

**DRUMMING MY WAY HOME: AN INTERGENERATIONAL NARRATIVE
INQUIRY ABOUT SECWEPENC IDENTITIES**

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

(Educational Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

February 2014

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ABSTRACT

The point of origin for my research is my birth: I was born in the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital. I was denied contact with my mother because she had tuberculosis and was deemed contagious. Indian Hospitals were established to house Indigenous peoples to control contamination. In my mind, I was born into legislated interference.

My research puzzle emerges from my encounters with what I call a lost “sense of belonging”. Through exploration, I educated myself, my community, and the public about what happens to an Indigenous person when they are removed from critical aspects of their cultural identities. As part of the journey, I weave together two methodologies that support and protect the intense emotional work that accompanies my inquiry. These are Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry. Indigenous Storywork allows me to employ important protocols that align with community-based ethics while conducting research with Indigenous communities; Narrative Inquiry, particularly autobiographical Narrative Inquiry, allows me to engage safely and relationally in deep personal reflection.

I examine what it means to be *Secwepemc* from my and my community’s perspective as I engage with the lived-experience stories of a *Secwepemc* youth and Elder. I tell of my own lived experiences and share my participants’ narratives; this story-sharing highlights the importance of knowing oneself and will assist other Indigenous peoples to define their own identities. I ascertain that Indigenous Knowledge is anchored in our identities and connections to our cultural rootedness, often inspired by the cultural teachings of grandparents. My autobiographical narrative, along with the participants’ stories, identifies the importance of intergenerational knowledge transmission, familial relationships, and land-based/culture-based learnings in my *Secwepemc* identity study.

The *Secwepemc* hand drum theoretically and metaphorically epitomizes Indigenous Knowledge; it ensures that my research project remains balanced in terms of upholding community protocols while honouring the Elders'/grandparents' teachings. Rather than allow the influx of external influences to hold Indigenous peoples in a subjugated position, I propose that narrative-based research increases our advancement in research, academia, and healing. This dissertation offers an alternative way to tell our truths and to remove Indigenous histories from the periphery of mainstream society.

PREFACE

Publication arising from the work presented in this dissertation.

Martin, G. (2011). Drumming my way home: A Secwepemc perspective. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 37(2), 107-116.

This work is located in Chapters One and Two of this dissertation.

This work is approved by

The University of British Columbia Behavioural Research Ethics Board
Certificate number H11-01780

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people who walked with and beside me and sometimes carried me through my journey to complete my PhD that I wish to thank from my heart.

I express my gratitude to my committee and my teachers: Supervisors Drs. Jo-ann Archibald (Q'um Q'um Xiiem) of the Sto:lo Nation, an author, Indigenous scholar, and leader in Indigenous Knowledge pedagogy. I value the teachings through Indigenous Storywork that helped me understand how to find answers through a question. Dr. André Mazawi, I appreciated your knowledge of theories and your fiery passion when discussing them. You encouraged me to articulate my ideas clearly for others who are new to Indigenous Knowledge to understand. Dr. Jean Clandinin I thank you for showing me how to journey through narrative inquiry and learn how to appreciate my parents for giving me the gift of life. I wonder if I would have reached this milestone if I did not have this amazing experience. I express my gratitude to my teacher Elder Jean William for helping me remain grounded in my cultural teachings. I learned so much about the traditional practices of the *Secwepemc* people through our conversations and you were always there to answer my questions.

I could not have completed my study without the support and involvement from my community partners who helped me decide on the focus of my identity study (Chief and Council, Education department, Advisory group, and Elders) and my participants Elder Jean and Colten. I am grateful to my sponsor, Lake Babine Nation; Education staff Monty Palmantier, Brenda Michell, and Gina Patrick for your endless support.

I thank my SAGE colleagues, Dorothy Christian, Heather Commodore, Amy Parent, Alannah Young Leon, Jocelyne Robinson, Joyce Schneider, Aurelia Kinslow, Marissa Munoz,

Karlie Fellner, for emotional support and a listening ear. My additional supports are: Drs. Tina Fraser, Shelly Johnson, and Mar Y Paz for always helping me believe that I could finish the degree. I am further grateful to Marc Higgins for your graphic expertise and Brooke Madden for intellectual engagement.

I raise my hands and give thanks to the Musqueam people for allowing me to live and learn within their territory for the past six years. I honour Rose Point for her strength and support for Indigenous students at UBC.

I thank my husband Pat Martin for your emotional, spiritual, and physical support for me and our children, Kyle and Kirsten throughout my studies. The ongoing support relieved the pressure allowing me to stay focused. Your continuous reference to Dr. G constantly encouraged me to keep pace with my work and push to finish. I thank my daughter Denise for caring about my well-being and sending me care packages on occasion. My son Trevor, grandsons Vincent, Lynden and Phoenix, I carry close to my heart. Kyle and Kirsten I felt your ongoing support through your presence. My life-long friend Lena Paul, I thank you for listening without hesitation when times were tough and your unwavering belief that I would fulfill my goal. I thank Herman Paul for the strength through *Secwepemc* songs.

Finally, to my family and ancestors who have gone to the spirit world especially my Grandparents Ned and Nancy Moiese who gave me spiritual guidance, integrity, and the work ethic to ensure that the writing flowed in a good way, Kukstemc.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my Grandparents, Ned and Nancy, my uncle Stan, my brother Vince, my sister Cecelia, my parents Tommy and Suzie who are together in the spirit world. I felt your presence as memories poured through my being. The journey through my lived-experience helped me learn a lot about my beginnings and I am forever grateful that I remained connected to my roots. I hope that the stories shared will forge a new path and dismantle the effects of colonization.

SECWEPEMC PRAYER

Kuwstec-kuc tqelt kukpi7 teskectec-kuc te tmiows-kuc
We thank you Creator for giving us this beautiful earth.

Yucwminte xwexweyt te stem ne7elye ne tmiow
Take care of everything on this earth.

Yucwminte re qelmecw, tmesmescen, spipyuy'e, sewellkwe, ell re ststillens-kuc
Take care of the people, the animals, the birds and our food.

Knucwente kuc es yegweyegwt.s-kuc
Help us be strong.

Kuwstec-kuc tqelt Kukpi7 te skectec kuc te xwexweyt te stem
We thank you Creator for giving us everything that we need.

CHAPTER 1:

FINDING “I” IN MY STORY

*Whatever I am going to tell about my experience, as I go forward
I am listening to the messages that I am getting from my surroundings
because of my attachment to the land and the importance of the drum. I
am listening to my intuition. It could be the beginning of the next part
of my journey, I think it is.*

Martin, 2009

Opening Epigraph

My opening epigraph is from a personal story I wrote in 2009. I realize now that this was the first time I engaged from an ‘I’ position in my scholarship. It was very difficult for me to write my first story, and I struggled throughout this dissertation to write autobiographically. The quotation describes the complexity I face in terms of becoming attuned to who I am. I must explore my sense of exclusion, or my lost “sense of belonging”, in order to move beyond this feeling: it is imperative that I connect to who I am in order to understand my *Secwepemc* identities. Sharing this epigraph reveals the importance of learning how to listen intently to my surroundings and intuition as I journey forward.

Throughout life, I have experienced dis/connections from my being. Consequently, my embodied experience of disruption – dis/connection – is caught in the interplay between dichotomous responses to Indigenous identities housed within two strong emotions: validation, and denial of identities. The first emotion responds to my need to claim my personal validation of *Secwepemc*¹ identities; the second speaks to my need to refute the absence and denial of *Secwepemc* identities specifically instigated by the *Indian Act*.

¹ Throughout my dissertation I privilege *Secwepemc* as my preferred identity marker. I also use “*Secwepemc*” interchangeably with “Indigenous” because I wish to proclaim and disrupt labels. The term “Indigenous” expresses my affinity with people globally who have similar backgrounds. This use of the term is supported by the United

The grave influence of legislation on my being began from my encounter with separation at birth. The separation I allude to and ultimately my research is influenced by the fact that I was born in the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital in Sardis, British Columbia (BC). The former hospital was 448km from my community (Sugar Cane) which is located in close proximity to Williams Lake, BC. As I grew up, I remember being told that my mother was quarantined with tuberculosis (TB) prior to and during my birth. She was deemed contagious and placed in the Indian Hospital to control the spread of TB. These hospitals were set-up to house “Indian” (according to the federal government’s label) people only. Laurie Maijer Drees (2013) proclaims “that between the 1940s and 1970s, Canada’s federal government offered Aboriginal peoples a *separate* health care service from that available to non-Aboriginal Canadian citizens” (p. xviii). Maijer Drees confirms TB was treated as contagious. She said, before a cure emerged the federal government set up a reactive “plan to isolate and control the epidemic in Canadian society and avoid the transfer of diseases to non-Aboriginal citizens” (p. xxxviii). Due to my mother’s condition, we were separated when I was born and I was placed in the care of my maternal grandmother when I was discharged from the hospital. My wonderings about my identities arise from my birth experience.

My research promotes the importance of owning and sharing my story, and also for my participants to own and share their stories. The stories help us understand some of our history and the struggles to overturn the loss of our cultural identities. Knowing ourselves will dispel the negative beliefs and stereotypes imposed upon us. The dismissal of self-doubt, lack of confidence, and low self-esteem will help us become stronger and believe that we can do well in

Nations. I use labels such as “Aboriginal”, “Indian”, “Native”, “First Nations” when citing authors or referring to legislative policy.

education, for example. From the outset of this dissertation, I grappled with the inclusion of myself in the story. I wondered if my story was important and if I had something to teach through my experiences. I did not feel that I had a whole lot to offer, and the “so what and who cares” component to research stifled me. I needed to unpack the basis of my own sense of loss of who I am as a human being and a *Secwepemc* person.

My autobiographical narrative is portrayed within a specific socio-cultural and historical context. Part of this historical context is exposed in Furniss’ (1999) description of how frontier histories in my hometown of Williams Lake celebrated the early white “discoverers” (p. 4) of British Columbia and disseminated the widespread desirability of cultural assimilation or the liberal democratic myth of the “self-made man” (p. 4). Furniss explains how demeaning stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples denied “their individuality, humanity, and integrity” (p. 5). To counter this denial, my study explores *Secwepemc* life stories in order to validate and contextualize a *Secwepemc* worldview. I am interested in what has shaped *Secwepemc* identities, in hearing the stories and perspectives that are not found in textbooks. My focus is to inquire into the lives of three *Secwepemc* people in order to recognize and reaffirm who we are as a people. Following Clandinin and Connelly (2000), my response will create “a new sense of meaning and significance in respect to the research topic” (p. 42) and uphold the importance of preserving our identities, illustrated through our collective intergenerational experiences. My study aims to develop an understanding of what supported *Secwepemc* identities. While my inquiry is relational and reflexive, the following research questions guide my study:

1. How do Elders shape cultural identity?
2. How is cultural identity important for *Secwepemc* people?
3. How do stories convey our cultural identities?

The third question is approached by exploring how stories passed down from generation to generation have shaped who we have become and, especially, how we connect to Elders. It is important to understand the effects of dislocation, as McIvor (2012) asserts that dislocation has weakened the identity of many of our people (p. 27). According to McIvor, dislocation, in addition to severing ties from family and community:

has had hugely destructive psychological effects on many Indigenous people. It has also created generations of Indigenous people who were left feeling empty and unfulfilled both culturally and spiritually. Colonially imposed definitions of who was “Indian” and the collective shame attached to the widespread devaluing of our languages, our ways of life, and therefore ourselves has culminated in enduring negative effects on identity. (p. 27)

I grew to feel unfulfilled culturally and spiritually through my interactions with mainstream society and the public school system. As a way of combatting these feelings, I position my research within, as well as structure my approach in accordance with, Wilson’s (2008) Indigenous paradigm. Wilson states that the term “Indigenous” is in the process of being reclaimed by Indigenous peoples, as it has come to mean “relating to Indigenous people and peoples” (p. 15). To disrupt the status quo, I prefer to use “Indigenous” (rather than Aboriginal, First Nations, etc.) following Wilson’s claim that: “Indigenous is inclusive of all first peoples – unique in our own cultures – but common in our experiences of colonialism and our understanding of the world” (p. 16). Therefore, I employ both Indigenous and *Secwepemc* as my preferred descriptors to sort through my research puzzle about cultural identities. Aligning with my identify preferences helps me dismantle the external labeling and it allows me to feel more autonomous in terms of choosing how I want to be identified. I review the complexity of labeling in more depth in Chapter Two.

This research puzzle has two aims: firstly, to help the mainstream education systems understand the *Secwepemc* peoples' lives better; and secondly, to help other Indigenous peoples with similar stories and backgrounds know there are many of us who experience identity losses. Cajete (2000) believes that "education is really about helping an individual find his or her face, which means finding out who they are, where you come from, and your unique character...education should also help you find your heart" (p. 183). Possibly our stories can assist educators and policy makers to understand the lives of Indigenous peoples and the effects of our lived experiences, especially residential school trauma; by understanding our lives, educators can learn how Indigenous peoples have been affected by this trauma.

Like many individuals/scholars who have journeyed back to their roots, my journey is personal and vital. Identity experiences vary; for me, it is a journey home, while for others it may be a continuing search for their community. In spite of the impact of having false identities imposed on us through legislation, I believe a new day is coming where Indigenous peoples will wholly celebrate their cultures and identities again because they were never extinguished. According to Furniss (1992), "shared kinship ties, language, and cultural values reinforced a sense of common identity among the Shuswap² of the Cariboo.

Indigenous practices were also threatened by the 1884 amendment to the *Indian Act* by the federal government, which aimed to curtail culturally-rooted identities by outlawing cultural practices and eliminating Indigenous languages in residential schools. For example, potlatches and other ceremonial practices were banned; as a consequence, anyone caught practicing, or perceived to be practicing, any form of Indigenous culture or traditions was given a penalty or jailed. This legislation was only repealed in 1951. These disruptions impeded the

² Shuswap is the English word for *Secwepemc*.

intergenerational transmission of cultural identities, resulting in a fragmented and/or misunderstood culture, and modified cultural practices and spiritual teachings. Our Indigenous identities have thrived rather than becoming stagnant despite the government's attempts to restrict them.

Palmer (1994) illustrates the assault on the practice of *Secwepemc* subsistence in the 1987 *Regina v. Alphonse* court case. During the trial, *Secwepemc* witnesses made efforts to explain how the practice of subsistence is valued and essential to the *Secwepemc* way of life. The court decision was hindered by the inability of the court system to comprehend the spirit of traditional subsistence practices; the Western legal system could not understand what hunting meant for the survival of the *Secwepemc* people. Therefore, due to the inability of the legal system to understand the witnesses' portrayal of subsistence hunting, the defensibility of subsistence was denied. The court decision dismissed, both literally and symbolically, the importance of hunting as a viable defense and the significance of the transfer of cultural knowledge practices.

Further variance in identities is attributed to the forced movement of Indigenous peoples off their lands. I found that many Indigenous peoples like me, who migrate to cities may or may not know their cultures or have ways of practicing it. The absence of specific cultural practices in urban centres can be attributed to the diversity of the Indigenous peoples who live in them. There is not one cultural practice that will apply to all Indigenous peoples. We are all unique. The retention of culture in urban centres is stronger for Indigenous peoples who are larger in numbers. To remain strong culturally, Indigenous peoples will create space for themselves to gather and practice their culture. For others who are not culturally grounded, they may be drawn to more broadly delineated Indigenous events such as Pow Wows, National Aboriginal Day celebrations (June 21), or events similar to West Coast night (drumming and singing) at the

Vancouver Indian Friendship Center. I feel that most Indigenous peoples who have been connected to their culture/homeland have an inherent strength that moves them to fulfill their cultural void. On the other hand, there are people who do not know their cultural identities who may never learn or enjoy them. It is important for Indigenous peoples to maintain linkages to their cultural identities. I learned through my research that my grandparents, and their teachings, are the foundation of my cultural identity.

By bringing my Indigeneity into my academic work, I recognize and acknowledge the importance of *Secwepemc* culture. I continually reflect on how *Secwepemc* history could have been different if identity disruptions had not occurred. I believe the importance of celebrating our Indigeneity cannot be underestimated, otherwise Indigenous Knowledges and worldviews are compromised and deemed less important. I currently rely on childhood memories with my grandparents to bring me back to my cultural beginnings.

The stories I offer in this study are three examples among many of Indigenous peoples who experienced interruptions and disruptions from family, culture, and homeland. I believe that many people have resorted to defense mechanisms to protect themselves from trauma for survival. Through re-living my story, I became more aware of the trauma that I have experienced on various levels. My birth in an Indian hospital was my first experience of trauma, which was then compounded by being reared without the closeness of a mother. There were also the residential school experiences of both my dad and myself, and my subsequent experiences with racism. Because of my history, the defense mechanism I applied was to ensure that no one got too close to me. I remained guarded to avoid being hurt; in effect, my defenses also closed off my emotions and I have difficulty showing and displaying affection to my loved ones. As I began my research, I noticed that my defenses played out in my writing and I struggled with

confidence. Thankfully, I have the capacity to return to the vital teachings of my grandparents to learn and heal. My journey to reclaim who I am begins with me, and extends out to my family, community, the Elders and overall the Creator, as shown in Figure 2. I intend to restore/re-story *Secwepemc* values to their rightful place by using Narrative Inquiry³ (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to tell my story and Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008) to share my participants' stories.

Situating Education and *Secwepemc* Research

I began to honour my stories by learning how to speak of myself as a *Secwepemc* woman and re-educate myself in a viable and connecting way. The complexity of the process resonates with Schneider's (2008) experience, as she explains "[m]any of us from Indigenous communities feel emotions of self-doubt and fear in today's academic environment. We feel that we must prove not only our research but also ourselves as Indigenous people, as legitimate" (p. 37). I feel that I could have been further along academically if I did not experience the self-doubt of which Schneider speaks. I say this because my high school teachers encouraged me to pursue a university degree, and I blatantly refused because I dreaded stepping into an environment where I would feel unwelcome or possibly forsake who I am. I had already traversed twelve years of education where I was situated as an outsider, peering through the glass ceiling. I had my doubts that I could survive in a university environment, especially in 1973 when I graduated from high school; the closest university to Williams Lake was then UBC in Vancouver. In addition, I had no knowledge of Indigenous scholars that inspired me, yet the encouragement I received from my grandfather to get an education resonated. My grandfather always said it was important to

³ I reference Narrative Inquiry and Indigenous Storywork methodologies interchangeably throughout the dissertation. I will often list the methodology in order of the context in which it is being used or sometimes alphabetically.

get an education and bring it back to the people, and his words subconsciously remained in my mind and kept me searching for more.

To truthfully self-actualize, I must situate myself and connect to my community. Williams Lake is located in the interior of BC; I remained in its vicinity into my late 20s. Economic necessity brought me to Prince George, considered the northern capital of BC, a two-and-a half hour drive north of Williams Lake. In 1984, 28 years from the time of this writing, I claimed Prince George as my home base.

Although I am from one of the 17 *Secwepemc* communities in the central interior of BC⁴, through marriage I am a member of Lake Babine Nation (LBN). My home village is historically known as Sugar Cane and is now also known as *T'exelc*. In addition, my home community is referred to as the Williams Lake Indian Band under the *Indian Act*. *T'exelc* is described by Sandy (2011) as, “a place where the salmon charge up the river” (p. 2) and the name Sugar Cane, “comes either from the sweet tall grass that grows there or from a story of sugar falling off a pack mule as a pack train travelled through” (p. 2). Sandy adds that the language is “*Secwepemctsin*” (p. 2). The 17 communities comprising the *Secwepemc* nation are outlined in the following map:

⁴ BC in particular has the most culturally and linguistically diverse Indigenous population, and therefore, knowing and understanding each nation and territory is important for establishing education and policy relationships.

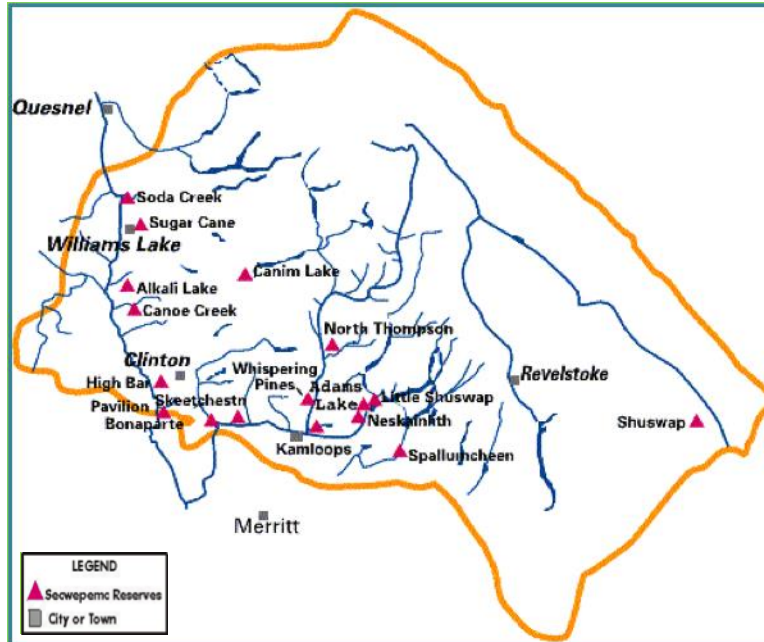


Figure 1: Map of Secwepemc Territory

Source. Secwepemc.org (n.d.), used with permission.

Sugar Cane is where I was raised by my grandparents, Ned and Nancy Moiese. I have fond memories of my grandparents, and I credit them and hold them in high esteem for being my primary caregivers and teaching me cultural values in my formative years. They cultivated the space for me to grow and flourish. My grandfather's teachings were especially powerful and they keep me grounded; the hand drum equally produces the same connectedness. A significant teaching my grandfather bestowed on me is humility; the words he spoke that resonate within my conscience are *"never to forget where you come from"*. I interpret these words to mean that wherever I go, I must always remember my beginnings and never to imagine that I operate on a higher level than anyone.

I firmly believe that positive Indigenous participation in education and research must be intensified to support Indigenous Knowledge within academia. This could be achieved through the advancement of Indigenous pedagogies to create spaces for Indigenous scholarship. For example, support for post-secondary education can be found in the September 2006 Kenny

Family Foundation Think Tank of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Lifelong Learning publication *Priority Directions for Nurturing the Learning of Our People*. Roberta Jamison, National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation (NAAF) CEO and President, tabled the report at the Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs on October 24, 2006. The report stressed that the responsibility to control education belongs to Indigenous peoples themselves. For Indigenous education to be effective, it must teach about our connections to land and culture. The land and culture based connections are integral in my research, as I demonstrate how my ties were never severed and I am attuned to certain aspects of my identity. My research will contribute to the factors identified by the NAAF as they are important for Indigenous peoples' educational success. The report provides a positive example of connecting to place, culture, and identity to enhance control of Indigenous education, and it supports me and others who journey home to Indigenous ways of knowing, and of knowing oneself.

Since entering the UBC Philosophy of Education Doctoral Program in 2008, my primary academic goal is to contribute to and augment Indigenous Knowledge discourse for the advancement of Indigenous educational theory and praxis. My aim is to increase my capacity to influence educational and societal change, as well as to enhance my own effectiveness as an Indigenous scholar and educator. In order to achieve my goal, I realize that I must have a strong sense of who I am and how I represent Indigenous Knowledge from a communal perspective.

Ever since I embarked on my educational journey, I was uneasy about how Indigenous students' life histories, which include their connections to family, culture and communities, are absent in academia. In the Western education system, I was taught to think linearly rather than holistically. Linear outcomes are measured against preconceived guidelines and benchmarks; holistic thinking is non-prescriptive. Archibald (2008) depicts holism as inclusive of heart,

mind, body and spirit, whereas linear thought is black and white: a right or wrong with no in-betweens or nuances. To remain holistic in my approach, I must have the autonomy to walk through the doors of the academy and also remain intact with my family and community. Holism helps me reflect on aspects of who I am rather than deferring to a particular script, such as an imposed legislated *Indian Act* identity. I believe non-holistic thinking causes Indigenous peoples to lose sight of self and discredits and devalues their being; self-doubt breeds the potential to tacitly accept labels. My doctoral dissertation is an opportunity for me, as one *Secwepemc* person, to help myself and others believe in who we have become, because I learned from my grandfather to remain connected to my roots. This is a cornerstone of my epistemology.

In addition, my epistemological journey connects with my community's story. Drawing from my personal experiences, I explore threads of life stories along with two other *Secwepemc* people who journey with me. My intergenerational study includes Elder Jean William (*Mumtre Nunxen xw te nek'wests'ut*) and youth, Colten Wycotte. Collectively, we are from the same community and my study took place there. All participants preferred to use their real names rather than a pseudonym, although relatives and acquaintances named in stories will not be revealed. Through acknowledging our heritage, we find the strength of Indigenous identities; in this vein, Rosborough (2012) writes of her experience, "[b]y placing Kwakwaka'wakw stories, language, and epistemology at the heart of my research, I engage in a process that strengthens my sense of identity and place in the world" (p. 22). I, too, am looking for the same. I realize that language is a significant connecting factor to identity but in my study I do not focus solely on explicit indicators. Identity is immense, and my interrogation of it stems from familial separation and the resultant distance from cultural identity. Furthermore, the telling and sharing

of *Secwepemc* stories and life histories contributes to Kuokkanen`s (2007) demand to open the academy`s storehouse of knowledge and allow Indigenous philosophies and epistemologies to be heard. The knowledge that I speak of is *Secwepemc* knowledge, which is manifested in the community`s collective ways of coming together through celebrations, stories, songs, language, and living off the land. Because “Indigenous storywork brings the heart, mind, body, and spirit together for quality education” (Archibald, 2008, p. 153), my purpose is to bring the heart, mind, body, and spirit of the *Secwepemc* people together to produce *Secwepemc* pedagogical research into *Secwepemc* identities. To accomplish this purpose, I must first make meaning of who I am and who I am becoming: I must return to my personal relational experience and locate myself as a *Secwepemc* person.

My relational connections are shown in Figure 2.

To speak from a relational position is the best way to describe who I am, because I embody the five spheres outlined in the circle – self, family, community, Elders, and Creator. The relational aspects of the sphere are similar to Atleo`s (2004) description of the physical and metaphysical as being one; this concept is known as

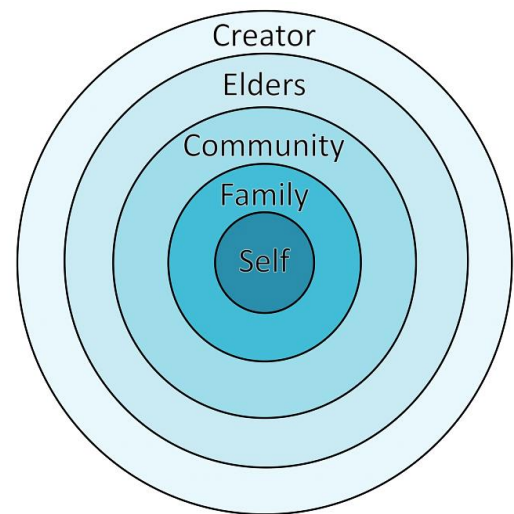


Figure 2: Relational Sphere

heshook-ish tsawalk in the Nuu-chah-nulth language, meaning the mind, body, and spirit are connected. Atleo concludes that the mind, body and spirit are correlated, which is very similar to Archibald`s concept of holism. My frame of reference operates in a circle; there is no beginning and no end, and all the parts are interconnected and equally important. I do not stand in

isolation: embodiment represents my whole being. Embodiment allows me to connect with self through the reliving and retelling of my lived experiences, which is the integral framework that links me to heart, mind, body and spirit. Cajete (1994) elaborates that embodiment/holism is the way “Indians symbolically recognized their relationship to plants, animals, stones, trees, mountains, rivers, lakes, streams, and a host of other living entities” (p. 74). Holism is strengthened by “celebrating these natural relationships...as living in a sea of relationships” (Cajete, 1994, p. 74). According to the Elders, many *Secwepemc* people enjoy similar embodied cultural bonds with nature and these cultural narratives are what help shape us. The *Secwepemc* believed all living things, even rocks, fire, water and other natural phenomena, to have souls since they were people during the mythological age. (2001, December, n.d.). *Secwepemc News*, p. 14.

My Culture is My Hand Drum

My PhD journey, my drum in hand, is leading me back to important cultural values. The hand drum signifies the heart or life line, honesty, and integrity in my work and the overall need to treat people with respect. I discovered that while Western institutions retain colonial ideals, they can be a place for Indigenous scholars to heal and reconnect as well. For example, I connected with my hand drum and I began to sing public songs through my participation in academia. Previously, I kept my hand drum safe and quiet until I began my PhD at UBC in Vancouver, BC. In 2008, I felt my hand drum beckon my spirit while enrolled in Dr. Jo-Ann Archibald’s Indigenous Knowledges and Education course (EDST 565D). During a seminar, I presented my hand drum and I sang along with a taped recording of the Women’s Warrior song. I was extremely nervous, and mindful to honour the hand drum and the song by my actions. It felt quite uncomfortable, yet I knew I had to begin to honour my gift. Later, with a group of

women at the First Nations House of Learning at UBC, I continued to learn and practice drumming and singing. I was taught that there is no right or wrong way to drum and sing, what is important is the intent in your heart. This is much the same as how I work my way through academe, focusing on being right in my heart. The hand drum signifies personal meaning for me; I will know if I am using it correctly.

Dr. Archibald, Q'um Q'um Xiiem, is from the Sto:lo Nation and she extended the opportunity for me and other students to connect with our spirits on a personal level. She offered us a class exercise to spend a few hours with nature (on the land) and engage in deep reflection while paying close attention to our surroundings. Each student chose the medium that suited her/him. I found a place of serenity alongside the Salmon Valley River approximately a 30 minute drive north of Prince George. On my walk by the river I listened deeply to my surroundings. I also spent time listening to my spirit guide. While I recount this experience, I can immediately return to the time and place. As a result, I found the courage to reach for my hand drum after spending a few hours on the land. Q'um Q'um Xiiem acted as a catalyst by creating a safe space for students to explore and value their gifts. Many of us made meaningful connections to places and spaces we may never have travelled to in a metaphorical sense before.

My research into *Secwepemc* identities aims to raise critical consciousness by affirming that Indigenous peoples have strong cultural identities and there are explicit differences in terms of how we learn and view the world. Our learning is experiential and place-based. I have the opportunity to open spaces from where people can tell their stories: this will ensure that the value of community is sustained. If educators, policy makers, and service providers are exposed to the delicate historical intricacies of Indigenous identity development, they could recognize how personal and cultural identity losses affect Indigenous peoples and use this recognition to assist

in the revitalization of Indigenous pedagogy and educational policy. This, in turn, could generate a holistic perspective in decision-making around policy, program content, court decisions and a host of other areas that influence our daily lives. In addition, Indigenous peoples will have the opportunity to broaden their own opportunities to speak and to be heard at some level. To speak and be heard to effect change is a personal quest expressed by Bruno (2010) as “making a societal contribution, even in a small way (and that is all that is needed to make a difference). If it is only my children that I teach, then hopefully I have reached their generations to come” (pp. 41-42) is her strong objective. Her words gave me comfort as I struggled and strained to position my study within its wider academic context.

Teaching future generations is vital because many Indigenous peoples are stricken with intergenerational post-traumatic stress, as Duran (2006) terms it. I am affected by combined institutional experiences of Indian Hospital and residential school. I am living with the residual effects of my parents’ exposure to each and I have not addressed them; instead, I passed on certain experiences to my children. Duran refers to concepts of “intergenerational trauma, historical trauma, and the Native American concept of soul wound” (p. 16). He contends that when trauma is passed on through generations it is cumulative, so unresolved trauma becomes more severe each time it is passed on. Duran explains that when the experiences are not dealt with in previous generations they have to be dealt with in subsequent generations. I am hopeful that telling my story contributes to the healing of generations to come.

I realize that I am not alone on this journey; many Indigenous scholars (for example, Bruno, 2010; Cardinal, 2010; Lessard, 2010; Young, 2003) have all spoken about a process of re-storying who they are. Similarly, in order to reaffirm who I am, I must understand the importance of cultural identities for Indigenous peoples and communities. Michel (2012)

expresses a sense of urgency to reclaim our cultural identities; she iterates that in order to confront the “colonizing forces of assimilation, we need to take back our right to our own histories” (p. 23). The fallacy of a legislated identity dictated by the *Indian Act* triggered for me the holistic importance of owning my *Secwepemc* identities and culture as a self-actualization process. I felt more oppressed being a federal government label and I became infuriated at the fact that I am continually legally referred to as an “Indian” in accordance with *Indian Act* definitions. The *Indian Act* imposed the fabricated identification of Indigenous peoples as “Indian”. In order to refute legislated identity, I must give credence to and privilege my identities in order to locate myself within, and in relation to, my *Secwepemc* culture. It is critical for me and other *Secwepemc* peoples to remove the tension between Eurocentric and Indigenous worldviews and restore our epistemological and ontological integrity. Integrity is mandatory because Indigenous people are so diverse; it is difficult to create any kind of categorization or typology of Indigenous epistemology and ontology as many themes overlap and are interconnected as I have already exposed through scholars Atleo, 2004; and Cajete, 1994. I personally recognize that we can be connected to our homelands in a semi-spiritual or spiritual way. By this I mean that we may have experienced attachment to the land in our formative years and physically moved away from our homeland, but we remain connected. For some Indigenous peoples, who may not know their homeland, they can feel the missing link and they may go in search of their roots in order to feel whole. Hawaiian scholar, Manu Aluli Meyer (2001) situates our relationships with our environments as spiritual as well. She believes, [o]ntology is the philosophy of essence – who you are, who are your people, where are you from, what difference does that make to you? That’s ontology (Meyer, 2001, p. 195). This is what I hope to answer.

Holistic ontology is a clear connection between individual, community, land, and the universe. Whereas, the nature of Western knowledge is to objectify reality and in this sense it places challenges upon Indigenous epistemology in which the premise of reality is focused on an inward journey. My study is premised on mine and my participants' inward journeys. Unearthing our epistemologies will reverse the manner in which, "[t]he epistemology of our past has been compartmentalized into scattered pieces and removed from our lives" (Ignace, 2008, p. 53). My "stories lived and told" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20) link me to the embodied experience of being *Secwepemc*; as I explained in the preceding sections, this embodiment extends to my hand drum. The hand drum reverberates between honouring and exemplifying my return to my beginnings and connectedness to my people. I am on a journey home in many ways; to reconnect to who I am, and who I am still becoming.

Indigenous Knowledge From the Heart

I further valued Indigenous Knowledge from the heart when I attended the Building Peaceful Communities Institute at the University of Alberta in July 2009. There I experienced Indigenous Knowledge in a sharing circle lead by Sean Lessard, a First Nations scholar, and Florence Glanfield, a Métis scholar. Sharing circles are common practice for Indigenous peoples and communities across Canada; each community adheres to an array of cultural protocols specific to their nation which are based on important teachings and traditions. I have participated in several sharing circles for healing purposes, but rarely in an academic institutional setting. In this particular setting at the Peace Institute, the sharing circle signified a place of respect. Each person was given an opportunity to share or not share, depending on how they felt. A physical object was passed around, and only the person who held the object would share whatever they needed to without questions or interruptions.

During the sharing circle, which included participants and instructors, two profound events occurred for me. One was when Sean Lessard shared words received from an Enoch Elder, Bob Cardinal that “the longest journey we will ever take is from our head to our heart”. I was really touched by these words because of my emotional losses and specific inability to show/display affection caused by the removal of children from parents to attend residential school; I know how important heart work is. The message spoke to me because I am on a personal journey to move from my head to my heart and the hand drum will bring me where I need to be. In order to celebrate Indigenous Knowledge, listening to the heart is crucial. I am learning to listen more intently to the values that emanate from the land and the ancestors. This brings balance; as a human being I understand the importance of the heart as the physical body’s life force and, equally important, as an Indigenous person listening to the heart is part of my Indigenous Knowledge. I will continue to learn to hand drum and allow the drum’s spirit to guide me throughout academia.

The second event that happened at the Peace Institute is when I spoke in the circle about my grandparents. I acknowledged my grandparents as my trusted guides who bequeathed their support to me for the important work ahead. As I spoke about them, a magical happening took place. I mentioned in the circle that I was moving forward, believing that I am doing the right thing and hoping that my grandparents would approve. It was a dark overcast day and rain was expected at any moment. As I was speaking, an instructor on the opposite side of the room said the sun shone directly on me from behind. She believed that it was my grandparents giving me their blessing; I, too, believe that was the case. Standing beside the hand drum are my ancestors, particularly my grandparents, from whom I seek and receive guidance. I feel their presence as I

embrace Indigenous Knowledge. My spiritual connections are examples of how I diverge solely from Western thought and join with my *Secwepemc* ontology.

My Awakening With Renewed Understanding of Indigenous Knowledge

Indigenous Knowledge is a vital system that respects the different ways of being of Indigenous peoples and responds to their ways of knowing. The acknowledgement and sacredness of stories and the honouring of their truth require a justifiable framework conducive to Indigenous Knowledge. My study depicts my own awakening and connection to Indigenous Knowledge. I regard Indigenous Knowledge as validation; it gives me the opportunity and courage to reflect on and articulate my Indigenous values, beliefs and ideas.

To encourage my reflection I recall these questions posed by Linda Smith⁵.

1. What have we learned about ourselves?
2. How do we know what we know?
3. How does Indigenous Knowledge help us to become who we are?

According to these epistemological questions asked by Smith, we must look inward to find the answers. Smith explains “inward” as going deep within oneself to the depth of the soul, to be in tune with one’s being. This is the splendour of Indigenous Knowledge; there is no single directive on how to apply it, nor is there a standard definition to describe it. Rather, Indigenous Knowledge varies and its defining principles rest upon the people and the territory. Indigenous Knowledge is expressed within each nation according to their distinct culture; it is an essential part of the group’s identity. Smith further asserts that lessons learned from Indigenous Knowledge may not be immediate. Some people may go along in life and suddenly a lesson will

⁵ Smith raised these questions in her keynote address at Trent University’s 10th Anniversary celebration of their Indigenous studies PhD Program in Peterborough, Ontario in June 2010.

appear. For others, lessons may not be noticed for quite some time, if at all. Elder Jean William, a participant in my study, showed me an example of Indigenous Knowledge transmission. At the beginning of the research process, during preliminary discussions about identities and what it means for the community, Elder Jean made a comment that I did not quite understand at the time. She said “you are not *Secwepemc* unless you return to the land” (J. William, personal communication, February 10, 2011). *Secwepemculecw* is further explained to show how the *Secwepemc* are connected to the land: [*Secwep*] – unfolding/spreading out and coming home; [*emc*] – people of; [*ulecw*] – the land of, place of, territory. I wondered what this lesson meant and how to interpret it. As I progressed through the dissertation, feeling the connection to my homeland became increasingly important for me personally and it finally dawned on me recently: the important connection between place and identities for *Secwepemc* people is how people return to the land. This lesson appeared by observing my two eldest children and how they have returned to the land. My son hunts for moose and deer in the *Secwepemc* territory and my daughter actively engages in traditional food gathering and preserving on the land; this affirms they have returned to their *Secwepemc* roots.

Smith also reiterates that Indigenous Knowledge is not linear or prescriptive rather understanding Indigenous Knowledge becomes apparent in time. The same principle is enshrined in Archibald’s *Indigenous Storywork* (2008). Smith and Archibald provide striking examples of how Indigenous Knowledge is extremely distinct from Western knowledge systems that rely on universal ‘objective’ truths, categories and hierarchies that partition knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge is not partitioned, slotted into categories or shaped into a mold; it is fluid. I believe it is important for Indigenous peoples to think, feel, and act based on their own moral,

ethical, and cultural teachings. For me to do so I must return to my childhood memories of my relationship with my grandparents.

To realize my cultural bonds, I am drawn to Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) reference to Narrative Inquiry as the "embodiment of lived stories" (p. 43) because my embodiment extends to my community and *Secwepemc* people culturally. I am appreciative that I can legitimately convey my cultural strength through the memories of my grandparents. Likewise, Cajete (1994) characterizes connectedness within an Indigenous context in terms of how "Indigenous groups used ritual, myth, customs, and life experience to integrate both the process and content of learning into the fabric of their social organization. This promoted wholeness in the individual, family, and community" (p. 34). Learning from our grandparents and Elders are key components of social organization.

Historically, our values were attacked by external forces that disrupted *Secwepemc* traditions, knowledge, life style, organizational systems and especially identities, causing them to fracture, leaving in their wake a displaced sense of individual and collective identities. My exploration is an example of the struggles faced by a collection of *Secwepemc* people. The research for my dissertation helps me understand how the loss of identities affected my ability to acknowledge and validate my cultural beginnings. There is a purpose and practical application to my study. Understanding identity loss is essential to help me and other Indigenous peoples move forward, to self-actualize and be self-empowered in order to contribute to the well-being of our families and communities.

To guide me further, I rely on Kirkness and Barnhardt's (1991) pivotal article about Indigenous education, "First Nations and Higher Education: The four Rs—Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility". I align the moral and ethical foundation of my *Secwepemc* identity

study with these four Rs. Kirkness and Barnhardt address how, from the institution's perspective, "the problem [of low Indigenous student numbers] has been typically defined in terms of low achievement, high attrition, poor retention, weak persistence" (p. 1) but from the students' perspective, there is a need "for a higher educational system that *respects* them for who they are, that is *relevant* to their view of the world, that offers *reciprocity* in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise *responsibility* over their own lives" (p.1, italics in original). Like many Indigenous scholars, my research begins with the utilization of Kirkness and Barnhardt's four R principles of Indigenous education in an Indigenous research context because they are critically important and relevant for community engagement. Accordingly, my application of storytelling and narrative is guided by Kirkness and Barnhardt's four Rs. In my academic work, they help me to create space for *my* mode of being.

The four R principles support cultural protocols that are essential when conducting research with and for Indigenous peoples. I am an Indigenous researcher who will be returning to my home community. Hence, I must engage with my community in a way that incorporates respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility as baseline considerations for engagement between the Indigenous researcher – and the Indigenous community. For instance, we must have respect for each other and the mandate of the project; I must demonstrate the relevance of what I can offer the community for future development in terms of the community's wants and needs; I must practice reciprocity by taking some information and giving some back; and I must demonstrate responsibility by working safely, respecting ethical boundaries and protecting my research accountability to myself, my community and the academy. To translate the four Rs into a research relationship means to honour traditional knowledge and cultural values, to capture the

essence of Indigenous viewpoints, to be responsive in giving back, and to listen and engage with the community. Therefore, I include the four R principles in my methodology.

Accomplished Indigenous theorists who honour traditional knowledge and cultural values include Archibald (1997; 2008), Atleo (2004), Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000), Cajete (1994; 2000), Graham Smith (1997), and Linda Smith (1999), to name a few. Each of these theorists reflects upon their particular cultural beliefs, traditional practices, relationships with the environment and with one another as part of their knowledge seeking and making process. Given that Indigenous worldviews are rooted within each nation's culture, the understanding of Indigenous Knowledge is rooted within the societal philosophies, values, and traditions of the people. The above theorists emphasize research ethics and protocols conducive to conducting research within Indigenous communities holistically and spiritually. To adhere to cultural protocols, I am learning to rely on my hand drum to support me in my work and to help me think clearly about my contributions to education, community, and Indigenous Knowledge. Indigenous Knowledge has created a feeling of legitimacy for me, although not necessarily for academic purposes – most likely because it is not fully appreciated or understood in this milieu. Absolon (2011) explains how Indigenous Knowledge works for Indigenous scholars:

The awareness and methodologies we have about ourselves in relation to Creation is integrated into our methodologies as we locate and story ourselves into our search processes. Our worldview/roots are informed by our ancestral lineage, our personal and political history, our cultural make-up, our nations and the sacred laws that govern our care and occupation of Mother Earth. (p. 58)

Therefore, Indigenous scholars/researchers do not separate themselves from their research, but rather are a part of the research and many connect with a culturally-embedded framework to represent Indigenous Knowledge – mine is the hand drum. This method/arrangement may be very difficult for non-Indigenous scholars to understand. However, this should not be seen as a

reflection on the legitimacy of Indigenous Knowledge research methods, but rather the struggle to integrate Indigenous Knowledge into the mainstream Western scholarly tradition.

Following the path of Indigenous scholars, (Absolon, 2011; Anderson, 2011; Bruno, 2010; Rosborough, 2012; Steinhauer, 2001; Young, 2003), Indigenous Knowledge is essential for my research involvement with *Secwepemc* identities. For instance, Absolon (2011) explains how “[t]he past, present and future intersect, and much of our research is about searching for truth, freedom, emancipation and ultimately finding our way home” (p. 55). This is my story to find my way home; before I get there, I must acknowledge the struggles Indigenous peoples like me face to reclaim our identities. It is often a heart-wrenching experience. The passion to retain and reclaim identities is what drives me as I express my own personal dislocation from my *Secwepemc* identities. My research project is an important step to include ways in which *Secwepemc* cultural ancestries manage the cultural interface between Indigenous and Western ways of knowing, and to help me move toward the reclamation of a *Secwepemc* pedagogy. The cultural interface was introduced by Nakata (2007) as a crucial tool for reconciling dual knowledge systems. He proposes that Indigenous peoples proceed with care because, by becoming educated in a Western system, they could unintentionally run the risk of becoming subdued into a subjugated position; if this were to happen, our role in the education system would be counterproductive. The connection to my beginnings is represented by my hand drum as my physical, spiritual, and metaphorical⁶ guides. These are what aid me to navigate between

⁶ In my study, the hand drum serves dual purposes. It represents a strong sense of embodiment for me, as I began to understand my hand drum as *Secwepemc* culture. The circular and physical features of the hand drum and its representation of spiritual connectedness to the land and ancestors guide me, and remind me to stay strong in who I am.

Indigenous and Western worldviews, and ultimately, allow me to find ways to interact with both my community and the education system.

According to Absolon (2011), many Indigenous researchers rely on their personal life-teachings and experiences in their work. The goal of personal story is “to learn more about our Indigenous self, history, worldview [and] culture” (p. 70) to balance the interface between Indigenous and Western worldviews. The best outcome is for Indigenous peoples to enjoy autonomy legally, politically and socially.

The significance of Indigenous Knowledge is supported in Archibald’s (2008) statement that “Aboriginal people have said that to understand ourselves and our situation today, we must know where we come from and know what has influenced us” (p. 42). Indigenous Knowledge is the foundational principle required to support my understanding of being *Secwepemc* as it relates to a sense of belonging. I foster my sense of belonging through the hand drum which returns me back to my *Secwepemc* beginnings. Most importantly, hand drumming nurtures my spirit during my inquiry and helps me remain balanced.

The Hand Drum as Metaphor

Anderson (2000) notes that “[m]usic, singing and drumming are integral to Native cultures” (p.143). Traditionally, songs, dances, stories, and ceremonies of the *Secwepemc* were important parts of daily life. The ceremonies were vital in maintaining the values, beliefs, and teachings of the *Secwepemc* regarding care of the land and the people. The metaphorical strength of the hand drum kept the *Secwepemc* tied to the land and reminded the people of their responsibilities to both land and community. A practiced example of the hand drum’s relationship with the land is captured by the *Secwepemc* song and prayer before harvesting food, medicines, and other materials from the land. *Secwepemc* people make an offering to thank the

Creator and the spirits for what is taken, especially the life of the animals and any objects that are sacrificed. The *Secwepemc* believe that all inanimate objects have spirits that must be respected.

A *T'exelc* community member shares her experiences with hand drumming while growing up:

My grandmother Celestine and my mom Elizabeth were both hand drummers. In fact, that's what I grew up with them singing all the time in the evenings, especially in the winter time. I used to have to dance for candy! My grandmother Celestine used to sing whenever she got the chance, in the parades, and at the stampede. I and Doreen always had to get dressed up in buckskin and dance while she drummed and sang. I remember we danced for Princess Margaret way back when she came to town...sometimes in the 60s. She and Ol' George Myers from Stone used to sing together at home and at stampede time too. Lots of singing was and is done at the lahal games too. My uncle Paul and grandfather Frank really loved to play and sing. I'm like that now too. I even sing the funeral songs cause my mom made me stand with her, Pleasa and Josephine Bob at the funerals and told me that would be my job when I got older. I didn't believe her but now here I am!
(K. Palmantier, personal communication, November 25, 2010).

For me, the hand drum represents the connection between humans, earth and the circle of life. As I reconnected to my homeland, my second drum (shown in Figure 3), was gifted to me by the Education Director in my *T'exelc* community for a conference presentation in Cairns, Australia in 2010.



Figure 3: Secwepemc Hand Drum
photo credit: Georgina Martin

Of particular significance is how the handle of the hand drum is woven with sinew in the shape of a spider web; this signifies my intertwining relationships⁷. The web configuration is described by Absolon (2011) as a representation of how “Indigenous worldviews teach people to see themselves humbly within a larger web or circle of life” (p. 31). The relevance of this is not only my connecting with the drum; I also feel connected to community. The webbed handle “contains our relationships to one another and all of Creation” (Absolon, 2011, p. 31). I connected to the hand drum to help me understand and articulate the important *Secwepemc* qualities I grew up with: honour, humility, hope, and humour. My cultural awakening began with the celebration of Indigenous Knowledge through the usage of my hand drum; my hand drum is part of my Indigenous ontology.

Summary of Chapters

Due to the intensity of my personal disconnection from my identities at birth, I deliberately set out to include myself in the discussion in Chapter One. I humbly, and with a great degree of difficulty, began to story myself into my research to become a part of the “larger web or circle of life” (p. 31) of which Absolon speaks. Writing myself into the study has helped me open space to understand my lived experiences. The intent of Chapter One is to situate myself within the context of Indigenous Knowledge and assist readers to appreciate my position; I also establish how my research supports cultural identities. I realize that my stories interweave with those of others and, therefore, I use Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to carefully and respectfully tell the stories that belong to me. To further uphold the relationality of, and respect for, the stories told, I express reverence for my hand drum as my trusted guide; the hand drum

⁷ The intertwining relationships will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter as I expand on the metaphor of my first hand drum.

further signifies the theoretical framework of how I approach my research, and I will return to its reverberations throughout.

In Chapter Two, my concept of the hand drum is explained. The hand drum represents my deep connection to my cultural roots and it offers me spiritual inspiration and guidance throughout my study. The hand drum is a thriving example of the important attachment to both my genealogy and Indigenous Knowledge. Understanding where I come from, and other scholars' concept of identities, helps me dispel the legislated and colonized identities that I was born into; it enables me to move toward emancipation with a renewed sense of self. Hand drumming is the mainstay of my *Secwepemc* cultural identity: it may not be for all *Secwepemc* peoples, but it is vital for me. As I connected with my hand drum, I gained the strength to include my own voice in my writing and academic project. The hand drum is important to the *Secwepemc* peoples' cultural identity and the drum helps me feel connected to that identity. I describe the drum making process that coincides with my own realization about our identity stories.

In my third chapter, "Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry" I describe how I bring together the two distinct but similar methodologies in this dissertation: Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008) and Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) to support how I re-tell and co-create the embodied experiences of the three participants. I apply Narrative Inquiry to the re-telling of my story and Indigenous Storywork is utilized in the co-creation of the participant's stories.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six are the individual story chapters of the three participants: Georgina (myself), Jean, and Colten. In Chapter Four, I re-live and re-tell my lived experiences through a Narrative Inquiry lens. My story provides insights in respect to my relationships with

my grandparents and their teachings. I recall my experiences in public school and residential school. Chapters Five and Six are dedicated to Jean and Colten, who depict their understandings of identities through a series of memories and stories. The starting points for the conversations are photographs that capture meaningful cultural identity experiences for Jean and Colten.

Chapter Seven concludes the dissertation; in this final chapter, I reinforce the support and teachings from grandparents/Elders described in my research that provide epistemic and ontological fulfillment for Jean, Colten, and me. The teachings from Elders are vital for the continued strength and transmission of cultural identities.

CHAPTER 2:

SITUATING THE RESEARCH PUZZLE

The disease/dis-ease associated with colonial trauma has severed the teachings in my life today as an adult. The onus is now on me to continue learning and living these teachings, taking responsibility to share with others who are on a similar healing journey. (p. 16)

Richardson, 2012

As my journey began, I struggled with the notion of having an explicit research question, so piecing together cultural identities made sense from an academic perspective. Similar to Rosborough (2012), I “put into action what it means to be Indigenous” (p. 39). Finding her Indigeneity helped Rosborough find out what it means to be *Kwakwaka’wakw*; for me, finding my Indigeneity connects me to what it means to be *Secwepemc*. The first step I took toward my Indigeneity is learning to use my hand drum. In this chapter, I return to my cultural beginnings and expand upon the meanings of my hand drum. Taking up my responsibility to learn and pass on teachings is a necessary response to colonial trauma, as Richardson points out in the quotation opening this chapter. At the outset of my PhD journey I came upon two key catalysts, which I touched on in Chapter One; the beckoning of my hand drum in Dr. Archibald’s course and the affinity I felt with Narrative Inquiry. From these experiences, I knew that Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry were the right approaches for my study; the hand drum began as my guiding metaphor, which turned into an Indigenous Knowledge theoretical framework for understanding *Secwepemc* identities. Narrative Inquiry is situated in Young’s (2003) work and Bruno (2010) invokes both Narrative Inquiry and Indigenous Storywork in her dissertation. For Young, Narrative Inquiry provided agency for her to study the relationship between language and identity. Bruno states that Indigenous Storywork was critical to her work as she could not write her document without referring to an Aboriginal worldview. As an Indigenous scholar, she

needed to make sense of the world and Narrative Inquiry and Indigenous Storywork helped her do this. Likewise, McIvor (2010) refers to worldview as a “cultural and spiritual way, with my ancestors walking beside me,” (p. 138). I am like-minded in my approach. Initially, I conceived of Narrative Inquiry and Indigenous Storywork as separate entities with important and distinct qualities. The direction my research took showed me how particular aspects of each methodology complements and supports the participants’ narrative and storytelling in Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

My theoretical framework is channelled through my first hand drum that was gifted to me by my lifelong friend, Lena Paul, from my *Secwepemc* community. I, in return, acknowledged and accepted the responsibilities of owning the hand drum. The gifting reminded me of stories my grandparents told to me: they shared stories about how men and women in the community were selected for important leadership or community roles by the way they represented themselves, from childhood through adolescence. Leaders were selected through the portrayal of critical leadership qualities such as humility, honesty, respect, responsibility and good character.

In 1980, my friend gave me the hand drum because she felt that I was ready to receive it. By accepting the hand drum I agreed to honour, respect, and care for the drum. I was not certain about the meaning and magnitude of the gift although I was willing to learn; I came to realize the sacredness of the hand drum and its significance as a major aspect of *Secwepemc* culture. The passing on and acceptance of the hand drum is in itself a story. The first drum I acquired was not simply given to me, as the giver ordered the making of the drum and then she prepared for the most appropriate time to present me with the drum. The exchange of the drum is a reciprocal honouring between the giver and receiver with spiritual and sacred meaning: the hand drum is not merely an object.

The finished hand drum (Figure 4) reminds me of my identity at the beginning of my studies. First, I was gifted with the drum (this is a representation of my identity); then I learned how to use the hand drum with a song; then, as I became more acquainted with hand drumming, I learned to appreciate the making of the drum with all its parts. I experienced a similar process as I learned to understand what has shaped mine and my participants' identities. The following graphic representation of the hand drum serves as my theoretical framework and the drum helps me recreate and maintain linkages with, and return to, my cultural beginnings.

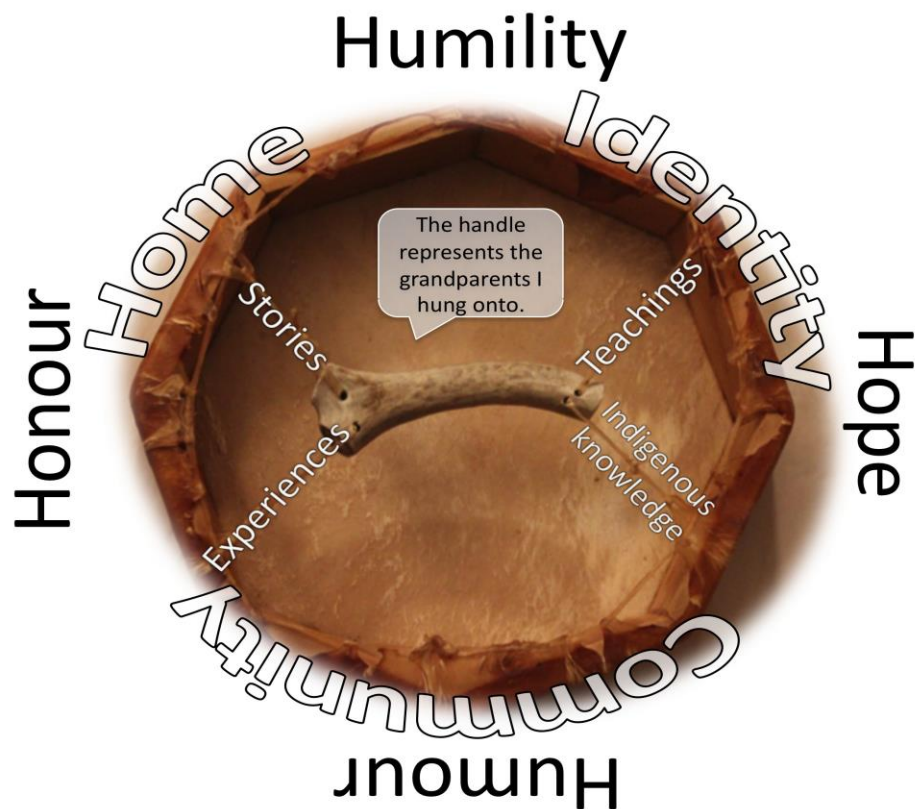


Figure 4: Secwepemc Hand Drum Theoretical Framework
photo credit: Georgina Martin

The hand drum guides me in my search to unravel the value of identities. I begin with the handle, which contains the memories that connect me back to my grandparents. The knowledge I gained from the relationships with my grandparents and the deep feelings of connection, Lelani Holmes refers to as “heart knowledge” (2000, p. 46). Holmes explains that the knowledge passed on through the generations in her Hawaiian culture unites with the *kupuna* [Elders] of generations past and this relationship is known as “blood memory” (p. 46, italics in original). My memories are what sustain my “heart knowledge” and “blood memory” that I have with my grandparents. The sinew straps that anchor the handle represent my lived-experiences, Indigenous Knowledge, teachings, and the stories that keep me connected to my identities. My memories hold the key to my cultural-rootedness and they help me realize how my lived-experiences connect me with the cultural teachings of my grandparents. The hand drum itself helps me find direction in the meaning making; the graphic also shows how I go about my research using an Indigenous paradigm – incorporating honour, humility, hope, and humour.

The Handle - My Grandparents

In my memory, my grandparents are vivid. They were the most important people in my life growing up. My connection to them is so strong that I can return to times and places and relive the feelings and emotions I felt then, in the present moment. Reliving such experiences is described by Dewey (1938) in reference to longitudinal and lateral connections:

As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands and contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situation to follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continue. (p. 44)

Every part of my learning gained from my grandparents' teachings continues in various forms and I constantly bring the teachings forward in my present life. Therefore, the connections with my grandparents became my starting place for my research and I rely on them in my narratives. As a result these meaningful relationships represent who I became and how I will live out my future.

Experiences

I experience the values of my grandparents' teachings and I am reminded of the depth of our culture; although I am not completely connected to the culture, I feel its strength. I have many memories of times spent with my grandparents as a child, only good memories. I remember the strong work ethic my grandfather taught me. We lived on the reservation in a one-room log house with an attic, built by my grandfather; the attic provided temporary accommodation and my grandmother dried choke cherries there. My grandparents and I slept in the main floor's living quarters.

During the early 1960s, homes on the reservation had no indoor plumbing. My regular chores were collecting water for household use and carrying wood for the fire. At first, I would cart water in a bucket from the creek which was across the reserve and down over the hill. Because I was a child it seemed far. Without indoor plumbing, water had to be carried for multiple uses like food preparation and cleaning. I can picture the water pails in their place, close by the wash basin and mirror for cooking and washing-up. Later on, cold water pumps were placed in the community which made water more accessible and a lot closer to my grandparents' house. I collected wood from the wood pile outside the house where it was chopped by my grandpa or one of my uncles. The wood was carried inside the house and placed

in the wood box beside, but not too close, to the stoves. We had two stoves, one for cooking and the other for heat. These memories are like voices connecting me back to my grandparents.

I loved my chores because when I finished I sat patiently by my grandpa on his bedside until he gave the nod for me to pull the cardboard box out from underneath the bed to find my treat. I could choose from apples, oranges or dried fruit. To this day, dried apricots are my favorite dried fruit – my grandpa called them “ears”. The reward system worked well for me because it trained me to earn my way.

Equally valuable are the experiences I shared with my grandmother. I remember when I accompanied her on berry-picking trips. Depending on the season and place, we gathered Saskatoon berries, wild currants, gooseberries, cranberries, and choke cherries. Now, in my memory, I can hear the sounds and smell the savory scent of the Saskatoon berries boiling on the stovetop as they were prepared for making pies. Choke cherries were dried on paper in the attic for winter consumption. If it wasn't the sweetness of berries in the air, it was the strong odor from the preparation of moose or deer hides. The odor depended on the preserving stage of the hide. If it was at the beginning it would be the smell of the hide mixed with brains from the animal which was not very pleasant. The cured hide ready to make moccasins, gloves or jackets had a very pleasant smoked smell. As I revisited these memories, I realized that for me to understand my experiences with identity losses, I must travel back to my stories, such as these, and interrogate the experiences that disrupted my connection to identities.

Indigenous Knowledge

By using a culturally-relevant framework, Rigney explains Indigenous researchers can disrupt the “history of exploitation, suspicion, misunderstanding, and prejudice of indigenous peoples in order to develop methodologies and approaches to research that privilege indigenous

knowledges, voices, experiences, reflections, and analyses of their social, material and spiritual conditions” (Rigney, 1999, p. 117, as cited in Smith, 2005, p. 87). It is important that my research utilizes methodologies that privilege the voices of Jean, Colten and I, through the sharing of personal stories and connections to our Indigeneity. Grande (2008) further asserts that “Native students and educators deserve a pedagogy that cultivates a sense of collective agency as well as a praxis that targets the dismantling of colonialism...it is one of our primary responsibilities as educators to link the lived experience of theorizing to the processes of self-recovery and social transformation” (p.236). In addition to the transformational power of Indigenous Knowledge, the powerful stories awaken the conscience; both the cognitive and affective domains are touched. The stories promote the transformation of both the story tellers and the story readers. Therefore, the transforming mind-sets needed to be balanced due to the delicate nature of the healing journey that evolved. Eventually, I found safety through the autobiographical process and practical application of Indigenous Knowledge. My Indigenous Knowledge is built around the memories I keep of my grandparents; these memories connect me spiritually to my homeland, my grandparents’ teachings, and now to my hand drum too.

Teaching and Stories

The teachings from my grandparents proved to be extremely valuable as they were carried through adolescence into adulthood. I often wondered how others were taught and if learning from grandparents shaped the experience of other children in other households. I did not spend much time with other families. I was mainly alone with my grandparents so I cannot determine if other children were taught the way I was. As I was growing up, I did not wonder about how other children were taught. Now, later in life, I wonder. My inquiry into identities moves me from my head to my heart which reflects a process of reconciliation, of inner struggles to

integrate the teachings and words of my grandfather, especially to never forget where I come from. I return to the notion of “*never to forget where you come from*”, as it is circular and it is conducive to our *Secwepemc* ways.

I remember hearing stories about relatives and friends who travelled from village to village. The trip would take days, sometimes weeks, by horse and wagon depending on the distance. When the travelers arrived in the village, they were received and greeted with courtesy. My grandfather spoke about how meals were prepared for the travellers and they would be fed first. In terms of proper protocol and etiquette, children waited while guests were given priority for food. After the meal, the tables were cleared and dishes washed while the guests rested. By listening to the story, I knew what my role was when guests arrived and I knew what I could expect when I travelled to a neighbouring community. Ignace (2008) includes reciprocity as a feature of *Secwepemc* culture; he describes how invited guests knew it was tacitly understood that they would return the favour of hospitality at a later date. I found through my own research how reciprocity and several other *Secwepemc* cultural markers have been diminished. The destructive experiences will be discussed in subsequent chapters as participant stories unfold. Traditional knowledge gained from living alongside my grandparents shaped the stories that I have come to live by, they shaped my successes and they also shaped who I have become and am still becoming. My identity formation is also influenced by observations of the practice of the four Hs in my community that I introduce here.

The Four Hs

The four Hs – **honour, humility, hope, and humour** – reverberates throughout our territory and demarcates the resilience of the *Secwepemc* peoples. The four Hs are empowering attributes for the *Secwepemc* and other Indigenous nations as well. The first 2 H attributes are

inseparable – **honour** – extends to all the elements in the Relational Sphere shown in Figure 2; self, family, community, Elders, and the Creator. In my intergenerational study, all three participants collectively honour and uphold their grandparents. It is the highest degree of respect that is passed on to esteemed Elders, parents, and important people in the community.

The second H – **humility** – means self-respect and self-worth. It is a strong leadership quality. For example, many people in our community collectively work behind the scenes to support various community/cultural events. The people offer their skills/labour with diligence because they care and are committed to successful outcomes. It is the sense of being humble. Honour and humility are values that the *Secwepemc* peoples carry out with the highest degree of respect. They walk through life with humility and they do not expect any form of recognition. People may or may not be honoured and it is something they do not quest for. The three of us are collectively honouring our grandparents with the respect we show them in my study.

The third H – **hope** – is necessary for survival. There is always hope that our lives and our futures will improve. Without the sense of hope for progress, living would feel insurmountable. Hope turns darkness into possibilities. We have hope that our cultures will thrive, as I uncovered that *Secwepemc* peoples have an innate sense of who they are through lessons learned from grandparents and/or Elders. There is additional hope for advancement and improved socioeconomic conditions as more Indigenous students obtain degrees, for example.

The fourth H – **humour** – is our saving grace. Humour helps us endure and live through difficult situations. Humour is healing. For example, rather than feeling overcome by grief when faced with difficulties, humour helps us cope with feelings of loss or helplessness and the situation becomes more manageable. I believe humour helped us remain resilient in order to survive the residential school experience and other social atrocities. If it was not for the healing

power of humour, I believe that many more of us would have been consumed by the onslaught of trauma caused by the separation from language, families and communities. Many of us are thankful that the healing power of humour massaged our spirits and kept us strong. The four Hs are continuing values that many Indigenous peoples continue to live by.

The Spirit of the Hand Drum

Prior to my own drumming experience, I witnessed *Secwepemc* people hand drumming at many community/cultural events. I noted how drummers would honour the hand drum; the drummers would set aside any feelings of negativity before taking their place in the drumming circle. This quality is genuine and authentic because the power of the drum is felt and carried through the group. No-one wields power over the other; everyone is on an equal footing and negativity is dispelled. The dispelling of negativity can occur months/weeks/days/minutes before the event, depending on when the person is approached or when they decide to drum. The request for drummers can be made by approaching the person and offering tobacco or, in places like UBC, a call for drummers is made and the drummers are acknowledged by some form of gifting. When the drummer agrees to drum, they begin to plan by thinking about the ceremony and the context of which they will be part. The request and acceptance follows cultural protocols. I recognized that the practice of drumming is powerful because I learned that the spirit people are present to help. The power of the hand drum is shown in the power and unity of the community. The same principle of cultural protocols is applied in sharing/healing circles.

A good example of this power can be found in the work of Anderson (2000), a Métis scholar who described how Edna Manitowabi felt when she first heard the drum. Manitowabi is Odawa/Ojibway from Wikwemikong, Manitoulin Island, and head woman for the Eastern

Doorway of the Three Fires Midewewin Lodge. She is well-known nationally as a Traditional teacher, ceremonialist, drum keeper, and grandmother. She has been instrumental in the re-introduction of Traditional teachings and ceremonies in her local area, and is an active researcher of Traditional medicines. Manitowabi said the drum reached inside her, giving her “a great sense of peace”, and a feeling of “coming home to where I belonged” (p. 142). The drum deepened the emotion in her heart and awakened her spirit. It brought the memories of her grandmothers, grandfathers, and her ancestors: historical and blood memory. Manitowabi related to the sound of the little boy water drum: it gave her strength. This drum is central to Indigenous cultures in Eastern Canada; I first heard the sound of the little boy water drum in Peterborough, Ontario. Native drumming can help women dismantle negative definitions of being and lead them to places where they will find powerful affirmations of self and nation (Anderson, 2000, p. 143). My hand drum is guiding my spiritual path as the drum amplifies the voices of my ancestors. The drum is also healing. There are many facets to *Secwepemc* culture, but the hand drum is the most central for me.

Before I connected with my hand drum, the spiritual realm was missing in my research. Now, as I drum, I appreciate Atleo’s (2004) concept of Nuuchahnulth Indigenous Knowledge, the inclusivity of all reality, physical and metaphysical, everything being one. Accordingly, Nuuchahnulth origin stories predate “the conscious historical notion of civilization and scientific progress” (p. xi). Like metaphysicality, Archibald’s (2008) holism represents the circle of life; there is no perceived beginning and no perceived end. All the parts are interrelated and equally important. In my sphere, self is at the center and inclusive of, and extending to, family, community, Elders, spiritual guidance and the Creator. It is necessary to be at one with self in order to embrace the connection to Indigenous Knowledge. Without knowing oneself within a

Secwepemc ontological relationship the individual, like me, will have a defective sense of genealogy.

Due to the magnitude of the identity topic, it was difficult to problematize identity. It became a challenge to unpack and re-pack the meanings of identities. To help me understand I reflected on Schneider's (2007) description of her separation from identities. She wrote:

The separation inflicted upon my community by the residential school system, the dispossession of our lands and rights to govern ourselves using our own laws and ways of being has resulted in our alienation from each other, our territory (for many of us) and our rightful inheritance to our language, stories, and vital connections to past, present, and future family members. (p. 6)

In the same year, I wrote about identity from a Political Science viewpoint; the stark reality of identity loss is still relevant:

The loss of identity is a major threat to the loss of a people because it severs individual identity from community and culture. The formation of identity is by language, custom, tradition and practice. Therefore, the loss of culture and identity eradicates the Aboriginal continuum. Aboriginal youth are especially threatened by loss of culture if they replace hunting, trapping and fishing by opportunities to get a drivers license, chat on the internet, and pursue contemporary trends. This reality will continue as Aboriginal people migrate to urban centres and youth either lose touch with their homeland or do not develop communal and cultural roots. (Martin, p. 14)

I recognize that our identities and collective cohesion are fragile. I, like Anderson (2011), feel the outrage, hurt and pain of colonial impositions. Anderson asks, "When will we be heard?" (p. 8); she then declares that we must transform to regain and revitalize Indigenous languages, cultures, families, and communities for our continued survival.

I felt confused and I wondered about my identities. Memories return from when I was a young child, maybe around six. I hear my grandfather's words and I set out to follow them. He said that I needed to go out (leave the community) and get an education and bring it back to our

people and I was never to forget where I come from. The words my grandfather spoke to me so many years ago continue to resonate. His words remain in my subconscious; I remember them clearly to this day. I am astounded at the profound affect his words carry. He had no formal Western-oriented education; he was the steward of life teachings necessary for the survival of our people. I could not fully understand what it meant to bring education back to the people, so by undertaking this doctoral research in collaboration with my community I hope to accomplish what my grandfather meant. Therefore, my research focuses on the lives of three generations of *Secwepemc* people who share their stories and experiences of what it means to be *Secwepemc*. I am interested in what shaped and challenged the development and sustenance of *Secwepemc* identities. Of particular interest are *Secwepemc* culture, identities, and worldview, all of which are explored in the forthcoming chapters.

The Drum is Connected to the Land

My *Secwepemc* hand drum extends from the spirit of the land through its physical properties – the drum’s surface is made from moose hide and the material for the wooden frame is from the tree. In my heritage, our connectedness to the land is acknowledged. The *Secwepemc* people respect how the moose or deer sacrifice their hide and they pay homage to the animals’ spirits. The trees provide shelter, medicine, and transportation. They are sources of nourishment and their roots represent our rootedness to the earth. These are important elements for survival and they are directly linked to Mother Earth.

Equally linked to Mother Earth is the sound of the drum. It was explained to me that when all the hand drummers are in sync, their synchronization resonates with the heartbeat of Mother Earth. There is no short cut or quick answer to learn how to reach the moment when the beat of the hand drum keeps time with Mother Earth; the experienced hand drummer will simply feel it.

Ultimately, the sacredness of the hand drum demands honour and integrity. Therefore, my acceptance of the hand drum bestowed on me the responsibility to care for it and use it in a good way. Similarly, as I move through my study, the sacredness of the hand drum correlates with the highest degree of care necessary when I handle the participants' stories with which I am gifted. The release of the stories demands crucial curatorship to honour their truth.

Connecting to Indigenous Knowledge

To connect with and embrace Indigenous Knowledge, I reflected on how Archibald (2008) shares the Trickster story *Coyote Searching for the Bone Needle*. Archibald (2008) heard it from Eber Hampton of the Chickasaw Nation; the story resonated with Archibald as Hampton made connections between motives and methods in research, as shown in this paradigmatic example:

in the story, Old Man Coyote was searching for a bone needle by the fire and Owl showed up to help. Owl told Old Man Coyote that the needle could not be found around the fire; if it had been there, Owl would have spotted it. Old Man Coyote told Owl that the needle was used quite a ways over in the bushes. Owl wondered why Old Man Coyote was looking by the fire then Old Man Coyote explained that it was easier to see by the fire because it gave off good light. (p. 35-36)

In essence, I am searching for my own bone needle story, like the Old Man Coyote trickster character. The paradigmatic example helps me ponder my lived experiences and the teachings or theory of the teachings from my grandparents and Elders to unravel the underpinnings of Indigenous Knowledge. Like Old Man Coyote, I must figure out where to look before I begin my search otherwise I could make mistakes by looking in the wrong places, like he did. The desired outcome is to make meaning of my own story; therefore the search for the whole, in many ways, is my dissertation and my life. I am heading home through academia, which has become a part of me and a part of my hand drum. The delicate balance required between Indigenous and Western worldviews equate to how Owl questions why Old Man

Coyote is searching for the bone needle by the fire. Owl confirms that the bone needle is not there otherwise he would have spotted it. I gain from this message that Owl is cautioning Old Man Coyote not to look in the wrong places. Therefore, I must ensure that I do not become confused and distort my articulation of *Secwepemc* worldviews. The assuredness of Owl's statement coincides with Archibald's (2008) advice that by listening and watching we gain understanding from the Elders before we make meaning of their words. The interpretation of stories carries the same responsibility; before the storyteller can make meaning of the story, they must listen intuitively to ensure the essence of the story is correct, otherwise a change in the wording could change the whole story. This approach, Archibald (2008) explains, is an important element of story sharing; it allows the listener (who becomes the reader when the stories are written down) to make meaning of the words and stories without direction from the storyteller (meaning-making). This challenge is conveyed when Owl wonders why Old Man Coyote is looking by the fire and it turns out that it was because it is easier to see by the fire. Therefore, to convey the truth and co-construct participant stories, one must move away from the fire and really listen with our eyes and our ears. Each time I wonder if I am hearing correctly, I reflect on the transmission of Archibald's (2008) teachings from the Elders, my grandfather's voice and the beat of the hand drum. Each of these elements, in harmony, represents the heartbeat of Mother Earth as well.

The multiple layers of meaning created by the Owl and Coyote trickster story is one example of how Indigenous scholars utilize story to create new Indigenous Knowledge pedagogy and make meaning of Traditional Knowledge. New meaning depends on the purpose of the interpretation, how the story is told by the storyteller and how it is received by the listener. As I developed my research direction on identities, I search for my own bone needle. My thoughts

and reflections are circular; they bring me back to how I was taught and the important words of my grandfather, who continued to remind me to never forget where I come from. The respectful words of my grandfather give me guidance and I honour them.

Indigenous Knowledge is my theoretical framework and *Secwepemc* ways of knowing forms the basis of my epistemology. Wilson (2008) defines epistemology to mean:

[T]he theory of how we come to have knowledge, or how we know something. It includes entire systems of thinking or styles of cognitive functioning that are built upon specific ontologies. Epistemology is tied in to ontology, in that what I believe to be “real” is going to impact on the way that I think about that “reality.” Choices made about what is “real” will depend upon how your thinking works and how you know the world around you. (p. 33)

By sharing the development over time of my ways of knowing, I offer a narrative of growing awareness: – mine. My personal reflection has uncovered my epistemological knowledge which was learned through the teachings of my grandparents.

Exploring What Identities Represent

In my effort to problematize, dissect and decipher how I examine and investigate identities, I interrogate the meaning of identities. My decision to explore identities is grounded in my personal, historical disruptions. For quite some time I experienced a missing link between how I grew up and who I have become. I am not entirely sure what caused this feeling because I do feel attached to my grandparents and my homeland. It is this sense of confusion that governs the significance of my research into identities. I equate my personal situation to someone who is adopted, although this is problematic because I do have a sense of my roots and I acknowledge my grandparents for offering me strength and courage in my achievements. Even though I grew up in a caring and supportive environment there was, and continues to be, something lost. I acknowledge there are many Indigenous peoples who share my experience, and therefore I

recognize the value in researching identities. Also at issue are the traumatic experiences that have disrupted Indigenous identities for over 200 years. These experiences contributed to Indigenous peoples experiencing lack of agency in their identities. In addition to these challenges to identity formation, I experienced the intergenerational effects of residential school which have disrupted my ability to exhibit caring affection to my immediate family; I was denied the ability to speak my language and to practice my culture. The sharing and exploring of my own experience are acts of self-actualization, reclamation and renewal. My work contributes to helping affirm Indigenous identities and, most importantly, to finding a voice for myself and others.

Another critical component of my work is the articulation of a contextual Indigenous approach, my academic praxis. The intended outcomes of my research are transformative and transdisciplinary and they invoke knowledge mobilization. The process is transformative in the sense that I reclaim ownership of my cultural identity by returning to my homeland; transforming, and reconnecting with my *Secwepemc* beginnings. I refer to my study as transdisciplinary because there are no boundaries in respect to learning and acknowledging identities; the subject of identity surfaces for Indigenous students in any discipline. Transdisciplinary movement invokes knowledge mobilization as Indigenous students are curious about how they can strengthen their identities by connecting to their own cultural societies. Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith (2008) recognize the importance of Indigenous epistemologies as they call on non-Indigenous scholars to realize that it is time to dismantle, disconnect, and decolonize Western epistemologies so Indigenous voices can be heard. My research is an opportunity to contribute to the growing demand for Indigenous Knowledges and methodologies, while I contribute to the self-empowerment of the *Secwepemc* people.

An Indigenous praxis begins with acknowledging where one comes from and includes the recognition of one's historical, political, and social location. As an Indigenous scholar and researcher, I must keep the following principles in mind when conducting research with Indigenous communities: firstly, I must respect who I am and secondly, my research must be relevant for the community. Throughout this dissertation, I represent my identities and I aim to produce a relevant response to the community's inquiries about *Secwepemc* identities.

Identity Stories Emerge

As I think about and envision how to roll out the three sets of stories to come, I am reminded of the same precision needed to prepare the moose/deer hide for the making of the hand drum. After the hide is secured to a large wooden frame, the hide is delicately kneaded to soften it in preparation for making various products. The equivalent care is necessary in the collection and release of the stories. I must prepare for taking up and sharing the participants' stories in a way that is inherently respectful and reflexive. The intent of bringing together Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry in my next chapter is not to create a dichotomy between Indigenous Storywork (participants)/Narrative Inquiry (researcher/storytelling) because I am not suggesting that Indigenous Storywork cannot do the work of Narrative Inquiry, it just has not been done yet in the same fashion. By weaving together the tenets of Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry, I take key aspects from each and incorporate them into a context that works best for my purpose. For example, I utilize Narrative Inquiry to personally connect with my story at a deeper level, and Narrative Inquiry assists me to reflexively relate to the participants' stories. In similar fashion, Indigenous Storywork can expand to include the sharing of lived experiences beyond traditional/cultural stories and Narrative Inquiry can include

a traditional/cultural element as many Indigenous scholars are drawn to Narrative Inquiry as well.

To build on Indigenous Storywork in the sharing of participant stories I start where Archibald left off. She states, “[m]any First Nations storytellers use their personal life experiences as teaching stories in a manner similar to how they use traditional stories. These storytellers help to carry on the oral tradition’s obligation of educational reciprocity” (p. 112). This approach is framed as a give-away; Archibald lays these teachings out to be taken up in ways that respect the principles of Indigenous Storywork, while offering Indigenous Storywork as a methodology to use in different research contexts for different purposes.

In the story chapters, I share my personal stories of my lived experience to sort through the misunderstandings of my identities while Elder Jean’s story is an example of a give-away. She shares her personal life experiences as teaching stories, speaking a lot about traditional practices. Colten’s story follows as a composition of learning stories which track how he relates to identities in his youth. While releasing Jean and Colten’s stories, I am not interpreting or analyzing so much but telling as I share their stories in their voice. I project their voices, like Blaeser (1999) I unravel the significance or revolutionary meaning of the stories. Blaeser attests this style of storytelling helps “weave people into the very fabric of their societies” (p. 54).

I reiterate that the vital occurrence that distorted my sense of identity is a birth experience. Consequently, other than knowing I was born in an Indian hospital, I do not have the courage to look into the legacy of Indian hospitals. On September 24, 2012, while observing a class at the Chilliwack campus of the University of the Fraser Valley, I learned that the TB hospital where I was born was a residential school first.

Yet, my lost sense of belonging is confusing because I know without a doubt that I was cared for by my grandparents. In my quest to understand this experience, I recall reading an article about an adopted person's experience. It was about feelings of abandonment and how it felt when nurturing ties were severed between them and their mother. The story made sense because my situation was very similar. My ties with my mother were cut like the umbilical cord at birth simply due to my mother's medical condition. Throughout my life I will not deny that this experience affected my emotional development. To this day I have bouts where I yearn to experience a close mother/daughter relationship. There are many times when I yearn for my mom, especially around celebrations or when I need advice about life.

To piece together these explorations of identities and overturn our absence in the history of Williams Lake, I bring together the experiences of two other community members to find out how our *Secwepemc* life histories intertwine and make meaning. I am very interested in what it means for others to be *Secwepemc*. These shared histories have stimulated and assisted me in reliving and reconnecting to some of my own history. As I stated earlier, my identities project is heart – wrenching, as it takes me to places I rarely venture. Over the years I became conditioned to avoid deeply painful and traumatic experiences. To start my journey, the hand drum consistently and constantly reminded me that my work is surrounded with the same care, protocols and attributes as the hand drum itself.

The avoidance and fear I felt is not unusual according to Manulani Aluli-Meyer. She speaks about how a set of ideas can bring you back to remembering. Aluli-Meyer (2008) explains that the remembering extends from our Indigenous epistemology and brings us into a world awakening. This is the process I am going through. I gained my epistemology from my grandparents and through the research process I am becoming more awake. She states, “Genuine

knowledge must be experienced directly” (p. 224) as the experience helps us organize the research mind. I spent considerable time drawing myself into the research, explaining my connection to my grandparents and the hand drum earlier on. It is a continuous undertaking to become an “architect of meaning” (Aluli-Meyer, 2008, p. 224) in order to build my road map. I am almost there; my next phase is to address the stories. Aluli-Meyer adds that “Knowledge that endures is spirit driven” (p. 218). I am on the right track as I have included the spirit of my grandparents, hand drum, ancestors, Creator, Indigenous Storywork, participants, and homeland in my study for example. My hope is to rekindle and keep the spirit alive as I conclude my next phase.

The Colonizing Influence on Indigenous Identities

To begin this segment of the inquiry, I offer examples of scholarly works that describe the infliction of colonization upon Indigenous identities. The complexities these authors illustrate show how identity losses influence individuals; I comment on how these scholarly works factor into my own questions about identities.

Cordoba (2004) claims voice and identity on her own terms; in other words, she “come[s] home” (p. 56), while healing from and resisting the colonial processes of fragmentation. She considers her life to be a deconstruction, reconstruction and regeneration of voice, a re-mapping of the spirit. I, like Cordoba, cannot surrender my Indigeneity to geography, blood quantum or time. Cordoba (2004) refers to a people who “face diverse obstacles as they seek belonging, identification with, or participation in specific communities” (p. 56) as “mixed bloods”. By “mixed bloods” she means Indigenous people with shared genealogies, predominantly Caucasian. She concedes that disconnect may be due to internalized processes of colonization or internalized racism, either individually or communally. My sentiments regarding disconnect

from identities arise from my own process of colonization which severely impacted my sense of belonging. Cordoba suggests that as Indigenous people personally reclaim their identities they revitalize themselves, families, communities, and nations. This is crucial, and an important part of my personal journey to reaffirm my *Secwepemc* roots. Significantly Cordoba states that our epistemologies frame our ways of thinking and being and our cultures and traditions provide us with the means of expression.

Alfred (1999) maintains that identity is imposed by external forces which Native peoples have internalized as the colonial mindset. He further explains that traditional philosophies focused on an array of individual characteristics and membership was determined by beliefs and behaviour, combined with blood relationship to the group. He asserts that collective views have shifted over time in response to the social, political, and economic forces which affected the group's need for self-preservation. He also iterates that respecting the right of Native communities to self-determine includes the reconstruction of their nations as groups of related people descended from historical tribal communities with defined cultural and racial characteristics for inclusion. I find that in terms of how Alfred describes the existing turmoil faced by Indigenous people regarding government imposed identity, the fact remains that Indigenous peoples are continually engaged in complex relationships with the state. The various levels of legislated identities imposed upon Indigenous peoples generate an array of relationships with the federal government which eventually shifted to dependence upon the government; many Indigenous peoples currently survive on government subsidies. The shift seriously affected the peoples' ability to self-actualize.

Retzlaff (2005) expresses Native identities as (re-) constructed and (re-) affirmed by using various ethnic labels. He refers to labelling as a political act since labels have the capacity both

to include and exclude. The author suggests that the construction of a homogeneous national identity such as ‘First Nations’ or ‘Aboriginal/Native people’, is a tool of resistance against outside domination and empowers Aboriginal people⁸. Retzlaff speaks of ‘In-Group Indian’ as a shift in membership categories within Native discourse. The replacement of ‘Indian’ with ‘Aboriginal,’ ‘Native’ and ‘First Nations’ shows how discourse is dynamic; it reflects a wider process of socio-political change. Retzlaff thinks that because the term ‘Indian’ is used by Native people, this may show that the externally imposed term and identity concept of ‘Indian’ has been internalized and accepted by Aboriginal people. I argue against this idea because ‘Indian’ is a legal requirement of the *Indian Act* and it is one of the least preferred titles of many Indigenous peoples. However, I do think that ‘Indian’ has been accepted to a degree by some, both consciously and subconsciously, because Indigenous peoples fear that without the legislated legal protection created over time, Indigenous peoples may be left with no control over what could be imposed next as we remain legislated by the *Indian Act*.

Lawrence (2004) writes about appearance politics which complicate identities and create vast differences in individual and family histories depending on geographical and social location. Her particular focus is Canada’s mixed-blood peoples. Her argument is that urban, mixed-blood Native people have as great a stake in the Native politics of recognition and empowerment as do “real” Indians – those consecrated by status under the *Indian Act* with access to reserve lands. Lawrence emphasizes divisions within Native communities that result from acceptance of the government definition of “Indianness” through status or band membership. She states that “Native identity in Canada has primarily been shaped by a system of regulation and control that

⁸ In my view, First Nation is a replacement for Indian because it is referenced in terms of people relegated to reservations, and therefore I prefer not to use this term.

Britain developed as a global imperial power” (p. 7). Lawrence further argues that when the power of exclusion lies with reserve-based Native Band members, who exert it at the expense of urban Natives, they allow themselves to be co-opted by white society; ultimately, they regulate themselves in destructive and divisive ways that weaken the notion of Indigenous nationhood. This presents yet another angle on how the colonial approach continually damages the collective cohesion of Indigenous peoples.

Meanwhile, Massaquoi (2004) refers to subjectivity as being constituted by reference to discursive practices and shaped by the effects of power which operate through individuals. In other words, the theorization of resistance, revolution, and change cannot be separated from the formation of subjects and selves. She claims that the process to transform subjectivity is through combining cognitive, affective, and embodied experience; none of these dimensions can be privileged. There is also a need to engage in geographical self-discovery which involves what it means to be an individual whose identity has been created by acts of refusal or premised on exclusion. She affirms that identity becomes a necessary component of agency, resistance, and survival. For her, it is attained through an ongoing process of self-analysis and interpretation of social position. I reflect on Massaquoi’s self-discovery as an important contribution for my study because it addresses how identity is important for survival, and how we can create our refusal to accept the status quo. I am searching for what it means to be *Secwepemc*, and my identity as *Secwepemc* has survived through my acts of refusal to be contained by colonial forces and, like many Indigenous peoples, a refusal to be exterminated by exclusion.

Vine Deloria Jr., and Lytle (1984), begin by reminding us that nationhood is a component of sovereignty. They indicate that nationhood is a process of decision-making that is free and uninhibited. According to the authors, Indians have preserved nationhood or peoplehood

throughout contact with non-Indians. Difficulty arose in communicating the essence of nationhood to the larger society. For example, during the postwar period, Indians in the United States behaved like other racial minorities in their approach to problems and efforts to get the attention of the federal government. They had very few viable options because they lacked substantial economic and social freedom; this is a continuance of Indigenous legacy. Vine Deloria Jr. & C. Lytle wrote, *The Past and Future of American Indian Sovereignty: The Nations Within* in 1984, when self-government was a theoretical framework for reconstructing an ancient idea of sovereignty, thus preparing the groundwork for an entirely new expression of Indian communal existence. In Deloria Jr. & Lytle's view, nationhood and peoplehood are preserved but the structure is not articulated coherently. Returning to the historical beginnings of *Secwepemc* life with Elder Jean William in Chapter Five, contributes to these authors' notion of nationhood and peoplehood. The voices need to be strong and forceful. Jean maintains that the *Secwepemc* people were socially and politically sound and they survived through traditional means but the systems deteriorated from the impacts of colonization.

Battiste (2004) further outlines how the Government of Canada admitted that their past actions contributed to undermining the identity of Aboriginal peoples by suppressing their languages and cultures, and prohibiting their spiritual practices. Yet, Battiste reminds us that "it is a remarkable tribute to the strength and endurance of Aboriginal people that they have maintained their historic diversity and identity" (p. 7). But, in my reality, the *Secwepemc* people face erasure of the language with each passing of an Elder. To combat this erasure we must remain proud of our culture, language, and heritage. *Secwepemc* cultural identities have been weakened in my home community, largely because many Indigenous children were separated from their families and communities and forced to stop speaking their languages and practicing

their heritage and cultures in residential schools. The approach taken in my study is to help correct this. As Battiste (2004) acknowledges, creating a path to break the silence of oppression must be done carefully because the pressures and emotional forces of the process can risk further damage.

I paid attention to Battiste's advice and incorporated safety in my approach to mine and my community's exploration of identities. As I proceeded, I realized that my study about identities became a healing journey that required personal safety to navigate through the painful process of self-discovery. For example, in June 2012, after my conversations were completed and I began to write my dissertation, I became stuck because the stories became too personal. I remained in this mode until I convened with my committee in August that year and sought advice on how to approach the painful process of letting out my stories. It was decided that I write the stories in reverse order than originally planned which was to write Jean and Colten's stories first, and then my own. The change in ordering helped me tremendously and I was able to write again. I managed to write the stories in draft and I returned to re-organize the story order. I begin by narrating my story in Chapter Four, followed by Jean's story in Chapter Five and then Colten's narrative in Chapter Six. I show how our genealogies cannot be essentialized because the three of us have distinct embodied experiences, different locations from which we speak, gender differences, and we are at different stages in life. These considerations make us different. However, there are certain commonalities within our experiences that help us sustain our connection to collective *Secwepemc* identities. Through our collective experiences, many factors informed how our *Secwepemc* identities have been shaped. For example, the three of us are very closely connected to our grandparents and my relational lived experiences and the memories of my grandparents are what have kept me feeling attached to the *T'exelc* community

The only way to give emphasis to a *Secwepemc* context is to return to my homeland and the people. Accordingly, applying an Indigenous Knowledge lens is of paramount importance; as Wilson (2001) states, “Indigenous research needs to reflect Indigenous contexts and worldviews: that is, it must come from an Indigenous paradigm rather than an Indigenous perspective” (p. 176). I invoke my Indigenous paradigm from my lived experience alongside my two community participants by reflecting our collective *Secwepemc* contexts and worldviews in the research. Similarly, Bruno (2010) explains that “worldview initiates purposes and form, and the appropriate research questions and methods that will create some form of actuality” (p. 48). I purposely focus on the positive aspects and strengths of my community; I do not delve into or attempt to re-live the fragile and painful relational and social experiences of family or community disruption. I want to invoke an affirmative approach and build on the strengths of our people and cultures rather than continue to tear down our peoplehood through negative stories. I further heed Battiste’s (2004) concept when she says that “Elders speak to spiritual connections as the core, yet few understand what that means” (p. 10). I feel that the lack of understanding applies to individuals regardless of age, because people can be strong in their spirituality yet not understand it culturally. Battiste further suggests that these connections are the source of finding vision, one’s guardian spirits, and one’s gifts in a life journey. I found this in the connection with my hand drum. I feel the connection at the core which gives me strength. If I did not, I would “[fail] to acknowledge Indigenous ways of knowing and doing research, the sacred aspects of Aboriginal cultures [would be] silenced” (Goudreau, Weber-Pillwax, Cote-Meek, Madill, & Wilson, 2008, p. 74). Accordingly, Goudreau et al. (2008) resolve, “methodologies that do not encompass the spiritual element may do more harm than good” (p. 74); I understand this.

Battiste (2004) refers to the importance of figuring out how assumptions create the moral and intellectual foundations of current society and culture. Most importantly, she says, studies must be completed by Aboriginal peoples in order to create space for “Aboriginal consciousness, language and identity to flourish without ethnocentric or racist interpretation” (p. 13). Therefore, my study is advancing Battiste’s ideals of creating space by raising the consciousness of *Secwepemc* people by *Secwepemc* people. The examples of colonial influence on Indigenous identities are extremely damaging. Distortions occurred by creating labels and classifications of Indigenous peoples and their cultures. Anthropologists took the stories handed down by the *Secwepemc* and Interior Salish storytellers and categorized them into “the boxes of myths,’ ‘conceptions of the world, and religion” (Ignace, 2008, p. 53). The ancestors’ stories were further stripped of any consciousness of history and edited in narratives and treated as “folklore” (Ignace, p. 54). The stories were treated as insignificant. Ignace proves that problems emerged to hinder the *Secwepemc* peoples’ sense of self and identity caused by outside/external forces. Indigenous people definitely require a proactive response to correct the disparities.

Moving from My Head to My Heart

In order to advance a proactive agenda, I must have strength and determination to move from my head to my heart. In reverence to Jean and Colten’s stories, I invoke the style presented in Archibald’s *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit* (2008) as my continuing theme in these participant stories. The outline created by Archibald aided the shift in my writing approach from a Political Science writing perspective to a storytelling writing approach. In order to set some guidelines for myself as the writer and help guide the reader, I explain how the stories unfold.

I begin with Archibald's (2008) explanation about establishing relationships as she took direction from Elders based "on the fundamental values of respect, reverence, responsibility, and reciprocity" (p. 108). Archibald captured her values in communication with Noella Little Mustache as she explained the cultural readiness required when interacting with Elders. I adhered to the same respect and cultural readiness by honouring my Elder participant and meeting with her at her home and then being responsible for follow-up. I applied the same principle of storytelling in my communication with my youth participant as well. When I articulate my own story in Chapter Four, I use Narrative Inquiry because this methodology helps me invoke memories from my lived experience. Similar to Cardinal (2010), I needed to understand my lived experience before I could wonder about the identities of my participants. Cardinal iterated how Narrative Inquiry is a methodology that helps the writer deepen their understanding of their lived experiences; this was crucial for me as I worked through the struggle with loss of identities. Narrative Inquiry helps me become increasingly aware of the effect of these losses. In concert with the two story-sharing/telling genres (Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry), I am moving from my head to my heart. The care of stories is succinctly expressed by Lessard (2010): "[n]arrative inquiry helps me respect the individual within the research and attends to the details of a life because it provides space for the experience and honours the inquiry process" (p. 22). I position my study by using the same approach as Lessard. Lessard adds, "I wrote the stories with spirituality in mind and reflecting on the importance of taking care of a story" (p. 32). Lessard found that he had to attend to one of his participant's stories differently because of his relationship with her family. As an Indigenous scholar, I relate to the situation very well. I employ a similar approach to my participant's stories as I consider

my position with the community and my relationality with the participants. I introduced the four H concepts that reinforce my theoretical framework.

Scraping and Removing the Fur to See and Hear the Drum

In this chapter, I introduced my theoretical framework using the hand drum and I reflected upon the views of various scholars in order to examine different ideas pertaining to Indigenous identities. The complexity of identities parallels with the complexity of preparing the deer or moose hide to get it ready for tanning. This would be scraping and removing the fur from the hide. In the drum-making process I must understand how the fur is removed, as I must also be aware of the writings of some other scholars and what they have said about identities. I equate the preparation of the deer/moose hide as my own preparation to understanding what I need to know about identities before I begin to explore the participants' stories. I prepare by remembering the delicate care given to the hide as it is scraped with a sharp tool to remove the hair and smooth out the roughness in the hide; this process is to get the hide ready for the next stage. The first precaution prior to handling the hide is recognizing the appropriate time of year to take the hide from the animal. For example, the hide is not taken in the spring because the hide would be too thin for drum-making because the animal is lean. When the right hide is located, it is scraped carefully to remove the hair, fat, and blood. The cleaning must be done without causing holes or nicks in the hide otherwise the hide will be ruined. The same care taken in handling the hides is needed by me to handle my participants' stories with precision and respect. The hide gets its final rinse; it is rolled into a ball and placed in the freezer for preserving until the tanning frame is ready. Preserving the hide until the frame is ready to finish the drum corresponds to the time required to interpret stories. When a story is told it is not interpreted immediately, time is needed to reflect to ensure that the stories meaning is accurate.

The current drum I hold also keeps me in touch with my being and it reminds me to take appropriate measures.

I feel that I must make an ethical and positive shift to reframe my thoughts about identities, very similar to the words spoken by Young (2003) about language and identity. She said, “Not knowing my language I feel like a mute in the world [and yet] I know where I am and I know that I belong [here]” (p. 53). I experience the same mute feelings, yet I know I belong too; I want to help other people, ethically and responsibly, to find out how they belong.

The hand drum is my spiritual strength to help me confront the harmful identity disruptions caused by colonialism, forced assimilation, residential schools, and the *Indian Act* so I can have a clear frame of reference. It guides me to navigate my educational experience between *Secwepemc* teachings and Western knowledge. In 2008, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to acknowledge my culture by beginning to learn how to hand drum. This critical experience taught me to connect heart, mind, body, and spirit. My connectedness to the hand drum is powerful and sacred; this is what grounds me. Integrating my cultural awakening, my grandparents’ teachings and my journey through academia represents my version of the beat of the drum keeping time with the heartbeat of Mother Earth. My hand drum is my catalyst: to anchor me and awaken my spirit.

CHAPTER 3:

INDIGENOUS STORYWORK AND NARRATIVE INQUIRY

Storytelling, oral histories, the perspectives of Elders and of women have become an integral part of all Indigenous research. Each individual story is powerful. But the point about stories is not that they simply tell a story, or tell a story simply. These new stories contribute to a collective story in which every Indigenous person has a place. (p. 23)

Young, 2005

Past, present, and future wonderings about embodied life experiences that have shaped cultural identities propel my research. These wonderings drive me to find my place and affirm who I am through stories as Young emphasizes in the opening quotation. My exploration of three generations of *Secwepemc* lives helps me and others to understand the importance of life stories, and in particular, experiences that are shaped by social, cultural, familial, genealogical, and kinship ties. These embodied and relational experiences affect who we become and influence our individual journeys - whether academic or not.

This study is important because I know I am not alone in bringing forth the sometimes difficult disconnect from my sense of belonging. Similar to Cardinal (2010), I harbor feelings of not belonging. She describes hers as “one who is not the Indian you had in mind” (p. 3), a quote from Thomas King. I am not quite sure when these feeling arose in me, yet like Cardinal, I am exploring my lived experience from a feeling of not belonging.

The significance of identity is supported by Michel’s (2012) references to Elders George Manuel and Mary Thomas. Michel explains that the Elders have awakened us. She refers to the Elders as ‘transformers’ who “remind[ed] us of the importance of representing self and to share the stories that were silenced in the past to help put an end to the ‘Colonial Story’ being the only story being told” (p. 85). My hope is that my personal life story will help others understand and

relate to their own identities. I am infuriated about how several elements of my identities have been defined by legislation. The severity of the act of legislation is exposed by Palmater (2011); she states, “Indigenous peoples in Canada have been subjected to varying degrees of government control over their individual and collective identities, including divisive membership rules based on the goal of assimilation” (p. 28). Palmater attests that her “children will continue to be excluded from their individual and communal identities as ‘Indians’ and therefore as Mi’kmaq peoples because Canada determines who qualifies” (p. 28). This is a stark example of how legislation continues to create complex and confused definitions of *Indian Act* identities and how the *Act* maintains exclusionary practices. Palmater’s children will carry on the legacy of misplaced identities.

In my research project, I explore my lived experiences alongside an Elder and youth from the *T’xelc* community. The narratives are composed by conversing, sharing, and remembering stories of three community people; a youth, a middle-aged person, and an Elder. Through this process, the people (individually and collectively) will tell their stories – their truth. This situated truth contributes to the discourse on Indigenous Knowledge theory and transformative praxis as well as aligns with Brown’s (2004) “cultural regeneration through a theory of cultural pedagogy” (p. 14).

There are many components to Indigenous Knowledge and the focus of Indigenous Knowledge depends on the seeker and how they use their Indigenous Knowledge lens. I firmly believe that Indigenous Knowledge gives strength to the Indigenous scholar, as Archibald (2008) explains, “sources of fundamental and important Indigenous knowledge are the land, our spiritual beliefs and ceremonies, traditional teachings of Elders, dreams, and our stories” (p. 42). With this strength, Indigenous scholars have an opportunity to open up the limited boundaries of

what is accepted and valued in the academy and create more space for Indigenous Knowledge. The increased use of Indigenous Knowledge assists to eradicate the concern that Brown (2004) expresses regarding the Western academic system's intense focus on "objectivity, validity, and reliability" (p. 47). Because many Native researchers have relationships considered insider status and/or closeness to the community they are researching with, their studies were often not felt to be sufficiently objective, according to Brown. However, the use of Indigenous Knowledge methodologies allows their findings to be valued in their own right and given the prominence they merit. The increase in Indigenous scholars is definitely promoting the Indigenous Knowledge agenda; it is time to speak for ourselves.

Shelly Johnson (2011) was encouraged by Indigenous scholars to "tell our stories and acknowledge that there are gaps in our Indigenous knowledge" (p. 4) when she compiled her story. My Indigenous identity study is meant to moderate the divide between Indigenous and Western worldviews by bringing Indigenous Knowledge into my inquiry. I am exploring through a *Secwepemc* conceptual framework that embodies Indigenous Knowledge; embedded knowledge and reflexivity are part of the people, land, and the relationships. The personal stories present a medium for others to understand how Indigenous lives are affected by copious trauma.

Gathering the narratives of the participants, land, and relationships provides me with the context to attend to my research about cultural identities. The narratives begin with my lived experiences that help me reconnect to vital pieces of my identities and place. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that "narrative inquiry is a way of understanding experience" (p. 20). My purpose is to self-actualize through understanding my experience as I compose and recompose who I am. For my participants' stories, I shift to a method that is more conducive to

representing their voices. It must be honourable and respectful, emerging from an Indigenous paradigm. Therefore, I trust my *Secwepemc* hand drum and Archibald's (2008) Indigenous Storywork to exemplify the honour and respect required for sharing and interpreting their stories. From Archibald's seven principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy" (p. ix), the latter three are incorporated into my study. Indigenous Storywork is an ethically responsive guide for releasing First Nations stories and storytelling for educational purposes (Archibald, 2008). She adds that the lessons learned from stories depend on the listener/reader's interpretation of it. Returning to the webbed handle of my hand drum reminds me of how our respective identities intertwine, relate, and diverge as the stories unfold. Through the sharing of our life stories, I believe that we have helped each other grow. I am learning about my past through the Elder's stories and I gain affirmation from her knowledge of witnessing me in my formative years while the youth recounts how *Secwepemc* youth experiences shape identities on school landscapes and in families.

In order to portray how the participant stories intersect and merge, I must go through a process where I can comfortably think narratively (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For example, in Chapter One, I shared excerpts of my relational life experiences with my grandparents while growing up in order to help me re-live my stories. Speaking from my personal frame of reference helps me appreciate the connection to stories. I learned to find comfort in writing from the autobiographical "I" position, and I relate to meaningful embodied experiences. Experiences in story have many interpretations; they can be individual, communal, or metaphysical. On an individual level, these interpretations are in the heart and spirit of the beholder; communally they could relate to landmarks that demarcate elements of the community's history; metaphysically,

the connection to spirit is similar to that of the hand drum keeping time with the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

My challenge is to articulate in story form my life experiences. When I began, first person writing felt awkward because my earlier academic work excluded this style of writing and my grandfather's teachings constantly remind me to be humble, so I felt reluctant to speak of myself. I quote from my personal narrative on April 20, 2010 about my grandfather's ideals about being humble:

He really impressed upon us that we're never...we're always to be humble and the one thing he always reminded me of that I'm never to do and that's to brag. He says, you never brag about yourself or what I've got or that kind of stuff and those are very...like I try...really try to walk the talk and I remember those...like those things keep playing in my memory like I'll never forget what my grandfather said.⁹

So I am very aware of the notion of extreme self-promotion. To be humble is part of how I was taught and if I go against this principle I act in violation of my humility; therefore, speaking from a personal position has to be done with a clear conscience. To achieve this, I must let out my stories and share my personal reflections and experiences in a manner that teaches or explains. The intent of including me in my dissertation is to share experiences with the hope of helping others learn from my autobiographical narrative. My goal is to help others develop rather than solely to highlight my personal accomplishments. Contained within my relational web of stories are the methodologies that will respect and protect the research process: these are Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry. In essence, both methodologies have similar yet

⁹Texts written in italics are actual conversations I am engaged in either directly or when I interpreted and inserted my commentary into my participant stories in Chapters Five and Six.

distinct characteristics that support my study. To elaborate on this aspect of my methodology, I recount the following experiences.

I found affinity with Narrative Inquiry because it allowed me to safely engage with and narrate my memories. In my writing about self, personal safety is necessary due to the potential triggers one can experience from residential school trauma. Narrative Inquiry is a methodology that supports the researcher's personal inquiry to the degree that the individual can comfortably establish limitations. Within the safety and comfort of Narrative Inquiry, I am able to share some of my memories. The researcher has the autonomy to only release the stories/memories that will not inflict harm or overwhelming pain on anyone in the study, including oneself. I connected with Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry respectively in two instances: firstly, when Jo-ann Archibald presented Indigenous Storywork to students at a Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement meeting in Prince George in January, 2008; and secondly, I attended Jean Clandinin's Narrative Inquiry course at the University of Alberta in July, 2009. At each occurrence, I felt enlightened and it made sense to me to weave together the two methodologies, similar to the relational qualities of the spider web handle of my hand drum. Contained within my relational web of relationships, these two methodologies support my research process as well.

There are points of resonance within Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry, and what I found missing in one methodology I could grasp in the other. These methodologies represent my relational and Indigenous theories. For example, Narrative Inquiry does not have the deep Indigenous protocol that I find in Indigenous Storywork. Narrative Inquiry has a deep respect for stories and it controls the depth of the stories; while Indigenous Storywork has guiding principles that respond to Indigenous protocols especially spirituality. In my study, I

choose to refrain from exposing deep-rooted negative experiences that have the potential to re-traumatize people. To avoid traumatizing experiences, both Narrative Inquiry and Indigenous Storywork embraced the strong principles of respect while handling stories with thoughtfulness and care. Essentially, my *Secwepemc* pedagogical framework emerged from this combination.

There are key attributes of each methodology I draw upon; for example, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) express how “It is equally correct to say ‘inquiry into narrative’ as it is ‘narrative inquiry.’ By this we mean that narrative is both phenomenon and method” (p. 2). For my purposes, Narrative Inquiry helps facilitate the power of place, of tradition, of Indigenous ways of knowing, of passing on traditional ways and recovering them by inquiring into lived experiences then telling, retelling and re-storying lives. Narrative Inquiry supports my motivation to seek ways that I experience the world, while my hand drum and Indigenous Storywork protects, guides, and channels the research mode for all the participants. Story becomes the vehicle through which we teach, a pedagogical approach which could be easier for Indigenous learners due to our traditions of orality. Polkinghorne (2007) explains that the interpretative analysis of storied texts “is a commentary that uncovers and clarifies the meaning of the text” (p. 483) and the general purpose “is to deepen the reader’s understanding of the meaning conveyed in the story” (p. 483). He outlines the use of narrative as follows:

It draws out implications in the text for understanding other texts and for revealing the impact of the social and cultural setting on people’s lives. In some cases, narrative interpretation focuses on the relationships internal to a storied text by drawing out its themes and identifying the type of plot the story exemplifies; in other cases it focuses on social and cultural environment that shaped the story’s life events and the meaning attached to them. (p. 483)

Polkinghorne further states that the “development of narrative interpretations is less rule derived and mechanical” (p. 483). To assist me to contextualize the stories, my hand drum

facilitates my honouring of participants' stories with integrity; while Indigenous Storywork shows me how to incorporate protocol to ensure stories are handled appropriately and with care. This resonates with Archibald's (2008) requirement that we respect the people who own and share their stories; this serves as my ethical guide. Archibald reminds us that remembering, retelling, and reconstructing stories is not a straightforward matter; rather, a prevailing issue is to keep the power – the “spirit” – of the story alive (p. 147). The reverence of the hand drum combined with the respect of the Elders as teachers is integral for the transfer of Indigenous Knowledge. Another important consideration is to invoke a methodology or methodologies that are congruent with Indigenous Knowledge. Kovach (2009) includes language, epistemology, and knowledge within Indigenous inquiry, stating, “[w]ithin the structure of story, there is a place for the fluidity of metaphor, symbolism, and interpretative communications (both verbal and non-verbal) for a philosophy and language that is less definitive and categorical” (p. 60). Kovach's explanation is useful for both Archibald's (2008) Indigenous Storywork research and Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) Narrative Inquiry because stories flow, they are not definitive and categorical in outcomes. For example, Archibald (2008) explained how stories are interpreted through the different lenses of both teller and listener, which is not prescriptive; while Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) lived experience component of Narrative Inquiry is based on stories told and retold, as the story erupts somewhere along a continuum which is also non-prescriptive.

Narrative Inquiry in particular fosters positionality and embodies who I am and what I bring into the Western system. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) affirm this as lived experience – “that is, lives and how they are lived” (p. xxii). Subsequently, positionality is analogous to Bouvier's (2001) concept as, “[t]he notion of positionality is intimately connected with how we

construct identities in the cultures and subcultures in which we live [...] So long as identity is viewed as static or is essentialized, I will never be able to reconcile who I am” (p. 188). For me, my study is the beginning of reconciliation. Greene (1995) echoes this sense of becoming, of always being in the making process, in the midst of becoming. Through examples of others’ work I began to feel comfort in telling my own story to make meaning of identities.

In addition to personal story sharing, Archibald’s (2008) *Indigenous Storywork* helps me keep stride with Indigenous Knowledge systems. She explains how insights gained must be shared, “in a manner that incorporates cultural respect, responsibility, reciprocity and reverence” (p. 38). Indigenous Knowledge is important at various levels, and particularly in my research there is a reciprocal responsibility for me to share respectfully what I have learned with whoever will benefit from it. Archibald (2008) acknowledged, “The voices of the teachers, their knowledge, and the way that this knowledge is represented and publicly shared must be in compliance with culturally ‘proper’ ways” (p. 38). As the storyteller in my study, I must know which stories to tell and how much to tell about the stories’ meaning. Stories can range from sacred to historical, cultural to personal life experiences, and testimonials. Lessard (2010) captures the essence of story interpretation, he says: “I need to take time, be patient and have discussions, recognizing that the answers to the questions will eventually emerge. Conversations cannot be rushed. It is impossible to consider the sharing of stories if I do not understand the environment and its ability to create or limit conversation” (p. 19). The basic tenets of protocol are to ensure that no undue harm is caused by the exchange of information or actions, and that intellectual property rights are protected. Protecting intellectual property is necessary because of the history of Indigenous people being researched and not being given credit for their knowledge.

Ethical Matters Live at the Heart of the Inquiry

While preparing to work with stories, I instituted Archibald's (2008) three of seven principles as a responsive ethical guide for releasing First Nations stories and storytelling for educational purposes. The first four of Archibald's principles (respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence) grew from Verna J. Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt's (1991) 'four R's' for Indigenous postsecondary education for which Archibald gives thanks. Archibald's (2008) Storywork research model highlights a respectful trust relationship; this is brought forward in her methodological design, as Archibald wondered,

Was I doing anything different from earlier 'outsider' academics who created a legacy of mistrust among First Nations concerning academic research? How was my research going to benefit the education and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples and their communities? How would I address ethical issues related to respect and ownership of Indigenous intellectual property? (p. 36)

To look for answers, she returned to the Elders and applied their important wisdom to her research. Her time spent with the Elders was necessary to develop long-lasting trust relationships and acquire advice. For example, Archibald (2008) approached her Elders to find out how to reach people she needed to talk with and the straightforward reply from one Elder was simply to ask them. She knew that the expressed advice was to be taken literally and applied without further question. She described how the researcher-learner must be prepared to invest the time to demonstrate their moral honesty, especially with Elders; Elders will detect if intentions are good or not. Archibald's advice is to get to know the teachers by learning to listen and watching to gain understanding from the Elders before making meaning of what they say.

The same listening and watching approach is applied to the collection of my field texts from conversations with my participants. For example, in the *Secwepemc* way before I share the story I must listen intuitively to ensure the exact words are captured, because any change in the

wording or purpose can change the whole story. Observing body language and gestures is equally important to appreciate the full intent of the story. I must be patient and listen intently to the messages. I noticed that listening to and interpreting stories is critical for capturing the essence of the stories with both Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry methodologies.

In addition, Indigenous Storywork adheres to cultural protocols depending on the sacredness and intensity of the subject matter. I am aware there is a differentiation between public and private stories. Some stories are so sacred they will not be shared outside families or Nations, and there are others that can be shared publicly. The same protocols apply to several traditional practices and ceremonies. For example, certain hunting, fishing, and gathering places are accessible to the people within a particular territory only and these places cannot be disclosed. I am attuned to protocol. In preparation for letting out stories, I reflect on the process of assembling the frame for the drum as I move to the next phase of my journey with Jean and Colten. Each stage of drum-making requires appropriate care. After the cured hide is ready, the frame is constructed. There is no metal used to secure the wooden frame. A string is tied around the outside of the frame to keep it intact; wood glue is then applied to firmly fasten the frame. Light cedar wood is used. While the glue is setting, I am thinking about how I will undertake the interpretation of Jean and Colten's stories. I intend to represent their stories in a manner that is not intrusive in order to represent their truth. After the glue is set, the wood is sandpapered to smooth out the rough edges to avoid punctures. At this point, I feel ready to release the participants' stories ethically. Then lace strips are cut from the hide for binding together the back of the hand drum. At this stage, I consider how to make meaning of the collective stories in respect to community. A short piece of the antler is used for the handle. I will consider

each stage of drum making as my safeguard while handling the gift of stories the three of us share.

The Story and the Narrative

Although both Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry are about story, I need to explain how story and narrative apply to my study as both terms carry distinct meanings. Branching from Kovach's discussion, I use Narrative Inquiry as the method of sharing lived experiences, while Indigenous Storywork conceptualizes life. Kovach (2009) explains how methodologies and story interconnect: "Story is an Indigenous method for sharing experience and interpretative, subjective understanding is accepted" (p. 176); she reiterates how the application of storytelling and narrative as methods are relevant for Indigenous research as well as the subjectivity of making meaning. Kovach expresses how storytelling conceptualizes life – place, kinship, ceremony, language, and purpose. She further affirms that story privileges voices and stories that were previously silenced and held at the margins of academic worthiness. To express my Indigenous worldview, I rely on Indigenous Storywork to theorize the meaning within the stories, to help guide my research and pay attention to the protocols and responsibilities involved in the sharing of Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous stories. Similarly, Polkinghorne (2007) states that "Narrative research is a study of stories...Stories are also told by people about themselves and about others as part of their everyday conversations" (p. 471). The conversations shared by the three participants in my study generate the re-told stories that each is willing to share. The release of the participants' stories will be in the form of composed and co-created conversations. Co-creation is expressed by Gill (2003) as "Opening up a place for the co-creation of re/search that goes beyond predetermined b/orders and pre-determined bodies" (p. 50). Thus in my case, I am co-creating the stories about identities that are

not predetermined, and the narrators give voice to their own identities. Consequently, by using Narrative Inquiry for my story, I am looking through a narrative lens, eloquently expressed by Connelly and Clandinin (1990) as inspired by “the way humans experience the world” (p. 2). The authors explain that [n]arrative names the structured quality of experience to be studied, and it names the patterns of inquiry for its study (p. 2). Furthermore, the distinction is preserved by “calling the phenomenon ‘story’ and the inquiry “narrative” (p. 2). In addition, Connelly and Clandinin say, “that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience” (p. 2). People can shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are, just as they interpret their past in terms of these stories.

Clandinin and Rosiek (2007) express [story as] the portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful (p. 38). I find Narrative Inquiry particularly meaningful as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that “narrative is a way of understanding experience” (p. 20); therefore, as I narrate my story, I develop a deeper understanding of my lived experience. The relational aspect of the methodology means that I do not study my participants but rather enter into a co-creation process with them. Gill (2013) refers to co-creation as a counter-methodological approach whereby:

researchers and community members must immerse themselves in the challenging work of coming to a negotiated shared and collective co-understanding of knowledge protocols, values, research processes and contexts. (p. 8)

Gill explains how co-creation shifts from the traditional academic research approach. Gill’s co-creation applies to my research as I take the best of Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and Indigenous Storwork (Archibald, 2008) to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge

protocols within a shared understanding to meet academic requirements. The co-created approach supports my inward reflection on genealogical location, along with *Secwepemc* community members, we research our “own genealogies and histories as a way to unearth subjugated identities and silence histories” (Gill, p. 10).

Further, Dewey (1938) shows how an individual’s experience moves according to the environment that the person is in, as their lived experience includes all aspects of their experience; they are not split, otherwise the experiences will become disorderly. So every lived part of our lives makes up who we are and these experiences need to be validated and deemed important. The continuity and interaction provide the measure of educative significance and the value of an experience. Accordingly, Dewey (1938) asserts, “we cannot tell just what the consequences of observed conditions will be unless we go over past experiences in our mind, unless we reflect upon them and by seeing what is similar in them to those now present, go on to form a judgment of what may be expected in the present situation” (p. 68). This can be done through lived experience.

In addition to sharing the stories of lives lived, situating the story is necessary. For the community participants’ stories I revert to Indigenous Storywork for support and reflect upon ways to create Archibald’s (2008) “Synergistic interaction between storyteller, listener, and story” (p. 33); because I was challenged to speak from my “I” position, I needed to overcome this to achieve synergy. Reframing my narrative is captured and contained in my autobiographical narrative inquiry into my experiences as a *Secwepemc* person, through learning about my cultural identity and engaging in research with *Secwepemc* people and by examining the relationship of cultural identity to education. Narrative Inquiry and Indigenous Storywork come together because they are both relational and reflexive.

Indigenous Knowledge and Identities

Indigenous Knowledge, culture, and identity are seamless in multiple ways which add to the complexity of finding identities. I consider cultural identities to include several elements. These elements are: connection to land, place, spirituality, language, and community. An example of culture within Indigenous Knowledge is conceptualized by Dei, Hall, & Rosenberg (2000):

This knowledge refers to traditional norms and social values, as well as to mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate the people's way of living and making sense of the world...For millennia, many indigenous cultures were guided by a world view based on the following: seeing the individual as part of nature; respecting and reviving the wisdom of elders; giving consideration to the living, the dead, and future generations; sharing responsibility, wealth, and resources within the community; and embracing spiritual values, traditions, and practices reflecting connections to a higher order, to the culture, and to the earth. (p. 6)

In terms of my identity, I value my *Secwepemc* beginnings and I revere my grandparents for their teachings that kept me grounded. Through my lived experience with them I was able to maintain my inner connection and value the importance of culture and identities for endurance. Although I lost many facets of my identities I hung on to some important childhood memories which Holmes (2000) refers to as "blood memory" (p. 40) is contained within the relationships with my grandparents and their teachings. Holmes describes how knowledge was passed on through generations: "As the kupuna [Elders] share knowledge, they articulate the voice of the land" (p. 46); I find the connection to the cosmos and the Elders' knowledge to represent the voice of the land. I hope that my journey back to my beginnings will rekindle these memories.

Who are the Narrators?

To begin, I initiated contact with a core advisory group of *T'exelc* community members and we met in the community on August 28, 2009; the group supported my research and assisted

me with the development of my ideas. The initial meeting included an Elder, a Master's student and the Education Coordinator/Band Councilor to determine which community members would be invited to participate. Since my project addressed identities associated with a very specific genre, space, and place, it needed to include three generations of *Secwepemc* participants.

Following the initial meeting I made a Powerpoint presentation to *T'exelc* Chief and Council on November 16, 2009, to provide an overview of my research direction. Then Dr. Tina Fraser, a Maori scholar, presented her newly-minted PhD dissertation, "*Maori-Tuhoe Epistemology: Stages of Sustaining Tribal Identity Through Tuhoe Performing Arts*," at a community gathering on January 29, 2010. Dr. Fraser presented her work to describe how her study reflected on her Maori tribal identity and to show the *T'exelc* community how they could be involved in exploring aspects of identity. The event is advertised in a poster as follows:

This dissertation focuses on the experience of being Tūhoe, as described by a single participating haka (song and dance) group (Ngāti Haka-Patuheuheu). It identifies how people develop and sustain their individual and collective tribal identity through Māori performing arts and how Te Hui Ahurei ā Tūhoe contributes to the continued transformation of Tūhoe self-determination.

The second advisory meeting was held on February 10, 2010, to review research topics and community involvement. This meeting included three Elders, the Education Coordinator, and the school Principal. I brainstormed ideas around identity and received assistance in recruiting the youth participant. Elder Jean was approached due to her position within the community and she had then been a practicing Elder-in-training for several years. She knows the community and the people well: she represents the community on several treaty issues respecting the land, she is a fluent speaker of the language and can therefore attend to language considerations, and she has experience working in the Williams Lake high schools counselling Aboriginal students. Her understanding of the education system is balanced with her cultural knowledge. She has walked

in both worlds very eloquently. I requested that the advisory committee recruit the youth participant, as the community knows their membership and who is eligible to meet the age requirement. I requested that the youth be male and between the ages of 19-23 for gender and age representation. Some of the comments and key points that were raised by the advisory group included:

- Identity is cultural and place based;
- If the medicine wheel concept is used it could be outlined as follows:
Mental = Educational (how are we going to fix this?)
Physical = Who am I? Where are you from – physical location?
Emotional = includes mental health – Elders are not being respected or acknowledged
Spiritual = What are your cultural beliefs/values? *Secwepemc* worldview; Traditions through stories.
- Need to build a foundation
- Losing work ethic; bring back honour and respect with our families
- There is a feeling of displacement in different forms
- We used to have a winter dance here
- We need to redefine ourselves
- Our original home was in Glendale
- Features speak volumes; try to find the strong features and traits
- You have a purpose
- Land is important
- What is identity?
- What comes from the inside? What comes from the outside?
- Critical to name a person or place that makes you feel connected
- Identity is connectedness

Possible research ideas/questions suggested by the community:

- What is *Secwepemc* identity?
- How has my educational experiences impacted my self-identity?
- How has identity impacted my sense of community?
- What does *Secwepemc* Indigenous Knowledge mean?
- How do *Secwepemc* [people] identify themselves?
- How can identity be defined through an Indigenous Knowledge framework?
- How can *Secwepemc* identity be redefined to nurture a *Secwepemc* worldview?

The community participants were very giving and actively participated; they felt that my topic was extremely important. During each visit, I provided nutrition for the gathering. To

reciprocate the community's participation a community celebration will be held after the dissertation has been defended and placed in the UBC library system.

Relational Conversation with Narrators

I use story-gathering in my research around identities in a similar manner to Young (2003) and Bruno (2010). Their story examples assist me to recognize the voice of the narrators in the research relationship as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) point out, "the equality of participants, the caring situation, and the feelings of connectedness" (p. 4) are extremely important. Young and Bruno illustrate how narrative researchers compose their narrative of inquiry by moving back and forth several times in a document as narrative threads are woven. I weave the stories between myself, Jean, and Colten, by continuously confirming the authenticity of the stories with the participants to ensure my re-telling of their stories meets their intent and approval.

I began the process by scheduling one-hour conversations with each participant on August 10, 2011. I met with Elder Jean at her residence and provided her with bottled water. A monetary gift was offered to Jean and she declined, requesting that once the dissertation was complete I hold a community celebration for all the Elders. I met with Colten and we decided to conduct our first conversation behind his grandparents' house. I provided Colten with lunch and a monetary gift for his time on each visit. The conversations began with no set structure; both Jean and Colten spoke about their significant artifact and its relationship to *Secwepemc* identity. My second set of conversations took place on September 11, 2011. The conversations were a continuation from the first session, again allowing the participants to offer what they wished to speak about in respect to *Secwepemc* identity. The same protocol was extended to both participants to ensure that the meetings took place at a site that they were comfortable with, and each received the same consideration of comfort and respect for their participation as at the first

meeting. At the conclusion of this session, each participant was provided with copies of the first set of transcripts to review for accuracy and approval of content. In early November 2011, I met briefly with the participants to access the first set of transcripts they had reviewed and provided them with the second set. I personally transcribed all transcripts using Express Scribe to capture the essence of the conversations. The second transcripts were returned to me on December 6, 2011, when we had our final round of conversations. During the final session, all three of us met together as a collective at Elder Jean's home as I wanted to explore what it meant for us to discuss our collective identity. Colten and I were greeted with a very rich historical overview of teachings and demarcation of *Secwepemc* identities by Jean. It was an excellent learning experience for Colten and me. I sense that Jean enjoyed being our teacher. These are profound memories that remind me of my connection to my *Secwepemc* roots. The final conversations were transcribed and returned to Jean and Colten in January 2012, reviewed and returned to me in mid-February 2012. Ongoing discussion continued by email and telephone when questions arose, as I strove to ensure that the stories are represented with appropriate intent. The conversations included harmonious alignment of character and physical environment as Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain how multiplicities of narratives by participant and researcher mean engaging in living, telling, retelling, and reliving their stories. There are many variables within the stories that conjoin and interplay depending on the place, time, and space of each event.

Adding to the complexity of re-telling stories is Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) metaphor that creates the three dimensional narrative inquiry spaces. The "terms are personal and social (interaction); past, present, and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation)" (p. 50). A high level of trust is required to be entrusted to handle stories with respect and integrity. The temporal location must be appropriate; accordingly, decisions are

made depending on whether stories will be told from the past, present, or future or it may be a collective temporality depending on the message being narrated. Place is important to signify the meaning within the story and the narrative will either be personal or social. Within the three dimensional narrative inquiry spaces, I can either solely tell stories or come alongside the participants in the living out of stories. Accordingly, Connelly and Clandinin (1990) express how “narrative researchers are compelled to move beyond the telling of a lived story to tell the research story” (p. 10). I begin by narrating my own research story. By contrast, in my study, I found it ethically sound and in keeping with Archibald’s Indigenous Storywork principles to narrate the participants’ stories in their voice. I found that our stories mainly complement each other, weave together, or intersect on different levels. For example, if I place my story alongside Jean’s stories there are parts of them that are similar because we are both raised by grandparents. The Elder has helped both the youth and I co-create our identities, by reclaiming our “lives and how they are lived” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. xxii), that may have been silenced. Our stories extend from different eras and our collective stories add to the richness of the larger cultural narrative. In exploring my identities, I see places where I have come alongside both participants to help me understand my cultural identity.

In doing this work, I take heed to Benham’s (2007) advice that Indigenizing the narrative is a fundamental challenge. Part of the challenge is placing the narratives in an authentic Indigenous paradigm. Regardless, I am drawn to Narrative Inquiry and I have the same outlook as Bruno (2010) when she suggests that, “Narrative Inquiry is consistent with the values inherent within an Aboriginal worldview” (p. 50). However, the caveat I heed is while telling the narrative there is unavoidable discomfort caused by centuries of assaults on Indigenous people. Authenticity is captured in the respect for the people and responsibility for the topic. Clandinin

(2006) explains that tensions can “emerge and re-emerge as narrative participants attend to their experiences of moving from the close relational work with participants to beginning to represent their inquiries for a larger audience” (p. 48). This is where I diverge from an all-encompassing Narrative Inquiry approach because part of the stories’ function is to “learn something essentially human by understanding an actual life or community as lived. The narrative inquiry undertakes this mediation from beginning to end and embodies these dimensions as best as he or she can” (p. 8). In my study, I embody my stories while I share the participants’ stories to the best of my ability in their voice which I cannot totally embody. Responsibility for the stories is housed within the framework of my hand drum and the principles of Indigenous Storywork. I take a positive leap forward, moving beyond the confines of colonialism while respecting the delicate sensitivities that may arise to ensure that I do not re-traumatize anyone. Exploring identities is a deeply personal and painful process; more so for Indigenous people who have been constricted by the shackles of colonization.

Embodied Identity Experiences

Following in the path of Young, (2003), Bruno (2010), Cardinal (2010) and Lessard (2010) my role in my doctoral research is to inquire into my stories lived and told through composing and recomposing who I am. These compositions are embodied experiences that drive the passion to pursue and comprehend the meanings of lived experiences and how they shape identities. Bruno (2010) succinctly expressed this as “a journey towards self-discovery gained from the Aboriginal culture and influential people with that culture” (p. 12). This is my opportunity to explore mine and my participants’ *Secwepemc* identities and realize how influential people with cultural strength in our community helped us preserve what it means to be *Secwepemc*. I am interested in what supported and also challenged our *Secwepemc* identities.

My aim is to discover and affirm that *Secwepemc* people have identities that are bound by the cultural, familial, social, institutional, and linguistic narratives in which we are embedded. The only way I can manage this is through the telling, re-living, and re-telling of relational memories/stories that mold who I have become. This is why I share intimate experiences with my grandparents who taught me to never forget where I come from. Our stories, like the hand drum, must be handled with delicate balance, synchronizing, and moving to the heart beat of Mother Earth as these identity stories unfold. The collection of conversations is delicately transferred from field texts to meaning making with the participants in my study to co-create and retain the essence of their stories.

Composing Field Texts

Field Texts

In preparation to co-create stories, I keep in mind how Clandinin (2006) describes the composition of field texts. Clandinin explains how, “we live in the field with our participants, whether the field is a classroom, a hospital room or a meeting place where stories are told” (p. 47), meaning there are several locales where field texts can be sought. Accordingly, “there are a range of kinds of field texts from photographs, field notes, and conversation transcripts to interview transcripts” (p. 47) that can be utilized to gather stories. Engaging with stories is crucial as Kuokkanen (2007) outlines the critical nature of story sharing:

A call for academic recognition of indigenous epistemes is not the same as a demand for an impossible nativist project for returning to precolonial indigenous practices. Rather, it is part of a growing trend among indigenous scholars toward reorienting our current practices and activities by seeking appropriate solutions within ourselves and grounding them in premises and values deriving from our own epistemic conventions rather than those of the West. (p. 24)

I agree with Kuokkanen because recognizing Indigenous epistemes creates hard work for an Indigenous scholar as it necessitates the return to, and problematization of colonial experiences. I previously mentioned how painful recounting history and childhood memories can be for the individual and it could cause cognitive paralysis in a scholar. Going deep into my inner core to find appropriate solutions and ground them is difficult personal work. Kuokkanen goes on to reposition the discourse in terms of how the gift is contextualized in a way that makes sense for me as an Indigenous scholar:

the gift functions mainly as a system of social relations, for forming alliances, communities, and solidarity. It is often ignored that in indigenous worldviews, the gift extends beyond interpersonal relationships to “all my relations.” It is a key aspect of the environment-based worldviews of many indigenous peoples, for whom giving entails an active relationship between the human and natural worlds, one characterized by reciprocity, a sense of collective responsibility, and reverence toward the gifts of the land. (p. 24)

Therefore, the conversation flow regarding identities begins with me as a personal narrative in relation to Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) explanation that the narrative inquiry starts, “with the researcher’s autobiographically oriented narrative associated with the research puzzle (called by some the research problem or research question)” (p. 41). I situate the context of the research puzzle within our stories and I utilize conversations to co-create the research text. I did not pose any specific questions during my conversations with participants. I simply asked Jean and Colten to bring a significant item with them, such as a photograph or artifact, and the identity stories unfolded from there.

During the conversations, I began with a photograph of my grandparents that I reflected upon. Photographs are a way to order our lives or they are memories that help us construct stories (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Clandinin and Connelly also illustrate how photographs “of people remarkable to our lives in some way, of special events, of places” (p. 114) help us

make connections. I also borrow from the authors' the term *memory boxes* which “trigger memories of important times, places, and events” (p. 114, italics in original).

In my initial conversation with Elder Jean, she started with an earlier landscape photograph of her grandparents, who were sitting side by side in front of their log house (personal communication, August 10, 2011). She continued to weave several more photos into her story followed by showing and describing several original woven baskets; Colten had a photograph of a hunting trip but forgot to bring it on each occasion. Colten described his photograph and eventually showed it to me on his cell phone because he knew he would forget to bring it (personal communication, August 10, 2011). The objects lead Jean and Colten to recount moments, events, and experiences that shaped their identities. Discussions of identity formation, personal and family relationships, *Secwepemc* language, schooling and work experiences, residential school, cultural values and beliefs emerged from our times together. What really linked the three of us are the stories we shared about our vital relationships with grandparents.

Moving from Field texts to Research Texts

While I narrated my own stories, I pondered the three-dimensional narrative space – the personal and social; past, present and future; and place. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) refer to these spaces as “*inward and outward, backward and forward and all situated in place or places*” (p. 50). My inward direction focuses on my “internal conditions, such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions” (p. 50), while the outward is the environment. Ultimately, situating the stories within the three-dimensional Narrative Inquiry spaces created the fullness of my lived experiences and represented my identities.

From my location, I elicit memories of my personal and social life experiences with my grandparents while growing up; this is my lived connection to *Secwepemc* beginnings. At this

juncture, I know I must revisit my core (inward location) and go outside myself (outward) and backward/forward through time. Yet I find it difficult because I have never written from an ‘I’ place before, and this requires a shift in processing thought from formalist to narrative.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explain that formalists begin the inquiry with theory while “narrative inquirers tend to begin with experience expressed in lived and told stories” (p. 128). I find myself bumping up against the formalistic boundary in my efforts to move away from a theoretical frame of reference. As I read, “Reverberations from Narrative Inquiries: Reliving Our Lives”, a paper presented at the American Educational Research Association conference by Huber, Murphy, and Clandinin (2012), I realized that I was in the midst of the story and complexity regarding Narrative Inquiry. This was my first awareness of truly experiencing Narrative Inquiry personally.

Similar to Murphy’s story in the above paper about waking up to understand the importance of familial curriculum making, I am in the midst of understanding familial story telling. The complexity is that I am awake and attentive to both Indigenous and Western worlds simultaneously. Jean responds to difficulties of changing what the body remembers. She explains that “[l]iving restoried knowledge is more difficult than applying knowledge” (Huber, et. al, p. 12). What also spoke to me from this paper are portions of the authors’ identification of aspects of reliving. As stated by the authors, “we note the importance of chosen communities to support us in staying awake and in figuring out new possible ways to relive our stories in the multiple places in which we live” (p. 16). I am applying this same principle in my study about identities, as I rely on my community to support me to seek ways to re-story multiple sites of identities. In addition, Huber, et.al (2012) indicates that reliving stories is deeply ethical and reliving is interwoven with relational responsibilities to participants. In my study the ethical

nature of story-sharing and my relational responsibility to participants is also protected by the cultural protocols revered within Indigenous Storywork.

In my case, I extend ethics to my community, and this is exactly why I need to have my hand drum and Indigenous Storywork principles travel with me as I must apply a high degree of respect for the retold stories I share on a spiritual level too. A huge consideration for me and other community-minded Indigenous scholars is the refusal to extract information from communities and then just leave; many of us remain a part of the community in some form. Therefore, even after the dissertation is packaged and presented, my community identity does not cease; my community connection and responsibility is infinite which leads me back to never forgetting where I come from. I found that in order to understand narrative I needed to focus on specific embodied defining moments that critically shaped my lived experiences as I spoke of the separation from my mother at birth. I share my email communication with a fellow narrative inquirer following the 2009 Summer Institute: Building Peaceful Communities regarding this experience:

September 23, 2009

Georgina: *One of the things that came to mind for me today and brought a tear to my eye is that I never was able to have a conversation with my mom and never will.*

I also thought about this as I have to write a reflective piece for my other class on my position for my research topic which is identity. I am sure that my lived experience has a lot to do with my need to focus on identity.

Jan: *That makes a great deal of sense...This type of reflective/writing is deeply challenging and very VERY personal. That alone can cause a writer to get “stuck” because it’s too close to home.*

Georgina: *There are times I miss my mom and wish that I had a relationship with her...I was raised by my grandparents and I never did have a chance to connect with my mom. I did send her photos of my eldest son and she did get them, they were in her belongings. When she died I was 17 and she was 39. I had plans on looking for her but I didn't get to it in time.*

Jan: **hugs* I'm so sorry about this. I have no doubt you have amazing stories from this experience, but it's possible you may not find a way to write them for a long time, or will find the need to approach the writing in tiny "snapshots" so that each instance doesn't overwhelm you as you immerse yourself in the memories.*

Georgina: *I think as long as I keep my feelings down I will not move through the healing. I have varying levels of anger and sadness, most of the time I try and not think about it.*

Jan: **nods* I believe I understand this—I've found writing an excellent way to help cope with intense anger and sadness but in my "real life" I also try not to think about it.*

Georgina: *I think a lot of these types of events along with colonization contributes to my feelings of deprivation and reluctance.*

Jan: **nods again* I think that makes a great deal of sense.*

Georgina: *I am finding that with narrative it seems that I have to get in touch with my emotion and I must be able to write about feelings.*

Jan: *Yes! The trouble (from a "creative" point of view) is that immersing oneself in those emotions can be so overwhelmingly painful we aren't able*

to get the story out—whether in speech or in text.

Jan (J. Buterman, personal communication, September 2009) was totally correct in her assessment; as I wrote this conversation, I felt deep emotions surface by reflecting on my very personal, real, and traumatic identity separation. I suggest that many Indigenous people who live with trauma experience this same difficulty; for many it becomes easier to remain hidden from our emotions rather than endure the pain to re-live the trauma. I feel by disclosing snippets of my experience I can help others begin to come to terms with the pain associated with misplaced identity. The point of this conversation is to begin to help me return to and get in touch with my earlier landscape as I interrogate my own identity.

I have been told and heard many times that in order to know where we are going we must know where we have come from. This has become increasingly important for me at this time as I sort out the next segment of my personal and education journey with my fellow narrators. I noticed that finding out more about where I came from is taking a great amount of courage. As noted in my conversation with Jan, I have defaulted to a safety mechanism where I would rather leave the unanswered to be just that: unanswered. Now I am feeling that if I want to experience the hand drum keeping time with the heartbeat of Mother Earth I need to reconcile a few things in myself to move toward balance.

To make sense of my research puzzle and story weaving, I return to Benham (2007) who cited Indigenous narrative as a crucial means for telling memories for three reasons. First is the recognition that collective memory is different than dominant texts which requires the reconstruction of history. Benham explains, “indigenous narrative recovers a collective memory that raises critical consciousness” (p. 529). Retold stories definitely recall the deep mutilation caused by boarding schools. The second reason is that Indigenous narrative includes

personal/family and societal healing and the third reason is that, Native/Indigenous narratives or cultural resistance and resurgence have powerful pedagogical and policy implications. I am drawn to Benham's ideas to unfold and weave my stories with Jean and Colten.

Framing the Narratives

I feel comfort having Jean William as the Elder narrator because Jean has been an Elder in training for many years. Jean supported Indigenous education in various capacities within School District #57, in Williams Lake, BC, and she teaches university courses. Jean's Indigenous Knowledge, Elder Knowledge and education knowledge brings strength and richness to my study. She has the ability to manoeuvre between Indigenous and Western worldviews with a balanced understanding of how each operates. Given the depth of her situated knowledge, she is a conduit for knowledge transfer. I did not personally seek out the youth participant for my study. I requested the person through the community advisory committee and the person needed to be male between the ages of 19 and 23. The rationale for my preference was to institute a broader gender/age perspective and to secure a youth perspective about identities. The two community participants and I frame the narratives surrounding *Secwepemc* identities, beginning with our own stories.

Weaving the Narratives

In order to weave the narratives and share the voices of the participants in this document, the process must be suitable and handled appropriately. I understand Benham's (2007) reference that collective memories are different than dominant texts. This is why I am careful about the medium I choose to convey and legitimate voice. Meijer Drees (2013) reminds us that oral histories are, "part of a person's life—a little bit of personal energy—that must be handled with respect and care, and not simply turned into objects of study. Stories are gifts given, not

collected” (p. xxi). The intent behind how I convey the stories is expressed by Meijer Drees as I too “recreate the voice of the teller” (p. xxiv). The difference in approach is the way I consider the embodied narrative my own which captures defining characteristics of my identities, while Jean and Colten’s are situated knowledge stories. We each have identities, stories to live by, and through this study I discover what this means.

When I return to my earlier landscapes I am reminded that stories do not stand alone and this notion definitely coincides with our collective identities. This inquiry delves into each of our collective relational experiences. I begin by travelling back to my beginnings and experiencing the wonderings of my childhood which I delve into in Chapter Four. I know some facts about my life history and Elder Jean helps me fill in some blanks. This project is about giving and receiving support for *Secwepemc* people to understand their identities which can enhance educational and personal success, simply by knowing who we are and being proud of it. In my memory, I continually return to the values passed on to me by my grandparents in terms of how their teachings influenced my life.

I employ Narrative Inquiry and Indigenous Storywork concurrently because I found attributes of each consistent with the other yet there are differences in terms of relationships. With the support of Narrative Inquiry, I can go inside my core and tell and re-tell my own narrative with an analytical lens while I find it necessary to tell participants’ stories through a principled Indigenous Storywork paradigm which is to tell the story without invasive analysis but rather allow the listener or reader to make meaning of the stories. As succinctly expressed by Rosborough (2012), “Archibald’s (2008) research demonstrates that stories have the power to educate and heal the heart, mind, body, and spirit” (p. 74); therefore, giving each participant the opportunity to learn through our stories is very powerful and healing. The sense of legitimacy is

important for all of us to project our voices. I am reminded of legitimacy as I return to the making of the hand drum; akin to storytelling, the hand drum is handled with care. When the drum is taking shape the hide must be draped a certain way on the frame otherwise it will crack or the draped hide will become too loose and wobbly. If the hide cracks or becomes too wobbly the piece of hide will be ruined and the process will have to start again. Similarly, the way I process stories commands intricate balance so that the power and beauty of the story is not ruined.

Getting Ready For the Research

Peeling back the nuances of my identities begins by considering how my identities have been shaped up to the present-day. I equate the attention applied to tanning the hide and assembling the frame to the way I intend to handle the stories. The care and precision coincides with how Steinhauer (2001) organized her research. She pointedly stated that she would not cause disservice to her people. I apply the same principle in my study; the care of the moose or deer hide is how I conceptualize the sensitivity applied to my research. Steinhauer chose to process her data respectfully by applying Indigenous ways as her foundation. She was drawn to the image of a tree as the cornerstone to support her thinking process:

Trees have roots that are firmly rooted in the ground. Their creation and growth involves a long nurturing process...I think of how solidly the roots are rooted in the ground and how they provide the life food, the knowledge, for the rest of the tree. I see these roots as representing our ancestors. (p. 186)

My own rootedness is captured in my motto: Drumming my way home. As a reminder, my hand drum material extends from the solid roots of the tree. The hand drum steers my journey to find the pieces, reconnect them, to inform and reaffirm my *Secwepemc* identities.

In terms of the grand or collective narrative there are several areas that were uncovered that could be of interest for Indigenous people, community and the academy. Firstly, scholars, (Archibald, 2008; Kirkness and Barnhart, 1991; Kovach, 2009; Linda Smith, 1999, 2010; Wilson, 2001) pointedly support the quest for Indigenous voice in the academy and the space for Indigenous scholars to not lose themselves in the process. This is extremely important as many Indigenous scholars return to their home communities to work from within. It is imperative that relationships are formed to build trust. Communities will understand and recognize the value of respectful research and begin to dispel the historical experiences of having research done about them rather than with them.

The limitation of my study is that the stories told are from the histories of three people only; this cannot be considered a conclusive representation of the *Secwepemc* people or all Indigenous peoples. The stories shared in this study can represent only the three participants, although there are likely many others with similar histories. However, I found throughout my journey that sharing my story publicly – whether in conferences or classrooms – touched people whether they are Indigenous or not. The key is that many of us have grandparents who have played a major role in our lives. The research content required absolute care and consideration in how the stories would be told because it can be very traumatizing to both participants and audience. It is important for scholars who decide to do this type of work to be knowledgeable about how traumatic experiences can affect Indigenous peoples; for some, the mere mention of residential school triggers strong emotion. It could require a great deal of strength and endurance for the scholar to maintain balance and self-care.

In the next chapter, I show an example of how *Secwepemc* identities have transformed by illuminating various disruptions to my identities. It is important to realize and reclaim one's

cultural identities in order to take a stand against legislated *Indian Act* labels otherwise we run the risk of remaining in a subjugated position.

CHAPTER 4:

GEORGINA'S JOURNEY

Weyt-kp, Secwepemc-ken te T'exelc re st'e7e7kwen.

Hello, everyone Georgina is my name. I come from T'exelc.

Re Secwepemc wenecwem re stsgwey ell tukwentus re sxyemstweccws.

The Secwepemc should honour, humility and also love to show humour.

William, 2012

Prior to and as I began to write this chapter, I underwent serious deep reflection often wondering why I harbour the feelings of not feeling good enough or feeling lost. As I sat down at my computer, I called on my ancestors to help me think clearly and I lit my candle for strength and support to carry me through. I am still uncertain exactly when the deep-rooted discomforts began in my journey to story and re-story my identities. I do know throughout my life I felt the emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual losses from the absence of my mother. The losses transformed into self-doubt about my being. Throughout the dissertation process I continued to think that I am not good enough to include myself and I questioned how my story could be important or credible. So I open my chapter with a quote from Jean in our language to acknowledge who I am and where I come from. I also asked for a translation in the *Secwepemc* language to capture the meaning of honour, humility, hope, and humour. The literal translation is shown; there is no word equivalent for hope in our language. I found revelation in the words of Brown (2004). He said:

emotions are the root of the sacred tree of life. Emotions provide energy for learning that is activated through perception, creating the possibility of thought and understanding. Without emotions, there is no thought, no learning, no education, no research, no dreams and no conscious life. In Native symbology emotions are represented, at times, as water. (p. 4)

Brown's words helped me recognize why I must acknowledge and connect with my emotional losses I experienced in my childhood. I concur that without the wholeness of mind, body, and spirit, I carry the absence of learning. Brown (2004) states emotions and values are central to Aboriginal education and learning. Of the four points he raises, the first and third points stood out. They are: "First, there is a need to understand the colonization of Aboriginal emotion in order to develop an understanding of how to regain the emotional maturity for de-colonization" and "Third, there is a need to understand the development of Aboriginal values to increase the learning potential of Aboriginal students" (p. 17). Possibly I am so colonized that I continue to search for validation and I find quite often that my confidence can be shaky. Or, I am a victim of the historical emotional trauma I experienced from being separated from one of the most important people in my life, my mother. Brown (2004) supports this, he states: "a natural relationship between any two human beings is defined by loving affection, communication and cooperation. However, the special human capacity for relational response can be interrupted or suspended by an experience of physical or emotional distress" (p. 76). My story about both the absent feelings of affection and my lived experience of interrupted and suspended emotions caused anguish. My story begins.

My Humble Beginnings

My name is Georgina Rose Martin (nee Wycotte) and my birthplace is Sardis, BC. I was born into a family of five girls and four boys and I am the middle child. There are seven of us left. The main village where I grew up is approximately ¼ km off of highway 97 on the right heading south from Williams Lake towards Vancouver. The house I lived in with my grandparents was the third house on the left as you drove into the village. My Uncle's house was in behind the second house.

To situate my story, I return to my personal interview conducted on April 20, 2010 moderated by a fellow student in the Institutional Ethnography CCFI 508B course with Dorothy E. Smith. The exercise gave me the opportunity to begin an experiential account of my given topic; mine is identity. I confirmed my research direction by exploring how identity personally impacts me. While writing autobiographical narrative, I move between the three dimensional inquiry spaces outlined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000) which are: the personal and social (interaction); past, present and future (continuity); and place (situation). I also move inward, outward, backward and forward as I tell and re-tell my stories. These stories consist of my lived experiences growing up.

In my memory I have no recollection of any strong emotional connection within my family. I lack feelings of being held or hugged much if at all. The physical and emotional contact was something that was just not apparent when I was growing up. I wondered if this practice was something that was absent from all families because I heard other people talk about how physical affection was not really practiced. The missing affection became a real problem as it is an ongoing legacy, I never got healthy physical affection when I was growing up so I am not able to pass it on to my children and this is very painful. Today I am not that great of a hugger. I do remember a significant person other than my grandparents in my life growing up that helped me feel special and that was my Uncle Ken. From him I received the sensation that I was important. Slipping back in time I explore memories of my life with my grandparents by beginning with the story of my grandparents' photograph.

The Story of my Grandparents' Photo

In July 2009, as I read the instructions for participating in the graduate course on Narrative Inquiry as part of the Building Peaceful Communities Summer Institute, I realized I had to bring

a photograph or artifact that had special meaning. Without hesitation I chose the picture of my grandparents, likely because I knew my grandparents cared for me and part of the course was to understand identity making as relational practices. I carefully tucked the photo into my bag as I prepared to leave Prince George for Edmonton. I have many photographs of my family yet the photograph of my grandparents is the one I selected without hesitation. I only thought about my choice as I wrote about it during the course work with the photograph. On the morning when we were to share the photograph, I carefully wrapped the photograph in my special scarf and brought it into the Centre for Research for Teacher Education and Development and into the small office where I met with Colleen and Lynne, the two other members in my research circle group. Even though we had only known each other for a few days, we often shared our feelings, reaching often for the box of tissue. I knew the photograph would generate deep feelings of emotion therefore I needed to prepare myself for the events ahead. Each time I have intimate reflection with my grandparents in their photograph I have difficulty containing my emotions. I cannot explain why because my memories with my grandparents are sacred, possibly the emotion is connected to my own feelings of loss that I felt when they passed on. I handled the photograph carefully and spoke about how it is one of the few items I acquired when my grandfather passed on. Here is my cherished photo:



Figure 5: My Grandparents, Nancy and Ned Moiese
photo credit: Georgina Martin

As I spoke to Lynne and Colleen, tears welled up in my eyes as I gazed at the photograph, of my grandparents' arms wrapped around each other's shoulders. Gazing at the photograph I noticed how they looked very happy, a young couple in their 30s. Yet my grandfather looks tired. I am not sure what type of work he did but I believe he was a hardworking man. As Lynne, Colleen and I sat together; I looked at the photo and directly into my grandparents' eyes. The photograph is in colour although there is a section on my grandmother's left where there is black and white coming through. I believe photographs in earlier days were taken and the colour was painted in. As I spoke of the photo to Lynne and Colleen, I told them that I still hold my grandparents in high esteem; they were the most important people in my life growing up. For as long as I can remember, my grandparents raised me. As I gaze at my grandmother now, I see myself in her. I never realized this connection before; maybe I am beginning to get closer to who I am, and am becoming, through self-acceptance. They don't have big smiles, yet I told

Lynne and Colleen I see them as content. My grandpa is handsome and my grandma is beautiful. All I could say were good things about my grandparents because I cherish them as I do their photo. I spoke more about how they took care of me while I was growing up. I had all the essentials and I was taught moral values including a strong work ethic, to be kind to others and the importance of having good character. I may not have lived up to all the things I was taught yet my grandparents gave me a strong foundation that I return to often. I spoke of how my grandparents gave me special gifts by teaching me to be principled and most importantly, to have a strong work ethic. For these gifts I am very grateful to my grandparents.

I shared the reason I came to know about why I lived with my grandparents with Lynne and Colleen. I told them I knew that my mom was quarantined in an Indian hospital with tuberculosis. I have not researched the events surrounding my birth yet. I feel the less I know at the moment helps me avoid the pain of growing up without the closeness of a mother. This feeling is an ongoing life event. I have participated in many healing seminars and programs over the years to address unresolved childhood detachment issues. For example, on June 24, 1990, I wrote a letter to my mom. In the letter I spoke of the importance of love and affection. I said, "To me that [love] is very important otherwise you grow up empty and displaced." The letter was written to help me move through emotions associated with the feelings of loss. Understanding the imbalance and healing from them is imperative for me to gain the ability to help my children heal from intergenerational trauma. I realize, I must arrest the feelings of displacement to stop passing them on.

Living the Stories of my Photograph

Because I shared the photograph as part of a narrative inquiry process, Lynne and Colleen began to ask me questions and wondered with me within the three dimensional narrative inquiry

spaces, that is, within the dimensions of temporality, sociality, and place. Together we wondered about the place where the photograph was taken and the events that were going on around that time. It appeared as a posed photograph and we wondered if a commercial photographer had come to where we lived and offered his services. Or was it a special occasion. I realized I did not know why it was taken, or where, or what events were going on around that time. I knew that they were not wearing their everyday clothes as I remembered my grandfather's blue jeans and my grandmother's dresses. Sliding backward in time, together we wondered why I was the only one out of nine children that stayed with my maternal grandparents. Each time I go through these wonderings, raw emotion surfaces and I cry. I wondered more about the tears and I grappled with the memory that much of my upbringing I also lived without my siblings too. Sliding backward to the stories of my birth, I wondered if the story of my living with my grandparents began then. I wondered if I was with them when the photograph was taken. I wondered how old my mom was when the photograph was taken.

Through my conversations with Elder Jean I learned that in my community, family took care of family members. It was part of the system of caring that a young child was selected by grandparents when they needed care. It was not so surprising to me that I stayed with my grandparents after all. One of the stories I remember hearing is about my mom coming home. I was told that my grandparents decided to keep me and raise me as their own. To this day I do not know when my mom recovered and left the Coqualeetza hospital. In a very recent discussion about my identity topic with a professor, I spoke of how my identity has been affected by the loss of connection with my mom and the person I was telling was shocked at how the separation from her new born must have affected her. I was taken aback by his response because I had never thought of how the separation could have affected her too. Until this conversation it never

crossed my mind that maybe she could have wanted me. I think about how this taking care of family is part of the cultural narrative of my community, and how it shapes all of our identities. As I think about the cost and responsibility of my grandparents having a child with them I know that they always made me feel like I belonged with them, that I was wanted. Until I wrote about my grandparents' photograph I did not pay attention to their age at the time. Now as I do the age calculations I realized that when I was five, my grandmother, according to the St. Joseph Oblate House records, would be 62 and my grandpa 63. They were by no means young to be raising a young child. I must have brought joy into their lives.

I wondered again what occasioned the photograph. I remember that the photograph was always hung on the living room wall in a special place. When my grandfather passed on, I remembered the photograph and I acquired it. That was one of the most cherished items I wanted to keep. In January 2013, I discovered through conversation with my one remaining uncle that the photograph was taken when my grandparents' attended Klondike night at the Elks Hall in Williams Lake. Having the photo helps me keep the spirit, teachings, and memories of my grandparents alive. I am not sure why I have a wrenching feeling of separation of not knowing who I am. I only need to look at my grandparents' photograph to remember that I did belong and people cared for me. Thinking about the larger social and cultural narratives I wondered why my grandparents decided to spend the money that the photograph cost. I know their access to money was limited because my grandfather worked hard at manual labour. I know this because my grandpa could not read or write throughout his life.

I wondered again if my grandparents' lived in the same house where we lived when the photo was taken. Then I gaze at them in the photo and I believe they are very strong and caring people. I tell myself a story that I inherited their strength. I admire them for passing it on to me

it has shaped my identity. It is the story I tell of who they were in my life that keeps me strong and continuing to be completing a PhD. If I could tell my grandfather a story I would tell him when my high school teachers were encouraging me to continue on to university I did not feel that I was capable. I thought about this as I looked to the sky on my training run at the UBC track on April 5, 2013, I kept thinking that it is really something that I am actually here at UBC right now. I never imagined ever being at this campus completing the highest degree possible. I honour and thank my grandparents for supporting me and training me to pursue something that I thought was impossible.

A Story of Photographs: Where Are Photographs of Me?

While I slipped back in time to reflect on photographs displayed in my grandparents' home I realized there were no photographs of me. I remember only a few photos displayed in their home. I recall them being black and white photographs of relatives from the war and another of a relative graduating from a Registered Nursing program. She was wearing her white nursing cap. Then in later years there was a photograph of my Uncle riding saddle bronc in the rodeo that was another very special photograph. I do not recall any photographs of me. I never saw my grandparents taking photographs; I don't believe they even owned a camera. A camera would be deemed a luxury item. The only photo I own from my earlier landscape is a group photo taken at the back of the Day school I attended and I am seven. The lack of photographs adds to the mystery of my childhood as I am not able to create a clearer picture of my growing up years.

Retelling the Stories

It was possibly due to limited income that photographs could only be displayed of very special occasions. Sliding back in time, I cannot remember being in photos or seeing baby or toddler pictures of myself. I have no memory of my appearance as a child or a visual of what was happening around me. This could be another reason why the photograph of my grandparents is a deeply cherished item because there were no other photographs of them when they were young either.

The Red Hot Pot Belly Stove

A childhood story I remember is when I was around three or four years old. Slipping back to the age of four, my grandpa was 62 and my grandma 61. I know it is a story I have told often. I do not remember if my grandma and grandpa ever told me the story of the Red Hot Stove but I do think I remember the pain of the burn.

My grandparents called me “little mischief”. I am not sure when they gave me the nickname but I certainly remembered that I fit the name on this particular day. I was behaving mischievously as I ran in circles around the Red Hot Pot Belly Stove in the center of our one room log house. The stove was constructed from used gas or oil drums (large metal cans) at the St. Joseph’s Mission by men from our village who worked in the black smith shop at the school. St. Joseph’s Mission was about a 15-20 minute drive from our community. When I think about the institution I am sure it had a lasting influence on our community. Many children from our village were taken from their families and sent to St. Joseph’s Mission. The school had a strong mandate to assimilate beginning with the removal of children from their parents and extended family. The removal cut off the children’s ability to learn and practice their traditional values of living off the land and speaking the language. The disconnection from families would be foreign

for everyone. The students would see siblings on the grounds but they could not talk to each other. They could see one another for brief periods and possibly exchange a few words. The disconnection wrought upon the children by the Mission school caused family cohesion to fracture.

On this particular day the stove was very hot and I remember the bright red glow. As I ran around and around the stove, I saw my grandpa sitting on his bed in the corner of the room, telling me to “Stop you will fall on the stove and get burned”. Over and over grandpa repeated his words. He did not physically try to stop me. Perhaps he worried that if he moved toward me, I would have startled and lost my focus. True to my nickname, I did not listen and I kept running. I do not know how long I did this but I do remember slipping and falling on the red hot stove. As I was running with my right side facing the stove I lost my grip and my feet gave way and my right shoulder touched the stove. The pain was intense and I began to shriek and cry and my grandpa jumped into action. I am not quite clear on how we got to the hospital in Williams Lake. My grandparents did not own a vehicle. My grandma and grandpa had very little money and neither of them had a driver’s license. I do not remember if my grandmother was in the house at the time nor do I remember if many people on the reserve owned vehicles. Somehow they got me to the hospital. I remember a white hospital located at the top of a hill. I cannot remember being treated. I heard people tell that when I was being attended to, my grandparents heard me wailing from the pain and it bothered them. I am sure I was in great pain from falling on that red hot stove. To this day I have a scar on my right shoulder from the burn. The burn was quite large. Over the years the scar has faded to the size of a loonie, but I will likely always wear this scar. I am grateful that my face did not touch the stove.

The Experience From the Fall

As I slide back to the time I fell on the red hot stove I can only think of how the incident must have affected my grandparents. From my memory, they were very gentle and caring people. I believe it was my grandfather's gentle nature that held him back from being abrupt but it must have caused him grave anxiety to anticipate the inevitable. My grandfather always approached his teachings with non-interference. The task/information would be verbally conveyed and it was up to me to do the rest. Following the incident, I am positive that they hurriedly found means within the community to get me into the hospital in Williams Lake for medical attention. Perhaps my uncle drove us there as he owned a vehicle and lived a short distance from my grandparents. If he was away from the community, it would be the caring/sharing nature of our people for a quick response to get me to a doctor. I am not sure at the time if ambulances made trips from the City of Williams Lake to the reservation.

Re-storying brings forward memories and it was only when writing this story that I realized when my colleague calls me trouble it reminds me of "little mischief". I feel comfort with the nickname because it evokes emotions about the affection my grandparents gave me when they called me little mischief. Perhaps the pain I associate with growing up and feeling disconnected comes from the lack of memories of being held or hugged yet, I can associate the caring of my grandparents for being there for me and taking care of my immediate needs in a non-physical way. I can still feel the closeness of both my grandparents when I spent time with them.

Retelling the Story – the Emotional Distance

The experience from these earlier landscapes is where I inherited the story that it was wrong to hold or hug loved ones. My grandma understood this as the traditional teachings of the

Church. It was frowned upon to have any physical contact with others including family because it was construed as sexual to hug, instituting affection as taboo. I was never prepared for any type of physical development. My physical body changes were never explained and it was unnatural to show our bodies. For example, I learned about the life cycle in my Physical Education classes in high school and wearing shorts was not permitted until much later. When I was 12 and I could wear shorts, the length had to remain below the knees. I recognize how the non-physical contact affected my relationships in later years especially with my children. In a letter I wrote to my eldest son on June 19, 1990, I said, "I did not learn how to feel or express my emotions. In turn I did not know how to do this with you...I tried my best to be a mom. The things that hurt me when I was a little girl I tried to avoid repeating with you guys, and the things I needed I tried to give." I still cannot comfortably express affection. This was 23 years ago and I still rarely hug my children.

A Story of My Grandmother's Catholic Faith

Thinking about the absence of non-physical contact during my growing up years, I realize that it could have stemmed from indoctrinated Catholicism. My grandma was a stoic Catholic; I remember accompanying her regularly to attend the Catholic Church on the reserve. She always helped out with special occasion events in the Catholic calendar, such as, Easter and Christmas. Prior to Easter, we participated in the Signs of the Cross; I believe this began a week before Easter. I can hear my grandma lead the hymns and the singing of the rosary in English and *Secwepemc*. The Church was an important event and priority for her. As a child, I had no choice, it was mandatory that I attend church with her. I do not recall my grandfather attending to the same degree.

Because of my grandmother's attachment and devotion to the Catholic faith, we did not talk openly about personal matters like the female hormonal development; these conversations were taboo because it was considered sinful. The notion of sinful acts is what also influenced the non-exposure of the body. The length of skirts was well below the knees, almost ankle length. When shorts were introduced they had to be below the knees and eventually were allowed to be shorter to just above the knees. From childhood into my pre-adolescence, I fully respected both my grandparents and I adhered to their wishes.

My Tricycle Gift

I recollect the time I received a brand new tricycle for a Christmas gift from my uncle. I recall my age to be around two or three years old. My grandpa was 59 and my grandma 58 when I was two. I remember my Uncle inviting me to his house, located close behind my grandparents' house. Funny I do not recall the color of my Uncle's house though; I think it was either light blue or white. When my Uncle invited me to his house he said he had something to show me. I had no idea what it might be but I recall being curious. As I entered the house, I remember a decorated Christmas tree to my right in the corner of the living room. As I slip back in time, I find this unusual because I had not noticed Christmas trees in other homes. My grandparents did not have a Christmas tree except for a small ornamental tree that sat on the kitchen table.

I was filled with excitement anticipating what would happen next. I wanted to know what my Uncle was being secretive about. He was behaving as if there was nothing unusual. My aunt was with us as well. As we passed through the living room he told me to go ahead and look around. As I moved through the living room into the next room, my eyes lit up and I imagine they must have grown to the size of saucers. There was a pink tricycle. I looked at it then at my

Uncle. “What are you waiting for?” he asked. “Get on the tricycle and try it out. It’s for you”. I never imagined owning a tricycle. In that moment, I was in awe, I felt very special. I got on the tricycle and rode it around the house. My Uncle teased me and said he wanted to ride the tricycle too.

Retelling the Story of the Gift

This story was told to me so often when I was growing up. As a child living with her older grandparents who had little money, I never owned new toys. Receiving the tricycle in my early years from my Uncle meant a lot to me. I am not sure why I attribute such a strong emotion of caring to the tricycle, likely the gift from him resonated with a sense of belonging. On the other hand, it was amazing that I could have this item, deemed a luxury. Possibly this experience stands out because my grandparents could never afford to give me such an item. Tricycles in the community were uncommon largely due to the cost and access to these items. People who could acquire them needed a job and the means to travel into Williams Lake to purchase them. My Uncle and Aunt were young and they both worked and they had no children of their own yet. This might have been why they could gift me with a tricycle. Or perhaps it was because my Uncle cared so much for me that he wanted me to be happy.

I could only ride the tricycle in the house or in front of the house on the hard packed roadway because there were no paved streets. When I reflect on this event, it seems amazing that I remember it because I was quite young however I recall my sons’ memory when he was two. He clearly recalled where we stored our lawnmower in a wooden box behind our duplex. He spoke of the lawnmower often and I was amazed. I wonder, now as I inquire into the story, if what I am recollecting is not the actual living of the stories but mostly the stories that I was told about this time.

I grew up learning and understanding that the people surrounding me had a strong sense of caring and sharing. I can hear my grandfather telling a story about how it is important to give the shirt off your back if you had to. He put this into context by suggesting that a person consider who needs the item the most. It was part of who we were. An extension of my grandparents' generosity was when they invited expectant mothers from neighbouring villages into their home to be closer to the Williams Lake hospital for delivery. Their home was not too big yet they extended support to other people. They were able to house the expectant mothers in the attic of our one room log house. I experienced a strong sense of caring and sharing in this fashion.

Sliding back in time I do not remember Christmas gift giving as an important event. Yet, as I grew older, I often wondered why I never spent time with my family during Christmas. I remember my grandparents never fussed over Christmas either. There were no Christmas dinners. What I do remember is trying out for the Christmas choir to sing Christmas carols during Christmas mass which I never accomplished. I recently discovered through conversation with Elder Jean that Christmas was not our *Secwepemc* celebration. She said; the events around Christmas were brought in by the Catholics. This explained why it was not a big event in my memory or a big part of our lives as I have grown to practice it. I was relieved to learn and realize that Christmas gift giving was not our way of life because I had felt left out in my earlier years. Now I realize that my grandparents gave me solid gifts in many other ways. They did the best they could with what they had. My grandparents lived experiences are associated with the depression.

Stories From the Landscape of my Early Years

Aside from the tricycle I played with small wooden blocks. I pretended they were cars and I pushed them around in piles of dirt mimicking the sound of the motor outside the front window of my grandparents' house. I accepted that I did not own any toys and I was content. I spent hours playing alone with my wooden cars. While I played with my cars, I recollect that I wore denim coveralls and high top black canvas runners.

There Was Nothing Flashy About the Way We Lived

Now as I slip backward in time and place, I realize my clothes seemed more like boys' clothing than girls' clothing. I wonder if my grandparents bought boys' clothes because they were more durable. Without a lot of money they could not afford frequent new clothes. Or were the clothes given to me by others? Or maybe they were hand sewn? I wonder now how I got my clothes. Perhaps they were durable because they wanted me to be outside or they needed the clothes to last longer. I wonder if it was my grandmother, grandfather, or possibly my Uncles who shopped for my clothing. There were no stores on the reserve and the closest stores were in Williams Lake, seven miles from the community. I wonder how my grandparents got into Williams Lake to shop. I remember living in comfort, but there was nothing flashy about how we lived. We had all the necessities, nothing extravagant. I remember feeling slightly uncomfortable being dressed in boys' clothes though. Maybe I stood out from the rest of the children my age. I wondered if it was because my grandparents didn't pay attention to how other children my age were dressed because girls normally wore dresses.

My Grandpa's Back Pocket

I remember the times I accompanied my grandpa, always behind him hanging onto his back pocket. I was around four and I felt content, somehow knowing I had a good life. My

grandpa and I walked to collect water or to visit people around the main village. I was his shadow, walking alongside him with my right hand in his left back pocket. The water pump where we gathered water in buckets was not too far from my grandparents' house. In my earlier years as I hung on to my grandpa's back pocket we would go to the log house adjacent to the water pump and my grandpa visited there. I accompanied him and stuck by his side. I remember another house across the reserve from my grandparents' where they would go for regular visits too. I believe close relatives lived there. I remember feeling really close with my grandpa while I stayed close by his side. Hanging on to his back pocket was normal for me. I hung on so frequently that I remember the day we were out for our regular stroll. I envision it being a nice sunny day. As we were walking along, I heard a sudden tearing noise. It was the sound of the pocket tearing off my grandpa's jeans. I remember surprise that I was standing beside my grandpa holding the pocket. I remember I wasn't afraid. My grandpa and I stood still and laughed. It was pretty funny to all of a sudden have my grandpa's pocket in my hand. I am not sure if the pocket was sewn back on the jeans or if a new pair was bought. There was always another pocket to hang on to.

My Grandparents Are Gifts

The time I held onto my grandpa's pocket was in the early 1960s. I would have been four and my grandpa would be 62 and my grandma was 61. Although they were in their senior years, I do not remember them as such. They were quite agile and vibrant. I was never limited in my mobility while I lived with them, and I had been with them from birth. Even though they were retired, I remember the comfort of knowing they were always close by.

I often heard people talk about the hardships and the struggle for food; times were tough in those years. The people were still recovering from the 1930s depression and the Second World

War which ended in 1945. I heard conversations about food rationing to make sure that everyone was cared for in the community.

I knew we never went hungry; we always had good meals. My grandmother cooked while my grandpa did the physical work of chopping wood and carrying water. As I inquire into this story, I can see my grandmother in the kitchen starting the fire in the wood cook stove so she could prepare a meal. She got the fire going with dry pitch and thin kindling. The fire would start quickly and heat the stove top. Remembering the crackling sound of the wood is comforting.

As I slide back in time, I remember our one room log house. Upon entering the house, the table is in the corner on the left. Beside the table is my grandmother's bed and next to it is my grandfather's bed. A short distance from my grandfather's bed is the bed I slept in. Beside my bed is a cupboard holding dishes. Beside the cupboard is the stairwell leading upstairs. Next to the stairway is the wooden box that held the firewood to feed the kitchen and potbelly stoves. Beside the wood box are the pots and pans hung along the wall. The kitchen stove is close to the wall to allow for connection to the stove pipe through the ceiling. Next to the kitchen stove is the water bucket and wash basin where we cleaned up. Toward the centre of the room is the pot belly stove used for central heating. As a child, our house felt spacious, I realize now that it wasn't that big. I wonder where we kept our clothes.

While remembering these earlier landscapes, I wonder if my mom was still at the Coqualeetza hospital as I do not remember seeing her. I cannot recall when she came back to the community and when I saw her again and I do not remember seeing or being with my dad either. I was alone with my grandparents. Their children were adults when I lived with them so I was the only young child at home. My grandparents had a lot of time and attention to invest in my

upbringing. I spent many days with them while I gained my strong work ethic especially from the way my grandfather taught me. Both my grandparents were gentle people. I cannot remember an incident where I was even scolded. I would say that my childhood was carefree.

Sliding back in time and thinking about the age I would have been when I engaged with my chores, I noticed they were my formative years. What I remember from those days is the good feelings I got from finishing my chores (packing wood and water) and being rewarded. Because certain food was sparse, I remember appreciating the treat of an apple, orange, dried fruit and occasionally candy. The reward system taught me how to work. Sometimes I asked to do chores to get my treat. My grandpa would play a game with me before I was rewarded. He would pretend he didn't know why I sat next to him on his bed. I sat beside him and waited, being a child it felt like a while. He eventually gave me the nod to pull the cardboard box from underneath his bed to find my treat. This is how my grandpa succeeded in his teaching. To this day, I maintain my work ethic both physically and mentally. I hold my grandfather in high esteem for having the patience to teach me.

As I retell the story, I can sense those long ago feelings of safety and comfort. My grandfather probably felt comfort in knowing that I was beside him too. Until I decided to engage with Narrative Inquiry in my dissertation, I avoided thinking about my earlier landscapes. I do not understand what causes me to avoid sliding back to those days even knowing time spent with my grandparents were happier times. Because I can only remember minor glimpses of my childhood, I am connected with Elder Jean and my uncle to help locate myself in my earlier years.

Attending School

When I was six, I started school at the Community Day school on the reserve. I attended there from grades one to five. It was a short distance from my grandparents' house. My grandmother walked with me to the top of the hill and watched and waited until she saw me get down to the school doors. I walked the short distance to school every morning and I walked home for lunch. My grandparents prepared my lunches and they usually ate with me unless they were too hungry to wait. They rose early, especially my grandpa, I recall that, he was awake and having his coffee by 5:00 am every morning. If my grandmother did not walk with me she made sure there was another student I could walk with. I was not allowed to walk alone until I was eight. The school was too close to the access road into the community which fed off busy Highway 97. Highway 97 cut through our community.

I remember being in one large classroom with students from primary to intermediate grades on the main floor of the schoolhouse. I think the higher grades were on the basement level of the school. Our desks were lined in straight rows facing the front of the class from which our Caucasian teacher lectured. As was common in rural schools at the time, one teacher taught the entire class. I remember following strict rules in the school. We had to put our hands up to ask for permission for everything, mainly to use the bathroom during school hours. We could not leave our desk until the teacher gave us permission. Sometimes this was fairly uncomfortable, especially if students had small bladders and drank too much. Possibly I did not experience high levels of anxiety because I knew my grandparents weren't too far away. I recall enjoying school and being a fast learner. I didn't have any trouble with the material that was taught. I always got my homework done and I rarely was disciplined. There may have been a few times that I had to stay in school after hours to practice my multiplication tables or my

writing skills. I found the multiplication tables difficult as the numbers got higher. My grandparents didn't help me with homework much but, they made sure I did my work on my own and they helped me practice reciting the multiplication tables by listening. All of my school supplies were provided by the school. Students received a certain amount of supplies and the items were labelled and each student was responsible for them. Supplies were replaced as writing books were filled or pencils and eraser wore down. It was difficult to get replacements if the items were lost. There was no library in the school. Textbooks were issued and these were not replaced if they were lost or damaged because the school only had a set amount to hand out. If a student lost their material, they had to borrow from someone.

For grade six, I left the day school on-reserve and I was bussed into Williams Lake daily. I recollect instances during my elementary school years at Marie Sharpe Elementary in Williams Lake that were not comfortable. Beyond reach of the teachers, I overheard my people being called 'dirty Indians' and the girls were called 'squaws'. Native students were targeted with these names on the playground, in the classrooms, and in the washrooms. The name calling would come from other students; I do not recall hearing mean words from adults. These words were unusual for me, my grandparents never said them and we did not own a TV so I wasn't exposed to these hostile words until I mixed with non-Native students. I did not understand; I knew they were not nice words. I wondered if the words would stop if I washed my skin until it turned white. Having these words thrown at me were painful, for a while, I wished that I wasn't Native so I could fit in. I told my grandparents about the bad words and their advice was to not pay any mind to what was said, these things were not true. My grandfather reminded me that I am not less than anyone, his words helped me cope.

I was materially poor living with my grandparents because they were pensioners. I never really felt it until I went into the public school system. Integrating with non-Native students introduced me to competitiveness and status. I did not fit in if I wasn't competitive in sports or if I didn't have stylish clothing. In my class photo I wore canvas shoes without laces and I was made fun of. Another negative experience I remember was when teams were picked in Physical Education, I could expect to be one of the last chosen to a team. Other students from my community were treated the same but I did not become part of a group, I remained a loner. I heard the saying often, 'sticks and stones can break your bones but words can never hurt you', well they did. The nasty remarks were painful. I put up a barrier to protect myself from allowing the words to penetrate. A deeply painful memory was when our class prepared to present a play for family. I articulated how I felt in a letter to my mother on June 24, 1990, "[t]he one time that I was really hurt was when I was in my sixth grade. We prepared a concert for our parents to present at the end of the school year. All of my classmates' parents were coming and they asked where my parents were and I wanted to die". All I could say is they are not here. Although I knew my grandparents didn't have the means to travel from the village to my school, I felt left out. This was an unprovoked strike toward my sense of belonging. I attended Marie Sharpe Elementary for another year to complete grade seven.

My Elementary Experiences in Public School

When I reflect on my integration into the public school system in my elementary years, I remember leaving the comfort and safety of my grandparents' home and community and entering into a hostile environment. My prior worst school experience was the discomfort from having to wait for permission to use the bathroom for an extended time to feeling like a second class citizen. There was nothing welcoming about my new school. It was larger than my one

room school and there were less people like me. I learned very quickly how to keep my thoughts to myself and to metaphorically disappear. On a positive note, my early school landscapes taught me how to be strong and resilient.

The absence of my grandparents' participation at my school was difficult, but I understood that they did not have the means to interact with the school. On the other hand, it is very likely that they did not feel comfortable going into the public school so they chose not to attend. Thinking back to my elementary school days, I do not recall my grandparents being actively engaged with my school even on-reserve.

Moving to Residential School

In September 1968, I was moved to the Cariboo Indian Student Residence (formerly St. Joseph's Mission). The school operated from 1868 to 1981. At the time, the Residence operated as a boarding place and students were bussed to 150 Mile House or Williams Lake public schools. I was twelve when I left the comfort of my grandparents' home; my grandpa was a month away from turning 70, and my grandma was 69. They could no longer provide for me. At the residential school, I was placed in the senior girls' dorm with a bed amongst a number of other students. The large one room dorm was separated by age group. I was placed among the younger girls. I made a few friends but I do not recall spending a great amount of time with anyone in particular. I do remember trying to get a glimpse of my brother on the school grounds or during meals so I could talk with him. I felt lost and missed my grandparents a great deal. There were mainly *Secwepemc*, Chilcotin, and Carrier students. Many of the Chilcotin and Carrier students could speak their language and I heard them talk to each other often. I could not speak my language and I did not hear others speaking our language either. I recall the adults who kept watch over the students referred to as Supervisors. When we addressed them it would

be my Mr., Miss, Brother, or Sister if they were part of the convent. Many of the lay people were Irish. If our actions were deemed to be out of line we were strapped. I remember the supervisors being quite strict. The students were issued chores to complete daily and weekly. The chores were inspected and if the job wasn't approved, they had to be redone. I stayed at the Residence during the school year and returned home for summer breaks. In my final year at the Residence, the senior students moved to the fourth floor and we were assigned to shared bedrooms with one other person of the same gender. It was more private and we had closets to store our belongings.

I relied on my ability to excel in school and I plunged into my school work to stave off the negative feelings. Eventually, my hard work paid off. During my ninth grade, I was one of six Native students (four from Williams Lake and two from 100 Mile House) selected and sponsored by the Department of Indian Affairs to participate in an all-expense paid tour of Europe with our schools Social Studies program due to my honour roll standing. The trip organizers placed a limit on the amount of spending money we could bring, which was \$300.00. The rationale was to promote fairness so some students would not have more than others and it would teach students responsibility. The residential school administration took care of all travel associated costs and the four students from the residential school were tasked with raising the spending money. The residential school cook regularly baked a huge supply of donuts and a number of Residential School students took turns selling them on the street corners, in Williams Lake. I can clearly recall this event. I was shy about selling donuts on street corners, but we raised the funds for all four Williams Lake students over a number of weeks. My grandparents were not involved in my Europe trip. Since I attended the residential school, I saw them only when I went home for summer break. I had no means of communication or travel to visit with them.

Reliving Some of My High School Experiences

The anxiety of living with strict rules at the residential school was overturned when I was awarded the trip to Europe. Throughout my earlier years I did not have fancy clothes or trips, my grandparents provided me with the means to survive. The travel experience to Europe was a life changing event as it opened up a new world for me. Since this trip I developed a desire to travel and learn things. I was a young 14 year old. I have limited memories of the trip and I can only recall the names of the countries we travelled to in Western Europe. My existence of living on the fringe during my school years lasted up until grade 11 and things began to change. During my senior high school, grades 10-12, I attended Columneetza Senior High. I continued to practice my strong work ethic and I kept up my grades. I discovered that I was a fairly strong competitor in High School team sports and I was no longer overlooked when teams were picked. I began to be selected to a team sooner; I experienced inclusion. I also had teachers who were supportive in my studies and appreciated my gifts.

As I walk about the UBC campus now, it feels surreal to be at UBC because I never believed in myself enough to consider an education beyond high school. My confidence grew by remembering my grandfather's advice to never feel less than who I am.

A Story of Moving between the Residential School and My Grandparents' Home

I returned to the residential school around 1976 to live and work. I worked at the Residence up until when it closed in 1981 and I was recognized with a jacket bearing this crest:



Figure 6: Residential School Crest
photo credit: Georgina Martin

I never did wear the jacket. I am not sure why it wasn't worn but I keep it in my treasure chest of memories.

When I worked at the residential school, I drove 15 minutes to my community during lunch hours to provide care for my grandparents by cleaning their house. Frequently, on weekends I drove them into Williams Lake to grocery shop, there, I witnessed my grandpa signing his pension cheque with an x. My grandmother could sign her name. The enjoyment of grocery shopping was how my grandparents demonstrated their independence. I sensed that they enjoyed the trips and each appreciated how they could make their own decisions about what to buy. The trips required a lot of patience; they would not be rushed.

Retelling the Story of Caring For my Grandparents as They Aged

I deeply respected my grandparents for taking care of me as a child so without hesitation I took the initiative to care for them in different ways. It was not financial; it was by physically helping them. I had my own toddlers to care for at the time. My grandpa was 75, and my grandma was 74 when I made trips to the community during lunch hours to help them out. I understood that they enjoyed their independence by living in their own home and they liked to do

their own grocery shopping. To support them I helped to keep their environment clean. Eventually, home support workers cleaned homes for the elderly and people with physical limitations. On some days visiting and listening to their stories about their day was sufficient to let them know they were cared for. Since I had a license and a vehicle I could drive them in and out of Williams Lake to shop. This was a big event for them to experience their independence by physically shopping. Each grandparent would take their own shopping cart and I would occasionally check and remove items that they doubled and tripled up on. I scheduled up to two hours to allow them their freedom to shop. This was their major outing as they had limited mobility. One other event that my grandfather in particular thoroughly enjoyed was attending the Williams Lake Stampede. I drove him to the rodeo and sat with him if I could. If I could not be with him I made sure he was seated and I drove him back home at the end of the day. He attended the rodeo annually until it was too physically challenging for him to get up and down stairs.

My University Experience

While I raised my eldest children I was a single parent and the vision to pursue higher education returned. From 1981-1983, I took up the Diploma in Business Administration at what was then Cariboo College in Kamloops, BC, which is now Thompson Rivers University. Although I consider myself to be a hard worker my grades were mediocre during that time. In 1983, after I completed my summer internship in 100 Mile House, I decided to work instead of returning to school. I then accepted a position in Prince George, BC and relocated in 1984. My youngest son was born in 1987 and my youngest daughter in 1990. Unexpectedly, the vision of pursuing an education returned again in 1992, and I embarked on what would be my education journey. I started at the University of Victoria commuting monthly between Prince George and

Victoria for one week sessions over two years. I enrolled in the Administration of Aboriginal Governments Program and with additional courses I concurrently completed the Diploma in Public Sector Management in 1994. This experience was somewhat challenging with young children, I took them frequently with me to Victoria. I recall a vivid and joyous moment with my children during bedtime on one of my trips when my five year old son read aloud to me from my university textbook, my daughter would be three. He would on occasion stumble over big words and we would all have a good belly laugh. I worked and raised my family throughout. The quest for education tugged at me again. In 1994, I started my Bachelors Degree with a Political Science focus at the University of Northern BC (UNBC) in Prince George. I completed my Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1998 and continued on to the Master of Arts Degree in the same year. During this degree life hurdles obstructed my path and I could not complete the program within the expected timeframe. While I was engaged in my thesis research is when my Caucasian supervisor found that they could not help me connect with the pull I felt to explore identity within an Aboriginal worldview. It was prudent for me to just get the thesis done. The discipline was not friendly to writing from the autobiographical 'I' position as well. I did receive one time extension and managed to complete the draft of my thesis. A further time extension beyond the draft was denied. I spent the entire 2005 year negotiating my way back into the program to complete the degree. With the support of an Indigenous scholar a proposed strategy and outline presented to Graduate studies was accepted and I transferred from the Political Science stream to Interdisciplinary Studies with a new committee to complete the degree in 2007. I am positive that the resilience and perseverance that carried me through my education journey came from the vision of my grandfather, to get an education.

My resilience is shown by Monty Palmantier, who is the Education Director of Lake Babine Nation during his presentation at UNBC's Indigenous Graduate celebration when he spoke on my behalf.

May 26, 2007

In essence, Georgina has been consistent in her perseverance and this had been a key ingredient to the success she has attained academically and professionally.

The expression of 'where there is a will; there is a way' comes to mind. Though Georgina was dealt some roadblocks, even by this institution, in achieving her Master of Arts Degree—she persevered! Again in terms of a metaphor, I am reminded of the quality of water (which those fish swim through towards their spring spawning grounds) – water will always find a way; either around, through, or over whatever stands in its path. In that sense I am mindful of the strength of this Secwepemc woman.

Monty's words are a strong example of perseverance. When I struggle and feel defeated I remember my early landscapes and the important teachings of my grandparents' work ethic re-invigorates my will to complete tasks, examples are the challenges of attaining the Master and PhD degrees.

I moved through a process of telling, re-telling, living and re-living memories of my lived experiences. I recollect the earliest landscapes to the best of my ability. My memories of my earlier landscapes would be more vivid if I had photographs to reflect upon. Yet, I am satisfied that the memories of my growing up years with my grandparents are the most comforting. I have figuratively placed the memories of my life with them as the most outstanding. My grandparents gifted me with strong values. They continue to be my tower of strength. I understand that it is up to me through a narrative inquiry lens to re-tell my story. I am able to acknowledge how a

single or several traumatic events affect a person's outlook. I have the ability to remain where I am or decide to move forward. I believe my life has already moved forward on many fronts. I found the strength in myself with the help of my grandparents' voices [blood memory] to attain my university degrees.

I have seen growth in myself throughout my academic journey at UBC especially in the development of drumming. I moved from experiencing fear to pick up the drum to acquiring the confidence to sing the Women's Warrior song solo. Through Narrative Inquiry, I gained the understanding of how to re-story my history by also thinking about the rhythm of the drum beat. With the stroke of the drum stick as it makes contact with the drum, the reverberations tell me about how my grandparents took care of me when their child was not able to. By reflecting, I understand how my grandparents took up the family/cultural responsibility to raise their daughter's child. With another stroke of the drum stick, I remember how my grandfather loved me to allow me to be so close to him by hanging on to his back pocket and my uncle showed me how much I was treasured when he bought me the tricycle. My grandparents accomplished what they set out to do and raise a healthy and strong individual. Then the drum goes off beat too when memories of rupture and discordance occurs through feelings of not belonging on my earlier school landscapes. The beat becomes strong again as I gained acceptance in school. The drum continues as I learn to be in sync with a view of "Drumming My Way Home" on many fronts. Messages come to me that show growth in my lived-experience and I rest assured that I have done and continue to do the best that I can.

This was shown to me by my eldest daughter in my birthday card in 2013. She told me that although my mother was absent, I have been a good mother to four kids. She included a poem she wrote for me about six years ago.

Strength Of A Mother

*Strength of a mother
Has given me guidance
Strength of a mother
Has given me independence
Strength of a mother
Has given me wisdom
Strength of a mother
Has shown me her integrity
Strength of a mother
Has given me dignity
Strength of a mother
Has shared her knowledge
Strength of a mother
Has shown the warmth of her heart
Strength of a mother
Has shown her leadership
Strength of a mother
Has made me a better daughter
Strength of a mother
Has made a place to call home
Strength of a mother
Has shown endless love
'Strength of a mother'*

I gained solace through the words of her poem. Through re-telling and re-living of my stories I realized that I did enjoy various traits affiliated with a sense of belonging that I could not recognize until I re-lived my experiences. I understand through Narrative Inquiry that I have the ability to re-tell and re-story my lived-experience in order to dispel my sense of loss and feel more grateful and positive about my earlier landscapes.

In Chapters Five and Six, I write the narratives of Jean, then Colten. Jean and Colten's stories are shared to provide historical and current insights into cultural identities while emphasizing the importance of *Secwepemc* people knowing who they are. The procedure I use is to share their stories as teaching stories by presenting the narratives of each of the participants in

their voice. Then I offer an interpretation through an Indigenous Storywork approach to make meaning of the lessons in these stories.

CHAPTER 5:

JEANS' STORY – BEING RAISED BY GRANDPARENTS

In this chapter, Jean shares her personal life experiences. Her stories are meant to be teaching stories. She facilitates the passing on of knowledge regarding the practice of *Secwepemc* traditions that she learned from her grandparents. Jean's life-experience stories assisted her to look within herself and draw out the positive interactions she had growing up with her grandparents. She inherited the richness of *Secwepemc* culture from them. Through my research project, I became a recipient of her teachings and I found that my life story parallels hers in regards to growing up with grandparents. I consider the power of Jean's stories by borrowing Archibald's (2008) storywork approach to make meaning of how the stories are used and the way they are told. Archibald states that stories are significant for "teaching, learning and healing" (p. 85). The following excerpts are segments of Jean's stories, shared in her own words to illustrate her feelings and knowledge about *Secwepemc* identities in a historical and cultural context. I release the story in Jean's voice first, and then I make meaning of the stories in relation to *Secwepemc* identities throughout. My interpretations are recorded in italics.

Background – Social and Economic Conditions

I was born in 1940 and that's when we travelled with horses, wagon, and horseback. We didn't have vehicles until 1957-58. We never got bored; the kids rode horses a lot. Most of our time was spent with family, we were tight knit. In the fall we distributed dry meat among families that really needed it. During the winter is when hides were cured. We rarely went into Williams Lake but when we did, it was a really big event. We cleaned up at the sweatlodge and put on our go to town clothes. We rode horses alongside the wagon. There were two roads going into Williams Lake on either side of the lake. We went into town one way and came back the other. When we travelled into Williams Lake it was mainly to get basic supplies like rice, flour, sugar and syrup. Supplies were rationed back then; we got one can of Rogers syrup. We never bought meat. We would get some of our teas. We got dried wild tea from the meadow too. We had tons of wild tea, roots, berries and our medicines.

On the way home we picked berries; sx'usem, saskatoons or choke cherries. It depended on the time of year. Sx'usem was the first berries to pick then saskatoons and choke cherries. The berries were dried. Toward the end of summer it was t'nis (cranberries) and then crab-apples. When I was a little girl I used a darning needle, to thread the apples together on a string. They were hung out to dry, and later stored in gunny sacks.¹⁰

Jean's reflection illustrates the social and economic conditions in our community following the Depression from 1929-1939. Grocery store supplies were limited to necessities – rice, flour, sugar and syrup – goods were also rationed. Meat was not purchased which meant that the community relied on the land – hunting and gathering. I sense very strong family cohesion and kinship ties. Kinship is expressed through Jean's experience from the 1940s and I felt it with my grandparents into the early 1960s. Families spent more time together playing and working. Mobility was limited as vehicles were scarce. Horses and wagon were the most frequent modes of transportation and, of course, it took longer to get to places. Families shared the excitement of travelling into town and Jean describes it as a major event for everyone. The travel served dual purposes. On the return trip, berries were gathered; the type depended on the season. The people were self-sufficient and caring. The necessary foods were collected for sustenance and all families in need were given provisions. Seasonally, hides were cured for making jackets, gloves, moccasins, and drums. Items could be sold for economic stability, but the people were self-sufficient. Families were content, there was no boredom, and there was emphasis on helping and looking out for each other.

Grandparents' Marriage – Making a Life

I recall my grandfather had an arranged marriage the first time he married. It was in the late 1800s or early 1900s; he was either in his late teens or early 20s. He was promised an inheritance of hay fields and gardens here at Sugar Cane if he married Grace¹¹. He married

¹⁰ Jean's interviews took place on August 10, 2011; September 11, 2011; and December 6, 2011. In this chapter, the interview dates are not cited in the text in order to maintain the narrative flow of the stories.

¹¹ All names have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

Grace but he didn't get the inheritance so he worked hard to develop his own property. He acquired Wycotte flats and created fields. In his first marriage he was given a cedar basket. It's a woven basket and I think it is a Carrier basket, my great grandmother was Carrier. It's handmade, unbelievable workmanship. My grandfather tied the basket on his belt and put oats inside it to spread the oats for planting. The basket is from the 1800s and it is weathered. When you look at it you can see how closely woven it is. I treasure the basket with all my heart, it is one of the most significant things I have. This type of gift was in his first wife's dowry. I have the dowry, or trunk. The dowry was given by the nuns. Back in the day, the girls were 15 or 16 when they were married.

When my grandparents were married, it was second marriages for them. Grandma was born September 7, 1895 and grandpa was born on August 22, 1880. They married in 1934, she was about 39 and he would have been 54. I think my grandma was in her 50s, when I lived with them.

My grandparents were a twosome, we called them the lovers because they always hung on to each other and they were close, always at each other's side. They were committed in their marriage.

Very much like me, Jean holds her grandfather in high regard. I sense that having the ability to work hard is a strong quality for our people as Jean spoke of how her grandfather toiled to develop property and create fields. My maternal grandparents worked very hard and I inherited the same trait from them as well. I was not aware until my conversation with Jean that dowries were practised among our people, I never heard of this while I was growing up. They do not appear to be part of our cultural practices as the dowry came from the nuns.

The Carrier basket signifies long-lasting quality in workmanship, and sentimental value that cannot be priced in monetary terms. The basket is over 200 years old and Jean points to the quality of the artisanship that went into the weaving. The handicraft work and Jean's memories associated with the basket have withstood the test of time.

When Jean mentioned the young age that girls were married – 15 or 16 – it made me think about my mom. She was born in 1933 and married in 1949 at the age of 16. I am the 5th child of 9; when I was born my mom was 23. Re-living these memories helps me think of my mom's experiences in a different light, being so young and having many children must have presented

some difficult challenges. I think back of how frightening it must have been for her to be quarantined with TB at a very young age when I was born. I have no idea when my mom was placed into the Coqualeetza hospital. Because of my sense of loss, I did not make the effort to put these facts in perspective. Becoming more aware helps me understand what life must have been like around that time and I wish I could have spent more time with her.

Family

My grandfather had eight children; four boys and four girls. Your [Georgina's] dad was the youngest. My grandfather lost his first wife when all eight children were quite young. Christine, Aunt Sophie and your dad were brought up in the convent. Our grandfather worked at St. Joseph's Mission ranch when his children were young.

It seems that our families were quite large, Jean's mom and my dad came from a family of eight and my mom and dad had nine children. There was increased demand placed on parents to support so many children. I learned that my dad was raised by nuns in the convent and he was motherless at a very young age. This could explain how the absence of affection has permeated our lineage, especially keeping in mind Duran's explanation that when emotions or trauma are not dealt with in one generation; they are passed onto the next. If my dad was not exposed to affection then how could he learn how to express affection? My dad was subjected to very damaging circumstances that impaired his development as a child. Through my study, I am learning about these events that will of course help me place my challenges in appropriate context as emotions of resentment are replaced with empathy.

Relationships - Siblings

My grandmother Geraldine was born during her mother's first marriage, before her mother became a Grouse. Her mother had two more daughters, Eileen and Diane. These are grandma's half-sisters. In our culture though we don't say half-sisters or half-brothers; we are all sisters and brothers. This is important to point out because it shows the family cohesion we practiced in our culture. My grandmother's father was Kistemt.

Jean points out a very important aspect of Secwepemc culture in terms of relationships. I understand how brothers and sisters are distinguished as 'whole'. I learned that relations extended beyond blood line. People could be considered brother/sister, aunt/uncle by how they interacted within the family or group. The title was given by how the person modelled their behaviour by caring and sharing. While I was growing up, I remember my grandparents being very cordial to visitors and they were also treated well when they visited in other homes in the village.

Kinship

Grandma Geraldine was married to a Chief in Alexandria and she lived with him there. When he passed on, her brothers and sisters brought her back home to Sugar Cane. She had an adopted son with her, Sam the other son stayed in Alexandria. When she came back after the passing of her husband it was customary for her to refrain from picking berries while she was in mourning. She could eat fresh salmon and fresh meat in moderation. Because Grandma couldn't pick berries or work with fresh salmon or fresh meat Tse7emp gave her this basket as a gift when she returned.

I did not know that when my grandmother married my grandfather she inherited eight children. I was confused and I started asking questions when I was about 10. My grandpa said I have lots of wives, he was just joking. All my aunts and uncles from grandpa's first marriage were like grandma's own children, she never called them stepchildren.

Jean explains how various relationships reflect family cohesion. Geraldine was not forgotten, when married and moved away from the community. After her husband died, her family brought her back home from a Carrier community. The children from the marriage were welcome too. When she remarried, she inherited eight children that she raised as her own; they became her children. The close relationships show how accepting people were. Jean mentions the customary ways of the Secwepemc that were practiced when a loved one passed on. There are certain activities that the person who loses a loved one refrains from doing while they are in mourning. This custom is still practised. The intricate detail is not for public sharing.

Grandparents Practice Respect

When we talk about respect my grandfather highly respected my grandmother. I don't know of anyone else who highly respected their mate. They sat side by side in the wagon and they sat side by side outside their house. They were always together. They didn't only respect each other they respected the land, the animals and everything. They needed the horses and cows and the land they owned. They respected the kids. My grandfather really enjoyed them. They would come around and he would sit outside and watch the kids. He never disciplined them or yelled at them. They were all aware that he was there. He would give them a drink of water from the bucket; we never had taps. That was the kind of rearing we had.

I grew up with my grandparents and I feel most privileged that I can speak my language now and I am fortunate that I learned all my traditions. They took me at a very early age, I was probably a baby. I was either two weeks or two months old. This was our cultural practice in the early days when I was born. A child was chosen and raised by grandparents. And when the child grew up they became responsible for caring for the grandparents in their senior years. I was told my grandparents took care of me when my mother and father went to work. When my mother came back from her employment my grandparents would not give me back. They said we'll keep her and she will be responsible for us in our later years. This practice was well known. I wondered about this in my teens and I carried a lot of pain. I understand it now and I accept the arrangement in a positive way; I embrace it – my grandparents gave me a special gift.

Jean explains her observation of respect which was practiced by her grandfather toward his spouse, grandchildren, the animals and the land. She also expresses her gratitude for the environment she grew up in. Initially, Jean felt emotional pain as she did not fully understand why she was raised by grandparents. She felt rejected at first until she realized later on in her teens that grandparents raising grandchildren was a cultural practice of the Secwepemc people. Now she feels privileged for all the values she was taught, especially learning the language. She learned to appreciate living with her grandparents as a gift because she learned traditional ways and she can practice them. Jean's story illustrates the grandparent/grandchild bond and her story helped me feel more grateful about growing up with my grandparents as well. I often wondered about my arrangement as it separated me from my siblings. I concluded that living with my grandparents was a special gift too and I gained a lot of value from their teachings that

I could have otherwise missed. I appreciated the insight I gained from Jean for showing me the importance of intergenerational cultural bonds and practices.

Teachings – Respect and Love

My grandmother took care of my personal grooming. She used the wash basin to get me ready for the day. She braided my hair. I didn't like the way she did it. She would pull my eyes back like a natural face lift. Then she scrubbed my elbows and made sure my fingers were clean from the time I was little. She helped me put on my socks and shoes and she tied my laces. These are the things I remember. She never told me she loved me. I knew when I got up in the morning I could go to her and we never had bad words for each other. In respect to showing affection and showing love, my grandmother was the person in my life that showed me that.

With my boys, I show love and appreciation. I am not afraid to say Willie, I love you. Love comes into it, the word is deep. In the past, I would put my head on my grandmother's lap. I loved that. My grandson does too every now and then. I miss it.

An important message I gain from Jean's connection to her grandmother is how love and affection is shared and expressed even without physical contact. Love and connection is shown by the care and attention grandmother extends to granddaughter through personal care. It reminded me about how my grandparents took care of my personal grooming and taught me how to tie my laces as a young child. Until Jean shared her story, I did not realize how much love could be shown without ever saying, "I love you". I truly realize that I was loved too. I can feel why the memory of my grandmother singing, "You are my sunshine" to me carries raw emotion. That was my grandmother's way of showing her love.

Jean understands how important it is to pass on love to her children and grandchildren and she has the ability to openly express it. She acquired the practice through her own experience with her grandparents. The love was there and did not need to be verbalized. I grew up within the same environment. I feel that it is now my responsibility to figure out how to express love more fully.

Lessons About Survival

They were instrumental in teaching me about survival. I lived in the same log house with my grandparents. My room was upstairs; I had my own little haven. I shared the upstairs with my brother. This is where the dry berries were kept. My grandparents looked after my brother too; he came into the family when he was about five years old. Later, my brother was taken by Aunt Connie to support her because she was a single parent. She lost her husband when her children were really young.

The situation with Jean's brother supports the sharing/caring nature of our people. Her brother was cared for and later sent to an aunt so he could help her care for her children. The Secwepemc had developed a strong stable communal safety-net to maintain the survival of families, especially those who needed extra support. I can understand how younger family members were sought out to maintain and protect family cohesion. Jean and I experienced similar situations, we were raised by grandparents and in later years we reciprocated for their care and support. I understand now how grandparents accepted the responsibility to provide care for their grandchildren and keep them in the community rather than subject them to foster care. I learned that the actions of our grandparents were unselfish acts of love that supported Secwepemc cohesion and the transmittal of cultural practices.

Pictures – Memories of Horses and Wagon

The picture on the wall here of my grandparents is one that your brother took, I asked him for a copy of it. I don't know when it was taken, I saw it on the wall in his house and I asked for a copy and he shared it with me. I have several pictures of them together. Some really early ones when they were really young like in their 70s. I guess I'm saying I'm really young, I'm in my 70s. I treasure their pictures. I treasure him with his horse and wagon.

Grandpa used to travel with his horse and wagon. I have pictures of it and I have a picture of your siblings all around our wagon. They would play around our house. He just loved to have his grandkids come around and play around the wagon. I have tape recordings; I can hear the kids playing. Alec and Ivan and all of them, they were really little.

I went for the horses for my grandfather. That was the connection we shared. I would get the horses when he needed them and he would sing to me. I looked after him; if I didn't

show up he would know. Our day started at 6:00am; I fed and watered the horses then we had breakfast. I always had a horse to ride.

It is clear that Jean had a special reciprocal relationship with her grandfather. Her cherished memories are recollections of photographs and her lived experiences. There is a pattern of activities shared between them and it sounds like when the pattern was broken, life would feel out of sorts. The horses and wagons were very important as a mode of transportation and a gathering place for Jean and her grandpa and for the other grandchildren. I sense that there were feelings of magic in the relationship and the activities shared between them. Culturally, I feel their kindred spirit.

Secwepemc Practice – Caring For Grandparents

My grandparents never really explained to me why they took me; I started questioning my mother when I became an adult. She said that she never gave me away, my grandparents wanted me. They knew that when I got older I would be responsible for looking after them sort of like an old age home where a lot of our people are going now which is sad. We don't take the time to take care of them like we used to. My grandpa never went to the hospital, he died at home. I looked after him. It was probably one of the best parts of my life getting to know him and enjoy him. We laughed a lot and spent a lot of interesting times together. I bathed him, cut his hair and his soopjean, cut his toenails and cleaned his ears. I would roll his cigarettes and give him his brandy when he needed it. He never drank much only when he was under pressure. Later in life he started to drink brandy before he went to bed. He also loved egg nog with brandy for breakfast. Granny never drank in her life, only tea.

Jean speaks of a very important custom within the Secwepemc culture. The Elders were kept in the community and given the necessary care as they aged. I would say that they lived a dignified and respectful end of life and there was no alternative, they kept their place in the community. Grandparents took the necessary steps early on to invest in a grandchild's upbringing so they didn't have to worry about their after-care when they couldn't do things for themselves. The Secwepemc people had a very solid social system in the early years. Jean acknowledges that the system is no longer in place; the elderly are placed in homes and most

likely relocated out of the community, because the community is not equipped with the appropriate resources to provide the necessary care. Liability is also a major concern nowadays and it is an important consideration in regards to care for the elderly. People must have the proper credentials to avoid potential harm or risk to grandparents/elderly, especially if they require mobility assistance or regular medications.

Like Jean, I am thankful that I was able to provide some care for my grandparents. I was limited due to my family responsibilities. I had a young family to take care of at a very young age. I did the best I could at the time.

I couldn't look after my grandmother the same. She died of cancer. She had a big growth and she needed morphine. She was hospitalized and I asked the doctor to move her to Vancouver in case she could be saved. She eventually died in the Vancouver hospital. I didn't really like the way they looked after her but that was the best we could do back then, there is still no cure for cancer.

I sense Jean's heartfelt loss because she could not provide the same level of care for her grandmother due to her major illness that needed constant and immediate attention. Jean decided that it was best for her to receive care from the medical system to help prolong her life. In this situation, the community could not facilitate at-home care and keep her there. In some situations it is handy to have options. Unfortunately I could not take care of my grandparents to the same depth as Jean as I started a family when I was very young. I was respectful to them and I provided transportation and a clean environment for their comfort.

My Grandpa as Advisor

My grandpa had an advisor role, that's really interesting because that's the kind of role I play now. I call myself the cultural advisor. The hereditary Chiefs would come to my grandpa when they experienced problems. He had leadership; the Chiefs would go hunting or fishing with him. While they were visiting the Chiefs asked for his input and his advice would become part of the decision. The Chiefs would reach a consensus.

He was respected by his children and by the community. He really took care of us. When he came back from town we knew that he would have a box of popcorn for us. Out of nostalgia, I still buy the same popcorn.

Jean describes how her grandfather played a leadership role in the community. He did not hold a leadership position or Chieftainship yet he was considered a respected advisor.

I heard that certain individuals had innate leadership qualities they were born with and they could be placed in important leadership roles by the way they behaved and carried themselves.

Jean's grandpa fit this role. I do not think it is coincidental that Jean finds herself in the role of advisor; she was exposed to leadership throughout her life through her grandfather. I noticed that when her grandpa's advice was sought, the location was never in a boardroom, meeting room, or even in the home, it was on the land while hunting or fishing. I suggest that nature and its surreal surroundings provided spiritual guidance and bore witness to the events.

Sharing Chores

I was never really disciplined. I wasn't told you got to do this or do that. When there was a sweatlodge, granny would say we have to get the water ready. It was what we did and we didn't question it. When we went to Church, the bell would ring and we knew it was time to get ready. We didn't have to be told, they didn't boss us around. Like today it seems like you have to boss people around and tell them when they have to get ready. It was the same when we needed wood, we would get ready and go get it. We learned everything from the time we were little. We helped with everything when we went berry picking; getting the baskets, food and water ready and loading it up. We knew everything had a place. My grandmother was disciplined in how she put the food together; she would open up the tarp and an apple box or something similar was used. Everything had its place, the knives, forks, spoons, sugar, butter and everything was wrapped. The food went in the wagon and grandpa looked after the horses. I brought the horses and my grandpa would hook them up and check all the harnesses to make sure there was nothing broken and he checked the wagon too. He made sure his gun was in a safe place and granny would look after the knives. We all played a role. We weren't in each other's way. We all did different tasks. In the fields, grandpa cut the hay and grandma raked, bunched and cocked the hay. When my grandpa was in his 70s, he often rested. He needed a lot of rest, that's what I am, 71.

Grandpa would say let's pick berries. We all got our baskets ready, put on our hats, socks and shoes and away we went. When we filled our berry baskets we came home. Those were the things that I observed.

I can attest to Jean's story about not needing to be disciplined and given orders to do chores. I was raised with the same discipline. During that era, our community worked as a collective and people were attuned to what their tasks were. The adults carried out heavier duties and the children and Elders took care of lighter loads. There was no strict method of how activities were completed for example, the water levels in the bucket did not have a set standard nor did the wood pile have to be a certain width or height. Everyone contributed to the best of their ability, there was no quality check on the work. People took pride in their effort. Certain cues meant certain activities were underway and the family members took up their post depending on the event. There was no time wasted in organizing, things were accomplished in a timely manner. The work ethic was very strong and calculated. Children gained important work habits at a very young age. Grandparents instituted sound safety practices for all events on the land. I feel the strength and sheer enjoyment in Jean's memories of family gatherings. Families truly appreciated each other. There was less outside influences as well. The influx of modern conveniences also played a role in work ethic. Children in the late 60s, early 70s, became accustomed to the reduction of manual labour. For example, horses and wagons were no longer prominent in the gathering of wood for the stoves; motorized vehicles and equipment made it quicker and easier. Then electric or propane stoves and central heating systems almost eliminated the need for gathering wood at all.

Jean recalls there were hardly any vehicles in the community and I too remember that very few families owned televisions or telephones. Radios were the most frequent form of entertainment and communication.

Spirituality

While I was growing up we always thanked the Creator. We took time to be thankful for what we had especially our health; my grandparents both had excellent health. Our spirituality was practiced on Sundays when we were out on the land. My grandma closed the tent and we said our prayers. It was instilled in us in our youth. My spirituality is very important.

Church was a big part of my grandparents' lives; they went to church every morning and evening and we all attended mass on Sunday. They were really involved in their spirituality. They never questioned anything about the Catholic Church. Church was a way of life. In my own life I questioned it because I had a lot of negative feelings; even today I question that part of my beliefs. I know it's not the Catholic Church it's the people that were in the Church, I try not to focus on bad feelings. I am experiencing my own healing so I try to forgive people. That's my own belief; I don't expect anyone to believe what I do, I don't impose my beliefs on others.

I understand that Church was a regular congregation where most everyone came together on Sundays. It was time for people to see each other and visit too. I did not feel tension against the Church as a young child, but I did fear God from conversations I heard about what happened to people who misbehaved. I was told that people would go to purgatory and spend a long time there, until they offered penance for their behaviour or they went straight to hell. These places sounded very scary; I did not want to go there. I remember my grandmother attended faithfully too and she led the prayers. I always sat with her toward the front of the church and I always wore nicer dresses to attend Mass. I heard the service in English and the prayers were in English or Secwepemctsin.

Jean and her grandma recognized the Creator while my grandmother did not, or not openly if she did. I suppose everyone had various feelings toward the Church yet it seemed to be a place for weekly gatherings without question.

Familial Relationships

I call some of the people that I went to Residential School with my family; Mary is a sister to me. She is my cousin but I call her sister; we spent a lot of time together at the Residential School, she is part of my family unit. I call all of you my nieces and nephews

instead of cousins. Your [Georgina's] mom and I were really close in age we were just like sisters when she married your dad. I remember asking for permission to listen to her sing. She played the guitar and she sang lullabies to the kids. We spent a lot of time together and we used to do crazy things. When the men were out we would go horseback riding and we acted crazy when we were younger.

As previously mentioned, kinship is not based solely on blood line. Family cohesion was strengthened and carried stronger ties depending on interrelationships. Jean explains how she considered people she shared Residential School experiences with as family. The experiences created strong bonds. Jean extended a caring role toward me and my siblings. She chose to call us nieces or nephews which is closer than cousins. Familial ties were stronger culturally, no artificial borders were created.

I appreciated hearing Jean speak of my mom's talents. I am learning that she was truly a gifted woman. She was a fun-loving person and a good friend to Jean. I remember her being a hard worker. She took me and my two younger sisters with her once to her workplace, I do not recall the year or our ages, I just remember we were very young. She had a chambermaid job at the 150 Mile House hotel, we walked there from the community so we would have been old enough to walk the 4.8 km. As I move through the process of storytelling, I am finding out that I can reach back and bring forward some memories of my mom and I am fortunate to be an extension of her.

Cultural/Traditional Practices

Over a year ago, this past March, I lost my brother. A lot of people helped me out. Because of his passing, I couldn't pick berries or dry salmon. I really missed that, it is instilled in me. That's something I learned from this basket. I call it the culinary arts basket; it represents the food I am giving away now. I gave Dora some jams because she helped me a lot. She provided food and money for my brother's funeral. She was always there; Thomas and Minnie did the same for me. They are the people I am giving food to and I learned how to do this from this basket. It is a gift my grandmother got when she lost her husband. Her husband was a Chief. The culinary arts basket is fairly large and it could have a layer of dry meat, dry salmon, dried berries and dried roots. The basket is really beautiful. The concept is about giving. It's a gift; like I gave Dora jarred goods.

Traditionally we didn't have jars; the food was put into baskets to give away. I picked up the concept of the culinary arts basket and practiced it when I lost my brother. I didn't really have to go to that extent. I cut my hair and I refrained from picking berries or handling fresh salmon and fresh meat. That's how we give instead of using money.

I broke with tradition when my brother died. I went a bit overboard like giving up berry picking and working with fish. Usually the people in really close relationships with the person who passed-on stop traditional practices. It would be husband, wife, or child. I wanted to experience that whole concept so when my brother died I took on this practice. I only wore dark clothing and cut my hair. Then, if I went out into the bush I couldn't stay there for long. I guess it's that we never forget these teachings.

My grandmother picked plants in the spring and made powder for poultices. The poultice is used for colds. She taught us to dry meat and fish, to prepare my own jams and pick berries. My grandmother couldn't read or write but man she could make jams. My son Willie is carrying on these activities now; the tradition has passed down to his generation. My nine year old grandson is learning how to bead and sew; he sold a necklace yesterday for twenty dollars. It is important to supplement our income for special things.

I practice my sweats. We used to have sweats at the meadows and a sweat at the river. It was at the Fraser River where we had our fish camp. We called it "Cqwellnekwetkwe", in English it is the Wycotte fishing ground. It's past Chimney Lake or Chimney Ranch on the Fraser River.

I am going back to our great grandmother, old Marie's traditional way of dancing. I dance at Pow Wows. I am looking at how she danced and how her regalia were made. I don't have any pictures so I am working from how it was explained to me. Mavis told me a story about when the older ladies were down by the creek, where the creek and the river meet. They were supposed to be having a sweat but they were dancing. The men were drumming and the women were dancing. She told me how old Marie did her dance and what she had down the front of her dress. I am replicating the scarves with bead work down the front of my regalia.

I always remember that hard work gets you somewhere. It's not money it's knowledge. This is what I got out of the training from my grandparents. That training is so valuable. I never get tired. I'm driven by the knowledge that was passed on to me. I thrive on it. I was taught so much, this other stuff is secondary. I am fortunate, I also have the language. It is really important to own our roles as mothers and aunties and to be true to that.

My son is preparing a hide right now. I helped him, we both scraped it; he did most of it, I gave him guidance on what to use and how to scrape the hide. He is carrying on the tradition. My sister Ann and her daughter Heather prepare hides on occasion too. They don't do it very often though because the hides are lots of work.

I learned from my aunts, my grandmother, and grandfather where to find the best saskatoons and I know where to pick the best cherries. I know where the good fishing

spots are and I know where the animals are out in the territory. I listened to all the stories and I have an abundance of information.

There were stories shared about coyote. One night the owls were telling us a story. The way the Owl was telling stories some kind of event was going to happen. They would share stories about the duck with babies too. I have a binder of coyote stories; coyote plays an important part in our myths.

Jean continues to practice culture the way she learned it. After losing her brother, she allowed people to take care of her as the community traditionally took care of each other during her growing years. She often mentions in her conversations how people always looked out for others during times of need. This is the Secwepemc way. Jean is living the legacy of her grandparents as she continues to practice and pass on traditions and the important teachings she inherited from them. Jean mentioned something really important that Colten and I have inherited as well; she said we never forget the teachings. This message brings hope that the silence of our traditions can be revived.

Because she is very rich in the culture she continues the practices in many ways. What she does not know, for example the regalia, she learns so she can work on preserving more knowledge about Secwepemc practices. Jean plays a very important role in passing on cultural practices to her family members and community members who want to learn. I have a strong impression that her role as cultural advisor is to ensure that the traditions are kept alive. Jean spoke of the sweathouse and I remember going with my grandmother to them as a child. We went to a sweat beside the creek. I recall the steam from the hot rocks were unbearable for me in my youth. I would lie close to the ground and lift the covering so I could breathe in the cold air from the outside otherwise I felt as if I was going to suffocate. I was too young to understand the spiritual qualities of the sweat for the Secwepemc people. In my adulthood, I learned this and I practised sweats in my territory with my lifelong friend Lena.

Making Baskets

A lot of love goes into the baskets; now I make baskets. I started making a coil basket but I didn't finish it yet. It is one of the first baskets I tried to make. I do things in the customary way, the way I was taught. The baskets are made from birch bark and cedar roots. The bigger baskets are for storing the berries and the smaller ones are used for picking berries. I haven't used my gift baskets from Maggie; they are too fragile. I dropped one when I was showing it and it cracked. These are for display only. I usually don't bring out my old baskets they are too fragile; the one I brought out for you now I normally don't handle. I prefer not to touch them anymore because they deteriorated. They were used for food gathering and you could put hot rocks in them too.

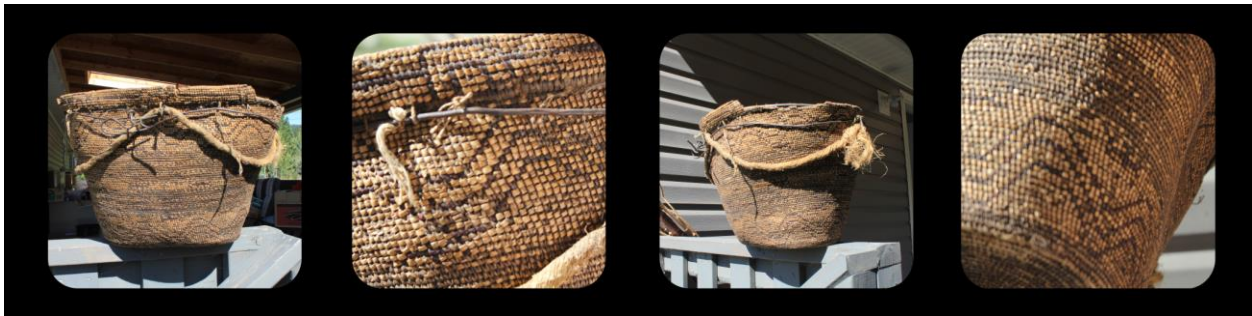


Figure 7: Photograph of Jean's Basket
photo credit: Georgina Martin

Baskets are very significant items that keep Jean connected to her cultural roots. She shares stories about the intricate detail and workmanship in the basket weaving and she further describes how they were used. The stories told are very important because the practice of basket weaving has not flourished nor is its cultural significance known. This part of Secwepemc history could become extinct if the traditions are not passed on or recorded.

I recall using cedar bark baskets to help with the berry picking as a child. They were very light. The smaller baskets were used for collecting the berries as the larger baskets were filled to capacity. I am not sure if the practice of making cedar bark baskets has thrived. Jean explains how the value and workmanship of the basket expresses the love from the basket maker. A lot of care and attention goes into the making, from the gathering of materials to the finished product.

Seasonal Food Gathering

The fall season is when we hunted. The men hunted for moose, deer, ducks and wild chickens. Our diet was 80 to 90 per cent of what I call bush food. Moose and deer meat were dried and we ate chickens. The berries were dried in the summer. We sold our cattle in the fall and that's how we lived from year to year. The winters were long and the cattle, chickens, horses, and dogs had to be fed all winter long. If the winters were severe the animals had to be fed a lot. In the fall our firewood was stock piled for our wood stoves; we had no gas heat. We relied on the bush for everything.

We followed the seasons; we called them seasonal rounds. In the winter-time lots of stories were told especially in the evenings while we were at the meadow. We talked about our day and talked about what we saw. It was always interesting when we had visitors. A lot of people like my brothers or my dad or Uncle Tom would come on horseback. They would tell stories about what they saw on the way; the number of ducks, rabbits, moose, deer or anything that they saw on the land. They would tell grandpa how his children were and how the Chief and other people in the community were doing. We never got lonely. We never had a television, only a radio. We listened to the daily message broadcast and the news. This was our means of communicating and finding out what was happening. Telephones were rare so in order to contact people in the area we called into the radio station and had our message sent to whoever we needed to reach through the radio. We knew that our message would get to the person because if they missed the message a family member or friend would pass it on.

For the rest of our food supply, we had about four gardens, two were potatoes and two were vegetables. We had two, maybe three cellars. These were underground; there were no freezers back then. We grew enough potatoes for all of our extended families, our aunts and uncles. The families took a bucket of potatoes, carrots, or turnips, whenever they needed it. There was no abuse; we all shared. We shared a lot at community events too. We had full barrels of dried salmon and dried meat and crocks of salted salmon. My aunts made pies and bread. Our granny would tell us to take what we wanted. The whole family were really caring and sharing people.

In the winter we started the hides again. My grandmother liked to have some spending money so she could buy a new dress or shoes or buy us clothing once in a while. Granny would make herself some new dresses or she made me clothing. When I went to Residential School, she made my dresses and underwear and bought shoes.

Jean teaches through her stories the importance of food gathering by following the seasons. The community had a very thorough system to ensure that all their food needs were met. The people knew the time of year that hunting and harvesting were to take place to maintain their livelihood. Their efficient system included gardens and storage facilities, both

were large enough to stock pile food to sustain families throughout the year. The Secwepemc self-managed this system to ensure there was no waste and the people respected the use of supplies. There was no greed.

The people relied on nature for most everything. The wild game and home grown vegetables made a healthy diet. There were no preservatives or toxic sprays used in the foods taken from the land. I notice that Jean does not identify processed foods as part of the diet. I understand that people in the community were a lot healthier when they relied on traditional foods. Jean reiterates how the tanning of hides was a viable economic entity and currency to access some goods. Tanning hides is hard work yet it was a regular component of the peoples' seasonal activities. A lot has changed; there are very few people who tan hides now. Self-sufficiency was a huge accomplishment for the Secwepemc people in the era Jean describes. Modern conveniences introduced by outside influence have seriously weakened the traditional practices of the Secwepemc people.

Community Connections

Right after the Williams Lake Stampede around the beginning of July, we got everything ready and our family went down to the river and we fished for salmon. We caught salmon and dried them for winter supply. Everything we did was family-orientated. We picked berries and this was our means to provide for the family. My father worked with the ranchers so he never had time to fish for my mother's side of the family. My grandparents and a group of us caught fish for them. When one of my uncles went to war we fished and dried salmon for that family too. People were selected to do this; the rest of us were always ready to help. This was our practice, we made sure we looked after the widows who lost their husbands, and we prepared dried fish for them too.

My grandpa and Uncle Gary would be careful not to over fish so my grandmother would not be worked to death. They were respectful and they would always ask her how many fish she could handle that day. I can't imagine fishing all night and preparing the fish all day. If there were other extended family members like Auntie Lillian to help out then the men would bring more fish.

Auntie Lillian helped with the cooking; making bread and bannock and whatever granny couldn't do. When I got older I made the bannock by the fire and kept the fires and smoke

going. This was my responsibility until the food was prepared; the men were responsible for getting the wood. Then I hung the fish out and learned how to cook. Salmon was a really important part of our food chain.

Later, we moved to the meadows, above the campground by Asahal Lake. It's about a 45 minute walk from the community. We camped there for the summer while we cut hay. We worked on the hay early in the morning before it got too hot. This was a family event, to take care of the horses and cattle. When the heat became too unbearable we picked berries. My grandfather would take us to the berry patch and he would rest. We hunted for moose in the meadows too. Our family stayed at the meadow until the haying was finished.

Within the family unit all the sons helped out with the hay, horses and cattle. Grandpa made sure that all his sons and daughters had wood, deer and moose meat. It was really family oriented. They were all good hunters and they were able to get their own game. If your [Georgina's] dad got a moose or deer or the same with Uncle Gord it was shared and everybody benefitted. Community sharing was practiced, the same with berries. During celebrations people from Esket travelled over to visit; the berries were cooked along with the salmon. We invited people in and gave them food and made sure they were warm. Those were the respectful ways and it's not being passed on.

My grandparents were really involved; they would go to all the activities in the community. They went to all the dances and they were involved in the church.

Jean describes the strength of community support. While her father worked her grandfather made sure that seasonal food supplies were provided for the families that her dad would normally provide for. When a family member was physically absent, people in the community were identified to fulfill the family's needs so everyone was looked after. Help was given to widows or anyone that needed extra support. This was the cultural practice.

Another cultural practice was preservation. When the men fished, they made sure that they did not overfish for a few reasons. They protected the fish supply as the Secwepemc depended on salmon as a main staple. To ensure that they had access to salmon annually they caught only what was needed for sustenance and allowed the salmon to restock for the following years. The Secwepemc were very astute about self-monitoring the food chain. The other consideration was for the women and children who gutted and prepared the salmon for preservation. The salmon

would be dried or frozen later on when appliances were introduced. The men highly respected the amount of labour that went into preparing the fish so they limited their catch. They would bring more if they knew others in the community could help.

Respect extended to the alignment of duties depending on the person's ability. For example, young Jean looked after the fires to ensure that the smoke kept going to keep the flies and bees away from the drying salmon. The flies were especially bad because they would lay multiple eggs on the salmon and cause them to quickly spoil. Once the flies infected the salmon they would not be edible so Jean had a very important role. I think many of us did not realize the importance of our roles that were less labour intensive.

Jean emphasizes how work-related activities like food gathering and haying were family and community-oriented. Families helped each other out and it didn't seem like work, rather families and community spent more time together. It was more like a social gathering. When I was growing up, I remember how moose and deer meat was shared throughout the community. When the hunters got a moose or deer, the place where the meat could be collected was announced. People were respectful; they only took portions, so everyone had meat. The community-sharing dynamic spread to neighbouring communities. When visitors came in, they were looked after and they went home with food supplies.

Identities

The Wycotte name originates from Esket and it was political when a Wycotte tried to overrule something in the community. There was rivalry and the Wycottes were told that they don't have a say in political matters because they were actually from Esket. That's the White man's thinking. We followed the mother, we were matrilineal. When our grandfather married his first wife he was told by her parents that if he married her and moved he would get gardens and fields. So he got married and he never got his fields. That's how Wycotte flat came about; he worked hard to get it. He pulled all the trees from the roots and worked the land. He broke his back getting that land so I will not let anybody take it away.

I never heard anything negative in the past two years. For a while it felt like the people were on our case, it's not like that anymore. I remember the disgruntled would say the Wycottes are trying to have a say and they're from Esket. I never took it seriously, I just thought that I was brought up by my grandmother and I go by her standards so they can't dispute anything.

Gift giving never was a really big thing. My grandmother loved it even if she was brought flowers. She was the happiest person on earth. If she was given a scarf she treasured it forever. When I gave my grandpa a bag of candy you would think that he won a million bucks. He loved his candies. I don't think he celebrated his birthday ever. Every day was a special day. I saw the affection and I do the same with my family. I give them jams and things not bought from Walmart. I give them something that means something to them. The first drum I ever made I gave away. That's the way I was brought up, that's just the way I am. I do things because it makes me happy and that's how I show real love. That's what I grew up with; it's what I know and what I do.

There was movement among communities; people often migrated if there was intermarriage. This was the case with Jean's grandpa. He came from Esket and there were politics about this move. He was considered to be someone from the outside because he did not originate from Sugar Cane, so efforts were made to exclude the family from any decision-making. This practice is deemed to be unusual. It is not considered to be a social norm of the Secwepemc, but is referred to as 'White man's thinking'. It goes against the principle of communal cohesion. Normally in our community everyone is welcome regardless of their previous location when they are a contributing community member.

I was happy to hear Jean explain how our people were not materialistic. I often wondered about gift giving especially around Christmas time. Jean set the record straight when she said gift giving was not a Secwepemc practice. The Christmas celebration and gift giving on December 25th was brought in by the Catholic Church. Jean calls it their (the Catholics) celebration, it was not significant for the Secwepemc people. Prior to this, the Secwepemc did not need a special occasion to celebrate, rather everyday was considered special. I recall hearing my grandparents give thanks for a new day every day. I sense the feeling of winning a

million dollars expressed by Jean when people were presented with a gift of any size or shape. My grandparents gave the same response. I frequently noticed that when Elders are given gifts they will not use the item. They store them for a really special occasion, or they may never open or even use the item. It seemed that the Elders wanted to preserve the moment eternally.

The celebratory characterization of gifting is reflected in how the Secwepemc thanked the Creator for everything, including the breath of life, on a daily basis. External forces changed this. It became disheartening, Christmas gift-giving is an example. It can cause people to feel excluded if they do not receive gifts, thereby promoting a more commercialized sense of caring.

Stories of Residential School

I think your [Georgina's] dad was born in 1934; he went to Residential School. I don't know how long they were in Residential School. I never got the information from Auntie Sophie and Christine. Our grandpa worked at the Mission ranch. I remember the stories; it was really hard for his children to be at the Residential School. Grandpa would eat in a separate dining room with the workmen and this was the only time his children would see him. They were segregated. Aunt Christine said he would come in and have meals. If his children were caught talking with grandpa they would get punished and be whipped.

Your great grandfather on your mom's side came from Little Shuswap¹² Band and your great grandmother is from Canoe Creek.

Another defining moment in terms of my identity is Jean's confirmation that my dad attended Residential School. I was not sure but I had a strong sensation that he did. The mere fact that he went there explains a lot about my dad. I heard how survivors of residential school left there with broken spirits because they did not have the closeness of parents. It was a very cold place to be raised, especially as it was done by people who never had children of their own. The priests, brothers, and nuns were there only to do their job. They enforced segregation by

¹² Jean and Colten use Shuswap to define our genealogy. I utilize Secwepemc as my preferred reference. Both Shuswap and Secwepemc refer to our people.

punishing my dad or his siblings for wanting to see their dad. It would have been painful and confusing for them to be in his presence and not be allowed to interact. Of course they would receive negative messages from the experience and internalize them. I can understand how my dad's residential school experiences from when he was a boy affected him because he did not learn how to express love and affection either. The cycle has continued as I have the same difficulty.

Learning By Example

In terms of identity there are three indicators that I consider part of oral tradition because when these things happened we just knew from experience that certain things needed to be done without being given orders. We knew when we heard someone chopping wood it would be time to get ready to pack it in; when the sound of the dipper scrapped the bottom of the bucket it was time to pack water; and when I heard my grandmother making fire it was time to get ready to peel potatoes, carrots or onions, whatever would be cooked that day.

We didn't have schedules we just knew what had to be done. Now with my grandson I tell him to be home by 4:30 because he has chores to do and then I name off the chores. We just knew if grandpa chopped wood we packed it in, nobody told us we had to. When we heard the dipper scrapping the bottom of the water bucket, we knew it was time to pack water; we never had to be told we just did it. It was a modelling kind of behaviour. When cooking was started I knew I had to peel potatoes; this was the kind of respect we had for one another. We knew this well and we learned well. I felt so proud when I packed water in the 2lb pail then I graduated to the 3lb pail then I went up to the 5lb pail and then the 10lb syrup pail.

The relationship that my grandmother had with me from infancy into my adulthood is the kind of respect we had for one another. I knew how she did things. We were a very busy family and we were very productive. In my teens I remember my grandmother telling me about how the old people lived. Nowadays people are just trying to learn in their teens.

In the recent past our people needed permission to leave the reserve. I heard the Chiefs talk about how the people's boundaries should be respected. Boundaries are not respected today. I think that is why we are creating our own problems because we allow others to more or less come in and dictate to us how to do things. If you look at the Band Office it works like the old Indian Agent in a sense.

The teaching/learning style has drastically changed from earlier years to now. Jean and I both learned to attend to chores by knowing what needed to be done without being told. We both

willingly did our chores for the sheer feeling of receiving appreciation. We knew our grandparents were happy when we did the work and that was all we needed to feel good about it. Young people behave differently nowadays. There appears to be a lack of motivation or possibly too much stimuli from technology and modernization. Our chores were necessary for the family to have drinking water and warmth. Now water is available by turning on the tap and heat by turning up the thermostat. Modern conveniences decreased the reliance on manual labour but there are still chores that need to be done especially to maintain a clean and safe environment.

Jean emphasizes how we were taught as well. She mentions that the teaching was role modelled. We learned to respond to the cues when chores needed to be done rather than being given direct orders. I believe we both did so out of respect to demonstrate to our grandparents how much we cared for them. I am not suggesting that youth do not care for their grandparents now, but the work ethic has drastically changed from when Jean and I both grew up.

The Teachings and Knowledge Gained From Jean's Stories

Elder Jean reflected on her life experiences in her community to articulate her connection to *Secwepemc* culture and traditions. She emphasized her experiences growing up with grandparents. Her memories are vividly contained in the stories she told and they underscore how Jean developed her cultural and traditional knowledge. From interviewing Jean, then narrating her stories, I learned more about the ways of our *Secwepemc* people in the *T'exelc* community too. The stories are special because the oral teachings we receive are not found in textbooks. The stories depict the independence and resourcefulness of the *Secwepemc* people. It is important to know that the *Secwepemc* had solid traditional practices that were passed on from generation to generation. The teachings are still being passed along but at a lesser degree.

By listening to Jean describe our cultural history, I am able to affirm my identity and recognize the solid teachings I received from my grandparents.

Jean described how various external forces affected the traditional ways of the *Secwepemc* people and these influences diminished the strength of our cultural identities. From this learning experience, I suggest that Jean and I are privileged to have the solid lived-experiences that connected us to our identities. Jean recommends that everyone take the initiative to learn the culture and traditions before they are gone. By gathering Jean's stories and interpreting their meaning, I found that the stories' meaning helped me better understand myself and my situation (where I came from). I believe retelling and reliving these stories helped both Jean and I understand how we see ourselves in our lives and cultural narratives. The continued sharing of the stories and cultural experiences in the community can assist others make meaning of their identities and, in all likelihood, many more people have solid memories of the teachings from grandparents and Elders. Jean's stories about living and learning from her grandparents prove that our Elders did shape our cultural identities and that cultural practices maintained the strength and unity of our people. The transmission of cultural knowledge through the passing on of stories supports the revival and survival of cultural identities and helps us sustain who we are. The traditional lived-experiences Jean shares are important to help us achieve the interrelatedness and synergy introduced by Archibald. To understand our holistic genealogy and harmony within our cultural identities requires personal responsibility to learn about Traditions and pass on the teachings. Our nation is well positioned to regain our cultural integrity with knowledge keepers like Jean in our midst.

The next chapter provides insights and characteristics told by Colten in respect to how he views identities from a youth's perspective. Colten represents a youth voice in my intergenerational study about cultural identities.

CHAPTER 6:

COLTEN'S STORY – GETTING STARTED

My first meeting with Colten took place on August 10, 2011. We met at his grandparents' home in the *T'exelc* community. My gratitude was expressed by providing Colten with food and a monetary gift. Prior to the visit, I requested that Colten bring an important photograph to our meeting. Colten said he thought about bringing a photograph of himself with his best friend and his grandpa on a hunting trip. He described the scene of his photo; the group are sitting inside the box of a red pickup truck posing with a deer. The picture was taken outside Colten's mom's house. Colten explained that the picture is important to him because it brings back memories of times when there were no worries. He recalls and describes his memories throughout our conversations. I make meaning of his stories in relation to *Secwepemc* identities, and I describe these meanings (in italics) as I did with Jean's stories. My purpose in sharing Colten's stories through this method is to present his stories in his voice. The stories are transcribed into text primarily the way Colten shared them; I refrained from editing his stories other than to ensure the stories flowed accurately.

Memories

I am ten or eleven in the hunting photograph. It was quite a long time ago; I was a kid. I miss those days, we did whatever and my grandpa would take us hunting or fishing. I really liked those times. The photo reminds me of when I was worry free. My friend lives in Williams Lake now; he has a girlfriend and a kid. We still hang out once in a while and visit. He fished with me last year where I worked. I was a catch runner down at Rudy Johnson's bridge and he would come down and hang out and fish.¹³

¹³ Colten's interviews took place on August 10, 2011; September 11, 2011; and December 6, 2011. In this chapter, the interview dates are not cited in the text in order to maintain the narrative flow of the stories.

A significant memory for Colten while he was growing up is spending time with his grandpa and his best friend. It was a time of comfort, no worries. He describes how he was exposed to the Secwepemcs' cultural practices of hunting and fishing at a very young age. The fishing activities are important events; he also spent time fishing with his friend. Colten's experience occurred around 2000, which shows that youth were still actively involved in cultural practices. Colten did not disclose whether youth are still engaged in traditions; he only spoke about his own experiences, not other youth. Colten practiced culture and he developed strong relationships with his family and friends while he was growing up. Throughout my conversations with Colten, I noticed how important these relationships were to him. I found this unique as I do not hear many youth speak about relationships with family in the same tone. Other youth could have the same feelings; I just have not heard it verbalized before.

Spending Time Between Two Families

When I lived with my mom in Campbell River I was in pre-school. I was around four or five, I was pretty young. We stayed with my younger brother's dad and his family for some time. Later on we moved to Victoria and we lived there for about a year and a half. I think I was in grade 5. It felt weird going to school in Victoria. There were a lot of different people around and there were no natives. I am usually around natives. There were just streets and I had to watch where I was going and what I was doing. I couldn't just go outside and play and do whatever I wanted like I did around the reserve. I found some friends and it was ok, but I missed home I guess. I wanted to move back to Williams Lake. It's alright to go away sometimes and try something new and different. It felt like a lot of moving around. Every holiday or something I went with one family and hung out then I came back.

We lived in Victoria for about a year and a half; after half a year I wanted to move back to Williams Lake. I did move to Nemaiah and I went to school in Nemaiah for about three years. I finished grade seven in Nemaiah and grades eight to 12 in Williams Lake.

In earlier years, before I became a teenager, I spent a year with each of my parents on their reserves (Nemaiah and Sugar Cane). I alternated and I spent my holidays between the two communities. I had weekend visits between the two places too, until I was around 10. It was alright for me growing up. When I was with one parent I missed the other one though and I kept switching schools. It wasn't that bad, I knew both communities.

I have not seen my dad for a while now; I have not been out to Nemaiah in a long time. At least two months. That is a long time for me. It feels like a long time because I haven't seen my family. It depends on what I'm doing, I might spend a weekend there, or during Christmas break, I will spend a couple weeks there.

During his childhood, Colten noticed how much he moved around. The moving did not affect him too much because he was able to spend enough time with each parents' families. Colten had developed a strong attachment to both communities. He felt a noticeable difference between living on the reserve and in a non-Aboriginal community. When he lived off-reserve, he felt that there were no others around like him; at least he could not identify them if there were. There could be some people but they do not self-identify as Indigenous. While he lived off-reserve, Colten did not like the limitations in his movements. This is likely because when he is on-reserve, he feels more secure with fewer barriers and safety concerns. It is noticeably different for him because there is always responsible adults close-by to keep an eye on the children; the adults would notice if anything was out of sorts with the young ones. They would naturally respond if a problem arose. Adults watching over children are a common practice in many Indigenous communities; a sort of social safety-net. I suggest that the feelings of safety are what supported Colten's childhood as being worry-free. Colten did miss his family sometimes; he spoke often about missing his dad. I sense that he became a strong individual as he managed to balance his life between two families. This would require a great deal of courage and resilience. He always seemed to keep his emotions in check as he knew he would spend his time between two homes.

The movement of Indigenous youth between families and communities is not uncommon. As Colten explains, he shifted between both. A child or children can be quite mobile throughout the school year when their parents separate or their parents may have responsibilities in different communities. This information is important for teachers to understand the impacts the

separation has on the student with frequent movement between families and schools. The move can be challenging for the student's attention, retention, and overall performance. Their academic and emotional health can be compromised if they do not receive appropriate support in schools. Parents may be reluctant to disclose their personal life situations for fear that the information would generate negative consequences like stereotyping that accompanies single parent status. These feelings of apprehension deny the student's enjoyment of a well-rounded learning experience.

Familial Relationships

What I make a connection to is my family. They really help me out a lot and they are always there for me. Family and friends are the people I talk to and ask for guidance.

My dad and I sometimes have a real good talk; he helps me out a lot. He's been through a lot in his life and he knows what I'm going through. I really talk to him because he sits down with me and he listens. The family helps me to be ok.

I have four brothers and two sisters. My brothers and sister on my dad's side I haven't seen very much because I haven't been out to Nemaiah. My brother on my mom's side moved back to Campbell River so I don't see him much and my other brother is a little guy. My little brother stays here at my grandma's and I see him every once in a while when I visit. My sister lives here too. I feel that I don't see them as much as I should.

I never knew my grandpa on my dad's side; he passed away. He is from Toosey. The funeral was last year. My dad and his dad weren't really close. We went out to Toosey for the funeral and my dad introduced me to all our cousins and aunties from out there. I never really saw them before. It was pretty good. We talked a bit and ate supper and took pictures with them. It was a one-time meeting. Toosey is on the way to Alexis Creek just past Sheep Creek bridge. It is about 20 minutes from Williams Lake. People fish around the bridge too. Farewell Canyon is on the other side of Toosey.

Colten shows in his dialogue that family is very important to him and he recognizes that he does not see them enough. Although he spends less time with his family, he feels highly supported by them to help him through situations. He knows that they are there for him in times of need. It is exciting to see that Colten has his family for support. Unfortunately, there are

many people who grew up without strong supportive relationships. I noticed his relationships were nurtured during his growing years.

Colten shows his familial relationships are his strength. Although he did not have a relationship with one of his grandparents, it does not seem to affect him. He had a one-time connection and seems to have accepted it. Given that many Indigenous people suffered from the effects of residential school, it is promising that there is positive growth in familial relationships.

Life in Nemaiah

It is a three hour drive from Williams Lake to Nemaiah. The roads are better now so it can take two and a half hours to get there. There are lots of travellers from many parts of the world that visit Nemaiah.

During school, our Chilcotin classes went on field trips. The youth worker brought us to sweats, fishing, hiking, and berry picking. We visited the Elders and watched them tan hides or smoke fish. The Elders taught us to pick berries, make bows and arrows and things like that. There was cultural week for all the Chilcotin elementary schools. The students gathered at one school and we had lots of activities for a week. There was traditional stuff like tanning hides and making bows and arrows, gaff hooks and fishing stuff. We did this at the end of the year. It was fun.

I was going to try and fast out in Nemaiah. My dad said when I was becoming a man I was to go into the mountain by myself and fast but I was scared to go by myself so I didn't go. I was to go for a week and survive on a bit of dry meat and water. I would pray and wait to see something. I thought that was pretty cool because they said whatever I saw or dream about that's my power.

Nemaiah is not as secluded as it once was. The roads in and out of the community are more accessible and the travel time is shorter. While Colten lived and went to school in Nemaiah, he had more exposure to cultural practices in school and learning from Elders. It is impressive that the schools supported cultural learning by dedicating time for students' exposure to hands-on cultural learning. Culture and land-based pedagogies are significant approaches to learning for Indigenous students especially youth because their learning is more effective when

they learn together with their peers. Colten mentioned many times throughout his conversations the importance of spending time with friends and others his age.

Colten was immersed in many of the same activities that Jean describes as Secwepemc practices as well. These experiences helped Colten build his strong character. He participated in regular cultural events in his dad's community too. These cultural practices (sweats, hunting, fishing, berry picking and tanning hides) between his two home communities were very similar. Colten was exposed to two distinct cultures while he was growing up. The experiences can be both strengths and challenges because he gained knowledge about both cultures at the same time. There are some differences so he needed some adjustment to switch between cultural teachings.

Although Colten did not practise the traditional coming of age ceremony, he is aware that it exists and he knows how it works. He knows in the culture that to become a man he had to spend time on the land in solitude unfortunately, he was too afraid. He would have gained power through his dreams. Possibly when Colten is stronger he can return to the teaching and do something similar.

Community/Collective Stories

About the community, I see people go hunting or I hear about it when they go fishing. There are some sweathouses around here [Sugar Cane] people go to. I haven't been to a sweat for a long time.

When I was younger I remember events like the Yuwipi ceremony or a ceremony at the lake, camping and sweats. Mexican people visited our community and they did a full moon ceremony. My auntie knew about the ceremony. It was hosted at the Band office in Nemaiah. It was a big ceremony where people stood in a circle. They hummed, prayed, sang, and danced with the lights off. It would be total darkness, everything was blacked out and we could hear an eagle flying around like spirits. They were spirits of old. I heard it was real. I heard things and you could feel it. It was the praying, singing and drumming that made it happen. Then we passed around a peace pipe. I did it once. It hasn't been done lately, I hear of it in other places, people talk about the Yuwipi ceremony but not

around here [Sugar Cane]. I think they still have Pow Wows here. I don't really go to Pow Wows and stuff like that.

Good stories are about power, like healing people that are sick. There is talk about people and bad medicine. People say stuff like your spirit ran away from you. My grandma said one of my cousins was really sick and they brought her to her sister Marjory and Marjory saw this thing running around, it was her spirit. The spirits have different animal names. My auntie and the other girls put hands on you and they feel things. Sometimes they stay in Kamloops and they have dreams about things that happen over here. They would warn us about what they see in their dreams. Another is the crane, when it made a really ugly noise something bad would happen. I saw a crane a couple times when I was hunting with my Grandpa Homer. We were walking around the field just past 150 Mile House in the cut blocks.

I heard stories from the Shuswap and Chilcotin that one day the White man will depend on us. The technology will be gone. They will be learning from us. We will revert back to the old days like living off the land. I heard stories that something will happen in the future that will cause this.

Colten speaks of ceremonial experiences that are not part of either Shuswap or Chilcotin cultures. The ceremony took place in his community of Nemaiah. He had the ability to relate to these events, as he shared how he felt and what he heard during the ceremony. I feel that Colten described spiritual connections that adults may think youth would not understand or relate too. He was connected to spirituality in both his communities. He speaks later on of his grandmother teaching him about signs from the owl and his grandpa taught him about messages from cranes.

Both the Yuwipi ceremony and Pow Wows are external practices to Colten's cultures. I suggest that if Colten was not rooted in his own culture and background, the foreign experiences could have confused him; however, he clearly explains the ceremony as an entity outside of his own practice. He demonstrates in his narrative that he has the ability to separate his communal cultural teachings from others. The ability to do this shows strength in Colten's character because a young person can be negatively influenced or confused by different beliefs.

Colten was introduced to various stories. He says some stories are good and some not so good. The good stories have healing power and the bad stories cause sickness or separation

from your spirit. Stories can appear in dreams, and the spirits have animal names or they can be associated with birds (he mentions owls and cranes). I believe that Colten is rich in knowledge about traditional ways because of his upbringing. The knowledge he acquired is not available or practiced by all youth. The absence of cultural knowledge can foster a person's ability to develop a strong sense of who they are because culture is an integral part of personal identity as Colten has described.

Language

I didn't really learn any of the languages. When I was really young I used to speak Chilcotin, that's all I spoke. I think I moved to Sugar Cane for a while then I lost it and started speaking English. I was really young, I think I was three or four or something. I was just a little kid. It would have been alright if I kept speaking it. I barely know any Shuswap, I don't speak it fluently. The Elders around the Rez spoke it but I never really learned it. I did in school, I took Shuswap classes but I found Chilcotin was easier to remember because it has shorter words and easier to say I guess. I never really learned anything about either language. It's hard to answer the question about who I am. If you're not practicing your traditional ways you lose touch with it and become like everyone else.

The people fish with a dip net here and I think it's for Aboriginal people unless they have some kind of permit. Sheep Creek is 15 minutes west of Williams Lake towards Anaham. It's just before Farewell Canyon. On your way out to Anaham or Stony it's the first bridge going downhill. It's not the bridge before Alexis Creek. This one is not even ten minutes from Williams Lake.

Colten spoke his Chilcotin language fluently at a very young age. He lost his ability to speak Chilcotin when he moved to his other parent's community. Only English was spoken among youth at Sugar Cane which shows that Shuswap is not fluent in our community. He did take Shuswap classes in school, and determined that Shuswap was more difficult to learn and speak. At the time of our meeting, he was not speaking either language. I believe that when Colten is ready to learn the language again he will not have too much difficulty as he has been exposed to it at a very young age. I expect that when I become acquainted with the Secwepemc language I will be able to learn it without too much difficulty for the same reason.

Although Colten mentioned a few times in our conversations that he didn't know what to say about who he is, he did have some profound messages. Several of his stories connect him to his traditional practices between his two cultures. He acknowledged that while he is not practicing the traditional ways, he may lose touch with the culture and he runs the risk of becoming like everyone else. He has a strong value base of how culture connects people of their identities, communities, and families. I believe that Colten has a lot of cultural knowledge and he solidly represents a youth's perspective. He has a lot to teach.

Colten seems unsure about the details surrounding dip-net fishing; I confirmed that the Secwepemc people do fish for salmon with dip-nets. Permits were not required when I accompanied fishermen to the river to dip-net, but permits are required now. Previously, the Secwepemcs' subsistence was unencumbered. The people took only what they needed to survive for the year, now the fish catch is closely monitored. The traditional practices are continually eroded by environmental and legislative change.

Sports

I remember when I was around 12 my dad took me to Redstone for steer riding school. We were learning how to steer ride and I jumped on my first steer and I got hurt real bad so I quit right there and I wanted to go home. I was in hockey right from the starting level around five years old up until I was in grade eight or nine. Then in about grade ten I was too old for the minor league. If I wanted to keep playing hockey I would have to go in the recreation league. I didn't want to do that so I stopped playing. I play ball hockey now. Our ball hockey team plays in Skeetchestn or Seabird and sometimes Lillooet. I used to play baseball but our team isn't active.

My dad owns horses and cows. When I was in my early teens I used to ride horses all the time. I remember one year I got hurt on the horse so I stopped riding altogether. I kept getting hurt riding horses; I stopped liking them. My dad kept trying to get me back into riding. He would say maybe the saddle was too small; we'll get you a bigger saddle. I just gave up. He still does a lot of horseback riding.

I remember the gymkhana. It is a bunch of games and different types of races. It was fun. I never did it myself because I don't like horses. My dad likes it, he likes horses. Every year at the rodeo in Nemaiah they have the suicide race. It's part of the rodeo. I don't

care for it. Beside the rodeo grounds there is a creek and a mountain goes up about a quarter of the way up. The horses and riders go up there and wait. They race down this really narrow trail only one person can get through at a time. There might be a beaver dam in the creek and the water is deep. My dad wiped out a few times. Nobody gets hurt too bad. I think my dad went down once and broke his collar bone.

Colten was very active in steer riding, horseback riding, and hockey in his earlier years.

He was especially introduced to activities that his dad was either good at or involved with a lot, such as horseback riding and rodeos. Colten's dad was involved with livestock so Colten was around animals a lot too. He was very active, and I noticed how he made decisions and stuck to them at a very young age. When he determined that steer riding and horseback riding caused him injury, he quit and he would not go back to the activity with any amount of coaxing for fear that he would get hurt again. He particularly did not care for rugged events like the suicide race, likely because of the potential for injury. Colten shows character in his confidence to make his own decisions, particularly around events that can cause harm.

Learning Experiences – High School Landscapes

One summer I joined the Chief and Council shadow in Nemaiah. I shadowed my dad, he was the Chief. We went to meetings and events in Vancouver and other communities. It was fun. I tried to take notes but I never got into it, it was too much talking. I liked hanging out with my dad a lot that summer. I thought it would be cool to be a Chief. I wouldn't know what to do.

I would rather go to school for something I want to do. I like working outside with animals. I am interested in marine biology that studies creatures in the ocean or maybe archaeology. I liked science but I didn't really like my teacher. I tried to take physics and chemistry but I couldn't get into it. I tried chemistry but there was a lot of math and formulas I had to take. It was algebra. Biology wasn't that bad it was just that my teacher was strict in class and I wasn't comfortable. There were lots of people that I didn't talk to so I dropped out. That would be in grade 11. I was falling behind so I got out of it and took the easier science course, the basic science. I wanted to graduate so I picked the easy classes so I would actually graduate that year. If I go back, I want to do it soon, the sooner the better. I just need to get started. I think I have to upgrade for a year and take courses like math and science over again because I took the easier courses.

When I went to school it felt like I had to be there it wasn't really that exciting. I think I only had summer classes once because I failed. It took me a week and a half to pass. I

never spoke to my mom and dad about it much because they always told me to get the hard work done now and it will be easier later. I think in grade 12 it was mainly my friends that kept me going to school; I wanted to see them every day. It was fun; everybody spread out and moved away.

In school I wasn't really bothered by racism. There was just one person but it didn't really bother me though. Everyone had my back I guess when this person picked on me, it wasn't really racist. I don't know why he picked on me; it wasn't that big of a deal. It didn't bother me and he didn't do it all the time I guess, he would try and poke fun at me in front of his friends.

I don't really know what to talk about. School was alright, when I was getting close to finishing it was hard because my friends would want to skip out and just do whatever downtown and I would fall behind in class. I would get in trouble with my parents and I think last year in grade 12 with a month or two months to go I was taken off the graduating list. That forced me to pull up my socks and get my work done so I could pass. I graduated from Williams Lake Secondary. The school goes to grade 12 now. I didn't find it really challenging, there was always someone to help me there, like the First Nations support workers. We were really good friends with them and hung out with them all the time. The Support workers were really cool. We talked to them when we saw them in the hallway or sometimes they brought us out for lunch or we would have projects in school and they would take us downtown to get supplies. They would take us out of class. It was pretty cool; I found it helpful and comfortable. They tried to help us in any way they could with what we needed. They were older people. They would take us aside and help us. School just felt like something I had to do. I kind of really didn't like school. I had to go there every day and do the same thing and learn for six hours. But it wasn't that bad. When I was in school there would be some kind of thing down here (Boitanio Park) I think it was Aboriginal Day. I don't do anything regularly on Aboriginal Day. I only attend things I know about.

I really like computers, one time I was going to take this computer program for three years. I went to Kamloops and talked with a counsellor about the program. As time went on I didn't feel interested in it anymore. I was scared and it felt too hard to go back to school again after being away for such a long time. I was away for three years going on four. I kind of see my uncles and aunties like friends or buddies. I don't ask them for advice, I can't explain it.

What we are talking about is helping me reflect on my early years up until now, what I did and who means what to me; it's helping me to be who I am in a way. I think about who I am from this person, I usually just live my life and I never really thought about it before. I don't really know how to see who a person is really. I'm having a hard time; I don't know what to say. I'm not really the type of person that wants to go and do stuff.

In terms of how Colten describes his time with his dad, I detect that relationships are really important for him. While Colten was a Chief and Council shadow, he was fortunate to receive

mentorship from his dad. He enjoyed the time he spent with him; it was an experience and opportunity. Colten benefitted from his experience, but it is rare for youth to have this type of opportunity due to time constraints for the mentor and the additional costs of travel, etc. It was likely more cost-effective for Colten due to the relationship. It is an example of how a community invests in their future development by training their youth for leadership.

Colten shares his concerns about school. As a teenager, he had difficulty sorting out what he wanted to do for a career but he did know that he liked science. Unfortunately, he had difficulty with a teacher, which is not abnormal; maybe the experience could have been managed better if he had a way to develop a response to the negativity. I understand that many Indigenous students can be caught in similar situations because of misunderstandings between teacher and student; these could be due to cultural or age differences. I relate to Colten's story about taking easier courses, I did the same in high school because it felt like the norm. Guidance Counsellors directed me to take the non-academic courses because they were easier. I took business-related courses that only required general math and I avoided algebra and sciences because I was led to believe that I did not have the capacity to complete this level of work. By listening to Colten's story, I realize how things have not changed; he was given the same options in his high school experience. Additionally, my four children received similar advice when they attended high school between the years 1985-2007. They were directed into the lower level non-academic stream, and as a concerned parent I objected and revised their course loads. I was able to support my children unlike many Indigenous youth advocates who may not have access to or understand how to challenge the public school systems on their child's behalf. If Colten made different decisions rather than accept the advice he received he could have avoided the need to upgrade. Decisions to move into non-academic programming in high

schools essentially create the prerequisite to upgrade for college or university in later years. This could be a deterrent for youth to pursue higher education.

Colten speaks of experiences that I heard about often from my teenage children and I could not really relate to what they were going through at the time. Colten helped me understand that many youth feel the same in high school. He speaks of going to school to be with his friends – that was his motivation. It seems for many youth in high school that the social contact becomes their priority. Colten admits that his grades fell because he skipped classes and went off with his friends. He went along with this until he was removed from the graduating class list and he realized he might not graduate. He became less inclined to share this information with his parents. I sense that this was because of the respect he held for them or he didn't want them to feel like he let them down. He felt more comfortable confiding in the First Nations support workers in the school. Colten's experience reveals how youth can benefit from positive support and encouragement. The role of the First Nations support workers in public schools is pivotal. They provide mentorship and support for the Indigenous students in a caring way. These support workers have a positive impact and they helped Colten pull through.

Colten mentions another important factor about youth and their interests. Initially, he was keenly interested in pursuing a computer program but as time passed he developed anxiety about returning to studies. The element of fear is important for educators to recognize when they develop strategies to support youth decisions to consider college or post-secondary education. I suggest that it is vital for educators to understand youth and assist them to overcome their fears; to encourage them to enlist their potential and succeed in academic curriculum.

Losing Interest

I don't hunt and fish much now; I kind of lost interest. Over time I wanted to hang out with my friends. This would be more into my teenage years, like 13 or 14 [Colten is in his

20s now]. I can't do things where there are lots of people, I feel uncomfortable. I like to be by myself and do my own thing. I have a handful of friends that I hang out with, my best friend and his brother and some other boys in our age group.

I don't do much now; I hang out with my friends. We play video games or skate-board around town. I don't think I did any canoeing or any sort of activities really.

Colten admits his interests and priorities changed in his teenage years. He preferred to spend more time with his friends rather than hunting and fishing. Fortunately, he developed the cultural practice of subsistence earlier on; when these are learned at an early age, I understand they are never forgotten. I am reminded of this because I anticipate that when I begin to learn the language I will catch on because I grew up with my grandparents speaking our language fluently. Possibly Colten will hunt and fish again later on in life.

He spends time with a few friends and he can also be on his own and feel comfortable. I see this as another character trait Colten developed; I believe that youth can perceive time spent alone as a sign of inadequacy in-case people think that they do not have friends or are unpopular. Youth tend to be very vulnerable to perceptions at this delicate stage in their lives. I remember being very much a loner in high school but I made it through. This could be another motivator for why I did well; I think I buried myself in my schoolwork to avoid the loneliness.

Colten's interests shifted more when he was in high school and again into his 20s. His friends became his priority and his preferred activities changed. Like many youth now, their time is spent playing video games and skate-boarding. I mentioned this shift in my M.A. thesis in 2007 as a threat to our traditional ways, as many youth choose to turn away from them and become consumed by technology and modernization. In Colten's situation, he has the knowledge of subsistence hunting and fishing. It is an aspect of his embodied experience that he probably can easily return to.

Work Experiences

The place where I work is Rudy Johnson's bridge. People dip-net fish there too. Mainly people from Sugar Cane fish there or they go to Farewell. The Soda Creek people go there sometimes but they usually go to their own fishing areas near Soda Creek by the heritage site. I have never been fishing down that way.

I like outdoor work. I don't think I could sit in an office or behind a desk or any place for very long. I like to be outside and move around and see interesting things. I like animals, I really like animals. I like being outside exploring. I go for a walk up the hill and see what's on the other side. When we go to the river we wander around a lot and check out what we can find. I am a catch monitor down at Sheep Creek. I monitor the fishermen that are down there and count how much fish they catch and I take a scale sample for each of the fish. I don't really know what the scale sample is for; they didn't really tell us. It could be to tell their age or where they have been. They have this whole big system; I guess it's to see how many fish come up the river and where they are coming from. That's pretty much it.

Colten learned the Secwepemc people have different fishing areas through his recent job as a fish catch monitor. Although he wasn't fully aware of the reason for taking samples of the fish scale, I believe his activities are affiliated with the preservation of fish stocks. Colten may not fully appreciate that he was engaged in a very important role to assist with the security of food preservation for the Secwepemc people. The level of fishing is monitored to ensure that the yearly salmon run is maintained. Excessive fishing depletes the salmon stock and threatens the people's livelihood; therefore, monitoring reduces the risk of over-fishing. Colten enjoys the outdoors and his work practices are culturally connected to the teachings he gained from his grandparents. He often demonstrates the knowledge of traditional fishing practices which is a significant example of place-based knowledge he learned from family experiences.

Grandmothers' Teachings

I don't go out to Nemaiah and visit much lately. My Grandma Betty on my dad's side lives out there. She does different things like feed the cows and prepares hides. When I was in Nemaiah my grandma would teach us a lot of stuff and we would hang out with her. She would be doing hides, picking berries or drying fish. In Sugar Cane I would be with my grandpa hunting, fishing or drying fish. Sometimes we would pick berries but mostly hunting and fishing.

Sometimes I see my grandma and aunties when they come into town to do their shopping or when they are on their way to visit family in Kamloops. My cousins are in Kamloops; they either go to school or just live there.

I hung out with my grandma and learned from her whenever she does traditional stuff. She cuts fish and meat for drying. She also tans hides; she would scrape it and let it soak in water for a while. I would help her sometimes; I usually watch because I don't know what to do. That would be my Grandma Betty. She always had these sayings like she closes the window curtains every night because if an owl came and looked at you in the window something bad would happen or if the owl whistled at you at night, it was bad to whistle at night. It was bad for us to whistle at night because something might whistle back at you and you would get really sick.

My other grandma, April, she was always there for me, helping me out, I really love her. She's always worrying about me and giving me advice and telling me not to be bad or stuff like that. Like when I drink or something she's the one that really makes me think about it. She just makes me think about things. She really helps me a lot and gives me advice and she helps me any way she can. She's always happy and so nice.

Colten fondly speaks of his relationships with his grandmothers and the teachings he received from them while he was growing up. He was engaged in several traditional practices throughout his life and he refers to them as learning opportunities. Earlier he said he does not practice cultural activities anymore; like Jean and I, the teachings are embedded in his memory. From the conversations I had with Colten, I recognized the high degree of respect that he has for the grandparents he had relationships with. He describes his time spent with his Nemaiah grandma as "hanging out" with her. He uses the same reference for his close friends and the First Nations support workers. I find his reference to "hanging out" with his grandma significant because he places his relationship with her in the same sphere of importance as his friends. I find that youth tend to separate their relationships with grandparents and parents in a hierarchical relationship. By "hanging out", Colten treats his grandma like one of his friends.

It is heartening to hear Colten say he loves his maternal grandma. I do not often hear young people his age openly express love. In my experience, it seems difficult for youth to

express affection. He shows gratitude for the advice he receives from her, and he is not afraid to admit that he needs positive guidance to keep him on track. I see this as character strength because Colten is not afraid to accept that he needs good advice when he behaves inappropriately.

Identities

I am the oldest child in the family. My oldest brother is 16. My brother Kyle and my other brother on my dad's side Sam, he's in grade 11 now. I am really bad with birthdays; I don't remember them all. On my dad's side, Shayna is six. She's my sister on my dad's side and on my mom's side I have Cindy.

I was raised by my grandparents and my mom and dad. When I was younger I remember spending time with my grandma on weekends when my dad was at meetings and my mom was going to school.

Colten has siblings from both his parents. He does not remember their birthdays but I do believe that he cares a great deal about all of them. He grew up with his maternal grandparents; they were involved in his upbringing along with his parents. This arrangement contributed to the strength in Colten's character.

Lately I stay around town because it's easier to get a job and more of my friends are here. I don't hang out with anyone in Nemaiah around my age. They party and they are crazy sometimes. I try not to party but sometimes I get into trouble too. I skateboard with my friends around town, anywhere we can really. Sometimes we are told to go somewhere else, but not too often. We just do our own thing and hang out. It's just usually me and my friend Tony. Sometimes one of our other buddies will meet up with us. We might see him wondering around or see him at the skate park or something. We skate until we get tired I guess then we find something else to do or we go back to our buddy Cameron's place and relax, play some video games. We mainly play shooting games; we connect with others. Everyone is addicted to Xbox. That's the main technology and the cell phone I guess. We talk to people on the computer. I talk to my friends by computer or text. About technology, most people use it a lot. I think there are so many new gadgets and different systems. I don't think older family members really use that kind of stuff. My dad uses it and my mom does. I talk to them sometimes.

As Colten grew up his interests changed. He resided closer to Williams Lake for easier access to jobs and to be close to his friends. He didn't get into the social scene too much. He

preferred to hang out with a few friends and skateboard, which is what many youth in his age group were doing at the time. Skateboarding and video games became an important part of youth culture in Colten's generation. He places emphasis on Xbox as an "addiction", because youth are drawn to computers, cell phones and other gadgets. In his view, many people his age use these items unlike adults. He knows youth are consumed by technology and they tend to spend more time talking through the computer or cell phones rather than in person. The trend of impersonal conversation can potentially impair the development of social skills for teens and there is the risk of negative attacks through social media. Technology has created intense challenges for youth, parents, and schools.

I don't really like talking a lot unless I really need to. I think about what's going on around me and I keep it to myself. Once in a while I did public presentations in school but I didn't like it. The first time I did was when I was in Victoria. There was a whole bunch of kids that I didn't know. I hung out with a couple of them and I had to do this project that I didn't do. I think I had a month to do it and I barely did anything. I never really thought that it was important for marks. I just got up and I said I had nothing and the teacher said ok then I sat back down. But then in high school it wasn't as bad. I knew I had to get it over with.

I conclude that although Colten was quiet he is a very strong individual. He shows character as he describes a school experience that could have resulted in a negative consequence but it did not seem to devastate him. He did not complete an assigned public speaking project because he felt that it wasn't that important. Colten did not elaborate on the outcome. It leaves one to ponder what happened; it appears that it must not have impacted his overall grade otherwise he would have mentioned it. Given the way I was taught, there would have been a serious consequence for failing to complete a project and the teacher likely would have made some reference to it in front of the class. The way Colten describes the event, the presentation did not occur and that was the end of it.

In Williams Lake there wasn't a really particular hangout spot. It didn't matter; a group of us would just go anywhere and do anything or just walk around at lunch time or grab something to eat somewhere. Someone would suggest something and we would do it. We would wander around and joke around. I think there were about 20 of us that hung out all the time. Not all at once, it would be different groups of people. Like at random places like Walmart, the mall, gas stations or restaurants.

Colten's description of how he spent his time in and around Williams Lake awoke memories in me of when I attended high school in Williams Lake. The patterns are similar, although I had few friends and our options of places to hang out were less varied. During Colten's era, there were more restaurants, a mall, and other establishments like Walmart. During the late 1960s/early 1970s in Williams Lake there were no big box stores, or malls, and only a few restaurants. When I was in grade 11, our hang out was one particular restaurant on the main street in the downtown core. We spent hours sitting in the restaurant usually sharing whatever someone in our group could afford. We basically sat in the diner, while we shared the food and listened to the 25 cent juke box. This was the extent of our entertainment.

We did not have access to sporting events, or activities like skateboarding. Technology was not introduced at this point. Stimuli through technology increased in Colten's school experiences. I feel the same nostalgia for high school experiences though. Similarly to Colten, I did not feel a lot of stress. My job was to go to school and I was content doing as I was expected. Thinking back to my elementary and high school days, although I was not involved in sports, I did not feel deprived, these were just things we could not do and we accepted it.

I can't believe I forgot my picture again. I remembered it; I took a picture of the picture with my cell phone. It was sitting right there. The other thing is my car. I feel better when I have a car. Without it I had to catch a ride everywhere or I was stuck. I use it all the time. I had speeding tickets. I got a speeding ticket and a ticket for a no "N" sign at the same time. So I got a letter in the mail saying my license was suspended. I got it back, lucky my grandpa was there because the fines had to be paid and he said well I got it I guess. I signed papers and they gave me a temporary paper until my picture ID came. They gave a date when I could go in and reinstate my license; mine was September 6th, so I went a few days after because I didn't get paid until then. It was the first thing I bought

when I got my money. My grandma had a car and she put insurance on it when I got my license back. She found it too hard with only two vehicles because my cousin Leslie has a little family and she needs to use my grandma's SUV all the time. So my grandma and my xpé7e bought a new car for my grandma, my grandma has three vehicles now. She said I couldn't handle it with only two so I had to buy another one. Everyone depends on people with a license; everyone needs a ride to run errands. Every time my aunty or uncle or somebody needs a ride, they ask me to bring them somewhere or they need to go shopping. I say yeah, for sure it's no big deal. Sometimes it gets pretty hectic when everyone is doing everything at the same time. I get stressed out and I feel like I am being rushed. It was getting that way before I lost my license so it was a nice break for a couple weeks. The young people nowadays make plans to drink and stuff.

An important aspect of Colten's life is having his driver's license, both for mobility and to support his family and friends with transportation. He still carries on with his caring spirit in a conventional way. Everyone needs transportation to acquire goods or attend appointments. For a period when he did not have access to a vehicle, he felt stuck. The independence he feels is important. He admits that the demand feels hectic occasionally, and it was nice to have a short rest from being a driver. I sense Colten's need for a driver's license is a major priority for him. It is the one thing he can't live without, it supports his independence.

Values Drawn From Colten's Stories

While I represented Colten's stories from our conversations together, I felt extremely privileged for the opportunity to share his embodied relational experiences. Many times his stories helped me return to my own experiences growing up in Sugar Cane and Williams Lake. His high school experiences, especially, brought me back to the times I attended the same school. I was reminded of similar difficulties in school settings which show that some things have not changed. In addition to reconnecting to life in school, Colten helped me improve my understanding of what youth experience in schools and at home. His stories are invaluable for parents and educators as he reveals how youth interact with family, friends, and mentors. Colten

provides insight for parents and teachers to understand youth experiences. There is an opportunity to enhance adult/youth relationships in many areas.

He demonstrates the importance of learning languages, culture, and traditions as they are a major connection to identities. He maintained a strong allegiance to his families as he grew up. The lessons learned from his parents and grandparents are invaluable, as these teachings can only be acquired through healthy relationships with family and community. Familial and cultural bonds are important components of both the *Secwepemc* and Chilcotin cultures that Colten grew up within. Throughout the conversations, Colten expresses sincere gratitude for his friends, mentors, and family support to help him throughout life.

Although some differences exist between his *Secwepemc* and Chilcotin cultures, they are more similar than different. The two cultures strengthened Colten's knowledge: he did not feel confused. I noticed throughout his story, Colten could separate traditional practices between the two by describing what he learned in each community. Given that he was very young, he could have combined them into one for ease, but rather he respected them individually. This is a strong indicator of knowing oneself. In his story, he acknowledges how the languages presented some challenges. For Colten, the Shuswap language was more difficult than Chilcotin.

I was extremely encouraged by the strength of Colten's connection to his families and communities. He demonstrates the care he felt for his supports (parents and grandparents) and he expresses love for them effortlessly. His ability to show affection is crucial; it is an example of how youth have developed the capacity to reduce the intergenerational effects of residential school. His character exhibits generational growth, given that Jean and I continue to harbour feelings of numbness and long-lasting detachment from our emotions. Colten's experiences

exemplify giant leaps in the personal growth of our people; there is hope for the future healing of our families.

Colten's experience further reaffirms the important role that grandparents hold in passing on important traditions and culture. Similar to Jean and me, he was exposed to *Secwepemc* culture and traditions at a very young age. He may have recently separated from his culture, but I do believe he will never forget the teachings that are embedded in his being. Although several times Colten would stop and say "I don't know how to talk about who I am" he did present invaluable information about youth experiences. At another time he mentioned how participating in my study was helping him to recognize who he is. To learn from and support youth, it is detrimental that adults listen to and learn from them. My study shows that youth have a lot of rich knowledge to share.

I begin Chapter Seven with the final conversation we held on December 6, 2011, which brought Jean, Colten and I together as a collective. I wished to consider our collective or communal identities, because our relationality is equally important. I consider elements of our individual identities that bring us together as *Secwepemc* people.

CHAPTER 7:

BRINGING IT HOME

*Each of us needs to belong, not to just one person but
to a family, friends, a group, and a culture. (p.35)*

Vanier, 1998

I begin my concluding chapter by sharing the collective stories of the three study participants (Jean, Colten and I) to collaborate on our *Secwepemc* culture and identities. The importance is to know that our cultural connectedness is not solely an individual effort, the *Secwepemc* have a collective history. Hence Vanier's quote is used to draw attention to the need to belong to our family, our friends, to our *Secwepemc* people and to our *Secwepemc* culture. As previously mentioned, our last visit was at Jean's home, on December 6, 2011, where the three of us had an open conversation about what it means to be *Secwepemc*. Each of us brought our personal perspectives, memories, and experiences to draw upon and we reflected on the research questions posed in Chapter One as follows:

1. How do Elders shape cultural identity?
2. How is cultural identity important for *Secwepemc* people?
3. How do stories convey our cultural identities?

In her story, Jean recounts the strong traditional practices that were passed on to her from her Elders and grandparents. Through the teachings, she learned how to pass on the traditions to keep the *Secwepemc* culture alive. Colten strongly emphasizes his familial ties, his connection to two distinct cultures and the strength of kinship. I remain inherently connected to my culture and homeland through the embodied teachings and memories of my grandparents. This chapter signifies how our Indigenous Knowledges have been molded through our stories, teachings from

our Elders/grandparents¹⁴, and lived experiences. I further discuss the importance of *Secwepemc* identities and propose future research considerations.

Sharing Identity Stories as a Collective

Jean explains that rocks are markers that assist our people to recognize and identify places in the territory. An example is red rock called *PellTsko'ten*, that is found in the Sugar Cane First Nation community alongside the train tracks; Jean affirms the rock is used to make pipes. She says, when you see *PellTsko'ten* in the territory, you know you are home (J. William, personal communication, December 6, 2011). This coincides with Jean's lesson in Chapter One when she said, "you are not *Secwepemc* unless you return to the land", as [*Secwep*] means both unfolding/spreading out and coming home (personal communication, February 10, 2011). Jean indicates that place names were used a lot in creation stories. Accordingly, the *Secwepemc* know the territory surrounding Sugar Cane is our home and the people used these areas for traditional practices. Therefore, geographic indicators are significant to the cultural identity of the *Secwepemc* people¹⁵.

Earlier in life, Jean moved away from the community to attend school; yet she always knew she had a home to return to. The connection to her grandparents eventually drew her home. Jean recounted a favourite memory of Christmas preparation. She rode on a horse-drawn sleigh with her xpé7e (grandfather). The horse harnesses had brass collars and colored chimes.

¹⁴ I included Elders with grandparents because grandparents can fulfill the role of an Elder but not all grandparents wish to be acknowledged as an Elder. To respect them, I do not automatically reference grandparents as Elders.

¹⁵ Due to the limitations and time constraints of my study, I did not delve into geography or place names within the territory. There are some names mentioned as Jean or Colten spoke about them during our conversations. A thorough account of *Secwepemc* history is captured in Ron Ignace's work; *Our oral histories are our iron posts: Secwepemc, stories and historical consciousness* (2008). I utilize Ignace's dissertation for historical reference.

The families gathered and travelled into Williams Lake on Christmas Eve to buy a turkey. On the way into town, everyone stopped at the point (a landmark pullout beside a jutting rock face) and had lunch around the camp fire. Tea, bannock, dry meat, and dry fish were served. After lunch, the party continued into town to buy the turkey. On the return trip the travellers used lamps to light their way through the darkness. The people in the community saw the lamps approaching and they gave the four gun salute as the sleighs and horses arrived. Everyone was happy when they heard the bells chime. The turkey was prepared for midnight dinner on December 24th. The meal consisted of turkey, cake, a bit of bannock, coffee or tea; it did not include potatoes, gravy, and all the trimmings like it does now. The people did not set-up and decorate Christmas trees; only poinsettias were displayed. Jean said, “We have our own beliefs and we try to keep our traditions alive in my family” (personal communication, December 6, 2011). I have a vision of the sleigh ride and the family and community cohesion that occurred around the horse and sleigh event. I understand the kinship that Jean describes as a strong element of our *Secwepemc* cultural identity too.

Colten fondly remembers his hunting trips with his xpé7e. He never shot the animals himself; he observed. Hunting took place when families were in need of meat. Colten knew the hunters would prepare and leave the community at 5:00 am the day after hearing that a family or families were in need. Colten tried to help his xpé7e pack the meat out of the bush to the vehicle, but it was too heavy for him so he carried the gun instead. Carrying the gun and taking safety precautions is an important part of learning. Children were given manageable tasks. Colten practised safety by removing the shell clip from the gun and he kept the gun pointed away from the people. He remembers sawing the bones with a handsaw to hang the meat. He says, “I

was a kid so I couldn't help that much". However, during this time Colten participated in the cultural practice of sustenance.

He reminds us that his methods of helping others evolved when he got his driver's license. He borrowed his grandpa's car to give people rides – his grandpa told him to be careful and to drive slowly in the winter time. Jean acknowledges the value of this teaching for Colten's safety and that of his passengers because the roads become quite treacherous in the winter time. Colten consistently acknowledges how his grandparents were there for him. His story reaffirms kinship by expressing the performance of community support in times of need for food, and also the family cohesion he has with his grandparents.

I noted that collectively we have strong relationships/connections with our grandparents. Grandparents are solid representations of familial and communal unity for the *Secwepemc* people. They are the pillars in the community. All three of us have grandparents who practiced and passed on the cultural teachings, and they were always present. I assert that the sharing of culture sustained the knowledge of our sense of belonging. Through my study, I came to realize that the feelings and teachings I received from my grandparents are gifts. Our grandparents as Elders did indeed shape our cultural identities. I did not fully comprehend how important my grandparents are in my life until I re-storied my experiences alongside Jean and Colten's. The support and teachings I received from my grandparents are what gives me the epistemological and ontological fulfillment that I discuss in this thesis. They have now gone to the spirit world, but their memories keep me connected to my homeland where I was raised. In this sense, I am *Secwepemc*, and I have returned to the land. I know I am from *T'exelc* and this is where I belong. Through my study and the collective sharing of stories with the participants, I discovered the significance of how the stories and teachings we acquired from our grandparents

kept us anchored to our *Secwepemc* beginnings. Despite the toil and disruption we each faced from the assault of external influences in our lives, we remain resilient and connected to our cultural identities through the revered teachings of our grandparents.

Revering What it Means to be *Secwepemc*

In my dissertation, I further sought the defining characteristics and importance of *Secwepemc* identities through stories and literature written by *Secwepemc* scholars (Billy, 2009; Ignace, 2008; Michel, 2012). I found there are no standard definitions of what it means to be *Secwepemc*. The meaning or degree of identity is dependent upon the individual, according to their embodied experiences.

I agree with Ignace (2008) that the knowledge of our Elders is crucial to honour their pivotal role in shaping our cultural identities in *Secwepemc* society. Ignace recalls how the Elders were ill-treated by the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) who went against their wishes in the past. The Elders set out to defend the *Secwepemc* territory against the intrusion of outsiders, and to protect the *Secwepemc* Nations' own governance. Ignace (2008) points out that in spite of the Elders' efforts, the DIA instead separated the *Secwepemc* Nation into 17 smaller communities by reducing approximately 150,000 square kilometres of traditional homeland into 1% of the original territory into Indian reserve land. Like many Indigenous Nations in Canada and other parts of the world, the *Secwepemc* suffered from the forced loss of economy, culture, language, and territory in spite of the Elders' efforts to protect them. A present-day comparison with the ill-treatment of Indigenous peoples is described by Abu-Saad (2006). He describes how the Palestinian Arabs remain "separate from the Jews socially, politically, and administratively" (p. 1087) as a result of segregated government policy. These colonized projects of nation states progressed at the expense of the colonized peoples. Ignace (2008) notes that according to the

Elders, the *Secwepemc* people thrived despite interference; therefore, it is vital to continue to pass on the traditions and keep them alive for our survival. He affirms that the Elders shaped *Secwepemc* cultural identities through their positions in our society. He adds, “our elders not only detail the travels on our land and the use of our resources; their stories... [as] shared are memories, they are the collective historical consciousness among *Secwepemc* elders” (p. 337). Another *Secwepemc* scholar, Kathy Michel (2012) reaffirms the position of Elders. She states, “Not only did the involvement of the Elders provide language to the program, but it also restored them to their natural role in the community as knowledge carriers” (p. 167). Both Ignace and Michel distinguish how the Elders held vital societal roles in the preservation of *Secwepemc* Knowledge.

It was the influx of European settlement within the territories of the *Secwepemc* that seriously eroded the traditional ways of life and shattered our systems. Contact seriously threatened and distorted *Secwepemc* Knowledge¹⁶ and identities. *Secwepemc* scholar Janice Billy (2009) summarizes how the historical fur trade caused massive change to the *Secwepemc* way of life. She records how the competitive nature of the fur trade caused fractures in the social structures (mixing of cultures affected the beliefs, customs and values of *Secwepemc* society) and changes in family structure as the men trapped and spent less time hunting and fishing. The fur trade modified the *Secwepemc* economic system as the *Secwepemc* had to trade salmon after the beaver were trapped to almost extinction. With the substitution of trading furs for trading salmon, the food supply was threatened. Billy focusses on the reclamation of *Secwepemc*

¹⁶ Other aspects of *Secwepemc* Knowledge that Ignace (2008) discusses are language, common history, and common laws. These latter areas were guided by the *Secwepemc* Elders, uniting the people, through the common bonds of kinship and family relations within, and between, communities.

knowledge and consciousness-raising of the people through a decolonization process: “[b]oth of these [consciousness raising and decolonization processes] are critical to cultural survival of the *Secwepemc*” (p. 53). She identifies other events of destruction such as colossal epidemics, the arrival of missionaries, and the Gold Rush which further caused catastrophic damage to the *Secwepemc* way of life. These events have changed the landscape of *Secwepemc* identities, and must be considered and understood in order to realize their impacts. I believe that people must recognize what they had, and how culture changed, in order to sort out how to get it back. The documented knowledge of *Secwepemc* scholars (Billy, 2009; Ignace, 2008; Michel 2012) is very recent; this shows the absence of *Secwepemc* stories and knowledge by *Secwepemc* scholars in the research literature. My research is a major contribution from another *Secwepemc* scholar that helps to raise critical consciousness about *Secwepemc* identities past and present among three generations of *T’exelc* people.

I echo the strength and endurance of the Elders as keepers of the Traditional Knowledge. In my journey, as I became reacquainted with the teachings of my grandparents, I understand how they formed my heritage and inner strength. If I had not spent time with them, I would not be able to speak about cultural identity. Jean and Colten acknowledge their grandparents for the same reason.

Based on Ignace’s historical account and my lived experience, I believe one of the most damaging attacks on identities has been the removal and denial of practices that transmit culture. The history of cultural loss is bred by the residential school program, state intervention, and the resultant enforced loss of language among Indigenous communities across Canada. Therefore, it is necessary for the *Secwepemc* people to learn about and own their identities in order to thrive. Unfortunately, Canada’s *Indian Act* still classifies who we are, while the *Secwepemc* people

include kinship and familial relationships as esteemed markers of identity the state does not. I learned this as a child and I remain connected to my homeland in my own way. *Secwepemc* kinship kept the *Secwepemc* people together in sharing/caring relationships. Kinship is what bound the Nation.

The threat to our culture is felt and experienced by all three generations of *Secwepemc* in my study. I feel connected in certain instances, but I must learn and practice the traditions more. I can drum and sing the Women's Warrior song, I now need to learn how to sing a *Secwepemc* song and I must also learn the language. I am consciously aware of what I need to do. Meanwhile, Jean continues to practice and pass on the traditions in the most effective ways that she knows. I heard her say that "it is up to the people, young and old, to take up their responsibility to learn about our culture" (J. William, personal communication, August 10, 2011). I sense her concern that the youth have lost interest at a rapid rate and it is difficult to coach them into the traditional mode of learning. For example, Jean and I learned by listening/observing cues when work needed to be done while most of today's youth must be given instructions or orders. However, Colten has shared his rich cultural experiences between Chilcotin and *Secwepemc* that he learned while he was growing up. In his late teens, he separated from his involvement with culture and became more involved with the everyday activities of his peers, namely skateboarding and technology. I believe that, like me, Colten is grounded in his cultures and he will get back to it when he is ready. My study assisted me to unravel my own identity losses within an intergenerational context by collecting and enquiring into identity stories alongside Jean and Colten.

I consider my contribution of the re-telling of life stories through the *Secwepemc* lenses of three community people as an opportunity to question the existing landscape in and around the

city of Williams Lake where the *Secwepemc* people have lacked voice and agency. Furniss (1999) raised awareness about the historical atrocities of colonialism, racism, and Residential School in her book, *The Burden of History: Colonialism and the Frontier Myth in a Rural Canadian Community*. Therefore, by moving away from colonialism, the participants' stories in my study provide first-hand genuine accounts of lives lived and told by the people. My study adds to the statement made by Michel (2012) that the *Secwepemc* "are finding ways to assert their independence and distinct identity" (p. 254). These written stories help the participants' and others strengthen their identities.

In my study, I exposed another layer of racism that is not evident in the literature: the assault on *Secwepemc* identity instigated by the legacy of Indian hospitals. Meijer Drees' (2013) newly published book, *Healing Histories: Stories from Canada's Indian Hospitals*, is "the first detailed collection of Aboriginal perspectives on the history of tuberculosis in Canada's indigenous communities and on the federal government's Indian Health Services" (back cover). Sellars (2013) also shares some of her vivid memories of when she was admitted to the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital in 1960. In her book, "They Called me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School", she says "I had lost my whole family" (p. 23). I too allowed myself to become more aware of Indian Hospitals in my study as I spoke about my own experience of being born in one. Now, as I reflect on it, I am even more thankful that my grandparents took me or I could have been given to another family or adopted out by Social Services. If either of these scenarios occurred, I would have been further removed from my cultural identities.

The participants' stories show the depth of the three individual's cultural knowledge. I found among my study participants that *Secwepemc* identities are rooted in the culture. Culture

can be practiced or observed; I suggest that knowing one's identity comes from the heart. Cultural identity is detrimental for our continued survival as a distinct *Secwepemc* Nation, it has been shown through my research that culture is what keeps us connected and rooted to our homeland and community. The three of us spoke about our attachment to grandparents and our *Secwepemc* traditional practices such as hunting, fishing, sweats, gathering, hide tanning, and preserving. Family inclusion and contact with the land base are paramount. The sense of connection to family, culture, and community stood out in my intergenerational study.

Reclaiming the Drum as My Epistemic Framework

My research is embedded in Indigenous Knowledge theory. Indigenous Knowledge is the theoretical framework and belief system behind the doing, or thinking, of my research. I needed to deepen my understanding of Indigenous Knowledge before embarking on this study. In addition, learning more about and applying Indigenous Knowledge protocols helped protect me on my journey to reveal and speak about my lived experiences. I did not anticipate how difficult the re-telling of my story would be until I engaged with Narrative Inquiry. Therefore, it was necessary to utilize the appropriate tools to make meaning of both Indigenous Knowledge theory and Indigenous Methodology (my hand drum). In my opening chapter, I situated and refined who I am in relation to my identities and my homeland: my story unraveled and depicted the importance of identity in terms of who I am. This is important to fulfill my role as an Indigenous scholar. Chapter Two introduced my theoretical research design: I described how my hand drum transformed into a metaphor and also the theoretical framework of my Indigenous Knowledge and worldview to facilitate my understanding of *Secwepemc* identities. The overview of theories assisted me to situate my study within two methodologies, Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and Indigenous Storywork (Archibald, 2008). At the beginning stages of my

PhD, I could not pinpoint exactly why I needed to apply two distinct methodologies. I listened to my intuition (spirit guide) for direction. Michel (2012) provides a compelling description,

Indigenous Storywork ...helped deepen my understanding of how Indigenous values, such as relationship, can interconnect, and sometimes depart, from academic narrative research. Archibald empowers the powerful processes of learning that traditional stories evoke. (p. 128)

I found that *Indigenous Storywork* (2008) supported my understanding of how traditional stories and practices contributed to my deeper understanding of who I am. Michel also explains how narrative inquiry strongly positions the researcher in the research and attends to place, temporality, and relationships. I understand why my autobiographical narrative is an important element of *Secwepemc* identity transmission as, “Our research interests come out of our own narrative of experience and shape our narrative inquiry plotlines” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 121). By including myself in the plotline, I also needed to respect the traditions; Archibald’s work helped me with this. In my study, Narrative Inquiry helped me sort through and express my lived experiences, while *Indigenous Storywork* facilitated the important traditional teachings that extend to our collective identities coupled with the honouring of our traditional teachers – our Elders/grandparents.

I claim self-actualizing for three generations of *Secwepemc* identities as a process of acknowledging the importance of a *Secwepemc* worldview. The shift from a Eurocentric to a *Secwepemc* worldview aligns with Wilson’s (2008) Indigenous Knowledge lens, converting to an Indigenous paradigm rather than an Indigenous perspective. For me, the shift from paradigm to perspective means that as a *Secwepemc* person, I have the ability to articulate and express our collective stories from an embodied *Secwepemc* position (ontology) opposed to a distant abstract perspective. I do believe that others may be able to relate to our conditions depending on their lived experiences. Learning from the actual experiences and lives of *Secwepemc* people is vital.

The weaving of Indigenous Storywork and Narrative Inquiry methods and methodologies (Archibald, 2008; Clandinin & Connelly 2000) is described in Chapter Three. Utilizing the *Secwepemc* hand drum as a metaphorical framework emphasizes cultural protocols and integrity in respect to maintaining linkages with our culture. To further support protocols, three of Archibald's seven principles set out in *Indigenous Storywork* (2008) are used, namely, "holism, interrelatedness, and synergy" (p. 2), which guides the research and story-sharing. I focused more on these three of Archibald's principles because I began with Kirkness & Barnhardt's (1991) four Rs which are similar to Archibald's first four principles. I followed Archibald's (2008) interpretation of holism as "[a]n Indigenous philosophical concept of holism refer[ring] to the interrelatedness between the intellectual, spiritual (metaphorical values and beliefs and the Creator), emotional and physical" (p.11). I also followed my holistic sphere (depicted in Figure 2), which includes, self, family, community, Elders, and the Creator, and I included heart, mind, body, and spirit. The circular hand drum reminds me to remain intact holistically. By retaining these values and beliefs, I maintain interrelatedness and synergy with my participants, my community, and the academy.

Reverberations from the Hand Drum

As a *Secwepemc* scholar, the hand drum is as an important framework to guide my study. It acknowledges my spiritual connection to my community and reminds me of my cultural values. Throughout my journey I learned how to drum and sing. At UBC, I managed to lead songs a few times, and I will become stronger with further training, support, and practice. There were several instances in the writing process where I got stuck, and I reached for my hand drum to comfort me. I listened to the reverberations of the drum stick as it stroked the drum: the motions and sound helped me realize the intentions of my work. The respect and integrity of the

hand drum as my metaphorical guide brought me back to my humble beginnings and it helped me move from my head to my heart. The next phase after my study is to take up learning how to sing *Secwepemc* songs and speak the language.

Benefits and Impacts of Knowing One's Identity

Jean, Colten, and I benefitted from the opportunity to express what *Secwepemc* identity means to us and it allowed us to express our truth. Jean's narrative shows strength and commitment in the practice and passing on of traditions; Colten shares valuable experiences regarding the perceptions of youth in schools, in communities and with family; and I now have a greater appreciation of how my relationship with my grandparents sustained my cultural identities.

The insights gained are invaluable for understanding the strength and resilience of an Indigenous group/community. The stories contained in this dissertation dispel the myths exposed by Furniss (1999) that *Secwepemc* people were invisible, as I detailed in Chapter One. Ignace (2008) took a stand and claims that *Secwepemc* people have a foundation and history that authenticates our existence. As more *Secwepemc* scholars come forward, we can collectively reverse the description of non-Indigenous academics regarding our history. Sharing our lives and stories is a beginning for many of us to heal and self-authenticate our cultural experiences.

It took me until the completion of my dissertation to feel more worthy. I finally realize that I do have a strong sense of who I am (my identity) and who I am becoming: I just needed to have the confidence and the space to express it. Through the re-living and re-telling of my story, I identified how my grandparents passed on the strength of my *Secwepemc* identity through their teachings. I connected with the reality of separation from my mother by understanding that it was not her fault that I did not have a mother/daughter relationship with her. The reflexivity of

Narrative Inquiry helped me see my lived experiences in a healing way. I have the ability to turn dark experiences that limit me into learning experiences that move me forward. For the first time on Monday, October 14, 2013 I wept when I listened to the song “You are my sunshine”, the same song that my grandmother sang to me when I was a little girl. The words in the song connected me to how my grandparents must have felt about their daughter and they were passing on the love and affection to me. I am beginning to remove the walls of figuratively self-mutilating: I think there is someone with a lot more strength and compassion inside those walls. I am hoping that I had – and have – the ability to pass on important teachings to my children, just as my grandparents passed them on to me.

Consequently, positive, proactive, and sincere interest in understanding the past, present, and future of *Secwepemc* identities can assist teachers, caregivers, and service providers to understand how to work and interact with many Indigenous peoples and others who have been confined by varying degrees of subjugation. I felt confined and it took a lot of work and effort to advance to a place where I felt that my story mattered. By sharing our stories it may not take others as long to move from under subjugated influence.

Strengths and Limitations of the Research

I experienced strengths and limitations in the development of my scholarship. It was difficult to step outside of my comfort zone. Even though I purposely chose methodologies that I felt were congruent with the subject matter and the research process, it was still extremely difficult to articulate. The benefit of my Indigenous Knowledge and Indigenous Methodology approach, though, is to encourage other Indigenous scholars to utilize processes that are relevant for their research especially if the focus is from an Indigenous Knowledge standpoint. I needed

to place myself within the realm of Indigenous Knowledge in order to be able to understand and relate to my past and connection to my people.

I acquired stronger connections and affiliation with cultural identities as I learned about the practices of story-sharing. Prior to my research, I had not engaged in storytelling as a research technique. Benham (2007) explains that stories have the power to explore people's relationships publically and privately, within their environment, and with one another. These stories illuminate knowledge that connects people to their roots as individuals and communally. My Indigenous narratives are stories of life with my grandparents; they are the pathways that shape who I am. This is a significant revelation that evolved through the research process, emerging from the extreme difficulty I had initially to story myself into the research. As I moved through the Narrative Inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) process, I felt myself move from my head to my heart. I began to see my mom in a different light by realizing that it was not her decision to let me go, it was due to her health. I further realized that I was fortunate to be raised by my grandparents as they saved me from another institution. I could have been placed into foster care or adopted. Rather, my experience taught me about the strong familial ties in my community and I found that my grandparents loved me like they loved their daughter. I also learned from Jean's story that my mom was a wonderful person. If I had not gone through the storying process, I would not have come to make meaning of my past experiences which help me to heal and believe in myself. I am sure many people will be able to relate to my story. Our collective stories awaken the holism, interrelatedness, and synergy Archibald (2008) introduced by sharing more about relationships with family, relatives, birds and animals, animate and inanimate objects. Archibald (2008) describes how the Elders' life stories show how Indigenous peoples survived and kept cultural knowledges intact. I extend the concept of survival by describing how

Jean, Colten, and I kept our cultural knowledges safe through the teachings of our grandparents/Elders.

Implications for Future Research

In my study, I established how *Secwepemc* identities were, and are still, threatened to varying degrees by misguided history, legislation, colonization, and the lost sense of who we are – individually and collectively. My purpose is to clarify what supports the development and sustenance of *Secwepemc* identities. I began with my own identity question as a *Secwepemc* woman – my desire to reclaim a sense of belonging as I set out to seek answers for my research questions. I drew from my personal experience as a *Secwepemc* person growing up with my grandparents. Through the study, I learned how stories contribute to our cultural identities. I also learned how to re-story my embodied experiences into the present for healing purposes. I added the stories of two other *Secwepemc* community members who affirm the vibrancy and survival of our cultural identities.

Many of us know how we are culturally rooted to our identities. It would be helpful for non-Indigenous people who work with Indigenous peoples to learn and understand the impacts of our colonial history and the ensuing struggles we face. We are beginning to carve out academic space by utilizing research methods and methodologies congruent with Indigenous Knowledge theory that supports our expression of our epistemologies (ways of knowing) and ontologies (ways of being) in the world. My ideas presented in my research project further the work on Indigenous methodology and Indigenous Knowledge theoretical framework. It brings forth important and meaningful discussion on Indigenous methodologies, in addition to how Indigenous methodologies share borderlands with Narrative Inquiry. It adds to the work of (Young, Bruno, Cardinal, Lessard) who recently offered insights and possibilities of supportive

and collaborative ways to work between Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars. My study advances these possibilities in similar ways and explores conceptual linkages. I provided valuable awareness in respect to how ethical considerations are threaded throughout and remain prominent in Indigenous Methodology and Narrative Inquiry although differently conceptualized in both methodologies. It would be helpful now if non-Indigenous peoples who encounter Indigenous peoples in schools, shopping centers, government offices, jails, workplaces, etc., could attend to the lived and told stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that each person embodies rather than stopping at the visible bodily markers.

I learned that many Indigenous people can present a strong, stoic appearance. It took me to the end of this study to acknowledge that my stories carry powerful lessons and I learned how to feel more confident telling them. Sharing our *Secwepemc* stories in text could encourage others, as far as they are comfortable, to share their stories as teaching stories. The sharing gives us the ability to move away from the debilitating oppression of colonization; as we tell our stories, the knowledge grows.

The stories shared by three community members from *T'exelc* also contribute to the practice of cultural identities as strength. Our stories reaffirm the important role of grandparents/Elders to keep us connected; therefore, knowing our cultural identities helps us tackle the influences and effects of colonization. The stories shared are examples of consciousness-raising from which other oppressed people can learn. Rather than allowing the influx of external influences to keep us oppressed, I propose that narrative-based research increases our development and Indigenous Knowledge theory. It is not acceptable for our histories to continue to linger on the margins of mainstream society.

An area that requires further investigation and consciousness-raising, briefly introduced in my study, is that of Indian hospitals. A critical examination of the intergenerational impact of Indian hospitals on generations of Indigenous people in British Columbia needs to be carried out in relation to family and community disruptions, poor educational outcomes, and continuing health issues. I could not go further than to acknowledge their existence: there is no information in the limited literature available about the effects of these hospitals on the *Secwepemc* people in my community. What I am aware of is that I was born there. I made some effort to obtain my birth records; so far I have not been able to locate where I can find them or know if they even exist. This could be the next part of my story. In conclusion, in my lifetime, I have been exposed to Indian hospitals and residential school. These combined experiences could have destroyed me but it is the teachings, strength, and support of my grandparents and my resilience that sustained me throughout life. For this I am thankful to my grandparents, my ancestors, and the Creator; Kukstemc Tqelt Kukwipi⁷.

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