

RUNNING HEAD: REDEFINING EDUCATION THROUGH ANISHINAABE PEDAGOGY

REDEFINING EDUCATION THROUGH ANISHINAABE PEDAGOGY:
A JOURNEY TO CLARIFY HOW ABORIGINAL EDUCATION BROUGHT ME TO
ANISHINAABE PEDAGOGY

BY

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ABSTRACT

Using a bifocal, place conscious Anishinaabe-Western/Euro-Canadian lens, the evolution of Aboriginal education is examined from a personal and professional perspective. Meaning surfaces from the lived-experiences of the author, an Anishinaabe woman, educator, parent, community member and Aboriginal education specialist, and what continues to unfold at national, provincial and local levels as “Aboriginal education” with an emphasis on what is taking place in south central Manitoba. The thesis highlights the resurgence of Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching and learning, specifically Anishinaabe pedagogy, and identifies goals for education from an Anishinaabe lens that looks beyond academic success to pedagogical tools that can help restore wellness and well-being for all Canadians.

Keywords: Aboriginal education, Anishinaabe pedagogy, Indigenous, First Nations, Métis, Inuit

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I dedicate this thesis to my daughter Syrena who has grown up a great deal since I began this thesis journey in 2007. Syrena I hope you find something nourishing within these pages that gives you strength, hope and a sense of place in the world as an Anishinaabe Métis woman.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Boozhoo, Tansi, Aniin. Wapinoong Ikwe Ndishinikas. As an Aboriginal education consultant, I've asked many questions about the abstract notion named "Aboriginal education". What is it? What do we want teachers to teach? What do we want students to learn? How do we want students to come into such knowing? I also wondered what influence I had in changing educational systems and curricula. Was I having an impact on teachers' daily practice? Was I helping to increase academic success for Aboriginal learners?

I continued this exploration by looking more closely at the concept of Aboriginal education to consider how it was being developed, implemented and assessed. For these reasons, I felt a need to analyze and evaluate all the various perspectives; to critically examine how I have come to my own understanding of Aboriginal education. Within this process, ceremony, storytelling, and Anishinaabe pedagogy have been very important for my learning, research and perspective on Aboriginal education. Anishinaabe ways of teaching and learning helped me find my role, and to better understand who I am as an Anishinaabe woman, as an educator, a mother and as a Canadian. I hope this thesis will help teachers, schools and communities with planning and assessment of Aboriginal education and help each reader to find place of belonging and a place to contribute.

Chapter One defines those critical moments that led me to this study. I identify problems, issues and contemplations surrounding Aboriginal education to illuminate my growing knowledge of Anishinaabe education and pedagogy from a local place-conscious

lens. Anishinaabe pedagogy has systematically been overlooked in our modern constructions of Aboriginal education.

In Chapter Two, I use an “Aboriginal Education Initiatives Timeline” to review relevant literature, including scholarly works, and grassroots, political, legal and government documents to understand how Aboriginal education has emerged as a socially constructed phenomenon. I also aim to illustrate how Indigenous ways of teaching look at the changing presence of Indigenous peoples while recognizing the revitalization of Indigenous ways of teaching and learning through the growing presence of Indigenous educators. This helps me locate myself further by looking at our individual and collective stories.

In Chapter Three, I build on the work of Shawn Wilson (2009) and use ceremony as the metaphor to understand Indigenous methodology. The sweat lodge acts as a conceptual framework and provides a process to answer my questions in a way that brings me into knowing myself and my community. The sweat lodge, metaphorically, is like returning to the Mother’s womb; entering that place where we can feel nurtured, and where it is safe to go to our spiritual centre to explore and answer the questions that take us from deep self-reflective spaces to clarity. It also illuminates Indigenous pedagogy where holistic, student/person-centered and relational perspectives guide our interactions and thought processes. The sweat lodge is much like putting medicine wheel teachings into practice. It creates a space to move back and forth between lived-experience, feelings, attitudes, ideas, understanding and beliefs.

Chapter Four uses the metaphor of steadying the kaleidoscope. I aim to be pragmatic; to look critically at the pieces that continue to influence the make-up of Aboriginal education I explored in the first three chapters.

Chapter Five is meant to take the best of both worlds, Western and Indigenous ways of teachings and learning, and to keep in focus the goals, limitations and possibilities that are available from both Western and Indigenous perspectives as we work to further define education.

Defining Moments

When I first began to answer the many questions that brought me to write this thesis in 2008, I realized there was little literature available that illuminated the distinction between the pedagogy of local First Nations' cultures and the institutionalized field of Aboriginal education (Battiste, 2004), an area that I was drawn to explore. It was helpful that one of the first Master's thesis courses I took with Dr. Barbara McMillan asked me to identify those critical moments that helped define me as the teacher I had become. This was an important part of my investigation as I had to situate myself and make sense of my own journey as an educator. Working as an Aboriginal Education Consultant for the Winnipeg School Division at the time, it was important for me to understand my role and the huge responsibility at hand. Overall, it helped me locate myself and illuminate my life experience. It took me down a path to explore notions of Aboriginal education outside of Western thought.

As an Aboriginal Education Consultant my role was to support further developments in Aboriginal education, whether it is curriculum development, policy, new programs and schools. My thesis in part began as a process to understand and increase the efficacy of my

work. By understanding the inner working of the education system, this process has been useful as it helped me reflect deeply on my role as an educator and as an Aboriginal Education Consultant. Initially, I wanted to understand how to naturalize the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives into curricular and various aspects of school planning and programming. I now realize this thinking starts from the basis of Western pedagogy with huge limitations. In addition, I've had to play the part of being a cultural broker: acting as a bridge between two worlds. In efforts to utilize the best of both worlds, to merge the goals of Western Euro-Canadian schooling and the Indigenous of Indigenous people, it is vital to make way for the authentic representation of Aboriginal peoples in how we understand Aboriginal education. It has been equally important to contribute to an understanding of how local and distinct First Nations' cultures contribute to Aboriginal education as a conceptually growing phenomenon in school systems that has the power to transform education for all students.

To illuminate such a perspective, I use an in-depth "bifocal" (Archibald, 2008; Atleo, 2005) and place-conscious lens to balance Indigenous and Euro-Canadian perspectives on the topics of Aboriginal education. My goal is to take the best of both Western and Indigenous ways of teaching and learning in an attempt to improve outcomes for all learners. This in turn, illuminates the need for Indigenous people to be equal participants as we (re)conceptualize (Aboriginal) education.

Given the resurgence of Indigenous epistemology and pedagogy, it's vital that we utilize what I call a place conscious lens in our review of Aboriginal education. We must be cognizant of our local Indigenous nations and differentiate between the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe speaking nations) and the Neheyawak (Cree speaking nations). In comparison,

would it not be ridiculous to go to Europe and call the people there the “Europeans” making no distinction between the diversity of nations? The fact is, the term Aboriginal education continues to overshadow and simplify the diversity that exists amongst Indigenous nations in Canada, especially when these initiatives do not dig deep enough to be able to acknowledge how local knowledge structures inform our Aboriginal education initiatives. My concern, like others including Marie Battiste (2013), is that the distinct voices of Indigenous peoples are overshadowed by the term Aboriginal education. As a resident of south-central Manitoba and a person of Anishinaabe/Innue and Métis descent, I turn to my local Anishinaabe culture to consider what has been extracted from the life-ways of this cultural community that contributes to what is perceived and taught as “Aboriginal perspectives” in Winnipeg schools. In addition to using personal narrative that draws from lived experience, I will use an Anishinaabe cultural lens to steady this conversation. This complements extensive reading of academic literature to differentiate between Western and Aboriginal education. As I look back to my personal perspective and collective perspectives, I focus on what is problematic with Aboriginal education.

The Problem with Aboriginal Education

To begin, the interdisciplinary field of Aboriginal education itself continues to be a concern for a number of reasons, not the least of which is defining what the phrase “Aboriginal education” means to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, particularly those involved with teaching and learning. What is problematic with this term is that it is a socially constructed Western idea, like the invention of “the North American Indian”. The trouble with concepts, such as “North American Indian” and “Aboriginal education” is that

they are both generic terms that can keep us at a distance from historical truths and gloss over distinct identities. The self-naming for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples has been in conflict with the ways in which they have been defined by the federal government of Canada, which has been steeped in paternalistic law and legislation. The term “Aboriginal” combined with the term “education” further compounds what is problematic. It is so broad that it often overshadows the existence of distinct First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. For this reason, we must look beyond the paired concepts of “Aboriginal” and “education”: terminology that can obscure, if not conceal, contributions at local levels.

We cannot expect educators to understand the perspectives of distinct First Nations if we do not make them apparent. Whose responsibility is it to illuminate such knowing, especially when the knowledge of Indigenous people in Canada remains rudimentary? As someone who identifies as Anishinaabe, Inninew and Métis ancestry, as well as being an Aboriginal education specialist, it is part of my responsibility to answer these questions. What we mean by “Aboriginal,” “education” and “Aboriginal education” can each have fluid meanings, depending on who is teaching, the period in history being considered, and who is setting the terms. Prior to contact, there was no concept of the idea of Aboriginal education. There were, however, Indigenous ways of teaching and learning.

To be place conscious, I look to the Anishinaabe to recognize what is being taken up from local Anishinaabe that is being deemed as “Aboriginal education” within our public schools. For example, the integration of “The Seven Teachings” has become one of the latest topics to be embraced by a number of schools within Winnipeg. Over a 15-year period, I have seen this Aboriginal education initiative grow and, in many cases, shape shift from school to school. I noticed that these teachings were being taught and showcased in several

schools as the “Aboriginal Seven Teachings” or “The Seven Teachings”. In both cases, the titles overshadowed the Anishinaabe origins. Identifying the “Anishinaabe Seven Teachings” as Aboriginal teachings assumes a Pan-Aboriginal perspective that can mislead students into believing that all Aboriginal peoples across Canada maintain such teachings, and that Aboriginal Peoples and their teachings are all the same, which is simply false. In addition, as noted by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, (1996), the “add and stir” model of bringing Aboriginal education into the school curriculum, environment, and teaching practices has not achieved the needed change but continues to sustain the superiority of Eurocentric knowledge and processes.

If teaching and learning practices continue to be premised on Eurocentric ways of knowing, how then do we allow Aboriginal peoples, more specifically local First Nations and Métis voices, to be the tellers of their own existence, especially within the constructs of modern schooling? In such a context, I find myself needing to acknowledge what informs my own practice as an Aboriginal education specialist. This requires that I look deeper, to unearth what lies beneath our local and modern conceptions of Aboriginal education. In doing so, we would find the pedagogy of the Dakota, Dene, Métis, Nehayawak (Cree) and Anishinaabe (Ojibwe speaking peoples). My goal, then, is to look beyond notions of Aboriginal education and initiatives.

Notes on Terminology

The term Western refers to European or Euro-Canadian colonial perspectives that have come to dominate perspectives within the established Canadian education system.

The term Indigenous refers to the First peoples; descendants of the original or pre-colonial peoples found within Canadian borders. It can also mean original peoples of

various countries worldwide. The term Indigenous is currently gaining popularity in Canada as it replaces the term “Aboriginal”. A recent example is the Government of Canada renaming “Aboriginal and Northern Affairs” to “Indigenous and Northern Affairs” in 2015. There has been great push back against imposed terminology that define diverse Indigenous peoples with a singular term like Aboriginal. In some cases many people use the term Aboriginal to identify themselves as part of larger collective identity, as it captures a shared common and troubled relationship with European and Canadian government authorities (Lum, 2015). In addition, the term Pan-Aboriginal perspective has been used to understand common and collective national experiences encountered by diverse First Nations across Canada, but it forces broad generalizations that further overshadow unique experience. This thesis aims to avoid a pan-Aboriginal perspective in order to understand the diversity amongst Indigenous Peoples that reside within Canada, particularly the Anishinaabe.

Although it has been put forward that Canada has a relationship with Aboriginal peoples as stated in the Canadian Constitution, not Indigenous peoples, I prefer to use the term Anishinaabe and Indigenous as both terms affirm the First Peoples, or original people, with specific locations. Anishinaabe is identified from a local Indigenous lens, and the term Indigenous is identified from a global lens (see the Martineez Cobo Study’s working definition of Indigenous peoples as presented in Asia Pacific Forum and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2013). However, for the sake of continuity and clarity with the topic of this thesis, I will use the term Aboriginal education as it is more commonly understood at this time in history.

The term “Indigenous” is used not in its global sense but to refer to the descendants of First Peoples within the boundaries of Canada. In the earlier part of our shared history on this continent, archeologists would come to play a huge role in renaming First Peoples. This renaming has been entrenched in Western literature. They categorized Indigenous Peoples using terms like “cultural area groups” that creates clusters of Indigenous nations based on similarities in their subsistence lifestyles. Unfortunately, within this process Indigenous nations were muffled in the telling of their own existence. The renaming has the effect of depersonalizing our origins as First Peoples within our homelands. This alienation contributes to the identity crises many Indigenous youth encounter as a result of convoluted naming and renaming of First Peoples (Fitznor, 2006).

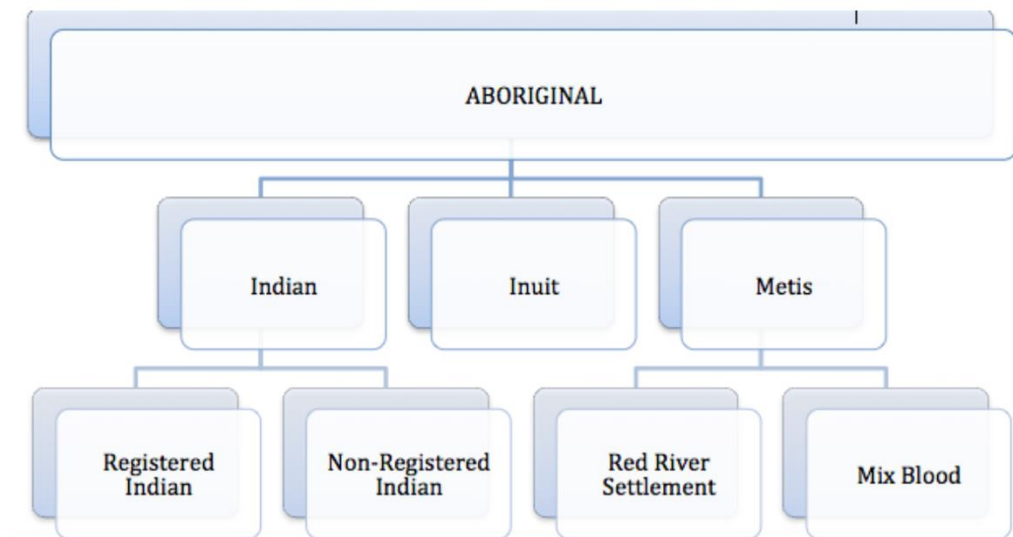


Figure 1. Aboriginal Peoples as defined by Sec. 35 of the Canadian Constitution

The word “Aboriginal” provides a common denominator to capture three collective but distinct groups in Canada as illustrated in Figure 1. The term only came into usage in Canada in 1982 when Aboriginal Peoples were defined under section 35 of the Canadian

Constitution in order to affirm the unique political and legal relationship the Government of Canada has with Aboriginal Peoples. It is a modern form of racialization and identity politics (St. Denis, 2007; Warner, 2006), “resulting in a complex system that can be hard to understand and that often divides people from the same family into different groups” (Fox, Lavallee, Poitras, & Sataa. 2008, p. 2). I question the sense of using such a term derived from legal and political realms when our goal is to educate.

As seen from our collective past, Canadians have learned about First Nations, Inuit and Métis people from the lens of Western epistemology: an outsider perspective. The term “Indian” is a prime example as it is a term invented by and serving colonial purposes. It “is the most distorted and dehumanizing figure in White North American history” (LaRocque, 2010, p. 4). Today, the term “First Nations” is preferable to the term “Indian” or “Native”. In many contexts, the use of the term Indian may be viewed as offensive, but it is still used within legal contexts, namely in reference to the Indian Act. When we look at this “terminology from a ‘corrective lens’ what comes into focus is an overwhelming presence of Eurocentric and hate material in our archives, histories, literatures, school textbooks, and contemporary popular cultural productions” (LaRocque, 2010, p. 5) that perpetuate negative stereotypes and false representation of the First Peoples. The term “First Nations” has replaced the word Indian when referring to people identified as Indians, registered or non-registered, under the Indian Act. There are 617 First Nation communities in Canada, 63 of which are located in Manitoba. Early European explorers thought they were in India when they landed in North America, so they called the original inhabitants Indians. This term sets First Nations apart from Inuit and Métis.

The term First Nations was adopted by the Assembly of First Nations to refer to their membership and to recognize First Nations members by their nations. Figure 2 shows the origins of certain terms, and the transition from Indian to using the term Anishinaabe (R. Chartrand, 2004). Some of these terms like the word Indian or Native are losing popularity but are still in usage today. As an act of self-determination First Nations people are reclaiming their cultural and linguistic identities by way of their mother tongue. Geographically, the most commonly spoken Indigenous languages within Winnipeg, and its surrounding area include languages of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Inninew (Cree), Inuit (Inuktitut), Métis (Michif) and Dakota's

Anthropological Language	Legal/Political (and changing politically correct) Language	Self-Determining Language
Eastern Woodland Plains Indian Southwest Northwest Plateau Great Basin Arctic Subarctic	Indian Native First Nation First Peoples Aboriginal Indigenous Half breed/Métis Eskimo	Anishinaabe (Ojibwe speaking) Dakota (Siouan-speaking) Dene (Dënesųłiné speaking) Haudenosaunee (Iroquoian language family) Inninew (Cree speaking) Inuit (Inuktitut speaking) Métis (Michif speaking)

Figure 2. Terminology: From Indian to Anishinaabe (R. Chartrand, 2004)

The term “Métis” refers to “descendants of the unions of First Nations women to European men during the fur trade and colonization era” (Métis Federation of Canada, 2013-2015). This definition has been politically challenged by people who recognize the Métis as having blood lineage that can be traced to historic Métis communities like the Red River Settlement. The Métis have recently been reclassified as being Indians under the Indian Act of Canada (Supreme Court of Canada, 2016). The broader usage of the term Métis is not supported by current Canadian case law.

The term “Inuit” has replaced the derogatory term “Eskimo” when referring to Indigenous peoples in and from the Canadian arctic. It has been a long journey to get it right in terms of knowing which language to use when referring to the original occupants of North America.

Defining Anishinaabe Pedagogy

Although the term pedagogy was created within Western constructs to encompass the theory and practice of how best to teach in educational settings, it is a useful concept to understand that Indigenous peoples had epistemologies, or ways of knowing, as well as pedagogical practices, ways of transmitting knowledge (Battiste, 2004; Laramée, 2013). The pedagogical practices of the Anishinaabe and Euro-western cultures are fundamentally different. For the Anishinaabe culture it is difficult to separate traditions from education, because theory and practice are interwoven animate features (Battiste, 2002, 2004, 2008, 2013). This interconnectedness is a characteristic element of the Anishinaabe pedagogy that sets it apart from the precepts of Euro-western structures of education. This is not to say Anishinaabe epistemologies, ways of coming to know, are radically different from other

First Nations like the Inninew (Cree speaking people) or the Haudenosaunee (otherwise known as the Mohawk people). In fact, there are many common threads that weave together an understanding of First Nations epistemology as noted by the Canadian Council of Learning (2007) in the “First Nations Life Long Learning Model“. These can be viewed as a common way of approaching pedagogy, as the art and science (and maybe even craft) of teaching. Mark Smith (2012) suggests “a good way of exploring pedagogy is as the process of accompanying learners; caring for and about them; and bringing learning into life” (p. 1).

What sets Anishinaabe pedagogy from Western ways of teaching and learning are the educational experiences that are focused on developing the whole child, which is more expansive than the goals found in the current mainstream educational system. Overall, Indigenous ways of teaching and learning are defined in part as a relational pedagogy, land-based, experiential, and holistic in perspective (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). This way of teaching and learning has been defined as animate (Battiste, 2004, 2013). The goals can also be identified as the pedagogy, or the ways in which students are brought to knowing. Based on all that I have read, experienced and developed in my own practice and to bring clarity to Anishinaabe pedagogy I use the following modern terms to identify Anishinaabe pedagogy as:

1. **Relational pedagogy** that relies on interaction with our daily natural world and the relationships we have with all beings that occupy our life space and the world around us. Learning can be seen as a natural consequence of our interaction with these variables, but, pedagogically, the goal is to bring students into a mindful understanding of our relationships and the experiences with all their relations. Anishinaabe pedagogy relies on the land as a textbook and the people as living libraries (Chartrand, 2012).

2. **Holistic learning**, where attention is brought to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of each learner. Pedagogically, students would be engaged in learning that draws attention to all aspects of ones being. The goal is to help students master their inner resource and apply it to daily to their lives. It is both a belief and the goal that we must provide opportunities to develop the whole child including development of the spirit, not religion. An undeveloped spiritual domain can lead to a futile existence. The spiritual aspect of our children is that place where we must nurture/develop each child's sense of self in relation to the world around them. The place where they find purpose in life and connect meaningfully to their life existence. It is the place within where they are inspired and moved into action. It is the place that holds personal willpower and/or volition (Bopp, Brown, Lane, 1984).
3. **Experiential learning** implies the belief that children need direct contact and interaction with people, places and things they learn about and interact with daily. Pedagogically it is the valuing of life experience. It is the belief that life experience is necessary to bring one into knowing. Animate learning implies the need to experience and apply knowing as opposed to passive, decontextualized rote learning (Battiste, 1995, 2008, 2013).
4. **Student/learner centered**, relies on the belief that we must value the life experience of each and every child that would advance them along a continuum of holistic human development from their critical centre. The goal is to help each learner find one's gifts, purpose, and sense of belonging: identifying where they can contribute to an individual and collective sense of well-being. Each child must be given opportunities to learn from their critical center in order to gather coping and development tools that will help them

take control and be responsible for their life journey. From a pedagogical lens, Anishinaabe cultural and/or pedagogical practices are increasingly available to all young people within public education. Examples of these cultural practices include daily smudging and sharing circles, Sunrise and/or Pipe Ceremonies, rites of passage ceremonies, vision questing or Sundance Ceremonies. Pedagogically, each child would come to these ceremonies when they are ready. Just because a child turns 13 years of age doesn't qualify her/him to engage in certain ceremonies simply because they are seen as becoming a teenager from a western lens. Anishinaabe pedagogy as student centered learning would help each child and each teacher to determine when each child is ready to engage and advance to the next stage in their personal development. The cultural protocols would help determine this.

5. **Strength-based learning** is focused on the recognition that every child has a gift/talent/attribute(s) that make her/him unique and that can serve a role in supporting collective well-being. The goal of the teacher is to help each child find her/his gifts.
6. **Inclusive and engaged learning** that does not seek to discriminate against other children who are not Anishinaabe. The term Anishinaabe is thought to have two meanings. The first refers to "the people", in other words, human beings. The second draws from linguistic and oral traditions that tell the story of the first Anishinaabe man being lowered down from the stars to Mother Earth (Benton-Banai, 1988; Robson, 2008). Our cultural identities are equally developed from our language and traditions that are deeply connected to the land-base from which we originate as distinct First Nation societies. Our teachings lead us to act in a way that serves to benefit the

collective, to support human life and human development, as it contributes to wellbeing for all. This was evident in pre-European community practices. It's evident in the early peace treaties, which demonstrate how First Nations welcomed Europeans to this land. These acts of kindness are indicative of a value system that places life, relationships and responsibility to one another at the utmost core of why and how we do things.

7. **Land-based education** provides a place conscious lens to see the historical, cultural and modern landscapes that provide opportunities for learning from the land, from Indigenous peoples and from the languages and traditions of local Indigenous peoples. (Cook, Davis, Dykun, & Firman, 2015; Simpson, 2014).

To further describe Anishinaabe pedagogy, I use storywork, a personal reflection of my educational, professional, and personal experiences, as pathways to further explore the similarities and difference between the Euro-western and Anishinaabe ways of teaching and learning. Storywork allows me to examine the world around us as a means to transform it (Archibald, 2008; 2010; Fitznor 2012; Pitawanakwat, 2009).

Until recently, there was very little literature written about Anishinaabe pedagogy (Absolon, 2009, 2011; Battiste, 2002; Bell, 2013, 2015; Benton-Banai 1988, 2007; Johnston, 2003; Pitawanakwat, 2009). My goal is to build on the few sources that attempt to define Anishinaabe pedagogy (Bell, 2013, 2015; Laramee, 2013), particularly in a form that can be understood from a basis in Western thought. There are three related peoples who embrace the term Anishinaabe. These are the Odawa, the Ojibwe, and the Potawatomi. All three speak Anishinaabemowin, the language otherwise known as Ojibwe and, in some places, identified as Salteaux (Benton-Banai, 2007; Pitawanakwat, 2009).

The Anishinaabe

As noted by Pitawanakwat (2009), the Anishinaabeg (plural) traditionally lived around and west of the Great Lakes when they first came into contact with Europeans. Colonization dispersed descendants over a vast geographical area that now includes Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta in the north, and Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Kansas, and Oklahoma in the south. The process of colonization changed the boundaries of the Anishinaabeg through population decimation, relocation, and displacement. “The most drastic change was the establishment of the reserve system, which dispossessed the Anishinaabeg of all but one percent of their traditional territory” (Pitawanikwat, 2009, p. 8). In Manitoba, there are currently 63 reserves populated by five language groups, including the Cree, Ojibway, Dakota, Oji-Cree, and Dene.

My roots, as traced through parents, take me to my father’s community known as Camperville/Pine Creek/Duck Bay. These are Anishinaabe Ojibwe-speaking communities within the Treaty 4 territory. My mother is from Lake Manitoba/Vogar, Manitoba situated in Treaty 2 area, an Anishinaabe/Métis community. Over my fifteen years as an Aboriginal Education Consultant, I have observed that a majority of cultural initiatives in Winnipeg schools tend to be Anishinaabe-centric in nature, perhaps due to the fact that by geography the Anishinaabe or Ojibwe-speaking First Nations communities are situated geographically closer to Winnipeg and its surrounding area. My discussion begins with a description of Anishinaabe pedagogy, which has existed since time immemorial.

Schooling Experience

I look first to my own schooling experience where I heard stories that exposed me to concepts of the Anishinaabe. Although some stories have been shared in my family, it was in

school, and within my local cultural community where I was able to weave together a better understanding of these teaching and our existence as Anishinaabeg. The art of storytelling through shared songs, stories and lived experience developed my conception of what it meant to be Indigenous, First Nations, and Anishinaabe and to later question the notion of Aboriginal education. The four stories presented below illustrate how I came into such knowing. It is also a good example of my experience as a student with Anishinaabe pedagogy.

Dan Thomas' story, "Four Original Laws of the Anishinaabe". The first story was shared with me at Argyle Alternative High School, in a grade 11 history class. Dan Thomas, an Anishinaabe educator and curriculum writer working for the provincial government developing Native Studies curriculum, had been invited as a guest speaker. What I observed was a local knowledge keeper sharing a story that has existed amongst the Anishinaabe people since the beginning of time. It was a story about the original laws that were given to the Anishinaabe people that, if followed, would help them maintain life on "the good red road" or, in other words, Mino-Pimatisiwin (Laramee 2013; Young 2005); a beautiful path that was left behind by our ancestors.

From an educational perspective it made me conscious of my own existence as an Anishinaabe person, and anchored me to a geographical location on Mother Earth. This gave me a sense of place, as I saw roots that ran deep. I also began to see a distinct nation of people that was hidden in plain sight. This was a critical learning moment for me in many ways, and I knew it wasn't anything like I had experienced before within the context of public schooling. I was used to learning about other people in faraway places or about Aboriginal peoples through the lens of a distant past. What Elder Dan Thomas brought with

him did not come from a textbook. It came from a story that had been passed down from generation to generation. In addition to his story, he brought an illustration of symbols, which included a circle with four quadrants that had a teaching situated in each of its four directions. From what I recall, the first teaching/law was sharing/caring; the second, kindness; the third, honesty; and the fourth, faith. Each of these teachings was accompanied by a symbol that has helped me retain what was shared through them. Each direction has a story to substantiate the meaning of the teaching. Within each teaching, Elder Dan Thomas used the land and the animals as learning tools to help retain information presented in the story. It demonstrates a relational pedagogy as he illuminated our relationship to the land, to the animals and to each other.

Today, I still ponder and draw meaning from the images and teachings presented within this story. These teachings are the basis of our cultural communities, and are essential to maintaining the distinctiveness and well-being of our people. The songs, The Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather teachings (Benton-Benai, 1998), ceremony, and protocols are interwoven expressions of Anishinaabe culture, identity and ways of teaching and learning as illustrated through story and symbolism. As I now reflect on this experience, I recognize the socialization value of the story. Stories challenge learners to take responsibility, to appreciate their choices, and to feel comfortable knowing that they have the power to make choices (as was illustrated in the honesty teaching described next).

The story itself encourages the integration of thinking, feeling and acting. For example, Elder Dan Thomas used the symbol of a tree to illustrate the importance of the honesty teaching. The tree represents to each Anishinaabe a personal sense of integrity as we walk this earth. We were told to remember that the trees are a reminder that we must

walk with honour. The teaching stated that we can walk through life making good or bad decisions, and, although we may think that we can get away with bad decisions, it is each and every one of us who must carry this knowing in our heart and in our mind. So when we walk through life, we can always find a tree that represents how crooked or how straight we have walked. It is a teaching about the responsibility to self-regulate our behavior. We must carry ourselves through this physical world and carry our conscience with us. The trees are a reminder to remember the teachings that encourage us to be moral beings as we move through life. Fundamentally, we must make decisions about our actions. From an Anishinaabe perspective, the act of making decisions is not just a cognitive problem-solving task. From an Anishinaabe perspective it is a mindful and holistic process that takes into account our emotional, physical, mental and spiritual well-being. We consider our relationship with other people and with all living beings, both animate and inanimate, in the world around us. This develops a mindful understanding of oneself in the world. This is reflective of an Anishinaabe worldview in how it is developed through cultural stories and language.

To understand the implications further, each person will have to make hard life decisions that affect not only her/his own interests, but the interests of other people as well. This is why we must be mindful of all our relations and how all our relations are interconnected in the web of life. As I now see, the educational outcomes were to instill moral values and ethics within a socialization context and to understand the humility of one's existence amongst all of Creation. Although the teachings have clear objectives, they are more open-ended in their approach as they rely on the learner to achieve these moral ends within a contemplative state. From a Western lens, I have compared these ways of

teaching and learning to character education within public schools. For the Anishinaabe, these teachings encompass much more than character education. They are expressions of an Anishinaabe/Indigenous worldview.

From a comparative lens, between Anishinaabe pedagogy and Euro-Canadian schooling experiences, Elder Dan Thomas' teachings were neither abrasive nor static or authoritarian. The Anishinaabe stories he presented imparted learning that cannot be measured easily using Western means of assessment. In many ways, I view these learning experiences as being more significant than the content I learned in my history course that year. More importantly, his words were freeing. They created a context within which I had the freedom to choose and to learn from my own life experience. For me, this story was the beginning of a journey that would anchor me to my own life existence as an Anishinaabe person. His teachings allowed me to immediately connect with Anishinaabe pedagogy, and to see how it lived in our homes, my community and later to see how it was enveloped and expressed within the "First Nations Holistic Life Long Learning Model" (Canadian Council of Learning, 2007). The illustration for this model shows each student as a living tree and, like trees, each student must have strong roots. This becomes the strong foundation from which students can emerge.

Myra Laramee's story, "Medicine Wheel Teachings". The second traditional teaching I learned took place that same year and was delivered by Myra Laramee, a local Indigenous educator who worked at Argyle School. Although Myra was Cree, she had come to learn the ways of the local Anishinaabe. The day my classmates and I were in her company, she shared what she had learned about Medicine Wheel teachings with us. Medicine Wheel teachings are an ancient symbol that originates with First Nations peoples.

It has many variations that can differ from one First Nations to the next. My focus is not on any particular medicine wheel, but to determine how it is used as an educational framework upon which to understand the many learning theories that derive from the First Nations of Turtle Island/North America. There are layers upon layers of teachings that are contained within this learning framework (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, & Lane, 1984).

On the day when Myra first presented the medicine wheel to us, she drew a circle on the chalkboard with four quadrants that reflect the four aspects of human beings. It was a new theory I had not previously seen. She wanted each learner within the room to take notice that each of us was more than our physical selves. Her words and illustrations turned our attention toward our inner spaces that helped us recognize that we were also emotional, mental and spiritual beings. She wanted us to see that we had more to nurture/develop than our mental self; that we had a responsibility to nurture all aspects of our being including the emotional, physical, cognitive and spiritual domains.

What occurred that day was the planting of a seed within me that has continued to grow over the years. It helped me to see that, as Indigenous peoples, we have teaching models, learning theories and ways of thinking that would help me understand myself as a learner, person and human being. It was the seed of self-awareness. It was a new orientation to life and learning. The image I saw on that board was simple, yet profound. It is a useful educational device for all students, as it orients learners to those inner spaces that need attention and development. In hindsight, I realize this was a powerful learning experience because much of my attention as a student was often oriented to ideas and knowledge that have not stayed with me through the years. I recall learning facts and stories that were not relevant to the here and now. Provincial curricula that teachers teach

includes the knowledge and skills that are predetermined through provincial education ministries. Much of the Manitoba curriculum, as I remember it, oriented my attention away from my inner and immediate spaces. What I experienced with Myra's presentation was different. It was a critical learning moment that attuned me to my inner and immediate spaces. It forced me to critically reflect on my being, as I was, right there and then. It was a learning framework that allowed me to experience my life more mindfully from that day forward.

Including medicine wheel teachings as part of one's pedagogical tool bag, allows educators to assist students in seeing themselves more fully from the perspective of their own life experience. Learners come to see value in noticing their immediate and inner spaces. It is a holistic, metacognitive learning device that encourages self-awareness, self-regulation and self-directed learning. It is a framework that helps learners understand the nature of being; existence within the four categories of being (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual). Such a framework is non-discriminating. It can help all students achieve a greater sense of self and being in the world. It helps learners to interpret the world from their own life location including life situations/experiences. This, to me, is Anishinaabe pedagogy – a way of teaching and learning in which each student situates and draws meaning from her/his critical centre.

Garry Robson's story, "The Anishinaabe Clan System". The third story was told by Anishinaabe elder and now retired educator Garry Robson. I first heard the stories of the Anishinaabe Clan System in a public school classroom and later through professional development workshops Garry offered over the years. It was illustrated as a seven-pointed

star with a specific animal that represented a clan or animal totem at the end of each star point (see Figure 3).

The teachings of the Anishinaabe Clan System have been handed down from generation to generation despite attempts to eradicate this system and the knowledge that would perpetuate its existence. For the most part, it has been passed on orally, but there are a growing number of print sources (Benton-Benai, 1988; Gaywish, 2005). Elder Garry Robson was a knowledge keeper of this knowing, and the story he told helped me understand that the star represented the Anishinaabe social governing system and how each clan contributed to governing and community well-being.

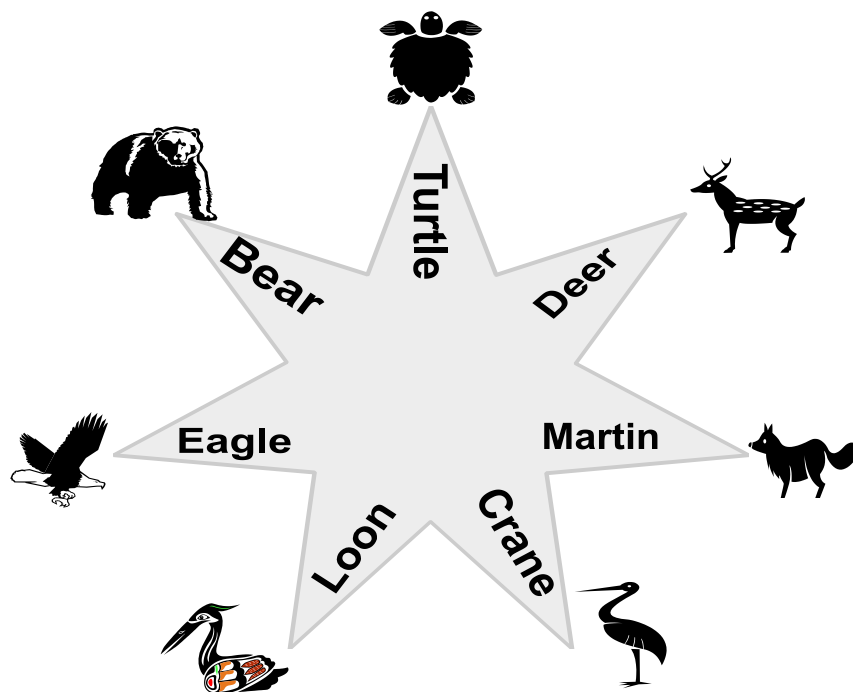


Figure 3. Anishinaabe Clan System (Rebecca Chartrand 2003 as recalled from Garry Robson teachings, and Benton-Benai, 1988)

Interpreted from a modern lens, the Anishinaabe had doctors, teachers, spiritual leaders, hunters, warriors/protectors of justice, and philosophers. Although the clan system

could have been presented as a governing system that existed in the distant past, the stories that Elder Garry Robson shared brought this system to life, illustrating that it was alive and very much amongst us today. As Elder Robson shared his own traditional name and clan with us, he also shared that it had taken years to come to such knowing. This knowledge was not found within the constructs of public schooling, it required seeking out other knowledge carriers and Elders who would impart such knowledge. This is how he found his cultural identity and place within our cultural community.

What I recognize now is that this was also an unspoken invitation to find our place amongst our own life-worlds. It was like Dr. Martin Brokenleg's model of a Medicine Wheel for belonging, mastery, independence and generosity called "Circle of Courage" (Brendtro, L., Brokenleg, M., & Van Brockern, S., 2002). What I heard in Garry's story was a lifelong journey that illustrated how he had contemplated who he was as an Aboriginal man. It had taken him years of living to come to a place of self-knowing. He also illustrated that self-knowing came from having a context from which to develop. This cultural context allowed his own presence and identity as an Anishinaabe person to emerge. It allowed him to exist as he was, as an Anishinaabe man. Sharing his traditional name and clan created this space not only in his psyche, but also allowed him to construct these cultural and literal spaces for learners like me. In a sense, his story provides a road map on which we can each learn to grow from our own roots and from our cultural identities.

In Manitoba, Myra Laramee, Dan Thomas and Garry Robson are recognized as Indigenous educational leaders as much as they are known and respected as local Elders. They each worked as teachers, education consultants and other job titles, noting many contributions to the education system.

Luke and Lyna's story, "The Anishinaabe Prophecy Song". As a student of Children of the Earth High School, I signed up for a culture course and was introduced to Luke Arquette who had been designated our cultural teacher, with Lyna Hart, his colleague and companion. Both have since passed. Luke was from eastern Canada, and I am uncertain of the Nation to which he belonged. Lyna was Inninew/Cree. Both spent many years and countless hours engaging in or hosting local ceremonies and had come to know the ways of the Anishinaabe. As a result, they became Anishinaabe knowledge keepers, knowledge transmitters, and made a life commitment to revitalization of culture and traditions. The cultural credit course I signed up for at Children of the Earth took place in Luke's home. Although I was his student for a short while, Luke and Lyna played a significant part of introducing me to an extended cultural community. It was through them that I met other Indigenous peoples who were involved in maintaining or reviving traditional practices including people like Dave Courchene, Jr, and David Blacksmith.

Luke taught me how to make my first hand drum at the age of seventeen. This set me on a path to sound my own voice and connect deeply with my cultural roots. Moreover, Luke and Lyna exposed me to cultural revitalization camp, known as "The Strong Earth Mother Lodge", located about and 75 minutes east of Winnipeg. This cultural site allowed me to stay on this cultural learning path to connect with transmitters of Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) and Inninew (Cree) cultures. After Luke taught me how to make my first drum, he and Lyna taught me a number of songs, one of which was the an Anishinaabe Prophecy Song. The Prophecy Song Luke and Lyna taught me was a piece of a larger story; a message and an account of Anishinaabe history. It speaks of different eras the Anishinaabe people would live through, beginning with a prophecy that provoked a migration from the eastern

part of Turtle Island/North America (Benton-Benai, 1988). The story eventually takes us to our present location in time, identified as “the awakening.” Both Luke and Lyna emphasized the importance of youth in this story. As I reflect on my time with them, I realize they wanted us to see that we had a role to play in the remainder of the story. Their message was that Indigenous youth would help pick up what was left behind by our ancestors that would make our nations strong again. This story was introduced as “The Anishinaabe Morning Song”. It is a piece of the Seven Fires Prophecy of the Anishinaabe (Hart, 1991, 1998, personal communications). I continued to learn more about this prophecy through ongoing community sings and other cultural events. I would come to organize many community sings out of my own home and later rotated between homes of other singers and drummers. We would become part of a cultural revitalization movement.

Reawakening and Resistance

The Anishinaabe Prophecy Song is a calling from the ancestors to the Anishinaabe people telling them to wake up from a deep sleep. Coincidentally, Métis Leader Louis Riel is cited as making similar historical statements and, as a result, must have been Anishinaabe – French Métis. When I review this history within the context of my current location, I realize there is ample history within the geography of Seven Oaks School Division where I currently work. The Seven Oaks School Division has been named after the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks. The signing of the pre-confederation Selkirk Treaty in 1817 illuminates the presence of local Indigenous nations. As presented by Niigaan James Sinclair at the Seven Oaks School Division School Division Administrators Retreat (October 2014), the 1817 Selkirk Treaty captured the presence of the Anishinaabe Clan System exercising its authority within the area (see Figure 4) as well as the presence of other local Indigenous

Peoples. Local First Nations, and the intermarriage with Europeans brought a growing number of Métis families to inhabit the area. They have yet to be compensated for being forced from their traditional homelands. On March 1, 2016, however, the Province of Manitoba recognized Louis Riel (1844-1885) as Manitoba's first leader (CBC News – Manitoba, 2016). Both events are examples of the longstanding marginalization of Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

Both the Anishinaabe Prophecy Song, and the words of Louis Riel assert a voice and a presence that gave me courage and inspiration to sound my own voice. They provided me with an alternative lens to interpret the world around me that differed from what I had learned in school. These missing perspectives had a significant impact on me as a young Anishinaabe/Métis-woman. One example was how I interpreted the Meech Lake Accord, an attempt to change the Canadian constitution. At issue was the fact that Aboriginal peoples were overlooked and excluded from in Constitutional negotiations. First Nations leaders demanded that the Accord be rejected on this basis (Kusch, Welch, & Owen, 2015). The Accord ultimately failed to pass in the Manitoba legislature because of the voice and resistance of a single Aboriginal MLA, Elijah Harper.

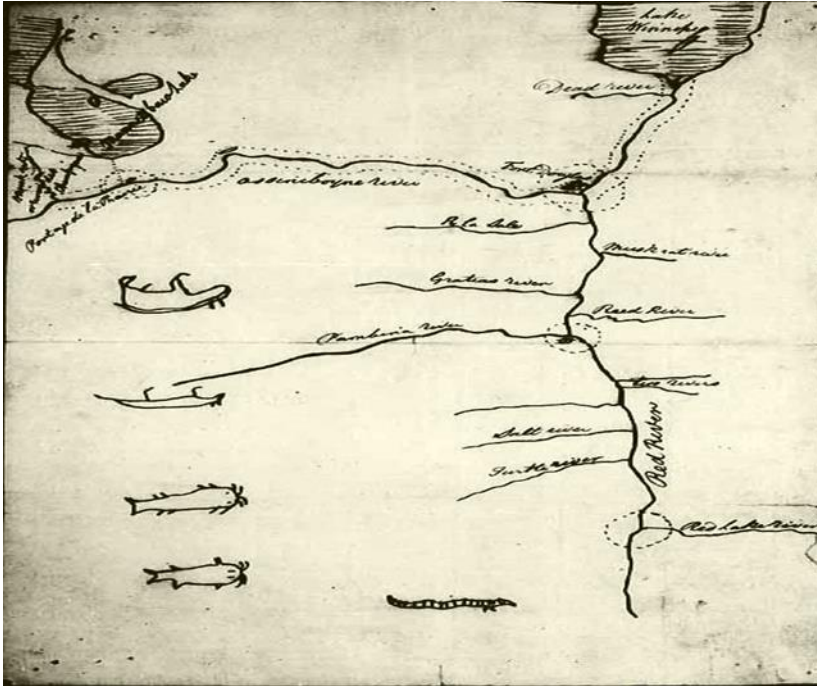


Figure 4. "Selkirk Treaty Indian Chart of Red River," undated. Library and Archives Canada.

What I saw in this experience was historic for two reasons. First, it was a reaffirming movement for Aboriginal people across Canada as it brought thousands of Indigenous people together to the Manitoba Legislative grounds in 1990 to support Elijah Harper in his act of resistance and rejection of the Meech Lake Accord. I also saw a people rise to sound their voice, and whose collective actions spoke louder than words. It was a sign that a reawakening was occurring, and I was part of the collective awakening that was foretold.

This experience opened my eyes to the unique and contentious relationship Aboriginal people have with the government of Canada. Since then, Indigenous peoples across Canada have continued to organize themselves again and again. The people are now awake. The "Idle No More" movement that swept the nation in 2015 is another prime example of this. Collectively these stories have many interconnections. They provide a lens

to understand our lived experience. They help us link our lived experience to our ancestral roots by reconnecting the umbilical cord that was severed as a result of oppressive laws and policies imposed on Aboriginal peoples, like those that made residential schools a reality. We are now approaching a time where we can assess Aboriginal education initiatives from what has emerged over the past 40 plus years. To further understand our modern landscape, we must look back and determine what has given shape to Aboriginal education in order to see why Indigenous people must be equal partners, if not central, in defining what our goals of Aboriginal education should be. This is the journey that we have yet to travel.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Over the past 300 years, what Aboriginal students have experienced as education has been designed, imposed and controlled by Westerners (Kirkness, 1992, 1999, 2013). There are different definitions and assumptions of what is meant by Aboriginal education in Canada, and each definition likely has certain goals, challenges and limitations. To help make sense of Aboriginal education, I created the Aboriginal Education Initiatives Timeline (Figure 5) to assist in organizing my thoughts and review of the literature. It begins with a wide-ranging look at the national landscape and the background from which Aboriginal education would emerge. It then identifies Manitoba-specific Aboriginal education initiatives before focusing on the Manitoba school divisions, specifically the divisions I've worked with, in order to emphasize my lived-experience and location.

Broadly speaking, Aboriginal education has emerged from social, political and legal wrangling since Confederation. The concept of education for First Nations children was first negotiated in Treaties 1 to 7 in the 1870s (Carr-Stewart, 2001). Interpretation of the intent of the Treaties and what was negotiated continues as an ongoing battle. If we look back, the first stage of education imposed on First Nations children was paternalistic and followed assimilation policies that led to the creation of Residential Schools run mainly by churches under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Government (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), 1996). There was no defined curriculum, no input from First Nations people and no accountability for the delivery of education. To a large extent, this is true in First Nation communities today (G. H. Smith, 2003). First Nations, with federally funded schools, continue to be held hostage to provincial curricula that keep Indigenous

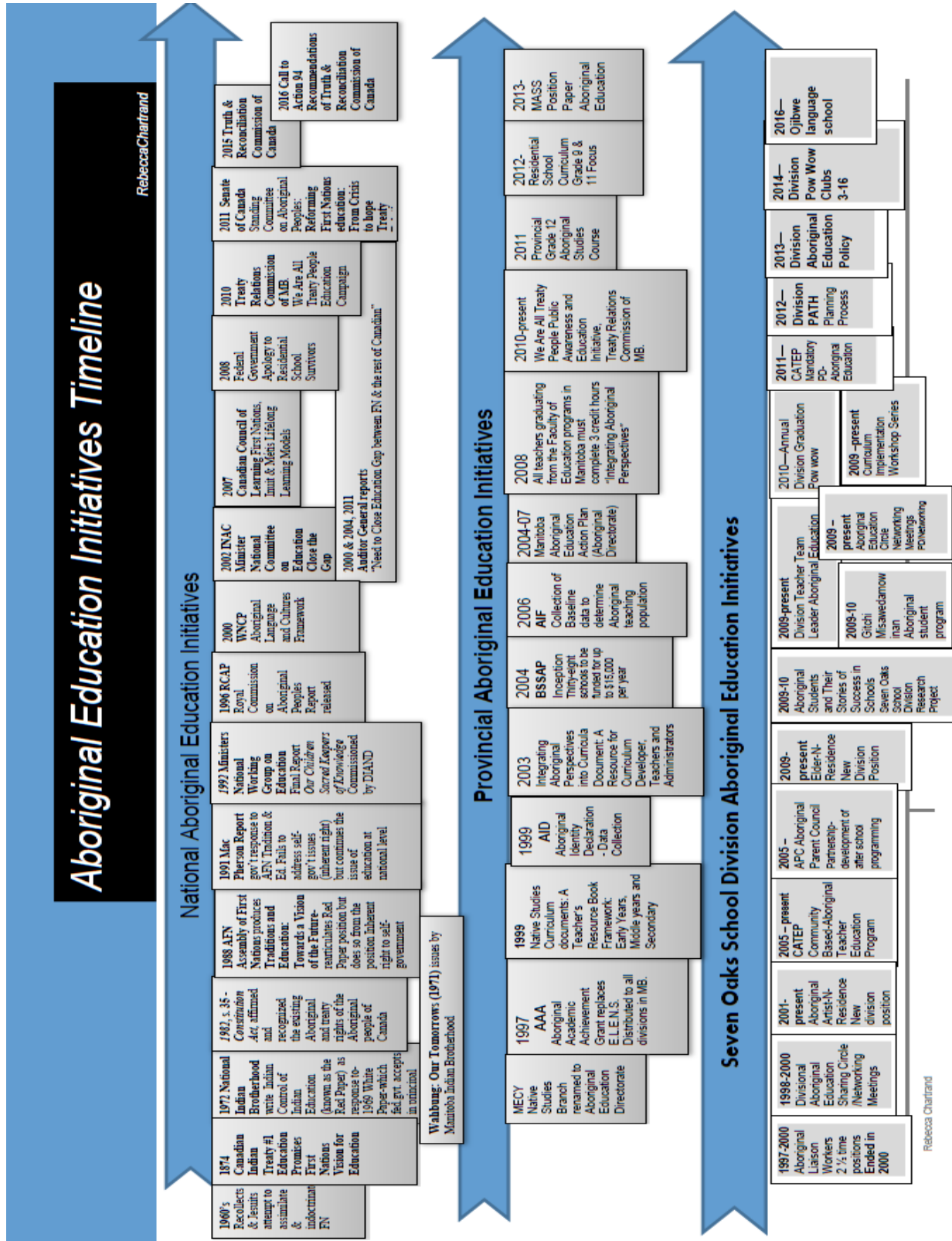


Figure 5. Aboriginal Education Initiatives Timeline (R. Chartrand, 2008, 2016)

ways of knowing, teaching and learning on the margins within our own communities (Battiste, 2013). Hence, the fight for First Nations control of First Nations education continues (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; Assembly of First Nations, 2010). The final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015) is the first of our efforts to truly understand what happened in these schools.

Modern Conceptions of Aboriginal Education Emerge

To make sense of this complex socially constructed phenomenon, I look to the unique and legally binding relationship Indigenous peoples have with the Canadian government and notice that three short years after Confederation, Canada would negotiate Treaties 1 to 7. First Nation leaders would negotiate the peaceful sharing of the land (Carr-Stewart, 2001) in exchange for services that would allow immigrants and First Peoples to participate equally in the new economy: education being key (Treaty 7 Elders and Tribal Council, 1996, p. xi). First Peoples did not believe that accepting a Euro-Canadian form of education was a surrender of their own culture and identity (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; TRC, 2016). At the signing of the Canadian Indian Treaties, First Peoples believed education, as a part of treaty promises, would supplement traditional educational practices with Western teaching so they could “live and prosper and provide” (Morris, 1991, p. 28). Unfortunately, what would arise was racist legislation that aimed to oppress and “civilize” Indigenous peoples. Education was utilized as a weapon of mass destruction (Saul, 2013), and children were used as a center point to destroy cultural identities. Moreover, Indian Act legislation would ensure that First Nations parents were paralyzed: restricted from leaving their lands or bringing their

children home. Legislation made it nearly impossible for parents to fight for their children let alone for a voice in what would be “Aboriginal education” for their children.

Historically, education began as a government driven initiative that predominantly targeted First Nations, and later included Métis and Inuit children (TRC, 2015a). It was an experience for children that was both imposed and regulated by Canadian legislation and largely led by the political, legal and economic goals of Westerners. Within these initial constructs, Western values and goals dominated, determining what Aboriginal children would experience under the guise of education. Within this historical relationship, education was used to marginalize and obliterate Indigenous thought and presence (Saul, 2013). While the rest of Canada was developing as a new country, Indigenous people were pushed out of sight and out of mind as they were confined to reservations until 1959.

Rather than serving to equip First Nations children with adequate skills and participation in mainstream economy (Saul, 2013), the curriculum in Residential Schools was often substandard with a focus on technical and vocational education. In fact, there was no assessment of the academic outcomes of the Residential Schools at the time they were operating. The only assessment to date of the “educational learning experiences” at Residential Schools comes in the form of the testimony of Survivors through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015a). The purpose of the Residential Schools was to annihilate indigenous identity and to “kill the Indian within the child” (Government of Canada, 2008). Aside from the soul wrenching traumas and stories of abuse, the Residential Schools were a failure. Teachers were inexperienced and, in some cases, technical-vocational training was little more than workhouses for children (TRC, 2015).

Emerging Aboriginal Voices and Presence

After World War II, the world woke up to human rights atrocities. This, in turn, illuminated grievances Indigenous peoples were experiencing in Canada. With the Canadian Government's commitment to the new concept of human rights, as signatory to the United Nations' (2008) Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it was increasingly difficult to ignore its own nation-wide human rights violations against Indigenous Peoples. Imposed schooling and assimilative policies became a key criticism of the government at the time (Library of Archives Canada, 1917). The League of Indians has been acknowledged for improving some of the more oppressive elements of the Indian Act after the 1950s. As a result of their work (see http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/008/001/008001-5000-e.php?&e=1&brws=1&st=Aboriginal%20Documentary%20Heritage:%20Historical%20Collections%20of%20the%20Canadian%20Government&ts_nbr=4&), in 1959 the federal government removed the bans on political organization, traditional spirituality, and restrictions to off-reserve travel. This gave rise to the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB).

The NIB, argued that curriculum and schooling experiences mandated by federal and provincial government were destroying Indigenous Peoples' identities and ways of life. At the national level, we see an endless stream of Indigenous leaders petitioning government, writing position/policy papers. *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* (1971) issued by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood (MIB) would address the controversial political history from which Aboriginal education had emerged (St. Denis, 2009). The position articulated in *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* has been restated time and time again, including the most recent report and recommendations released from the TRC (2015a, 2015b). Ongoing Auditor General Reports (Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2000, 2004, 2011) would include

recommendations to address the education gap between Aboriginal children and their counterparts.

Overall, the timeline (Figure 5, p. 38) illustrates the plight of First Nations peoples to be, at the very least, equal partners in defining an education for their children. Indigenous Peoples have “continued their struggle to maintain culture and language as core components of education, based on distinct rights recognized in the Canadian Indian Treaties and in the Constitution, and they have continued to resist policies that seek to erase their sense of being as Indigenous people” (Battiste, 2013, p. 10).

The timeline essentially begins with the Canadian Indian Treaties, where education first emerged. National Indian Brotherhood and successive national policy papers recognize the inherent right to self-government as the basis for control over education. The Ministers National Working Group on Education Final Report entitled, *Our Children Sacred Keepers of Knowledge* (Jeffrey & Mount Pleasant-Jette, 2002), and the Canadian Senate report, *Reforming First Nations Education: From Crisis to Hope* (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, 2011) as well as the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (United Nations, 2008) recognize the misuse of education in creating a very damaged relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the rest of society. At the same time, things have come full circle where education is now seen as the key to reconciliation and empowerment for Indigenous peoples. The political will is mounting to create change. Yet, we still need society to see the legitimacy of these political, educational and scholarly documents that rearticulate the need for improved education outcomes and full and equal partnership with Indigenous peoples in paving a path forward. The 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015b) clearly illustrate unresolved contentious

issues playing out in years to come. The reports call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples (TRC, 2015b).

Provincial Aboriginal Education Initiatives

Looking back using the Aboriginal Education Timeline (Figure 5, p. 31), it's important to see the initiatives that have been unfolding in Manitoba. Manitoba's has been impacted by the federal politics showing initiatives since the early 1970's. In 1974, Manitoba Department of Education established the Native Education Branch as part of its effort to increase academic outcomes for Aboriginal learners. It has since been renamed as the Aboriginal Education Directorate (AED). *The Manitoba Aboriginal Education Action Plan 2004-2007*, released by the Directorate provides insight to the goals established by the department. Recent documentation of initiatives illustrate a focus on four key areas: to increase high school graduation rates; increase access and completion rates of post-secondary education; increase successful entry into and participation into the labour market: and improve the research base for aboriginal education and employment.

At the time of the release of the *Action Plan*, I was working in Winnipeg School Division as an Aboriginal Education Consultant. It was important for me to understand the direction the province was moving and to fully articulate these targets to the educators I was supporting through the division. Over the past 40 years many of the financial and human supports offered through the Aboriginal Direction Directorate, like school division supports and initiatives, have been experimental and ad hoc in nature. There have been many successes and challenges along the way. Most importantly, it's imperative that the efficacy of such efforts are reviewed. For example, the Aboriginal Education Directorate

released *Bridging Two Worlds: Aboriginal Education and Employment Action Plan 2008 – 2011*. The document was developed in consultation with Aboriginal peoples and educational stakeholders as a process that affirmed Aboriginal peoples as equal partners in defining outcomes. The following goals are the result of this collaboration:

1. student engagement and high school completion,
2. access to and success in adult learning, including post-secondary education and training,
3. meaningful participation in the labour market, and
4. family and community engagement and educational stewardship.

Many of the initiatives at the provincial level continue to be focused on graduation rates and geared to achieving positive employment outcomes. During the past ten years there has been a shift to engage Aboriginal parents and community in defining and implementing the outcomes of these initiatives. This must be viewed in light of the broader context from which these changes have emerged. The fight for First Nations Control of First Nations Education is not only a federal issue or a federal responsibility. Aboriginal peoples across the country, in both federal and provincially funded schools, continue to exert their presence moving from a place of marginalization to equal partners in closing the education and employment gap between Aboriginal children and their counterparts.

The Government of Manitoba has increasingly earmarked dollars to support Aboriginal academic achievement and has increasingly put pressure on educational institutions, school divisions and teacher training institutes to support Aboriginal academic achievement. Existing as an arm of Manitoba Education, the Aboriginal Education Directorate supported academic success through key initiatives, including: the *Aboriginal*

Academic Achievement Grant (AAA) initiated in 1997 that replaced the English Language Enrichment for Native Students (E.L.E.N.S.) and *Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents (BSSAP)* that was an initiative in 2004 with thirty-eight school being funded to implement pilot projects. Not all schools received the BSSAP grants however every Manitoba school division has received the AAA Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant to use at their discretion with funding is based on a per capita formula based on census data.

Along with these initiatives comes an increasing request to integrate Aboriginal perspectives in existing Manitoba curricula. Some school divisions continue to use funds to hire Aboriginal education/liason/coordinator/consultant positions to assist with the development and implementation of their Aboriginal education initiatives. In addition, each school division is unique in the supports and initiatives it undertakes. My position in Winnipeg School Division as the Aboriginal Education Consultant from 2001-2009 was part of the Winnipeg School Division's initiative. The timeline cannot fully encapsulate the many initiatives that have emerged over the past 20- 40 years in public education, but it provides a local and Manitoba focused. This thesis stems from the desire to review the efficacy of my own work and to measure outcomes up against our collective initiatives.

The timeline helped me see that curriculum development and curriculum implementation has been a key area within the growing field of Aboriginal education. First came Native Studies Frameworks (Manitoba Education and Youth, 1999). This was a set of books designed for three levels: Early Years, Middle Years, and Senior Years. Each level follows the Manitoba Social Studies curriculum and provides Indigenous perspectives that can be developed as units of study. Further curricular documents were to follow including: *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Manitoba Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum*

Developers, Teachers and Administrators (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003); *Grade 12 Current Topics in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Studies: A Foundation for Implementation* (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2011); and *From Apology to Reconciliation Residential School Survivors: A Guide for Grade 9 and 11 Social Studies Teachers in Manitoba* (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2013). These curricular documents share an emphasis on engaging parents and community.

I have worked on a number of these initiatives as a curriculum development committee member and have known others involved in development of these resources where I have not been present. Based on personal experience and what has been communicated to me about these experiences, it hasn't been easy to include authentic perspectives and oral traditions within Manitoba curricula that don't water down or minimize Indigenous perspectives. For this reason, the efforts to increase parent and community involvement in provincial initiatives are, in part, to ensure inclusion and authentic representation of Aboriginal peoples. The planning, development and inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives differ throughout the province.

Nonetheless, partnerships have been key in moving an Aboriginal education agenda forward in Manitoba. In 2008, Faculties of Education in partnership with the Aboriginal Education Directorate created a mandatory pre-service course on Aboriginal perspectives for teachers in training. Essentially, teacher candidates were required to complete a three credit-hour course on integrating Aboriginal perspectives in Manitoba curricula in order to graduate with a teaching degree in Manitoba (Robinson-Settee, 2008; University of Manitoba, nd). In addition, The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba developed educational materials and provides teacher education related to understanding and

teaching about the Canadian Indian Treaties (see <http://www.trcm.ca/treaty-education-initiative/about-tei/>), and the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) developed its Position Statement on Aboriginal Education (2013).

Missing from the Aboriginal Education Timeline (Figure 5, p. 38) is the explosion of Aboriginal literature, many pieces written by Aboriginal authors, that has emerged over the past 30 years from various publishers. In 1972, there was little if any literature written by Aboriginal authors incorporated in Kindergarten through Grade 12 curricula. This turn of events caused me to consider what else was happening with the development of Aboriginal education outside of resourced documents. The development of cultural and linguistic resources, instructional material, teaching strategies and professional development along with the development of Aboriginal education policy are impacting the changing the landscape of Aboriginal education.

It's important to keep in mind that many Aboriginal education initiatives are experimental in nature, due to the fact that Aboriginal education as it exists and is defined in the mainstream education is a newly socially constructed phenomenon. The evolution of Aboriginal education is hugely influenced by existing curricular documents, outcomes, pedagogical tools and assessment/evaluation of what counts as important learning. All of which is premised on Western ways of teaching and learning. Clearly, Aboriginal student success continues to be measured through a Western lens that uses quantifiable data including attendance records and graduation rates (Battiste, 2013). In addition, given the complexity of Aboriginal education as a growing discipline, these initiatives exhibit high levels of fluctuation with changes in staffing, process and content (St. Denis, 2009).

Overall, it's important to question whether these initiatives are in fact having the desired effect especially when research indicates Manitoba continues to have one of the lowest graduation rates for Aboriginal students (Greene, Freeman, Mallet, & Silver, 2002).

Divisional Aboriginal Education initiatives

As we look deeper into the education landscape of Manitoba, it has been useful to know there are 40 school divisions. At this time, each of these school divisions continues to receive Aboriginal Academic Achievement (AAA) funds to assist “with current programming on the implementation of new programs that target academic success for Aboriginal students” (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015). School divisions must establish goals as part of their school and school division planning and reporting process. At one time, funds to increase Aboriginal student achievement were used at the discretion of each school division. Recently, accountability measures direct spending 51% of the AAA funds on literacy and numeracy with measurable results to illustrate improvements in Aboriginal student achievement. The remainder of the grant, if any, can be used at a division's discretion to support culturally relevant programming (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015). Four of the 40 school divisions have an Aboriginal education policy. These four are Winnipeg School Division, Seine River School Division, Sunrise School Division, and Seven Oaks School Division. Only the policies of the two school divisions in which I have worked, Winnipeg and Seven Oaks, will be described.

Winnipeg School Division. At one time I worked in the Winnipeg School Division (WSD) as the Aboriginal Education Consultant. This division has the highest proportion of Aboriginal students compared to any other school division in Winnipeg and surrounding

area. For more than 30 years it has implemented a wide variety of initiatives to support Aboriginal education, Aboriginal students and Aboriginal staff.

In 1979, WSD created a position for a Native education consulting teacher. In 1991, the division created Children of the Earth High School for Grades 9-12 and in 1993 established Niji Mahkwa School for Nursery-Grade 8. An Aboriginal Education Policy was adopted by WSD in 1996 and reviewed in 2005 with minimal revisions. The policy has eight areas of focus. These are employment equity, Aboriginal awareness and race relations; curriculum; Aboriginal languages; parental involvement; Aboriginal schools; adult education and literacy; and evaluation and assessment. These initiatives would not have come to fruition without the pressure that came from the Aboriginal community.

As the Aboriginal Education Consultant for WSD, I helped develop many Aboriginal education teaching units and materials. I also conducted professional development sessions and workshops for teachers in a number of curricular areas to bring Aboriginal perspectives into classrooms in all schools across the division.

Seven Oaks School Division. I was motivated to create The Aboriginal Education Initiatives Timeline (Figure 5, p. 38), when I was sought and hired to build capacity for Aboriginal education in Seven Oaks School Division. It helped me understand what was happening at the local level in light of provincial and national trends. I also wanted to gain a good understanding of what was happening in SOSD given my prior experience in Winnipeg School Division. The timeline helped me appreciate the work that was already taking place in SOSD and fostered a common understanding of where the division was with respect to Aboriginal education.

In my review of the timeline, identifying my personal location was important. I took into account that I worked as a teacher in SOSD from 1999-2001. During this time, I worked at Maples Collegiate, teaching Grade 10 English and Grade 10 Geography. I also designed and taught school initiatives courses (SICs) focused on Native Studies for Grades 9-11 and taught in the Maples Adventure Program (MAP), an alternative program for students who were struggling academically. The MAP program no longer exists.

I left Maples Collegiate in 2001, to take on an Aboriginal Education Consultant position with the Winnipeg School Division, as mentioned above. During this time, I was seconded to the Manitoba Teachers Society to work in the Professional Issues Unit. I returned to WSD and in 2009 returned to Seven Oaks School Division as the Seven Oaks Team Leader for Aboriginal education. This was a half-time position that became full-time in 2011. I also spent two years working for Anishinaabe Oway-Ishi, a pre-employment Education, Training and Youth Program for young adults, one year as an Aboriginal Community Coordinator for St. Boniface School Division, and one school term in my home community of Pine Creek teaching in a multi-grade 7-8 classroom. This work experience at a variety of locations helped me compare initiatives taking place in provincial schools and a federally funded First Nations school.

The third column of the timeline looks specifically at Seven Oaks School Division's Aboriginal education initiatives. The timeline is useful to compare and contrast initiatives as an assessment tool. I have used it as part of my professional development workshops to create a greater understanding of what we, as a division, are doing with respect to the goals of provincial and national initiatives. Seven Oaks School Division is situated in the most northern part of Winnipeg. We have 24 schools with 11,000 students and 1,311 staff

positions. Our Aboriginal student population is at approximately 25 percent. We have the second largest influx of new immigrants to Winnipeg, and the second highest number of children in the care of Child and Family Services. Ninety percent of these children are Aboriginal. The division has an Elder-in-Residence position, an Aboriginal Education Division Team Lead, an Aboriginal Scholar-in-Resident; an Aboriginal Artist-in-Residence; and has worked to increase employment equity opportunities.

Similar to many of the 40 school divisions in Manitoba, SOSD once employed few Indigenous teachers. In 2006, “the Province gathered baseline data information about the Aboriginal teacher population to assess current capacity and plan for future needs in this growing sector” (Raham, 2009, p. 12). According to this data, of the 614 teachers on staff in SOSD, 37 self-identified as Aboriginal. This is equivalent to 6.1% of the division’s teaching population. Aboriginal teachers self-identified in the following ways:

- 3 Anishinaabe (Ojibwa/Saulteaux)
- 1 Anishinaabe (Ojibwa/ Saulteaux) / Inninew (Cree)
- 2 Anishinaabe (Ojibwa / Saulteaux)/ Métis
- 1 Anishinaabe (Ojibway/Saulteaux) / Oji-Cree
- 17 Métis
- 1 Métis / Other (Cree)
- 3 Oji-Cree
- 1 Oji-Cree / Uncertain of Ancestry
- 1 Other (Cree)
- 1 Other (Cree) / Other (Blackfoot)
- 1 Other (Cree / Icelandic / Scottish)
- 5 Uncertain of Ancestry

To address this issue, Seven Oaks School Division had a vision to grow their own Aboriginal teachers. Administrators approached the Winnipeg School Division and found a shared concern and a willing partner. The administrators of both divisions approached Manitoba Education and the University of Winnipeg for support for this initiative, and the

Community Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) was born. It has been in running for 11 years since 2005 and as of this year we have since graduated 13 teachers (2016). The CATEP program enables us to hire Aboriginal candidates to work as educational assistants while certifying as teachers at the University of Winnipeg. They take courses one evening a week and every second Saturday. CATEP has worked for us as a division. Based on internal data, we currently employ 29 Indigenous educational assistants as part of our CATEP program. This year we focused on hiring teachers fluent in Cree and Ojibwe to support the development of the Seven Oaks School Division's first Cree and Ojibwe bilingual school. Aboriginal staff and non-Aboriginal staff have come to embrace their responsibility in teaching Aboriginal education, as teachers and as allies. We see the growth in the number of Aboriginal education groups/committees we have in each of our schools.

As part of my role to build capacity in Seven Oaks School Division, I took on CATEP as part of my work duties and immediately saw the potential at hand. CATEP was a little goldmine. I wanted CATEP to be more than a program for graduating Aboriginal teachers. I wanted the division with CATEP to graduate leaders in the area of Aboriginal education. With the support of Seven Oaks School Division superintendents, I was able to offer professional development specifically for the CATEP students in the SOSD and engaged them in leadership development opportunities. Most recently we have created the CATEP mentee position that allows one CATEP student each year to job shadow me to gain insight of the inner workings of these specialized positions. In addition, I have woven Seven Oaks School Division CATEP program into the work of Council for Aboriginal Education in Manitoba (CAEM). CATEP students help organize our annual CAEM Aboriginal Education

Conference. CATEP student have input in workshops, keynote speakers and in many cases offer workshop sessions themselves. This provides them with the opportunity to see themselves as leaders. Creating a space for them to demonstrate their abilities, or grow into them, has proven to be mutually beneficial for the students and the work of CAEM and CATEP. Many are currently leading initiatives within their schools.

Overall, the timeline has been a useful assessment and locating tool, but missing was my personal lived experience as an Anishinaabe women and Indigenous educator. The timeline did not capture my growing awareness and articulation of Anishinaabe pedagogy. As a result, I envisioned a 4th column that would include what was important when we are developing, implementing and assessing Aboriginal education initiatives. This made it possible for me to consider the unique voice and experience of Indigenous educators, including my own experience, and to contemplate where we have been situated in the unfoldings of Aboriginal education outside the work of provincial education ministries and/or education institutions.

Indigenous Renaissance: Re-emergence of Indigenous Ways of Teaching and Learning

The term “Indigenous Renaissance” I first came across in the works of Dr. Marie Battiste (2013). The Indigenous Renaissance Illustration (Figure 6) I created to capture the notion that through the work and presence of Indigenous educators, Indigenous epistemology and pedagogy continue to emerge and gain force from local places. Aspects of Indigenous education continue to make their way into public education systems as Aboriginal education. This growing presence is not solely a result of curricular or print resources but due to the growing human resources and presence of Indigenous people finding their way into careers within public education (Fitznor, 2002). Battiste calls this the

age of Indigenous Renaissance (2013) where each of us is finding her place amongst the collective. Our responsibility as Indigenous educators, is “to advance ancient

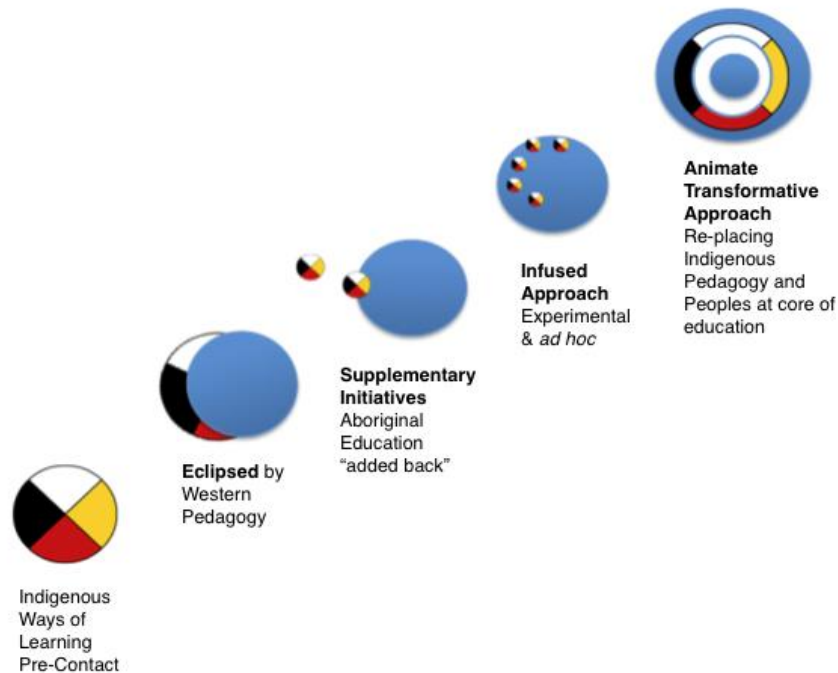


Figure 6. Indigenous renaissance: Reemergence of Indigenous Ways of Teaching and Learning

epistemological underpinnings and ontological principles that were handed down for generations” (Archibald, 2010, p. 2).

The illustration helped me visualize how Indigenous epistemologies and pedagogy moved from the center of our lives to the margins. The illustration builds from the work of the Canadian Council of Learning, specifically the First Nations Life Long Learning Model (2007) that provides great insight into Indigenous epistemology, pedagogy and ontological understandings

Indigenous ways of learning: Pre-contact. The first circle with the four quadrants represents Indigenous epistemological, ontological and pedagogical practices. It affirms an Indigenous presence since time immemorial. It is important to utilize a place-conscious lens to recognize there are over 600 distinct First Nations in Canada with their own languages, culture, traditions, histories and worldviews that have been shaped by their relationship to the land (Ermine, 1995; Simpson, 2000). This historical teaching and learning timeline anchors my research and provides a context to consider what has taken place here in Manitoba, particularly in Winnipeg and its surrounding area, and to locate Anishinaabe people and our pedagogical practices. Although there are many similarities between First Nations ways of knowing, teaching and learning, it is the work of local Indigenous educators that helped me gain an understanding of who we are as distinct peoples. Legally outlawed at one time, our language, culture and ways of teaching and learning went underground in order to survive the cultural genocide.

Indigenous ways learning: Eclipsed by western pedagogy. The second circle shows an eclipse that overshadows Indigenous ways of teaching and learning. This is where Eurocentric education would dominate for more than 300 years (Kirkness, 1999). Social justice movements in the 50's and 60's pushed for authentic representation of Aboriginal peoples within public schools, in part, to address the fallout of Residential Schools, and/or the low academic achievement and graduation rates of Aboriginal learners. The third circle illustrates the "supplemental initiatives" that began to appear after 1972. These initiatives were aimed at including representations of Indigenous people to supplement existing curricular resources. Although they had good intentions, between the late 70's and early 80's, a number of the images, like those in Figure 7 below, found their way into curricula

and textbooks that perpetuated stereotypes and bias towards “Indians”. In his professional development workshops, I have seen Garry Robson use similar illustrations to those included in figure 7, ABC’s of Aboriginal Stereotyping. These are examples of experimental and ad hoc initiatives that have failed. In attempts to include representation of Indigenous peoples these images have created and/or perpetuated stereotypes of Indigenous peoples that still resonate today. These are not true representations of Indigenous peoples.



Figure 7. ABCs of Aboriginal Stereotyping (G. Robson)

Aboriginal education “added back”. The next “Supplementary/Complementary Stage” shows the creation of the Native Studies Branch of Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth in 1987, new staffing, development of curriculum resources (e.g., *Native Studies Frameworks*, Manitoba Education and Youth, 1999), new programs and other initiatives. The Aboriginal Education Initiatives Timeline (Figure 5, p. 38) illustrates some of these changes at the provincial level.

Indigenous educators would become the forerunners of change. There were only a handful of First Nations post-secondary students in all of Canada in the 1960s. If a First Nations person wanted to attain a post-secondary degree, she not only had to leave her family and community, she also had to forfeit her Indian status and all rights associated

with Indian status; essentially surrendering her identity (Holmes, 1987). This discouraged First Nations women and men from pursuing higher education. With the historic population decrease due to disease and famine, First Nations communities were left to deal with the daily stress of socioeconomic issues in isolation of non-Aboriginal Canadians. The lack of opportunities within communities forced people to leave their communities which put further stress on family and community as it further depleted human resources. To address the low academic success rates of Aboriginal students as well as the fallout of Residential schools, Aboriginal Teacher Education programs emerged in the early 1980s. This included the Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program (BUNTEP), the Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP), the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), and the Winnipeg Education Centre (WEC). These programs continue to emerge based on need. For example, the Community Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program, previously described, was initiated by Seven Oaks School Division in 2002/2003 as a partnership with the University of Winnipeg. Over time, each of these Aboriginal teacher education programs mentioned successfully graduated Aboriginal teachers. As noted by Settee (2014) "this was a very important era in Aboriginal teacher education in Canada" (p. 2).

Indigenous teacher educators brought with them an authentic voice and a clear and major contribution to the growing field of Aboriginal education (Battiste, 2004, 2008, 2013; Benton Benai 1988; Fitznor, 2002, 2005, 2006; Kirkness, 1999, 2013). I benefited from this movement as I am a graduate of The Winnipeg Education Centre which focused on certifying teachers to address the issues and work within the inner city of Winnipeg (Fitznor, 2002; Settee, 2014). As part of my current role in Seven Oaks School Division, I

provide professional development, leadership training and support for our CATEP students. My hope is that we create opportunity to graduate not only Aboriginal teachers, but to graduate leaders in the area of Aboriginal education. For this reason, I believe it's essential to help CATEP students see themselves as the leaders they are, and as part of and contributors to this unfolding Aboriginal education story.

Infused approach (experimental and ad hoc.) In the infusion/integration stage, I show Indigenous perspectives moving from an emerging stage to that of self-determination, where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples work together to advocate for change (St. Denis, 2009). This is the stage where we see the term "allies" emerge, which demonstrates that Indigenous people were no longer in this movement alone. Many non-Aboriginal people were advocating for necessary change. This stage shows further connection to civil rights movements, illustrating how topics in Aboriginal education are taking effect with colleagues.

Dr. Laara Fitznor (2002) captures this era and shows Aboriginal people and their allies as a critical mass that shares in a responsibility to shift Aboriginal education away from assimilative policies toward education grounded in Indigenous epistemological and pedagogical practices. This work continues to gain credibility and prominence in academia and various educational settings. This movement has helped with the work of the Canadian Council of Learning that gathered together many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators who were working to redefine how success is measured for Aboriginal learners (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007).

Although I don't agree with the past writing of the following researchers, we must recognize there are many educators involved in discussions around Aboriginal education.

These can be very tense conversations, and I don't think we can ignore the perspectives they attempt to elucidate. Howard and Widdowson don't hold credibility amongst Aboriginal scholars. Their writing, however, illustrates their repeated efforts to have a voice in understanding the complexity of this particular era. In *Approaches to Aboriginal Education in Canada: Searching for Solutions* (2013), they identify two conflicting approaches to, or perspectives on, Aboriginal education. This distinction enables individuals to see their practice aligned with one of two pedagogical camps: parallelism or integrationism. Parallelism originates in Aboriginal self-determination and would see curricular outcomes defined as part of Indigenous Peoples quest for self-determination. They believe this to be an aspirational place. The integrationism camp aims to improve Aboriginal education achievement within the conventions of Eurocentric/Western systems.

Integrating Aboriginal Perspective into Manitoba Curriculum (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003) is a good example of the types of resources that have been created to support the integrationism approach. This document, directs teachers to integrate Aboriginal culture, history and perspectives with existing Manitoba curricular outcomes. Parallelism, on the other hand, leans toward First Nations Control of First Nations Education, where Indigenous peoples lead in defining the goals, the curriculum, outcomes and assessments of Aboriginal education.

We must continue to illuminate and utilize the epistemological and pedagogical ways of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people as a basis to understand the diversity amongst Indigenous nations and to be inclusive of these perspectives as we create policy, curriculum and programs (Canadian Council of Learning, 2007, 2009a, 2009b). This will ensure that Aboriginal elders, parents and communities are equal partners in these

developments and, thus, are present to guide improvements in educational outcomes for all students.

Animate transformative approach. Indigenous educators have begun the process of creating educational programs that take the best of both Western and Indigenous education. The “transformative stage” values the benefits of Indigenous education for all children. Dr. Nicole Bell, for example, created the Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin Cultural Healing and Learning Program. She describes it as representing a transformational educational site built for the self-determination of Anishinaabe people, in alignment with the Indian Control of Indian Education policy document of 1972. The program exists as a model for other off-reserve Anishinaabe communities to create culturally-based educational spaces for their children by "just doing it. (Bell, 2013, p. 1)

Bell is an example of a knowledge keeper for the Anishinaabe people within her particular geography. She demonstrates what is possible when we merge Indigenous and Western Indigenous education. The place-conscious, experiential and land-based program created the opportunity to reconnect the umbilical cord for Indigenous learners that helps make their cultural identities strong again. For non-Aboriginal students, Anishinaabe education offers holistic (emotional, mental, physical and spiritual) development. As Dr. Rainey (2005) has explained:

Enduring teachings are embedded in the languages of the people that are considered to be sacred gifts of the Creator. These teachings are, too, embedded in all aspects of traditional and spiritual life. Teachings are to be shared in the context of activity that engages the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of being. In this way, as

understood in Anishinaabe worldview, knowledge is instilled and activated, strengthening our connection to the chain of lives of which we are the living vessel in our time, and preparing us for good life and to carry out our responsibilities to the generations that will follow us.

This type of learning increases an awareness of inner workings of one's being, where students learn to value what they carry within that helps them make sense of themselves as human beings. In turn, this helps them see their place within a worldview that takes into account the importance of good relationships to family, to community and to the environment. This is how we nurture or develop spirit and naturalize it within Western education. According to Fiona Muldrew (personal communication, 2016), students learn to engage with various elements and see the relationship they have with: air (mental/thinking/planning/philosophy), earth (physical, nature, body, health), water (emotional/healing/feelings/love) and fire (spiritual/passion/connection to Creator/purpose).

When students of all ages learn to share these experiences as valuable sources of information, they are more likely to find their voice and place amongst the collective. Western education has long been focused on outcomes that develop knowledge (cognitive), skills (behaviors) and attitudes. Within the context of the Medicine Wheel, I associate this type of learning with mental and physical domains. It limits developments of the affective domain, where social, emotional or spiritual development is overlooked. We take for granted that children have opportunities in other places, such as their home or community, to develop these areas. However, for Anishinaabe students we must take into account the impacts of Residential Schools and the impact of Euro-Canadian economic and educational

systems that keep us disconnected from our social, emotional, and spiritual domains. This has left many Anishinaabe students struggling to find themselves, to create healthy cultural identities, to find purpose, belonging, or mastery and generosity with one's gifts (Brokenleg, 2005).

The First Nations Life Long Learning Model (Figure 8) demonstrates the importance of holistic learning and connections to real world learning. It shows how we must each contribute to the well-being and make up of our communities, nations and greater society.

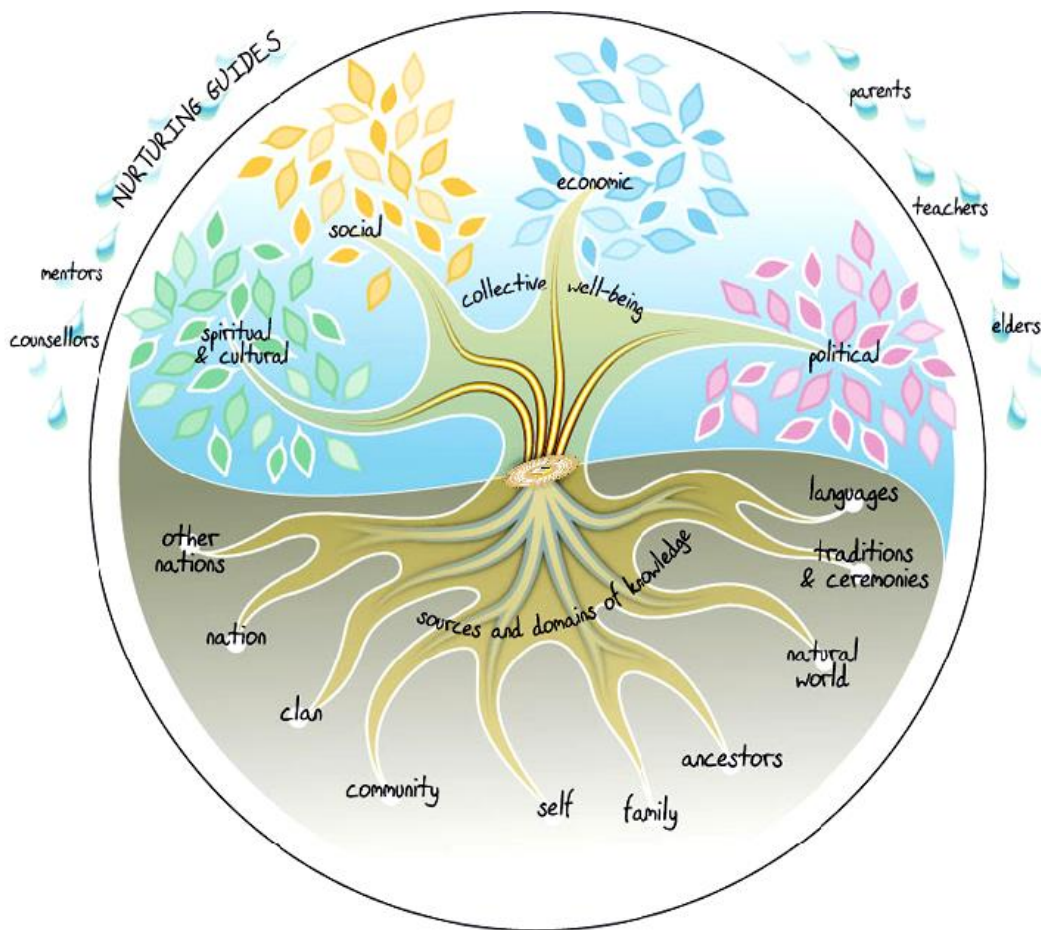


Figure 8. First Nations Life Long Learning Model (Canadian Council of Learning, 2007)

The falling leaves nurture new growth in the spring, metaphorically nurturing the strong roots from which future generations can emerge. Indigenous pedagogy helps children see the role they must play in creating healthy environments for oneself, for family, community and the greater society. The illustration “Indigenous Renaissance” (Figure 6, p. 54) offers a simplified overview of this complex history, which portrays the resurgence and growing credibility of Indigenous educators. It has been more than 40 years that Indigenous leadership has been pushing to move Indigenous epistemology and pedagogy from the margins to the center. Research can help us remember where we have come from, where we are each situated in this collective story and where we must contribute.

Grassroots and Partnership Initiatives

My lived-experience with grassroots, artistic and cultural initiatives, community volunteer work and social justice movements brought me into the folds of a collective narrative that illuminates a contentious relationship with government and Western education. Looking back to understand my place within this collective story has been an important process for me both personally and professionally. It’s important to look at the work that has evolved outside of Education Ministries and other government bodies to determine what else has impacted the growth of Aboriginal education. In part, it emerged from a background of social, political and legal lobbying, but we cannot forget what happens in our local spaces where we create groundswells that contribute to change.

The work of the Aboriginal Circle of Educators (ACE) was important to me as a new teacher. Formerly known as Aboriginal Teachers Circle, it was a volunteer and self-determining organization (Fitznor, 2002) that predominantly engaged Aboriginal teachers working within the Winnipeg School Division. It’s important to value all forms of the

Indigenous renaissance including the work of ACE, Council for Aboriginal Education (CAEM) in Manitoba and Aboriginal Parents groups who saw a need for change. ACE and CAEM provided a place for educators to support one another and to create professional and community networks while addressing important issues of racism, discrimination, and self-determination. These experiences have been well documented by the Canadian Teachers Federation (St. Denis, 2009). ACE and CAEM solidified our unique experience as Indigenous educators (Fitznor, 2002). ACE created this neutral space to nurture ourselves as Indigenous educators, to address our unique needs and aspirations, to sound our voice and take action.

There have also been growing partnerships with various education institutions, supporting the Indigenous Renaissance, including the development of various ad-hoc and standing committees that have emerged through the Manitoba Teachers' Society and other local community organizations. There have been many allies and partners who are working to redefine educational solutions for Indigenous students. Representation is growing at all levels and in all areas of education, including teacher unions. Aboriginal education scholars such as Dr. Marie Battiste, Dr. Verna Kirkness, Dr. Laara Fitznor, and Dr. Rainey Gaywish have been frontrunners in this work, drawing from personal, professional and cultural spaces. With the growing Aboriginal teaching population, many have joined in a pursuit to not only illuminate Indigenous ways of teaching and learning (Hart, 2009), but to recognize Aboriginal education as a distinct way of teaching and learning that must be recognized as its own field of knowledge (Battiste, 2013; Chartrand, 2012; Pitawanakwat, 2009; Doerfler, Sinclair, & Stark, 2013).

Chapter Three

Indigenous Research Methodology

From a Western perspective, research is the orderly investigation of a question or topic for the purpose of adding to knowledge. Data are collected, analyzed, and interpreted in an effort to "understand, describe, predict or control an educational or psychological phenomenon or to empower individuals in such contexts" (Mertens, 2005, p. 2). Identifying the methodology to be used to guide a research project helps the reader understand "how knowledge is constructed about the world, who constructs it, and what criteria [is] use[d] to create meaning and methodology" (Usher, 1996, p. 131). Each methodology identifies "what counts as knowledge, how knowledge claims are justified" (Creswell, 2013, p. 31), which draws attention to the relations between the researcher and that being researched. Within Western research, there is a need to narrow the focus of a topic in order to communicate, and bring clarity to ideas. Choosing a research methodology is, therefore, meant to make use of and communicate ideas. Choosing the wrong type of methodology can limit the outcomes, as it requires the researcher to follow a particular set of rules or standards to validate knowledge claims as defined by the methodology.

Indigenous Methodology: Story as Research

In attempts to define Aboriginal education, there has been little attention paid to the distinction between the pedagogy of local First Nations' cultures and the institutionalized field of Aboriginal education. This study uses Indigenous methodology, with storywork (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009) as the key method to weave together individual and collective stories. I drew from my lived experience as a resident of south-central Manitoba, and utilized my lived-experience to analyze what has been extracted from Anishinaabe

culture that contributes to what is perceived as, and what is being taught as, Aboriginal education in Winnipeg schools. Equally important, I identify critical factors that make up my own understanding of Aboriginal education: its history, beginnings and unfolding over the years. This background helps me locate myself, allowing me to appear and articulate what I see as Anishinaabe pedagogy, which results in informing my life, work experience and scholarship.

I realized the goals of Western curricula were problematic when seeking to integrate authentic Indigenous perspectives and local Anishinaabe ways of teaching and learning (Chartrand, 2012). I wanted to clearly articulate what Anishinaabe was outside the precepts of Aboriginal education. As an Aboriginal education consultant within south central Manitoba, I wanted to be clear and define what contributed to my own perspective.

This thesis builds on a prior phenomenological study which focuses on collecting data from participants lived experience. In phenomenology, the first step in the methods process is called *epoche*, or bracketing. This process attempts to maintain a sense of objectivity by illuminating bias. In order to do this, one must make his or her bias apparent, then set it aside (Moustakas, 1994). Essentially data brings us to the notion that one's "experiences are also the possible experience of others but also that the experiences of others are the possible experiences of oneself" (Van Manen, 1997, p. 58). Within this notion, it is possible that experiences can have universal character.

Looking for units of meaning in lived-experience had me thinking about Indigenous ways of making meaning. Our ceremonies were central in my growing understanding of Anishinaabe pedagogy. Ceremonies often guide us in understanding ourselves within the world around us. Within the context of research, rather than illuminating and setting aside

my bias, I used my lived experience as the centre piece to pull this thesis together. Indigenous scholars helped me utilize and articulate my life experience as a necessary and natural part of my research. Unfortunately, there was very little research when I started this journey in 2009, but I found Indigenous scholars (Absolon, 2011; Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Wilson 2001, 2003, 2009) who offered insight into defining the research, outlining the ethical protocols and explaining the cultural congruent methodologies that can be used for research. Shawn Wilson's book, *Research Is Ceremony* (2009), was particularly useful. It strengthened my desire to make sense of my lived experience as I attempted to answer my questions.

Margaret Kovach (2009, 2010) helped further solidify these connections between knowledge gained through lived experience, ceremony, and research. She states that as tribal people, we have a long history of knowing how to proceed in seeking knowledge that is based on tribal knowledge and connection to traditional and ceremonial processes. In Western research the notion of objectivity comes with the idea of separating oneself from meaning making. In phenomenology, it is the act of looking at lived experience in small units before one can unite these components to see the big picture.

Joanne Archibald's (2008) storytelling work affirmed that we could tell our own story as research. It strengthened my desire to resist Western methodologies as the only way to engage in research. This was empowering. It creates a space to voice, contemplate and make sense of my lived experience, therefore, valuing my existence. The "practice within the Western paradigm can amputate your sexuality, your gender, your language and your spirituality, by looking at individual components rather than looking at the total person and the complexity of the connections and relationships that allow that individual to

function” (Cordero, 1995). Rather than setting myself aside within a phenomenological study, I made the decision to amplify my lived experience.

That being said, it’s important to recognize that Indigenous and Western research methodologies can work hand in hand. For example, the second step of phenomenology aims to systematically understand how the essence of experience can be understood by using rich descriptions of experience to describe both external experience and internal or conscious understanding of experience. The process uses language and a system of reduction to identify units of meaning, which are equated with an essence of experience (Moustakas, 1994). I considered this from a holistic and cultural lens and realized how similar this process was to what I have experienced in our ceremonies. For example, in the phenomenological study mentioned above, I interviewed three teachers in order to understand their lived-experience with the integration of Aboriginal perspectives. However, in attempts to maintain objectivity, I had to remove myself and set aside my own experience, bias, and vision by focusing on units of meaning that were specific to my participants’ experiences. Unsatisfied with the scope of the phenomenological study, I decided to proceed using Indigenous methodology to continue my meaning-making research.

By using an Indigenous methodology, I am able to move back and forth between experience, literature and ideas, as well as the social, cultural, political and historical variables that contribute to the socially constructed phenomenon we call Aboriginal education. For me, writing a thesis affords me the opportunity to pause, to reach deeper understandings of Aboriginal education and to see where I am positioned in developing this body of work. At the same time, this process allowed me the opportunity to illuminate my

own thinking and to give back to our growing body of knowledge as Anishinaabe and Indigenous peoples.

Research instruments. The figures I've created throughout this thesis are research instruments and expressions of my thinking: how I have gathered and expressed my thoughts on the subject of Aboriginal education. They have helped me express my understanding of Aboriginal education as a growing and socially constructed phenomenon. In this chapter, I illuminate how I draw meaning from my lived experience through Indigenous methodology. The visual illustrations I have created show how I kept track of what I was thinking or reviewing, and how I organized my thoughts. They also communicate my analyses.

As mentioned, my thesis builds on the work I carried out in a previous phenomenological study where I interviewed two Caucasian teachers and another teacher who identified as being an Aboriginal/Anishinaabe teacher. The purpose was to use their lived experiences as a stepping stone to interpret my own. By exploring teachers' experiences with the integration of Aboriginal perspectives, I aimed to answer the following two questions: How do teachers understand and articulate Aboriginal education? What variables contribute to their understanding of Aboriginal education? There were no definite answers in their responses and missing were distinct recognitions of local Anishinaabe pedagogy. Although teachers may have participated in cultural ceremonies, they could not find it in them to use the language that would convey the distinctiveness of the Anishinaabe or any other First Nation. They expressed Aboriginal education in part as "more of a philosophy, or way of life". One teacher said, "The Seven Teachings are Aboriginal education" and that "experiential learning was Aboriginal education". The interviews

reinforced what I believed was missing. This was the need to illuminate Anishinaabe ways of teaching and learning and to consider how local Anishinaabe knowledge and ways of teaching and learning are losing their distinctiveness because they are not made clear and obvious. I also realized that teachers who did not engage with the Indigenous community would have a harder time trying to express what Anishinaabe pedagogy was, or what Aboriginal education is outside the precepts of public education. As a result, I utilized my own lived-experience as an instrument of my research.

As noted by Wilson, “our research is an extension of ourselves” (2009, p. 88). Indigenous methodologies embrace relational assumptions as central to core Indigenous epistemologies, unlike Western methodologies where “the quest to maintain objectivity” has had a “history of people being told to amputate a part of themselves first...rather than look at the total person and the complexity of the connections and relations that allow that individual to function” (Kovach, 2009, p. 42). Together with holistic ways of searching for knowledge, I am able to get to core issues by using a dialogic method (Kovach, 2009) that is egalitarian and subjective (Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; Wilson 2009). The figures help me break down the complexity of what has become Aboriginal education in order to understand what has contributed to its foundation and constituent parts.

Indigenous methodology encourages situating oneself in the research study, in what Indigenous scholar Fitznor calls positionality (2006). This practice takes into account relational assumptions as central to core Indigenous epistemologies. From a cultural lens, I see that Indigenous methodology is premised on cultural ways of teaching and learning. As Kovach notes, Indigenous methodologies make use of a “specific contextual knowledge assumption emerging from a particular tribal knowledge base” (2009, p. 41). In light of this,

my thesis aims to be Anishinaabe-centric for a number of reasons. First, geographically, I am situated in the southern regions of Manitoba, surrounded by Anishinaabe communities. I identify myself as an Anishinaabe/Inniew/Métis woman from south-central Manitoba, and have identified many of the Aboriginal education initiatives within local public schools as being Anishinaabe-centric or local cultural practices (Chartrand, 2012).

Worldview. Kovach's (2009) suggests that the focus of discussions about Indigenous methodologies should concentrate on the worldview or paradigm that guides our research. Worldviews provide a basis to understand how the world works, and how we should operate within that world. In order to shed light on the worldview from which I am operating in this research, I provide two visuals that illustrate this worldview. The First Nations Lifelong Learning Model created by Canadian Council of Learning in 2007 (Figure 8, p. 62) and the Web of Life (Figure 9, p. 72) illustrate a worldview that is used to further explain the Indigenous methodology I am using to guide my research. The common feature of Indigenous worldviews is the concept of relationships. Applying an Anishinaabe worldview to Indigenous research methodologies would raise consciousness of the relativity of relationships and how they bring us into knowing (Battiste, 2013). The visuals helped me see myself in a constant flux of relationship and to see that I am part of the world around me and that my actions or inaction will have impact.

From a Western lens, a philosophical paradigm is often used to “[shape] how we formulate our problem and research questions to study and how we seek information to answer the questions” (Creswell, 2013, p. 18). Paradigms are premised on particular assumptions about how knowledge is gained. As noted by Kuhn (1970), a paradigm provides assumptions that guide our intellectual pursuit of knowledge. It is a way to break

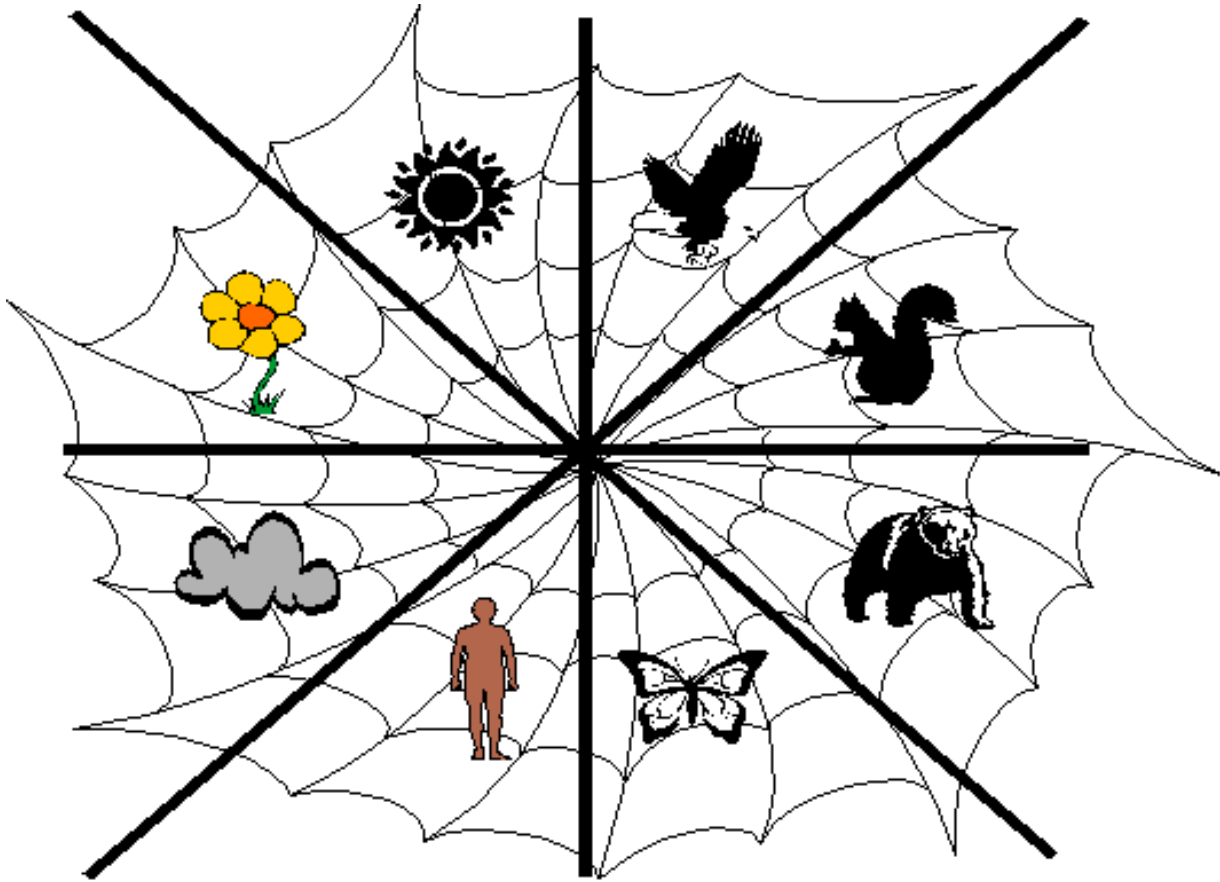


Figure 9. Web of Life Worldview (illustration created by R. Chartrand, 2002)

down the complexity of the real world, while understanding ourselves within that world. Overall, identifying the research paradigm provides a roadmap into the inquiry, creating a particular lens and set of methods to guide a reader's observation of a particular research project. It is how the research should be understood and studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). At this point, it is worth noting that Western methodologies are human made intellectual processes that aim to validate knowledge claims.

In comparison, Indigenous worldviews have not been theories to be discussed but exist as lived experiences that persist through time. They continue to exist within the cultural life-ways of our communities and are much better understood through

participation. When entering a ceremony, for example, there are protocols to engage one in the process of the ceremony. These protocols raise a consciousness which help activate a holistic perspective that illuminates and creates an opportunity to engage all aspect of ones being, bringing attention to the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual domains. To see a Smudging Ceremony, you would witness burning sage in a large shell and see individuals using their hands to bring the smoke of the burning sage to various parts of one's body. I have heard some people describe it as cleansing the space around them and within. In practice, it is the act of bringing attention to the fact that we are more than our physical self. As we smudge the different parts of our body, we are bringing attention to our heart (emotions), our mind (mental/cognitive), and the smoke that rises helps us connect to all of creation and to see that we are part of something greater than any one of us. The teachings that are shared around smudging develop this holistic worldview. It also helps us see that we have a responsibility to take care of all aspects of our being. These practices strengthen understanding of how we should view ourselves within our life worlds, which in turn form beliefs about reality, or beliefs, which help us determine what constitutes as reality. Within Western research this is defined as ontology.

Ceremony is research. Indigenous methodologies are premised on natural law, which follows natural life cycles like seasonal ceremonies that follow the Sun's cycle. Some Anishinaabe ceremonies are, therefore, conducted during the equinoxes and solstices. Ceremonies, such as the Sundance or Sweat Lodge Ceremony are conducted and offered upon request. There are many types of Sweat Lodge Ceremonies; some examples include healing sweats, naming sweats, feasting and celebrations sweats, which allow individuals or collective groups to share in a meaning making process. Figure 10 "Sample of Brian

McLeod's Sweat Lodge Teachings" provides an example of teachings and/or reasons that may bring someone to request or run a Sweat Lodge Ceremony.



Figure 10. Sample of Brian McLeod's Sweat Lodge Teachings, 2009

The Sweat Lodge Ceremony provides a conceptual metaphor to understand my research methodology. In addition, the integration of a Medicine Wheel and the Sweat Lodge Ceremony provide a concrete example of the Indigenous research methodology.

The sweat lodge from a cultural and spiritual lens. The sweat lodge is a sacred ceremony that should be respected for the meaningful life experience and spiritual practices it is for the Anishinaabe. It is a spiritual ceremony where people can pray, contemplate important life issues, and ask for healing, teachings or direction. The sweat lodge is sanctioned by the individual or individuals who are asked to conduct this

ceremony. In practice, a Sweat Lodge Ceremony is conducted by a leader or leaders and the experience the leader(s) facilitate act as intermediaries between the physical and spiritual realms. From my personal experience, participation in ceremony strengthens our sense of knowing about ourselves and ourselves in relations to all that exists in creation. Within a ceremonial space, knowledge is gained from lived experience (Battiste, 2004, 2013).

The sweat lodge from a pedagogical lens. As stated by Wilson (2009), ceremonies, like research, are constructed spaces that can serve to bring one into knowing. If we are to look at ceremonies, like the Sweat Lodge Ceremony, from a pedagogical lens, ceremonies can be equated to institutes of learning. The conductor/leader would be deemed the teacher. Sharing in a sweat lodge is added value. Some leaders conducting the Sweat Lodge Ceremony give participants an opportunity to speak and to share words, songs, teachings or contemplations about what brought them to the sweat. In these cases, I have experienced the dual role of others being both teacher and learner in the sweat. That is, a participant within a sweat can also provide guidance, insight or resolution of issues, or help resolve contemplations by adding to the experience with their presence, their words, and their kindness. Ceremony serves as a guide, as it facilitates a process that allows one to come into knowing. Indigenous epistemology, or the ways in which we come to learn then manifest from intentional engagement of the individual in the experience. It is an act of free will.

The sweat lodge from a research lens. Overall, ceremony, like research, creates "space between people with the relationship that they share" (Wilson, 2009, p. 87). I compare the experience in a Sweat Lodge Ceremony to efforts at meaning making. From an Indigenous research lens, research looks to the intricate web of relationships that brings us

into knowing. Storytelling and oral traditions are essential aspects of ceremony, and each of us must rely on our own processes to make meaning from lived experience.

The instrument I used for this research study is the concept that ceremony is research (Wilson, 2009). To make this more explicit, I have chosen to use the Anishinaabe Sweat Lodge Ceremony and Medicine Wheel teachings I carry to clarify my methods. Some have referred to the sweat lodge as the womb of Mother Earth (Brian McLeod, 2009, personal communication). It is a circular dome that rests like a full belly on Mother Earth. There are many cultural stories that are used to describe the Sweat Lodge Ceremony. There are also various ways in which one would prepare herself or himself to enter the lodge. I will begin at the point of entry into the lodge/ceremony.

The Sweat Lodge Ceremony

As part of protocol and traditional teachings known to me, this journey begins by entering the sweat lodge from the eastern doorway. As I kneel down, and before I crawl into the lodge, I state my traditional name *Wapinoong Ikwe* (Eastern doorway woman) and my clan name *Wabishke Meaungun Doodem* (I am from the white wolf clan). Upon entering, each person presents themselves to the Keeper of the lodge, to the ancestors, or to the people already sitting in the lodge. In terms of phenomenology, it would be somewhat like bracketing/epoche as it makes apparent one's bias, as well as the relationship one has with the people present, including their relationship to their ancestors, families, nations, communities and geography. This situates, as the name one carries and the clan one belongs to may direct where each person sits in the lodge, as each cardinal direction holds meaning and has purpose within the circle. To understand this from a cultural lens, it illuminates an awareness of our relationship to one another and the responsibility to those

relationships. There is always some way to relate to one another within the lodge even if it is simply on human or male/female basis. This act, when associated with research, is what Fitznor would likely call positionality (Fitznor, 2009, personal communication.). It is the way in which we must acknowledge ourselves, making ourselves apparent in our body of work to see where we are positioned in terms of our relationship to research and to each other.

These initial steps are important factors not only in entering a sweat lodge, but in writing my thesis. They help me to consider how I see myself in relationship to this body of work. It helps me appreciate the gifts and responsibilities that I carry in my name and clan, and how I have come into knowing. It also has me consider how to reciprocate this knowledge as part of my responsibility to these relationships. This thesis, for example, can be seen as reciprocating this knowledge.

From a Western perspective, this is what is defined as ontology: how we understand our existence or reality. The “idea that knowledge is approached through the intellectual leads to the belief that research must be objective rather than subjective, that personal emotions and motives must be removed” if the research results are to be valid (Carjuzaa, & Fenimore-Smith, 2010, pp. 3-4). Indigenous methodologies can be both objective and subjective. I am viewing this experience from a holistic lens. I envision I am sitting at the center of my own lived experience within a 360-degree lodge amongst others who are engaging in a similar process. Our reasons for being at the Sweat Lodge Ceremony may differ, but what remains consistent is that we are each engaged, reflecting, making meaning, answering questions that may have brought us to a contemplative space. This is what I call gathering knowledge from our own critically reflective center.

Data collection. The collection of data emerges from the centre of this envisioned circle, where the concept of wholeness is present and the process begins in the east and moves in a clockwise cyclical pattern to south, to west, to north, and returns to east to begin again. This provides a clear method to draw up and assemble data and a clear method for analyses of data. Pedagogically, it utilizes all of our senses. The metaphor, research as ceremony, requires the application of experience, illuminating individual and collective stories. This is a humanistic process that gathers knowledge from all the directions and from all that are present in ceremony. The sweat lodge, like the Medicine Wheel, provides a framework to attain a balanced perspective between the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Medicine Wheel frameworks serve as a tool for analysis of the data collection given that it requires ongoing reflection of oneself in relation. The holistic perspective with the four domains helps maintain a balanced look at each part albeit through wholeness and interconnectedness. The wholeness of the lodge requires that all domains are visited. This is what Bell (2013) calls a 360-degree vision.

As a method, it is clear that my thought processes would follow the same pattern. The four cardinal directions are used as points of reference to move me along in collecting data. The abstract becomes concrete when I apply myself to the process. The stories I have shared, the stories others shared with me in this thesis are examples of this process. I make use of my lived experience drawing on what I have experienced physically. I also include the social, emotional life experiences along with a reflection on metacognitive processes, to gather those critical moment life experiences that have brought me into knowing.

Method of data analysis. My data analysis is grounded in personal experience and reflective practice. I weave together personal experience that draws from formal

professional workspaces, and include data drawn from experience gathered from my engagement with the cultural life ways of Anishinaabe/Indigenous communities. The emphasis is placed on a search for meaning, and construction of clarity from a personal location. Explaining the methods used to engage in the Sweat Lodge Ceremony provide insight into an Indigenous methodology at work. This is where I gather data and make meaning.

Orientating oneself within ceremony is fundamental to creating data. The number four to the Anishinaabe is important in the sweat lodge teachings as it orients people to the four directions. This is similar to Medicine Wheel teachings that provide teachings that help centre oneself in relationship to four directions including the four aspects of being, the four cardinal directions, the four stages of life and so forth (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, & Lane, 1984). The number seven is also a key variable in the method of data analyses as it provides further opportunity to understand our relationship within 7 directions bringing awareness to the spatial/temporal spaces. This adds opportunity for movement from within (personal physical, emotional, mental, spiritual insight) to the outer world where we can engage with what is below us and what is around us on Mother Earth, considered as “all of our relations”. The number seven creates a mindfulness that we are not alone, that we must consider what is below us (Mother Earth) and above us (the cosmos) as well as what is within us. The above and below can be viewed as opportunities to move inward and outward, or to move from personal experience to collective experience.

In terms of method, within the lodge, the ceremony comes to a pause in each cardinal direction, it is a time to reflect on what has brought us to the lodge. The teachings and the pause allow a critical examination of oneself up against the teachings of the

directions, of the stories and experiences shared in the lodge. This is an example of a subjective, holistic and lived-experience methodology in play.

A holistic Indigenous research paradigm provides maximum flexibility to structure the research around each person's lived-experience, and also provides enough shape to guide as a methodology. It is a method that affords me the opportunity to draw on subjective data, where I take into account physical/pragmatic experience, emotional experience, mental/metacognitive experience, spiritual, insights, intuition, passions, inspirations and worldview to make meaning.

Validity and credibility. From this critically reflective centre, our experiences lead in telling us what is real. So “rather than the truth being something that is out there or external, reality is in the relationship that one has with the truth. Thus, an object or thing is not as important as one's relationship to it” (Wilson, 2009, p. 73). Value is placed on constructing understanding through association and relationship building that begins with ourselves extending outward to engage and interact with the world around us. In terms of writing strategies, Clandinin and Connelly “encourage individuals to write narrative studies that experiment with form. To look backward and forward, look inward and outward, and situate the experiences within place” (as quoted in Creswell, 2013, p. 220).

Fortunately, the work of Indigenous scholars (Absolon, 2009, 2011; Archibald, 2008; Kovach, 2009; L. T. Smith, 2002; Wilson, 2009) has more recently provided literature to support the articulation of an Indigenous methodology. Within this approach “significant attention is paid to assumptions about knowledge” where “methods ought to be congruent with the philosophical orientation identified in the research framework to show internal methodological consistency (Kovach, 2010, p. 41). From a cultural lens, Gehl (2012)

illustrates how the word “Gdebwe na”, for example, can be understood as a cultural mechanism as well as a research method that assures knowledge articulated must follow cultural traditions before it is expressed or accepted. Knowledge must, therefore, be connected to both the mind and heart to hold credibility and validity amongst the Anishinaabe peoples, because it ensures that expressed knowledge is grounded in ancient Anishinaabe oral traditions that are grounded in truth and holism (Gehl, 2012).

As noted by Chacaby, the “source of knowing is a lived connection that reflects the intricacies of one’s spatial/temporal physical, mental, emotional and spiritual environment...the inner workings of one’s relations” (2011, p. 28). “The only true knowledge that I can have is that which is learned from experience” (Monture-Angus, 1999, p. 45), and that which is absorbed from lived experience that becomes part of understanding of the world. The main question of credibility then, within an Indigenous research methodology, would be self-evaluative, which serves to answer the following questions. Have I strengthened my sense of self within self-knowing, within a sense of purpose and direction and more importantly as it relates to seeing myself as part of the circle of life? I could also consider, for example, whether I am clearer now about my roles and responsibilities on both a personal and professional level. Do I know what my next steps will be as I move forward in my life and work? Have I come to understand my gifts/strengths, and do I honor these gifts by making them apparent in how I represent myself? Have I made myself clear that others will understand my perspective and position on the topic?

This knowledge does not look to standardization or a checklist of criteria to determine the credibility or validity of knowledge production per say. It exists within the

researcher's ability to illuminate how knowledge was attained through lived experiences, pulling at those critical moments that helped shape knowledge construction of a particular topic and/or resolution of a question. Coming to know then, from an Indigenous lens, is built on "systems of knowledge that are built upon relationships between things, rather than on the things themselves" (Wilson, 2009, p. 74). They hold at the core a relational understanding and accountability to all our relations that exist within our life worlds (Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008), "where knowledge is co-created within the relational dynamic of self-in-relation" (Kovach 2009, p. 42). This way of learning, or coming into knowing, values the "interpersonal, intrapersonal and environmental" (Wilson, 2009, p. 74): factors that bring us into knowing. So rather than placing value on the findings or end products that would be measured by an exterior list of criteria, validity of knowledge construction is placed on the process and the respect and reciprocity found in the relationship the researcher has with herself or himself, family, community, clan, province, and nation and work relations: all of one's relations. Equally important is the space that is created to reciprocate knowledge and to honor the people, places, situations that brought one into knowing.

Wolcott's position about validating ones work within qualitative research is helpful here. He is more concerned with understanding and less concerned with validating (1990, 1994). Creswell writes: "[Wolcott] ultimately tried to understand rather than convince, and he voiced the view that validation distracted from his work of understanding what was really going on" (2005, p. 245). This perspective seems less concerned with appeal or dissuasion. Wolcott's position/perspective on illuminating understanding as opposed to asserting validity and proving validity is more in line with an Indigenous research

methodology. Wolcott (1990, 1994) emphasizes understanding; not convincing. However, the act of sharing understanding is an act of persuasion in itself. Understanding of a phenomenon would implicitly call for future action on behalf of one or the collective, but in a non-abrasive way.

In this next section, I move clockwise from East to South to West and North as I would if I were entering the Anishinaabe sweat lodge. This is part of my methodology: to reflect and gather data from each direction using personal life experience as the data source.

Reflections in the spiritual domain: Attention and intention. For the sake of making the methods more explicit, I will use an Anishinabeg Medicine Wheel (Figure 11, p. 84) to illustrate as I explain my method to make meaning. From cultural teachings, I have been told that everything starts with spirit, which is why our ceremonies bring attention to the spirit to bring balance to what we can see as physical. Smudging creates the opportunity for each person to ground herself and to be mindful of herself as a holistic being. The act of smudging brings attention to the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual. It is the act of noticing oneself, engaging and clearing out any negativity that might hold one back from engaging fully. I view smudging as an extension of our Medicine Wheel teachings. “Medicine Wheels can be used to help us see or understand things we can’t quite see or understand because they are ideas and not physical objects” (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, & Lane (1984) as cited in Bell, 2013, p. 1).

To me, the spiritual aspect of our being is the place within us that holds our inner most beliefs about the world, our worldviews, and the deep connections we have with the world around us. It is part of our inner world that connects deeper with something greater,

to a sense of purpose that often moves us to act. Our physical body then carries out these intentions, and we operate or behave in ways that reflect our understanding of the world and how we must act/proceed in this physical world. Essentially this is our worldview. To seek knowledge, truth and understanding from these contemplative and deeper parts of being, I consider and draw upon spiritual work. It is meaningful and helps create purpose, by nurturing deeper connections in lived experience. It becomes transformative if we are able to use what we learned to contribute to the world in meaningful ways. Research can also do this. It can help us find a place to express, to find purpose and make ourselves useful, therefore, identifying places to contribute and to belong. Moving from a phenomenological study to an Indigenous methodology has been inclusive of this spiritual

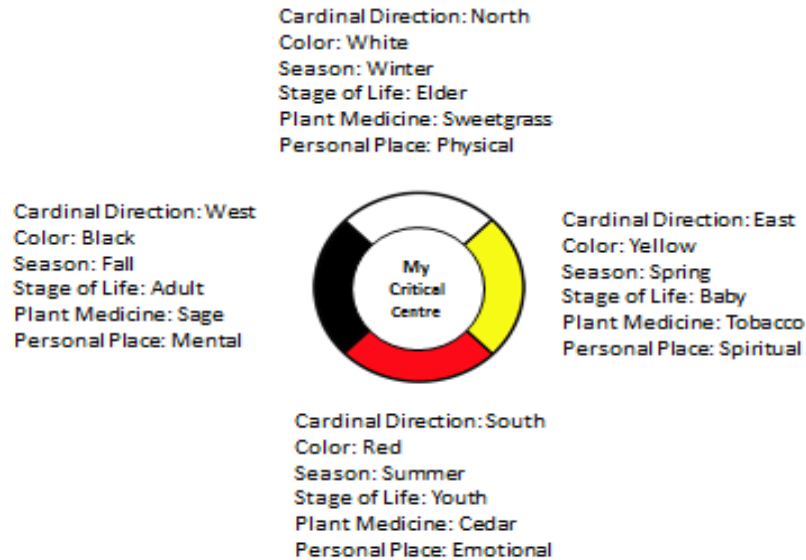


Figure 11. Anishinaabe Medicine Wheel Teachings (as communicated by Myra Laramee, 1995; Brian McLeod, 2009, Rainey Gaywish, 2016 and adopted and utilized from *The Sacred Tree* (Bopp, J., Bopp, M., Brown, L., Lane, P., Jr., 1984).

journey for me. It has allowed me to nurture deeper parts of my being, thus, renewing a sense of purpose. It has allowed me to take notice of the deep ancestral roots I have to this land.

Reflection in the physical domain: Preparing for research. By centering myself and then allowing myself to move clockwise to the next direction, the direction of physicality, I am able to show my next method. Following the natural life cycle of ceremony, I move from the spiritual realm to the physical where I look to my personal lived experience/pragmatic experience. It is here where I will consider what I have experienced or evidenced and the initiatives I have undertaken as an Aboriginal educator. It helps me identify at what points I have experienced success, challenges, or where I have taken issue with the use of term Aboriginal education. By recalling and then writing my story, I will be able to see how Anishinaabe pedagogy was experienced. This process then allows me to articulate this understanding.

In the physical/pragmatic domain I will ask questions that reflect physical lived experience. More specifically, I could consider setting, location, and my human senses. Questions posed might include the following. What have I experienced to date that has influenced my desire to write a thesis about my experience with Aboriginal education? What have I learned about this topic and, more importantly, how have I learned? Have I learned through book knowledge or lived/animate and/or cultural experience? Where have these experiences taken place? What have I learned from Western ways of teaching and learning that inform how I conceptualize and implement Aboriginal education? What have I learned from the cultural life ways and experience I have had in cultural settings that inform my understanding of Aboriginal education?

Reflections in the emotional doorway. I continue along this clockwise methodology and acknowledge that this Indigenous methodology will afford me the opportunity to normalize the presence of emotions in my research and to consider the emotions I continue to work through in completing a thesis. In the beginning, 2005, I realized I had hesitations about sharing my point of view and voice. I currently view this as internalized oppression to some degree. From a cultural lens, I questioned whether I had earned the right to speak, which also created ambivalence. As a graduate student, learning to find my voice has been a central part of this process. At times I felt insignificant, not smart or worthy enough to speak or share what I have envisioned. As I reflect on the work of Carol Dweck (2006), *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, she identifies how attitudes affect the way people view themselves as learners and illuminates the role that thought, belief and attitude play in academic success. Her work is premised on the belief that students hold one of two fundamental mindsets: either they are smart, or they are not smart. I have integrated her research into holistic, student-centered ways of teaching and learning to support engagement and academic success. Within this thesis, Dweck's research brings awareness to explore the emotional and spiritual domains of meaning making. My prior work and ongoing contemplation, which touch the heart, capture the essence of emotions that have supported or undermined my work. My point here is to acknowledge that I am a full human being with a range of emotions that can serve as a resource or supports to learning and completing a task. In order to have emotions work for you, there must be opportunities to make sense of emotions, make them apparent and have them work in your favor. Delays in completing a master's thesis, for example, may not be due to a lack of skill, per say, but might lie with defeating feelings and/or beliefs about one's self (i.e.,

beliefs about academia and your place in it). Questions that I've asked include the following. What feelings propelled me to complete a Master's of Education degree? What do I think about how I feel and how this affects what I know and what I do with what I know? Do I think this work is worthy of writing and expressing? Do I have the support of my relations to finish this work?

Centering myself in the belief (spiritual) that I count, I was able to draw strength to continue. From an Indigenous lens, research is "inclusive of a holistic process" (Absolon, 2011, p. 22), "that insist[s] on a more circular approach to the problem" (Wilson, 2009, p. 39). So rather than staying stuck in emotion, such as self-doubt or "making judgments of others' writing and contributions, I would use what others have said to bring into nearness my own experience (Wilson, 2009, p. 92). This concept allows me to express myself, not as an expert of the topic at hand, but to humbly express my own lived experience. The concept "research is ceremony" (Wilson, 2009) helped me consider my writing as an offering to the sacred fire of the collective. Furthermore, I wanted my research to bring me to a deeper level of understanding of my role and responsibility as an Indigenous educator, as a mother, sibling, and family and community member. Finding and maintaining my voice amongst this body of work was not an easy task. I lost myself at times trying to fit my thoughts into a particular way of communicating that has been created in academia.

Reflections in the intellectual doorway. Within the mental domain, I would consider the metacognitive process I have come through as part of this intellectual pursuit. Questions I might ask would include those that follow. What do I think about what I know? This aspect of my being helps me make choices. It is the place where I constantly assess, (re)-evaluate and move inertia forward. How do I ensure there is worth to me and to others

in how I write this thesis? Western methodologies are key within this part of the research as it is a metacognitive and intellectual pursuit, as Western methodology serves to validate the worth of one's writing. Illustrating that an intellectual process is maintained within Western criteria is key within this part of my methodology. As stated, there are many options to draw from within Western qualitative research to validate research. Indigenous scholar Dr. Gregory Cajete suggests the use of metaphors as they present ideas that are much easier to grasp compared to disconnected or wholly abstract ones. When ideas fit metaphors perfectly, and if those metaphors are reflective of one's natural environment, these conveyed ideas are more likely to make sense (Cajete, 2012, personal communication).

Indigenous research, for example, would use an Indigenous holistic research paradigm to guide the formation of questions. Using a question-posing model, the four cardinal directions provide a natural series of steps to contextualize questions and ensure that the full extension of one's human experience is accounted for. It serves as a guiding light.

I recognize this process is reciprocal. It does not end when I have moved through all four domains of my being. It continues to flow as part of an ongoing self-assessment process. It is part of a holistic and living worldview. If my research impacts my beliefs, if it renews or helps me find purpose in what I have done and what I continue to do, then it has been a worthy process. The spiritual domain allows us to connect to these deeper, meaningful and purpose-driven parts of our self. Essentially our actions/behaviors stem from the place that holds our innermost beliefs. Indigenous methodological questions that emerge from this domain add to a question of credibility about this work. From an

Indigenous research methodology, I would consider the following questions. Have I gained a deeper understanding of myself within the circle (work, community, and life-experience)? Am I clear on where I must journey next as a result of this work? Is there merit in this work for others? Do I have a better understanding of myself in relation to this work and in relation to others that live life restoring culture, language, traditions and knowledge of the Anishinaabe.

In the next Chapter, I will be looking at the variables that contribute to the make-up of Aboriginal Education: the goals, content and assessment as it is currently experienced in schools today.

Chapter Four

Variables that Contribute to Aboriginal Education in Canadian Schools

To bring it all together, I use an illustration I created called “*Steadying The Kaleidoscope of Aboriginal Education*” (see Figure 12). I first created this model in 2006 as part of a post baccalaureate course I was taking at the University of Manitoba on program planning. I have since used this model to as part of a course I designed for the Manitoba Teachers Society. The target audience was aspiring school administrators, and the course was called, The ABC’s of Aboriginal Education. The course title is puzzling, as the following makes clear:

There is no unified description of Aboriginal education as it is profoundly influenced by the intersection of Indigenous and Western worldviews, the policies and practices that guide teaching and learning, individuals and system beliefs about the value and purpose of public education, language, and the historical relationship between schools, curriculum and Aboriginal peoples. (Manitoba Education and Youth and Advanced Learning, 2003)

The kaleidoscope model is intended to assist in understanding the complexity surrounding Aboriginal education by steadying what I perceive to be a shape-shifting lens. The illustration I created helped me think deeply about that which defines the focus and content of Aboriginal education.

Indigenous scholars recognize that a bi-focal perspective and critical lens are necessary in understanding and contributing to the Indigenous Renaissance (Archibald, 2008; Atleo, 2005, 2009; Fitznor, 2005; Gaywish, 2011). This dual perspective creates space

to examine the variables that influence the goals, outcomes and assessment of Aboriginal education. The model I created is designed to be holistic, layered, engaging and process

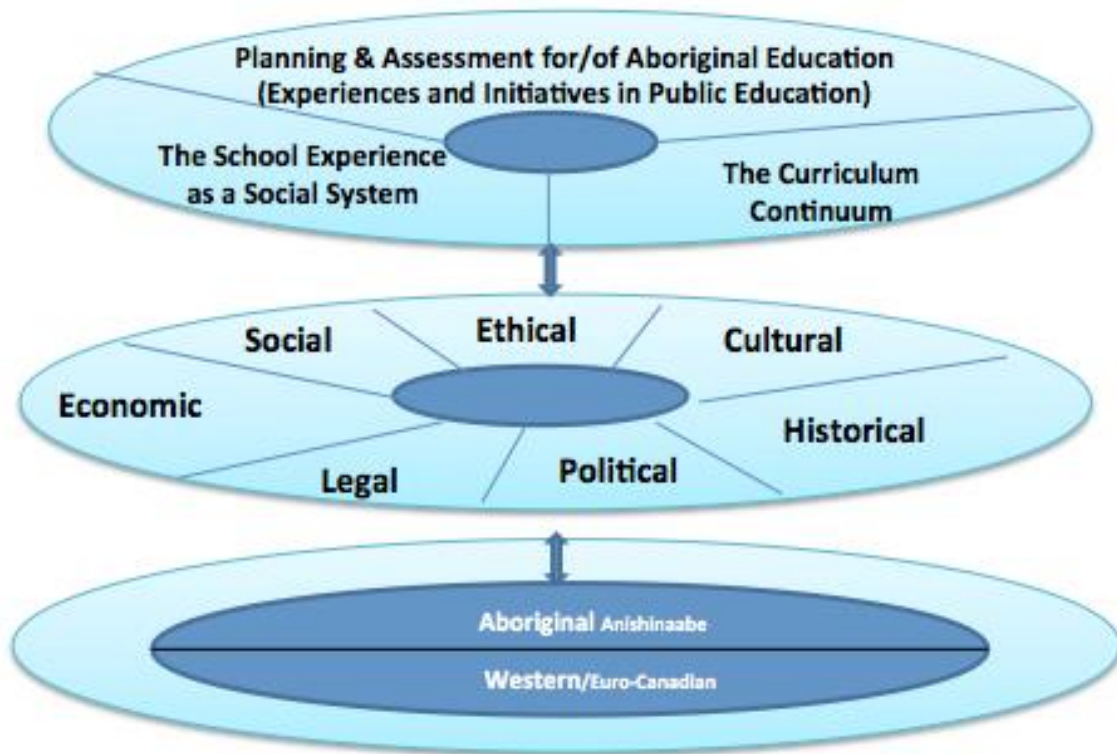


Figure 12. Steadying the Kaleidoscope of Aboriginal Education. Rebecca Chartrand 2009, adapted from First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (CCL, 2007) and Sork (1991)

oriented (Sork, 1991). It illuminates the interplay of power dynamics that influence the focus, scope and assessment of Aboriginal education initiatives. It can also be used to critique our Aboriginal education policies, curriculum development and curriculum integration initiatives, professional development or school/division planning where Aboriginal education is present. It brings to light the issues of injustice and inequality as we (de)construct the vision, goals and outcomes of Aboriginal education initiatives.

Davies and Ellison (2003) state that we must look beyond the boundaries of the school and understand the interface between the school and its environment. In the particular case addressed in this thesis, we must see the plight of Indigenous peoples to be present in the past and to be present in modern socially constructed phenomena such as Aboriginal education. The goals of Westerners have often dominated, and, within a profit driven society, ensuring a strong economy has been a central pillar of our modern education system. For this reason, goals for Aboriginal students are weighed against the value of their contribution to society. This starts in school with the measurement of attendance rates, graduation rates and later employment. These goals differ from goals that would emerge if we used a cultural lens to drive our Aboriginal education initiatives. Cultural goals, for example include opportunities to revitalize culture and linguistic identities, as these are crucial in forming healthy identities and in current pursuits to heal and reconcile the impacts of Indian Residential Schools.

The attempt to merge Western and Aboriginal epistemologies within the context of Western schooling creates unique challenges. Chandler (2010) has described this as an attempt to reform education that cannot help but engender epistemic violence and discord. Rather than viewing such discordance as something to be quelled, I value such sites of struggle and resistance as opportunities to critically explore and deepen our understanding of what's at hand. I do not assume the model in Figure 12 is all inclusive and capable of covering all the issues or perspectives that can be or should be explored, but it does create the opportunity to engage more deeply with this topic, to apply a question-posing process that would contextualize local and collective initiatives.

The Three Tier Model

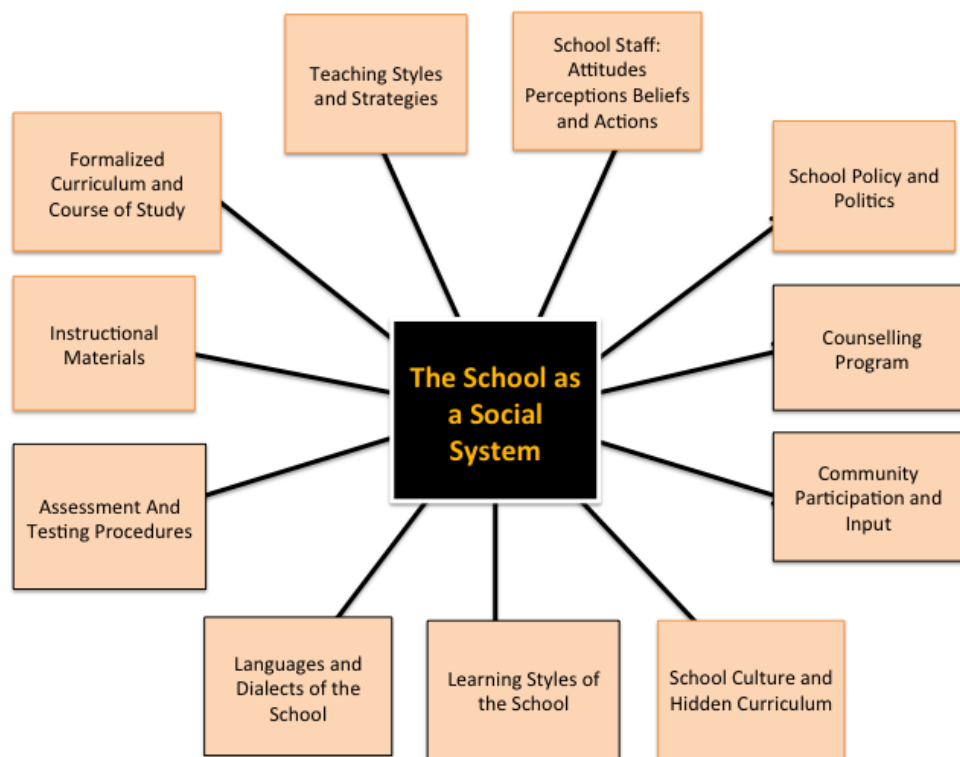
The model is three-layered. The first layer, at the top, looks at the technocratic nature of Canadian schooling. Technocracy is defined as an organizational structure where decision-makers define the outcomes based on an awareness of the unique make up of each situation. The second layer, in the middle, is a critically reflective domain that steadies the variables that contribute to the makeup of Aboriginal education. The third layer, at the bottom, looks at holding Indigenous and Western perspectives in balance. The model creates space for Indigenous Peoples to be present as we explore Aboriginal education in the context of Western educational outcomes that have dominated what our students experience as schooling. In what follows, I will explore the content of each layer.

The top level: Our technocratic education system. The first layer represents Canadian schooling as a technocratic industrial model comparable to that of an assembly line (Robinson, 2012). As a social system, the school provides learning procedures that aim to pattern human behavior to learning outcomes desired by the dominant society. Rather than learning through natural curiosity, the school as a learning institute defines the content and pace of learning from Kindergarten through Grade 12. Students are expected to conform to this type of learning experience in order to achieve success. The mantra of public schooling is “go to school–graduate–get a job:” be a productive member of society.

Public education institutions are meant to provide equal education by providing the same or identical content and approaches in an attempt to be just and fair to all. Battiste (2013) argues that formal education “is a culturally and socially constructed institution for an imagined context with purposes defined by those who are privileged to be the deciders, and their work has not always been for the benefit of the masses” (p. 159). Traditional

modes of education often attempt to quell or minimize dissent from Western normative ways of educating. For this reason, greater insight is needed when assessing Aboriginal education outcomes, including a different skill set, knowledge and resources, to ensure that time and efforts and targeted funding are seeing results for all children.

I used the work of James Banks (2006) to illustrate how Canadian schools as social systems continue to maintain the status quo (Figure 13). The formalized curriculum and courses of study are but one arm within “The School as a Social System.” Schools then, cannot help but systematically discriminate against diverse Indigenous ways of knowing, teaching and learning. The topmost layer of the kaleidoscope embodies this perspective.



James Bank, 1998

Figure 13. The School as Social System (Banks, 2006)

Today, provincial and territorial ministries of education continue to oversee the production of curricular documents. These documents include standards-based outcomes and mandate what teachers are to teach through the academic school year. Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth has increasingly earmarked dollars to support Aboriginal education initiatives. It is a stated priority. In light of the Aboriginal education timeline, presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 5, p. 38), the majority of provincial Aboriginal education initiatives are focused on curriculum development and implementation. These new curriculum developments are designed as learning resources to support the integration of Aboriginal perspectives into existing curricula as a means to achieving greater Aboriginal academic success (Dion, 2009; Kanu, 2002, 2005). Although we are seeing growth in new curricular resources, “through adaptive dimensions of curriculum, Aboriginal content has been so marginalized, fragmented, and delivered from Eurocentric perspectives that have not much effect on students” (Battiste 2013 p. 163). In addition, curriculum content is generally static and becomes outdated with time.

The school as a social system and the reliance on readymade curriculum documents perpetuate one grand Eurocentric narrative (St. Denis, 2007, 2009). As an example of how the status quo is maintained, consider the role of teachers. In teacher education courses, teachers are instructed and encouraged to think about how to plan, teach, and assess learners in a variety of subject areas. They generally are not taught to question why a particular subject is a component of the province’s system of education or why the mandated topics and learning outcomes in a subject are more important for students to know and understand than others. The primary focus of a curriculum is to stipulate the content to be taught. Curricular documents include lists of general learning outcomes

(GLOs) and specific learning outcomes (SLOs) that suggest a pre-planned sequence of lessons for achieving retention of the SLOs. In many classrooms, particularly those in Middle and Senior Years, there is also a reliance on textbooks or print materials as basic teaching resources. In such an environment, teachers would naturally come to notions of Aboriginal education from a Western Euro-Canadian perspective, with their own beliefs and pedagogical strategies that would greatly influence conceptualization and implementation of Aboriginal education.

It's important to recognize the past 40 years as an era of experimentation that has put teachers in the trenches to create change. This has left them vulnerable. Some teachers have excelled, but in other cases things have gone terribly awry at the level of the classroom.

On the surface, we expect teachers to integrate Aboriginal perspectives, but beneath that is also the responsibility of addressing unresolved contentious and historical issues. It has been argued that a majority of the challenges are a result of heavier workloads, racism, discrimination, and lack of support (Kanu, 2005; St. Denis, 2007, 2009; St. Denis & Schick, 2003). Given the complexities associated with the inclusion of Aboriginal education in schools, there has also been a high level of change in staffing and in initiatives (St. Denis, 2009). We cannot ignore the racial tensions and inequities that play out in all aspects of Canadian society (LaRoque, 2010; St. Denis 2009; St. Denis & Schick, 2003). These are race relation issues, and a focus on curriculum sidesteps the deeply entrenched and racialized issues that must be addressed (St. Denis, 2009) if Aboriginal education initiatives are going to be successful. Historical wrongs, including Residential Schools and inter-generational trauma, must be taken into account, and education institutions must play an instrumental

role in reconciliation between Canada and Aboriginal peoples (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples 1996). This reconciliation involves each and every one of us as Canadians.

The Middle level: The critical reflective domain. The middle layer looks at the variables that contribute to the makeup of Aboriginal education outside of the curricula associated with provincially mandated formal education. As seen in Figure 13 (p. 94), there are seven sections and, thus, seven variables. These sections are labeled: historical, political, legal, economic, social, ethical and cultural. These are the variables that define the scope, focus and content of what becomes Aboriginal education. It is meant to display how each section exists as a competing factor, illuminating the interplay of power dynamics. For example, within a question posing research methodology, it is important to consider why the goals of one section would prevail over the goals of another section. Over the past 40 years economic goals have often prevailed over the cultural goals of Indigenous Peoples. If cultural goals had prevailed, Indigenous Peoples would have their languages, culture and identities intact. Each variable exists to illuminate the complexity of Aboriginal education. To better understand this complexity, I look at each variable, beginning with the “Legal”, and explore the issues, questions or opportunities that arise within this variable before moving on to the next.

Legal. The legal domain illuminates the unique and legally binding relationship that Indigenous peoples have with the Canadian government. What was envisioned and then experienced as education by Indigenous peoples is ongoing and highly contentious issue that plays out within Canadian legal and political realms. To Indigenous Peoples, Treaties were about land sharing, while Euro-Canadians viewed Treaties as land surrender. Instead

of taking the best of both worlds to support First Nations participating fully in a changing economy with newcomers, First Nations children experienced a segregated education that was legally controlled and regulated by the federal government of the day. First Nations have since been struggling to step outside of this paternalistic relationship with government, pushing for self-determination that asserts a legal right for jurisdictional control over First Nations education. Today, First Nations schools are still obligated to adhere to provincial standards, outcomes and assessments that maintain the status quo. These are the unresolved historical issues that continue to play in out in both provincial and federally funded schools. For this reason, we must return to the intent of the Treaties to find solutions. It is our obligation as Canadians to honor the treaties, it is our responsibility as First Nations Peoples across Canada to rebuild healthy Nations- education being key.

Although the Canadian Indian Treaties were negotiated between the Crown and First Nations, today provincial education regulations continue to influence the outcomes and focus of Aboriginal education. Each province has its own provincial Education Ministry, with its own curriculum, standards and regulations. There are over 1000 reserves and only 515 schools (Mendelson, 2008) with many legal issues that continue to play out in the relationship between First Nations and federal/provincial governments as it pertains to education. The main issue is the obscure legal relationship between First Nations and government, "There is no legislation that recognizes First Nations right to control their own education and to set up the organizations that allow them to do so effectively" (Mendelson, 2008 p.214) The Indian Act, limits INAC- Indigenous and Northern Affairs from recognizing First Nation as entities with whom the government may contract to run their own schools.

Mendelson (2008), further notes that a First Nations Education Act would redefine the legal relationship between First Nation that would give First Nations the authority to manage the schools on reserve.

Canadians have benefited from the Treaties while First Nations, Métis and Inuit through The Indian Act has been dispossessed of their inherent rights, and subjugated to a “special status” under a paternalistic relationship with government. This has to change. The uneven distribution of power and resources has left First Nations, Inuit and Métis people oppressed in their homelands (Friere, 1970). In an effort to help Canadians understand the Canadian Indian Treaties, the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba established in 2010 has been running a public education campaign over the past six years called, “We Are All Treaty People” The intention of the phrase, is meant to illuminate that we are as much Treaty people as we are Canadians. Canadians Indian Treaties afforded newcomers, past and present, the opportunity to settle on these lands.

From a legal standpoint, the Aboriginal education experienced in public schools must also be interpreted and understood from the lens of the Canadian Indian Treaties, as this illuminates unresolved and contentious legal issues. First Nations Control of First Nations education maintains an ongoing struggle between First Nations and governments the trickles down impacting provincial politics. This is evident in the how Aboriginal education has become a focus and priority for many provincial education ministries, including school divisions.

Historical. Indigenous peoples, as a founder member, helped create Canada. That is what the treaties signify. Our history, as a result, should be seen as Canadian history and should be valued and learned by all Canadians and all new immigrants. The goal is to bring

a balanced perspective as we look at each section of the kaleidoscope. If we look at the historical domain, we might look at the Canadian Indian Treaties to see what was envisioned as education for Indigenous children that has not yet come to fruition. We could then look back even further to recognize that Indigenous Peoples had and continue to have ways of knowing, teaching and learning that are now being expressed through academic literature. We must come to see the history of Aboriginal Peoples as an integral part of Canadian history that is viewed neither as a sidebar in a Euro-Canadian story. The reality exists that First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have a different perspective on Canadian history that is not commonly understood. The bifocal historical lens tells us that the Aboriginal experience in Canada is yet to be fully understood and appreciated.

Political. As identified in the Aboriginal Education Timeline in Chapter 2 (see Figure 5, p. 38), Indigenous peoples have been locked in a paternalistic power dynamic. The education politics of this relationship have been playing out since Confederation. For more than forty years, political pressure has been mounting to close the education gap between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students in Canada. Increasing academic success for Aboriginal students has been the primary focus at both the federal and provincial level (Royal commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 2006; Office of the Auditor General, 2000, 2004, 2011; Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b). This poses a great challenge that calls for reform in all areas of our society and within all areas of formal education. This political pressure has led to numerous prospective initiatives. Some of these initiatives focus on administration reform (Richards, 2008), parent and community engagement (Aboriginal Education Directorate's BSSAP initiative) and increased funding (Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2015). However, for change to occur there is a need to sensitize

Eurocentric consciousness, and this requires learning that challenges the beliefs of Canadians (Battiste, 2013). To date, governments have done very little to address this issue. The average Canadian has observed very little of this discussion in political debates as it has not been central to political discussions. This may be due to the lack of understanding of this issue that many consider outside of their lived reality.

It's important to note that First Nations continue to be segregated to life on reserved lands set aside for "Indians". The average voter is unaware of the oppressive laws that kept Indigenous peoples from participating as equal members of society. This has created many unresolved grievances that continue to be marginalized in the political arena at federal and provincial levels. Issues surrounding water, homelessness, land claims, economic development, housing, health, suicide, and education are key examples of unresolved grievances.

One example of the marginalization Indigenous peoples have experienced in their homeland was being denied the right to vote until 1961. While First Nations were given the right to vote fifty-five years ago, women in Canada were given the right to vote 100 years prior in 1916. This is one example of the lack of representation of Indigenous Peoples in governments and the inability to address grievances in political realms. With increasing numbers of Indigenous peoples running for provincial and federal representation, political lobbying has been key to moving representation forward.

We can't forget the politics that play out in our local spaces. We have to ask the following questions: Whose agenda? Who determines the content, the focus, and the goals for Aboriginal education? This is true at every level including local First Nations communities. It's a question of power and authority, the control of resources and the

priorities we set. The goal is to balance out representation; to have Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people present to consider the outcomes of Indigenous and Western ways of teaching and learning that will define what becomes Aboriginal education in our local spaces.

Economic. It has become so evident that the economic domain dominates all educational outcomes including Aboriginal education. Our educational system is based on an industrial model where success is measured by contributions to the existing economy. That is why academic success, graduation rates and employability are the main focus of Aboriginal initiatives. This focus is illustrated in Manitoba's Aboriginal Education Directorate Action Plans for 2004-2007 and 2008-2011. From a Western lens, there are people who continue to assess the economic costs to this country if we do nothing about the low graduation rates of Aboriginal students (White, Peters, & Beavon, 2009). Aboriginal people are viewed as a deficit from this perspective, sending a message that our kids don't measure up. It also sends the message that they are not valued within this paradigm, because they would be viewed as an economic burden. From an Indigenous perspective, the mantra "go to school- get a job- become a contributing member of society" is a reality that does not exist within First Nations communities.

Canada First Nations were segregated and isolated to remote parts of Manitoba, kept out of sight and out of mind while the rest of the country was developing. Forced to live off the rations that came in from the Department of Indian Affairs, many became dependent on social welfare. The oppressive laws of the Indian Act made it near impossible for First Nations to develop businesses in their communities. For this reason, and for many years, there has been little if any economic development in First Nation communities and

unemployment rates can be as high as 95%. So, when we look at creating a transition from school to work, Aboriginal youth must leave their communities. Although, First Nations communities continue to create partnerships with colleges and universities to help students and community members acquire trade skills, the jobs in their home communities do not exist. The skilled worker can either live where there is work or return to the community where the status quo dependency on welfare will continue.

Colonization and the Indian Act have destroyed many Indigenous economies and have created barriers to establishing healthy economies and employment. Indigenous peoples continue to be looked at from a deficit lens. In urban and rural areas, Indigenous peoples have experienced racism and discrimination which lessen economic and employment opportunities (St. Denis, 2009). This has led to cross-cultural training and employment equity affirmative action programs. This is where Aboriginal education is also necessary, as it is designed to create healthier relationships and informed opinions to lessen bias and prejudice and foster healthy Indigenous economies.

From an Indigenous perspective, pre-contact economies were built on systems of trade and alliances and community well-being that held sustainability and respect for the environment and natural resources at its foundation. Rather than viewing the economy from a consumer and individualistic lens, Indigenous economies were built on relationships of respect and reciprocity between people, the land and their environment. The values embraced community well-being over individual gain. Indigenous societies viewed individual wealth as a form of cancer, where selfishness was frowned upon as it created an imbalance between family and community. Certain ceremonies of Indigenous peoples were a form of distributing wealth. Treaty making processes established between First Nations

long before the arrival of Europeans Nations embraced gift giving as a form of establishing and maintaining good relationships. The value of caring for the collective lives within this gift giving practice is seen in ceremony. This truth has been captured in the film “I AM” written, directed, and narrated by Tom Shadyac, in 2010.

Currently, First Nations schools are hostage to Manitoba curricula leaving little room to develop curricular outcomes. These subject-specific curricula do not address the unique needs of First Nations communities. From an Indigenous lens, “real equity can be achieved in Indigenous education only when a principle of equalization is adopted, so that we have equality in staff salaries and benefits as well as infrastructure and up to date technologies...” (Goulet & Goulet, 2014, p. 198). Economic inequity continues in this country. One need not look further than the dollars per student per year in First Nations schools and provincially funded schools.

Social. In general, the interaction of people and their collective co-existence, irrespective of whether they are aware of it or not, and irrespective of whether the interaction is voluntary or involuntary, can be seen as the social spaces we inhabit. The term social is often used as a descriptor that implies there is a state in which people are not “social” or in which people are totally free of social relations. However, this implies either radical individuality or even solipsism as a natural state to which “social” is of secondary or additional status, rather than co-existing with personhood or being an inextricable part of being human in the world. Terms like “social justice” imply that there are conventional types of justice that are not social. (Lamont, 2016, personal communication).

From an Anishinaabe lens, the term social should illuminate the web of relationships we have to one another. Relationships are at the core of understanding ourselves as social

beings. Within these relationships are shared responsibilities to see other organisms within our collective co-existence. Our goals within education are to make all learners aware of and responsible to those relationships. This is the role of a good human being. Aboriginal education, in this context, acts as that bridge between Indigenous and Western philosophies of education. Indigenous philosophies are much stronger in stressing relationships, personal responsibility and social cohesion, honouring the past, the present and those relations yet to come in the subsequent seven generations.

Aboriginal education, as experienced in public schools today, is quite different from Indigenous ways of teaching and learning (Battiste, 2004). The latter is a way of teaching and learning that relies on relationality (Kirkness, 1999, 2013). Concepts of wholeness are central as Anishinaabe worldview is a relational pedagogy, and this includes an understanding of ourselves as part of a never-ending web of relationships that bring us into knowing. You can see from the Web of Life illustration (Figure 9, p. 72) that Indigenous pedagogy nurtures a sense of responsibility to all relationships, whether it is a relationship with one's self, other human beings, or other life forms including the earth, plants, air and water.

Historically, and still today, learning in Aboriginal communities was practical and intentional, and knowledge and skills were nurtured and applied immediately for living and survival. Respecting other life forms is paramount within the concept of social responsibility. The term social can be understood from the concept of relationship pedagogy, and from an Indigenous lens, our concept of social would be holistic. As such, education is used to develop skills, attitudes, knowledge and beliefs that strengthen our

understanding within a web of relationships that help us thrive in everyday life (Archibald, 2008, 2010; Chartrand, 2012).

Ethical. Ethics involves questions of right and wrong behavior. Within the context of Aboriginal education, we must go beyond the consumer approach to education and see education as an opportunity to create more just societies (Apple, 2008). On a broader national scale, we must reconcile what was promised and denied within the Canadian Indian Treaties. It is our ethical responsibility as Canadians and as Treaty people to resolve the loss of language, culture, identity, and well-being caused by Eurocentric Canadian education systems. The oppressive and assimilative laws of the Indian Act continue to leave First Nations disempowered in their own communities with little to no input in how education dollars are spent. This is still the reality today, because the fight for First Nation's control of First Nation's education continues. First Nations schools are still held hostage to teaching provincial curricular outcomes. First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples create their own curriculum that reflects ancient epistemologies and that addresses the socioeconomic situations of their communities (Canadian Council of Learning, 2007). This includes the power and authority of government directing funding for First Nations communities.

For me this starts with a balanced perspective in our definition and assessment of Aboriginal education. As Indigenous Peoples, our vision of Aboriginal education and what we want our children to achieve from education must be factored in. "The way that Indigenous knowledge is presented in the school system must also be subject to ethical guidelines" (Battiste, 2002, p. 170), and balanced and authentic perspectives. "Canadian administrators and educators need to respectfully blend Indigenous epistemologies and

pedagogies with Euro-Canadian epistemology and pedagogy to create an innovative ethical, trans-systemic Canadian educational system.” (Battiste, 2002, p. 168).

Cultural. The goals of the cultural domain would see revitalization of language, culture, and positive self-identities as an ultimate goal of Aboriginal education. This section would acknowledge the goals of education for First Nations, Inuit and Métis children that include the national recommendations identifying best practices. But we must take into account the ground-breaking work of Indigenous educators and scholars who are creating pathways to understand why language and culture revitalization is important and why land-based education is important. It helps answer the questions: What do we want teachers to teach? How do we want teachers to teach? These Indigenous educators and scholars also differentiate between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and illuminate ways of teachings and learning that have been sorely overlooked under the umbrella of Aboriginal education.

It is a pan-Aboriginal perspective that overlooks the diversity that presents obstacles. Educators and teachers need to understand that best practices in one place won't necessarily transplant well in other locations. In addition, there are many superficial and/or trivial activities that undermine the transformative value Indigenous ways of teaching can have for all children. Painting rocks, making bannock or dream catchers are examples of cultural activities that can lack substance if they do not include historical, cultural teachings. The activities should be about more than the tangible item produced in these activities. The cultural knowledge extracted from local Indigenous peoples frequently gets overlooked when we fail to recognize the distinctive Indigenous communities from which knowledge, pedagogy and human resources are drawn. We must look to the holistic

ways of teaching and learning and tap into the rich pedagogical learning opportunities to understand what learning possibilities are at hand. Elder Garry Robson has often said, “There are layers to cultural teachings just like in education. You start with the elementary and move to deeper and more philosophical understandings” (G. Robson, 2010, personal communication,). The integrity of Indigenous knowledge gets lost if the simple “add and stir” approach to integrating Aboriginal perspectives is used (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). For this reason, it is necessary to include Elders, Cultural Knowledge Keepers, parents and community in what we teach and how we teach.

Dion (2009) points out that much of our traditional knowledge gets lost when teachers utilize their personal pedagogical techniques and procedures to transmit Indigenous knowledge, or when they use these activities to reinforce western values and world views. As noted in her research, many of these practices are often premised on Western ways of teaching and learning. As a result, teachers and their students can overlook important lessons, perspectives or messages if they do not gain the ability to see with two perspectives. To effectively develop and integrate Aboriginal education requires a paradigm shift; to see another way of teaching and learning that is valid. Storytelling, for example, is one way of transmitting knowledge without providing the answers. It creates a space to hear a story that uses symbols and metaphors to guide learning and to make sense of the story from personal life experience and contemplation (Cajete, 1994). For this reason, it has been critical for Indigenous peoples to be part of the development and assessment of Aboriginal education. We must rely on Indigenous peoples who understand Indigenous epistemological and pedagogical practices to help us create an authentic Aboriginal education that is balanced between Western and Indigenous practices and that

is utilized and applied to our conceptions of Aboriginal education (Archibald, 2009; Battiste, 2004, 2005; Bell, 2013; Chartrand, 2012; Laramée, 2013).

Within my own work, I have observed local Anishinaabe teaching being taken and repackaged with a pan-Aboriginal branding. For this reason, I have been drawn into deep reflective spaces to consider what I am defining as Aboriginal education in terms of content and process. I believe we must look critically at our work to determine the efficacy of these new specialized Aboriginal education positions that serve to support the development, integration and assessment of this growing body of work.

The third level: Maintaining a bifocal lens. At the center of the model is the core that is focused on the aspirational goal of achieving a balance between Indigenous and Euro-Canadian education (Figure 15). The circular core evenly divided into two parts captures this notion, as one side represents Indigenous worldviews while the other represents Western/Euro-Canadian worldviews. They are also represented so as to be complementary areas of interest, rather than competing areas of interest. The core of the model speaks to these possibilities of intentions. From this, the goal is to create inclusive outcomes, strategies, and processes that can be utilized to create successful outcomes.

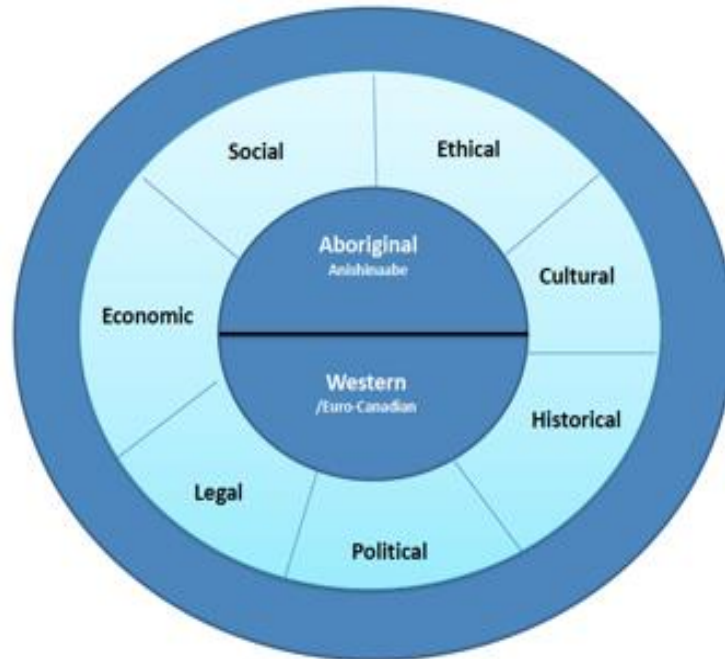


Figure 14. The Inner Core of the Three Tier Model (R. Chartrand, 2009)

Taking the best of both worlds brings us into a holistic framework where Indigenous education develops the social/emotional and Spiritual and the Western develops the mental and physical. Together they form a stronger education system that would produce capable young adults and citizens, not just graduates successfully completing an academic course. They would be graduating as well-rounded human beings, strong in self-knowledge and with the ability to walk in “Pimatisiwin”: to walk in a beautiful way with all of creation. It’s an envisioned education system that can empower individual and collective healing and well-being, if it enables students to find self-confidence and to connect to their true selves, their heritage, their ancestors, their spirit guides, their passion, and their community.

Chapter 5

Synthesis

When I look back at the last four chapters, I realize my thesis has a (de)constructive pattern. In Chapter one, this began by reflecting on those critical moments where I illuminate factors of Anishinaabe pedagogy. Throughout this process, I used both Western/Euro-Canadian and Indigenous perspectives to reflect, to learn and to transmit my insights. I also realize what I learned was shared through stories voiced by Indigenous guest speakers who carried knowledge that was not yet found in any textbook. In Chapter Two, I reviewed relevant published literature and looked back at historical documents and events to see how Aboriginal education emerged. I used linear chronological and holistic illustrations to explain my growing perspective. In Chapter Three, I made use of the Sweat Lodge Ceremony as a means to gather and interpret data. I not only identified the Sweat Lodge Ceremony as my Indigenous methodology but made use of this ceremony to further illustrate what Anishinaabe pedagogy looks like as a process for learning. In Chapter 4, I used a bifocal lens to further examine the many variables that contribute to the makeup of the Aboriginal education as it occurs in Canadian schools.

I realize cultural knowledge and experience has been invaluable throughout my thinking process. I believe, my perspective would have been limited if I relied only on my Western/Euro-Canadian schooling experience for what's represented as Aboriginal education in public schools. Attending Sweat Lodge Ceremonies, experiencing the Sundance Ceremony as a Sundancer and being immersed daily in professional dialogue that questions whether schools are a place for cultural practices, like smudging, helped me establish the Western/Euro-Canadian and Anishinaabe bifocal lens.

The Best of Both for Collective Well-being

My search for clarity about Aboriginal education is the realization that this pursuit has been both philosophical and pragmatic. I now see that the question “What is Aboriginal education?” is parallel to asking “What is education?” From a philosophical perspective, it’s a question of the purpose of education: “What are schools for?” It is the educational aim that defines the curricular goals and content. It’s also a question of what we want students to be capable of doing after they graduate. Equally important is how we want/need them to be, today and into the future. From a curricular perspective, it’s a question of what we want teachers to teach and students to learn. From a pedagogical perspective, it’s a question of how we want students to come to knowledge and act in ways that support what we value in the world. Therefore, we need to be clear about our aims for (Aboriginal) education. This final chapter will bring together final thoughts on Anishinaabe education, and consider how the goals of Anishinaabe philosophy and Anishinaabe pedagogy have been actualized in my work as the Division Team Lead for Aboriginal Education in Seven Oaks School Division.

As an person of Anishinaabe/Inniew and Métis descent, I realize that the need to understand Aboriginal education is about understanding ourselves as Anishinaabe people: trying to see that our ancestors and cultural roots lie within the very earth that is beneath our homes and our local schools. Indigenous people have fought a long uphill battle to re-emerge and assert perspectives through Canadian and Indigenous literature, curriculum and pedagogy. It’s therefore important to reflect deeply on the aforementioned philosophical questions that bring our goals and aims for education to light. In general, philosophies of education maintain a vision that helps examine the goals, purpose or meaning of education from a particular lens. From an Anishinaabe perspective, an

important goal to academic success is the desire to restore wellness in our homes, communities-for individuals and for the collective that would make our Anishinaabe Nations strong again.

The reflective writing practice in Chapter 1 helped me to situate and understand myself as an Anishinaabe person outside of Western thought. From a cultural lens, I realize my responsibility as Anishinaabe Ikwe, as mother, teacher, Winnipegger and Canadian to illuminate who we are as Anishinaabe. As Myra Laramée has said (2013), teachers do not have the knowledge to critically understand what Aboriginal/Anishinaabe education is and its benefits for all learners if we do not make it apparent. From a cultural lens, I see this as part of my responsibility as an Anishinaabe. As noted by Battiste (2013), Indigenous educators are part of the Indigenous renaissance working to reconnect our roots and assert our place within our homelands as First Peoples. We are distinct Nations with distinct cultural identities, ceremonial practices, epistemological and pedagogical tools that are not only useful but also nourish the spirit. We must continue to illuminate our ways of knowing, teaching and learning as part of this growing discipline we call Aboriginal education. For these reasons, Anishinaabe peoples involvement is crucial as Aboriginal education is redefined from a local lens. Doing otherwise will maintain a paternalistic status quo

Anishinaabe education doesn't need to be created as much we need to shine a light on the pedagogical practices that continue to exist within the cultural life ways of our Anishinaabe families and communities. In Chapter 1, Anishinaabe pedagogy is defined as a relational, strength-based, holistic, student-centered, experiential, inclusive and engaging, and land-based way of teaching and learning. This may be similar to other First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of teaching and learning (Canadian Council of Learning, 2007), but we

must be place conscious and see that collectively we are as diverse as this land.

It's important to see that Anishinaabe goals for education are both similar and different to other philosophies of education. The education goals of achieving holistic wellness are currently not synonymous with the goals of Western Euro-Canadian education. The competing goals of formal education continue to be dominated by efforts to increase test scores and graduation rates that are perceived to cater to national economic growth. Westheimer (2015, p. 30) uses the metaphor, "the test scores that ate humanity," to specify where we lose students in efforts to achieve academic success over wellness. Overall, education has cut our children off at the neck by focusing on the acquisition of knowledge and an application of cognitive skills that are measured by an economic yardstick (Battiste, 2002, 2004, 2013; Robinson, 2010). The narrowed vision of curricula and obsession with numeracy and literacy skills, although important, are at the expense of developing the physical, affective, and spiritual domains in our children (Westheimer, 2015) which can result in a dehumanizing K-Grade 12 education experience.

It's unfortunate that Indigenous perspectives in education and curricula continue to be minimized and marginalized. Many people have the perception that Aboriginal education exists only to support a specific population or to address the low academic success rates of Aboriginal learners. This, of course, is a deficit perspective that views Aboriginal students as never measuring up to standards within Western/Euro-Canadian education systems. Regardless of this marginalization, Indigenous peoples are bringing their worldviews, ways of knowing, teaching and learning to their work spaces. Be it Indigenous educator or ally, we are deconstructing, questioning and impacting education reform. Many non-Indigenous educators are saying the same thing: we need education

reform. Rather than seeing Indigenous education and Western/Euro-Canadian formal education as being at odds, it's important to discern the increasing common spaces that aim to develop the whole child and that put children at the heart of what we do.

The task at hand is to value what Indigenous knowledge systems bring to education that is good for all learners. Generations of Canadian children have gone through an industrialized model of schooling that has left children undeveloped in certain areas. The Indian Residential School System left children ill equipped to parent, or to participate in the economy (TRC 2015). In addition, generations of First Nation, Métis and Inuit children need opportunities to understand and heal from cultural genocide which aimed to wipe clean their cultural identities. Indigenous knowledge systems can help undo the destructive impacts of Western/Euro-Canadian education that have left children spiritually, emotionally, mentally and in some cases physically ill. Our ways of teaching and learning and the goal of restoring wellness can help address the crises that resonate in our homes and communities. For this reason, it is important to know what has been missing from our educational content and to consider what is needed to restore wellness.

Waking children up to what's inside. I agree with Sir Ken Robinson (2012) we must wake children up to what's inside of them. From a cultural lens, smudging is a useful cultural practice that illuminates what is inside. Smudging can be deemed a cultural ritual which can stir up controversy about its place within our public schools. For this reason, it is important to illuminate the pedagogy within this activity that makes it useful for teachers to add to their pedagogical tool belt. I have used Figure 15, *The Pedagogy of Smudging* in my workshops. I ask participants to utilize a bifocal lens and then identify the cultural and pedagogical practices of smudging. Smudging can be used to ground students who are

behaviorally or emotionally out of sorts, to activate student's inner resources by drawing attention to them, to highlight, gather and activate internal resources to support the tasks ahead, and to help students conduct ongoing self -assessment.

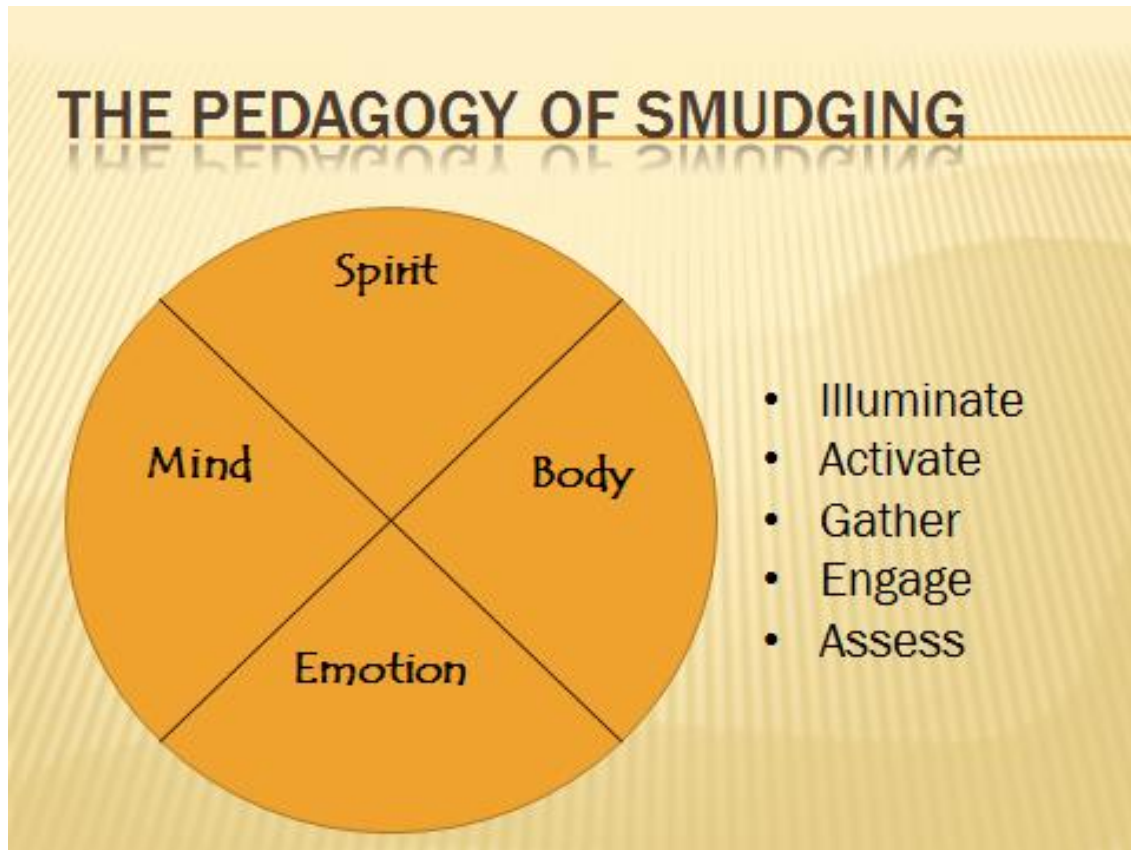


Figure 15. The Pedagogy of Smudging (R. Chartrand, 2008)

Engaging in daily smudging practice provides an opportunity for students to see themselves holistically, to see they are more than their brains (cognitive domain) and their bodies (physical domain) This gives them the space to notice their emotion and spiritual domains in addition to their cognitive and physical selves. This, in turn, can lead to greater opportunities for personal development.

Smudging as a pedagogical tool, goes hand-in-hand with student-centered learning, which aims to illuminate the learners interests and develop autonomy or independence by

placing children in a position to have a say in what they learn. Daily smudging can help develop self-assessment skills that grow self-awareness and place children in a critical role to explore their interests and make meaning from their life experience. Holistic frameworks, like Medicine Wheels, create an internal frame of reference to help learners organize and understand themselves as a whole being including the various parts that make up the whole person.

Without development in all areas, underdevelopment in certain equally important areas can result. From an Anishinaabe lens, it's important to develop the spiritual domain of each learner. In my discussions with educators, as noted in Chapter 3, I identify the spiritual domain as the place within that helps students see themselves in relationship to the world around them: world view; and where students learn to self-actualize (Brokenleg, 2005) by finding purpose and meaning in their life. Finding a language to include development of the spiritual domain can naturally broaden our Manitoba/Canadian curriculum. I believe we are nurturing the spirit through many of the new initiatives educators are undertaking, but we continue to sidestep conversations about developing spirit.

From an Anishinaabe lens, our goals for (Aboriginal) education must include development of the spiritual domain that can amount to a much richer schooling experience for students. I also believe that ignoring the development of this area can/has lead to a spiritual hollowness. This can be identified as a sense of emptiness that leads to meaningless work and/or meager life experiences. From a pedagogical lens, the spiritual aspect of our domain can be measured in ways that are comparable to the ways in which physical strength and knowledge are measured. To illustrate this I created a self-

assessment activity that I've used with staff and students over the years to initiate a greater self-awareness of their physical, emotional, mental and spiritual domains. It is a paper and pen exercise, which aims to holistically self-assess and/or measure the ways in which each person grows themselves holistically. To assess the spiritual domain students indicate on a continuum from 1-10 where they see themselves positioned. Ten indicates "connected" and 0 indicates "disconnected" to life experiences that grow meaning, purpose and deep meaningful connections. There are no right or wrong answers, just the realization that we each find different ways in our lives to develop or ignore the spiritual domain. Below is a sample set of questions that would bring students into discussion about the spiritual domain.

1. Do I feel connected to people (i.e. Do I have deep meaningful conversation from time to time?)
2. Do I feel connected to places on the earth that give me joy, peace of mind or rest, and do I go there often?
3. Do I take time to appreciate the life around me, including people, the land, and bird's animals, the elements like the wind and rain or the sun on my skin?
4. Is there something in my life I am passionate about that moves me to take action?
5. Am I inspired to create music or art that expresses my feelings?
6. List 5 things that are most important in your life.

Overall, if we do not give students the opportunity to see who they are inside, they will not have the vocabulary, the insight or practice to know how to develop what they don't understand.

Figure 16 *Illuminating Our Inner Resources* shows how holistic (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, Lane, 1984) and Medicine Wheel teachings (Myra Laramée, personal communication 1991) impact how I conceptualized, articulate or designed Aboriginal education workshops over the years for teachers and students. It is an image from a power point presentation that I developed for a middle year's workshop series offered to teachers in Seven Oaks School

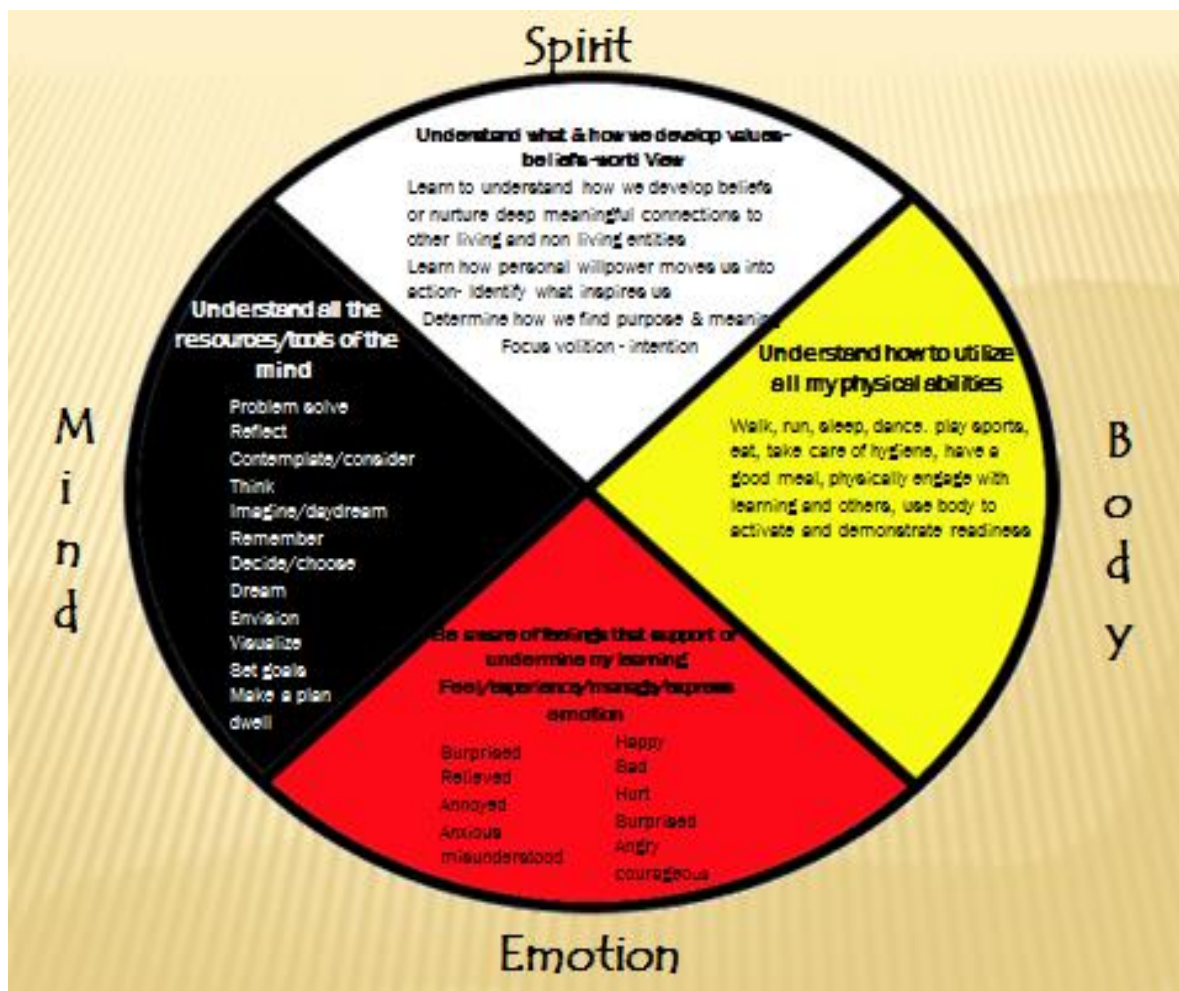


Figure 16. *Illuminating Our Inner Resources* (R. Chartrand, 2008)

Division called *Engaging Middle Years Learners using the First Nations Life Long Learning Mode* (2008). I used the image in conjunction with an activity that had participants identify the various ways they can develop each domain for themselves and their students.

Maintaining a bifocal lens. Unless educators have direct experience with Anishinaabe cultural ceremonies it may be difficult for them to understand their pedagogical value. Maintaining a bifocal lens to bridge Indigenous ways and Western/Euro-Canadian perspectives in professional workshops has helped me move back and forth between Indigenous and Western world views. The creation of these illustrations and paper and pen self-assessment and self-exploration activities has been useful in identifying Anishinaabe ways of teaching and learning. I now look to the works of non-Indigenous scholars who support the integration of Anishinaabe pedagogy and are making similar or identical statements.

Shanker's work (2013) provides strategies to grow capacity within the emotional domain. He states there is a need to teach students to understand stress in their lives in order to reduce it. This is done by helping students achieve a greater sense of self-awareness as it pertains to emotions: knowing the difference between being calm, focused or alert compared to being hyper or hyper-aroused. In his book *Calm, Alert, and Learning*, Shanker (2013) offers an assortment of strategies that will help students return to being calm, focused and alert. This could be learning what to avoid in life that causes stress. He also explores five domains that develop an understanding of self-regulation. These are the biological domain, the emotional domain, the cognitive domain, the social domain and the prosocial domain. From a holistic lens, the spiritual domain is either missing or replaced as the pro-social domain. The prosocial domain is identified as "the realm in which the individual engages in behaviors that are positive and helpful and that promote social acceptance, friendship, and - very critically - empathy" (xvii). Empathy, speaks to me as

something spiritual. When empathy is present, it demonstrates a deeper or more meaningful connection for people which is a pathway to holistic wellbeing.

I have used ideas, similar to Shankar's in professional development workshops with educators in Winnipeg School Division (2001) and in Seven Oaks School Division (2006/08) that helped me understand and appreciate Shanker's work (2013). Figure 17 is an illustration that aims to identify the strengths of each learner. To identify what tools, gifts and inner resources are available within each child that can support learning. From a holistic lens, the illustration provides an opportunity to explore the resources of each of the four domains. For example, if someone is emotionally down, they can use their physical self to go for a walk or work out to release emotion. Such actions can free up or trigger more

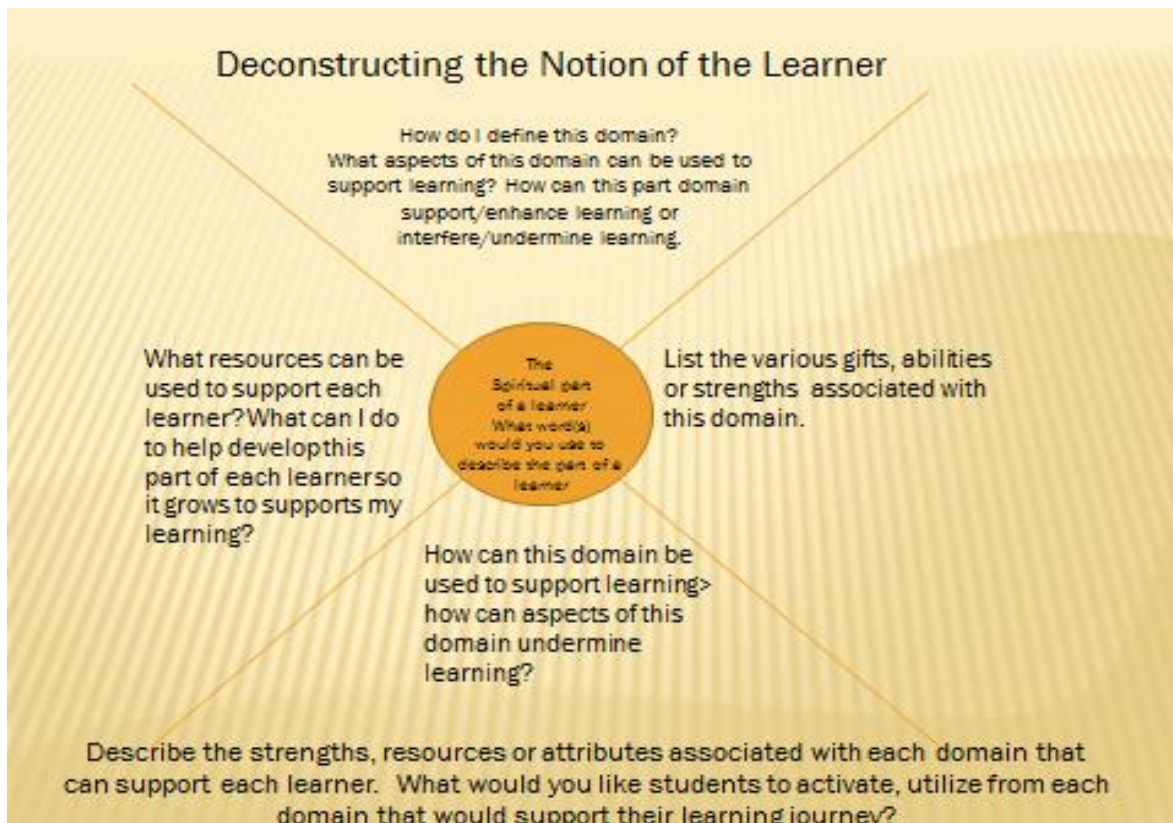


Figure 17. Defining the Strengths of a Learner (R. Chartrand, 2002)

positive emotions that support learning. If someone isn't interested or engaged in a particular topic, then looking to the spiritual domain to see what's valued, important or meaningful may be useful areas for the individual to focus on. The focus is self-awareness and language development in order to be able to articulate one's state of being. In addition, the components illustrated in Figure 17 create an opportunity to identify how these areas can undermine learning if students are not activating or know how to manage or utilize these various domains.

Overall children need an education that will wake them up to what's inside of them (Robinson, 2010), that connects them to the world inside them as much as they are oriented to be successful in the external world around them (Battiste, 2013). As stated by Battiste (2013), Indigenous epistemology, pedagogical and ontological practice shed light on what's missing from education for our children. Anishinaabe pedagogy helped me see that children must understand all aspects of their full being. It is all that more imperative that we activate the inner resources of children today. Growing each child's spirit, as spirit is defined in this paper, is an important part of holistic education (Miller, 2007, 2010; Miller, Karsten, Denton, Orr, & Kates, 2005).

Land-based education. To Indigenous scholars, land-based education is synonymous with that which nurtures one spirituality (Simpson, 2014) and can lead to greater feelings of wellbeing. Archibald (2008), Battiste and Barman (2005), Simpson, (2000, 2014) and Wilson, (2003, 2009) recognize land-based education as critical in understanding who we are as Indigenous peoples. The more time we spend on the land, the more we notice ourselves as part of an intricate web of relations. In that noticing, we forge deeper bonds and feelings of appreciation for the natural world. The land is our teacher.

Unfortunately, there has been difficulty with the integration of spirituality given that the spiritual domain is “an aspect of humanity rarely considered in Western education” (Battiste and Barman, 1995, p. 19).

In addition to overlooking the spiritual domain in public education, Louv (2005) points out that children are developing a “nature deficit disorder”. He claims that this disorder is caused by restricted or limited access to natural areas, urbanization, and the lure of social media. The result is alienation from the natural world, which in turn can result in a wide range of behavioral or spiritual problems. Confined to learning within the confines of four walls alienates children from the immediacy and diversity of their natural environments which has resulted in a worldview that has minimal regard for the environment, including species in the animal and plant world. Figure 18 *A Warped Worldview* shows how we have positioned ourselves as human beings through Western ways of teaching and learning. The Western idea of human beings dominating the natural world is evident in Western theories of evolution that have led to destructive behavior towards the environment.

In the face of these challenges it's no wonder increasing numbers of educators are leaning to emerging discourses like holistic education, education for sustainable development (ESD), outdoor experiential education and land-based education (LBE) and education for sustainable well-being (ESW-B). Common in all these developments is a growing exploration of well-being for the individual and the collective. This paradigm shift is evident in the work of Deer, Falkenberg, McMillan, & Sims (2014) and many educators

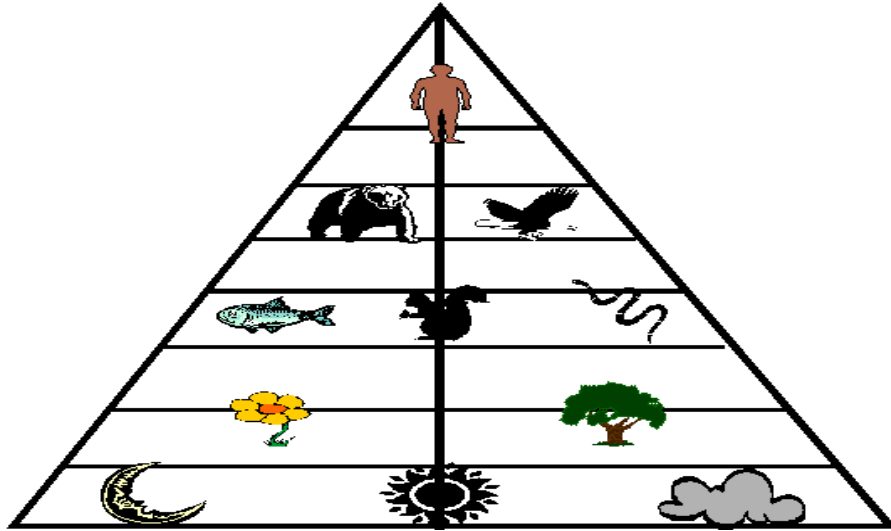


Figure 18. A Warped World View (R. Chartrand, 2002)

working to redefine education through notions of wellbeing. Falkenberg (2015) writes that well-being needs to be more than the absence of ill-being in order for students to live well; to live a fulfilled and flourishing life. Well-being must include a present tense and give consideration to students' quality of life daily. It should draw from holistic concepts that consider multiple domains and qualities of human living, and what I deem an emergent quality where becoming well or well-becoming are central in what we want our students to achieve. This must include developments of inner spaces, which grow into capabilities. In this way, students learn to live well in the present with a mindset that has concern for future generations. Hence, sustainable well-being.

The First Nations Life Long Learning Model (Figure 8, p. 55) provides a good example of the roots that were severed through Western/Euro-Canadian schooling experiences and in turn reinforces where we need to look to restore wellness. Our children need strong roots in order to emerge from a strong foundation. We must relearn our

languages, traditions and ceremonies that connect to the natural world, to our ancestors and to each other as family. We must learn from ourselves and from our life-experience.

Without strong roots of integrity, things become abstract, and by their abstractness can turn into disconnected, shallow learning. Knowledge, for example, is an abstract concept, but when we honor and connect knowledge from where it originates, it strengthens the relationship that brought us into knowing. Indigenous knowledge has been exploited time and again since settler contact. The exploitation of knowledge may benefit someone in the immediate realm, but over time the interconnectedness of all life and all our relations tells us that what we do to others comes back to us, perhaps not immediately, but eventually.

Returning Home

After 40 plus years of ad hoc and experimentation with aims to increase academic success for Aboriginal learners, graduation rates for Aboriginal children continue to be significantly low in Winnipeg and Manitoba. As reports indicate, 38% of the Aboriginal population in Manitoba is graduating from high school (Silver, Mallett, Green, & Simard, 2002). For this reason, we cannot approach Aboriginal education with a pan-Aboriginal lens. Our approach and strategies need to be local. We must therefore use a local place-conscious lens to identify the challenges, resources and solutions at hand.

Amongst the provinces and territories of Canada, Manitoba holds the record for the high number of children apprehended from their families and communities. Currently there are over 11,000 children in the care of Child and Family Services of Manitoba, and of these 11,000 children 90% are Aboriginal (Brownell, Chartier, Au, MacWilliam, Schultz, Guennett, Vaidivia, 2016). It has also been noted that only 33% of the children in care graduate from

high school compared to the 89% of students who never come in contact with Child and Family Services (Brownell et al., 2016). In Seven Oaks School Division we are working to address this issue as part of our Aboriginal education, mental health and wellness initiatives.

As noted by Brownell and colleagues (2016), formal K- Grade 12 is already challenging for many, add Child and Family Services apprehension rates to this and the result is even lower graduation rates for kids in care. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2016) reported the devastating impacts of Residential Schools, yet Aboriginal children placed in non-Aboriginal homes in Manitoba continue to experience similar types of trauma. This includes isolation from family, community and cultural identity.

In the Seven Oaks School Division a committee was established to find ways to address the issue. I was invited to sit on this committee, which currently includes Aboriginal educators, representatives from Child and Family Service Agencies, and is growing to include Indigenous parents and community members. Although we do not yet have terms of reference, our goals aim to understand the underlying factors that necessitate the apprehension of children and to provide education and partnered supports. Presently, we are discussing trauma informed practice, and in my role as the Division Team Lead for Aboriginal Education, I'm looking at ways to provide innovative programing that supports children while they are in care.

The work of this committee is groundbreaking. First, because it has been initiated by a school division. Second, because it brings diverse and in some cases opposing perspectives together that can result in difficult conversations. Based on the concerns I

have with Child & Family Services in Manitoba, it was important for me to emphasize that we cannot be working to make the existing system more efficient. Rather as a committee, we must be advocates for change and look to work in partnership with our local Indigenous community to find solutions.

It's important to show how the Anishinaabe thinking, and teachings identified in Chapter 1 and 3 continue to influence my perspective and my thinking. As a contribution to the work of this committee I created Figure 19 *Circle of Supports for Indigenous Children in Care*. Although it's a work in progress, meant to illustrate the resources and supports in Seven Oaks School Division that are available for children, biological families and foster parents and to help identify supports that may be missing. In creating it, I was thinking of the Anishinaabe Clan System (Figure 3, p. 15) in which families and community together, through kinship relationships, maintained a strong sense of responsibility to collectively raise children. The Residential School system tore apart our families and communities. Although the committee and its members cannot solve these issues immediately, we look to ways in which we can support kids in care while they are with us in Seven Oaks School Division.

I recently wrote a successful proposal to the National Indian Brotherhood to support Indigenous Language Revitalization in Seven Oaks School Division. The funds were initially aimed at supporting the Kindergarten to Grade 3 Ojibwe bilingual school opening in September of 2016. However, the funds also made possible the launching of a 4 week Ojibwe summer language program that ran daily from 09:30- 15:00 from July 18- August 12, 2016. The camp was advertised as being open to everyone, and I strongly encouraged families to register with their children. The outreach phone calls we made to families,

reaffirmed we have a high number of children in care as many of the phone calls to families we answered by foster-parents. We spent a great deal of time reaching out to our foster families in Seven Oaks School Division and their CFS workers/agencies to enroll Aboriginal children in foster care in the language camp. I never imagined we'd get the response that we did. We had a waiting list with children wanting to get into the program. We immediately requested a partnership with various CFS agencies to cover cost to secure an Elder/Knowledge Keeper to work with children from the various CFS agencies. This is a work in progress, but it illustrates my intent to bridge supports. From a cultural lens, restoring strong Anishinaabe communities is important.

Seven Oaks School Division: Circle of Supports for Indigenous Children in Care

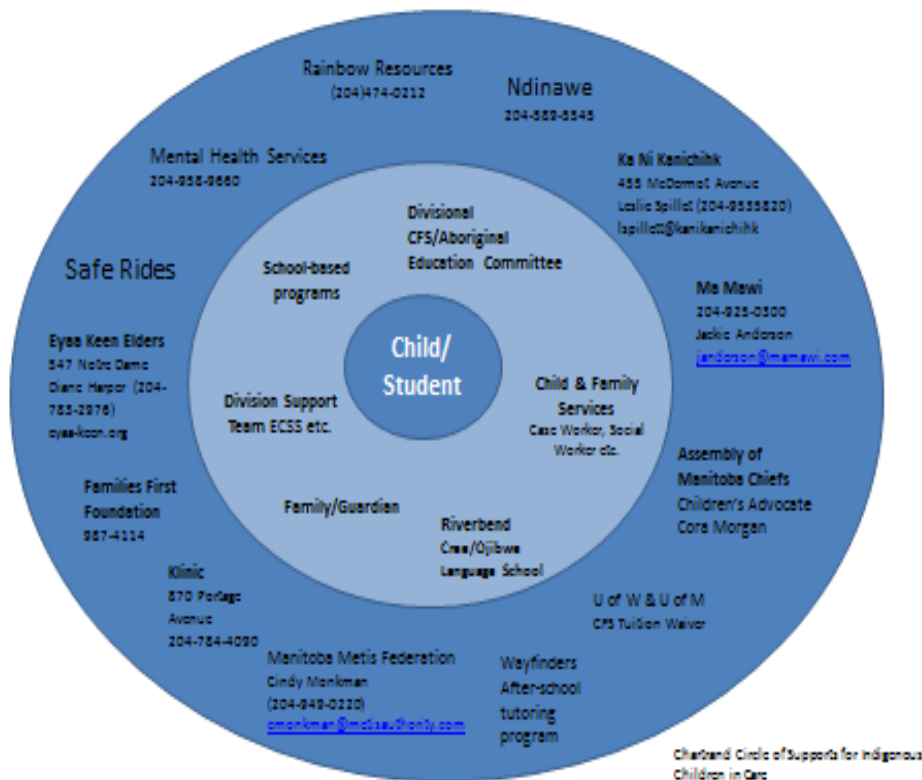


Figure 19. Circle of Supports for Indigenous Children in Care (R. Chartrand, 2016)

Overall, we must ensure we had adequate supports to assist in dealing with the trauma children in care experience while being separated from their family and communities. It was important for me to invite parents and foster parents, social workers, Elders and volunteers into the language camp. Although there is always the desire within me to see our Anishinaabe clan system fully restored, Figure 19 illustrates my thinking around the current landscape for children in care. As Anishinaabe we are not living and working in isolation from the rest of the world and must therefore work together. It's important for me to show that as Indigenous peoples we had highly sophisticated governing and child rearing practices that need to be illuminated and included in our plan to educate and raise healthy children. Children are at the heart of what we do in education and social services. Visual maps like Figure 19 help to illustrate where we are each situated, and that position determines what each individual brings to support children in care.

Currently, the Ojibwe summer language camp is bridging supports between two southern CFS agencies, Seven Oaks School Division and the NIB Trust. These experiences may help to ease the emotional trauma experienced by children in foster care while they are away from home. In the event these children do not experience reunification with their immediate family, the long-term goal of this initiative is to provide experiences that connect kids in care to community, to events, to people, to resources and cultural practices that will help them grow into resilient, confident and capable young adults.

We must see the importance of wellness in achieving academic success for Aboriginal learners. *The Web of Life Worldview* illustration (Figure 9, page 65) provides an example of how we can work to achieve sustainable wellbeing. It shows where well-being transcends human relations in the interconnectedness of all life. As noted in Chapter One,

Anishinaabe laws/teachings of sharing/caring, kindness, honesty and faith are meant to guide people to live in a good way with each other, with the land and with all beings in the natural world. This is a broad perspective that looks seven generations forward to understand that we are borrowing Earth from our children. Leanne Simpson (2011) maintains that our ways of teaching and learning urge us, through a relational lens, to re-insert people into relationships with and on the land as a mode of education. We need to resituate human beings in the web of relations in order for all people on Earth to appreciate that which sustains us and that which contributes to holistic and sustainable well-being. To achieve the goal of wellness, children must see themselves supported and part of an intricate web of relationships. We must work together to endure the sustainable well-being of all our children. When hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits work together, this is when we truly have Indigenous education” (Archibald, 2008, p. 12), and an education that can serve society well.

From the Western/Euro-Canadian perspective of curriculum, these are less-valued learning areas that fall under the affective (social/emotional and spiritual) domain of learning. However, as noted in this thesis, various education scholars are moving towards goals of wellbeing. We cannot expect our children to act as responsible members of a caring society if they are not moved into action by their heart, their minds and their beliefs. Indigenous scholars argue that we must find a balance between the inner and outer spaces of our being and educate our children holistically (Battiste, 2004, 2013; Gel, 2012; Goulet & Goulet, 2013; Simpson, 2011, 2014). It’s important to see how we can bring a balance between learning that attunes students to both their inner world, as we work to help student be successful in their life, and the outer world they inhabit (Calliou, 1995).

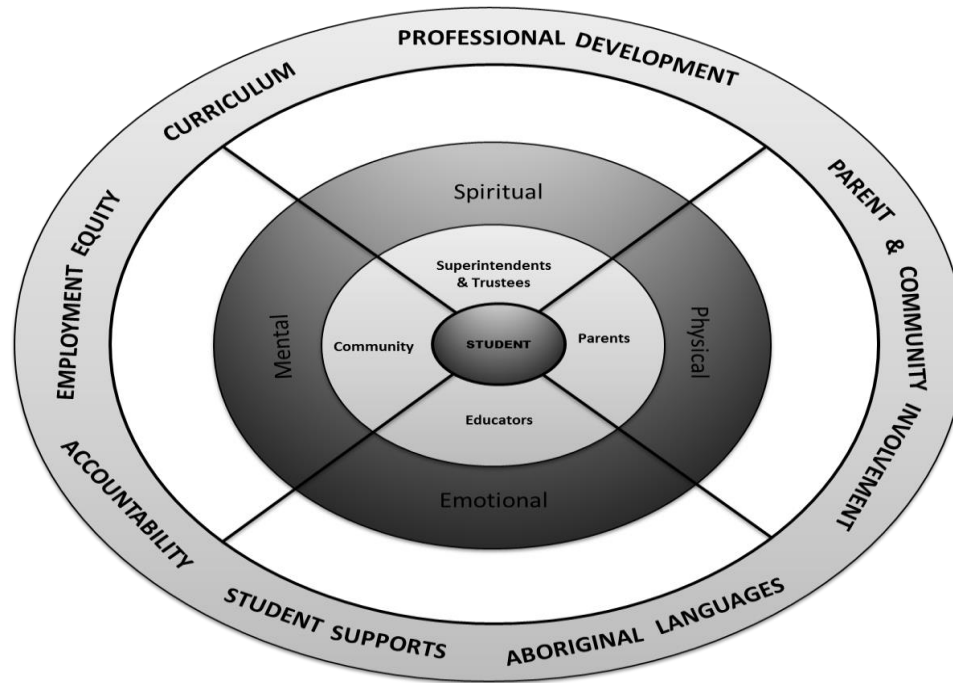


Figure 20. Seven Oaks School Division Aboriginal Education Policy (R. Chartrand, 2012)

As a last example, I use Figure 20 *Seven Oaks School Division Aboriginal Education Policy* to illustrate the influence of Anishinaabe thinking in my work. The policy is holistic and aims to maintain a balance between Indigenous and Western/Euro-Canadian goals for education that uphold high expectations. It builds from the Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH) planning process utilized in 2012 to bring together trustees, superintendents, administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members to create a vision for Aboriginal education in Seven Oaks School Division. Over a 2 day period, we carried out a PATHing process that identified a number of goals. One of the goals was the request to create an Aboriginal education policy. Charged with this task, I organized a series of division and community consultation meetings to gather further thoughts on such a policy. I wrote the policy in 2012 that drew from Aboriginal people's rich culture, history, perspectives and ways of teaching and learning. It was adopted by the division in April

2013. I envisioned it as a living document where initiatives are expected to change over time as goals, initiatives and outcomes are implemented, evaluated, and revised or built upon.

Figure 20 is an illustration of the policy that captures its key components. The word student situated at the centre of the policy indicates a child/student-centered policy. The second circle identifies the need to provide wrap around support for students. It looks to engage all available supports to help each child build from their strengths/gifts. This begins with parents. Parents are a child's first teachers and, as a result, are situated in the east. Moving clockwise, educators are situated in the south. From a bifocal lens the word community would be inclusive of certified teachers as well as Elders, and knowledge keepers. Moving to the west, the policy looks to community for resources and partnerships to support students and our Aboriginal education initiatives. It also looks to the local Indigenous community to assist with efforts to re-insert our worldviews and make use of pedagogical tools within educational institutions. For Anishinaabe children, the road to academic success must include wellness as part of the plan. For some learners, like myself, establishing strong cultural roots that nurture a sense of self knowing, purpose, place and belonging is a powerful motivator. All children need to see themselves situated in the world in which they live. Superintends and trustees are situated in the north and are held in a position of power and authority to ensure that the policy outcomes are achieved.

By including the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual domains in the third circle, the policy illuminates the belief we must support and develop the whole child. The last circle identifies the seven focus areas of the policy. These are parent and community

involvement, Aboriginal languages, student supports, accountability, employment equity and curriculum professional development.

The PATHing process and the Aboriginal education policy established clear targets that have kept me focused in my work as the division's Lead for Aboriginal Education. Overall, as a division we believe the policy outcomes can enrich the experiences of all learners while supporting academic success for Aboriginal learners. By incorporating authentic learning of and with Aboriginal peoples, we can forge a rich collective identity that honors Aboriginal peoples and all our relations. The policy draws from the division's philosophy that communities are more sustainable and mutually beneficial when we build upon relationships and responsibility to one another to ensure all of our students benefit. It was a privilege to write this policy as it gave me an opportunity to merge the best of both Indigenous and Western goals for education. .

Coming Home

If it is not apparent, the stories I wrote about in Chapter 1 had a profound impact on the type of educator I would become. The stories have often been a point of reference in my work as an Aboriginal Education Consultant. I realize that I am a bridge between two worlds. I hope this thesis illuminates the beauty of Anishinaabe culture and the usefulness of Anishinaabe pedagogy for all learners.

The process of writing a thesis was an opportunity to dig deep into my lived experience that honors those relationships that brought me into knowing. This process has strengthened my roots and helped me understand what my grandmother was showing my siblings and me through her actions. She made an effort every summer to take her grandchildren out on the land. It was a time to unplug from the modern and changing

landscape we found ourselves in and continue to find ourselves in today. She practiced traditions in her home, she feasted, honored her relations by creating meals that brought people to the table to sit and nourish the spirit of family and community. I was sad that she left us early due to diabetes, but her actions spoke louder than her words. The ending of my thesis has me thinking about her. My search for knowledge and understanding kept me looking out into the world around me, but much of my learning of what it means to be Anishinaabe comes from my life experience. Our ways of teaching and learning exist in our homes. They may not be easily understood, because we have lost the language that would guide us, but they are here and we are piecing things together and learning to re-articulate our ways of teachings and learning within a modern landscape. It's a matter of noticing, appreciating and illuminating this living knowledge.

During my Sundance Ceremony, when it was getting particularly difficult, I thought of my grandmother often. In my thoughts I remembered her sitting on the land where we picked berries, or I imagined us walking together down wooded paths to get back to the camp. This is how I honor her, my mother and my father, all my relations, by picking up those golden nuggets that were left behind for us, and that will restore wellness and rootedness within our homes.

All of our children need the opportunity to learn from their roots and get on the road of Pimatiswin, identified by Young (2005) and (Laramee, 2013) as the good road which was left behind by our ancestors. Language and culture must to be restored in our homes, in how we engage children to find their place amongst their families, communities, nations and society. Anishinaabe pedagogy provides an example of how we get there. I hope my children and all children, colleagues, friends and family see that we are working to find our

way home, to healthier places of wellbeing that nurture us daily.

Conclusion

In closing, the ninety-four Recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2016) call on the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians. The report calls on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples and with a commitment to sufficient funding and opportunity to develop culturally appropriate curricula that protect the right to Aboriginal languages. These recommendations bring us back full circle, to consider what was envisioned at the signing of the Canadian Indian Treaties. Indigenous peoples are rightfully entitled to implement their vision for education that would restore wellness, culture, language and dignity. Education institutions across Canada, Provincial Ministries of Education and all levels of government must make room for Indigenous educators/scholars, parents and community to fully participate in this revitalization

As an Anishinaabe woman, mother, and community member illuminating wellness as an important educational goal in addition to academic success stems from the bifocal lens I have tried to maintain throughout this thesis. The intent of the Canadian Treaties was to take the best of both worlds in order to help our children be successful in a changing landscape. This is our responsibility as the original peoples of this land, as Treaty People and as Canadians. We each have a role to play in bringing these Treaty promises to fruition. The common denominator in establishing healthy communities past, present and into the future lies in building and maintaining good relations. That is what treaties were and

continue to be about. We must all work together to embrace this potential and create a Canada that is good for all our children.

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