

*Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories
about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience*

by

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Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

Abstract

This qualitative research study *Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience* is a study of selected Aboriginal students and professors who were involved with the Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) program. WEC is an inner city teacher education program that started in the late 1970s, though this study's focus is in the 1980s. During that era, there was an influx of students who attended the program to address the need for more Aboriginal teachers in Manitoba and to address poverty in low income communities (Clare, 2013; Poonwassie & Poonwassie, 2001). The participants shared stories of their life journeys and educational experiences related to their participation as students of WEC. They described the impact the teacher education program had on their lives. This study also explored the pedagogy and teaching methodology of two professors who taught at WEC during the 1980s.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I want to thank the Creator for a good life and for giving me wisdom and humility to be a good *Anishinaabe-kwe*. I want to acknowledge and say *miigwetch* to my late parents, Lawrence and Rosie Robinson, for being my first teachers, for loving and encouraging me to pursue my education. They believed in me and taught me the values of hard work, perseverance and community service.

My husband Charles and my two sons, Craig and Kevin, are my inspiration for living a good life and being a positive role model, not only for them but for the rest of my family. Thanks for your love, patience and understanding while I was working on my coursework, research and writing. I did this for my sons and my future grandchildren! To my family, my brothers and sisters who believed in me, I am the first, in my family, to get a Master's degree and I want to encourage my sons, nieces and nephews to continue their educational journeys. Education can provide a strong and prosperous future and is the new buffalo (Stonechild, 2006). There will be challenges; do not give up. Think about your children and grandchildren and let them be the inspiration to complete your studies.

Elders have a special place in my heart and I am so grateful to be able to sit with many of them and hear the beautiful teachings. *I say Miigwetch* to my maternal grandmother, the late Sarah Jane Bone, and my paternal grandparents – the late John and Elizabeth Robinson. To my mentors Jacci Kaykaykeesic, Dr. Myra Laramée and Dr. Priscilla Settee, Dr. Mary Young and to the Elders and traditional teachers whom I hold so dear to my heart: Dr. Don Robertson, Garry Robson, Dan Thomas, Ann Thomas Callahan, and the late Mary Guilbault.

I am so grateful to have met and to have the opportunity to work with two of the most intelligent and compassionate men, my “boss” Dr. Gerald Farthing, Deputy Minister of

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Education/Advanced Learning, and Dino Altieri, my guide on the side and also my Assistant Director. Gerald encouraged me and supported me throughout my studies and in my work life and I am so honoured to work with him. When I was on sick leave from 2010–2012 and when I returned back to work, Dino kept the work flowing and supported me toward the completion of my research and writing. Thanks Dino!

Words cannot express how thankful I am to have a faculty/research advisor who is a Cree woman and understands and walks in both western and Aboriginal scholarly circles. Dr. Laara Fitznor, *ekosani* for all your encouragement, assistance and getting me through this process, I will be forever grateful. My committee members, Dr. John VanWalleghem and Dr. Gary Babiuk, I am so thankful for your advice, wisdom and support during my Master's thesis process. I could not have done it without you, and I am so grateful to have shared this experience with you.

Attending Winnipeg Education Centre from 1983–1987 was a transformative time in my life because it shaped me into a confident and competent educator with a social conscience and I emerged into a stronger *Anishinaabe-kwe*. To the participants in this study, I am humbled you shared your stories with me. I want to say thanks to all the students I sat in classes with, studied with and co-celebrated our accomplishments and getting our Bachelor of Education degrees. Even to the students who graduated before me, you inspired us and made us feel like we could do it; thanks!

I want to thank my First Nation, Dauphin River Chief and Council, especially Councillor Harold Anderson for providing me with a small grant to pay for one term in my final year of my Masters degree. Miigwetch. Marjorie Poor, thanks for making the final hours of my thesis editing enjoyable. You certainly are the best!

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Finally, I want to dedicate this thesis and thank my late sister, Valery Ann Bird (nee Robinson). She was the one who encouraged me to apply to the Winnipeg Education Centre and said I would make an awesome teacher. I am so happy we had the opportunity to go to school for a year together as she graduated in 1985. We were in a couple of classes together and I have great memories, especially Ojibway Literature class; we had so many good laughs. This is for you sis and may the legacy of pursuing education be the inspiration for your children and grandchildren. Forever loved and never forgotten, I love you Val!

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About the Thesis

About the Thesis Title

The first word in the title of my thesis is *Tipachimowin*. I chose this title because it is the heart of my study. *Tipachimowin* translated into Cree means telling your story. Although I am *Anishinaabe*, I chose to use a Cree word because my mother's grandmother, the late Ellen Stagg (nee Scott) was Cree from *Misipawistik* (Grand Rapids) "Misi" means big and "Pawistik" means rapids in Cree. My children's grandmother, the late Dorothy Settee (nee Crate) from *Ochekwi Sipi* (Fisher River) named after the animal fisher, was a Cree advocate and promoter of Cree language so I wanted to honour my Cree relatives by using the word *Tipachimowin*.

The following quote from *Research is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* by S. Wilson (2008) asserts that we all have a story about our life experiences in which we can find meaning. This supports the second part of my title: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience:

Indigenous people in Canada recognize that it is important for storytellers to impart their own life and experience into the telling. They also recognize that listeners will filter the story being told through their own experience and thus adapt the information to make it relevant and specific to their life. When listeners know where the storyteller is coming from and how the story fits into the storytellers life, it makes the absorption of the knowledge that much easier. (p. 38)

Writing Method

My writing style has an Indigenous focus throughout the thesis. For example, as mentioned in the above paragraph, I have used a Cree word, *Tipachimowin*, as part of my thesis title. I have also used *Anishinaabemowin* words and they are italicized to indicate that they are another language other than English. I also provide the English translation for the words when written for the first time. I have also used participants' names in the *Anishinaabe* language to

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promote the use of Indigenous languages in scholarly writing. I have also used the circle as a framework as a tool to analyze and organize my data. The circle is one of our traditional teachings and it is used to create ways of understanding and knowing (Laramee, 2013).

My writing is also relational to the various ideas I convey. My research focuses on the stories of three Aboriginal women and two professors and their experiences at Winnipeg Education Centre. I also share my experiences as a student at Winnipeg Education Centre. This relational style of writing (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Fitznor, 2002; Young, 2005) is used to strengthen the stories and show the relationship between researcher and participants.

I chose to take an approach to writing that fits with Indigenous methods such as repetition. It may appear that I repeat myself; however, this writing style restates my thoughts and perspectives from an Indigenous perspective. In *Anishinaabemowin*, we often repeat what we are saying and that has influenced how I write my ideas. The use of Indigenous metaphors is also used in my thesis. Scholars such as Absolon and Willett (2004) use berries as an Indigenous metaphor. I have used the circle as my metaphor to interpret and analyze the stories of all the participants. I've also used a personal and reflective voice in my writing (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Kovach, 2009) which weaves my reflections throughout the thesis. I found it as a way of storytelling or which is also referred to as narrative writing style.

Finally, I have used plain, clear language in my writing to express understanding and clarity. In the next section, I will provide highlights within each of the chapters of my thesis.

In Chapter 1, Background to the Study, I share the story of who I am, where I come from, why I was drawn to this study and how I situate myself in teacher education. By situating myself in research, it allows others to get to know me, why I have those perspectives and how they shaped me as a person and educator in research (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Fitznor, 2002). One of

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the most important teachings my father passed on to me was to know that I was *Anishinaabe* and that if anyone ever asked who I was, to tell them I am *Anishinaabe* (Young, 2005). Many young people do not know who they are and where they come from and it is my hope that my story will help them to begin a journey to seek their identity. I close the chapter by sharing the history of teacher education programs in Canada and Manitoba followed by information about my research study: the research question, purpose of the study and the participants.

In Chapter 2, Literature Review, I share how the literature informed this study and provided a basis for my research. The opening quote in this chapter tells how “someone saw something in us” (Morrisette, 2013). Winnipeg Education Center (WEC) as a teacher education program had an impact on the lives of three Aboriginal students and why two professors taught at WEC during the 1980s. This was a very important era in Aboriginal teacher education in Canada and by showing how many teacher education programs started in the late 1970s is an important part of history (Battiste & Barman, 1995; Fitznor, 2002). In addition to the information on teacher education programs I also share a traditional teaching on *Anishinaabe* Philosophy of Education (Figure 1) and the Circle of Courage® framework (Figure 2). The traditional teaching had an impact on my understanding of *Anishinaabe* understandings and forms my way of learning, thinking and doing. In closing, Manitoba Aboriginal Teachers’ Questionnaire Reports 2006 and 2009; a study (Settee, 2008) I did as part of my Masters coursework and lastly a report about Teachers’ Work in Canadian Aboriginal Communities (1998) are included as part of the literature review and are explained further in this chapter.

In Chapter 3, Methodology, I provide information on the methodology of how my study was designed. I discuss the theoretical orientation, study participants, procedure used for communicating with participants, data collection methods and instrumentation, interview

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questions, semi structured interview process, confidentiality, location of study and data analysis. As an Indigenous researcher and loving to hear stories from people, I used an exploratory approach in qualitative research.

In Chapter 4, Profiles, I introduce the participants of my study. Each participant is introduced by saying “*aniin*” in *Anishinaabemowin*. The pseudonyms for all the participants are in *Anishinaabemowin*. The three student women participants chose names associated with the Earth as this is women’s responsibility to care for the Earth: *Aki Ikwe* (Earth Woman), *Nibi Ikwe* (Water Woman) and *Noodin Ikwe* (Wind Woman). The two male professors chose names associated with the sky world as this is the men’s responsibility to care for the fire: *Ishkote Inini* (Fire Man) and *Kisis Inini* (Sun Man). The profiles highlight their backgrounds, education, careers and transformation-living a good life.

In Chapter 5, *Tipachimowin: Their Stories*, the students and professors share stories about their Winnipeg Education Centre experiences. I organized the themes of the stories in the Circle of Courage® framework using Belonging (East direction), Mastery (South direction), Independence (West direction) and Generosity (North direction). There were two frameworks that emerged for the students, one framework is the students before WEC and the second framework is the students at WEC. One framework emerged for the professors using the Circle of Courage®. For the students, within the inner circle of the framework, I included four questions that I heard from an annual general meeting keynote: who am I and where do I come from (both used in East direction), what is my purpose (used in South and West directions) and where am I going (used in North direction). I did not use these four questions for the professors because the professors already had a sense of identity and as both White men, are allies.

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In the final chapter, Chapter 6: Discussion, I share the themes that emerged, what I learned from my study and recommendations. I discuss the themes that emerged: Preparing for the Next Seven Generations, Building a Community within a Community, Equity and Capacity Building, and Helping Each Other. As an Aboriginal educator and researcher, all these themes related to the students transformation and providing a quality of life for themselves, their families and communities. Finally, there are four recommendations that I discuss. As an Aboriginal educator working within an education system that can have some influence on the possible partnerships and strategies, I am privileged. I honour all the participants who shared their stories and selected me to hear their stories.

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Chapter 1: Background to the Study

In order for our people to be successful, we need to answer these four questions: Who am I? Where do I come from? What is my purpose? And where am I going?

(Chief Justice Murray Sinclair, 2011)

In this chapter, I share my story through a beautiful teaching I heard from Chief Justice Murray Sinclair at the Ka Ni Kanichihk Annual General Meeting in November 2011 which is shared above in the quotation. I share my story of who I am, where I come from, why I was drawn to this study, and how I situate myself in teacher education (Absolon & Willet, 2004; Fitznor, 2002; Monture-Angus, 1999). I also share my identity as a person, a learner and a student. I end the chapter by sharing the history of teacher education programs in Canada and Manitoba followed by information about my research study: the research question, purpose of the study and the participants.

Who am I?

Tansi. Aniin. Boozhoo. Esikwe nitishinkas. Mahkwa ni dodem. Saskachewenoong ni doonjii. Lawrence shoogoo Rosie Robinson ni mama shoogoo niibaba. Apici ni minwentam niwi tipacim about learning. Nin Anishinaabemowin.

My Spirit Name is Clam Woman. I am from the Bear Clan. My home community is “Where the river drains into the lake” or in English, Dauphin River. My parents are Lawrence-ebun and Rosie-ebun Robinson. The *Anishinaabe* word ‘ebun’ written after a name signifies that person has passed on. We are taught to use this word as a sign of respect for the departed.

Anishinaabe. If anyone ever asks who you are, tell them “I am *Anishinaabe*.” (Young, 2005). My first language is *Anishinaabemowin*. My father instilled this sense of identity since I was a little girl. But when I think about it, no one ever asked me who I was until junior high

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school when we were working on projects about nationality. My first language is *Anishinaabemowin*, also known as Ojibway/Ojibwe/Saulteaux. *Anishinaabemowin* was spoken in our home and I am grateful that I can understand my language fluently. This is the only language I knew until I entered the public school system in Kindergarten. I really enjoyed going to school because my grandfather used to walk me to school. I used to hold his hand and we would walk down Elgin Avenue and then up Ellen Street to Victoria Albert School. Those were happy times for me because I had a special bond with my grandfather, or as I grew up knowing him, Dun Nun. I remember my first day of school. I did not my Dun Nun to leave me there alone; I was scared. He told me he would be waiting for me after school, which he did. I remember my teacher speaking to the class and I did not understand what she was saying or asking of us. I would just follow what everyone else was doing. I quickly learned the English language, mainly for survival (Young).

As I got older, the fluency of my language slowly diminished – only responding to my parents and relatives in part English and *Anishinaabemowin*. My parents said it was important for us to learn the English language because we lived in the city, so they would continue to speak to us in our language and we had to answer back in English. I wish my parents had encouraged us to continue speaking in our language at home too. I am fortunate that I can understand my language as many people cannot understand *Anishinaabemowin*. Today, I understand my language fluently and understand what the Elders are saying and when I attend ceremonies, I can speak semi-fluently.

I grew up in a Christian home and we went to church several times during the week because my Dad was a church pastor and “Indian” representative for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada for Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. We grew up helping in the church and

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worked with predominately *Anishinaabe* and Cree people. I have and will always have respect for my upbringing in the church. I believe, however, that we do not have to leave our identity, histories, and worldviews at the doors of churches. I want to share a story about my Mom, Dad and auntie who were faithful church people. This story is connected to our identity as *Anishinaabe* people regardless of our beliefs. In June of 1988, I had a miscarriage at 25 weeks gestation. I was heartbroken. My parents told me that they would take me to my auntie who lives in our home community of Dauphin River and she would make medicine for me. My mother told me to buy some gifts for my auntie such as tea towels, towels, and scarves in exchange for the medicine she was going to make me. I bought the gifts and we drove four hours. When I saw my auntie, she had this jug full of red liquid and she told me to drink one cup at sunrise and one cup at sunset for four days. She told me the medicine was made for women who had miscarriages and that I needed to have faith that it would heal my body so that I could have more children. I followed her instructions and visited along with my parents for the week. This experience made me think about our traditional ways and why more families did not know or practice it anymore. It was like it was underground or hidden knowledge. I was so proud my auntie knew about this medicine because one year later I gave birth to my younger son, Kevin. Unfortunately, our traditional medicines were not acknowledged: colonization and the impact of residential schools on our communities and families destroyed these cultural ways of living and doing. I am grateful that my auntie still knew about the plants to make the medicine and she honoured the teachings that were passed to her from her mother-in-law, my paternal grandmother. This experience created curiosity and I wanted to learn more about medicines and traditional ways. Today, I am a Sundancer, a Pipe carrier for the people and attend various ceremonies and circles and live a clean, healthy lifestyle.

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Where do I come from?

I was born and raised in Winnipeg's inner city. My parents came to Winnipeg in 1958 seeking employment and a new life in an urban centre. My dad was 29 years old and my mother was 28. They had three children when they came to the city: Walter, Marina and my late sister Valery. My mother was pregnant with my sister Hilda. Hilda was the first of the remaining six children to be born at the Women's Pavilion as it was once affectionately known. It is now known as the Women's Centre. In our home, my parents spoke *Anishinaabemowin*. We understood and spoke the language fluently in our home until we started school. Once we started school, we would have to answer our parents in English, even though our parents continued to speak to us in *Anishinaabemowin*. I am grateful to my parents for maintaining a strong connection to our home community. My Dad had a red pickup truck and my Mum would make it comfortable by putting foam mattresses and blankets for us to sit in the back. Mum, Dad and the baby would sit in the front seat and the rest of us would sit in the back and make the journey to *Saskatchewan*, making stops at the neighboring reserves of Fairford, Lake St. Martin and Little Saskatchewan. We knew who my Mum and Dad's relatives were, often by community names and not their given Christian names. We used to have so much fun playing and exploring the land while my parents visited with their relatives. I had a happy childhood and did not consider myself poor (Young, 2005), although we were because my Dad worked only one job and he supported the whole family. My Mum was a stay home mother; raising the family, keeping the house organized and making sure all our needs were met.

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What drew me to this study?

There were experiences I had when I was going to grade school in Winnipeg that led me to want to make changes. I recognized the way that Aboriginal peoples were misrepresented in textbooks and in life. For example one day when I was in Grade 6 and learning about Indians and the history of Canada, I saw how “Indians” were portrayed in textbooks and in particular what and how teachers taught about “Indians of Canada.” I am certain my teacher had very little or no information about Indians of Canada and relied on the textbook or teachers’ guide for the information. In those days, we were portrayed in textbooks as savages and barbaric. I was puzzled and thought to myself, “is she talking about me and my family?” I was confused because my father taught us as young children that we were *Anishinaabe* and if anyone ever asked who we were, we were to respond, “I am *Anishinaabe*.” Young (2005), in her book *Pimatisiwin: Walking in a Good Way – A Narrative Inquiry into Language as Identity*, shares her experience with her parents and the importance of speaking the *Anishinaabe* language and how our language connects to our culture. Her parents instilled in her, “wherever I go, wherever I am, I will always remember I am *Anishinabe*” (Young, 2005, p. 22).

We were not this “savage, barbaric people” that was being taught to us! When I went home at lunchtime, I told my mother what happened in school and what we were being taught. I told her my ears were burning red because I felt shame and embarrassed. I was also the only Aboriginal student in the class, so I felt singled out. As I reflect in adulthood, I believe it wasn’t the intention of the teacher to hurt my feelings; she was just misinformed about “Indians of Canada” and the accurate history. My mother told me not to challenge the teacher, as teachers were in positions of authority, so I did not. That day, I said to myself, when I get older, I am going to help change how teachers portray Aboriginal people in textbooks and help them to learn

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the real truth. I also made the decision to consider education as a career. Currently, I am the Director of the Aboriginal Education Directorate with Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. This position allows me to have a leadership role in Aboriginal education areas such as research, policy development, curriculum and strategic initiatives related to Aboriginal education and training. Being an educational leader is a humbling and responsible role as many of my recommendations and decisions impact many students, educators, parents and communities in Manitoba. I am grateful for all the partners and supporters we have at the Aboriginal Education Directorate as our motto is “Aboriginal education is everyone’s responsibility.”

Situating Myself in Teacher Education

Since I was a young girl, one of my aspirations was to be a teacher. I always knew I had something special because young children typically play “school” and my younger brothers, nieces and nephews actually listened to me. My father saw my ability and volunteered me to teach Sunday school at the local church. For some reason, I really enjoyed preparing the lessons and seeing the excitement in my students’ eyes. As I got older, I worked summer jobs and it usually involved coordinating or leading groups of children and youth in recreation activities. I found this part of my life satisfying. When I graduated from high school, I bumped into a colleague who mentioned a downtown school that was hiring for a teacher assistant. To my surprise, the principal of the school was my principal from my elementary school days. I stayed in that position for three years and I knew I could aspire to being a teacher. Many times in the classrooms, I was left to supervise the students while the teachers were otherwise engaged. I heard about the Winnipeg Education Centre through my older sister, the late Valery Bird. She had been recruited from a training program for inner city residents to attend the WEC program as

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a laddering opportunity. Little did I realize that through WEC and receiving a post-secondary education my life would change! In the early '80s the milieu of WEC was collegial, community focused and oriented towards social justice (Clare, 2013; Lukinski, 1997; Poonwassie & Poonwassie, 2001). In those days, a majority of the instructors/professors were educational activists, social constructivists, philosophers and open minded thinkers all who taught what Freire (1970) advocated. There was also a movement within the Aboriginal community for reclaiming Aboriginal culture and language identities (Laramee, 2013). As a WEC student myself in the 1980s, I found myself in the middle of this movement that was occurring not only at WEC but also at other teacher education programs elsewhere in Manitoba and Canada (Hesch, 1999).

Being a student at Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s was an exciting experience and there were many successful elements of the teacher education program. One of those elements was financial supports. Many of the students came from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Many students were single parents, some were taking care of extended family members in the same household and some students were even contributing to their families outside of their own household. With the financial assistance I was provided to attend the Winnipeg Education Centre, I found it was very beneficial for our family needs. In addition, our tuition and books were covered. I am trying to remember what my living allowance was, but just over \$300.00 bi-weekly rings a bell. At the beginning of each class, textbooks/course materials were provided. I found this support very beneficial because textbooks/course materials could cost you from \$30.00 depending on the text and anywhere upwards to \$200.00. That was a lot of money when you were a student on a fixed income or a single parent during that time.

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Another successful element was the small class sizes. My cohort group was just under 20 students and, because of the small class size, everyone got to know each other. We formed good relationships with each other and we also had the opportunity to support each other inside and outside our classes. We would get together and have study sessions, writing blitzes or just reviewing notes before tests or exams. Sometimes we even got together just to sit at someone's kitchen table and have coffee and conversation to motivate and support each other. It was a time to just vent and our cohort supported each other in other ways as well. In my second year I had my first born son. While I was on maternity leave, I received a phone call from one of my classmates. He said I am coming to pick you up for lunch and we want to see your new baby boy. I did not realize that they had planned a surprise baby shower for me at the Centre. When I walked into one of the classrooms, I was really touched by my cohort group being so thoughtful. Even though they were all on fixed low incomes, they welcomed my son with such generosity.

Another successful element of the program was being at a satellite location away from the Fort Garry campus on Pembina Highway in the southern part of the city. The Fort Garry campus is like a city within a city with all the various faculties housed at that campus. Our off campus location was on Nairn Avenue and Chester Street in an area known as Elmwood in the eastern part of the city. Although WEC was not situated in an inner city area, it had good bus service to the location. I didn't have a vehicle, nor did I even know how to drive while I was a student. I commuted on the bus and sometimes caught a ride with my sister, who was a fourth year student at WEC during my first year at the program. The building was previously an elementary school and all the classrooms were well lit with natural light and large picturesque windows. Because we were all adults, if there were more than 20 students in the classroom, it felt crowded. The classrooms would have been designed for children and not adults. There were two long hallways

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and at one end of the hallway, there was a gymnasium. At the other end was a large room which would have been a staffroom. That staffroom was our student lounge. The student lounge had couches and small tables for four around the room. There was a table with a coffee maker and the coffee was purchased on an honour system, 25 cents a cup. Also interesting is in those days, you could smoke in buildings and many students did not like going to the student lounge because of the secondhand smoke. As students, we fundraised to have an exhaust fan installed in the student lounge to alleviate some of the smoke. It helped somewhat, but I remember, the fan was so noisy it was more of a nuisance than helpful for its original purpose. The student lounge was a fun place to be, to connect with students, and it was sometimes used for study groups.

Although it was not relevant to me as a student, there was a school parking lot that accommodated approximately thirty vehicles at the rear of the school building. Not having to pay for parking fees would have been advantageous for students and staff alike. There was also all day parking available on the side streets beside the Centre.

Academic support was another successful element of the program. There were core staff members located on site at WEC. The core staff taught courses and advised and assisted us with our program requirements and specifically our major and minor teaching areas. They provided advice and made sure we were on track with our coursework and assignments. They also provided emotional support when needed. The room where they were located was not private. The offices had dividers and it was difficult to have private discussions with your advisor. We would have to meet after each term with our advisor and if your program needed some adjusting, they provided some recommendations. For example, I had a double major in English and Aboriginal Languages. Many of my classes for my Aboriginal language could not be accommodated at the WEC site, so I had to take Aboriginal language courses at the Fort Garry

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campus. I found attending the Fort Garry campus challenging because I was not accustomed to such a large place. I had to orientate myself to the buildings where I took those courses. There were a couple of courses that I took with some of the other students, so we formed a small cohort and supported each other. A couple of these courses were Structure of the Ojibway Language and Ojibway Literature. We used to have so much laughter in these classes because we got to speak our language and deconstruct it to understand how the words were formed. Aside from the core staff, there were also “parachute professors” as we called them, who came from the Fort Garry campus. Having the parachute professors with their specializations was advantageous for the content; however, they were not accessible like the core staff. If we wanted to meet with them, we would have to wait until our next class or leave a telephone message. This was a challenge for students who were having difficulties with the course content. I remember an example when we had to take a course on Introduction to Government and the instructor was from the Political Science area. I remember struggling along with other students in my cohort, so they (WEC) hired a tutor to help us understand concepts that we were not grasping. With the assistance of the tutor and a study group, I ended up passing the course. They didn’t let us struggle; professors were helpful if you asked for help.

One of the last successful elements I want to share is about being accepted into the program as a mature student. Sometimes socio-economic circumstances or need for academic upgrading prohibited students from entering a post-secondary program. The mature student provision allowed students entry at the age of 21 or, in special circumstances such as mine, 20 but turning 21 during that academic year. So they accepted me as a mature student. The benefit of being a mature student was you had some life experience and in many cases, mature students already had families and were caregivers in many ways within their families. I valued the

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expertise of mature students and the life experiences made the program richer in terms of discussions that occurred in the classrooms. Many of the students had been in short and long term relationships, they had children and in some cases, grandchildren. Many of the students also had experiences in the workforce and some, like me, were also upgrading from teacher assistants to teachers. I already knew I loved working with children. My sister encouraged me to apply to the WEC program and I have been blessed with becoming a teacher and my career has been very rewarding. Being a mature student was challenging at times because there were few of us who were not parents so I did not understand some of their challenges until I had a son at the end of my second year! I tell you, that was some learning experience. There was never a dull moment with conversations on one's life journey as a parent, grandparent or whatever.

There were also barriers to the teacher education program. One of the most significant barriers was not having Aboriginal professors, other than two instructors I had for Introduction to Ojibway and Introduction to Cree language courses. It was great to have these instructors and we had fun in these classes. Ninety percent of the students who took these Aboriginal language classes were Aboriginal students. The classes were always filled to capacity and there was a sense of pride in learning our languages and being able to converse with each other. You could tell who grew up hearing the language because of the intonation of their speech when we had to practice speaking. They also understood some of the slang words and this caused lots of laughter. Another experience of having an Aboriginal staff was when Laara Fitznor was working on her Master's degree and doing her study at WEC. I was so happy to see someone at WEC who was an Aboriginal person. I remember sitting with her in one of the offices as she was explaining how she would be working with WEC students to provide support to students. It is important to have faculty as role models working in post-secondary institutions. It was very encouraging to

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have Laara at WEC which has resulted in long term relationships with many of the students who are now working in education areas all over the province and in Canada.

Because there was a lack of Aboriginal professors/instructors at WEC, there was limited focus on Aboriginal focused courses such as Native Studies courses or courses infused with Aboriginal content such as history of Aboriginal education in Manitoba and Canada. These types of courses would have been beneficial for students. This was another barrier with the teacher education program at WEC. Many of the students would have had knowledge of Aboriginal education, and would have been provided more historical information, teaching and learning strategies, which would have added value to the program. There were professors who did attempt to include some Aboriginal content in some courses such as one of the communication courses. The course taught us various effective communication strategies and how to teach students who had some communicative barriers, especially students whose first language was not English. Many students face challenges trying to learn English and this course helped us understand that everyone does not speak Standard English.

Identity as a Person

I want to share two stories of how I situate myself as a teacher. The first story impacts how I situate myself as a person who has gifts and talents to share. As a first year student at WEC, I remember one of my first assignments in the Seminar and School Experience course. The instructor asked us to prepare a visual portfolio about ourselves that provided our birthplace, family background, education experiences, likes and dislikes and any other relevant information we wanted to share with future students. Although this was a major assignment for the course, the portfolio's ultimate audience was students that we would be meeting in schools during our

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student teaching. I was so excited when I had to create my portfolio because I like sharing stories about my life. I also have a creative side for designing pages and making the portfolio interesting for students. I gathered pictures from my childhood and family, documents such as graduation certificates from high school and college, pictures of my family, a pictograph of my family tree, memorabilia from my wedding and pictures of my new family. When my portfolio was completed, I had to share it with classmates while at the same time we were being evaluated by our instructor. I remember getting back my grade on the assignment and my instructor indicating my portfolio was beyond her expectations and that I would one day be a master teacher. What my instructor was teaching us was the value of establishing relationships by sharing who we are as individuals so that students would see us as people and not only as teachers. This was a valuable lesson because establishing relationships and building a sense of belonging is the essence of education.

I also recall the summer of 1983. There were close to 20 students in my “year group” as we called ourselves. As part of the orientation to the program, staff took us to a camp; I cannot even remember where it was located. One of the requirements was to read the book *In Search of In Search of April Raintree* written by Beatrice Culleton (1983). We had “getting to know you” sessions, April Raintree discussions and introduction to WEC. I was not that scared because my sister was in the Year Four group and she would be graduating in the following spring Convocation. I knew some of the students in her year group because I used to go with her to student events and help her with her son, Robert. My sister was a single parent and I lived with her and her son in a trailer park off North Main Street of Winnipeg. When I think about it now, we lived so far from the WEC off-campus site. Even though we did not live in the inner city, we had low-income inner city characteristics: inadequate housing and mediocre nutrition. As a

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student, I received financial support as part of a government sponsored Access Program. I appreciated being one of the students selected to be sponsored for my education degree. The comprehensive student support approach that the Access Programs developed was for people who might not go to university because of life circumstances but could succeed at the university with Access supports (Clare, 2013; Poonwassie & Poonwassie, 2001). The WEC student demographic at that time was 50% Aboriginal, 30% newcomers to Canada and 20% other (i.e. Caucasian) (Clare, 2013). More information about the Access program supports will be discussed in the literature review.

As I indicated before, I remember one of my first classes that had a profound impact on me. Our professor gave us this huge coiled art book that was 18" x 24" and in that book we had to tell our life story from birth to present (1983). We had to make this book attractive and filled with information that we would share with students that we would be teaching in practicum. The book was to introduce ourselves to our students so they would know who we are as student teachers but more importantly, as people. This assignment was situating us as future teachers or introducing the storyteller and to “impart their own life and experience into the telling” (Wilson, 2008, p. 32). By sharing my life story with students, they could possibly relate to my story and make connections to their own history (Kovach, 2009). Wilson (2008) confirms, “when listeners know where the storyteller is coming from, and how the story fits into the storyteller’s life, it makes the absorption of knowledge that much easier” (p. 32).

Identity as a Learner and Teacher

I fondly remember my first university Math course and sitting in the classroom waiting for the professor to come in and start teaching us some number theories as this course was called Number Systems. I can even remember the course number 13.228. I will never forget the expression on my peers' faces as our professor walked in the room carrying a box of wooden blocks with graduated units on the sides that resembled one centimeter squares. The wooden blocks came in various sizes and shapes. I thought to myself, "Oh boy, I'm in trouble now because I was expecting to see books and papers!" The professor had a big smile on his face and was thoroughly ecstatic for this new venture in teaching. He told us to put our books aside and began to hand out these charts of papers with four vertical columns categorized as units, longs, flats and blocks. Then he proceeded to hand out these blocks and told us to play with them. So I began to build mini structures with the blocks I was given. As we were playing, he told us we were going to learn about counting in base systems and that the current way we were teaching math was far more complicated than it had to be. I thought about it, and he was right. We teach in base ten. My curiosity was piqued. He began to explain the notion of base three. He said to put a pile of centimeter blocks in the unit's column, which in essence were "ones." So for every three units, you would get one long, which in essence are 10. What I actually found astounding was that I understood this concept by using these manipulatives, called Dienes blocks (Dienes, 2002). I not only surprised myself as a learner but also thought, "I can teach my future students these very concepts." Being a student in a program like WEC gave me opportunities to be in the presence of instructors who cared to teach differently.

Comparing my teacher education program experience to other education experiences is similar in many ways. One, I was raised in the inner city of Winnipeg and many of my peers at

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WEC were also raised in the inner city of Winnipeg. Also, at WEC, many of the students came from diverse backgrounds. I remember one student sharing a story of his sad survival escaping from Vietnam. He was trying to save his family and his children didn't make it. His children did not make it onto the boat and they perished. What a decision one would have to make, do you stay on the boat or drown with your family? Many students were refugees like the student I just mentioned. I grew up living in a diverse neighbourhood where there were recent immigrants from many countries like Portugal, Italy, Philippines, and Uganda to name a few. There were also more Aboriginal people moving into the city from First Nation and Metis communities.

When I look at my experience being a WEC graduate compared to other colleagues who took more traditional routes of teacher education, I realized that WEC students had unique life experiences and in many cases, some of those experiences were tragic. Many students because of their maturity had or were in relationships. Some of my colleagues when they were in traditional teacher education programs had just graduated from high school and were exploring relationships. Many of the students came from white privilege and were not familiar with people from diverse communities such as recent immigrants and refugees. In addition, many came from suburbs or small communities where everyone looked the same. So it was a challenge for many of my colleagues who were teaching in inner city schools. One of the unfortunate circumstances that WEC graduates had to face compared to graduates from more traditional routes was the belief that WEC provided watered down programming. Some perceived WEC graduates as getting through only so that there would be more Aboriginal teachers and other diverse teachers in inner city schools. It was unfortunate because many of us were dedicated and understood the students, their families and communities. We had value added to what students from more

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conventional programs had to offer. We understood our communities and came with our toolboxes ready to make positive changes for our students.

History of Winnipeg Education Centre

In Manitoba, one of the first ACCESS type teacher education programs was the Winnipeg Centre Project which opened in 1974. The Winnipeg Centre Project transitioned from being a rural teacher education program (hosted by the Faculty of Education, Brandon University) to an inner city teacher education program (hosted by the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba), which became known as the Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC). In 2004, WEC was moved to the University of Winnipeg, presumably because its central city location could better serve inner city residents. WEC has produced numerous graduates since its inception. Many of these teacher educators are Aboriginal (First Nation, Metis and Inuit) peoples who are making valuable contributions in the education system and society (Clare, 2013; Fitznor, 2002; Poonwassie & Poonwassie, 2001). These scholars point out that historically, Manitoba Aboriginal people have had a history of not quite fitting into the mainstream education system due to various reasons such as cultural difference, racism, age, inadequate educational preparedness, family life circumstances – single parents, low income earners, first generation post-secondary students – amongst other factors (Settee, 2008). It took specialized programs that could offer and develop wholistic models like the ACCESS programs to try to ameliorate these issues and produce successful Aboriginal graduates in various fields (Richard, 2011). WEC is one program that was developed with specific goals and objectives in mind to produce teachers within a model for success.

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ACCESS programs were and are still are beneficial to students who have challenges entering and completing post-secondary education. Some of these challenges include academic, economic, social and/or cultural need (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2013; Richard, 2011). ACCESS programs provide financial, academic, emotional, and more recently Indigenous focused spiritual supports to students. Without these supports, many Aboriginal students would not succeed in mainstream programs (Richard, 2011).

Research Question

From 1983–1987, I was a student at the WEC. During this time I met and subsequently maintained relationships with numerous graduates and a few professors/instructors. In this study, the participating former students shared their background information and experiences about being a student at WEC, shared reasons they decided to become a teacher, and offered a student’s perspectives about the various elements of the WEC program. The professors also shared information about their background, why they wanted to teach at WEC, how they intervened when students were not succeeding and whether they felt they made an impact on WEC education students. WEC had a transformative impact on my life. I wanted to learn from the students’ collective experiences whether their lives and educational experiences were also transformative. Since the professors had a critical role in that transformation, I hoped to learn what ideas and strategies motivated them to develop as agents of change.

For example, Clare (2013) shares stories on the impact WEC Inner City Social Work Program (the sister program to WEC Education) had on “graduates who run local agencies, who hold political office or prestigious appointments, and of graduates’ children who are attending

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post-secondary institutions” (p. 75). These students, like me, came from inner city or northern communities, had low socio-economic status, and were first generation post-secondary students.

Purpose of the Study

Thus, this study is based on two sets of data – one from former WEC students and one from WEC professors. My purpose was to gather, describe, and analyze that data to discern what could be learned from some participants. Through researching one aspect of the WEC story, I hope to contribute to the broader understanding of how ACCESS programs meet their mandate. I will discuss this in more detail in Chapter 4.

In the next chapter, Literature Review, I examine how the literature informed and connects to my study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

None of us got into the program by being privileged and we all knew it; we knew, at some level, that we were all oppressed people, and we were all there because someone saw something in us.

(Morrissette, 2013, p. 37)

Introduction

This chapter reviews literature that informed this study in the following areas: defining transformation, history of Aboriginal teacher education programs in Canada and Manitoba, Winnipeg Centre Project/Winnipeg Education Centre, Manitoba *Aboriginal Teachers' Questionnaire* reports (2006 and 2009), *Anishinaabe* philosophy of education, teachers' work in Canadian Aboriginal communities and my Settee (2008) study. This chapter highlights what is in the research and therefore what it says about my study. This Literature Review is important because it forms the basis for my study. I define transformative experiences in the context of students who attended access type programs. I also provide a history of teacher education programs in Canada and then focus on Winnipeg Education Centre as institutions of change for Aboriginal students. I also share information on a study, Settee 2008, which I led as part of my Masters coursework for a Qualitative research methods course. The *Aboriginal Teachers' Questionnaire* reports 2006 and 2009 are highlighted in this literature to provide information on the number and location of Aboriginal teachers in the province of Manitoba. It is also important to share Indigenous philosophies that guide my life's work and within a research context, how I used these philosophies to understand the data and interpretation of the stories which will be shared in Chapters 4 and 5. Finally, the literature review ends with some thoughts on teachers' work in Aboriginal communities and how it is critical to have Aboriginal teachers in the education system.

Defining Transformation

Transformation is a key concept (Silver, 2013) with individuals who have gone to ACCESS programs like Winnipeg Education Centre. Individuals who graduated from Winnipeg Education Centre testify to the success of the program as a way of breaking the cycle of poverty (Laramee, 2013; Morrissette, 2013). I grew up in an economically disadvantaged home by socio-economic standards although my basic needs were cared for and we did not know we were poor (Richard, 2011). In Silver's book *Moving Forwards, Giving Back* (2013), he states, "Difficult though returning to school as an adult is, real change is occurring" (p. 138).

Individuals who graduated from Winnipeg Education Centre testify to the success of the program as a way of breaking the cycle of poverty and increasing the quality of life (Laramee, 2013; Morrissette, 2013). By receiving an education, it is transformative for students, and Silver talks about students who attended adult literacy programs and how one student, a forty-six-year-old grandmother shares that "it's a big step for me. I'm proud of myself, and my kids are proud of me. I go home [from the Adult Literacy Program] happy, like, saying I accomplished something, so I feel good about that" (p.138). Students who attended the WEC share how education gave them the tools to increase the quality of life in their personal lives, their families and communities and within their careers. Some of these stories are shared in Chapter 5.

I grew up in an economically disadvantaged home by socio-economic standards although my basic needs were cared for and we did not know we were poor (Richard, 2011). The "Poor as Authors of Change" section in Silver's book *Moving Forwards, Giving Back* (2013) highlights and empowers individuals who have been in similar situations, like poverty, to be the orators and writers of their own stories, whereby others can relate to the similar situation.

Adults who are empowered in this way – by an educational strategy that builds on experiential knowledge acquired in growing up poor; that deepens their capacities for

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critical thought and their understanding of the broader forces that shape their lives; and that instills in them the belief that they can transform the reality that has been their experience – are less likely to leave their communities in pursuit of individual gain, and more likely to use their educational and experiential knowledge to give back to the communities in which they have lived. (Silver, 2013, p. 10)

Many graduates of Winnipeg Education Centre have not only become authors of change, who write about their lives and career experiences, but also agents of change who work with allies to influence and impact change in educational systems (Laramee, 2008; Smith, 2002).

Through transformation, teacher education programs had a pivotal role in the lives of many individuals. The term ‘conscientization’ refers to an awakening of critical consciousness where people become aware of their sources of oppression and relations of power (Freire, 1970). For example, Freire believed that “adult learners have to become aware of the broad socio-economic forces that shape their lives and their ways of interpreting the world. This implies the central importance of critical thinking” (Silver, 2013, p. 10). Freire believed that adults could “achieve a deepening awareness of both the socio-economic reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality through action upon it” (cited in Silver, 2013, p. 10).

History of Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs (TEPs) in Canada

Aboriginal teacher education programs have emerged in Canada since the mid-1970s. The Aboriginal teacher education programs, also known as TEPs, emerged in the late 1970s throughout Canada and many still exist today, however, particularly in western Canada (Battiste & Barman, 1995; Dienes, 1973; Fitznor, 2002; Hesch, 1999; Laramee, 2013; St. Denis, 2010). In Battiste and Barman’s book, *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (1995) they state, “The year 1969 is viewed by Aboriginal peoples in Canada as a crucial turning point in the transformation of Indian education control” (p. vii). They go on to explain that the federal

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government's 'White Paper Policy' sought to transfer federal responsibility for First Nations on reserves to the provinces. Aboriginal peoples rejected this policy and issued their own 'Red Paper Policy' and this paper "gave birth to the National Indian Brotherhoods' *Indian Control of Indian Education*" (Battiste & Barman, 1995, p. viii). It was this landmark document that the federal government accepted in principle in 1973 as a national policy. It was in this era, the government funded cultural centres throughout Canada to support culture and language programs. Also established, were several Indian education training centres at various universities across Canada where the Aboriginal population was increasing rapidly (Battiste & Barman, 1995).

In Saskatchewan, three programs were established: the Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP), Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) and Saskatchewan Urban Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). These programs promoted teacher training for Aboriginal teachers outside regular channels of instruction, although they utilized the same courses of instruction and content (Battiste & Barman, 1995). For example, SUNTEP is designed for Métis and Non-Status First Nations/Aboriginal students. The program is offered in two centres, Prince Albert and Saskatoon. Besides meeting the regular program requirements, SUNTEP students are required to take courses that will assist them to teach Aboriginal students, especially those in urban centres. It was during this time that the Winnipeg Centre Project opened in 1974 as one of the first ACCESS teacher education programs in Manitoba.

In British Columbia, the Native Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NITEP/ITEP) has been operating for forty years. It operates out of the University of British Columbia campus and has three field centres at Bella Bella, Kamloops and Duncan. NITEP students and graduates are role models and agents of change and empowerment. Over the past 39 years more than 360

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individuals have graduated and gone on to successful careers as teachers, administrators, provincial and federal government employees, and other highly valued positions in Aboriginal education. Many have continued their studies and have received Master's and Doctorate degrees. (University of British Columbia, June 2014).

The Ministry of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology supports a number of Aboriginal Teacher Training Programs in the province. The Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) at the University of Alberta was established in 2001 with the first cohort group beginning in January 2002. The intent of ATEP is to allow students to complete their Bachelor of Education degree in Elementary Education while maintaining community, family and cultural connections. The U of A offers a community based model and work closely with partner colleges in all phases of program development and delivery. Elders are involved in many capacities but their primary involvement is in the classroom and in the student teacher learning process. The program minor is selected based on community need, e.g. Cree Language, cross-cultural language arts.

The Aboriginal Teacher Education Program at the University of Alberta was established in 2001 with the first cohort group beginning in January 2002. The province of Alberta also has the Niitsitapi Aboriginal Teacher Education Program at the University of Lethbridge and the Master of Teaching Program at the University of Calgary. These programs, delivered in collaboration with First Nation colleges, have led to an increased number of First Nations, Metis and Inuit teachers in Alberta classrooms.

In terms of standards, requirements, and overall objectives, there is no difference. Students in the ATEP stream graduate with the same skills, knowledge and aptitudes as students on campus and receive the same graduation parchment at Convocation. The differences are in the

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focus of the program. ATEP is intended to address the urgent need for teachers with the desire and commitment to work with Aboriginal students. It is also designed to be responsive to unique teaching requirements in both northern communities and communities of diverse learners (University of Alberta, June 2014; University of Alberta, brochure, n.d.).

In Ontario, the Native Teacher Education Program (NTEP) (which is housed in the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University) was established in 1974 by Director Harold Linklater. NTEP has been carefully designed to offer students a fine balance of academic and practical courses. NTEP is about creating an environment that reflects the cultures and values of First Nations. Students participate in a variety of core program courses that reflect diverse Aboriginal culture, leadership, and identity. NTEP class sizes are also relatively small, which allows students to work in close collaboration with their professors and peers.

The program began as a two-year diploma program in 1975 with its first graduates leaving the program in 1977 to pursue careers in the teaching field. Since then over three-hundred (300) NTEP students have graduated. Graduates have ascended into positions of influence in the communities where they serve and reside. Employment has been, and continues to be, very successful, both in the federal and provincial educational institutions for those who have graduated.

Since establishment, NTEP has grown immensely and now is part of a four-year undergraduate, concurrent degree program with teachables in most grade levels. Enrolled in the core courses of the NTEP program, students may earn an Arts or Science degree while they are concurrently working towards a Bachelor of Education (General) degree (Lakehead University, June 2014).

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In 1994, NTEP added another academic year to the program. Graduates who obtained the Certificate in Native & Northern Education could, as well, complete a McGill University B.Ed. It then became a four-year university program with a total of 120 credits. In 2004 NTEP added a foundation year to make it a five-year program. The foundation year was created to ensure that all applicants met the entrance requirements.

In 2007, NTEP gained a new 5-year partnership with University of Regina. The program consists of U of R courses and transfer courses from NAC (Nunavut Arctic College). Under the fee-for-service arrangement, the U of R provides a range of services, including visiting instructors, professional development opportunities for students and learning experiences through exchanges (Wikipedia).

Other universities in Ontario have Aboriginal teacher education programs. Nipissing University which offers an Aboriginal Teacher Certification Program (ATCP) qualifies students to teach the Ontario elementary school curriculum in combination with traditional values, culture and art from Kindergarten to Grade 6. In addition, the ATCP provides you with opportunities for personal and professional growth (Nipissing University, June 2014).

Queen's University Aboriginal Teacher Education Program started in the spring of 1991, with the first intake in the fall. The program is suited to both Aboriginal (Status, non-Status, or Métis) and non-Aboriginal students with a university degree who are interested in Aboriginal education and prepares the teacher candidate to teach in the Primary-Junior (PJ) divisions (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6) or the Intermediate-Senior (IS) divisions (Grade 7 through OAC). Courses include Aboriginal perspectives, balancing Aboriginal-specific and student-centred

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learning with knowledge of the teaching/learning process, and research on Aboriginal education (Queen's University, June 2014).

The University of Ottawa offers two teacher education programs: a Community-based Teacher Education Program which is a certificate program, scheduled over two-years is offered in partnership with Aboriginal communities and consists of work in the classroom of a mentor teacher, courses and practice teaching. Courses are delivered through distance education and by face to face classes during the summer months in the sponsoring communities. This program is similar to the Program for the Education of Native Teachers (PENT) at Brandon University, with the exception that PENT is offered over five to six years. The second program offered by University of Ottawa is also a certificate program. The On-campus Aboriginal Teacher Education Program is scheduled part-time over two years, is offered to individuals who are First Nations, Inuit or Metis. The program consists of work in a classroom, courses, and practice teaching. Courses are delivered in Ottawa during the summer. Fall and winter courses are delivered by distance education. (University of Ottawa, June 2014).

In Quebec, through McGill University, Education for First Nations and Inuit replaced the Certificate in Native and Northern Education. This is a sixty credit program that provides an opportunity for Algonquin, Cree, Inuit, Mi'kmaq and Mohawk people to become qualified as teachers. It is offered on a part time basis in First Nations and Inuit communities throughout Quebec in collaboration with the Cree School Board, the Kativik School Board and the Mohawk and Algonquin Education Authorities. A full time and part time program are also available to Inuit in Nunavut, in collaboration with the Nunavut Teacher Education Program of Arctic

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College in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Graduates of this program receive Ministry certification to teach at the elementary level in Aboriginal schools (McGill University, June 2014).

The Yukon Native Teacher Education Program (YNTEP) is a four-year program leading to a Bachelor of Education degree. Graduates qualify for both Saskatchewan and Yukon Teacher Certification and are eligible for teacher certification throughout Canada. YNTEP is a full-time program comprised of fall and winter semesters as well as a one-week summer cultural camp course. The program provides extensive school practicum experiences throughout the four years to ensure that graduates are well prepared for teaching positions in Yukon, including rural schools, and elsewhere. One of the goals of YNTEP is to foster awareness and valuing of Yukon First Nations' cultural experiences. Courses in Yukon First Nations history and courses in cross-cultural education serve to familiarize teachers-in-training with the diversity of students from a variety of Yukon First Nations. As program transitions happen students may choose to complete the current YNTEP degree through University of Regina at Yukon College or transfer into any new teacher education program that becomes available in the future (Yukon College, June 2014).

The Eastern Arctic Teacher Education Program (EATEP) began in 1979, and an affiliation with McGill University was established in 1981. Initially, NTEP offered a two-year teacher education program culminating in a Certificate in Native & Northern Education from McGill University and certification to teach in the NWT. Graduates of EATEP's two-year program accumulated sixty university level credits in elementary education.

Teacher education in the Northwest Territories, which began as an experimental program in Yellowknife in 1968, was the first Aboriginal Teacher Education Program in North America. In 1970, the program relocated to Fort Smith and after a short affiliation with the University of

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Alberta, established a long-standing partnership with the University of Saskatchewan in 1977 that continues today. Until 1979 Nunavut students attended the program in Fort Smith; however, in that year a separate program was established in Iqaluit that became affiliated with McGill University in 1981.

Teacher education in the NWT has a long and successful history – graduating 269 teachers since 1968, 78% of whom are Aboriginal. Graduates of the program are currently employed in all areas of education across the territory, bringing about critical systemic changes through the creation of a uniquely culture-based education school system (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment, n.d.).

For the eastern provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island, there were no identified Aboriginal teacher education programs.

History of Aboriginal Teacher Education Programs (TEPs) in Manitoba

As Aboriginal communities began to strive for self-determination, and as a need for Aboriginal educators in schools became a necessity, the development of Aboriginal teacher education programs in Manitoba embraced the needs of communities (Fitznor, 2002; Laramée, 2013). The developers had the vision to be responsive to the needs of the communities and to create programs that would reflect the communities that were served (Fitznor; Poonwassie & Poonwassie, 2001). Winnipeg Centre project and Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program began the journey for Aboriginal teacher education programs which would not only provide access for potential teachers, but would provide opportunities that would flourish for subsequent programs to follow in their path. Thus other programs would be established such as Indian and Métis Project for Action in Careers through Teacher Education

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(IMPACTE), Program for the Education of Native Teachers (PENT), Sagkeeng Teacher Education Program (STEP), and Community based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP). They facilitated culturally relevant teacher education programs to meet the diverse needs of teacher education in Manitoba (Fitznor; Poonwassie & Poonwassie).

In the summer of 1974 funding arrangements were made through the Northlands Agreement to establish a Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program with a projected start date of January 1975. However, in September 1974 BUNTEP became responsible for the administration of two Aboriginal teacher-training centres from another project known as IMPACTE (Indian and Métis Project for Action in Careers through Teacher Education). New Aboriginal teacher training centres were opened in Cross Lake, Nelson House, and Island Lake (Garden Hill) in January 1975. Various programs were subsequently opened in rural and northern communities. The success of BUNTEP graduates cannot be considered without some reference to IMPACTE. Graduates of IMPACTE and BUNTEP serve as role models and can be found in a wide variety of positions. The majority are working as classroom teachers or school administrators while others work as Chiefs of Bands, Superintendents of Education, counsellors, and employees of the Department of Education or Aboriginal organizations (Brandon University, 2009).

Other teacher education programs known as TEPs were created in Manitoba such as Sagkeeng Teacher Education Program (housed by the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba and Community based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (housed by the Faculty of Education, University of Winnipeg). Manitoba has been a leader in developing off-campus, community based programs in northern and urban centres, which have an emphasis on academic,

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financial, and counseling supports for students. These centres all followed the ACCESS program model of comprehensive supports.

Winnipeg Centre Project/Winnipeg Education Centre

The Winnipeg Centre Project is a teacher-education program that was formed to give low-income, inner-city residents the opportunity to become teachers. The project was designed by Brandon University and the Planning and Research Branch of the Manitoba government's Department of Colleges and Universities Affairs in cooperation with the Winnipeg School Division #1. The project was conceived with several objectives in mind. The residents of the core area, or inner city, of Winnipeg include new immigrants, Canadian Indian and Metis families, welfare recipients, and many of the working poor (Deines, 1973).

Presently, the Winnipeg Education Centre Bachelor of Education Program is committed to providing mature citizens of Winnipeg's inner city with the necessary education to become certified teachers competent to meet the challenges of teaching and learning in the current and future global environment. This program aims to structure effective and culturally infused learning experiences for our students throughout their years of participation in the program as well as to support, nurture, and mentor them. WEC aims to contribute to the education and development of inner city communities. These communities are both culturally diverse and economically disadvantaged. That is, the majority of Aboriginal people in Winnipeg live in the inner city and the representation of immigrants in Winnipeg has grown dramatically for more than two decades. (University of Winnipeg, 2009)

Settee (2008) Study

In the winter term of 2008, I took a research course for my Master's of education degree and I developed a qualitative research assignment. The research assignment received ethics approval from a quasi-review committee from the Faculty of Education. I interviewed three Aboriginal women who were ACCESS education students attending a teacher education program

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in the 1980s. The three Aboriginal women participants from my 2008 study had transformative experiences in their lives which included: identifying racism, development of voice (Laramee, 2013), developing relationships and strengthening family bonds, and breaking the cycle of poverty by receiving their post-secondary education.

The WEC teacher education program positively impacted the students as educators. For example, all three participants in Settee (2008) became change agents and independent, self-sufficient women in their families. The women also developed voice and were able to advocate for themselves, their families and community in their various roles as educators. Their experiences as children and vulnerable adults would not be repeated for their children, families and for the students they would teach. For example, they would now challenge their students to identify issues of oppression such as racism and to take action.

The interviewees in the Settee (2008) study saw the successes of the teacher education program as arising through relationships with peers, with WEC staff and the Director of the program. The students formed relationships that were supportive and collaborative (Laramee, 2013). The experiences they faced with WEC staff were both positive and negative but they used those experiences as a life lesson which empowered them.

The instructors were described by one of the students as “socialists and [they] believed in social justice” (Settee, 2008). They challenged students to think and act in alternative ways of learning and teaching. These educators held to a social and educational activist approach to teaching and they challenged the interviewees’ way of viewing education and deconstructing western ways of teaching and learning.

Manitoba Aboriginal Teachers' Questionnaire Reports, 2006 and 2009

In April 2006 and April 2009, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth/Advanced Education and Literacy surveyed every practicing teacher-educator in Manitoba. This survey was called the Aboriginal Teachers Questionnaire (ATQ). The purpose of the questionnaire was to request voluntary self-declaration of Aboriginal ancestry and collect baseline data for Manitoba on the number of Aboriginal teachers in the province. Once the respondents declared Aboriginal ancestry, they were asked to answer additional questions on Aboriginal language(s) spoken, when and from where they graduated and if they were interested in further research. This survey established baseline information on the number of Aboriginal teachers in Manitoba and where taught. The findings of this report are important in setting targets for increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers in Manitoba.

***Anishinaabe* Philosophy of Education**

The *Anishinaabe* peoples of this territory (Manitoba) have at the core of their traditional teachings the following principles: Vision, Patience, Reason and Motion that hold the circle for balance. These principles are framed in Figure 1, which represents a journey for education and learning that has many layers, depths, and substance, with learners being at the centre of the circle, and an interconnected support system (of parents, families, communities, and nations) in order to do the work of educating for 'conscientization' that Freire (1970) stated as important for emancipation to a good life. The curved arrows in Figure 1 demonstrate movement through spirally fluid relationships. Within the perspective of Aboriginal education, this would mean a balanced life within multi-worlds (Battiste & Barman, 1995; Fitznor, 1998). Some of the themes that emerged from the Settee (2008) study showed that the Aboriginal educators embodied a

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vision that reflected these balanced lifeways that honoured both Western and Aboriginal traditions.

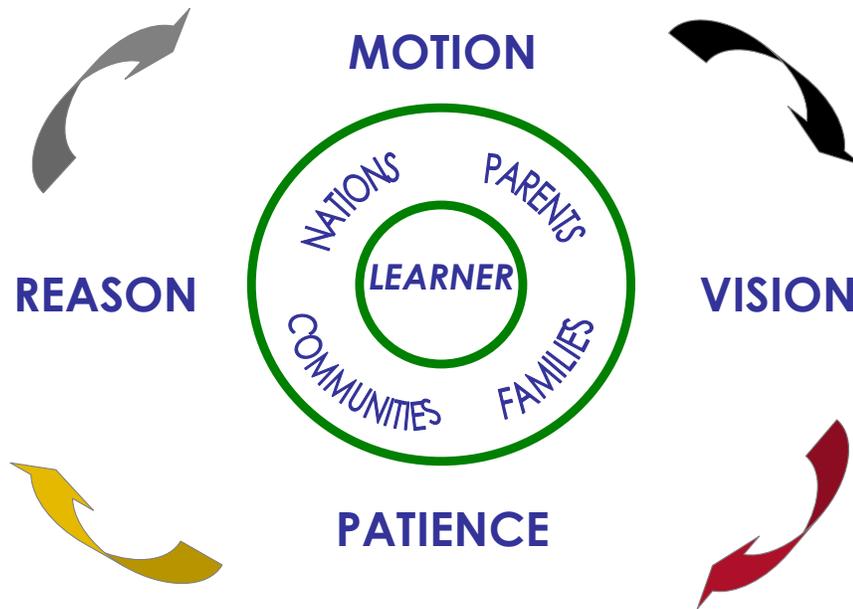


Figure 1: Vision, Patience, Reason, Motion

I first heard about the principles of vision, patience, reason, and motion as *Anishinaabe* teachings from Elder Garry Robson, who worked as the Aboriginal Awareness consultant at the Aboriginal Education Directorate, Manitoba Education, in the fall of 2002. I honour Garry for sharing this teaching with me. Herein, I share this philosophy and I place this knowledge/information in an abridged form and in italics to denote that it is embedded in what I came to know, from my Oral traditions and learnings – of an *Anishinaabe* worldview.

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From an Aboriginal perspective, all of creation occurs in Circles and cycles. The teaching of Vision, Patience, Reason and Motion begins in the East.

In the East is the teaching of Vision or the “Who”? It is represented in the east because vision is what we are working towards. Vision is hope and when we have hope, our communities have reason for existence. In the East is where all life begins and is symbolized by children. The East is where the sun rises and each new day begins.

In the South is the teaching of Patience or the “What”? Patience is what is required to work with self and others. When we have patience, we listen, observe, liaise and collaborate to name a few qualities. I believe patience is required to work effectively with all people. If we have patience, then we work more efficiently. The teaching of the south is symbolized by young adults, the place of wandering and wondering about what the future holds. Patience is wondering what will happen.

In the West is the teaching of Reason or the “Why”? Reason is the why we do what we do. Reason is situated across from Vision because a reason is required for vision. One of my visions is to have Aboriginal language programs such as Anishinaabe language programs in schools and communities to maintain the Anishinaabe language. Many of our fluent-speaking Elders are passing away. Young ones are not learning the fluency of the language and the language is dying with the Elders. The teaching of the West is represented by adulthood.

In the North, is the teaching of Motion or the “How” and the “When”? Motion, is action and the doing. Motion is situated across from patience and both have to be balanced. I believe that getting the work done is important, but it is also critical to have the patience. Without

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motion, we accomplish nothing. If we work hastily without patience, we may act too quickly without thinking thoroughly. Likewise, if we wait too long for things to happen, nothing would get accomplished. With this teaching, we have to get as close to the centre as possible so that all four aspects are as balanced as possible.

As indicated from the sections in this figure, it shows that the learner requires a support system through parents and family members. Parental and family support is foundational in student success. Parents are the first teachers of their child and as educators we have to acknowledge their roles and responsibility of being the first teachers. The Vision, Patience, Reason and Motion *Anishinaabe* philosophy show us that communities have a fundamental role in helping shape the learner. For example, I can see where this model makes sense in my own analysis of my experience as a youth and in the influence of ACCESS supports: When I was a young girl, my community support was the local Friendship Centre. At the Friendship Centre, we had a safe place for recreation and participating in community events. I believe as educators, we have an obligation to connect our learning institutions with the community. In my daily work, we have increased funding to support parental and community involvement because everyone has a role in the education of our children and youth. Nations also have responsibility for supporting the learner. Nation completes the circle surrounding the learner. This model is reflective of the kind of support systems reflected in the ACCESS programs that produced graduates who became leaders (Clare, 2013). For the purpose of this study, it demonstrates that ACCESS type programs may be instrumental in promoting successful peoples.

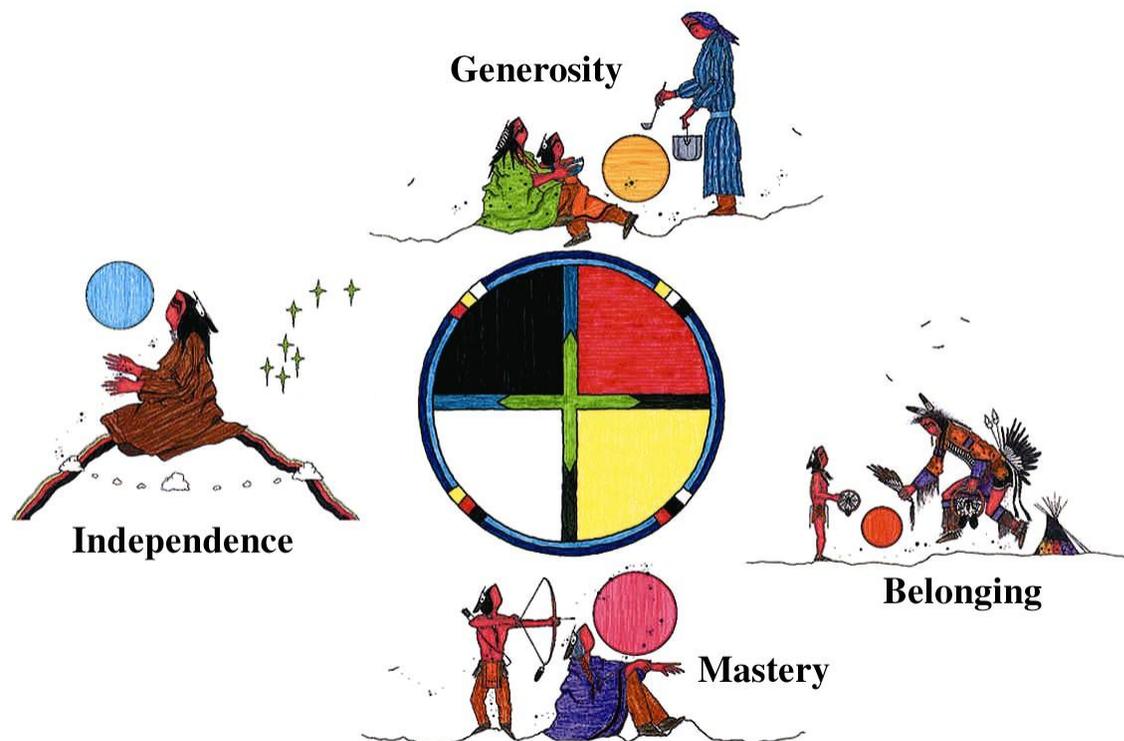


Figure 2: Circle of Courage®

Credit: The Circle of Courage is a Native-based child growth and developmental model originally described in the book *Reclaiming Youth at Risk* by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern. Copyrighted and trademarked by Starr Global Learning Network for which Reclaiming Youth International is the corporation representative and training division. See www.reclaiming.com.

A Circle of Courage® (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990) is another Indigenous framed model that shows how an extensive, interconnected and positive support system can produce healthy and confident students. I remember the first time I had heard of Dr. Martin Brokenleg’s work on the Circle of Courage®. I went to his presentation while I was still teaching in the Winnipeg School Division. His presentation caught my attention because he was going to be speaking on reclaiming youth at risk and this was a topic that I was interested in, being an inner city *Anishinaabe* educator and a mother of two sons. I contend that his model contributed to the theoretical framework of my study in that there are key principles needed for

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good education and a good life – a balanced life in two worlds of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. Brokenleg positioned himself as an American Indian Lakota traditional knowledge keeper, as a psychologist, and as a church minister. He contends that students need to progress through principles such as belonging, mastery, independence and generosity to reclaim their place in the world. He indicated that once students have a sense of belonging, they are ready to learn. Once the students have learned the skills and knowledge in their studies (mastery), they move to independence and are therefore ready to take care of themselves; then they can give back to their families and communities both physically and spiritually. This model has been shared with many nations and I believe it is a model that can be implemented in any cultural group and in teacher education programs.

As educators, the work we have of creating a space of belonging is critical (Fitznor, 2002 & 2012; Kirkness, 2013; Smith, 2003). Based on the Brendtro et al. (1990) model, belonging is foundational to feeling a sense of self-worth. As an educator, I always say it does not cost anything to say hello to anyone who may walk into your classroom or into your school. A smile with a hello can go much further. In teacher education programs, educators can also have the environment reflect the student population. I would argue that the *Anishinaabe* philosophy of education that grounds who I am is reflected in an Indigenous model of understanding using the circle (Brendtro, et al.; Laramée, 2013), and much of these principles was also evident in ACCESS programs even though they were not explicitly articulated in these ways.

Reviewing this literature has helped me to reflect on my experiences that I am briefly sharing here. For example, my philosophy of education has impacted my influence on the education system in Aboriginal education in the province of Manitoba within the last decade when I worked as an administrator. As an educational leader, I was able to use the Circle as

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pedagogy and leadership, and the guiding principles of Vision, Patience, Reason and Motion as teachings, or principles for living. These principles influenced the development of a strategic plan that I led for my work in the Aboriginal Education Directorate. Usually in a bureaucracy, we work within a box and in a linear fashion. I remember the day we had to present the strategic plan to my manager. As we presented the strategic plan, we explained each teaching, describing the symbolism and the significance to learners. I will never forget the look on my manager's face as he looked in disbelief that we were able to demonstrate how a strategic plan could be presented in a circular model. There have been challenges to help my colleagues understand an Aboriginal worldview. On a positive note, I have found this stimulating because it stretched me out of my comfort zone and I learned about how much more work is needed to help colleagues develop understandings of Aboriginal peoples' histories, cultures, and contemporary lifestyles.

Teachers' Work in Canadian Aboriginal Communities

The researchers in the Saskatchewan study *Diverting the Mainstream: Aboriginal Teachers Reflect on Their Experiences in the Saskatchewan Provincial School System* (Legare et al., 1998) focused on the narratives of teachers' experiences in the provincial school system in Saskatchewan. For example, they asked Aboriginal teachers for their perceptions of contributions and non-contributions to their teaching environment. The research question was: How do Aboriginal teachers culturally negotiate curriculum? Initiating-interview questions were a) Tell me something about your own education and background and b) Tell me how Aboriginal culture is reflected in your teaching. The following excerpt from the study highlights the teachers' voices:

In general, Aboriginal teachers expressed their desire to have schools move away from a monocultural to an intercultural perspective, and were prepared to engage in dialogue

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with non-Aboriginal colleagues ... Aboriginal teachers often chose teaching as a career because they wished to transform schools into institutions where social justice is a high priority, whereas mainstream teachers may have a different perspective in choosing teaching as a career. (p. 4)

In Chapters 4 and 5, the student participants share stories on why they wanted to become teachers and the above literature helped me understand their wish to choose a career in teaching. Finally, I wanted my research to focus on the teaching experiences within the provincial school system and learn lessons from those experiences. This literature indicates that Aboriginal teachers who have been trained with principles of social awareness, activism, social justice and Aboriginal/Indigenous perspectives help build a system that is responsive.

Wotherspoon (2006) explored the multiple roles that teachers face, how they survive with their multiple roles and meet many demands placed upon them, and how to improve education prospects for Aboriginal people. I focused on Manitoba and Saskatchewan and this is what captured my attention when searching for the articles and how it relates to my research topic. The strength of this article was the literature review and the multiple citations from both western and Indigenous scholars. I was even more intrigued when the researcher cited the then Manitoba Aboriginal Education Framework and how Manitoba and Saskatchewan are forward thinking in Aboriginal education. This article supports my research by focusing on Aboriginal teachers and their perceptions about their role as educators and how they can impact change.

Wotherspoon (2006) surveyed 344 Canadian public school teachers who could provide insight into how teachers respond to the divergent elements within their work. The school districts were chosen if 5% of the student body was identified as Aboriginal. 27 school jurisdictions (17 provincial school divisions and 10 First Nations schools) from all regions of the provinces and representing all grade levels distributed the surveys. He reported the information

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on the open-ended questions i.e. current teaching positions, Aboriginal education and programming initiatives, teacher training and in-service opportunities, teaching conditions in relation to school and community climates, and teachers background characteristics. It highlighted Manitoba and Saskatchewan teachers and the reforms shaped to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal people. Verna St. Denis (2010) in her report to the Canadian Teachers' Federation on *Aboriginal Teachers' Professional Knowledge and Experience in Canadian Schools* cites that "studies of teachers' lives and work have focused on the impact of educational reforms – in particular, market-driven policies and practices – on teachers' morale, commitment, resiliency and ability to care" (pp. 12–13).

In closing, the literature review highlighted key areas that connected to my study, such as the transformation of the students through a teacher education program, and how Winnipeg Education Centre impacted the students' lives by providing an education in a program that focused on inner city studies and populations. My mini study in 2008 demonstrated how teacher education programs had a positive impact on students and the key themes that emerged. The literature review also shared Indigenous models of understanding and how these models help shape my worldview and how I applied the Circle of Courage® to upcoming chapters as a tool for data analysis based on my research. Finally, the literature review highlighted the need for more Aboriginal teachers in Canada and more importantly in Manitoba through the following reports: *Diverting the Mainstream: Aboriginal Teachers Reflect on Their Experiences in the Saskatchewan Provincial School System* (1998); *Aboriginal Teachers' Questionnaire* reports (Manitoba Education, Citizenship/Youth and Advanced Education and Training, 2006 and 2009); and *Teachers Work in Aboriginal Communities* (Wotherspoon, 2006).

Chapter 3: Methodology

Remembering and talking about my experience as an Aboriginal person is Aboriginal research. Through the telling and retelling of my story, I am able to reclaim, revise and rename my history so that I come to a new understanding about it.

(Cam Willett in Absolon & Willett, 2004)

In this chapter I provide information on the methodology of how my study was designed. I discuss the theoretical orientation, study participants, procedure used for communicating with participants, data collection methods and instrumentation, interview questions, interview process, confidentiality and data analysis.

Research Design

Using an exploratory approach, the purpose of this qualitative research was to examine and describe the histories and experiences of WEC students and professors and the meanings of those experiences while at the Winnipeg Education Centre. Through semi-structured interviews, I examined the impact that the Winnipeg Education Centre teacher education program had on three Aboriginal women through their stories and experiences, and the meanings of their experiences. This first part of the research focused on women who attended the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. In the interview questions I asked participants for their background and education, why they wanted to become a teacher, what their experiences were as a student at WEC. Additionally, I asked them to compare their experiences at WEC with what they knew from other education students who went the conventional route of teacher education. The second part of this research examined the influence two professors who taught at the WEC in the 1970–80s, had on the participants' education program. The time period of the 1980s was

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chosen because during this time, there was an influx of students within the teacher education program and it was at its peak of programming (Clare, 2013).

Theoretical Orientation

Teaching and learning as an act of love is a powerful image and commitment in education (Laramee, 2013). I knew from a young age, that I would aspire to be a teacher because I wanted to teach as an act of love. As mentioned earlier, “someone saw something in us” (Morrissette, 2013, p. 37) and some of us knew we had something special to share as educators because of our life experiences and backgrounds. Giving back to our communities as educators are what Brendtro et al. (1990) referred to as generosity, in his work about the Circle of Courage® model. Giving back knowledge, experience, compassion and advocacy are some of the ways educators are being generous to the people and communities.

Storytelling is an important method to collect research (Absolon & Willett, 2004; Wilson, 2008). Everyone has a story and through my research I want to listen to these stories from participants and explore the experiences and the meanings within these stories. Absolon and Willett support storytelling as a research method, “remembering or talking about experiences as an Aboriginal person” (p. 7) is an important aspect of this research.

A sense of belonging is critical for positive identity and student success (Brendtro et al., 1990). During the 1980s, there was an influx of Aboriginal students. They did not attend the Fort Garry Campus at the University of Manitoba, but rather, an off campus site was established to house the program in a small school in the eastern part of the city. This off campus site became a home for me. The campus felt like a home for me because I had a ‘sense of belonging’. There

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were other students who were like me, who had similar life experiences. The class sizes had no more than 25 students which was ideal to form relationships with other students.

Study Participants

The participants for the study were recruited to participate in the study through purposeful sampling. I recruited the student volunteers from my education and Aboriginal community connection in the urban centres and surrounding First Nations communities. The participants were Aboriginal women who were students that attended the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. The professor participants were those who taught at the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. Both retired professors were recruited through community based connections.

The three student participants were Aboriginal women and educators who graduated from Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. The participants were willing to be interviewed regarding their experiences as students at Winnipeg Education Centre. The participants shared their experiences within their subsequent roles as educators and contributions they made and are continuing to make in education. The student participants were asked to verbally voluntarily declare Aboriginal identity when I began the interviews.

The two professors who were recruited were individuals who taught at the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s. I informed all the participants about the purpose of the study through an initial phone call (see Appendix A: Ethics Protocol Submission Form Script of Oral Recruitment Communication – Students and Appendix B: Ethics Protocol Submission Form Script of Oral Recruitment Communication – Students) and followed up with an information

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letter about the study through email (see Appendix C: Information Letter for Participants (Students) and Appendix D: Information Letter for Participants (Professors)).

They contacted me directly when they were interested in participating in the study and then I provided them with the Consent Form for Participants (see Appendix E: Consent Form for Participants-Students and Appendix F: Consent Form for Participants-Professors) and interview questions (see Appendix G) through email for four of the five participants. One of the professors required me to mail the information letter, consent form and interview questions through registered mail because he did not have reliable email access. When we met for the interview I fully explained and reviewed the consent form and what was expected of the participants. I obtained written consent from all participants, and arranged a convenient time and location for each interview.

I felt humbled and honoured that I maintained connections with the participants and that they chose and trusted me as a researcher to hear their stories and experiences. Kovach (2009) in her book, *Indigenous Methodologies: Conversations, Characteristics and Contexts* talks about relational quality and how we select participants within Indigenous contexts:

Relational quality within Indigenous research frameworks manifests itself in a special way when it comes to selecting people for research. In conducting her research, Cora Weber-Pillwax connected with people she had known for years ‘not in terms of knowing their personalities, but knowing their connections’ (1999:170). Michael Hart comments that his research participants are those from whom he has some pre-existing relationship. Relationship was a central theme that re-emerged and had particular relevance in discussions of methods because people make contact with their community and need to have that relationship in place to offset the mistrust of research within Indigenous communities. Laara Fitznor comments that, in her research, part of the relational aspect of sampling is directly connected to the trustworthiness of the researcher. She says that people chose to be part of her research because they know her and she has a good reputation in the community. To have an identity as an Indigenous researcher is not necessarily enough (though it helps) to establish trust. There also has to be evidence that the Indigenous researcher is approaching this work respectfully. Because of the relationship factor in sampling, it is not simply a matter of the researcher choosing the participants. This process is more reciprocal. (p. 126)

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I am glad the participants chose me. I respected all the information they shared about their lives and for me to interpret it and frame it in a respectful way that will assist anyone who works in Aboriginal teacher education.

Communicating with Participants

Through my various education and community connections, I was able to recruit the three student participants and two professors for my study. I knew the three student participants and where they were employed. I also knew where one professor lived and I was able to locate the second professor by searching the telephone book. I was able to connect with all the participants through the telephone call to share information about my study. All the participants were interested in participating in my study and then I provided them with the information letter (see Appendices C and D), consent form (see Appendices E and F) outlining the process. I also included the interview questions (Appendix G) for their future reference. Once they reviewed the information I provided, we arranged for an interview time and location at their convenience. There was one student participant, where after two attempts to interview, had to cancel because of health issues. It was a difficult decision for her not to participate in my study because she wanted to share her story and also help me out. Through my participant list, I was able to locate another student participant on short notice.

The participants were interviewed once with each interview lasting approximately one hour. Four of the five interviews were held in person and one through teleconference. The interviews took place in a location that was comfortable for each participant. The interviews were recorded by two different audio recording devices. The participants were informed that

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they could, if they needed, turn off the audio recording devices at any time during the interview. After each interview the conversations were transcribed and returned to the participants who wanted to review their transcriptions for accuracy and for the participant to have an opportunity, if wanted, to delete any information or quotes. Major themes and ideas emerged from the transcriptions, which will be described in the next chapter. The data was kept in a secure area in my home. The only individuals who had access to the data were my transcriber who was hired to transcribe four of the five conversations (see Appendix H: Pledge Form Transcriptionist), my research supervisor and I. I transcribed one student interview because, as mentioned earlier, there were two cancellations from one potential student participant, which affected my interview timeline. In Chapter 4, I highlight where and when the interviews took place for each participant. Each interview was held a different location and held at different times of the day. The interviews almost always included tea or meeting at a restaurant prior to the interview. I informed the participants that at the completion of my study, their audio recordings will be erased.

The interviews were audio taped and detailed written notes of the participants' responses were collected.

Two participants (one student and one professor) requested the summary of the study to be emailed to them, so that was done.

Data Collection Methods

Instrumentation

I adapted some interview questions from a questionnaire that were used in the Saskatchewan study *Diverting the Mainstream* (Legare et al., 1998) as mentioned in Chapter 2.

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Interview Questions

The interview questions for the three Aboriginal students who graduated from Winnipeg Education Centre from the 1980s were:

1. Tell me about your own background and education.
 - a. How do you identify with your Aboriginal background??
 - b. Where and when did you receive your teacher education?
 - c. What is your current role as an educator?
2. What made you decide to become a teacher/educator?
3. Tell me about some of your experiences within the teacher education program.
 - a. What were some of the successful elements of the teacher education program?
 - b. What were some of the program barriers of the teacher education program?
4. Compare your experience in the teacher education program to:
 - a. Your own previous and subsequent educational experiences
 - b. The experiences of colleagues who took more traditional routes to teacher education

The interview questions for the two professors who taught at Winnipeg Education Centre during 1980s were:

1. Tell me about your own background and education.
2. Why did you want to teach at WEC?
 - a. What philosophies and theories guided your teaching?
 - b. What approaches did you implement when teaching adult learners from various cultural backgrounds?

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- c. What if students were not succeeding, how did you intervene?
 - d. What strategies did you use to support students academically?
3. If you have also taught in more typical teacher training programs, what are they and how do/did your teaching methods differ?
 4. How do you feel you contributed to the lives of students at WEC during the time period?

Interview Process

The interviews were semi-structured, meaning I had a discussion with my participants while following the interview questions mentioned above. I provided the interview questions to all participants prior to the interview so they could reflect on their responses. One participant provided me with his responses in hard copy which assisted with the transcribing as well. I asked for clarification on some responses with the participants, however, I did not have to ask probing questions. I did not share any of my ideas or thoughts during the interview with the participants.

Participants were informed that they can stop the interview at any time. I also informed participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Prior to the interviews, I reviewed the Consent Form for Participants (Appendix E and F) to ensure that the participants understood the nature of the research and to provide them with an opportunity to ask any questions about my research and the process for the interviews.

Confidentiality

Anonymity was respected and followed in this study. Pseudonyms are used to ensure confidentiality of the participants. For the student participants, I had names in the *Anishinaabe* language from which they chose. As women, I used names that were associated with the

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elements of earth: Earth (*Aki*), Water (*Nibi*), and Wind (*Noodin*). Woman in *Anishinaabe* is *Ikwe*, so *Ikwe* was added to each of the student's names. For the professor participants, I also had names assigned in the *Anishinaabe* language that were associated with the elements of the sky: Sun (*Kisis*) and Fire (*Ishkode*). Man in *Anishinaabe* is *Inini*, so *Inini* was added to each of the professor's names.

Data Analysis

This thesis explored the experiences of the participants while at Winnipeg Education Centre. The data analysis consisted of reviewing transcriptions from the interviews with the participants and drawing interpretations (Creswell, 2008). After the interviews were transcribed, they were examined for themes and major ideas about participants' perceptions as students in the teacher education program, their careers and their background. The transcribed interviews ranged from thirteen to 26 pages, double spaced with lined numbers on the left side of the page. The numbers of transcribed pages did not have an impact on the quality of the data. One of the analysis techniques I utilized was constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by looking for key issues, themes or activities in the data which became categories of focus. This technique involved using speculation, writing down ideas first then reviewing the data by circling key words and underlining key words. I also used coding by developing coding categories. There are three types of code families. *Narrative codes* describe the structure of talk which may tell you something about beliefs. *Methods codes* isolate material pertinent to research procedures, problems, joys, dilemmas, etc. The final type, *preassigned codes*, is deliberation on particular problems or aspects of a setting or subject (McMillan, 2008, p. 284). My preference for coding was the preassigned codes using the Circle of Courage® (Brendtro et al., 1990): Belonging,

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Mastery, Independence and Generosity. Additionally, I used the teaching by Justice Murray Sinclair (2011), which was quoted in Chapter 1: who am I, where do I come from, what is my purpose and where am I going; to help complement the Circle of Courage® model to understand experiences of the participants and analyze the data.. For each code, I used a different colour highlighter: belonging (pink), mastery (orange), independence (green) and mastery (blue). As I reviewed each participant's story, I highlighted with the coloured highlighter key words phrases that were associated with each of the codes. For example, if participants mentioned their home community, I highlighted the home community with the pink highlighter and in the column, I wrote "Belonging: and home community name." Knowing your home community is an indicator of belonging. I did this same process for each participant, using the coloured highlighters for each code and writing notes which are also referred to as "memoing" in the right hand column of the page. The memos were used later for comparison with other participant's transcriptions: student to student, professor to professor. For example, all three student participants left their home communities to attend high school in the city because their home communities did not have school beyond Grade 8. I was able to refer back to the section through my memos and locate the phrase that corresponded with this topic. I used this process of hard copy coding to identify emergent themes such as "leaving home community for education."

After I completed the hard copy coding and memoing, I began to draft the three circle models to organize my themes for the students' and the professors' experiences at WEC. On the outside of the circle and I placed Belonging in the East direction, Mastery in the South direction, Independence in the West direction and Generosity in the North direction. I also added the following phases of life below each direction as well: East – My Background and Identity; South – My Education; West – My Career; and North – My Transformation –Living a Good Life.

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Finally, in the centre of the circle where all the directions meet, I put the four questions in each of the directions: East – Who Am I? Where Do I Come From? South and West – What is my purpose? North – Where Am I Going?

Chapter 4: Participant Profiles

In this chapter, I introduce the student and professor participants' profiles. Their profiles feature the first two interview questions where the students were asked to tell me about their background and education, and what made them decide to be a teacher. The final two interview questions about their experiences at WEC will be addressed in the next chapter: *Tipachimowin: Their Stories*.

Before each participant profile, I introduce them in *Anishinaabemowin* by saying “*aniin*” which means “I am happy to see you again and am glad we have crossed paths.” For the student participants, their names are associated with the earth and have been given names/pseudonyms that represent woman (*Ikwe*), *Aki* (earth), *Noodin* (wind) and *Nibi* (water). I chose to give all the female students pseudonyms that are associated with the earth because as women, in the *Anishinaabe* teachings I learned, we are caretakers of the earth and carry the responsibility for water. The student participants chose their name from a list that I provided associated with women roles and responsibilities: *Aki Ikwe* – Earth Woman, *Noodin Ikwe* – Wind Woman and *Nibi Ikwe* – Water Woman.

For the professor participants, I also introduce them by saying “*aniin*” and have given them names that are associated with the sky world/men's responsibilities: *ishkote* (fire) and *kisis* (sun). Because both my professors are men or *inini* in *Anishinaabemowin*, this is added to their name to indicate their gender. The professor profiles feature their background and education.

Aboriginal Women Participants

The first objective of this study was to examine the impacts of the teacher education program and how the program changed the Aboriginal Women Participants' lives. The research obtained information about their experiences and attitudes as students in a teacher education program and how the teacher education program impacted their attitudes as educators and as Aboriginal women. By interviewing the student participants of WEC and analyzing their stories, I explored the educational strategies of the program such as learning cadres, community based learning, experiential learning, cultural relevance to self and learning, and which specific elements of the program impacted their learning. According to the literature (Clare, 2013; Poonwassie & Poonwassie, 2001; Richard 2011), it is evident that the program made a difference in participants' lives through teaching them to be empowered as women and as educators. This study demonstrated the depth of the evidence. This complemented my observations and documented sources I heard, experienced and read over the years, and that found in my previous mini study (Settee, 2008).

Aniin, Aki Ikwe – Earth Woman

I always considered myself Anishinaabe. I didn't know what that meant. I didn't articulate that in that way, but I always knew I was an Indian woman and we lived and grew up in an Ojibway/Metis community. (Aki Ikwe – Earth Woman, 2014)

Aki Ikwe and I met in my office for the interview. She and I had met earlier for breakfast on Easter Monday. We met at my office as it was Easter Monday and no one would be in the office since it was a statutory holiday for some workers. *Aki Ikwe* said she would feel comfortable meeting at my office. She also had the day off, so we were both relaxed.

The first question I asked *Aki Ikwe* is to share some information about her background and how she identifies with her Aboriginal background. *Aki Ikwe* is a status Indian from a First

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Nation community in the Interlake region of Manitoba. She was born in a rural town in the Interlake region. Her mother was Metis and her father was English/Icelandic. Her family lived in a small village outside of the First Nation until she was nine years old. She also attended day school in this village in a two room schoolhouse. The two rooms in the school house were referred to as the big class and the little class. *Aki Ikwe* was in the little class which was Kindergarten to Grade 3. *Aki Ikwe* considers herself *Anishinaabe* and her first language is *Saulteaux*. *Saulteaux* was the only language spoken at home until she started school. Her father spoke to her in English and was only home on the weekends, so *Saulteaux/Ojibway*, as it is also referred to, was spoken the rest of the week. In 1966, her father wanted them to have a better education so he moved the family to the city. When they moved to the city, they lived in a small two room house where one half of the house was bedrooms and the other half of the house was a kitchen. The family ate all traditional foods as her family members were trappers, hunters and fishers, so that was the food she was accustomed to eating. The family ate deer, geese, muskrat, and pickerel. As she got older, she was introduced to other foods that were bought at the store. Other than the store bought food, the rest of their food was homemade. She recalls her grandmother having a massive garden and storing the vegetables in a cellar. They also picked berries all summer: strawberries, raspberries, saskatoons and plums. It was a modest lifestyle for her family. They also had to haul water from a water pump across the road from where they lived as they did not have running water or electricity. *Aki Ikwe* has fond memories of her summers as a child; she shared a memory of spending many times at the lake swimming and playing kickball. In the winter they played a lot outside in the snow. As a young child, *Aki Ikwe* was sick with rheumatic fever and had to be hospitalized several times.

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Her mother raised the family and her father was the breadwinner of the family. He would come home on weekends. She had a very happy childhood living in her home community and she had lots of friends. In 1966, this all changed when the family moved to the city in a west-end neighbourhood. They were the only Aboriginal family that attended the school in the neighbourhood. The majority of the families and neighbours was Italian and Portuguese. She attended this school from Grades 3 to 6. She recalls being held back one year when she previously went to school in her home community. She repeated Grade 2 because the desks were bolted on the floor in the two room schoolhouse and there was no room for her to sit at the Grade 3 section of the classroom, so they made her repeat Grade 2. Her father was very upset about this incident and he knew this was not the place to raise his family. This is when he bought the house in the west-end neighbourhood of the city. The house was across the street from the school to ensure that the children's education was going to be a priority. After they adjusted to the bright city lights, the family had a very difficult life in the city. The family faced discrimination and culture shock from a life where the land was their playground to restrictions such as fenced in yards and unwelcoming neighbours, having to be cautious when crossing the street and not jaywalking which means having to cross the street at the street corners. *Aki Ikwe's* family had to deal with culture shock and racism; they had to deal with taunting and being made fun of by other students. The family also had pronounced accents that clearly differed from their new neighbourhood and classmates, and they were stereotyped based on what the students' ignorant perception of what an Indian. Her family had a very difficult time feeling accepted and it was particularly hard on her mother. Her father worked sixteen hour days with the business he started and it took a toll on *Aki Ikwe's* mother. Her mother started drinking heavily and there were times when they did not see their mother for a long time. Her oldest sister, who was thirteen

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at the time, took care of the family when their mother was out drinking. The family got through this difficult time in life and her mother joined an alcohol support group and started learning the traditional way of being an *Anishinaabe* woman and started going to ceremonies. Her mother was sober for the last thirty five years of her life before her passing.

Aki Ikwe finished Grade 6 at the school across from her home and, because she did not feel accepted, she convinced her mother to let her move back to her home community to live with her grandmother. She was thirteen when she went back to her home community and lived with her grandmother until she was an adult. She moved back to the city to finish high school. *Aki Ikwe* started a family in her twenties and had three children by the time she went to University at the Winnipeg Education Centre from 1981 until 1985. *Aki Ikwe* is now a Director of a First Nation education authority and has achieved her Masters in Education. Prior to her becoming a Director of Education, *Aki Ikwe* was a teacher and school administrator in various inner city Winnipeg schools. She wanted to become a teacher because she was active in her community and she wanted to be able to give back to her community:

I thought I could influence the education system in a way that would meet the needs of Aboriginal students in a way I didn't experience because I always felt isolated...because this system was foreign to me...and I thought, if we could change the curriculum in some way to make it more reflective of the students in the classroom, I could impact that way. She also knew that by becoming a teacher, she would be "gainfully employed for the rest of my life."

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Aniin, Noodin Ikwe – Wind Woman

Noodin Ikwe and I met at my home and I interviewed her in my kitchen. It was a sunny day and we were both happy to see each other. We started off the interview with *Noodin Ikwe* telling me about her Metis heritage. They found out that they were Metis before her mother passed away. Her mother had to hide the fact she was Aboriginal. There was shame in being Aboriginal: “*We found out we were Metis. But she had to hide it; she always hated the fact that she was Aboriginal.*”

Noodin Ikwe believed that her maternal grandmother was a treaty Indian but all the documentation was lost when the Catholic Church burned down. Her maternal grandmother was born in a northern Ontario First Nation. When they were trying to prove their legal identity, the family stories alone were not considered valid; documentation was required: “*All the information is gone but we do know the story behind it and what happened, but that doesn’t carry a lot [of weight].*”

Noodin Ikwe was raised in the Interlake region of Manitoba. There were fifteen children in the family. By the time her mom was fifty years old and her dad was forty three years old, *Noodin Ikwe* left home at the age of fifteen when she was in Grade 9. It didn’t take *Noodin Ikwe* long to find employment; she had various positions, including working as a hairdresser and food coordinator. When she turned eighteen, she decided she wanted to work with child and family services in group homes. At the age of 25 she decided to continue her education and attended the Winnipeg Education Centre. She considered herself fortunate to have “*gotten paid to go to school*” or to have received a living allowance for attending school at WEC. She also worked part time while going to school to supplement her cost of living because the student allowance she received did not meet all her financial obligations. *Noodin Ikwe* graduated from WEC in

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1987. After graduation, *Noodin Ikwe* worked in northern Manitoba for a year teaching in an isolated community. When she worked in the northern community, she says, “*I saw things there that children just shouldn’t go through and I kept thinking, okay, as an educator, how can I help them?*” After this experience, she decided to return to Winnipeg and get back into the system by attending the Social Work program for a year. However, she felt there were so many people in the Social Work program that she couldn’t survive in it, so she returned to working in group homes and receiving homes. Because she had a Bachelor of Education degree, she worked as a frontline social worker and remained in this position for over 20 years. As a front line social worker, she was able to use her education training in a different way: “*Some of these kids could not go into the school system because they were [out of] control...so I would keep them in a home and I would teach them during the day, the basics of life and that’s what I did.*”

Noodin Ikwe wanted to become a teacher because her aunt, with whom she also shares the same name, was a teacher. She thought her aunt was the “*neatest person in the whole world and I wanted to do things just like her.*” *Noodin* loved playing teacher with her aunt and was so proud when *Noodin* could be the teacher. *Noodin Ikwe* is now retired as a social worker/educator and works part time as a substitute teacher.

Aniin, Nibi Ikwe – Water Woman

Nibi Ikwe and I met at her home and I interviewed her in her dining room. We met for lunch before the interview and caught up on some news events. *Nibi Ikwe* and I were students at Winnipeg Education Centre and she was in the same cohort group with my late sister. She graduated in 1984. *Nibi Ikwe* is originally from an *Anishinaabe* First Nation on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. She speaks *Anishinaabemowin* fluently which is also referred to Ojibway and

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Saulteaux. She grew up in this community for the first fourteen years of her life and it is where she began her formal schooling. There was a one room schoolhouse and she entered school when she was six years old. She went to this school from Grades 1 to 3. They were taught by nuns. This school eventually closed and they were transferred to the First Nation community school. She attended this school from Grades 4 to 9 until she left her community to attend school in a rural town and eventually went to the city for high school.

Her father was a non-status Indian which was referred to in *Anishinaabemowin* as *Apiti Koshishanak* which means half or part of a cultural group. She talked about the separation in her community and how many non-status or Métis families lived in the outskirts of the First Nation community or reserve. The outskirts were west of the reserve and where all the facilities/amenities were located. She felt that living in the outskirts was a “*very rewarding experience.*” *Nibi Ikwe* was raised by her parents and her grandparents did not live too far away. Her father was a hunter and trapper and valued education. Summers were spent at a summer camp close by the First Nation community. These memories are treasured as extended family, grandparents, aunts and uncles hunted, trapped and fished in the camp.

When *Nibi Ikwe* came to the city for high school there were 24 students who had to leave their community to attend high school. Many First Nation communities did not have a high school so it was, and still is, common practice for students to leave their community to receive secondary education in city, rural and Northern high schools throughout the province. The students often had to live in what is called Private Home Placements where the student lived with a family and were provided with board and room. You were fortunate if you could live with a relative while attending high school in the city, rural town or northern community. It was very challenging moving to the city and they all experienced cultural and environmental shock,

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loneliness being away from family and friends, and loss of using their *Anishinaabe* language.

Nibi Ikwe was fortunate that she had older siblings attending school in the city, so her loneliness was not as severe as that of some other students. She was determined to do whatever it took to be successful with her education. She was very pleased when her high school principal asked how many of the students spoke *Anishinaabemowin* because they could take a challenge exam and receive credits for language fluency, which she did. Sadly, out of the 24 students only two or three graduated from high school and this caused great concern for *Nibi Ikwe*. She states: “*This still happens today. The other students dropped out because of lack of support. These students missed home and I was fortunate to have had good house parents.*”

After graduating from Grade 12, *Nibi Ikwe* did not return to her home community. She went to an urban university but did not complete her studies because of financial reasons so she returned to the city and worked at a local hospital as an interpreter until she received a job as a teacher assistant. While working at this school, she met a student teacher from WEC and *Nibi Ikwe* ‘knew’ she had the intelligence and determination to be an educator. She said: “*If this is what a student teacher does, I can do this.*” *Nibi Ikwe* graduated from WEC in 1984 and shared an interesting experience when she was in her fourth year in the program. Because *Nibi Ikwe* is fluent in the *Anishinaabe* language, they required a language instructor to teach an introductory course for the *Anishinaabe* language at WEC. *Nibi Ikwe* taught the course after some encouragement and I was fortunate to be in her class. She shares how it was challenging at times teaching your peers, however, she brought fun and laughter into the course. She shares that this experience was “*the most challenging experience that I had but was the most rewarding as well.*”

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After graduation, *Nibi Ikwe* worked at a languages organization for two to three years before she started her career in one of Winnipeg's school divisions. She shares her thoughts on why she did not teach after graduation:

So when I graduated from the Winnipeg Education Centre, I think I knew most of the schools and the staff that were there during my student teaching years, but for some reason some of us were not successful in getting jobs right after our graduation and I think some people even went up North because I remember one of my peers going up north to teach and a couple of other students. . . I think very few of us got offered jobs through the local school division. To me I thought that should have been a priority somewhere because we were all getting this training, most of us were First Nations, and I thought it would have been ideal for school divisions at that time to hire as many . . . Aboriginal, First Nations teachers because there was a group of 20 of us that couldn't get jobs right away.

Nibi Ikwe taught at the high school and elementary levels, as a support teacher, and a school administrator in this local school division. There was a First Nation organization that opened in 1999 in Manitoba which provides direct service delivery to numerous First Nation communities. *Nibi Ikwe* has worked with this organization since it opened and continues to work there in a managerial position. *Nibi Ikwe* has completed her Master in Education degree and is a doctoral candidate at a university in western Canada. *Nibi Ikwe* wanted to become a teacher because she wanted to make a difference for students:

I learned a lot about the language and the medical field and I didn't have any intentions of ever getting into the medical field because I wasn't good at science or math. I didn't think it was my area, but I soon realized that I was more interested in teaching. You

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know, although my experiences weren't that great, I really thought I could make a difference for future students and future learners and maybe I could get into a teacher education program.

The Professors

The male professors were assigned names/pseudonyms that are associated with the sky because, in the *Anishinaabe* tradition, I learned that the men have responsibility for the sky world. Similar to the student participants, the professors chose their names from a selection I offered: *Ishkote Inini*: Fire Man and *Kisis Inini* – Sun Man.

The second objective of this research was to examine the impact two professors within the teacher education program had on the students and the program overall. The unique infrastructure features of WEC included cohort groups, an off campus facility with access to professors/instructors on site, small class sizes, and establishing long term relationships with students. In addition, there were professors who taught from a social justice and activist stance and they were open about their commitment. In 2008, I conducted a quasi-experimental research study as part of a Masters' course requirement in Qualitative Research Methods (Settee, 2008). One of the themes that emerged from the research assignment was that supportive WEC staff made a difference for students. The elements/questions I would examine are *why* did these professors want to teach at WEC? What philosophies and theories guided their teaching? How did they prepare to teach adult students in a program like WEC? What approaches did they implement when teaching adult learners from various cultural backgrounds? If students were not succeeding, how did they intervene? What strategies did they use to support students academically? Did they feel that they contributed to success of students completing the program

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and why? I wanted to ascertain why the professors chose to teach at WEC; why they stayed for many years, whether something or somebody had an impact on why they taught at WEC, and how they feel they contributed to the lives of so many WEC students.

Aniin, Ishkote Inini – Fire Man

Ishkote Inini and I met at his home located in the north-central part of the city. When I arrived at his home, he offered me a cup of tea and we talked about some mutual friends and colleagues before the interview. He was sharing some interesting stories about his involvement with the community when he became interested in social justice: *“When did I become interested in equality and all that type of stuff, like poverty? I answered I don’t really know the answer to that, probably most of our values are formed before we’re aged twelve.”*

I decided to turn on my taping devices because he was talking about his father and when he was a young boy, twelve years old. He shared a story about a neighbour who broke his leg just before seeding and his father organized a whole bunch of farmers to help plant the neighbour’s crops. As a young boy of twelve, he observes that this must have taken a lot of organization on his father’s part: organizing the seed, getting all the tractors to plant the seed and says that it took them one day to plant the neighbour’s crop. He shared about another neighbour who wanted to build a barn and his father organized lots of things to get the timbers and farmers to help this fellow farmer build this barn. So they once again as a community of farmers, built a barn. *Ishkote Inini* summarizes this experience with his father quite eloquently: *“So I think I must have learned from Dad about inter-relating with neighbours and so on (laughs).”*

Ishkote Inini was always interested in overseas students who came to the University where he was working. So one day, the chairperson of the overseas student association said that

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he should go to Africa, and so he did. When he came back from Africa to the big city, university had already started, so he taught in a school where they were short a teacher. He got to teach history and other things that he really did not know anything about. While at this school he met a student who was in a program focused on technical learning and low achieving students. The teacher in the class asked the students to write about their interests in electronics, so this student wrote about how to make a radio. The teachers were amazed at how much he knew about radios and he knew even more than the teachers and yet he was in this low achieving class.

Here this little guy knew more about electronics than all of us teachers at this place and here he is the stupidest class in the school and I keep wondering, darn it all, how do we slot people into these places and so on where they don't belong. I mean he must have had a terrible time suffering at school being in the lowest level (laughs) especially with all his brilliance.

After the big city, *Ishkote Inini* came to Winnipeg and taught at a local university. At this local university, he was sent to Guyana and taught there for four years and helped launch the University of Guyana. He enjoyed teaching at the University of Guyana because they would start university in the evening because most of the students were teachers. During the day, *Ishkote Inini* would teach workshops about Mathematics in Guyana schools and was thrilled that he taught Mathematics in almost every school. He also went and worked in the prison, showing the inmates films about hockey or sports. Funny thing was that they locked him in the room with over one hundred and forty people. When he reported this back to his supervisors, they were surprised that the inmates did not throw him out of the prison, because the supervisor said that others were thrown out. *Ishkote* asked why would they be thrown out and his supervisor said

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they were showing films about how to raise chickens and he told them he was not surprised they got thrown out because he said to them, “*what are you going to do with a chicken in prison?*”

After Guyana, *Ishkote* spent some time in Chicago and met a colleague and wanted a course in university education. He found out in Guyana that Mathematics and Physics might be the only thing that could change the country. He also thought that the University of Chicago would have developed a course in the area of history of education and sociology, but it was not available and this is when he switched to teacher education. He worked on connecting the university with schools and with integrating the schools between the white and black teachers and he thought this was a good idea but fondly remembers that this was perhaps not what he was supposed to do because they were “*doing marvelous things.*” After Chicago, *Ishkote* came to Manitoba and heard that they were preparing Aboriginal teachers and decided to “*come and help.*” He worked in the Brandon University Native Teacher Education Program (BUNTEP), Program for the Education of Native Teachers (PENT) and Indian and Metis Program for Aboriginal Community Teacher Education (IMPACTE) and then finally, he worked at the Winnipeg Education Centre until he retired.

Aniin, Kisis Inini – Sun Man

Kisis Inini and I did not get to meet in person because he lives in another province in Canada. I interviewed him by telephone. When I called him for the actual interview, he and I first had a conversation about the days at the Winnipeg Education Centre and also caught up on some new about friends and family. Teleconferences are a normal part of my work, but for the interview with *Kisis Inini*, I wished I could have interviewed him in person to have a personal connection and to see his expressions during the interview.

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Kisis Inini was born in 1937 in a city in a neighboring province and also attended elementary and high school in that city. His parents were both teachers. He decided to branch out and went to college to study commerce but half way through he decided that the world of business was not a part of him. During this time, he was also studying piano and was so good that he received his Associate status from a prestigious school in piano performance. He decided to study economics at another university, but then he became ill and had to have surgery. This experience led him to have a “*change of mind about what I wanted and what I wanted to be.*” He shared about his reason for not wanting to consider education, “*for some perverse reason I still shied away from teaching, thinking I didn’t want to follow in my parents’ footsteps. That proved to be wrong.*”

He went on to complete a Bachelor of Arts in History and a one year program at the College of Education which gave him a professional certificate. He taught at three different high schools in one of the cities in the neighbouring province during the 1960s. He then decided to pursue a graduate degree in history and received a Master of Arts in Canadian History from an eastern city university. After receiving his graduate degree, he was asked by the Faculty of Education in his home province if he would help develop a Social Studies curriculum replacing a professor who was on maternity leave, and he states, “*This was my first introduction into University, and I liked it.*” His next venture was running for school board and he spent a year on the Board of Education. After serving on the Board of Education, he was offered a position as an instructor in the College of Education in the Department of Educational Foundations which is history and philosophy of education areas. After two years of being in this area, *Kisis Inini* had found his niche.

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I liked being in the College of Education. I liked teaching education to students and I liked the material that we were teaching. Its breadth and scope gave me lots of opportunities to broaden their minds. It was also a time when, in the late '60s and '70s, as you may remember when things were starting to get politically volatile with the Vietnam War and with Students for a Democratic Society and other organizations and individuals. That was very strong on the campuses and I supported the students during that time with their struggles.

In 1972, *Kisis Inini* pursued a Doctorate in Education at an American university and found it very stimulating. While working on his Doctorate, he returned to his home province and was Assistant Professor, then Department Head at a local university for five years. He completed his Doctorate in 1981. As Department Head at his local university, he had gone back to teaching and although he was the Department Head, he “*was not the department head*” and felt he was in a rut as far as his teaching strategies and teaching content, so the position that he had heard about at Winnipeg Education Centre appealed to him:

I knew nothing about the Winnipeg Education Centre when I applied in 1984. I knew a little bit about Winnipeg because I had taught a summer course in the '70s at the University of Manitoba...I went for the interview in which we also talked about a bit and [was] particularly impressed by the fact that the students were involved in the selection process. In any case, I was offered the job and although it was administrative, my five years as Department Head was a plus for me.

Kisis Inini was offered a three year contract at the Winnipeg Education Centre from 1984 until 1987, which coincidentally are the years I studied at WEC. He says one of the saddest decisions he had to make was not to renew another contract.

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In conclusion, all the interviews were rich with information about each of the participant's life and career. These profiles provide a glimpse of the students' and professors' background and education. In the next chapter, the students share their stories on their experiences at WEC through the successes and barriers of the WEC teacher education program and comparing their experiences to other students/educators who took more traditional routes to teacher education. For the professors, their stories focus on why they wanted to teach at the WEC teacher education program, what the differences were if they taught in other teacher education programs, and how they feel they contributed to the students' lives while they were at Winnipeg Education Centre.

Chapter 5: *Tipachimowin*: Their Stories

In this chapter, the students share their stories on their experiences at WEC through the successes and barriers of the WEC teacher education program and comparing their experiences to other students/educators who took more traditional routes to teacher education. For the professors, their stories focus on why they wanted to teach at WEC teacher education program, if they taught in other teacher education programs what were the differences and, how do they feel they contributed to the students lives while they were at Winnipeg Education Centre. The professors reflected on their background, education and career. They also shared their theories, philosophies and approaches that impacted their teaching and role at WEC.

I listened carefully to their stories in voice (the interviews) which were audiotaped and also read their stories (transcripts) with care and respect. I am honoured that the three students (*Aki Ikwe* – Earth Woman, *Noodin Ikwe* – Wind Woman and *Nibi Ikwe* – Water Woman) and the two professors (*Ishkote Inini* – Fire Man and *Kisis Inini* – Sun Man) shared their stories with me. It was interesting to reflect back to the 1980s era for the students, the professors and myself. There were times of laughter and times of sadness during the interviews when reflecting on childhood memories, educational experiences, teaching at WEC for the professors and teaching careers for the students. We also had an opportunity to have some conversation about how we are living in the present and how Winnipeg Education Centre affected impact and transformation on all of our lives.

Selecting the participants in my study was based on the following criteria for the student participants: each had to be an Aboriginal woman who was a student at the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s and graduated from the WEC-Education program. In addition, the student

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participants had to have taught for a minimum of five years in a First Nation or provincial system.

The criteria for the professor participants were they had to have taught at the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. I selected the students and the professor participants from a list I created based on professional affiliations and personal relationships after graduating from the program. One of my professor participants lived in another province and I conducted a telephone interview with him. As an Indigenous researcher, I am privileged to have maintained relationships with the participants over the years during my career, with the exception of the one professor participant, *Kisis Inini*, because he lived in a different province.

I met with the participants for the interviews at a location of their choice and comfort. Each interview was held at a different location. For the student participants, *Aki Ikwe* and I met at my office on a day when no one was in the office; *Noodin Ikwe* and I met at my home in my kitchen; and *Nibi Ikwe* and I met at her home in her dining room. For the professor participants, *Ishkote Inini* and I met at his home in his kitchen and I interviewed *Kisis Inini* through a teleconference.

After the interviews were completed, I hired a transcriber to transcribe four out of the five interviews verbatim. The transcriber signed a Pledge Form (see Appendix H) to pledge confidentiality on the data being entrusted in their role as transcriber for my study. Because one of the potential participants was unable to participate during my scheduled interview period, it affected my research timeline and I transcribed one of the student interviews.

After I read the transcriptions once, I began to use a common analysis technique known as constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) by looking for key issues, themes or activities which became categories of focus using preassigned codes from Brokenleg's Circle of

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Courage®: Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity as described in Chapter 1. I coded the data by using highlighters and assigning each Circle of Courage® direction a colour: Belonging (pink), Mastery (orange), Independence (green) and Generosity (blue). While I was coding the data, I also used a technique called memoing by writing the preassigned code in the right hand column of the page and writing comments related to the code underneath. This allowed me to reference themes, issues and activities for future analysis and interpretation. I used this process for each student and professor.

After I coded and began memoing each student and participants transcripts, I looked for common themes, issues and activities and began to formulate commonalities amongst the students and professors. Themes emerged and I began to itemize the themes into circle frameworks. There were two circle frameworks that emerged for the students. The first circle, “The Students in the Circle of Courage® Framework” (see Figure 3) emerged with common themes in each direction:

East (Belonging): My Background and Identity

South (Mastery): My Education

West (Independence): My Career

North (Generosity): My Transformation – Living a Good Life

Also included within the inner circle of the framework (Figure 3) are the four questions that were referenced in Chapter 1 by Chief Justice Murray Sinclair: East – Who Am I? Where Do I Come From? South and West – What is my purpose? North – Where Am I Going?

These questions relate to the circle framework along a lifelong continuum and within the circle, Indigenous and western rites of passage.

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Continuing the circle framework for the students, a second circle emerged, “The Students at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework” (see Figure 5). The similar themes emerged for each direction in Figure 5: My Background and Identity, My Education; My Career and My Transformation – Living a Good Life. Within the inner circle, are also the four questions referenced in Chapter 1 from Chief Justice Murray Sinclair: East – Who Am I? Where Do I Come From? South and West – What is my purpose? North – Where Am I Going?

For each of these circle frameworks I will share the common issues and activities that were shared by the students.

After the circle frameworks were developed for the students, the professor’s framework “The Professors at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework” (see Figure 7) emerged with the following themes in each direction:

East (Belonging): My Background

South (Mastery): My Education

West (Independence): My Teaching

North (Generosity): Contributions to WEC Students

Because the professors already had situated themselves in their careers and were aware of the gifts they brought to WEC, I did not include Chief Justice Murray Sinclair’s four questions in the centre of the professors’ circle. The following sections will highlight each Circle diagram and will share the stories of the students and professors.

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The Students in the Circle of Courage® Framework

For this section, I developed the diagram **The Students in the Circle of Courage® Framework** (see Figure 3 on page 75) to illustrate the students before they attended Winnipeg Education Centre. This diagram highlights themes that emerged from the students' stories using the Circle of Courage® as the framework. Furthermore, I developed another diagram (see Figure 4 on page 76) to show selected excerpts of the participants' voices in each of the directions.

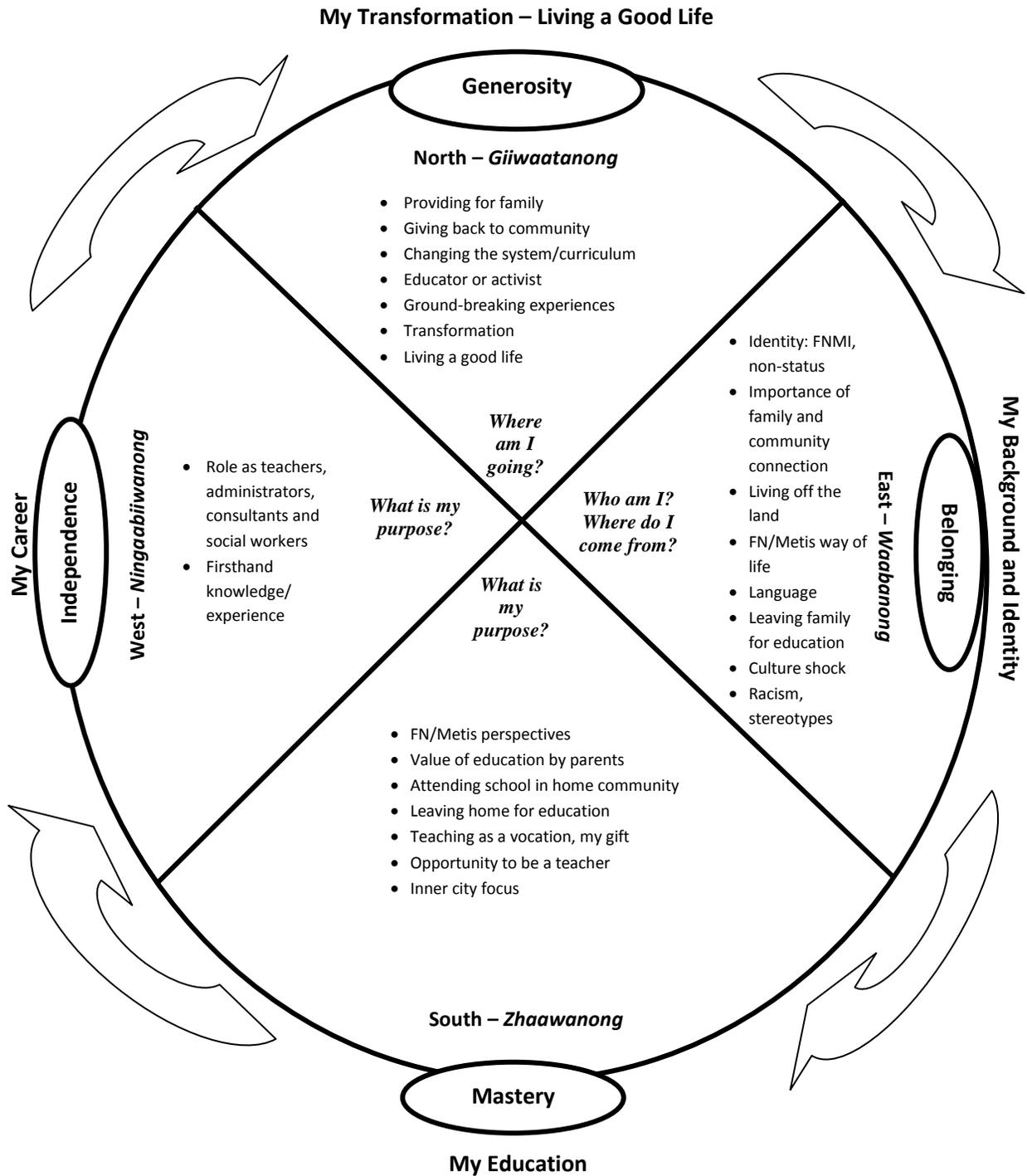


Figure 3: The Students in the Circle of Courage® Framework

Figure 4 highlights excerpts of the participants' stories in each of the directions.

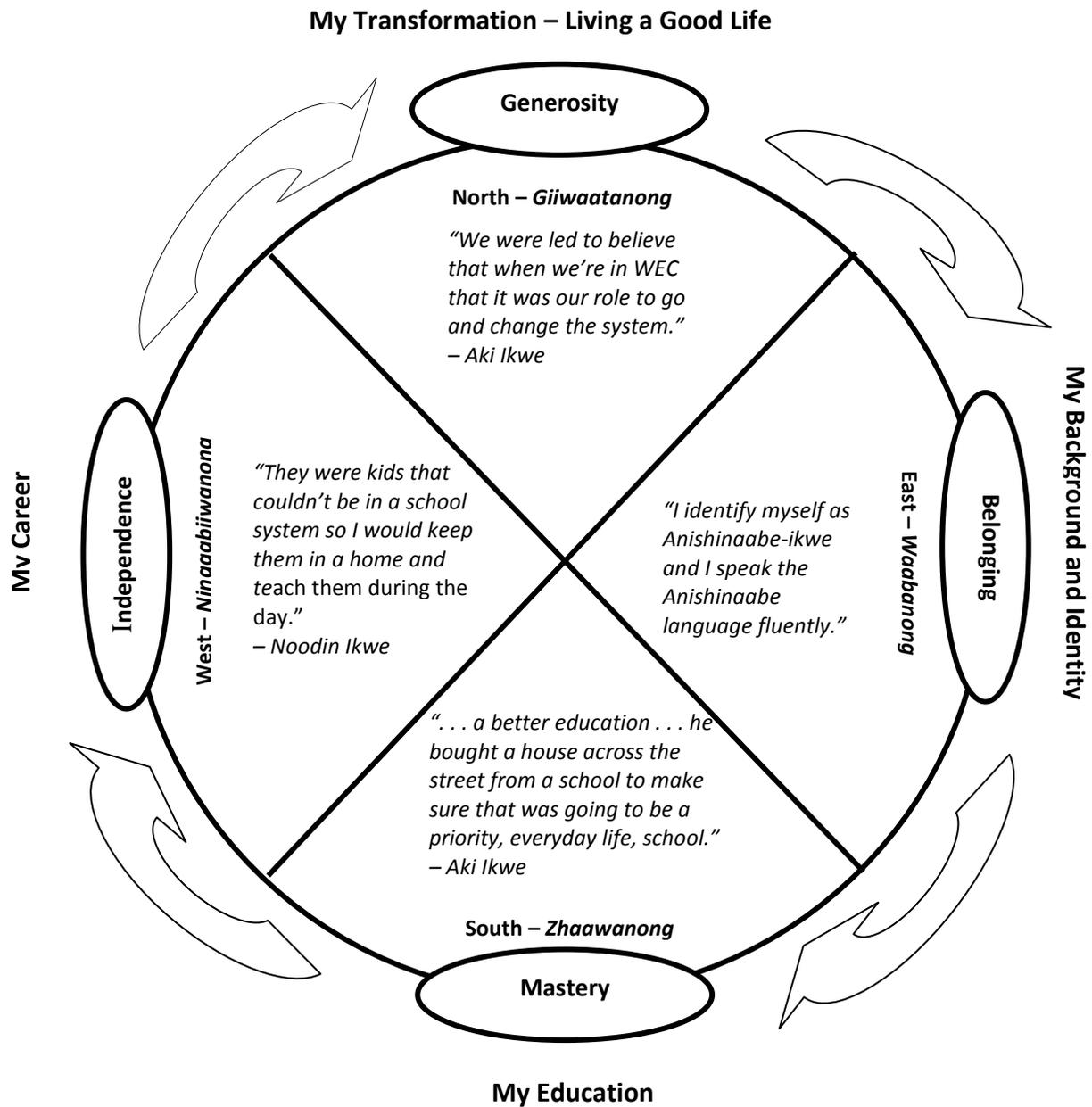


Figure 4: The Students before WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

East: Belonging – My Background and Identity

We start in the East and examine the stories of belonging as they pertain to the student participant's backgrounds and cultural identities. I asked the students the following interview questions: Tell me about your background and how do you identify with your Aboriginal background? The three student participants identified as being either *Anishinaabe*, Metis or non-status Indian and were raised in their home communities located throughout Manitoba.

I always knew I was an Indian woman and we lived and grew up in a Ojibway/Metis community. (Aki Ikwe)

I'm Metis...we recently found out that before my mother died...she always hated the fact that she was Aboriginal. (Noodin Ikwe)

I identify myself as Anishinaabe-ikwe and I speak the Anishinaabe language fluently...and I grew up on my First Nation for the first fourteen years of my life. (Nibi Ikwe)

Aki Ikwe and Noodin Ikwe were raised in the Interlake region of Manitoba and *Nibi Ikwe* in the north eastern part of Manitoba in a remote community. *Nibi Ikwe's* father also identified as non-status Indian in her younger years. Her father would also say *apitomaacowin* which means half breed in *Anishinaabemowin*.

Aki Ikwe and Nibi Ikwe also had *Anishinaabemowin* spoken in their homes as young children. Having an Aboriginal language spoken at home strengthens one's identity, sense of well-being, and connection to the Land and the Creator (Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education, 2000). *Aki Ikwe* shares some insight about how her family balanced both English and the *Anishinaabe* language in their home:

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My first language was Saulteaux and the reason that was my first language is that's the only language that was spoken when I was growing up and we only learned to speak English when we started school. My father spoke to me in English (pause) but I would only see him on the weekends so during the week the only language that I was exposed to was Saulteaux or now it's known as Ojibway.

All three student participants were raised on the land and had very close connections to their family and community. Their families all hunted, trapped, fished, had gardens and lived off the Land. They spoke about summers with family at summer camps outside their home communities and how they would pick berries and just have fun enjoying the summer weather, this was an *Anishinaabe* and Metis way of life.

We ate traditional foods, all my family would be trapping, hunting, fishing (pause) and so that's kind [of] what I was accustomed to. I was accustomed to eating, you know, deer meat, geese, muskrat, pickerel and it was only later on as I was getting older that we were introduced to other types of foods like the foods that we could buy at the store. Other than that all of our foods were homemade. My grandmother, who lived about a hundred feet from where we were, had this massive garden that we all shared. So she would grow all the vegetables that we would need to sustain us through the winter and every home had a cellar where we kept all our vegetables and we picked berries all summer and canned them. We picked strawberries, raspberries, saskatoons and plums... It was a very modest lifestyle...and in summer we spent a lot of times at the lake swimming. I had a very happy childhood living there. (Aki Ikwe)

My Mum and Dad raised both of us. If it wasn't Mum and Dad it was the grandparents that took care of us and we also traveled to my Dads hunting and trapping grounds, I

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think mainly during the summer months because they wanted us to go to school during the school year September to June. He really valued education and he thought it was really important, the hunting and trapping grounds and I think it was located by the Manitoba and Ontario border... and it wasn't just our family that went there, it was actually extended family. I remember my grandparents being there as well including my other family members, my aunts, uncles and grand aunts and uncles, they were there as well. So they relied on their survival at that time really relied on hunting, trapping and fishing because that was my Dad's main occupation. So in the summer and other times, if any of us siblings were not old enough to go to school, they actually went with my Dad and grandparents to go there other times of the year. (Nibi Ikwe)

All the women shared the love and connection they had as young women to their families and their communities. They were safe and accepted in their communities, their basic needs were provided for; they were receiving an education on the Land and in classrooms through formal learning. All three women had to leave their home communities in their teen years for various reasons. *Aki Ikwe's* family had to leave because her father wanted a better education for his children:

I went to a regular day school in the community. There [were] only two rooms to that school, one for the older students – they called it the big class and the little class. I was in the little class. It was Kindergarten to Grade 3 and in 1966 my father wanted us to have a better education so he moved us out to Winnipeg. (Aki Ikwe)

Notin Ikwe left home at fifteen because her father was retired and her mother was a homemaker and she wanted to explore the workforce: *"I left home at fifteen and I got a little part time job and started hairdressing and that didn't work out too well."*

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Nibi Ikwe shares her experience attending the a little schoolhouse for Grades 1 to 3 then having to attend the community school from Grades 4 to 9. Because the community school only went to Grade 9, she had to attend high school in Winnipeg and live in a private home placement:

Anybody that finished the Grade 9 program back home, all of us would get ready to attend high school in Winnipeg and other urban areas. I do remember my first trip down to Winnipeg to attend high school and there was quite a large group of us, I would say there was about 23 or 24 of us, that were leaving our home community to attend high school in Winnipeg or in different urban areas.

Moving to the urban centres had many challenges for the women. Leaving their families, relatives and community was a major challenge and it was not too long before they each faced issues of racism, stereotypes and culture shock in their schools and neighbourhoods.

Nibi Ikwe shares her experience when she came to high school in Winnipeg:

I don't quite remember the other experiences but I know there were challenges. Some of it would have been cultural shock, some of it was related to some of the challenges we had in terms of the language because you know because there was no validation of who you are, and when you are coming to city life it is basically you are to go to school, attend school and you do whatever you can to be successful.

Aki Ikwe and her family were traumatized by the racism and stereotypes they experienced living in the city:

After the excitement of the bright lights wore off, reality set in and we had a very, very difficult time adjusting to the life in Winnipeg. We were often discriminated against because we were this bush family that came and lived in the city and it was very hard on

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us. Putting the two together, our life, our way of life and the way we knew the world changed very drastically in one summer. From you know rolling around in the bush and just having the freedom to come and go, all of a sudden we were caged and you know a little area and we weren't allowed to go into people's yards. We were not allowed to jaywalk, we had to go to the end of the street and go where the lights were for example. So it was a, it was a culture shock I guess and then the taunting we had from the other students again, they made fun of us. We had an accent that was different from theirs and they soon found out that we were Indians and then we got stereotyped on what their perception of what an Indian was. And my whole family really had a difficult time feeling accepted in the city and (pause) it was hard on my mother as well because my dad again was working, you know, 16 hours a day.

Based on the Circle of Courage® model, belonging is foundational to feeling a sense of self-worth. Belonging is feeling a part of a unit, a community, and knowing who you are and where you come from. All three women had a sense of identity, knew where they came from and had strong connections with their family and community. There was an interruption with their sense of belonging when they had to leave their families and communities. This is why, as educators, creating spaces of belonging is critical (Fitznor, 2002; Kirkness, 2013; Smith, 2003). As well, in Chapter 1, Sinclair shares a teaching about being successful as Indigenous people. He said first and foremost, we need to be able to answer these first two of four questions: who am I and where do I come from? The students were able to answer these first two questions Sinclair poses because of the relationships they have with themselves, others and the land and water.

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South: Mastery – My Education

As we move along the circle to the South, this direction is represented by Mastery and pertains to the students' educational experiences. Mastery is attaining the skills and knowledge to live a good life and to have a positive impact on society and the economy. The interview questions I asked were, tell me about your education and why did you want to become a teacher? As mentioned in the previous section, all three women attended school in their home community until they moved to the urban centres for a better education or training; or for Nibi Ikwe, she had to attend high school because of no high school program in the home community. Having to leave the community interrupted the family unit, especially for Aki Ikwe's family having to face racism and stereotypes within their neighbourhood. These experiences influenced the students' future education and careers.

Education was valued by *Aki Ikwe* and *Nibi Ikwe*'s parents and they both saw the value in formal education because of the support they received from their parents. *Nibi Ikwe* shared, "*He really valued education*" when speaking about her father. For *Aki Ikwe*, an incident at school prompted her father to move the family to the city:

I was held back one year, when I was living in my community; not because I couldn't do the work. It's kind of strange but they had desks and all those desks were bolted together and there were no open spots in the Grade 3 row so they put me in the Grade 2 row and I repeated Grade 2, simply because there were no desks in the Grade 3 row and my father was very upset with that and that's when he thought this isn't going to be the place to raise his family. He wanted some place, I guess a better education. He felt Winnipeg would offer that. So he bought a house in Winnipeg right across the street from a school to make sure that was going to be our priority, everyday life, school.

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As I mentioned in the previous section, *Belonging*, all three women attended their formal schooling in their home community and had to leave their communities because of no high school program in the community, for employment and for better education opportunities in the city. Many First Nations students have to leave their home communities to attend high school in urban and rural centres. *Nibi Ikwe* shared that out of the 24 students that left her home community for Grade 10, only four graduated. She shares her thoughts on her peers who did not graduate and that this is still currently happening:

I do remember trying to figure out of the 24 of us that left back home three years ago, I wonder how many of the other students are going to be graduating the same year as I do. But later on I found out there were actually only two or three of us, my cousin last year and I can't remember the other student. I mention this because this is reality, it's still happening today. Too many Aboriginal students are not being successful and we had our reasons for not being that successful. I think the students, the other 20 students that decided to drop out, either in Grade 10 or 11, before they reached Grade 12 had a lot to do with the lack of supports that were provided and we were all put in private home placements.

Nibi Ikwe says she is fortunate that she had older siblings already living in the city, so she did not feel as lonely as her peers during her high school years. After high school, *Nibi Ikwe* attended a rural university to work on an Arts degree but did not complete it due to financial constraints. She then worked as a teacher assistant until she learned about WEC. After her hairdressing training, *Noodin Ikwe* worked as a food coordinator in a school. Then she worked in a group home until she started school at WEC. For *Aki Ikwe*, she went back to her home community at the age of thirteen to live with her grandmother for a few years then she came back

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to the city to complete her high school. She started at WEC when she was 24 and had three children.

Being a teacher is a gift and all three women wanted to become teachers. *Noodin Ikwe* had a positive role model as a child, *Nibi Ikwe* met student teachers while they were doing their practicum and it piqued her interest in teaching and *Aki Ikwe* wanted to give back to the community by becoming a teacher.

Honestly, I used to play all the time (laughs) as a teacher you know for many years and my aunt who I was named after, she was a teacher and I thought she was the neatest person in the whole world and I wanted to do things just like her. And she used to invite me over for the weekend because I was her niece eh and she would play the student and I got to play the teacher, I was just a kid. Anyways I always wanted to be just like her and she was a teacher so I guess that's how it started. (Noodin Ikwe)

I was a teacher assistant for a couple of years before I went to Winnipeg Education Centre... and somebody was actually student teaching there from the WEC and so I got to know her and a couple of other students that were training in that program and I thought you know well this is an interesting program and I don't have money, I want to be a teacher...so I went ahead and called them and I got an application form and filled it out and was invited to go for an interview. I went and I really liked it and I knew teaching was something that I wanted to get into and I was very fortunate and shortly after the interview, I got a call and said you have been accepted to come to WEC to start your teacher education program. (Nibi Ikwe)

I've always been active in my community and I wanted to be able to give back to the community all the things that were given to me and I believed at the time that I thought I

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could influence the education system in a way that would meet the needs of Aboriginal students in a way that I didn't experience because I always felt isolated and always felt like I didn't belong there because this system was foreign to me and my worldviews and the way I thought. And I thought if we could change the curriculum in some way to make it more reflective of the students in the classroom I could make an impact that way.

(Aki Ikwe)

Having the opportunity to become a teacher was seen as very positive and all related to the inner city focus of the program. They were able to 'relearn' "Who I Am" at WEC. These points will be covered in the next framework, "The Students at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework."

West: Independence – My Career

In the West direction, independence allows us to take care of ourselves and others. Through receiving a formal post-secondary education and now pursuing their careers, the women took on various roles in education and have specializations in inner city and have firsthand knowledge as inner city educators. They were teachers, administrators, consultants and social worker in an education setting. They also began to understand Sinclair's third question, "What is my purpose?" These women found their purpose within the walls of learning institutions and lead successful careers. The interview question for this section was: what is your current role as an educator?

Noodin Ikwe shared that she recently retired from her role as a social worker teaching in the group homes. Just after receiving her education degree, she went to teach in a northern town. While she was there, she decided to go back to school and work on a social work degree. She

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only completed a year in social work and then she went back to working at the group and receiving homes. Because *Noodin Ikwe* had a Bachelor of education degree, she was assigned to the frontline at the group home. She stresses the importance of teaching the students in the group home:

Not that I didn't use my education because I did. Some of these kids could not go into the school system because they were totally out [of] control. So I kept those kids and I worked with them because they are like so cool, anyways they were kids who just couldn't be in the school system so I would keep them in a home and I would teach them during the day, the basics of life and that's what I did for three years.

Aki Ikwe held numerous positions within her career, she was a teacher, guidance counsellor, vice-principal, principal, consultant, and is currently a Director of Education for a First Nation. *Aki Ikwe* also completed her Master of Education degree.

Nibi Ikwe also held numerous positions after she received her education degree. She worked at an Aboriginal language organization for three years before she worked for a local school division as a teacher at early years and high school levels. She also held positions as a divisional leader for a grant, and moved into administration at the assistant principal level and then as a principal. She currently works as a coordinator for a large First Nations organization in Winnipeg. *Nibi Ikwe* has also completed her Master in Education and is completing her Philosophy of Education studies.

North: Generosity – My Transformation and Living a Good Life

As the stories are shared through each of the directions from the east, to the south, to the west and in the north, the progression through each of the directions reclaims their place in the

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world (Brendto et al., 1990). The final direction of the model, generosity, is what our Elders and Knowledge Keepers have taught us; we can give back to our families and communities both physically and spiritually. We have heard numerous educators refer to education as the new buffalo (Kinew in APTN, 2012; Stonechild, 2006) because in the past, the buffalo was able to provide sustenance for families and nations. In the present day, education is referred to as the new buffalo because education should be able to provide sustenance for our families' continued survival.

Aki Ikwe knew that by becoming an educator, she would always be employed because of the demand for Aboriginal educators and would be able to provide a living for her family:

There is always need for an educator and I wanted to ensure I would be gainfully employed for the rest of my life. So I wanted a career that would give me employment and so education was it but someone told me later I should've been a lawyer, just kidding (laughs).

There was frustration, as *Nibi Ikwe* shares when the students who were trained to specialize working with inner city communities, were not being employed by the school divisions:

I think I knew most of the schools and the staff that were there during my student teaching years, but for some reason, like some of us were not successful in getting jobs you know right after our graduation and I think even some people even went up North because I remember Sherry going up north [any northern community in Manitoba] to teach and a couple of other students. So very few of us, I think, might be wrong, I think very few of us got offered jobs through the school divisions. To me that I thought, should have been a priority somewhere you know because we were all getting this training, most of us were

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First Nations, and I thought if you know it would have been ideal for school division at that time to hire as many...Aboriginal, First Nations teachers because there was a group of 20 of us that couldn't get jobs right away.

Each of the students changed the systems in which they worked. *Noodin Ikwe* shared in the previous section how an education program supported students who were in group homes because they could not function in a “regular” classroom. The students had many social and educational issues to deal with and having this support for them was beneficial to their well being and education. *Nibi Ikwe* also shared how she was part of an Aboriginal high school that opened up in Winnipeg, the first of its kind in the province and being hired later in her career for an organization that provides services to First Nations, again, the first of its kind in Manitoba. Both these educational institutions were significant in Manitoba because the Aboriginal high school infused Aboriginal language and cultural perspectives into the curriculum and the First Nations organization provided service delivery to many First Nations in the province. She referred to these experiences as “ground breaking.”

Sinclair’s fourth question, “where am I going” is part of living a good life. The students were faced with situations with respect to being an educator or activist by contemplating Sinclair’s question and Brokenleg’s direction about generosity. When the group home did not send the students to the public school, was *Noodin Ikwe* being an educator or activist? *Aki Ikwe* summarizes this point between being an activist or educator:

We were led to believe that when we were in the WEC that it was our role to go and change the system. So I actually really believed that. I thought okay, it's up to us if we want things to change it's in our lap and we have to make those changes. But the part that they didn't do a very good job in teaching us is about the system and the way in

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works because when you go in there and you try and change it. The system needs to protect itself, right? And the individuals in there will do what it takes to protect that system, and they did not prepare us in terms of the backlash or the resistance to that change and in saying that, what do you do about it? When there is a system and it's very conservative and it works for certain groups of people and there's that resistance to change. The curriculum or the methodology and so on, then what to you do?

Although there was not a specific interview question geared to transformations or how the students were living a good life, it was evident through their confidence and ease in answering the questions about their life, their education and how WEC had a positive impact on their lives. I will discuss this more in the next circle framework, “The Students at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework” (Figure 5).

The Students at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

For this section, I developed the diagram **The Students at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework** (see Figure 5 on page 90) to illustrate the students' experiences at the Winnipeg Education Centre. This diagram highlights themes that emerged from the students' stories using the Circle of Courage® as the framework. Furthermore, I developed another diagram (see Figure 6 on page 91 to show selected excerpts of the participants' voices in each of the directions.

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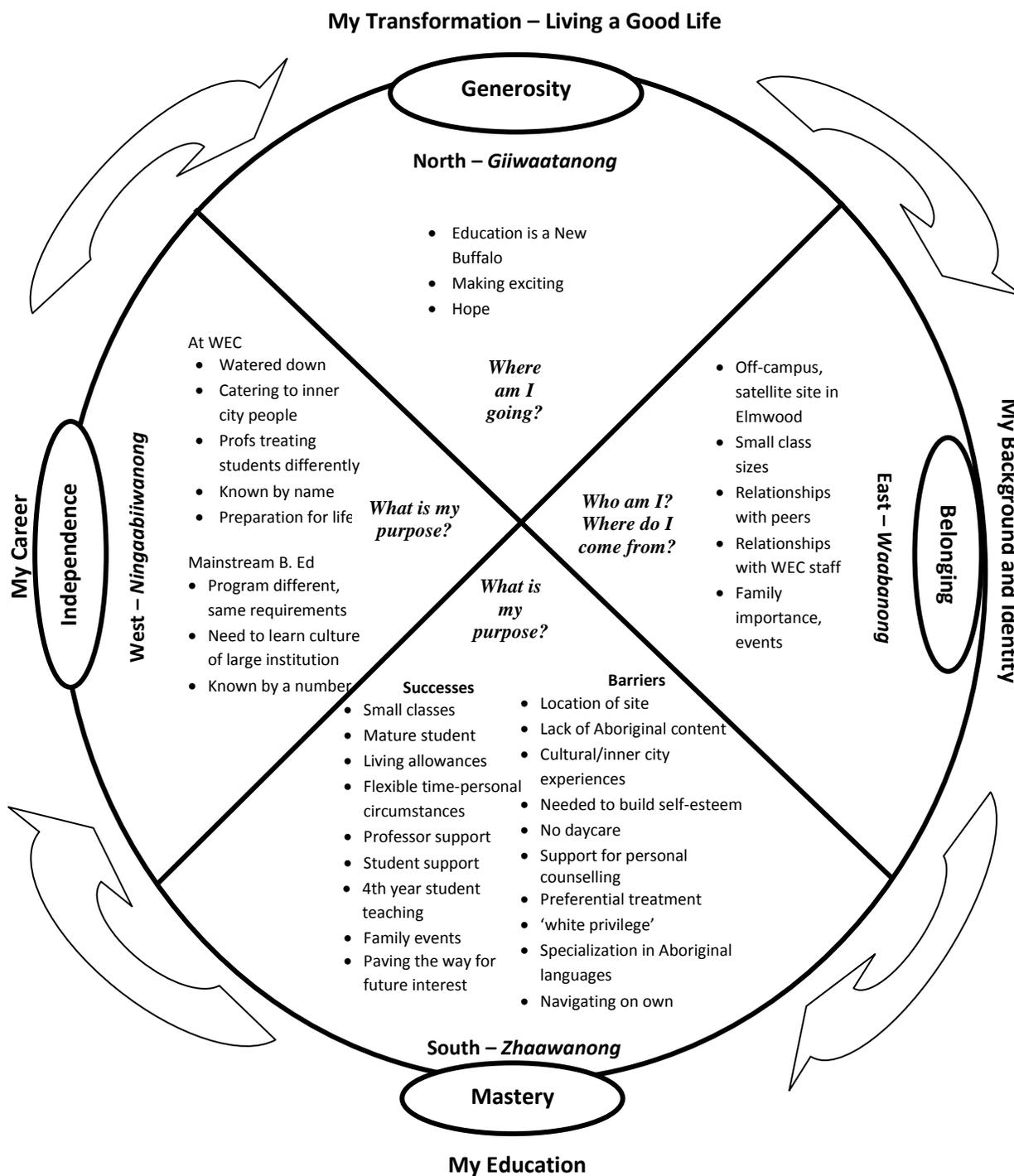


Figure 5: The Students at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

Figure 6 highlights excerpts of the participants' stories in each of the directions.

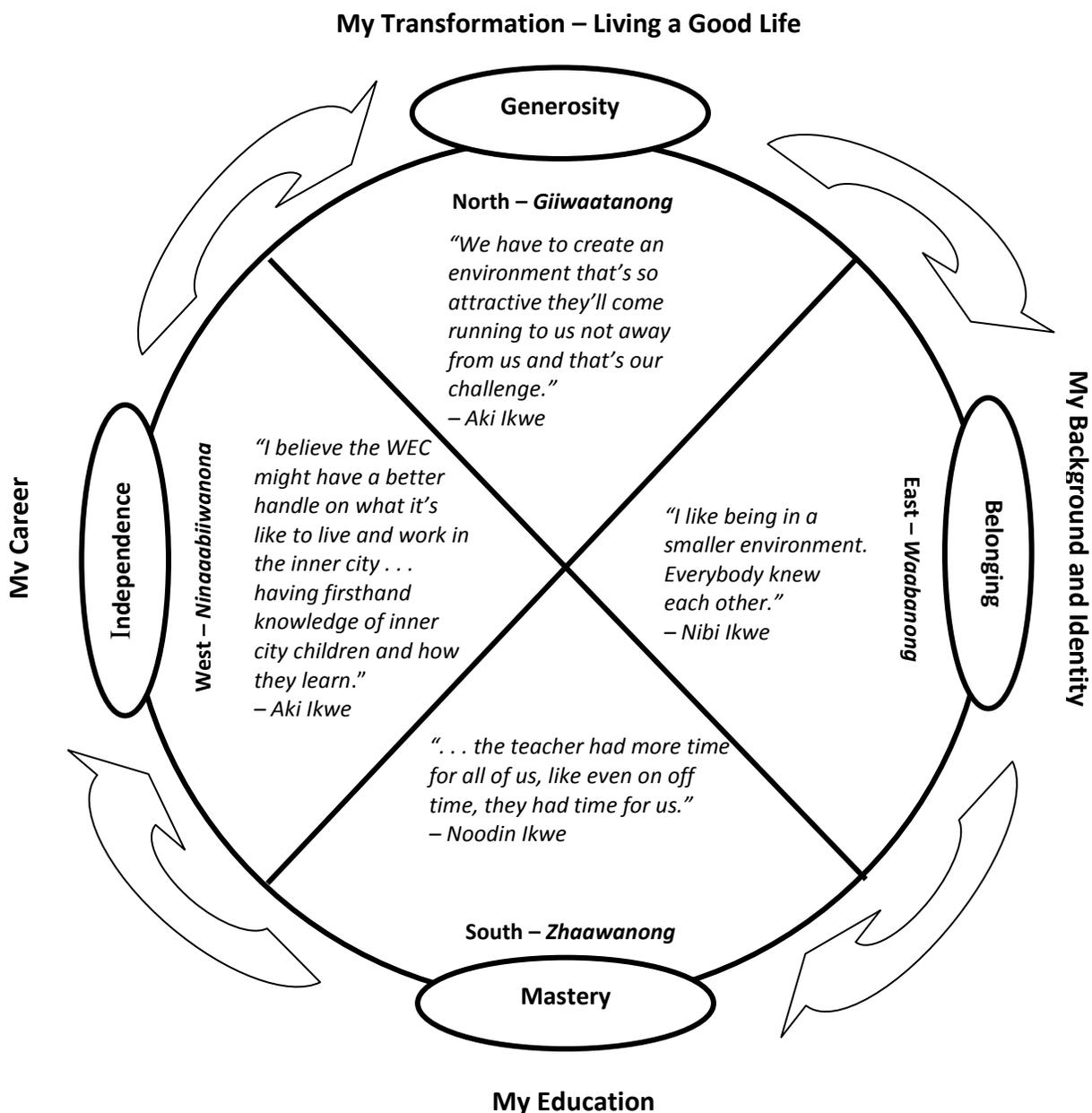


Figure 6: The Students after WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

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East: Belonging – My Background and Identity

We start in the East and hear the stories of belonging as they pertain to the student participants' experiences at WEC. In this direction, the students share what elements of the program made them feel like they had a sense of belonging at WEC and how their background and identities were honoured as students in the WEC Education program. The interview question that relates to belonging is: what were some of the successful elements of the WEC Education program?

In the 1980s WEC Education was located off campus as a satellite program in the Elmwood area of Winnipeg, off Nairn Avenue and Chester Street. The building was owned by the Winnipeg School Division and was a former elementary school. Although the centre was not located in the inner city of Winnipeg, for some students the location was inconvenient especially if you did not have a vehicle and had to rely on public transportation. In my view, being a former elementary school, the classrooms could accommodate up to 20 adults comfortably depending on how the tables were set up. After 20 adults, especially in the summer months, it would become quite uncomfortable because there was no air conditioning and the extremely tall windows that were 3' x 10' and at least four in the room made it very hot and humid. Aki Ikwe recalls when WEC Education was located in Aberdeen School which now houses Niji Mahwa School in inner city of Winnipeg: *“Well it was the Winnipeg Education Centre, it relocated from I’m not sure where they were, maybe Aberdeen school and then they moved over to Chester Street. That’s where I went to university.”*

The students also mentioned that the small class sizes contributed to a sense of belonging because you knew who the other students were in your cohort and could form relationships and friendships. Students were also able to have relationships with WEC staff and periodically with

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what was referred to as parachute professors, who were not WEC staff, but professors that came from the main campus to teach a course or courses at WEC:

I have to say the small classrooms, 15-16 students in the classroom. The teacher had more time for all of us. (Noodin Ikwe)

I like being in a smaller environment and not like going to the university and just getting lost with being there and also not having any close connections or supports like at a bigger university. I like the Centre because, at the Centre everybody, or it seems to me everybody, knew each other or if you didn't have friends going there, you met them eventually. You know because it was such a small group. (Nibi Ikwe)

Finally within the direction of belonging, family and having the support of family was important for the students. WEC had family events for special times of the year and invited spouses/partners, children and other family members or significant others to celebrate special occasions. These events created lifetime friendships with some of the students as well:

There were times when we would pool together for groceries or little fundraisers like that so that helped out I think families, young families for students that had children, it really helped them out too. But it also helped me out too because we were all in the same type of situation, nobody had any money, we were always studying and overloaded with assignments and reading and stuff like that, but everybody kind of shared those experiences with each other, so that was, I think that that in itself was a very good supportive environment. (Nibi Ikwe)

The other thing for the elements of teaching [aids] they did have a lot of stuff for kids, like they ran some programs and stuff in the evening and stuff like that. I don't think that they had a child care place for the children but they did have a lot of activities after

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hours where the parents could take the children and you know have little fun things to do with your parents after school. (Noodin Ikwe)

We had a really tight group and we fell in love with our families, like with other people's families too. And there's no program where you can have kids and have other people going to your home or you know and all of a sudden their kids just become your kids like because you're just a part of that world you know. We lived basically, I think, together and we watched each other's kids grow up you...we built really firm, solid friendships out of it. (Noodin Ikwe)

South: Mastery – My Education at WEC

In the South direction, Mastery focuses on the education the students received at WEC and specifically the successes and challenges to the program. The interview questions I asked were: what were some of the successful elements of the program and what were some of the barriers of the teacher education program.

Barriers within the WEC Program

Some of the barriers that the students shared were the location of WEC as mentioned in the previous section, belonging. The specific reason the location of the WEC was mentioned as a barrier was its geographic location being in the Elmwood area of Winnipeg and for students who had to rely on public transportation this was perceived as a barrier. On another note, though, for those students who had vehicles, there was a parking lot adjacent to the school and the parking was free.

Another barrier was lack of Aboriginal content in courses with the exception of the Aboriginal language classes, Cree and Ojibway, that were taught at WEC. The students shared

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that courses about the treaties or Indian Residential Schools would have been beneficial to their learning:

...could have had more content from an Aboriginal perspective: treaties and residential schools. If it did, I would have been further ahead. (Nibi Ikwe)

So anyway at the Winnipeg Education Centre finally I agreed to teach a course and oh my goodness I do remember the first day when I started I thought oh this is going to be so difficult and I think I had probably one of the biggest classes. I think it was about 25 or 30 students. (Nibi Ikwe)

The other thing that I felt a lot of the courses that we took could have been more reflective of Aboriginal people and it wasn't. So when I went out and had to teach Native studies, for example, I felt like I was not equipped to teach them. They might have given you an introduction to it but I believe we should have been more prepared as teachers. If that was my area and I wanted to specialize in you know we had a couple of Ojibway courses for example but when it was really kind of taking a look at the curriculum and how you can incorporate Aboriginal perspectives. There wasn't really very much of that. (Aki Ikwe)

Another barrier that *Aki Ikwe* shared was WEC could have improved on building self-esteem with students.

They could've done a better job was really building on students' self-esteem and feeling good about being students and feeling, I think they could've contributed more in who you are as a learner. So I kind of struggled along on my own and tried to find my own supports, as an Anishinaabe woman to try and you know really establish my identity and really try and build myself up and be proud of who I am.

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The need to have more inner city focus and perspectives in courses was another barrier. Because many of the students were inner city residents or were born and raised in the inner city, they were aware of the many social issues that affected the students and their families.

So I felt that the fact that they said it was inner city education I thought maybe half of the coursework was going to be in the area and I was quite surprised when it was just, all they did was take all the courses from, that were being offered on campus and brought them to the program there. So that part of it surprised me a little. (Aki Ikwe)

One of the last points on barriers that were raised by *Noodin Ikwe* was on white privilege. She felt that some of the students who were Aboriginal received preferential treatment compared to non-Aboriginal students or Aboriginal students who were fair skinned.

The other barrier that, I hope this is where I would put it, is because I looked white. At the Winnipeg Education Centre they (sighs), I don't know, I felt like they expected more from me and I wasn't the brightest in the world okay (laughs) but some of the people who looked more native umm they were like, they were considered token Indian and that's exactly what, like they were given so much extra time when never even completed all their course work, I'm sorry but you know like but like they didn't and they would get all this extra time, extra time to get you know things done and then even when they didn't complete it, they still graduated and that bothered me.

She felt that because of her skin colour, she did not receive the same supports as other Aboriginal students who had darker skin.

Some people say that I'm lucky that my skin is white and they don't know that considers me an Aboriginal person, they don't. Unlike my family, a lot of them are dark

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(laughs) and they find that the world has been better to me than to them because of my skin colour.

These students faced many challenges over two decades, and looking at how WEC currently operates, there have been some improvements made for students, such as the location of the WEC program, which is now housed at the University of Winnipeg in the central part of the city. There is an Aboriginal Student Centre that includes advisors, a work space and meeting space that is accessible to students and also Elders available for counselling.

Successes of the WEC Program

The second part of the South direction is the successes within the WEC program. As mentioned in the previous section, small class sizes had a positive impact because students established relationships with students and professors. Because of the small class sizes, students were also able to support each other and work in small groups.

I have to say the small classrooms; 15-16 students in the classroom were a success of the program. (Noodin Ikwe)

I like the Centre because, at the Centre everybody or it seems to me everybody knew each other or if you didn't have friends going there, you met them eventually. (Nibi Ikwe)

WEC's students were all mature students and to be eligible for the program, you had to be 21 years old. By being mature students, WEC students came with a variety of life experiences compared to students at the Fort Garry campus. For example, many WEC students were in relationships and had families. Both *Aki Ikwe* and *Nibi Ikwe* had a young family as students.

A significant successful element of the program included a tuition free program, books and living allowances that were provided for students during their studies.

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I think I can speak for the majority of the people there, there wasn't enough money to do anything. There was, it was hard just to pay your rent and have a little extra just to do I don't know to do anything, to go out for coffee, to do anything. You really had to learn the discipline of not spending anything, you know and if you didn't have families to help you then you had no choice, you had to go out to work and to supplement. But then I think you could only do 200 dollars a month or something or whatever and that was even hard too because then you're too exhausted to do the homework and everything. (Noodin Ikwe)

Plus the financial means of providing a cost of living allowance so I didn't have to work part-time go to university and raise my children. (Aki Ikwe)

There were also flexible times for students who needed time to have children as *Aki Ikwe* shared, and in *Noodin Ikwe's* story, to grieve and attend her mother's funeral.

So that was the first thing, the other thing was, the course load wasn't as heavy as a regular student as a student at the university of Manitoba. And that helped as well because when you're a single mom raising children, there's more flex time to make sure you get all your courses done and the homework that's required to be successful so they were accommodating in that way. (Aki Ikwe)

One of the successes all three students shared was about the support from the professors. There were professors that were full time staff at WEC which also provided academic support and advice to the students. There were also what students referred to as "parachute profs" because they came from the Fort Garry campus or were hired as instructors to teach courses. Here are some stories shared about the professors and the impact they had on the women:

Some of the profs at the program were very in tune with what the students needed and so they were able to individualize the program in some aspect....Well, what they tried to

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do as much as possible is tried to figure out what your area of interest is and what it is, what you believe in, right? And then so what they would do is when it came to doing assignments they would accommodate what your interest in your area was and they'd try as much as possible to find resources to support your philosophy or your way of thinking or your experience in life and try to incorporate that as much as possible in your writing or your homework assignments; Which is what good teachers do anyway. (Aki Ikwe)

The teacher had more time for all of us. (pause) We were able to I guess to get more profs out from the University of Manitoba and just it was very different from the University where all of the profs who came in seemed to have time for us, like even on off time they had time for us. (Noodin Ikwe)

We had really good professors from what I could recall. Because the professors made themselves available to us, and at times when things were too difficult to comprehend or to understand, there was opportunity for additional academic support you know. Like I mentioned earlier, I felt that I wasn't good at science or math so I do remember going to these additional classes that the professors would provide and it was optional, you know if you wanted extra help, they would help you out in science and other help in science and a group of us would go, so that was really good for me to participate in. (Nibi Ikwe)

Another success in the program was having your student teaching practicum extended in the fourth year. All your coursework was completed by the end of the third year and students were able to spend the entire fourth year in the classroom with their cooperating teacher. This element in the program allowed students to experience the planning that occurs prior to the school year: planning and organizing the classroom space for students' academic programming. Students were in the classroom from late August until April.

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We spent more time in the classrooms... was a benefit. The teacher provided classroom experiences and student teachers managed the classroom on their own for extended period and this was good practice. (Nibi Ikwe)

These successful elements as seen in Figure 5, contributed to the student learning and transformation as educators.

West: Independence – My Career

In the West direction, Independence focuses on the how the students compared their WEC education experiences to the students who attended mainstream education programs. The interview questions I asked were: compare your experience in the WEC Teacher education program to a) Your own experiences and subsequent educational experiences and; b) experiences of colleagues who took more traditional routes to teacher education. In order to meet graduation requirements for the bachelor of education degree, there were the same requirements regardless of the program students attended. It was the same program but with a different focus within the programs. For example, WEC had a focus on inner city education. WEC students did attend the Fort Garry campus for some courses and students shared that they had to learn the culture of the large institution. For example there were numerous buildings in the Fort Garry campus and locating the building where their course was being offered was challenging, unlike going to 15 Chester Street. One of the students shared that she felt like a human at WEC and a number at the Fort Garry campus:

...after I had been to Winnipeg Education and then I went to University of Manitoba to get my social work degree, it was too much. It was too many people and I was just a number. It wasn't like I was a human being in there; I was a number. (Noodin Ikwe)

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At WEC, there were misconceptions that the program was watered down or less rigorous because of the focus of the program and the mature students that were in the program. Because many of the mature students may have not completed a high school diploma, students were perceived as not having sufficient education to be teachers. There was a perception that WEC graduates were less than the students who graduated from more traditional education programs:

Yeah I think I kind of touched on this before where at the beginning before I went to Winnipeg Education Centre I only had Grade 9 and kind of like the first year in WEC they kind of teach you how hard life is going to be as a student. And they kind of prepare you, slowly prepare you for what's coming at you. (Noodin Ikwe)

“Well when I think, when I look back, certainly those colleagues of mine knew how to work the system to their benefit...when I compare myself and the program that I took to other people who took the program on campus, there was a little bit of this idea that because it was an off-campus program it just catered to inner city people. That somehow the program must be watered down, there was a little bit of that. But in fact, in some ways I felt some of the profs, the parachute profs, I don't believe they treated us any differently than students on campus, from what I understood. So, but in general I felt those courses would, because I did go on campus after I finished by B.Ed. and I actually did better on campus than I did in the program at the WEC. I just felt maybe it's because I didn't understand the culture or whatever but I certainly, when you look at my transcripts, my grades were quite high after I left the WEC and went on campus. So then I realized the program wasn't that too different (pause) in terms of you know what it took get an A for example. Cause when I took my Post Bac I never got lower than a B and when I did my Master's I think most of my grades were A's, I might've got one C in the whole program

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and then the rest were A's. So I think it was a matter of learning the culture and what was expected and being able to live up to those expectations. (Aki Ikwe)

WEC not only prepared the students to become teachers, WEC prepared the students for life. The transformative experiences at WEC shaped the students into educators and, for some of the students, activists for inner city education. *Aki Ikwe* sums it up eloquently:

I believe the WEC might have a better handle on in terms of preparing us is really getting a handle on what it's like to live and work in the inner city and really having a firsthand knowledge of inner city children and how they learn and the barriers that prevent them from being successful. I felt coming from that environment and living in that environment and then trying to work in that environment I had firsthand experience, whereas individuals who've never been exposed to that had to have a different beginning point. So then they would actually count on you as aboriginal person to help them understand some of those issues that are preventing learners from being successful. So over and over again because I was an Aboriginal, I in some ways felt there was a lot of pressure on me to speak for the community and you're kind of thrust into that situation because you're an Aboriginal person. And in some way I actually didn't mind doing that, and in other ways I felt it was an extra pressure put on you.

North: Generosity – My Transformation and Living a Good Life

In the previous section, *Mastery*, the students shared their experiences as students in the WEC program and how the program shaped them as students and teachers. *Noodin Ikwe* shares how after she completed the WEC education program, she still received support from one of the professors by shipping her books and other resources for the adult education program and for the

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children's library. She saw a need in the community and she was able to connect with someone from WEC and receive some support. Although at WEC there were no specific courses that focused on Aboriginal perspectives, *Aki Ikwe* shares how one experience, relearning her identity, was transformative:

I had to learn all over again who I was and I had to learn the worldviews, like it actually had to be explained to me how we were brainwashed to think you know very western way, western culture, western worldview and so on and I always have to catch myself, realizing that I'm doing that. I'll give you an example. Our traditional way is to be more restorative in our approaches, restorative practices and philosophies and beliefs, whereas the way we were raised from the time we entered school, was in a very punitive way; like if you did something wrong you would be strapped. Whereas our traditional ways would be if things were done right you learned from that experience and then you support people or learners to do things the way they're supposed to be done.

All three students graduated from WEC and went on to be educators within various systems which allowed them to support their families and contribute to their communities. I referred to this earlier as education being the new buffalo (Kinew in APTN, 2012; Stonechild, 2006). The students also found that their education allowed them to make education exciting and rewarding. *Nibi Ikwe* shared how she was involved in two significant events in Manitoba, the establishment of the first Aboriginal high school and a First Nations organization. *Aki Ikwe* shared how she sees the system being more exciting as a result of her transformative experiences at WEC:

When I became an educator, you know the reason these kids are being drawn into the streets – it's very exciting – and I said, you know what, we need to make school more

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exciting. We need to outsmart what's going on in the street and make school so attractive that the kids will never want to leave. We need to make it safe; you need to allow children to be children. They don't have to grow up as fast as they are on the street. And we're the teachers, we can't blame the parents and we can't blame the kids for why they don't want to go to school. We have to create an environment that's so attractive they'll come running to us not away from us and that's our challenge as educators.

The Professors at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

For this final section, I developed the diagram **The Professors at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework** (see Figure 7 on page 105) to illustrate the professors' background, teaching experiences and how they feel they contributed to WEC students. Furthermore, the next diagram (see Figure 8 on page 106) shows selected excerpts of the participants' voices in each of the directions.

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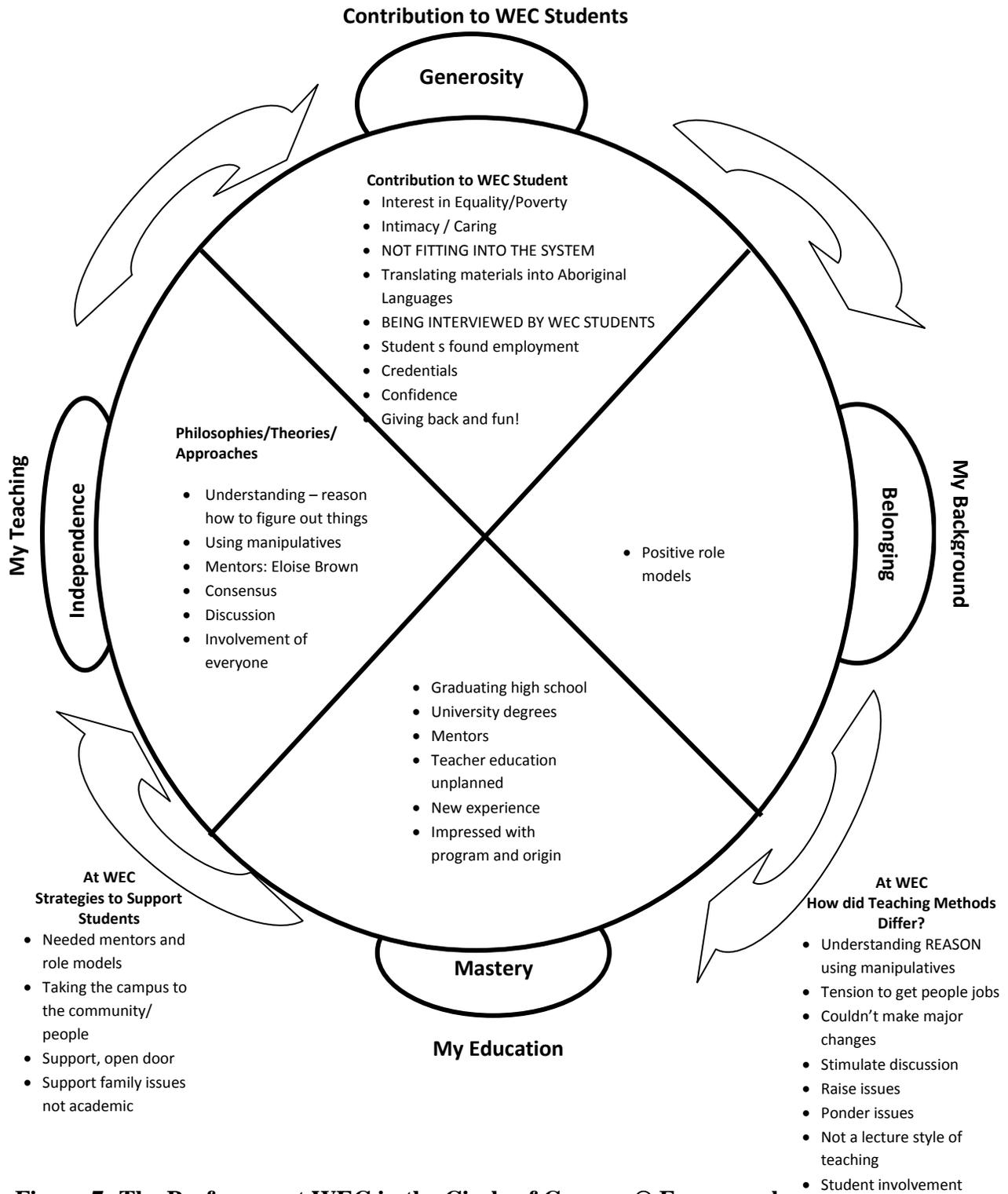


Figure 7: The Professors at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

Figure 8 highlights excerpts of the participants' stories in each of the directions.

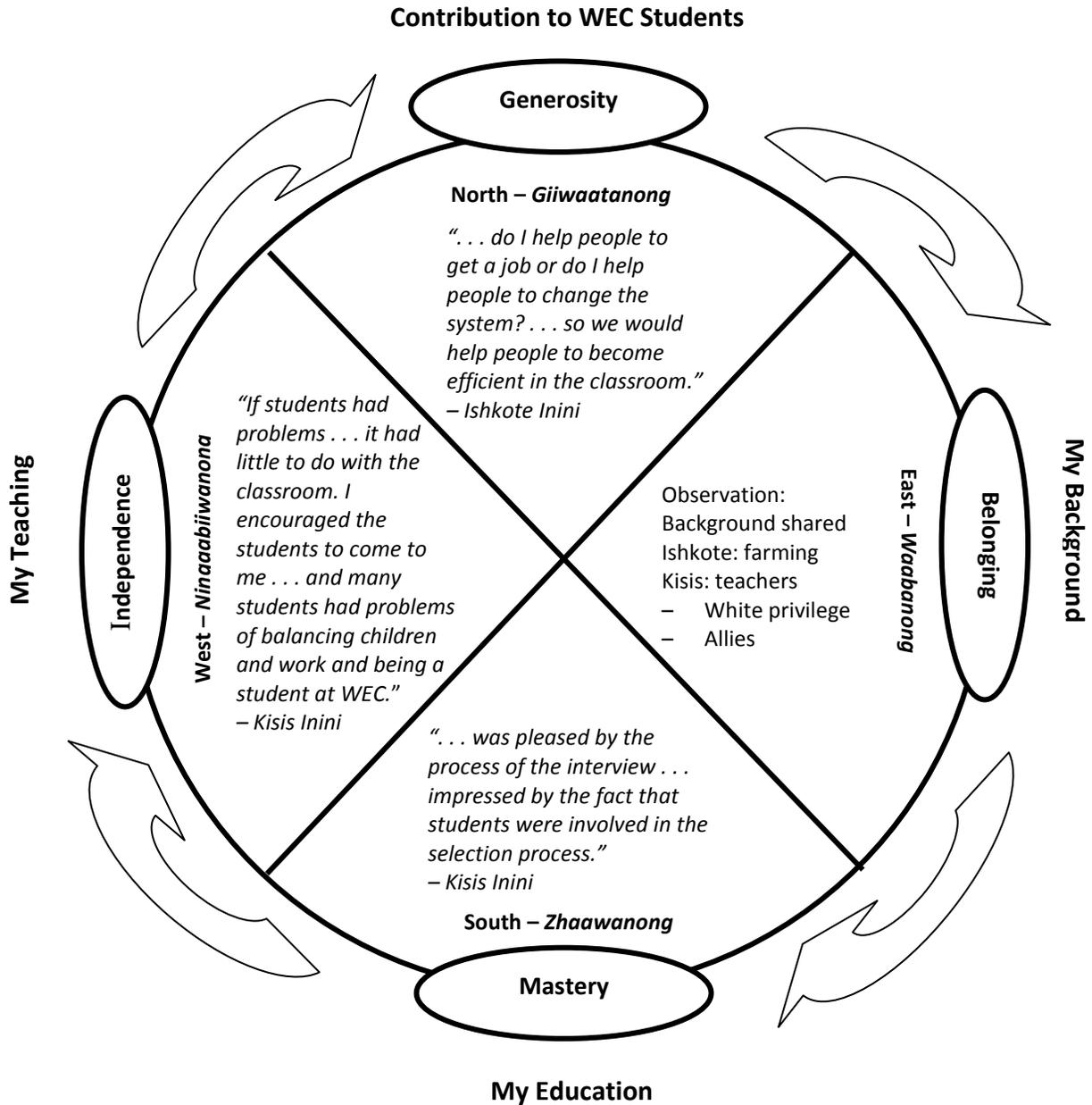


Figure 8: The Voices of Professors at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

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East: Belonging – My Background

We start in the East for the professors' journeys through the circle. The two professors (*Ishkote Inini* – Fire Man and *Kisis Inini*-Sun Man) shared their stories of their experiences with me while working at the Winnipeg Education Centre. Both *Kisis Inini* and *Ishkote Inini* are retired. *Ishkote Inini* shared a story about how as a young boy his father taught him about relationships with and the value of helping people:

Probably most of our values are formed before we're aged twelve but (laughs) my father, I remember a neighbor broke his leg just right before seeding time and my dad organized I don't know a whole bunch of farmers to help plant this guy's crop. Now that must have taken a lot of organization, I don't know how it all happened of course but you'd organize the seed to make sure you had all the seed there and get all the tractors and so on to plant all this stuff with the seeders and things like that and anyways we planted his whole crop in one day or they planted his whole crop in one day (laughs). And another farmer wanted to build a barn and I remember dad organize a bunch of people to come and help build his barn, I don't know how the, the farmer needed lots of things to uh get the timbers and things you needed to build a barn with. But dad organized the personnel so that they could hammer things together and things like that. So I think I must have learned from dad about inter-relating with neighbors and so on and so on (laughs).

Kisis Inini had the advantage of both his parents being teachers: “*For some perverse reason I still shied away from teaching thinking I didn't want to follow in my parents' footsteps. That proved to be wrong.*”

Because the professors have already situated themselves within a teacher education program and they didn't share as much information about their backgrounds, I focused on how

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they created spaces of learning for students in the Independence section. I asked the professors the following interview question: Tell me about your own background and education. The education responses will be shared in the next direction, South: Mastery – My Education.

South: Mastery – My Education

In this direction, I will highlight each of the professors' education leading up to their work at WEC and why they wanted to teach at WEC. The interview question was: tell me about your education and why you wanted to teach at WEC. *Kisis Inini* gave up tenure at the university he was teaching at to come to WEC. *Kisis Inini* says that he was very impressed with the program and its origin and how the program emerged to increase the number of Aboriginal teachers in the province. I just love this story about *Kisis Inini* and how he came to WEC and in particular the students being part of the selection process:

I knew nothing about the Winnipeg Education Centre when I applied, that was in 1984. I knew a little bit about Winnipeg because I had taught a course in the '70s, a summer school course at the University of Manitoba. But I really didn't know Winnipeg at all, I had friends there and that was one of the nice things. Anyway, I was offered an interview while I was still teaching and I went for the interview and was pleased by the process of the interview in which [we] talked a bit and [I was] particularly impressed by the fact that students were involved in the selection process.

Kisis Inini came to WEC as the Director for the program and as part of the administration; he also taught courses and informally counselled students. He was very impressed with the Faculty at WEC and the students. He felt that after the years he spent in Winnipeg, he was quite knowledgeable about WEC, Aboriginal education and the institutions that WEC was involved with during his time at the Centre.

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Ishkote Inini had an interesting journey to WEC. *Ishkote Inini* taught in various universities before he came to Winnipeg and WEC. He shares how he came to WEC:

I heard you know that they had decided in Manitoba to prepare Aboriginal teachers so I said, I'll come and help with that (laughs). So I came here and we started lots of programs. We started the BUNTEP program (Brandon University's Northern Teacher Education Program); PENT program for the education teachers that started the year before but they were just getting their feet under them; IMPACTE, the Indian, Métis project out of Swan River; and the Winnipeg Education Centre (laughs) and thank goodness like I always lived here in Winnipeg but we would fly out to Split Lake and Garden Hill and Nelson House and so on to work in the schools there...I would take these blocks and everything like that to Nelson House as well. In fact I remember putting these base ten blocks in the boat in Garden Hill because the only way we could get from one place to the other was to place the blocks in the boat.

In the next section, we hear their stories of their philosophies, theories and approaches to teaching at WEC.

West: Independence – My Teaching

In this direction, I will highlight each of the professors' philosophies, theories and approaches to teaching at WEC and what philosophies and theories guided their teaching. The interview question was: what philosophies and theories guided your teaching at WEC and what approaches did you implement when teaching adult learners from various cultural backgrounds. *Ishkote Inini* shared that one of his philosophies is reason. He believes that “*people should know what they are doing*” and here is a story he shared about reason:

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I have this idea that people should know what they're doing, it's a strange idea (laughs) because all the other universities, I think, just wanted to teach people you know, here's what you do when you get into class, you follow the textbook or do whatever it is they're doing in the school and you help the kids pass the test. In fact I would help the kids over at "A" school and I went over there with my student teacher because I was going there. And this one poor little kid had done, one half plus one half equals one half and I said you know you've done all these problems wrong. He said "well just tell me how to get the answer, don't tell me what's going here at all here, just tell me how to get the answer because I want to get rid of this sheet" and that's what is going on in schools and I fear it's still going on. Poor little kid didn't understand at all what he was doing with fractions you know and didn't understand the answer was reasonable.

Ishkote Inini shared that manipulatives for teaching Math helped people to see what they were doing in mathematics:

and that's why, what I did back at WEC with all the blocks and so on was to try to help people to kind of see what in the world they were really doing with place value and multiplication. And so this is why we played with blocks and so on and you know even to this day I give some of this stuff to these teachers here and they don't know what to do with it, they sort of say well why would you want mini-computer or a pappy computer or anything like that or we're too busy we don't have time for understanding? We don't have time for understanding, oh we just follow the textbook and do what we're told here (laughs). So they'd reject all my pappy computers and mini-computers and all that stuff that I subjected all you people to (laughs). But again I think you know that really shows the contrast.

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Ishkote Inini also provided me with the following text to support his philosophies:

I wanted to teach at WEC for two reasons, at least. I see a greater need for equality than we have had in recent past. To overlook 15% of our population was a crime. Second, as I learned in Guyana and Chicago, traditional education often disempowered those not in the middle class. William Whyte and Niji Mahkwa students often came last on standardized tests. Truly progressive education would welcome the creative values of all learners in the system. In summary my main theories and philosophies are: Greater equality is a good and thinking is more important in education than memorizing meaningless symbols. Hence we need concrete materials at early stages of learning, at least.

Ishkote Inini also felt that concrete, hands-on materials were often better than symbols.

He said that teachers need teacher centres where they can make their own materials or adapt those found in a centre. For example, *Ishkote Inini* said Island Lake teachers changed all the word games from English to Oji-Cree.

Kisis Inini shared his philosophy and approach to teaching:

But when I did teach at WEC I applied the principles of teaching that I had applied during my years in the College of Education. One of the things about teaching philosophy and uh history of education is it's a lot of attitude for stimulating discussion and raising of issues and asking people, asking students to ponder the issues and so instead of a straight lecture, which many of my colleagues did, I evolved a kind of, a more student involvement with me in the lead and I've had responses from many students over the years that this was really important to them. That they had never had, even the questions for example, the existence of a public school system wasn't in fact in the Marxist term a

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part of the state apparatus guaranteed to ensure the maintenance of the same power structures and class structures that have existed forever or were we just as teachers playing toward the powerful?

If students were not succeeding in the program, I asked the professors how they intervened. *Kisis* talked about providing support one on one:

I did quite a lot of, I felt it was a small situation compared to the other universities that I had been used to and I was able to, individually, connect to students and if there were students that... and I encouraged students to come to me if they had problems and many students had problems that had little to do with the classroom but problems of balancing children and work and being a student at WEC. Those were many of the kinds of problems that I tried to deal with and so I would have lots of one on ones with my, the students and got to know most of them quite well. And tried in various ways as I got to know the community better, I tried in various ways to give them support and assistance.

Ishkote Inini shared that many students had the academic skills to succeed in the program but if they weren't succeeding, it was due to outside sources, such as family not supporting the student:

Students did succeed for several reasons, so seeking reasons for lack of success was a good first step. Learning from grandparents, parents and others is important. One student did not continue because his family housed so many visitors to Winnipeg. You might say he was too caring. Others changed their goals at WEC, perhaps to be activists rather than academics, or to pursue work of a different value. Few students who left were not capable. If such students were not succeeding I could mainly suggest a change in order of their activities, not the value.

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Some of the strategies the two professors shared to support students academically were included mentors and role models who had experience in the real world. Many of the students had to juggle being a full time student and raising a family. Some students were caring for multiple generations in their families as well such as aging parents, their own children and in some cases, grandchildren. This is why “*taking the campus to the community*” as *Ishkote Inini* shared, removes one of the barriers in order to support students. To support students academically, he shared two pedagogical strategies:

Diversifying materials in the classroom. I thought of it as the smorgasbord approach to teaching where several options were made available so the learners could choose the approach that matched their learning style. Secondly, I invited diverse individuals like architects and physicist to teach beyond my skills.

The staff at WEC was very supportive to the students and provided supports wherever possible, we heard this with the students’ stories and the professors shared how they were able to support students academically and personally.

The final question for the west direction is if you taught in more typical teacher education programs, what are they and how do/did your teaching methods differ.

Ishkote Inini shares:

More typical training programs were mainly words written or spoken as in lectures and blackboards. My teaching methods always included more concrete materials where we made geoboards out of plywood sheets, or balance scales out of boxes. In Guyana, I got the Technical Institute to make us baskets full of Cuisenaire rods.

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Kisis Inini had shared his philosophy of teaching earlier and he remembered the Christmas dinners at WEC that were not necessarily connected to teaching methods, but about the collegiality and generosity of the students:

I don't think I would say that my methods of teaching and or administration changed very much when I got to WEC. It was based upon, what I earlier said about, democratic decision making and um students involved teaching rather than lecturing and continued it much the same way. I had to learn a lot about the nature of the students, the nature of their background and umm the nature of the world in which they were going as Graduates and I think that helped. I don't know if you remember the Christmas dinners? Things like that were very impressive, I was very impressed by the way they involved the students and their families and uh it was much more intimate, I would say, a program than any other that I had ever taught in and I really reveled in meeting the children of the students and things like that. It was, in my view, better because of that intimacy and that involvement beyond the centre itself.

North: Generosity – Contributions to WEC Students

In the North direction, generosity is how the professors felt they contributed to the lives of the students during the time they were teaching at WEC. Both professors worked at promoting the idea that the students of WEC were worthy of being teachers and that WEC was a viable institution of learning that produced high quality teachers with life experiences that would benefit the education system. *Kisis Inini* shares the following:

One of the things we had to do and I'm not talking about students now is that we had, one of the constants we had to deal with was overcoming the idea that we were a Bachelor of

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Education like program that were pushing our students through with lower standards to get them to have a degree and for many people that meant that they wouldn't be hired because we had to overcome this reputation. Which I'm not sure during the three years that I was there that really happened even though I think when we went out student teaching I think we impressed the teachers in the schools. Our students graduated with the other B.Ed. students from the University of Manitoba and I think it improved but that was a strategy I don't think the government directed enough to, or the Division, directed itself to understanding.

Ishkote Inini also shares the following about WEC being criticized about the type of students at WEC and the challenges they faced as a program within an institution:

And this is one thing I didn't tell you about, we were always accused of creaming at the Winnipeg Education Centre, they said "You always take the best of the people and help educate them" I mean the rank and file would never be able to put up with this. Well did you think we creamed at the Winnipeg Education Centre? (laughs). I think that's a very negative word in a sense, it implies that most people aren't capable and you took only the few who were capable but you know I can imagine people. One thing I probably didn't put in there was that the Association gave us a hard time at the very beginning. They said, "Why do you want to educate these Aboriginal teachers?" because they had never done it (laughs). In fact, I think I put somewhere in there that when I came back to Manitoba there was only 12 Aboriginal teachers that I knew about, out of teaching staff of 12,000 in Manitoba – only 12 Aboriginal teachers! And I said somebody's children [are] going to have problems with this (laughs) so that's why I think the programs were good ones.

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In addition, *Kisis Inini* shared this point about WEC and the students:

I think we had good students, I'm not saying all of the students who came here were good but all of them came motivated. They had been initially; they had taken the initiative to apply. They had been carefully vetted too, by a wide range of community members too and people from the centre. And some of them, most of them, succeeded. I don't know if you've done any statistical work on the period when you were there but very, very few didn't get their B.Ed. and didn't get their professional certificate. And sometimes they found difficulty finding schools that were willing to take them and I felt sorry about that. We were, specifically I think, directed to prepare teachers for urban poor schools, North End Winnipeg in particular. But a lot of, a surprising number of, the people who got their B.Ed.'s from WEC ended up in rural Manitoba and ended up sometimes back on First Nations and that's okay but we were expected to have created a sophisticated urban teacher for North Central Winnipeg rather than a general teacher and I don't know of the extent to which we succeeded in that. (Kisis Inini)

Kisis Inini shares about WEC and the intimacy; this is sacred. It is even beyond friendship and relationship. Today, many of these relationships still exist and, sad to say, we even attend the funerals of our peers, their family members and professors. Here is what *Kisis Inini* shares about intimacy:

Well I think to some extent I've answered that but another dimension is it relates back to what I just talked about is intimacy... I contributed to them by caring for them. That sounds rather sentimental or cliché but [it's] hard to say more. When I left, and I don't know, Helen, whether you were there the year that I left but the outpouring of affection and support of what I had done for the previous three years was astounding to me. I've

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never experienced that in any other workplace and so maybe that speaks for itself, I don't know.

Ishkote Inini mentioned in an earlier section that translating materials into Aboriginal languages was beneficial for communities like Island Lake who wanted to teach Math in the Aboriginal languages. He felt that having this available for schools was important and was a way that he contributed to WEC. Both professors felt that students choosing their Program Director, as *Kisis Inini* shared earlier, and staff empowered the students to choose who they wanted as professors. *Kisis Inini* and *Ishkote Inini* felt that this contributed to the richness and diversity of the staff:

If anyone wanted to teach at the Winnipeg Education Centre we said: well you have to come for an interview with the students (laughs). The students will select the professors and professors who wouldn't subject themselves to that, we knew, wouldn't be good teachers. So to begin with we had this whole idea that if you're going to be interviewed to teach at the Winnipeg Education Centre you've got to come for an interview with the students and I don't know all, well I forget all the questions the students asked, probably interrogated with but boy that was a good interview I think. And so we got tip top people to be involved in the place, but the poor university has never learned about that either, you know they still have this strange idea that other colleagues can probably pick better professors than the students can. But you see that gets back to that whole idea that, is the educational institution set up for the students or is it set up for the system? (laughs) Students versus systems and the university is equally set up for the system you know.

Teaching or activism is one idea that *Ishkote Inini* noted as providing some tension. He shared this:

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Yeah they certainly were a contrast but again I started by sort of saying we always had this tension about we wanted to get people jobs, we wanted to get people employed and so that meant you couldn't really do things radically at all, you know you couldn't make major changes. So I would say the contrast was always in my own mind between do I help people to get a job or do I help people to change the system? And I'm afraid I caved in on most occasions when I look at it in retrospect with the fact that getting jobs was more important than changing the system. So we would help people to become efficient within the schools you know. But again as I said earlier quite a number of teachers in the schools very well know that the schools were not anything and they were merely doing what they were told you know. Okay we'll help select the textbooks for our classrooms or something like that and workbooks and the all the rest... So I try to find this middle ground again between helping people to see what they're up to or understand what they're doing and help them to get the answer.

But in the end, *Ishkote Inini* felt that WEC's greatest contribution was getting people credentialed:

There was often tension at WEC over helping the students to get jobs in regular schools, or teaching progressive pedagogy. I felt WEC's greatest contribution was getting people credentialed at the U of M so they could choose a future path. I was pleased when some high schools hired our elementary school graduates since people there knew that some of the main student weakness was a weak elementary school upbringing.

In closing, one of the comments that exuberates the life of the spirit of WEC was what *Kisis Inini* shared about one of the convocations with a group of graduates' celebration and fun:

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I hadn't looked up my memorabilia or my pictures but and I don't know whether you were in this one but there was one picture of us at the Graduation out at the University of Manitoba and I'm wearing my Ph.D. regalia and they're wearing, these young women were wearing their gowns that they were going to be getting their Degrees with and we're sort of lifting up our legs, showing our legs off (laughter) underneath these gowns and I was in the middle of them. It was a delightful picture and I have it somewhere.

I am honoured the participants chose me to listen to their stories, to capture a time when Aboriginal teacher education was at its peak, one might even say in its revolutionary period because I see my fellow peers in positions within the education system that are impacting education in a very meaningful and challenging way. The professors touched my heart with their stories of activism, dedication, and advocacy. I am humbled that I learned how to be a teacher from two individuals that sincerely care about education and people.

In the next and final chapter, I share some themes, what I learned and future directions and recommendations.

Chapter 6: Discussion

In this final chapter, I share some themes that emerged, what I learned from my study and future directions and recommendations. I felt a sense of privilege being able to hear the personal stories and experiences from the students and professors. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, I felt honoured that the participants chose me and trusted me with their stories because they were personal and intimate memories, especially for the students having to recall some painful memories such as having to leave their communities to attend school. Hearing their stories in places where they felt comfortable – either within my home or office space, in their homes or on the telephone – was very important. I felt a connection to all of them regardless of the location of interview and looked forward to hearing their experiences and reliving a time in all our lives that was transformative and others may even say revolutionary because some of the graduates that emerged from WEC went on and did some pretty amazing work within the education and Aboriginal communities within Winnipeg and Manitoba. I observed some WEC graduates contribute to the community by founding some organizations such as Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc. and the North End Women’s Center. Did all the WEC graduates become teachers? No, some became activists as mentioned above because they saw a need within the Aboriginal and north end/inner city communities and addressed it by creating community based organizations to meet the social needs.

As a researcher, I used Indigenous models to organize the information – the Circle of Courage® (belonging, mastery, independence, generosity); the Four Questions from the Sinclair teaching (who am I, where do I come from, what is my purpose and where am I Going); and the Vision, Patience, Reason and Motion teaching. These models/teachings helped me to recognize and organize the themes that emerged through the students’ and professors’ stories into the four

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directions of three Circle Frameworks: The Students (Figure 3), The Students at WEC (Figure 5) and The Professors (Figure 7) (Chapter 5: *Tipachimowin: Their Stories*). These stories shared the strength and confidence of the students and how WEC transformed their lives as women and educators. The professors' stories demonstrated the commitment and advocacy from the professors and their belief in the WEC program.

I am honoured the participants shared their stories, to capture a time when Aboriginal teacher education was at its peak, one might even say in its revolutionary period, because I see my fellow peers in positions within the education system that are impacting education in a very meaningful and challenging way. The professors touched my heart with their stories of activism, dedication, and advocacy. I am humbled that I learned how to be a teacher from two individuals that sincerely care about education and people.

Settee (2008) Study

In 2008, I conducted a study for one of my Master's degree courses on the impact the teacher education programs had on the students. I interviewed three Aboriginal women who were ACCESS education students attending teacher education programs in the 1980s. The three Aboriginal women participants from my 2008 study had transformative experiences in their lives which included: identifying racism, development of voice (Laramee, 2013), developing relationships and strengthening family bonds, and increasing their quality of life by receiving their post-secondary education.

The WEC teacher education program positively impacted the students as educators. For example, all three participants in the Settee (2008) study became change agents, independent, self-sufficient women in their families. The women also developed voice and were able to

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advocate for themselves, their families and community in their various roles as educators. The instructors were described by one of the students as “socialists and [they] believed in social justice” (Settee, 2008). They challenged students to think and act in alternative ways of learning and teaching. These educators held to a social and educational activist approach to teaching and they challenged our way of viewing education and deconstructing western ways of teaching and learning.

Living a Good Life

By receiving an education, the quality of life increased for the students. One of our *Anishinaabe* teachings is to prepare for the next seven generations. Reciprocity is one of the values I learned from my study. The students all shared that by getting an education, it helped them improve their quality of life so they could provide a living for their families, but more importantly, they wanted to give back to their communities and make a difference in the education system. WEC was created at a significant time in Canadian history when not only Manitoba, but also the rest of the country, was training Aboriginal people to become teachers. This was in response to the White Paper Policy (Battiste & Barman, 1995) that was to be enforced for First Nations peoples in the 1970s. During this era, one of the goals was to train Aboriginal people to become teachers. WEC’s mandate was also training people who were raised in inner city communities to become teachers to specialize in inner city education. The students, by receiving their education, were preparing for the next seven generations as our Elders tell us when we are making decisions; think about your grandchildren and their grandchildren so that our decisions will have positive impacts for the future. The students all felt that they were able to give back to their communities as educators and as women in their families.

A Community within a Community

Building a community within a community – a small campus with a big agenda – is what I also learned in my study. WEC began as an off-campus program from the University of Manitoba in the 1980s and students formed community through collegial and supportive relationships. There are three sub-themes: supportive relationships between professors and students; social and academic support among students; and system supports.

Students and Professors

There were limited student supports, such as counselling, as we heard from the students. However, the staff at WEC did their best to support the students who were struggling with personal and academic issues. Some students also felt there was limited support to navigate your way through the university system if you needed to take a course off campus. The WEC staff did their best to accommodate students' learning needs, but having a full-time counsellor would have benefited the program. Students also shared how they developed relationships with the staff at WEC because of it being an off-campus community.

This is when I met Laara Fitznor, who at the time was completing her Master's program and she came to WEC to complete her practicum. Her support was needed and the students gravitated to her because of the counselling support but also because she was a Cree woman. There were no Aboriginal staff at WEC and Laara being there provided a role model and mentor for many students. Numerous students have also maintained a lifelong relationship with Laara.

I learned that equity, capacity building and supportive staff made a difference. The professors made a difference with the students' transformation to educators. They provided

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learning experiences that were challenging and thought provoking as shared in my previous chapter. Through these challenging experiences, students were able to develop their voice and confidence. *Nibi Ikwe* shared that because of her fluency in the *Anishinaabe* language, in her fourth year she was asked to teach an introductory course in Ojibway to WEC students. She was encouraged by many to teach the course and this built her confidence to teach the course and she did a wonderful job – I know because I was one of her students. By WEC staff encouraging *Nibi Ikwe* to teach the Ojibway class, they were also building capacity within WEC so that she could teach the language in subsequent years.

One of the student participants shared that the professors in the 1970s and 1980s were socialists and activists. She shared that those academics had a very different background from the Ivory tower type of academic. This was a transformative experience for the students, having people who believed in them and who knew that they had something to offer to the education system.

Students Supporting Students

Helping each other is one of the important things I learned in my study. Students supported each other academically, financially and personally. I was touched by the story that was shared by *Nibi Ikwe* when the students in her group would pool money together to help other students in need of groceries. I remember in my second year, when my son was born, my year group had a baby shower for me during the lunch hour. These were students who were all on fixed incomes, yet they had the generosity to help each other.

In my 2008 study, one of the participants shared that her relationship had dissolved and she was sitting in her home with no furniture and two young children. She was surprised one day

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when a truck arrived and there was furniture and bags of clothing for her children. The students in her class gathered furniture and other household belongings to help their fellow classmate. This is the generosity students experienced at WEC.

Students also shared how they supported each other academically by having study groups and tutors for courses. These additional supports were beneficial to students in successfully completing coursework.

The students shared how they developed relationships with each other because of the small class sizes. We all need support systems for encouragement, for assistance and to feel accepted. Through their collegiality, the students worked together and developed supportive networks. When pursuing post-secondary studies, there are various ways to support your learning and the students shared the various strategies to help each other academically. I remember sitting at numerous kitchen tables studying notes taken in class, making flash cards with definitions and key concepts and discussing these concepts. It was a different era because we did not have computers in those days and it was a very different type of learning.

In my 2008 study, one of the students shared that the students supported each other by having learning cadres which was created for students to take personal responsibility for themselves and for each other. The students in the cadre supported each other academically, socially and emotionally. These cadres were accountable to each other and if the cadre was successful, everyone was successful. If the cadre failed, everyone failed, so they worked together to keep each other sober and studying and basically kept everyone on track.

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System Supports

A smaller location with a smaller number of students created an atmosphere of belonging and more cherished relationships formed amongst students and staff of WEC. The small class sizes and being located at an off-campus location were all positive aspects of the WEC program. The financial supports such as living allowances, tuition and books were provided for students and alleviated debt load. Even with these supports, some students had to work part time jobs to cover additional expenses for cost of living.

Interpreting the Data through the Lens of My Own Experience

For this section, I developed the diagram *Esikwe (Helen Settee) at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework* (see Figure 9 on page 127) to illustrate my experience within the Circle of Courage® framework.

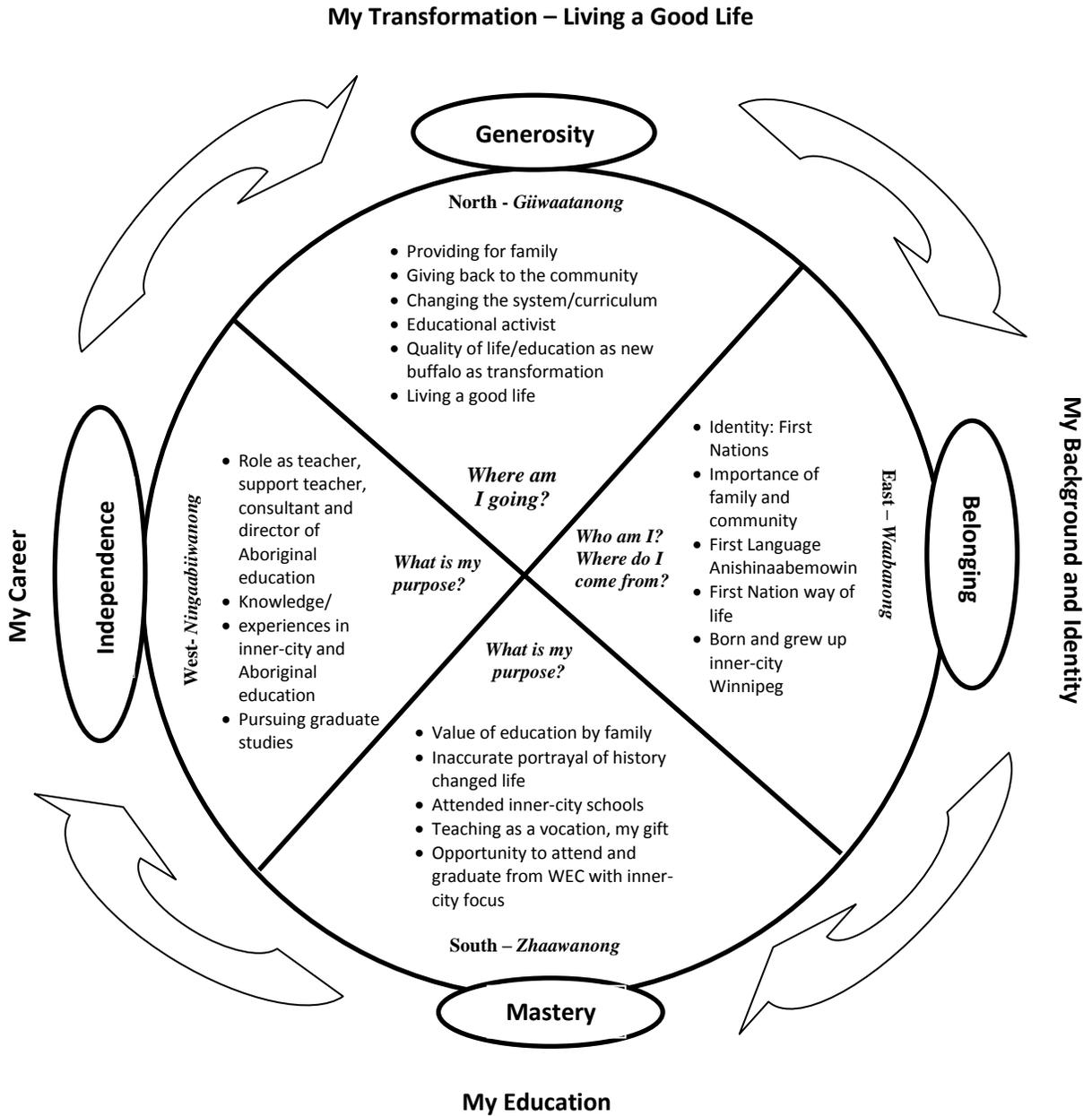


Figure 9: Esikwe (Helen Settee) at WEC in the Circle of Courage® Framework

I start in the East Direction – Belonging, My Background and Identity. I am *Anishinaabe* from Dauphin River First Nation and I am grateful that *Anishinaabemowin* is my first language. *Aki Ikwe* and *Nibi Ikwe* also understand and speak *Anishinaabemowin*. My background is similar

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to the students' experiences, who all had a connection to their home communities and strong relationships with family. I also grew up with First Nation ways of life having respect for the land, for the people and myself. Even though I was born and raised in the inner city of Winnipeg, I am grateful my parents ensured we knew where our home community was and that they took us on road trips to be with family and friends.

In the South direction – Mastery I outline my education. My parents valued education. All three student participants talk about the importance and value of education that their parents instilled in them as young children. Being raised in Winnipeg, I did not have to leave my home community like the three student participants to attend high school or training. One of the stories Aki Ikwe shared was an inaccurate portrayal of history when she was a student. I had the similar experience when I was in Grade 6. This experience in Grade 6 had a lifelong impact on me and is the reason I chose to become a teacher. I wanted to change how Aboriginal people were perceived in learning resources and I am in a position to influence change in my present position with the Department of Education. I am honoured to have been selected to be a student at the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. This experience like that of the three student participants had a transformative effect on my personal and professional life as a graduate of WEC.

In the West direction is Independence, My Career. The first ten years of my career was spent teaching in schools within the inner city of Winnipeg. I had the privilege to teach students from various cultural groups including First Nation and Metis students. After being in four different inner schools as a teacher and support teacher, I took on the challenge of consulting with the Department of Education working with school divisions on policy and programs. I later was Acting Director of one of the branches and eventually was Director. I decided to pursue

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graduate studies in Education and am honoured to have worked with many people in Aboriginal education across the province of Manitoba and throughout Canada. Both *Aki Ikwe* and *Nibi Ikwe* also held numerous positions in education and contributed to education in various areas.

In the North direction is Generosity and My Transformation – Living a Good Life. By receiving my Bachelor of Education, I was able to sustain a career in education and improve the quality of life for my family. I am also able to give back to my family and community. This is also referred to the “new buffalo” (Stonechild, 2008). By receiving an education, this was a transformative experience for me. I have gained confidence as a learner, teacher and as an *Anishinaabe Ikwe*. I live a good life within my community and try to be the best *Anishinaabe* I can be, not in an egotistical way, but with confidence and competence.

Recommendations and Future Directions

As a result of my learnings in this study, I recommend the following:

1. Continue to support students in Aboriginal teacher education programs/ACCESS programs by providing supports financially, academically and socially. One of the more significant supports that was provided for the students was financial supports through tuition and books being provided for students and living allowances. Providing these supports alleviated significant pressure for the students so they could concentrate on their studies. There have been some gains made in the past couple of decades with respect to Aboriginal student centers being established in post-secondary institutions (Richard, 2011). These supports would have helped the WEC students and need to continue and expand as the Aboriginal student population increases at post-secondary institutions. I also see the need for mentors for teacher candidates. These mentors could be available to teacher candidates by offering advice

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and moral support. Mentors could be made available through networks such as the Aboriginal Circle of Educators.

2. Develop more courses and offer ones that include Aboriginal content and perspectives. One of the areas that the students felt they did not have enough learning was by having courses about Indian Residential Schools, the Treaties and courses that focused on inner city pedagogies and methodologies. Yet, they felt expectations that they would have expertise in these topics. Again, there have been some developments within the teacher education programs; however, there is a need for more courses that focus on the past, present and future of Aboriginal peoples and perspectives that have evolved.

There is one three-credit-hour course Aboriginal perspectives course that is mandatory for all teacher candidates graduating from teacher education programs in Manitoba that was mandated by the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy in September 2008 (Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy, 2007). This course is a starting point for all students in the province to learn about the past, present and future in Aboriginal history and education; however, more courses and perhaps programs that have an emphasis on Aboriginal education need to be developed such as University College of the North, which has a focus on the North and the Cree Way of Life (Neff and Young, May 2013). This program has had a positive impact on training teachers for Northern Manitoba (Neff and Young) and can be utilized as a template for teacher education program development.

3. Develop an Aboriginal education teacher strategy for Manitoba to increase the number of Aboriginal teachers in the Manitoba. The *Aboriginal Teachers Questionnaire Report 2009* showed that there were 10% of Aboriginal teachers in the province who self-declared as Aboriginal. If the population of teachers should closely resemble the population of students,

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there is a need for more teachers since the Aboriginal student population is estimated at 15.4%. The strategy could have the following elements imbedded: policy development, recruitment strategies, retention supports, and course and or program development in Aboriginal education, hiring and mentorship.

4. Encourage and support graduates who are Aboriginal, especially WEC graduates, to pursue graduate studies. I started my graduate studies when my sons were young boys and I was working full time, but I put my studies on hold until they got older. Supporting WEC graduates would build capacity within the educational community to benefit the system at the school, school divisional, in First Nation communities, post-secondary institution levels.

Conclusion

I am honoured I had the opportunity to hear the stories of students and professors from the good old days. I enjoyed their stories and am humbled they shared part of their lives with me. I want to share, in closing, the following excerpt from Chapter Six: It's the WEC Way, written by the late Kim Clare, from *Moving Forward Giving Back: Transformative Aboriginal Adult Education* by Jim Silver (2013) which I feel also applies to WEC Education:

Within the community of the ICSWP [Inner City Social Work Program] there is a lively atmosphere filled with optimism for social change and hope for the inner city to be a better place to live. Roanna Hepburn, program administrator since the very first days, recently reminisced about the program and coined the phrase, "the WEC way." When asked about her perspective on program success she said that "in the early days the idea was that our graduates would infiltrate the social agencies and the inner city schools and make change from within. And that's happening!" The WEC way, perhaps intangible, does have heartfelt meaning to many proud inner city folks. (p. 75)

Miigwetch. Kinanaskomitin.

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Appendix A: Ethics Protocol Submission Form: Script of Oral Recruitment Communication – Students



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

**Ethics Protocol Submission Form
Script of Oral Recruitment Communication –: Students**

Research Project Title: *Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience*

Researcher: Helen Settee

Helen: Hello. My name is Helen Settee and I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. I know it has been <indicate time: years, months> since I last spoke or saw you. I trust you have been keeping well.

Student: Allow time for response, such as, “Hi Helen, it is good to hear from you”.

Helen: As part of my graduation requirements, I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. As part of my graduation requirements, I am conducting a qualitative study to examine and describe the histories and experiences of Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) students and professors in order to identify transformative experiences while at the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s. In April 2008, I completed a quasi-research study, titled *Sharing Experiences in a Teacher Education Program*. This study included three Aboriginal women who were students in an ACCESS teacher education program (but not specific to the WEC) in the 1980s. A theme of transformative experiences emerged from this study. Therefore, I am interested in your experiences as a student and as an educator. My study involves education students who attended the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s and meet the following criteria: Aboriginal woman, graduated from WEC in the 1980s, have taught in a public or First Nation school for minimum of five years, and are currently working an education related field, or have recently retired from education and have had these career experiences. Your stories will add another layer of experiences from a related program to these stories.

Student: Allow time for response and potential question(s) or to repeat phrase.

Helen: My study has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this study, you can contact Margaret (Maggie) Bowman at Margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca or by phone 204-474-7122. If you agree to be involved, I will meet with you at a time and place that is convenient and comfortable for you and interview you for about an hour to an hour and a half. I will be recording the interview and taking notes. Everything you tell me will be kept strictly confidential and you do not need to

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

answer any questions that make you uncomfortable and you are free to stop the interview at any time.

Helen: My research will take place during the month of April 2014. It is important for you to know that your participation in the study is completely voluntary and there is no remuneration.

Helen: Do you have any questions?

Student: Helen to answer any potential questions.

Helen: I hope you will consider being involved in my research– your feedback will be very helpful in examining the impact of teacher education programs as they relate to Aboriginal educators and the contribution you are making in education.

Professor: Helen to answer any potential questions.

Helen: I hope you will consider being involved in my research– your feedback will be very helpful in examining the impact of teacher education programs as they relate to Aboriginal educators and the contribution you are making/made in education.

Helen: Do you have a pen and paper? If you have, any questions or concerns about this study contact me by email umsette2@myumanitoba.ca. You can also contact my research supervisor, Dr. Laara Fitznor by phone at (204) 474-7158 or email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca

Helen: Do you have any questions? If yes, answer them.

Does this study interest you? If yes, ask them when would be a convenient time to meet and potential location. If you agree, I will need you to sign a consent form for the study. I can email it to you if you want to review it before the interview.

Professor: Sure, here is my email.

Helen: Thank you for your time and I look forward to our interview.

Appendix B: Ethics Protocol Submission Form: Script of Oral Recruitment Communication – Professors



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

**Ethics Protocol Submission Form
Script of Oral Recruitment Communication – Professors**

Research Project Title: *Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience*

Researcher: Helen Settee

Helen: Hello. My name is Helen Settee and I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. I know it has been <indicate time: years, months> since I last spoke or saw you. I trust you have been keeping well.

Professor: Allow time for response, such as, “Hi Helen, it is good to hear from you”.

Helen: As part of my graduation requirements, I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. As part of my graduation requirements, I am conducting a qualitative study to examine and describe the histories and experiences of Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) students and professors in order to identify transformative experiences while at the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s. In April 2008, I completed a quasi-research study, titled *Sharing Experiences in a Teacher Education Program*. This study included three Aboriginal women who were students in an ACCESS teacher education program (but not specific to the WEC) in the 1980s. A theme of transformative experiences emerged from this study. Therefore, I am interested in your experiences as a professor who taught at the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. I understand you are retired and I am requesting your participation by sharing information about your background, why you wanted to teach at WEC and what strategies and theories guided your teaching.

Your stories will add another layer of experiences from a related program to these stories.

Professor: Allow time for response and potential question(s) or to repeat phrase.

Helen: If you agree to be involved, I will meet with you at a time and place that is convenient and comfortable for you and interview you for about an hour to an hour and a half. I will be recording the interview and taking notes. Everything you tell me will be kept strictly confidential and you do not need to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable and you are free to stop the interview at any time.

Helen: My research will take place during the month of April 2014. It is important for you to know that your participation in the study is completely voluntary and there is no remuneration. My study has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

have any concerns or complaints about this study, you can contact Margaret (Maggie) Bowman at Margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca or by phone 204-474-7122.

Helen: Do you have any questions?

Professor: Helen to answer any potential questions.

Helen: I hope you will consider being involved in my research– your feedback will be very helpful in examining the impact of teacher education programs as they relate to Aboriginal educators and the contribution you are making/made in education.

Helen: Do you have a pen and paper? If you have any questions or concerns about this study contact me by email at umsette2@myumanitoba.ca. You can also contact my research supervisor, Dr. Laara Fitznor by phone at (204) 474-7158 or email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca

Helen: Do you have any questions? If yes, answer them.

Does this study interest you? If yes, ask them when would be a convenient time to meet and potential location. If you agree, I will need you to sign a consent form for the study. I can email it to you if you want to review it before the interview.

Professor: Sure, here is my email.

Helen: Thank you for your time and I look forward to our interview.

Appendix C: Information Letter for Participants (Cohort Students)



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

Information Letter for Participants (Cohort Students)

Date

Dear (Participant's Name):

I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. As part of my graduation requirements, I am conducting a qualitative study to examine and describe the histories and experiences of Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) students and professors in order to identify transformative experiences while at the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s. In April 2008, I completed a quasi-research study, titled *Sharing Experiences in a Teacher Education Program*. This study included three Aboriginal women who were students in an ACCESS teacher education program (but not specific to the WEC) in the 1980s. A theme of transformative experiences emerged from this study. Therefore, I am interested in your experiences as a student and as an educator. Your stories will add another layer of experiences from a related program to these stories.

If you would be willing to share your experiences, please contact me at umsette2@myumanitoba.ca. If you agree to be involved, I will meet with you at a time and place that is convenient and comfortable for you and interview you for about an hour to an hour and a half. Everything you tell me will be kept strictly confidential and you do not need to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable and you are free to stop the interview at any time.

It is important for you to know that your participation in the project is completely voluntary. The focus of this study will be in the area of Aboriginal teacher education, as it relates to Winnipeg Education Centre students and professors.

I hope you will consider being involved in my research—your feedback will be very helpful in examining the impact of teacher education programs as they relate to Aboriginal educators and the contribution you are making in education. If you have any questions or concerns about this study contact me by email at umsette2@myumanitoba.ca or my research supervisor, Dr. Laara Fitznor at (204) 474-7158 or email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

My study has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this study, you can contact Margaret (Maggie) Bowman at Margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca or by phone 204-474-7122.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Helen Settee
Graduate Student and Principal Investigator

Appendix D: Information Letter for Participants (Professors)



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

Information Letter for Participants (Professors)

Date

Dear (Participant's Name):

I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. As part of my graduation requirements, I am conducting a qualitative study to examine and describe the histories and experiences of Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) students and professors in order to identify transformative experiences while at the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s. In April 2008, I completed a quasi-research study, titled *Sharing Experiences in a Teacher Education Program*. This study included three Aboriginal women who were students in an ACCESS teacher education program (but not specific to the WEC) in the 1980s. A theme of transformative experiences emerged from this study. Therefore, I am interested in your experiences as a professor who taught at the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. Your stories will add another layer of experiences from a related program to these stories.

If you would be willing to share your experiences, please contact me by email at umsette2@myumanitoba.ca . If you agree to be involved, I will meet with you at a time and place that is convenient and comfortable for you and interview you for about an hour to an hour and a half. Everything you tell me will be kept strictly confidential and you do not need to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable and you are free to stop the interview at any time.

It is important for you to know that your participation in the project is completely voluntary. The focus of this study will be in the area of Aboriginal teacher education, as it relates to teacher education programs and teachers who are Aboriginal.

I hope you will consider being involved in my research– your feedback will be very helpful in examining the impact of teacher education programs as they relate to Aboriginal educators and the contribution you are making in education. If you have any questions or concerns about this study contact me by email at umsette2@myumanitoba.ca or my research supervisor, Dr. Laara Fitznor at (204) 474-7158 or email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

My study has been approved by the Education Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB). If you have any concerns or complaints about this study, you can contact Margaret (Maggie) Bowman at Margaret.bowman@umanitoba.ca or by phone 204-474-7122.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Helen Settee
Graduate Student and Principal Investigator

Appendix E: Research Instruments



Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

Research Instruments

The research instrument will be semi-structured interviews using the following open-ended questions:

Three Aboriginal women students who graduated from Winnipeg Education Centre from the 1980s are:

1. Tell me about your own background and education.
 - a. How do you identify with your Aboriginal background??
 - b. Where and when did you receive your teacher education?
 - c. What is your current role as an educator?
2. What made you decide to become a teacher/educator?
3. Tell me about some of your experiences within the WEC teacher education program.
 - a. What were some of the successful elements of the teacher education program?
 - b. What were some of the program barriers of the teacher education program?
4. Compare your experience in the WEC teacher education program to:
 - a. Your own previous and subsequent educational experiences
 - b. The experiences of colleagues who took more traditional routes to teacher education

The interview questions for the two professors who taught at Winnipeg Education Centre during 1980s are:

1. Tell me about your own background and education.
2. Why did you want to teach at WEC?
 - a. What philosophies and theories guided your teaching?
 - b. What approaches did you implement when teaching adult learners from various cultural backgrounds?
 - c. What if students were not succeeding, how did you intervene?
 - d. What strategies did/ you use to support students academically?

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

3. If you have also taught in more typical teacher training programs, what are they and how do/did your teaching methods differ?
4. How do you feel you contributed to the lives of students at WEC during the time period?

Appendix F: Consent Form for Participants (Cohort Students)



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

Consent Form for Participants (Cohort Students)

Research Project Title: Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories About Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

Principal Investigator and contact information: Helen Settee
Email umsette2@umanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor and contact information: Dr. Laara Fitznor
Email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca Telephone (204) 474-7158

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. As part of my graduation requirements, I am conducting a qualitative study to examine and describe the histories and experiences of Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) students and professors in order to identify transformative experiences while at the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s. In April 2008, I completed a quasi-research study, titled *Sharing Experiences in a Teacher Education Program*. This study included three Aboriginal women who were students in an ACCESS teacher education program (but not specific to the WEC) in the 1980s. A theme of transformative experiences emerged from this study. Therefore, I am interested in your experiences as a student and as an educator. I also want to learn more about your experiences as an Aboriginal person at Winnipeg Education Centre, why you wanted to become a teacher and the contributions you are making or have made in education. Your stories will add another layer of experiences from a related program to these stories.

This study will require you to participate in one interview for approximately one hour to one and a half hours in April 2014. The questions you will be asked will be open-ended questions about your experiences as a student in a teacher education program and the impact your education has had on you as an educator within the education system. The information you provide will be used to understand the program elements that make a teacher education program successful or not.

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

The interviews will be audio taped and written notes will be kept to record your ideas and responses.

The benefits of participating in this study are gaining a sense of well-being because of sharing your experiences that contribute to a greater understanding of professional growth and development of Aboriginal students and professors in teacher education programs. There is no potential risk of your involvement in this study.

The data is anonymous and will not include your name; pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. Any identifying information about you or the school will be stored in a locked location at all times to ensure confidentiality of the information. Only I, my research supervisor and a potential transcriber will have access to these documents. The transcriptionist will sign a pledge of confidentiality and will be sent to Education Nursing Research Ethics Board Chair. These written notes will inform my study as it relates to teacher education and Aboriginal people.

There will be no remuneration or compensation for you as a participant.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You will be free to disregard any questions during the interview or withdraw from the research at any time by telling me, without any negative consequences. Your data will be destroyed after your withdrawal from the study.

You will have an opportunity to review the transcribed notes after the interview and a brief 1-3 page summary of the study by June 2014 via mail or email. The results of the study will be available to you by providing your contact information at the bottom of the consent form.

The results of the study will also be made available on University of Manitoba M space, to my Thesis Research Committee and to conferences such as the Shawane Dagoiwin-Aboriginal Education Research Forum 2014.

All tapes/data will be erased and notes will be shredded at the end of the study in December 2014.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about this study contact me by email umsette2@myumanitoba.ca or my research supervisor, Dr. Laara Fitznor at (204) 474-7158 or email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

This research has been approved by the Fort Garry Campus Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the coordinator of Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board, Margaret.Bowman@ad.umanitoba.ca or by telephone (204)474-7122.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Please send me a written summary of the results of the study:

(email or mailing address)

Appendix G: Consent Form for Participants (Professors)



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

Consent Form for Participants (Professors)

Research Project Title: Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories About Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

Principal Investigator and contact information: Helen Settee

Email umsette2@umanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor and contact information: Dr. Laara Fitznor

Email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca Telephone (204) 474-7158

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

I am a Graduate student at the University of Manitoba in the Faculty of Education. As part of my graduation requirements, I am conducting a qualitative study to examine and describe the histories and experiences of Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC) students and professors in order to identify transformative experiences while at the Winnipeg Education Centre during the 1980s. In April 2008, I completed a quasi-research study, titled *Sharing Experiences in a Teacher Education Program*. This study included three Aboriginal women who were students in an ACCESS teacher education program (but not specific to the WEC) in the 1980s. A theme of transformative experiences emerged from this study. Therefore, I am interested in your experiences as a professor who taught at the Winnipeg Education Centre in the 1980s. Your stories will add another layer of experiences from a related program to these stories.

This study will require you to participate in one interview for approximately one hour to one and a half hours in April 2014. The questions you will be asked will be open-ended questions about your experiences as a student in a teacher education program and the impact your education has had on you as an educator within the education system. The information you provide will be used to understand the program elements that make a teacher education program successful or not.

The interviews will be audio taped and written notes will be kept to record your ideas and responses.

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

The benefit of participating in this study is gaining a sense of well-being because of sharing your experiences that contribute to a greater understanding of professional growth and development of Aboriginal students and professors in teacher education programs.

There is no potential risk of your involvement in this study.

The data is anonymous and will not include your name; pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. Any identifying information about you will be stored in a locked location at all times to ensure confidentiality of the information. Only I, my research supervisor and a potential transcriber will have access to these documents. The transcriptionist will sign a pledge of confidentiality and will be sent to Education Nursing Research Ethics Board Chair. These written notes will inform my study as it relates to teacher education and Aboriginal people.

There will be no remuneration or compensation for you as a participant.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You will be free to disregard any questions during the interview or withdraw from the research at any time by telling me, without any negative consequences. Your data will be destroyed after your withdrawal from the study.

You will have an opportunity to review the transcribed notes after the interview and a brief 1-3 page summary of the study by June 2014 via mail or email. The results of the study will be available to you by providing your contact information at the bottom of the consent form.

The results of the study will also be made available on University of Manitoba M space, to my Thesis Research Committee and to conferences such as the Shawane Dagoiwin-Aboriginal Education Research Forum 2014.

All tapes/data will be erased and notes will be shredded at the end of the study in December 2014.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have any questions or concerns about this study contact me by at email umsette2@myumanitoba.ca or my research supervisor, Dr. Laara Fitznor at (204) 474-7158 or email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Fort Garry Campus Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB) at the University of Manitoba. If you have any concerns or complaints about

Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the coordinator of Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board, Margaret.Bowman@ad.umanitoba.ca or by telephone (204)474-7122.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Signature

Date

Please send me a written summary of the results of the study:

(email or mailing address)

Appendix H: Pledge Form – Transcriptionist



**UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA**

Faculty of Education

Department of Educational Administration,
Foundations and Psychology

**Pledge Form
Transcriptionist**

I, _____, transcriptionist for Helen Settee, Graduate student
for

Research Project Title: Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories About Their
Winnipeg Education Centre Experience

Principal Investigator and contact information: Helen Settee

Email umsette2@umanitoba.ca

Research Supervisor and contact information: Dr. Laara Fitznor

Email laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca Telephone (204) 474-7158

pledge confidentiality on the data being entrusted to me in my role as transcriber for this study.

Transcriber

Date

Principal Investigator/Graduate Student

Date

Appendix I: Research Certificate



Research Ethics and Compliance
Office of the Vice-President (Research and International)

Human Ethics
208-194 Dafoe Road
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3T 2N2
Phone +204-474-7122
Fax +204-269-7173

APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

April 3, 2014

TO: Helen Settee (Advisor L. Fitznor)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Lorna Guse, Chair
Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board (ENREB)

Re: Protocol #E2014:023
"Tipachimowin: Students and Professors Share Stories about Their
Winnipeg Education Centre Experience"

Please be advised that your above-referenced protocol has received human ethics approval by the Education/Nursing Research Ethics Board, which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement (2). This approval is valid for one year only.

Any significant changes of the protocol and/or informed consent form should be reported to the Human Ethics Secretariat in advance of implementation of such changes.

Please note:

- If you have funds pending human ethics approval, please mail/e-mail/fax (261-0325) a copy of this Approval (identifying the related UM Project Number) to the Research Grants Officer in ORS in order to initiate fund setup. (How to find your UM Project Number: <http://umanitoba.ca/research/ors/mrt-faq.html#pr0>)
- If you have received multi-year funding for this research, responsibility lies with you to apply for and obtain Renewal Approval at the expiry of the initial one-year approval; otherwise the account will be locked.

The Research Quality Management Office may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba *Ethics of Research Involving Humans*.

The Research Ethics Board requests a final report for your study (available at: http://umanitoba.ca/research/orec/ethics/human_ethics_REB_forms_guidelines.html) in order to be in compliance with Tri-Council Guidelines.