in the North" (1998) stress the importance of confidentiality and informed consent in working with Aboriginal peoples. These two issues were very important to

examine in this project against the backdrop of issues of translation, race and colonization.

I needed to balance the confidentiality concerns of individuals with the rights of the community to community knowledge. This is flagged as a concern in the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies "Ethical Principles for Conduct of Research in the North" (1998): "The informed consent of participants should be obtained if they are going to be identified; if confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, the subject must be informed of the possible consequences of this before becoming involved in the research" (p. 3). Since Baker Lake is a small hamlet, this anonymity may be hard to maintain. Furthermore, it was important to inform research participants that they may withdraw from the research at anytime without any penalties: they could continue taking the instruction even if they decided not to be subjects (ACUNS, 1998). In addition, I prepared a consent form for participants in both Inuktitut and English to sign, which outlined their role in the research and that they could withdraw at any time from the project.

Teacher as Researcher

It was important for me to consider my role as both the teacher and the researcher in this project. Already, I occupied a privileged, white, colonizer position, and I also took on the role of teacher. Historically, Inuit have been only attending schools since the late 1950s, when children were sometimes forcibly removed from their families on the land and moved to residential and day schools by Southern government officials. Thus, the Southern-styled school system demonstrated that it had the power to relocate people. As

mentioned earlier, the traditional role of teacher has been one of telling and "depositing" (Freire, 1970) knowledge. There is the notion that the teacher holds the power of defining knowledge and thus dismissing other views, if he/she sees that they do not fit into his/her paradigm of knowledge.

To this day, many teachers in Baker Lake are from the South and bring with them a Southern and white perspective. Therefore, I needed to bear in mind that the knowledge and ways of knowing of the Inuit in Baker Lake were the most important aspect to any creative writing and empowerment project. That is, I looked at teaching in ways that would enable the learners to tap into their own stories and write that which empowers them, without fear of criticism from an outsider. Because of this, I decided to work on the teaching curriculum with the Elders and the Adult Educator in Baker Lake, and some teaching was undertaken by the Elders as well. A similar model was developed among the Yup'ik Eskimos of Alaska (Lipka, 1998). Teachers of Yup'ik origin met with Elders in their communities to develop a science curriculum for schools based on traditional knowledge and employing the teaching methods of the Elders. The teachers often reinterpreted the Elders' knowledge into teaching methods in the school context. The Elders were then asked to participate in the delivery of these programmes for the schools.

This type of curriculum development was congruent with an Inuit traditional approach to learning, *isumaqsayuq* which is:

> the way of passing along knowledge through the observation and imitation embedded in daily family and community activities, integration into the

> immediate shared social structure being the principal goal. The focus is on values and identity, developed through the learner's relationships to other persons and to the environment. (Stairs, 1995, p. 140)

This technique required the one teaching to act as a facilitator. As a teacher who would facilitate learning I hoped the learners would begin to feel at ease with writing about their own culture, their own lives as Inuit, and would understand that no Southern solution or perspective was sought in this creative writing workshop. The Elders imparted the importance of songs from the Baker Lake area to the learners, and taught the songs, something I, from where I am positioned and with the knowledge I possessed, was not able to do.

While it was important for me to observe which practices worked best in teaching Inuit creative writing, it was important for me to solicit comments from participants without them being hesitant to say what they thought. As mentioned earlier, as teacher, I did not have the power to pass or fail or of grading, however, as a teacher-researcher from a Western-style educational institution, I may have represented this tradition to the learners in their minds. To lessen the impact of these possible negative associations, I enlisted the help of research assistants in the community to conduct one-on-one interviews with the learners and to organize a focus group at the end of the project to solicit the learners' views.

Here, the theory of Freire (1970) was very important. His model of intellectuals going to the countryside to teach literacy to the peasants was very much an outsider coming to teach as insider model. He reiterated that it was important for the outsiders to

be there, as they were part of the elite, those who were oppressing the peasants. Thus, the oppressors learned about the reality of the oppressed, by encouraging them to “name” their world, that is, they were taught to speak their own words through literacy. I was a proponent of Freire’s naming of the world through literacy and of this project being an empowering experience.

In summary, the instruments and procedures that I used in this study were interviews, focus groups, a Project Advisory Committee, and participant observation. The project took place in Baker Lake, starting in February, 2006 with the development of a curriculum and the teaching of the creative writing programme along with the Elders in the community. An anthology of the adult learners’ writings was launched in Baker Lake in May, 2006. I returned to Baker Lake for the launch to observe, and I also returned in June, 2007 to meet with Project Advisory Committee members and my research assistants. I consulted with them about whether their views of the learners had changed since the writing and launching of the book. There were ethical considerations that needed to be considered throughout the project: the role of colonization, confidentiality and consent, and teacher as researcher.

Data Analysis Procedures

I analyzed the project data using Ritchot’s (2004) interpretation of empowerment among Aboriginal peoples as a framework. I looked for major themes in the Project Advisory Committee meeting transcriptions, interviews, focus groups, and participant observation fieldnotes.

I had data transcribed from tape in the case of interviews, focus groups and the Project Advisory Committee meetings. I read the transcripts with a view to coding with Ritchot's (2004) interpretation of empowerment among Aboriginal peoples as a guideline. I selected themes from the data and constructed a picture of both the domain (Spradley, 1980) in which I did the project, Baker Lake, and Inuit culture, as well as looking at the experiences of all the participants in the process of the project. These participants included the adult learners, community members, the Elders involved in the project and the Project Advisory Committee as well as my own participation.

I undertook the analysis and did a member check with participants as to whether my interpretation fit in with their interpretations of events. At the time of the book launch I visited and checked some of my analysis to date with the Project Advisory Committee. Further member checking involved communicating back and forth with Alexis Utatnaq by email and telephone between Winnipeg and Baker Lake. I also presented a draft of my dissertation to the participants in the project for their input, and I will ask them for their input before any subsequent academic articles that arise from the project are submitted for publication.

Overall, this study was a small, qualitative one using participant observation and interviews, which are tools of ethnography. I also employed focus groups. The Advisory Group was an action research tool that was helpful to the project. The overall purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of a creative writing instructional programme and the publishing of a book on the empowerment in the community of nine Inuit adult learners in Baker Lake. In the process, the curriculum developed with Elders may point to ways that songs traditional to the area can motivate adult learners to write and feel

empowered. Analysis of the data consisted of looking for themes and the data analysis was shared with project participants before the final draft of this dissertation.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Chapter Four will present the results of the analysis of the data from this study. The data examined in this study are: (a) planning process (with the data consisting of field notes from Project Advisory Committee Meetings, transcriptions of meetings with Elders around planning the workshop, my field notes about the process, transcripts of a focus group with the workshop participants); (b) workshop data (with the data consisting of my field notes about the progress of the students regarding their writing, the writings published by the students in the book, *The Sound of Songs* [Utatnaq, 2006]); (c) book launch data (with the data consisting of my field notes about the book launch, transcripts of Project Advisory Committee members' reactions to the book launch, transcripts of individual interviews with the learners about their experiences).

The data were used to respond to the Research Questions for this study:

1. What were culturally appropriate teaching methods and curricula that were successful in motivating adult learners to write stories from their own experience?

2. What did Inuit adult learners write in response to the English instruction and the Elder's songs?

3. How did writing and publishing in English and Inuktitut affect the empowerment of Inuit adult learners?

4. How did members of the adult learners' communities perceive the learners when they became published "authors"?

1. What were culturally appropriate teaching methods and curricula that were successful in motivating adult learners to write stories from their own experience?

To determine whether the methods that were developed by me and the Elders in this project were appropriate for the learners in the workshop, this section will examine data from the planning process and the creative writing workshop. Chapter Three discussed the outline of the curriculum used in this project. The following analysis about the planning process sheds light on the research question.

The Curriculum Planning Process

I planned the curriculum for this workshop in conjunction with the Elders and the Project Advisory Committee in Baker Lake. In the early planning stages when I contacted Alexis Utatnaq at Nunavut Arctic College about instruction, he and I agreed that the Elders needed to be involved in the instruction for the workshop. After all, they knew the traditional song forms that had been orally passed down in the Baker Lake Area. Alexis asked the two Elders, Winnie and Thomas, to join the curriculum planning process and the Project Advisory Committee. He asked them because they were prominent Elders in the community who had been teaching about Inuit traditions in the public schools in Baker Lake. The data from the planning process includes transcripts of meetings with the

Project Advisory Committee to plan the project, including the curriculum, and a transcript of the meeting with the Elders to construct a relevant curriculum for the workshop.

The Project Advisory Committee in Baker Lake was composed of the Adult Educator, Alexis Utatnaq, at the Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) in Baker Lake, an editor, a youth representative, and two Elders. Alexis made suggestions about the composition of the Committee and contacted the members about participating. The Committee met twice while I was in Baker Lake in February 2006. Over the three and a half weeks that I was there, we discussed the aims of the project, the definition of empowerment, how to recruit participants, and the shape of the workshop to be taught.

The adult educator acted as translator for the meetings, as I was the only participant who did not speak Inuktitut. The Elders spoke only Inuktitut, while the other participants spoke both Inuktitut and English in the meetings.

I noted that the Elders spoke the most during the Advisory Committee meetings and that other participants looked to them to speak first. It was my impression that the other Project Advisory Committee members agreed with the Elders throughout the meetings. I met with the Elders and Alexis Utatnaq, who acted as translator, to talk specifically about the course curriculum. From my earlier experiences in teaching creative writing workshops in the Caribbean and to English-as-an-Additional-Language (EAL) learners in Winnipeg, I suggested that the workshop be two days of instruction. My thinking was that learners, because of other commitments such as attending college or working, might not wish to participate in a longer programme. The Elders said that I was the one who knew about things like timing and structure. In other words, timing and

structure are from the Southern culture, which I came from. Thus, in this interaction one can see the impact of colonization.

In terms of content, in all the Advisory Committee Meetings, the Elders were adamant about the importance of teaching in Inuktitut and the value of the language. Thomas said, ". . . the Inuit language cannot be forgotten, it must continue, it must survive, so we must struggle to pass it on to the next generation" (T. Qaqimat, Project Advisory Committee Meeting, February 8, 2006). In addition, they emphasized how important it was to have the young people in the community know the traditional songs of the area.

The Elders also emphasized that they supported the creative writing workshop because the youth had a lot of English profanity in their vocabularies, and needed to learn to express themselves in a proper way. Winnie Owingiyak said, "It's easy to refer [sic] to profane language when you cannot express yourself and it's just not acceptable. We should be teaching these same adults that profanity is very hard on the ear, it's just, it doesn't win you any arguments--We should be, you know, making them aware, that you know, there's better ways of expressing" (W. Owingiyak, Project Advisory Committee Meeting, February 8, 2006).

For my English portion of the workshop, I suggested to the Elders that the learners write about their experiences in writing and learning, as they may have some ideas about how the public school system could have served their learning needs better. I had undertaken a similar exercise in Trinidad with my creative writing course there (Driedger, 1999a; 1999b) and this had been a successful motivation for writing. The Elders thought that a similar approach would work well in Baker Lake.

However, it later became apparent to me that perhaps this exercise would be a traumatic one that would not enable participants to write. I came to this conclusion because of the difficulty in recruiting participants and through teaching mini-lessons before my workshop at the General Educational Development (GED, high school equivalency) and Adult Basic Education (ABE, which focuses on more basic literacy skills) classes, at the Nunavut Arctic College, where learners chose to write about "happy" things. It appeared to me that perhaps writing about potentially traumatic issues could be a problem in motivating the learners to write.

The Elders, overall, deferred to me in the choice of format and timing for the workshop. They did, however, have control over the portion that they would teach. They opted to team teach the course, as they had taught before in the high school in Baker Lake. They said that they had worked out a way of working together, as Thomas, one of the two Elders, explained: "There will be a little bit of quarreling . . . . [We] can really pick on each other some days, but it's just all for fun." (T. Qaqimat, Elders Meeting, Feb. 20, 2006). Indeed, the two appeared to know each other well and teased each other in the Advisory Committee and Elders' planning meetings.

Fanon (1963) is important to note here, as the Elders asserted their right to teach the oral traditions in their session the way they wanted. They did not interfere with the English portion, as that was my domain. They, in essence, made an anti-colonial decision—they would have control of working with the oral storytelling traditions to teach the young people in the present and to building a culture:

> The emergence of the imagination and of the creative urge in the songs and epic stories of a colonised [sic] country is worth following. The storyteller replied to the expectant people by successive approximations, and makes his way, apparently alone but in fact helped on by his public, towards the seeking out of new patterns, that is to say national patterns (p. 194).

According to Fanon, these national patterns are the foundations of building a people's ever evolving culture. Before this stage, the colonized have learned the culture of the colonizer and their own culture has become fixed and static since the time period that the colonizers appeared. The Elders in my project were asserting Inuit culture—there must be songs taught and they must be taught in Inuktitut.

To some extent, translation resources determined the teaching methods that were used. I had hoped that the Elders would sit in on my English session in the mornings to see what the learners were writing. Alexis, the Adult Educator at the Nunavut Arctic College, explained to the Advisory Committee that he could be available to translate for three hours in the afternoons, but not in the mornings. Finding another translator would be very difficult, even though I had raised the funds to hire a translator during my project. Translators were in demand in the community working for government and the mining company that was exploring the possibility of opening a gold mine. I had all along thought of having an English part to the course, and after the insistence of the Elders about writing in Inutkitut, it was decided at the Advisory Committee Meetings that the course would be bilingual and that the students would write in both languages. I would lead creative writing exercises in English on the two mornings, and the Elders would

attend in the afternoons and teach the traditional songs and would also bring a traditional drum to accompany them in their singing.

To attract participants to the workshop I conducted some mini lessons with the General Educational Development (GED, which is high school equivalency) and Adult Basic Education (ABE, which focuses on more basic literacy skills) classes as one of the teachers at the College suggested that perhaps the students did not know what I was talking about when I mentioned “creative writing and publishing.” I taught a mini lesson of approximately half an hour in length in each class including reading some poetry from an Inuk poet, Panegoosho (1962) about waking up on the land. I also read some of my own poetry about a loved one.

In both cases, I was looking to hook the learners’ attention through their personal experiences of the land and their personal relationships, both areas that I had read have traditionally been important to Inuit. Indeed, the exercises prompted everyone to write something, and a good proportion of the learners shared their work out loud with the others when I asked if anyone wanted to share. These mini lessons recruited six more adult learners for the workshop. With the two participants who had signed up through the community radio, TV announcements and bulletin boards, there were finally nine participants.

The Creative Writing Workshop

The first portion of the workshop, February 21st, was held on a sunny, very cold day, and eight learners attended. There was no forgetting that I was in Baker Lake because the temperature was –50 Celsius with the wind-chill. The group consisted of

seven women and one man. The women were all in their twenties or early thirties. The man was in his forties. The man was unable to attend the second day of the workshop, but on that last day, another man attended who was in his late twenties or early thirties. Initially, the group was very quiet and listened to me explain the purpose of my project. I told them that I was a student like they were and that they were helping me to complete my coursework. Most importantly, they would have some of their writing published and would learn about the Elders' songs.

I held a short focus group with the learners just before the first workshop started. I asked the group what their previous writing experiences had been and how they felt about writing. I noted that some members talked much more than others, and I attempted to draw out others by encouraging everyone to speak to each question.

It became apparent that the learners saw writing and education as important for achieving the kinds of employment that they wanted. Many of them had worked or were working in retail and government service jobs in Baker Lake. They found this working in retail or in social services very difficult because the community had many demands on them. The learners felt that participating in upgrading at the NAC and in this workshop would help them change their careers.

One person shared that she felt that the process of writing was hard in the past because of the pressure when the teacher asked her to write something. She would sit there thinking, "Think, think." Two learners saw writing as important for communicating with family and friends. One participant said that he practiced writing by hand every day and felt it was an important skill to practice for communication because "writing letters is a good way of keeping in touch with family and friends." Another learner also saw

writing as important in her life: "Me, the way I see writing, it's a way of communicating with family and friends, and say you're told a story or (inaudible) you can write it down and that way you remember."

One participant saw writing as a way to express feelings: "And even just writing makes you feel better, like say one day you get frustrated and you write about it and then you look at it another day."

Other participants raised the issue of the place of Inuktitut and English in their schooling. There was tension there. One young woman related that she had been instructed in Inuktitut from kindergarten to grade three in Baker Lake. Then, her family left for awhile, and when they came back to live in Baker Lake in the early 1990s, she found that the situation had changed regarding Inuktitut: "I was discouraged because they [Inuit teachers] were telling us that we are white now, you're supposed to speak English, you can't talk Inuktitut anymore. What are you trying to be, or you know, degrading, so I just completely got turned off wanting to learn Inuktitut."

Another woman related her background with Inuktitut and her reluctance to learn English:

> I can read and write Inuktitut, speak English. Writing is a challenge for me, because when I was going to school, like high school, I used to, anywhere from grade six to (pause) five to grade nine or eight I used to skip English classes because I didn't like English, and it's just a challenge for me because I grew up, my parents only speak Inuktitut, they don't speak English at all.

Her main language was Inuktitut, and she realized later that she should not have been skipping English classes because “[for] jobs and any courses nowadays you have to include good English.”

Another focus group participant found it interesting that people who speak different dialects of Inuktitut have begun listening to each other: “I find it kind of interesting to see what one dialect relates to the other. But it seems like everybody likes to be heard and they want to be included into the community.”

The discussion then turned to the importance of finding work and helping oneself. One participant observed that more people should have signed up for the Creative Writing Workshop: “I think I’d like to see more people here and do this workshop so that they can learn more about writing and then maybe after get, maybe after taking this workshop they’ll improve their writing and at least they’ll help themselves.” Another participant emphasized that there is a problem with those on social assistance feeling that others who are employed should help them out. Some members of the community call in to the local radio station with their requests. According to one focus group participant, “they say: ’I’m poor, feed me, help me, I’ve got no education, have pity for me, give me this, I need that, cause I’m not working, you’re working, you’re rich, not me.’”

Overall, the learners were attending the workshop for several reasons. They saw the writing instruction as a way to improve their own literacy skills to obtain their goals in the workplace. And they saw writing as a way of expressing themselves in their lives. In particular, they saw letter writing as a way of keeping touch with loved ones. They also saw the workshop as an aid in their own overall personal development.

Culturally Appropriate Curriculum and Instruction

English Instruction

After this focus group, I realized that some of the themes that I had been thinking of asking them to write about were relevant: the weather, a childhood memory. At the beginning of the workshop I emphasized that we would begin writing in English right away and that they could write in any form—prose, poetry, song or fiction. I also told them that the best way to learn to write is to write, that they should just put their pen to the paper and keep writing, anything, just keep writing. Also, the learners should not worry about "correct" grammar and spelling, as this was irrelevant for the workshop duration. This was the method that I had employed in my writing workshops in Trinidad (Driedger, 2003). These methods resulted in everyone in Trinidad writing something during the workshops and most writing something worthy of being published. I provided some time in the workshop for the Baker Lake learners to revise before their pieces appeared in the book. First, I looked over the work and then asked them if the few editing changes that I made were acceptable to them. Changes included the placement of commas and corrections of a few spelling errors. The learners did not wish to make any substantial revisions, except one woman who took her song home to revise it. Perhaps because I read their work first, the learners felt that the teacher had spoken and everything was "right."

In our first exercise, I asked everyone to write for fifteen minutes about a childhood memory. I chose this because this would tap into the treasure trove of stories in their own schemata of Baker Lake. I wanted to learn the issues that people found most

important to them and what topics would interest them in writing. I was learning more about my students by hearing their foundational stories (Shor,1992). I prefaced the exercise by sharing two stories written by learners at the Trinidad and Tobago Adult Literacy Tutors' Association workshop that I had conducted in 1999 (Driedger, 1999a).

I emphasized that the learners were going to write and could have their work included in a similar publication, a booklet of letter size paper, folded in half and stapled in the middle—it would have a colour cover and would be around 30 pages in length. Again, the learners were quiet and very attentive during this ten-minute mini lesson. Then, the writing began. All were able to write at least a few sentences in the fifteen-minute period. A number of learners wrote several pages.

I asked if anyone wanted to read their piece aloud to the others, not for criticism, but to share their memory with the others. There was a volunteer immediately. The group enthusiastically greeted her story, and then others wanted to read theirs. The group that had appeared shy to me was coming alive. Throughout the morning of exercises, every learner read some of their writings, and a few of the learners read every piece they had written to the group. In one case, a learner asked me to read her piece on her behalf, because it dealt with the memories of someone close to her that she had recently lost. The reactions of fellow classmates were positive in all cases, and they nodded their affirmation of some of the opinions and experiences in the different stories, saying things like, "Yes, that is my experience too."

The second exercise was to write a story that their parents or grandparents, uncles or aunts had told to them—a family story, in other words. Again, the students wrote for fifteen minutes and then came back together to share their work. This exercise elicited

questions and discussions among the learners and they related these stories to their own experiences—interest was high. It was obvious to me that thinking about their own families' stories motivated them to write. This supported Freire's (1970) assertion that the teacher needs to start with subject matter that the learner is familiar with in order to be successful in reaching the learner.

The second morning, February 23rd, I again instructed in English and the learners all wrote pieces. The first exercise was to write about "what kind of weather are you? For example, are you stormy or sunny?" The learners worked with this metaphor well. Two students chose their prose pieces on this topic to be included in the book (Utatnaq, 2006). I asked the learners to write about "what my dreams are," thinking that many traditional Inuit stories talk about people having dreams. Everyone wrote something on this topic; these were, however, quite personal, and these pieces were not chosen for inclusion in the published book. Another topic that I chose for the morning was to discuss "how you got your name." In the Inuit tradition, naming is an important event, where when one is named after a deceased relative, others will view you as that person in this life (Minor, 1992). For example, if a woman was named after her aunt, her mother would refer to her as "sister." Not everyone wanted to write on this topic, so I said they could write about their favorite place or game as well. Perhaps the learners were unaware of the origins of their names. In addition, they may not shared their names, as in the Inuit naming system some names can be spiritually powerful and secret and are not shared with strangers.

The Elders' Instruction

On the afternoon of the first day, the Elders instructed the learners. First, they talked about the songs that were indigenous to the area around Baker Lake. They emphasized that they were talking from their experiences of the songs, of hearing them from others, and from composing them on the land. Songs needed to be composed and sung in Inuktitut, as they always had been. Again, this echoed the theory of Fanon (1963) who claimed that the oral stories of a people will survive colonialization and that these stories carry the seeds to rebuild a colonized people's culture.

One of the Elders, Thomas, emphasized that songs were composed when one was alone on the land. A hunter might compose a song in his head while he travels on the land. Being on the land is a good time to compose songs because one is alone and can think peacefully. Composing songs in one's head keep one's mind preoccupied while doing other tasks. Because of this tradition, Thomas emphasized that the learners might wish to go to another part of the college complex, away from the others in the classroom to write their songs. He suggested that writing together in the classroom was not the way songs were to be composed. Some students decided to go to another room or into the hall to compose their song, while three people stayed in the classroom at their seats.

Winnie emphasized that traditionally songs were about experiences in the composers' lives. Topics included the family, hunting, sewing, and the weather, anything that was happening in the life of the composer. Women might compose songs about how they love their family or about sewing. Thomas said that the men would create songs about their experiences such as looking after their weapons and making sure their rifles are working. This Inuit method of composing songs about one's own experiences

coincides with Shor’s (1992) concept of teaching students “where they are at”, that is, have them write about what they know, which I had used in my English instruction. The format of these songs was usually in a “verse” and “stanza” form with the verses and stanzas alternating. The stanza was the refrain “ai ya ya ai ya.” These were also known as “ai yaya” songs. They were often sung with the drum as well. The “ai ya ya” was not used in a formulaic way, but as the Elders explained, was used to fill in for words and rhythm in the song, “like the phrase scoobie doobie do,” explained Alexis, who was interpreting for me. In addition, the language of the songs was not simply straightforward. Metaphor was used. Winnie explained that her father sang that “his hair stood up” instead of saying that he was scared.

I observed that the teaching styles of Winnie and Thomas consisted of giving a mini lesson, just as I had done with the learners. Perhaps this was a way for them to operate in the formal educational atmosphere of the classroom. This was a way of integrating the formal with the Inuit way of teaching through activities of everyday life. Traditionally, Inuit have learned while observing someone at work making something that is real in the world like a meal or while hunting for food (Stairs, 1992). An older person usually showed the child how to do something and “[a]s soon as the child gained a basic skill, the ‘teacher’ would encourage the child to innovate and to try to make things on their own” (Boult, 1990, p. 11).

In keeping with an Inuit form of teaching, Winnie provided models of songs by singing several of the traditional songs that she knew from the Baker Lake area. She emphasized that the singer was very humble and would self deprecate in the song. For instance, a woman was singing that she is “just hanging out” when she actually is doing a

lot of sewing. And she also sang that she was hungry, but she had just caught a big fish. Another was the song of a hunter talking about a wolf that he wanted to catch and how he would not be able to do it, and then he does it. These songs were around two to three minutes in length.

The students were rapt during this time and listened carefully. The Elders talked and sang in Inuktitut, and it appeared that all students understood. Alexis translated for me during the session.

The Elders added the traditional drum to the singing of the songs. Thomas played the drum and asked if anyone else wanted to try it. Every person in the class tried it, including me. There was great enthusiasm for learning how to “dance” or sway with the drum, turning it up side to down side in rhythm to the song that Winnie was singing (a traditional song from the area). At this point, one of the students suggested that we write out the traditional song that Winnie was singing in Inuktitut syllabics on the whiteboard in the classroom. The Elders thought this was a good idea, and the student began to write down the words as Winnie dictated them.

Other students wanted to take turns in writing the syllabics or gave advice about which were the right syllabics to write certain Inuktitut words. Then the students realized that I would not be able to read syllabics, so they wrote out the same text in Roman orthography.

Text on the board, Winnie began to lead us in learning to sing the song to a tune that she said was well known in the area—it was a tune that one often composed one’s own songs to. The learners all sang and laughed when they stumbled over the words and

the tune. Thomas soon joined in with the drum. We practiced the song ten times that afternoon.

The learners had not wanted to share their own compositions at all from the day before. Singing Winnie's song together helped learners to learn more about the song and its rhythms. Why did the learners not share their own songs? It appeared to me that the only reason was because they felt that they could not write songs that would meet the Elders' standards. After all, the learners' Inuktitut was not as accomplished in its vocabulary and usage as that of the Elders. In addition, according to Berger and Epp (2006) Inuit children would work on a project on their own and then present it to someone as a gift. At the end of the last day, when I asked for submissions for the publication, most learners chose their songs to be included in the book. Perhaps they had decided that they had created something tangible that could be shared with the community as a gift through publication in the proposed booklet.

Most learners also did an English translation of their original Inuktitut song to appear alongside the original in the book. Later, Alexis, who was translating the book into both Inuktitut and English, said that the Inutkitut on the whole was done well and he had not changed the translations as he believed this reflected well what the learners were trying to convey.

2. What did Inuit adult learners write in response to the English instruction and the Elders' songs?

Samuel, (not his real name),was employed in the community, and he was not part of the ABE or GED classes at the Nunavut Arctic College. He wrote several pieces of

text that were published in the book. In the English exercise on relating an early childhood memory he related his first traveling experiences:

> My late mother (Salome), God bless her soul, was sent out to Churchill, Manitoba in the summer of 1960 to deliver a baby boy and that was me. After I was born and ready to go home to Baker Lake my mother flew and carried me in an amauti, which is a pouch on the back of a woman's parka. I was just a baby, so I did not remember my airplane ride. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 15)

In response to the writing about how one is like the weather, Samuel did not use the metaphor to describe himself until the end of his prose piece. He wrote about how global warming has impacted life for everyone in Baker Lake:

> I have lived most of my life here in Baker Lake and the weather has seen some changes in the past 10 to 15 years. And this change of weather has been a benefit and a drawback for all of us in the community . . . . For example, our winter today has been mild for most of the 2005/06 year and that has been very nice. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 29)

However, in the end, he said he would prefer to be the nice weather. He appeared to be the most adept at writing as he also said in the Learners' Focus group that he tried to write every day, by hand, to keep in practice.

In a Project Advisory Committee Meeting after the workshop, Thomas deemed Samuel's attempt at the song the best, as he was able to best emulate the Elders'

structure to compose his song. He used the “aiyayas” as a kind of refrain. His song was sad, as he continued to write over and over that he missed his friends who were far away. Having the Elders teach traditional songs accompanied by the drum was an effective way to encourage the learners to write their own personal stories. The nature of the traditional songs was to sing about one’s own life experiences. The learners’ songs reflected the themes that the Elders suggested, and they also wrote of their own experiences and feelings. The form was not usually the form of the Elders’ songs, though. This could be due to the short length of instruction. Thomas said later that he felt that one of the learners were really getting the hang of the form towards the end of the workshop, and if there had been more time for instruction, he would have got it. This learner, Samuel, wrote:

> Ajaa ajaa ajaa I am alone in my house
> Ajaa ajaa ajaa my friends are far away
> But they are on my mind and I imagine
> Them Ajaa ajaa ajaa.
> (Excerpted, Utatnaq, 2006, p. 41)

Nancy, (not her real name), is a young woman in her twenties who was completing her GED at the Nunavut Arctic College. She very much viewed writing as a big factor in her healing after the death of her father the year before. Several of her prose pieces included in *The Sound of Songs* (Utatnaq, 2006) mention her fond memories of her father while visiting Schultz Lake and her family’s fishing camp:

> After breakfast, my father would leave with the guests and guides to go fishing for the day. I remember that I would miss him and would worry about him because of the grizzly bears up at Shultz [sic] Lake. I would worry that my dad would not come back that evening because of the wind. I would be worried that it would be too windy for the boats to come back to us. They made it back every evening and I would be happy to see my dad. His happy face made me happy. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 21)

Indeed the weather is part of life in Baker Lake, and Nancy handled this metaphor for her life handily:

> Seeing my family shine makes me shine. Seeing the sun shine longer now in late February makes me shine more. Personally, I find the dark winter months here in Baker Lake make me dark as well. I want to learn how to be sunny when there is no sun. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 27)

Nancy's writings point to the importance of family in her life and growing up with her parents and sister and being on the land: "My parents had always taken us out camping. Those were fun days. I remember my father driving the snowmobile and we would be in the box sled, enjoying fresh air and the sun (during spring)" (Utatnaq, p. 17).

Nancy also shared her first "kill" as a child, an allusion to the hunt:

> I saw a hole, and I wondered why it was just there. I looked in the hole and a little white head peeked out. It was a white lemming. I ran into the porch and grabbed a hammer. I went back to the hole and waited. When the head popped out again, I hammered the poor thing to death. I showed it to my mother with the lemming in the palm of my mitt. My mother screamed, and I felt bad, because it was my first kill ever. (Utatnaq, 2006, pp. 17-18)

One woman, Sarah, (not her real name) dealt with her love for her children in a prose fashion:

> I love my daughters. They are very precious to me. Without them, I am not whole. They are a part of me, for they have come from me. I love them from the bottom of my heart. (Utatnaq, 2006. p. 37)

This is how she interpreted the Elders' exercise to write a song. She did not use the Elders' stanza and chorus approach, however she picked up on a theme, the family about which women in the area have often composed songs.

Sarah also picked up on the theme of the land and her favourite place in an interesting fashion. Not only does she enjoy walking outside, she enjoys her own interior landscape:

> In my favourite place I feel more at peace, and it is a way of calming myself down. Although there are machines and trucks passing by, I hear nothing but quietness and peacefulness. The cold, harsh wind does not even bother me and

> over time I begin to enjoy the conflict with the cold climate. It is as if I don't feel cold when I'm walking because I have a lot of things going on in my mind, compared to the people driving on machines, freezing their faces. I have learnt that walking really does relieve stress and connects you with yourself. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 32)

Sarah's mother approached me after the launch of *The Sound of Songs* (Utatnaq, 2006), where her daughter had read the above piece. She told me that her daughter was very wise and that Sarah had taught her about the importance of walking and reflecting.

Sarah completed her GED that year and went on to study away from the community, in Iqaluit. She studied to be a nurse for the community of Baker Lake, a first, as there were no local nurses who worked at the Health Centre.

Another woman, Judy (not her real name), wrote about her relationship to the land:

> Ayaya Song
>
> I was happy that I was going to live.
>
> I started walking to the land.
>
> I walked into my parents' tent, started eat-
>
> ing caribou meat.
>
> It was so delicious.
>
> After I was done then I started playing
>
> games all by myself.
>
> (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 39)

Darlene (not her real name) is a young woman in her twenties who was studying in the Adult Basic Education programme at the NAC. She selected two pieces to be in the book. Her prose about an early childhood memory mentions a funny moment with her sister:

> Tamara is my sister. She is three years younger than me. When she was like three years old, she had gotten her first puppy.
>
> My mom asked her, 'What are you going to name it?'
>
> Tamara said, 'Her name is twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are . . . ' and she continued to sing.
>
> Soon after that, my other sister, Bella, walked in I said, 'Tamara named her puppy a whole song!' I tried not to laugh and tried not to make fun of it. My mom had to stop me making fun of it. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 19)

Darlene chose to write about how she got her name, as this was one of the exercises in the English portion of instruction. Her prose piece is instructive about Inuit naming traditions:

> When my mom was pregnant with me she and my dad somehow decided to name me after my Aunt Anne's daughter. . . . When I was born I had that name, but there was a problem when I was born. My heart was beating too fast. My

mom phoned her dad to tell what was going on. So, he said to give me another middle name. Then he named me Palaittuq,

After that my heart rate went back to normal. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 25)

Darlene also wrote a song in response to the Elders' instruction. She chose to pick up on the importance of the Inuit traditions that the Elders said were emphasized in the songs of the Baker Lake area:

Keep it alive, five by five

1. Igloo building, keep it alive
2. Throat singing, keep it alive
3. Ayaya singing, keep it alive
4. Hunting skills, keep it alive
5. Drum dancing, keep it alive

Keep it alive, five by five. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 34)

Darlene's composition is a kind of "rap song," and when she read it aloud in the workshop she called out the numbers and read it just as it appears.

Editing the Sound of Songs (Utatnaq, 2006) Publication

The process of selecting and editing for the publication that came out of the workshop as well as the book launch can shed light on whether the teaching methods

used were successful in motivating students to write their own stories and to feel comfortable with them. Two learners chose to remain anonymous in the publication, but the other seven chose to have their names beside their work.

The learners did not select some of their more revealing personal pieces for publication. I had mentioned to everyone during the workshop that they needed to think carefully about whether they wanted everyone in Baker Lake and beyond to read what they had written. This was important to consider, as this could have an impact on the learner that she or he did not wish. Each learner chose at least one piece to be included in the book. A few learners had two or three pieces included. Some of the learners chose to include the pieces about their favorite place and game from the mini lessons I conducted to recruit them to the workshop. I looked through the pieces after the workshop and made a few minor spelling and grammar changes. I then showed the pieces to the authors for their approval.

Alexis examined the Inuktitut and English versions of the pieces. Most students had written their pieces in one language and then translated it into the other for the book. Alexis made very few corrections to the learners’ translations and Inuktitut syllabics. He also translated a few of the pieces in English into Inuktitut where the learners had not translated them themselves.

Also, the learners made very few revisions to their pieces before publication. The overall quality of the work was high. The majority of the learners agreed with the minor changes. One learner, however, wanted to do a major revision of her song, and she took it home to revise. She did not make the major revision, though, and decided to have her piece published as she had written it in the workshop. Perhaps the learners did not

embark on major revisions because beginning writers often do only surface revisions (Flower, Hayes, Carey, Shriver, & Stratman, 1986).

Overall, then, each learner felt enough pride in his or her work to have at least one piece included. Although, two learners asked to be anonymous in the publication, at the launch of the book three months later, one of these anonymous authors decided at the last minute to read her piece on stage to the 50 community members who were present. Originally she had felt shy and did not want her name included, but she became caught up in the excitement of the book launch, a community event.

3. How did writing and publishing in English and Inuktitut affect the empowerment of Inuit adult learners?

This section examines the question of whether the adult learners were empowered as a result of the writing instruction and publication of their work. First of all, however,

I will examine the definition of *empowerment* in the context of Inuit culture and the community of Baker Lake.

Problematic Aspects of the Term Empowerment

It became evident in the project that the word *empowerment* was problematic and that there were different views of this term and what it meant among those involved in the project. Throughout the project, I, as researcher and instructor, had thought of it more as a political way of acting in the world, self-efficacy to make changes in the community, and this is how Freire (1970) would define the empowerment gained from literacy and knowing the “word.” Ritchot’s (2005) study of Aboriginal women leaders in Manitoba

served as a guideline for me in constructing the methodology for this project. I used her notion that the Aboriginal women are empowered, not individually, but to help their Aboriginal community. However, throughout the project, definitions of *empowerment i*n the context of Inuit in Baker Lake became evident.

Alexis, the Adult Educator at the NAC, used the word *mapitturaliurpata* which is a person making her or himself visible and to stand out in some way. He saw empowerment as a process of individuals learning that they can make a contribution, that there are things they can do. He wrote in his Introduction to *The Sound of Songs*:

> The idea that young adults could write and publish their own work to make them feel empowered seemed appropriate for a community like Baker Lake. With unemployment and income support so high, many have nothing to do. At times they feel useless in the community. But many people have such talents that they sometimes do not see. So, I thought, maybe this is something that could prove that they have abilities within them. (Utatnaq, 2006, p. 8)

Alexis also served as the translator for the meetings with the Advisory Committee and for the workshop with the Elders, as the Elders could not speak English and I could not speak Inuktitut. He translated the word *empowerment* to the Elders not only as making oneself known to others, but also as a process of becoming a person in the community: " . . . to make visible, my translation also was to develop yourself, develop yourself in a way that you're making yourself visible to others, look, look at me, I've done this, I can do this (A. Utatnaq, Interview, June 20, 2007).

At the meetings with the Elders and the Advisory Committee, the Elders saw *empowerment* as knowing real Inuktitut and being able to sing and compose in the traditional song forms. Here, Brody's (1991) work sheds some light on the Elders' view that Inuktitut and knowing Inuit traditions is very important. The Inuktitut translation of empowerment, "to make visible," that Alexis used in this project, can be interpreted as young people becoming visible as "real Inuit" (*inummarit),* a standard that Inuit would like to live up to according to Brody. This also includes knowledge of Inuktitut and its terms for specialized plants and birds: "The *Inummarit*, however, use a vocabulary with a special richness beyond the names of creatures undifferentiated by others. They also use a host of refined terms and phrases and complex grammatical forms" (Brody, 1991, p. 151). In addition to the richness of the language, being "real Inuit" also means possessing traditional knowledge in the form of hunting, knowledge of geography and animals, and the traditionally defined areas of authority in the family (Brody, 1991).

I observed that the Project Advisory Committee members perhaps had their own agenda of finding some way of bringing the Elders and youth together to begin a dialogue. This had not been occurring in the community because many of the young people did not speak Inuktitut at the level of the Elders and this discouraged communication--even in the same households--between older and younger members. A member of the Project Advisory Committee stated:

> Nowadays, they [the Elders] do try to correct speech and so forth, and they try to tell them the correct way, but these days it seems the young people are a little

> more . . . aggressive, and they don't respect and listen to what they're being told" (Project Advisory Committee, February 8, 2006).

The young people I observed in the writing workshop were able to read and write Inuktitut and syllabics, as most demonstrated on the white board during the class. The difficulty may be that the younger people feel hesitant about speaking Inuktitut with the Elders because they do not speak it with the same fluency as their Elders. They may feel less than adequate in this area, and this discourages communication between the two groups even further.

Shearwood (2001), in his research on literacy in Inuktitut and English in Igloolik, found that Elders and the younger people did indeed speak Inuktitut differently as the Elders (those born before about 1946) did not write in the standard orthography adopted for Inuktitut in 1976. The Elders, then, may view this as a lack of interest in learning Inuktitut and in being a real Inuk. This may, of course, be true for some of the learners; however, all except one were able to write in Inuktitut for the book.

One learner felt her lack of knowledge of Inuktitut acutely and felt that she could not write a song in Inuktitut with the Elders. She did, however, sit in on the Elders' instruction about the traditional songs. I suggested to her that she write her song in English, but she declined, saying that the song was supposed to be written in Inuktitut because that is the way the Elders were teaching it. Again, Brody's (1991) concept of being "real Inuit" means doing it in the way that the Elders instruct.

The works of Laugrand (2002) and Shearwood (2001) help to better one's understanding of the dynamics between different generations. They postulate that there

are three generations of Inuit now in Nunavut, each of whom has a different view of the written word and writing their history: (1) the group that came off the land, the Elders, (2) the in-between generation now in their 40s and 50s who were the first to go to English-speaking schools, and (3) the young people in their 30s and under.

Laugrand (2002) holds that while Elders have a suspicion about telling stories in print, those in the other groups do not. The Elders find it problematic that the context of the stories is removed when they are published in print. That is, the reader does not know the person telling the story, or where the story is being told. In their opinions, this is as much part of the telling of the story as the actual words. And, in fact, Elders would explain that they can only tell a story from their own personal point of view and their own lived experience. Knowledge has been personal in Inuit culture.

Those who went to school learned about the value of writing as a tool that could be used to obtain agreements in writing that would benefit Inuit politically in Nunavut (Laugrand, 2002). In this project, it appears that two of the Advisory Committee members who are in that 40s and 50s group have joined this project because they see the value of writing for the younger generation. They, themselves, have experienced the benefits through work and through recording the stories of their Elders for future generations, as one of the members edited a book of Elders' stories (H. Mannik Interview, June 19, 2007; A. Utatnaq Interview, June 20, 2007).

This, then, fits in with Briggs' (1970) experiences living with Inuit in the 1960s in the Gjoa Haven area which is connected to the Baker Lake area by the Back River System. Some of the Inuit that Briggs worked with did settle in Baker Lake, but most went to Gjoa Haven. She postulated that the Inuit see the development of a person's

autonomy as the goal for every Inuk, as they move from childhood through the different stages of life. This autonomy is thought of in terms of *ihuma*-- that is, the cerebral functions of the person's mind, the ability to reason: "The growth of *ihuma* is internal and autonomous to a degree. They believe that *inhuma* needs to be informed, instructed, in order to develop along proper lines" (Briggs, 1970, p. 112). And all of this serves the purpose of helping the camp, composed of one's family and others: "In general, Inuit opted for helping and being helped, and valued social responsibility very highly. Contributing to the well-being of one's family and camp was the purpose that all the independent judgement and self-reliant, autonomous behavior served" (Briggs, 2000, p. 236).

Indeed, according to Laugrand (2002), the Elders maintain that they can only give their point of view and do not speak for others, and this relates to the individuality of each individual's experience of the world. There is not a collective view of *Inuit* traditionally. Individuals find their own way in the world and tell stories from their perspective. Inuit accept knowledge, as do other Aboriginal peoples (Goulet, 1998) based on personal experience and thus, they will only speak from this. Thus, it can be concluded that Inuit empowerment can be seen as developing as a person to achieve greater autonomy, and that the learners in this project are on that path. The Elders believe that the learners must retain their language and thus be able to sing the traditional songs as they were meant to be sung. And those of the second generation on the Project Advisory Committee believe that writing will enable younger people to enter jobs and the life of the territory of Nunavut.

In my examination of the concept of empowerment, I found that Brody (1991) introduced a useful concept *Inummarik*, which means: " 'a genuine Inuk' or 'a real person': *Inuk* + *marik* (genuine)" (p. 141). Stairs (1992) suggested that a person evolves towards becoming a genuine person who can contribute to the community:

> *Inummarik* identity is progressive, one does not assume the fixed qualities of a bounded person . . . . This acceptance of a progressive identity is demonstrated by Inuit as they absorb such external features as syllabic writing, fox trapping, media technology, and large-scale carving into the same body of traditional knowledge as oral 'literature,' sea mammal hunting, land lore, and kinship structure. (p.118)

Stairs reiterates that this identity is "ecocentric," that is, it has Inuit involved with their environment, the land and animals, directly in their development as people. Added to this is the "cycling" of Inuit lives which is captured in the metaphor of hunting—there is a cycle of action involved in hunting, an ongoing process that is required for sustaining Inuit lives.

Therefore, empowerment can be seen as a person becoming visible in the community to others and having personal autonomy. In addition, according to the Elders, to achieve autonomy it is the process of becoming a "real Inuk" who knows the traditional ways and the Inuktitut language.

Interviews

I hired a research assistant nearly nine months after the launch of the book, *The Sound of Songs* (Utatnaq, 2006). Due to my position as teacher, I felt that I needed to hire research assistants to carry out the interviews in order to mitigate the power circumstances of asking the learners what they thought of my workshop. Again, because I may have represented their Southern-style schooling experience they could have just told me what they thought I, as a teacher from the South, wanted to hear. On the other hand, they could have found a way to resist in the interviews and focus groups. I, therefore, hired two of the members of the Planning Committee, those who were in the middle generation who spoke both Inutktitut and English, to conduct these interviews. The identities of the learners are not known to me and I will refer to them by number.

Out of nine learners, seven were interviewed. One learner was deceased at the time of the interviews and another learner did not wish to be interviewed one-on-one. The first research assistant completed six of the interviews, but was unable to complete the final one due to accepting other employment. A second research assistant finished the last interview.

The results of these interviews overall showed that there were four learners who felt that the course was a good experience and that it increased their confidence in writing, which is a tool for achieving personal autonomy, that is economic and social opportunities, in Baker Lake. As one learner reiterated: “It gave me the opportunity to learn how to write properly and it enhanced my writing skills . . . . So in that case I am pretty optimistic with writing” (Learner Number 1, Interview, January 9, 2007).

One learner learned new writing skills in the area of writing with more fluidity:

> Like I learned it's, when you're asked to start writing something and you don't know what to write about or what to write, and then you just, once you start writing you don't realize (pause) you carry on and you can really express your feelings a lot in writing and you don't realize it, but when you write it that you notice a lot of things. I've learned a lot about writing in that programme, like just keep writing something and then go back and then fix the errors. (Learner Number 3, Interview, January 11, 2007)

Another learner also learned about the process of writing:

> The one thing I learnt was the free writing session. We just write down what comes out of our head, without grammar and spellings. It was interesting because you practically write on a paper, just like how you would talk. (Learner Number 6, Interview, January 23, 2007)

In addition, another learner viewed the whole workshop writing process as an emotional healing experience: "I think it [the workshop] was pretty interesting, and part of healing" (Learner Number 7, Interview, April 24, 2007).

In terms of whether this writing experience "empowered" the learners, it can be said that six of the learners felt that they had become more confident as "writers" since the workshop and the launch of the book: "The course that we took here encouraged me to keep trying and trying to write and never to give up, if I failed for the first time"

(Learner Number 1, Interview, January 9, 2007). Another learner concurred that she felt more confident about writing and that “I wanted to learn more and write more songs and write more Inuktitut” (Learner Number 2, Interview, January 11, 2007).

Though this confidence could be seen as part of empowerment, how did it relate to their overall sense of self, their personal autonomy, and their view of their role in the community? Four of the participants said that they felt good about the publication of their work: “I felt good and excited about my work being published” (Learner Number 6, Interview, January 23, 2007). Two learners expressed surprise that they had been able to achieve the writing and publication of their work: “I wasn’t here at that day [book launch day] but I knew that the publication was happening. I was in awe” (Learner Number 1, Interview, January 9, 2007).

Learner Number 3 stated: “A lot of people were impressed and even I myself was impressed with what I saw [in *The Sound of Songs*], not knowing that I can write when English has always been a challenge for me” (Interview, January 11, 2007).

In order to ascertain if the learners were “becoming visible” in their community, the research assistants asked them whether they had had reactions from others in the community about the publication of their work after the book launch. Five said that people had talked to them and the reaction was positive. Two learners heard from their family members about their achievements. Learner Number 2 shared that her mother was very happy about it: “She said that she didn’t expect me to write something about like, it as a ya ya song, and she was really impressed cause I did something like that. She wouldn’t think that I would do such a thing like that, but I went home with the book and surprised her, so she has a couple of the books now” (Interview, January 11, 2007).

Learner Number 7 related: “We only spoke about it within the family. I don’t know what the other people thought about my own personal stories. I don’t know if it’s too fresh, they didn’t feel what I felt” (Interview, April 24, 2007).

Four learners out of the seven said that others outside their family commented on their work and that they perceived that they were seen differently in the community. One learner’s friends were supportive: “A lot of my friends pat me on my back and said that I did a good job” (Learner Number 1, Interview, January 9, 2007). Another learner related: “Yeah, there was a few people that came up to me and they said to me that I did a good job and for the first time; they were happy about it. They said that they should have taken that course so they can write a book too” (Learner Number 2, Interview, January 11, 2007).

Learner Number 3 commented, “When I see one of the Elders that attended this programme he says that I’m very smart and bright and that I know a lot of my traditions and that I’m a fast learner, that made me feel more confident in doing things” (Learner Number 3, Interview, January 11, 2007). Another learner expressed hope that others, including the Elders, would see her differently in the community: “I hope so, I want people to understand that people are human beings and people do have feelings, these feelings” (Learner Number 7, Interview, April 24, 2007).

Is this, then, empowerment? According to the Inuktitut word *mapitturaliurpata* that Alexis used in our work, the learners had made themselves stand out, and had become more visible to others in the community.

People were surprised at the achievements of some learners. Overall, four out of the seven learners interviewed felt a sense of achievement within their community. One

person received positive reinforcement within the family, and two learners did not report experiencing any increased visibility in their community. In terms of whether there was personal autonomy, I examined indicators such as the learners' readiness to move on to other challenges.

Six of the seven learners related that writing would help them in their future plans. Three people stated that it would help them further their schooling, as Learner Number 6 stated: "Writing will definitely help me in my future plans since I am continuing my schooling" (Interview, January 23, 2007). Learner Number 3 added that mastering English writing skills were very important for the job market: "Like without Grade 12 you can't even work anywhere, and a lot of places require good reading, writing, English skills and to me right now I still find English is a challenge for me" (Interview, January 11, 2007).

Another learner saw that writing offered her a way to deal with personal stories in her life: "Writing would definitely help me deal when it's my deep personal stories. I think it's easier to write than to speak about anything, it's so personal" (Learner Number 7, 2007, Interview, April 24, 2007).

In terms of the Elders' view of including the traditions in one's development as a person, two learners mentioned these traditions as being pivotal for them. After the publication of her writing, one learner felt more confident to write more Inuktitut: "I wanted to learn more and write more songs and write more Inuktitut . . . . I'm happy with it. . . . I'll do more Inuktitut" (Learner Number 2, Interview, January 11, 2007). This same learner stated that she would also like to write more in English and that having a writing group like the workshop at the NAC would help her in her future plans:

> I'm hoping to take that course again, so I'll learn more to write a story or a song, so I'll, I'll show my son like when he grows up. I'll show him what I did, so he'll do the same thing, he'll have the same opportunity and encourage him to talk Inuktitut and sing Inuktitut or drum dancing. (Learner Number 2, Interview, January 11, 2007)

The Elders' definition of being empowered as a person through language and traditions is seen here.

Learner Number 2 also stated that having her writing published had impacted on her life, as it did for three of the other seven learners: "It got me thinking, yeah, about writing . . . . It just, I just wanted to keep on going and writing different stories and writing different songs" (Learner Number 2, Interview, January 11, 2007).

One of her workshop classmates said that having her work published changed her self-perception of herself as a "shy person":

> Like I put in, like I said I put in anonymous, I'm the shy type, and after seeing the book that was published from our writings, I felt more confident and not as shy. I felt more open, that I can be open and even having the people in the community telling me that they didn't know I, I can write stories or that I was good in writing. (Learner Number 3, Interview, January 11, 2007)

Overall, the learners gave short answers and did not elaborate much, as Hattie Mannik, the first research assistant, said about the interviewing process: "Some have

good answers, but most of them didn’t seem to know what to say and all that . . . . I’m not sure. Either they’re not interested or, unless it’s their very first time to do this, they really didn’t know what to say” (H. Mannik, Interview, June 19, 2007). I asked Hattie for her opinion about the interviewees because I was curious as to why the answers were short. In my experience interviewing other research participants in disability, women’s and writing projects the respondents usually spoke at length.

Two of the learners appeared to not be engaged with the interviews, or with the material that they had written. They answered “no” or “I don’t know” to most questions in the interviews, although one of these learners did say that she felt more confident about her writing as a result of the workshop and the book publication. The first research assistant (Mannik, 2007) felt this might be because these learners were not interested in what they had written. Perhaps they thought it was like “school” where it was work and you “had” to do it: “Like when you go to school, when you’re in school, when you know you have to do your work, you do it even though you’re not interested in them. It’s more like, it could be that to them too” (H. Mannik, 2007, Interview, June 19, 2007).

The second interviewer, Alexis, who is the Adult Educator, postulated that this might be a typical response of those in the younger generation:

> A lot of young people are like that, they’ll try to avoid the issue by just saying, no, I don’t know . . . . Yeah, they don’t want to talk about it or they’re just not interested or they’re shy. I have the same problem in the classroom. We try to get students to participate in discussions and we want everybody to say their piece

> one way or the other, and you'll get at least a couple of students who will say, no, I don't want to talk or I don't know. (A. Utatnaq, Interview, June 20, 2007)

In addition, their lack of response may be due to Inuit's reluctance to talk about themselves. On the other hand, it can also be postulated that the learners, in hindsight, did not feel that keen about the writing workshop and the book launch experience. However, whatever the reasons, whether the learners had a lack of interest in being interviewed, or a lack of interest in the project afterwards, the focus group data gathering process was also affected.

Focus Groups with Learners

I had planned a focus group with the learners to evaluate the results of this project. This focus group was to have taken place after the individual interviews, but it did not take place. Alexis, the second research assistant, made two attempts to convene a focus group of the learners. He called members by phone, first of all, and set a time for the meeting. No one showed up. Then, he realized that because all the learners did not have phones, perhaps they were not all hearing about it through word of mouth as he had hoped. Thus, he called those with phones and mailed letters about the second meeting to everyone. Again, the date was set, and none of the learners appeared at the focus group.

Reasons for this could have been that the project of writing and publishing the book was over and the learners felt far away from this project already:

> They had no problem with participating and writing, but after that when we started asking them about the processes and all that goes into writing, I don't think they were, maybe they did not have the skills to talk about it, and that they just felt maybe it was too complicated and maybe some felt, why, what's the use, I already wrote my story, isn't that good enough. I don't know. (A. Utatnaq, Interview, June 20, 2007)

Indeed, it also could be that they had already participated in the one-on-one interview and did not see the reason to convene in a focus group to talk about the same project again.

4. How did members of the community perceive the learners when they became published "authors"?

As is related above, in many cases, learners' parents, family, and friends, as well as the Elders provided positive feedback about the publication of the learners' works. I also looked to the Project Advisory Committee as a barometer of how the community might view the publication of the book and how the learners were perceived afterwards. Before the workshop, the Elders were adamant that the young people be taught in Inuktitut and learn more about their language and songs. This indeed happened, and they were impressed with the young people's efforts. After the workshop they expressed satisfaction that the learners were very attentive and that they worked hard: "I was quite happy with it, they were trying very hard in their Inuktitut and they all worked very hard at it" (T. Qaqimat, Project Advisory Committee Meeting, February 27, 2006).

There was further indication after the book launch that the Elders' version of empowerment had been achieved to some extent. Thomas explained that "seeing the results of the book and the opening, they [the learners] understood a lot and were able to produce and [I am] very impressed by that…" (T. Qaqimat, Project Advisory Committee Meeting, June 2, 2006). In addition, the Elders were impressed that many parents of the learners were present at the book launch and that the parents showed great support. One mother "yelled out from excitement to see her daughter performing up there" (W. Owingiyak, June 2, 2006). The same parent was excited that her daughter had expressed herself and she learned something from her:

> Just as we closed, [a] mother came up and gave her own feedback of her daughter's composition about [the learner] walking and the mother felt a little bit embarrassed by saying here I am racing with a skidoo and my daughter's just taking her time walking to school to contemplate life. She said, how wise my daughter has become. (H. Mannik, Project Advisory Committee Meeting, June 2, 2006)

The community showed interest in the book launch and 50 people attended on a cold evening with sleet pelting the thawing ground. Many Elders were unable to attend due to the poor weather—the Elders in this project wished that more had attended so that they could get the other Elders' feedback about the writings and the learners' efforts at the songs.

The vision of empowerment as a person making oneself visible to the community and developing personal autonomy was also present at the book launch, as most learners read their compositions from the book in both English and Inuktitut. One woman, as mentioned earlier, was so overcome by the excitement of the event, that she read her piece on stage even though she signed herself "anonymous" in the publication. There was a feeling in the Recreation Centre the night of the book launch that this was a community event. As one Elder, Thomas, stated, he had a hard time holding onto his copies of *The Sound of Songs* even in his own house. His son and grandchildren wanted to read the book to find out what others in the community had written. As Alexis pointed out, this was the first community event where people other than the Elders' were voicing their own perspectives, the contributors were telling "the community with their own words, their own thoughts and in that structure the book, *The Sound of Songs*, and the book launch" (A. Utatnaq, Project Advisory Committee Meeting, June 2, 2006).

Overall, there was a sense of empowerment for the learners as they read at the book launch, saw their families there and received reinforcement from Elders and others in the community, who bought their book. (Thirty copies were sold.) In fact, at one point, I looked at the book launch attendees, all in chairs backed up against the four walls of the Recreation Centre, and they were all following along in their copies of *The Sound of Songs* book as the learners read. The interest of the community must have been encouraging to the learners that night, and indeed the comments of the learners about the book launch, mentioned earlier in this chapter, reinforce this view.

In addition to the community and Elders' support, the learners felt that they had learned more about writing, and in some cases, they had surprised themselves with their

own abilities. Overall, the majority of the learners felt that the writing and publishing experience had benefited their quest for more training and better employment. They saw the workshop as a stepping stone to their development, not only in their writing skills, and in being seen as doing well in the community, but also in terms of learning about the Elders' songs. Winnie, the Elder, led a song group formed by four workshop learners, and performed a traditional song at the book launch. There was sufficient interest and a sense of ownership for these women to practice for two days before the launch. At the time it appeared that a song group would be formed out of the workshop activities, as there was a lot of interest from these women. However, this did not materialize, probably because there was no funding available to start a group, according to Winnie (W. Owingiyak, Final Project Advisory Committee Meeting, November 6, 2007). I assumed that funding would be required to pay the coordinator of such a group.

Indeed, all definitions of empowerment, from knowing the traditional ways and being "real Inuit" to making oneself visible to the community, to developing personal autonomy were evident, to greater and lesser degrees, for most of the learners. Whether there will be long term results in terms of community involvement over the years is unknown.

Conclusion

The results and analysis of the four research questions for this project show that the majority of learners experienced some form of empowerment through learning to write more easily, through hearing about their achievements from others in the community, and through feeling more confident in their writing abilities and their

knowledge of their Inuit traditions. In addition, members of the community appear to have taken interest in the achievements of the learners and saw the learners as doing well in terms of learning about traditions, the Elders' definition of empowerment, and through developing themselves as persons, making themselves visible as members in the community—personal autonomy.

In terms of curriculum, the Elders' teaching a portion of the workshop with me opened up communication between the Elders and younger people. In the process, the Elders' insistence on teaching in Inuktitut and in having control of their sessions appeared to be an act of resistance against colonialism according to Fanon's (1963) theories about the role of storytellers in a colonized society. Indeed, the instruction motivated the learners to write their own stories for publication. More results and analysis will be discussed in Chapter Five in an auto-critique, wherein I will examine my role as researcher in a different cultural context from my own.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN (AUTO)CRITIQUE

This chapter will discuss my positionality as a researcher and how this impacted the results of this writing, publishing, and empowerment project. Another researcher may have undertaken the same project and come up with different data, results and conclusions. My positionality--as a white woman, of Mennonite descent with disabilities that fluctuate in their severity--will be outlined. The effects of my disability, gender, religion and ethnicity will be examined. This will include a critique of the small amount of time that I spent in the community of Baker Lake. My stance on the importance of written literacy, as a graduate student and a poet, also impacted the way I collected data and the way I delivered the workshop.

My Positionality

As mentioned earlier in the dissertation, I identify as a white, Mennonite woman with several chronic illnesses including fibromyalgia and breast cancer that I consider to be disabilities. I will discuss how each of my positions impacted this study. First, my chronic illnesses played a major role in how the research was conceived and set up. Ideally, it would have been better for the project if I had been able to spend more time in Baker Lake, especially in the post-booklaunch phase of the project. The whole question of empowerment would have been easier to ascertain because I would have been around in the community to hear and observe the learners' and community's reactions. In addition, the learners would likely have felt more comfortable if they had seen me in the

community more often. This would likely have meant that the project would be more in their minds. Because I did not visit Baker Lake until one year after the book launch, it was difficult for my research assistants to contact and interview the learners from the project. As Alexis told me, the project was over in their minds, so why was I still asking questions?

The project had a larger gap between the book launch and completing the interviews and attempted focus group than there should have been—a year by the time the process was completed. We had all discussed that interviewing the learners six months after the publication was launched would have been ideal. This is where the factor of my health played a large role, as I unexpectedly was diagnosed with a new chronic illness, breast cancer, at the time that needed to be treated extensively during this period. I should have had more contact with Alexis, the learners, and the Advisory Committee. I could have kept everyone in the loop by informing them more about what was going on concerning my study. Due to my illness, the communication was not as frequent as it should have been.

I traveled in and out of Baker Lake, rather than staying longer in the community, due to health reasons. My presence thus was more of an act of travel. That is, how long could I be away from the monitoring of doctors (Baker Lake did not have a resident doctor, only a nursing station), how long could I deal with the effects of fatigue from the more rugged terrain, gravel roads, the climate, and with learning to live in a new place? I decided that going three times, with the longest period being three and a half weeks, was the way to proceed. I felt this would work, even though traditionally, (according to anthropological practice), projects should be longer in order to gather data, that is, the

time in the community and the instructional time would be longer. Briggs (1970) in her book, *Never in Anger*, spent two years living with an Inuit family to document hers and their cultural experiences. However, my travel stance was also one that I had taken in previous projects that I had been consulting on in the Caribbean, Central America and in Nunavut.

The idea of the consultant jetting in and out is a colonial attitude that I brought with me. Thomas (1994), in *Colonialism's Culture*, views travel as a kind of new colonialism in today's postcolonial world. He cites Edward Said, who claimed that travel actually is needed for the broadening of an academic's perspectives: 'Travelers must suspend the claim of customary routine in order to live in new rhythms and rituals . . . the traveler crosses over, traverses territory, and abandons fixed positions all the time' (Said in Thomas, 1994, p. 6). However, according to Thomas, travel "re-empowers a dominant subject even if it destabilizes his customary truths" (Thomas, 1994, p. 192). That is, colonial assumptions are reinforced as one views others in their culture as "different" from oneself.

I realized this when I met a group of Southern consultants in Baker Lake the last time I visited in June, 2007. They were in the community gathering as much information in a short period of time as they could. I saw myself mirrored. And I realized that I was involved in "sampling" a place, of being a "tourist." That is, I knew I did not have to stay there if it got too uncomfortable, unpleasant, if I did not like it. If there were inconveniences, I did not have to live there; my stay in Baker Lake was time limited.

My socialization as a Mennonite from a liberal Winnipeg church that was concerned with justice issues also affected how I conceived and carried out this project.

The service arm of the Mennonite church is the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), where I worked both as a volunteer and as a paid staff person in the 1980s. There was a development agenda, both within Canada, with Aboriginal peoples, and outside the country in developing nations. The role of MCC workers was to work towards helping people help themselves.

This MCC work was my first introduction to self-help, and it evolved into issues around self-determination and empowerment as I became involved in the disability rights movement in Canada and abroad. I have carried this notion of empowerment over to this project. However, I also carried over the notion of spending small stints in countries as a consultant. My work in the disability rights movement, in particular, was for short durations, of not more than six weeks at a time, in the Caribbean and Central America. This kind of stint was justified by the disability rights movement in that the self-help organizations of people with disabilities in the developing countries were partners with us, the Canadians, and we would listen to what they wanted. Thus, our staying with them for a longer period of time was not needed, as the disabled peoples' organization in a developing country was the "expert" on their own situation. This attitude influenced my thinking in conceiving of the methodology for the project. I contacted Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) to work with me in planning and carrying out my project. Alexis Utatnaq of NAC convened a community Project Advisory Committee, who were partners with me.

Teaching writing, in a way, is a still a colonial project. I discovered that it could be used in both negative and positive ways during this project. Freire (1970) reiterated that in traditional teaching practices, knowledge was deposited into people's minds and

was used to bring the oppressed around to the oppressors' view of the world. The workshop held in Baker Lake emphasized that the knowledge of Inuit in the area needed to be written for the community and others—this included working with the traditional songs of the Elders and also telling family and personal stories. I attempted to overcome the "depositing" of knowledge while teaching by tapping into the culture and experience of the area.

I used this technique to help overcome the learners' existing attitudes towards writing. Many of the learners shared in the focus group before the workshop that they did not like to write or that it had always been hard for them to write in school. They were convinced, however, that they needed better literacy skills to improve their employment prospects in the community. Smith (1999) had a similar view, when considering indigenous peoples and education:

> Indigenous communities continue to view education in its Western, modern, sense as being critical to development and self-determination. While criticizing indigenous people who have been educated at universities, on one hand, many indigenous communities will struggle and save to send their children to university on the other. (p. 71)

The culture of creative writing workshops and theory is important to my decision to teach a two-day workshop. As a creative writer, I have been involved in writing communities that often sponsored the "writing workshop." These workshops were a one- to two-day course where an experienced writer discussed writing, how he/she approached

that task, and then led the group in writing exercises. The point of these workshops was to stimulate writing and to motivate writers to think and write in ways that they had not before. This was the same idea that governed my teaching choices in Nunavut, just as it had in my teaching writing in Trinidad (Driedger, 1999a; 1999b). The learners in Baker Lake did, for the most part, write pieces for every exercise with me and the Elders. Thus, the goal of motivating the learners to write was achieved through this method.

The workshop instruction did not contribute to the improvement of the learners' writing. This was not a goal of this project and in hindsight, I see that more time could have been spent on improving the writing of the learners, rather than just motivating them to write. As mentioned earlier, the learners did not undertake any major revisions after their first drafts. In future, if such a project were undertaken in Baker Lake or in another community in Nunavut, writing improvement should be a goal of instruction. This would provide maximum benefit for the learners who were taking part in this writing opportunity.

In addition, more time should have been spent on the instruction in the traditional songs. The Elders, at the Project Advisory Committee meetings after the book launch, and at the final Project Advisory Committee meeting said that the time that they had to teach the songs was too short. Thomas pointed out that if they had had more time, the learners would have been able to perfect a song (Project Advisory Committee, June 2, 2006). The learners, on the whole, also expressed the need for more instruction from the Elders on these song forms. Thus, the creative writing workshop model was helpful for encouraging writing, but the depth of instruction in traditional knowledge was lacking. Thus, there should have been a longer time for instruction. Also, the reason I had such a

short course was because all the learners had other commitments to school and work during the weekdays, and I understood that a workshop on the weekend would have few participants. In an ideal project, there would have been more time for the learners to absorb the teachings of the Elders, which most were hearing for the first time.

Overall, the instruction in this project had limitations for the empowerment of the community as a whole. If instruction in writing improvement and traditional songs had been in-depth, there would most likely have been more of an impact on the community and the learners. Any future writing workshop in Baker Lake or in another Nunavut community would need to take this into consideration.

My experience as a creative writer in the South also led to a misunderstanding about the seating arrangements at the launch, held at the Recreation Centre. When I first arrived that night, I noted that the wooden, hard-backed chairs were lining the square Centre, all along the edges and the chairs were backed up against the walls. I immediately started to arrange the chairs in rows in front of the one-foot high stage at the back of the Centre. I had done about two rows of ten chairs when I thought, why isn’t anyone helping me do this? I looked around and saw that no one else, was paying any attention. I asked Alexis if the chairs should be set up this way and he said, no, no one will get up to read if there are people directly in front of them in rows. The learners will be too intimidated. The chairs needed to be placed against the walls of the Centre. Embarrassed, I returned all the chairs to their original positions.

I realized that my concept of how stories are shared was a Southern one with the experts front and centre “up there” presenting to the rows in front (a linear seating arrangement). The chairs along the walls roughly formed a circle and from my chair

during the launch I realized that we could all see each other in that circle. We could share our reactions to the writing together. The stage was still at the end of the Centre, but those on stage also formed a part of the circle. This was instructive to me, as I realized that I just took charge of the seating arrangements and did what I thought was “supposed to be done.” This gave me a reminder to observe and listen before acting in the project. Undoubtedly, there were other times of which I was unaware that my Southern notions directed the construction of and teaching in this project.

Finally, how my gender affected this project is hard to evaluate. I noted that of my nine workshop participants, only two were men. Did fewer men express an interest in attending the workshop because I was a woman? The NAC classes in which I gave mini lessons before the workshop had more women than men, but the proportion was not that much greater. My gender may have affected the make up of the participants in the workshop, as the women may have felt more comfortable with a woman instructor. On the other hand, Inuit women may participate more in educational programmes. Guay (1988) inferred in her work that Inuit women, especially women with men’s names, tended to be more educated in terms of formal education, and to participate in small business and paid jobs. However, Guay pointed out that there is no data comparing women’s to men’s graduation from high school. At the time, records were only available for students from 1980 to 1986—there were no records before 1980. It could be that Inuit women tend to be more interested in education, especially for employment, than men, but research needs to be done on this.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed how my positionality as a researcher impacted on the results of this project. Being of Mennonite descent and a woman with disabilities affected how I chose to structure the project. In addition, my past experience in the creative writing community in Winnipeg and the Caribbean greatly influenced the structure and the length of the workshop. This led to a lack of depth for the learners. They needed to have a longer time of instruction with the Elders, who were teaching songs and traditions that most learners had never heard about. In addition, the learners also needed more in-depth instruction in English composition. The next chapter will discuss the implications of the results of this project.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine whether teaching creative writing and then publishing adult learners' work in a book led to the empowerment of Inuit adult learners in Baker Lake, Nunavut. Chapter One outlined the rationale for conducting this study and Chapter Two reviewed the literature on research in orality, different types of literacy, written composition, writing and empowerment, and Inuit writing historically and currently. Chapter Three discussed the participatory action research orientation of the methodology, a description of the curriculum process that was enacted, and described the research plan. Chapter Four outlined the results of the data collected concerning the writing curriculum employed in the workshop and a discussion of whether empowerment took place among adult learners. In the process, I have postulated an Inuit definition of empowerment. Chapter Five was an auto-critique of my role as a researcher in a Northern Inuit community and how this may have impacted the research and the results of this project.

This chapter will present a review of the curriculum used in the creative writing workshop, the publishing of the book and its launch, and the empowerment of the learners that took place in this study. I will discuss the implications of the results for future studies, and for teaching writing in an Inuit community.

Results and Implications of the Instruction

This section will present the results and implications of the first two research questions:

1. What were culturally appropriate teaching methods and curricula that were successful in motivating adult learners to write stories from their own experience?

2. What did Inuit adult learners write in response to the English instruction and the Elders' songs?

The first question looked at the teaching methods that were employed in this project, of which there were two streams: English instruction in topics familiar to the learners and the Elders' songs taught in Inuktitut. The data of the planning process and the creative writing workshop itself were used to determine the success of these methods in motivating learners to write about their own experiences. The results of the planning process were that the Elders and I formulated a bilingual, English/Inuktitut workshop. This was as a result of the Elders' emphasizing the importance of strengthening young people's use of the Inuktitut language in the community. The Elders taught Inuktitut songs that were traditional to the areas around Baker Lake. They engaged the learners and the learners were able to write some songs in response to the instructions. However, the songs produced mostly did not follow the traditional template very closely. Some students, in fact, adapted the song format to their own style, while still using the traditional topics, such as family and hunting. The learners were able to relate their own

lives to the songs of the Elders and this motivated them to write their own songs. However, they produced less writing during the instruction from the Elders than during the English portion of the workshop. I think this can be attributed to the fact that the Elders' songs were entirely new to all but one learner, who had heard some songs previously at the Cultural Centre. There was a steep learning curve in terms of learning the form of the songs.

The Elders' Inuktitut instruction in songs appeared to generate a lot of enthusiasm and interest among the learners in hearing about and writing songs traditional to the Baker Lake area. In fact, four of the women in the writing workshop later met to practice the traditional song that Winnie had taught at the workshop. They performed the song at the launch of *The Sound of Songs* (Utatnaq, 2006).

The implications of this interest, reflected in the interviews with the adult learners, and the Project Advisory Committee meetings, appear to be that Elders and learners would like more instruction and more in-depth instruction in writing and performing songs at Nunavut Arctic College (NAC). To date, further instruction in song writing has not taken place at the NAC. This is contingent on NAC being able to fund the course. This remains a task for the future.

The Elders of Baker Lake appeared to be happy with the interest and enthusiasm of the learners and with the songs that the learners wrote. It appears that this method would work well in other Inuit communities in the Kivalliq region, of which Baker Lake is part, and in Nunavut as a whole. Further instruction could be undertaken in both Baker Lake and other Kivalliq communities to start with. The Nunavut Literacy Council in the Kivalliq region has expressed interest in learning the results of this study and might look

at how these teaching methods could be used in other communities. This would mean that Elders in the communities would be consulted about teaching songs or stories from their area to learners in their communities.

The English instruction, using creative writing workshop teaching techniques, helped the learners produce at least several pieces of writing each. The use of topics that I believed would stimulate the learners to write from their own personal experiences appeared to motivate them to write. Each learner had at least one piece in the published anthology. The learners seemed eager to share their writing with the other members of the workshop and the workshop participants seemed interested in the writing of others. The topics of weather, a favorite place, a dream, a childhood memory and a favorite game were ones that seemed to resonate with the learners and prompted them to produce writing. These were topics that I drew out from the readings on Baker Lake as a place and on Inuit culture that I had studied before I arrived in Baker Lake and what I observed in teaching the pre-workshop mini lessons to the ABE and GED classes to recruit workshop participants.

It appears, therefore, that English instruction could be used successfully in tandem with an Inuktitut portion of Elders' songs in other areas of the Kivalliq region and other regions of Nunavut. This is assuming that the other communities also would opt for bilingual English-Inuktitut writing instruction. Consultation with the communities would need to take place, with a similar Project Advisory Committee structure, to determine the needs of the particular community. Again, the Nunavut Literacy Council has shown interest in the past at looking at the structure of this project to see whether it can be

translated for other communities. Perhaps I could train people in the communities, literacy workers, to set up such a community project with the Elders in their areas.

Overall, the instruction was successful in prompting each learner to include at least one piece in the published anthology. The learners used the tools of the English creative writing exercises and the Elders' instruction in songs from the Baker Lake area to write about their families and personal situations. The learners appeared to be enthusiastic at the book launch which may have added to their empowerment as individuals and as writers, where they thought they were not writers before.

The Empowerment of Inuit Adult Learners—Results and Implications

This section will discuss the results and implications of the research questions for this study that examined the empowerment of Inuit adult learners in Baker Lake:

3. How did writing and publishing in English and Inuktitut affect the empowerment of Inuit adult learners?

4. How did members of the adult learners' community perceive the learners when they became published "authors"?

The notion of *empowerment* was important to the results of the study, and how the members of the community Project Advisory committee, the Elders, and I interpreted it in this study The definition of empowerment that I used to interpret the results of this study is based on the Inuktitut word *mapitturaliurpata* where a person makes him or

herself stand out or makes him or herself visible. Throughout the project this definition grew to include “personal development” of “growing as a person, an Inuk, and becoming more of an Inuk,” and having personal autonomy. Using this definition, I postulated that the learners in the study did experience growth as people in several ways.

First, the majority of the learners, six, found that the writing and publishing of their work led to increased confidence about their ability to write. For some, it has encouraged them to think about the possibility of continuing to write from their own perspective.

Second, the Elders’ instruction in traditional songs appeared to have an impact on the empowerment of some learners who said that they wanted to learn more songs. Four of the women in the group pursued a singing group to perform Winnie’s song for the community at the book launch. These same women and the Elders spoke later in interviews and meetings about how this made them a feel part of the community—their parents were proud of them, the Elders were proud of them, their friends were proud of them.

The Elders’ instruction could be seen as a beginning in the community. This kind of instruction had only been undertaken to a limited extent in the local high school. This workshop expanded on that instruction and exposed many younger people in their 20s and 30s to the traditional songs and Inuit drum playing traditions, exposure they had not had before. There appeared to be an interest in having the Elders teach more courses on these songs and traditions at the Nunavut Arctic College. The College and Elders appeared willing, though funding would need to be found to add these courses to the NAC curriculum. At present, many of the NAC’s courses focus on preparing workers for

the gold mine being built north of Baker Lake and also on Adult Basic Education and the GED.

The Implications of the Study as a Participatory Action Research Project

Overall, the fact that the study was structured as a participatory action research project seemed important. This project enabled the community to have input into the running of the project and the findings. In a sense, this was a community development project that linked the Elders and younger people in the community. A project like this had not been undertaken before in their community and I think the NAC, the Elders and the members of the community may have become aware that the young people are interested in the traditions and that they can also write.

What then, are the implications of someone conducting such a study in a community such as Baker Lake again? The community and the literacy project would be better served from having a writing instructor in the community to deliver a longer and more in-depth writing workshop in both English and Inuktitut. The Project Advisory Committee thought that more instruction would have enabled the learners to perfect the traditional songs from the Baker Lake area and to learn more about Inuit traditions. I also concluded that longer instruction in English would have benefited the learners' writing. These kinds of writing opportunities do not happen often in the community and therefore, more time should have been spent on improving writing and making this a more in-depth learning experience for the learners. I think training local instructors from the different Nunavut communities would enable longer courses and more follow-through with the learners.

Conclusion

In the area of writing instruction this study's conclusions point to the success of having Elders teach songs traditional to the area of Baker Lake. The conclusions also indicate the success of teaching using writing topics to which learners can relate in the community. Both of these teaching techniques were successful in motivating the learners to write and to publish at least one piece each in the book. The process of publishing learners' work in a book and then launching it in the community created empowerment for the individual learners and it also changed how the community, especially the Elders and the parents, viewed the learners' abilities to write and to understand Inuit traditions. The project itself, being a participatory action research project, demonstrated the skills and motivation of the community of Baker Lake to participate with the researcher in the project through the learners, a Project Advisory Committee, the Nunavut Arctic College and the Elders. Overall, this project created a venue for Inuit to write and publish their own realities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Project Interview Questions

Appendix B:

Utatnaq, A. (2006). ***The Sound of Songs: Stories by Baker Lake Writers.***

Baker Lake, Nunavut: Nunavut Arctic College.

(Authors' names have been blanked out to preserve the anonymity of the learners.)

APPENDIX A.

Project Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Adult Learner Participants

Before the Creative Writing Course Begins

1. How much writing have you done? How do you feel about writing?

2. What is your experience with writing?

3. Why are you taking this workshop?

Individual Interview Questions for Adult Learner Participants

After the Publication and Launch of the Booklet

1. Could you tell me a bit about your background?
   a. Age
   b. Martial and family status
   c. Employment status
   d. Level of education achieved
   e. History of living in Baker Lake

2. What did you think of the creative writing course?

3. Why did you choose the themes and stories to write about that you did?

4. Had you heard the Elders' stories before they visited the course and told them to the class? Did the stories impact what you decided to write?

5. Do you feel more confident about writing after the course and publication of your writing?

6. How did you feel about the publication of your writing?

7. Did others in the community talk to you about your work being published? What did they think?

8. Do you think that others in the community, your family, Elders see you differently now that you are a published author?

9. Does it matter to you what others in the community think about you and your contributions to the life of Baker Lake?

10. Do you know other published authors in your community? What is your view of them?

11. How can writing help you in your future plans?

12. Is your life different than it was before you had your writing published?

Questions for Project Advisory Committee Members

When Project Starts

1. What do you see that this writing project can accomplish? In the community? For the learners? For you?

2. What does the word "empowerment" mean to you?

3. What kind of writing curriculum do you think would be successful for this creative writing workshop?

4. How do you think the project is progressing? (This will be asked throughout the project meetings)

At the End of the Project

1. What do you think about the empowerment of the adult learners now that they have had their writing published and launched?

2. Have the students become more involved in their community?

3. Are the students interested in learning more about writing?

4. Are the students feeling overall more confident in their ability to read and write in English, to contribute to community life?

Questions for Elders

1. What do you see that this writing project can accomplish? In the community? For the learners? For you?

2. What does the word “empowerment” mean to you?

3. What kind of writing curriculum do you think would be successful for this creative writing workshop?

4. Which stories that you can tell do you think will be effective in teaching?

5. When are you available to come to class to tell stories? And for how long?

Questions for Alexis Utatnaq, Adult Educator, Nunavut Arctic College (NAC) Baker Lake

Questions for the Advisory Committee Members will be asked of Mr. Utatnaq, as he will be a member of this group.

1. How did you recruit students for the creative writing workshop?
2. What is the students’ experience of reading and writing?
3. Has anyone published their work in either English or Inuktitut before?
4. Why do you think the students are taking this course?
5. What do you hope will come out of the course and the publication of the booklet?
6. How does this fit in with the mandate of the NAC?
7. Is this project something you want to try again by holding more creative writing workshops?

APPENDIX B

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The Sound of Songs

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ᑎᑎᕋᖅᑕᖏᑦ

Stories by
Baker Lake Writers

ᐊᑦᕿᒃᓱᖅᑕᐅᔪᑦ ᐊᓕᒃᓯ ᐅᑕ'ᓈᓗᑦ
Edited by Alexis Utatnaq

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ᐃᓕᑕᕆᔭᒃᓴᐃᑦ

ᐃᓅᖕᓂᒃ ᖁᔭᓕᕗᒍᑦ ᑕᒪᑐᒥᖕᖓ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᕐᑎᖕᓂᒃ ᐃᑲᔪᓚᐅᖅᑐᓂᒃ. ᕕᓂ ᐅᕕᖕᖓᔮᖅᑯ ᑑᒪᓯ ᖃᕿᒪᑦᑯ ᐱᕆᐊᖅᓂᖕᖓᓂᑦ ᐃᑲᔪᓚᐅᖅᒪᑎᒃ. ᓯᕗᓕᐅᖅᑎᕆᓚᐅᒃᑲᕗᑦ, ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᖅᑎᑦᓯᔨᐅᑉᓗᑎᒡᓗ ᐊᒻᒪ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᒃᓴᑉᑎᖕᓂᒃ ᐋᖅᑭᓱᐃᔨᐅᖃᑕᐅᑉᓗᑎᒃ. Hᐋᑎ ᒪᓐᓂᒡᓗ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ Hᐃᓗ ᑕᒍᖅᓈᖅᓗ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᒃᓴᑉᑎᖕᓂᒃ ᐋᖅᑭᓱᐃᔨᐅᖃᑕᐅᓚᐅᖅᑎᖕᒪᓂᒃ. ᖁᔭᓕᕆᐸᕗᑦ ᔮᓂᓗ ᑳᒪᓐᓗ ᑐᔪᖅᒥᕕᖃᖅᑎᑦᓯᖕᒪᓂᒃ ᑕᐃᔮᓐ ᑐᓈᑦᔪᒥᒃ. ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᑭᖑᓪᓕᖅᒥᒃ, ᓵᓗᒨᓂ ᐳᑐᒍᒃ ᑎᑎᖅᐅᔭᕈᑎᖕᒪᑎᒍᑦ ᐱᐅᔪᒥᒃ ᒪᒃᐱᖅᑐᖅᓯᑉ ᖃᖕᒐᓄᑦ ᐊᑐᖅᑕᕗᑦ.

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ᐱᒋᐊᕈᑎᖓ

ᐅᖃᓗᒡᕕᐅᓯᒪᒐᒪ ᑕᐃᔮᓐ ᑐᕇᑦᔪᒥᑦ ᐊᒃᑐᑦ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᑎᑦᓯᓐᖑᓵᕐᑎᓪᓗᖓ ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᒥ. ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕈᑎᒋᔭᖓ Ph.D-ᑖᕐᓯᐊᕐᓗᓂ ᐱᔾᔪᑎᒋᐸᓗᒍ, "ᑎᑎᕋᐅᓯᖅ, ᒪᒃᐱᖅᑐᕋᓕᐅᕐᓂᖅ, ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᑎᒍᒥᐊᓕᕆᓐᓇᕐᓂᖅ ᐃᓅᓯᕐᒥᒃ ᐃᓅᓱᒃᑐᓄᑦ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᑐᓄᑦ" ᐱᓕᕆᐊᕆᔭᖓ ᖁᕕᐊᓇᕈᒥᓇᓚᐅᕐᐳᖅ ᑐᓴᕐᑉᑯ. ᓇᒻᒥᓂᖅ ᑎᑎᕋᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᒪᒃᐱᖅᑐᕋᓕᐅᕐᐸᑕ ᐊᔪᓐᖏᓐᓂᖅᓴᐅᓕᕐᓱᒐᔭᓐᖏᓚᖅ ᐃᓅᓱᒃᑐᖅ ᒪᑭᑦᐹᓪᓕᕈᑎᒋᓗᒍᓘ?

ᑕᒪᓐᓇ ᐃᓅᓱᒃᑐᑦ ᑎᑎᕋᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᒪᒃᐱᖅᑐᕋᓕᐅᕐᐸᑕ ᐊᓅᓯᖏ ᒪᑭᑦᐹᓗᕈᑕᐅᒥᐊᒃᓴᖓ ᐲᔪᒥᓇᖅᐳᖅ ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᒥᐅᓄᑦ. ᐱᓕᕆᐊᒃᓴᖅᑕᖃᑦᓯᐊᕐᓂᓗ ᓂᖃᐃᑐᖅᑐᓪᓗ ᐊᒥᓲᑉᓗᑎᒃ ᓱᓕᕆᐊᒃᓴᖃᓐᖏᓐᒪᑕ. ᐊᑑᑎᖃᓐᖏᓐᓇᓱᒋᓕᖅᐸᖕᒪᑕ ᓄᓇᒥᓂ. ᐊᒥᓱᑦ ᐊᔪᓐᖏᓐᓂᓖᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᓐᖏᑐᐃᓐᓇᖅᑕᒥᓂᒃ. ᐃᓱᒪᒋᓕᕈᑎᒋᕙᕋ, ᐃᒻᒪᖄ ᑎᑎᕋᕈᒥᒃ ᒪᒃᐱᖅᑐᕋᓕᐊᕆᓗᓂᔾᔪᒃ ᑐᑭᓯᓇᔭᖅᐳᑦ ᐊᔪᓐᖏᓐᓂᖃᕐᓂᖓᓂᒃ.

ᑕᐃᔮᓐ ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᒧᐊᕈᓐᓇᕐᓂᕐᓴᓚᐅᕐᒪᑦ ᐅᐃᓂᐲᖕᒥᑦ ᑕᒪᑐᒥᖓ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᖃᕐᓗᓂ. ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᒦᓚᐅᕐᐳᖅ ᑕᑦᕿᓗᒃᑖᒥ ᕕᑉᕈᐊᕆᐅᑎᓪᓗᒍ 2006ᒥ ᐱᓕᕆᖃᑎᖃᖅᓗᓂ ᐋᑦᕿᒃᓱᐃᔨᓂᒃ, ᐃᓐᓇᐅᔪᓂᒃ, ᐊᓯᖏᓐᓂᓪᓗ ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᒥ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᐃᓅᓱᒃᑐᑦ ᐃᒻᖏᕐᓂᕐᒥᓪᓗ ᑎᑎᕋᕐᓂᕐᒥᓪᓗ. ᑕᐃᔮᓗ ᐃᓐᓇᕆᔭᕗᓪᓗ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᖅᑎᑦᓯᔨᐅᑉᓗᑎᒃ ᐅᑉᓘᖕᓂᒃ ᑕᓪᕈᓂᒃ. ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᑐᑦ ᖁᕕᐊᓱᓪᓗᐊᕕᓚᐅᕐᑐᑦ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᓂᕐᒥᓂᒃ, ᐱᓗᐊᕐᑐᒥᒃ ᐃᓐᓇᐃᑦ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᑎᑦᓯᑎᓪᓗᒋᑦ.

ᐃᓐᓇᕆᔭᕗᒃ, ᕕᓂ ᐅᕕᖓᔮᕐᓗ ᑑᒪᓯ ᖃᕿᒪᓪᓗ ᐱᒋᐊᕈᑎᖃᖅᑕᓚᐅᕐᐳᒃ ᐅᓂᑉᑳᖅᑐᐊᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᐃᒻᖏᖅᓗᑎᓪᓗ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᐱHᐄᓐᓂᒃ. ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᑐᑦ ᐅᖃᓗᖃᑎᒌᓕᖅᓗᑎᒃ ᐊᐱᖅᓱᕐᓗᑎᓪᓗ. ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᑐᑦ ᐃᖕᒥᓂᒃ ᑎᑎᕋᓕᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᐱHᐃᕐᓂᓪᓗ ᐅᓂᑉᑳᖅᑐᐊᓂᓪᓗ. ᓇᓕᐊᓐᓂᒥᐊᖅ ᑎᑎᕋᕈᓯᕆᓱᐊᕐᑕᓂ ᐊᑐᕈᓐᓇᓚᐅᕐᐳᑦ ᐃᓄᒃᑎᑐᓪᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᖃᑉᓗᓈᑎᑐᓪᓘᓐᓃᑦ.

ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᒐᓂᖕᒪᑕ, ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᓚᐅᕐᑐᑦ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᒃᑲᓐᓂᕈᐊᓚᐅᕐᐳᑦ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᐅᓂᑉᑳᖅᑐᐊᖏᓐᓂᒃ, ᐅᖃᓪᓗᕆᒃᓴᐅᑏᓐᓂᒃ, ᐱHᐃᕐᓂᓪᓗ, ᕿᓚᐅ'ᑕᕐᓂᕐᒥᓪᓗ. ᐃᓐᓇᐅᔫᒃ ᐊᖏᖃᑎᒋᕙᐃ ᐅᖃᒻᒫᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᐊᓯᐅᕐᓕᕐᑉᑕ ᑕᒪᑦᑯᓂᖓ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᑦᓯᐊᕐᑐᓂᒃ. ᐊᖏᖃᑎᒌᓗᒃᑖᓚᐅᕐᐳᑦ ᑕᕝᕙᓂ ᐊᒃᑐᑦ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᕕᐊᓂ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᓂᖃᕆᐊᖃᕐᒪᑦ ᐃᓐᓇᐅᔪᑦ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᔪᑦ ᑕᕝᕙᐅᓚᐅᐱᓯᖕᒐᑦ.

ᑕᕝᕙ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᓚᐅᕐᑐᑦ ᑎᑎᕋᖅᑕᖏᑦ.

--ᐊᓕᒃᓯ ᐅᑕ'ᓈᖅ

Introduction

I was first contacted by Diane Driedger just as I began my new position as an Adult Educator in Baker Lake. Her project for her Ph.D. in Education, "Creative Writing, Publishing and Empowerment of Inuit Adult Learners" sounded intriguing to me. Does writing and publishing their own work affect the self-empowerment of Inuit adult learners?

The idea that young adults could write and publish their own work to make them feel empowered seemed appropriate for a community like Baker Lake. With unemployment and income support so high, many have nothing to do. At times they feel useless in the community. But many people have such talents that they sometimes do not see. So, I thought, maybe this is something that could prove that they have abilities within them.

Diane planned on coming to Baker Lake from Winnipeg as part of the project. She stayed in Baker Lake for the month of February 2006 and worked with the project planning committee, the Inuit elders, and other members of the community to hold a workshop with the adult learners. Diane and the elders shared the teaching of the two-day workshop. The participants truly enjoyed the workshops, especially with the elders leading the workshops.

The two elders, Winnie Owingayak and Thomas Qaqimat would begin by telling stories and singing traditional Inuit songs. There would follow discussions and questions among the group. The participants then had time to write their own stories and songs. They were free to write either in English or Inuktitut.

After the workshop, most of the participants wanted to learn more about Inuit legends, stories, songs and drum-dancing. And the Elders concurred, saying we are fast losing people who know these things. There was agreement that The Community Learning Centre should run more courses and workshops with our elders as resource people.

The results of the adult learners' work follow.

--Alexis Utatnaq

ᐃᑦᖃᐅᒪᔾᐃᑦ

MEMORIES

ᐃᖅᑲᐅᒪᔾᖃ ᓄᑕᕿᐅᓂᒻᓂ

ᐊᓈᓇᒥᓚᐅᒐᕋ (ᓵᓘᒥ), ᑕᕐᓂᖓ ᒍᑎᐅᑉ ᓴᐃᒻᒪᖅᑎᓪᓕᐅᒃ, ᑰᓪᔭᐊᓘᑦ ᐊᐅᓪᓚᖅᑎᑕᐅᓚᐅᕐᒪᑦ ᐊᐅᔭᒥ 1960-ᐅᑎᓪᓗᒍ ᐃᕐᓂᐊᑉᓗᓂ, ᐅᐸᖓᐅᓐᓂᖅᑐᒥᒃ. ᐃᓅᓚᓂᒃᑲᒪ ᐊᐃᔪᖕᓇᖅᓯᓐᓂᒃᓗᓄᒃ ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᓘᑦ ᐊᓈᓇᒪ ᐊᒫᖅᓗᓂᖓ. ᓄᑕᕋᓛ'ᓈᖑᑉᓗᖓ ᐊᑕᐅᖄ ᐊᐅᓚᔩᖕᖏᐳᖓ.

ᓯᕗᓪᓕᒥᐊᕐᓗᑕ 1970-ᓄᑦ ᐱᕈᖅᓴᕿᓪᓕᐊᓕᖅᓗᖓ ᐃᓅᓱᒃᑐᖑᖅᐸᓪᓕᐊᓕᓵᕐᓗᖓ. ᐳᐃᖅᑲᐅᓂᖃᑕᐅᑉᓗᖓ ᖃᓄᒥᐊᖅ ᓱᓕᓇᕙᓚᐅᕋᑉᑕ, ᓲᕐᓗ ᕿᔭᐊᕐᔪᖕᓂᒃ ᐱᖕᖑᐊᓕᐅᕐᐸᓚᐅᕋᑉᑕ. ᐅᑭᐅᓇᔭᑉᑎᖕᓂ ᓯᕗᓕᖅᑎᑉᑕ ᐅᖃᐅᑎᕚᑎᒍᑦ ᐳᐃᖅᑲᐅᑦ ᑲᑎᕝᕙᓪᔭᐊᕈᒫᕐᒪᑕ ᒥᓂᓱᑕᒥ ᐊᒥᐊᓕᑲᓂ ᐊᐅᔭᒃᑯᑦ. ᑭᓯᐊᓂ ᑕᒪᑉᑕ ᐃᓚᐅᓂᖅ ᐊᔾᔪᕐᓂᐊᕋᑉᑕ. ᒪᕐᕈᐃᓐᓈᒃ ᐃᓚᐅᔫᓪᓗᐊᕐᒪᓂᒃ ᓄᓇᑉᑎᖓᓐᓂᑦ, ᑕᐃᒪ ᐃᓚᒌᒃᑐᑎᒍᑦ ᓂᕈᐊᕆᐊᖅᑲᓚᐅᕐᐳᒍᑦ. ᓂᕈᐊᖅᑕᐅᖃᑕᐅᓕᖅᓗᖓ ᒥᓂᓲᑕᓕᐊᕐᑐᒃᓴᓄᑦ ᓴᓇᑦᑕᐃᓕᖕᓂᒃ ᒪᕐᕈᓂᒃ ᐊᐅᔭᒃᑯ. ᑎᖕᒥᓲᖅᑐᖕᖓᕐᓂᐊᓗᖓ ᐃᓅᓯᒻᓂ (ᐊᐅᓚᔾᔪᖕᓇᖅᓯᑎᓪᓗᖓ), ᑕᒪᓐᓇ ᑭᖕᖑᐃᓐᓇᖅᐸᒃᑕᕋ. ᖁᕕᐊᓇᒃᔪᐊᓚᐅᕐᑐᖅ ᑲᓇᑕᐅᑉ ᐊᓯᐊᓄᐊᕐᓂᐊᕐᒪ.

My Childhood Memory

My late mother (Salome), God bless her soul, was sent out to Churchill, Manitoba in the summer of 1960 to deliver a baby boy and that was me. After I was born and ready to go home to Baker Lake my mother flew and carried me in an amauti, which is a pouch on the back of a woman's parka. I was just a baby, so I did not remember my airplane ride.

Fast forward to the early 1970s when I was growing up or developing as a boy. I was in Boy Scouts and we did a lot of activities, such as making wooden toy vehicles. During the year we were told by our scout master that there was going to be a jamboree in northern Minnesota in the summer and we could not all go. There was only room for two from our community, so our group had to select or vote. I was one of the lucky boys picked to go to Minnesota for two weeks in the summer. This was my very first airplane ride in my life (that I remember) and this sticks out in my memory. It was very exciting because I was going to a different country other than Canada.

ᓄᓇᕐᐅᓂᒻᓂᒃ ᐊᐅᓚᔨᔭᖕ

ᐊᐅᓚᔨᕗᖕ ᒥᑭᔪᓈᖑᑎᓪᓗᖕ, ᐃᒻᒪᖄ ᐱᖕᓕᓯᓂᒃ ᓯᑕᒪᓂᒡᓗᐸᕙ ᐅᑭᐅᖃᖅᑎᓪᓗᖕ, ᐋᓈᓇᒪ ᐱᓱᖃᑎᒋᕙᓚᐅᕐᒪᑎᒍᑦ ᓯᓚᕐᓯᐊᑦᑑᑎᓪᓗᒍ, ᓯᕿᓐᓂᖅᓗᓂ ᐅᐱᓐᖑᒥ. ᐊᐅᓚᔨᔭᖕ ᖃᓄᖅ ᒪᒃᑯᒃᑎᒋᕙᓚᐅᕐᒪᖕᓚᑖ. ᐋᑕᑕᒪ ᐃᓂᖅᑯᓇᖅᓗᓂ, ᐋᓈᓇᒪ ᐃᓪᓚᕌᔭᖃᖅᓗᓂ, ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᐊᖕᔪᐊᕐ ᓯᓐᑎ ᓂᕕᐊᖅᓯᐊᓈᖑᔅᓗᓂ. ᐅᑭᐅᓂᒃ ᐱᖕᓕᓯᓂᒃ ᐊᖕᔮᒃᑯᐅᔭᖅ.

ᐃᒡᓗᕐᔪᐊᑦᑐᐊᒦᓚᐅᕐᓯᑦ ᑭᓐᖕᓚᐅᑉ ᖃᓂᐊᓂ ᐊᑕᐅᖅ ᑕᐃᑲᓂ ᓯᑐᕐᐅᔮᕆᐊᖅᑐᖅᐸᓚᐅᕐᐳᑦ. ᕿᒻᒥᖃᓚᐅᕐᓯᑦ ᐊᑎᓕᖕᒥ ᓚᐃᑎᒥᒃ (Lady) ᓴᓂᓕᕇᓐᓇᔭᓚᐅᕐᑖᑎᒍᑦ. ᐊᑭᓵᖅᑐᐃᓐᓇᔭᓚᐅᕐᒪᑎᒍᒃ ᓯᓐᑎᓗ ᐅᕙᖕᓗ. ᕿᓂᖖᕿᕙᒃᓗᓂ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᓐᖏᑕᒥᓂᒃ. ᑭᓇᒥᐊᖅ ᖃᓪᓕᓗᐊᕐᐸᑦ ᓯᓐᑎᒍᓪᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᐅᕙᒻᓄᓪᓘᓐᓃᑦ, ᑮᓯᒋᐊᕐᐸᒃᓗᓂ ᐊᓯᖏᓐᓂᒃ.

ᐊᖕᔭᖅᑳᒃᑯᒪ ᓄᓇᓕᐊᖃᑎᕇᓐᓇᔭᓚᐅᕐᒪᑎᒍᑦ. ᕐᑯᕕᐊᓇᖅᐸᓚᐅᕐᐳᖅ. ᐊᐅᓚᔨᕗᖕ ᐋᑕᑕᒪ ᓯᑭᑑᕐᓗᓂ ᐅᕙᒍᑦ ᑲᓕᖕᒦᓗᑦ ᕿᔪᕐᑯᑎᓕᖕᒥ, ᓯᓚᒥᒃ ᒪᒪᖅᓴᕐᓗᑦ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᓯᕿᓐᓂᖅᓯᐅᕐᐅᔭᕐᓗᑦ (ᐅᐱᓐᖑᒥ).

ᐊᖕᔭᑲᓗ, ᓄᑦᕐᑐᐊᖑᑲᓐᓄᒃ ᐅᓇᑕᐃᓐᓇᔭᓚᐅᕐᐳᒃ. ᑭᓯᐊᓂ-ᐃ' ᑕᐃᒪᓐᓇᐃᑦᑑᓚᐅᓐᖏᑦᑐᒃ!

ᑕᐃᑉᓱᒪᓂ, ᓯᓚᒦᕐᐅᔭᕐᓗᖕ ᐅᐱᓐᖕᖑᑎᓪᓗᒍ ᐊᐱᓐᓂᑐᐊᒥ ᐃᒡᓗᑉ ᓴᓂᐊᓂ. ᓯᑎᐅᔾᔪᒥ ᑕᑯᕗᖕ, ᐃᓱᒪᓕᕐᓗᖕ ᓰᖅ ᑕᓖᓂᒥᐊᖑᔾᔪᖅ ᐱᑕᖃᕐᒪᖕᓚᑦ. ᑕᑯᒥᐊᕐᕗᖕ ᐃᓗᐊᓄᑦ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᖃᑯᖅᑐᒥᒃ ᓂᐊᖁᓈᒥᒃ ᑕᑯᕗᖕ ᐅᔭᖕᒋᑦᑐᖅ. ᖃᑯᖅᑐᓈᖅ ᐊᕕᓐᖓᖅ. ᕿᒫᕗᖕ ᑐᖅᓯᕐᑎᖕᓄᑦ ᑲᐅᑕᐅᔭᕐᒥᓪᓗ ᑎᒍᓯᕐᓗᖕ. ᑕᐃᑯᖕ ᓯᑎᐊᓄᐊᓇᕗᖕ ᐅᑕᖅᑭᓕᖅᓗᖕᓗ. ᓂᐊᕐᑯᐊ ᓄᐃᖕᒥᖕᒪᑦ, ᑲᐅᒃᑐᖅᐸᕐ ᑐᕐᑯᕐᓗᒍ. ᑕᑯᑎᑦᓴᖅᑐᓕᖅᐸᕐ ᐋᓈᓇᒪ ᐊᕕᓐᖓᖅ ᑎᒍᒥᐊᕐᓗᒍ ᐳᐊᓗᓯᒪᓚᓚ. ᐋᓈᓇᒪ ᐃᖏᐊᓪᓚᒃᐳᖅ, ᐃᓗᐃᓪᓕᓚᐅᕐᐳᖕ ᐱᑦᓐᖕᓚᐅᑎᒋᒪᓗᐊᕐᑯ.

ᑭᖑᒡᒍᑦ ᐅᑎᕈᐊᕐᓇᖅᐸᒃᑐᖅ ᐊᑐᓚᐅᒃᑲᕗᑦ ᐊᑐᒃᑳᓂᕈᐊᕐᓇᖅᐸᖕᒪᑦ ᓄᑦᕐᐅᓂᕐᑎᖕᓂ. ᑕᐃᒪᓐᓚᓪᓚᑦ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᐅᖃᐅᑎᕙᒃᐸᖅᑲ ᓄᑦᕐᐅᓂᓂ ᕐᑯᕕᐊᒋᕐᑯᕐᓗᒥᑦ ᐊᑐᓚᐅᐱᓱᖕᖅ, ᐊᑕᐅᓰᓐᓇᕐᓗᑎᒃ ᐊᑐᕐᓂᐊᕐᒪᔾᔭᒃ.

My Early Childhood Memory

I remember when I was very small, about three or four, that my mom would take us out for walks on beautiful, sunny, spring days. I remember how young we all looked. My dad was very handsome, my mother had teardrop glasses, and my only sibling, Cindy, was just a little girl as well. She is three years older than me.

We lived in a big house near a hill and we would always go sliding there. We had a dog named Lady who was always at our side. Lady had always protected Cindy and I. She would growl at people that she did not know. If the person got too close to Cindy and I, she would snap at the person.

My parents had always taken us out camping. Those were fun days. I remember my father driving the snowmobile and we would be in the box sled, enjoying fresh air and the sun (during spring).

My sister and I, being the only two children, would fight a lot, though. I guess that we were not the only children who have done that!

One time, I was outside one spring at a big snow bank beside the house. I saw a hole, and wondered why it was just there. I looked in the hole and a little white head peeked out. It was a white lemming. I ran into the porch and grabbed a hammer. I went back to the hole and waited. When the

head popped out again, I hammered the poor thing to death. I showed it to my mother with the lemming in the palm of my mitt. My mother screamed, and I felt bad, because it was my first kill ever.

I wish we all could turn back the hands of time so that we all could experience our childhood again. That is why I tell people to cherish their children now, because they will never be small again.

ᑕᒫᕋ

ᑕᒫᕋ ᓄᑲᓇᔾᕋ. ᐱᖑᓱᓂᒃ ᐅᑭᐅᓂᒃ ᒪᒃᑯᖕᓂᖅᓴᖅ ᐅᐸᒻᒥᑦ. ᐱᖑᓱᓂᒃ ᐅᑭᐅᖃᓕᖅᑰᖅᑐᓂ, ᕿᒻᒥᕐᒧᐊᕐᔪᒃᑖᓐᖓᓚᐅᕐᒪᑦ.

ᐊᓈᓇ ᐊᐱᕆᕚ, "ᖃᓄᖅ ᐊᑎᕐᓂᐊᖅᐱᐅᒃ?"

ᑕᒫᕋ ᑭᐅᒍᖅ, "ᐊᑎᖓ twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are..." ᐃᒻᖏᐅᔭᒻᒫᓕᕐᓗᓂᐅᒃ.

ᐅᐸᑦᓯᐊᑉᐹᖑᕐᒪᑦ ᐊᖑᔫ ᐃᑎᖅᐳᖅ. ᐅᖃᐅᑎᕚᕋ, "ᑕᒫᕋᐅᑉ ᕿᒻᒥᕐᒧᐊᕐᔪᒃ ᐊᑎᓯᒫ ᐃᒻᖏᐅᓯᕐᒥᒃ!" ᐃᓚᖅᑕᐃᓕᑉᑐᖑᑐ ᒥᑕᐅᑎᒋᓱᐊᓐᖏᓪᓗᒍᓗ. ᐊᓈᓇ ᒥᑕᐅᑎᒋᕐᑯᓐᖏᓐᒪᒍ.

Tamara

Tamara is my sister. She is three years younger than me .When she was like three years old, she had gotten her first puppy.

My mom asked her, "What are you going to name it?"

Tamara said, "Her name is twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are...", and she continued to sing.

Soon after that my other sister, Bella, walked in. I said, "Tamara named her puppy a whole song!" I tried not to laugh and I tried not to make fun of it. My mom had to stop me from making fun of it.

ᖃᒪᓂᖅ

ᐅᕐᓂᒍᐊᒡᒍᔭᕐ ᐃᖃᓪᓚᐊᕐᕕᒃᐳᑦ ᖃᒪᓂᕐᒥ. ᓄᓇᒥᔭᕗᑦ ᐊᑎᓕᒃ ᐃᖃᓗᒃ ᓛᔅᒥᒃ. ᐃᑦᖃᐅᒪᔭᑦᖃ ᐊᒥᓱᑦ ᑕᐃᑲᓂ ᓄᑦᕿᐅᓂᒻᓂ. ᓯᑕᒪᓂᒃ ᐃᒡᓗᕐᔪᐊᖃᖅᑐᒍᑦ, ᐳᐊᕐᓇᑎᓕᖕᒥᒡᓗ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᐊᓯᖏᓐᓂᒃ ᑕᒃᐸᓂ. ᓄᓇᒥᔭᕗᑦ ᑲᑦᔮᕐᓇᖅᑐ'ᑐᐊᖅ ᔪᓚᐃᒥᓗ, ᐊᐅᒍᔅᑎᒥᓗ ᓯᑉᑕᒻᐱᒥᓗ. ᑰᓗ'ᓈᖃᕐᓗᓂᓗ ᖃᓂᑉᑎᖕᓂ ᐃᒥᖅᑕᕐᕕᒥᔫᒃᑲᕗᑦ.

ᐃᑦᖃᐅᒪᔭᑦᖃ ᐊᓈᓇᒐ ᐱᑭ, ᐃᓪᓚᕐᕕᖕᒦᑎᓪᓗᒍ, ᐃᒐᑉᓗᓂ ᐱᖕᒐᓱᐃᖅᑕᖅᓗᓂ ᐅᑉᓗᒃᑯᑦ. ᐊᑖᑕᒐ, ᑖᒪᔅ, (ᐃᓅᔪᖕᓃᓴᓚᐅᕐᑐᖅ ᒪᐃᖑᑎᓪᓗᒍ 2005ᒥ) ᐊᒥᓱᓂᒃ ᐱᓕᕆᐊᖃᕐᓗᓂ. ᐅᑉᓛᒐᔫᒃᑯᑦ ᑐᐸᒃᓗᓂ ᐸᕐᓇᒃᐸᓪᓕᐊᔪᖅ ᐅᑉᓗᒧᑦ. ᐊᓈᓇᒐ ᐅᑉᓛᕿᒥᑕᓕᐅᕐᓗᓂ ᑐᔪᕐᒥᐊᓄᓪᓗ ᐃᑲᔪᖅᑎᓄᓪᓗ. ᐅᑉᓛᕿᒥᑖᓂᒃᑯᑉᑕ, ᐊᑖᑕᒐᓗ ᑐᔪᕐᒥᐊᓪᓗ ᐃᑲᔪᖅᑎᖏᓪᓗ ᐃᖃᓗᒃᓯᐊᕆᐊᖅᑐᓕᖅᐳᑦ.

ᐊᐅᓚᔾᔪᖕᒐ ᐅᖕᒐᒥᕙᓚᐅᕐᑯ ᐊᑖᑕᒐ ᓂᕕᐅᕆᕙᓚᐅᕐᑯ ᐊᒃᓚᒃᑕᖃᔪᖕᒪᑦ ᖃᒪᓂᕐᒥ. ᐃᓛᓐᓂ ᓂᕕᐅᓕᖅᐸᒃᑐᖕᒐ ᐅᑎᓐᖕᒋᒋᐊᒃᓴᖕᒐᓂᒃ ᐊᓄᕆᒧᑦ. ᓂᕕᐅᖅᐸᒃᑭᑉᑐᖕᒐ ᐊᓄᕆᑐᓗᐊᕐᓂᖅᐸᑦ ᐅᒥᐊᕐᓂᑦ ᑎᑭᑕᐅᓚᓐᖏᓐᓇᓱᒋᑉᓗᑕ. ᑎᑮᓐᓇᕐᔪᐊᖅᐸᒃᑐᑦ ᐅᓐᓄᒃᓴᑕᓖᑦ ᖁᕕᐊᓱᓕᕐᓗᖓᓗ ᐊᑖᑕᒐ ᑎᑮᓐᒪᑦ. ᑮᓇᖓ ᖁᕕᐊᓱᒃᑐᖅ ᖁᕕᐊᒡᓴᒃᑎᑦᐸᖓ. ᖁᕕᐊᓱᒃᑐᖅ ᑐᔪᕐᒥᐊᖏ ᖁᕕᐊᓱᖕᒪᑕ ᐃᖃᓗᒃᑲᒥᒃ ᐅᕐᑯᒪᐃᓐᓂᓕᖕᓂᒃ 30ᒥᑦ 40ᒧᑦ. ᐅᓐᓄᒃᓴᒃᑯᑦ, ᑕᖅᓯᔭᖀᖕᒐᑦ, ᐃᒐᑉᕕᖕᒥ ᑲᑎᓪᓗᑕ ᐅᓂᑉᑳᖃᑎᒌᖕᒪᑕ ᓱᓕᓇᓚᐅᕐᓂᕐᒥᓂᒃ ᐅᑉᓗᖕᓂ.

ᐃᓱᓕᑦᓴᖀᖕᒐ ᐃᖃᓪᓚᐊᕐᓇᖅ, ᓂᑲᓪᓗᖅᐸᓚᐅᕐᐳᖕᒐ ᓄᓇᒥᔭᕗᑦ ᕿᒪᒋᐊᒃᓴᖅ ᖁᕕᐊᓇᕐᒪᓂᓛ. ᐅᑭᐅᕐᑐᔭ'ᑐᐊᒃᑯᑦ ᓂᓇᐅᒃᐸᒃᓗᖕᒐ ᐊᕐᖀᒍᓗᑦ ᐃᓚᒌᑎᒍᑦ ᐅᕙᖕᒐᓗ ᐢᓇᑉᑎᖕᓄᐊᕈᐊᕐᓗᖕᒐ, ᖁᕕᐊᓯᒥᐊᖅᑐᕐᓗᖕᒐ

Shultz Lake

One of my favorite places is our fishing camp in Shultz Lake. It is called Ekaluk Lodge. A lot of my childhood memories are from being up at our camp. We have four cabins, a caterpillar and more assets up at our camp. The landscape itself is so beautiful during July, August and September. A creek runs by the camp, where we drink fresh water.

My memories are that my mom, Becky, would be in the kitchen a lot, cooking meals three times a day. My father, Thomas (who recently passed away, last May of 2005) would be doing a lot of activities. He would get up early in the morning to prepare for the day. My mom would cook breakfast early in the morning for the guests and the guides. After breakfast, my father would leave with the guests and guides to go fishing for the day.

I remember that I would miss him and would worry about him because of the grizzly bears up at Shultz Lake. I would worry that my dad would not come back that evening because of the wind. I would worry that is would be too windy for the boats to come back to us. They made it back every evening and I would be happy to see my dad. His happy face made me happy. He would be happy because the guests were happy that they caught a 30 to

40 pound fish. In the evenings, when it was dark out, we would all gather in the kitchen and share stories of the events that happened that day.

At the end of the season, I would be sad to leave the camp because it was a happy place. During the long winter months I would be eager for the next year for my family and I to get back up to our camp, to be happily at our camp up at Shultz Lake.

ᑭᓇᐅᔪᖓ?

WHO AM I?

ᑲᓄᖅ ᐊᑎᖅᑖᒐᒪ

ᑕᐃᓱᒪᓂ ᐊᓈᓇᒪ ᓄᑕᕿᓵᖅᒫ ᐅᕙᑉᓂ. ᐃᓱᒪᓕᐅᓕᓗᓂ ᑕᐃᔮᓐ ᓄᕿᑦᑐᖅᒥ ᐊᑎᖃᖅᓂᐊᖅ. ᑕᐃᒻᒪᓱᓕ ᐊᑎᖅᑕᖅᑐᖓ ᑕᐃᓇ ᑭᓯᐊᓂ ᐃᓄᑲᒪ ᐅᒻᒪᑎᑲ ᐱᐊᓚᓗᐊᓚᐅᑐᖅ. ᐊᓈᓇᒪ ᓯᕙᓂᖅᑐᖅ ᐊᑖᑕᒥᓄᑦ ᐅᖃᖅᓗᓂ "ᐸᓂᓚᒐ ᐆᒻᒪᑖ ᐱᐊᓚᓗᐊᖅᑐᖅ" ᐊᑖᑕᓯᐊᒐ ᐅᖃᖅᑐᖅ "ᐊᑎᖅᑖᖅᑲᓐᓂᖅᓕ ᐸᓚᐃᑦᑐᖅᒥ" ᑕᐃ'ᓇ ᐸᓚᐃᑦᑐᖅ ᐊᑎᖅᑖᖅᑐᖓ.

How I Got My Name

When my mom was pregnant with me she and my dad somehow decided to name me after my Aunt Anne's daughter. Anne's oldest, who had passed on as a baby, was named Diane Nuqittuq. When I was born I had that name, but there was a problem when I was born. My heart was beating too fast. So, my mom phoned her dad to tell what was going on. So, he said to give me another middle name. Then he named me Palaittuq.

After that my heart rate went back to normal. My full name is now Dianne Nuqit-tuq Palaittuq.

ᖃᓄᐃᑦᑐᒥ ᓯᓚᖃᖅᐳᖓ?

ᐊᒥᓱᓂᒃ ᓯᓚᖃᖅᐳᖓ ᐊᑕᐅᓯᐅᒐᓗᐊᕐᑎᓪᓗᖓ. ᓯᓚᒐ ᐃᓅᓯᒻᓂᒃ ᒪᓕᒃᑐᖅ. ᖁᕕᐊᓱᒃᑯᒪ, ᓯᕿᓐᓂᖅᐳᖓ. ᐅᐃᒪᔭᕈᒪ, ᓄᕗᔭᕗᖓ. ᓂᑲᓪᓗᕈᒪ, ᕿᐊᕗᖓ ᓂᐸᓗᖕᒥᒃ. ᖁᕕᐊᕆᙱᑕᑦᑲ ᐃᓄᐃᑦ ᓂᙵᒃᓵᕆᒥᐊᕐᑐᑦ ᐅᕙᓪᓂᒃ. ᓂᙵᓪᓗᐊᕕᒃᑯᒪ, ᖃᒪᓂᑦᑐᐊᑉ ᐱᖅᓯᕆᕚᖓ. ᓂᙵᒃᓴᖃᐃᙱᓐᓂᖅᓴᐅᓕᖅᑐᖓ ᓯᓚᑦᑐᖅᐸᓪᓕᐊᓕᕋᒪ. ᖁᕕᐊᓱᙱᓕᕐᒥᒍᒪ, ᐅᕙᓪᓂᓪᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᑲᑉᐱᐊᕆᔪᖓ ᐃᓛ ᐃᓗᒥᐅᑕᖃᓗᐊᓕᕋᒪ. ᐱᖅᓯᖃᑦᑖᖅᑐᑎᑦ ᐱᓱᐊᙱᑦᑲᒪ. ᑭᓯᐊᓂᑉᑕᐅᖅ ᑕᑯᒃᓴᐅᙱᑦᑑᙱᓐᓇᒪ ᐊᓄᕆᑎᑦ. ᖁᕕᐊᓱᙱᒐᔫᕈᒪ, ᐃᓱᒪᕗᖓ ᐊᓄᕆᐅᔪᖓ ᓇᑎᕈᕕᒃᑐᑎᑦ.

ᓄᑕᕋᑦᑲ ᐱᖃᑎᒋᔭᖄᖕᒐᑉᑭᑦ ᓯᕿᓐᓂᕈᑎᒋᓱᐊᕐᐸᑦᑲ. ᐱᕈᖅᓴᖁᙱᓇᑉᑭᑦ ᓄᕗᔭᔪᒥᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᐱᖅᑐᒥᓘᓐᓃᑦ. ᐃᓅᓯᕆᔭᕗᑦ ᓯᕕᑭᓗᐊᕐᒪᑦ ᓄᕗᔭᐃᓐᓇᕐᓂᐊᕐᓗᓂᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᐱᖅᓯᓐᓇᕐᓂᐊᕐᓗᓂᓘᓐᓃᑦ.

ᖃᑕᙳᑎᒋᔭᑦᑲ ᖃᐅᒪᓛᖓᓚᑕ ᖃᐅᒻᒪᖅᐸᒃᑭᕗᖓ. ᓯᕿᓐᓂᖃᑦᑖᔪᓯᖕᒥᖕᒪᑦ ᕕᑉᕈᐊᕆ ᓄᖑᓕᖅᑎᓪᓗᒍ ᓯᕿᓐᓂᓗᐊᓴᓕᕆᕗᖓ. ᐅᕙᖕᓗᐊᖅ, ᑖᖃᑦᑖᓕᖅᖓᑦ ᐅᑭᐅᒃᑯᑦ ᖃᒪᓂᑦᑐᐊᒥ ᐃᓅᓯᖅ ᑖᖅᓯᖃᑕᐅᕗᖅ. ᖃᐅᒪᐃᓐᓇᔪᓯᓱᐊᖃᓚ ᓯᕿᓐᓂᙱᒥᐊᖃᓗᐊᕐᑎᓪᓗᒍ. ᐃᓚᓐᓂᒃᑯᑦ, ᐊᒥᓱᐃᖅᑕᖅᓗᖓ, ᓯᓚ ᐃᑦᖃᐃᔾᔪᑎᒋᕙᒃᑕᖃ ᐊᑖᑕᒻᓂᒃ, ᑖᒪᔅ ᑲᓪᓗᒃ. ᓯᕗᓪᓕᖅᐹᖑᓚᐅᕐᑐᖅ ᐃᓄᒻᒪᕆᒃ ᓯᓚᓕᕆᔩᐅᓂᕐᒧᑦ ᐊᓕᓚᔪᒥᒃ ᓇᓗᓇᐃᑦᑯᑕᖅᑖᕐᓗᓂ ᑲᓇᑕᒥ. ᐊᑖᑕᒐ ᐅᙵᑎᓕᕚᖓᑉᑯ ᓄᕗᔭᔫᓪᓗᐊᕐᑐᖓ ᓂᐸᓗᒃᑑᓪᓗᐊᕐᑐᖓ ᐅᕙᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᖃᐅᒪᕈᓐᓇᖅᑐᖓ ᐃᑦᖃᐃᓛᙵᒪ ᖁᕕᐊᓱᒃᑎᕆᖕᓂᒃᑎᓪᓂᒃ. ᐊᑎᖃᕋᒪ ᑭᖑᓪᓕᕐᒥᒃ ᑲᓪᓗᖕᒥᒃ. ᐃᓄᒃᑎᑐᑦ ᑐᑭᖃᖅᑐᖅ "ᑲᓪᓗᖕᓂᕐᒥᒃ". ᑖᒪ ᐊᑖᑕᒪ ᐊᑎᕆᓚᐅᕚ ᐅᐱᒋᓪᓗᐊᕕᒃᑕᖃ. ᑲᑎᑎᑕᐅᓐᓂᕈᒪ, ᐊᑎᖃ ᐊᓪᓚᙳᖅᑎᓚᙱᑦᑕᖃ, ᐅᑖᑕᒐ ᐃᑦᖃᐅᒪᑉᓗᒍ.

What Kind of Weather Am I?

I am a lot of weather all in one. My weather follows my daily moods. If I am happy, I shine like the sun. If I am confused, I get very cloudy. If I am very sad, I cry like the rain. I do not like people deliberately getting me mad. If I am very mad, I am like our Baker Lake blizzards. I do not get upset as much as I used to as I am maturing. But if I get very upset again, I am even scared of myself because of all the pressure built up inside of me. I do not want to feel like a blizzard for a long period of time.

I do not think that I am transparent like the wind. If I am a little upset, I think that I am like the wind blowing snow just on the ground.

When my children are around I want to be sunny for them. I do not want them growing up thinking that they could be cloudy or a like a blizzard all the time. I think life is too short to be cloudy or especially blizzardy.

Seeing my family shine makes me shine. Seeing the sun shine longer now in late February makes me shine more. Personally, I find the dark winter months here in Baker Lake make me dark as well. I want to learn how to be sunny when there is no sun.

At times, a lot of times, weather reminds me of my father, Thomas Kudloo. He was the first Inuk to be certified in Canada to be a weather technician. When I miss my father I can get cloudy, rainy, and shiny when I remember the happy times with him.

My last name is Kudloo. In Inuktitut it means "thunder". This is my father's last name that I truly honor. If I ever get married, I do not want to change my last name, as I honor my father.

ᓯᓚᐅᒍᒪ

ᐅᑭᐅᖅᑕᖅᑐᒥ ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᑎᑐᑦ ᓄᓇᕗᒥ, ᓯᑕᒪᓂᒃ ᓯᓚᖃᕋᑉᑕ. ᐅᑉᓗᐃᑦ ᐊᓂᒍᖅᐸᓪᓕᐊᑎᓪᓗᒋᑦ ᓯᓚ ᒪᓕᒃᓗᒍ, ᐅᑉᓗᐃᑦ ᐊᑐᖅᑕᑦᑲ ᐃᑉᓕᓇᕆᑦᑲ ᐃᓚ 40 ᐅᑭᐅᑦ ᐊᑯᓐᓂᖃᓕᕋᒪ. ᖃᒪᓂ'ᑐᐊᒥᐅᖏᓐᓇᑲᓯᒃᑐᖓ ᓯᓚᕗᓪᓗ ᐊᓪᓚᙳᖅᓯᒪᓕᖅᓗᓂ 10-ᒥᑦ 15-ᓄᑦ ᐅᑭᐅᑦ ᖄᖏᖅᑐᓄᑦ. ᑕᒪᓐᓇ ᐊᓪᓚᙳᖅᓯᒪᓕᕐᓂᖓ ᐃᓛᓐᓂ ᐱᑦᓯᐊᒃᑯᑦ ᐃᓛᓐᓂᓗ ᐱᑦᓴᐅᖏᑦᑐᑦᑯᑦ. ᐃᓅᓯᖅ ᓄᐃᑉᐸᓪᓕᐊᕋᓴᖅᐳᑦ ᐱᐊᓚᔪᒥᒃ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᓯᓚᕗᑦ ᐅᐃᒪᓈᖅ. ᓅᕐᓗ, ᐅᑭᐅᓇᔭᕗᑦ ᓂᒡᓕᓇᙱᑦᓯᐊᕐᒪᑦ 2005-06 ᐅᑭᐅᖑᓂ ᓯᓚᑦᓯᐊ'ᑑᑦᑕᖅᓗᓂ. ᓯᓚᐅᒍᒪ ᓇᓕᐊᓐᓂᒥᐊᖅ ᑖᒻᓇ ᓯᓚᒋᓕᖅᑕᕘᓇᔭᕗᖓ, ᐃᓚ ᓂᒡᓕᓇᙱᑦᓯᐊᒥᐊᕐᒪᑦ.

If I Were a Weather

In the northern climate, like Baker Lake, Nunavut, we have four seasons of weather. As time marches on to eternity with its seasons, I am living present time as precious because I am in my mid-forties now. I have lived most of my life here in Baker Lake and the weather has seen some changes in the past 10 to 15 years. And this change of weather has been a benefit and a drawback for all of us in the community. Life is unfolding its mystery in a hurry and the northern climate is the most perplexing one. For example, our winter today has been mild for most of the 2005/06 year and that has been very nice. If I were a kind of weather I think I would be this year's winter, just because it has been a very mild one.

ᐱᐅᒥᓛᕐ

ᐱᐅᒥᓛᕐ ᑭᓯᒻᖏᐅᕐᑐᖓ ᓯᓚᕐᔪᐊ'ᓈᒻᓂ. ᓯᓚᕐᔪᐊ'ᓈᒻᓃᓛᕐᖓᒪ, ᐱᓱᐳᖓ ᐃᓕᓐᓂᐊᕐᕕᖕᒧᑦ. ᐃᓅᓯᒻᓂᒃ ᓇᓪᕚᕐᖓᒪ ᐃᓗᒻᓃᑦᑐᒥᒃ, ᐅᕚᒻᓅᑦ ᐅᖃᓪᑐᓇᒃᓴᕐᑐᖓ, ᐊᑦᕿᒥᐊᖃᖅᑕᑦᑲ ᐋᑦᕿᒃᓱᕐᑐᒥᑦ, ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᐱᓗᐊᕐᑐᒥᒃ ᖃᐅᔨᒪᓕᖅᐸᓕᐊᔪᖓ ᐅᖃᖃᑎᒥᑉᓗᒍᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᔩᓱᓯ, ᐱᖃᓐᓈᒻᒪᕆᒐ, ᓴᐃᒪᓂᕐ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᐅᓐᓂᖅᓯᐅᕐᕕᒐ.

ᐱᐅᒥᓛᒻᓂ ᓴᐃᒻᒪᖅᓯᒪᔪᖓ, ᐅᕚᒻᓂᒃ ᖃᓱᒍᑎᓕ. ᓄᓇᒃᑰᕈᑎᑦ ᐊᓯᖏᓪᓗ ᖄᖏᖅᐸᓪᓚᐊᒐᓗᐊᕐᑎᓪᓗᒋᑦ, ᑐᓵᙱᑕᑦᑲ ᑭᓯᐊᓂ ᓂᐸᐃᑦᑐᖅ ᓴᐃᒪᓇᖅᑐᕐᓗ. ᓂᒡᓚᓇᕐᓂᖅ ᐊᓄᕆᓗ ᖃᓄᐃᒥᙱᑕᑦᑲᓗᓐᓃᑦ ᐃᓗᐊᕆᒥᐊᓕᕐᓗᒥᓪᓘᓐᓃᑦ ᓂᒡᓚᓇᕐᓃᑦ. ᓲᕐᓗ ᐃᒃᑮᑉᓚᙱᑦᑐᖓ ᐱᓱᓪᓚᕐᒪ ᐃᓱᒪᒃᓴᖅᓯᐅᓗᐊᒧᑦ, ᓄᓇᒃᑰᕈᑎᑐᖅᑐᓂ ᐃᓱᒪᒃᓴᖅᓯᐅᕈᐅᔭᕐᓂᖅ ᐊᔪᕐᓇᕐᒪᑦ ᑮᓇᖏᓗ ᕿᕿᑎᖅᓯᓐᓇᓕᖅᑐᑦ. ᑐᑭᓯᐅᒪᓕᖅᐳᖓ ᐱᓱᒃᑐᓂ ᖃᓱᓐᓇᖅᑐᖅ ᐊᒻᒪᓗ ᐃᓱᒪᒃᓴᕐᓯᐅᑦᓯᐊᕐᓇᖅᑐᖅ.

Favorite Place

My favorite place is when I'm in my own little world. And when I'm in my own little world, I'm walking to school. It is when I'm connecting with myself, talking to myself, solving my own problems and most importantly, I'm connecting or talking with (to) Jesus, my best friend of all, my only comforter, my only counselor.

In my favorite place I feel more at peace, and it is a way of calming myself down. Although there are machines and trucks passing by, I hear nothing but quietness and peacefulness. The cold, harsh wind does not even bother me and over time I begin to enjoy the conflict with the cold climate. It is as if I don't feel cold when I'm walking because I have a lot of things going on in my mind, compared to the people driving on machines, freezing their faces. I have learnt that walking really does relieve stress and connects you with yourself.

ᐱᕼᐃᑦ

SONGS

ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕ, ᑖᑉᑯᐊ ᑕᓪᓕᒪᑦ

ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕᑦ, ᑖᑉᑯᐊ ᑕᓪᓕᒪᑦ
1. ᐃᒡᓗᓖᐅᕐᓂᖅ, ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕ
2. ᕿᐊᕐᕚᓂᖅ, ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕ
3. ᐊᔭᐊᔮ, ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕ
4. ᒪᖃᐃᓐᓂᖅ, ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕ
5. ᕿᓚᐅᑦᑕᕐᓂᖅ, ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕ

ᐳᐃᒍᖅᑕᐃᓕᓕᑦ, ᑖᑉᑯᐊ ᑕᓪᓕᒪᑦ

Keep It Alive, Five by Five

Keep it alive, five by five
1. Igloo building, keep it alive
2. Throat singing, keep it alive
3. Ayaya singing, kept it alive
4. Hunting skills, keep it alive
5. Drum dancing, keep it alive

Keep it alive, five by five.

ᐱᕼᐃᕐ

ᐋᔮ ᐃᔭᔭ ᔮᔮ ᐳᔭᔭᔮ, ᓇᒡᓕᒋᔭᒃᑲ ᐸᓃᒃᑲ
ᐊᔭ ᔭᔭᔮ, ᐃᑉᓕᕐᓇᖅᑐᒃ ᑕᒪᕐᒥᒃ ᐸᓃᒃᑲ
ᖃᕐᒪᐃᔮ ᔭᔭᔮ ᐅᕙᒻᓂᖕᒐᕐᑐᓐᓈᒃ ᓇᒡᓕᖕᓇᖅᑐᓐᓈᒃ
ᐊᔭ ᔭᔭᔮ

My Daughters

I love my daughters. They are very precious to me. Without them, I am not whole. They are a part of me, for they have come from me. I love them from the bottom of my heart.

ᐱᕼᐃᖅ

ᖁᕕᐊᓱᓚᐅᕐᐳᖓ ᐃᓅᓂᐊᓕᕋᒪ.
ᓄᓇᒧᑦ ᐱᓱᓕᖅᐳᖓ.
ᐊᖓᔪᖅᑳᒪ ᑐᐱᐊᓐᓄᐊᕐᓗᖓ, ᓂᕆᓯᑉᓗᖓᓗ
ᑐᒃᑐᒥᒃ.
ᒪᒪᓚᐅᑯᓂ.
ᐱᐊᓂᖕᒪᑦ ᑭᓯᒻᖏᐅᕐᓗᖓ ᕿᑎᓗᕿᐅᔭᓕᖅᐳᖓ.

Ayaya Song

I was happy that I was going to live.
I started walking to the land.
I walked into my parents' tent, started eating caribou meat.
It was so delicious.
After I was done then I started playing games all by myself.

ᐊᔮ ᐊᔮ ᐊᔮ ᐅᕙᖕᒐ ᐃᒡᓗᒻᓂ
ᑭᓯᒻᖕᒋᐅᕐᓗᖕᒐ
ᐊᔮ ᐊᔮ ᐊᔮ ᐃᓚᑦᑲ ᐅᖕᒐᓯᖕᒪᑕ
ᑭᓯᐊᓂ ᐃᓱᒪᒋᔭᑦᑲ ᑕᐅᑐᖅᑰᖅᐸᑦᑲ ᐊᔮ
ᐊᔮ ᐊᔮ

ᐊᔮᔮ ᐊᔮᔮ ᐊᔮᔮ ᐃᒡᓗᒻᓂ
ᑭᓯᒻᖕᒋᐅᕐᓗᖕᒐ
ᐃᒃᓯᕙᑉᓗᖕᒐ ᐊᔮᔮ ᐊᔮᔮ ᐊᔮᔮ ᐃᓚᑦᑲ
ᐅᖕᒐᓯᖕᒪᑕ
ᐊᔮᔮ ᐊᔮᔮ ᐊᔮᔮ ᑭᓯᐊᓂ ᐃᓱᒪᒋᔭᑦᑲ
ᑕᐅᑐᖅᑰᖅᐸᑦᑲ ᐊᔮ ᐊᔮ ᐊᔮ

ᐊᐃᔭᐃᔭᔨᔭᐊᔭ

Ajaa ajaa ajaa I am alone in my house
Ajaa ajaa ajaa my friends are far away
But they are on my mind and I imagine
them Ajaa ajaa ajaa

Ajaajaa ajaajaa ajaajaa I am alone in my
house
I am sitting down Ajaajaa ajaajaa ajaajaa
My friends are far away
Ajaajaa ajaajaa ajaajaa But they are on my
mind
I imagine them Ajaa ajaa ajaa

Aijaijajijaija