



LEARNING THROUGH YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:
MOVING FORWARD BY LOOKING BACK AND CONNECTING TO PLACE

A Thesis submitted by

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This Thesis is entirely the work of Mary Irvine Gardiner except where otherwise acknowledged. The work is original and has not previously been submitted for any other award, except where acknowledged.

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Abstract

In a remote First Nation reserve in Northern Ontario, the community is undergoing rapid change due to mining development. This study will explore the nature of collaborative partnerships between community and school, examining relationships that support youth in successful school engagement and transitions in a changing social economic landscape. The study focuses on community driven learning that is relational, cultural, and place based, creating an ethical space and a natural decolonizing process in a colonizing world. Within overlapping borderland spaces of Indigenous and Western knowledge, constructive and collaborative dialogues of tension and resistance, and visionary possibilities are re- presented as a critical performative process and framed within post-colonial theory and critical pedagogy to explore notions of power and agency, positionality, multivocality, identity, history and place using a narrative participatory action research approach. Performative forms of textuality as lived experience, ecologically connected to the local culture and environment, constitute the primary and secondary data. This included art, storytelling, critical personal narratives, audio/visual recordings, conversations, unstructured interviews, student work and researcher's reflective field notes and journals. Participants include teachers, parents, students and community Knowledge Keepers. Emerging themes are examined for practices that are conducive to dynamic community partnerships, and reflective of learning communities in a process that is sustainable and generative to change. The findings include performance indicators that may contribute to positive transitions that underscore effective community partnerships and healthy school outcomes, and that from this study may have broader application to other Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Research Problem

The focus of my research is in developing collaborative and sustainable partnerships between school and community within a Northern Ontario remote First Nation community. It is within this context that the methodology unfolds as an ongoing process and the researcher's developing moral awareness of the inter-relationships that comprise the dualism in one's daily reality. Using an Indigenous holistic lifelong learning approach, a participatory action research methodology, and a bricolage method, the tools embedded within the medicine wheel teachings were used as resistive strategies to explore the complex layers of a Eurocentric pedagogical structure. It was within this context using a post colonial perspective that a cultural learning program was developed to support positive student outcomes in school as a strategy to explore the implications of mining exploration that is infringing on the traditional territorial lands of this Ojicree community. Using the knowledge and values embedded in the lived teachings of the medicine wheel and the guiding principles of the Elders and ancestors in negotiating ethical relations in land use planning, the social, political, and economic power structures within the dialectical nature of dominant knowledge construction were explored to bring a conscious awareness and critical understanding in negotiating mutual meaning, intention and purpose within a changing local landscape in which schooling is embedded. As the community school is situated in an environment undergoing rapid transitions due to mining exploration, the implications for my study were twofold: one was the concern for protecting and regenerating its rich culture so that it is not disenfranchised by community members due to the changing landscape and the second was the opportunity to capitalize on the future social benefits that change can provide the youth in gainful employment. The relationality between traditional and

contemporary funds of knowledge threads through the study generating a space in which to reimagine alternative pathways of pedagogical practices, an exploratory process of critical reflection and dialogue exchange in making sense of the lived experience and daily performative actions that are relational and inclusive of both the secular and the sacred in ways of doing, knowing and being. The concept of relationality holds that we are all socially connected to each other, to the natural environment, and to the spiritual world. This connection brings about an interdependence that creates learning opportunities that emphasize learning in relationships with fellow students, teachers, families, members of the community, and the local environment. This was a process of sharing information through formal and informal learning practices, alternatives to the status quo. This allowed a critical focus on qualities involving identity, generative relationships, and mutual communication and interactions that embed the potential for reconnection between the cultural and academic knowledge dimensions that benefit both the individual and community well being within a border crossing pedagogical framework. As a lifelong journey, this lived unfolding iterative cycle of problematizing, reflecting and negotiating balance inherent in the dualism in one's daily experience provided the space for a conscious reconciling of differences in educational practices and opportunities for developing natural decolonizing relationships that contributed to bridging and expanding sources of knowledge contributions between two diverse knowledge systems.

The implications for my study are restricted to the context of the community with whom I work bringing greater critical awareness of the tensions between mainstream knowledge and the lifeworld knowledge that students bring with them to school but may have broader applications for other Indigenous and non Indigenous

communities in its contributions to inform practitioners and policy planners in aligning theory and practice from a relational context and inclusionary perspective that embodies time and place.

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Chapter 1 An unfolding journey

1.1 Introduction to self as a reflection and outsider: Listening, hearing, doing

The writing of the thesis has been difficult to start and to find a thread to connect all aspects of it. I do know that the tone and nature of my reflections have changed, have grown giving me greater understanding of myself in relation to Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being.

How I speak as author in my thesis indicates my self-positioning in relation to my work and the community of Webequie, but also to the reader and the outside world. At times I write from the personal voice using ‘me/my research/my position in the community’. This speaks directly to the reader and I ‘own’ every word. In other places I seem to ‘hide’ becoming less personal and using the distant ‘one finds/one is aware of’. As the reader, I anticipate that you will notice this. I am aware of this, as it is part of the natural flow of the thesis so that in places I step back and write from the ‘distanced’ voice of the invisible author. These shifts in voice are vital as voice indicates my own positionality and awareness of ethics. It may be that I adopt a more distanced third person voice that sounds more in line with the scientific tradition- in writing method, but not in writing of methodology/theory and power relationship underpinning my study as it is vital to ‘own’ my own position in the study as author.

I have worked in Webequie as a principal for 14 years. My doctoral journey has allowed me to broaden my thinking and understanding of myself in relation to others and the reality of the complex relationships that make up our evolving selves, the world and the planet that we inhabit as one people. In collaboration with my advisors, scholarly literature, and living and working with Indigenous people – these diverse sources of knowledge have given me insight and understanding that comes

not only from living life but learning to embrace life through diverse lenses and knowledge pathways. As a non-Indigenous person and one who is curious, many of my questions have become interwoven with new questions through my ongoing quest for truth and understanding. I did not know how naïve, sheltered and isolated I had become in accepting the reality of a dichotomized world until I began my learning journey in an Indigenous community geographically situated in a remote location in Northern Ontario, Canada. Then I came to understand my positioning as a colonizer while others' lived reality is situated in the margins of a colonizing process. Until that time, I had been living and experiencing only half of what the world had to offer with a tunnel-vision understanding and with an unsettling sense of conviction and certitude that undeniably, as I look back now, mirrored the 'status quo' and a prescribed dominant perspective in knowledge acquisition. It has taken me over half of a century to realize this. With a growing sense of tension and imbalance in my own understanding of truth and knowledge, provided a nudging curiosity and quest for answers, my thesis journey took root (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2003). As an allied 'other' I have moved into a space of possibilities with a growing awareness of what can be by imagining an emerging symmetry between diverse worldviews.

This experience has supported my understanding of the importance of embracing life's experiences in its totality, living through and beyond the complexities and chaos, yet it is but a gaze away for all to experience if the *dormant seed within is nourished to awaken* a sense of curiosity to grow and flourish and make sense of a dichotomized world. Embracing binaries of black and white/chaos and order as alternative pathway and dialogues of exchange focusses attention on the relationships among elements rather than on elements in isolation thus allowing as Barnhardt & Kawagley describe, "a growing appreciation of the complementarity that exists between what were previously considered two disparate and irreconcilable systems of thought" (2003, p.4).

My research journey has focused on my gaze becoming more vigilant, aware, and alert to the dynamics of mindful relationships, their evolving nature and the

emergent patterns and phenomena that presage subsequent conditions as my career and life experiences in Webequie have matured over the years. As an allied other, my goal has been to travel a parallel path of equal footing of mutual respect, participating in a common goal and through communication and a growing sense of trust and belonging commit to envisioning a system of education for all people that respects the philosophical and pedagogical foundations provided by both Indigenous and Western cultural traditions.

I have worked on my research project concurrently as I have been a principal in a First Nation School. This school is on a reserve in Northern Ontario, Canada. It is a fly-in, remote community with a population of approximately 850 community members. The school is a Band operated school. There are approximately 200 students enrolled at the school from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Students are required to leave the community for post secondary education. The school staff is composed of a combination of community band staff and out of community employees. English is the language of instruction until recently when an Immersion program was introduced in September 2018. The school follows the Ontario Department of Education standards of practice. Culturally responsive education is encouraged in curriculum planning but remains an ‘add on’ or addendum to the provincial curriculum.

My thesis focuses on the complexity and nuanced exploration of working and living in a school community that is overshadowed by prescribed mainstream educational standards. Concurrently it explores an unfolding and organic process that captures the patterns that emerge in the redesign of schooling to fit the particular cultural context in which the community is situated. This process of transforming schooling into a more culturally adaptive form aims to improve the quality of

education and outcomes for students in the local community and involves “fostering a connection between two functionally interdependent but largely disconnected systems – the Indigenous knowledge system rooted in culture that inhabits place and the formal education system imported by the early settlers (Orr, 1994 as cited in Kawagley and Barnhardt, 1998, p. 2). “Within each of these evolving systems is a rich body of knowledge and skills that, if properly used, can strengthen the quality of educational experiences for students...” (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 1998, p.2).

Indigenous scholar, Martin Nakata, observed that it is through a working together in a reconciling process that has influenced my awareness that the disconnect of Indigenous education, through many years of an assimilative educational structure, frustration and broken promises at the hands of outside educational and political stakeholders, can reconnect through a restructuring of a hierarchical system into a fluid lateral structure “to improve outcomes for Indigenous learners in formal education processes” (2007, p. 7). This is a critical process that challenges the limitations of Western Science but is a pathway that supports and empowers a “renewed interest in Indigenous knowledge, systems and practices” within the local and global context (Nakata, 2007, p. 7). With Nakata, I believe this is a contested space to engage, dialogue and ask questions and grow in understanding and rationalizing the dualism that exist between Indigenous and Western thought. This has engaged me on a pathway in negotiating difference through reciprocated interactions, mutually respected values and goals, and communication of human activities sharing information with the purpose that a restructuring and transformation of schooling into a more culturally adaptive form of education is possible. For me as principal, and as an educator, this ongoing reflection has become an exploratory process of problematizing education. It has allowed a weaving

together and threading between two ideologies which provided the creative space to rationalize and reimagine the possibilities to support and improve outcomes for students within the community and also the quality of education for all students in the process. This coordinated and cyclical process of action, observation and reflection has produced emergent events and results that cannot be predicted but has influenced a natural redesign of systems of coordination to take account of each emergent or group of emergent phenomena which can be influenced in an organic natural process over time. My years of experience in self reflection, in challenging my own positionality during an ongoing cycle of gathering and analysing data became a natural coordinated on the ground process of theory and practice constantly in mutual interaction. Nakata refers to this back-and-forth engagement with two contested worldviews as being “constantly engaged with it, as we move forward in a constant process of endless and often unconscious negotiations between these frames ...for viewing, understanding, and knowing the world” (2007, p. 10). This became a balancing and re-balancing organic process in school improvement planning with a common mutual goal of improving the quality of education and outcomes of Indigenous students in the community.

I have come to realize that humans cannot be controlled only enhanced or suppressed. Mindfulness and open curiosity remove interference through natural human activities sharing information. Processes of interactions that focus on qualities involving identity, relationships, communication, and mutual interactions between the parts of a system embed the potential for reconnection between the cultural and academic well-being not only for students within the community where I live and work but have ramifications for all students. There is a growing criticality in developing a moral awareness of the inter-relationships that comprise the dualism in

one's daily reality. My tenure in Webequie became a critical part of my lifelong learning journey. It brought awareness during a lived unfolding exploration of two-eyed seeing in the possible relationships bridging two diverse knowledge systems. It was an evolving process and constant negotiation in a space of possible relationships between the parts or elements that make up the whole of a flourishing system. It was these sites of interruptions or intersections along the way that provided the nourishment for the medicine wheel metaphorically symbolized by the tree of life that my research journey unfolded in a dynamic and storied way (Note to readers: for more information see appendix 6, #3).

1.2 The Symbolism of the Tree: Finding my way

In hindsight, I realize that my initial gathering and analysis of data were too close to the prescribed mainstream way of doing, being, and knowing. But as I continued my walks of conscious reflection as I walked through the trees of aspen, birch, willow and jack pine, I wondered at the ancestral history of this Northern geographic place, a pristine landscape that adapts and tells a story and way of life where man and nature have survived the tests of time through mutual relationships that foster sustainability and environmental integrity. The community is an island hamlet nurtured by the natural medicines and way of life that has “an intimate connection to the subject that benefits the well-being of the community” (McGregor, 2005, p. 592). It was from this repositioning and decolonizing perspective with a growing awareness of my innate colonial biases, a distancing from the data led to a peripheral perspective and a richer textured meaning and way of collaborating with community and participants emerged as a way of life and actual living of that live, exposing an ‘in betweenness’ and space of rich possibilities and hope. The trees became a blur of possibilities intermingling one with another symbolizing a bush of

hope. This overlay or healing agent was dynamic in its interdependent relationships of evolving growth and adaptability. An open mind, an inclusive perspective and an awareness of the energy of everyday mundane experiences of living and working with community imbued an emergent strength and dynamics within the nuanced layers of oral history that are grounded in the everyday reality and timeless boundaries of survivance of intergenerational knowledge. The richness of the everyday is in a constant flux of energizing and re-energizing resistance, negotiating the power relations between colonizing and decolonizing forces in order to find balance within a complex world; the survival of knowledge systems is in making meaning of the everyday and is grounded in the local stories of the past, and that give purpose and action through an ongoing process of deconstruction and reconstruction as a renewal and survivance process.

Early in my tenure as principal, a local artist painted a mural of a First Nation Holistic Learning Model in the hallway of the school (Figure 2). It is this mural that has been a steadfast guidepost in my learning journey. I gaze at the wonder of it every day. The image is both a tree and a Medicine Wheel. Natural medicine is about well-being, power and the flow of life. Being seasonal, the wheel is both metaphorical and real. The tree is therefore a symbol for the cycle of a life and learning, the phases of age and learning, the seasons and our energy as humans. It positions us as beings in nature and of nature. Using the medicine wheel which encompasses the model, one is able to see the individual, the community, and the world. The learning model is life-long and life-wide. It has something to offer everyone. What amazes me the most is its totality in structure from the micro to the macro. It encompasses the world in its entirety, both living and nonliving dimensions. It is a web of relationships for all to look at and the possibilities for each and everyone of us starting with self and extending into pathways and web of life

relationships that we create both consciously and unconsciously along our lifelong learning journey or ‘walk in the bush’. Though there are few words on the learning model, its design spans a lifetime awaiting us to give it personal and collective meaning with every available tool possible: it is cyclical, intergenerational and relational. It is simple yet complex depending on the perspective one is gazing from. If your gaze is from the West, it is complex as it is incomplete as you only see half the ‘picture’ and possibilities, that from a linear, compartmentalized, fixed non fluid worldview. If your gaze is from the east, an Indigenous perspective it is simple and holistic, as you see the total ‘picture’ as one unfolding, nonlinear and organic, spanning a lifetime with endless possibilities and hope. This mural has embraced my research journey. It has given me a better understanding of the relationships, connections and never-ending possibilities in life. It provides universal tools for a lifelong and lifewide journey. It has humbled me in embracing the world as it is enriched with all its diversity and what it can offer in its timelessness. It is the possibilities - individually and collectively, animate and inanimate - that are attainable when relationships are in balance and aligned. The model is the essence of a humanistic, social, inclusive and equitable society that is always in the pursuit of harmonious and ethical relationships. The medicine wheel functions as a map by which students, teachers and Elders can make sense of the inchoate, the numinous within and beyond us. Masakata Ogawa quotes Keiji Yamada, a Japanese historian of Oriental science, who writes, “every culture and every society has its own science, and its function is sustaining its mother society and culture” (as cited in Ogawa, 1995, p. 4). The medicine wheel provides a pathway that goes beyond the confines of Western science as solely a destination of discovery of new knowledge to include science as a coming to know and an ongoing journey that incorporates Indigenous

wisdom and holistic values and as supported by Berkes et al is “a cumulative body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmissions” (Berkes,et al., 2000, p. 7). It is with this wisdom of the Elders in mind and the tacit knowledge of the ancestors that upon reflection of the statement that, “the educational gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians is the most significant social policy challenge facing Canada” presents a reconciling space to pursue harmony and balance in contemporary education (Richard, 2008, p.1, as cited in Hatcher).

1.3 The Tree of Life: Mirror Imaginings

I take a pause here to summarize for myself as writer and for you as reader how this journey is to unfold, so that it empowers those that read it to redefine how relationships are negotiated in a sustainable and inclusive way. This process becomes a bricolage, an empowering tool for those who are ready to embark on a reconciling journey in walking the talk in ‘good faith’ and collaborating in a good way going forward. As a bricoleur, I used the tools that are given to me in my thesis, those of words and pictures that compose the data of my participatory collaborative research (PAR). These words and pictures are the truths as told by youth, adults and Elders living in the context of a lived reality and marginalized space. As the analysis unfolds, through metaphorical and recursive walks through the bush which are common hiking and camping areas in northern Ontario’s reserves and traditional lands, truth is validated as an empowering peeling away process, revealing unheard voices of resistance in the lived stories of knowledge immemorial.

What follows is a synergetic journey of living and growing with community in an enlightening process of deconstruction and reconstruction of component parts to make a whole. I hope that you as reader will be given a sense of walking through

the bush and during the walk a sense of the building tension that disrupts and interrupts the tranquility of the space that we live as a settlers in colonized space but at the same time a sense of purpose and urgency as we walk the path together, looking for something that is beyond reach with a building sense of anxiety, at first with no clear answers just prescriptions from the political and economic arenas that pervade the space of a Euro-centric perspective and objective reality. My hope is that this will allow us a realization that life has alternative paths, paths of subjective reality and open mindedness to ways of being and doing together, creating a tranquil space to re-imagine and listen to the voices of other(s)/things that surround us and awaken us from within. This becomes an alternative path or second walk, providing a closer reflection or analysis of the data, using a peripheral vision and sensory perception that allows self as a subjective being to capture and feel the underlying and hidden meanings that seem to come alive and connect to mind and heart the vivid imagery and metaphor of the medicine wheel and all its possibilities and opportunities on this second alternative path. It is through this growing sense of renewed hope and possibilities that unity is created and a sense of belonging and becoming is achieved. This awareness of how the mind and heart can work together as a change agent comes alive in my research. It was an individual and collective process that evolved over the duration of the research study.

Reflective moments and interaction with self were ongoing in the research process - an introspection of my wellbeing and intuition: mental, physical, spiritual and emotional. I realize this is a natural part of life's journey: sometimes an unconscious process other times a conscious reflection, and the connections that are made are constantly in flux, evolving, and an overlapping of looking back and bringing forward, as we continuously adapt to an evolving environment and place to

give a deepening sense of identity and ownership in the actions performed. It is within this context that I interpreted and analyzed the data collected over time and space as I metaphorically walked through the bush reflecting through my eyes and the eyes of the community. It was a weaving together of difference through an evolving understanding that the jagged edges of tension in perceived knowledge power inequalities provide the opportunity to negotiate and build relationships that celebrate solidarity through inclusionary actions.

This reflective process became critical to my research analysis as I peeled away the complex layers of a place identified by culture and language yet part of a larger society and status quo that transcends this space with its binary forces and imbues its power and ideology that dominates and suppresses the voice of the marginalized, thus tipping the scales of justice/injustice. It is in this space that I explore the data, to seek an alternative path, one that recreates and renegotiates to balance the scales, through a common space of integrity and good relations. The medicine wheel metaphorically depicts a bricolage of tools that traditionally teach Indigenous lifeways as a process of continuous lifelong learning adding resistive energy to balance a Eurocentric power structure. The medicine wheel becomes an overlay to bridge building and closing the gap between polarized Indigenous and Western worldviews in a complimentary and parallel walk. It is a reflection on difference that mirrors back a sameness in those attributes that support and strengthen kindred human relations.

It is these spaces of alternative pathways that we can explore together as reader and writer and walk in a parallel path to find the truth as told within the context of place and alternative ways of knowing, doing and being. It is these spaces that have the greatest power to undo injustice and recreate knowledge that brings a

sense of balance within a world of technological dependency. These are the reflections of my peripheral walk through the bush; listening and absorbing my inner voice that gave me strength, agency and voice to define self and become subject of my actions to make moral choices that balance the dichotomy of a Western scientific perspective. There is a pathway of growing awareness that weaves Western and Indigenous worldviews to explore actions that interrupt the status quo and those serving the political, economic and social powers of an elitist group. It was in this research journey, through cycles of reflection and action, a process of looking back and bringing forward, that I, too, grew both personally and professionally in weaving together a deeper understanding of diverse knowledge perspectives.

Herein stands the challenges posed by human vulnerabilities in balancing the scales of justice, but in mutual and harmonious way. The inter-relationships depicted by the metaphor of the medicine wheel validate the nature of truth as an exploratory process of knowledge creation and recreation in time and over time in a continuous process of purpose, resistance, negotiation, and collaboration. It is a living organism of complex relationships that makes sense of the messy world we live in.

My own personal reflective growth in this evolving journey is entwined and drawn from the power of the knowledge that transcends the data as I too walked through the bush finding my way both parallel and complimentary to Indigenous ways of doing so that I could reconnect with mother earth in doing things in a more inclusive and caring way. It was a dual process of coming to know by looking back and bringing forward, reconciling my past experiences and moving forward stronger and re-energized. Each journey is unique, yet in tandem with one another and I invite the reader to reflect on their own life journey as the study unfolds.

1.4 A cyclical process of becoming

1.4.1 Subjective position and awareness

As I have implied, I have reached beyond the half century in my life span. I have a colorful heritage of Irish, Scottish, English, and French Acadia ancestry. The history is 'rich' and I do believe would make up a bricolage if I were to add accompanying stories. These stories inevitably would include the tensions and conflicts related to the process of colonialization but these stories would only be half a story so I need to move into the narrative discourse of the post-colonial era to get the 'other' half and complete the story. This has become my quest in my research journey. These are the stories and narratives that will complete and fulfil my life circle and my journey forward. The process has been my 'becoming'.

1.4.2 The Problem

It is hard if not impossible to separate my work life as an educator from that of the community as the medicine wheel metaphorically is relational to all things. But the focus of my study is on the students, Indigenous students going to school in a remote First Nation community, and it is to this aim that I strive in my professional pursuits, as an educator, to provide the best opportunities and to make available to students the tools and programs to be successful in coping with the realities of life in a colonized world.

1.4.3 The Challenge

As an educator I was attuned to Western pedagogy and Western ideology. This is not only what I knew, I thought everyone was the same. I was not making the connection that there was more than one worldview. Though I was contrary growing up and often referred to as 'Mary, Mary quite contrary' there was also an evolving

conscious awareness within me of a misalignment or jagged edges of tension between contrary or difference and mainstream norms. Yet, as a classroom educator I always gravitated to those considered ‘at risk’. I found these students not only challenging and rewarding in my work but also because that I could relate to these students in engaging ways. This was not so in Webequie as I soon realized that success is not measured solely through academic standards but through a holistic approach that encompasses multiple knowledge sources. This challenge became my nemesis, my passion, and ultimate fulfillment because it was catalytic pivotal to starting my doctorate which allowed me to work through the challenges in collaboration with students, teachers, community and academic advisors which ultimately embraced my doctoral study. I say this most humbly as it has only been made possible by the community members of Webequie who gave me the opportunity to explore and to learn in a mindful way the process of becoming more human and comfortable in my relationships as an individual and as an educator. It has allowed me to experience the essence of my being as a process of ongoing actualization.

1.4.4 Action: learning through the doctoral experience

This research journey has been a collaborative process of working with staff, students, parents, and community in developing cultural programs to support student learning, give them balance in life and to support healthy and sustainable outcomes in their lifelong learning journey within a community of change and transition. It has been a fulfilling experience working with community, learning and growing together with community and learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place.

1.4.5 Reflection

My research journey allowed me to experience the medicine wheel come 'alive' as a process of negotiation and relationship building, as an emergent process of transformation both personally and professionally. It was as it should be, aligning with the ebb and flow of time. The medicine wheel is a vision of the possibilities of a never ending 'becoming'.

It is this sense of wholeness, of continual becoming that I hope permeates my thesis in addressing the strategies and tools that have been and continue to be implemented at the school to support growth and positive student outcomes. It is a process of ongoing decolonization within the micro/macro framework embraced by the medicine wheel, a visionary framework symbolic of a universal reconciliatory process through ongoing re-negotiation of Indigenous-settler relations. It is a process that embraces the possibilities of hope - a becoming that is inclusive and equitable. It is a space of continual reflection, action and transformation. It is not only a process of learning in practice but is personal and professional: the medicine wheel manifest.

1.5 Historical Background of Webequie and Education

1.5.1 School History

The school was named after Simon Jacob, a historical figure in Webequie history, a chief and a catechist he is well known for his involvement with the early development of Webequie. Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre teaches both the elementary and secondary grades. The school is designed to promote a sense of pride of heritage and promote a cultural enriched environment.

1.5.2 Demographics

Webequie is an Oji-Cree (population approximately 800) First Nation in the Canadian province of Ontario. It is located approximately 538 kilometers north of Thunder Bay, ON. It is accessible only by air and a winter road system. The nearest road accessible communities are Pickle Lake (256 km) in the southwest and Nakina (320km) in the southeast.

1.5.3 Webequie Logo

Webequie, pronounced Way-bih-quay, is an Ojibway word that means, “shaking head from side to side”. There is a story that explains how Webequie acquired its name which translated to English mean ‘shaking its head’.

The story goes early one morning a community member paddled his canoe out on to the lake and noticed a family of mergansers swimming the calm waters of the Winisk Lake. The wind stood still and the mergansers attempted to take off into the air. In their desperate attempt, the mergansers ran on top of the water trying to take flight. The man noticed the heads of the mergansers shaking side to side in their efforts to become airborne.

This is where “Webequie” originates and why we have a merganser as part of our community logo as depicted in Figure 1 (anonymous Elder, n.d.).



Figure 1 Webequie First Nation Logo

1.5.4 School Programs and Services

Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre offers a full-time Kindergarten program, Grade 1-8 classrooms, High School Program, a Special Education Program, Health and Wellness Program, Cultural Program, Core Native Language Program, Immersion Program, Wahsa Distance Education Learning Centre, and Keewaytinook Internet High School (Kihs)

1.5.5 School Governance Structure

Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre has an Education Director, Board Members, and School Council Committee which comprises Webequie Education Authority. The Education Authority is governed by Webequie Chief and Band Council which is an elected body and represent the community members. Within this context, the school is community regulated and self-governed by the Band Council.

1.6 Intersectionality: Relational and Place-based Research

The goal of my inquiry is to develop a collaborative model of learning through sustainable school-community partnerships that support students in successful school engagement and transitions within a changing social economic

landscape. I have been a principal and head teacher in a remote First Nation Ojicree reserve in Northern Ontario for the past 15 years and although I am not an Indigenous Canadian, this long-standing partnership has allowed me to develop relationships built on trust and respect with students, teachers, parents and community members. The community is undergoing rapid change and transitions due to mining exploration which justifies the rationale for my inquiry: one is the concern for protecting and regenerating its rich culture so that it is not disenfranchised by community members due to the changing landscape and the second is the opportunity to capitalize on the future social benefits that change can provide the youth in gainful employment. Seeking to strengthen the community as it negotiates this change the study will focus on community driven learning that is relational, cultural, and place based, creating an ethical space to reimage “research as a performative process of decolonizing in ways that are self-empowering, exciting and hopeful” in a colonizing world (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. xiii). Indigenous knowledge is a lived-world form of reason that informs and sustains people who make their homes in a local area. In such a context, peoples have produced knowledges, epistemologies, ontologies, and cosmologies that construct ways of being and seeing in relationship to their physical surroundings” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 136). It is within overlapping borderland spaces of Indigenous and Western knowledge, that a dichotomous framework of either/or and both/and exist that allows for the conscious movement into the re-creative terrain of ‘third space’ that can be conceptualized as spaces of intersecting ideas and issues. These are sites of borderland rhetorics that can inform egalitarian social relations and social justice as they are rhetorics of resistance, community education and re-presentations that are produced and reproduced in third space (Licona, 2005). The researcher will use

Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a collaborative and respectful dialogical methodology to negotiate sites of tension and resistance, and visionary possibilities that will be re-presented as critical storied narratives that underlie an unfolding process of decolonization as a natural regenerative praxis supportive in engaging sustainable school outcomes during transition and change.

1.7 ‘Allied Other’: Positionality in Research

Framed within post-colonial theory and critical pedagogy the purpose of my inquiry is to gain a greater understanding of whether and how collaborative and community-emergent learning can promote resilience and sustainability for an Indigenous community impacted by the infringement of the mining industry. Smith states, “interrogating the power relationships found within the Indigenous-settler dynamic enables a form of praxis that seeks out Indigenous voice and representation with research that has historically marginalized and silenced Indigenous peoples” (Smith, 1999, xiii). Using a holistic approach to lifelong learning, specific to the needs and aspirations of the community, an empowering and regenerative healing process will be generated in resisting colonial oppression which is a distinct community historical relationship between “human thought and the social context within which it arises” and equalize power relationships through a participatory action research process (PAR) (Berger & Luckman, 1991, p.16). Critical multilogicality seeks to question the hegemonic and oppressive aspects of Western education and to work for diversity and justice by helping “construct conditions that allow for Indigenous self-direction while learning from Indigenous knowledges that provide compelling insights into all domains of human endeavor” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p. 135). As a non Indigenous school administrator, who has demonstrated commitment and trust building over the years of my tenure in the

community, I consider myself an allied ‘other’ and co-collaborator in this PAR study in exploring how a cultural enrichment program that is relational, local and culture-based may be able to engage and support youth in their education within a changing landscape. Situating my study within a decolonizing framework, I concur with Bruner, commenting on the practices of education stating that culture is the ‘context in which individual members make sense of and appraise incidence and phenomena and is also a resource for an individual to conduct a well-adapted life in the culture and if necessary, for transcending it’ (as cited in Takaya, 2008, p. 4).

In redefining, how success is measured for Aboriginal learners, the employment of a holistic learning model as a resilient and sustaining process integrates the best of Traditional and Western knowledge systems, as complimentary knowledge perspectives, rather than solely the Western imposed deficit model of measuring success that aligns to the marketplace economy (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009).

In engaging in community-emergent learning the dynamics, nuances, and complexities of two diverse knowledge perspectives can be explored. The active engagement of local teachings as a living practice of engagement holds the potential to regenerate community knowledge, educational praxis, and develop leadership capacity through collaborative processes congruent with Indigenous epistemology and ways of doing and knowing. In this interrelated process, it is anticipated that my research will address both community and school concerns of engagement within the context of a changing local landscape.

Indigenous research methodologies support practices that are conducive to community partnerships and reflective of learning communities in a process that is sustainable and generative to change (Kincheloe, 2008). Figure 2 depicts the

metaphor

of the medicine wheel representing the circle of life and the interconnectedness of all things, a reflexive tool and interwoven thread and performance indicator for all life stages both individually and collectively. The sources and domains of knowledge and learning development begin at birth and permeate the learning rings nurturing the learning spirit in creating and re-creating visionary possibilities of resistance and change and alternative pathways that are resilient and sustainable.

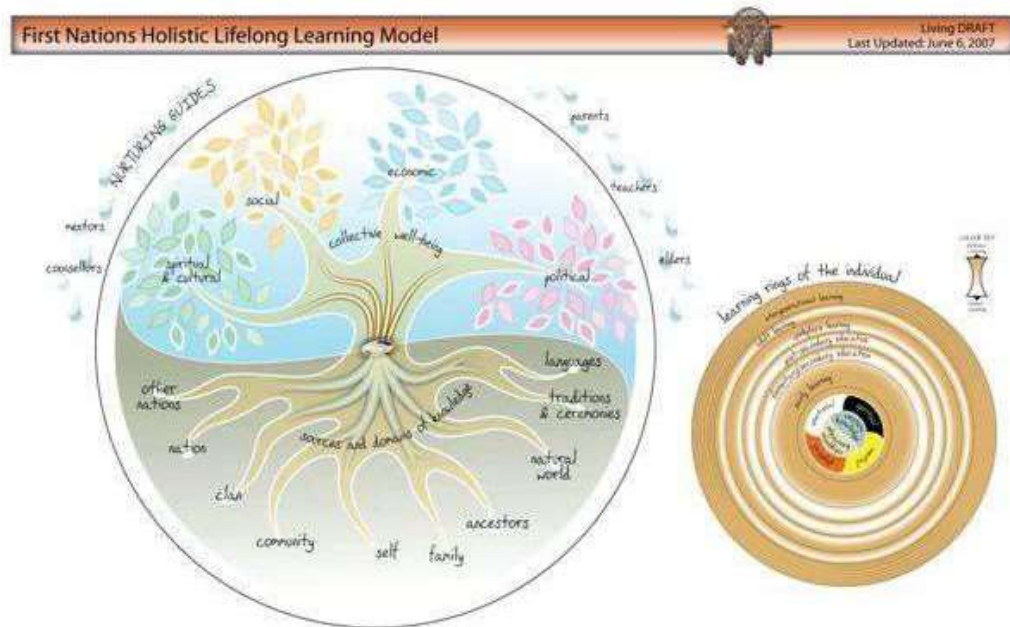


Figure 2 *The Medicine Wheel: 2009, Canadian Council of Learning*

Indigenous methodologies are decolonizing allowing for spaces to develop equal partnerships that are humane and reciprocal. Within the context of my inquiry, contrasting epistemologies and ontologies will allow diverse knowledge systems a space for the equitable valuing of ideas and relationships in understanding the world and the living entities within it by embracing the reconciling principle of the cultural interface that can bring an awareness of the social foundations of values and world views that can be found in antiquity and based on Indigenous concepts of sustainability and resiliency. In this way, difference can be viewed as a decolonizing

process of ethical negotiations in reconciling difference by making possible “Pascal’s famous statement that what is truth on one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other” (Berger & Luckman, 1991, p. 17). My collaborative endeavor is to “better understand and act to subvert structures and inscriptions of social and cultural inequality” (Kincheloe, 2008, p.1) allowing difference to be valued and an opportunity for insight and social and personal transformation. In this way diverse knowledge systems can be viewed as a way to engage in alternative paths of making meaning and reconstructing alternative possibilities” (Kincheloe, 2008, Fals-Borda, 1987). An Indigenous perspective embraces relational assumptions and central to this worldview and way of knowing is the oral tradition of sharing knowledge. It is the relational element that transcends boundaries that compartmentalize Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, allowing an overlapping cultural interface for ethical dialogue exchange and the mutual sharing of knowledge and values when employing Indigenous methodologies in research.

1.8 Research Questions:

Overarching question:

1. How can community driven learning that is relational, local and culture-based support and engage students in achieving successful school outcomes within a changing landscape?

Sub questions:

1. How may the teachings of the medicine wheel benefit community wellbeing, strengthen community resiliency and sustainability through community-emergent learning?

2. What relationships are pivotal to building identity, strength and resiliency in young Indigenous learners?
3. How can the teachings of the medicine wheel connect Indigenous and Western curriculum in developing resilient and sustainable practices in learning and teaching in the 21st century?

1.9 Conclusion: Cycles, connections and ethical dialogue of difference

This research journey has been a process of looking back and working collaboratively to build trusting relationships in which to plan and implement programs to benefit students. It has been a process of cycles involving listening, hearing and doing with the focus on making connections to the medicine wheel through a community of collaborative praxis and ethical dialogue of difference between Indigenous and Western knowledge relations. Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the specific cultural, social and geographical context of Webequie within broader social and educational frameworks. It is this context that is specific to collaborative praxis and ethical dialogue.

Chapter 2 Making Connections

2.1 Introduction: setting the stage for negotiations in ethical space

The readers' understanding and reading of the images portrayed in the figures in chapter 2 are more than a schematic representation of a process or artefact, or a scientific approach to showing the interaction of parts of a system. In my context I am talking about much more complex and human experiences, interactions, learning and the journey across decades of a life within a community. In this sense the chapter includes 'schematic models' which are more than 'diagrams' – they endeavour to capture something of the spirit and life journey of the individual within community and to express deep patterns of growth and connection with nature.

This chapter will provide a short summary on the structural readiness implemented and/or in place in preparedness for moving forward by the Webequie community within the wider context of education in Northern Ontario and against the broader background of the mining boom that is seen as essential to Canadian growth. The changing landscape in this context refers not only to the physical domain but the broader socio-cultural implications for the community as it opens up and manages changes linked with resource development. In embracing change, the implications facing the community are twofold:

1. The concern for protecting and regenerating the community's rich culture so that it is not disenfranchised by community members due to the changing landscape
2. The opportunity to capitalize on the future social benefits that change can provide the youth in gainful employment.

The following figures depict sites of tension and will be referred to in later chapters and as part of data analysis. Sites of tension create a space to interrogate the power relationships found within the Indigenous-settler dynamics and to take conscious action that supports Indigenous voice and agency. This chapter invites the reader to engage with the challenge of the study, in terms of the complexity of relationships in such a changing and potentially disruptive context of change, but also in terms of the theories that inform the study. These intertwine the medicine wheel but also how third space and representations of difference can be explored through living practices so as to generate new knowledge and meanings.

2.2 Western Knowledge, Development and Education

2.2.1 The Ring of Fire

The Ring of Fire is an area of mining and resource development that is infringing on traditional lands as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3 Ring of Fire mining exploration

The Ring of Fire refers to the geographic area of emerging mining development and resource exploration in Northern Ontario. It is demographically located in a remote area on Indigenous territory and traditional lands. It is within this space identified as place(s) with social foundations of values and world views that can be found in antiquity and based on Indigenous concepts of sustainability and resiliency that the research unfolds. The land is imbued with ancestral stories of survivance grounded in balancing relations with all knowledge domains; physical, spiritual, mental and emotional. This respectful interaction between man, nature and the cosmos is mutual and reciprocal in defining place as self and community. The overlapping political, social and economic relations of an oppressive and competitive Western ideology is resisted and interrupted by a cultural interface or third space to negotiate meaning and purpose between two diverse knowledge systems. This evolving process, as a decolonizing process is a negotiation of the tensions inherent in a reconciling process of good faith and a healing journey. The cultural interface provides a dialogical space to recreate and re-balance institutional power inequalities. The possibilities to negotiate dialectical tension between difference as a complimentary and inclusional dialogical exchange of knowledge was never as visible, evident and emergent as in the everyday practices that unfolded during the time of my evolving research. It is my intent and aspiration to build a bricolage of meaning and possibilities through the collection of the research data as a re-imagining of the visionary possibilities and perhaps give enriched inspiration and hope for the reader in his/her lifelong learning journey and becoming.

2.2.2 Ontario Ministry of Education: Reach every child

Figure 4 summarizes the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF) as implemented by the Ministry of Educations (MOE) in supporting school success and

reaching every student. The SEF is grounded in a hierarchical structure and rooted in colonial approaches as viewed through the lens of Western thought. This is not to discredit multiculturalism as a tool for honouring diversity, but rather to be conscious of decolonization as a resistant process that challenges the dominant social political structures of a global economy and that continues to re-create pedagogical policy and practices that are assimilative in nature.



Figure 4 *K-12 School Effectiveness Framework, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013*

A cultural space that negotiates the complexities and tensions of difference embraces a natural porous and fluid morality, an inclusionary understanding of diversity as a unique curiosity seeded within self in relation to place within a social environment. Dewey’s theory concerning social learning, “believed that school should be representative of a social environment and that students learn best when in natural social settings” (Flinders & Thornton, 2013, p. 8). Under the assumption, that

all students are unique learners, Dewey’s theory of education remains a proponent that students’ interests be the driving force of teaching practices (Dewey, 1958). The uniqueness of every child and the social setting where learning is situated requires a re-consideration and restructuring of polarized scientific thought that may misalign a balanced relationship between theory and practice from a reflective inclusionary perspective. It is in this misalignment that missed opportunities and possibilities for moral pedagogical action may be articulated in the everyday experience where learning is situated presenting a critical and innovative space reflective of the possibilities of 21st century pedagogy. These possibilities are reflective of Fullan’s beliefs in the moral responsibilities of education as depicted in Figure 5.

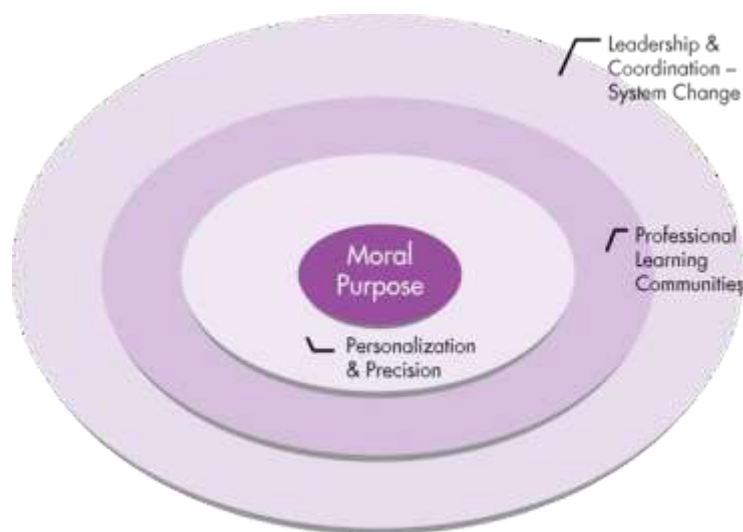


Figure 5 Ontario Ministry of Education: Learning for all, 2013

Given a shared commitment to the education and moral responsibilities of reaching every child, learning communities composed of partnerships between school, family, and community within the local context becomes a collective problem-solving lateral capacity building process that is focussed on student learning that is driven by ongoing learning communities that “create knowledge and

opportunities that support these practices” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 53, Fullan et al., 2005, Fullan, 2012). It is this moral process that “raises the bar as it closes the gap” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 54).

It is within this context in natural settings that actions with moral purpose become resistive strategies and natural agents of change within the context of my study from an Indigenous worldview. The discrete borders and compartmentalized dimensions as represented by the School Effectiveness Framework limits the continuity of learning and the organic bridging of all knowledge domains in its restrictive cartesian framework and hierarchical structure. An Indigenous lifelong learning model is naturally inclusive and open to all relations and learning dimensions to provide space for dialogue exchange that is ethical and moral in negotiating mutual understanding and meaning between educator and student embracing diverse perspectives.

2.3 Traditional Knowledge: Drawing on the Medicine Wheel Teachings

2.3.1 School Improvement Plan

Figure 6 depicts the school’s framework for reaching every student as a holistic framework which is based on the lifelong learning model depicted in Figure 2. The inclusive nature of the medicine wheel framework embraces both Western and Indigenous ideologies as represented by the overlapping circles in Figure 6, providing a space to re-structure and re-create learning in school that raises students’ “awareness of global and moral issues when introduced at the appropriate cognitive and emotional level ... [and] encourages students to think for themselves and take responsibility for their own learning, behaviour, and decision-making” (Hopkinson, 2007, p. 58). This inclusive and organic crossing of boundaries between formal and informal learning environments and social settings builds natural relationships with

all knowledge domains and interrupts the linearity of Western learning theories with the focus on standardized testing and assessments. The power differentials underscoring polarized positions and dualist thinking are re-connected by the concentric and overlapping circles. The overlay or cultural interface balances contemporary and traditional classroom theories and beliefs by connecting culture with learning and developing and strengthening family and community engagement and values in a social space where the classroom becomes a “social entity for children to learn and problem-solve together as a community” through a collaborative process of critical reflexivity (Williams, 2017, p. 93). This place based, cultural and relational approach to classroom learning views students “as unique ... constructing their own knowledge through personal meaning, rather than teacher-imposed knowledge and teacher-directed activities (Schiro, 2012; Williams, 2017, p. 93). The interchangeable and flexibility of learning in a variety of social settings and interactions with the social, physical, spiritual, and intellectual environments underscores Dewey’s belief that education should be considered “a process of living and not a preparation for future living” (Flinders & Thornton, 2013, p. 35). Social learning theories emphasize that schools and classroom be representative of real live situations and Dewey posited that, “... introducing too much academic content, out of context with children’s social lives, bordered on unethical teaching behavior” (Williams, 2017, p. 92). This sense of freedom and ownership of knowledge as a co-creation of identity in relation to the learning environment recognizes space as a fluid energy that is not discrete in its tangibility but distinguished by its receptive intangible qualities that define place as a nonlinear and dynamic social and historical relationship. It is these determinants that are woven through the everyday lived reality that survive and pass on through time

and antiquity. It is these relational dimensions that distinguish the inclusionary qualities of the holistic lifelong learning model as opposed to the Western framework that prescribes to a static cultural diversity. Western ideology is discrete and isolated knowledge lacking the vibrance of the lived uncertainties of everyday reality, whereas Indigenous ideology is fluid and receptive to the flowing passing of time, past and present intertwined. It embraces a growth mindset that is border free yet collectively resilient, strengthened and supported within a circle of life and knowledge that is caring and inclusive in its diverse relations. It is this space of sharing intergenerational knowledge and values that has receptive and empowering possibilities in the cultural interface. It is a space of imagining and sharing of knowledge differences in good faith and in doing so informs and empowers both sides of a dialectic contradiction and either/or polar way of thinking towards an inclusionary dialogue of both/and. This complimentary bridging and sharing of knowledge differences is the embodiment of good relations with all/things and is embraced within the circle of the holistic lifelong learning model.

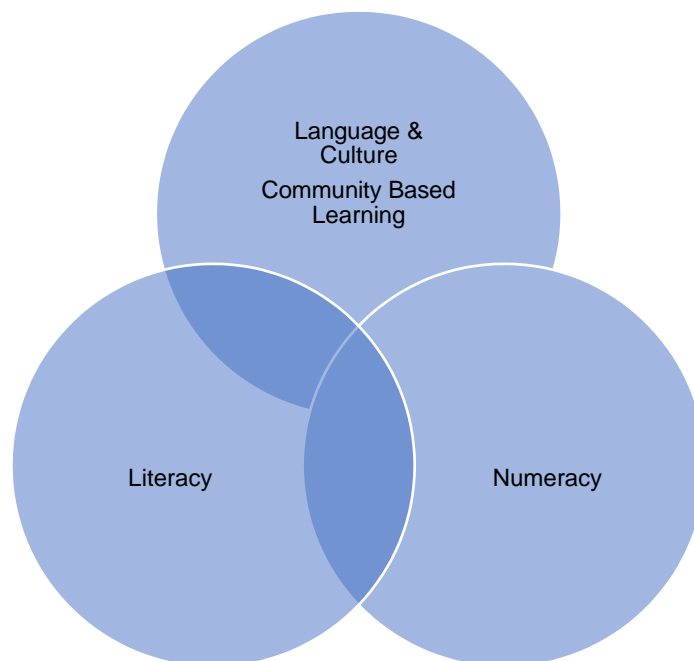


Figure 6 *Integrated curriculum and community teachings*

2.4 Webequie First Nation On-Reserve Land Use Plan

2.4.1 Community-based land use planning

Figure 7 depicts the community framework built on respectful relationships, continuity and sustainability in going forward in the 21st century with social change and mining development. The three-tiered approach to land use and negotiation represents the protocols for conducting and negotiating exploration activities on traditional lands between multiparty stakeholders. It embodies a mutual social responsibility and reciprocal agreement by both negotiating parties that recognizes mutual recognition for the dignity and respect of the inhabitants and the environment. It represents a respectful and collaborative dialogical process in contributing to combined outcomes that benefit all parties in the negotiating agreement. The framework embraces an inclusive structure open to all stakeholders: reserve, neighboring communities, private industry and all levels of the government. The three-tier structure identifies three areas around the community of Webequie and the relationship between the community, the land, surrounding communities and other parties in these areas: Tier 1 represents the reserve territory that encompasses a diversity of natural land use and environmental features. It covers about 34,000 ha. Tier 2 represents the protected traditional area and covers approximately a 40-50 Km radius. It is used for traditional harvesting and Anishnawbe cultural livelihood activities foundational to the cultural identity of the Webequie people. Tier 3 is the area of mutual benefit. This encompasses “Webequie people, neighboring communities, and outside parties that realize benefits from customary use, stewardship and development activities. This area of mutual benefit is both an area of land as well as a principle of a healthy community economy that is achieved when

the land and Indigenous livelihoods are preserved in balance with new resource development opportunities” (Webequie First Nation, 2019, p. 8).

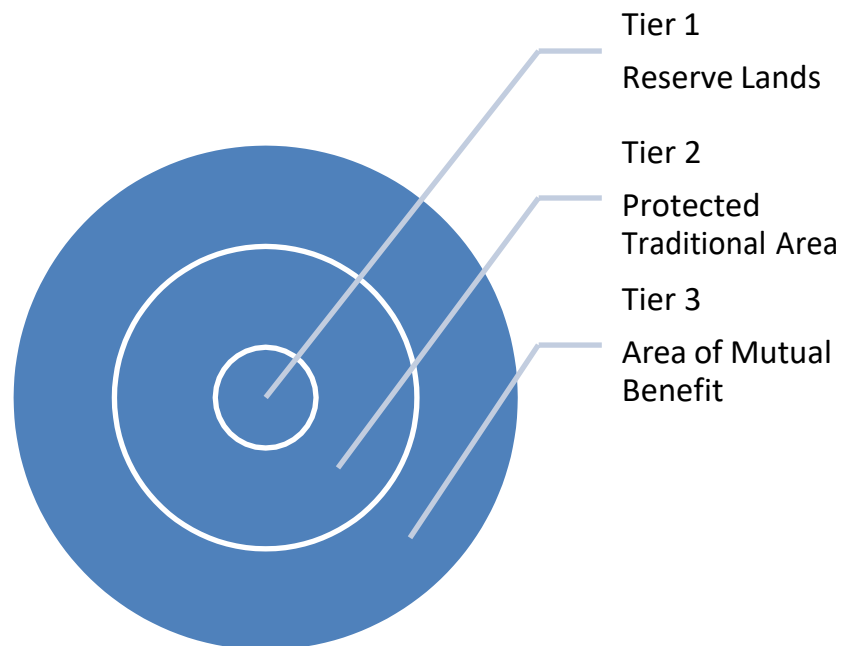


Figure 7 Adapted by the author from Webequie First Nation On-reserve Land Use Plan: Three Tier Structure

2.5 Conclusion

It is in the reading of the images that the figures are transformed and explored as sites of tension, a process of negotiating meaning and understanding of the dialectical world that we live and interact on a daily basis. This is foundational in bringing to life the diverse tools represented by the universal application of the medicine wheel. It is these visual images the figures portray, and the underlying relationships represented by the metaphor of the medicine wheel that emerge and are applied specifically to the thinking, being and interactions of individuals and community members in this study. It is a process of weaving through and recreating relationships that have the possibilities to address the issues of the research by

exploring meaningful pathways that may support students successfully in navigating a changing local landscape.

These visual diagrams are diverse and illustrate difference. Two depict a Western perspective (Figure 3, Figure 4) in which Indigenous ideology is not addressed or visually seen and therefore can be considered as located on the periphery. The last two showing Traditional frameworks are holistic and inclusive of Western knowledge. Having a cultural program at the school depicts curriculum that is not filtered from a Western perspective. The overlapping areas in the school curriculum circles (Figure 6) represent third space where difference occurs and are areas where deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge and sense making is negotiated. The Three Tier structure (Figure 7) depicts the reserve in the centre, traditional lands as a buffer zone in the middle and mining development on the outside. The ‘buffer’ zone is an imagined space to negotiate difference and to reimagine equal partnership benefits that are humane and reciprocal “when the land and Indigenous livelihoods are preserved in balance with new resource development opportunities”– ones that respectfully create alternative pathways that promote voice and agency and employability opportunities (Webequie First Nation, 2019, p. 8). It is these complex interactions and relationships that underscore the dynamics of the medicine wheel which guide my research as an ethical and organic process.

My deep exploration of the theory is explored in the next chapter: a critical exploration of the literature informing my ethical practice in participatory research. It recognises the voices of those experts whom I recognise as foundational to my own learning and ongoing praxis.

Chapter 3 Reading the Literature: Theories and Concepts - looking back

3.1 Introduction

As an embedded researcher engaging in a humanistic and qualitative study, I have structured this chapter is structured to highlight key influences and concepts, theories and voices that have shaped this study, drawing upon the works of scholars who have shaped my understanding and given me direction in my research journey. I will bring a closer focus on Indigenous scholars in chapter 4. I recognize their contribution in grounding my research and their guidance in positioning my study and supporting the theoretical underpinnings of my thesis, as the ideas of these forefathers support key areas of my research. I will name them in full in the first instance rather than giving the surname only. This approach is based on respect for all voices and recognises the importance of naming and honouring key researchers in shaping my understanding and whose ideas I have invoked as signposts and to validate my methodological approach as an ethical process in conducting Indigenous research.

3.2 Liberatory Pedagogy: The Forefathers and Grounding Theory

3.2.1 Paulo Freire

Only by developing a critical standpoint and an awareness of how the world is divided and maneuvered by the myths which powerful social forces have created can humanizing relationships based on mutual reciprocity and respect become an integrated transformative process. This kind of transformation and change in mind-set creates a functional and cooperating unit that frees the participants to make choices and change their own reality.

Paulo Freire viewed education as part of a wider project of cultural and political liberation and transformation of society. His liberatory pedagogy fits into a bigger picture of theoretical development of ways of thinking about the world. His concepts of conscientization, problematizing, and ownership underscore a framework that embrace emancipatory education that has informed my context and study (Freire, 1970b, 2005). As an intervention process Freire’s approach can empower both teacher and learner to resist the dialectical tension of the ‘banking’ concepts of silence and monologue so that teacher and learner “begin to learn, the one to know self as a being of worth and the other as capable of dialogue in spite of the straitjacket imposed by the role of educator as one who knows” (Freire, 2005, p. ix). These three underlying theoretical concepts - conscientization, problematizing, and ownership ground my research and are pivotal in a critical pedagogical approach, vital to Indigenous methodology, and in conducting a reconciling and decolonizing research process. Freire’s theories inform my practice, supporting my understanding of more contemporary writings particularly from the perspective of an Indigenous philosophy that embraces a worldview in which all learning and development are nourished and inter-related to four knowledge domains: emotional, spiritual, cognitive and physical. Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies are rooted in worldviews that are relational and inclusive of both the sacred and the secular. Antoine’s concept of relationality, that we are all related to each other, to the natural environment, and to the spiritual world, brings about an interdependence that creates learning opportunities that emphasize learning in relationships with fellow students, teachers, families, members of the community, and the local environment (2018). How knowledge can be known and how knowledge can be taught, from an Indigenous perspective

therefore is holistic, as the world exists in one reality (Antoine et al., 2018). Unlike Western educational approaches where spirituality is often seen as taboo in the classroom, in an Indigenous approach, the spiritual dimensions cannot be separated from the secular dimensions and “human development and well-being involves attending to and valuing all of these realms which are “informed by ancestral knowledge which is to be passed to future generations” (Blackstock, 2007, p. 4). Freire refers to the concept of conscientization as a “human process in which men as conscious beings are not only in the world, but with the world, together with other men” and further “that it is the domains of work, of history, of culture, of values that men experience the dialectic between determinism and freedom” (Freire, 1970a, p. 453). In Freire’s viewpoint, it is only through reflection and action that humans can participate in critical praxis and think of the world objectively:

Their reflectiveness results not just in a vague and uncommitted awareness, but in the exercise of a profoundly transforming action upon the determining reality. Consciousness of and action upon reality are, therefore, inseparable constituents of the transforming act by which men become beings of relation (Freire, 1970a p.453).

It is through this process of conscientization that learning becomes a two-way process, fostering a spirit of dialogue, in which consideration of alternative ways of understanding the world can emerge through a problem posing educative process that underscores a dialectical relationship between consciousness and the world. Conscientization implies a dynamic and evolving humanizing

process of itinerant cycles of action and reflection and it is this ontological core of Freire's philosophy of the ideal or essence of humanization or becoming more fully human, that is congruent with Indigenous worldview in the relationality of all things as a living practice of active engagement with the potential for regenerating voice through a process of problematizing community knowledge as a conscious decolonizing action and change agent. Freire's understanding that education is political and that the social and economic structures set limits on what becomes possible in the classroom emphasizes the importance of connecting education with lived experience thus allowing experience to be the guide and starting point for building and deepening an awareness and understanding that "reality-the physical world, the social world, and the inner world of thought, emotion and experience-is in constant motion" (2005) and that as humans moving through life stages, reality is increasingly problematized and reinterpreted. Roberts posits, "knowledge arises not from isolated, individual, abstract, purely theoretical activity, but through dialogue, human practice and engagement with the messy realities of everyday life" (2005, p. 448). Liberation, therefore, is a constant struggle and

as conscious beings are capable of reflecting on their world, of imagining that it might be otherwise, and of changing it. But the world we create through conscious practical activity also acts back on us, influencing the way we think, feel and respond to others (Freire, 2005).

A community-emergent program instills a resistance to these prescriptive outside forces and acts as an empowering agent. Problematization of the hegemonic relations between dominance and subordination in society provides the space for critical reflection and interrupting the unequal relations and resisting the reproduction of colonizing forces. These are spaces for agency and voice where possible counter-hegemonic action can take place. One “can know only to the extent that one problematizes the natural, cultural and historical reality in which one is immersed” (Freire, 1970b, p. ix). Freire differentiates problematizing from problem-solving. Problem-solving uses a reductionist objectivist approach whereas to problematize is to “associate an entire populace to the task of codifying total reality into symbols which can generate critical consciousness and empower men to alter their relations with nature and social forces” (Freire, 1970b, p. ix). This becomes a subjective process involving reflection and dialogue with others and “whose historical goal is to become transforming agents of their social reality ... and subjects ... of their own history” (Freire, 1970b, p. ix). It is a process of decolonizing that disrupts structures of social and cultural inequalities allowing for voice as agents of change. Freire emphasizes, “each moment spent in dialogue which prepares men and women to “emerge” from their state of “immersion” becomes an active agent of change and are then able to intervene in reality in order to change it” (Freire, 2005, p.xii).

Core to Freire’s theory on human relationships is respect and the goal of all developmental change is to “transform people, not merely to

change structures” (Freire, 2005, p.xiii). Therefore, acquiring ownership becomes a natural cyclical process of conscientization and problematizing that produces what Freire refers to as themes and epochs. This complex and layered process requires a critical awareness of the external prescriptions and power relationships that adapt humankind permitting cultural immobility. But, if humans respond to the challenges of their environment, then a process of ownership can occur by giving historical meaning to geographic space, thus creating culture. “This humanizing participatory and cyclical process of creating, re-creating, and deciding, allows historical epochs to take shape” (Freire, 2005, p. 4). Freire characterizes an historical epoch by a series of aspirations, concerns and values in search of fulfillment, by ways of being and behaving and according to Freire the concrete representations of these aspirations constitute the themes of an epoch, which in turn indicate tasks to be carried out. According to Freire, the epochs are fulfilled to the degree that their themes are grasped, and their tasks solved. “Whether or not men can perceive the epochal themes and how they act upon the reality within which these themes are generated will largely determine their humanization or dehumanization, their affirmation as subjects or their reduction as objects” (Freire, 2005, p. 5). Only by developing a critical consciousness and an awareness of how the world is divided and maneuvered by the myths which powerful social forces have created, can humanizing relationships take action that is sustainable and regenerative.

“This process becomes empowering and transforms into a true community, integrating a flexible, critical spirit that can perceive the

contradictions which occur in society as emerging values in search of affirmation as external prescriptions” (Freire, 2005, p. 5). Freire refers to “tidal waves” as epochal transitions involving clashes between contradicting emerging historical-cultural values “between the ways of being, understanding, behaving, and valuing which belong to yesterday and other ways of perceiving and valuing which announce the future” (Freire, 2005, p. 6) and it is only through a critical standpoint and awareness of the contradictions are they real and capable of being transformed in action” (Freire, 2005, p. 6). It is anticipated that the themes of my research that emerge through itinerant gathering and analysis of data will not only expose the tensions inherent in epistemological dualism but be pivotal in the kind of strategies and action taken to counter hegemonic power imbalance empowered by colonial structures. Engaging in critical dialogue and reflection provides a space for problematizing and negotiating tensions. This kind of approach allows community to be subject of their own transformation in which the location of decision making remains inside the community. It allows community to contribute and make decisions based on those who live in daily familiarity with the geographic area. These decisions are based on critical exchanges that result in new structures and practices emerging from the old through a process of respectful and reciprocal relations grounded in dialectical reciprocity.

Building on Freire’s thinking in relation to the implications and nature of Indigenous knowledge in the context of education and

development, three broad approaches have emerged among current debates.

Freire's pedagogical theory focuses on the oppressed, subjugated, and excessive inequality. His approach is emancipatory in the sense that it is grounded in a developmental model "of the human subject that has...to overcome obstacles of humanization" (Morrow, 2008, p.88). Concepts of conscientization, problematization, and reflection allow a critical awareness of power differential between the oppressed and the oppressor. Freire believed that both the oppressor and the oppressed are diminished in their humanity when their relationship is characterized by oppressive dynamics but through a greater awareness of the power differential, the oppressed can take action to change their circumstances. Ivan Illich's argues that there is an incommensurability between Western and Indigenous knowledge and therefore creating "a situation where colonial domination and economic unsustainability are inevitable" (Morrow, 2008, p.81). Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, and Kincheloe and Semali approach the problematic of Indigenous knowledge through multicultural theories and subjugated knowledge. This approach advocates for dialogue in which both knowledge systems "are accepted as equals, as variant forms of local knowledge with differential access to power" (as cited in Morrow, 2008, p.82). This becomes a basis for a new conception of transformative education and an approach to redirect development away from Western models. The third approach advocates for a more inclusive and contextual understanding of knowledge and in this context the concept of cultural hybrid is developed and provides a framework for rethinking the

implications of conscientization for marginalized people” (Morrow, 2008, p.82).

3.2.2 Henry Giroux

Henry Giroux’s work focuses upon education as a political tool and perhaps although he is not an Indigenous scholar his work on decolonising education has informed and supported Indigenous scholars. Giroux’s dialogical teaching emphasizes a shared process of learning and knowing that involves theorizing about the experiences shared in the process. This becomes a reciprocal learning experience for teacher as well as the student. It is through shared experiences and dialogue that students can explore their identities and build resiliency. He theorises that this process creates a safe dialogical space that overlaps Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, a space for experiences, histories, and voices to be heard and shared in the creation of real and imagined possibilities. Giroux concurs with Freire that some strands of critical pedagogy offer a reductionist view of identity by transforming the notion of dialogue into a method, invoking conversation resulting in individual lived experiences being given primacy over theory. “Pedagogy is not a method but a moral and political practice that recognizes the relationship between knowledge and power and realizes that central to all pedagogical practices is a struggle over agency, power, politics, and the formative cultures that make a radical democracy possible” (Giroux, 2018, para. 7). Community emergent learning provides a moral space to deconstruct colonial educative policies and to re-create a pedagogical praxis that envisions a sustainable practice that is just and inclusive.

Sharing and exploring diverse knowledge systems, supports Zavala’s emphasis that “decolonizing research strategies is less about the struggle for method and more about the dialectical spaces that make decolonizing research possible

(2013, p.55). It is a space of overlapping relations in which border crossing and coalition building is possible. A community driven learning program allowed the space for students to explore and renew the knowledge and skills shared by community Elders as the transmitters of ancestral wisdom - a natural tool to strengthen identity and to build efficacy and resiliency. This is a fluid process that strengthens voice and agency in resisting the nuanced complexities that underscore the dialectical contradictions and power differentials that exist in the world and to re-create authentic meaning of their own reality. In Ananias words, “If you have strong roots, you will be strong and resilient. You will never lose what you have to offer... you will never get integrated, influenced, or assimilated.” (Elder, 2014).

Additionally, educators who misinterpret Freire’s notion of dialogical teaching may also fail to link experience to the politics of culture and critical democracy. Giroux points out “that such pedagogy leaves identity and experience removed from the problematics of power, agency, and history” (as cited in Freire, 2005, p.18). From a neo-positivist approach, this denies the existence of any hidden curriculum and assumes that all knowledge is objective and neutral and therefore there is nothing hidden about it (Singh & Doyle, 2006, p.258). It is in this regard, that Giroux believes that the Western traditions share a common ideology that “... view schools ... as a ... way of life organized to produce and legitimate the economic and political interests of [the] business elite..” (Giroux & Simon, 1988, p.10) and in doing so denying culture which is foundational to freedom and democracy to be practiced and learned amid struggle, difference, and dialogue. This Western perspective denies “the voices, experiences, and histories through which students give meaning to the world and in doing so often reduce learning to the dynamics of transmission and imposition” (Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 10, 15). Giroux argues that

practicing critical pedagogy is not limited to schools but extends to the multiple sites of cultural production that influence meaning and identity formation. “Critical pedagogy is a strateg[y]ic . . . , arising from questions such as ‘How is human possibility being diminished here?’” (Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 21). All work in such sites must begin with naming and problematizing the social relations, experiences, and ideologies constructed through forms that can diminish cultural or societal mobility. In this way schools become sites of struggle and pedagogy that generates a social space to expand human capacity to enable people to intervene in the formation of their own subjectivities within the context of their environment, plus the critical capacity to make choices and transform that reality (Freire, 2005). It is within this space that Indigenous ideology as holistic in all knowledge domains can be renewed and strengthened as a process of healing and decolonizing and in doing so de-centre Western traditions and re-create their own reality.

This space allows “for a politics of difference and empowerment as the basis for developing a critical pedagogy through and for the voices of those who are often silenced. It is a call to recognize that, in schools, meaning is produced through the construction of forms of power, experiences, and identities that need to be analyzed for their wider political and cultural significance” (Giroux & Simon, 1998, p. 10).

My interpretation of Giroux’s work led me to anticipate that within a social space and context of community engaged in emergent learning, students can come to question and make meaning of their daily experiences and continue to develop critical awareness and the implications of the wider social, political and cultural arena. Given this opportunity potentially can empower students to become change agents through their daily lived experiences and social interactions. Hannah Arendt posits that “every action . . . acts into a medium where every reaction becomes a chain

reaction ... the smallest act...bears the seed of the same boundlessness, because one deed, ... suffices to change every constellation” (Arendt, 1958, p. 190), Just as in nature, skipping pebbles across the water, producing natural ripples of over lapping circles that intertwine and connect creating a strengthening bond of change and solidarity (Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute, 2016).

Giroux supports Freire’s combination of theoretical rigour, social relevance, and moral compassion.

Freire gave new meaning to the politics of daily life while affirming the importance of theory in opening up the space of critique, possibility, politics, and practice. Theory and language were a site of struggle and possibility that gave experience meaning and action a political direction and any attempt to reproduce the binarism of theory vs politics was repeatedly condemned by Freire (Giroux, 1997, p. 312).

I draw upon Freire and Giroux’ work to emphasize the centrality of relational space to my study. Relational space embraces dualism, providing an arena for dialogue and ethical negotiations where the basic principles of a moral democracy based on liberty and equality are possible amid struggle, tension, difference and dialectics. It is in this relational space that the values that are embodied in the practice of community emergent learning can transcend and bridge the dualism in Western ideology as a social phenomenon of bonding through cooperative interaction and natural reciprocity. This deeper understanding of social relations as a theory in everyday moral and caring responsible practice avoids a reductionist approach and has the capacity to “unif[y]ies our view of the institutional morality of economic life and political life in one coherent conception of social relations among citizens” (Hussain, 2020, p.109). It is in the overall collective sustainable benefits

that may be gained in a space of openness and willingness to negotiate and reconcile epistemological and ontological differences through a continuous dialogue exchange based on mutual understandings, that the seeds of solidarity may empower difference as a natural change agent. It is in this space that the possibilities to re-plant seeds of hope that are nourished to grow between and with difference that alternative pathways grounded in the values and principles of Indigenous knowledge and community ways of doing, being and knowing can empower a natural freedom of voice and balanced power relations.

In this study, and in my practice, I use a critical pedagogy taking the historical and social particularities of students' experiences as a starting point and through critical examination, builds on the democratic possibilities that are inherent in our schools, pedagogy, and theory (Giroux and Aronowitz, as cited in Singh & Doyle, 2006, p, 242). This form of pedagogy connects the classroom to the life students live outside the classroom without objectifying relationships considered as "other" within a hegemonic culture. It develops and expands on students' thinking as a process and awareness of the power differentials that exist in an oppressive Euro-centric political economy. Instilling a critical approach in the research process integrates reality as a problematic and the capacity to reflect and take action infusing ownership and self-determination within the geographic spaces where learning is situated. Critical pedagogy is congruent with an Indigenous worldview that is grounded in relationships and connections to living and non-living beings and entities. Indigenous scholar, Thomas L. Crofoot Graham (2002) calls this a relational worldview in which the focus is on spirituality and a sense of communitism and respectful individualism. An Indigenous worldview is lifelong and life wide. Indigenous knowledge, as described by Marlene Grant Castellano is personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or

metaphorical language (2000). Cross posits that a relational worldview considers a balance between forces identified as spirit, context, mind, and body (1998). It is this sense of connectedness and continuity in relationships that grounds the research from an Indigenous worldview and has the capacity to build individual and collective balance and wellbeing. It is this relational aspect that has the potential to negotiate difference - an ethical space of relationship building where Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews encounter one another in a reconciling and healing process to resist the forces of oppression and give purpose, balance and meaning in a decolonizing praxis, as Indigenous scholar, Sandy Grande (2004) explains, “which emerges from a collectivity of critique and solidarity between and among Indigenous peoples, other marginalized groups, and peoples of conscience” (as cited in Calderon, 2006).

For me as a non-Indigenous educator working in an Indigenous community this becomes the starting point to define the ground on which one’s “voice” becomes possible within a pedagogical encounter (Giroux, 1988, as cited in Giroux and Simon, 1988, p. 16). It is within this context of the lived reality and everyday experiences of the community that local learning has the potential to (re)engage and (re)connect students to their roots and ancestral past, to the survival skills that have been passed on, adapted and remain steadfast today. It is these intertwined relationships underlying culture, identity and place that are grounded in the teachings and values of the medicine wheel as a relational force targeted towards the restoration of balance and harmony. The medicine wheel represents the complex nuances and layers of inter-relationships that are inter-generational and provide pathways and signposts for balance and wellbeing both individually and collectively. It represents a metaphor of possibilities of a humankind that is just and equitable. As individuals we are constantly striving for self actualization, that which defines us as

human beings and with the passage of time the essence of one's humanism is peeled back and becomes more transparent and can be compared to a healing process as one matures through life's stages. Similar to Christian humanism, "this is an approach that "promotes the worth of human beings and asserts that humans strive to become more fully human in unity with others, despite impediments to humanization such as injustices, exploitation, and oppression" (Kirylo, Schugurensky, as cited in Salazar, 2013, p. 125). The central image informing life in the community where I am engaged is the Medicine Wheel which represents an organic process of identifying and re-identifying always moving backward and forward, adapting to external forces and surviving changes by either adapting to the changes passively or adapting and actively building the capacity to make choices and transform that reality. These are human choices. It is a dynamic and cyclical process of harmonious inter-relationships that shape and mould our being, who we are and what we know. "It is a lifelong and life-wide metaphor that is dynamic and always targeted towards the restoration of balance" (Cross, p.6, 1997)

The medicine wheel provides the structure to nourish "A critical pedagogy that affirms the lived reality of difference and everyday life as the ground on which to pose questions of theory and practice" (McLaren, 1988, as cited in Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 6) is catalytic both in voice and as a decolonizing agent. It is within this space that my research unfolds as an ongoing process "that claims the experience of lived difference as an agenda for discussion and as a central resource for a pedagogy of possibility (Simon, 1987, as cited in Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 16). It is this agenda that goes beyond the positivist scientific agenda of observation and measuring (Grbin, 2015, p. 311). It is an agenda that creates a collaborative space for a multiplicity of voices that does not silence in the name of its own ideologic

basis but embraces “a struggle over assigned meaning, a struggle over the direction in which to desire, a struggle over multiple and even contradictory versions of self” (Lewis & Simon, as cited in Giroux & Simon, 1988, p. 16). It is a conscious way of thinking about knowledge and the world within a liminal space that actively cultivates collective agency among Indigenous people and others “committed to re-imagining a .. space free of colonialists and capitalist exploitation” (Grande, 2006, p. 204).

Giroux believes that education exists beyond the confines of the classroom and that there is a need to create space for pedagogical practices that create people capable of envisioning a more just and democratic world and are willing to struggle for it. This is a pedagogy that includes “lifting complex ideas into the public space,” recognizing human injury inside and outside of the academy and using theory as a form of criticism to change things (Said, 2012, p. 7). This demands a willingness to make connections between private issues and broader elements of society’s problems that are otherwise hidden. It is in this space that community emergent learning can explore the relational forces between Indigenous and Western perspectives as a strategy to resist and negotiate difference as a strengthening agent in striving for greater harmony, inclusion and social justice both individually and collectively in a hegemonic society.

My practice in this context is informed by Giroux’ belief that pedagogy must be viewed as a cultural, political and moral force in order to have conversations that focus on the common good, democratic values, pedagogical conditions “that would further critical dialogue and the potential for students to learn how to hold power accountable” (Giroux, 2018, para. 2). Domination is at its most powerful “when its mechanisms of control and subjugation hide in the discourses of common sense, and

its elements of power are made to appear invisible”. (Giroux, 2018, para. 5). Giroux posits, “Power ...shapes the spaces in which everyday life takes place and touches peoples’ lives at multiple registers, all of which represent in part a struggle over their identities, values, and views of others and the larger world (Giroux, 2018, para. 6). My belief, drawing upon Freire and Giroux is that extending learning beyond the confines of the classroom as an inclusive and collaborative project to restore balance and harmony and build bridges that embrace relationships through mutual respect and reciprocity, becomes a humanizing process that not only challenges the status quo of a market economy but empowers change agents. Ownership of this kind of change builds individual and community capacity, self-direction and informed choices that are sustainable. If schooling is to prepare citizens to participate in a just and equitable society, then the kind of relationships built between the places we call schools and the places where we live our lives requires a critical conscious as it is people and culture that invest places with diverse meaning.

For Indigenous students, such as those in Webequie, relationship to place is socially constructed. Gruenewald emphasises that places as social constructions are “mediated by culture, education, and personal experience but places themselves are products of culture” (2003, p.626). Within the context of my study, it is important to be aware of social spaces as cultural products and to unpack their particular cultural meanings. Thus, places produce and teach particular ways of thinking about and being in the world. In providing a cultural program that embraces emergent community learning that is locally situated and culture-based, students have the space to reconnect with culture, identity and the environment as Casey explains, “to live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the places one is in” (as cited in Gruenewald, 2003, p. 627). It becomes a sustainable space, empowering ownership

and knowledge creation, consciously re-creating space with meaning that connects identity, and culture to knowledge that is unique to place and to re-image what it can become. “It is a process of resisting the hegemonic forces inscribed with politics and ideologies that reflect and reproduce social relationships based on power and domination and that reduces education to preparing workers to compete in the global economy” (Apple, 2001). The control of educative spaces by government and other social institutions becomes of critical importance for educators in preparing students to understand the ideological and political restructuring that is going on all around them and to deconstruct the larger forces surrounding them by giving them the strategies to connect local with global tendencies, and to think strategically about ways of interrupting the dominant forces of a market economy. The goal is to find a balance or common ground between the anti-imperialist struggle and the anti-capitalist struggle through a dialectical relationship that helps to define the spaces in-between Indigenous and Western thought world (Grande, 2004).

From a humanistic and critical consciousness standpoint, the works of Freire, Giroux and other scholarly supporters, allows my study to explore within the relational space of two worldviews as metaphorically represented by the medicine wheel how knowledge is created and whose knowledge is created to strategically best support a healthy balance between self, individual citizenship, collective citizenship and the market economy in a way that supports student learning and development that is sustainable within a changing landscape both locally and globally.

3.3 Conclusion

Chapter 3 guide posts an evolving critical awareness of how the concepts of conscientization, problematization and ownership can provide a site to explore the

relational space of two worldviews and to negotiate the possibilities inherent in Western dualism as a change agent in my study. It advocates for an alternative pathway forward for Indigenous education through community emergent learning as a space to exchange dialogue of resistance, collaboration, and reciprocity with a moral social conscious. It is within these dialectical spaces that decolonizing action, as a fluid process of reciprocity and coalition building is made possible. It is a space of overlapping relations in which border crossing and coalition building is possible. A community driven learning program as a strategy for connecting to grassroots values allows the space for students to explore and renew the teachings of Elders and Knowledge Keepers as a natural tool to strengthen identity and build resiliency and sustainable relationships. This is a fluid and holistic process in learning and development that strengthens voice and agency in resisting the nuanced complexities that underscore dialectical contradictions and power differentials that exist and are hidden in the structures of social institutions and to flesh out these forces to re-create authentic meaning of their own reality. In chapter 4 I have placed the voices of Indigenous scholars in a central position and that many of these contemporary Indigenous scholars have been influenced by the founding theories of Freire and Giroux. Chapter 4 builds on the works of scholarly authors and introduces strategies to define the spaces in-between Indigenous and Western thought as a conscious way of thinking about knowledge and the world within a liminal space that actively cultivates collective agency among Indigenous people and others.

Chapter 4 Postcolonial Theory and Concepts: Making Connections

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses postcolonial discourse and concepts that address the legacy of the colonial project as a decolonizing process. In writing, I have made a conscious effort to bring greater awareness of the invisible forces pivotal to the ongoing tensions of living in a colonized world inundated by social inequalities grounded in a contraction between politics and ethics that exercise authority and power over identity, values, and different knowledge perspectives. This chapter explores decolonizing discourse, resistance strategies, and the third space to contest and negotiate a moral purpose and conscious pathway that underlies a humanizing approach to reconciling differences through fostering greater understanding, reflection and action and as posited by Foucault (1970), “where this is always something still to be thought and where the primacy of representation is “the very field upon which the human sciences occur” and the task is in the “unveil[ing] to consciousness the conditions of its forms and contents” (as cited in Lather, 2006, p. 784). It is within this political arena that the assumption of linear relationality between educational research, policy and practice are interrupted as discursive and political events and the “inexact knowledges” become “a field of strategic possibilities ... a counter-science of policy analysis that troubles what we take for granted as the good in fostering understanding, reflection and action (Lather, 2006, p. 787).

4.2 Decolonizing Discourse

The focus of postcolonial critical scholars is to shift the thinking in the discipline away from the hegemony of Western conceptions of thinking by

challenging Western theorizing and decolonizing by focusing on “aspects of colonialism and its pervasive effects which have persisted...even after the end of the colonial rule” (Tepeciklioglu, 2012, p. 1). In other words, postcolonialism is a continuing process of resistance to colonial suppression throughout societies, and in their institutions and practices through discourse that addresses the “legacies of the colonial era and the unequal power relations between metropolitan centres and their ex-colonies” (Tepeciklioglu, 2012). Indigenous scholar, Homi Bhabha (1984, 2004) concepts hybrid, mimicry, otherness, liminal, marginality, difference, and subaltern are all part of postcolonial discourse that challenge and resist the colonial centre ruling power and the inability of European theory to deal adequately with the complexities and varied cultural origins of postcolonial writing as “European theories themselves emerge from particular cultural traditions which are hidden by false notions of ‘the universal’” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 2004, p. 11). It is in this respect that Bhabha argues it is the very contradiction of the colonial word that “opens the possibility of fracture from within” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p. 101) and due to the underlying ambivalence that underlies colonial discourse opens the door for counter-discursive strategies to use as a form of resistance against the dominant Western episteme by deconstructing those processes which rationalize the imposition of the imperial word on the rest of the world (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p,102).

An example of this dominant discourse in postcolonial context is in the education system that defines self and place from a Western perspective. “The overt work of the text is abrogation, an abrogation of the formations which constitute certain experiences as authentic” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p.

90). It is in this way that discourse empowered by mainstream education as hidden curriculum “denies the existence of alternative discourses” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p. 95). As meaning is constructed from culture and context, then through reconstruction, new meaning is possible. In making problematic and questioning the relationship between language and the world, “an investigation into the means of knowing rather than into what is or can be known” is possible (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p. 136). Language is power because words construct reality and “power lies in the ability to control the means of communication” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p.88). The essence of imperial authority is represented by power which comes from the control of and interpretation of language but also of order itself, while the periphery of the colonial world is represented by dependency and otherness. The peripheral lacks order because it lacks the power of representation. Since the truth lies elsewhere, language can only mimic the representation of the truth. This has its own profoundly ontological ramifications for the inhabitant of the margin” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p. 89). The tension caused by the binary of imperial/colonial world operates as a driving force in the decolonizing process. “If language constructs the world then the margins are the centre and may reconstruct it according to a different pattern of conventions, expectations, and experiences” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p. 90). It is only by interrupting the control of interpretative modes that facilitate continuing domination and powers of exclusion in ontological as well as material terms that new knowledge and ways of knowing can be reconstructed and validated as truth outside the European hierarchy “reinforced by symbols, rituals, and traditions, so the ‘word’ passes from....to male humans, to female humans

and finally to all lesser beings” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p.99). It is from this postcolonial discourse that challenges the binary codification of constructing meaning that the door is open for the innate, the transformative and the relational to reconstruct meaning and being. Gayatri Spivak’s term ‘othering’ (1985, 1988) underlies practices in three areas that are relevant in decolonizing methodology and postcolonial discourse: marginalized perspectives on the centrist authority; from the challenges posed by alternative systems based on that of which is lateral as opposed to hierarchical; and hybrid or mimic forms which refuse the categorization of the dominant power. This diverse way of ascribing meaning denotes a multiplicity of complex relationships and “different ways of being and knowing and act to subvert the establishment of any one notion or way of being as axiomatic” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p. 99). It is in this way that diverse knowledge creation is not only imagined and authenticated, but possible and interpretation “occurs by negotiation between differing perspectives and involves not one world, but many, the crossing of whose territories requires debate and discussion...[not] brute force...but the key to survival is vigilance through communication (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p.100). It is this web of relationships and interstices that inclusion and authenticity transcend and does not exclude or assimilate that “reality but becomes that which can be negotiated between a multiplicity of groups and possibilities, not a series of differing perspectives on the same reality” (Ashcroft et al, 2004, p.100).

4.3 Resistance Strategies

It is in this space that exploration of Indigenous Knowledge holds transformative possibilities in the exploration of human consciousness, the nature of

its production, and the process of its engagement with cultural difference. Paulo Freire and Antonio Faundez argue, “Indigenous knowledge is a rich social resource for any justice-related attempt to bring about social change. In this context, Indigenous ways of knowing become a central resource for the work of teachers ... and contribute ... to the educational experience of all students. Freire and Faundez conclude that intellectuals “should soak themselves in this knowledge assimilate the feelings, the sensitivity of epistemologies that move in ways unimagined by most Western academic impulses” (1989).

As a non-Indigenous researcher seeking to capture the stories and narratives of Indigenous participants and Elders, I am cognizant of my outsider position and humbled by the colonized experience. At the same time, I seek to be an ‘allied other’ and antipositivist and friendly insider who endeavors to deconstruct within the Western academy and its positivist epistemologies and to contest notions of objectivity and neutrality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 6). Fine et al., 2003 posit “we value ..., insider, participatory, collaborative methodologies. These are narrative, performative methodologies-research practices that are reflexively consequential, ethical, critical, respectful, and humble (cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 6). As a non-Indigenous researcher, I seek to construct stories that are embedded in the landscape in which I work, both physically and spiritually (Note to readers: for more information see appendix 6, #4). “These will be dialogical counternarratives, stories of resistance, of struggle, of hope, stories that create spaces for multicultural conversations, stories embedded in the democratic imagination (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 6). I anticipate this to be a bricolage of performative practices that represent authentic lived experiences that make Indigenous life visible within the local environment (Denzin et al., 2008, p.

22). Experience is both personal and social and always in relation to a social context

that is changing. As

critical pedagogy and theory, I seek to produce practical, pragmatic knowledge, a bricolage that is cultural and structural, judged by its degree of historical situatedness and its ability to produce praxis, or action (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 26). Within this framework the researcher will interweave her own personal and professional journey and her lived experience in working in an Indigenous community for 15 years.

4.4 The Third Cultural Space – a becoming

Critical pedagogy is respectful of and grounded in Indigenous knowledge practices and works within the borderland epistemologies – different system of knowing, knowledge production and knowledge assessment (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 27). It is within these borderland spaces that my study is situated. Peter McLaren and Nathalia Jaramilla, Marxist humanists, imagines a critical pedagogy “where class consciousness is replaced by a *napantla*, or borderland, Indigenous pedagogy. *Napantla* signified an intermediary space where the beliefs of the oppressor could be resisted, in overlapping and layered practices and spaces. The concept of *napantla* refers to a space where students, teachers and scholars can engage in resistance, critique, and a politics of negation” (as cited in Denzin et al., 2008, p. 28). Bhabha’s theory of cultural difference provides the conceptual terms of ‘hybridity’ and ‘third space’. He refers to the fact that cultures are not discrete phenomena but instead are always in contact with one another which leads to cultural mixed-ness” (Rutherford, 1990, Bhabha, 1990). He describes this as an ongoing process and emphasizes what happens on the borderlines of cultures and to what is happening in-between cultures and refers to this as the ‘liminal’. The liminal is often found in particular postcolonial social spaces, but also marks the constant process of creating new identities through their open-endedness or their ‘becoming’. Adela Licona, feminist scholar, concurs that it is in within the borderland lived experience that a dichotomous framework of

either/or and both/and exist that allows for the conscious movement into the re-creative terrain of 'third space' (2005). These spaces can be conceptualized as spaces of intersecting ideas, tendencies or issues and are sites of struggle that offer possibilities for people to resist. Borderland rhetorics and third spaces can be understood as a practice and a location. As practices they reveal a differential consciousness, and as locations they reveal spaces of opportunity for building of coalitions. "Borderland rhetorics can potentially inform egalitarian social relations and social justice as they are rhetorics of resistance, coalition, community education, activism, imagination, and re-presentation that are produced and reproduced in third space contexts" (Licona, 2005).

It is this space that encompasses the medicine wheel, a relational space, a holistic ideology that underscores my study within a decolonizing paradigm. It is depicted in Figure 8 as the third cultural space represented by the medicine wheel imagined at the juncture between the roots and the trunk of the First Nation lifelong holistic learning model (Figure 2, page 25). Critical, Indigenous, decolonizing theory is embedded in ethical relationships as ways of knowing, doing and being that are grounded in all knowledge dimensions: physical, spiritual, emotional and mental. The research journey was a conscientization process and natural transfer of ownership to community. It was an evolving exchange of dialogue and an organic healing process of doing Indigenous research with community committed to nurturing the learning spirit as a balancing force and responsibility..."to ensure that the work is align[ed]ment with the principles of Life and Love" (Antone, 2002, p. 19).. Third space uses spiritual models of truth and validity and values multivoiced, performative forms of textuality. For Swadener and Mutua, decolonization is about the process, in both research and performance, of valuing, reclaiming, and

foregrounding Indigenous voices and epistemologies. The emphasis on the performative and on critical personal narratives opens a space for cross-cultural partnerships between and among Indigenous researchers and allied others (as cited in Denzin et al.2008, p.22). It allows for an ethical space to explore difference and common ground between Western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge.

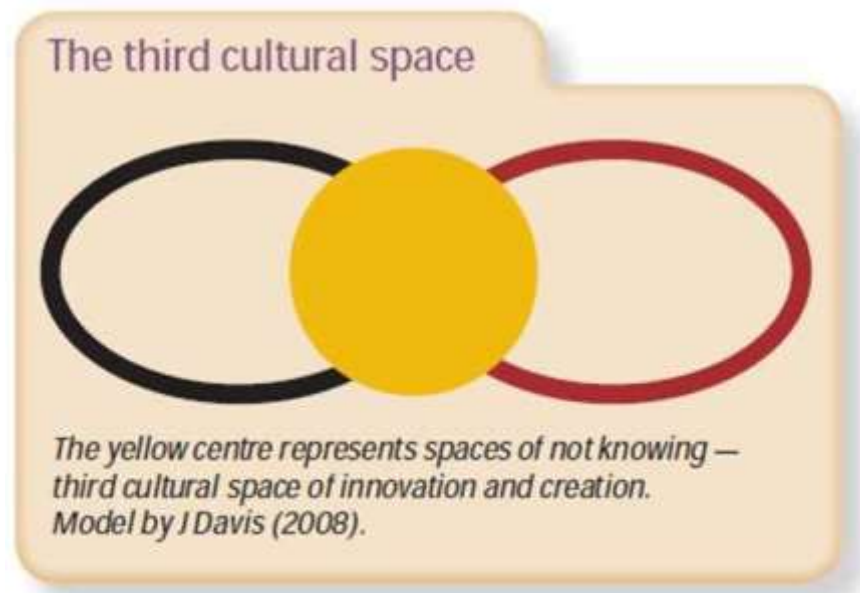


Figure 8 The Third Cultural Space, Government of Queensland (2011)

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter briefly summarized decolonizing discourse, resistance strategies, and the third cultural space to make visible the possibilities available when an ethical approach to research is employed. Indigenous methodologies provide an array of possibilities when interpretation of reality occurs through negotiation of difference. Exploring the web of relationships at the interstices and being both open minded and vigilante in communicating and interpreting different realities and ways of knowing and doing provides a space for interrupting and decentering dominant powers and

providing a space for diverse voices to be heard in a shared contribution and a sustainable future for humankind.

Chapter 5 Indigenous Research: Ways of knowing, Doing, and Being

5.1 Introduction

Indigenous scholar, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, emphasizes that Indigenous research is less about method and more about navigating dialectical spaces that can enrich the understanding and the negotiation of the complex nature and nuanced layers of a colonized world (2012). Border crossing and coalition building is possible and beneficial in negotiating tensions when dialogue is grounded in ethical research that respects diverse voices. This chapter outlines the contribution of community learning, participatory action research, and socio-cultural theory in providing an ethical framework to negotiate dialectical relationships that build agency and voice, in conducting decolonizing research.

5.2 Community Learning

Culture is the foundation of Indigenous individual and collective identity, and its erosion through colonial practices disrupted the historical collectivist nature of its social institutions and relational processes (Little Bear, 2009; Chandler & Lalonde, 2004). I concur with Indigenous scholar, Marie Battiste (2002, 2004), that success for Aboriginal people requires the recognition and the restoration of this vision of lifelong learning (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009; Bennett & Anuik, 2014). The colonial process has resulted in diminished self-determination and a lack of influence in subsequent policies such as the Indian Act (1876) that have been detrimental to the lives and well-being of First Nation peoples in Canada (Chandler and Lalonde, 2004, 2008).

Cultural continuity may be described as the degree of social and cultural cohesion within a community and the culture of a community is a dynamic source of

sustainable knowledge that connects self to the world through individual and collective interrelationships (Absolon, 2010; Chandler & Lalonde, 2004). The complexities of navigating the space and bridging the intersection between research and community by using methods that align with the natural strengths and capacity building potential from within the internal, organic community structures underscores self and community identity, resiliency and well-being and may address the numerous socioeconomic and cultural barriers challenging Indigenous students (Chandler & Lalonde, 2004; Reading & Wien, 2009).

Community emergent learning is the way in which Indigenous communities have always learned and within this context the school and community of Webequie navigate between two worlds. This process challenges the existing and contemporary policy and practices which operate at the system level with a focus on ‘standards’ and high stakes testing. By building solid relationships and shared responsibilities based on the assumption that public schools are neither equitable nor effective for all students, community driven learning has the potential to become an educative process that bridges a gap between the school and community. In this process, leadership emerges not from the professional community alone, but from community members, taking charge of the education of their own children through democratic processes that seek to focus on the strengths and knowledge of local ways of knowing and doing as sovereign rights and self-determination and not on the gaps and weaknesses that dominant the Western pedagogic perspective of ‘one size fits all’ (Antone, 2002, p. 18). In this way, the organizing and educative efforts are also decolonizing efforts, which build a power base for the community through knowledge and action linkages. “Achievement of First Nations education requires communities looking within themselves to frame education” (Assembly of First Nations, 2014, p. 2). Data collections becomes ongoing and is used to plan

purposeful action for improvement. The overall goal of building knowledge within the community remains constant, with a form of knowledge that assumes a direct connection between understanding and action which acknowledges and emphasizes community capacity building alongside school improvement (Zavala, 2013). This becomes a natural process of self-determination and ownership where the community identifies its own resources for economic, educational and social redevelopment (Assembly of First Nations, 2014; Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Canada, 2011). For the purposes of this study, Zavala's definition of decolonization will be used to imply an anti-colonial struggle that grows out of grassroots spaces (2013, p. 57; McGregor & Breton, 2008). The driving force, lies in a commitment for change, through participants' deepening understanding and awareness of colonizing forces at 'work' as social processes and developing strategies to strengthen resiliency, well-being, and identity within the community and school.

As a researcher, I have been deeply embedded in this community for over a decade. This is therefore not a 'research project' but a way of life. I write from the community but not for the community as we are composed of many voices. I am a participant and have become a researcher, learning and writing from experience but with a purpose and intent to bring positive change. This thesis, therefore, reports upon a Participatory Action Research experience. The research is positioned within an impoverished community undergoing rapid change due to mining development. The aim of reclaiming and revitalizing the process of knowledge production as community-emergent learning is to transmit Indigenous ancestral languages, traditions, values, cultures and histories, while at the same time preparing and making accessible to the learner the strategies and tools that may support learners in achieving potential in any setting they choose (Assembly of First Nations, 2014;

Gibson & Klinck, 2005). Challenging the status quo, through the transformation of the relationship between researcher and research, through a participatory action research process with Indigenous people and research-supported data may provide the ethical space for educators, facilitators, and researchers to work collaboratively to engage in areas of emerging need within the context of a holistic framework to investigate learning gaps, by exploring pathways of possibility and structures which may support regeneration of Aboriginal ways of knowing and doing and structures which extend colonial oppression (Ministry of Education, 2007, 2009, 2013; Assembly of First Nations, 2014, p. 4; Matawa First Nations Management, 2014; Cottrell, Preston & Pearce, 2012; Garman, 2009, Aboriginal Education Office, 2007, p.26; Denzin, Lincoln & Smith, 2008).

In a report on healing in Canadian Aboriginal communities it was emphasized that personal healing and nation building go hand in hand and that decolonization is the therapy most needed as the framework for personal and community transformation (Lane et al., 2002; Bopp et al., 2003). Therefore, my work as an educator, researcher and community member is part of that process of ongoing healing.

5.3 Participatory Action Research – My Positionality

As a situated researcher embedded in the local community and co-participant in the participatory action research (PAR), my role is to observe, listen and be always reflective of my positionality as a Western researcher doing ethical research with Indigenous people and of the criticality of respectful and reciprocal relationships as a coparticipant and agent to social change (Porsanger, 2004, Fals Borda, 1987). At the same time, as an embedded community member, I am engaged in the daily lives and lived experiences of the participants -an insider relationship interwoven within a

mutual journey of inquiry and exploration (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). This type of collaboration enriches the context and complexity of relationships in the inquiry spaces and offers alternative ways of understanding difference, collaboration, ethical participation, and negotiation that may be intertwined in the living through of inquiry to explore and gain an increased understanding of relationships of human beings to both one another and to their ecosystem (Ermine, 2007, Mazzocchi, 2006, Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Indigenous communities are the primary expression of a natural context and environment where exists the fundamental right of personhood to be what one is meant to be. “This is a gaze that remembers a time before colonialism and one that reflects a belief in itself as a human community” (Ermine, 2007, p.200). PAR is a collective, self-reflective inquiry that researcher and participants undertake together, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. This reflective process is directly linked to action, influenced by understanding of history, culture, and local context and embedded in nuanced and layered social relationships (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; McNiff & Whitehead, 2011; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). Using narrative, will allow the storied lived experiences of both the researcher and the community to be voiced and interwoven within the context of the inquiry (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007). Whitehead asserts that practitioners supporting other practitioners who are creating democratic communities or practices are committed to a scholarship of educational inquiry (1999).

PAR provides a platform for multiple perspectives and a dialogic and self-reflective arena for critical thought both at the local and global level augmenting and giving impetus to a decolonizing process that serves to legitimize Indigenous worldviews. “Humans need to encounter and learn to value multiple perspectives in all areas of their lives. A critical multilogicality values Indigenous knowledge

because Indigenous knowledge has transformative power and can foster empowerment and social justice” (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 26). It is within this critical standpoint epistemology of borderland spaces that silenced voices can come alive and resist the structures of market-driven ideologies and envision a continuity that connects the past to a stronger tomorrow. Collaborative and community-emergent learning provides a starting point to rejuvenate Indigenous ways of being and doing as a capacity building and healing practice in a dichotomized world by exploring stories as critical narratives as an ongoing process of conscientization and decolonizing power relationships. PAR requires a critical exploration of power and positionality difference and seeks to proactively improve the world through reflection and action. It requires the researcher and participants to engage in a collaborative and ethical manner every stage of the process (Kryzanowski & McIntyre, 2011). This creates a decolonizing space for school and community “to change the questions asked, challenge the assumptions, disagree, radically inquire and change policy and practice” (Denzin et. al., 2008, p. 161; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, Carr & Kemmis, 2003).

5.4 Socio-Cultural Theory and Collaborative Inquiry

As a researcher embedded in community I am engaged in collaborative inquiry with the community- they are my co-researchers. This is not a project but a lifelong learning process. Therefore, I am mutually engaged in ongoing co-construction of knowledge.

Socio-cultural theorizing has led to connections and hybrids among divergent strands of socio-cultural theory and insights that meaningfully inform pedagogic practices through the interrelationship between cultural practices and psychological processes (Ratner, 1997; Arvind, 2008, Bhabha, 1990, 2012). If the concept of

knowledge in all societies is understood by how we know through the mode of reciprocal engagement within the ecosystem, and not as an objective truth, then there is some common ground for relational engagement and to enable multiple perspectives to contribute to the management of ecosystems. This common ground is a space to explore complexity and variability of epistemology and for gaining understanding in bridging the epistemological gap (Woodley, 2010; Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005). Indigenous knowledge is a rich social resource for any justice-related attempt to bring about social change therefore as humans critically reflect on their own 'situationality' and through respectful collaboration and reciprocal dialogue that envisions transformative change as an ongoing commitment or 'becoming', then people may reposition themselves as subjects rather than objects of their own history (Freire, 1970b; Shor, 1993; Giroux, 2010).

As a researcher engaging with community through a post-colonial lens, PAR has opened up safe spaces for the communication and co-construction of experiences and meaning and resisting power structures through a collaborative process of knowledge construction as a possibility to transcend colonizing forces (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). When researcher and participants are partners, their collective research and action grounds knowledge in human agency and social history. Thus, collaborative inquiry strives to make sense of and transform the world through the capturing of narratives and counternarratives (Fals Borda, 1987). As a non-Indigenous scholar I agree with Fine, Torre, Boudin, Bowen, Clark and Hylton who say "we value insider, participatory, collaborative methodologies" as these are narrative, performative methodologies-research practices that are reflexively consequential, ethical, critical, respectful, and humble (as cited in Denzin et al., 2008, p. 6). This can be done through true reciprocity in the research relationship

when there is engagement in dialogue and both participants and researcher learn together how to apply their common partial knowledge to the totality of the situation they are committed and to take constructive action. As a result of the critical dialogue and reciprocity, new structures and practices may emerge from the old ones through a process of conscientization (Freire, 2005; Little Bear, 2009). Within learning situations, such as community-emergent learning, this becomes critical educative practices and a way of thinking and making connections between individual experiences and the social contexts in which one is embedded. Conscientization is the first step of 'praxis' which is defined as the power and know-how to take action against oppression while stressing the importance of liberatory education (Freire, 2005, 1970).

5.5 Land Based Pedagogy

Dewey's theory of the nature of experience permits a greater understanding of educational life (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Dewey, 1958). Experience is both personal and social and always in relation to a social context that is changing. As critical pedagogy and theory, I seek to produce practical, pragmatic knowledge, constructing a bricolage of data gathered by the community and as part of my ongoing work in the community context and "that is cultural and structural, judged by its degree of historical situatedness and its ability to produce praxis, or action" (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 26, Gruenewald, 2003). Marker speaks of Aboriginal pedagogies being drawn from the landscape creating an eco-pedagogy that may intersect with narratives as lived experiences of land-based learning in Indigenous communities (2009, as cited in Yunkaporta). "Critical pedagogy is respectful of and grounded in Indigenous knowledge practices and works within the borderland epistemologies" (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 27). It is within these borderland spaces that

my study is situated. McLaren and Jaramilla, Marxist humanists, imagine a critical pedagogy as an intermediary space where the beliefs of the oppressor could be resisted, in overlapping and layered practices and spaces where teachers and scholars can engage in resistance, critique, and a politics of negation (as cited in Denzin et al., 2008). It is this space that creativity and innovation is possible and change that informs praxis from an Indigenous perspective to enrich the lives of students in their education as a lifelong journey. Decolonization is about the process, in both research and performance, of valuing, reclaiming, and foregrounding Indigenous voices and epistemologies. The emphasis on the performative and on critical personal narratives that opens a space for cross-cultural partnerships between and among Indigenous researchers and allied others (as cited in Denzin et al., 2008, p.22).

5.6 Ethical Research and an Indigenous Community

As a researcher working in partnership with Indigenous teachers, parents and students, the research process and protocols were guided by the community, Elders and cultural Knowledge Keepers to ensure that I was accountable and so that the community would benefit, as recommended by Menzies (2001). An Indigenous approach with a decolonizing aim allows me as both researcher and participant to think critically about the processes and outcomes, bearing in mind that Indigenous peoples' interests, values, experiences and knowledge must be at the centre of the research methodology and that the construction of knowledge is relational and holistic (Rigney, 1999; Cajete, 2004; Smith 2012). In researching with Indigenous people, the process was dedicated to the social needs of the community and driven by humane concerns rather than the economic needs of corporate and government institutions (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2008, p.153). As an embedded researcher and agent to change, my inquiry was associated with social transformation honoring the

voices of multiple truths as created in storied counter-narratives congruent with a research approach that seeks understanding and self-in-relations with outcomes that benefit the community and culture (Graveline, 1998). Indigenous methodologies are a reflexive approach to conducting research and provides the researcher a guiding reference and ongoing awareness of unbalanced power relations (OFIFC, 2012). Within this framework of mutual reciprocity and respect, my research was designed to include safeguards for participant privacy and measures to protect the confidentiality of any data collected. Being a small community characterized by a close network of relationships, coding individual data was an option to mask identities and to preserve anonymity regarding any privacy concerns or sensitive issues through a process of voluntary and informed consent to participate in the research process. I worked closely with Elders, cultural mentors, teachers, parents and students to explore the meaning and use of data gathered in the study, and to ensure and verify there was a shared understanding of how data was gathered, stored, used and presented in my thesis and in other publications. The community maintained the power of veto over whether elements of data were included or not, and whether names of individuals be used. Clandinin posits this as a procedure to “allow us to strive to foresee potential negative consequences so that the community can make an informed decision to participate or not” (2007, p. 272). Respect for, and accommodation of, First Nations on joint ownership of research and maintaining access to data for community use has guided the research practices. My research study aligns with a critical and decolonizing approach in conducting ethical research that are embedded with Indigenous values “offering a research theory, method, and action for giving back to the community through research as praxis” (McTaggart, as cited in Kovach, 2010, p.27). It transfers control to the Indigenous community,

respects spiritual models of truth and validity and values multivocality and performative forms of textuality. My research was guided by the relational protocols of the teachings of the medicine wheel as foundational in conducting Indigenous research with Indigenous people.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter situates my study within an Indigenous lens and it is from this perspective that the tensions, limitations and reductionist nature of measurable outcomes as a ‘one size fits all’ imposed outcomes approach to learning is problematized, through alternative lived knowledge pathways that “account for various situations and factors in.... community” (Antone, 2002, p. 18). This process of deconstruction is metaphorically depicted by the medicine wheel in its wholistic approach and inherent teachings and values in respectful and responsible relations with the mind, heart, spirit and body. These intertwined knowledge domains that have been practiced and validated as lived Indigenous theory since time immemorial connect life and nurture a spirit of balance in educational programming as a decolonizing process to counter hegemonic forces that contribute to “dis-ease” (Antone, 2002, p. 18). The medicine wheel is a wholistic tool to reconstruct and rebalance “the inner environment and the actual outer physical environment” as a means of reclaiming...Indigenous ways of knowing, and a positive cultural identity for Aboriginal people” (Antone, 2002, p.18; Ningwakwe, 2003, p. 29). This is a negotiation of qualitative and quantitative learning outcomes as situated through a lens lived in place and grounded in the teachings of the medicine wheel and “as expressed from an Aboriginal perspective as a way of life based on a wholistic world view” (Antone, 2003, p.8). This inclusive lens and worldview are discussed in chapter 6 which explores the underpinning methodology of this experience.

Chapter 6 Methods

6.1 Introduction

“Go into a forest, you see the birch, maple, pine. Look underground and all those trees are holding hands. We as a people must do the same” (Iwama, Marshall, Marshall and Bartlett, 2009, p. 3).

This chapter expands on how narrative ethnography and the creation of a bricolage as a method has reinforced the relationality of my research project as a naturally unfolding of everyday reality when viewed through the metaphorical lens of the medicine wheel. As an inclusionary framework, the tools of the bricoleur provided the strategies to negotiate difference as an exchange of dialogue and a process of decolonization. This chapter outlines how using a bricolage method opened up a space for a “new discussion around community-based epistemologies and community defined knowledge structures” to “explore [and question] knowledge claims and meaning making within and across cultural divides” (Bang, 2009, p.1).

My study took place during the tenure of my position as principal at the local community school in Webequie First Nation located on the traditional lands of Treaty #9, in a remote fly in reserve in Northern Ontario, Canada. My position began in 2006 and continues to the present time. Formal data gathering began with USQ Ethics approval granted February 15, 2018 with expiry date February 15, 2021, #H17REA190 (Appendix 1). Prior to Ethic’s approval and the formal data gathering process, digitized recordings and photos were a common practice in the community with the advent and access to digital devices, capturing students and community members enjoying seasonal land-based activities as a natural life-skill pursuit with family or traditional activities organized by the community or the school as part of integrated and informal learning practices. This is encouraged by the Education

Authority to support, share and sustain cultural heritage and became a focus for my study from a pedagogical perspective. Considered informal learning, integrating community traditional pursuits, a seed was planted to explore the quality and value of practical local knowledge in school. In 2010 the government of Ontario announced its intention to begin the development of a mining district in Northern Ontario's pristine ecological environment that would develop and improve the socio-economic infrastructure of the community as resource extraction and mining claims infringed on the traditional territory and trap lines of the surrounding natural environment. The ramifications of this political development provided the impetus for the community to mobilize strategically in land use planning with a goal toward a stronger future and a space opened up for the natural unfolding of my study using a bricolage method. Once ethics was approved, creating a bricolage of data that was readily accessible to explore dualism within a medicine wheel framework and permission granted by Webequie Education Authority on August 17, 2017 (Appendix 2), a collaborative journey began. This was a reciprocal research journey with the community, exploring the benefits of a cultural enrichment program that was relational and place based in supporting positive learning outcomes at school. The following questions were explored:

Overarching question:

1. How can community driven learning that is relational, local and culture-based support and engage students in achieving successful school outcomes within a changing landscape?

Sub questions:

1. How may the teachings of the medicine wheel benefit community wellbeing, strengthen community resiliency and sustainability through community-emergent learning?
2. What relationships are pivotal to building identity, strength and resiliency in young Indigenous learners?
3. How can the teachings of the medicine wheel connect Indigenous and Western curriculum in developing resilient and sustainable practices in learning and teaching in the 21st century?

Exploring the research questions was a gradual yet intentional process, focused on supporting students in achieving improved educational outcomes.

6.2 Diversity in Data Gathering – Ethics and Timelines

As community-emergent learning, the teachings of the medicine wheel were shared with students as a strategy to engage youth in a holistic learning process. A medicine wheel format was used by students as a reflection sheet for activities they participated in (Appendix 3). Primary data was gathered in cycles according to seasonal harvesting activities, monthly cultural themes & Grandfather Teachings, and traditional life skill pursuits (Appendix 4). It was ongoing and iterant over a 3-year school period from February 2018 to February 2021. Each cycle included analysis involving diverse dialogue and reflection inclusive of all participants' voices and quality checking for accurate transcription by the researcher. Secondary data consisted of photos, audio and or video recordings of students, teachers, parents and community members participating in past cultural learning activities and documentaries. This data was collected in the community of Webequie by

community members and partnered non-community stakeholders between 2010 and 2018 both pre and post Ethics Approval. Voluntary and informed consent was obtained for any data used for the research study (Appendix 5A, 5B, 5C, 5D, FE, 5F)).

Two groups were created for ethics approval. The first group was the advisory group. The researcher was part of this group. Also, a male First Nation adviser who acted as interpolator and provided guidance and feedback from community meetings and Elder gatherings. Other advisory members included 2 mature female parents and also Native Language teachers at the school. Another member was a mature male, also a parent and the coordinator of the cultural program at the school that became known as Cultural Fridays in which each class from grade 1 to grade 8 participated in a cultural activity once a month. The 2 Elders of the advisory group were female who are knowledgeable of the culture and fluent in the Oji-cree language and also provided direction in the research process through feedback and shared insights from other peer community Elders. The wellness counselor was a participant of this group and provided insight on the value of cultural life skills supporting student engagement. These 8 members were encouraged to be open about any concerns they had and shared advice, insights and suggestions from the general community at the advisory meetings or with the researcher in daily interaction, or anonymously through one of the members. Group 2 consisted of about 150 participants which included students under the age of 18 who attend the school from kindergarten to high school. Some students were older than 18. It also included community members that were involved in the instruction of the learning and also helped out during the activities. This included parents of the

students and community teachers working at the school. Teachers of the students also participated in the activities who were native or non native teachers

Data was gathered and reviewed for research value from existing secondary data sets and primary data sets over the 3-year period. The data provided layers of nuanced dialogue and reflection for the focus group over the 3-year period as student participants grew accustomed to completing the medicine wheel learning sheet. The process of planning, action, observing, and reflecting became a natural school process as dialogue gradually deepened over the three-year period and immersed naturally with school improvement planning. Teachers grew accustomed to completing a cultural enrichment form that connected learning activities with provincial curriculum standards. Teachers and community participants became more confident and comfortable in engaging in the cultural program, progressing from hesitant to more confident in organizing the ‘Cultural Friday’ activities as well as other cultural events in the school and community. Cultural activity forms were used by the cultural coordinator to describe the weekly activity, supplies needed and community members and Knowledge Keepers to be involved, and, permission letters sent home informing parents of the activity. Elders’ comfort level increased as their presence in the school visiting classrooms, telling stories and craft making progressed over the 3-year period. Organizing weekly land-based activities became more of an informal conversation from week to week as school and community organized and collaborated in coordinating weekly activities that aligned with the seasons. You could sense the ebb and flow of activities changing from one season to the next. Cultural activities and ceremonies such as sweat lodges, fasting, drumming at school events, community pow-wows, welcoming baby ceremonies became learning experiences connecting school and community. The focus group from year

one to year three seemed to dissolve from a formal meeting to weekly interactions in organizing and preparation for cultural Friday's. School participation in traditional community events grew over the 3-year period. The school was gifted the use of a camp during this time and continues to be used for weekend camping excursions for students, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers to have a space to enjoy the natural healing agent of being with nature. The In School counselor organizes these out of school excursions throughout the year. In the first year of data collection in September 2018, the school began a Kindergarten Immersion Program, which has supported a growing awareness in connecting identity to language and land. This program has added impetus to the value and benefits of the cultural enrichment program through its increasing visibility in the school from year to year. The 2021-22 school year will have 100% Ojicree immersions from year 1 & year 2 kindergarten through to grade 2.

Each cycle of the cultural program has strengthened meaning and purpose through continuous dialogue creating a growing awareness and conscious rhythm and practice in negotiating greater balance between indoor and outdoor learning experiences. It was an evolving and dynamic weaving between Indigenous and Western knowledge, each year looking back and building on what worked and what did not work well.

The cyclical nature of the research experience aligned with the annual school improvement planning (SIP) working document. As mentioned in chapter 1, the 3 main components in the SIP document are Literacy, Numeracy and Culture & Language. Each year the overlapping nature of culture & language activities within the school increased as the natural flow of community involvement and learning grew in ownership and taking up increased space in school planning and

programming. The medicine wheel became a natural guide in balancing achievement and well-being and the relationship between the spiritual, physical, mental and emotional dimensions grew in understanding and value as an integral component and part of the school improvement plan. Students expressed the value of their learning through the medicine wheel assessment and the 4 learning domains a mutual discussion with classroom teachers, students and community instructors. An example of student work is below from a grade 4 class reflecting on a rabbit snaring activity (Figure 9) and one from a high school student who participated in a fall camping experience (Figure 10). The bricolage method supported multiple age groups who participated in the study to provide a progression in thought in expressing individual experiences interacting with the local environment.

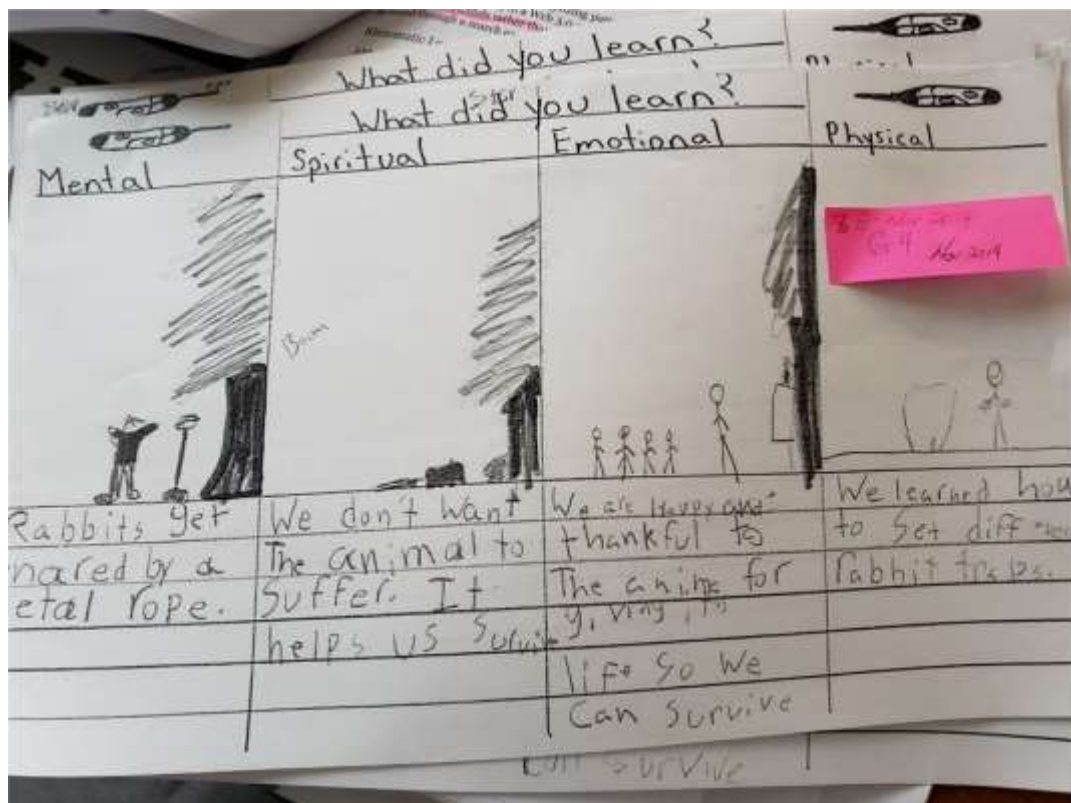


Figure 9 Grade 4 student reflection, Nov. 2014

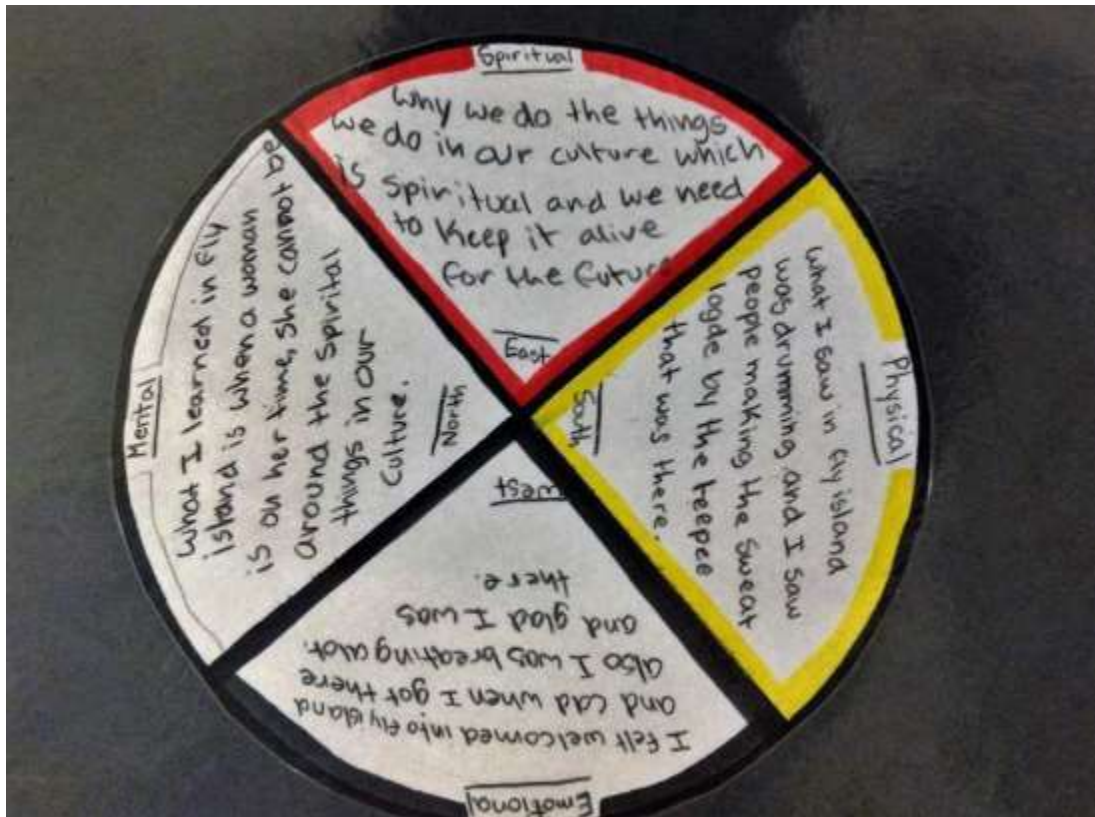


Figure 10 *High school Student's reflection from an outdoor camping experience, October 2016*

During the last year (cycle 3) of data gathering and analysis, the effects from the uncertainties brought on by the Covid-19 global pandemic provided natural opportunities and a growing awareness of the benefits of an overlapping school schedule that blended learning both inside and outside the school. Integrating formal and informal learning became a natural strategy in supporting a balance between a healthy and safe learning environment for continuous learning to transpire. It was a working together between school and community to support both academic achievement and outdoor local cultural pursuits. The third cycle provided texture and another layer of rich meaning and a growing understanding of the complexity of knowledge and finding balance in daily practice living and learning in Webequie. The study grew into a lived experience of trial and error providing the ebb and flow inherent in the bricolage method. It was an evolving process in which practical

learning and local traditions and life skills intermingled with formal in-school learning as well as supporting and engaging students' well being from learning on the land. The educatable moments and opportunities for community emergent learning were found in the continuous exchange of dialogue and re-creation of the deeper value in negotiating understanding in the visible actions taken to accommodate learning during a pandemic. This led to envisioning and harnessing some of the lessons learned during the pandemic as post pandemic learning opportunities for engaging youth in school and implementing within the next year's school improvement plan.

In looking back, each cycle in the data gathering process allowed a gleaning of evidence to support progression to the next cycle. The figures below show the progression that became apparent and visible in the overlap of formal (literacy/numeracy) and culture & language (community learning) over the phases of data gathering and analysis. It depicts the commonalities or space that grew through discussion and reflection between Western and Indigenous praxis as a space of intersectionality and ethical dialogue in negotiating balance between achievement and healthy well-being in daily practice at in learning and teaching.

Three-year Cycle of Data collection and analysis

The Process: February 2018 – February 2021

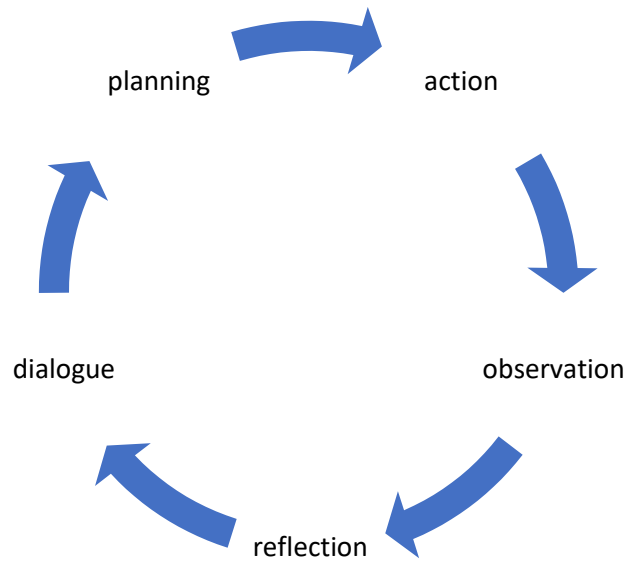


Figure 11 An Iterative Process (adapted by the researcher from the Cultural Interface and Hermeneutic Loop)

Purpose of the Journey - Cycle 1: 2018-2019

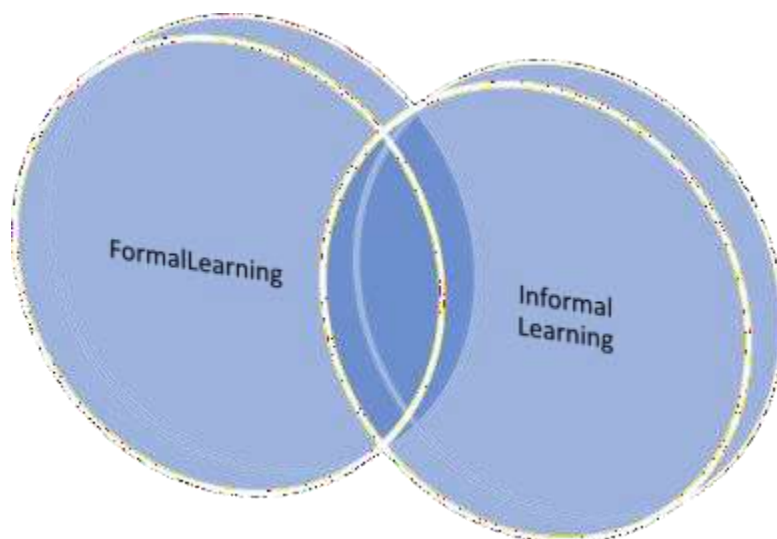


Figure 12 Making sense of the Data (adapted by the researcher from the Cultural Interface and Hermeneutic Loop)

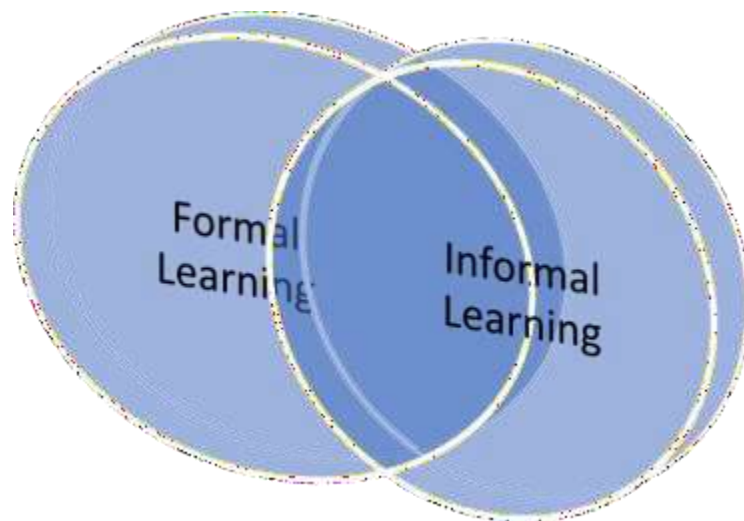


Figure 13 *Ethical Relationships (adapted by the researcher from the Cultural Interface and Hermeneutic Loop)*

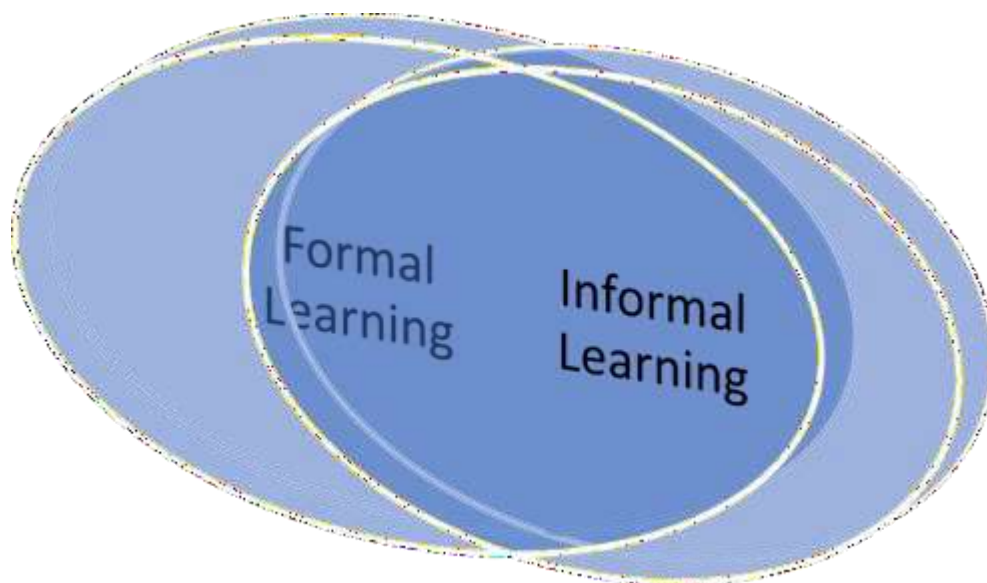


Figure 14 *Knowledge Re(creation) (adapted by the researcher from the Cultural Interface and Hermeneutic Loop)*

The bricolage of data provided a process in which the study became a lived experience of daily practice in rationalizing a balance between 2 diverse knowledge traditions that supported student engagement and positive outcomes in school. It was a weaving together of formal and informal learning practices in place. It was an ongoing journey and an iterative process of looking back, bringing forward and planning action for the next cycle. Each cycle had moments of tension requiring dialogue by looking at the evidence gleaned from the data that was metaphorically stitched to the medicine wheel. Each cycle of data gathering and analysing the yearly experience for implementing changes for the following year required approval by Webequie Education Authority (WEA). These were educatable moments of ethical dialogue exchange and a process of deconstructing and reconstructing meaningful relationships in how to move forward in the program each year. It was the lived data in discussion with participants that ranged in ages depicted by the rings of the medicine wheel that became the educatable moments in planning for the next actionable cycle. There was an ebb and flow created by the iterative and ongoing collection of data as it was examined and re-examined within and between each overlapping cycle with participants learning, planning and understanding together the challenges and benefits in how diverse knowledge contributions could support holistic development and learning over time and place. It was a constant process of negotiating a balance in relationships between academic achievement and student well-being. It involved situating the data within the medicine wheel and analysing learning and development from a holistic perspective (Figure 15 & Figure 16).



Figure 15 Learning dimensions of the medicine wheel

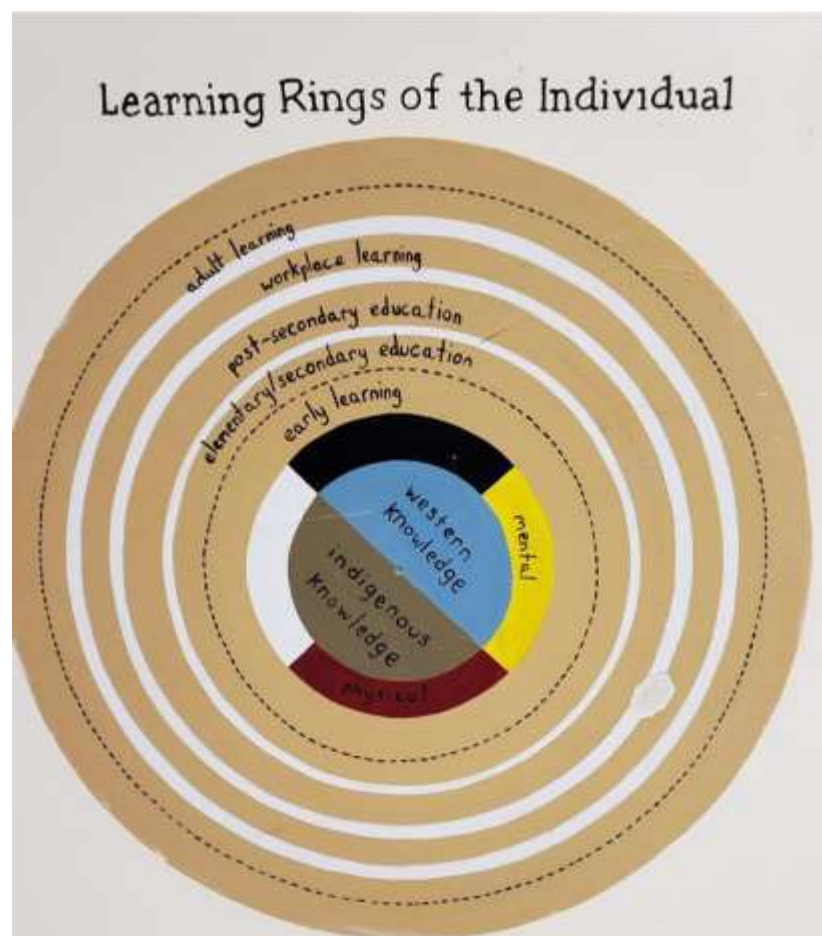


Figure 16 Learning Rings of the Individual

Each cycle explored greater learning opportunities that extended beyond the boundaries of the school to interactions with the surrounding environment expressed by ancestral memories, stories, language and traditional skills. I have included two photos below to give the reader a perspective of where Webequie is located and the local environment. Below is an satellite photo (Figure 17) of the traditional trapping lands, currently undergoing change and experiencing tension between man and nature creating a space to reimagine im(possibilities) and mis(opportunities). It is within this context that the community is located (Figure 18), the school in the centre, surrounded by the natural learning environment that the study unfolded. Within this authentic space, the data explored, from a holistic perspective, the emotional, physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of learning and development from a lifelong medicine wheel lens.

The bricolage provided a suitable method as a decolonizing process to gather diverse data as was needed to explore and interrogate knowledge relationships and the value and qualities of overlapping learning dimensions between both Indigenous and Western ways of doing pedagogy.

The aerial photo (Figure 18) of the community includes the school and a tepee structure which is exterior to the school but attached to the walkway entrance. The picture captures the lateral connections with physical structures to the natural environment where land-based activities took place: school tepee, school camp, community hall, youth centre, canoeing, snowshoeing, and other camping areas where ceremonies and life skills took place during seasonal activities and the fall and spring harvesting. All these locations are within the community and surrounding traditional lands. The first figure (Figure 17) situates Webequie within the

surrounding geographic area known as Winisk River Provincial Park. This bushed terrain stands as a sentinel surrounding the community.



Figure 17 *Satellite map of Webequie first Nation retrieved from <https://latitude.to/satellite-map/ca/canada/421158/webequie-first-nation>*



Figure 18 *Aerial View of Webequie community, retrieved from [google.com](https://www.google.com), 2019*

6.3 The Diversity in Bricolage as an Indigenous Method

A bricolage of data representing lived experiences, ecologically connected to the local culture and environment constituted primary and secondary data. This data was gathered pre and post ethics approval. These included art, storytelling, critical personal narratives, audio/visual recordings, conversations, unstructured interviews, student work and researcher's reflective field notes and journals. Participants included teachers, parents, students, external agencies and community Knowledge Keepers. Emerging themes were examined for practices that are conducive to dynamic community partnerships, and reflective of learning communities in a process that is sustainable and generative to change. My data collection methods were grounded in the notion that in Indigenous research, methods for data collection are really expressions of ways of knowing, being, and doing (Martin, 2008). Using a bricolage seemed well suited for my study to illustrate the unfolding nature of my inquiry and the imagining of the researcher participant relationship (Kim, 2015). For an Indigenous critical study such as mine it allowed for participant reflections on their own lifeworlds and places to be a part of the world in which one lives, to be collected as pieces of personal and social stories that represented a bricolage of divergent perspectives and value relations that "ideologically define[ed] social contexts" (Robbins, 2013, p.112). It is due to the diversity of the bricoleur's toolbox that thick and textured layers of negotiated meaning was made possible, resisting a reductionist view, to explore the relationality between divergent ontologies and epistemologies.

Through a distillation process I focussed on key themes and recurring concepts. The telling of stories is a natural process as humans are storying telling

beings. They may not seem to conform to expectations of 'story structure' but they are narratives of experience. I captured them with consent as audio and/or video recordings. During the data analysis phase in conjunction with ongoing data gathering, I read and re-read each narrative, drew out key themes and concepts, opposing ideas, and 'gaps and silences' in what was said and not said. I then went back to the individuals concerned and shared those distillations, as part of veracity and cross checking. This was to ensure that if other participants understanding of the 'truth' of their experience and story differed from my own it would be captured in the sequential layers or cycles of data, response and analysis.

This process assisted in the planning and action for the second and third cycles allowing the local culture and community learning to evolve and grow each cycle. The silences in the data told a story of their own and were the most layered with history and memories. Often it was the silent or hidden stories that were the strongest and brought out the in-between or intersectional meaning, not to be interpreted but to be respected with the ways and weight of Indigenous experiences lived through colonial suppression of Indigenous knowledge. It was this data that sang with a spirituality that connected theory and practice as a resilient quality and to put into words would only discredit its value. It was a critical reflection for me and an ethical guidepost that reconciliation is a mutual healing experience. It was a humble lesson of acceptance and respect for diversity and how to learn to walk a reciprocal path between two diverse but equal knowledge systems as a moral responsibility that requires a trusting relationship and recognition that knowledge flows two ways and that it is both a personal and collective healing journey. Involvement and engagement in the cultural program had a ripple effect as community learning became a reconciling process in respectfully navigating the

tensions of dualism by taking a more integrative and approach to learning in the classroom. As awareness grew, community staff took ownership for displaying cultural teachings on the school bulletin boards and syllabic translations for English became more common in the school. A sense of collaborative moral responsibility in addressing calls to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) became more pronounced over the three-year period of the study providing the impetus for collaborative action in recognizing the value of the cultural component in school improvement planning (SIP).

Table 1 summarize the iterative cycles of data gathering and analysis process:

6.4 Iterative Cycles of data gathering and analysis over a 3 -year period: Feb. 2018 – Feb. 2021

Re-occurring cycles / Dates	Participants
Advisory group Data: audio recordings/minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researcher, Indigenous teachers, Elder(s) guide and organize process -meet every 4-6 weeks: informal setting (cultural centre in school) - records or minutes captured by researcher and shared with advisory group
Data: Film, audio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indigenous teachers, community members, outside-community invited visitors (Knowledge Keepers) capture conversations, cultural activities, community/school events, traditional teachings/ceremonies - seasonal activities (fall hunt, harvesting, spring goose hunt) and other traditional skills pre-planned by Advisory Group.

Field notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researcher, Indigenous teachers and community participants - capture daily routines and interactions in school and community
Reflective journal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Researcher -cyclical written self-examinations on personal and community learning -ongoing until completion of study

Summary:

Organization and seasonal activities were guided by the Advisory group and aligned with the seasons. An Elder and cultural advisor was an integral member in decision making and providing ethical leadership and direction and community protocols.

Data included audio and/or visual film, recorded and spontaneous conversations written up later, written minutes or recorded Advisory group meetings, student work that was captured as digital photos, film of students and community participating in indoor and outdoor activities, researcher’s field notes and reflection journal.

Filming:

This was captured by teachers, students, invited guests to the community, and the researcher. All filming and recordings were noted by date, time, place, type of activity and grade. Filming school/community events is a natural occurrence in the community with the contemporary availability of digital technology. Informed consent was sought before any data filming or recordings took place to ensure consent was voluntary and that the activity/event was allowed to be captured as data according to traditional protocols. Filming and recordings of events and traditional activities are seasonal and the place and time was planned in collaboration with the school’s cultural advisory group and community members. These events took place in classrooms, in the cultural centre in the school, on the land, in the bush, on the water, at the community or school gym, or in an Elder’s house. Depending on the nature of the event a feast consisting of traditional food and/or ceremony was often involved. As part of the cultural program, Indigenous teacher(s) and community Elders and Knowledge Keepers conducted traditional

teachings/ceremonies/events with the students. On occasion, there were invited guests to the community such as a medicine man or knowledge keeper that conducted a ceremony or a traditional teaching. Film was transcribed initially by the researcher. As the initial filming contained large amounts of raw data, the researcher looked for only those parts that held value for the study and it was these parts that were transcribed word for word. Some of the 'still' photos captured data for the researcher in interpreting facial expressions and 'unsaid' words in communicating meaning connected to time, place and context of an event/activity. These interpretations were transcribed by the researcher. All raw data captured by film was made available to share with the community and for their viewing and to capture their thoughts and reflections as part of the researcher's field notes and/or reflection journal.

Veracity checking

This was to ensure that integrity was ongoing in the process of the project allowing the community as co-generators of the study and sharing of knowledge to collaborate and confirm accuracy of transcription and intended meaning. As anticipated at this stage only those parts of the raw data that had value as final data were checked. At this stage if a community participant recalled an event differently than how the researcher transcribed verbatim, there was the opportunity to capture and add another layer to the researcher's written transcriptions.

Researcher's Fieldnotes

The researcher maintained notes of what was happening on a daily basis. These daily routines and interactions were dated and included observations and interactions i.e., who she met, what was said and what was done. This included capturing thoughts and reflections that were shared by Indigenous teachers orally or written. These notes as well as my reflections provided insights to where I was at the 'moment' and change over time about the roles that I played as principal, partner, and learner and the different lens and insights provided in the process of creating the final vignettes.

Researcher's Reflections

The researcher dated and timed each reflection. The reflections included critical self examination on a regular basis. This included the researcher's feelings and perceptions as experienced, felt and seen in her daily interactions that held

personal insight and sense of meaning. I reflected on my personal and inner responses in what brings a sense of joy, sadness, humour, wonder and troubles and if and how my feelings and thinking may have changed over time as part of the ongoing experience of the study and process. Over the time of the study this became a looking back on earlier reflections and incidents—a reflection of my reflections. This critical self examination was an ongoing and deepening focus on ‘de-colonizing’ my own thinking by becoming acutely aware of language choices, daily actions and interactions to avoid re-colonial thinking.

Bricolage Method:

The researcher read and re-reread transcripts, fieldnotes, and reflections.

Using a bricolage approach with researcher acting as a ‘bricoleur’ she stitched together concepts from the data sets by

Colour coding emerging concepts or issues thematically

Cross mapping concepts

Theorizing and critically analysing the concepts, intersections of concepts and what is ‘unsaid’ (spaces between concepts)

Distilled the key concepts or questions into short neo-narrative summaries

Shared the neo-narratives with community for veracity and integrity checking

As was anticipated this process was a seamless, organic and overlapping and continued for a two year period to allow for reoccurring cycles planning, action, observing, reflecting, analysing, revising, and re-planning to allow for a critical process of adding layer upon layer of data and analyzing so that transcription captured the essence of emerging themes as shared and understood by self and community. It was the major themes that emerged in a continual process of analysis that addressed the questions of my study and created neo-narratives or teaching stories made up of a collection of vignettes. It became a process of data collection and analysis and a layering of data over existing data through shared feedback and cross checking, allowing for the natural flow of cyclical spirals to merge and express meaning to Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing as leadership through critical learning stories.

Table 6.1 Iterative Cycles of data gathering and analysis over a 3-year period: Feb. 2018 – Feb. 2021

6.5 Conclusion

The medicine wheel teachings were metaphorically the bricoleur's tools employed in my study through a natural infusion of its practices using a community driven program. As a space to navigate and critically explore the complex tensions and power differentials permeating a colonized world, a process of decolonization was enabled and validated through a web of inter-relationships that were reawakened and renewed through community learning and its natural connections to the criticality of intergenerational knowledge as a survival and resistive strategy that balances the dialectics in interdisciplinarity. It was a mutual educatable experience and a humanizing process between human beings and the world "through which ... we come to subjectivity, transcending our object position in a society..." (Freire, 1970, p. 12). Freire referred to this transformation as "a path through which we come to understand what it means to come to cultural voice" (Freire, 1970b, p. 12).

As the cultural program grew within the school, guided by the tools of the medicine wheel teachings, so too did the natural infusion of the teachings organically grow within the participants, taking on a renewed and sustainable meaning that was living, generative and relational. In the final transcription that captured the essence of emerging themes, as shared and understood by self and community, the questions to my study evolved as expressions or vignettes interspersed throughout the study and final discussion as a collection of critical learning stories. In analysing difference and asking questions previously unimagined, multiple perspectives were examined "with a growing awareness to which ones are validated and which ones have been dismissed" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 170). The bricolage process in its inherent relationality with difference allowed the analysis to be an emerging process of greater understanding "in how dominant power operate[s]d to exclude and certify

particular forms of knowledge production and why (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011, p. 170).

This chapter described the iterative experience of my own learning with the community during data gathering and how this determined my ‘walk through the bush/forest’ and the Medicine Wheel/Tree of life approach in the study which will be discussed in the Methodology chapter to follow.

Chapter 7 Methodology

7.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a more in-depth exploration of the process of bricolage (Note to readers: for more information see appendix 6, #6) and expands on its suitability for work in this Indigenous context, where a holistic and lifelong learning approach is key to community wellbeing.

I have likened the data to ‘the bush’ and my experience in walking through it to exploring and finding a pathway through a forest. This approach emerged for me as one that is most consistent with Indigenous research methods, during the ongoing analysis of my own and the community’s experience. In doing so, it allows the reader to connect my method and methodology.

The focus of my study is to explore the diverse and complex layers of colonization as lived, within the parameters of a community driven cultural program that is relational, cultural and place based. This chapter outlines the ethical processes in conducting Indigenous research that explores knowledge diversity as an inclusive exchange of dialogue to explore dualism as a space of possibilities and a way of doing, knowing and being that reimagines a stronger tomorrow. A bricolage approach provided greater flexibility and suitability to explore in depth within an Indigenous context where a holistic and lifelong learning approach was key to community wellbeing.

7.2 Parallel journey of discovery

Indigenous methodology is defined as a theory of inquiry. Indigenous methods -including poetry, art, drama, storytelling, and critical personal narratives are performative practices that represent and make Indigenous life visible (Denzin et al., 2008, p. 23). Using the First Nation Lifelong Learning model and the third

cultural space as described in Figure 2 and Figure 8 respectively which I have copied a snapshot below in Figure 19, provides an ethical framework for exploring and gaining a greater understanding of dual knowledge systems by interrupting and challenging dominant thought and foregrounding Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being. This is an inclusionary framework of human possibilities, in a space to reimagine and realign learning and development from a holistic perspective. My methodology evolved into a reconciling journey of deepening awareness and a process of recognition through healing and renewing relationships to “remove Aboriginal knowledge out from the colonial cloud to be acknowledged on equal footing, appraised on its own merits, and studied in accordance with its own methods, and used as a preferred approach for matters affecting Aboriginal peoples” (The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Dussault & Erasmus, 1996). As a foundational pillar that threads through my study, this learning process of ethical recognition and acknowledgement that Indigenous and Western epistemologies reflect very different worldviews and contexts provided a space to exchange dialogue at the interstices of dominant binary thinking to explore and embrace a deeper, shared understanding and interpretation of my research data as a lived and visible learning experience, both real and imagined through an Indigenous lens and for making meaning and sense of a lived reality in relation to place and other/things. This was an individual and collective reconciling process in problematizing Indigenous and Western worldviews as cultural encounters and exploring pathways of possibilities going forward that lead to balance, synergy and reciprocity so that the richness of epistemological differences can co-exist together in respectful relationships that benefit all students. This was an ongoing process of dialogue exchange, a conversation through and with the data that Brill de Ramirez

describes as, “a fluid continuum of ...conversive discursivity that can allow for cultures to move towards transformative reciprocity without the risk of erasing the diversity and distinctiveness of subjective difference (Karahkwi, 2019, p. 83). So too, the research study was an intervention process of engagement in learning and growing together by “placing discourse and conversation along a spectrum is crucial insofar as it curbs the temptation to reinvokethe tiered binaries of European-Indigenous, written-oral and subjective-objective” power inequalities (as cited in Karahkwi, 2019, p.83). In the third cultural space (Figure 8) the black circle represents Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being and the red circle represents Western ways of knowing, doing and being. The overlapping circle is the third cultural space, a middle ground which represents a new way of working (Bhabha, 2004). According to Nakata (2007), the third cultural space draws on Aboriginal ... histories; perspectives; ways of knowing, being and doing, balanced symbiotically alongside Western ways of knowing, being and doing. In addressing the themes and calls to Action, originating from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), my research aligns with a critical need for educators and institutions to build bridges between Indigenous and Western knowledge systems to achieve meaningful outcomes, for Indigenous students in particular but for all students in general (Williamson & Dalal, 2007). It was this challenge that underscored my research journey as a reciprocal process in creating bridges of shared understanding in context between Western scientific knowledge and Indigenous “responsive, active eco-logical” knowledge that views “language, land, and identity as interdependent in a unique way and constantly renewed and reconfigured” (Christie, 2006, p. 3).

7.3 Exploring difference

The creation of a third space recognizes that Indigenous communities have distinct cultural worldviews. “When Western and Indigenous systems are acknowledged and valued equally, ...the merging of views represents a new way of educating” (Queensland Education, 2008, p. 9). Yunkaporta states “to use the Aboriginal concept of balance – if that is a part of our way, then it makes sense for us to find what pedagogy we have in common with non-Aboriginal ways too, balancing the two worlds. If we find the overlap between our best ways of learning and the mainstream’s best ways of learning then we will have an equal balance” (Yunkaporta, 2009, p. 1).

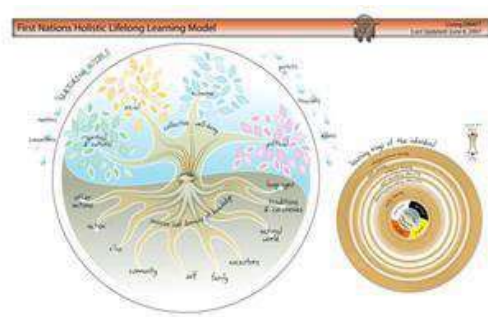


Figure 2: First Nation Holistic Lifelong Learning Model

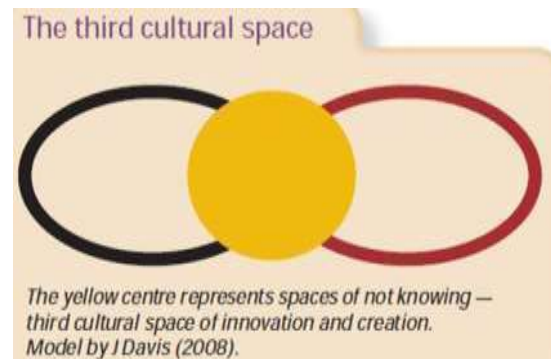


Figure 8: The Third Cultural Space

Figure 19 Realignment and Balance

Figure 8 shows how the cultural space provided a complimentary and inclusionary position to view the medicine wheel and starting point in how to analyze the data from an Indigenous perspective and lens ‘allowing the opportunity to explore multiple epistemological positions that go beyond the shorelines of Western thought’ (Blackstock, 2007, p.8). This is an ongoing realignment and balancing process in negotiating opposing forces and dialectical tensions. As a researcher, participant in the study and as a woman of non-Indigenous background, my use of

PAR methodology allowed the voices of Indigenous lifeworlds to be heard parallel with a Western lens both mirroring and blurring identity formations as re-imagining the possibilities of diverse epistemologies. It is in this third space of cultural mingling that spatial theory evolved from the work of French philosophers who were male, European and who had a strong focus upon linguistics and postcolonial positioning as referred to in the literature review through the works of scholars such as Michel Foucault and Homi K. Bhabha allowing the data collected to speak of the evolving truths of the everyday reality as represented by the artifacts of the data collected that emphasized Indigenous knowledge creation as a process of exploring “interconnected phenomena over generations” (Blackstock, 2007, p.8).

This balancing and reconciling principal is central to many Indigenous worldviews and is exemplified by the work of Nakata who asserts that a reconciling dynamic is a “crucial element in any future methodological positions” in history and education, while also being cautionary that it is “more easily said than done” as academics tend to “take sides” rather than explore the complex intersection of the interface (Nakata, 2007, p. 164). As a researcher, embedded in the community, it was critical that I be cognizant of my position of power as a non-Indigenous head teacher and was vigilant in guide posting my research in close collaboration with a community mentor. This deepened my awareness and conscious reflections of my innate biases as a non-Indigenous person allowing me to grow and self-develop within my own cultural heritage and lived experience. This process made visible the challenges and the limitations in my positioning and transitioning across boundaries. Conducting participatory research granted me the opportunity as an ‘outsider’ to collaborate with Indigenous participants gaining deeper understanding over time in a

space of mutual recognition in seeking accuracy and interpretation from an insider's lens and thought perspective.

7.4 Knowledge sharing

It is in this space that restructuring of meaning is possible as the potential third space of resistance and starting point and to realize that strategies such as community learning have the potential to re-centre Indigenous voice and reclamation of ancestral knowledge. Nakata describes the application of the cultural interface in schooling as beginning in Indigenous lifeworlds and then extending learners in the overlap with non-local realities, maintaining continuity with the past while learning skills relevant to the present and future. He asserts that an interface approach is not simply a vehicle for Indigenous transition into the mainstream, but a source of innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are relevant for learners of any culture (Nakata, 2002). The interface is a space for dynamic lifelong learning to balance and adapt to synergistic change and innovation, blending contemporary and traditional knowledge. It is a dynamic relationship between past memories with future imaginations in constant negotiation with the present as lived. This is a space to re-establish values and ways of doing that forge “a new relationship characterized by mutual recognition, respect, sharing and responsibility (RCAP, 1996). This is a process that neutralises deficit views of culture and eliminates tokenism, instead focusing on schooling as an educative process that encompasses all students in skilling them to operate creatively in the wider world without losing their own cultural standpoint (1998, Sefi Dei, 2002). These practices then, would privilege local place-based knowledge in the curriculum and in the organisational culture of a school, thus viewing Indigenous knowledge as a sophisticated system rather than as a parochial limitation or obstacle.

Within overlapping borderland spaces of Indigenous and Western knowledge, my research depicts constructive and collaborative dialogues of tension and resistance where visionary possibilities are re-presented as a critical performative process and framed within post-colonial theory and critical pedagogy to explore notions of power and agency, positionality, multivocality, identity, history and place using a participatory action research approach. For an Indigenous critical study, my research was grounded in ethical relationships with the community, allowing the research to evolve and reflect a part of the world as lived and experienced by the community. As an embedded co-participant, using a critical lens allowed the research process to organically integrate reality as problematic and the capacity to reflect and take action giving meaning to the geographic spaces where learning is situated. The researcher's ongoing reflections, mentored fieldnotes, and shared personal and collective stories of the participants created over time a bricolage of divergent perspectives that were ultimately stitched together as a convergent whole. While bricolage has evolved in response to the need for 'multiple' expressions of 'reality' and has developed from feminist and qualitative practices, it also sits firmly in the tradition of First People's ways of telling, sharing histories and culture, and teaching non-linear, allusive and symbolic teachings. Bricolage provided a suitable tool to remix and blend the material with the spiritual to rejuvenate Indigenous knowledge dimensions into sustainable relationships and creative approaches to pedagogical praxis. It is in human/earth relationships that place is given meaning and "situates time by giving it a local habitation" (Brown, 2017, p. 133). The bricolage allowed the blending of "science, ...ecology, and spirituality to weave new approaches and alternative pathways in making meaning to lived reality as a space to explore with "renewed understanding of place" (Brown, 2017, pp. 133-134). The bricolage of data

became a re-creation of place in a space of ethical and cultural negotiation and shared conversations, a “dialectical and dialogical process [in which] ideas influence place, and places influence our ideas, with neither arrow of influence set as deterministic” (Brown, 2017, p. 133).

7.5 Knowledge enrichment

Within this complex and layered context, inquiry cannot be confined to a single paradigm or interpretative strategy but rather open to the never-ending creativity and possibilities that underpin narrative text. Due to the embedded nature of my work experience in the community over an extended length of time, a space of ethical collaboration and mutual trust has been created to share contested spaces and negotiate meaning of the research questions from the lens of a diverse group experience that evolved over time. There are moments of personal reflection and looking inward on my own experience and added reflection notes about my own critical examination and growth. but this study is not about my story. It is the community’s story.

Storyed narratives seem quite natural in both exploring the questions of my research but also supporting my personal sense of commitment and sense of moral obligation, citizenship, and in cultivating comradeship that speaks to the challenges of the multiple ways that information can be discovered, recognized, valued, and shared. Semali & Marezki posit, this two-way flow implies both “outreach” on the part of the university and “in-reach” on the part of the community, with the partners being respectful of each other’s domains of knowledge and ways of knowing (Semali et. al., 2006). As a co-participant with an embedded and invested interest in the community, my methodology allowed me to include personal stories and reflections as I gathered memories and stories of parents, colleagues, community members,

Elders and children and then to interweave the personal and the storied voices of participants into the research text. According to Ellis, Adams and Bochner, autoethnography “depicts people struggling to overcome adversity and shows people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles. Therefore, it is ethical practice that has a caregiving function and in essence it is a story that re-enacts an experience by which people find meaning and through that meaning are able to be okay with that experience” (Ellis et al., 2011). The process of storytelling communicates and validates meaning as a lived experience and can be a shared healing agent for both the storyteller and the listener (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 8). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) suggest that research as we know it in the Western world progresses through eras and is now in the seventh era which proclaims to recognize multiple ways of knowing and multiple ways of expressing what we know. This is a humanistic and ethical approach in dialogue exchange that supports “a relationship between knowledge, power and agency that is grounded in both the social and the political spheres” and that “knowledge represents positions from which people make sense of their worlds and their place in them, and from which they construct their concepts of agency, the possible, and their own capacities to do” (Stewart, 2000, p.20). For an Indigenous study using a critical lens, stories can be an empowering agent of resistance for colonized and economically subordinated groups of people and therefore used to disrupt power in canonical research theory. Using a PAR approach grounded in personal experience, my research aimed to “sensitize readers to issues of identity politics, to experience shrouded in silence, and to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different than us” (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 3). Sharing stories as an ethical practice in a space of cultural overlap is a shared reconciling experience in negotiating different

knowledge perspectives that “expands and opens up a wider lens of the world” (Ellis et al., 2011, p, 4).

7.6 Negotiating Expansion of Knowledge

Difference refers to multiple ways of knowing, doing and being. Different perspectives can stem from “race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, class, education or religion” (Ellis et al., 2011, p.4). This concept of difference enables the bricoleur to move toward ‘the light of epiphany’ by exploring alternative ways of analyzing and producing knowledge (Kincheloe, 2008, p.15). Third space or cultural overlap is a space for dialogue to attend to and analyze lived experience. It is in this space that epiphanies or moments of tension are shared, explored and negotiated to influence a deeper understanding and embodiment of alternative knowledge perspectives.

Within the tensions of difference, rest insights into new levels of understanding of the subjects, purposes, and nature of an inquiry (Kincheloe and Semali, 1999, Burbules and Beck, 1999, as cited in Kincheloe, 2008, p. 15). Different meanings and layers within the bricolage push the research process into the hermeneutic circle as we are induced to deal with diverse parts in relation to the whole (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 15) as depicted in Figure 10. Spatial theory focuses on diverse knowledge perspectives in which the exchange of dialogue involves the blending of Indigenous and Western thought. It was this paradoxical dialogue that a change of understanding became possible, destabilizing predetermined presumptions and current meanings thus opening new possibilities of understanding. The medicine wheel metaphorically depicts the circle of life in which there is ongoing evolving negotiation between the subjective and the objective, differentiated/undifferentiated, mind/body. Ethical space is a lived space for recreating alternative interpretations in knowledge evolution and becoming. It is here that epiphanies are imagined and re-

imagined in making sense of the unending relationships that connect the lived reality of *place* to the world we exist in and are a part of without bias and power/knowledge domination. It is this principle of oneness in relation to all things that the possibilities for alternative knowledge pathways can create transformation through awareness and deeper understanding for diverse knowledge perspectives. The process of the bricolage and ongoing data collection and dialogue expanded its suitability for work in this Indigenous context, where a wholistic and lifelong learning approach is key to community wellbeing. It became an ongoing negotiation between the parts and the whole, shaping meaning and understanding as an interdependent relationship.

An Indigenous worldview expresses knowledge as a coming to know, a meaning that “signifies a personal, participatory, holistic journey towards gaining wisdom-in-action” (Aikenhead, 2010, p.3). It is this active engagement with life as a curious provocation for learning, continuous practice, feedback and reflection that deeper understanding and interpretation of life’s phenomena is possible. This holistic journey goes beyond the restrictive boundaries of Western scientific knowledge. The inclusive nature of the medicine wheel and its inherent wisdom nurtures and values the strengths of both worlds-Indigenous and Eurocentric and by walking in both worlds “Indigenous students...gain cultural capital essential for accessing power as citizens in a Eurocentric dominated world while maintaining their roots in an Indigenous wisdom tradition” (Aikenhead, 2010, p. 9). It is this dynamic cyclical and evolving action that medicine wheel symbolizes and is seeded in the data of my study that opens up the hermeneutic loop to expansive and new knowledge horizons that become new challenges and possibilities for re-interpretations and deeper meaning and understanding built on interrelationships and generative practices (Figure 20).

It is in *place* that Indigenous knowledge defines culture and identity through its relations to all things. *Place* being unique and identifiable creates a space in which to re-imagine harmony and balance both individually and collectively. The cultural program, using the tools of the medicine wheel naturally re-connected relationships that balance individual holistic learning and development in all knowledge dimensions and collectively reinforces balance and harmony socially, politically, economically and spiritually/culturally. The cyclical and overlapping nature of the cultural interface as depicted in Figure 19 as a reflective process that underscores the tension, possibilities and nuanced complexities in a decolonizing process.

Transformative action occurs when a truth comes to be intuitively known and as Cajete explains “it is at that moment that a connection is made to a natural principle manifesting itself in the unfolding of a natural process and herein lies the true power of individual and collective creativity and its subtle power to influence the world” (2004, p.49). Indigenous theory evolves through practice and is informed through past stories and memories that are brought forward, blended with the present through observation and experiential learning inclusive of Western theory and continues in iterative cycles. This knowledge is timeless, connected to all knowledge dimensions and passed on orally from one generation to the next grounded in local culture, values, and traditions. It is this connection to place as land or earth under foot that empowers the relationship and balances the individual and collective. It imbues the values, responsibilities and teachings of the medicine wheel that is pivotal in reciprocal negotiations and conscious recognition of becoming a stronger and sustainable tomorrow.

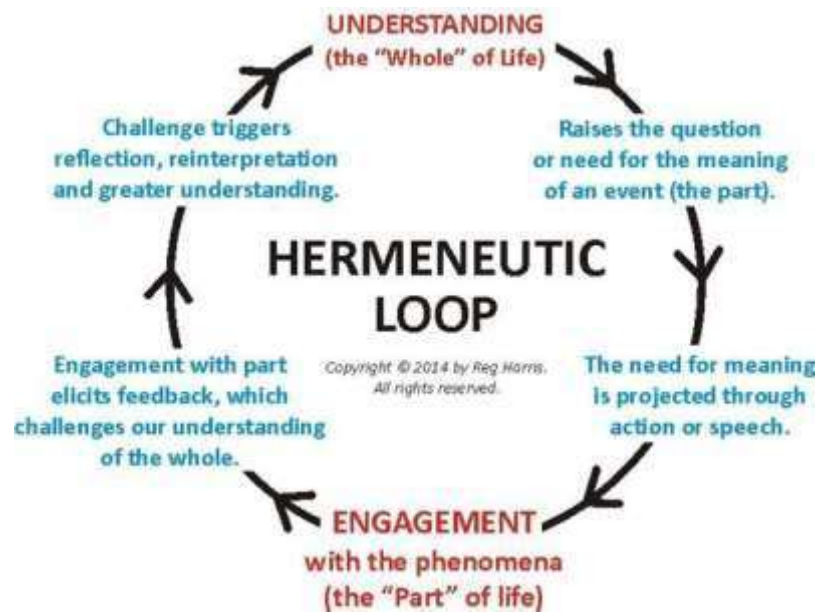


Figure 20 Hermeneutic Loop, Harris, 2014

Using an Indigenous methodology my study challenges Western assumptions in terms of what constitutes knowledge construction. I have used the medicine wheel grounded in a holistic approach to learning for gathering knowledge and interpretation incorporating a decolonizing theoretic lens. As a researcher but also a participant, I chose to use a bricolage to symbolize the tree in organizing and coding the data and looking for relational themes that connect learning to the traditional teachings of the medicine wheel and that support schooling that is sustainable and generative to change. The presentation of my findings will be re-presentations and co-constructions of the data in the form of re-storied and decolonized neo-narratives from the lens of an Indigenous perspective situated in third space. It is in this contentious space that power and pedagogy can be re-framed from an Indigenized perspective.

PAR and Indigenous critical methodology incorporate important aspects of an ethnographic narrative approach in focussing on voices of the participants and embedding my personal experience in the social and cultural context. This

methodology allows the voices and stories of the participants to unfold in a journey of reconciliation, aspirations, hope and change that underscores the context of my study. Autoethnography as a form of narrative research will allow the researcher to systematically analyze her personal experience embedded in a larger social and cultural context. It is based on the premise that understanding the self is a “precondition and a concomitant condition to the understanding of others” (Transken, 2005). Thus, autoethnographers have to distinguish their approach from simply reflective storytelling by comparing and contrasting personal experiences against the existing research, analyzing personal experience in light of theories and literature, considering ways others may experience similar experiences, and illustrating facets of cultural experience embedded in personal experience (Ellis et al., 2011). I have chosen not to write an autoethnography, though my research study did require deep critical reflection as a vital part of my journey and my personal narratives are part of that process, but instead focussing outward.

7.7 Conclusion

In utilizing an Indigenous research design, aspects of narrative inquiry suited a PAR approach and Indigenous research methodologies as they encourage a ‘learning together’ and communicating together in a space open to alternative pathways in knowledge production and expansion. Indigenous methodologies involve a dialectical process between critical theorists and Indigenous scholars and Indigenous people. It can be defined as “research by and for Indigenous peoples, using techniques and methods drawn from the traditions and knowledges of those Peoples” (as cited in Denzin et. al., 2008, x). Sharing stories is a way of understanding and inquiring into life experience through “collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social

interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20). Narratives as stories of life experiences are deeply embedded in all human cultures and a part of how we talk about our work, our lives and families so is a part of our every day. By using narratives in this context, I was able to write ‘with’ and ‘from’ an embedded perspective rather than ‘about’ the community in which I work as principal creating a two-way flow in an empowerment process in knowledge negotiation, a mutual reconciling journey in sharing and enriching the learning experience for all. Indigenous scholar, Shawn Wilson, describes Indigenous methodology as a moral process of being accountable to all my relations” (2001, p. 177)

Narrative is a cross disciplinary qualitative research methodology that pursues a narrative way of knowing by exploring the stories of participants. Appropriate for my study, it became a living document that took on an organic design that naturally unfolded in a dynamic ebb and flow of the local landscape experiencing social economic resource transition. From an ethical approach, I drew upon the authentic voices, spoken narratives, accounts and notes of participants in my study. I could not ‘speak for’ the community, but my voice and the voices of students, teachers and Elders were the data that allowed myself and the speakers to establish meanings, and implications for this community and potentially others. This is an ethical process of performative practices that explore the lived experiences of individuals that are connected through time and space providing continuity and interaction that crosses epistemological borders allowing for multivocality (Denzin et al, 2008). Denzin (2003) uses the term ‘performative’ in the way that we ‘perform’ our identities every day and that we ‘perform’ in our roles as citizens of the world” (as cited in Transken,2005, p. 19).

The stages of my study were depicted over time, as performative practices

that informed school improvement practices through community learning as an emergent process of working with community to engage students in sustainable learning pathways within a holistic lifelong learning framework. This became an evolving integrative process within a space of overlapping possibilities of emergent themes of strength, survivance and struggle for self determination and ethical recognition in good faith by bridging the theory/practice cultural divide imposed by Western knowledge.

Chapter 8 which follows, reinforces the researcher's embeddedness through partnerships and relationships with the community as strong drivers for PAR as a 'live' data gathering approach committed to community well being. Stories and participant artifacts gathered over a length of time provided rich and visible data for the project which were analyzed in the natural environment in iterative cycles searching and exploring recurring themes, gaps-what was unsaid, the silences, and quality checked with participants that the summaries of their key ideas were accessible. It involved an ongoing sharing with community and drawing upon their observations, ideas, and adjustments in program planning. The next chapter allows the reader to make sense of the walk through the bush approach that I used to connect my method with methodology. It was an iterative experience of my own learning with the community that emerged during the data gathering cycles that determined my walk through the bush process and the medicine wheel/Tree of Life approach in the study (Note to readers: for more information see appendix 6, #5). These walks through the bush provided the ongoing analysis of my own and the community's experience.

Chapter 8 Journey through the data – Walking through the bush and connecting the past to a stronger tomorrow

8.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the reader an overview and summary of the magnitude of data collected of the learning opportunities experienced during the time of the study. It includes both primary and secondary data. These informal learning experiences grounded and guide posted my study in finding balance in daily praxis living in Webequie and embedding myself in Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. Below is a summary table and overview of data gathered representing the researcher's walk through the bush. This includes both secondary and primary data with approved and voluntary consent:

Who/What	Class/age	When	Where
Noront Resources documentary (CD recording)	Students, teachers, parents, community members	2014	Webequie community
Teacher/students recording /Class Field trip/Cultural Friday (photos and medicine wheel learning sheet)	Grade 6/7	April 2014	Ice Fishing/Webequie
High school student (poetry)	Grade 10	April 2014	School/Webequie
Rabbit Snaring (photos and medicine wheel learning sheet)	Grade 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 class	Nov. 2014	Webequie First Nation and traditional lands
DareArts annual dinner and leadership awards Photos of the event	High school student from the school/community	May 2015	Photos taken in Toronto
Elder Christmas stories CD recording	Grade 4 class	Dec. 2015	Visited the classroom
DareArts: Reclaim the game	Grade 7-Grade 12	Feb. 2016	Webequie First Nation

Who/What	Class/age	When	Where
Spring Hunt: Cultural Week mitt making and mining matters workshop Teachers, students, community teachers Blending Indigenous and Western knowledge	Grade 4, Grade 6	April 2016	Webequie First Nation
Teachers, students, Elders, community members (photos)	Grade 6	Fall 2016	Fishing/Webequie
DareArts annual workshop (photos). The Fox and the Bear. How the bear got his tail. Song composition: Mashkwe Seewin...Maa-Moe Recording of song, dance and students in the school/gym	Grade 7 to Grade 12	Nov. 2016	Webequie First Nation and traditional lands
Photos: partridge hunting, Elders cooking, Campfire, In the Bush, school tepee cooking, Drum Elders and Knowledge Keepers beading, Halloween events	Various classes from Kindergarten to Grade 8, teachers, parents, community members	Nov. 2016-Feb. 2017	Webequie and traditional lands In the school

Who/What	Class/age	When	Where
Recordings of Year(s) in review (done by teacher) activities range from indoor to outdoor activities and cultural events	All classes, staff, Elders, community members, parents	Year(s) in review include: 2014-2015 2016-2017 2013-2017	Webequie First Nation and traditional lands
Fish Netting (medicine wheel learning sheet)	Grade 8 class	Oct. 2017	Webequie First Nation and traditional lands
Tepee making in the bush (photo and medicine wheel learning sheet)	Grade 8 students Teachers, community Knowledge Keepers	Nov. 2017	Webequie First Nation and traditional lands
High school students learning documents Course: Issues of Indigenous Peoples in a Global Context (Native Studies)	Grade 11-12	Jan. 2018	School/classroom
Elder Mathias Letters To address healing initiatives	Elder and community member	March 2018	School, Webequie

Who/What	Class/age	When	Where
Spring Hunt (cultural week). Events and activities took place inside and outside the school (legends, crafts, fishing, hunting, camping, medicine wheel teachings, goose camping) photos	Whole school (kindergarten to grade 12)	April 2018	Webequie First Nation and traditional lands
Classroom pics by teacher	Various grades and classrooms (kindergarten to grade 8)	May 2018	
NAPS (Nishnapaise Aski Police Service) School visitation (Public Service from Thunder Bay Ontario)	Grade 7 and 8 class	Feb. 2019	School gym
Fall hunt (camping, traditional skills, ceremonies and teachings) Medicine wheel learning sheet: Social Studies: connections between the past and the present	Grade 6k and Grade 7	Sept. 2019	Fly Island, Webequie and traditional lands
High school students medicine wheel learning sheet (connecting learning to the land and the internet)	High School (Grade 11/12)	Sept. 2019	School/classroom And Fly Island field trip Webequie traditional lands

Who/What	Class/age	When	Where
Virtual Christmas concert Recordings and photos, taken by teachers and staff (school during Covid protocols)	All grades	Dec. 2020	School/Webequie Posted on SJMEC facebook page for community and families
Secondary data: utube videos			

Table 8.1 Photos/recordings were taken by teachers and students unless specified in table. All other recordings/photos were gifted to the community by outside stakeholders working in partnership with the community as a learning document. Consent and approval were granted for all data usage and to be part of the learning experience in conducting the study.

8.2 Secondary Data: 2014 Noront Documentaries.

These recordings originated from a founding partnership between the community and a mining exploration company during the infancy stage of minerals being discovered on traditional lands surrounding the community. Noront Resources Limited (Ltd.) conducted a documentary in the initial stages of the mining project with community members in developing good relationships. The documentary is composed of short interviews with various community member which included Elders, adults and one youth. The documentary was done in the spring of 2014. It is accessible from a website that Noront developed called Mikawaa that translates to *discovery* in Ojicree (Noront, 2010a). Copies of the documentary were also gifted to community members in the form of a CD. As I was working in the community during this event, I was given a tape also. The researcher transcribed the tapes verbatim. The tapes were re-read using highlight looking for re-occurring themes and concepts. Date and time of transcription were recorded. The last reflections and transcriptions were done in Feb. 2019. Reference to Table 8.2 contains some of the researcher's reflections of the data over the years. Ethic approval agreed to the use of secondary data as this data was gathered by the community and shared as part of normal program of learning.

Below in Table 8.2 are examples of reflections, notes and transcriptions over the years: primary and secondary data that initiated the study and provided the bricolage of diverse learning expressions that were interpreted as a process of innovative praxis for Indigenous learning in place, and a space to decolonize:

Memories brought forward:

Secondary Data: Community documentaries, 2014, Noront Resources, Webequie

Ananias Spence: d.o.b. Elder 1940

Reflection notes made by researcher Feb. 4, 2019

-everything has healing powers (Feb 18/19)

-open mindedness and mutual respect (02/18/19) for difference

-know yourself

-cycles of life (02/18/19)

tools in life are unique

-Important to understand where you come from i.e. identity

-Culture and language are the important tools

- -It is important that the whole community benefits not just one
- Understand cultural clashes

Matawa Annual report: 2013/14

“This is an item from the earth. This is how we are going to move forward in our working relationship. The minerals will be in the earth for a long time. The First Nation peoples will benefit forever. This young child will hopefully benefit from what is about to happen in our territories. We hope the development will benefit all of our communities. We look forward to having a good relationship with everybody and working together so we can all benefit.”

Secondary Data: Community documentary: 2014, Webequie, Noront Resources

Josie Jacob: d.o.b. 1929-Elder

Reflections/mark-ups made Feb. 2019 by researcher

- migration routes- (natural cycles – Dec. 28/20)

- tools needed for survival and daily living. Survival was a priority and this required constant working together as an organization, as a whole

- I would love to see my grandsons and granddaughters come and see what I do and to capture these “moments of exposure. It would be very honouring”. “I would like to see a program that teaches this, and so they’re actually doing it and having a sense of the uniqueness of the culture and heritage. It is important that we instill these practices,

- People have to know about those tools and value them and value the contributions of the tools and people that used them. ‘It’s about value and people. There has to be a message that gets across- getting a sense we are people and we are here’.

(place, time)

Un(balance)

Secondary Data: Community documentary: 2014, Webequie, Noront Resources

Matthew Jacob: d.o.b. 1947

-name of the community came from mergansers (symbolic, Dec. 28/20)

young running across the top of the water, shaking their heads and flapping their wings trying to take flight (symbolic, making sense, Dec. 28/20)

Family-his dad is Cree and his mother Ojibway

sons/daughters live in **Webequie** and some in **Thunder Bay** (transition, Dec. 28/20)

15 he started trapping for survival (land connection, Dec. 28/20)

Everything is **changing and is going the white man way** (dominance, awareness, Dec. 28/20))

For the kids to learn they need to **know the Indian way**. Some, few do. I teach some. I am a good **guide** (roots, identity, Dec. 28/20)

Layers of meaning

Secondary Data: Community documentary: 2014, Webequie, Noront Resources

Bob Wabasse: Adult in his 40's

(Comments highlighted in yellow by researcher date 2/19/19))

complex society (colonized society)

empower young because we need to live by the rules of the system.

I see a possibility for young kids because a new way of thinking is emerging.

The community itself is an **entity and relationships built on openness, honesty, trust and sharing so that the whole (community) benefits** than the possibilities are endless. It is about **making meaning in your life**-you have to find what you love to do and when you find it, if you are strong in your **'roots', you can create anything**. The wisdom of the Elders talk about strength in your roots and if we **nourish what is inside us -that inner being, than the enthusiasm, effortness, and willingness to take risks and expand can create endless possibilities**. The community can learn from each other.

Changing landscape & Lifelong learning

Secondary Data: Community documentary: 2014, Webequie, Noront Resources

Annie Shewaybick d.o.b.-adult

Original Makawaa tape transcribed Dec. 2018

Yellow highlights made from my first transcription.

- teacher

-wants to get her grade 12 to encourage kids to go to school and get an education, skill and be able to support their families

- sews and makes baby bundles. She teaches the kids to embroider so they can do it and pass it on to their kids

-different for the younger parents and that education is the way to support families and that is why she is going back to school.

Using the tools of the medicine bag (Note to readers: for more information see Appendix 6, #2)

Reflections from a community documentary

Secondary Data: Community documentary: 2014, Webequie, Noront Resources

Leslie: young adult: early 20's

back up with the support of my family, friends and traditional and spiritual practices like going dancing and singing to make me feel good again.

when I dance and when I sing it comes from my heart and emotionally, I feel good.

When I walk in the bushes I feel good about myself again. Go to school and get your education, it's the only way and

These reflections in yellow refer to Leslie living in both worlds. When he had challenges, he practiced traditional spirituality to get through it.

My reflections on broad themes

May 13, 2018: Researcher's reflections on the tapes originally produced by Noront Resources in 2014 (Noront, 2010b)

I see themes emerging from listening to these tapes. I see sense of life-wide learning in listening and comparing what the youth say and what an Elder says. Youth speak of the importance of family in their life and also an emotional peace from tradition and land i.e. dance, song, going to the bush. Elders have a greater understanding of self 'it is right there in front of you, it is self. Elders speak of the past and bringing it forward. Adults speak of the importance of education. Elders speak of responsibility and working as one-egalitarian community. With a sense of togetherness, community speak of survival as one and not just individual families but as a whole community. As change happens, skills need to adapt as the tools of life. All speak of importance of strong roots, looking inside for the strength to meet challenge on life's journey, sense of spirituality. There was a strong sense of reconnecting and working together for understanding of difference and how both need to contribute equally in going forward in a changing landscape i.e. mining development. Difference refers to holding on to the traditional teachings (values) while going forward and being educated and having opportunities for gainful employment. The land is the relationships but no longer a source of sustainability therefore, therefore formal education is required to gain fruitful employment. Elders speak of how the white man changed everything –

disconnect. Ananias speaks of the need of understanding the community's way of being and doing things i.e., the whole needs to benefit. There was a strong sense of spirituality i.e., humanism, responsibility, trust, respect and kindness. These aspects of spirituality come from relations to local traditions and the land. These qualities are learned from relations to the land and the natural environment.

Good relations and values

Data recorded by the grade 4 teacher, Dec. 7, 2015, School, Webequie

Classroom Recording

CD Recording: (grade 4 class)

Mathias Suganaqueb: community

Elder Date of Recording: Dec. 7,

2015

Elder Mathias talks to the grade 4 class. He speaks of gifts as not those you bought at the store as there were no stores when he was young. You lived and thrived off the land. There was dancing, food and sharing what you had. Everybody was together in the community. During his time kids went to school 10 months of the year. His wife, Emma, went to Kenora. You only brought what you were wearing the day the plane came to take you. The teachers were not nice, you got strapped if you didn't listen. There was no communication or phone to connect with parents. (Disconnect, assimilation, Dec. 28/20)

Dancing and socializing brought peace of mind from the challenges brought on by residential schools.

Emerging meaning: a process in finding space.

Researcher's notes and mask made by participant in the DareArts workshop in Webequie, week of Feb. 2, 2016



Mask made by high school student, Feb. 2016, Webequie

Taken from DareArts: (Youth Leadership Program) 'Reclaim the Game': The theme for that year. Masks were used to depict dichotomies in life. This was one by an anonymous student.

Revitalization and colonization from the youth's perspective – high school.

There was a song that was also created by the youth: We are one (hockey theme, just the words: the only way to score is to take a chance. It's cool on the ice. It is here that we speak our language- beautiful Ojicree. We put a shield in our hearts, it keeps us free **(youth are finding their voice and making sense of their personal reality in place in relations to space as the external world. They are beginning to cross borders between the personal i.e. micro and the macro i.e. colonial structures in society.** (Dec. 28/20)

Transcription of the song:

Take a stand, try not to break

Every goal you make is a stand you'll take

The only way to score is to take a chance

It is part of our lives, it's a statement

It's in our hearts, its in our pride

That is deep inside

So hear our song

We never give up

This game we play

Game of life

Together

We are one

We are hope

This song represents the possibilities of youth and their aspirations in going forward. This tape and music is done through the arts.

The drum: the heartbeat:

Dec. 28/20: Speaks to resistance to colonial forces. Life is made up of dichotomies. Balance the good with the bad, a blending of the traditional with the contemporary. Rise to challenges but stay grounded in your roots. It is your roots that give you support and sense of unity in reaching your goals and dreaming the good life.

Below in Figure 21 is a photo taken from Orange Shirt Day 2017. Annually there is a community walk where the students from the school meet at the Band Hall (seen in the background of the photo). From here photos are taken and then community members, Chief and Counselors walk the community in honor and memory of residential school and supporting the logo on the shirts, ‘Every Child Matters’.



Figure 21 Orange Shirt Day Community Walk: September 2017

The photo in Figure 22 represents the natural curiosity in all children. The cultural program supports this inherent instinct and connection to the land and supports children at an early age in strengthening their identity and traditional roots.



Figure 22 Partridge hunting, Fall Harvest Sept. 2016 Webequie

The bricolage of data encompasses the medicine wheel and the learning rings of the tree over time and place. The photo below in Figure 23 was taken from a cultural Friday field trip, Nov. 2014. Students filled out a Medicine Wheel learning sheet. This student's experience as expressed on the sheet traverses time as we the reader look back 7 years. The words on the sheet express learning through the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional dimension while communing with nature on the land. The learner develops and grows with deeper understanding of the world as he/she matures.

This overview of the data speaks to the learning opportunities that evolved over time, empowering place as a location for voice, power, agency and tension as an educatable moment for dialogue of difference. The project was a space where diverse knowledge systems converged in solidarity to re-create innovation and change.



What Did You Learn?

<p>Receive with the mind Air element The Warrior Winter. I learned about tripping Rabbits and Set tripsy</p>	<p>Determine with the Spirit Fire element The Visionary Spring. I learned that every living thing has a Spirit. animal has Spirit.</p>
<p>Mental</p>	<p>Spiritual</p>
<p>Emotional</p>	<p>Physical</p>
<p>Give with the Emotions Water element The Teacher Summer. I learned that animal give their lives so we can eat.</p>	<p>Hold with the Body Earth element The Herder Autumn. I learned How to hang a Shrine Box.</p>

Figure 23 Rabbit snaring, Nov. 2014, Grade 6 & 7 class

The *walk through the bush* outlined in this chapter aligns with the cultural Friday schedule that students participate in on a yearly basis. This is recopied below from the Appendix 4.

Appendix 4: Community Teachings: Language and Culture: Monthly Schedule (working document)

Monthly Native Language Theme, Grandfather Teaching & Activities			
Month	Native Language Theme	Grandfather Teaching	Community Activities
September	Family	Respect	Goose camp, survival skills, gun safety, bannock making, legends, puppets, learning respect, medicine wheel, harvesting, cooking preparation, life skills, land survival, medicines for winter,
October	Community	Truth	Target shooting, partridge hunting, traditional games, hunting festival week, mittens, camping, Fall harvest, traditional foods, trapping, fish cycle
November	Animals/birds	Honesty	Target shooting, partridge hunting, traditional games, hunting festival week, mittens, camping, Fall harvest, traditional foods, trapping, traditional foods, fish cycle
December	Christmas	Love	Legends, beadwork
January	Legends	Wisdom	Storytelling, traditional games, drumming, snowshoeing,
February	Friendships	Humility	Dreamcatchers, earrings, drums, making moccasins, fishing, rabbit snaring,
March	Land formations	Bravery	Ice fishing, fish fillet, land/nature
April	Survival skills	Truth	Fire building, species identification, harvesting, spring hunt

Monthly Native Language Theme, Grandfather Teaching & Activities			
Month	Native Language Theme	Grandfather Teaching	Community Activities
May	Medicine wheel	Respect	Camping, fishing, goose hunt, ice break-up, teachings of the medicine wheel
June	Values	Honesty	Shelter building, camping

Note: Cultural Fridays: Each grade participates in a land-based activity one Friday each month

8.3 Conclusion

The review of data as presented in this chapter is symbolic of my iterative walks through the bush and is hoped to reinforce the power of place as a learning strategy to negotiate the tensions of knowledge differences within a cultural space of ethical dialogue. This is a moral stand, in solidarity and to re-awaken the voice within, and as Elder Mathis affirms, *stronger together* (2016). This is what is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 9 Chapter 9: Journey through the Data: Data Analysis

9.1 Introduction

“Indigenous knowledge systems and Western knowledge systems work off different theories of knowledge that frame who can be a knower, what can be known, what constitutes knowledge, sources of evidence for constructing knowledge, what constitutes truth, how truth is verified, how evidence becomes truth, how valid inferences are to be drawn, the role of belief in evidence, and related issues” (Gego & Watson-Gego, 2001, p. 3).

This chapter explains how the flow of the data over the years became a process of decolonization. It was a reconciling journey in my growth and understanding of how the critical forces of a dualist system of global power and knowledge creation that dominates social, political and economic relationships is perceived and taken for granted as the status quo to base successful and desirable outcomes and objective indicators to measure success in life. Deconstructing Western ideology was an interactive process in listening and rationalizing with the data as likened to a ‘bush’ and my experience to walking through it and exploring and finding a pathway through a forest. This chapter highlights a sequence, showing the flow of my journey over the 3-year data gathering period. It was a process that opened a space to exchange dialogue of difference and a re-creation of meaning with purpose and intent within the context of the local landscape of learning. This deconstruction and reconstruction process evolved in cycles and seasons through the performative actions of participants co-interacting through a community emergent learning program that was relational, local and culture based. In looking at the data over time generative themes were identified: memories brought forward, un(balance), layers of meaning, a changing landscape and lifelong learning, and the

natural tools of the medicine bag, It was in the themes that emerged and likened to my data walks in the bush that a reciprocal journey of reconciling truth differences as an ongoing exchange of dialogue emerged as pivotal to re-affirming cultural voice, resiliency and identity. As a parallel journey this mutual dialogue empowered both ideologies, as inclusive contributors for learning success that embody the tools of the medicine wheel from a lifelong and lifewide perspective. It was this ‘walk in the bush’ approach that emerged for me as one that was most consistent with Indigenous research methods, during the ongoing analysis of my own and the community’s experience. It was this approach that allowed me to grow in understanding the creative and powerful flow that is embedded in the relational teachings of the medicine wheel (Figure 2 recopied below).

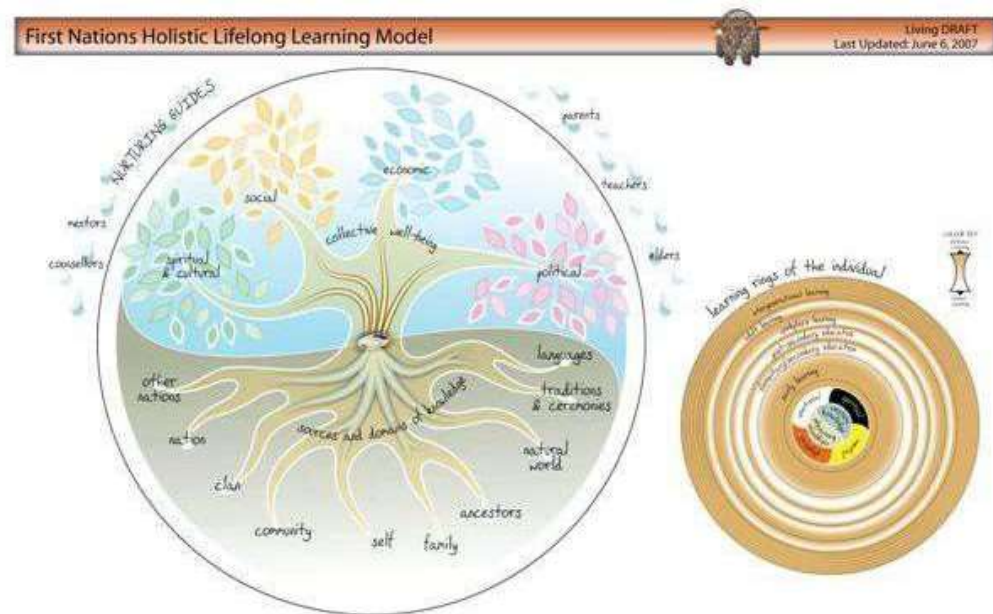


Figure 2 *First Nation Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (recopied)*

I begin this discussion of the analysis process by situating myself on the medicine wheel through a reflection note and description of my own walk through the bush. It allows the reader a greater understanding of my positionality within the

context of my experience in the process of the study as a non-Indigenous researcher and co-participant.

As I enter the bush I feel in need of reconnecting to my roots, my ancestors as I am feeling not quite in balance. Perhaps I am fighting a cold or am just restless. Once I am surrounded by the peace and quiet of the natural surroundings of the forest, my breathing calms and my senses become more alert. I can hear the sounds of nature and I get lost in my inner thoughts and begin to think more clearly putting things in perspective and coming to terms with the hustle and bustle of my daily routines. At times life can be chaotic and confusing and it is hard to know what path to follow. When I was young life was easy as I was protected and shown the way with a patient hand as my parents and mentors showed me the way but as I grew older more responsibility and burdens were given to me. Looking back, I faced my challenges using the tools that my mentors had given me along the way to guide and make me stronger and resilient to make my own decisions. Why then am I seeking solace in the bush still at this life stage, my senior years. At moments I strive for the concrete and that which is clear and explicit an easy and clear path yet at other times I pursue the path less traveled looking for that which is unattainable or out of my vision in an abstract way. What truth do I seek if not on an alternative path? I have been taught that there is only one true way yet I seek an alternative way, one perhaps that resists the objective trends of suppressive technology and easy access to scientific knowledge. I decide to take the trail to the left as I continue my walk in the bush. Feeling less confident

having strayed off the main path, I fear I will soon be lost, a forgotten soul in dense bush without a compass to show me the right way. If I had stayed on the main trail, I would have been one of many always doing the expected, instead I dared to be different and heeded an inner instinct and tuition encouraging me on. Was it my true self or the voice of my alter ego testing my resilience and daring spirit? I am tired now and cold. I stop to light a fire and as the smoke rises from the flames my eyes follow. I see a great expanse of sky and I wonder at the intricacy of the universe and the unknown fate of my being. I am thankful for the re-awakening of my sensibilities and to be a part of a greater cosmos and realize my worries are unfounded and bask instead in the renewed resiliency that I absorb from the power and energy of nature and the cosmos that imbues and embraces me. I leave the warmth and protection of the fire, rejuvenated and rekindled with a sense of harmony to continue my journey.

My walks in the bush reflect the experience in analysing the data over the 3-year cycle. It was a process of negotiating dualism in third space and rationalizing meaning to inform practice over that time. The medicine wheel grounded the process and guided the lived journey of the study in creating a space to ask questions around the raw data. Each cycle created a loop to inform change for the following year. This was a collaborative process in looking at the data. For me, my walks through the bush were an unpacking of the data, a reflection of my maturing and changing thoughts and perceptions over the iterative gathering and analysing the experience with the community.

9.2 Overview

What follows is a chart and photos to sequence the journey, conflicts and educatable moments that made up the flow in the data gathering and analysis process. Each year ended with looking back and planning for the next school year and cycle. This always included an extension to cultural enrichment or program planning. It was a process of looking back, deciding what worked well through questioning and dialogue. It was an unpacking of the data interacting with the medicine wheel to determine a holistic balance. It was a coming to a mutual understanding and interpretation of the previous year's engagement in the actions taken. It was looking at the data both past and present to come to the best decision going forward to support students in the long term. The conversation around the cultural program grew each year as we grew in comfort talking informally as a natural inclusion of more community learning overlapped the formal instructional schedule. It was connections made through the data that a growing confidence and ownership for the cultural program grew making the bricolage come alive and roadmap the study through a medicine wheel perspective. The cycles highlight a linear path to show time, action and the planning sequence of the study but it was the relationships built over this time that educatable moments emerged as a process of two worldviews converging as expressed in the artifacts guiding the study in looking for balance between formal and informal learning. It was a process of working through the tensions of two worldviews with power differentials but with a common purpose of supporting students in school from a lifelong learning perspective. Any decisions that the focus group made were written into a proposal for approval by the local education authority. It was a growing awareness for me in how building respectful and trusting relationships between the polarity of dualism is a circular flow

of interdependent connections that strengthen the ‘whole’ in personal and collective life experiences. Individual and collective wellbeing was critical in the process of stitching together the data as a tree of life metaphor.

The data represents the mapping of a progression of thought and action taken over the 3-year cycle. My reflections are often an expression of my thoughts and questions asked when there are possibilities for changes, when I can leave the ‘baggage’ of passive learning at the door and focus on the interactive learning opportunities that instil a love for learning and natural curiosity that is grounded in a culture of place and nature’s sensibilities. It was these possibilities that were unpacked in the data analysis and in doing so gave voice to doubt and confusion creating spaces of possibilities and teachable moments to reflect on the relationality of practice that models the medicine wheel framework within the context of place. It was a process of unravelling and making meaning of two perspectives by negotiating meaning to reach a common understanding or ‘wholeness’ within each cycle and trying to improve balance in daily practice in the subsequent cycles.

From a Western lens, traversing a parallel journey in learning with community, the process progressed through time and space from first, to second, and third space in gaining deeper meaning and understanding through an evolving cultural enrichment program. Table 9.1 below gives an overview of the journey as iterative cycles of theory as practice in place.

<u>Cycles</u>	<u>Timeline</u>	<u>Spatiality</u>
Cycle 1	Feb. 15, 2018 – Feb. 15, 2019	First space
Cycle 2	Feb. 15, 2019-Feb. 15, 2020	Second space
Cycle 3	Feb. 15, 2020- Feb. 2021	Third space

Table 9.1 *Iterative cycles of theory as practice in place*

This figures below are meant to give the reader a sense of the flow and sequence of the study interacting between linearity and spatiality.

Cycle one is depicted in Figure 24 to symbolize first space as a place that we all identify with home, ancestors, family and community. These are our roots of origin that we connect to regardless of social circumstances. These relationships may grow and extend as we journey through the learning rings of life stages: child, youth, adult and Elder. From a child’s perspective this is a time when life begins, is complete and whole.



Figure 24 *Webequie, 2017*

Cycle 2 is represented by second space. This is the context that the research study is positioned. The mask represents the dichotomy that exists in the world. As youth transition from childhood to youth in their life stages, questions about identity and relationships arise (Figure 25).



Figure 25 Reclaim the game, Feb. 2016

It is at this life stage that supports in learning can be implemented to support healthy achievement and development. Simultaneously, there is a mirroring of myself walking a parallel path and interacting with community, from my life stage and experience, to implement change in the school structure, to balance daily practice which is the purpose of the research study. The creator of the mask begins to see the dualism that exists in the world as a student in school. The fragmentation of Western thought from an Indigenous lens can challenge healthy growth and development. Within the context of my study a medicine wheel approach was implemented to analyse this process using the storied primary and secondary data to guidepost the experience from a holistic perspective (Figure 15 recopied below).

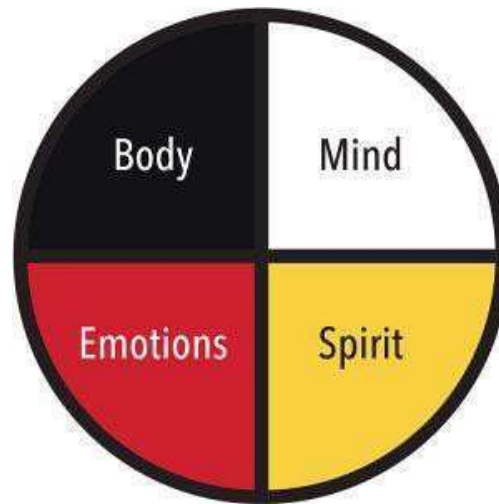


Figure 15: Learning dimensions of the medicine wheel (recopied)

It is in this space that the voices come together, exchanging dialogue from multiple perspectives. It was an iterative process, cycling through life's natural stages back and forth, with each cycle a maturation in thinking and interpretation of the diverse data gathered and analysed that by cycle three there was a deeper understanding, awareness and consensus through dialogue exchange to inform practice going forward to support students from a holistic learning lens.

My walks through the data were likened to exploring a bush – blending my sense and sensibilities with the natural environment, rationalizing the mind and heart in my everyday world. It seemed like a process of gathering disconnected thoughts and reflections and making sense of it in the 'real' experience that was captured in my years of data gathering. The data analysis was not a logical organized process but a process of troubling of the binary. It was an iterative process and as I looked at my accumulated data, I thought of it at first as my unguided walks through the bush. As I continued my walks, I created new paths where I found useful resources that 'caught my eye' – images, ideas, stories that I became familiar with, that spoke to me over time with a deeper meaning and interpretation of my journey in life, likened to the 'tree of life'. It was these statements, symbols and metaphors that had meaning and

relevance in the data that I highlighted, questioned and commented through my reflections and field notes. Some of the data I put aside yet questioned why I was doing so, noted, and in some cases came back to later if meaning and value evolved and new insights matured in my daily experiences and interactions over time. My exploration of the data was like a continuous branching off onto new paths in the bush making up the cycles or tranches of data gathering and analysis. In doing so the ideas, images and stories emerged into themes and as I questioned and commented connections started to merge across the data. I was like making connections across binaries, using my mind and heart, looking inward and outward, looking back and bringing forward, letting my mind flow to balance my well being by blending the 'good' with the 'bad'. This was an evolving awareness and deepening understanding of the medicine wheel approach and holistic lens. My analysis of the data flowed in layers both converging and diverging just as my walks in the bush and intermingling with the natural environment and its nurturing elements: Layer one became my themes and I used as subheadings within the discussion chapters. I thought of this first tranche of data or captured images as the resources I had gathered from the forest through which I was continuously walking. I made sure to note the date, speaker, and place with each bit of data – so that it almost seemed like a list of citations under a thematic heading. Then I went through and wrote questions and comments making connections in each theme. This conversation with the data was my analysis and formed my discussion headings. Some of the questions I asked in the analysis of the data were: What stood out? What did I not understand? Were issues emerging that seemed simple? Why am I making sense of the data in this way? What kind of focus or cultural lens was I bringing to it? Was there another reading or interpretation? As I wrote, I became inspired to write personally or I remembered

important thoughts, feelings around an event or a memory associated with my own learning as an educator and I added this in a new font colour. This was my second layer of data. It was my personal reflections upon the first tranche of data. This I kept with the original analysis. This process took several weeks and was very in-depth. It created a bricolage. Layer 1 was the gathering of quotations or images from the raw data gathered over years under the themes that emerged and formed headings in my study and discussion chapter. Layer 2 was the notes and questions that I made (often in the same document as layer 1 data but in a different color which was in the form of a conversation and questions about the data and where I added my reflections or analysis. I did not try to be consistent in voice. I was at times the teacher/researcher and at other times a learner asking simple questions. I at times brought in personal memories as I am also part of the story. As I stepped back from the data for a time as part of the process of this storied experience, I would ask questions such as: What has been missed? Whose voices are not being heard here? What stories are partially revealed? What narratives are given the most attention? This was an important questioning process. It was a 'looking back' at my own analysis and a checking of the 'gaps and silences'. Doing this helped to bring my attention to those uncomfortable but important areas of culture and awareness. I asked: How does my personal world influence how I have interpreted the data? I wrote about this. This 'exploration of the gaps and silences' became a very important third layer of data. It took me back to the theory and the literature review. Finally, to ensure my reading and analysis of the bricolage represented more than my own way of thinking, I took some of the statements back to the people who I worked with-the Elders, other educators, and the children themselves and asked, "This is what I remember and think. These are the stories and moments I have focussed on because they seemed

important to me. What or who have I missed? How do you recall that experience?

The community's voices formed a fourth and final layer of data and it was this integrity check that has allowed me to present my work with authority. It was my genuine endeavour to bring in 'multiple voices and ways of knowing.

9.3 Conclusion

The voices of the data enriched the words of scholars as read in the literature chapter. As I traveled and negotiated third space with the community there was a blending of both traditions. The mapping of the data from a nonlinear dimension transcended the dualism of mind vs body to loop the learning dimensions of the spiritual and social. It was the interpretation of this process using the voices of all participants that completed the loop and the circular flow of the medicine wheel tree of life. The process of how this dialogue exchange evolved is explained in the next chapter.

It was the nonlinearity dimension that embodied the lived everyday experience that embraced the data with a porous presencing of self with a natural inclusional thread between space and matter that re-affirmed place with culture and identity. It was this kind of analysis that emerged from the data by drawing on the strengths of both Traditional and Western knowledge. Aikenhead & Ogawa posit "using Traditional knowledge can allow for a perspective that is spiritual, holistic, relational, and place-based, with the goal of maintaining co-existence with nature" (as cited in MacRitchie, 2018, p. 14) whereas Western knowledge "can provide a perspective that is reductionist, quantitative and aspires to universality" (as cited in MacRitchie, p. 13). It is these attributes and expressions that are discussed in chapter 10 that gives meaning and understanding to the lived reality of everyday experience from the perspective of place and address my research questions.

Chapter 10 Data Analysis/Discussion

10.1 Introduction

Indigenous perspectives are only possessed by Indigenous peoples, although Indigenous knowledge is negotiated and understood in partnership with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Nakata, 2007)

The data analysis/discussion chapter covers the tranches or layers of data as described in chapter 8. The previous chapter reinforces that data analysis was ongoing with multiple voices to authenticate knowledge claims grounded in place and the criticality of multiple layers as a process to support student learning from an Indigenous lens. The nonlinearity of Indigenous knowledge supports learning as a dynamic process. Truth is a storied experience of life in which reality is continuously in transitions from birth to death. The discussion depicts this truth from an Indigenous lens situated in a place undergoing change with the focus on supporting youth successfully as they live and learn in two worlds. Rationalizing the dualism in a colonized world was an overlapping journey that evolved over the three years of data gathering and analysis. It is these layers of multiple voices of analysis that is discussed in this chapter in a space of re-creation and re-imaged possibilities and alternative pathways to support youth in a stronger tomorrow. There were no clear outcomes only ongoing iterative cycles of planning and action. It was never a linear progression but a spatial process of looking back, reflecting on different voices with an ethical understanding of common purpose and negotiated meaning and making sense that interwove life stages and individual experiences. It was not a one size fits all 'truth' but a process of understanding dialectics as a conversation of difference. This discussion evolved into a bricolage of diverse voices that harnessed moral and

responsible relationships that made possible space to re-create an inclusional acceptance of difference.

10.2 Prologue to dialogue discussion

It was a mutual reconciling dialogue with the data and a process of listening and being heard. It is hoped that it was a reciprocal journey of border crossing and mutual contributions from which youth will reap benefits to support their lifelong learning journey. The beginning of the dialogue and audit trail foretells the possibilities of ethical relationships when both partners are listening to each others' words within the context of place and diverse perspectives. It is a coming together in good faith and finding common interests. This chapter opens with a spirit of good intentions as quoted by the signing of a historic agreement between merging partners that theoretically holds promising possibilities for respectful relations, equal contributions, and mutual beneficial outcomes for both parties. It is a beginning of renewed hope and reconciling relations between and with diverse knowledge perspectives. In 2009, prior to the documentary tapes being recorded both parties of the exploration agreement– Noront Mining Resources and Webequie First Nation - signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), in which Chief Cornelius Wabasse stated:

This is a welcome agreement for the Webequie First Nation. The membership ...looks forward to a positive and meaningful working relationship with Noront. We are committed to this mutually beneficial partnership with Noront, who is attempting to be as inclusive as possible as they continue their exploration activities. Our agreement recognizes that activities associated with mineral properties will be best achieved when Aboriginal and Treaty rights are recognized, and

the social, environmental, and cultural well being of the First Nations are in balance with a company's objective to conduct further work on their mineral properties" (Noront Resources, 2010b, par. 4).

Noront's President and CEO stated,

We are extremely pleased to have signed this agreement with the Webequie First Nation. Noront is committed to corporate social responsibility. We want to ensure the environment in which we work and the people with whom we work are treated with dignity and respect so that they can contribute to our combined future successes. We look forward to playing an important role in the development of the Ring of Fire through continued cooperation among Noront, local First Nations, various levels of government and industry" (Noront Resources, 2010b, para. 3).

It is in the spirit of humanizing relationships as expressed in the negotiating comments above through an ethical dialectical process that a mutual understanding of difference can lead to actionable knowledge creation and re-creation possible through the "restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other" (Freire, 1970b, p. 72). The prologue represents a continued exploration, an unfolding parallel walk in challenging difference as a theory and practice in seeking pathways to live with others in solidarity through relationship building that underscore reconciling difference as a process of decolonization.

10.3 Research questions:

This chapter engages with the data that traverses time by looking back and connecting learning and knowledge gaps in a way that border crossing makes possible deeper meaning and understanding of ourselves and our world and the interconnectedness of life and learning as a continual re-formation of interactive cycles, rather than disconnected and discrete occurring events. Using the bricolage, this is compared to stitching together the ragged edges of a quilt to make it unique, complete and alive with enriched meaning and expression to build and explore alternative learning pathways and fluid connections that expand the possibilities of experience that go beyond the prescribed and restrictive boundaries of Western structural ideology. In doing so my research questions are explored by looking back and bringing forward through tools of the medicine bag lessons to be heard and learning possibilities by travelling shared parallel pathways as a common mutual alternative in knowledge creation in the 21st century. This pathway holds inclusionary possibilities that may contribute to improved Indigenous outcomes in the community but also contribute to the holistic outcomes of all students. The discussion is really a conversation with the data as a process of ongoing analysis that is grounded in the truths as expressed by the artifacts. It was through this ongoing interaction that the answers to the questions were made visible:

Overarching question

1. How can community driven learning that is relational, local and culture-based support and engage students in achieving successful school outcomes within a changing landscape?

Sub questions

2. How may the teachings of the medicine wheel benefit community wellbeing, strengthen community resiliency and sustainability through community-emergent learning?
3. What relationships are pivotal to building identity, strength and resiliency in young Indigenous learners?

10.3.1 Sub Question #4

4. How can the teachings of the medicine wheel connect Indigenous and Western curriculum in developing resilient and sustainable practices in learning and teaching in the 21st century?

10.4 Looking back and reflecting on my journey as I continue to move forward

What makes me whole is practicing diversity but not all people have the same mindset or have a conscious awareness or willingness to engage in an enriched dialogue about the layers of historical (em)power(ment) of difference and therefore complacency breeds an acceptance for labels such as inferiority, deficiency and gap (reflection notes, 2020).

10.4.1 The early years, looking back

It is my first year attending school and I am not achieving well as it has become a daily routine of telling my teacher I have a stomach ache and want to go home. I live in the country and am bussed to a city school each day. The teacher tells my parents I might have to repeat the year. My parents are worried and transfer me

to a school closer to home. It is in the country and I am given more freedom to 'roam'. The stomach aches disappear.

Before the triumph of modernity – sealed in Western Europe of the seventeenth century by the advent of the scientific revolution – people lived in constant interaction with a host of beings, powers, spirits who tricked us, protected us, quarrelled with us, guided us, taught us, punished us, and conversed with us. We were wealthy in our human and other-than-human communities (*Apffel-Marglin, 2011, p.3*).

Now, in my mature years, as an educator, learner and researcher, I continue my quest to explore the fullness of life. It is a sustaining journey that provides me the space to be curious, creative, challenged and to reminisce. My thesis is a narrative of hope and inspiration, a space for me as a writer, and I hope also for the reader to reflect on where they have come from and where they are going. It is a space of reconciling relations between people, places, and the land. It is a conversation about how a renewal in ethical relations may change the impossible to the possible in moving forward. As Linc Kesler said so poignantly, “The Indigenous connection must be made to train another generation of students, experts, and practitioners who look back on this basic knowledge about country, culture and history” (as cited in Hatherly, 2015, p. 1)

10.5 Reflections:

In this chapter, I have presented memories and engagement with what came before now by relating back and connecting learning gaps similar to stitching together the ragged edges of a quilt to make it unique, complete and alive with meaning and expression to explore with greater understanding questions such as: What is the value of these critical connections to nature and the environment that

speaks more than words? Why are these connections not validated? The reflections became natural chapter introductions, short vignettes of memories that provide critical moments of questioning the validity of lost learning opportunities of my past. These reflections that connect my past to my present context and positionality provided the space and the educatable moments to negotiate reconciling differences through my engagement with community voices. It disrupts monotheism through shared negotiation of deeper meaning and growth by bridging the certainties of scientific knowledge with the uncertainties and the intuitive knowledge and ethical ways of Indigenous people opening space for a respectful exchange of dialogue. It was a humble journey in sharing truths and privileging Indigenous voice in a space to envision a stronger tomorrow. The photo below depicts Elder Mathias holding a feather as he re-tells a legend. The feather connects the truths of past knowledge to the present and the future. The feather connects the words to nature's unfolding patterns and Indigenous connections to the land and culture. He is telling a creation story about how the bear lost his tail.



The tree is an image—a metaphorical structure upon which I shape my bricolage of data. I am part of the tree. I am on the other side of the data. As I make sense of the data, I am also gaining a deeper understanding and sense of myself and who I am in relation with community and exploring alternative pathways and possibilities for student learning. The data allows me to negotiate western dualism by balancing my own growth and life journey. As I weave in and out of two worlds, I hope to initiate curiosity in the reader to pause and reflect on the strengths of relationships and mindful possibilities and understandings that can inform knowledge production. I do not stand alone in this process of making meaning but have an exchange of dialogue of diverse perspectives that flow through the structure of the tree metaphorically depicted by the life cycle and healing process of the medicine wheel. It is similar to Mathias holding the feather and sharing knowledge with others in good relations. The tree is a holder of diverse knowledge and its growth cycles and iterative decomposition of leaves represent the deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge renewal and regrowth through time and space. It is a progression of collaborative thought and negotiated meaning. As an ongoing process, my discussion chapter is an evolving progression rationalizing first and second space within a volatile third space. It is a dialogue exchange with the data, interspersed with reflections as repetitive cycles of questioning, negotiating and making meaning of lived reality in place. It is a reclamation and privileging of Indigenous voice to gain a deeper awareness through a process of deconstruction of colonial ways of knowing and a reconstruction of alternative meanings and pathways. It is a living discussion of live as lived in a community that transcends time in ways of doing, knowing and

being. This is what Elder Mathias is doing as he passes on inter-generational knowledge to those listening as he recounts the story of the bear to the youth.

I have used the term “walks in the bush” to describe my deep exploration of the data gathered over the years of the study. It was these imaginary walks that allowed me to rationalize two knowledge systems by retreating to my past reflections and going forward to the present, and while exploring the almost irreconcilable differences of the data, glimpsing the possibilities of hope and aspiration in a shared space of dialogue. It is not the tree itself that speaks of truths and validates the bricolage of data. It is the predictive capability in reciprocal relationships that the wisdom of Indigenous connections organically embody and mirror back alternative and emergent learning pathways. These emergent relationships of intangible strength and power that exude from the data walks bridged and balanced irreconcilable differences. It is this critical thread and empowering wisdom that emerged from the data that speaks to how wisdom imbued in resolving phenomena perhaps can change the ‘simple’ truths of Western knowledge by adding a deeper layer of critical awareness that empowers a reconciling understanding of the diverse and complex realities we live.

The bricolage has guided my research in seeking balance in student learning within the context of the lived experience of a remote Indigenous community and in collaboration with community. In traveling this pathway over a 15-year journey, it has been stories like Elder Mathias that has balanced my journey and has evolved into a critical reflection of my own personal and professional awareness in exploring pedagogical possibilities in the context of how learning is experienced in relation to the situatedness of where schooling is located as a place for curious minds to explore and develop in a safe and accepting space. From a

critical, humanistic standpoint, the telling of the story using a bricolage, organically reveals the oppressive tensions and conflicts embedded in Western pedagogical ideology when negotiating difference as a process of mindful knowledge exchange and possibilities for more robust learning pathways.

My imaginary walks through the bush, as I reflected on the data, heightened my awareness as I became attuned to the richness of different learning perceptions and opportunities connected to the environment. As I embedded myself in the data, I experienced a sense of *déjà vu*, moments of looking back and reflecting on my own personal and professional learning experiences. I was able to deconstruct and reconstruct a blending of formal and informal learning from a holistic perspective that gave deeper meaning and understanding to my learning gaps. I was able to rationalize my disengagement from the formal school environment by an innate curiosity to find balance with nature and the outdoor elements. I re-envisioned my own branch on the tree and the nourishing supports that supplemented my disconnect with the status quo and often oppressive learning metrics and determinants for success prescribed by Western pedagogy. As I grew in professional awareness of the complacency undermining the dominant structures of Western ideology, I was able to rationalize the gaps in my formal learning with the rich ‘informal’ learning I received and the intrinsic value of the who and how I received these supports from. In looking back, even as I continue to move forward in my healing journey, it was the jagged edges of two worldviews colliding that were, are, and will continue to be the negotiated moments of tension and spaces that challenged my curiosity for a deeper understanding of the complex nature of knowledge creation and ownership of truth claims that define me in self actualization. These questioning moments of rationalizing a moral and democratic responsibility in differentiating between right

and wrong led me through a web of inter-connected relationships grounded in diverse knowledge perspectives. The weaving dynamics of the medicine wheel became the impetus for my lengthy research journey exploring the relational value of community emergent learning. It was the antidote I needed to make sense of my own learning gaps. In looking back, it was the caring understanding and guidance of family and supporting mentors that guided and developed my contrary nature into a resilient and resistive strategy of hope and opportunity by opening up a space to flourish in defining who I was becoming and that difference was valued by my allied others as developing my sense of identity. It was this contrariness in my way of thinking and actions that I have come to celebrate as moments of rupture and perceived truths in my personal journey and lived experiences. It has been an empowering agent, that has strengthened over the years as I traveled a parallel path of respectful relationships in learning through participatory research to be an allied other within an Indigenous community.

10.5.1 Stories of difference

It was from my reflections and data gathered that stories of difference and diversity emerged as fragmented pattern pieces and disconnections in learning. This critical awareness created the space for the stitching together of relationships that created a toolbox of possible strategies to reconnect students through their unique and storied learning journeys. This was a space of negotiation and conversation in my data walks through the bush. It was a process of reconciling walks in silent reflection, action and dialogue exchange in a space of growing trust and openness that the power and energy flow from stories was recreated, making sense of the jagged edges created by difference in a dichotomous knowledge system. It was a reconciling journey of hope and possibilities as the tensions underscoring power

relations were explored through a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of meaningful actions and renewal of Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being. It was through the diverse stories analyzed by the artifacts of data pieces that the metaphorical stitching together of the pattern pieces created a quilt representing a holistic understanding of diverse learning pathways that are lifelong and lifewide. Below is the work of a high school student expressing what the term 'resistance' means to her/him. The student's response is done through both art and words and in doing so has connected man and nature in a natural way that includes all knowledge dimensions: mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.

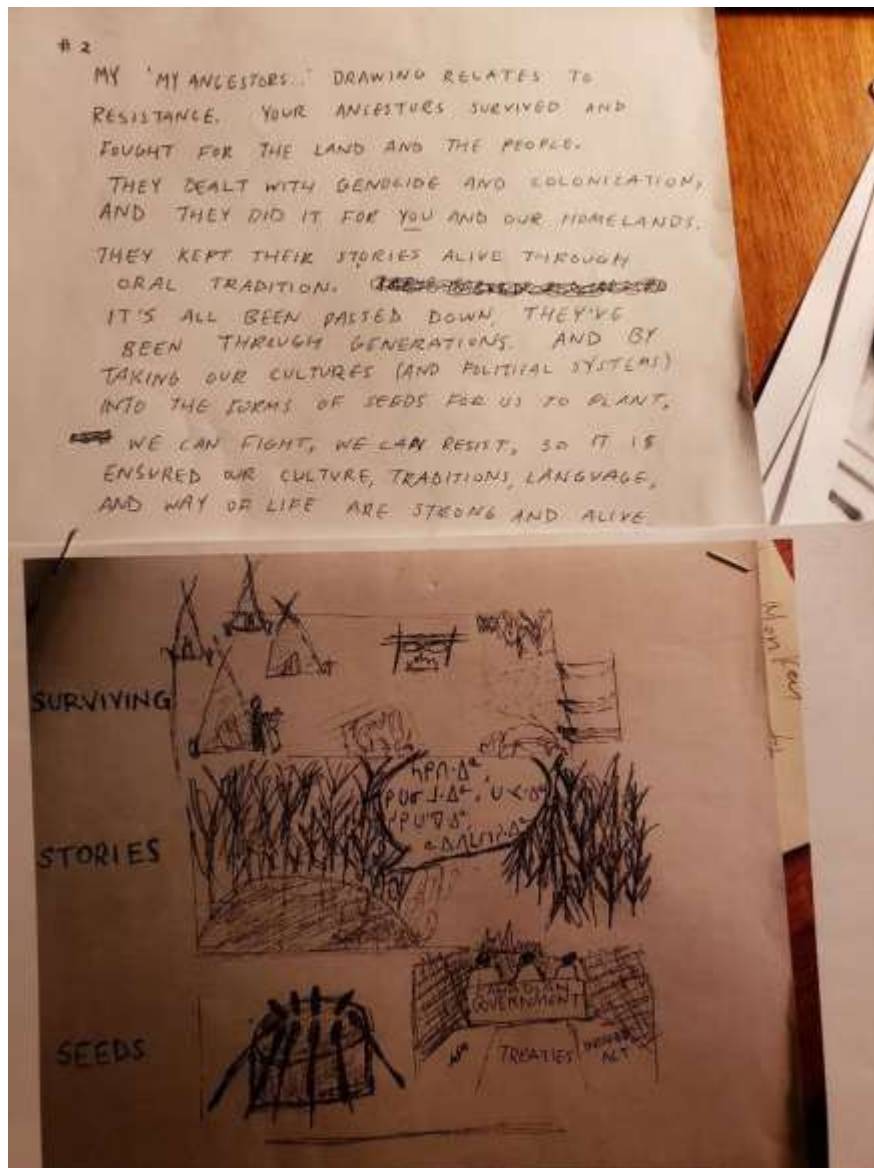


Figure 27 High school student, January 2018, Webequie

I became a bricoleur in making shared and negotiated meaning of the data pieces. These were the tools and strategies used to connect and bridge learning, creating alternative pathways in which two knowledge systems can be reimagined as a co-creation process of converging and diverging possibilities through a parallel and reciprocal dialogical relationship.

The co-creation process connected the mind, heart and body in a fluid ripple motion to re-image alternative learning pathways. Out of chaos came order in the bricoleur's quilt of diverse knowledge connections. The tree became whole and healthy in a circular cycle and process of "reclamation and resurgence, dialogue and contestation...an act of ceremony that seeks to undo and re-imagine" (Sium & Ritskes, 2013, p. 8). The connecting of the data pieces created a bricolage of deeper understanding in the power of story and how the strength of relationships grounded in place produce the tools for the creative construction of knowledge that is sustainable and resilient in its inclusionality with others. Combining sense and sensibility in the telling of a story holds great healing power for both the teller and the audience if it is done in a space of mutual responsibility and honesty. Herein lies the potential for a cycle of renewal and reconstruction of knowledge and values that support community well being (community member Mekanak, J, Nov. 2020). This growth in my understanding became clearer as I re-envisioned my personal learning journey as a branch on the tree and how through a dialectical process of knowledge exchange a clearer meaning of the fluidity and becoming of the jagged edges of the bricolage emerged. It was a nonlinear path of weaving back and forth from an irreconcilable perspective of an either/or binary relationship between Indigenous and Western knowledge perspectives to a reconcilable dialogue of 'both/and' within a

space of hope, challenge, responsibility, and with a persevering faith in humankind.

As a sense of the complimentary possibilities naturally began emerging in the storied data than the answers to my questions became a re-affirmation of the possibilities of ethical space rationalizing difference as a space of creativity and innovation in forging knowledge pathways as diverse ways of knowing, doing and being that underscore balance, resiliency and sustainability.

10.5.2 Connecting to the natural world

This immersive and entangled journey through the data was symbolic of the merganser story connecting to all elements both above and below the water as it shook its head both resisting and creating the necessary elements to soar into flight. This is the space to examine, learn and explore the complex layers of knowledge creation, to question the ownership of whose knowledge counts, how knowledge is defined, who defines knowledge and how to best make sense of meaning and ownership in defining success in 21st century education outcomes for Indigenous youth living, doing and being in a community of cultural renewal and a changing social/economic landscape. Doing research with an Indigenous community challenged my sense of curiosity and resilient nature which led to a greater understanding of how a binary pedagogy interacting within a cultural and ethical space of difference can provide the impetus to negotiate and problematize challenging opportunities for potential action through a process of critical dialogue of difference in a space of ethical knowledge exchange.

This space of interaction was an evolving cycle of looking back and bringing forward both traditional and contemporary knowledge, building relationships and negotiating common understandings for actionable learning that made meaning of historical power relations through a critical lens of inquiry in which knowledge since

time immemorial has been renewed and passed on. It is a visionary space and place for future concentrated actions and transformative possibilities for how schooling can be negotiated with a diligent awareness to the environment as a learning landscape and credible tool for place based holistic pedagogical engagement. This is a space of opportunity for interaction in knowledge exchange that reconciles knowledge differences and celebrates and validates knowledge diversity by “Learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place”.

10.5.3 Lived spaces of possibilities and knowledge validation

It is a lived space, represented by the bricolage of data composed of relationships of reconciling understandings between my own examination and reflection of my interwoven learning experiences as first space and an ethical collaborative journey with community and school situated in place within the context of a community-emergent learning experience through conceived second space (Note to readers: for more information see appendix 6, #1). The embedded complexities of dualism became visible in negotiating and stitching together of the pieces of data enlightening my walks with deeper meaning and awareness of colonial superiority and the oppressive influences of mainstream societal cultural conditioning. It was these clashes that became educatable moments through an examination of conscience and a mindful reflection of the past that a greater understanding of purposeful meaning for two eyed seeing evolved. It was from this perspective and growth in my awareness that a mutual trust and a sharing of diverse knowledge perspectives that an interruption and rationalization of power inequality emerged as a strategic and resistive stance of possibilities. Third space became a place to negotiate with purpose a re-balance of the inherent tensions between the

mind and body through the actions and

celebrations of the knowledge, values and truths as lived and practiced in harmony in the 'in between' spaces. It is in this space that a visible horizon emerged to envision adissipation of false Western myths that permeates privilege through a critical reconciling process of 'reading between the lines' and taking moral action. The student work below brings an awareness of the affects of colonization through the perception of a high school student. This is an example of an educatable moment between 'teacher' and 'learner' to discuss and dispel the myths that can hinder healthy growth and development by talking through the tensions of dualism and reconnecting to supportive relationships that rejuvenate identity and cultural roots.

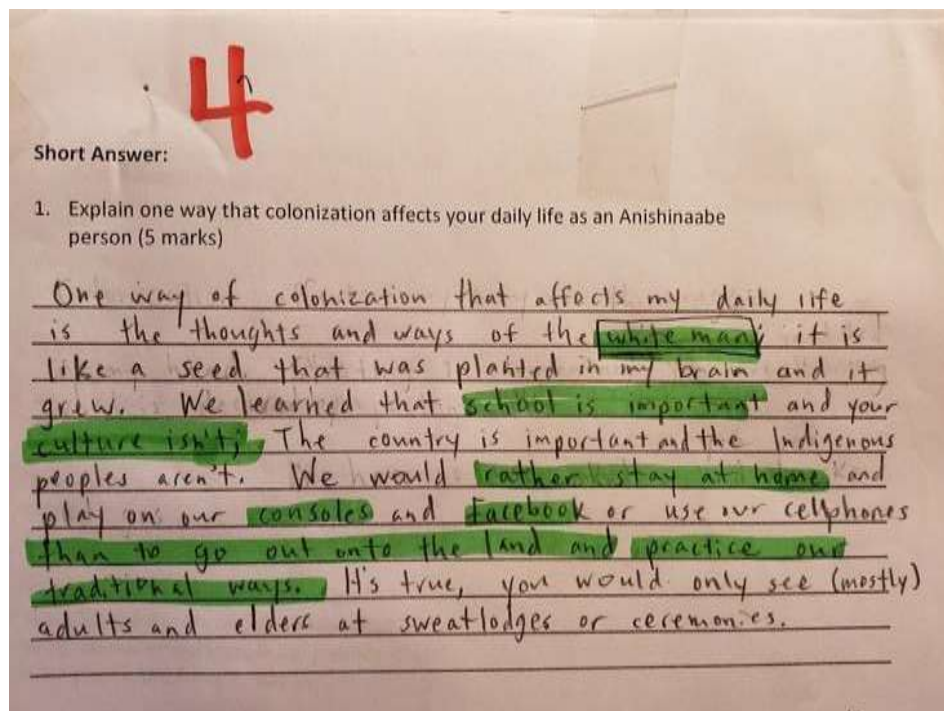


Figure 28 High school student work, January 20218

10.5.4 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

I was defeated by nature in my goal to reach the first summit in climbing Mount Kilimanjaro that day but felt elated in knowing that I had tried my best. The image of a mountain is like a resistive challenge in life in which one can be passive or take action. I came away with a renewed sense of inner strength, respect and

responsibility for the natural teachings imbued in the ecological wonders of the natural environment (Reflection, August 2018).

The power of these natural truths and the validity of this knowledge is grounded in the oral history of Indigenous knowledge and values since time immemorial. It is in the orality and living practice of looking back and bringing forward the historical legacy of ways of doing, knowing and being that survivance is celebrated and passed forward. These are the values, attributes and knowledge sources that have been suppressed and marginalized by Western knowledge ideology exacerbating the gap in reaching every student.

Silent no more as a process and change agent is an interruption and de-centering of power relations for the marginalized. It is an oral and iterative process of recounting and living of traditions, values and knowledge in cycles of renewal and rejuvenation. My walks in the bush along side the living stories and actions emerging from the data clarified and deepened my understanding of ancient truths revealed in the resilient voices and actions in relations to the wholeness of the universe. This relationality and respectful understanding of monism deepened and changed into a seamless reconciliation process of deconstructing and reconstructing the complexities of the inequitable power struggle innate in a limiting colonial structure, creating a space of dialogue for possibilities and potential change. It was in this space that my growth deepened in conjunction with community, making greater sense in interpreting the reality I live both now and in my past and with a renewed sense of hope going forward. The 'gaps' slowly disappeared as the 'jagged edges' took on a fluid shape with negotiated interpretation and meaning imbued in the data. It was this added layer of understanding that gave texture and meaning to question 4 of the study. This fluid sense of connection is felt in the mural that was drawn by students

during a leadership workshop that took place at the school in November 2016. It was an opportunity for students to experience the medicines of the traditional teachings as told by an Elder. It was a week long workshop that filled the medicine wheel branches with local culture and teachings. It was a walk in the bush in kindred spirits with nature and mother earth.



Figure 29 The Fox and the Bear Mural: November 2016, Webequie

10.5.5 Third Space

Third space is a site of diverse knowledge recognition and a space for an equitable celebration of balance and harmony in diverse knowledge creation. This inclusionary process was a demonstration of good faith, and a reciprocal understanding and ethical relationship in exploring and embracing knowledge as a caring and sharing of diverse connections in how knowledge is created and makes meaning for a sustainable and resilient future. It is a space to grow, rejuvenate, and re-generate the innate goodness and belief in humankind through a reflection on the

beauty, delicacy, resiliency and patience of a silent yet adaptive environment that sustains the place of existence to all living beings. It is a place for the grateful and ungrateful to reconcile difference for the betterment of all. Balancing the contributions of both knowledge systems as a continuous vision or becoming has been the result of my walks through the bush in tandem with the data and made possible my growth and learning and understanding of what might be if all voices are heard and listened to in ethical relations. It is these inclusionary relationships that are pivotal to building identity, strength and resiliency.

10.5.6 Bricolage of understanding empowerment as a process

Even before this study, my learning began through the process of observing, listening and gathering stories, moments, snatches of conversation, examples of students and colleagues' writings. This became a formal process and these data pieces became an ongoing and layered bricolage that has helped me to understand and learn. These interactions and exchanges of knowledge was exemplified by the holistic teachings of the medicine wheel providing the tools for me as a bricoleur to stitch together 'pieces' of nourishment for healthy growth, behaviours and outcomes as expressions of alternative pathways of possibilities that deepened learning relationships. The stitching process was a change agent for strengthening resiliency, hope, and renewal. Its empowerment lay in its inherent spiritual energy that embodied all relations: human and nonhuman

10.5.7 Seeds of hope

As a living tree, the overlapping and iterative actions of the bricolage distilled emergent meaning and understanding of the data in its interpretation and validation of the adaptive integrity of Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being with an

increasing awareness of the troubling and challenging binary at the nexus of informal and informal learning initiating the opportunity to problematize, explore, dialogue and validate the truths and values of knowledge creation within the context of community learning.

This space of visionary possibilities to pursue, learn and interpret meaningful sense making for curious and inquiry minds provided the impetus for personal growth and clarity in my self reflections over time. As I became more embedded in the natural environment, I could see more clearly the interdependence between humans and their environment. My walks became an expression of the data that connected me to the natural knowledge of the environment expressed by the data allowing me to problematize my own past oppressive learning perceptions and reconcile the gap through a greater understanding and awareness of the dualism inherent in Western ideology and prescribed pedagogy. This became a parallel walk of learning and growing together and a weaving together of the data pieces. It was this examination of diverse knowledge perceptions that third space was created as teaching opportunities and educatable moments. It became a space to negotiate learning pathways that sustain and balance healthy growth and development for Indigenous learners. The bricolage is a space of exploration. As I became more attuned to where I was in my data walks, a natural infusion of the nourishment and energy that is connected to the natural elements of the environment flowed through me providing me nourishment to grow, rejuvenate and flourish.

10.5.8 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

It became those moments of reflection that reminded me of my youth and the connectedness I felt skiing down a mountain through the powdery snow, with both a sense of calm and anxiety and anticipation and fear as I negotiated nature's natural

challenges as gifts of opportunities and accomplishment. When I reached the bottom of the hill I would re-construct my run to better adapt to the natural forces of nature and improve my skills. This was done unconsciously and intuitively – as an examination or reflection in connecting with the natural physical environment.

Looking back, I realise it was the informal learning experiences that I embraced and had most meaningful connections such as a beach lifeguard for swimmers, camping, hitch-hiking through Europe, climbing Kilimanjaro, hiking the trails of Ireland.

These were all challenging but positive learning pathways in my youth and adulthood that I navigated with my mind, body and heart – with a sense oneness and interdependence with the environment in negotiating and making meaning of my lived reality at the time (Reflection, Aug.24, 2020). These examples are weak compared to the infallible strength and resiliency I have witnessed in my research journey – for example - in the sudden passing of a loved one and the natural resilient and inseparable support of community coming together after a devastating loss. The steadfast comradery and respect for grief and hardship is core to community resistance in upholding ethical values and respectful interactions with others. The humanity and kindness of supporting one another was visibly demonstrated during Covid-19. As schools were closed, the mental, emotional, spiritual well being, health and physical survival of community was demonstrated by turning to the multiplicity and empowering relationships connected to the land. This natural process of renewing Indigenous knowledge, values, and culture is a strengthening agent that empowers truth as ways of being in both human and nonhuman knowledge dimensions. A community Elder said that the community is strongest when it works together to support the youth who are in the centre of the circle (Nov. 2020). This connection between school and community symbolizes the bridging of contemporary

and traditional ways of knowing. In addressing sub question 4, “How can the teachings of the medicine wheel connect Indigenous and Western curriculum in developing resilient and sustainable practices in learning and teaching in the 21st century, there is an emphasize on the attributes and actions that ground Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being as a legacy of survivance that mixes both Western and Traditional knowledge in supporting successful outcomes. It is a resistive strategy that negotiates balance in healthy outcomes for students to grow and develop in all medicine wheel domains and at all ages. It is a fluid process of dynamic growth and flexible change within a larger circle of wrap-around support. Bob Wabasse, cultural advisor, likened traditional knowledge to a deeper understanding of the teachings of the sweat lodge (Oct. 2020). The sweat lodge has many teachings. It is diverse and ageless spanning time, place and ethnicity. It does not judge but is open to those seeking voice as being truth in action. It is a continuum of reciprocal giving and receiving or teaching and learning that is lifelong. It provides the tools for sustainable and resilient relationships that speak to power through the interruptions of settler colonialism in reciprocal respectful relations. The medicine wheel is an image that symbolizes a circular force of strengthening layers of deeper understanding in speaking truth to power through actions of being truth to power through ethical relationships. Bob continued his analogy by saying anyone can play a guitar by learning the notes but for some the guitar and the player are in tune and harmony when the music becomes more than just notes played on an instrument (Oct. 2020).

These attributes that underscore the legacy and survivance of Indigenous ways of doing can never be mimicked by Western ideology in words or theories. It is through a process of reconciliation, in good faith, that a deeper understanding and

awareness in the power of knowledge relations is in the inclusion of a multiplicity of voices. It was in my walks and the weaving together of the bricolage as a process that possibilities emerged in third space as re-storied creations of alternative learning pathways.

Unfortunately, my formal education consisted of a series of discrete and structured academic learning compartments lacking the fluidity of negotiating the jagged edges of a binary approach that is perceived through a holistic perspective. It has only been in my later years of maturity and growth in awareness to diversity that I have come to experience a sense of becoming as a growing phenomenon of exploring the possibilities and sense of wholistic fulfilment gained from taking a critical approach to difference by consciously recognizing and interrupting the inequalities of colonial dialogue. I have come to understand that it is the wisdom of the Elders that hold and pass on the sanctity and survivance of humanity in respectful relations with an opposing and dominant knowledge system that continues to suppress the potential for diverse knowledge creation through its division of mind and body ideology.

10.5.9 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

I have come to understand that truths are more than the power of knowledge created from a scientific Western tradition. In the process of my data walks, it was the images that held the power and spoke the silent truths of knowledge. It was a moment of ah! and of being truth to power. It was more that the reality of the physical land under my feet as I walked in the bush. It was the connection to the emotional and the spiritual that came from unleashing and embracing the natural elements that surrounded me that both balanced and resisted the actions of my personal experience of doing from a Western perspective. It was this added layer of

complexity that made sense of my reality and became an empowering moment and change agent in my perceived way of Indigenous knowing, doing and being. The land became a vast web of relationships with the air, wind, water, and fire connecting me to two worlds grounded in mutual trust and reciprocated responsible actions. This is the space for inspiration and hope for all learners in navigating two knowledge systems (Reflection, Nov. 7, 2020).

10.6 In Unity: the impossible becomes the becoming

The answers to my research questions are organically revealed in the stitching together of the data revealing seamless connections to metaphorical relationships as depicted by the medicine wheel. These representations begin at the tree roots and extend to the leaves. Each tree in the forest is unique in its growth but always part of the surrounding environment, striving for symmetry in an asymmetrical reality. It is this growing awareness of the benefits and contribution of diversity that I experienced in doing participatory research with community that space was negotiated and opened up to dialogue and exchange of knowledge from a growth mindset and a two-way perspective in learning potential. This is a parallel walk exploring two worlds and balancing both in a growth continuum. The bricolage became a natural stitching together of how imbalance can be reconciled both for the individual and the collective to create a beautiful tapestry that comes alive with an unleashed freedom for learning that encourages creativity and innovation. The photo below speaks to the wonders of nature giving a sense of unity that sustains man through its connections to all the elements in the natural environment: air, land, water and fire. The students are critically engaged in building knowledge that connects their learning to the nurturing supports provided by home, school and the community.



Figure 30 *Grade 6/7 class building a tepee, September 2016*

The bricolage embraces a lifelong affinity for growth and development that balances the academic with the well being of the individual and the collective. The bricolage is a guidepost in how the bifurcation of colonisation can be stitched together in negotiating within a resilient continuum of convergent and divergent knowledge perspectives. This decolonising space gauged the potential in how ethical relationships may strengthen resiliency and identity as an ongoing relationship. It

was a process of rationalizing binarism and negotiating dualism as an exchange of dialogue

This is what my walks in the bush have taught me as I looked at the data and stitched it to the tree in a fluid manner. I saw a mirror bricolage of myself as I mapped my life journey in relation to the jagged edges of difference. In looking back, I saw myself and how I have grown over the years in self understanding and awareness of how the empowerment and validity of truth claims are an interwoven thread of personal and social constructs of communicative action and reaction that reproduces worldviews, values and culture within a dynamic changing reality in time and place. I am part of the data as an embedded researcher in my exploration for greater meaning and understanding in how pedagogy can better validate the integrity of knowledge and values that is embedded within the context of place through the eyes of those that inhabit this space and glimpse the endless potential for knowledge collaboration and contribution. The richness of the data brings the bricolage to life as its energy flows through the tree, creating concentric connections to self, man, nature and the ecosystem telling a story and, in its telling, revealing the possibilities and pathways to reflect upon in negotiating shared meaning in the daily reality of life lived and guiding ethical choices in our life world, just as the tree is connected to the earth, air and water receiving and giving off earth's ambient energy. It is the relationality of the bricolage that the unity of the four quadrants emerged as a visual mosaic of life's journey in reclaiming harmony from a holistic perspective. This is visualised in the actions and performances of third space knowledge as lived by community consciously and unconsciously negotiating the tensions of ethical relationships and common understandings that sustain a culture's identity as agents of local knowledge that is evolving as situated in place amidst the constraints of a

changing social economic landscape that is layered within the complex and oppressive forces of a global market economy. It is this awareness of the complexity of knowledge creation that community driven learning, grounded in ethical relationships with both human and nonhuman dimensions that may support and engage students in achieving successful school outcome within a changing landscape. There is a dynamic resilient dimension in the bricolage in its mystic connections between humans and the natural environment that is woven together by reciprocal and responsible ways of doing, knowing and being. There is a sense of timelessness to the themes as they are constantly connecting the past with present knowledge in a renewal process of reconstructing and rethinking relationships that give evolving meaning and purpose to the local and historic context of the research process as expressed by the varied resistive strategies that support cultural continuity and positive outcomes for the individual and collective in a time of uncertainty and economic and social change. The bricolage provides “an alternative framework[s] that takes into account the dynamic processes on many levels that may confer on the individual, communities, and whole people better prospects for survival and positive development. Indigenous concepts provide ways to approach a dynamic, systemic, ecological view of resilience” (Kirmayer et al., 2011, p. 85). It is this kind of circular flow of pedagogy between the school and the land that is pivotal to building identity, strength and resiliency in young Indigenous learners. The bricolage negotiates the ruptures in Western knowledge that fragment the growth and healthy development of the tree of life and provides alternative pathways to renegotiate the complex layers of systemic suppression of a fragmented didactic knowledge system. The bricolage depicts the flexible and adaptive nature to the changing circumstances of man and the environment offering various forms of resilience strategies “by a person’s age, sex,

education, and life history, and change over time with transformations of identity and community” (Kirmayer et. al., 2011, p. 85)

So it was in my successive walks through the bush, in exploring the flow of the bricolage that the realisation occurred in my own critical reflections how I have grown in personal actualisation and professional praxis through the distillation of the bricolage process and through living and experiencing nature’s seasonal cycles through the lens of a community renewal project. *Nature has a gentle way of knowing, predicting, and sharing its knowledge. “I have lived in Webequie long enough to know that when the snowbirds arrive, winter isn’t far off. This year a flock of snowbirds landed in my path in mid October and instinctively I thought to myself it is time to take the winter clothes out (Reflection, Nov. 2020).*

Imbued by the strength of the data as interpreted through its spoken and unspoken words, I have been renewed and empowered in my faith and hope in a just humankind that envisions the possibilities of transformation when allied others negotiate diversity through the lens of an ethical space of shared knowledge perspectives bridging difference with respect and integrity. The in betweenness and liminality of the students’ mask reveals the blending of the medicine wheel teachings in ‘reclaiming the game’ with a developing sense of moral autonomy, responsibility and understanding of self in relation to others. This is a parallel path of exploration and discovery of the possibilities and challenges inherent in negotiating two knowledge systems with a growing awareness of authentic and inauthentic being in the world as “All human beings are continually oriented towards their own potential, ...If, whilst moving forward, the standards and beliefs and prejudices of society are embraced, individuals may fail to differentiate themselves from the masses. This

Heidegger regarded as living an 'inauthentic' existence (Warick, 1970, as cited in Hornsby, 2012, p.2).

It was in the daily lived actions of the storied data that the dichotomous relationship of binaries, unequal power relations and the misconceptions of Western knowledge superiority were explored through an ongoing deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning. The bricolage was a metaphor to narrate the lived world through storied relationships as a renewal process of reconnecting and strengthening identity and resiliency. It was a parallel walk making visual, strategies of resilience that support individuals and collective wellbeing in making sense of the reality in which we live and to envision the possibilities and pathways to a stronger future by “modifying and adapting the colonial structures to their own purposes, while maintaining their relationship to the land” (Battiste, 2005, Barnhardt & Kawagley, 1999 as adapted in UBC Blog). I have come to understand the flow of the holistic model as an expression of [cultural] resilience [and survivance] in capturing the “nature of human adaptation and development across the lifespan” (Kirmayer et.al., 2011, p. 85). The teachings of the medicine wheel are grounded in ethical relationships to the land and can traject a multiplicity of possibilities to balance learning in two lived worlds. Grounded in the rootedness of community emergent learning, sustainable relationships that develop individual and community well being can be stitched on the bricolage as thresholds of alternative possibilities. These are the adaptable tools, represented as time and place, by the data that recreate images of opportunities that support, “how the teachings of the medicine wheel may benefit community wellbeing, strengthen community resiliency and sustainability through community-emergent learning”.

10.7 An ethical collaboration between school, community and beyond

In living what we have been doing as a collaborative project and an evolving school community process in renewing cultural teachings and values, I as an allied other, have come to reconnect to my own roots in a stronger way through the practice of knowledge dimensions that have been suppressed by Western ideology and pedagogy. It has been those expressions of a moral humanity that self actualise the spiritual and emotional dimension of the individual and collective that can empower change and embrace allied others to challenge relationships within a culture of place and push the boundaries of possibilities. By learning to walk an ethical parallel path with Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being as portrayed by the roots and sources of knowledge, I have been enriched in my own resiliency by reconciling difference as an empowering change agent as one that reinvigorates and reaffirms the authenticity of my own lived realities in relations with others. Indigenous ways of doing have rejuvenated me in my own humanness and perhaps more important to the possibilities of a stronger future when two knowledge systems work together to interrupt alterity and otherness through dialogue and conversation in good faith in order to gain greater understanding of the world we inhabit as one people and the association of the ontological status of others with our own Dasein which in itself, is a form of Being. Heidegger explains that Being-in-the-world is a Being-with, and that the understanding of the presentness of others is to exist (Hornsby, 2012, p. 3). In this sense, the tree is an image of multiplicity and diversity, and from my interpretation of Heidegger's concept of "Dasein" depicts, through the storied data, an unending journey in making sense of one's reality in being-in-the-world with other-ness by making space for possibilities "that indicate[s] Dasein's ownmost

potentiality-for-being, or the way in which the “authentic future” is winning itself from the “inauthentic future”. (Ginev, 2010, p. 19).

Culture defines who we are as individuals and as a storied legacy of our life is transferred from one generation to the next. Culture can be either constraining or emancipating. With the loss of the Enlightenment ideals “of a well-rounded individual and a full and beautiful humanity, forms of social organisation were eliminated and other purposes of life- spiritual, moral, emotional, and traditional became irrelevant. It is these ruptures of cultural continuity that have occurred with colonisation and disconnected the organic flow of the medicine wheel. The bricolage provides sources of resilience to reconnect and rejuvenate the roots of the tree through authentic relationships in a unifying space of difference and to anticipate the possibilities in transcending boundaries in synthesizing and making meaning of the interplay of dualism. These are the tools of the medicine bag from which the themes emerged as expressions of the data, both spoken and unspoken. The answers to my research questions are weaved and interwoven throughout the data, as strengthening agents and adaptive tools on hand and available for the bricoleur to use. It is in the stitching together of the pieces of knowledge as depicted in the words, visuals and symbols as Indigenous ways of doing and being that stories of resistance become an empowering bridging agent and unifying element in balancing the four quadrants of the medicine wheel in order to make meaning of the world and “the nature of social being, of human existence, and also for the search of practical knowledge and understanding (Soja, 1996, p.1).

A community Elder at the beginning of a legend describes Webequie before the infringement of colonial forces. The story takes place over 100 years ago in

Webequie. All the people lived in Tepees on the North Point. They lived off the land, gathering food, herbs, and medicines, trapping and fishing.

Elder Mathias tells the story:

At this time, everything was in harmony. The circle of animals was like the circle of people. This legend relates how the bear lost his tail. Bear had a long, beautiful bushy tail that he was proud of and liked to show off. Bear was hungry. Bear met Fox carrying fish on a willow stick. Bear asked Fox how he could catch fish. Fox told Bear to use his tail. Bear doesn't realize that Fox has tricked him. All of the other animals are watching to see what Bear will do. Bear sticks his tail in a hole in the ice and waits without moving for a fish to bite. Bear felt a tug. He caught a fish! Bear threw the fish on the ice. Bear stuck his tail back in the hole in the ice. The animals are excited that Bear has caught a fish! They watch eagerly to see what will happen the second time. Again, Bear felt a tug. He caught a fish! Bear threw the fish on the ice. Bear stuck his tail back in the hole in the ice. The animals are once again excited that Bear has caught a fish! They watch eagerly to see what will happen the third time. Time passes. The fish are not biting as quickly as the first two times. Bear waited a long time for another bite. Bear was getting tired and decided that two fish were enough. Bear tries to pull his tail out of the hole. The water is frozen and his tail is stuck. Bear pulls and pulls. His tail breaks off. Bear is angry with Fox and embarrassed that he lost his beautiful tail. The other animals are astonished by what has happened to Bear's tail. They gather around to comfort him. And that is the story of why Bear

has a short tail. When you hear Bear groaning in the bush, it is because Bear is still angry with Fox and sad about his beautiful tail. The lesson of the story is when we come apart, we lose our strength. Together, we are stronger. We are stronger together (Mathias Suganaqueb, Elder, Nov. 2016).

Elder Mathias is holding a feather when he tells the story so that he will speak the truth to the students in his telling with a sense of shared meaning that is respectful to all his relations.

10.7.1 Reflection on the story - Looking back and making connections

This story has become a guiding post for me as a reminder of my position in ethical relationships and respectful and humble acknowledgement and validations of truths shared by and with my relations in third space (Reflection, Oct, 2020).

Embracing diverse ways of knowing and doing and being, within the context of the daily reality and lived experience in Webequie First Nation, my data became a bricolage of intertwined knowledge sources and healing agents over the time of my research. It was within this context that my data came alive with enriched meaning and understanding of reality as a living organic entity in which the whole person is valued in context and that, by its methods, served to rationalize the dualities of different knowledge perspectives through an ethical bridge of knowledge exchange.

The bricolage negotiates the tension in the legend in an adaptive organic process of trial and error. It emphasises the importance of values in our interactions and respectful relations in negotiating difference. As I walk through the bush, I see respectful relations as the tree adapts to the forces imposed on nature from a scientific lens when there is a lack of understanding for the ‘total good’. This lack of

inclusion is a rupture point in the tree's natural environment and a space for possibilities and alternative growth pathways. What is good for man may not be good for the environment. This becomes a jagged edge in the flow of the tree's growth that requires a reflection and pause with purpose and moral intent. It is an interstice to question and exchange dialogue. This is a time to collaborate and gather in 'third space' the juncture between the roots and the trunk of the tree and negotiate the possibilities for healthy growth. This is an educatable moment and an opportunity to engage and ask questions: What kind of learning and education and schooling is needed at this point in time to best meet the needs of the individual without negating the collective? Is it the spiritual, mental, emotional, or physical dimension? What imbalance needs to be addressed at this time and within the context of place and time where the tree is rooted? What sources of knowledge and nutrients need to be explored and negotiated and what are the possibilities? What are the learning challenges and obstacles to healthy growth and development that can be overcome? What strategies can be used to adapt and/or initiate change in order to survive? What are the alternative pathways for healthy development and sustainable growth for not only one branch but for all the branches that make up the tree and the forest that protects the tree?

10.7.2 Growing and listening as I read and re-read my field notes as part of the research journey:

I asked a community mentor, a cultural advisor who guided my research journey the question: What is the meaning of the feather. I remember as I think back as he was smudging the school one morning, wafting a feather over the smoking bluegrass as we were walking in the main school hall, he spoke to me, "The feather has a beginning and an end and in between there are many veins, symbolic of life's

journey” (Robert Wabasse, February, 2020). This simple yet complex statement is an empowering thought for reflection and exchange of dialogue, in how the data is interpreted and answering the research questions. It is the interwoven thread stitching the pieces of the bricolage together, a continuous quest for truth and understanding, as the pieces become one of many paths taken in the unfolding story of the tree of life.

10.8 Thirdspace: Evolving knowledge and understanding

10.8.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

This is what the data reveals in the medicine wheel. It represents a bricolage of endless possibilities and tools to celebrate in good relations the mundane and sentient experiences that accumulate in our journey through life. It is a looking back and bringing forward. It provides the tools to ground us in place with a sense of purpose and intent that celebrates self in our daily growth and development mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically in ethical interactions with others/things.

It is the relationships and interactions within the story that Mathias tells that holds meaning and purpose for all life stages for those that listen with moral intentions. This is a story that embraces all relations-human and nonhuman. It encompasses the teachings of the medicine wheel in all directions, races and dimension of learning and development that make us whole as human beings. Life is given greater meaning when it is lived to its fullest expression by the mind, heart, spirit and body. It comes alive when feelings and emotions become a natural expression of our daily life experiences. It defines identity with a freedom to voice, with a growing sense of anticipation and empowerment of more to come, outcomes built on the evolving and strengthening agents of nutrients that balance dialectic

relationships. My repeated walks through the data reinforced my inner self, rejuvenated my spirit and sense of wonder at the delicate web of life we are all a part of, and in how the power of mindful thoughts, words, and actions in all our relations can create harmony and balance in heart, mind, spirit and body (Reflecting on my field notes, Oct. 2020).

10.8.2 A Sense of Belonging

It was this renewed strength of personhood that I felt grow stronger in my repetitive walks through the bush, both in self reflection and in analysing the ongoing collection of data both close up and from a distance, from one lens and then another and finally, with both was I able to glimpse with a sense of hope the ‘possibilities’ and the realisation that, “In the forest, no tree can stay healed unless all trees are healed” (Simonelli, 1994, p. 11). This sense of holism when you are connected to the land is both a responsibility and honour that in its nourishment of the body, heart, mind, and spirit a process of deconstruction and reconstruction begins, adding another layer of enriched knowledge imbued by the authentic teachings of Indigenous values in relation to the natural environment connected to the culture of place (Note to readers: for more information see appendix 6, #7). It is this sense of belonging within a caring habitat that embraces all the determinants of the world that reminded me of the youth on the hill during cultural week as depicted in Figure 31, a photo of students enjoying nature’s transitions and change of seasons from winter to spring.



Figure 31 *Students playing on a hill, April 2018, Webequie Spring Hunt*

Here the youth are learning on the land with a feeling of comradery, familiarity and ownership that is connected to the local community with an unconscious awareness of bridging formal and informal knowledge as they reconnect with the natural environment outside the school. In Figure 32, the photo depicts adolescents are outside but closer to the school. Metaphorically as students mature ‘crossing the road’ symbolizes border crossing opportunities for both formal and informal learning opportunities to maintain a healthy lifestyle and to engage in future educational pathways.



Figure 32 Students crossing the road, April 2018, Webequie Spring Hunt

This blend of learning begins to align more closely with the possibilities of how healthy growth and development may be sustainable when relationship transitions develop and deepen with age and maturity and a critical lens and an awareness that is grounded in questions explored such as, who am I and where do I come from and where am I going? It becomes an interwoven evolving dialogical process of how all knowledge domains as tools of the bricoleur's medicine bag can be used to support curious minds and engage wholesome and lifelong learning trajectories that are embedded in place as a space of awareness to grow and broaden horizons. By freeing up my mind, heart, body and spirit in the multiple images I was able to wrap myself around and blur the boundaries between the dualism of nature/nurture with a renewed understanding and interpretation of the meaning of place as a space to balance and bridge dualism in pedagogy through the infusion of enriched subjective and practical knowledge that can "reassert[ing] the equally existential spatiality of life in a balanced trialectic that ranges from ontology through to a consciousness and praxis that are also simultaneously and presuppositionally

social, historical and spatial” (Soja, 1996, p. 5). Reasserting the spatial in relation to the social and historic rejuvenates the criticality of multiplicity in grounding place as a determinant of identity both individually and collectively. Students crossing the road are bridging knowledge systems with a growing awareness of colonised forces as a space to decolonise, question and explore alternative pathways, values and responsibilities in relation to place as core to strengthening cultural identity and resiliency.

As a root source of knowledge, Mathias’s story is much more than about the tension between a bear and a fox, but rather an authentic method of reinforcing the historicity of Indigenous knowledge that truthfully and respectfully belies the imbalance inflicted by Western power and privilege when moral values are relegated to the margins. As a residential school survivor, Mathias’s story becomes a reconciling healing agent and for those that are ready to listen with an open and honest heart an empowering tool for voice, agency and space of tension.

10.9 The soul of humanism

I used bricolage as a method to deconstruct and reconstruct meaning from a humanistic qualitative lens to bring the medicine wheel alive likened to a tree’s lifelong journey, its natural rings and how its roots, trunk, branches and leaves work together as a whole to adapting to the evolving forces of nature in order to renew and survive its life’s span. The rings of the tree tell its own story and that of the forest within which it lives. Metaphorically, the life cycle of the tree is used to contextualize the nuances of human experiences and to better understand the lived experiences of individuals as active participants in their lifeworld with an ever expanding and conscious awareness of the social inequalities in life. The bricolage represents First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model and has guided my

research journey in finding deeper meaning, alternative pathways and richer understanding of the data in answering my research questions.

10.9.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

I envision utopia, these are my dreams, I negotiate reality, these are my lived experiences. In good relations, infinite pathways for self actualization are possible. It is in the giving and receiving in all knowledge traditions that I will realise my potential (Reflection, July 2020).

10.9.2 Diverse Tools

The tools of the medicine bag symbolize the tools of the bricoleur. Bricolage as a method is flexible, universal and appropriate for participatory action research in a variety of fields. Depicted by the evolving life cycles of the tree, it embraces all learning domains and is inclusive of both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems (Note to readers: for more information see appendix 6, #8). The tree symbolises a holistic model for lifelong learners that can be used with the local tools at hand to define success for Indigenous students and to inform sustainable practices within the environment of the lived experience of schooling.

The bricolage is creative, intuitive, with an empirical sense of criticality and awareness of the “bigger picture”. Using bricolage, provides the resistive strategies to stitch together data giving new meaning and insight as a decolonizing process for envisioning and guide posting Indigenous ways of being, knowing and doing that have extending possibilities within a 21st century education model. The bricolage is a space for moral and ethical relationships to renegotiate and contribute meaningful truth claims from diverse knowledge perspectives as a shared responsibility for a sustainable future for humankind and the planet to inhabit. It is a model to re-imagining the diversity in the world and its complex intertwined relations as one

people and to envision the possibilities of a stronger tomorrow in harmony with the mind, heart, spirit, and body.

10.10 In the beginning: seeds of knowledge

Colonization obliterated diversity in the interest of a homogenous and efficient global marketplace. The imperial powers and persuasions of technology oppress the human cries for social justice propagating human imbalance and attrition in the world (*adapted from Smith, 1984*).

In the beginning on my first walk through the bush, I was only aware of what I observed through the lens of an objective observer, a dysfunctional, fragmented view, connecting only those relationships that I saw as advantageous, using my body and mind to analyse the data I had collected. I was back in my childhood passively receiving knowledge that reminded me of a reward/punishment and dichotomous system of knowledge creation. This is what I knew as the acceptable norms and expectations from mainstream society. In other words, I was complacent in my walk. In my second walk through the bush, I closed my mind and using my senses and feelings, began to soak and bask in the beauty and delicate relationships of nature around me. These were reminiscent of my own personal experiences of freedom from the constraints a one path only dictated by a prescribed pedagogical system for academic success. The tree has a culture and energy all its own that is empowering to those that take a revitalizing breath, a subjective stance and embrace the selfless and re-energizing gifts nature has to offer. It is a silent partner, yet expressive in its actions and reactions during transition and change. It is a trusting collaborator and participator with a sense of purpose and direction for those that acknowledge responsibility in giving back and value its resilient omnipresence in negotiating survivance and sustainable practices.

Over the years of my research, my walks in the bush have deepened in meaning and growth in communion with the trees and the empowerment of their teachings and relational values intrinsic to ethical relationships between man and the natural environment. This has been a participatory process of many walks as an iterative collection and analysis of my research data composed of varied artifacts as expressions of learning experiences on the land connecting with nature as a fluid organic process congruent to the life cycles of a tree. In viewing the data discretely, first from an objective perspective and then a subjective perspective I was able to see the jagged edges of the bricolage, the missed opportunities and teachable moments for critical analysis and potential growth. It was this awakening to the diverse relationships and sources of nutrients that makes a tree whole that third space took shape. The jagged edges represented alternative pathways but with a common vision. It was a growing conscious awareness, by problematizing difference, that an empowering potential emerged and became unleashed in the unending data and the silent voices resoundingly heard. The potential for this unleashed contribution is in the ethical recognition and acknowledgement of didactic dialogue in transforming the pedagogical process and praxis. As the uniqueness of each branch of the tree is supported by the open acknowledgement of diversity in the tree's nutrients, its identity, values and attributes grow and flourish, strengthening and balancing the overall well being and growth of the whole tree and forest. This is an open system of reciprocal collaboration. In my own growth and reflection, the empowering voice of Mathias's words, has deepened my understanding of the criticality of ethical relationships of mutual trust, respect and moral responsibility in problematizing diversity between different knowledge systems, otherwise, "we come apart" (Elder Mathias, Nov. 2016). Each tree may be unique by name and require a different mix

of nutrients to support and connect the jagged edges of its branches to augment potential healthy growth and development but the purpose and intent of all the trees together is realised and expressed in ethical relationships of acceptance and understanding of difference in ways of doing, knowing and being in the negotiated meaning and balance between nature and mankind for a greater mutual good. It is a delicate and responsible collaboration between the natural ecosystem and the human mind that contributes to the survivance of mankind and the planet through a union of diversity.

10.10.1 The hidden potential of ethical relationships: a coming together

The importance of good relations with all things has brought enriched meaning for me, in the symbolism of the feather, in speaking truths passed on from all our relations. There are diverse ways of knowing, doing and being that contribute to a just and moral society but are only sustainable if the seeds of knowledge are planted in porous soil that germinate roots that can explore and grow within a mindful environment that supports and encourages an exchange of dialogue grounded in respectful, open universal and ethical relations. It was this understanding that was taking root in my third walk in which I was able to envision a space of possibilities and a becoming of ways of doing and knowing in good relations as a web of shared knowledge creation and relationship building that is inclusive and mindful of diversity in contributing to the whole bricolage. The distillation of deficit thinking engrained in western logic and pedagogical approaches to learning opened up a space of innovation and problem-solving to allow diverse opportunities and knowledge contribution.

10.10.2 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

I have been privileged to walk a parallel path and as a non-Indigenous ally, have ethically and humbly crossed borders to grow and learn. This has been a personally enriching and empowering reconciliation in body, mind, heart and spirit that has brought greater balance, validation and integrity to my lifelong learning journey with new understandings and guideposts in ways of doing, knowing and being with all relations in humble recognition of the social integrity and validity of Indigenous knowledge systems (Reflection, Aug. 2020).

My third walk was not divided into binary and discrete opposites but inclusive of all knowledge contributions: mind, body, spirit, and emotions. From this lens, I could envision and problematise the dynamics of the living tree in its negotiation of relationships as a dynamic process of the mind and heart cohabitating as one. It was a process of deconstruction, and reconstruction of meaning that constantly is forging a balance in the everyday reality of life. Stories are interpretations of the reality we live and the social interactions that give meaning and purpose to what and how we come to know. Mathias's story is inclusive of all relations that give intentional meaning to identity and resiliency in respectful relations and interactions between man and his environment. It is inclusive of the mind, heart, body and spirit. Mathias story spans time and ages with an evolving sense of both the secular and the sacred connecting the past and future with a fluid energy. It is intergenerational knowledge that has meaning for all ages and all humankind who are willing listeners, mindful of diverse sharing of knowledge and enter respectful relations within diverse social, cultural and historical contexts. Mathias's story is open to diverse interpretations with equal access to Indigenous and Western traditions.

10.10.3 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

I have been guided by the medicine wheel: it holds a sense of mystery, wonder, and continual fulfillment and endless possibilities for both the individual and collective well being. There is a ripple effect that is always moving outward, looking beyond and gazing at the horizon and the dreams of a stronger future through an ethical recognition of diverse knowledge contribution.

It is in the letting go and pushing personal boundaries of uncertainties that the intersections in our everyday curiosities and quest for meaning become more than possibilities, dreams, and visions for personal and hopeful collective social action (Reflection, Aug. 2020).

10.10.4A Reminder and a Review of ethical knowledge creation and trusting relations: Whose knowledge is it?

As an Elder advisor, Mathias, through his stories, connects youth to their roots, heritage, values and identity. These are sources and domains of knowledge as depicted on the medicine wheel and are the roots of knowledge. The tree's roots provide the nourishment that support healthy personal development at any stage of life. This is depicted at the intersection of the tree between the roots and the trunk. This is where the learning rings of the individual obtains nourishment to develop a healthy and balanced life emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally as the individual experiences, explores, and travels life's learning journey. Mathias plants a new seed in every story he tells to re-rejuvenate strength in the roots and trusting relations in sharing evolving truths and as a reminder that the medicine wheel is cyclical, organic and fluid in its dynamic relationality. The evolving nature of the tree represents its empowering potential, continuity and survivance. It is a reminder that there are diverse tools in the root system to support and strengthen the

individual's learning paths in all directions and in evolving relations to time, place and space. These tools extend and embrace formal and informal learning, teachings in the school and teachings on the land. The bricolage is not static but dynamic and flexible in negotiating and rejuvenating supportive relationships in both knowledge systems as knowledge contributors and owners of the necessary nutrients so the learner will flourish in his developing mind, heart, body and spirit, a process of balancing and strengthening identity and well being. The web of relationships that support knowledge creation is inclusive of Indigenous and Western knowledge systems as represented by the 4 colors; yellow, red, white and black symbolic of diverse cultural identities and Knowledge Keepers and symbolizing a collective contribution by the human race: The planting of seeds symbolize the possibilities of the cumulative potential and nature of knowledge creation as a continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of evolving relationships that embrace all knowledge domains to meet the needs of diverse learners at different life stages as depicted by the learning rings. This is a blending of both the positivist and constructivist paradigms within an ethical space and moral stance of pedagogical equality that advocates through action and diversity so that 'every student counts'. It is more than the duality of theory and action. It is a negotiation of the jagged edges in cultural space and ethical dialogue. It is theory in action. It is a visible doing, knowing and being of diversity in education. It is a fluid leveling of the playing field that celebrates a reconciling, decolonizing process of theory in action. This is an ethical negotiation that accepts and celebrates diversity and embraces a reconciling process as the uniqueness of each child.

10.11 Re-Storied: Thoughts on data findings

10.11.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

It seems like one piece of data whether it be a photo, transcription, reflection, field note or story-are all inter-related, cyclical and span time. All demonstrate elements of decolonization strategies- strategies that are inherent in Indigenous ways of knowing and doing, the everyday realities of negotiating inherent rights of self determination and preservation that paints a picture or mosaic depicting strength, resiliency, empowerment and resistance (Reflection, November 2019).

10.11.2 Re-Storied:

As I look back on this reflection and gaze from a distance, I see the medicine wheel as a web of relationships that cannot be analyzed and picked apart. It can only be lived and relived, experienced in all its dimensions – a unifying whole- in constant motion. This is the re-storied reality of looking back, bringing to the present, and moving forward, blending the uncertainties with the certainties of a community undergoing constant transition and change. It is border crossing with distinction. It is a process of negotiating the jagged edges between the traditional and the contemporary as a decolonizing process of daily living that is grounded in exploring relationships. This is an ethical space of reconciling opportunities and possible transformations in ways of knowing and doing education in place. Embracing the duality of both knowledge systems at the intersection between the roots and the trunk of the bricolage is what gives the added layer of complex meaning and interpretation to the data/artifacts. This added layer of meaning is fluid, lived and passed on. It is inter-generational Indigenous knowledge. It strengthens and maintains the rooted values and attitudes that are constant and core to community's identity, culture, resiliency, sustainability, and resistance - that is the golden thread of the bricolage. It

is these attributes that sustain order amongst the chaos in negotiating binary knowledge systems and bridging the jagged edges – a becoming as in a vision of working together as a whole. It is these attributes a visionary possibility that strengthen the thread of ethical relationships and that underscore cultural survivance and are imbued with moral and human values of justice and equality that weave through the storied and re-storied data situated in place in a space of uncertainty. The medicine wheel is an ageless framework of antiquity and is a cyclical and natural process, with a conscious awareness and active embracement of the complexities involved in the ethical negotiation of relationships. This is the third space of dialogue exchange to envision the possibilities for transformation in twenty first century pedagogy.

10.12 Collective Knowledge

This was a learning process that has given my research enriched meaning and understanding of the opposing forces between man and nature in the validation of truth claims. It is, perhaps, at its core a misappropriation/appropriation, unconscious/conscious misunderstanding/understanding in the unethical/ethical determinants of ‘Whose knowledge is it? It was in the collective participation and the social interactions of diverse knowledge exchange that the knowledge holders embrace sanctity of humanness became visible in the research as a process of constantly questioning and challenging assumptions. The validity and truth of my research are in the everyday lived actions of the data. The artifacts are alive with meaning, truth and rich knowledge from time immemorial. The artifacts are the golden thread of ethical values that have evolved from the past and lives on today in the stories and actions of the community as an empowering agent defining self and that resiliently negotiates the collective rights and sovereignty of cultural survival

through a renewal and strengthening process of dialectical exchange. It is alive in the ethical actions and words and photos as storied and re-storied authentic truths for those that possess the integrity, courage, and moral responsibility to challenge a pedagogy that restricts the advancement of diverse knowledge that defines and perpetuates personal identity and collective survival without penalty, in a space of cultural and universal possibilities of being and becoming. It is in third space that this learning awareness and opportunities to rejuvenate universal values and standards of moral actions that promote diverse pathways can be explored and probed without penalty and risk of being labelled as inferior knowledge as exemplified by a hidden curriculum that espouses cultural imperialism. Perhaps, it is the shaking of the merganser's head that is a constant reminder of the uncertainties in life or the jagged edges for all of us that I quote Norbert Wiener, "It is the pattern maintained by this homeostasis which is the touchstone of our personal identity... We are but whirlpools in a river of ever flowing water. We are not stuff that abides, but patterns that perpetuate themselves" (Weiner, 1954, p. 21). The merganser that is a wild waterfowl that lives and fishes in the still cold waters of Canadian lakes thrives in his creative and adaptive nature to fluidly cross spaces in reciprocal relations to bridge binaries of uncertainties and certainties. My interpretation of this quote exemplifies the negotiated tensions between opposing forces striving for order and balance amidst chaos. Indigenous ways provides the divergence to practice culture in place and also as a tool for knowledge systems to converge. Third space provides continuous exploration and search for a deeper understanding that allows for a renewal of meaning and understanding associated with the morality of knowledge, power, and privilege (Li and Zhou, 2018; Green, 2007). Both Heraclitus and Bertalanffy expanded on Wiener's vision of homeostasis in proposing an open

system and an exchange of matter and energy with the environment “in complex ways to reach a state of dynamic balance. Bertalanffy coined this open system, “Fließgleichgewicht” translated to “an equilibrium of flux” (Wiener, 1954).

Indigenous stories are powerful metaphors that exemplify how all knowledge systems working through a web of relationships connect diverse expressions and ways of knowing within a practical and thought-provoking story. The strength of these relationships both within and between knowledge perspectives is reflected by a healthy balance in the learning development of the individual - the dimensions of physical, spiritual, mental and emotional - by giving both teachers and students the space to critically think about and reflect on “their educational situation, which allows them to recognize connections between their individual problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they are embedded” (Freire, 1970b). It is the optimization of the whole tree as a living organism and the consequences of fluid relationships that advancement of knowledge is sustained. This is metaphorically represented by the tools of the bricoleur.

10.13 Review of the bricolage:

The web of relationships does not have a saturation point only a continual renewing of the innate energy within self in pursuing an insatiable curiosity and quest for knowledge in realizing individual potential. Entry and exit points are fluid and evolving as Horton and Freire argued, “If the act of knowing has historicity, then today’s knowledge about something is not necessarily the same tomorrow.

Knowledge is changed to the extent that reality also moves and changes. (Horton & Freire, 1991). There is a stagnant risk in preserving identity as being and that which is taught as prescribed knowledge in mainstream pedagogy. Finding a balance in this dichotomous journey is in the in between evolving spaces of the bricolage in

negotiating through and with the jagged edges of diverse pathways of relationship building and by envisioning and exploring alternative possibilities that balance the inherent rights of learner diversity and moral accountability. As a student poetically wrote,

“One night wondering in the dark trail,

with the bright moon light gazing up at the stars.

Out of nowhere a presence so near to me,

watching my every move.

And if only someone had the chance to witness what happened to me.

As I danced with the dead,

My free spirit was laughing and howling down at me” (04/2014).

It is these imaginary opportunities to voice and speak of the possibilities of alternative knowledge pathways that draw on place and lived reality that empower multiplicity and agency to resist the hierarchal structures and bridge the complexities of binary opposites so that both laughing and howling are possibilities in a fluid structure of jagged edges and a shifting reality.

The sources and domains of knowledge depicted by the roots of the tree include languages, traditions and ceremonies, natural world, ancestors, family, self, community, clan, nation and other nations. Third space provides the setting to interrupt and question the erroneous assumption that one size fits all in learning which stagnates possibilities in growth, development and self determination. As I look back and reflect on two pieces of data, the importance of community emergent learning becomes relevant to my research. In a piece of grade 4 student work as

depicted below (Figure 9 recopied), the respect for nature teaches students the importance of values and responsibilities connected to the gatekeepers of the land. There is learning from diverse knowledge dimensions in connecting with land based and community driven learning that would not reap the same benefits and outcomes from formal classroom learning. The data reveals a balancing perspective that bridges the in between journey between life and death and howling and laughing. It privileges tension inherent in Indigenous voices by negotiating dualism through the lived experience of space that is local and relational This is an authentic way of learning within a culture of place with the possibilities of rooting a strong sense of individual and collective identity anchored in Indigenous ways of learning through participating with natural knowledge. It is a space of deeper understanding in honouring one another and respecting life both inside and outside of the school.

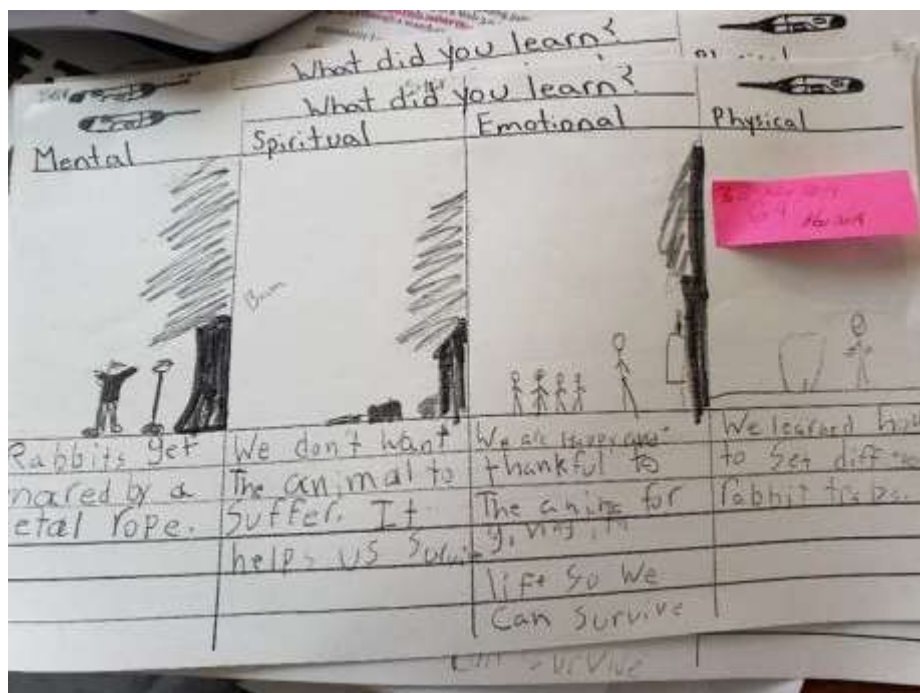


Figure 9 Student work, Grade 4, Nov. 16, 2014 (recopied)

An uneven root growth can challenge or de-stable the holistic development of the individual and the collective principles and practices of a community. This

awareness and pause of indecision between betrayal and allegiance requires a safe space, without penalty, to listen to the real stories of diverse learners and not just the ones that are expected and prescribed in institutional policy and formal classroom practice. Student learning is an inquiry provocation and a coming together of two worldviews, as an organic exploration of the uniqueness of self. It is a process of how parallel worldviews can be re-imagined in new ways of moving forward in life. To overcome challenges and barriers in life's journey, the learner competently and naturally draws on or is supported through the sources and domains of knowledge in collaboration with the 'nurturing guides' represented by counsellors, mentors, parents, teachers and Elders to provide the knowledge supports and caring strategies to re-stabilize healthy relationships and learning pathways along the way.

10.14 My emotional bond with the planet

10.14.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

As a non-Indigenous administrator, I have been programmed to maintain standards and to strategize how to address deficits in academic learning through an outcome based standards' approach to learning. I have come to realize that success is not only about academic potential as measured quantitatively but is connected to the social reality as perceived and lived within time, space and place. It is an emergent knowledge system embedded in the complex relationships of human and other than human that speaks "of a sense of unity between nature and humans" (Inoue & Moreira, 2016, p.15). Indigenous knowledge embodies the social and the more-than-human world which articulates a spiritual and emotional harmony which is a lived wholistic approach as "a complex network of interrelated parts, of systems nested within other systems" (Stevens, 2012, p. 581) (Reflection, Nov. 8, 2018).

The medicine wheel represents a bricolage of tools and strategies for community and school to implement and to renew relationships that were disconnected when “everything changed and it became the white man way and not the Indian way” (Matthew Jacob, 2014, Mikawaa). “The education system came in and everything was altered” (Ananias Spence, 2014, Mikawaa). The medicine wheel provides the tools to reconnect severed relationships and oppressive experiences between two knowledge systems in which direct instruction and constructivism are often seen as mutually exclusive poles in education. Relationship building nourishes the tree roots, strengthens individual well being and is exemplified in the leaves by a healthy collective social, political, economic, and cultural well being. It is a collective learning experience. It is a symbiotic relationship in which the whole system is connected to a multitude of learning sources grounded in a lateral root system providing a “self adjusting personal learning network constructed by the learners themselves to meet perceived and actual needs” (Lian and Pineda, 2014, p.22) As a dynamic structure the leaves re-rejuvenate the individual’s learning cycle with new strength and harmony as students grow and develop. This recursive cycle and lateral root structure in the planting of new seeds bridges agency and social structures strengthening identity as an evolving process over time and space. It empowers place based agency giving voice in third space to open a dialogue that “embodie[s],. more-than human movement along the ‘trails’ or ‘paths’ of lifeworld, and understanding of knowledge that has progressively been lost to humanity” (Larsen & Johnson, 2017, p.27). Community emergent learning becomes curriculum as a fluid thread and an “expression of the interconnectedness of life” (Canada Council on Learning, 2007). You cannot separate the knower from what is to be known. It is an active relationship of practice and negotiation of meaning. As a bricolage, it is a textured and

celebratory action of doing and sharing of knowledge and negotiating purposeful meaning by deconstructing and reconstructing new and evolving meaning in mindful relationships with all sources and domains of knowledge.

10.14.2 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

I have experienced this in walking in the bush with and among nature. It is a respectful acknowledgement of a giving and receiving in a reciprocal relationship between man and nature and if negotiated in a spirit of good faith can be expressed in the collective creation of sustainable knowledge and values that benefits humanity and the planet (Reflection, Oct. 2020)

10.14.3 Up Close and Personal

A community teacher once told me that the Elders never used the medicine wheel as a physical map to guide them. They lived the medicine wheel in their everyday experiences. It was in their actions, working together as community and in their oral stories that guided the way and informed knowledge creation as re-storied knowledge from generation to generation. This is the empowering agency of place-based knowledge acquisition and its natural resistive tendency in perpetuating a decolonizing process. This becomes a lifelong journey and alternative learning pathway that is a generative oral legacy of resiliency and survival.

10.15 Without Practice there is no knowledge (Horton and Freire, 1991, p. 97)

Every child is competent and capable and deserves to feel that what they know and how they come to know is validated as an authentic experience and truth claim. Western science is discrete, compartmentalized and reductionist. Indigenous knowledge is circular, fluid and relational. The medicine wheel expands the

contribution and value in knowledge creation through its diverse sources and domains of knowledge. It negotiates the dualism in Western ideology by balancing healthy growth and sustainable relationships for Indigenous learners. This is done in respectful and ethical negotiations of relationships and is inclusive and open to all learners. What is required for Indigenous learners to develop resilience, identity and well being is as diversified as non-Indigenous learners but what is critical is grounding pedagogy through the lens of the learner as a starting point and then extending their learning relationships and experiences using diverse sources and domains of knowledge, supports, and guides as represented by the tree and guided by the balancing principle. Achieving a balance in an individual's learning experiences is unique for every learner and ultimately depends on the right 'mix' of relationships within Indigenous and Western traditions. Finding this balance is manifested in the individual's holistic development in all dimensions that mirror self as part of the reality they live, interact and experience life and as expressed in healthy behaviours within their emotional, physical, spiritual and mental well being. This is continually changing and evolving as the learner progresses through life stages. It is lifelong, circular and evolving like the cycles of the tree adapting to the social, political, economic and cultural forces of the environment.

The learner's relationship to the natural world is a grounding relationship for Indigenous personal and collective well being and potentially beneficial to all learners as all knowledge sources and supports are reflected and equally valued as sources of nutrients in the tree's roots. The inclusive nature of both knowledge systems as depicted at the juncture of the roots and trunk enriches the fluidity of everyday experiences by negotiating the contradictions of a binary ideology. This is vividly brought to life through the use of a bricolage as a resistive method to show

how learning experiences intertwine both knowledge systems in negotiating a balanced learning continuum for Indigenous learners at all ages and life stages. This bridging of the animate with the inanimate or the human with the nonhuman is seen in the dynamic flux and asymmetric nature of the data as it acts as a voice of solidarity and responsibility, breaking the silence rooted in hegemonic forces with a reinvigorated strength that threads and connects relationships that support a monistic approach to creating knowledge that aligns with an organic understanding of diversity. This approach to understanding reality “aims to overcome the limits of both reductionism and holism by integrating them into a wider perspective” (Mazzocchi, 2006, p. 465). The data speaks, with an empowering force of agency, the immanent nature of possible relationships to all things as being core to embracing a critical pedagogy and philosophy for a sustainable 21st century pedagogy. This ‘affective’ element of possibility and hope is the third space of dialogue exchange as interpreted by the bricolage of data that threads the continuum of connections and relationships expressed by the wisdom and intuition between youth and Elders. The tools of the bricoleur act to bridge the dualist nature of hegemonic pedagogy with a monist approach by threading together, through the exchange of dialogue, the tensions inherent in the power/agency divide and allow a rethinking of the traditional divide between objectivist and constructionist approaches to learning with a critical stance that asks the questions, “Who is doing the learning? What connections is the learner making? What perspective or lens is the ‘teacher’ using to assess learning connections? Who is doing the teaching? What is the relationship between the learner and the teacher? And perhaps the most important question, Is the learning mutual so that difference is the focus to create a space of innovation and transformation in the learning journey? In this way, the educational process

“involve[s] critical consideration of the complex interplay of human and non-human entities” (Tillmanns et al., 2014, p.6).

10.15.1 Authentic Learning: teacher learner relationship – Teacher Mindfulness

Community emergent learning can visibly explore and ask questions about the contradictions in binary knowledge creation, by providing an ethical space for learners to explore diversity in knowledge systems through shared stories of experience and to negotiate meaning through deconstruction and reconstruction of the reality as lived in place, where learning is situated. This is a critical stance in which learning is grounded in the traditions, knowledge and values of a culture of place through “practices and representations that describe the relationships of living beings with one another and with their physical environment, which evolved by adaptive processes and has been handed down through generations by cultural transmission” (Berkes et al., 2000, p. 1252). As a touchstone and starting point for learning and inclusive pedagogy to unfold, it provides the space for the individual to grow, develop and create meaningful knowledge awareness and relationships that reinforce identity, resiliency and growth in the learning journey inclusive of both tacit and explicit knowledge. As knowledge creation is a dynamic evolving process, it is critical that learning relationships be reciprocal and mindful of diverse meanings and ways of expressing and interpreting knowledge by questioning and problematizing pedagogy from an assimilationist perspective. An unhealthy root growth can deter the learning trajectory of the individual. Elder Ananias explains about change in the community saying, “[the] government took over our way of living, our livelihood, everything was altered and I began to see the changes in the behaviours and the lifestyles of our people. That is where the challenge is-of Western

thinking and the way of thinking and acting with the world, the civilized world. When you combine our beliefs, the oral tradition – it’s really hard to instill the language and all the culture. I think we need to understand -that to really understand what’s happening, to know the importance of cultural clashes” (Elder Ananias Spence, 2014). These are the clashes and conflicts that become the educatable moments and provide a space for the re-honouring of Indigenous knowledge, values and beliefs- practices that have been in existence since time immemorial. This is an ethical process of reconciling a colonial structure and imbalance in power relations. It is a recognition and re-mapping of the history and social integrity of cultural identity.

It is in third space that the convergence of settled and settler exchange of dialogue provides the bridge to thread the jagged edges of the bricolage into a cohesive whole of shared understanding in how knowledge can be created and recreated in the best interest of the learner in navigating their learning pathways. The bricolage provides the space and opportunity for shared knowledge sources through Indigenous storyscapes that “continuously immerse[d] in coexistence with diversity of places altered by European settlement” (Baker, 2020, p. 2). Bridging the negative with the positive, aligns with a monistic perspective that threads and flattens the social structures of dualism, breaking the silence through the truths of the words, actions and stories expressed by the data. The thread has been reinvigorated through community emergent learning as a decolonizing process in deconstructing the opposing forces of dualism. This is not an assimilative process but an evolving process of authentic cultural voice and knowledge survivance of Indigenous ontology and epistemology in relation to place.

10.15.2 Negotiating the challenges and roadblocks

When there is a disconnect between self and way of knowing, binary forces take over and what was stable becomes unstable and empowerment becomes disempowerment. Identity becomes blurred and sense of identity and place lose meaning as relationships become weakened and in cases the thread severed. Awareness of the political historic context of cultural clashes can be supported through both tacit and explicit sources of knowledge as expressed by the roots of the tree. The bricolage of artifacts demonstrates the process of ethical negotiations between two parallel knowledge systems in accommodating learning experiences that support holistic balance in the learning continuum.



Figure 33 DareArts, Feb. 2016, Webequie

As depicted in Figure 33, a youth often see dichotomies as either good or bad or light and dark and not the space of hope and opportunities in between. This is the problematics of Western ideology and curriculum that is grounded in a hierarchical

social structure that proclaims a “universalism that paradoxically permits diversity masks ethnocentric norms, values and interests” (Bhabha, 1990, p. 208). Without strong grassroots and a support system, a sense of inferiority and vulnerability will permeate the learning spirit. Darkness outweighs lightness and a feeling of complacency may be internalized to fill the void. The medicine wheel provides the teaching tools to address these challenges and roadblocks in one’s journey in life. These challenges are life’s lessons and all life’s lessons, good or bad are learning experiences that shape and guide one’s learning journey. Its sources of knowledge and supports are overlapping and diversified. It is these sources and domains of knowledge that can nourish the learning spirit and sense of self and community by providing the kinds of knowledge sources that negotiate balance in relationships between the inner self and the external opposing forces thereby reaffirming cultural identity and voice, enabling students to make sense of the dualism in diverse knowledge perspective. This is depicted in Figure 34 in student work that provokes discussion using the four knowledge domains of the medicine wheel assessment tool in making connections to both the land and the internet with respect to learning strategies. It is like a weaving of traditional and contemporary knowledge to make sense of a constantly evolving reality.

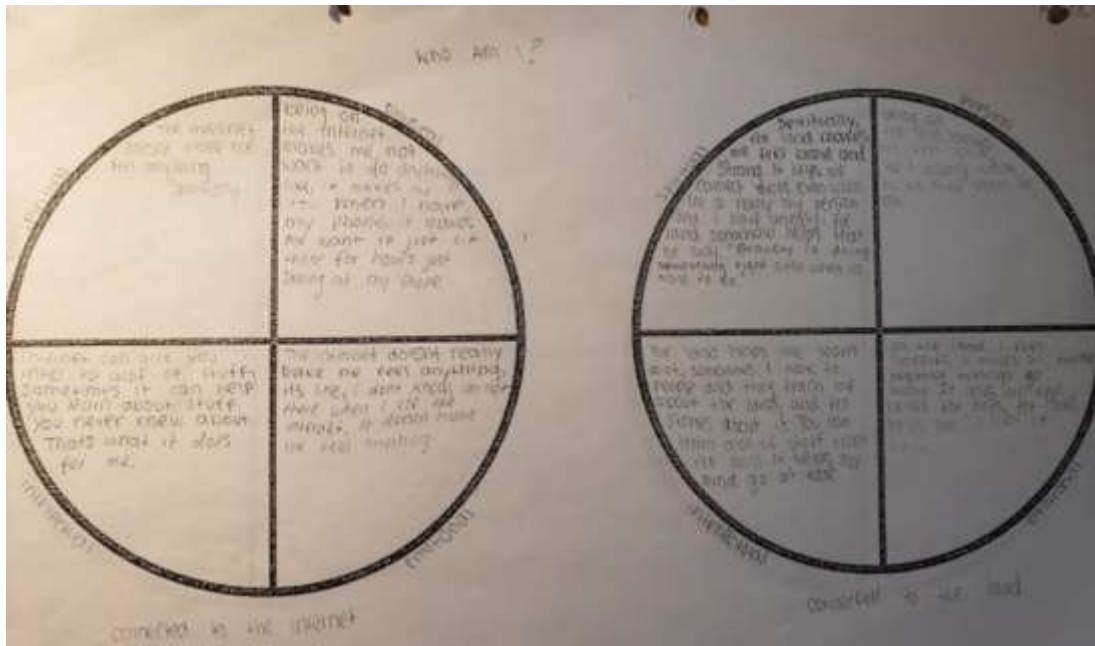


Figure 34 Student Work, Sept. 2018

The holistic learning model is a dynamic living framework constantly in flux providing adaptive tools to support balanced learning.

10.15.3 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

Metaphorically I have come to think of it as a healing agent for broken relationships. As one travels through life, relationships evolve and renew as an unfolding map of actualization, and alternative possible pathway to fit and align to the diversity of life's jagged edges. This is a fluid process (Reflection, September, 2020)

10.16 An evolving practice in exploring the jagged edges of difference

Discussing binaries is a critical teaching moment in contemporary education. It is the opportunity to explore reconciliation within the political historic context and within the framework of the medicine wheel using a bricolage of artifacts that support inclusive and healthy learning relationships for Indigenous students. This becomes a reciprocal collaborative effort in reconciling difference in an ethical space

by negotiating meaning and gaining understanding of cultural clashes and border crossing relationships. Community learning reinforces the root growth, rejuvenates and reconnects severed relationships and reawakens the inner self that defines identity and perpetuates well being within community.

Bridging difference is a complex and nuanced process. Negotiating in good faith and an understanding of reciprocal benefits to extend and diversify learning practices, requires a mutual relationship of purpose and intent. For a bricoleur, the tools for healing or actualizing begins with self, answering the questions, “Who am I? Where do I want to go in life? How will I travel toward my destination? From an Indigenous perspective this in relation to all things. *Crossing borders, from my perspective, has enriched my healing journey and sense of self actualization by expanding my learning horizon in relation to all things in ethical negotiation of meaning making, in good faith, and building trusting relationships. Crossing borders has rejuvenated my sense of self and honoring the goodness in mankind (July, 2020).*

Border crossing adds a new layer of textured meaning to the bricolage as the sources of knowledge and supports may be diverse and nuanced in negotiating balance in learning experiences so that students achieve optimal social outcomes. The centre of the learning rings depicts ‘self’ and as the rings extend outward the complexity and supports become more fluid and jagged demanding a more conscious awareness in negotiating appropriate relationships that bridge the gap between roadblocks and opportunities. Rather the dialogue becomes one of approaching roadblocks as challenges to be navigated and overcome as a critical process in navigating life’s goals through relationship renewal. I reflect back on my words at a student graduation, “All of the challenges and rewards you experience in your daily life become a roadmap that guides and strengthens your determination and curiosity

to continue your learning journey and to explore the many opportunities and choices open to you that give you a sense of meaning and fulfillment in what you do in life” (Reflection, June 2019).

10.16.1 Alternative Pathways: Border Crossing possibilities while maintaining individual and collective identity and well being

Always being guided by the centre of the medicine wheel -at the junction of the roots and tree trunk-focussing on self and identity holistic growth and well being will be reflected in the collective social, political, emotional, and cultural well being of the community as expressed in the different branches and leaves. As the individual learner cycles through the learning rings the circles, as represented in Figure 2, will overlap as border crossing relations progress and regress as self identity and external forces negotiate beneficial learning experiences through the deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning. This dynamic process aligns with a changing reality situated in time and place. As students mature and become more aware of the forces of cognitive imperialism as framed within the complex historical socio-cultural and political contexts of Indigenous education, community emergent learning serves as a steadfast counter-hegemonic pillar of resistance and inspiration “enabling the survival of Indigenous people’s cultural heritage” (Battiste & Youngblood, 2000; Macedo, 1999; Smith, 1999 as cited in Ortiz, 2009, p.93). As a resistance strategy, this process of border crossing and interrupting mainstream pedagogy luminates the hidden curriculum. This emergent learning practice becomes a lived curriculum of place. As Battiste confirms, Indigenous knowledge “is a complete knowledge system of... concepts of epistemology, philosophy, language, scientific and logical validation” (as cited in Sylliboy & Hovey, 2020, p. 2020). Community emergent learning reinforces Indigenous knowledge and ways of doing through place, as local

knowledge situated within a particular social context and interwoven in the local circumstances that apply in the situation which we find ourselves .. and frames the world in which we live (Snodgrass & Coyne, 1996, p. 5). Community emergent learning interrupts the dominant mainstream pedagogy and re-positions Indigenous knowledge “at the centre of the pedagogical event”. This becomes a “starting point for revitalizing and recovering an Indigenous epistemology, a culture and a language which is moving dangerously fast toward extinction under the growing pressure for assimilation” (Ortiz, 2009, p. 111).

10.17 Overlapping Contributions of knowledge: Ethical exchange of knowledge

This is a critical stance in negotiating difference and through this negotiation knowledge perspectives can be bridged for the betterment of the individual, community, and society. Once again, indicators of successful outcomes for Indigenous learners are reflected by maintaining a healthy balance in nurturing the heart, spirit, mind, and body. By using the medicine wheel tools this may require a mix of Indigenous and/or Western sources of knowledge so that ultimately both knowledge systems contribute to healthy outcomes during various life stages. In the photos below we see a blend of indoor and outdoor learner. Students in these photos are in the middle grades (grade 6 and grade 7). Learning goals are consolidated by an outdoor field trip. This kind of experiential learning provides opportunities for all students to benefit from all learning dimensions that are cultural and place based. The lesson is concluded by students asked to fill out a medicine wheel assessment sheet (Appendix 3) to describe the outing and what they have learned and how they felt. Many photos were taken of the field trip to allow students to make a medicine wheel collage.

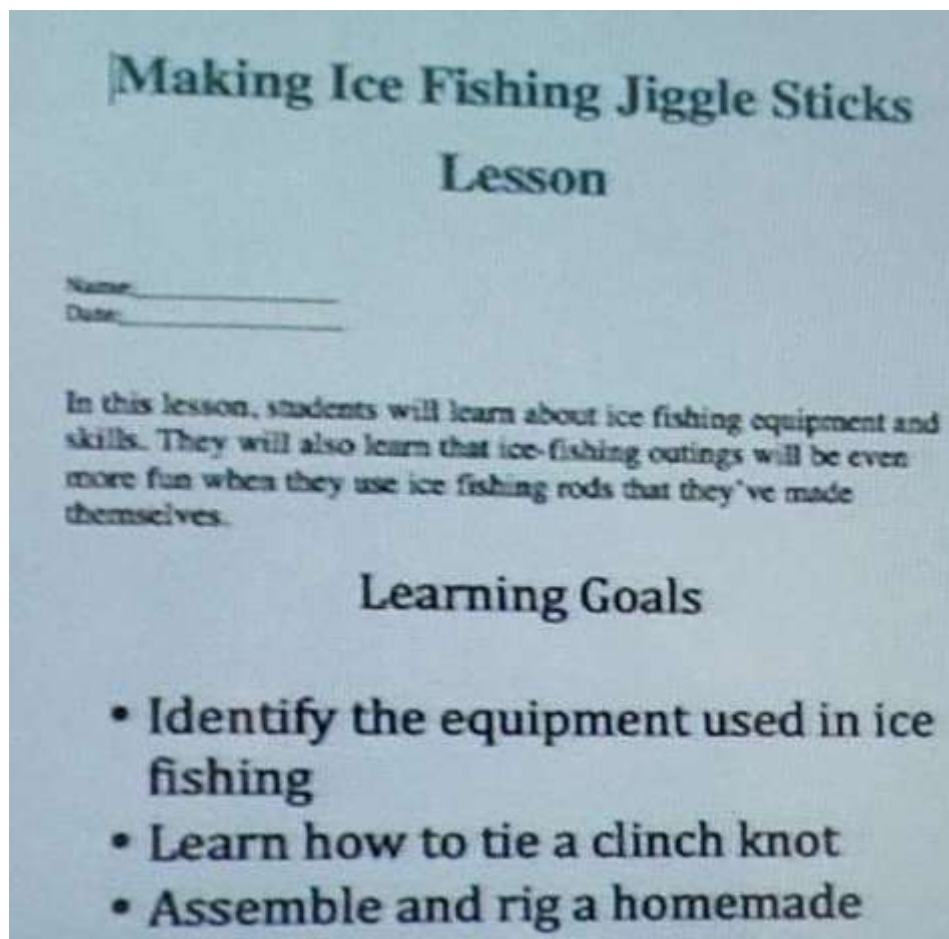


Figure 35 Ice Fishing lesson plan, April 2014, Webequie



Figure 36 Ice Fishing, April 2014, Webequie

Due to the re-generative nature of Indigenous knowledge, over time healthy outcomes will be represented by collective well being of the community as depicted by the leaves which recycle back into the earth with new knowledge that has been reconciled through negotiations that deconstruct and reconstruct the jagged edges of the bricolage as educatable moments to fluidly align and support another cycle of sustainable and resilient practices for youth and the community going forward with empowered voice and agency. This kind of negotiation in border crossing aligns with critical pedagogy in supporting both individual and community cultural identity in sustainable border crossing negotiations. Negotiating relationships using the tools of the medicine wheel provides for checks and balances that continually evolve with the changing landscape. With Webequie undergoing resource development the storyscape is dynamic and evolving which is ideally suited to the bricolage framework. Elder Ananias Spence reflects on negotiating border crossing relations when he comments on mining development, the environment and the community:

This is an item from the earth. This is how we are going to move forward in our working relationship. The minerals will be in the earth for a long time. The First Nation peoples will benefit forever. The young child will hopefully benefit from what is about to happen in our territories. We hope the development will benefit all of our communities. We look forward to having a good relationship with everybody and working together so we can all benefit (Matawa, 2014, p.2)

By bringing awareness to the nuances and tensions involved in negotiating two knowledge systems, learners can question and make meaning within a safe and supportive space to reconcile stories of place and re-create alternative pathways that

validate border crossing experiences with broadened understanding and in mutual good faith that result in lived expressions of harmony and well being both with self and others. Supporting harmony and well being, tools from the roots of the tree can be used to support holistic growth in all domains: emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally. These overlapping spaces of knowledge symbolize good relations in all connections and a space to reinforce and re-envision an even stronger future in potential border crossing relationships that will benefit community. In Figure 37 Kindergarten students are walking the trails on an island that is approximately 40 minutes from the community by boat or snowmobile. The location is on ancestral trap lines and is shared by the family for camping, hunting and traditional ceremonies. The students are on a field trip with their class to enjoy the teachings of the fall harvest. The photo depicts a fork in the road similar to my bush walks. It symbolizes the learning possibilities that are open for exploration by the curious minds of the young. The fork in the road is like the branches in the tree and the diverse learning opportunities available to sustain healthy minds and body. Learning that connects to place at an early age builds strong roots in life's journey and reinforces identity and instils ownership and agency at a young age. A strong foundation in roots and ancestral history that is connected to the land and surrounding environment provides a healthy learning environment for children's holistic health and well being. The tools of the medicine wheel are without boundaries and discrimination. All knowledge dimensions are available through the lens of the medicine wheel. Its branches and roots are lateral in their spread and provide a collage of learning and teaching supports that is lifelong and lifewide



Figure 37 Fly Island, Webequie, September 2014

Border crossing learning experiences using the tools of the medicine wheel create a space to intertwine curriculum through informal and formal learning. The teachings of the local culture, using Elders and Knowledge Keepers reaffirms cultural identity through connections that strengthen the learning spirit as identity and self with an added layer of reconstructed Western knowledge to contribute to new knowledge and ways of doing that support successful border crossing that bridges difference and develops allied relationships within a changing landscape.

10.17.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

Whose knowledge is validated in border crossing negotiations. The circular and fluid nature of Indigenous knowledge creation from one generation to the next as depicted by the medicine wheel is a combination of relationships between two diverse knowledge traditions. The process of regenerating Indigenous knowledge is grounded in the deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning that supports learning holistically in individual identity and collective wellbeing. The knowledge created in

relation to the natural world is based in place and cultural survivance. The knowledge created is truth as lived and validated by the relationality of the timeless nature inherent in the medicine wheel which is grounded in Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being as a lifelong and intergenerational journey (Reflection, Aug, 2020).

10.18 Inclusion changes the concept “difference” to “diversity”

Due to the relationality of the medicine wheel and Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being, answering my research questions became clearer as the bricolage natural mapping of the emerging themes and patterns grew stronger and repetitive over time and my understanding evolved with both an empowered and disempowered sense of shared criticality and ownership of knowledge.

The inclusive nature of Indigenous knowledge as depicted by the tree’s roots as sources and domains of knowledge include language, traditions and ceremonies, the natural world, ancestors, family, self, community, clan, nation and other nations. Sources of knowledge are diverse and inclusive of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledge systems. It is the diverse relationships negotiated within these knowledge sources that learning is experienced. Learning experienced through community emergent learning as was the focus of my research becomes a deeper shared experience and active agent to potential change over time and place. Emergent learning plays a critical role in providing nourishment for Indigenous learners so cultural identity and well being remain strong, resilient and sustainable in a changing local landscape. Healthy branches and leaves ensure that the roots will be fertilized and the earth reseeded so that the tree grows strong and germinates more growth so the forest flourishes with an adaptive awareness to the environment. The tree becomes a healing agent in rejuvenating culture and traditions. “For First

Nations people, the purpose of learning is to honour and protect the earth and ensure the long-term sustainability of life” (Canada Council on Learning, 2007, p.2). This is a reciprocal and ethical relationship between man and nature that supports balanced learning development and survivance of culture. The diverse relationships that are awakened and reaffirmed through community learning and the connections to the natural world revitalizes the roots through the nutrients provided by earth, air, sun, fire and water that re-energize and strengthens the learning cycle and individual and collective wellbeing from Indigenous sources of knowledge.

10.19 What is Success

Measuring success in lifelong learning is not a discrete measurement but rather an organic holistic process of continuous relationships that influence learning development and community survivance. It is in the honouring of all relations that Indigenous and Western traditions walk in a parallel path ethically respecting difference.

As I cumulate and embrace all my life experiences, I go forward re-energized and in strengthened relations with humankind and the natural world (Reflection, Sept. 2020).

I will refer to Mathias’s story to summarize the remaining of my research questions:

- How can community driven learning that is relational, local and culture-based support and engage students in achieving successful school outcomes within a changing landscape?
- How may the teaching of the medicine wheel benefit community wellbeing, strengthen community resiliency and sustainability through community-emergent learning?

- What relationships are pivotal to building identity, strength and resiliency in young Indigenous learners?

The dynamics of the bricolage method of mapping data, aligns with the tree of life as a circular and cyclical action of living Indigenous knowledge as a continual regenerative relational experience that influences individual identity and collective well-being of the community. The interactive and entwined relationships within the two knowledge systems influence holistic learning development emotionally, physically, spiritually, and mentally. The roots of the tree provide all the sources of nutrients for healthy learning and development. There are nurturing guides to support uneven growth and to balance development.

“Without understanding the soul of the culture, we just invade the culture”
(Horton & Freire, 1991, p.131).

As a strategic tool and source of Indigenous ways of being, doing and knowing, community driven learning as a community-emergent process is a reciprocal relationship between the knower and the learner. The sources of knowledge are local, relational, and culture based. Community learning involves sources of knowledge that include language, traditions and ceremonies, the natural world, ancestors, family, self, clan and community. These are all rich sources of local nutrients for the tree of life and provide for strong roots for the student in connecting to self and identity. As the community revitalizes these sources of knowledge using Elders and skilled Knowledge Keepers, both the reciprocal relationship and the cyclical nature of Indigenous knowledge creation rejuvenates both the giver and receiver of knowledge. This is an empowering process of spiralling growth in knowledge in good relations and brings balance and harmony for the individual by strengthening self as identity and the community’s collective well-being. This is

reflected by the circularity of Indigenous knowledge in the re-generative process. This is a natural empowering agent and growth in knowledge does not exclude Western Knowledge but rather augments local knowledge as an evolving rejuvenating nutrient to balance holistic lifelong learning within self and the community. All sources of knowledge are in good relations as they continue to walk parallel paths sharing diverse knowledge sources and always striving for a balance in drawing on the right mix of nutrients/knowledge to maintain healthy growth and development in the tree/learner/community. This is a space to re-envision the possibilities of reconciling truth claims as a mutual reciprocal process of knowledge exchange. The bricolage visually depicts this process and brings to life Mathias's words in his story, "when we come apart, we lose our strength. Together, we are stronger". The tree reflects this moral to his story in its relations to all things, both man and nature inclusive of diverse knowledge systems. Since Indigenous learning is holistic and lifelong then as students mature through life stages the sources and domains of knowledge will vary in accordance to their learning and social development trajectories. Behaviour outcomes and balance in well-being is an expression of the fluid relationships that nurture the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental dimensions. Questions I asked along my research journey included: Who am I? Where is here? Connections to the land is what shapes Indigenous identity.

10.19.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

There is a sense of intimacy and vulnerability in 'self' as a seed. A sense of belonging is nurtured in the roots to provide strong identity, resiliency and survivance. The answers to these universal questions brought me back to my own childhood with a renewed appreciation for my own roots (Reflection, Sept. 2020).

As the landscape changes so too will the dynamics of the tree's fluid and flexible nature to reflect the changing needs and jagged edges in the evolving dynamics of the student and community. Determinants of well-being are connected to the social, environmental and cultural sense of belonging. Community driven learning continually aligns with the needs of the individual and the vision of the community as it adapts to change. Community learning is a source and domain of knowledge that reinforces Indigenous values in its relations to the land and the natural world. Connection to the land sustains balance and sense of belonging. Strong identity, resiliency, and well being are reaffirmed through community emergent learning because Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being continue to survive the test of time. The leaves provide nutrients for the roots and the roots provide nutrients for a healthy tree. When the learner is receiving the right mix of nutrients than the individual learner is in balance and collectively the community is experiencing healthy well being. For Indigenous learners, as the tree depicts, reciprocal relationships that are pivotal include self, family, community, natural world, other nations. These are all sources and domains of knowledge for lifelong Indigenous learners. The various relationships between Indigenous and Western traditions with vary according to the needs of the individual and as reflected by the community well being. From a humanistic and holistic perspective an individual's learning potential can be perceived as a continuum of lived experiences that organically promote healthy growth and balanced learning development in the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions. The job of the bricoleur is to use the tools at hand to balance healthy growth for the learner in time and place. The holistic model is a framework that can assess healthy growth over time as it adapts to the individual's needs. It is a lifelong model. For my research project it was used to

answer questions that pertained to place and local culture. As depicted by the flow of the tree, Indigenous knowledge is in relation to all things: self, man and the natural world. These reciprocal relationships are cyclical and regenerative so that over time influences that affect individual learning development will be reflected in the collective well-being of the community which can be assessed as an indicator that either promotes or impedes the development of healthy individual and social identity. Due to the circular and reciprocal nature of the tree, individual identity and community well being is a relational and ongoing process “motivated by the need for relative integration, guided by intentionality, choice, the hierarchical ordering of values, and an ever-expanding conscious awareness” (Bland & DeRobertis, 2020, p.1). Culture within the community defines place as situated in a sociocultural and historical context in which education becomes a function of the community’s historical consciousness. “Colonialism has from the very beginning been a contest over the mind and the intellect. What will count as knowledge? And who will count as expert or as innovator? Such contestations remain central in the decolonizing process. Indigenous knowledges have been systematically usurped and then destroyed in their own cultures by the colonizing West. Diversity and pluralism are a characteristic of non-Western societies (Shiva, 2000, p. vi as cited in Dei et al., 2000). “We have to remind people that Aboriginal People have an oral history that is part of the reason there isn’t a balanced history” (Hall, 2000, as cited in Dei et al., 2000, p. 202).

Just like the tree, if the roots do not receive proper nourishment, it will destabilize the growth system. So too “when we come apart, we lose our strength, together we are strong” (Elder Mathias, 2014). When the sources and domains of knowledge are healthy the tree flourishes, but if it is lacking nutrients it will weaken.

In this sense, the tree requires the proper mix of nutrients for it to flourish, be healthy and germinate. Indigenous learners require healthy connections and learning relationships with man and nature to flourish and reach their potential. It is a process that is naturally inter-related with community well-being:

Healthy development of the individual depends on the relational conditions that promote optimal well being and the use of creative potential to benefit others as well as the relational conditions that promote those qualities as the outcomes of healthy development.

(Bland & DeRobertis, 2020, p. 1)

Indigenous knowledge cannot be fragmented. This is what we see in the photo below in Figure 35.



Figure 38 *DareArts, Webequie, Nov. 2016*

Figure 38 depicts the medicine wheel coming to life through the re-imaginings and symbolic re-creative actions of intergenerational knowledge and

connections to diverse knowledge systems and values. The photo was taken in celebrating the culmination of an intergenerational and interactive community performance depicting how strength in diversity supports resiliency and making sense of the complexity of the world we live. The medicine wheel (Figure 2) is recaptured below.

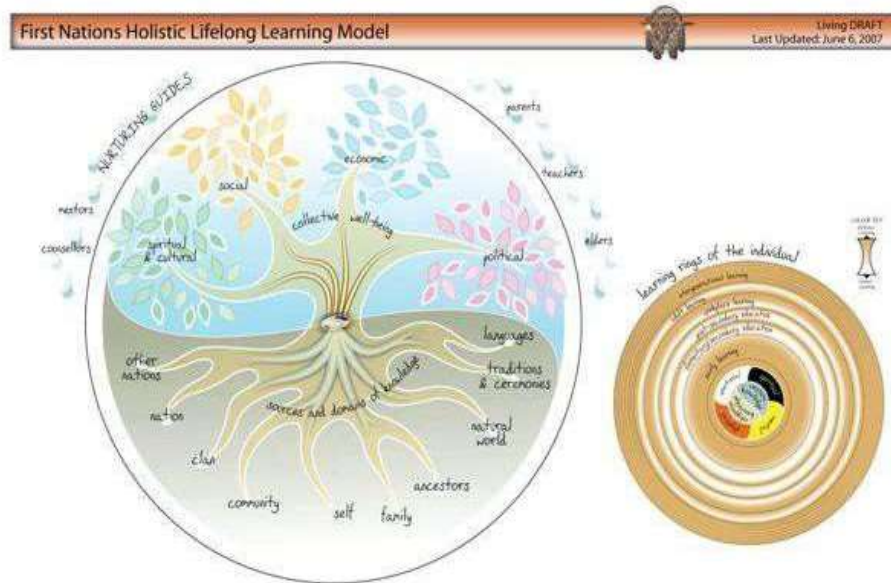


Figure 2 *Medicine Wheel at the juncture of the roots and the trunk of the tree*

The medicine wheel depicts the many connections to the tree as symbolized as a bricolage of tools to support healthy individual and collective learning and growth. When the tree is connected to all things man, the elements, the planet and the cosmos it is healthy, in balance and whole. If there is a disconnect or rupture in one of the relationships then the tree is no longer in balance or healthy and it may need to adapt to survive. The picture displays various domains and sources of knowledge such as self, community, family, culture and traditions, and other nations. There are also nurturing guides such as teachers, mentors, and parents. With these sources and guides, strength and solidarity are developed. There is a balance in the relationships between Indigenous and Western traditions and the learner portrays this with a

healthy wellbeing as expressed mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually in the photos. With the proper nutrients and supports the tree flourishes, it will re-germinate and other trees will grow. The tree is rooted in both Indigenous and Western relationships to provide suitable sources of knowledge and diversity for holistic and lifelong learning. As students become youth and question both themselves and the external world, the various relationships within Indigenous and Western traditions will be needed to accommodate the stage of learning and social development to ground learner's identity to place, and to support and strengthen agency, voice and resiliency going forward. More or less of the nurturing guides may be needed as well as more or less of the various learning relationships within Indigenous and Western knowledge traditions. The mix of relationships within diverse knowledge systems develops multivocality in the overlapping nature of border crossing dialogue to adapt to change and maintain balance and growth in all learning relations. Situated in this overlapping space, there are endless possibilities as Indigenous knowledge regenerates going forward envisioning a stronger tomorrow in good relations. This growing strength in identity and well being is reflected in the leaf clusters as expressions of the well being and balance within the community. Healthy balance in individual development, mentally, spiritually, physically, and emotionally will be reflected in the learner being grounded in grassroots knowledge and relations to the natural environment reaffirming strong connections to place and the land. These learning experiences develop resiliency, voice, and agency as expressed by community well-being in their social, economic, political landscape. This is depicted in Figure 39 in which students are expressing social justice with the theme 'reclaim the game'.



Figure 39 DareArts, Reclaim the Game, Feb. 2016, Webequie

In Figure 40, a student holds a feather as she speaks before a mainstream audience speaking truth from the heart, mind, body and spirit, in harmony with all relations.



Figure 40 DareArts Dinner, Toronto, May 2015

10.19.2 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

These photos communicate a strong sense of agency and voice in celebrating diversity. This is a decolonizing action and not an easy choice for a youth to make as the jagged edges of the feather remind us (Reflection, Oct. 2020).

10.19.3 A Stronger Tomorrow

As learning opportunities for Indigenous and Western knowledge traditions grow in good relations, diverse ideologies working in nuanced collaboration as depicted in the tree roots may have the potential of reaching every child (Figure 41) in negotiating a becoming of ethical connection in learning relationships that authentically benefit learning outcomes when experienced as a lifelong holistic learning journey. This is represented by the feathers surrounding the child on the shirt depicting the circle of care for all children when the tree is in harmony with all its relations.



Figure 41 A stronger tomorrow: Orange Shirt Day, Webequie, Oct. 30, 2019

10.20 Rekindling the fire

10.20.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections

As I come to the conclusion of my discussion chapter, I have traveled full circle as another year has gone by and it is Orange shirt Day amid Covid-19 safety protocols of wearing masks and social distancing are well in place. The school will walk today in greater awareness of issues that challenge individual and collective well being and the possibilities of a stronger future through walking together in parallel paths of growing solidarity. The Pandemic has informed and brought greater clarity and awareness to issues of global concern surrounding equality, sustainability, diversity, social justice, and ethical ways of doing, being and knowing in a mindful way (Reflection, Sept. 30, 2020)

What have I learned in the process of weaving together my tapestry as a bricolage of relationships? I have learned that Indigenous way of doing, being and knowing are inclusive and in relation to all things, in ways that are caring, sharing, respectful and responsible. It is a fluid and jagged energy adjusting to the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual aspirations of self, as the individual learner, is continuously negotiating possibilities of equal access and opportunity to diverse kinds and sources of knowledge and nurturing guides to support balance in life's journey in navigating and bridging the social and historic dualism in an everyday changing landscape. An Indigenous learner does not travel his journey alone. The inner self is an expression of the collective well-being of his community. This relationship between self and community is a reciprocal, continuous and self generating circular flow of knowledge relationships that re-generate and re-create knowledge so that self and community persevere in voice and recognition of good relations between both knowledge traditions. This is a third space of symbiotic

relationships of overlapping layers of knowledge creation grounded in place and its relations to the natural world.

The following 3 photos depict the mutual learning that is going on between community teachers, Elders and students. The learning is rich and expands lifelong and lifewide dimensions. Students are collaborating in the experience with teachers, family and community members. It is much more than the academics of formal instruction but includes the physical, emotional and spiritual. Man and nature are naturally connected in the traditional activity of net fishing, filleting the fish and feasting together. There is a communal sense of re-living the past, telling stories and working together. There is a natural spirituality in harvesting the gifts that nature offers with each season and a caring responsibility and respect for the environment. There is a mutual thanksgiving in the experience. Opportunities for these seasonal outings re-awaken the inner spirit, honour and empower Indigenous voice in teaching the youth ways of doing, being and knowing that strengthen identity and contribute to healthy border crossing possibilities. The level of learning is symbolic of the branches of the medicine wheel. Nourishment and support are inclusive and span life stages. The photos together tell a story that connects the individual to the land and to the community in a holistic embrace of mutual care, respect and togetherness. These informal learning experiences connect the disconnects and joins the mind and heart in the doing, knowing and being. There is a wholesome healing agent that embodies the experience and regenerates and re-awakens the resiliency and survival instincts in being one with nature. This oneness with nature connects man with himself and the human and non-human dimensions.



Figure 42 Learning from the Elders, September 2016, Webequie



Figure 43 Student learning how to fillet fish, Sept. 2016, Webequie



Figure 44 Teachers, students and community members feasting: Sept. 2016

The tree represents this with its root system grounded in the earth. For the tree to flourish, reproduce and re-energize it requires, air, water, wind and sun to ground the root formation for healthy growth and uniqueness as a tree. As it grows, it is in relationship with all things as it adapts to its local environment in a symbiotic relationship with man and nature. In ethical and responsible relations in honouring the 'goodness' that the tree represents it will flourish in reaching its potential and be actualized with healthy branches and leaves. The tree's growth both influences and is influenced by the energy that permeates its system from the air, water, earth and sun intricate to its life cycle. Each of the leaves on a tree are unique in their diversity and add texture and life to the whole tree. Each learner is unique and travels his own pathway using the tools at hand to enrich the well being of the whole community. This bricolage reflects the uniqueness of every student in their quest and curiosity for truth and knowledge. Learners are grounded in their roots, and as they journey the circle of life from east to south to west to north, they map their route as symbolized by the veins in a leaf to create their own unique 'feather' as a blueprint of their journey. As each learner's journey is unique so too are the leaves of a tree. The various relationships and connections that a learner experiences on their journey defines the inner self and is in relation to the 'whole' or well being of the community and then beyond in re-kindling voice and agency. The bricolage is a representation of concentric circles, adding layers of relationships through the deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning that reaffirms Indigenous ways of doing and knowing. It is a survivance process that is continuously evolving by looking back and bringing forward an evolving deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge to adapt to the reality of a changing landscape and making sense of the lived reality to support a stronger future for individual and community well-being. Relationship building

reaffirms Indigenous ways as a healing process of re-balancing knowledge relationships as it negotiates the ‘in between’ spaces to rejuvenate its roots and bridge two knowledge systems.

10.21 Conclusion

This chapter has served to rationalize the dualities of different knowledge perspectives through a process of dialogue exchange in a space of ethical relationships. Negotiating in third space is a vulnerable and reconciling process of recognizing in good faith the imbalance and inequalities of knowledge claims and the implications for rationalizing resistive strategies as a natural decolonizing process within a holistic framework. The chapter discussed the inherent tensions and alternative pathways to reconcile difference and de-centre hegemonic power relations. Pertinent to gleaning deeper understanding to the questions of the study, from an Indigenous pedagogical stance, is the criticality of the educatable moments and awareness by informed practitioners to the historical background from which, how and whose knowledge claims are grounded and to embrace as a moral and ethical responsibility the opportunities to engage and deconstruct Western pedagogy as a decolonizing reciprocal process. This calls for Indigenous methods of practice to be recognized as lived theory in action within the context of where schooling is situated. This is a lived experience in embedding practice within community by empowering place as a change agent that is empowering, resilient and sustainable.

Chapter 11 Summary

11.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the possibilities when humankind listens to the silent voices of the other than human elements that brings meaning and understanding to the complex nature of place as more than discrete objects separate from the body. It provides an elusive exploration of distinct relationships that goes beyond the discursive dialogue of first and second space that limits possibilities to a third liminal space for rationalizing meaning by giving form to forces that one did not contrive. It describes the process of embracing difference with an overlay of holism that is both inclusionary and complimentary. It expands on the possibilities of third space as a mutual negotiated process and way forward to a stronger future by situating place as pivotal to building identity, strength and resiliency in young Indigenous learners.

11.2 Holistic journey of discovery

11.2.1 Reflection - Looking back and making connections:

How can we find a sense of belonging that embraces the potential of all of the knowledge dimensions that embody the reality in the world we live? As William Shakespeare words encourage, “I am a feather for each wind that blows” (2007). It is in this imagining that re-creates possibilities that resist first and second space fragmented and contradictory knowledge that perpetuates the colonial power of hierarchical knowledge transference and is stereotypical of Western pedagogical praxis. An inclusionary perspective is a natural recourse to expand the limitations of scientific thought to address and inform pedagogical inequalities.

11.3 Complex ways of knowing, doing and being: connecting theory to practice

The wealth of knowledge hidden in spaces of possibilities that is symbolized by the images of the students, the feather, and the merganser imbues a deeper meaning and critical perspective giving substance and meaning to the quote, "...but is it not really difference the oppressor fears so much as similarity" (Moraga, 1988). Connections to spatiality as lived space, anchors and preserves sustainable identity to self in relation to place(s) with a developing sense of awareness and connection to 'other' in relationship to historicity and sociality. Merleau-Ponty (1968) posits that body and place form a chiasm or "intertwining" that can create an "inclusionary understanding of all material bodies not as objects but as unique places that are also always in place" (Whaley, 2018, p. 33). It is Bourdieu's expression of doxa as 'unquestionable truths' (1977) that permeates the interactions with deepened awareness and understanding in navigating the tensions and possibilities inherent in the data in its holistic connections to the natural environment as lived truths and ways of doing and being that resist the dominant educational doxa with a resiliency of hope and mutual collaboration. Merleau-Ponty describes a complimentary relationship between visible and invisible giving place 'form' as a

"...sort of straits between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever gaping open, something that comes to touch lightly and makes diverse regions of the colored or visible world resound at the distances, a certain differentiation, an ephemeral modulation of this world- less a colour or a thing, therefore, then a difference between things and color, a momentary crystallization of colored being or of visibility. Between the alleged colors and visibles, we would find anew the tissue

that lines them, sustain them, nourishes them, and which for its part is not a thing, but a possibility, a latency, and a flesh of things”
(Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.132-133).

My sense of understanding of tissue in Merleau-Ponty’s quote, I associated with the feeling that overcame me during my cyclical walks through the data as an evolving understanding and deeper meaning in interpreting the data as silent voices of lived expressions of truths in kinship with all relations. It is a “presencing” of past with present knowledge and values that strengthen the resistive forces that interrupt prescribed doxa through the “homogenization of lifestyles and an colonization of daily life” (Heidegger, 1971; Schmid, 2012, p. 43). Instead it becomes a future oriented relational lens that sees the possibilities beyond the horizon “ as an “kinship practice ... and intellectual praxis of holding different histories and contexts of thought together, not privileging one.....over the other” (Purewal, 2019, p.53).

It is the ethical values and Grandfather teachings that flow through the data like a “bathing fluid” enriching relations and ways of doing and being one with self, others, and beyond – the golden thread through the (un)certainities softening the jagged edges of dualism and anthropocentrism, bravely resisting the assimilative forces engrained in a binocular view of Western imperial thought, giving nourishment to those/things that are receptive to both receiving and giving “by way of their fluidly variable boundaries, all life forms exist in re-creative, transformative relationship with one another” (Whaley, 2018, p. 32, 27). It is both a reflecting moment of resistive resiliency and a sustaining process of evolving continuity and adapting to the changing nature of place within a space of ongoing becoming in negotiating a voice to be heard and listened to in an inclusive/oppressive dialectical

and reconciling exchange. This dialectical exchange is depicted in Figure 45 below as both a tangible and intangible energy both physical and moral that crosses boundaries ensuring as Rayner asserts, “that there is communicative spatial relationship and the possibility for transformation across all scales” (2004, p. 65). Spatial relations open up the binary relations of either/or to both/and locating a porous and relational quality to spatial boundaries “make[ing] distinct and yet allow[ing] for continuation, distinguish[ing] form but retain[ing] a sense of limitlessness” (Bachelard, Massey as cited in Whaley, 2018, p. 26). It is an empowering sense of integrating the “thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind” through the relational dimensions in spatial logics that reaffirms the diverse possibilities and imaginary becoming of the “local and non-local, text and context, place and space, all feed[ing] into and inform[ing] one another” (Bachelard, 1994, p.230). It is this relationship between body and place that mediates porous boundaries that Bachelard terms the concept “intimate immensity” (1994, p.). It is from this lived Indigenous experience and perspective or “those who inhabit borderlands or ... cross boundaries, the fiction of cultures as discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete spaces becomes implausible” (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 7).

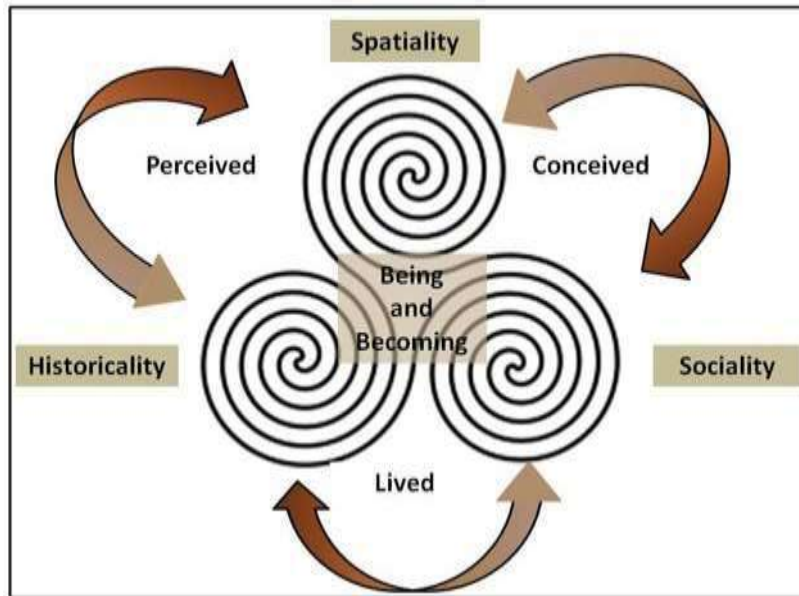


Figure 45 Thirdspace. A trialectics of being and spatiality. Modified from Soja (1996, pp. 71-74) and adapted from Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1974) as cited in Jones, p. 84

Using Rayner and Heidegger’s notion of neighborhood, “self-identity is understood to be an expression of natural neighbourhood and visa versa” (Heidegger, 1971, Rayner 2011) This reciprocity and reconceptualization of space and matter “transforms the inward facing self of objective rationality, opening it out into a natural inclusional awareness of self as neighbourhood. Our identity is at once unique and shared” (Whaley, 2018, p.33). Lingis writes: “One is born with forces that one did not contrive. One lives by giving form to these forces. The forms one picks up from others” (1991, p. 19). It is this kind of expressive form that flows from the empowering silence of the data contributing an enriched relationship between body and the world that embodies difference and diversity as complimentary and a reconciling process of understanding “not as threats or challenges but as vital sources of sustenance and enrichment” (Whaley, 2018, p. 32). Space and place revisited from an inclusional perspective may be conceived/perceived as a “presence of absence” (Whaley, 2018, p. 32) as nested

layers of (dis)empowering silence that is receptive to those with a creative mind and moral stance that a

“post-dialectic understanding of evolutionary process, becomes possible through recognizing space as a limitless, indivisible, receptive (non-resistive) intangible presence vital for movement and communication, not as empty distance between one tangible thing and another. The fluid boundary logic of natural inclusion as the co-creative, fluid dynamic transformation of all through all in receptive spatial context, allows all form to be understood as flow-form, distinctive but dynamically continuous, not singularly discrete. This simple move from regarding space and boundaries as sources of discontinuity and discrete definition to sources of continuity and dynamic distinction correspondingly enables self-identity to be understood as a dynamic inclusion of neighbourhood, through the inclusion of space throughout and beyond all-natural figural forms as configurations of energy (Rayner, 2011, p.1).

This inclusionary perspective allows for diverse possibilities in knowledge recreation through a fluid form of communication and movement. From a holistic perspective forms of informal education that connect students to the land, local natural environment, stories of the Elders and sacred teachings of the Knowledge Keepers strengthen core identity and making dynamic relational connections to the past in a fluid form of bringing knowledge forward in a natural and dynamic recreation process. A holistic learning approach for Indigenous students flows both outwards and inwards to develop both individual and collective identity and selfhood. It is a two-way flow in its lifelong trajectory. Home and community well

being is inclusive in the learning continuum and as identity and well being flows outward, the interests of the community self reflect the well being back to the individual. It is a continual cyclical circle of looking back and bringing forward. This is an embodied transferal of knowledge and values that strengthen the identity of the individual in conjunction with the well being of the community. This is a “natural evolutionary process[es] of cumulative energetic transformation” that is contradictory with definitive logic yet complimentary in its open-minded assumptions and wise possibilities (Rayner, 2011, p.1). Indigenous knowledge aligns with oral stories and intergenerational knowledge that is passed on and brought forward that bridges times past adding resiliency and identity as its memories survive the passage of time and adapt and evolve with the changing landscape. It is a place that memories live on in the minds of those that listen with humble ears and moral hearts adding a layer of resiliency and hope in a stronger tomorrow in negotiating and re-negotiating binary tensions in a reconciling process. These are the relational underpinnings and strengths that define form in the truths and values imbued in Indigenous teachings and ways of doing and knowing. It is this flow of energy that connects to the circle of life depicted by the tree and bricolage of data that radiates through and beyond in a survival journey. It is this flow form and dynamic continuum and trajectory of learning that supports students in co-creating sense of their everyday reality that defines and develops self identity as a sustainable process and lifelong journey.

11.4 Honesty – practice what we preach

Building on the concepts of space and place from a natural complimentary and inclusionary perspective, place is endowed with context and meaning in relation

to the surrounding environment. It is these relationships that align with the medicine wheel and support Indigenous identity and well being interrupting Western thought that space and matter can be separated, treating self and other as mutually exclusive where identity originates from entirely within the individual. It is from this kind of definitive logic that an oppositional worldview emerges from which segregation and discrimination grow rather than human compassion and moral values resulting in an unbalanced dualism. As Harvey explains,

'matter and space' as the foundational dualism, where the spatial is opposed to the material as its absence, as a lack. From this kind of dualism, a lot of lop-sided dualism may be derived such as male-female, man-women, white-black, objective-subjective, reason-emotion, rational-irrational, nature-nurture, culture-nature, winner-loser, me-you, us-them, and self-other. The premise of this discussion in objectifying space and matter is in the historical social ramifications underscoring Eurocentric knowledge perpetuated through the "abstract representation of independent objects in absolute flat space, allow[ing]ed the main capitalist powers to divide up the world into spheres of influence, and to 'treat natural and social phenomena as things, subject to manipulation, management and exploitation' (1984, p. 4).

The superior inferior dynamics of dualism is exemplified in the relationships between humans and the environment as written by Scott:

Certain forms of knowledge and control require a narrowing of vision. The great advantage of such tunnel vision is that it brings into sharp focus certain limited aspects of an otherwise far more complex and

unwieldy reality. This very simplification, in turn, makes the phenomenon at the centre of the field of vision more legible and hence more susceptible to careful measurement and calculation. Combined with similar observations, an overall, aggregate, synoptic view of a selective reality is achieved, making possible a high degree of schematic knowledge, control, and manipulation. (p. 11)

This objective rationality of dualism rendering unequal power dynamics exposes itself to what Foucault called the “capillary functioning of power” that filters into and is reproduced in the social structures of everyday life in the form of patriarchy, racism, classism, and ageism and prescribed mainstream pedagogy (Sheridan, 1977). “The definitive logic that objective rationality leads us to believe that one thing can never be another thing. That is, once we attribute to one natural form absolute independent singleness or ‘wholeness’, we both say what it is and what it is not and cannot be (Whaley 2018, p.31). From an Indigenous perspective, inclusionary thinking acknowledges the receptive influence of omnipresent space everywhere and the dynamic interfacing of space that instills a sense of monism in the interconnectedness of the medicine wheel, contradicting the logic of objective rationality.

11.5 Natural inclusion and a culture of belonging

By revisiting space, and place from a natural inclusionary perspective which aligns with holistic ideology, a different awareness emerges that holds out the hope and possibilities of bridging the objective with the subjective as Whaley posits, “space and matter no longer separate from each other (as our binocular eyesight and myopic abstract logics would have it)...allows us to recognize its [space] vital

influence as the receptive, universal ‘bathing fluid’ that brings form to matter and movement possible” (2018, p. 32).

With this shift, consistent with Indigenous lived experience and as Bob Wabasse, my mentor, has likened to the energy that underlies the theory of quantum physics, “boundaries are transformed from the discrete barrier of objective rationality to places of dynamic interfacing that distinguish (but do not define) one form from another whilst allowing for communication within, between, and beyond” (Whaley, 2018 p. 33). Third space opens up these possibilities for the porous flow of organic connections and relationships with all elements and knowledge dimensions that brings a oneness and embodies the bricolage symbolic of all the teaching dimensions of the medicine wheel to move and communicate. It is in the expressions of the performative actions that are grounded in universal values and ways of doing, knowing and being and underscore Indigenous values of the medicine wheel teachings of honesty, bravery, love, truth, humility, wisdom, respect that enrich the bricolage and the invisible becomes visible in the everyday lived experience. The connections made through community emergent learning that is cultural, relational, and place based provides this interruption and loosening of the dualism conceived in Western thought, giving space for humanistic determinants underscoring Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being to support Indigenous learners in their lifelong learning journey and to contribute to informing pedagogical practice in implementing structural strategies that promote creative inclusionary practices in education. It is in this space of rupture that expands and contracts both outward and inward between self and others through ethical and reciprocal ways of doing, knowing and being that bring form to matter in relationships and captures the essence of life’s journey,

symbolic of the medicine wheel teachings and captured in the ancient quote, ‘to love thy neighbour as thyself’.

11.6 Summary

Students reconnecting to lived spaces strengthen identity and resiliency in border crossing interactions with a growing criticality and understanding of a hidden curriculum that suppresses alternative pathways and ways of knowing, doing, and being. Both Lefebvre’s trialectics of spatiality and Soja’s third space opens up the “historicity and sociality of human lifeworlds to interpretations and knowledges that many of its most disciplined observers never imagined, while simultaneously maintaining the rich insights they provide for understanding the production of lived space” that counteracts Western dualism (Soja, 1996, p.4). From this standpoint, the trialectics of spatiality is a continuous process that echoes the diversity and fluidity that is inherent in the nature of reality (Anderson, 2002).

As a methodology, spatiality is an organic and fluid method for greater exploration and interpretation of diverse perspectives in understanding situated lived spaces as places of culture. Third space is a process for exploring and defining sustainable identity as an open system and border crossing possibilities. Spatiality allows the free flowing negotiation of perceived and conceived knowledge within a third space to analyze and project the possibilities of both divergent and convergent thinking perspectives as a dynamic process for continuous change, adaptation and improved relations. It is a creative process of enquiry in understanding the lived human experience and world with a growing sense of awareness of the interplay of social historical relations and political interactions in seeking harmony and balance in everyday practice. Third space provides the space to explore reciprocal relationships where the right to difference refers to a “renewed centrality, to the

places of meeting and exchange, to life rhythms, and a use of time that enable a full and complete use of these places” (Lefebvre et al, 1996, p. 179). This openness and access to alternative possibilities provides the opportunity to experiment and challenge the normative doxa and social practices that underscore the “homogenization of lifestyles and an engineering and colonization of daily life” (Lefebvre, as cited in Schmid, 2012, p. 43).

11.7 A heart without dreams is like a bird without feathers

As I now look back and revisit the ‘Webequie Story’, I have greater understanding as I gaze at the image of the merganser. It comes to life when I view it from a distant horizon in which the past and present are bridged and become one by grounding and renewing the possibilities through the recreation of storied data that embraces negotiated reciprocal relationships as a dialogue and exchange of knowledge that “offers a way to determine the dynamics of the formative process of different images over time and spatial thought. Different ways of life in different regions result in a mixture of various perceptions for places and contradictory attitudes toward policy making” (Li & Zhou, 2018, p. 3). It is a creative dynamic space to deconstruct hegemony and reconstruct sites of imaginary horizons of intertwined knowledge disciplines. As I view the image of the merganser once again as recopied below (Figure 1), Webequie First Nation logo, I bridge the objective and the subjective as land, water, air become one in their interconnections to support the human and non-human elements. The storied data create the spatial landscape to deconstruct and reconstruct binary arguments of both/and in which the objective reality of the outside world and subjective lived experience of a unique culture and place stitch together difference over time and place. Rather than perceiving space as a frozen and static entity, the merganser through its fluid relations between the

physical and the mental dimensions naturally crosses spatial boundaries in trusting relations that envision sustainable learning practices and creative possibilities in bridging difference through a shared recognition of good faith. Bridge building practices perceived as a space for deepening understanding and exploring difference as a place of caring and sharing in good relations promotes sustainable moral values and trust in self as this reflective quote suggests, **“If you trust yourself much, you can change your life easily just like you can change the places of the feathers with a simple blow!”** (Murat ildan, 2018)

It is in difference that awareness initiates dialogue of tension, opens the door for multiplicity of meanings and discourages stereotyping and labelling (Li & Zhou, 2018). It is through this lens that I experienced an evolving growth in understanding and connecting the storied and lived experience of Webequie. Situated in third space where the relationship between culture and nature is interdependent, sustainable possibilities in 21st century pedagogy is foretold as an unfolding story of “spatial imaginaries” (Soja, 2011).



Figure 1 *Webequie First Nation logo (recopied)*

The English translation of Webequie is ‘the shaking of the head’. The merganser, as recopied above (Figure 1), represents a diverse storyscape of my research journey. It is both an image and landscape of continual change and growth in grasping a deeper understanding and interpretation in answering the research questions similar to the adaptive nature of the merganser to the evolving dynamics of environmental forces. As the bricolage of data images stitched together a lifeworld onto the medicine wheel depicted by the First Nation Lifelong Learning model, the legend of the merganser became an unfolding story of validating local knowledge, dispensing “with the need for external validation of knowledge, ... by a constructed curriculum” (Cormier, 2008, p. 7). The shaking of the merganser’s head before taking flight represents an unfolding individual and collective roadmap of the emergent power and possibilities in the web of connections for “new ways of being, learning, and adapting both within and outside the school” (Charney, 2017, p. iv). Imaginary borders without discrete boundaries is an inclusionary vision that offers a new lens of learning within the community by negotiating curriculum as a way to expand and adapt practical ways of local knowledge through contextual and collaborative learning experiences which is shared by constructivist and connectivist pedagogies (Cormier, 2008, p. 4).

It was the resiliency and determination of the merganser to bridge spatial barriers that the bricolage emerged as a third inclusionary space in which “the concept of knowledge is fluid and subject to [changing] cultural and historical forces (Cormier, 2008, p. 5). It is a shared innovative negotiation “created by a broad collection of knowers sharing in the construction and ongoing evolution of a given field” (Farrell, 2001, as cited in Cormier, 2008, p. 4). In realization, I began to shake my head in wonderment of the possibilities in the emergent power of relationships

that begin at birth and are grounded in the roots of place and social culture. The merganser symbolizes the intertwining of ontology and epistemology through spatial relationships that are free of boundaries and social and historical bias with an “underlying assumption that knowledge represents positions from which people make sense of their worlds and their place in them, and from which they construct their concepts of agency, the possible, and their own capacities to do” (Stewart, 2000, p. 20).

Living in a remote Indigenous community for many years, I have become attuned to the natural cycles of the environment. These cycles became a natural part of my lived experience and have shaped my dual relations with self, community and society. My evolving understanding of spatial forms intertwined with the nature of social, historic and political forces has both sharpened and softened my awareness in how difference is both perceived and conceived and is reflected as a growth continuum and shared negotiation of knowledge creation between personal reflections, the literature and ongoing interpretation of the possibilities and becoming in the storied data of my research that emerged both from a distant impersonal perspective and up close and personal at a community level.

Fight or flight? Believe the unbelievable (retrieved Nov. 21/20 from

<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/fight-or-flight-response>)

My initial perception of the merganser was of a bird shaking his head in an anxious struggle to take flight or submit. Later I was to increase my understanding from the diverse ideas of those around me and their experiences in living in respectful harmony with the environment and natural alignment with nature’s ecological cycles. As my understanding grew with a greater awareness of the social and historic space I was living and working, I imagined the bird was shaking his

head at my naivety and closed mindedness much like first and second space, a space of passive acceptance of fixed knowledge production limiting my choices to a fight or flight response. My perception deepened as I became conscious of the over-riding power of objective knowledge and the tacit silencing of the subjective and creative mind to persevere in anxious times and to view as challenging opportunities. In order to overcome the opposing forces of the natural environment, the merganser shakes his head, negotiating with the elements, exploring alternative flight trajectories and pathways to gain momentum for successful flight.

This is an active process of third space possibilities when the powers of creative action, as a learning process of negotiating knowledge, de-centres the objective discourse through the re-creation of complimentary relationships with inclusionary learning pathways grounded in the local space and culture of place and identity. It is in this creative third space of difference as a space of knowledge exchange, that the merganser is free to fluidly explore its human and nonhuman surroundings both above and below the water, “bounded only by the limits of its habitat” a multitude of imaginary possibilities of hope and flight (Cormier, 2008, p. 4).

11.8 Re-imaginings

It is this constant shaking of the head, negotiating with self and others in reciprocal dialogue and diverse understandings and interpretations that innovative and critical action and alternative pathways are created freeing the merganser to continue his flight and explore new possibilities in his spatial journey. Opened spaces of alternative pathways is a dynamic process of recreating possibilities through reciprocal and changing relationships that inclusive flight trajectories are re-imagined. This space of re-imaginings is where border crossing is opened to the

recalibration of balance in diverse ways of being in the world and ways of doing and knowing. It is a space where reciprocity exists for the recreation of knowledge “that focuses on making endless sympathetic deconstructions and heuristic reconstructions of perceived space and conceived space by injecting new possibilities into the ‘lived space’” (Li & Zhou, 2018, p. 3).

The merganser symbolizes the notion of rhizomic growth as a figurative term to describe non-hierarchical networks of inclusionary possibilities and that have no restrictive barriers but equal and creative access to all relations and spatial sites of practice. Its borders are porous and not discrete and fragmented “allowing selves to move through them and practise activity in ‘other’ spaces” (Anderson, 2002, p. 54). Horizontal relations are reciprocal and equally sympathetic and sensitive to its human and nonhuman relations. The merganser navigates two worlds in a seamless rhizomatic practice of “constant becoming” (Anderson, 2002, p. 54). It is adaptive in its continual journey through time and space, consciously and unconsciously aware of its corporality and temporality. The rhizomatic nature of the merganser, flying porously through two worlds, guided by its feathered wings is symbolic of the powers of the medicine wheel and its adaptive tools to readily nourish and provide the resiliency in youth to deconstruct and reconstruct their stories in navigating spaces of identity to connect and make sense of difference as a continuous cycle of development and growth. In the rhizomatic construction of identity, the root structure is horizontal in crossing borders and binary spaces and reciprocal in “relations between self and place” as sites of diverse practise. (Anderson, 2002, p. 54). It is these visionary possibilities that I see in third space in analyzing the data as a process of stitching together a bricolage of difference in knowledge negotiation: “Together we are strong” (Elder Mathias, 2016). From this perspective, education cannot be

viewed discreetly or disconnected from an inclusionary vision from the uniqueness of individual and the distinctness and wellbeing of community. The fluid form of energy connects all spatial dimensions within a holistic approach and lifelong trajectory. The purpose of learning is in the exploration of phenomena that spurs the curious and survival nature of all beings. Working in an ethical space that is embodied with empathetic values and ways of doing and coming to know provides the possibilities of a transformative process of “locating the individual in an inclusional living space of complex relationships” (Whitehead & Rayner, 2009, p. 15; Lian and Pineda, 2014)). It is an educational process of passion and dedication for the learning and wellbeing of each student in place.

11.9 Conclusion:

By reconceptualizing space as a fluid form of receptive motion and interweaving relationships natural inclusionality can be perceived as a post dialectical dialogue and decolonizing process. This is a reconciliatory dialogue that is non resistive by going beyond objective rationality opening it out into a complimentary and natural inclusional awareness of self as community and becoming a future oriented relational lens that sees the possibilities beyond the horizon as both kinship and intellectual praxis providing reciprocal and parallel contributions in knowledge creation.

Chapter 12 Implications - A learning Path Bridging Two Worlds

As a philosophy of education, Indigenous knowledge holds universal value in its connections to all knowledge dimensions in which practical wisdom of long experience, observation and orality is indispensable to sustainable practices and innovative outcomes. Within the global community, its potential lies in its natural crossing of knowledge boundaries and managing of intersections through ethical relationships in negotiating knowledge difference as a moral responsibility in doing, knowing and being. Indigenous knowledge is practical in which “responsiveness, improvisation, and skillful, successive approximations [are] ... required” (Scott, 1998, p.305). Local knowledge is pivotal and beneficial to achieve local purposes and sustainable practices but may also have benefits from a global dimension in its contribution to global issues involving ecological diversity and sustainability. As I conclude my thesis a prime example in which challenges have been overcome through collaborative innovation and observable action in meeting the growing uncertainties facing the world due to the corona virus (Covid-19) has been the adaptability and flexible response of the community in the best interest of its members.

The richness of Indigenous pedagogy is embedded in the organic flow and kinship relations that seamlessly connect historicity, sociality and spatiality. The moral fibre and fluidity of Indigenous knowledge draws its identity, resiliency and survivance strategies from the local knowledge and local conditions that have evolved and adapted in relationship to place. Indigenous knowledge has been denigrated due to its “findings ... [being] practical, opportune, and contextual rather than integrated into the general conventions of scientific discourse” but it is this very contribution of Indigenous knowledge that opens boundaries to address diverse

perspectives (Scott, 1998, p.305). From an inclusionary and humanistic perspective Indigenous pedagogy is visionary and sustainable in its open endedness to traverse and blend fluidly and flexibly between Indigenous and Western knowledge traditions.

From my understanding, the recognition of the ontological nature of place and its relationship to space in Indigenous ideology needs to be understood as an inclusionary ideology and a starting point in negotiating in good faith on a mutual journey of exploration in seeking a reconciling re-balancing in a dialectical oppressive world. It is from an inclusionary space that opportunities for moral empowerment through the contributions of multiple voices and diverse marginalized groups will contribute to sustainable relationships in the global community. Place as defined in relation to space is intertwined with the environment and embodies values that can take your breath away if one is willing to look at the richness of nature and put things in perspective.

12.1 Knowledge exchange

Local knowledge is not meant to be general knowledge but is a critical survivance strategy that continues to pass the test of time through close observation and experimentation in mutual relations with man and his environment. This bricolage of practical knowledge “serves as a living, oral reference library for observations, practices, and experiments – a body of knowledge that an individual could never amass alone” (Scott, 1998, p. 307). In times of uncertainty as the world is presently experiencing, practical knowledge and intuition, “where the interactions involve not just the material environment but social interaction as well,” than practical knowledge and a sixth sense that comes with experience captures “the spirit of a practical approach” and conveys the “subtlety and nuance of this knowledge”

(Scott, 1998, p.310. 311). The codification of practical knowledge is often led by intuition and experience through a process of contextualized, evolving knowledge originating in place as, “a gathering, ... with no agenda save sociability and economy, the gatherings, amounted to local assemblies where opinions, stories,.. were exchanged” (Scott, 1998, p.315). The wisdom of the Elders is critical in passing on intergenerational knowledge and values. This continuance in Indigenous knowledge ensures its “contextualness, and its fragmentation that make it so permeable, so open to new ideas” (Scott, 1998, p. 314).

This readiness and openness to new ideas is indicative of its inclusionary embrace of divergent knowledge systems as it evolves over time. In Webequie with the infringement of resource development, the mutual negotiation of both knowledge systems leads to reciprocal learning in balancing environmental assessments and ecological sustainable projects. Now, more important than ever, is the opportunity to imagine from an inclusionary perspective in third space respectful negotiations in good faith and mutual trust and exploration of knowledge that has been created and passed on “in the context of lifelong observation and a relatively stable, multigenerational community that routinely exchanges and preserves knowledge of this kind” (Scott, 1998, p.315).

12.2 Mutual Sharing in Thirdspace

The history and legacy that Webequie can share with the industrialized world and within Canada are the imaginings and the possibilities of ways of doing, knowing and being that by example could unite the global community in pathways that are sustainable, caring and flowing in energy that is cyclical and renewable. It is a place of ‘in between’ that communicates with both worlds connecting the known with the unknown in respectful and trusting relationships. It is a kinship with all

relations negotiating in good faith. Using an inclusionary form of reasoning “can transform and restore our human sense of place as inhabitants ... of the world” laying open the possibilities “that encourage rather than impede sustainable human-environmental relationships” (Rayner, 2010, p.102). It is these kinds of open fluid boundaries that align with a[nd] sustain[s]diverse, complementary functionality and human cooperation (Rayner, 2010, p.102).

12.3 The tiered approach in understanding inclusionality in thirdspace

12.3.1 Inseparability of the micro and macro relationship

Looking back at the tiered approach that the community utilises in developing relations at the macro level reflects this inclusionary holistic approach in lifelong learning as a dynamic flow across time and space. I have reproduced Webequie’s 3-tiered approach to the present day Webequie Supply Road negotiations as depicted below in Figure 46 and adapted from Figure 6. The 3 tiers approach is a framework for Indigenous consultation and is consistent with the community’s traditional cultural values, customs and benefits in negotiations, “This consultation approach has been inherently passed on through generations by Webequie First Nation’s Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and forms a part of the Elders’ Guiding Principles that harmonize with regulatory requirements for consultation” (Webequie First Nation, 2020, p. 136). In this instance it is a proposed road that will connect the inner core or tier 1 through tier 2 or relational tier to tier 3 the outer or foundational tier.

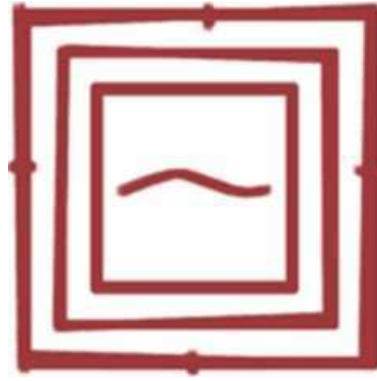


Figure 46 *Webequie First Nation adopted 3-tiered approach, 2020*

What is critical here is that the Elders' Guiding Principles that align with an inclusionary and holistic perspective and that allows for mutual and respectful exchange of knowledge in thirdspace dialectics. This is an unfolding process of infrastructure development and resource extraction, which can be considered an ongoing learning process of knowledge exchange. The development of northern Ontario holds potential opportunities in how knowledge is produced and shared. It is a thirdspace of imaginary opportunities and possibilities in re-creating and re-newing sustainable (non)human relationships connecting traditional and contemporary knowledge. It is a reconciling process for approaching sustainable negotiations and that express a process and starting point for an evolving and cyclical process of revitalising and re-newing individual identity and collective wellbeing from diverse and collaborative knowledge perspectives. The guiding principles are grounded in mutual recognition and ethical guidelines in a process of consultation and engagement that bridges all knowledge domains:

- Mutual recognition of nation to nation
- Mutual recognition of ancestral knowledge
- Mutual recognition of traditional knowledge and practices
- Mutual recognition of clan families and relationships

- Mutual recognition of sustainable livelihood; and
- Mutual recognition of traditional protocols (Webequie First Nation, 2020, p.1)

These principles ground Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being since time immemorial and provide the space for innovative risks and challenges that embody possibilities, hope and reciprocal learning from a both/and perspective in understanding and making meaning through interconnected and critical relationships woven through both micro and macro spatial dimensions. It stages a way for mutual growth in relationships and development in building capacity, identity, and self determination that is challenging, innovative, co-creative and iterative in its fluidity and organic evolution. It reciprocates and overlaps all knowledge dimensions that align with personal identity in the physical, emotional, spiritual and mental determinants of growth that perpetuate expressions of (dis)harmony in the social, economic, political and cultural well-being of place in relation to space. It is here in the middle tier of relationality that resistive challenge through mutual recognition and good faith that the core bonds and values inherent in humanity can come together in a relational thread of kinship and solidarity in negotiating in good faith. It is the golden thread negotiating the jagged edges of difference as complimentary that Whitehead and Rayner describe:

Self is understandable as a dynamic locality of its non-local natural neighbourhood, capable both of changing and being changed by its circumstances... Instead of instructing our selves to conform to pre-selective standards, we truly educate our selves to become involved in an ongoing, improvisational process of “natural inclusion” – the fluid

dynamic, co-creative transformation of all through all in receptive spatial context (2009, p. 24).

Recognising this logic and “acting upon this perception of reality changes the focus of every aspect of environmental and economic management” (Rayner, 2010, p. 111). It does not separate “individual economic interest from social or environmental interest” but rather these are viewed as “mutually inclusive” (Rayner, 2010, p.112). It is this inclusionary aspect that makes possible the overlap and co-creation of Indigenous and Western knowledge possible. As Rayner posits, “This transformation can be made possible by ensuring that the catalytic influence of receptive spatial context is brought imaginatively into view during all considerations of environmental social and economic issues and practices” (Rayner, 2010, p.112).

12.4 Implications:

My thesis has been a living journey of curiosity, exploration and continuous learning and growing within myself in relation to and with school and community and beyond. It has been an evolving and often an elusive cycle of growing relationships that inform holistic practice in place amidst the tensions inherent within a changing landscape. The nature of complex relationships, a process of rationalizing binary tensions, and connecting students to self and others within the community and global context is grounded in the survivance of intergenerational knowledge passed from one generation to the next. It is the continuous flow of values embedded in Indigenous ways of doing, knowing and being that became the empowering bonding agent and breadth of life that embraced the diversity of the bricolage as a parallel walk in dialogue exchange and border crossing opportunities. These were decolonizing experiences. It was the negotiated conversations in thirdspace that the reality of inclusionary knowledge contributions became evident as renewed strength

and reciprocal relationships grew stronger with the natural world and the organic infusion of Indigenous ways of doing, knowing, and being came alive and dynamic as the research project grew over time and in place. The cyclical nature of the project provided a natural space for capacity building and transfer of ownership in negotiating next steps in the learning continuum.

As an evolving decolonizing process of knowledge exchange, this was a mutually empowering experience and a resilient and resistive/non resistive stance that not only strengthened individual identity as a conscious and moral human practice, but also, as a natural mindful dialogical interaction re-created a more compassionate, balanced and sustainable praxis within the school and with community. Embedding Indigenous teachings within a community emergent learning program blended formal and informal learning experiences that embodied an enriched meaning, understanding and solidarity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff in recognition of the value and spirituality of diversity as a shared negotiation in good faith in the exploration of reconciling tensions in a Eurocentric pedagogy of praxis.

The implications and considerations of my research were an evolving learning process, that were specific to place and as revealed organically and documented through the daily lived experience of the participants. As an embedded researcher, over the time of 15 years, the intent of a community emergent learning program was to explore balance in curriculum programming between formal and informal learning and take action through an Indigenous learning framework. Using the tools of the medicine wheel, the outcome of this approach was to optimize balance between academic achievement and individual and collective wellbeing. As a PAR process, there was a constant looking back, reflecting and taking action as the

program moved forward. With this process came an awareness and deeper understanding of how relationships are intertwined and adaptive over time to support holistic growth and development. Through the bricolage and stitching together of diverse relationships an inclusionary process was made possible as meaning and dialogue progressed from first to third space. It is within third space that a post dialectical perspective can be glimpsed within a place of mutual commitment and dedication to the well being of students. This is a process of reconciliation between two diverse and complimentary knowledge perspectives. How will balance be maintained to ensure that community members are not disenfranchised through mining exploration and students are equipped with the skills to obtain gainful employment? As an embedded researcher I have brought forward questions and suggestions that I feel are honest and respectful, though it may not be my rightful place to speak. The strength of Indigenous ways is in the continuance to survive ongoing colonizing forces and the challenges that this presents and the actions taken ensure decolonizing and counter actions that instil voice, identity and resiliency within students as they grow, develop and negotiate balance in border crossing interactions. The wisdom and teachings passed on by the Elders and ancestors not only benefit Indigenous youth but may contribute to a more humane and equitable global community. Would not a strong cultural program guided by the guiding principles of the Elders provide a ripple effect through an infusion of Indigenous ways and values to cross all knowledge domains at both the micro and macro dimensions? Is it not these kinds of ethical relationships in third space that are sustaining and globally reconciling that would make possible a hopeful becoming toward mindful kinship relations?

This is a dynamic process, always in motion as the medicine wheel encompasses an intertwining of relationships that are circular and continuous in age, space and border crossing possibilities in lifelong and lifewide cycles. Place provides the roots to connect to self and place that is grounded in resiliency, identity and values that build and support relationships to make meaning and sense of the everyday for both self and the collective wellbeing. Roots are the starting point and ending point in the tree of life. It is the 'in between' spaces that students have endless opportunities to grow and explore diverse knowledge within a thirdspace of relationships that are grounded in mutual respect and inclusionary social interactions. As an ongoing process of reconciling relationships that are built on mutual reciprocity and understanding that negotiates dualism in a spirit of collaboration and a stronger tomorrow.

12.5 Epilogue

12.5.1 Looking back and making connections

I think this statement captures the wisdom of the Elders and the essence that underscores 'in good relations': "For Aboriginal people the future is predictable, we will survive to the extent that we believe we are the breath of life and thus hold the essential knowledge of living in a sacred trust for those that follow" (Blackstock, 2007, p.3)

As written by a high school student, this piece of written work captures the essence of border crossing opportunities done in good faith and growing awareness of the potential for alternative pathways through ethical negotiation of dialogue exchange:

One night a boy named Haylem had woken up from his sleep because his Grandma had began having pains just below her breasts, pains so bad she had begun crying. Haylem jumped out of bed and [went] into his grandparents' room, "Grandma, are you okay?" asked Haylem. Grandma opened her eyes and smiled, "yeah, I am okay. Haylem, go back to bed." Said Grandma, Haylem believed Grandma was okay and began walking tiredly towards his bed. The next morning he had realized he was alone in the house because his Grandma hadn't woke him up for school and his Grandma wasn't in the kitchen making breakfast. Haylem began to get worried, he saw it was just 8:30 and he decided to get ready for school and make something quick to eat because it's what Grandma would've wanted. Haylem had just finished his 4th period and was walking home, outside his house was a medical van. Haylem ran as fast as he can and rushed inside as he had gotten to the steps, he opened the door to see Grandma getting helped into bed by the medical van driver and Grandpa. We all had gotten out of the room to give Grandma some rest. Haylem had finished eating supper and went out back to find Grandpa making medicine for Grandma. "What are you making?" asked Haylem, "medicine for Grandma, they only gave her Tylenol," Grandpa said. "What's wrong with her?" Haylem asked, worried. Grandpa sighed and said, "He's sick." Haylem nodded and sat down next to Grandpa and watched how he was putting different kinds of plants into ziplock bags and wrote dates on the bags and how to make it. Haylem looked at Grandpa and asked, "I know your sick too, why don't you ever go to the nursing

station?” Grandpa had stopped what he was doing for just a second and then started again. “I don’t go to the nursing station because what they give out, Tylenol, antibiotic, white mans medicine”. He looked Haylem in the eye and said “it doesn’t work where you want it to work, it only works in your head, not where you are in pain.” Haylem nodded and asked another question “Why can’t you make your own medicine?” “Because I am a healer, I can’t heal myself, it doesn’t work like that” Grandpa replied. “Can I heal you?” Haylem asked. “I can teach you” Grandpa said. 5 years later Haylem had just gotten out of school and got into medical school, he learned a lot about white man’s medicine and traditional medicine. He worked at home where his grandparents were. He had changed the way his people were being treated and he treated them how they should have been treated. Everything in Webequie had just gotten better because of this. I think this is a story about Resistance” and Resurgence too? (High School Student, Jan. 2018)

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Appendix 1 Letter of Approval (USQ)

OFFICE OF RESEARCH
Human Research Ethics Committee
PHONE +61 7 4631 2690 | FAX +61 7 4631 5555
EMAIL human.ethics@usq.edu.au



15 February 2018

Ms Mary Gardiner

Dear Mary

The USQ Human Research Ethics Committee has recently reviewed your responses to the conditions placed upon the ethical approval for the project outlined below. Your proposal is now deemed to meet the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)* and full ethical approval has been granted.

Approval No.	H17REA190
Project Title	Learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place
Approval date	15 February 2018
Expiry date	15 February 2021
HREC Decision	Approved

The standard conditions of this approval are:

- (a) Conduct the project strictly in accordance with the proposal submitted and granted ethics approval, including any amendments made to the proposal required by the HREC
- (b) Advise (email: human.ethics@usq.edu.au) immediately of any complaints or other issues in relation to the project which may warrant review of the ethical approval of the project
- (c) Make submission for approval of amendments to the approved project before implementing such changes
- (d) Provide a 'progress report' for every year of approval
- (e) Provide a 'final report' when the project is complete
- (f) Advise in writing if the project has been discontinued, using a 'final report'

For (c) to (f) forms are available on the USQ ethics website:

<http://www.usq.edu.au/research/support-development/research-services/research-integrity-ethics/human/forms>

Please note that failure to comply with the conditions of approval and the *National Statement (2007)*, may result in withdrawal of approval for the project.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Mark Emmerson
Ethics Officer

**Appendix 2 Permission Letter – Webequie First Nation
Education Authority**

WEBEQUIE FIRST NATION EDUCATION AUTHORITY

Webequie First Nation
P.O. Box 240
Webequie, Ontario
P0T 3A0



Tel.: (807) 353-9942
(807) 353-5205
(807) 353-5209
Fax: (807) 353-9966

This is to confirm that Mary Gardiner has been granted permission to complete her research project which is a cultural enrichment program with the community at the school as part of her doctorate studies.

Name of research project: Learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place

School: Simon Jacob Memorial Education Centre

Community: Webequie First Nation, Webequie Ontario, Canada

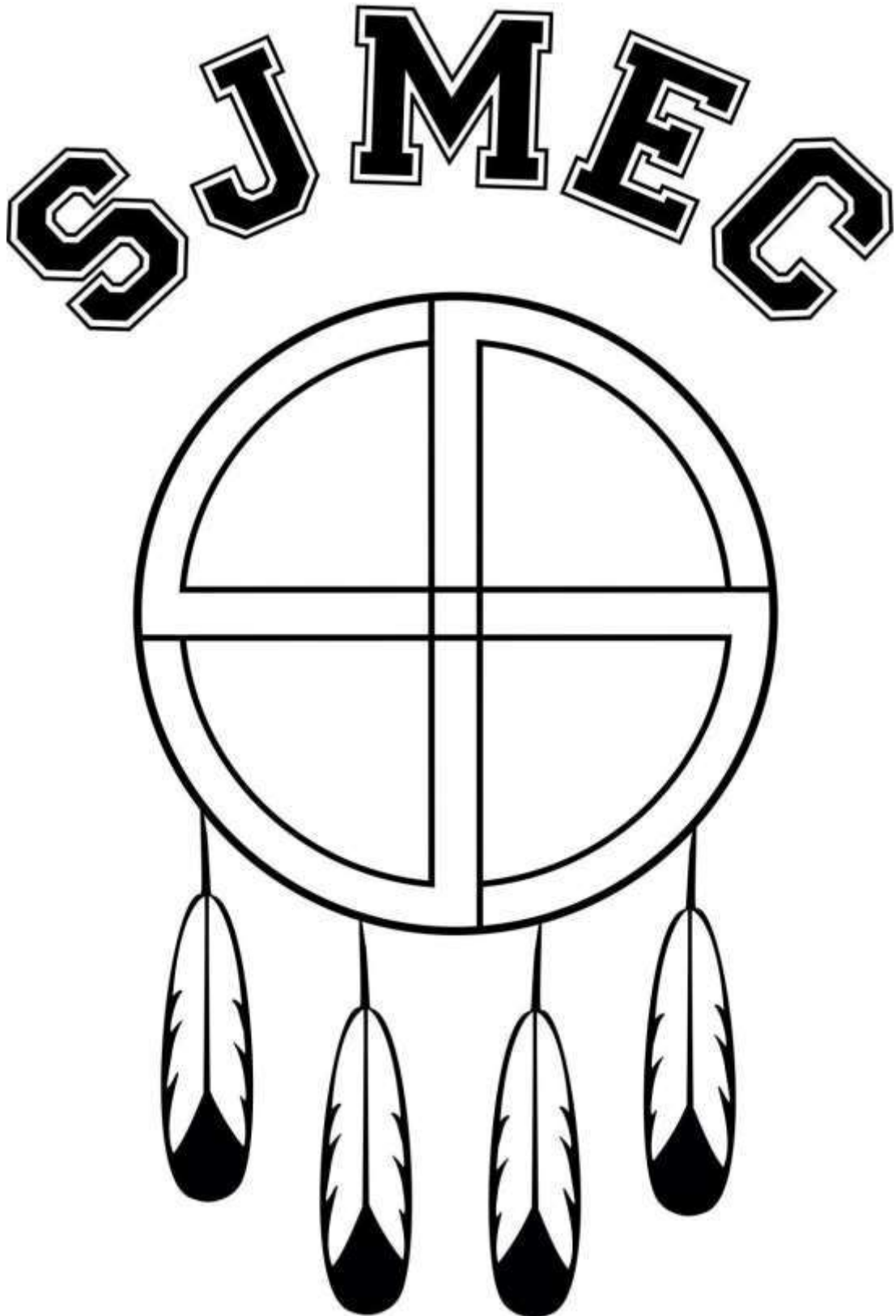
Ennis Jacob, Education Director, Webequie First Nation Education Authority

Signature: 

Ennis Jacob, Education Director

Date: August 2, 2017

Appendix 3 Medicine Wheel Template



Appendix 4 Letter of Approval (USQ)

Monthly Native Language Theme, Grandfather Teaching & Activities			
Month	Native Language Theme	Grandfather Teaching	Community Activities
September	Family	Respect	Goose camp, survival skills, gun safety, bannock making, legends, puppets, learning respect, medicine wheel, harvesting, cooking preparation, life skills, land survival, medicines for winter,
October	Community	Truth	Target shooting, partridge hunting, traditional games, hunting festival week, mittens, camping, Fall harvest, traditional foods, trapping, fish cycle
November	Animals/birds	Honesty	Target shooting, partridge hunting, traditional games, hunting festival week, mittens, camping, Fall harvest, traditional foods, trapping, traditional foods, fish cycle
December	Christmas	Love	Legends, beadwork
January	Legends	Wisdom	Storytelling, traditional games, drumming, snowshoeing,

Monthly Native Language Theme, Grandfather Teaching & Activities			
February	Friendships	Humility	Dreamcatchers, earrings, drums, making moccasins, fishing, rabbit snaring,
March	Land formations	Bravery	Ice fishing, fish fillet, land/nature
April	Survival skills	Truth	Fire building, species identification, harvesting, spring hunt
May	Medicine wheel	Respect	Camping, fishing, goose hunt, ice break-up, teachings of the medicine wheel
June	Values	Honesty	Shelter building, camping

Note: Cultural Fridays: Each grade participated in a land-based activity one Friday each month

Appendix 5a Consent Form Under 18 Years



University of Southern Queensland

Consent Form for USQ Research Project (Under 18 years)

Project Details

Title of Project: Learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place.

Human Research Ethics
Approval Number:
H17REA190

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Ms Mary Gardiner
Email: w0059957@uqmail.usq.edu.au
Telephone: 1-807-353-7103
Mobile: 1-226-376-6437

Supervisor Details

Professor Karen Trimmer
Email: Karen.Trimmer@usq.edu.au
Telephone: +61 7 4631 2371
Mobile: +61 407 902 362

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding your child's participation in this project.
- And you and your child have had any questions answered to your satisfaction.
- Understand that if you or your child have any additional questions you can contact the researcher.
- Understand that your child may be audio / video recorded.
- Understand that your child is still free to participate in the cultural activities without being part of the research
- Understand that permission is given for publication of data to be in identifiable form
- Understand that data cannot be withdrawn from existing recordings should they choose to participate and later withdraw
- Understand that you, or your child, are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.

- Understand that you can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au if you do have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project.
- Are the legal guardian of the child that will participate in this project.
- Agree for your child to participate in the project.

Child or Young Person's (under 18 years) Agreement to Participate

Name

Signature

Date

Parent's (or Legal Guardian's) Consent for a Child or Young Person to Participate

Name

Signature

Date

Please return this sheet to the Researcher prior to your child participating in the Project.

Appendix 5b Consent Form Over 18 Years



University of Southern
Queensland

Consent Form for USQ Research Project (over 18 years)


Project Details

Title of Project: Learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place.

Human Research Ethics
Approval Number:
H17REA190

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

 Ms Mary Gardiner
Email: w0059957@uemail.usq.edu.au
Telephone: 1-807-353-7103
Mobile: 1-226-376-6437

Supervisor Details

Professor Karen Trimmer
Email: Karen.Trimmer@usq.edu.au
Telephone: +61 7 4631 2371
Mobile: +61 407 902 362

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Have read and understood the information document regarding this project.
- Have had any questions answered to your satisfaction by the researcher and/or cultural advisor.
- Understand that if you have any additional [questions](#) you can contact the researcher and/or cultural advisor.
- Understand that the cultural activities and interactions may be audio/video recorded.
- Understand that you will be provided with a copy of transcripts for your perusal and endorsement prior to inclusion of this data in the project.
- Understand that data may be published in identifiable form.
- Understand that permission is given to use data ~~at a later date~~ for publishing purposes

- Advised the researcher of my wishes regarding use of my data and any images should I be deceased during the project.
- Understand that you are free to withdraw at any time, without comment or penalty.
- Understand that you can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au if you do have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project.
- Are over 18 years of age.
- Agree to participate in the project.

Participant Name

Participant Signature

Date

Please return this sheet to the researcher prior to participation in the project.

Appendix 5c Consent Form for Elders



University of Southern
Queensland

Consent Form for USQ Research Project (Additional Consent for Elders)

Project Details

Title of Project: Learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place.

Human Research Ethics
Approval Number:
H17REA190

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Ms. Mary Gardiner
Email: w0059957@umail.usq.edu.au
Telephone: 1-807-353-7103
Mobile: 1-226-376-6437

Supervisor Details

Email: Professor Karen Trimmer
Email: Karen.Trimmer@usq.edu.au
Telephone: +61 7 4631 2371
Mobile: +61 407 902 362

Statement of Consent

By signing below, you are indicating that you:

- Understand that by checking the appropriate circle, I have advised the researcher of my wishes regarding use of my data and any images should I be deceased during the project.
 - I give consent:
 - I withdraw consent:
- Understand that you can contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au if you do have any concern or complaint about the ethical conduct of this project.

Participant Name

Participant Signature

Date

Please return this sheet to the researcher prior to participation in the project.

Appendix 5d Retrospective Consent Form



RETROSPECTIVE CONSENT FORM FOR SECONDARY DATA

Project Details:

Title of Project: Learning through youth and community engagement:
Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA190

Research Team Contact Details:

Principal Investigator Details

Ms. Mary Gardiner
Email: w0059957@uqmail.usq.edu.au
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Telephone: +61 746 31 2371
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I understand that the researcher may ask me to give my permission for her to use photographs or film (audio/visual material) that may show me or family members, as part of her doctoral study. I may be asked to view the item(s) and to give my agreement for their use but understand that there will be no pressure upon me to do so. I understand that I may agree or refuse to allow the materials to be used and this will not have an impact upon my relationship with the researcher or school. I also understand that I may change my mind at any point, and that I should then ask the researcher to remove that item or items.

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature (over 18): _____

Parent Signature (under 18): _____

Date: _____

Appendix 5e Participant Information



University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Research Project Participant Information Sheet

Project Details

Title of Project: Learning through youth and community engagement:
Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA190

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Ms. Mary Gardiner
Email: w0059957@uemail.usq.edu.au
Telephone: (1)807-353-7103
Mobile: (1)226-376-6437

Supervisor Details

Professor Karen Trimmer
Email: Karen.Trimmer@usq.edu.au
Telephone: +61 746 31 2371
Mobile:

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD Project.

The purpose of this project is to explore the benefits and challenges of a cultural enrichment program supporting student engagement in school.

This is an invitation to request your participation in the school cultural enrichment program. Participants invited to participate may involve students, teachers, community members, elders, and visitors involved in cultural enrichment activities organized by the school and in partnership with the community. These activities will be organized by the Native Language Cultural Centre Advisory group. Activities will be part of the school instructional day with some activities extended to include camping opportunities during the school year. Cultural activities will be age and grade appropriate, organized to align with monthly Grandfather Teachings and monthly themes (see chart 1).

Monthly Native Language Theme & Grandfather Teachings

Month	Native Language Theme	Grandfather Teaching
September	Community	Truth
October	Family	Respect
November	Animals/birds	Honesty
Progress report		
December	Christmas	Love
January	Legends	Wisdom
February	Friendships	Humility
Report 1		
March	Land formations	Bravery
April	Survival skills	Truth
May	Medicine wheel	Respect
June	Values	Honesty

Chart 1

Participation

The research project will include digital recordings, capturing the learning activities and interactions taking place as students are engaged in community learning activities that are connected to the land, language and traditional skills and knowledge of the local landscape. The goal of the project is to explore and gain a better understanding how community learning may benefit student outcomes and support healthy learning and development. This project will be the basis of my Doctoral thesis. Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and with your written permission. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to but you will continue to participate in the cultural enrichment program as part of school curriculum. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage but your commentary and any digital footage up to the point of withdrawal may need to remain part of the commentary. A media release form may be signed giving informed consent if the amount of footage involves over 100 participants. If you wish to withdraw from the project, please contact the Researcher (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with the researcher or ~~Waberi~~ First Nation Education Authority.

Expected Benefits

This project seeks to establish if and how enriching programs with traditional and community based teaching and learning may benefit students. The findings may assist schools and communities to support student achievement and well-being in the following areas: parents as partners in their children's education, curriculum development, creating a welcoming school environment for all parents, offering skill-building opportunities for parents and enhancing communication between school and parents.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. These may include minimum anxiety or uncomfortable feelings in discussing issues that may be culturally sensitive. These risks will be managed by a designated cultural advisor, medical and psychological support, Elder support and wellness counseling advocate on your behalf if required and available for advice, clarification, and referral if requested. All aspects of the project are intended to take place in a natural learning environment. Your consent to the use of data captured of the cultural activities and interactions recorded will be an ongoing process. You will be given the opportunity to clarify and ask questions during the final stages of editing raw digital footage and transcriptions. All data gathered will be transcribed by the researcher and made available for you to check for authenticity and cultural appropriateness. You will have the opportunity to request editing or deletion of transcriptions in which you feel discomfort or misrepresentation. A community presentation will be made in celebration of the completion of the project.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments, films, digital media will be treated confidentially unless required by law. If you are asked and give consent to be involved in audio and/or video recordings, you will have the opportunity to verify your comments and responses prior to their final inclusion in the project. All data will be maintained for 7 years. This data will be stored in a secure manner on a USB with a password. Non-digital data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's home office. Pseudonyms will be used in the presentation of results if requested. As future use of the data may be anticipated by the researcher to support policy and curriculum development, no film or written publication will be made public without permission and informed consent from participants regarding secondary use of identifiable information. As chief investigator, the researcher will be the sole transcriber of the data collected, including audio and visual recordings and will conduct member checking and verification to ensure the interpretation of data is accurate and authentic in the transcription process.

Any data collected as part of this project will be stored securely as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management policy.

Consent to Participate

I would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in the project. Please return your signed consent form to the researcher prior to participating in the project.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Contact Details at the top of the form to have any questions answered or to request further information about this project. You may also contact the cultural adviser to ask questions and to share information about the project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. The Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and can facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix 5f Participant Information for Advisory Group



University of Southern Queensland

Participant Information for USQ Research Project Advisory Group

Project Details

Title of Project: Learning through youth and community engagement: Moving forward by looking back and connecting to place.

Human Research Ethics Approval Number: H17REA190

Research Team Contact Details

Principal Investigator Details

Ms. Mary Gardiner
Email: w0059957@umail.usq.edu.au
Telephone: (1)807-353-7103
Mobile: (1)226-376-6437

Supervisor Details

Dr. Janice Jones
Email: Janice.Jones@usq.edu.au
Telephone: +61 746 31 2349
Mobile:

Description

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD Project.

The purpose of this project is to explore the benefits and challenges of a cultural enrichment program supporting student engagement in school.

The researcher requests your assistance in implementing a cultural enrichment program within the school in partnership with community members. This will involve organizing cultural learning activities that are appropriate to age and grade and according to planned *Cultural Friday* groups.

Participation

Your participation will involve contributing your thoughts and ideas during advisory group meetings that will take place in the cultural centre in the school. The purpose of these meetings is to organize, plan monthly cultural activities for the students that align with the Grandfather Teachings and monthly Native Language themes. Meetings will take place every 4-6 weeks at 3:30 pm for an approximate length of 1 hour. These meetings will be recorded.

Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to take part you are not obliged to. If you decide to take part and later change your mind, you are free to withdraw from the project at any stage. You will be unable to withdraw data collected about yourself after you have participated in the advisory group. If you wish to withdraw from the project, please contact the Research Team (contact details at the top of this form).

Your decision whether you take part, do not take part, or to take part and then withdraw, will in no way impact your current or future relationship with Webequie First Nation Education Authority.

Expected Benefits

It is expected that this project will not directly benefit you directly. However, it may benefit student engagement and healthy school outcomes by strengthening connections through community learning that builds student resiliency and identity through culture and language revitalization. In doing so, authentic community learning will embed Indigenous knowledge in school curriculum.

Risks

Choose *one* of the following options:

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this project. These may include minimum anxiety or uncomfortable feelings in discussing issues that may be culturally sensitive. These risks will be managed with an elder present at the meetings and a cultural advisor who can advocate on your behalf if required and available for advice and direction and questions.

Privacy and Confidentiality

All comments and responses will be treated confidentially unless required by law. If you consent to be involved in the advisory group and the reconing of the meetings, you will have the opportunity to verify your comments and have the final decision on their inclusion in the project. Pseudonyms will be used in the presentation of results if requested. All recordings will be maintained for the requisite 5 years. This data will be stored in a secure manner on a password-protected USB and a back-up external drive. Non-digital data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office.

Any data collected as a part of this project will be stored separately as per University of Southern Queensland's Research Data Management Policy.

Consent to Participate

I would like to ask you to sign a written consent form (enclosed) to confirm your agreement to participate in the advisory group. Please return your signed consent form to me prior to participating in your advisory group.

Questions or Further Information about the Project

Please refer to the Research Team Contact Details at the top of the form to have all your questions answered or to request further information about this project.

Concerns or Complaints Regarding the Conduct of the Project

If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project you may contact the "University of Southern Queensland Ethics Coordinator" on (07) 4631 2690 or email ethics@usq.edu.au. If the Ethics Coordinator is not connected with the research project and cannot facilitate a resolution to your concern in an unbiased manner.

Thank you for taking the time to help with this research project. Please keep this sheet for your information.

Appendix 6

Additional Information for interested readers:

1. Reciprocity

I have been told that the Elders *like* me and know this is part reason for the longevity of my stay. In doing research over an extended period and as a collaborative project there was a verbal agreement from the beginning that ‘both knowledge systems are equal’. It has always been my intention to explore the depth and meaning of this statement. It was a guidepost as a head teacher that grounded my/our learning in exploring and asking questions that underscored ‘school renewal’ planning and striving for balance between ‘achievement and wellbeing’ in informing daily pedagogical practice.

2. Medicine Bag

The medicine bag encompasses the complex nature of truth as lived and experienced in place. The meaning of the medicine bag grew and became enriched as my own understanding of its meaning became clearer yet more complex with added layers of understanding over the years. For example, a community pow-wow holds layers of meaning that embrace value for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people if one has an open mindset and is curious and willing to explore positive habits of mind.

Reciprocity is a 2-way process of interacting in good faith. For non-Indigenous people the Medicine Bag holds the tools to look inward using the heart to spread the goodness of humanism in a way that can enrich the spirit. For Indigenous peoples using the tools of the Medicine Bag provide a way to renew and enrich Indigenous values and ways of doing that voice a spiritual power and knowledge that teaches and contributes to sustaining humanism and the natural environment in an age of global technological threats to life on earth.

3. The Medicine Wheel as a Bricolage

The Medicine Wheel was a school project and mural that was painted by a community artist in the hallway of the school. It coincided with introducing ‘cultural Fridays’, using a medicine

wheel reflection sheet and having Elders and Knowledge Keepers visiting classrooms and teaching on the land. It was a process of renewing local Indigenous knowledge. It was a tool to explore land-based teachings and learning, extending education beyond the classroom and formal Western pedagogy. As part of the bricolage, it was a critical process of growing awareness in how the Medicine Wheel can be used to guide balance between Indigenous and non Indigenous praxis by building relationships between achievement and well being within context of where schooling takes place and as a process to implement 'school renewal' in how learning is a mutual relationship between student and teacher in listening and observing to facilitate habits of mind that extend beyond the school within the 4 knowledge dimensions. This requires an understanding of the historical reality -a looking back- and reconciling knowledge systems in a way that will contribute and benefit the students we teach as a lifelong continuum of learning and development. The medicine wheel, its interpretation and meaning continues to grow and strengthen as the school grows in strengthening relationships and collaboration in understanding the power of balance in embracing difference as an ethical space of diverse knowledge contributions. From a personal perspective, the process of growing awareness in understanding the power of ethical space as living and making sense of the medicine wheel through a bricolage approach was both overwhelming and humbling. I think it is a personal experience that can only be lived and best shared with those that are open and willing to experience alternative pathways as an embedded/holistic lifelong learning journey.

4. Stories as lived:

The whole journey of the research was a living practice over the years of my tenure in the community. It was a process of school renewal that was both personal and professional. It is hoped that it became a reflective mindful journey for all staff, considering the lengthy duration of my journey as a collaborative project. In translating the stories as experience and life lived, it is hoped that the reader will come away with a renewed sense of connection to self, others, and the environment that strengthens a spirit of 'togetherness' in all relationships.

5. Iterative experience:

The emotional and cultural learning was immense for me- both at a personal and professional level. As this was a collaborative and lengthy research project that entailed large quantity of data, I felt the need to focus on 'pedagogical praxis'. Looking back, I often reflect on my initial pursuit in taking a Native Language course (Oji-cree) with good intentions to learn the language. This was encouraged by community also. Unfortunately, I allowed my academic studies to overshadow this goal. I do know that language is the root of identity and who we are. I would still like to 'study' the Native Language of the community and I believe my research would have been enriched by this emotional/ cultural connection with additional insights. I felt these connections grow and intensify throughout the journey adding a humbling reflection and regret/aspiration that this may be a future im/possibility goal as my learning journey continues to unfold.

6. Bricolage:

As a non-Indigenous ally, using a bricolage process was an emotional reflection and a 'rollercoaster' journey as my awareness and understanding of the complex layers, and constant negotiation of meaning unfolded in a decolonizing process. It can be likened to an emerging divulgence in the subjective dimension of humankind and an inclusionary pathway for non-Indigenous researchers/readers and allied others. This opportunity to grow and learn with community has given me a renewed hope in the empowerment of human vulnerabilities in negotiating meaning and truth claims in a dialectical space. This was a process that continues to unfold and perhaps it was this personal journey that was meant 'to be' for me, and within a learning community, who were patient and gave me time as we travelled together. This is something I would like to explore further in a future paper -perhaps for the benefit of non-Indigenous allies that work/teach within Indigenous contexts. For the longest time in my research journey, I was only catching 'glimpses' of what could be. I was so often encouraged to learn the language and looking back I sincerely believe this would have 'lessened my personal struggle' in making deeper meaning and weaving together the jagged edges of two knowledge

systems.

7. Relationships:

Balancing relationships underscore the complex nature of Indigenous Knowledge and the moral relatedness to knowledge domains. The rhythm in balancing diverse knowledge domains originates in the continuous interruption and negotiation of dualism and knowledge exchange. This process necessitates a sense of uncertainty in how and whose knowledge will be in/validated in the process from a sustainable global perspective. Future possibilities and hopes stem from the resilient/fragile nature of relationships. The fruition of sustainability is in the personal/collective and recognition of negotiating in good faith and being morally accountable in relationship building. This collective is composed of an ethical thread of trust and respect amidst diversity. This inclusion and way of being and doing is what crosses borders and knowledge spaces in good relations- both human and nonhuman. There is a constant ebb and flow and a ripple effect radiating glimpses/possibilities of both/and knowledge contributions. It is a looking in and looking out. *'In the forest, no tree can stay healed unless all trees are healed'* ..., I believe, applies equally to humans as to nature, whether referring to the individual, place, community or global perspective-there exist an ecology of relationships in life that start with 'self'. We are all one, on one planet, breathing the same air, existing on one earth/planet. The ecology of life is a changing reality, a journey in balancing/resisting knowledge domains, knowledge ideologies and the politics embedded in the pedagogy of practice. This interrelatedness affords and informs best practices that are rooted in place and empower voice that emerges from place through relationships connected to land, language and local culture. In looking back and over time as iterative cycles, my research journey, the interrelatedness between the personal and the collective created its own rhythm in working together as one.

8. Knowledge contribution:

Knowledge contribution can be considered a relationship between theory and practice. In this regard, the outcome and understanding depend on how knowledge claims are interpreted thus leading to either a recolonization or a decolonizing process in knowledge validation. A re-

awakening and awareness of the contribution of the 'silent voices' of those marginalized is the impetus needed to decolonize practice and interrupt the status quo. This then becomes a distillation of deficit thinking engrained in western logic and a renewal of pedagogical approaches to learning opening a space for diverse opportunities and enriched knowledge contribution. It is this visage that I propose as a balanced distribution in knowledge creation that is both resistant to dominant knowledge claims and a portrayal of 'difference' as a process of reaching all students.