

***YAN GAA DUUNEEK: AN EXAMINATION OF INDIGENOUS TRANSFORMATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP PEDAGOGIES  
IN BC HIGHER EDUCATION***

by

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores transformational Indigenous leadership pedagogies in higher education through a study at the University of Victoria. Four students, six Indigenous faculty, and four elders were interviewed to explore traditional concepts of Indigenous leadership and how they are being applied today within post-secondary education. Key challenges to maintaining an Indigenous way of knowing while being in the academy, and the ways in which students, faculty and elders are dealing with those tensions are explored. What emerged from the interviews was the importance of living cultural and traditional teachings, a commitment to building and maintaining relationships and the responsibility to self-determination of Indigenous people, communities and Nations. This research is grounded in Indigenous theory through Tlingit philosophies, the Medicine Wheel and my Canoe Journey.

## **Preface**

This work was approved by The University of British Columbia Behavioral Research Ethics Board, Certificate number H09-01252, and by the University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board on June 16, 2009.

Previously published work by this author as cited in Chapter 2 of this dissertation consists of the following article:

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There are many people whom I would like to thank in this long journey of connection for me between mind, body and spirit. I have come to know that giving thanks is giving honor, and by honoring, we are showing respect. Doing that means, as Chief Leon Shenandoah says, “I am becoming a Human Being” (as cited in Wall, 2001, p. 40).

I wish to express appreciation to the Department of Educational Studies and the Faculty of Education at UBC. In particular, I express my gratitude to Dr. Jo-ann Archibald (*Q’umQ’umxiem*, from the *Sto:lo* Nation), Dr. Graham Smith, (*Hingaroa*, Maori), Dr. Lee Brown (Cherokee), all of whom have been the leaders of our “cohort group” in the doctoral Education program at UBC. This cohort, which began as a group of 15, came together in 2006 and became an “extended family.” Under the guidance and support of Dr. Smith, we learned about collective and international Indigenous struggles, aspirations and movements towards self- determination<sup>1</sup>. Graham has espoused the need for transformative leadership in education, whereby we need both to theorize and actually to live transformation; this is an essential component of growth in the movement towards self-determination. I first met Graham in 2003 when he came to the University of Victoria to conduct a lecture. Shortly afterwards, he began sharing information on a graduate Indigenous student support group he was organizing across British Columbia called “Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Program” (SAGE). Graham diligently organized three SAGE groups in BC, located in Vancouver, Prince George and Okanagan. SAGE’s goal is to increase the number of Indigenous doctoral students who are committed to their communities’ cultural, educational, social and economic progress. In 2006, with his help, we

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<sup>1</sup> The right to control one’s own destiny- politically, economically and socially.

strategized and formed a group in Victoria to represent Vancouver Island. Graham's vision in British Columbia is similar to what he achieved in New Zealand, whereby 500 Maori doctoral students were recruited, supported and graduated within five- six years (G. Smith, personal communication, 2008). I learned through Graham how Indigenous leadership needs to connect the mind, body and spirit to all facets of knowledge in the pursuit of wisdom. Graham espouses genuine leadership qualities as those mentioned in this dissertation, and even though he left his guiding role with our cohort in 2008, he remains an influential leader, colleague and friend in my life.

Jo-ann Archibald and Lee Brown have been integral role models in our Education Doctorate program, both as instructors and mentors. Both have stressed the importance of storytelling as a pedagogical methodology and shared many stories with us on this educational journey. Jo-ann and Lee frequently brought their cultural teachings into the classroom as part of our learning experience and I thank them for these spiritual teachings. In her book, *Indigenous storywork: Educating the heart, mind, body and spirit*, Archibald (2008) reminds us of the power of stories, "sharing what one has learned is an important Indigenous tradition. This type of sharing can take the form of a story of personal life experience and is done with a compassionate mind and love for others" (p. 2). Jo-ann has shared her love, energy and commitment with all of us in this Doctorate of Education program. Brown has also honored us with many stories, songs, and teachings. In his dissertation *Making the classroom a healthy place: The development of affective competency in Aboriginal pedagogy* (2005), Lee incorporates his own stories in throughout the paper and discusses how this affective aspect of learning cultivates a form of well- being:

In fact if we had to choose it would be better to educate the heart because then we would know that the student would become an adult who would be kind

and useful to themselves and others. But if we educate only the mind and leave affect out, we cannot be sure what educational processes will create. (p. 8)

I also hold my hands up in appreciation to the faculty, students and elders at the University of Victoria who provided the opportunity for me to explore the transformational potential of Indigenous leadership and teachings within this dissertation, and who work so hard to bring Indigenous pedagogies, leadership and transformation to fruition within the university. Other inspirational influences include Dr. Verna Billy-Minnabarriet, Dr. Sandy Grande, Dr. Kathy Michel, Dr. Michelle Pidgeon, Dr. Lester Rigney, Janice Simcoe, Dr. Linda *Tuhiwai* Smith, Dr. Michelle Stack, Robert Wells, everyone in the Aboriginal Education and Community Connections Department at Camosun College, and those in the Indigenous Specialization in the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria.

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I will forever remember the gifts all of you have provided me with, and I thank you for showing me through your leadership that Indigenous pedagogies, leadership and transformation are linked and ultimately lead to wellness and self-determination.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to the participants who have been a part of this research journey.

I acknowledge those who have walked before me and given me the inspiration to walk this path.

I acknowledge the Great Spirit for guidance through this path on earth.

# Chapter 1: Preparing for the Journey

## 1.1 Introduction

In my preparation for this dissertation and during my studies as doctoral student, I have read literature from many Indigenous scholars, both local and international. I am honored to have met many of these scholars in my educational journey. The literature provides an array of information about diverse teachings, theories and philosophies in relation to Indigenous leadership. I do not want to duplicate existing literature, but I will reinforce and expand upon previous research and literature to share accounts of how Indigenous leadership pedagogies are manifested/nurtured and exhibited in post-secondary education through a study at the University of Victoria.

When I was in Australia in 2008, a friend, former instructor and Indigenous scholar Dr. Lester Rigney sat with me and listened to my ideas for this dissertation. After a long silence, he looked at me and said, “I think this is important, to analyze what is Indigenous about Indigenous leadership in higher education” (personal communication, December). Just as importantly, I want to link the accounts of those involved in Indigenous leadership in post-secondary education to the importance of how this manifests into student success and well-being. This dissertation involves Indigenous faculty, students and elders who are committed to sharing, revitalizing and centering Indigenous pedagogies/leadership and exploring how these values and teachings link to post-secondary education and create transformation.

In many ways, this dissertation honors the ancestors who have walked before us since time immemorial. As Maori scholar Moanna Jackson says, “Prior to colonization, our people pondered profound questions; people tested the limits of our knowledge, devised

explanations for what seemed unexplainable and developed all of the components of an intellectual tradition” (personal communication, December 5, 2005). While challenges are everyday realities, it is my belief that we all have a responsibility to those who walked before us to create a better place for those who come after us. This is as much about standing up for and re-vitalizing ourselves as it is about challenging colonialism in order to create a future for subsequent generations. Ultimately, by honoring the Indigenous worldview with respect and integrity, we will reawaken the spirit of the original peoples of this land.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine Western forms of leadership, partly because readers can research this in other ways if they choose. I prefer to place central focus on Indigenous transformational leadership pedagogies. Within this dissertation, I refer often to Indigenous transformational leadership pedagogies, that is, to how leaders facilitate Indigenous approaches to teaching and learning that ultimately lead to meaningful change/transformation in Indigenous communities.<sup>2</sup> As Graham Smith (2003), Maori scholar, observes:

The counter strategy to hegemony is that Indigenous people need to critically “conscientize” themselves about their needs, aspirations and preferences. This calls for a “freeing-up” of the Indigenous imagination and thinking given that one of the important elements of colonization is the diminishment of the Indigenous ability to actually imagine freedom or a utopian vision free of the oppressor. Thus a critical element in the “revolution” has to be the struggle for our minds - the freeing of the Indigenous mind from the grip of dominant hegemony.

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<sup>2</sup> These three concepts of leadership, pedagogies, and transformation and their relationship to one another are reflected in chapters 2, 6 and 7.

(introduction, para2)

*Wáa sá iyatee. Yoo xat duwasaakw Naadli.*

I would like to acknowledge that I am a visitor in the territories where I reside, those of the *Lekwungen*, *Sencoten*, and *Hul'qa'minum*-speaking peoples of the Coast Salish Nations. I am also a visitor in the territories where I am engaged in my Educational Studies Doctoral program at UBC. I therefore acknowledge the traditional and un-ceded territory of the Coast Salish people, in particular the Musqueam lands whose traditional territory is the place I am gaining knowledge or "coming to know." It is important that I situate myself within this research, as my identity and experiences have influenced my decision to pursue the research I discuss in this document. My story will be a part of this work as it would be impossible to separate myself from this research. I focus on Tlingit teachings within this research. Presently I am an instructor at Camosun College and I also teach at the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria as a sessional instructor.

At a very young age, I was removed from my home and placed in foster care before being adopted. Throughout my younger years, until the age of 17, I was obliged to learn the Western ways of knowing. In some ways, this knowledge was shaped by the educational system and resulted in a loss of identity, shame and low self-esteem. I did not have a desire to complete high-school. I started to become reliant on drugs and alcohol.

At 18, I went north for ten years to learn the teachings of the people and establish vital connections within the territory. I acknowledge that there were many obstacles and issues I had to deal with when connecting with traditions, culture and ceremonies. I will always be on this learning path and refer to this path of connection in this dissertation as

“coming to know.” While struggling with drugs and alcohol in my early twenties, I had a life-altering experience when I fell, while intoxicated, into the Yukon River and before being pulled in by the currents, I was pulled out by a stranger. This resulted in recognition of the need to transform my own life. When I started working with young people in 1984, I realized that many were going through the same struggles I had. I related to those struggles and realized this was my calling: to encourage, share and laugh with those around me. In many ways, the youth I have worked with over the past 25 years have provided an important form of healing and analysis for me.

At the same time, I learned how to live off the land, to hunt and fish and experience the “land of the midnight sun.” I began to embark on Canoe Journeys with newly acquainted relatives and close friends, and I share some of the stories of these journeys in this dissertation. These remind me of life’s journeys and make me cry, laugh, ponder and reflect. Stories also offer important lessons about how to live a good life. Oral traditions encompass abstract concepts and connect spirituality and philosophical beliefs that guide and shape Tlingit ways of being, so the canoe became the lens for me to see the world in a different way. It has allowed me to understand and begin to live the epistemologies/philosophies espoused by the Tlingit people since time immemorial. I have honored three of these traditional philosophies in this dissertation as they form the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Two. They are respect for self and others; sharing; and *haa shageinyaa*<sup>3</sup> - reverence for the Great Spirit.

As a researcher, I explore what role, if any, these teachings play in the formal education system. I graduated from the University of Victoria in 1999 with a Bachelor of

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<sup>3</sup> The Tlingit language will be used at times throughout this thesis.

Social Work and attained a Master's of Public Administration in 2002. In both programs, I focused extensively on Indigenous ways of knowing in academia- particularly as a way of helping and healing in relation to the Social Work profession. This was not an easy path; however, it was always the love, patience and resilience shown by family, friends and Indigenous faculty which helped ensure that my journey was a grounded one.

In the summer of 2002, while teaching in Northern Quebec, I was asked by my friend and teacher, Gale Cyr, to develop a course on Indigenous Leadership in Social Work at the University of Quebec, Abitibi-Temiscamingue. I found a dearth of literature which reflected Indigenous conceptions of leadership in post-secondary education and how such mentoring might foster Indigenous university students' success. After much thought and deliberation, I returned to Gale and asked what exactly she meant by Indigenous leadership. She looked at me and said, "Speak to what it is that you do and why you do what you do" (G. Cyr, personal communication, 2002). I struggled with these words and was not able to specify, highlight or understand the essence of why or how I was a leader. Maybe I was unable to or did not want to take on that role at that time of my life. Nevertheless, ever since it has been an area of interest of mine to explore and really think about what it means to be an Indigenous leader in education.

*Yan gaa duuneeek*, which means "to walk with dignity," is a common phrase used in Tlingit culture and signifies the highest honor a person can hold. There is no word in the Tlingit language that personifies living a "good healthy life," but the elders refer to *yan gaa dunneek* as having a similar meaning. Historically, people treated each other in the same manner, with the highest respect no matter where they walked or who they encountered, the four-legged or the two-legged. A teaching I recall is that everything living has a spirit,

even the smallest rocks. The traditional teachings state that, in order for us to live with nature, we have to respect it. Once we respect it, we never mistreat it. This is part of the path of walking with dignity. The name *Tlingit* translates to mean “human beings.” The word was initially used to distinguish human beings and animals since Tlingits believed that there is only a small difference between the two.

In one of my dreams, I am sitting in my office, gazing out the window...waiting for the words to come to me, a sign, something to provide inspiration to begin my doctoral work. I begin to think about my upbringing. I was taken from my home at a young age and placed in a non- Indigenous<sup>4</sup> home. I grew up knowing nothing about Indigeneity. It was not until my later years that I began searching for understandings of what this meant. How had this struggle affected so much of who I am today? Why did I struggle so much with focusing on questions to guide my research?

Suddenly, a crow appears at my window sill and begins to watch me watch him. Our eyes engage for some time and I start to talk with him. I begin to realize I am using an Indigenous framework for making *sense* of the world. I roll my eyes and am trying to say, as I am in this paper, that my upbringing affects my interpretation of the world. Theory and methodology are not going to be straightforward. I think that this is just too difficult. But that crow, he makes me speak to him. He gazes sharply back and forth between me and my surroundings in the office. He says to me “What’s your problem? I survive; get on with it.” This is a good lesson that while it is challenging to embark on this research, I am reminded

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<sup>4</sup> The writer privileges the word Indigenous with connotations that these people have a connection to a homeland, cultural and spiritual base. Throughout this paper the terms Aboriginal, First Nations, and Indian are used occasionally as they would have been used in a specific report, time or era.

by the crow that all forms of life can face difficulties and we all have hard work ahead of us. We all must get to the place in terms of Indigenous leadership where we recognize it involves unraveling complex histories, identities and experiences, and there are many learning outcomes based on who you are, where you come from and what your story is.

When I sat with Taiaiake Alfred last year in an interview for this project, he reminded me how Indigenous philosophies and theorizing have always been there and that colonization prevented those philosophies from coming out in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries: “I don’t want to sound arrogant at all, but I’ve really yet to find anything in any kind of philosophy from anywhere in the world that hasn’t been said in our own philosophy” (February 2010). This reminds me that we need to honor the teachings from long ago along with those of the present, which is my intent throughout this journey. We can center those teachings and re-visit them today. As you will see, many of the teachings in this paper provided by Indigenous faculty, elders, and students are not new; they are ancient, but how they are applied in post-secondary education today is new and innovative.

For the Tlingit, the old people have been the sources of stories and legends that kept the direct connection to the natural order of things, the natural law alive. Decisions were made based on the surroundings. Tlingits lived based on the natural cycle of the seasons. The inherent rights flow from natural laws; their sense of belonging, connectedness to the earth and responsibilities, all are based on Indigenous understandings and are inter-related based on natural law. Tlingits must also connect natural laws with social responsibilities to take care of the lands and the people. Tlingits used the “consensus” process through the teachings of the potlatch to honor relations and make decisions of importance, based on philosophies of respect, sharing and reverence for the Great Spirit.

When reflecting on traditional teachings (natural law) and ways of “living” today within community and in post-secondary education, I realize these philosophies are critical when developing and implementing new courses, programs, institutes and the overarching policies that guide these formations. Westerners may critique this “consensus process” as being time consuming or resource driven, but our traditional teachings say that it really is the process, the time taken in building relationships and ensuring decisions are made collectively, which is important and reflective of an Indigenous paradigm.

### *Gunalchéesh*<sup>5</sup>

This dissertation is a reflection of how I am coming full circle in my journey of learning through others. Part of that journey involved working with youth in the north, particularly those who had been taken away from their homes and lost their identity. I believe the coercive actions that removed many Indigenous people from their homes and placed them in non-Indigenous homes have had significant impacts on Indigenous communities. These actions continued the process of fracturing Indigenous identities which began through colonial policies such as the *Indian Act* and continued through Residential Schools.

Today, however, the numbers of Indigenous students graduating with a university degree is higher than at any time throughout history.<sup>6</sup> A focal reason for this increase is through Indigenous and non-Indigenous professors, community members, elders and students’ commitment to ensuring that students learn about/retain their identities,

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<sup>5</sup> Thank you.

<sup>6</sup>The 1981 census reveals that 2% of the Aboriginal population as compared to 8.1% of the non-Aboriginal population held university degrees. The 2006 census reveals that 8% of the Aboriginal population held university degrees compared to 23% of the non-Aboriginal population.

histories and teachings within post-secondary institutes. Collectively, we all are beginning to share knowledge as it relates to higher education and leadership pedagogies, and I am honored to be part of this important work. The following section looks at the purpose of my study.

## **1.2 The Purpose of this Research**

Initially, my intent was to focus on what is needed to build an Indigenous Institute, but over the past few years, I began to realize that in order to realize a big dream, it sometimes starts with smaller dreams. My primary concern is with how Indigenous students succeed in academia and what the important components for their success are. I looked at statistics from other universities in North America and saw that University of Victoria had one of the largest number of Indigenous faculty and staff of any post-secondary educational institute. I wondered aloud: what draws these faculty and staff to this particular university and what sustains them?

It is essential that Indigenous people, continue to de-colonize themselves by reclaiming histories, values, languages and traditions. The path towards self-determination means Indigenous people will provide their own solutions to their own problems and bring to life the elements of their lives that have sustained them since time immemorial. Today, Indigenous people worldwide are taking necessary steps to provide accurate accounts of their own needs and aspirations using Indigenous ways of knowing, being, seeing and doing to maintain strong people, communities, and Nations in working towards a self-determining future. This dissertation strives to promote/facilitate that future with integrity and passion in the area of leadership, pedagogies and transformation.

Specifically, this study critically examines Indigenous transformational leadership pedagogies in BC higher education. The purpose of the study is to:

- contribute information on Indigenous leadership pedagogies/approaches that have contributed to student and institutional success at the University of Victoria. The scholarly literature and public documentation about Indigenous leadership pedagogies as they relate to public post-secondary education is extremely limited. The lack of published sources indicates an apparent need for research in this area.
- provide a body of research that will assist other public post-secondary schools with planning and development of Indigenous programs.
- provide scholarly literature about university Indigenous leadership for future Indigenous faculty leaders and for use in higher education courses.

The goal of the research is to inspire Indigenous students to become involved in Indigenous education and ultimately leadership roles, thereby supporting the intergenerational transmission of leadership and pedagogies.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

Guided by the goals of my research, four key questions form the basis of this dissertation. They are:

1. How do Indigenous educational leaders describe or define transformational Indigenous pedagogies?
2. How is transformational education responsive to Indigenous peoples and how does it ensure Indigenous student success?

3. What have Indigenous leaders done to create and sustain educational transformation?
4. How can future Indigenous leaders continue to transform post-secondary Indigenous education?

#### **1.4 The Need for this Study**

Taking into account the requirements outlined by Graham Smith, this dissertation pursues the challenge of investigating the various facets of Indigenous transformational educational leadership. In particular, I hope that by critically examining Indigenous transformational educational leadership at the University of Victoria from the perspective of leaders, students and elders involved in post-secondary education, we will unite into a critical mass of Indigenous intellectuals<sup>7</sup> and non- Indigenous allies aimed at challenging the status quo. By challenging the status quo, we can change the predominant academic landscape whereby the students typically have to meet the needs of the institution and transform that to where the institution responds to and meets the students', communities' and Indigenous Nations' needs.

Western and Indigenous worldviews contrast greatly. The Indigenous perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual aspects of being, whereas the Euro-centric worldview perceives these as disparate and fragmented. Western worldviews impose "binary thinking," on students, which causes students and society to think and live categorically. Deloria (2001) in *Power and place: Indian education in America* states:

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<sup>7</sup>Intellectuals who share/return their knowledge with their people, communities and Nations are an important aspect of this term.

Look at the curriculum that Indian children are asked to use. Knowledge of the world is divided up into separate categories that seem to be completely isolated from each other.... We are asking the children to divide the world into predetermined categories of explanation and training them to avoid seeing the complete picture of what is before their eyes. (p. 155)

We all need to become the “revolutionary change agents” for our next generations, through education, whereby we continue to transform the circumstances by which we learn, understand and conceptualize the world. For example, academia must not only look at capital demands, but include in their policies and practice standards unique to Indigenous perspectives that reflect care for the land. Cajete (1994) states, “in spite of many who have succeeded by embracing Western education, Indian people must question the effects modern education has had on their collective cultural, psychological and ecological viability” (p. 22).

Education is perceived in the mainstream as a path towards individual empowerment. The imposition of settler society has resulted in the development of policies and standards that have harmed an Indigenous way of life. Ultimately, the goal of such policies is to assimilate people into dominant values and a singular identity. Abu-Saad and Champagne (2006) refer to this in their book *Indigenous education and empowerment: International perspectives*: “[N]ation building is accomplished partly through education institutions that prepare students as citizens to obtain the common cultural ground and values that will support the technical, social, cultural, and political demands of the nation state” (p. 3). Many Indigenous people do not share the values of individual capitalism or secular civic culture with their emphasis on/valorization of individual achievements.

Indigenous philosophies and worldview place their emphasis on a holistic, experiential, intuitive and collective form of teaching and learning.

## **1.5 Dissertation Overview**

This dissertation is organized in seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, in Chapter 2, I offer a review of the literature that relates to my study. Here, I begin with an overview of colonial processes and policies that shape and govern Indigenous education. This allows us to understand the context of contemporary priorities and challenges to Indigenous education. I then review three inter-related concepts that are at the core of my research: leadership, pedagogies and transformation. In particular, I engage with literature from Indigenous writers to demonstrate the ideas that currently circulate regarding the form and vision of Indigenous leadership, pedagogies and transformation.

Chapter 3 presents my three methodological and theoretical frameworks. In keeping with Indigenous epistemic frameworks, the methodological and theoretical frameworks in this dissertation are considered as inextricably intertwined; therefore, I outline Tlingit philosophies that guide my research process and are at the core of my lived and epistemic worldview. I will also set out the conceptual framework of the Medicine Wheel that I use in this dissertation to focus my inquiry and to make meaning of my analysis. Additionally, I will outline the teachings of the Canoe Journey that provide for an Indigenous methodological framework. This narrative describes and draws out teachings and connections which have become central to who I am and how I live. Of importance are the ways in which these teachings shape my worldview and position me as a researcher.

Chapter 4 details my research design and methods. I map out the research process, paying attention to who the research participants are and how I came to approach them

about participating in this study. I then turn to addressing questions of specific research ethics and protocols that emerged in relation to my study. Included in this chapter is the process by which I carried out the data analysis once I had completed my interviews. I end the chapter by introducing the faculty, elders and students who participated in this study.

As a sign of respect, acknowledgement and to honor the territories where I reside, study, and work, Chapter 5 describes the traditional territories of the Coast Salish, the Nuu-chah-nulth and Kwakwakawa'wakw Nations. I then outline the University of Victoria, the site of my research study, and offer an overview of the departments that the faculty and student participants represent. In order to ensure a detailed context for this study, I also discuss the University of Victoria's Strategic Plan as it relates to Indigenous peoples. Lastly, I profile the Indigenous Faculty Caucus and The First Peoples House to offer a richer background for supports for Indigenous faculty, elders and students.

Chapter 6 offers the findings for Indigenous leadership pedagogies that emerged from my interviews. I use the Medicine Wheel to illustrate my findings which are drawn from the four key questions posed to participants. These results are placed thematically in the Eastern, Southern, Western and Northern directions of the Medicine Wheel.

Chapter 7 concludes this dissertation. Here, I focus on the implications of my findings for Indigenous leadership pedagogies and articulate the significance and contribution of this research and its future implications.

## 1.6 Terminology

In this thesis, I chose to center the term *Indigenous*, which refers to tracing back lineage to, and having a close connection with, a certain land base. While this term does not have any legal status, it is widely used in higher education within Canada and abroad. At other times, the word *Aboriginal* is used as it is the term which gained legal status through the *Constitution Act* 1982. This term entrenched recognition of Indian, Métis and Inuit peoples as a part of the definition of “*Aboriginal* peoples.” When citing sources from a particular period in time, I will use terminology described by those authors, including “Indian,” “First Nations” and “Native American.”<sup>8</sup> I am also aware of the risks in grouping Indigenous peoples in any homogenous category, as historically and at present, families, tribes, Nations have referred to and continue to refer to their people based on their lineage, such as Tlingit, Haudenosaunee, Cree, etc. Again, wherever the terms “tribes,” “Bands,” or “Nations” are used either in other papers, or in an historical context, I have chosen to retain this wording in this dissertation.

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<sup>8</sup>The interpretations and services provided by both Canada and the United States for Band/ tribal members flow not from an individual's status in an ethnological sense, but because the person is a member of a tribe or Band *recognized* by Canada or the United States.

## Chapter Two: Navigating the Waters

*Aboriginal education as assimilation has always, everywhere, failed and failed miserably and failed destructively... Aboriginal education for self-determination, controlled by Aboriginal people, succeeds.* (E. Hampton as cited in Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada [AANDC], 1996)

### 2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on Indigenous leadership, pedagogies and transformation in post-secondary education; my point of reference throughout this dissertation is on Indigenous knowledge. In her book *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*, Maori writer Linda Smith (1999) accentuates the importance of privileging Indigenous ways of knowing. Smith argues that for far too long, Western knowledge and Western ways of being, seeing and doing have been privileged:

My own academic background is in education, and in my field there is a very rich history of research which attempts to legitimate views about Indigenous peoples which have been antagonistic and dehumanizing. Discussions around the concept of intelligence, on discipline, or on factors that contribute to achievement depend heavily on notions about the other. (p. 11)

I begin this chapter with a look back to provide a brief history of both the oppressive and empowering aspects of Indigenous educational policy. Specifically, this section includes a glimpse at the colonial policies that controlled the lives of Aboriginal people and then introduces the policy on *Indian Control over Indian Education*. This policy is an example of a national policy position created by the First Nations leadership at that time. Finally, the

first section concludes by focusing on recent BC post-secondary educational policies in which Aboriginal people created changes in post-secondary education. These changes ultimately resulted in limited First Nations leadership in the provincial policy framework. The importance of tracing this history is that it offers a context for the contemporary challenges to, and growth and openings for, Indigenous education.

In the second section of this literature review, I move on to reviewing recent literature on Indigenous academic leadership, pedagogy, and transformation in order to understand how these are being conceptualized and articulated by Indigenous scholars. While I engage these three spheres of leadership, pedagogy, and transformation as separate concepts, it is important to note that these are not mutually exclusive categories. In keeping with the principles and values underlying Indigenous epistemologies and world-views, these spheres often and readily come together and intersect with one another. My intent in working with the concepts as distinct entities is to address some of the specificities and complexities that relate to each of these concepts while paying close attention to their overlaps and interconnectedness. I will re-visit these three concepts in my analysis chapter. To begin this chapter, however, I review the historical policies of assimilation and integration which I would argue continue to be reproduced today, and as such, serve as the catalyst to understanding educational policies today and drive the need for change.

## **2.2 Colonial and Empowering Policies**

“Colonialism,” in its most conventional sense, involves the "gaining of control over particular geographical areas and is usually associated with the exploitation of various areas in the world by European or American powers” (Carnoy, 1974, p. 21). Perley (1993)

has identified four elements of colonialism: 1) the forced, involuntary entry of the colonized group into the dominant society; 2) the colonizing power of adopting policies that suppress, transform, or destroy Native values, orientations and ways of life; 3) manipulation and management of the colonized by agents of the colonizing group; and 4) the domination, exploitation and oppression justified by an ideology of racism, which defines the colonized group as inferior (p. 119). Indigenous people worldwide have continuously been subjugated by invasion, whether violent or under the auspices of "civilizing," "assimilating" or "integrating" in order to expropriate lands, traditions and culture. In Canada, the *Indian Act*,<sup>9</sup> Residential Schools,<sup>10</sup> and the "60's scoop"<sup>11</sup> are some of the direct results of colonial policies and practices (Naadli, 2010). The justice system, through the repeated and systemic incarceration of Indigenous people, continues to perpetuate colonial practices and tries to eradicate the spirit and soul of Indigenous peoples. What follows is a closer look at portions of historical policies which affected education for Indigenous peoples in Canada. Based on colonial governments and hegemonic powers at work, some changes were limited and restricted until Indigenous people, communities and organizations forced a re-thinking of government policy.

### **2.2.1 *The Indian Act***

The *Indian Act* of 1876 consolidated previous colonial legislation including the 1857 *Gradual Civilization Act* and the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869. This Canadian legislation naturalized gender discrimination and compelled a patriarchal order, thereby

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<sup>9</sup> This *Act* singles out Native peoples, largely on the basis of race, and removes much of their traditional land and property which results in isolating people from mainstream society. Many aspects of Native people's lives are placed in the control of, and regulated by, the state.

<sup>10</sup> Residential Schools were church-run schools where over 140,000 Native children were mandated to assimilate into mainstream society through: 1) moral training; 2) domestic/ agricultural training; and 3) a minor form of formal education.

<sup>11</sup> Provincial apprehension and fostering/adopting out of Native children to non-Native homes.

altering the basic social, political and economic organization of many Indian Nations. The *Act* defined who was an Indian, through labels such as “status” and “non- status” Indians, and these distinctions/designations removed status from women who married non-status men, although non-status (and non-Native) wives of status men would gain status.

One of the main features of the *Indian Act* was enfranchisement and the imposition of what are now known as municipal-style governments that replaced traditional forms of governance. Consequent revisions to the *Act* imposed greater control over the lives of First Nations peoples, while increasing the powers of colonial governments. The 1880 version of the *Act* created the Department of Indian Affairs to administer the *Act*. The *Act* also included a series of measures designed to protect and preserve First Nations lands, stipulating that only band members could live on reserve lands, that real and personal property on reserves were exempt from federal and provincial taxes, that liens could not be placed on Indian land, and that Indian property could not be seized for debt. It was, in part, the danger of abolition of these protective measures that generated opposition to the 1969 *White Paper*. Subsequent governments have attempted to undermine these few protections in place by proposing laws that would take away these provisions; an example of this would be the proposed *First Nations Governance Act* in 2007. Assimilation has always been high on the agenda for colonial governance; part of the purpose of assimilating Indigenous peoples involved their renouncing and giving up their specific cultures, languages, and beliefs in order to live and act just like the British and European settlers. Restrictions through the *Indian Act* ranged from rules about how Indigenous peoples would elect leaders, to how their children would be educated and how their estates would be dealt with after death. First Nations were allowed virtually no self-governing powers.

Enfranchisement of Indians who received any form of university degree was enforced by a law developed by the federal government. This law stated that if status Indians pursued higher education, they no longer needed to be Indigenous and could become regular citizens of Canada and access the same rights as other Canadians. In this way, assimilation would be realized again. This 1876 law enacted through the *Indian Act* stated:

- a. Any Indian who may be admitted to the degree of Doctor of Medicine, or to any other degree by any University of Learning, or who may be admitted in any Province of the Dominion to practice law, either as an Advocate or as a Barrister, or Counselor, or Solicitor, or Attorney, or to be a Notary Public, or who may enter Holy Orders, or who may be licensed by any denomination of Christians as a Minister of the Gospel, shall *ipso facto* become and be enfranchised under this Act. (as cited in D.N. Paul, 2006, "Indian Act – 1876", para. 12)

This law was changed in 1927, removing any reference to universities, but it still maintained that the Department of Indian Affairs had the ability to form a Board and force Indians to enfranchise (Stonechild, 2006). It was around this period of history when the federal government intensified its efforts at "assimilating" the youngest children involved in education through legislation of compulsory education through "Residential Schools."

The Canadian parliament overhauled the *Act* in 1951 and continued to amend it periodically throughout the remainder of the 20th century. While the more recent changes allows less federal intrusion, the government still exercises a large amount of control over the lives of Indian people (Chrisjohn, 1997). In addition, the government's control of the Indian population actually worked counter to the *Act's* stated goal; the *Act* isolated and

alienated Indian people from mainstream Canadian society instead of assimilating them into it. The Assembly of First Nations former National Chief Phil Fontaine has stated that the *Indian Act* is the only legislation in the world designed for a particular race of people (C-31, 2005).

### **2.2.2 Residential Schools**

When the notions that First Nations people should renounce and give up [their] own culture, languages, beliefs, and live and act just like the British settlers did not produce the desired effects, the federal government created Residential Schools, which were intended to expedite the process and attain the goal of “assimilation” (Spear, 2010, March 10). The government had Indigenous children forcibly removed from their homes/communities to attend the government-funded, church-run Residential Schools. Churches and religious orders provided education, moral training and domestic skills for young Indigenous boys and girls across Canada. The effect of these Residential Schools has left a legacy of grave, multi-generational damage to Indigenous children, families and communities. These experiences and legacies include the long-term effects of sexual and physical abuse experienced by Indigenous children from institutional staff and administrators, such as depression and suicide. As well, it is estimated that almost 40% of the children attending Residential Schools in the Yukon or northern British Columbia (Lower Post) died in these schools (Northern Native Broadcasting & Filmwest Associates, 1988). Much of the literature on Residential Schools speaks to these institutions as being a means of continued assimilation and civilization of Indigenous children into the colonial European way of life. Kelly and Altbach (2008) argue:

colonial governments gain strength through mental control ... implemented in a central intellectual location, the school system, in an attempt to strip the colonized people away from their Indigenous learning structures and draw them towards the structures of the colonized .... [E]ducation is important in facilitating the assimilation process. (p. 86)

However, in other literature, this legislated *Doctrine of Assimilation* (1828), which created Residential Schools that forcibly housed approximately 90,600 children in 130 schools (Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada 2008; Laboucane, 2009), is characterized not just as an act of cultural assimilation, but rather as an act of cultural genocide on Indigenous people. The United Nations' (UN) *Convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide* in 1948 reveals the absurdity of Indian policy through the *Indian Act*, which made it compulsory for Indigenous children to attend Residential Schools.

Below is an excerpt of the UN's interpretation of what constitutes genocide:

genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (Assembly of First Nations, 2002)

There is an abundance of literature that speaks to the extreme violence, abuse, coercion, fear, oppression and death that children in Residential Schools suffered over the

generations (Barman 1996; Chrisjohn and Young, 1997; Jaine, 1993; Miller, 1996; Snow, 1999). This forced colonial cultural assimilation equated to cultural genocide for Indigenous communities as it meant a complete severance from cultural identity, land, language, governance, traditions, spiritual growth, and intergenerational bonds with elders and communities. The implementation of the Residential Schools was based on dehumanizing and erroneous ideas about Indigenous people and their diverse cultures. Bennett & Blackstock (2002) speak at great length of the large Residential Schools that were funded by the federal government and operated by missionaries that forcibly removed children from the perceived detrimental influence of parents and Native traditions. The gathering of children was deemed a horrendous and tragic affair which undermined the development of healthy Aboriginal identities. Children were denied the right to speak their language and live according to their culture and traditions.

For over a century, the Residential School system operated across Canada and left a lasting impact on several generations of Aboriginal peoples. The impact of this form of colonization on the health and wellness of Indigenous people/ communities and Nations has been well documented (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997; Fournier and Crey, 1997; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999; Stiffarm, 1998). In many cases, this system negatively impacted generations of Residential School survivors' physical, emotional, cultural and spiritual well-being. Today, there is widespread research available on the low educational outcomes for Aboriginal youth that is linked to and a reflection on the generational impacts that Residential Schools have had on Indigenous peoples (Malatest, 2004; Schissel, & Wotherspoon, 2003; Statistics Canada and Council of Ministers of Education 2006; Stonechild, 2006). An analysis of the statistics reveals how the current education system

*continues* to fail the needs of Indigenous people and communities. For Aboriginal people today, the rates of high-school graduation and attendance at post-secondary schools are well below those of the rest of Canada. According to the 2006 Census, an estimated 555,400 adults aged 25 to 64 identified as an Aboriginal person (Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples). One in three (34%) Aboriginal people did not complete high-school, and 21% cited a high-school diploma as their highest educational qualification. At the same time, an estimated 44% of the Aboriginal population was postsecondary graduates; an estimated 14% have trade credentials, 19% have a college diploma and 8% hold a university degree (Gionet, 2009). Because of the change in questions for the 2006 Census, comparisons between 2006 and 2001 are only possible for university degrees. In 2006, 42,900 Aboriginal people had a university degree; this compares with 26,300, or 6% in 2001 (Gionet, 2009).

### **2.2.3 Indian Control of Indian Education - 1972**

Indigenous communities resisted successive educational policies which removed people from their homes/ communities, and they continued to fight for control over the education of their children. Based on individual and community agency, Indigenous people were able to create changes within Indigenous policy spheres. In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood<sup>12</sup> produced a policy on Native education called Indian control of Indian education. The policy contained a specific section on adult education because the Brotherhood recognized that, for Indigenous communities, education is a lifelong learning process and could not be fragmented into finite categories of time. The policy also stated

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<sup>12</sup> A precursor to the Assembly of First Nations.

that the federal government held fiduciary responsibility for Indian education (Shilling, n.d.).

This policy paper was accepted by the federal government for its general principles. Some of these were as follows:

- Indian parents must have control of education with the responsibility of setting goals;
- The Federal Government has legal responsibility for Indian education as defined by the treaties and the *Indian Act*;
- An Indian-orientated curriculum must be developed for schools which enroll Native children, and there must be full scale cooperation between federal, provincial, and Indian education people. (Khan, n.d.)

This document created pressure on the federal government whereby First Nations voices were acknowledged when developing future policies. This included, among other priorities, an action plan with targets to close the education gap-which resulted in locally controlled Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning. Other changes based on the 1972 Report included Band-controlled schools for children in elementary schools, Indigenous language revitalization courses/programs in elementary and higher education and development of an institutional context whereby programs began in Indigenous studies and educational pedagogies (AFN, 2010). However, many struggles continue to be fought today, including the battle for actual control and autonomy over education. After almost forty years, the federal government still seems to move slowly, delegating programs of administration to First Nations rather than facilitating First Nations' policy development

and financial control (McCaskill, 1987, p. 25). The belief persists that settlers know what is best for Indigenous peoples in terms of educating both children and adults.

#### **2.2.4 A Closer Look at BC's Educational Policies: "The Green Report"**

In 1989, the BC provincial government created a Provincial Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education for Native Learners. Their findings, entitled *Report of the Provincial Advisory on Post-Secondary Education for Native Learners*, came to be known as "the *Green Report*" (J. Simcoe as cited in Ministry of Advanced Education, 2002, p.1). The mandate of this committee was to recommend strategies to improve the participation and completion rates of First Nations students in the post-secondary system (Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, 1990). At the time, statistics revealed that approximately 80% of Aboriginal students did not complete high-school. Forty-one percent (41 %) of status Indians in British Columbia had less than a grade nine education while only three percent had some university education (Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology, 1990, p. 4).

Of the 21 recommendations provided in "the *Green Report*," it was clear that participation and completion rates significantly increased with the implementation of the unique cultural traditions of First Nations into program design and delivery. Janice Simcoe, Chair of Aboriginal Education & Community Connections at Camosun College states that many of the recommendations of "the *Green Report*" were eventually implemented leading to increased Indigenous student retention and completion rates. Among these was "that the Ministry provides targeted funding for public colleges, university colleges, and institutes to establish First Nations Coordinator positions to support First Nations student success" (J. Simcoe as cited in Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2002,

p. 1). Some of the earliest goals of the First Nations Coordinators were to define what “student success” was and to outline ways in which to achieve it. As Simcoe articulates,

We needed to examine the academic, financial, social and cultural needs of the students we had been hired to support, and establish or learn ways to help them meet these needs. (Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2002,, p. 1)

Today, there are over 55 coordinators in the province who have official responsibility to “promote First Nations student success” (J. Simcoe, personal communication, February 2011). Some of these Coordinators, though, have little force and effect in creating and maintaining change in the overall policies that guide education. Still, many post-secondary institutes are supporting First Nations students in unprecedented and diverse ways. The *Green Report* resulted in many post-secondary institutions developing better relations with community and other education providers. Colleges, universities and Indigenous institutes established First Nations Advisory Councils or Committees to advance Indigenous courses, programs and/or services and create many affiliation agreements. At a time when Residential Schools were still in effect in Canada, the 1991 *Green Report* was an influential document that registered a significant change within Indigenous post-secondary history.

### **2.2.5 Report of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Post-secondary**

#### ***Education for Native learners: Status Report on Follow-up Action***

A follow-up report in 1992 entitled *The Report of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Post-secondary Education for Native learners: Status report on follow-up action* was released by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology. The purpose of

this report was to review the progress that had been made since the recommendations of the 1991 *Green Report*. This review, in combination with input from Aboriginal Coordinators from post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal controlled institutions, was instrumental in developing the *Aboriginal post-secondary education and training policy framework* (the “Policy Framework”). The Policy Framework acknowledged progress that flowed from the *Green Report* and provided a policy spotlight for continued development correlating to the original *Green Report* recommendations (Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, 2002, Appendices, p.6). Four mandatory steps towards program development were articulated. Each public institution was expected to have:

- Employed an Aboriginal Coordinator;
- Established an Aboriginal Advisory Committee
- Established an *Aboriginal access policy*; and
- Initiated Aboriginal program development.

(Ministry of Advanced Education, 2002, Appendices, p.6)

These steps were created to ensure that institutions were utilizing the funds for Aboriginal Coordinators as they were originally intended and that Aboriginal communities were participating in the process. As well, these steps would help ensure Aboriginal student participation in post-secondary education and that Aboriginal program development would be guaranteed.

One of the ongoing problems with the *Policy Framework* was the expectation that institutions would reallocate existing resources to Aboriginal program development. Many institutions did not support the concept of Aboriginal program development if it required that they extract funds and resources from other programs to support Aboriginal

programs. As a result, the Aboriginal Special Projects Fund evolved to provide resources specifically for Aboriginal Program development. This provincial funding ceased to exist in 2007 when the Ministry's *Aboriginal post-secondary education strategy and action plan* (2007) came into effect. This was yet another policy designed by the government with the premise of recognizing the importance of Indigenous education and authentic relationship-building between post-secondary institutions and Aboriginal communities and organizations. While the *Strategy and action plan* included more Aboriginal people in decision-making processes and shifted various aspects of educational administrative control over education to Indigenous peoples, today governments continue to dictate educational policies that govern Indigenous education and the levels of funding associated with them. Nevertheless, the *Strategy and action plan* became a key document that guided the Ministry's approach to improving Aboriginal post-secondary education success in BC (Ministry of Advanced Education, 2007). The *Strategy and action plan* included a four-year funding commitment until 2010. One of the initiatives created under this policy was the *Aboriginal service plan (ASP)*, which was developed and piloted to support and enhance Aboriginal learner success.

*The 2012/13-2014/15 Aboriginal service plan and reporting guidelines* provide the following goals:

- Increase access, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Aboriginal learners;
- Strengthen partnerships and collaboration in Aboriginal post-secondary education;
- and

- Increase the receptivity and relevance of post-secondary institutions and programs for Aboriginal learners, including providing support for initiatives that address systemic barriers. (Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012, p. 1)

Recently, the BC Government extended funding this initiative until March 2015.

While various efforts made by Indigenous peoples and governments have created some important changes, these changes continue to be limited. *The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (1996) argues that these types of incremental changes in educational policies have not resulted in any meaningful long-term policy shifts whereby Aboriginal Nations would assume jurisdiction over Indigenous education which would permit them to develop their own policies, programs and institutions. The reality remains that, through successive governments, funding initiatives do not provide the financial security that is necessary for long-term sustainability.

### **2.2.6 Summary**

As the discussions of the *Indian Act* and Residential Schools demonstrate, colonial policies of education have left a legacy of multi-generational harm to Indigenous communities. The colonial drive and goal to instill Euro-centric values in order to assimilate Indigenous peoples has resulted in the fragmentation of knowledge and traditions. Educational policies based on discrediting and disparaging Indigenous knowledges, pedagogical strategies, and of devaluing Indigenous teachings and their teachers have disempowered Nations and communities. As the statistics cited earlier reveal, Indigenous students' learnings within the specific context of their traditions and knowledges have not been a priority for either federal or provincial governments.

Unlike colonial state policies, Indigenous leaders such as the Native Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations), have been clear and explicit about the educational needs and challenges facing our communities and Nations. Indigenous academic leaders have been instrumental and determined in making their voices heard in policy-setting and policy-review arenas to ensure Indigenous students' retention and success at the early schooling levels as well as in post-secondary institutions. Through their participation and influence in policy-making, these leaders have centered the visions and traditions of Indigenous teachings and learning in order to create empowering policies and contexts for Indigenous students. However, what becomes clear is that it is imperative for Indigenous academic leaders to engage on an ongoing basis in shaping and directing the needs of Indigenous communities with respect to education.

While Indigenous educators, leaders and communities have interceded to improve education for Indigenous students, ongoing colonial policies, practices, and processes prevail. This is not to suggest that the various policy initiatives currently in place are destined to fail. Many Indigenous educational leaders and non-Indigenous allies are making headways on showing how the success of education for Indigenous students is rooted in identity and a commitment to preserve and enhance Indigenous cultures and governance. Indigenous people need to be empowered and have control over Indigenous education. This is this mission that remains unaccomplished, one which needs to be recognized and realized with a greater sense of urgency and priority.

In order to understand what this recognition and realization will look like, I move towards Indigenous leadership and pedagogies as a way of understanding/framing the transformative potential of Indigenous communities. I will centralize the voices of

Indigenous writers/scholars and how they frame ideas about Indigenous leadership and pedagogies as such practices will ultimately lead to the empowerment of Indigenous peoples in terms of their control over Indigenous education. Ultimately, I believe that if there is not a commitment to cultural and Indigenous pedagogical supports in post-secondary education, Indigenous student enrollment and retention will never be fully realized.

### **2.3 Indigenous Leadership**

When examining Indigenous leadership, I chose to locate and center Indigenous scholars who have written in this area. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to express all of their conceptions of leadership, I focus on the more recent writings and thoughts reflected by Indigenous academics.

Indigenous scholars Michael Anthony Hart, Cree (2010) and Raven Sinclair, Cree/Assiniboine/Saulteaux (2004) argue that Indigenous intellectual work cannot be separated from work with and in community. That is, Indigenous scholarship emerges from, is interwoven with and strengthened by, Indigenous communities; the responsibility of intellectual leaders is to maintain connections and work with the needs of Indigenous communities in order to create effective change. Indeed, maintaining and strengthening community relations and ties becomes integral to notions of accountability and responsibility. The reciprocity this demands is central to ensuring ethical academic leadership. In this way, learning and the dissemination of knowledge are not one-sided or seen as transferring solely from the academy to the community; instead, Indigenous academic leaders participate in a mutual exchange of knowledge by being embedded in communities and caring for their well-being.

In their examination of transformative leadership, Menzies, Archibald and Smith (2004) call for a complex, nuanced, and multi-pronged approach to transformation that goes beyond “merely a set of strategies related to changing learners’ behavior, changing the curriculum, changing pedagogy, changing governance and so forth” (p. 2). They also call for a broader systemic change of our mainstream political, economic, and social forces for transformation in the education of Indigenous students and their intellectual lives and pursuits (Menzies, Archibald, & Smith, 2004). Importantly, the authors also call on Indigenous academic leaders to be accountable for their practices; thus, they assert:

We need to interrogate what we do academically (through teaching, research, and service) against the key question of “What is changed for our communities that promotes people’s well-being?” Particular responsibilities accrue to Indigenous academics. In particular, Indigenous academics must lead and model transformation by understanding the conceptual and practical elements of transformation as a process and an outcome. (pp. 2-3)

Like Hart (2010) and Sinclair (2004), Menzies, Archibald and Smith speak to the need for academic leaders to connect their work to and engage it with community.

The authors’ stress that Indigenous leaders need to ensure that their pedagogical and transformational goals are guided by the needs of their communities to ensure their collective well-being. Moreover, they provide another strong and important insight to Indigenous academic leadership, particularly on the issue of accountability: who we are, what we do, and how we do it are necessary components that we need to pay attention to in our pedagogical practices and on our quest for transformation. In this way, leadership is about an embodied practice where being and doing operate in tandem; therefore, leaders

need to be mindful of the ways in which their actions and practices are intrinsically tied to transformation.

Gail Dana-Sacco, member of Passamaquoddy Tribe (2010), also stresses the importance of community, in particular, the relationship to community as a way of ensuring accountability of Indigenous academic leaders. For Dana-Sacco, working with Indigenous communities is about linking the individual scholar to the larger collective. She writes,

It's not enough to ask only how we can be supportive of tribal communities; we must also practice personal accountability to our communities. We bring ourselves into the work with all our strengths, limitations, and complexities. Recognizing personal accountability to the larger collective is a humbling experience that helps us to understand not just who we are in the community but the legacy of our families and all the sacrifices large and small that have been made on our behalf. (p. 61)

Dana-Sacco's comments point out different elements of Indigenous academic leadership, namely, humility and a mindfulness of one's home, place, history, and tradition. The latter point speaks to the strength of our identities and a continuity of journey to and from our communities; it also speaks to our links to a place, a people, and a set of values that are larger than our academic communities and our own individual selves.

Connecting to home and community may also be a healing and rejuvenating process for Indigenous leaders. Working with an Indigenous worldview and its particular values, knowledges, and expectations, can be challenging – and at times, demoralizing – within the

Western-focused academy. Creek and Choctaw academic, Bill Bray (1997), shares the following:

For me as an Indian academic, the problem of locating “home” within the academic structure was serious. More than any people in North America, Indians can point to a piece of the world where home lies, and they can often even trace it back to specific rocks, trees, and bodies of water. The university is not where we point. We cannot adopt academia in the ways Euro-Americans can. Having no concept of links that cannot be broken, Euro-Americans can pull themselves up by the bootstraps and plant themselves firmly in the academic community, a community historically conceived to take care of them. Aside from a few minor scrapes and disharmonies, they fit academia like a hand sliding into a glove. What, however, can an Indian do? What can Indians do when the glove is tailored to the white hand, and the white hand is already happy inside it? (p. 39)

In this passage, Bray talks to the sense of alienation and displacement experienced by Indigenous students and academics in university settings. In other words, a challenge that Indigenous leaders will face in the academy is the sense of estrangement in their relationships, their epistemic work, and in their pedagogical styles. His somewhat rhetorical question, “What can an Indian do?” in the face of this alienation is answered by his earlier call to return home: to be centered by our communities, and to be grounded in our histories, our geographies, and our people is a vital component of healthy Indigenous leadership.

Following along the themes of community and its ties to Indigenous academic leadership, Taiaiake Alfred (1999) offers an additional dimension to Indigenous leadership.

For Alfred, the alignment of politics, community, and tradition is instrumental to the practices that enhance leadership. He writes,

Understanding leadership means understanding Indigenous political philosophy, conceptions of power, and the primary values that create legitimacy and allow governments to function appropriately and effectively. Good Indigenous leadership ensures that government is rooted in tradition, is consistent with the cultural values of the community. (Alfred, 1999, p. 23)

Accordingly, being mindful of and following the knowledge of Indigenous worldviews and philosophies, of the specific intricacies of the operations of power, culture and traditions of individual Nations are of particular importance for Indigenous academic leadership.

A refrain that is present in the various reports cited earlier in this chapter is that of the importance of foregrounding Indigenous values, tradition and culture in promoting Indigenous learning. In her study, Alannah Young (2006) argues that it is incumbent on Indigenous academic leadership to attend closely to, and promote, Indigenous cultural values within pedagogical and epistemic frames. Focusing on the relationship between Indigenous knowledges and transformational leadership, Young advocates for centering cultural values as a way for Indigenous leaders to promote and effect change, to emphasize a decolonizing agenda, and to foster the goals of self-determination.

Young's research inquiry on Indigenous leadership offers a rich account of the relevant themes that can guide Indigenous academic leaders. Her study (2006) involved in-depth interviews with nine elders and cultural leaders to understand the role of culture in informing and guiding Indigenous leadership. Her discussion with elders yielded nine overall themes, and I cite her work in detail here because her study offered a fruitful and

productive discussion of transformative Indigenous leadership which was advantageous to my research inquiry, particularly as I considered my own methodology and research questions.

The first theme Young identifies is the need to have historical knowledge of ourselves as people, of our collective histories, and of land. Cultural knowledge enhances cultural identity, and cultural identity is instrumental in leadership success. Secondly, Young's study identifies the promotion of cultural knowledge as key to leadership success. She states, "understanding [Indigenous knowledges] through positive cultural education—oral histories of Elders, symbols and storytelling to teach values, for example contribute to the pedagogy of transformative leadership" (Young, 2006, p. 54). Of importance for leadership success is to live the teachings and to embody the cultural values that leaders impart. The third theme is for leaders to engage in decolonizing education and knowledges to strengthen families and communities. Her research emphasizes:

The storytellers agreed that culture in Indigenous leadership is based on the understanding of components such as local intergenerational knowledge of genealogy and language and ceremonial practices that are self-determined and informed through millennia of experience. These aspects of culture play roles in the development of positive families, Nations and communities and are based on 1K praxis. They are seen as foundational to developing relevant leadership skills.

(Young, 2006, p.57)

Another relevant theme that emerges from Young's study is the understanding that leadership is a gift, or in Lee Brown's words, "a service to others" (2006, p. 60). Brown's

thoughts reflect on leadership as a gift as well as a responsibility. Young's work also imparts the need for leaders to engage in "wholism" (2006, p.63) – where, "developing a spiritual centre, through cultural practices, provides assurance and knowledge of who you are, what your intentions are and which direction you are heading. Developing spiritual connection also helps you move towards a more meaningful communal existence" (2006, p. 63).

The last four themes that Young identifies are respect, responsibility, relationships and reciprocity. Her study reminds us to be mindful and respectful of our everyday engagements with people, as well as with ourselves, our environment, and with all living beings (Young, 2006, p. 67). Concerning responsibility, Young also elaborates that "to ensure that land resources are kept healthy by sustainable, environmentally-friendly practices was a concern for the storytellers" (2006, p. 68). In addition, leaders need to be mindful of the different but equal responsibilities shared by women and men, and to honor the role of women as leaders and in shaping leaders. Relationships, which are another theme that Young identifies, are a central thread that runs in her discussions with elders. Here, "restoration of positive healthy relationships can be demonstrated through cultural processes so that the potential of all people, families and communities is enhanced" (Young, 2006, p. 68). As such, the responsibility of leaders is to ensure that they teach about cultural identity, protocols and practices to enhance family supports and community involvement. Finally, her call of reciprocity situates "giving back" as a guiding principle for leadership (Young, 2006, pp. 69-70). "Giving back" incorporates sharing and collectivity as important factors to cultivate balance between leaders and their community (Young, 2006, pp. 69-70).

Young's comprehensive and incisive study offers me much insight about the imperatives of traditional leadership. Her work provides rich data for me to work with in considering and conceptualizing my own work, particularly in my own research methods. While my study examines factors other than culture, her work is exciting in that it affirms the cultural urgencies facing Indigenous academic leaders as well as provide avenues and pathways to productive academic leadership.

In order for Indigenous academics to provide educational leadership and to realize the transformational potential of Indigenous epistemology and pedagogy, we need to consider the serious underrepresentation of Indigenous academics within the academy and the consequences of this underrepresentation. In a survey conducted by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) (2010), results indicate that "Aboriginal Canadians remain largely absent from the rank of the professoriate" (p. 1), and "remain most seriously under-represented amongst university teachers in Canada" (p. 4). For example, in 2006, while Indigenous people consisted of 4.3% of the overall labor force, only 2.1% were teaching in universities (CAUT, 2010, p.4). These low numbers have several implications for Indigenous academic leadership, including overworked leaders because of the larger volume of work, lower numbers to mentor Indigenous students, and fewer Indigenous colleagues to create solidarity and produce transformational change to benefit Indigenous students. The level of responsibility and commitments for Indigenous academic leaders, then, is higher than it is for most other groups because Indigenous faculty are overstretched in their teaching, committee activities, mentoring, and community outreach work (Corntassel, 2004; Green, 2002). In an often-hostile academic environment (Allen, 1998; Cleary, 2002; Graveline, 2002; Green, 2002; Laroque, 1996; Monture-Angus, 2002),

the effect of this gross underrepresentation is the marginalization of Indigenous academic leaders and the potential for stress, burnout and illness. The following narrative, from Pueblo Laguna academic leader Paula Gunn-Allen (1998), broadens our understanding of the concerns for the holistic health of Indigenous academic leaders. She made these observations on the eve of her resignation from her tenured position as the Chair of Native Studies at a prominent American university:

My resignation and the discouragement I see in my colleagues, their alienation from “academe,” are reactions to a seemingly insoluble problem: formalism, establishmentarianism, whiteness---whatever it is called, it has me beat. Depressed, overworked, hassled beyond belief, sick a large part of the time – I am simply unwilling (and probably unable) to cope with the situation.

(Allen, 1998, p. 134)

As I reflect on Allen’s words and the despair of the white academy she so poignantly describes, I know that this is not-an-unfamiliar experience for a significant number of Indigenous academics. Her words echo in the writings of Joyce Green (2002), who talks about “Never fitting in” (p. 86), and in those of Mohawk legal scholar Patricia Monture-Angus (2002), who speaks to a sense of homelessness in the academy. All this is not to suggest that it is not possible to create change and transformation; however, it does indicate that there is a lot of work to accomplish, and by fewer people. Many of the above-mentioned authors speak to the need to sustain and nourish our roots in and to community that goes beyond the knowledge and transformational basis of Indigenous leadership: these connections, as Bray (1997) has suggested, may be the source of intellectual, political and personal support.

Green (2002) expresses another view: she believes that scholars who have faced exclusions or dismissal of their scholarship have continued to meet institutional demands despite a lack of financial and institutional support and have a level of “excellence” and “generate a more complete knowledge” (p. 89). She also acknowledges the leadership and transformational potential of Indigenous leaders as mentors to Indigenous students where these students “find some solidarity in our existence, and sometimes in our scholarship, inspiration, and enlightenment. These students become part of the transformative” (Green, 2002, p. 90). The power of Green’s message lies in her conclusions about Indigenous scholars-as-leaders: “but some of us are here, and we demonstrate that we are not homogenous; we can be subversive of existing power relations; we are excellent; we are controversial; we are in solidarity with many others; and we are your colleagues” (2002, p. 90). The strength of such honest self-awareness and appraisal clearly indicates the transformational potential of Indigenous leadership within academe, the impact of which is illustrated in Figure 1, on the next page.



**Figure 1: Indigenous Worldviews and Knowledges**

This figure offers a summary of the analysis of the literature review on the themes, ideas and concepts that resonate for me as being important for Indigenous leadership. As the figure shows, leadership qualities entail a variety of elements: a leader works with humility; is connected to home, place, traditions; maintains connections and builds relationships; and engages in Indigenous activism in order to create and effect change.

Shifting from this review of Indigenous articulations of academic leadership, in the next section, I will examine Indigenous pedagogies, paying attention to traditional teachings and the content of these teachings. Pedagogies are important to the challenges of transformational Indigenous leadership as they fit into and feed the cycle of how leadership evolves, shifts and creates change.

## 2.4 Indigenous Pedagogies

Pedagogies have historically been interpreted as instructional strategies, styles of instruction and/or instructional theory. While I will not go into detail as to the validity of such Western socially constructed interpretations, I will say that because historically, institutions, teacher education, school systems and curricular models are often based on Western models, there is a constant need to re-define terms for differing contexts. We have the ability to move past hegemonic teachings towards re-defining what is right for our survival, for our well-being and for our children's future.

Within the concept of Indigenous pedagogies, of importance is the notion that an Indigenous pedagogy is one that emerges out of the local context of praxis<sup>13</sup> and, more significantly, among those who use it, there is a sense of ownership: it is their pedagogy because they have shaped it to suit their aims and goals. In fact, Indigenous pedagogies and their features have been around for thousands of years. And in every one of these features, choices and decisions are guided by a set of consistent and coherent ontological and epistemological beliefs, worldviews, and experiences. Lambe (2003), furthers this line of thinking by stating,

I learned from my Oglala/Lakota friend and mentor that *Mitakuye Oyasin* is one expression of what it means to be a human being. *Mitakuye* is all creation. *Oyasin* is a burning desire to know. My understanding of the phrase *Mitakuye Oyasin* is the burning desire of a person to come to know creation or their place in creation. (p. 308-9)

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<sup>13</sup> In his book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1986), Paulo Friere defines praxis as "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p. 36). Through praxis, oppressed people can acquire a critical awareness of their own condition, and, with their allies, struggle for liberation.

With this understanding, Lambe's article explores the differences between Western and Indigenous interpretations of pedagogies (in Lambe's case, Oglala/Lakota and Mohawk). First, Lambe states that the difference between the Western way of teaching is that there are agreed upon approaches to many students, compared to the Indigenous practice of "spending time with an individual so as to come to know that individual" (2003, p. 309). Through knowing the individual, the Indigenous instructor can make suggestions that the student has agency in deciding whether to follow, creating an educational relationship based on qualities other than power dynamics. Lambe uses the example of an elder making rattles around a group of children: children that are disposed to learning this skill tune in and pay attention, while those who are not continue to do other things. No one is coerced to learn. Respect and empathy between teacher and student, as well as a commitment to the teacher/student relationship, are both identified as a part of Indigenous pedagogy by Lambe (2003). Truth and correctness are not a major consideration in this type of pedagogy, nor is requiring learners to all take the same lessons from stories and teachings. Lambe states that "[t]he way an elder or mentor conducts him or herself both in the present and throughout their lives brings an added dimension to mentoring. Elders and mentors express direct and subtle nuances – reflections of body, speech, and mind whose impact on learning is difficult to articulate" (2003, p. 310). Lambe rejects the idea of power dynamics in the Western sense within an Indigenous pedagogy, stating rather that respect is an important element in the teaching relationship, and also emphasizing that all contributions to community are considered equally important. Lambe states that "[a] student who is engaged in learning in relation to their individual disposition, interests, and

natural talents will pursue knowledge to its fullest, and it is the responsibility of the elder, mentor, and entire community to help facilitate this process” (2003, p. 311).

Incorporating Indigenous pedagogy into the post-secondary classroom presents a number of challenges. These challenges include not teaching using Western pedagogies that have been internalized by the instructor; finding time to foster personal relationships with students; and creating a working model of success for instructors, students, and communities (Lambe, 2003). There is also a disconnect between traditional academia and Indigenous pedagogy because “Indigenous pedagogy rarely takes the form of crucial argumentative discourse that is common in academic, legal, and political circles” (Lambe, 2003, pp. 314-5). As Lambe points out, when these approaches to learning collide,

[Problems] incorporating certain expressions of Indigenous knowledge into argumentative discourse arise when we view theory or judge another person’s reasoning in the context of statements that should be translated into empirical or rational propositions and systematically tested; withstand or be asserted within dialectic argument; or set forth the criterion that one’s reasoning be constantly judged by or juxtaposed with academic literature of theory. (2003, p. 317)

Lambe also observes that the holistic nature of Indigenous knowledge does not always fit into the rigid separation between university departments. In terms of bringing Indigenous pedagogy into the classroom, Lambe emphasizes that respect “based primarily on actions and commitment, not solely on standards regarding accurate and appropriate representation of knowledge, titles, or role designations” is essential (2003, p. 319). A strong understanding of “what constitutes authority and its related decision making,

influence on others' lives, validity of knowledge, and accountability" is also important (Lambe, 2003, p. 320).

As pedagogical strategies, Lambe's focus on the individual and a dialogical relationship of respect and relationship between students and teachers is important in that it provides an empowering space for students to learn at their own pace, and to pursue both their own interests and curiosities. Earlier sections of this chapter have outlined that the findings of various reports have emphasized the importance of fostering traditional knowledges as a method of creating a positive learning environment for students; Lambe's traditional pedagogical methods give credence to these findings.

In explaining how she came to write a chapter about Indigenous methodology, Grande (2008) explains "[w]hen I say 'Indigenous perspective' what I mean is my perspective as an Indigenous scholar. And when I say 'my perspective,' I mean from a consciousness shaped not only by my own experiences, but also those of my people and ancestors. It is through this process that Red pedagogy – my Indigenous methodology – emerged" (p. 233). Because of the importance of Indigenous scholarly work in fighting colonialism, Indigenous scholars must learn the ways of the West while also resisting them. Grande states that "[s]uch is the premise and promise of *Red pedagogy*. It is an Indigenous pedagogy that operates at the crossroads of Western theory – specifically critical pedagogy – and Indigenous knowledge" (2008, p. 234). The author encourages Indigenous people not only to learn about "who they are," but also to commit to "reinventing" themselves. She states that "Red pedagogy is not a method or technique to be memorized, implemented, applied, or prescribed. Rather it is a space of engagement. It is the liminal and intellectual borderlands where Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars encounter one another,

working to remember, redefine, and reverse the devastation of the original colonialist encounter” (Grande, 2008, p. 234).

Grande (2008) discusses the colonial relationship in America and how it is largely linked to resource theft, which has been accomplished in large part through the process of colonizing minds. Because colonialism continues to the present day, the author believes that in addition to Indigenous pedagogy being included in the classroom, the entire educational structure has to shift to be of benefit to Indigenous students. While Grande understands that critical theory may seem like a privileged concept to consider in the face of Indigenous people’s struggles with everyday lived experiences of colonialism, she argues 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, helping them navigate the excesses of dominant power and revitalization of Indigenous communities. While there is nothing inherently healing, liberatory, or revolutionary about theory, 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. (2008, p. 236)

Red pedagogy features seven considerations related to modern Western education and decolonizing practice (Grande, 2008). These are outlined as follows:

- *Red pedagogy is primarily a pedagogical project.* In this context, pedagogy is understood as being inherently political, cultural, spiritual, and intellectual.

- *Red pedagogy is fundamentally rooted in Indigenous knowledge and praxis.* It is particularly interested in knowledge that furthers understanding and analysis of the forces of colonization.
- *Red pedagogy is informed by critical theories of education.* A Red pedagogy searches for ways it can be deepened by engagement with critical and revolutionary theories and praxis.
- *Red pedagogy promotes an education for decolonization.* Within Red pedagogy, the root metaphors of decolonization are articulated as equity, emancipation, sovereignty, and balance. In this sense, an education for decolonization makes no claim to political neutrality but rather engages a method of analysis and social inquiry that troubles the capitalist-imperialist aims of unfettered competition, accumulation, and exploitation.
- *Red pedagogy is a project that interrogates both democracy and Indigenous sovereignty.* In this context, sovereignty is broadly defined as “a people’s right to rebuild its demand to exist and present its gifts to the world...an adamant refusal to dissociate culture, identity and power from the land (Lyons as cited in Grande, 2008, p. 250).
- *Red pedagogy actively cultivates praxis of collective agency.* That is, Red pedagogy aims to build transcultural and transnational solidarities among Indigenous peoples and others committed to reimagining a sovereign space free of imperialist, colonialist, and capitalist exploitation.
- *Red pedagogy is grounded in hope.* This is, however, not the future – centered hope that lives in contingency with the past – one that trusts the beliefs and understands

our ancestors, the power of traditional knowledge, and the possibilities of new understandings. (Grande, 2008, p. 250)

Grande suggests that Red pedagogy is about the community decolonizing and building a new and better society. Her work offers much insight and guidance for my own work. Grande's view of pedagogy is that it is intrinsically political and seeks to create new avenues for knowledge creation that link traditional knowledges to the contemporary colonial field, making her call for decolonizing knowledge and pedagogy essential to transformative leadership. I take away from her work the importance of critically scrutinizing dominant structures of power, knowledge, and institutional practices. An important pedagogical strategy that Grande's work offers is the call to look at the past, situate ourselves in this moment, but to also have hope and craft a vision for our future. A persuasive aspect of Grande's work is that it challenges and subverts Western academic notions of objectivity and neutrality; Grande's pedagogy pays much attention to an ontological framework where subjective experience grounded in the everyday lived realities of students is an essential component of emancipatory pedagogy. Although Grande is critical of dominant modes of thinking, she nevertheless suggests that we not abandon or reject these theories; it is incumbent on Indigenous pedagogues to maintain a critical stance, or in her words, to situate ourselves in "the borderland" (2008, p. 234).

I now move to reviewing literature that speaks to the importance of transformation in Indigenous lives and communities. In thinking about transformation, I am guided by the following question: how do we connect our understandings of leadership and pedagogies to create meaningful change for ourselves, our communities and to help us achieve self-determination?

## 2.5 Transformation

Maori scholar, Graham Smith (2003), articulates an Indigenous theory for transformation when he speaks to the idea of transformation in education. He presents a shift from the process of decolonizing (which he argues still situates/privileges the colonizer in the centre of the process), to the process of transformation. He argues that that “the bulk of our work and focus must be on what it is that we want, what it is that we are about to ‘imagine’ our future” (2003). In his article titled “Indigenous Struggle for the Transformation of Education and Schooling”, Smith (2003) identifies six necessary sites of change for Indigenous leaders to focus on in advancing transformational knowledges and educational praxis. These include exercising self-determination over Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy; the validation and legitimizing of cultural identity; that pedagogical practices incorporate and align themselves to traditional cultural practices of knowledge dissemination; awareness/mindfulness of students’ social and economic life context; close consideration of principles of collectivity and kinship relationships; and creation of a working framework that outlines a shared and collective vision for pedagogical praxis (Smith, 2003).

In order for transformational education to be viable within Indigenous communities, Smith emphasizes the centralization of Indigenous praxis and the lived realities of Indigenous lives. For education to be meaningful, Smith stresses the need for education to be “local” – in other words, to be able to respond to the traditional cultural specificities of students’ lives. Of importance for Indigenous academic leaders is Smith’s assertion that transformative education needs to focus on social, political and economic inequalities and on engaging and addressing these struggles within curriculum and teaching. He cautions

that it is crucial to be mindful of the multiple strands of inequality and oppression; thus, any interventions within, and resistance to the struggle against exploitation and oppression need to be similarly multi-pronged. He asserts, “[I]ndigenous struggle is neither singular nor homogenous; and that there is a need to “struggle” on several levels and in several sites, often simultaneously” (Smith, 2003). In terms of critical theory, he stresses that it needs to be a transformative tool that is relevant for, and accountable to, local communities and their social, political, and economic conditions. Educational leaders, then, need to have a vision of resistance that is grounded within community, and to situate complex, multi-layered interventions in order to answer Smith’s challenge for them to be “change agents” (2003).

Smith’s ideas are compelling for my own research. His work reminds me of the necessity to attend to the rich, complex and dynamic histories of our students, communities, and the people, and to create strategies of resistance that embrace the complexities and degrees of these histories. In my own work, his writing encourages me to reflect on the specific ways in which Indigenous academic leaders create theories that are relevant to their students’ lives and to the various communities where they live. How do academic leaders attend to the specificities and localized struggles, while also keeping a vision for decolonization and self-determination? What is also compelling about Smith’s work is that he persuades us to be suspicious of theories that fail to interrogate and account for unequal power relations. The insight he offers that influences my work is the notion that we must attend to the *relationship* between the socio-cultural context and the everyday life of the individual. Akin to Grande (2008), Smith (2003) urges that this relationship is necessary to incite a rigorous examination of the forces that intervene and

shape the realities of students and their life contexts. This raises questions of how Indigenous leaders might respond to create relevant pedagogy and continually evolve their pedagogical strategies to create space for transformational learning for students.

Transformational education reminds me to pay attention to ontological processes, to be mindful of consciousness-raising and “ways of being” as a way of intervening within the disenfranchisement of Indigenous lives. Friere’s (1986; 2001) and Smith’s (2003) work reminds us that having an ontological vision allows us to focus on hegemonic processes that ignore, discount, or invalidate Indigenous education, knowledge, pedagogical strategies and worldviews. Moreover, not only does this vision allow us to focus on these processes, but more importantly, it provides us different insights and visions, and prompts us to ask different sets of questions about who we might be and who we might become.

Each of the aforementioned works has offered much to me in terms of grounding my own ideas of research directions. This literature oriented me in a number of ways: in terms of the particular sorts of questions I posed; in terms of my sense of accountability and responsibility within this research process, including the forms of reciprocity I must engage in this undertaking; in terms of the understanding of both my privileged and partial knowledge; and in terms of honoring my relationships with the participants in my project.

Transformational education has the potential to center Indigenous epistemologies and place them within any educational form or setting. My research explores notions of embracing Indigenous histories, teachings and knowledge, thereby situating *real* accounts of the histories, the teachings and the values that could, in turn, influence the sense of esteem and identity for Indigenous students. I am suggesting that by modeling a different kind of education – an education that focuses on the reality that Indigenous leadership

pedagogies and transformation encapsulate holistic, interrelated and yet distinct teachings that can sustain us both individually and collectively – we can encourage students not to divorce themselves from the ancestors who came before us. Rather, we can facilitate a process where students can walk with our ancestors’ knowledge and with people from all directions for the next seven generations.

## **2.6 Discussion**

This literature review demonstrates a different form of understanding Indigenous leadership, pedagogies and transformation. As I stated earlier, the concepts of leadership, pedagogy and transformation are distinct, yet the overlap and intersections between these three sites are highly noticeable. In the course of my reading, what became increasingly clear is that within these three domains, the different ideas build with and upon one another. Potentially, this speaks to an Indigenous worldview, where these concepts may be inseparable and may need to be understood as co-concepts. The overlapping and interwoven aspects of these three concepts are evident in the way that scholars emphasize the need for nurturing and fostering relations with and in community. For academic leaders, the literature reviewed here points to the importance for them to be connected with their community, their lands, and their traditions. Similarly, the literature review shows that pedagogical strategies need to be relevant to Indigenous students by focusing on community teachings, traditions, ceremonies, and values. Simultaneously, connecting to community and our teachings is enfolded within a decolonizing and transformational strategy. In this way, connection to land, community and traditions is a thread woven through the three concepts of leadership, pedagogies, and transformation.

In this literature review, a number of themes emerged. First, leaders, their knowledge base and the transformative potential of pedagogy need to be grounded within the land, the traditions, and histories. That is, Indigenous education needs to center relationship with the land and its connections to traditions, ceremonies, stories, histories, and shared vision of a collective future and well-being. Second, these writers guide us to think about our responsibilities and actions, and how to be accountable to the land, our histories, our identities and our being. Alongside these notions of responsibility and action is the call to engage in reciprocity with respect to our surroundings, our families, our communities and our Nations. Another thread that arises is the value of relationships and connections with people and places, and its importance in fostering relevant pedagogies and enacting change. Particularly with positions of leadership, it seems that the various writers accentuate the need for creating a relationship with one another and with all living beings. Another theme is that we need to maintain a balance between focusing on the individual's everyday socio-political realities while also maintaining a stance for interceding within structural inequalities and striving for transformative change. Lastly, it is clear that each of these authors considers it critical that Indigenous people have control over curriculum, pedagogical methods, and administration of Indigenous education.

While there are common themes that the various authors trace, they also differ in emphasis, tone, strategies, and visions. Granted, while they all speak to the epistemic urgencies and crises confronting Indigenous leaders, they have different emphases. One example would be the difference between Lambe's (2003) and Grande's (2008) pedagogical visions. While both are engaged in transformative pedagogies rooted in Indigenous knowledge and praxis, Lambe's work focuses on the local and interpersonal

aspects of teaching, while Grande moves beyond what she might consider “insularity” (2008, p. 3), and challenges Indigenous academic leaders to consider that pedagogy is a political project and needs to be a decolonizing force for Indigenous transformation. Furthermore, while Lambe (2003) focuses on creating transformative pedagogies based on traditional teachings, Grande (2008) actively engages Western theoretical orientations, particularly exploring critical theories both to confront and challenge the assumptions and limitations of these orientations, but also to further her own visions and hopes for a Red future.

These scholars offered many rich ideas, which I considered as I embarked on my own research process. Their work demands that I exercise responsibility and accountability within the research process. For example, in the methodology chapter, I discuss acts of reciprocity that I developed with the research participants, which focused on respectful relations and connections. I am reminded that despite the privilege of the knowledge I gained from my readings and research, my views are limited and partial, and they are enhanced by the teachings of the participants. These scholars remind me once again to be consciously connected to, and offer respect to the land, the territory, the people and the traditions of the Coast Salish people – the people upon whose land I live, work, and engage in this research.

In reviewing the literature, I was left with the following question: Given the emphasis that the various writers place on the importance of being connected to one’s land and to knowing one’s traditions, values, and ceremonies, how might students come to know their identities and histories, particularly those who have been displaced from their families, communities and Nations? Others followed. Given the historical displacements of

Indigenous peoples through the policies and experience of Residential Schools and the placement with and adoption of Indigenous children by non-Indigenous families, how might academic leaders facilitate the space of “coming-to-know” for those students who are disconnected from their homelands and teachings? What are some ways in which leaders can/should be accountable to those places/spaces of coming to know? Much of the literature assumes that students’ have access to their traditional knowledges; the historical legacy and contemporary processes of colonialism, though, create a disconnection between Indigenous people and their homelands. How might Indigenous academic leaders facilitate the journey of “coming-to-know” so that students are able to access lost histories, knowledges, traditions, and values?

While I have learned much from the literature on leadership, pedagogies, and transformation, the writers did not focus on student or elder perspectives on these concepts. Allannah Young’s (2006) work centered on elder’s perspectives of cultural leadership, while the other scholars did not provide viewpoints of students or elders. This dissertation will bring together the voices and perspectives of students and elders, along with those of academic leaders. It is my hope that having the viewpoint of these three groups will help enhance the current body of scholarship that reflects on Indigenous academic leadership, pedagogies, and transformation.

## Chapter 3: Packing My Belongings: Searching for Home, Identity and Belonging

### 3.1 Introduction

In this dissertation, I will center three Indigenous methodological frameworks: Tlingit principles, the Medicine Wheel, and the Canoe Journey teachings. Tlingit philosophies frame and comprise the worldview of my Indigenous teachings. The Medicine Wheel encompasses borrowed teachings from various mentors for whom it is a central part of their traditional teachings. Finally, the Canoe Journey teachings emerge from a personal journey that was a quest for my roots, identity, history, stories, and place. It was a journey to connect me to the paths of my ancestors and my community.

While I name these three frameworks as methodology, they also constitute my theoretical framework. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) indicates, Indigenous methodologies constitute the intersectional space of theory, epistemology and praxis. This is in keeping with Indigenous worldviews that highlight the way in which all things are relational and need to be understood in a holistic manner. Simultaneously, the conjoining of theory and methodology works against the Western epistemic and research tradition of classifying and separating questions of ontology and epistemology. Therefore, in keeping with and echoing Indigenous epistemic frameworks, the methodological and theoretical frameworks in this dissertation are considered as inextricably intertwined. Smith (1999) also reminds us that for Indigenous communities, the *process* of research is often more important than the findings. As such, the Tlingit principles, the Medicine Wheel and the

Canoe Journey teachings offer rich and complex understandings of the research process that, in turn, will help strengthen this dissertation project.

In my own journey of “coming to know,” I needed to situate the spiritual teachings as told by the elders. These teachings are an important methodological consideration for me as part of the Tlingit Nation because they allow me to honor and center my cultural teachings in my research process. In this way, I ensure that my methodology reflects and is relationally accountable to the teachings of the Tlingit Nation. The Tlingit principles also constitute the dominant theoretical worldview of the ancestors – as an intersection of theory, praxis, and process, Cecilia Kunz (personal communication, 1988; personal communication 2001) referred to these principles as “a way of life.” I choose to start with and center Tlingit principles as this privileges Tlingit ways of being, seeing and doing. This then leads into an introduction and description of the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel has been an important framework to enhance my understanding and interpretation of the world around me as well as the research that I am conducting. Finally, I will introduce the Canoe Journey which I took in 1990. It is my intent to respect and to bring forth key elements of my framework throughout this dissertation. All three frameworks have been an integral part of how I look at, perceive and make meaning of the world around me. I begin with the Tlingit principles, which help guide me in my everyday life, and have guided me in this research process.

### **3.2 Tlingit Principles**

I begin by honoring the Tlingit ancestors and in particular, Cecilia Kunz. Cecilia and I met twice in Fairbanks, Alaska: once in 1988 and again in 2001. Cecilia conveyed the

importance of three Tlingit guiding philosophies: 1) respect for self and others; 2) sharing; and 3) *haa shageinyaa* - reverence for the Great Spirit. Cecilia passed into the spirit world in 2004 at the age of 94.

### **3.2.1 Respect for Self and Others**

In 2001, in my conversation with Cecilia, a soft-spoken Tlingit elder, she emphasized how we would not maintain the *yan gaa duuneek* (dignity) of our people and others around us if we did not maintain the notion of “respect” for who we are and for those with whom we connect. “This involves the white man; they are not going anywhere. We all have to live together and have respect for each other’s ways” (C. Kunz, personal communication, 2001). This principle of respect, and its association with maintaining dignity, is critical to my research process. Cecilia’s comment imparts to me that even in our most tense or conflict-laden relationships, we have to find ways to be respectful in order to enhance the dignity of self and other. Her words also suggest to me to be mindful of the linkages between respect, dignity and cooperation.

Cecilia also spoke of the way in which many Tlingit people have lost their way, whether living on traditional territories or in the cities, and how we need to return to the ceremonies.

The potlatch is a big feast that marks a time for showing respect through honoring others, through payments of debts and sharing our wealth. The respect and honor held toward our ancestry, family, name, house crest, determined how detailed a potlatch would be. This respect would be showed in the preparation for years in

advance. We need to honor these teachings today because they are an important part of how we survived for so long. (C. Kunz, personal communication, 2001)

The teaching that Cecilia imparts is in line with Indigenous theorists, call to decolonizing through a return to our traditional ceremonies and values. Respect and dignity are intrinsic to our continued survival as Indigenous peoples, and in my research process, her teachings are a reminder that paying attention to the details of preparing for research is highly important as a demonstration of respect for others and as a means for enacting my own dignity. Cecilia's words also emphasize the importance of honoring and sharing, values that will be essential in how I conduct myself with the research participants in this study.

I have worked hard to be respectful of myself and others around me in all aspects of my life. I am mindful that there needs to be more written on Indigenous leadership pedagogies in higher education and that it is through the leaders', students' and elders' contributions, sharing and input that I can provide respectful, meaningful accounts as a way to guide future teachings. I aim to do so in a respectful way.

### **3.2.2 Sharing**

*Our idea of wealth is not about gathering but giving away. We have survived as a people for centuries by caring for our natural environment and by sharing with each other. (J. Brown, Tlingit elder, as cited in Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1994)*

One of the traditional values I have learned is the notion of sharing. While I am honored to be involved in moving Indigenous education forward, I am also aware that with this honor comes a responsibility, and that responsibility is to share the knowledge I receive. In 1988, when I sat with Cecilia, she spoke of how "we always shared everything

we gained with our people whether it be through ceremony, knowledge, fish, game or other means.” She worried that now there are too many Indigenous people becoming like the settlers and only wanting to gather wealth (C. Kunz, personal communication, 1988). More recently, Indigenous people have begun sharing different forms of Indigenous knowledge through elementary, high-school and post-secondary education. Indigenous elders, academic scholars and students are at the forefront of sharing and transmitting this knowledge. The concept of sharing experiences and transferring knowledge from those who carry it to the new generation is important for addressing struggles and ensuring the well-being of future generations. It is my hope that, by sharing information through this study, I can add to the knowledge base of Indigenous pedagogies, leadership and transformation and I will be able to “give back” to communities. Thomas reminds us that,

Passing on knowledge, wisdom and blessings is how we perpetuate the cycle of teachings from generation to generation as it was passed onto us. If reciprocity is a critical Indigenous value, then so too is purpose. Our work must be purposeful and give something meaningful back to our communities.

(Qwul’sih’yah’maht, 2011, p.61)

### **3.2.3 *Haa shageinyaa* (Reverence for the Great Spirit)**

Central to Tlingit beliefs is that there is a spirit within a spirit. Elders often refer to “*Haa shageinyaa*”, spirit of all spirits. We have a responsibility to honor the past, through our creation stories, the ancestors and the Great Spirit. Cecilia spoke of how “our people were connected to the environment and the animals who we considered were related to us. Tlingits could be transformed into animals and animals could take on human form (personal communication, 1988).” Both have eternal spirits. Cecilia communicated the

importance of the spirit world when preparing for a hunt in that, if the preparations honored the spirit of the animal that gave its life to the hunter, its spirit would be set free to be born again in a new body (personal communication, 1988). She said this is no different than how we treat each other:

There is the same belief for us as humans; we must prepare the body in a good way in order so that the spirits will have spirit belongings to help them with their difficult journey. This is why we are told that possessions were to be burned with the body. Blankets, pots and pans and warm clothing are things we need for that journey. Where that spirit is going, it is a place where the spirit could reunite with all their loved ones who had passed away before; we can then return in another form. (C. Kunz, personal communication, 1988)

I am mindful that spirits live everywhere, in plants, animals, the land and the forests, the sun and the moon. One of the teachings reveals that humans do not have spiritual experiences, *spirits have human experiences*. When we come to respect these spirits, they will respect us. Our ceremonies provide thanks to the spirits through birth, marriages, naming, and death. There are “good spirits” and there are “evil spirits” (C. Kunz, personal communication, 1988). We have many people who can guide us in these teachings. It is important for me to pray for strength each morning and give thanks each night. I do this through ceremony and through this research; it is my intent to honor the spiritual connections from the past, the present and in the future through the participants, this research, and in my own life.

### 3.3 The Medicine Wheel

This study is guided by the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel teachings, as taught to me by Gord Bruyere (Anishnabe), Gale Cyr (Anishnabekwe), Dr. Lee Brown (Cherokee) and Kathy Absolon (Anishnabe kwe), guide both my methodological and theoretical framework. The Medicine Wheel, as I have learned, is a way of life. The Wheel is holistic and elements of the Wheel help guide our life processes and re-creation of ourselves. It is all encompassing; it has no beginning or end. As we journey through this Wheel, we learn that change is more about gaining understanding rather than achieving perfection.

In his dissertation titled *Making the classroom a healthy place: The development of affective competency in Aboriginal Pedagogy* (2004), Brown speaks to the importance of the Medicine Wheel, “the Medicine Wheel, as a philosophical and epistemological concept, represents a multi-layered and multi-faceted reality. The layers of the Wheel have been used as a metaphor to describe the four directions, the four winds, the four races, and the four elements of creation: earth, water, air and fire” (p.18). Focusing on the four cardinal directions of the Medicine Wheel – the eastern, southern, Western and northern – we, as educators, can guide ourselves through the Wheel to organize and prioritize demands and necessities within academia. Oneida psychologist Dr. Roland Chrisjohn speaks to the importance of circles, “The circle is a metaphor much used by various North American Indigenous Nations. The sun; unity; wholeness; the change of the seasons...and for the non-Indian inhabitants of North America, the circle too, is a symbol: the empty nonexistence of zero; the vacuity of circular definitions or circular arguments; the endless loop of the

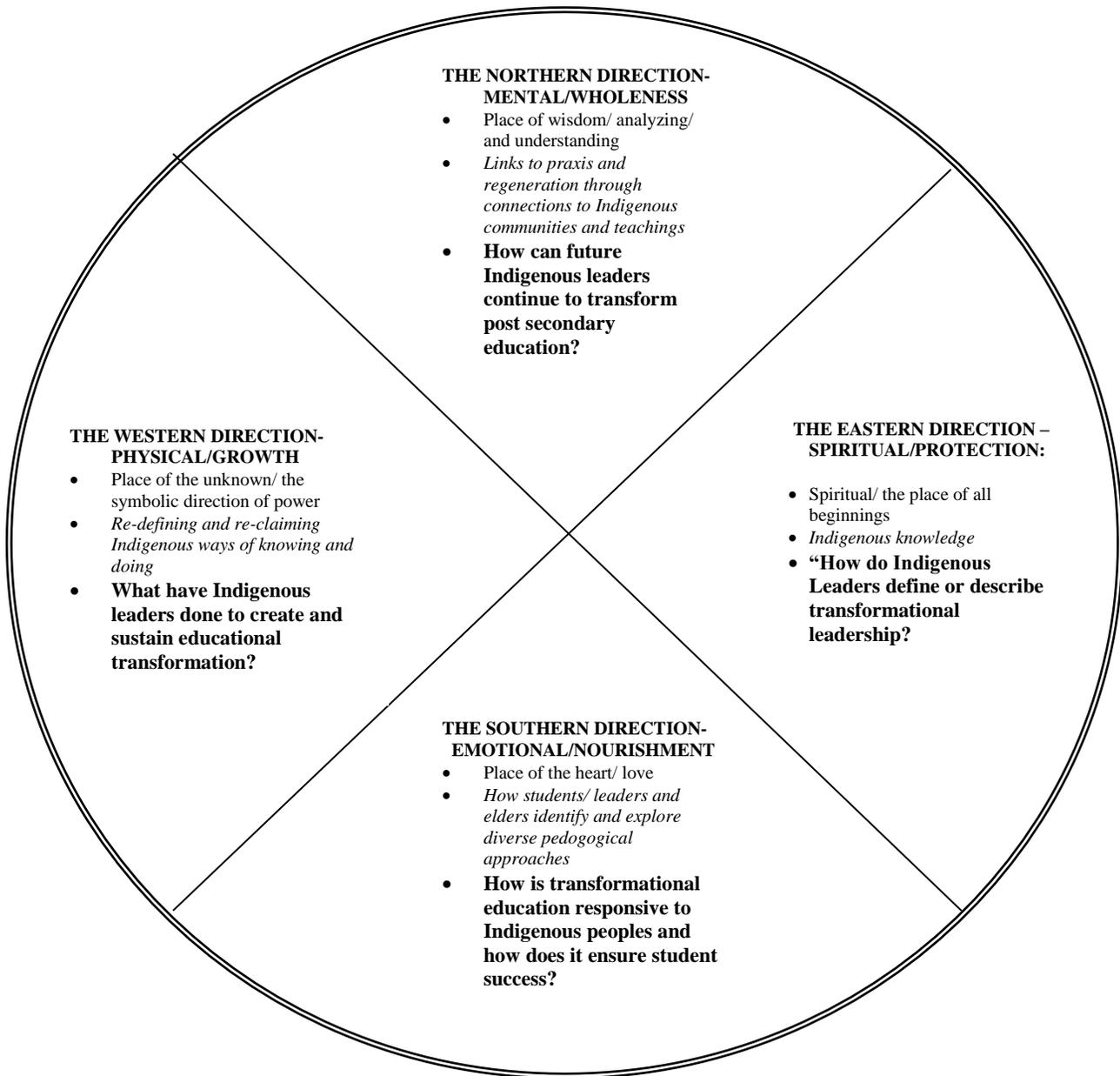
carousel” (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997, p. 115). For me, the Medicine Wheel is a representation of the circle of life which is always evolving and bringing new lessons and truths to the walking of the path. Like the circle, the Medicine Wheel connotes unity and wholeness which are important to our sense of connectedness, our relations, and our well-being.

I illustrate my findings and analysis through the four directions of the Medicine Wheel. In Medicine Wheel teachings, I have learned that we start in the eastern direction, the direction of new beginnings, when the sun rises and denotes spring. In the eastern direction I have placed my first dissertation question: “How do Indigenous leaders define or describe transformational leadership?” I have also placed in this direction the notion of how leaders and I define Indigenous knowledge. My study continues clockwise in the southern direction, which is the direction of youth and the direction of summer, a time when there is much movement. The second question - “How is transformational education responsive to Indigenous peoples and how does it ensure Indigenous student success?” - is placed in this direction. Here, I look at how students, leaders and elders identify and explore diverse Indigenous pedagogical approaches. The Western direction, the direction of adulthood and the fall season, comprises the “so what” piece. This is where I have placed my third question: “What have Indigenous leaders done to create and sustain educational transformation?” In this direction I examine the pedagogical approaches to re-defining and re-claiming Indigenous knowing and doing. The northern direction, the direction of elders, is a time of reflection and a space for regeneration and revitalization. I have placed my fourth question in the north: “How can future Indigenous leaders continue to transform post-secondary Indigenous education?” In the northern direction I examine the links to

praxis and regeneration by researching connections to Indigenous communities and traditional teachings. I also want to point out that no one direction has more autonomy than the other, and the concept of the Wheel is that all directions are equal and interchangeable. My analysis of findings includes various philosophies of the Medicine Wheel to ensure voices from literature, participants' interviews and my analysis enrich Indigenous leadership and student success in public post-secondary education.

Figure 2, on the next page, illustrates the fullness and richness of the Medicine Wheel, its teachings, and the elements of each direction. The figure highlights the philosophies of the directions of the Medicine Wheel, and shows how I have placed my questions in each direction of the Wheel.

**Figure 2: Envisioning Indigenous Transformational Leadership Within the Philosophies of the Medicine Wheel**



### 3.4 The Canoe Journey as a Methodological/Theoretical Framework

*"The Journey Within"*

*All that I ever do*

*Is seen in the currents of the river*

*All that I would ever be*

*Moves quickly to the sea*

*When I've had too much of it I rest*

*Turn to the old people who know*

*Their strength and courage flow*

*Then I rise to the surge of the river again*

*The teachings fill my mind*

*Touching the water emancipates my body*

*The land is speaking, the smooth waters wind*

*And I launch the canoe on the river again*

*I cherish the gifts from the journey*

*Respect, sharing and haa shageinyaa*

*And the river becomes a part of me*

*I have become part of the river*

*All that I ever do*

*Is seen in the currents of the river*

*And all that I would ever be*

*Moves quickly to the sea* (T. Ormiston, personal reflection)



**Figure 3: Canoeing in the North (image courtesy of Ab Morrison- Hayward)**

I first wrote this poem in 1990, the last time I was on an extended Canoe Journey. I center this journey and honor the teachings I have received through this dissertation as a form of leadership. This particular journey covered over 1300 kilometers and spanned the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Alaska. The 55 day journey consisted of paddling, portaging, hunting and visiting with communities. For me, it was a journey of hope, understanding, re-discovery and ultimately, a “coming to know” of my place in the world and my identity. My brother and I began the journey in Eagle Plains, NWT in mid-June, travelling for 10 days by way of the Bell and Porcupine Rivers into Old Crow, Yukon. After seven days in Old Crow, where we enjoyed the company and generosity of the community and spent time on the Crow Flats, we continued down the Porcupine River for 15 days to Fort Yukon, Alaska. We spent numerous days in Fort Yukon and entered the Yukon River for our final 18-day-journey to Tanana, Alaska. The teachings of the river are boundless. The teachings from this journey and from others on my homelands mirror my educational journey. The poem above speaks to some of my contemplations while on this Canoe

Journey and encapsulates the rhythms of the time and place of that journey. It speaks to the ways in which I merged with the canoe, the trip, the environment around me, and the sense of being on the land, and in the time and place of our people.

Today, I reflect on how values inform all aspects of cultural teachings and how we might utilize these values to live a good life. These values include reciprocity, generosity, love, honor, respect, belonging, sharing, caring, trust and spirituality. Whether participating in canoeing, in a sweat lodge, in a potlatch, in smudging or any other ceremonies, the values espoused in Indigenous cultures have informed, maintained and sustained people throughout time.

In the next section, I provide a more detailed consideration of my Canoe Journey. My Canoe Journey frames and provides an Indigenous-specific methodology. In part, the Canoe Journey speaks to the ideas that I come with to this dissertation, and I share the teachings<sup>14</sup> I gained in the process of this journey. That is, I detail the teachings and meanings that I gathered in the process of the Canoe Journey that helped create a shift in my personal life journey, and that have influenced how I am in the world. These teachings are what shape my worldview and guide my own teaching practice. Importantly, the Canoe Journey that I describe situates the Tlingit principles I discussed earlier, and illustrates how these principles came together in my journey. Like many Indigenous stories, the Canoe Journey is a story about land, place, connections, relationships, collaboration, and a site of both knowledge production and dissemination. As a methodology, the Canoe Journey informs the values that guided me during the research process, whether by the ways in which I

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<sup>14</sup> The key teachings are shown as figures framed in a box.

conducted my interviews, or how I analysed the data. The Canoe Journey, then, embodies my spiritual and intellectual core.

### 3.5 The Canoe Journey and its Teachings

In the 1980s, during the years of my teens and young adulthood, I embarked on several long journeys in the North West Territories, Yukon and Alaska. During this time, I was searching for meaning, identity and roots-connections (see figure 4). As an adoptee, I had sometimes seen the other side – that of confusion, alienation and loss - a side that was sometimes filled with pain, anger and hostility. In her book, *Recognition of being: Reclaiming Native womanhood*, Kim Anderson (1990) reminds me of the dilemmas of a fractured identity, but she transforms those dilemmas in relation to the reconstruction of native womanhood. In her diagram entitled “Who am I?” she places the ensuing questions into the circle: “Resist- Who I am not, Reclaim- Where have I come from? Construct- Where am I going? Act- What are my responsibilities?” (p. 16). These questions resonate strongly with me today as I reminisce on my canoe journeys of the past.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: SEARCHING FOR HOME, IDENTITY AND BELONGING**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that when you are dislocated from your family, your people, place, traditions, customs, language, and identity, there is a host of losses to be mourned. The Canoe Journey is a way of devoting myself to answering those elusive questions of home, belonging, and identity.

**Figure 4: Teaching and Learning: Searching for Home, Identity and Belonging**

In 1991, when I moved from the Yukon to Alberta, I had already spent eight years working with young Indigenous people who, like me, had grown up disconnected from

their identities. I wanted to share my experiences on the water and what these journeys have done for my identity, my self- esteem and my spirit. Through Canoe Journeys, I began to teach children and youth some of the skills needed to canoe and survive on the land. I was asked to mentor the young ones through canoe lessons, programs and trips. Today, I have come to understand how a canoe trip can be a powerful form of transportation towards learning. I have watched many people realize their own power, potential and possibilities on such journeys, transforming their own and others' preconceived limitations, and arriving at new knowledge of the self and, importantly, establishing a sense of the collective - that is, constructing and re-validating their identities, relationships and connecting the past, present and future together. Robina Thomas further emphasized this in our interview, "Leadership is really about living a life entrenched in the teachings, not about political behavior or posturing" (interview, 2010).

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: CREATING VISIONS, IMAGES AND DREAMS.**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that there are times when education is about providing space for the desire to create visions, images and dreams where there are so few.

**Figure 5: Teaching and Learning: Creating Visions, Images and Dreams**

The teachings contained in my Canoe Journey teachings originate from one particular canoe journey that I embarked on with my brother in 1990. I am fortunate to have retained my journal with pictures from that time-period. My brother spent much of his life in the bush, while I spent much of my time in the city. We connected in 1982 in Whitehorse. Both of us had been on several canoe journeys together in the Yukon prior to this trip in 1990, but our longest trip to date had been twelve days which took us from

Whitehorse to Dawson City on the Yukon River. In this section, I wish to demonstrate how we, as leaders, can embrace our ways of knowing and being which helps guide us in the future. More specifically, this section explores the ways in which the various elements of the Canoe Journey narrative can offer a framework for thinking about leadership and pedagogy, and it provides an opportunity to consider the power of traditional teachings for their epistemic range and the hope for creating change.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: NURTURING INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE APPROACHES**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that, as Indigenous peoples, life histories are disparate and not homogenous. For transformation to be possible, academic leaders must nurture a collaborative journey amongst students, while being attuned to the specificities and variances of life narratives.

**Figure 6: Teaching and Learning: Nurturing Individual and Collective Approaches**

This story is about the experiences I had while canoeing with a leader and brother of mine, Roland (whom we call Rolly), for 55 days on the Eagle, Bell, Porcupine and Yukon rivers that span the North West Territories, Yukon and Alaska. It was a journey of new beginnings, survival, “coming-to-know” and transformation. This 850 mile journey led me to a revelation about the commitment to moving forward, keeping my head up, while “paddling with a purpose.”

Preparing for our Canoe Journey began with a series of smudges with a mixture of sage, tobacco and cedar, and a two day fast at my friend Pat’s home in Dawson City, Yukon. Pat is from the *Tr’ondek Hwech’in* First Nation, Over the years, he has become a close friend and a spiritual advisor. Pat drove us to Eagle Plains, North West Territories with our canoe on the

top of his old Jeep Cherokee in the middle of June. Eagle Plains is located half way to Inuvik, NWT on the Dempster Highway. This curvy, endless highway is the most northern highway in Canada. Aside from a lodge in the area, the terrain is noticeably barren, with the Ogilvie Mountains in the far distance to the west and to the north, sprawling tundra which is often referred to as the “last frontier.” We set out on our journey at Eagle Plains, and this 55 day trip took us from Eagle Plains through the Eagle and Bell rivers, to Old Crow, Yukon and down the Porcupine River into the Yukon River at Fort Yukon, Alaska. Our journey ended in Tanana Alaska. We chose to stop and spend time in the various communities that we journeyed through – communities which are only accessible by air or water.<sup>15</sup> When I set out on this journey, I had very little understanding of the lasting effects this would have on who I am today and where I hope to be in the future. *Point your canoe downstream, keep your head up, listen to the land and paddle with a purpose.*

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<sup>15</sup> In the winter time, there are various ice roads between communities.



**Figure 7: Paddling the Bell River, NWT**

We were well prepared for this journey as both of us had been on several hunting/traveling journeys on the Yukon, Peel and Nahanni Rivers during the 1980's. However, none of those trips was as cumbersome as this one. Figure 7, above, is a snapshot of the preparation of our journey: it was taken in the middle of June in 1990. Our canoe was a seventeen foot cedar/fiberglass, with aluminum gunwales, which we purchased off Pat in Dawson City. We knew about the importance of packing no more than approximately 50 pounds of gear so that we could still comfortably maneuver the canoe through the waters we were to face. The way we saw it, our simple existence within the canoe was in the hands of the land and the Creator for the next eight weeks or so. We brought most of the gear in Whitehorse,<sup>16</sup> which included the typical camping gear to survive the elements: sleeping bags, a tent, a two burner stove, camping fuel, matches, rope, plastic, a compass, bug dope, candles, a first aid kit, bear flares, rain gear and two changes of clothes. Packing minimal food was a little trickier, as we expected to live off the land, but we carried enough food for about thirty days. Typical meals included lentils, beans, pasta, dried fruit, rice, powdered

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<sup>16</sup> The city we were living in is located approximately 450 kilometers south of Dawson City.

milk, sugar and oatmeal. We also packed lard, onions, garlic, and flour as these were essential to prepare the fish and wildlife we gathered along our route. We also chose to pack a .22-caliber rifle and a compound crossbow for hunting, along with two fishing rods and several skinning knives.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: TOTAL PREPARATION**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that leadership is about preparing to meet the pedagogical, epistemic, ontological, and affective needs of the classroom. To prepare only for disseminating prescribed knowledges is to prepare inadequately for the complex dimensions and forces that challenge praxis and meaning-making in the classroom.

**Figure 8: Teaching and Learning: Total Preparation**

I will never forget the overwhelming rush of joy and happiness the moment we pushed off shore at Eagle Plains, knowing that we were embarking on a journey that had no time restrictions and our only commitments were to the land and the Creator. I wrote in my journal on day three of the trip: "I don't know if there is anything like being on the water first thing in the morning at sunrise where the flow of the river and the sun's light off the water and the feeling of tranquility are so surreal" (T. Ormiston, journal, June 1990). You feel that serenity after days on the river: it is exhilarating, and it got me wondering about what it might have been like for our ancestors, that this was our only mode of transportation back and forth from the different communities up North. *Canoeing is such a good way to be in touch with the ancestors and with who you are....*

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: THE GIFT AND POWER OF SILENCE**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that in the silence, there is memory, experience, and a place for bearing witness. The journey teaches me that in the silence is a spirit, recorded history, and as leaders, we must prepare for accountable listening to hear the stories that silence offers.

**Figure 9: Teaching and Learning: The Gift and Power of Silence**

An average day on our journey would consist of seven to eight hours of paddling. For this journey, it was all downstream, including one set of rapids and one portage.<sup>17</sup> Because the sun never sets in the far north during the short summer months (June, July and the first part of August), it was not unusual for us to paddle some days for twelve to fourteen hours. In fact, even though Rolly had a watch, it broke during the course of our journey, and we began to have to tell time by the positioning of the sun in the sky as it circled the atmosphere. Time really began to have no relevance for us in a Western linear way on this journey. I pondered how circular cycles of time provided a shared sense of identity and history, of doing things when they were meant to be done and lasting for as long as they were meant to last. There were also stretches of seven to nine days on this journey where we saw no other human beings. Finding a place to set up camp some evenings could be an adventure, especially when windy, as the fast flowing river required quick, careful maneuvering from both the bow and the stern of the canoe so as to not tip with our supplies.

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<sup>17</sup> Portage refers to carrying supplies and canoe from one river to another. This was a three kilometre portage.

The late Ray Quock<sup>18</sup> taught me the healing elements of trees and plants in the North, and I became adept at finding branches from white birch trees and poplar trees, as they were always the driest in the North in summertime and best for kindling. There is nothing worse than being cold and wet on a rainy day and not being able to light a fire, especially when the mosquitoes are plentiful and could be described as mini dragon flies. Black flies also became a force to be reckoned with but usually only after a kill. Both forms of insects were merely searching for a little food.

In the mornings we would usually wake around 6:00 am to the sounds and sights of the crows, foxes, wolves, eagles, ptarmigans and grouse. We would walk the land at this time. I reflected on day five in my journal,

[T]oday, this mist is low, a little hard to see but we made the fire anyways and boiled some oats. We spent an hour picking gooseberries this morning and boiled some of them with sugar for energy while paddling. Today, prayers are given before we take the medicines from the land to acknowledge that those berries have spirit. We are on a rock bed which made our sleep awkward last night and the launch of the canoe difficult this morning. Our canoe is made of cedar and fiberglass so is quite durable, but we know it will need to be patched up somewhere on this trip; we are prepared for that. We carry the canoe over the rocks and then go back to grab our gear. From the water's edge, we climb into the canoe and push off, for me, mostly with my legs, and partly with the paddle. I am in the stern of the canoe for the next few days, a big responsibility, especially for the rapids we will face. Today is

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<sup>18</sup> Tahltan/Kaska Dene from Telegraph Creek, Watson Lake.

damp, overcast and cool, but at least it is not raining. Following the constricted bends of the river, we paddled steadily for about six hours until we got real hungry.

(T. Ormiston, journal, 1990)

We were used to finding old abandoned or unused trapper cabins on this journey. Ray told us long ago that these could be used as shelter as long as we showed respect for the people whose territory and property we were squatting on. This meant that we were to leave everything as it was when we arrived: water needed to be emptied, dishes washed and the garbage taken out to be buried or burned. We were not to take anything that belonged to the owners of cabins and we should leave something behind, even if just a letter expressing our thanks. We stayed in various trappers' cabins for up to eight nights during the course of our journey. Most of these were located on the Bell and Porcupine rivers, and they were a welcome retreat from the elements.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING: PRACTICING TEACHING**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that, as leaders, we can never forget the lessons we are taught of responsibility, accountability, and reciprocity. The Canoe Journey shows me how these aspects are necessary not just as hospitality, but as survival.

#### **Figure 10: Teaching and Learning: Practicing Teaching**

We faced our only rapids early in the trip. On this morning, as we arose, we saw a couple elders near the mouth of the Little Bell River, hauling in their fish nets. We paddled over to where we met the two elders from Old Crow, John and Peter. After introductions, we spent half the day with them, assisting in hauling in their catch, cleaning Chinook, roasting it on a stick over the fire and sharing stories about time on the land. Again, time

had no meaning for us on this day as we knew the rapids would wait for us. The men had trap lines and a cabin close to where the Little Bell River and the Bell River meet, and they had been there four days. They warned us to observe the rapids carefully before entering their course. These particular rapids were about 50 metres long and had three channels to choose from. The channel on the right was the safest, although we needed to climb the river bank to see just how fast flowing the river was because if it was too fast, we would need to stay clear of the right wall, too far right and we would meet a rather nasty eddy line which could capsize us. They are considered “class three rapids.” In the late afternoon, we walked down the path on the river bank beside the rapids while my brother spoke to those waters. From our vantage point, we could observe the movement of the river, and this helped us navigate a pathway through the rapids. Over the years, I had come to know how an eddy of stagnant water or a spray of water turning back on itself could expose where the rocks, currents and ledges were lying, just under the surface of the water. I knew that we would have to avoid these areas.

We walked back to where our canoe was docked and began to paddle towards the rapids. Our practice was to switch roles every few days, and that day I was the stern paddler. As the stern paddler, I was responsible for navigating the path of the canoe while shouting directions to Rolly to help direct the path and listening to him calling from the bow to indicate any potential upcoming obstacles. During a Canoe Journey, it is essential that we work in collaboration; when paddling into rapids, our need to work co-operatively was imperative. We both used contemporary canoeing terms for our instructions to each other on this day, “Pry,” “J-stroke” and “Draw” being the most common commands. The whole experience lasted about three minutes although it seemed like so much longer, but

aside from many splashes of water coming over the gunwales into the canoe, there were no dangerous mishaps.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: COLLABORATION FOR SURVIVAL**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that, for effective leadership, collaboration is not an abstract term that we merely talk about; collaborative relationships based on trust and mutuality are the vanguards of survival.

**Figure 11: Teaching and Learning: Collaboration for Survival**

I had only been on one other set of rapids in my life: the “five finger rapids”<sup>19</sup> which had claimed the life of various paddlers over the years. These “grade three” rapids were part of a twelve day Canoe Journey I did from Whitehorse to Dawson City, Yukon in 1987. They are located 24 miles north of Carmacks, and I had to climb the river bank to get to a lookout point above them, so I could study the rapids prior to canoeing through them. In the same way as with the Bell River rapids, I was able to view the “five fingers” or channels of swiftly moving water and offer medicine and prayer before paddling through the chosen channel. Canoeing through these rapids was one of the most challenging experiences I have ever been a part of. At one point, the wind was so fierce, it was as if the Creator just grabbed us and pulled us back through the waves. We came frighteningly close to the bluff. If we had hit it, we would have died like others before us because it was a straight rock bluff that went right into the river (see Figure 12 below).

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<sup>19</sup> They are named for the five channels, or fingers that pass through four basalt columns.



**Figure 12: Approaching the Five Finger Rapids, North of Carmacks, Yukon**

What I remember most about this location in was that while there in 1987, I had the opportunity to give thanks to the Creator for my child, as my partner had shared with me that morning, while in the village of Carmacks, that she was expecting our baby. In retrospect, it seems as though many of the most memorable experiences I have had were on the water.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: BALANCE, SELF-CARE AND PRAYER**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that as leaders, we will face challenges and feelings of exhilaration and sadness. Living in balance with all things, self-care and prayers help provide guidance and direction.

**Figure 13: Teaching and Learning: Balance, Self-care and Prayer**

In the far North, the mating season for geese is from late June and into July. This is the time when the geese fly low in small flocks, so it is a good time to shoot one with little exertion. Rolly and I shot three geese during this trip, all on the Porcupine and Bell Rivers

during the ten day trip between Eagle Plains and Old Crow, Yukon. I shot the first one from the canoe at about a 25 yard distance into the air to the right of us. I aimed for its belly but got him in the wing. He landed in the woods to the north of us-about ten yards away. We land marked the spot, paddled over to the bank of the river and rustled through the bush for what seemed like an eternity. As described in my journal:

When we finally got to the goose in an opening of the bush, it was flapping its wings in frenzy but couldn't move from its location; my brother told me to break its neck. I tried to do it but I had never done this with a goose, only a duck. I could not twist its neck in three tries. Finally Rolly came over, told me to hold the feet and let the goose's head dangle towards the ground; Rolly slit its throat with his buck knife. Plenty of blood surged through its neck to the ground and I felt somewhat embarrassed, but my brother smiled and told me not to worry, and just to watch him next time. He also reminded me I should keep my knife ready as a back-up plan in case things don't go as planned. I skinned the goose and gutted it before packing it back to the boat where we put it into a large plastic bag half filled with river water until we made camp a couple hours later. We buried most of the guts where we skinned the goose and left sage as an offering. While sitting by the campfire tonight, I talked again with Rolly about how I felt bad about not being able to kill that goose. He just smiled again and said, "That's good because if an animal gives itself to you, that is a gift you must respect. That means you must not let it suffer more than it needs to. If you don't treat it right, it may not give its life to you in the future." Good teaching today. Goodnight.

(T. Ormiston, journal, 1990)

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: TRUST TO LEARN FROM OTHERS**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that leadership involves being continuously open to learning, to knowing when you don't know, and knowing when to trust others to show you how to learn.

**Figure 14: Teaching and Learning: Trust to Learn from Others**

On this trip, we shot two other geese and I did snap one of their necks, after observing Rolly a second time. I remember thinking how we could have shot more geese, but we had an abundance of other animals to eat. We feasted on several beavers, porcupines and grouse on this journey. The late afternoons and evenings were opportune for dropping our lines in the water; we usually found the best fishing spots were where the endless creeks flowed into the rivers. We enjoyed Northern Pike, Grayling, Dolly Varden, and Arctic Char.

Along the Porcupine River, two days before the first community we were to arrive at, we came across our first caribou. To the north of us were the Richardson Mountains. I have only participated in one kill of large game, a moose, and I remember Rolly saying this was not the time for a kill. It was the closest I had ever come to caribou and I wrote,

We had been paddling long and hard today when we saw some moving objects on the right shore. Paddling closer, we saw a group of up to 20 caribou, feeding along the shore. It was amazing. Then they rushed into the river and swam across, with only their heads and tails sticking out of the water. I was in awe at the speed with which they travelled. We paddled towards them; they were already across, standing on the river bank, shaking the water off their hides. They looked at us and us at

them; we were only about five yards away from each other. I think we looked at each other for several minutes; the stillness of the water made everything seem so tranquil. We felt a deep appreciation of our surroundings before finally paddling on.

(T. Ormiston, journal, 1990)

One of the other experiences where we faced a large animal occurred half way through our 55 day journey, where the Porcupine meets the Yukon River. On this particular night, I slept under the canoe while Rolly was about 25 feet from me in the tent. We had become accustomed to keeping our food supplies in the bush, well away from our camp, so as to not attract animals to us. I remember hearing the bushes near us rustling and thought a moose or caribou was close by:

I awoke to the sound of something last night nearby. I lied still until I looked out from my sleeping bag and saw what appeared to be a bear walk out around the tent towards the fire pit. It was a lightish brown bear and appeared to be quite full grown. I was not sure how to react; I thought about what options were available to me. The bear flare was near the tent, but the cross bow was on the ground near the stern of my canoe. I thought for a second about reaching for it but knew it would be risky as I would have to maneuver to it while in my sleeping bag. I simply froze, partly in fear and partly in awe. The grizzly went close to the fire pit and poked its nose towards one of our canteens, and then looked across and straight at me. He walked to within three feet of me, sniffing around for my scent. I remember thinking/praying "I am not here to harm you; please don't harm me." Even though the words never reached my lips, I did move, whether accidentally or on purpose, I cannot be certain. The bear looked right at me with its distant brown eyes, and he

seemed to be checking me out. He moved his snout back and forth repeatedly and I knew he knew I was there. The grizzly then stood straight up on its hind legs which looked to be about ten feet high, front paws extended and let out one loud snarl. He returned back to all fours and wandered off into the bush. I heard the tent unzip and Rolly was beside me, wide eyed, asking if I was okay. We never slept last night at all. I never told Rolly about my fear of that grizzly...or that my bladder almost unburdened itself when that grizzly was walking away. I had almost pissed myself right then and there.

(T. Ormiston, journal, 1990)

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: OUR CONNECTION TO ANIMALS**

On this Canoe Journey, I am left to ponder the realization that just as values of respect, *haa shageinyaa* and reciprocity can structure the social relations between people, they can also structure and maintain relations between humans and animals. Our lineages attest to this. As a member of the wolf clan, I am a descendant of the wolf, I am a part of the wolf and he is a part of me. As such, I carry the traits and responsibilities of the wolf.

**Figure 15: Teaching and Learning: Our Connection to Animals**

Disembarking from our canoes and spending time in each of the three communities<sup>20</sup> we chose to visit along this journey was most memorable. Today, I reflect on Shawn Wilson (2009) and his book, *Research as ceremony: Indigenous research methods*, where he uses the term “relational accountability” and speaks to principles of authenticity, credibility and reciprocity as being foundations of an Indigenous research methodology rather than goals of validity or reliability (p. 101). These terms really are universal; they

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<sup>20</sup> Old Crow, Fort Yukon and Tanana

are the basis of living a good life, so I now reflect on the power of these relations through my stopovers on this journey. I learned about respecting the people/communities that we were in, and that I should not ask for things, including knowledge, but wait to have things shared with me when they were meant to be. The people shared many stories with us in each of the communities. Taking the time to listen to those stories was important and it reminded me that this is how we have always come to know. Mindful observation and reflection are important aspects for learning and building connections.

One particular layover lasted seven days for us. The people were happy to have us in the community and we were honored to be part of theirs. After ten days of paddling, we finally came upon Old Crow one afternoon in late June. What I remember most vividly is looking over at the riverbank and seeing the scattering of houses and fifteen to twenty people lining the bank. At the time, I wondered to myself, “Why are these people here?” It did not take long to realize that they were waving at us. How did they know we would be coming through? Maybe the impact of seeing them was magnified because we had only seen two other humans since we started our journey ten days earlier.

We yelled to shore and introduced ourselves. We asked permission to come to shore and were welcomed back by a young person who told us to paddle to where he was standing – a clearing on the side of the river. As we pulled our canoe in and jumped out, many of the people came up to us and introduced themselves. They pulled our canoe up the bank and hauled our belongings up to the landing. I recognized one of the community members who was from the Tizya family, and began reminiscing with him. I knew him from earlier days in Whitehorse. He asked if Rolly and I would like to stay at his place. We gladly accepted. In fact, we stayed several nights with him. I had spent time with some of the

young people from this community in Whitehorse over the years, so the ability to spend time in this community was an honor. I found out through one of the families here that they knew when we began this Canoe Journey because the young people from the community, who were now living in Whitehorse, had given advance notice to watch out for and take care of us. Their generosity and caring spirits while we stayed in Old Crow will forever be etched in my memory.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: COMMUNITY LINKAGES**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that paying attention to the linkages between Nations, territories, histories, and identities is about forging continuity, communal resilience and collective identity between Indigenous communities.

**Figure 16: Teaching and Learning: Community Linkages**

That first night we arrived, we were invited to the community dance at the hall where elders, parents, and youth came together to honor one of the young graduates who had recently returned from F.H. Collins High-school in Whitehorse. The night was highlighted by fiddling and “jig” dancing. A young man introduced us as visitors to their community and we received gifts from some of the community members in the form of dry moose meat, lard and blankets to take with us on the rest of our journey. Protocol required that we formally introduce ourselves and share stories about what we discovered on the rivers. We were asked mostly about any caribou migration we had witnessed and whether there were any other canoes on the river. For the people of Old Crow, one of the highlights on this night was watching Rolly and I dance to the fiddle. While dancing the jig is customary for Gwitchin people, it was the first and likely last time I will do that! My feet

simply could not keep up with the speed of the fiddles, no matter how much the people clapped along.

The next evening we spent time with some of the elders. One of our memorable meetings was with elder Edith, who was the most remarkable woman I met on this journey. I used to read her stories about life in Old Crow in the *Whitehorse Star* newspaper in which she had a weekly column entitled "Here are the news." On this particular night, she spoke of the old days. She recounted how, when the store was built in the current locale of Old Crow in 1950, this meant the whole village moved from Old Rampart House, the former village of the people. She spoke of how to that day, many of the old people had never eaten store-bought meat in their lives. Edith also spoke of the creation stories, and I realize how these stories speak to the importance of how the Gwitchin people and the caribou are related. I also recall how passionate she was when speaking to the importance of hunting and trapping muskrats and actually invited us to go with Alfred to pick up supplies at his camp in Old Crow Flats.

Alfred took us to his camp north in Old Crow flats, which is about a hundred kilometers south of the Beaufort Sea. We left for the overnight trip on the fourth day of our stay in Old Crow. Old Crow Flats is about a four-hour boat ride, with engine, from the community. It is where the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nations gather from mid-April until mid-June every year for muskrat trapping season. Old Crow Flats is located on a plain, and the flats encompass a multitude of lakes with rivers running through them. The people hunt muskrats in April and May when ice covers the lakes. Although we missed the opportunity to participate in trapping, we were honored to help Alfred and his son gather some of their gear, stay overnight and bring supplies back from his camp to Old Crow. Alfred spoke of

how muskrats are one of their main sources of fresh meat until the caribou travel through on their summer migration to the calving grounds each year. Each family in Old Crow has their own trapping area in Crow Flats which is passed down from generation to generation. I saw the remnants of camps where the people had resided for up to two months during “muskrat” season. That night we slept in the wall tents that were still up at the camp; the tents and their floors were lined with spruce boughs. We heard many stories of trapping and hunting in the area, ate muskrat around the fire and slept soundly that night.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: THE POWER OF THE LAND**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that our everyday lives contain an archive that documents our philosophies, our laws, our customs, values, and practices. I learn that working on the land is a powerful site of pedagogical instruction and identity formation.

**Figure 17: Teaching and Learning: The Power of the Land**

Today, the Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow is home to almost three hundred First Nations. You still can only get there by air or water-except for winter ice roads which run from where we began our canoe trip in Eagle Plains, to Old Crow. The elders speak of global warming and how the winter roads are less and less accessible each year because the waters are not freezing. The migration of the caribou has also been affected through globalization and the renewed threat of Alaska oil and pipeline companies that want to explore in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge area. One of the internal struggles of this small community, which is indicative of other Indigenous communities, is that many of the children have to leave the community after grade nine if they are to maintain their education. This is not an easy decision for some families because like so

many Indigenous people, they are taken away from the culture and traditions of their Nations at a young age and many do not return.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: NEVER GIVING UP**

This Canoe Journey gifted me with an important teaching from a community member in Old Crow who, before we left said “*point your canoe downstream, keep your head up, listen to the land and don’t look back.*” A teaching taken from this experience has shown me the importance of attaining higher education, of understanding my surroundings, of moving through challenges, and importantly, not giving up. Although the community member’s teaching was said to me in a disciplinary manner, I remember his words: today they resonate for me as a way to emphasize the importance of “indigenizing my work” on a daily basis.

**Figure 18: Teaching and Learning: Never Giving Up**

From Old Crow, we continued our journey to Fort Yukon, Alaska; this part of the journey lasted 15 days. The relentless rain on this leg of the journey had me feeling somewhat depressed as I wrote in my diary one morning while contemplating embarking back on the river again:

It rained with a hard wind most the night, hard to sleep, everything is dripping wet, and the sky still looks gray and threatening today. Even if it doesn't rain, today I just don't feel like paddling. I am lonely now, thinking about my warm bed, my brother and my aunties, my friends. What would they think of me not wanting to go on? Shit, I got no choice anyways. I do have my Stephen King novel though, *The Stand*. Stu is such a cool guy and I could stay in the tent today and read on. If it doesn't rain, we could light the fire later; Rolly can play guitar and we could sing our hearts out. I asked Rolly if he wanted to stay here today and he just said “cool.” We are

connected, we are so compatible together, and it makes the trip feel good...it's hard being out here some days...

(T. Ormiston, journal, 1990)

There were several times through our journey where we chose not to canoe and kept our camp in one locale for several days and simply read, hunted, swam and wrote in our journals.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: APPRECIATING LONELINESS, SORROW, AND SOLITARINESS**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that loneliness, sorrow, and solitariness are a necessary part of learning, teaching and leadership. I learn that loneliness, sorrow and solitariness are a critical part of the journey which allows space for introspection, reflection, and recharging our selves.

**Figure 19: Teaching and Learning: Appreciating Loneliness, Sorrow, and Solitariness**



**Figure 20: Setting Up Camp on the Porcupine River**

We continued to hunt small game along the way: ptarmigan, beavers and porcupines. One of the most repulsive sights we saw was close to Fort Yukon, Alaska. We saw an animal lying on the river bank, brought our canoe ashore and approached a dead caribou that had been shot many times at close range; we knew that a shotgun was used because of the bullet patterns in the caribou. Lead had pierced the carcass in its head, belly and hind leg. Mosquitoes and flies were feasting on the carcass, but there were no signs of natural decay. The belly was still moderately warm. I felt the people who did this could be only a day or two ahead of us. Clearly, this was a form of trophy hunting or a pleasure kill where the pleasure comes only from shooting and the animal is left to die for no reason. We took photos of the caribou, provided an offering and paddled on. When we got to Fort Yukon, we shared our findings regarding the carcass up river with the people. The next day I was asked to join several community members and the local conservation officer on a search for the hunters down river in their boat. Although we spent most of the morning on

the water, we never spotted anyone. Several days later Rolly and I heard they had caught two German men near Stevens Village which is further downstream.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING: VIGILANCE**

The Canoe Journey teaches me that we must continue in the history of the people by resisting the ongoing assault on our traditions and beliefs. The Canoe Journey teaches me that, as leaders, we must exercise vigilance in order to safeguard our land, our resources, and all living beings.

**Figure 21: Teaching and Learning: Vigilance**



**Figure 22: Near Stevens Village, Alaska**

Our journey quietly ended in Tanana, Alaska, on August 11th, within the ancestors' territory. Tanana is positioned where the Yukon and Tanana Rivers meet. The village is known as *Nucha'la'woy'ya* meaning where the two rivers meet. We stayed for two nights in

Tanana, which is even smaller than Old Crow. There were about 200 people there. Hillary and her husband Paul put us up for those two nights and we sold our canoe to them for two hundred dollars. We gave them many of our leftover foods and our old two-burner camp stove. They gifted us with two moose hide medicine bags; I still carry mine with me today. The money we got for that canoe paid for our flight to Fairbanks, Alaska which was only one hundred and twenty-five miles from where we ended this Canoe Journey. Our 850 mile journey was over.

Reflecting back, this trip, for me personally, was about reconnecting with my identity and being able to find connection to people and places. Being an urban adopted person and having lived in the city most of my young life without many cultural connections, having a place and space to explore these connections and being welcomed by each community we visited really helped me to be proud of who I am. Today, it is similar; we see many people who are in that place of education. They are not just young people either as colleges and universities attests to this. There are more Indigenous students than ever attending post-secondary institutions today - a whole new generation of people who are "coming to know" who they are as Indigenous people through schools. We have a big responsibility to try to ensure these students make connections with their places, homelands and teachings where possible.

You know, these connections were the most important thing to me. I grew up fast through these journeys too. In many ways, I transformed from a child into an adult through my Canoe Journeys. I learned how to survive with the elements, how the land has everything we need for survival, how solitude is needed in our lives, but how relationships

are just as important: really it is about balance. I felt so healthy on these trips too; we ate well and there were no drugs or any alcohol on these journeys.

I would suggest that a “wilderness” journey can serve as a space for developing Indigenous leadership pedagogies similar to what we face in academia. The preparations that go into a canoe journey are like the preparations one goes through in entering academia. Ceremonies, relationships, bringing only the essential belongings needed for survival and self-care are all important aspects of preparing and embarking on our Canoe Journey. These are similar to the preparation and journey through higher education. There will always be challenges such as those we faced while living on the land. They too can be related to the challenges that many students face and used as guides for those involved in post-secondary education. I think of that caribou whose life was taken purely for pleasure. I could not stand by to let something like this happen again, so I documented, remembered and spoke out on this issue with our people in the next community we landed in. Similarly, at the university, we challenge the continued subjugation of Indigenous knowledge through various forms such as direct action, educating and indigenizing the spaces we walk in, and for some Indigenous academics, this involves educating and challenging the whole institution in an attempt to transform the system.

“Living our values” on the water involved respect, humility, honor, co-operation and reciprocity, all of which figured prominently in this journey through rugged and beautiful terrain. Similarly, these values follow us in our career paths, whether we are studying to be anthropologists, lawyers, social workers, or educators. It is more about how you carry yourselves in the world than who you are. Indigenous Leadership involves living and understanding the deep spiritual, cultural, emotional and physical connections to the land

and the many teachings it provides us with. As Alfred (2010) shared, “true Indigenous education in an Indigenous context flows from the land” (interview, 2010).

My responsibility now is to bring these teachings alive in post-secondary education as a way to move towards self-determination and well-being. This way I can assist people in developing a sense of place, identity and responsibility much as I did on this journey. My responsibility also involves fighting for a learning environment where students do not experience learning as an obligation, but as a force that liberates the spirit and leads to a better way of being and doing in the world. Finally, I have a responsibility to build the connection between universities, our communities and our cultures. On the Canoe Journey; building relationships with and servicing community were responsibilities that spoke to collective well being. In academia, this must continue to be of primary importance.

### **3.6 Discussion**

The Tlingit principles, the Medicine Wheel and the Canoe Journey teachings offer different ways to provide methodological and theoretical grounding to my dissertation. In this dissertation, the Medicine Wheel facilitates a process whereby I can come to organize and consider the four questions that guide my study. The Medicine Wheel allows me to frame my research questions and to interpret and analyze my data through the interconnected quadrants of the Wheel. The Medicine Wheel also offers a clear path to present my research and its findings. In this way, the Medicine Wheel offers an opportunity to consider my research questions in both a balanced and holistic way.

The Tlingit principles and the Canoe Journey teachings converge in similar ways: they both facilitate the way in which I enter the research process, my relationships with my participants, the guiding ethical frameworks, and the regard by which I draw out my

themes and conduct my analysis. For example, the Canoe Journey teaches me that I must adequately prepare for the complex dimensions and forces that may confront me in my journey. In relation to my study, this teaching reminds me to be mindful and prepare for any contingencies and consider all the variables during my interviews. The Canoe Journey teachings also guide me to be attuned to the specificities and variances of life narratives, and again, this will be a strong guide during the interviews, and in drawing out themes during the data analysis stage. Additionally, as a theoretical guide, the Canoe Journey provides the Indigenous-based knowledges of time, place, history, stories, community, kinship, inter-connectedness, and relations with people, animals, and our environment.

Tlingit principles provide me with a different form of accountability to the research process. The principles guide how I prepare for my research and how I relate to and honor the research participants. Furthermore, the principles are also the site that offers direction to the ethical realm of my research. Indigenizing forms of ethical relations are often signaled to by the saying “in a good way”; the Tlingit principles guide the process by which I can conduct myself “in a good way.” The Tlingit principles, then, allow me to think through ethical issues such as protocols of gifting participants, how and where to meet them, how to offer respect to participant narratives, and my responsibility to share what I have learned once this dissertation is complete.

## Chapter Four: Paddle, Paddle, Paddle: Methods, Process, and People

*I was walking downtown on Robson Street in Vancouver a few years back when I heard a voice behind me call my name. I recognized the voice and immediately turned to see that it was a young person from back home. He was from Beaver Creek and I had not seen him in close to twenty years. At this moment in time, life had treated him badly and I assumed that he did not want to partake in much of what life had to offer. We all have these assumptions and I began to feel sorry for the state he was in. He asks me and my partner Jacquie to stand with him and relates, "I remember you looking out for me twenty years ago, what you been up to?" I could not think of how to bring the last twenty years of my life to him. I was so fixated on his situation and how much he had aged. I wondered how he got to this place in his life. "Not much", I said, "I am living in Victoria now going to school." He looked very interested in what I had to say and said that he had fallen on hard times since his wife left him. "I am just taking a break in life right now. I think I need to go back home." After some chat about who we had seen lately from the North, he asked me for my jacket. As it was somewhat cold outside, I gave him twenty dollars instead. Reflecting on this today, I really wish I had given him my jacket. (T. Ormiston, personal reflection)*

### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the research methods used in this study. I begin by outlining the research design, research questions, a description of data collection and analysis, and address issues of research ethics and protocol. I conclude this chapter with

the Participant and Access section that serves to introduce the reader to the people involved in this study.

I have chosen to interweave Western research methods such as interviews and focus groups with Indigenous methodologies such as Indigenous values, stories, and teachings. I am cognizant that the production of knowledge continues to work within a Euro-Western framework. The persistence of Euro-Western hegemonic frameworks within academia privileges these hegemonic ways of knowing and there is an insistence that others use these paradigms as well. Speaking to the Australian Indigenous context, Rigney (1999) writes, "Research methodologies and the protocols in knowledge construction in my country is the way the colonizers constructed it, and as a result, a racialized research industry still prevails in Australia" (p. 114). Furthermore, issues of rigor and validity within social research follow in, and promote the hegemony of Western/colonial epistemologies. McIvor (2010) highlights the tensions that Indigenous researchers face with non-Indigenous research traditions: "I continually felt a compulsion to frame, justify, and defend what I was doing within a Western framework that would, therefore, be "acceptable" (p. 138).

I counteract my own concerns around the difference between Western and Indigenous worldviews, values and epistemologies by ensuring that Tlingit principles, the Medicine Wheel teachings and the Canoe Journey serve as both methodological and theoretical frameworks. In considering my research methods, particularly in using Western research methods, my choice of method is one that resonates with, and reflects some of the elements of an Indigenous worldview. More precisely, I use the Tlingit principles, the Medicine Wheel teachings and the Canoe Journey teachings to Indigenize Euro-Western

research methods. In other words, I use Indigenous ways of knowing, doing and being to position myself as a researcher and to consider the teachings of my methodological frameworks to conduct my interviews and focus groups. Centralizing Indigenous teachings and knowledge allows me to analyze my data in a way that distinguishes meaning-making and interpretation of my data as distinctly Indigenous and outside of a Euro-Western framework of knowledge production. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) offers the following message for Indigenous-based research: “When Indigenous peoples become the researchers and not merely the researched, the activity of research is transformed. Questions are framed differently, priorities are ranked differently, problems are defined differently, people participate on different terms” (p. 193).

## **4.2 Research Design**

This research implements a qualitative design with a focus on the University of Victoria. Denzin and Lincoln in Creswell (1998) describe qualitative research as:

multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials –case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts- that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individual lives. (p.15)

Cresswell (1998) reminds us that qualitative research helps to “emphasize the researcher’s role as an *active learner* who can tell the story of the participants’ view rather than as an

expert who passes judgments on participants” (p. 18). In fact, I believe the participants themselves are the experts, and this belief calls forward the important teachings of our ancestors that “we are all teachers, we are all learners.”

### **4.3 Key Interviews**

I conducted in-depth interviews with six Indigenous tenured professors at the University of Victoria, all of whom have a minimum of five years teaching experience. Each individual interview lasted approximately 90 minutes. I met with two of the professors for a second interview in order to clarify and/or expand on points that they raised in their first interviews. Equal gender representation within the faculty sample was important as part of the acknowledgement of protocol within the traditional territory, and to ensure the data gathered respected the differing roles and responsibilities of our men and women. All of the participants were asked where they would like the interviews to occur: two chose their homes, one chose my home and three chose the interviews to be at the University of Victoria.

### **4.4 Focus Group with Students**

I conducted one focus group with four post-secondary Indigenous students from the University of Victoria who are currently or were previously enrolled in Indigenous programs for at least one year. I sought their views on Indigenous leadership pedagogies. One student sent his regrets about his absence as he became ill before the interview. All of the participants were women and the focus group was held at the First Peoples House on the university campus.

## **4.5 Focus Group and Interview with Elders' Voices<sup>21</sup>**

One focus group was held with three elders who are members of Elders' Voices. These elders have supported students, faculty, administration and the community to understand and respect local traditions/protocols and create awareness at the University of Victoria. These elders have their own history of struggling with the educational system imposed on them. Many of their stories spoke to the pain and anger they had faced, but they also spoke to the need to transform education through their roles at the university. A subsequent interview was held with one of the elders who was unable to attend the focus group.

## **4.6 Research Ethics and Protocol**

Qualitative studies scholars suggest that research participants need to be chosen for what they offer to the study as opposed to being selected through random sampling (Esterburg, 2002). I identified and interviewed a small number of participants who have been involved in Indigenous Education such as current Indigenous educators, current or former students, and elders. In the "Participants and Access" section below, I describe how participants were chosen. As a faculty member and a former student at the university, I know all of the participants involved in the study. They were all asked specific and open-ended questions. Guided by Tlingit principles and Canoe Journey teachings, and working in accordance with the traditions and protocols of the traditional territory that the university is situated on, I gifted all of the research participants. I also invited all the participants to

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<sup>21</sup> Elders' Voices is a group of Indigenous elders who engage with students, staff and faculty as well as sharing their knowledge with the university's administration. The goal of their voices is to integrate Indigenous cultural ways of knowing and being in the university.

have tea and/or food as part of the interview process both as a form of respect - for my relationship with participants, and for the time they were providing to me:

The term respect is consistently used by Indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social conduct. (L. T. Smith, 1999, p. 120)

Throughout this process, “respect” also meant that I kept the participants involved in the process as much as possible. I invited participants to review the initial findings, to edit their responses, and to participate in analyzing the findings. The students offered their interpretations of the findings throughout the process. The participants’ right to privacy was respected at all times. No participation was coerced and once participation had been initiated, people were aware of their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. The ethics of participation also included the right to anonymity, confidentiality and information security. All participants were asked if they would consent to their names being used in the dissertation or if they wished to remain anonymous. Everyone agreed in writing for me to use their real names. The faculty, students and elders also gave consent for their interviews to be videotaped. One participant asked to be notified if the videotapes were to be used for any purpose other than for this dissertation.

## **4.7 Participants and Access**

Each of the faculty members involved in this study was selected through a written e-mail request that was posted by the Indigenous Faculty Caucus in 2009 in a “Call for Participants” general letter. All those who were interested in the study contacted me within four weeks of the initial request. I then contacted each faculty member through e-mail prior to the interview and each potential participant was sent a letter in order to give that person time to think about the request. Respondents from each department connected with me by telephone or e-mail within five weeks of the initial request to receive information and interview guides. Faculty members participating in this study helped to identify potential student participants, and these students invited others to participate. Elders were approached at an Elders’ luncheon in late 2009. They were informed of the study and asked if anyone would be willing to participate. Blankets were gifted to all participants. Four elders agreed to participate and the focus groups were held in the community. Overall, ten women and four men were interviewed for this study.

## **4.8 Data Analysis**

A comparative open coding method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used for data analysis, whereby each piece of data was compared with every other piece, looking for similarities and differences. The data from each interview was reviewed and the researcher examined the data for themes or categories. Thorne (2000) describes this process as follows: “this strategy involves taking one piece of data (one interview, one statement, one theme) and comparing it with all others that may be similar or different in order to develop conceptualizations of the possible relations between various pieces of data” (p. 69). For the

first phase of this process, I read and hand coded each transcript for emerging themes with respect to each question. These emergent themes were then placed, using sticky notes, into the Medicine Wheel as they related to the four directions of the Wheel: spiritual, emotional, physical and mental.

In honoring those who participated in this research, I am mindful of Wilson's (2008) reference to his participants as co-researchers. He uses the real names of most people he worked with in his research and refers to this as ethical in an Indigenous research paradigm. Similarly, Qwul'sih'yah'maht (Robina Thomas) (2011) shares the biographies of women she studied in her dissertation stating that it demonstrates "the level of leadership each of these women plays in their families, communities and Nations" (36). I want to honor the relationships I have with the co-researchers while also being accountable to those relationships and their teachings. I now honor the faculty, elders and students involved in this study. I introduce who they are, provide a description of how I came to know them, their influence on my life and who their leadership influences are. I was thrilled and a little nervous to have interviewed people that I have known and respected for some time in my academic journey, both as a student and instructor at the University of Victoria. I also realize the importance of reciprocity as an Indigenous value. In keeping with the Tlingit principles of sharing and respect, it is important for me to honor those involved in this study as they honored me with their time, their teachings and their humor.

## **4.9 Faculty Participants and Co-Researchers**

### **4.9.1 Dr. Robina Thomas**

When I interviewed *Qwul'sih'yah'maht* (Robina Thomas) in early 2010 at my home, she had much to share on her conceptions of leadership, particularly as it related to her

Ph.D. work. Her research involved asking thirteen women from various *Hul'qumi'num* communities on Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland to share their thoughts on leadership. Robina is Lyackson of the Coast Salish Nation. She is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work. Robina was hired by the School of Social Work at the University of Victoria in 1999. She is a role model from whom I have learned a great deal. First she was an instructor of mine, then a mentor when I began teaching. I have regard for her as a colleague and as a friend. Robina would often speak of her grandmother's teachings, *Uy'skwuluwun* - the teaching to be of a good mind and spirit both in and outside of the classroom. Robina also speaks frequently of the important teachings her mother and grandmother provided to her throughout her life. I came to know Robina in 1999 as a student, and saw firsthand how much patience and support she had for all students. Her continued belief in students' abilities through Indigenous social work theory and practice was, for me, a powerful teaching in how Indigenous leadership might look. Much of the research Robina has engaged in involves Indigenous women and leadership. In our interview, she spoke passionately about Indigenous women scholars who have assisted in shaping who she is today. These include Lee Maracle, Devon Mihesuah, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and Jo-ann Archibald. Robina also spoke passionately of the profound influence women in her family/Nation had on her growth and development as a child and young woman. Over the years, I have come to respect Robina and know that any time I need to hear stories, laughter and teachings from the local territory; I could head down to the Crystal Pool and join her in what she refers to as her urban sweat lodge – “the steam room!” Robina received her Ph.D. in April 2011.

#### 4.9.2 Dr. Lorna Williams

I first met Lorna during her interview for a tenure track faculty position at the University of Victoria in 2005. I sat in on her teaching demonstration and was impressed with the cultural and spiritual knowledge she holds. Lorna Williams is *Lil'wat* from the *St'at'yem'c* First Nation in Mount Currie, British Columbia. She currently holds the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Knowledge and Learning with the Faculty of Education and the Department of Linguistics at the University of Victoria. She works in both the Linguistics and Education departments. For my interview on Indigenous leadership pedagogies, Lorna invited me to her place, where we sat for two hours, had tea, and I listened while she shared many stories on traditional leadership pedagogies and how this intersects with the work she carries out at the university. What stood out for me first and foremost is that she does not see herself as a leader, either in her community or at the university. "I just consider myself a worker. A member of our community to do the best that I can for the benefit of people" (L. Williams, interview, 2010).

My awareness of Lorna is that she *does* serve the people, and she carries out her work with integrity, commitment to all students and with fairness. She is a "mover and a shaker" and has fought for, and created the space for Indigenous knowledge/worldviews to be centered in the Education department at the University of Victoria. One of the most important teachings for me on this day when I interviewed her was how she expressed "as an Indigenous leader or scholar, there is an additional responsibility that tends not to be a part of the university's conception of a leadership role and that is my responsibility to furthering the ideals of our Nation and the goals of our people" (L. Williams, interview, 2010). Lorna's influences include her mother, her father and her uncle. She speaks highly of

George Manual, Joan Ryan, Nora Greenway and the McKay brothers in Nisga'a territory. Lorna is soft spoken, passionate and reflective when she speaks. She reminds me of an auntie or an elder and I was honored to have her involved in this work.

### **4.9.3 Jacquie Green**

*Kundoque* (Jacquie Green) is from the Haisla Nation. I first met Jacquie in 1996 when she was a student at the University of Victoria. We became friends instantaneously, and I have been honored to have learned so much from her. I often state that Jacquie is the reason I completed a Masters degree and why I am in pursuit of a Doctorate in Education. What I appreciate most about Jacquie is her humor, her strong identity as a Haisla woman and her dedication to and enthusiasm for her studies. Today, Jacquie is my partner, and I admire how she “walks her talk” everywhere she goes. I can only hope that one day I can walk with the strength and dignity she carries. The most powerful teaching I received when walking with her throughout the years and in her interview was the deep commitment she has to her family: “everything I say and do I have to remember that it’s a reflection of my mom and my dad, my family and my community” (J. Green, personal communication, 2010). Jacquie is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work and holds a BSW, MPA, and is currently working on a Ph.D. through Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Victoria. Jacquie’s leadership influences include her mother, Mary, her father, Ray, and her two grandmothers. She also acknowledges her past Indigenous professors as being important influences in her journey: Gord Bruyere, Gail Cyr, and Robina Thomas have helped ground her and create a “home away from home” for her in Victoria.

#### **4.9.4 Dr. John Borrows**

I first met John at a law conference at the University of Victoria when he presented on Indigenous legal traditions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We made a connection then which lasts today. John speaks and writes from the heart, with sincerity and conviction through the telling of stories. While I sat and talked with John as part of this dissertation, one poignant story he shared had such a profound impact on me that it is used here as part of my analysis. I am honored that John comes to my Criminal Justice 236 class regularly at Camosun College and speaks to Indigenous legal traditions. As a guest speaker, he shares stories and teachings which reflect how law can encompass Indigenous philosophies and traditions.

John Borrows is Anishinabe and a member of the Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation. John has a Ph.D. in Law from Osgood Hall. He was appointed professor at the University of Victoria Faculty of Law in 2001, and currently holds the Law Foundation Professorship of Aboriginal Justice and Governance with the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law. When I interviewed John in his office, he spoke often about how his mother and his grandfather profoundly influenced him on his leadership path: "I think so much of what we do in the way we develop, how we approach the world, is based on those who love us and extend a special sense of appreciation for you. They really did have that effect" (personal communication, 2010) John has written three books: *Recovering Canada: The Resurgence of Indigenous Law* (2002), *Canada's Indigenous Constitution* (2010), and *Drawing Out Law: A Spirit's Guide* (2010).

#### 4.9.5 Dr. Taiaiake Alfred

I met Taiaiake in the summer of 1997 through a mutual friend and former instructor. Taiaiake is a warrior and a wonderful motivational speaker. He is charismatic and grounded through his Mohawk teachings. He speaks from his heart, and I have learned a great deal through his leadership. I was particularly captivated by his description of a warrior to me in 1997: "the definition of a warrior is one who struggles to make change in life, but also maintains the **crucial** connection to ourselves, our people and our communities" (personal communication). I was honored that Taiaiake took the time to join a group of students, elders and community members at my place for a series of "critical" discussions on Indigenous knowledge, leadership, politics and philosophy in 2001 and 2002.

Taiaiake also shares his time with students at other post-secondary institutes and is an annual speaker for first and second year post-secondary students at Camosun College. He describes his influences as first and foremost, his family and, in terms of his understanding of politics, former Kahnawake Grand Chief Joe Norton who, during the 1990 Oka crisis stood fast in his determination to lead the people and the Nation, which was his responsibility in spite of criticism (T. Alfred, personal communication, 2010). He also speaks highly of Mohawk Elder Billy Two Rivers for his eloquence in the 1980s and bringing the message of the Iroquois' philosophy and world view to Canadians in various forms, and of the late Mary Two Axe-Early, the Mohawk woman who fought for the reintegration of women who had married non-Native men in spite of the Indian Act's rule, as she had conviction and challenged what some people in the community thought.

Taiaiake is a Bear Clan Mohawk. He is a full professor in the Indigenous Governance program and he specializes in studies of traditional governance, the restoration of land-based cultural practices, and decolonization strategies. Taiaiake has three published scholarly books, *Heeding the Voices of Our Ancestors* (1995), *Peace, Power, Righteousness* (1999/2009); and *Wasáse* (2005).

#### **4.9.6 Dr. Jeff Corntassel**

I met Jeff in 2004 at the University of Victoria in his capacity as the Graduate Advisor in the Indigenous Governance Masters program. I appreciated how Jeff would reach out to all Indigenous students, regardless of their discipline or field of study. He has always taken time for me to provide advice, review my writing, share stories, or just to ask how I was doing in my academic journey. He is soft spoken, sincere and caring. Jeff has honored our SAGE group by attending weekend retreats and offering his expertise to graduate students who are in their dissertation stage and I am honored to receive his ongoing teachings. Jeff is also an annual lecturer at Camosun College in the Indigenous Studies program. Jeff is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma who speaks and writes passionately on global Indigenous rights and self-determination strategies. Currently, Jeff is an Associate Professor and Graduate Advisor in Indigenous Governance at the University of Victoria. Jeff's first book, *Forced Federalism: Contemporary Challenges to Indigenous Nationhood* was released in 2008. While sitting with him to gather information on leadership pedagogies, he spoke about how his responsibility is always to his family first and foremost. He credits Benny Smith, and the late Leon Corntassel, for passing on important teachings. He also holds in high regard other Indigenous scholars such as Henrietta Mann, Dovie Thomason, and Vine Deloria, Jr.

## **4.10 Elders' Voices Participants and Co-Researchers**

Developed in 2008, the University of Victoria Elders' Voices is comprised of elders from the local First Nations, urban and Métis communities.<sup>22</sup> The Elders' Voices program is an Aboriginal Service Plan partnership project between Camosun College and the University of Victoria. The group is committed to providing support, acknowledgements and guidance to Indigenous students, staff and faculty at the university. They also have the somewhat daunting task of raising awareness and Indigenous knowledge for non-Indigenous administrators, students, community members and politicians. In 2009, the Office of Indigenous Affairs at the University of Victoria began an Elder-in-Residence program. This program ensures that an elder is available to answer questions, offer support, and conduct ceremony for Indigenous students on campus three days a week at the First Peoples House. Recently, this role was expanded to provide knowledge and awareness to non-Indigenous students at the university. The elders also welcome visitors to the territory through ceremony, prayers and songs/drumming. There are approximately 10 elders who are part of this group, and I was honored and humbled to interview four of these elders for this dissertation.

**4.10.1 Joyce and Victor Underwood Jr.**, Celtimet and Slasemia from the Tsawout Band, were the first elders I met from the Coast Salish territory when I moved here in 1996. I was working as a youth worker within the community, and when I was introduced to them, Joyce was the drug and alcohol worker and Vic was the financial advisor for the South Island Council. Both had been the keepers of a Sweat lodge on their traditional territory since 1988, and they invited me to participate in ceremony with them. For the

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<sup>22</sup> Elders Voices is comprised of 10 elders from the three Nations on Vancouver Island.

past 16 years, they have opened up their hearts, teachings and home to me, to the young people I have worked with, to my family, and to my students at Camosun College and the university. What I admire most about these elders is how caring, open and honest they are. Last year, I spoke to Joyce about how important she is as a leader and role model in my life. Joyce spoke quietly, as she always does, about the many people who have been in their home over the years and then leaned over and said in a humble way, “We love what we do Todd; it is what life is meant to be - a reciprocal process. We give but we also receive a lot of gifts for what we do” (personal communication, 2010). This reminds me that good things come back to those who do good things.

**4.10.2 Beverly Williams** is a descendant of Walter and Alice Williams, and cousin of Victor Jr. Bev resides on the Pauquachin First Nation but is originally from the Tsawout Nation. While spending time with the elders in Pauquachin in 2004 at a youth conference, Joyce introduced me to Bev. They are both part of the Pauquachin singers drum group and I was fascinated by the magnitude of Bev’s voice. Although Bev is a soft spoken, gentle woman, her vitality and conviction while singing in her language are powerful. Today, as part of Elders’ Voices, Bev provides Reiki healing at the University as well as in her community. When having tea at Joyce and Vic’s house and speaking about leadership, she referred to the power of the collective in the old days:

We all ate at this great big table and we all sat around the table. I remember grandpa telling someone that the power of the family is at the table, it’s at the table where you talk out your grievances about what’s going on that day or what’s going to happen tomorrow. You talk about it and settle it at the table. So when we all got down to eating that’s what they did. I’ll always remember that. (interview, 2010)

**4.10.3 Marie Cooper** is the daughter of Esther (Underwood) and Martin Cooper Sr., and niece of Dave Elliott Sr. I first met Marie in the fall of 2002 when she welcomed a group of us from Camosun College who gathered for a tour at LÁU, WELNEW Tribal School in Tsartlip. I remember the big smile on Marie's face when she hugged us one by one, saying how happy she was that we were bringing the "institution" out to the communities. Marie is kind and gentle and spiritual. She often speaks of the need for a collective/communal leadership with less emphasis on a single leader, as opposed to the colonial way of thinking and doing business. "So I look more to a collective endeavor and a communal endeavor in leadership" (M. Cooper, personal communication, 2010). Marie is a renowned leader in Indigenous education and, at present, she is on the Indigenous Education Advisory board in the Faculty of Education. She also sits on the Saanich Indian School Board. She received an honorary doctoral degree in Education at the University of Victoria and continues to provide guidance to students at the university through prayers, teachings, and direction to graduate students. Marie works vigorously towards creating change and well-being in the community, and I raise my hands for her unconditional work with visitors to the territory, including myself, and for the teachings she has provided to me over the past 10 years.

#### **4.11 Student Participants and Co-Researchers**

Four students participated in a focus group at the First Peoples House at the University of Victoria. What I remember most is the laughter, trust and reciprocity they all shared for three and a half hours. We shared food and talked in circle about Indigenous leadership in an open and honest manner. All students have been involved in Indigenous

programming at the school for at least two years. Amanda Engen (Dene/Metis) and Trish Pallichuk (Cree) were in the Indigenous Specialization at the School of Social Work. Angela Antoine (Nuu-chah-nulth) was in the Master's of Indigenous Counselling psychology program in Education, and Molly Wickham (Wet'suwet'en) was in the Master's of Arts in Indigenous Governance. I know several of these students as former students in my classes and currently maintain friendships with all of them through cultural, social and sporting events. They were all honored to have been in specialized Indigenous programming and I was honored that they took the time out to share their reflections on Indigenous leadership, pedagogies and transformation from their perspective.

#### **4.12 Discussion and Summary**

As stated at the outset of this chapter, my goal has been to center Indigenous philosophies and values while working with Western research methods. My study method is a qualitative study with a thematic analytical approach that emerges from the Western canon. The theoretical frameworks of Tlingit principles and Canoe Journey philosophies have ably guided me in my interviews with the participants, and throughout the collating and analysis of the discussions. Indeed, I believe that one strength of this project lies in its ability to create a space for both Western and Indigenous knowledges to co-exist and work together in complementary ways. While I have discussed some of the ways in which I Indigenized Western research methods, I will offer some other ways in which Tlingit principles and Canoe Journey teachings were instrumental in the research process. The Canoe Journey teachings of responsibility, accountability and collaboration were important. These teachings entailed that I transcribe the interviews and have the

participants review and make any changes to be correctly representative of their thoughts and ideas. I was mindful when I conducted my interviews and during my analysis of the Canoe Journey teachings that, as Indigenous peoples, life histories are disparate and not homogenous, and as such, we need to be attuned to the specificities and variances of life narratives. The Tlingit principle of respect was ever-present; some of the ways in which I paid attention to this principle was by honoring the local traditional protocol of gifting the participants, by writing about the participants in this chapter, and through the next chapter that pays respect to the local traditional territories and the Indigenous programs where I reside, work and study at.

In this way, while Western methods offer me the logistical tools for carrying out my research, Indigenous worldviews offer me the ethical, philosophical, and intellectual considerations I require to effectively articulate the findings of my research. Accordingly, in Chapter Six, I will again turn to Indigenous frameworks to articulate the findings, namely by using the Medicine Wheel.

# Chapter Five: Point Your Canoe Downstream and Keep Your Head Up

## 5.1 Introduction

The University of Victoria resides on or close to the traditional territories of the Lekwungen (Songhees) peoples; the Esquimalt peoples; and the WSÁ,NEC (Saanich) peoples which include the Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout and Tseycum territories. I am honored to live, attend school, work and play in this area and acknowledge the Lekwungen, Wyomilth, and Xwsenac Peoples of the Coast Salish Nation. I would also like to acknowledge that part of my schooling has taken place at the University of British Columbia, which is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

Vancouver Island, where the University of Victoria is located, comprises the Indigenous homelands of three Nations: the Coast Salish; Nuuchahnulth; and Kwakwaka'wakw territories. They have lived in permanent settlements on the island since time immemorial. These territories are significant in every aspect of my life and work on Vancouver Island. A critical part of Indigenous protocol and ethics is to acknowledge the territories we work on and to have respect for these diverse places and their histories. As a scholar, ethical practice is rooted in cultural protocols and in this I acknowledge that I have experienced many transformative approaches which reflect teachings from these lands. Therefore, I acknowledge the territories for facilitating and assisting in the development of Indigenous leadership, pedagogies and transformation within academia. The relationships we develop within these territories can assist in spiritual, emotional, physical and mental

well-being for students, administrators and faculty. I also acknowledge that it is a form of respect, wherever we live, to find out whose traditional territory we are on because every part of what is now known as Canada is someone's Indigenous traditional territory.

In the following pages I acknowledge and center the three Nations on Vancouver Island. I realize that the descriptions in the following section are predominantly in a form which reflects how ethnographers or anthropologists would describe the territories. To counteract the ethnographic tone, I have deliberately added pictures, quotes and references from people of these territories to honor the traditional territories as much as possible. Devoting a chapter to honoring the territories that I am on is consistent with both Tlingit principles and Canoe Journey teachings.

## 5.2 The Coast Salish

*"The Saanich dream is to live here with as little effect on our surroundings as possible."*

(Philip Kevin Paul, member of the WSÁ,NEC Nation)



**Figure 23: Coast Salish Dancers at the Aboriginal Leaders Gathering, Cowichan, 2008** (printed with permission of Edith Loring-Kuhanga).

Organized by the Cowichan 2008 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) Society, the Aboriginal Leaders Gathering brought together more than 110 First Nations Chiefs, Métis representatives, a delegation of Aboriginal youth and recreation organizations. The NAIG organizing committee developed a slogan for the games, “Journey of a Generation” which described the journey for the young athletes coming together in Cowichan.



**Figure 24: Traditional Territory of the Coast Salish** (Coast Salish traditional territory is in highlighted in pink.)

The Nations of the Coast Salish have traditionally occupied diverse inland coastal areas of British Columbia within the boundaries of the Northwest Coast from the mouth of the Columbia River in Oregon, north to Bute Inlet (Jack, n.d.). Coast Salish is part of the Salishan language family. Like other Indigenous languages globally, many of the Coast Salish languages are at risk of becoming extinct. This has already occurred with the Twana,

Nooksack and Pentlatch dialects. Today, there is a revitalization of Coast Salish languages, which include Comox, Sechelt, Squamish, Halkomelem, Lushootseed and Straits Salish; this includes both Northern Straits and Clallam (Coast Salish, 2010). Historically, the Coast Salish, as with other Indigenous people, used oral tradition which traces their connections from one family or community to another. This oral tradition has been in place for thousands of years through Longhouse ceremonies (Coast Salish, 2010). In my interview with Robina Thomas in 2010, she spoke to the importance of *Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw*<sup>23</sup> teachings:

The change I wish to see is a community rooted in our teachings, a community that reflects the teachings of *nutsa maat*. *Nutsa maat* is a critical teaching of the *Hul'qumi'num Mustimuxw*. *Nutsa maat* teaches us we are all one – we are the 2-legged, 4-legged, winged ones, those that crawl, those that swim, and all of Mother Earth.

(interview, 2010)

### **5.3 Nuu-chah-nulth**

*“Be proud of who you are as you are the continuation of our ancestors. I encourage you to pursue higher education and build self-confidence and self-esteem with the knowledge you receive from your elders and from academe. With dedication and determination you can achieve anything you endeavor to do. Don’t ever stop dreaming and don’t ever stop reaching for the stars.”*

(Charlotte Coté, personal communication, January 28, 2012)

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<sup>23</sup> The respected or original people of the territory



**Figure 25: Tseshaht academic Charlotte Coté, the Second Person from the Nuuchahnulth Nation to Receive a Ph.D. (printed with permission of Charlotte Coté)**

Charlotte is the author of *Spirits of Our Whaling Ancestors: Revitalizing Makah and Nuuchahnulth Traditions*. In an interview with *UW Today*, Charlotte spoke to the importance of whaling for her people, “Whaling is so important to our stories and our myths and our teachings. Even the place names around us link us to our whaling tradition” (Wick, 2010, October 21). Currently she is an Associate Professor, American Indian Studies, University of Washington.



**Figure 26: 19th-century Traditional Territory of the Nuu-chah-nulth.**

The *ha'houlthee* (chiefly territories) of the Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations,<sup>24</sup> stretch approximately 300 kilometres along the Pacific Coast of Vancouver Island, from Brooks Peninsula (South of Port Alice) in the north, to Point-no-Point (Washington state) in the south, and also include inland regions. Nuu-chah-nulth people of the past shared traditions, languages and many aspects of culture; they were divided into chiefly families, local groups and, later, into Nations (Clayoquot Alliance for Research, Education and Training). The Nuu-chah-nulth territory encompasses sixteen autonomous and unceded Nations.

“Geographically the Nuu-chah-nulth. are located on the west side of what is now called Vancouver Island. The term means “villages along the mountains and sea” and is a rather new designation “for describing the Nations living on the Canadian side of the border” (Happyhook, 2007, p.12). Today, each Nuu-chah-nulth First Nation includes several chiefly

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families, and most include what were once considered several separate local groups.

Fourteen Nuuchahnulth First Nations are divided into three regions:

Southern Region: Ditidaht, Huu-ay-aht, Hupacasath, Tse-shaht, and Uchucklesaht;

Central Region: Ahousaht, Hesquiaht, Tla-o-qui-aht, Toquaht, and Ucluelet;

Northern Region: Ehattesaht, Kyuquot/Cheklesahht, Mowachat/Muchalaht, and Nuchatlaht.

The Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council (NTC) provides various programs and services to approx. 8,000 registered members: Child welfare, Fisheries, Economic Development, Membership, Education & Training, Financial Administrative Support, Employment & Training, Infrastructure Development, Health, Newspaper (*Ha-Shilth-Sa*) and Social Development (Nuuchahnulth Tribal Council).

Nuuchahnulth is a division of the Southern Wakashan language family along with Makah and Ditidaht. There are 12 different dialects of the Nuuchahnulth language: Ahousat, Clayoquot, Ehattesaht, Hesquiat, Kyuquot, Mowachaht, Nuchatlaht, Ohiaht, Toquaht, Tseshaht, Uchucklesaht, and Ucluelet (Nuuchahnulth).

At the core of their traditional worldview, through the telling of origin stories to their children and practicing traditional ways of life, the Nuuchahnulth people believe that the “basic character of creation is a unity expressed as *‘heshook-ishtsawalk’*...meaning everything is one or everything is connected” (Atleo, 2004, p.117).

## 5.4 The Kwakwaka'wakw

*“Namgis<sup>25</sup> means to stand together as one and if we take this journey of healing, we return to sanalas (to become whole), and stand together as one again.”*

(Ruby Peterson, personal communication, January, 2012)



**Figure 27: Namgis, Kwagu> Academic Ruby Peterson**

*Gilakas'la, nugwa'am Pankwa'las. Namgis, d>u Kwagu>, d>u Katzi.*

*Xan'gagam Xanus<sup>26</sup>* (photo printed with permission of Ruby Peterson)

This presentation in the summer of 2011 is of an epic story of connecting Western counseling modalities to the traditional Kwakwaka'wakw teachings while in the Aboriginal Community Counselling program through University of Victoria Master's in Education Counseling Psychology degree.

<sup>25</sup> The 'Namgis are a distinct nation within the Kwakwaka'wakw territories

<sup>26</sup> Greetings, my name is Pankwa'las, I am Namgis, Kwagu>, and Katzi, my grandmother is Xanus (Dorothy Isaac, nee Nowell) and my grandfather is Ben Isaac.) My English name is Ruby Peterson. Picture courtesy of my good friend Pankwa'las.



**Figure 28: 19<sup>th</sup>-century Traditional Territory of the Kwakwaka'wakw.**

The Kwakwaka'wakw traditional territory includes coastal areas of BC extending from Smith Inlet in the north, to Cape Mudge in the south, west to Quatsino and east to Knight Inlet (The Kwakwaka'wakw). Historically, the centre of Kwakwaka'wakw territory is Queen Charlotte Strait on the Central Coast of British Columbia between northern Vancouver Island and the Mainland.

Originally, there were 30 tribes, all speaking dialects of Kwakwala. The Kwakwaka'wakw (formerly known as the Kwakiutl), are the southernmost members of a northern language group-the Wakashan family. Kwakwaka'wakw literally translates as "those who speak Kwak'wala" (Kwakiutl; The Kwakwaka'wakw). The former name "Kwakiutl" is actually the name of one specific Kwak'wala speaking tribe; the name was often misused as a collective proper noun to describe the cultural group as a whole. There are two groups of Kwakwaka'wakw dialects, one spoken on the outer coast of the northern

region of Vancouver Island, the other within the Queen Charlotte Strait and to the east (Kwakiutl; The Kwakwaka'wakw).

Since time immemorial, the Kwakwaka'wakw people have lived on Vancouver Island and nurtured a connection with the land and all things that are within their territories. As stated by respected elder William Wasdan, “our ancestors hunted, fished and trapped throughout this vast land and gave names to places in our language. Within the wide range of habitats in our territories are diverse biological communities, a living world that has provided for generations the physical and spiritual foundations of our culture” (Kwakiutl Indian Band).

## **5.5 An Introduction to the University of Victoria**

The University of Victoria (UVic) is located in Victoria, BC. With a teaching staff of approximately 1700, there are an estimated 19,000 students attending, almost 900 of whom are Indigenous (The University of Victoria, 2011). As Professor Taiaiake Alfred indicates (interview, February 2010), in 1995 there were three Indigenous faculty at the University of Victoria,. In June 2010, this number increased significantly to 23 Indigenous faculty. According to Roger John<sup>27</sup> (personal communication, 2010), of these 23, approximately 18 faculty members are tenured or in tenure-track positions. John's calculations surmise that approximately 35 Indigenous staff work at the university, which makes a total of 58 Indigenous employees. As of June 22, 2011, the numbers increased to 77 employees who self-declared as Indigenous. This figure of 77 employees comprises 2.4% of the university workforce (T. Eder, personal communication, July 28, 2011).

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<sup>27</sup> Roger is the former Indigenous student advisor in Human and Social Development (HSD). He has compiled his own unofficial figures herein as part of his employment in HSD.

Although there are no official reasons reported as to why there was such a significant increase in one year, preferential hiring criteria specific to Aboriginal employees has increased significantly at the university (T. Elder, personal communication, July 28, 2011). As well, it appears as though increases in Indigenous employees are partially attributed to the building of the First Peoples House in 2009.

There are 10 faculties at the University of Victoria: the Faculty of Science; the Faculty of Social Science; the Faculty of Humanities; the Faculty of Fine Arts; the Faculty of Graduate Studies; the Faculty of Law; the Faculty of Education; the Faculty of Engineering; the Faculty of Business; and the Faculty of Human and Social Development. (The latter includes two programs involved in this study: Indigenous Governance and the School of Social Work.) These ten faculties are referred to in Table 1, indicating the number of Indigenous students by degrees sought.

University of Victoria programs with Indigenous centered content and curriculum developed and delivered by Indigenous faculty include the Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance (MAIG) and two streams within the School of Social Work: the Bachelor of Social Work Indigenous Child Welfare Specialization and the Bachelor of Social Work Indigenous Specialization. As well, the School of Social Work offers a Master's of Social Work degree Indigenous Specialization. To clarify here, the School of Social Work has developed an undergraduate Bachelor of Social Work degree which specializes in Indigenous approaches to helping and healing, and recently it implemented a Master's degree that centers Indigenous epistemologies, a program which is built on the traditional epistemologies of Indigenous societies. There are also Indigenous centered curricula for

the Bachelor and Master's of Education degree, a Minor in Indigenous Studies in the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Indigenous Law Program. Additionally, the Child and Youth Care department has two Indigenous faculty who implement Indigenous content and courses into their existing program although they are not part of this dissertation.

Table 1 on page 130 shows a 10-year analysis of Indigenous students who attended the University of Victoria and indicates what degrees they were involved in. The table refers to registered students who either self-identified as Indigenous on the University of Victoria application form, or were identified as such either by another BC public post-secondary institution (if they attended one), or by the BC K-12 system. These figures were compiled by the University of Victoria Employment Equity Survey. The total number of Indigenous students registered in undergraduate degrees increased from 84 in 1999/2000 to 549 in 2009/2010. This reflects a seven-fold increase within a ten-year period. While this is a notable increase, the number of Indigenous graduate students is especially heartening. In 1999/2000, there were three identified Indigenous students pursuing a Master's degree or Ph.D. In 2009/2010, that number increased to 148, which is a fifty-fold increase in the ten-year period. Although the numbers in both graphs do not reflect completion rates of Indigenous students, they point to a change in intentionality; in other words they indicate the number of students intending to register for Indigenous programs or for general courses, especially for Graduate Students where there are specific programs with Indigenous content. As one can see in Table 1, the most concentrated number of students is in the Bachelor of Arts degree, with 156 Indigenous students registered for this degree in 2009-2010 compared to 36 in 1999-2000. This reflects a four-fold increase over

a 10 year period. While the statistics presented on the next page did not provide reasons for the increase in students, this study does speak to factors which are currently relevant, such as the increase in Indigenous faculty and staff who transmit Indigenous knowledge, leadership and pedagogies. It also appears that some of the increase in Indigenous students numbers correlate with the creation of the Office of Indigenous Affairs<sup>28</sup> and the First Peoples House, factors mentioned by students in this study. Clearly, there appear to be significant increases in Indigenous students enrolling in programs which focus on the helping profession, education, leadership and governance.

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<sup>28</sup> Indigenous Affairs promotes and supports Indigenous initiatives primarily involving student support services, protocol activities and the First Peoples House.

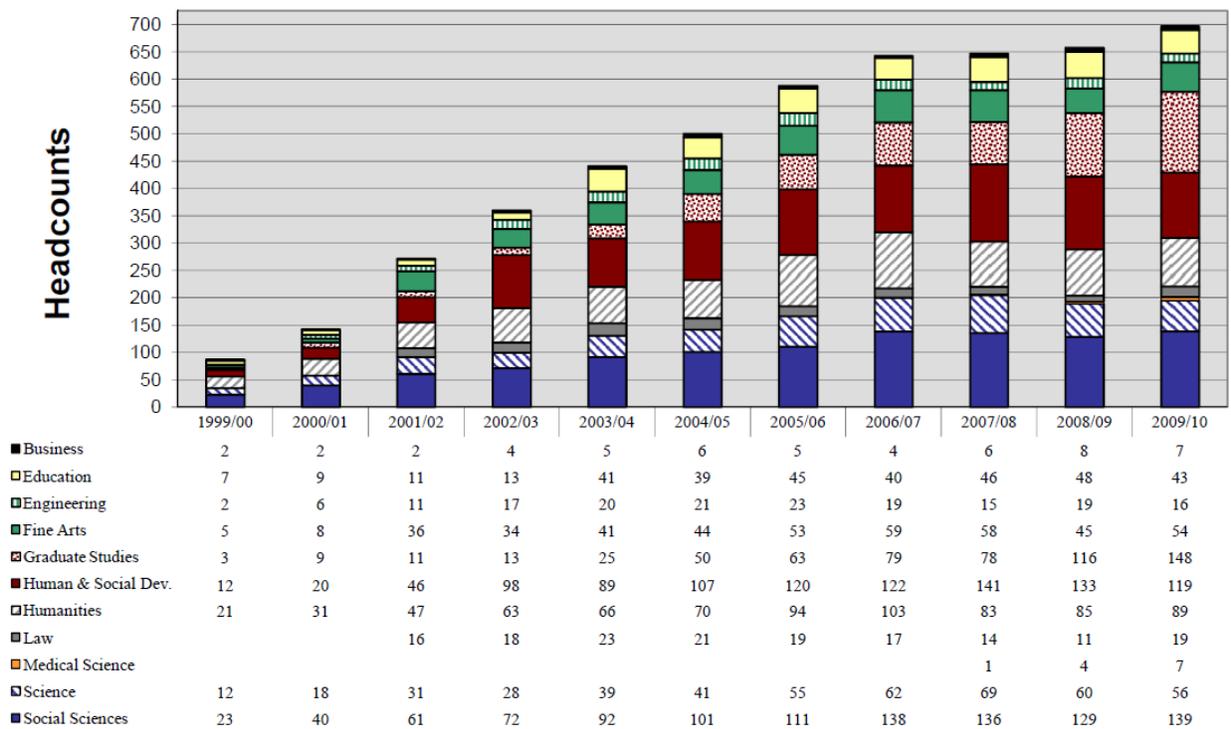
## UVic - Indigenous Students by Degree Sought<sup>1</sup>

	Degree	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
Undergraduate	BA	34	51	79	103	116	148	148	166	168	147	156	
	BCOM	2	2	2	4	5	6	5	4	6	8	7	
	BCYC										15	22	
	BED	6	7	7	9	12	15	18	30	28	40	36	
	BENG	1	1	6	5	10	11	14	12	9	12	10	
	BFA	2	3	7	10	15	21	28	32	32	29	32	
	BMUS	1	1	1	2	5	5	3	3	4	5	4	
	BSC	15	23	33	40	53	65	71	76	77	77	71	
	BSENG						2	2	2	2	3	3	
	BSN	1			2	9	16	21	27	24	33	38	
	BSW	4	7	13	31	36	42	42	51	62	49	34	
	CERT		1	14	14	13	7	27	39	24	15	22	
	DIPL	4	7	21	44	19	22	20	12	6	22	23	
	LLB			16	17	23	21	19	16	13	11	19	
	NOND	2	2	17	17	59	29	36	19	40	23	34	
	PSC						1		2			1	
	UNDC	12	29	45	49	41	39	71	73	74	53	37	
	<b>UG Total</b>		<b>84</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>416</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>542</b>	<b>549</b>
	Graduate	LLM						3	4	8	4	6	4
		MA	2	7	6	6	11	14	26	29	28	34	47
MASC									1	2	2	2	
MBA					1	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	
MED			1	2	3	4	9	6	7	9	28	32	
MENG												1	
MFA						1	1	1	1		1	1	
MMUS									1	1			
MN									1	2	3	4	
MPA							1	1	4	4	4	6	
MSC		1	1	1	1		4	7	9	9	7	5	
MSW					1	3	13	9	8	8	11	20	
NOND						1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
PHD				1	1	3	3	4	7	10	15	18	
PSC								1		1	2	4	
<b>Grad Total</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>UVic Total</b>			<b>87</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>697</b>

<sup>1</sup> Counts unique students in an academic year (includes summer and winter session).  
Source: ISIS, Banner, and Ministry of Education's K-12 database

**Table 1: University of Victoria - Indigenous Students by Degree Sought**

## UVic - Indigenous Students by Faculty<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Counts unique students in an academic year (summer and winter sessions).  
Source: ISIS, Banner, and Ministry of Education's K-12 database

Institutional Planning & Analysis  
February 23, 2010

**Table 2: University of Victoria - Students by Faculty**

Table 2 above shows the number of Indigenous students registered in each faculty. Human and Social Development (which houses two departments involved in this study - Social Work and Indigenous Governance), shows an increase from 12 students in 1999/2000 to 120 in 2009/2010. This reflects a ten-fold increase. The increase in students enrolled in Education is six times as large as it was 10 years ago. Again, with the focus on Indigenous education within curriculum and all aspects of programming, these numbers are expected to continue to increase in years to come.

## 5.6 The University of Victoria's *Strategic Plan*

Objectives and Key Strategies	Progress
<p><b>Objective 3:</b></p> <p><b>3a)</b> To increase the number of Indigenous students graduating from all faculties at UVic, building on our commitment to and our unique relationship with Canada's First Peoples and implement ways of enhancing the recruitment, retention and graduation of Indigenous students in all faculties. (VPAC, deans, STAS, ORE)</p>	<p>As a result of new programs, there are now nearly 700 Indigenous students at UVic, up from 87 students in 1999.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Aboriginal recruitment network, Indigenous student adviser and the hiring of a new Aboriginal recruitment officer continue to enhance the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students.</li> <li>• Some of the programs implemented to enhance recruitment, retention and graduation include the Indigenous Student Mini-University Summer Camp, the Indigenous student career transition program and academic programs focusing on Indigenous issues such as Aboriginal language revitalization, the Indigenous minor studies program and First Nations language and culture program.</li> <li>• Recent findings from the LE, NONET pilot project will assist us in continuing to develop strategies to support the recruitment, retention and success of Indigenous students.</li> </ul>

**Table 3: *Progress report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan: A vision for the future—Building on strength*** (continued on the next page)

Objectives and Key Strategies	Progress
<p><b>3b)</b> coordinate programs of education and services for Indigenous students. (VPAC)</p>	<p>A number of targeted initiatives have been established and are being coordinated to increase access, recruitment, retention, completion and transition opportunities for Indigenous students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Office of Indigenous Affairs was established and through the leadership of the Director of Indigenous Affairs coordinates and leads the development of educational programs and services for Indigenous students.</li> <li>• Indigenous students have access to a variety of culturally relevant programs and services through the Office of the Indigenous Affairs, the Native Student Union and the Indigenous Counselling Office.</li> <li>• Through the government’s Aboriginal Service Plan, the university was able to develop a number of programs focusing on student leadership, career transitions and caring community.</li> <li>• First Peoples House provides additional space to support the coordination of programs and services for Indigenous students.</li> <li>• A number of Faculty-based academic services support Indigenous students, e.g. in HSD, LAWF, EDUC etc.</li> <li>• An Indigenous Student Handbook with information about programs and services on campus is available for all incoming and current students.</li> <li>• UVic has established a national Aboriginal Economic Development chair to direct a program of research, relationship building and education to advance Aboriginal economic development in Canada.</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Progress report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan: A vision for the future—Building on strength**

Objectives and Key Strategies	Progress
<p><b>3c)</b> create a focal point for Indigenous students and programs through the completion of First Peoples House by 2009. (VPFO, VPER, STAS)</p>	<p>First Peoples House, located near the centre of the campus, was completed in 2009.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Peoples House is a centre that supports the academic, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of Indigenous students, recognizes and honors the diversity of values and beliefs among Indigenous people and provides “home away from home” for Indigenous students. It also serves to encourage intercultural understanding.</li> </ul>

**Table 3: Progress report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan: A vision for the future—Building on strength**

In 2011, the University of Victoria released its *Progress report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan: A vision for the future—Building on strength*. This report measures how the university is currently progressing within four primary areas: people, quality, community and resources, as determined in the 2007 *Strategic Plan*. Strategic plans are designed for organizations to develop priorities and to identify the needs of their institution in order to better serve its constituents. What can be problematic with strategic plans, particularly in large organizations like public universities, is that they are developed implemented and monitored by elites<sup>29</sup> within an organization they are purporting to serve. Many Indigenous people would look at the current *Strategic Plan* of the university as not having much force or effect because it does not allow time to build relationships, nor does it validate others who carry knowledge and offer direction such as elders and

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<sup>29</sup> A group of privileged "planners" in high ranking administrative positions who develop a mission statement, set goals and objectives, check the organization for internal strengths and weaknesses, evaluate the external environment for opportunities and threats, review strategic options, and then privilege an organizational strategy.

community members in the overall planning process. This can be particularly problematic for Indigenous peoples and their desire to have education meet the needs of their individuals, communities and Nations. The current process requires a commitment from the university to involve Indigenous people to develop, implement and monitor strategic plans in order to be useful. The process must be more inclusive and find ways to involve faculty, administration, communities, and elders collectively in order to be more meaningful. Although the University of Victoria has a President's Aboriginal Advisory Council on Indigenous Education (PACIE), this Council has rarely been convened recently to advise the President. The last time they met was April 2010 (President's Office, interview, February 28, 2012). Regardless, there is an urgent need for Indigenous leaders to be involved in policy-making such as through their involvement in strategic planning. Inclusion does not mean making decisions *for* people; it means making decisions *with* people. In Table 3 on previous pages, the *Progress report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan: A vision for the future—Building on strength* shows the only reference to Indigenous people in its progress report on objectives set in 2007 and reported on in 2011.

As stated earlier, *the Strategic Plan* measures how the university is currently doing in relation to four areas: people, quality, community and resources. The *Plan* identifies a set of goals for each area. In the first area, "People," the goal is to recruit and retain a diverse group of exceptionally talented students, faculty and staff, and to support them in ways that allow them to achieve their highest potential. In the second area, "Quality," the goal is to offer programs in teaching, research and support of such quality as to place the University of Victoria in the upper 20 per cent of a national set of comparable programs as judged by peer evaluation. "Community" goals are to establish the University of Victoria as a

recognized cornerstone of our community, one committed to the sustainable social, cultural and economic development of our region and our nation. Finally, in the area of “Resources,” the goal is to generate the resources necessary from both public and private sources to allow us to achieve our objectives and to steward those resources in a sustainable fashion. (The University of Victoria, 2011). Part of my critique centers on the fact that Indigenous peoples are not mentioned in any of the four areas except under the category “people.” While Indigenous student retention is important, it is inextricably linked with other personnel issues that are not reported on in the *Progress report on the implementation of the Strategic Plan: A vision for the future—Building on strength*, including Indigenous faculty and staff increases. As well, there should be some monitoring of “quality” as it relates to Indigenous programs, teaching, research and support. The same reporting needs to occur in the areas of “community” and “resources” to reflect where we are at today, and to project future needs in terms of the full realization of Indigenous education. If the university is to prioritize recruitment of Indigenous students and faculty, and to involve Indigenous communities in the process, this will require a framework that honors Indigenous pedagogies and knowledges. This honoring must also value the unique and distinctive aspects of Indigenous pedagogies and epistemologies.

## **5.7 Focus of this Study**

There are four departments at the University of Victoria which became a part of this study. Each of these departments centers Indigenous initiatives/programming and provides actual examples of how Indigenous leadership is being realized through their respective programming. The four departments examined in this study are:

- The Faculty of Human and Social Development - the School of Social Work;
- The Faculty of Law - Indigenous Law program;
- The Faculty of Education - Indigenous Education;
- The Indigenous Governance program - Master's of Arts in Indigenous Governance and Ph.D. in Indigenous Governance.

A brief history of the development and current initiatives of Indigenous programming in each of these schools is outlined below.

### **5.7.1 The School of Social Work**

In the early 1980's, the School of Social Work began to realize the need to develop and implement a social work program inclusive of Indigenous traditions, epistemologies and pedagogies. The School received two grants from the Donner Foundation to determine:

- how to assist Native students to pursue social work studies;
- how best to incorporate Native studies into existing courses/curriculum; and
- how to examine the prospects of delivering the BSW degree program to Native communities (The University of Victoria, School of Social Work).

In 1986, 35 First Nations students across Vancouver Island began a decentralized BSW program. Based on this program's success, the School of Social Work made a formal commitment in 1989 to include Indigenous students in the standard BSW program. To this end, Elizabeth Hill, a Cree and Blackfoot woman from Manitoba was hired as the first Indigenous faculty member in a tenure-track position at the University of Victoria . Sadly, she had to step down in June of 1991 due to ailing health. Elizabeth passed on to the spirit world in Winnipeg on August 23, 1991. Today, The School of Social Work maintains a fund in honor of Elizabeth Hill. The fund is used to assist Indigenous University of Victoria

School of Social Work students in their learning journeys within the program. (The University of Victoria, School of Social Work, n.d.)

The School of Social Work, in collaboration with the North West Band Social Workers Association (NWBSWA) of Terrace BC, also began delivering a Bachelor of Social Work degree program in Terrace in 1990. The degree program was initiated by NWBSWA due to ongoing issues with the courts and the BC Ministry of Children and Families who continued to dismiss Indigenous people's ability to work with their children and families if they did not have a university degree. Mary Green, Haisla/Tsimshian, a former graduate in Terrace, spoke to the need for Indigenous students to be involved in hiring the faculty who would teach in Terrace:

We wanted to ensure that, if we needed a degree, this degree was relevant to the teachings of the Northwest coast. It was essential that all faculty from the University of Victoria coming to our community needed to learn/ be aware of the cultural traditions and protocols of the Northwest coast and its seven surrounding Nations. In many ways, we were educating faculty as much as they were educating us.

(personal communication, July 21, 2010)

To date, there have been 22 graduates from this program. Due to the success of this program, NWBSWA and the University of Victoria collaborated to develop a decentralized Masters degree in Social Work in Terrace BC. This program has successfully graduated eight students who are now working in the community. The School of Social Work has partnered with other institutions in the past including Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) and University College of the Cariboo to offer Indigenous Social Work degrees (University of Victoria School of Social Work).

In 1999, Haisla student Jacquie Green conducted a study with First Nations Social Work students and social workers in over 20 Indigenous agencies and communities in British Columbia. Five key recommendations came from this study. They identified the following:

- the need for a culturally relevant Social Work program;
- the need for inclusion of Indigenous historical and current policies and practices throughout social work curricula;
- the need for cultural and spiritual support for Indigenous students;
- the need for recognition of experience acknowledged through prior learning;
- the need for a community-based social work program.

(The University of Victoria, School of Social Work)

What resulted from this study was the Bachelor of Social Work First Nations Specialization Program,<sup>30</sup> which began in September of 2000 and consisted of a series of designated courses within the general structure of the BSW degree. The Specialization program expanded the following year to support First Nations students interested in working in delegated agencies, and the First Nations Child Welfare Specialization began. (The University of Victoria, School of Social Work). The program is restricted to Indigenous students, although this year the Indigenous-only criterion is being revisited by faculty, students and the Indigenous Advisory Committee within the School.

Jacquie Green's report, along with the advice of the First Nations Advisory Committee,<sup>31</sup> has also led to more community-based programming. For example, in 2004,

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<sup>30</sup>In 2009, this was renamed the Indigenous Specialization

<sup>31</sup>This committee consists of 8 Indigenous community members dedicated to the well-being of Indigenous children and families and advise the Indigenous specialization on policies, programming and curriculum

the School offered a community-based Master's in Social Work (MSW) program delivered in Cowichan for community members who were employed as social workers in First Nations child welfare agencies. Since 2008, the School has offered an Indigenous MSW which combines both distance and on-campus studies for students.

The current School of Social Work Indigenous initiatives include the following:

- two Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work specialization programs;
- a Master's of Social Work Indigenous Specialization program began in 2008;
- two mandatory Indigenous courses offered in the general Bachelor of Social Work program;
- three tenured and two Indigenous tenure-track faculty, supplemented by four additional Indigenous sessional faculty;
- seven percent of students in the School of Social Work identify as Indigenous;
- *Siem Sun'eem* Indigenous Child Welfare Network was developed in 2008 to celebrate the strength of Indigenous families, communities and people and highlighting what is working in Indigenous communities in relation to research, community projects and practice;
- an Indigenous Advisory comprised of local community members and former students;
- an Indigenous Circle comprised of Indigenous faculty and staff which acts as a governing board and makes key decisions on Indigenous course development, school policies and teaching assignments rooted in Indigenous pedagogies;
- a community honoring feast held every other year to honor Indigenous communities, workers and students involved in the practice of Social Work.

### **5.7.2 The Faculty of Law**

The Aboriginal Law program at the University of Victoria began in 1992. Borrows conveyed that this is partly related to the department's initial hiring of an Indigenous faculty member, "I think that stems back to Heather Raven being hired around 1992 and because of the academic cultural support that we had in the school, the result being there became ways for students to see themselves in the program in a much stronger way" (interview, 2010). The Faculty is now renowned as a leader in Indigenous legal education, and they recognize there is also an urgent need for a broader understanding of Indigenous legal issues rooted in Indigenous legal traditions within the Canadian legal community (The University of Victoria, Law, n.d.).

The School partnered with Akitsiraq Law School Society and Nunavut Arctic College to provide a law degree in Iqaluit in 2005. The program was run completely in the northern communities, and Inuit law was incorporated into the curriculum (Borrows, interview, 2010). Based on the success of this program, a number of other Indigenous communities have come forward with an expressed desire for similar, contextual programming. As Borrows states, "Hearing that communities/Nations wanted their own laws be taught in accordance with their traditions but alongside the common laws as we were doing in Iqaluit helped spur that agenda along" (interview, 2010).

There had been a growing Indigenous student presence in the Law School at UVic; in fact, today 10 percent of all law students at the university are Indigenous. Now, the Law program offers an Aboriginal awareness camp that runs every year which one third of all law students attend. The camp helps create support and build relationships in the

classroom. Since the graduate degree in Indigenous Law was developed seven years ago, close to a third of the students have worked on Indigenous legal issues.

Current Law initiatives include the following:

- an Endowed Chair in Aboriginal Economic Development;
- a Law Foundation Endowed Chair in Aboriginal Justice and Governance;
- a Graduate Program highly focused on Indigenous legal issues (Ph.D. and LLM) with 1/3 Indigenous students (seven students);
- four Indigenous faculty employed full-time, supplemented by two visiting professors;
- a Summer Intensive Program in Indigenous Legal Studies held every third year;
- six courses specifically focused on Indigenous legal issues and many others include components dealing with such issues;
- an exchange program with Arizona State University Law School to facilitate comparative Indigenous Legal Studies;
- a large and active Indigenous Law Club;
- a Faculty Aboriginal Equity Plan.

### **5.7.3 The Faculty of Education Department**

Nella Nelson, who has been the Co-Chair of the First Nations Education Advisory board with Janice Simcoe since 1990, credits Dr. Richard King as an early pioneer in the development of First Nations education at the University of Victoria:

When we were at the University of Victoria in 1972, he taught Anthropology and Education in the Faculty of Education. He made an imprint and he was so caring. Ed John Hereditary Chief of Tl'azt'en Nation, Fred Carpenter from Bella Bella, Miles

Richardson, Haida Nation...we were all at UVic at the time and I think all of us credit Dr. Richard King for creating a sense of belonging and putting his tentacles out in the university for Native Education at that time. (interview, 2010)

In 2000, Mary Longman, Cree from the Saulteaux Nation, was hired for a two-year limited-term faculty position to enhance Indigenous curriculum and programming in the department. During her time at the University, Longman developed two courses in Aboriginal Education and her work built the momentum that resulted in other Aboriginal courses being developed in future years (The University of Victoria, Faculty of Education, 2009, Summer/Fall, p.2). In 2002, under the leadership of Budd Hall, a First Nations Advisor/Coordinator position was created to help support and recruit Indigenous students into the department. In 2004, Lorna Williams became the Director of Aboriginal Education and the first tenure-track Indigenous faculty member in the Faculty of Education. Her focus is on centering Indigenous knowledge/pedagogies in the Faculty of Education.

The Faculty of Education has also been involved in many initiatives over the past ten years to improve the program for Indigenous students. For example, a cohort of students in the Campbell River area took part-time courses over the span of six years in order to become First Nations language teachers through UVic's Teacher Education program. Also, in the fall of 2008, the First Nations Schools Association contracted a University of Victoria research team, under the direction of Dr. Lorna Williams, to gather information about Indigenous language programs in BC First Nations schools and communities and to assess the strengths and needs of language teachers and programs (The University of Victoria, Faculty of Education, 2009, Summer/Fall, p. 7). Today, this has resulted in Indigenous education-centered language programs that have been developed in conjunction with

communities. Nick Claxton, current Indigenous Student Advisor/Coordinator, spoke to the importance of responding to the needs of Indigenous communities and their learning/post-secondary needs. “We are bringing our teacher education programs out into communities, so it is community based and cohort driven. We offer diverse delivery of these courses including intense evening and weekend courses and conventional semester three hour per week courses” (personal communication, September 3, 2011).

The University of Victoria has been at the forefront of Indigenous education and this is attributed to a supportive Dean of Education, to faculty supports, to strong leadership, to community input and to the knowledge and passion of the Advisory Board (Claxton, personal communication, 2011).

Current Indigenous Education initiatives include the following developments:

- Five Aboriginal-specific courses are offered at the undergraduate or graduate level, one of which is a required course for all Teacher Education programs at UVic; this is a first for Canadian university Teacher Education programs (Claxton, personal communication, September 3, 2011). In January 2009, the Indigenous Speaker Series<sup>32</sup> began as a method of bringing community voice and local Indigenous knowledge into the Faculty (The University of Victoria, Faculty of Education, 2009, Summer/Fall).
- Five percent of the positions in the faculty's Elementary and Secondary Teacher Education programs will be held for First Nations, Métis and Inuit applicants who meet the faculty's requirements.
- Teacher Education programs are delivered in communities.

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<sup>32</sup>This series focuses on local speakers who speak to educational issues pertinent to Indigenous peoples, communities and Nations

- An Indigenous Education Institute was developed to offer four Indigenous education courses each summer which count towards a Bachelor degree.
- There are three Indigenous full-time faculty, six Indigenous sessional faculty and three Indigenous staff.
- There were 43 Indigenous students in 2009/2010-(T. Elder, personal communication, March 16, 2012). This number has increased to approximately 86 based on community programs now being offered (Nick Claxton, personal communication, 2011).
- A strong Indigenous Advisory Council exists.
- Dr. Lorna Williams is the current Canada Research Chair for Indigenous Knowledge and Learning.
- A Master's in Indigenous Counselling Psychology program began delivery in 2009 although it was suspended in 2011 due to funding cuts.
- There is a language revitalization program that starts with a one-year certificate in Language Revitalization, which ladders in the second year into a diploma, which then ladders into a DSTC (a teacher's certification that expires), and ultimately, students can continue into the fourth year for a Bachelors degree in Education Language Revitalization;
- In 2011, the Faculty of Education was approved to deliver a Master's of Arts and Master's of Education in language revitalization. Indigenous community members who are language experts can now attain a Master's degree and receive credit without a Bachelor's degree.

#### **5.7.4 The Indigenous Governance Department**

The Master's of Arts in Indigenous Governance (MAIG) began as certificate program in 1990 and was originally part of the Public Administration program. The late Frank Cassidy created the Administration of Aboriginal Governments Program at the University of Victoria (In Memory of Frank, 2007, October), and *Satsan* (Herb George) served on its original Advisory Committee in addition to being an instructor in the program (The University of Victoria, School of Public Administration, July 2010). Between 1990 and 1998, over 108 students completed the Certificate in the Administration of Aboriginal Governance (CAAG) program (The University of Victoria, School of Public Administration, July 2010). This community-based program offered practical management training to Indigenous community leaders and band administrators. The curriculum was developed in partnership with communities throughout British Columbia, including Lake Babine, Ahousaht, Gitsegukla, Westbank, Haida Nation, Mount Currie, Hazelton, Shuswap, Stó:lō Nation, Songhees, Musqueam, Burrard, Cowichan, and Chemainus (The University of Victoria, School of Public Administration, July 2010). The transition into the Master's in Indigenous Governance program (MAIG) began with the hiring of Kanien'kehaka (Mohawk) scholar Taiaiake Alfred in 1996. In 1998, he developed a program that situated modern governance issues in terms of traditional Indigenous beliefs about just social, political, and environmental relationships. In 1999, the Indigenous Governance program separated from School of Public Administration, wound down the CAAG program, and welcomed its first cohort into the Master of Arts in Indigenous Governance. Since 1999, "IGOV students have learned about colonialism's harmful effects, and the decolonizing potential of efforts to reclaim traditional Indigenous institutions and political philosophies" (J. Corntassel, IGOV

history, email attachment to personal communication, August 10, 2010, p. 2). Mavis Henry, student in the first cohort, spoke to the importance of this program;

The IGOV program has special meaning for me as I strive through my work to right the wrongs. Working mainly in education and social work, I came into constant contact with situations where Indigenous peoples were not being well served. In public education and in First Nations education the curriculum that makes up the core of academic study is biased and ripe with colonial thinking.... I was very stimulated by the challenges IGOV threw down in terms of asking us to consider our lives, our missions in learning, and our beliefs. (personal communication, December 16, 2011)

In 2001, IGOV started accepting Ph.D. students by special arrangement. Today, the core mission of the Indigenous Governance program is to “produce graduates who understand colonial legacies, and have the practical skills to educate others, protect the integrity of their territories and peoples, and support the renewal of Indigenous governance practices and institutions” (J. Corntassel, IGOV history, email attachment to personal communication, August 10, 2010, p. 2).

Current Indigenous Governance initiatives include the following:

- There are three Indigenous tenured professors and two Indigenous support staff.
- The Master’s of Arts in Indigenous Governance (MAIG) draws Indigenous and non-Indigenous applicants from across Canada and internationally. All courses are taught by three Indigenous professors.
- A local Advisory Council consisting of entirely local Indigenous leaders and activists.

- In 2009, IGOV shortened their Master's program from 18 credits to 15. Students could now complete a degree in one calendar year, after two semesters of coursework and a summer Community Governance Project (CGP).
- A mentorship year-long course was designed to give IGOV students an opportunity to meet regularly with faculty in a small-group setting. During these weekly sessions, students receive guidance about research and professional development advice and support.
- The program has 64 Master's graduates to date and three Ph.D. graduates (M. Scow, personal communication, September 30, 2011).
- A course entitled Indigenous Leadership Forum is offered as part of the degree program as an annual refresher course for program graduates, and a chance to organize with the dozens of grassroots leaders and activists who attend;
- IGOV has developed an informal exchange with the departments of Political Science and Hawai'ian Studies at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa (UHM). Students in the program participate in two-week-long experiential learning courses which alternate between Victoria and Hawaii. (J. Corntassel, IGOV history, email attachment to personal communication, August 10, 2010, pp. 1-12)

The numbers of students involved in each of the four faculties described above are increasing every year as indicated in Tables 1 and 2. In addition to the four faculties, there is a First Peoples House (FPH) and an Indigenous Faculty Caucus, both of which advocate for and support Indigenous students, programs and policy development throughout the university. Below is a description of the evolution and current realities of each of these entities.

### 5.7.5 Indigenous Faculty Caucus

In 2008, Indigenous faculty recognized an increase in Indigenous programming and faculty hiring at the University of Victoria. The Indigenous Governance program organized the creation of the Indigenous Faculty Caucus (IFC). Its purpose was to bring together Indigenous tenure-track and tenured professors to develop a political voice within the university and create a support network for common and specific issues faced by Indigenous faculty and students. Jacquie Green, current member of the IFC states, “We needed to come together as a collective to support one another, to build upon each of our own programs and to understand what each of our roles is at the university, within our own departments. Sometimes there are faculty that are alone in their departments and need support” (interview, 2011). Today there are approximately 20 Indigenous faculty who sit on the IFC. Within the four year span since its inception, the IFC has already profoundly engaged with the university as a political force. It led the overhaul of SFACT diversity training,<sup>33</sup> organizes an annual showcase for graduate work by Indigenous students, and advises the university on issues that are of importance to Indigenous members of the university community, including students. Members routinely serve on hiring committees, making the caucus vital in attracting and retaining Indigenous faculty. Today, it is working to support other Indigenous faculty collectively with the “tenure” process, and its members provide ongoing support to each other as academics in their teaching and their research (T. Alfred, interview, 2010; J. Corntassel, IGov history, email attachment to personal communication, August 10, 2010, pp. 1-12).

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<sup>33</sup>Staff and Faculty Aboriginal Cultural Training (SFACT) was developed to make the university a more welcoming environment for Aboriginal students through piloting both online and workshop curricula for UVic staff and faculty.

### **5.7.6 First Peoples House**

*The First Peoples House creates an academic and cultural centre for Indigenous students, and a welcoming space on campus for the broader community. Designed by Alfred Waugh Architect of Vancouver in the Coast Salish style, the House includes academic, administrative and ceremonial spaces.*

(The University of Victoria, Communications, n.d.)

The initial discussions about the construction of a First Peoples House (FPH) occurred in 1999 and arose from a group of students and faculty coming together and expressing the need for an Indigenous-specific space at the university that offered a variety of support programs. The supports that were envisioned included Indigenous counseling, an Indigenous space to deal with the complexities of being Indigenous in a Western academic setting, such as being away from their home communities, and a space to work through the difficulties Indigenous students encounter in having their knowledge and worldview subjugated within the institution. At that time, several students and faculty spoke to the significance of a gathering place for Indigenous students, faculty and community members to share traditions, ceremony and spirituality. I was honored to be part of these discussions and to help coordinate the initial fundraiser for the First Peoples House in 1999. From these early discussions, there was an agreement from the university President to hire a half-time Indigenous on-campus psychologist. This later evolved into a full-time position. There was also a committee developed to build a FPH which would be a space to come together and share culture, ceremony, while providing a unique space for learning. The space was designed to accommodate services to address the many

complexities of academia faced by Indigenous students and faculty (R. Thomas, personal communication, 2011).

The early planning committee deemed it was essential to acknowledge and involve the three Nations on Vancouver Island in the planning, development and implementation of the First Peoples House. Subsequently, Fran Hunt Jinnouchi, Director of the Office of Indigenous Affairs was hired.<sup>34</sup> Today, the 1161 square foot First Peoples House provides a friendly space for the community and an academic and cultural centre for Indigenous students, faculty and staff (The University of Victoria, Communications, 2011, July 19).

Currently, there are three classrooms, a ceremonial hall which accommodates up to 175 people, two faculty offices, an office for LE, NONET,<sup>35</sup> four offices for the Office of Indigenous Affairs (OIA), an office for the Indigenous counselor, a meeting room and an elders' room. Ten to fifteen Indigenous women work at the FPH which currently offers programming through the *Aboriginal services plan*<sup>36</sup> to assist Indigenous students in their educational journeys. Veronica Lefebvre, assistant to the Director at the OIA, indicates that craft and culture nights, community kitchens, tutoring supports, community partnerships, and wellness programs are some of the many initiatives currently operating at the First Peoples House. Many of these programs are ones that students have requested. The Office of Indigenous Affairs builds relationships and writes proposals for soft funding in programming, as mentioned above, and it is trying to secure full-time base funding for

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<sup>34</sup> This office was created in 2007 and was previously called the Aboriginal Liaison Office. Fran left the position in 2012.

<sup>35</sup> A program which provides Indigenous students supportive programs, community experiences, peer mentoring and financial assistance.

<sup>36</sup> Ministry of Advanced Education funding to increase access, retention and completion of Aboriginal students in post-secondary education.

other programming including the Elders' Voices and the Indigenous Recognition Ceremonies (V. Lefebvre, interview, November, 2011).

In the report entitled *Scratching the surface with a razor's edge: Investigating educational equity at the University of Victoria* (B. Whittington, email attachment to personal communication, November 11, 2011), questions have been raised about the long-term viability and stability of the FPH. The report states, "[T]here is only one paid staff member (a receptionist), no computers in the computer lab and no permanent programming<sup>37</sup> attached to the physical space" (B. Whittington, email attachment to personal communication, November 11, 2011, p.43). Some participants in this study expressed concerns that the original vision of the First Peoples House needs to be revisited regularly. Several participants in this study stated that internal relationship building and joint visioning between the FPH and Indigenous faculty/departments is needed to ensure the First Peoples House becomes the place that was originally envisioned by faculty, community members and staff. There are concerns that historically the Vice President's Office and the Office of Indigenous Affairs have been too closely linked at the expense of Indigenous students', faculty's and communities' input. FPH's growing pains include issues of how to manage the space in an institutional context and/or a cultural context. Several participants in the study have wondered whether the FPH should be a multi-cultural house, or a space only for Indigenous students to share experiences, culture and traditions.

As well, there is some concern that this "one stop/one shop" concept<sup>38</sup> has created some competition for existing human and financial resources, and strained relations between the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Indigenous faculty/departments where

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<sup>37</sup> Many of the programs are "soft" funded, whereby they have temporary short term funding.

<sup>38</sup> whereby services and programming are centralized to provide Aboriginal student support and retention

Indigenous programming already thrives. One example is in the creation of the Elders' Voices, through the Office of Indigenous Affairs.<sup>39</sup> Each department previously had an existing relationship developed with elders from the local territory. Some elders are now no longer utilized by departments because of the creation of ten recognized elders at the First Peoples House, where funding is more centralized. What has resulted is a "supply and demand" issue whereby the FPH retains authority over the elders and much of the space where they share knowledge. While this is considered positive, there are many Indigenous programs/departments that also need such resources and space. All of this is not to detract from the numerous programs being offered through the First Peoples House or the large numbers of Indigenous staff within the house who are committed to ensuring that Indigenous students have a welcoming place for years to come. This is simply the current reality of FPH's situation within the larger academic community.

## **5.8 Discussion**

In this chapter, I have attempted to provide an outline of the territories that the University of Victoria – the site of my dissertation inquiry – is situated on. This important task is in keeping with Tlingit principles and Canoe Journey teachings of respect, responsibility and accountability. As such, my intent is to honor the Coast Salish, Nuuchahnulth and Kwakwaka'wakw territories and their peoples.

I have also endeavored to provide a review of the relevance of the University of Victoria in the context of its commitments to Indigenous programs, and to profile the various faculties and departments that are represented in this dissertation. As this chapter shows, the growth of Indigenous students at UVic has been exemplary although the

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<sup>39</sup>This was partly created through the *Aboriginal Services Plan*.

university's overall response to their needs remains uneven. The commitment for Indigenous-specific programming in Social Work, Education, Law, and Indigenous Governance is bolstered by the dedication of Indigenous faculty, students and administrators, all of whom have attempted to lobby for institutional supports to encourage the retention and success of Indigenous students. As this chapter points out, many issues remain to be resolved, and Indigenous-specific funding and programs need to be expanded. With an increased and expanded field of programs, students, faculty and administrators, I am sure that Indigenous-centered education will continue to grow and flourish at the University of Victoria.

## **Chapter 6: Unpacking My Belongings**

### **6.1 Introduction: Intersections of Traditional Teachings and Higher Learning**

In this chapter, I present my findings from the interviews and focus group that I conducted with elders, students and faculty and disseminate those findings. “Unpacking my belongings” is my way of unpacking, piece by piece, knowledge I have received from participants and in turn sharing this information with those around me. I utilize the Medicine Wheel to analyze the key questions that guide this dissertation. My findings are placed within the four directions of the Wheel, corresponding with the specific questions that are posed in each direction. In accordance with the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, I begin in the Eastern direction, and my last question and its findings are placed in the Northern direction. The Medicine Wheel espouses the worldview that everything in the universe is part of a single whole and that all things are interrelated. Therefore, while I separate the emergent themes of all participants in the four quadrants below, I am mindful of how the questions overlap.. The central focus of each section of the Medicine Wheel is arranged as follows:

In the Eastern direction, I examine “How do Indigenous education leaders describe or define transformational Indigenous pedagogies?” What emerged, as described in the Medicine Wheel in Figure 32, are traditional concepts of leadership.

In the Southern direction, the second key question is “How is transformational education responsive to Indigenous peoples and how does it ensure Indigenous student

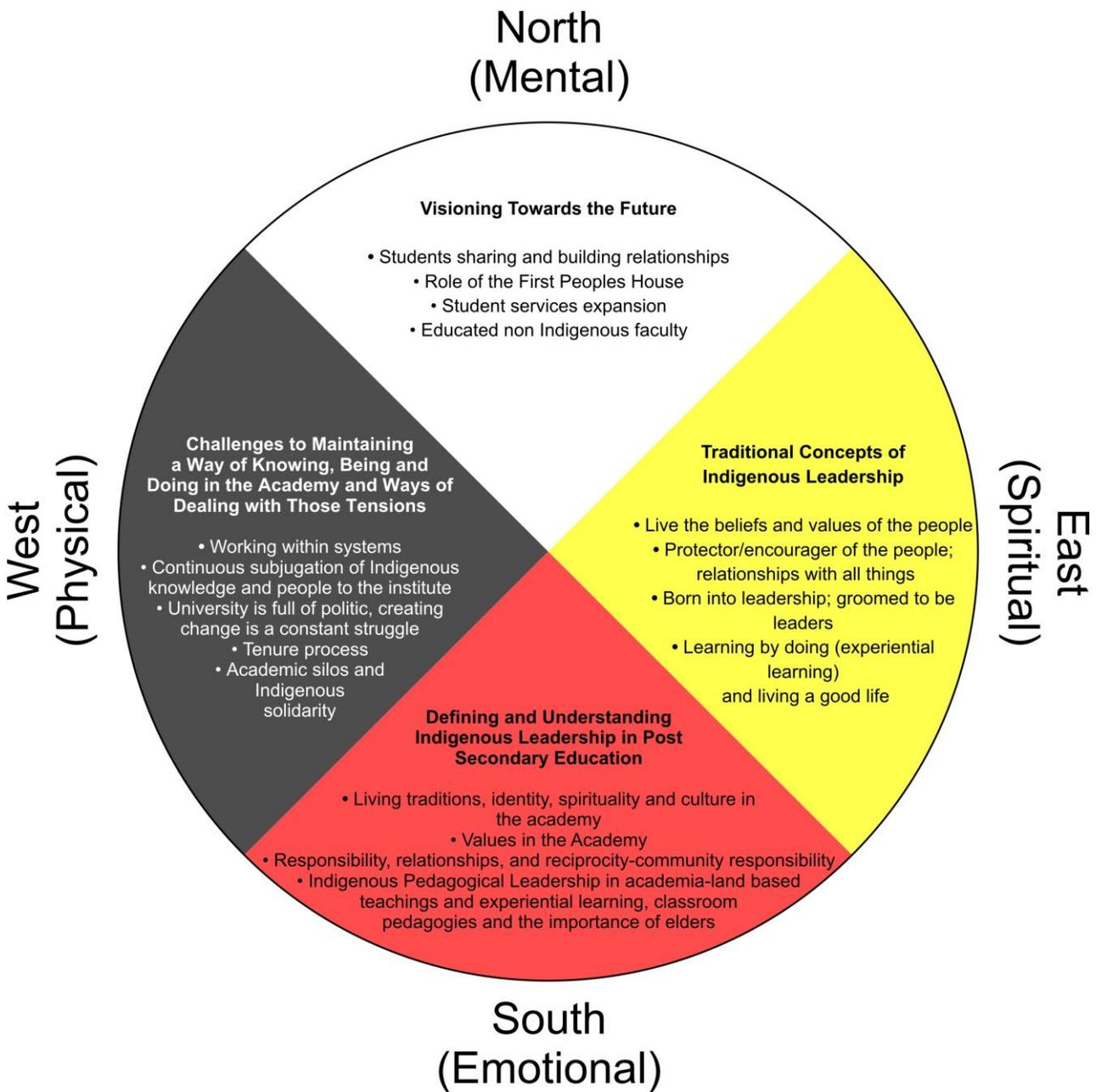
success?” The broad theme of defining and understanding leadership in post-secondary education is placed in this quadrant.

In the Western direction, I examine the question, “What have Indigenous leaders done to create and sustain educational transformation?” I have touched upon challenges to maintaining an Indigenous way of knowing, being and doing in the academy, and explored ways of dealing with those tensions.

In the Northern direction, the key question posed is “How can future Indigenous leaders continue to transform post secondary Indigenous education?” The emergent theme is envisioning the future. The Medicine Wheel in Figure 29 located on the following page illustrates the key findings of my research; these findings frame the discussion in this chapter.

## **6.2 The Eastern Direction: Traditional Concepts of Indigenous Leadership**

In order to understand how Indigenous leaders conceptualize leadership and responsibilities within post-secondary education, it is important to first examine their beliefs, experiences and reflections on traditional leadership. Many of the faculty, students, and elders suggest that, historically, traditional leadership has been represented by people in their communities who were not always recognized as leaders but who exhibited strength, courage and *lived* the beliefs of the people. For Alfred, this vision of traditional leadership means that “they’re articulate, they stand up for themselves, they bring together people; they’re funny. They know how to get things done. Those kind of people and they do get things done” (T. Alfred, interview, 2010).



**Figure 29: Medicine Wheel Key Findings**

All of the participants in this study reflected on important teachings from their own families, communities, Nations and others, including those scholars that shaped them into the people they are today. What is clear is how culture and traditions are always evolving and changing; there are no clear definitions. A local Coast Salish artist, Charles Elliott, spoke with me at length about this while sculpting at the LÁU,WELNEW\_Tribal School in 2001. I asked whether he thought his own artwork was traditional or contemporary. After some silence, he looked up at me and said, “I am creating tradition every time I construct something new...” (C. Elliott, personal communication, 2001). This interaction taught me how leaders brought culture and traditions alive historically as being relevant to the time and how they continue to make them vital, vibrant and relevant in their work today. This also articulates how leadership can permeate through all aspects of life and not be compartmentalized into the separate factions that are ever-present in academia. The teachings that are articulated herein speak to how traditions of the past can be considered building blocks that can be applied anywhere today.

In looking at how traditional Indigenous leadership manifests itself and is nurtured and fostered, the following themes emerge: protector of the people; relationships; born into leadership; groomed to be leaders; living the values; learning through experiential learning; and living a good life. In the passage below, it becomes evident that many of these themes are interrelated which reflects the correlation of many traditional and contemporary teachings. Therefore, I choose not to use “headings” in order to prevent fragmenting the issues that the participants identified and in heeding the Canoe Journey teachings of interconnectivity, accountability and collaboration.

All of the elders involved in this study are Coast Salish and are part of the WSÁ,NEC (Saanich) peoples. They talked about the traditional role of the speaker in their Nation and how leadership is manifested, nurtured and understood through this important role. They identified that traditional family laws contained all of the important teachings based upon values espoused from the heart. The speaker is the voice for a family and he speaks on the floor in the long house at any ceremony on behalf of what the family wants to do in that ceremony (M. Cooper, interview, 2010). The elders described how these ceremonies might include naming someone and how the family came to choose a specific name, acknowledging the passing of someone into the spirit world, honoring stages of life, weddings, and memorials. On such occasions, the speaker will say whatever the family wants him to say. The family might tell him which witnesses to call, which in and of itself, is a major responsibility because he needs to know the right Indigenous names and their pronunciations. The speaker has to know the history of the many names that get passed down and the proper protocol associated with those names,

Some of our speakers they have a little book, but my father in law he never had a book. It was all up here (pointing to the head); he could go around a whole room and he'd know a lot of the names. He'd kind of help the people value their names, like value the name that they carried. So a speaker has to know a lot of the protocols.

(J. Underwood, focus group, June, 2009)

The significance of the speaker's role as a leader was mentioned so that the people don't forget anything that is important. The families share with the speaker what he has to say. "No one forgets anything cause we've got to have one mind and one heart when we're on that floor" (V. Underwood, focus group, June, 2009).

Joyce Underwood also spoke to the important connections between the mind, body and spirit through the role of the speaker in the longhouse. She stressed the importance of a speaker having a good heart and said that anyone could be groomed to be a leader in the old days:

The family will know who is and what is. They watch people when they're on the floor. It all starts in their own little house. And they listen to the young warrior when he talks. Either he's got it, or he hasn't. As time goes on he moves up the ladder<sup>40</sup> because a lot of times when you pick a speaker, it's not always the same one. (focus group, June, 2009)

In many ways, the speaker is a protector of the people as he knows the family histories, knows protocols and values, and lives a balanced life. The elders emphasized that the speaker is a genuine leader through his connection to the people, his encouragement of the people, and his ability to bring people together and speak for and with them.

Crucial to leadership are the relationships to/with people in community. In one sense, leaders are in service to them, yet there is a subtle balance between serving them and leading them. Alfred (2010) says that by demonstrating your responsibility to the community you would, in turn, be entrusted with the responsibility to speak for them (interview, 2010). In other words, a leader would lead through his or her actions. Today, we can take these understandings of a speaker and a traditional leader and transform these principles into an academic context.

Faculty and students also expanded on the characteristics of and their relationship to leadership. Some spoke similarly of how people are born into leadership roles because

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<sup>40</sup> As one becomes more skilled as a speaker, he could speak at larger gatherings, could be called upon to speak at more functions (J. Underwood, personal communication, 2010).

others saw something in them when they were born, raised them to develop expertise in a certain way, to be a good hunter, a healer, and in return, these individuals take on that responsibility wholeheartedly and people acknowledged their expertise and knowledge in that area (T. Alfred, L. Williams, interviews, 2010). Other participants noted that at times, community members are nurtured into leadership roles whereby people recognize particular traits in others and begin to train them as leaders. Several people spoke to the importance of how traditional leaders inspired others to live a good life and did so by modeling through their actions (M. Wickham, J. Borrows, L. Williams, interviews, 2010). All the participants identified important traditional aspects of leadership: encouraging others to meet their aspirations; fulfilling the role and responsibilities community members have given you; being a source of encouragement; and from time to time, challenging people in a good way. I see this as striving to ensure a person is the best a person can be and realizes their potential.

Traditionally, as a collective, communities were instrumental in recognizing the interests and desires of people and providing the encouragement/support for them to do those things that benefit communities. In a reciprocal way, people in leadership roles created the mechanism for support/encouragement to take place for the well-being of all community members. Williams spoke to this in relation to George Manuel, who was an inspiration in her life:

I think that in everything that he did, it was always tied to very simple rules, and that was to work for and to lead people to restore our relationships within our community, our relationship with the land and to maintain our values. He was consistent and he persevered. He led but he also supported people. I watched him

support lots of young people. You know he provided the direction and the idea, and then he left it to everybody to be able to perform at their best. He worked in a realm of ideas and he let people come up with their own ideas. (interview, 2010)

Faculty and elders spoke to how traditional leadership included concepts of encouraging others through praise, experiential learning and storytelling. The essence of learning/fostering leadership came from those leaders who provided the general support of the belief that something could be done, then provided some information and let the individuals they were mentoring do whatever they were trying to learn (J. Borrow, interview, 2010). Borrow spoke of this in relation his mother's influence on his life, "I think so much of what we do in the way we develop, how we approach the world is based on those who love us and extend a special sense of appreciation for us. She really did have that effect" (2010).

## **6.3 The Southern Direction: Defining and Understanding Indigenous Leadership in Post-secondary Education**

### **6.3.1 Living Identity, Traditions and Culture in the Academy**

Traditions for Indigenous people are contextualized through histories, dreams, story-telling and personal experiences. Ensuring traditions are passed on through academia is a priority for Indigenous faculty, students and elders. One student in particular, Trish, spoke to how faculty in the School of Social Work encourage students to link their personal accounts from their lives with how the lessons learned will affect their practice, "We are encouraged to make meaning of our stories and how they effect change in the work we are engaged with" (T. Pallichuk, focus group, 2010).

Many of the participants spoke to the reality that tradition is a *living entity* and needs to be recognized as a vital component in post -secondary education. John Borrows offers the following reflection:

So part of having those values today is recognizing that tradition is a living thing. I spoke before and you heard me say that tradition can be the dead faith of living people or the living faith of dead people. Sometimes people hold tradition as something that is this dead thing 'cause they think it's frozen. Even though we're living, they don't really understand how to make it applicable today. I think tradition should be the living thing of those that passed already. And what that means for me then is that tradition has to interact with the present. It's not like tradition is static, isolated, frozen in the past but there's some authentic moment that we can actually get to. It's having those values of kindness, or honesty, or knowledge interact with other things that are around me in this setting. So take knowledge for instance. If that's a living tradition from a grandfather teaching, it means that I have to take seriously language, culture, our own laws, those have to be brought forward as knowledge.

(interview, 2010)

Indigenous philosophies have been around since time immemorial, Tlingit teachings suggest that the two important elements to well-being are respect for *haa shageinyaa* - the Great Spirit, and preservation of culture. We have a responsibility to uphold these values for generations to come; these are meant to guide us in our everyday lives and cannot be fragmented. Similarly, Victor Underwood from the Elders' Voices at the University of

Victoria emphasizes the importance of looking to the past in order to know where we are today and where we are going:

I see some of the students struggle around how to bring in their traditions here at the university. I say to them if you want to know about anything, you've always got to go back to the beginning. Go back to your family law. Go back to your community law. That's going to be the foundation where you need to go. Once you get that in place, you can work in the other world. You need to do this now because sometimes it's not in place; that's why a lot of students end up dropping out or quitting before they get their certificate or degree. So if they get their foundation built in their hearts, that's where they get their courage and their strength, and using our ways is very important to them. So that's what they have to work on and that's what we want to pass on to them as a way to encourage them to stay in school longer.

(interview, June 2009)

In his reflections on being an Indigenous scholar in the academy, Jeff Corntassel (2003) asserts how inseparable his Tsalagi (Cherokee) identity is from his scholarly work. As an intellectual leader, he argues that his identity, his scholarship, his role as an academic, and his Indigenous activism for change are all deeply intertwined. Whereas Western academic practice insists on maintaining the binary borders and exclusivity between activism and academia (Corntassel, 2003, p. 160), Corntassel describes, through a range of examples, how his Tsalagi identity is a critical aspect of the leadership he demonstrates in his intellectual and community work. In his academic life as a Tsalagi scholar, he takes pride in "knowing that my dedication to Tsalagi people and Indigenous communities did not conveniently fit into a Western conceptualization of 'objectivity'"

(Corntassel, 2003, p. 160-61). Of importance to his intellectual life and leadership is his need for “[his] life to reflect my attempt to walk the way of *wi-gaduwaga* based on relations to kinfolk, homelands/holy places, histories, language, and ceremonial life” (Corntassel, 2003, p. 161). Jeff’s emphasis on traditions as a basis for how students’ progress in his classes is a philosophical foundation linked to his pedagogy.

During our focus group, many of the students spoke of the importance of seeing Indigenous role models who have a sense of their identity and who “walk the talk” every day of their lives, no matter where they are; they clearly linked this to leadership:

Roger John<sup>41</sup> carries himself in a really respectful and traditional manner wherever; if he’s out in the community or when he goes walking into a classroom. He always has his drum with him and he has his medicines that he carries with him and I really have the utmost respect for that to be able to do that on a consistent basis without worrying about judgments and the support that he gives to students and to faculty and to staff on campus and off campus, the community members and from the community, making sure that he’s connecting. That’s a huge part of tradition of really staying connected to your surroundings.

(A. Antoine, focus group, 2010)

### **6.3.2 Spirituality**

Inextricably linked to the previous theme but deserving its own place/space is spirituality. Students emphasized that spirituality is an important pedagogy that is not normally privileged in mainstream academia and that it signifies wellness, connectedness to the ancestors, the Great Spirit, the land and each other. Willie Ermine (1995) explains

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<sup>41</sup> The former Indigenous Advisor for the Faculty of Human & Social Development. Name used with permission.

spirituality as “the inner space [that] is that universe of being within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self or the being. The priceless core within each of us” (p.103). This “core” helps us to know ourselves, our surroundings, and ultimately the connections of the “self” to all reality.

Throughout the discussions with participants, issues circulating around spiritual beliefs and values were important. Two of the student participants spoke of the need for effective leaders who are committed to their own healing/spiritual work and able to bring in aspects of that work into academia for students to see, experience and practice (A. Antoine, focus group, 2010; M. Wickham, focus group, 2010). All of the students equated spirituality with balance and wellness: “I notice that those who are grounded in spiritual teachings of songs, language, prayer and medicines, and bring them into classes where they have voice, seem to have more influence in our Indigenous program” (T. Pallichuk, focus group, 2010). Another form of spiritual practice that participants emphasized was humor and laughter. Many participants articulated the benefits of humor and laughter as mindful spiritual practices that serve as a catalyst for healthy leadership.

### **6.3.3 Traditional Values in the Academy**

All of the participants spoke to the importance of traditional values and how these values are profoundly rooted within Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies. Traditional values are important elements that inform every aspect of our lives. Elder Marie Cooper, from Tsawout First Nation, goes even further to say that in the old days, people were removed from leadership roles/spiritual ceremonies if they were not *living* the traditional values continually (interview, 2010). Living the traditional values is as essential today in

academia as it has been in the past; people need to show love, gain and show respect, have the trust of people and show trust in people. Cooper described this necessity as follows:

I do think about the leadership. I'm very observant of looking at people's style and the way they move with our people. And I look to see if they have a respect for the values of the people that they're working with because I've seen too much of the other, the colonialism. And so I look to see if people respect the values of the Saanich people. If they know the traditional place that we have in relationship to all the educational endeavors that we try to move through. (interview, 2010)

Participants spoke to the importance of knowing and living traditional values to developing ethical leadership and community skills which will sustain Indigenous Nations for generations to come. Vine Deloria states, "In the old days leadership depended on the personal prestige of the people whom the community chose as its leaders. Their generosity, service to the community, integrity, and honesty had to be above question" (as cited in Graveline, 1998, p. 248). This is still true today in post-secondary education. Jacquie Green spoke to how traditional values informed her *nuyuums* (teachings) through oolichan fishing, and related that she was taught to live the values of reciprocity, generosity, love, honor, respect, trust and honesty. She believes that all people have ancestral teachings and cultural norms, and she encourages all students to seek those histories through their own stories in the classroom. Several faculty members spoke to the importance of taking Indigenous teachings, taking the values, taking the languages and customs, and having them come alive in different settings including post-secondary academia. Borrows expresses it this way: "Whether it be Indigenous Governance, Social Work, Law, or Education, there is a place for you to bring who you are and have this validated in that

field” (interview, 2010). Thomas spoke poignantly in her interview about two values that were part of the teachings she received as she was growing up:

Two of the teachings that ring for me every day at the university, the first one is *Nutsa Maat*, we are all one. If I truly believe that we are all one, then I need to treat everybody exactly the same way that I would treat my grandmother who was one of the most important people in my life. I need to treat everyone as if they were my mother, as if they were my children who give me purpose every day. And so you behave a lot differently when you start to think about your relationships in that way. The other one is *Uy’skwuluwun* to be of one mind, a good mind and a good heart.

(interview, 2010)

Thomas related how important it was for her to walk her values and beliefs and teachings, wherever she is at the University of Victoria. She emphasizes the importance of carrying the teachings no matter where you are. Her compassion and love for people were manifested through her own family. She speaks often of how her grandmother, her aunts and her mother have always been the strength and backbone of her family and how they carried the family traditions and values with dignity and respect.

#### **6.3.4 Responsibility, Relationships, and Reciprocity - Community**

##### **Responsibility**

*In the old days, a Tlingit man would take his nephew at about 10-12 years of age down to the beach or the icy stream. There would be other boys from the village there too. The nephew was made to sit in the cold water for awhile, and when he came out, he whipped himself to restore circulation. This practice was a way to prepare for adult*

*life. It was a responsibility shared by all young men and showed that the mental discipline was more important than the physical.* (W. Williams, Tlingit elder, personal communication, 2001)

Tlingit children are taught responsibilities through ceremonies from birth to old age. These responsibilities are foundations to guide ways of being, seeing and doing; they connect people to the teachers of the natural and supernatural worlds, to all things living. Many of the participants in this study spoke of mediating their responsibilities at home and in academia and of the difficulty but importance of doing so. The hardest part of that journey seems to be the responsibilities that exist in the institution and how those teachings differ from “back home.” Students commented on these differences: “The institution really changes our mind sets. We have to pay greater attention to individual responsibilities than collective responsibilities, we learn how to compete rather than cooperate and you get ahead here by being more aggressive rather than being patient” (T. Pallichuk, focus group, 2010; M. Wickham, focus group, 2010). Students acknowledged that this situation is slowly changing as more Indigenous courses, programs and Indigenous institutes<sup>42</sup> are being developed and more Indigenous people work at these institutes. Pallichuk conveyed how the Indigenous Specialization in the School of Social Work centers on personal and collective responsibilities and how relationships are the foundation to learning in the program (focus group, 2010).

All students spoke openly about the changes they have seen at the university with the infusion of Indigenous worldviews and pedagogies. They spoke of the responsibilities

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<sup>42</sup> There are currently 35 Indigenous Post Secondary Institutes in British Columbia.

placed on them by Indigenous professors. They felt those responsibilities are really tough but important because they were being groomed to be leaders.

That's part of being in the program is learning all of these things and it's not skills-based in terms of I have a definite set of skills that I can go and make something or do something. It's a frame of mind; it's a way of thinking and being in the world. And so for me that responsibility is huge; they put a lot of pressure on you and a lot of high expectations but they do that because that's what you need to be a leader. In the kind of environment that we're negotiating with, there are high expectations, but I feel good about it because it's not just for me: it's for my community and my people and for everybody. So yeah that's definitely been transformative for me and has helped me to think for myself.

(M. Wickham, focus group, 2010)

Jacque Green, a faculty member in the School of Social Work, believes that our responsibility towards education today can be balanced with our responsibilities to our communities, but this is often tumultuous:

I believe that academia is something that is important for our people to pursue and I just hope that it becomes an easier decision to make compared to how it is today, where our people have to worry about not leaving our communities and our families. Education needs to be more accessible to all of our people. We are beginning to do that here at the university.

(interview, 2010)

Our responsibility to, and relationships with the Indigenous communities and lands we are situated on are essential aspects of collective leadership pedagogies as defined by all faculty involved in the study. Lorna Williams explains it this way:

The relationship is not only the relationship that we have person to person between the people who are leading the class and receiving teachings in the class but the relationship amongst the members of that immediate community. As well, what is emergent in a relationship that people find themselves within the space within which they find themselves. And the space is, in this case, not just the university but the land that we're on and the community that we're a part of. (interview, 2010)

Williams articulates that in addition to her responsibilities to students as an Indigenous scholar, there is an additional responsibility that tends not to be a part of the university's conception of a leadership role. This additional responsibility she refers to is her responsibility to "furthering the ideals of our Nations and the goals of our people. And I think that that's where a lot of attention is because there's a third person in the relationship. There's a third entity in the relationship that tends not to be there for others" (interview, 2010).

Lorna developed and taught a course called "Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World" in which students created a welcoming pole, a textile hanging, stories, and songs that were then gifted to the school and/or community. Lorna encourages students to be aware of and understand the territory where they are situated. She goes beyond this time/space to show that they are part of a community that transcends the "here and now." She creates an environment where students have become aware that "we are all being impacted by the stories and experiences of the people who went before us and

who are going to come after us” (L. Williams, interview, 2010). Lorna expands the students’ sense of who they are and who they have a relationship with. She finds ways so that the people who are participating in her courses really have a “sense of a relationship with the environment, the plants that are around us, with the community that is around us both at the university and off campus” (interview, 2010).

Applying these concepts of responsibility and relationships is important but challenging for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. I recall sitting in a classroom with Robina Thomas where she started a Social Work class by asking non-Indigenous students to identify the traditional Indigenous territory they grew up in, to identify any Aboriginal sacred site in that territory and to identify the traditional territory that the University of Victoria is situated on. She was trying to show students the significance of the vast history on the lands that is referred to by many people today as “home.” Robina was ultimately trying to show that if Indigenous students are required, through academia, to acquire knowledge about Euro-Western history, then surely this should be reciprocal. That is, non-Indigenous peoples should acquire knowledge about Indigenous people; this counter-knowledge becomes an important form of reciprocity. It was an eye opening experience for non-Indigenous students in the class, and today, I utilize this strategy in my classes. In my interview with Robina, she felt the need to Indigenize<sup>43</sup> her classroom and to Indigenize the spaces where she walks. She does not, however, have the desire to

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<sup>43</sup> The purpose of Indigenization is to share Indigenous knowledge in order for the general population to become better prepared to understand, negotiate with, and co-exist with Aboriginal peoples. It also means to infuse Indigenous knowledge into other parts of the university, i.e. through policies, curriculum development and delivery, employee education and student services.

indigenize the whole institute because it requires too much time and energy – time and energy she would rather use in other ways for Indigenous well-being.

### **6.3.5 Indigenous Pedagogical Leadership in Academia**

#### **6.3.5.1 Land-based Teachings/Experiential Learning**

Many of the participants in this study acknowledged the importance of land-based teachings as part of their post-secondary educational experience. Students, faculty and elders all expressed the importance of coming to know the history, location and the people of the local traditional territories<sup>44</sup> where the University of Victoria is situated. Faculty spoke to the importance of developing ongoing relationships with people from the territory. This entails understanding, respecting and living the protocols<sup>45</sup> of the community/Nation, spending time within the community in a meaningful way, meeting with and building relationships with those who carry traditional knowledge. Marie Cooper, Coast Salish elder from Tsartlip, explains it this way, “I think it’s so important to learn the protocol, to learn the ethics, to learn the spirituality around our place. We have people who know this in our communities and visitors should be respectful of them too” (interview, 2010). All of the departments involved in this study have worked hard on developing and nurturing these relationships, and it should be noted that this is not necessarily reflective of all departments at the university. Some have failed to build relationships, understand, or respect community protocols, or value the history of the territory.

Land-based teachings are important because they connect all elements of learning. One student participant, Trish Pallichuk, articulates this connection in the following way:

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<sup>44</sup> Lekwungen (Songhees); Esquimalt peoples; later this included the WSÁ,NEC (which consists of the Pauquachin, Tsartlip, Tsawout and Tseycum bands)

<sup>45</sup> Course of conduct or ways in which a relationship will be respected

“we come to realize the connectedness between the mind, body and spirit by being out on the land and it grounds me so that I can get through my other classes” (focus group, 2010). Students spoke to the wealth of knowledge they received by being on the land and engaging in experiential learning. Angela Antoine shared, “Our Indigenous faculty members are always taking the classroom outside of the institution. So we were going out in communities and really connecting with Esquimalt, really connecting with Saanich and all of that and taking and meeting our local elders and learning the local protocols” (focus group, 2010). By developing and nurturing ongoing relationships and learning traditions from the local territory, students are learning about responsibility, accountability and reciprocity. This responsibility to community is an important aspect of leadership.

While discussing his vision for the Indigenous Governance program at the University of Victoria, Taiaiake Alfred shared his contemplations on land-based teachings and their connections to this program:

For us we’re talking about Indigenous governance. Where does that come from?

That comes from the land. That comes from the philosophies and the traditions that exist on the land. So I think there’s an imperative for us to develop to the point where we have, where this is kind of a site that’s still useful in granting degrees and using the resources of the university, but it is based in the context of our culture.

And for me it’s increasingly becoming clear that that is on the land and the territory, and teaching people the philosophy and the ways of being Indigenous in that context there.

(interview, 2010)

Elders spoke of the constant need to adapt pedagogy to reflect that Indigenous teachings are not based on the here and now; rather, we are impacted by the stories and experiences of the people who walked before us and we will be impacted by the people who are going to come after us. One of the elders spoke to how he is involved in experiential learning activities with students on the local territory, whereby invasive plants are being harvested and replaced with traditional ones. During this process of harvesting, students are exposed to the stories of the land and its connections to the various facets of local culture and traditions. Faculty also spoke to the importance of experiential learning as a way for all students to broaden their sense of their identity and their interconnectivity to the world around them. They find ways in their curriculum and instruction so that students who are participating in their courses have a strong sense of a relationship with the environment, the plants, and within community, both at the university and off campus. All of the programs involved in this study encourage land-based teachings as an important form of experiential learning. Corntassel speaks of how the Indigenous Governance program centers this learning:

And so a lot of us have been able to benefit from that in the sense that we can create our own curricula. We have a lot more freedom. We can get outside the classroom. We can bring in elders. We can bring in other students from our communities. We can do things like our canoe carving project, where Charles Elliot, Tsartlip master carver, is our teacher and master carver; this is now an extension of the classroom where we're going out to observe and participate in carving paddles. It's been slow going but the other part of it is the physical. So we get folks outside and we do hikes and things that to promote physical well-being as well as the emotional and

intellectual. So we try to address all those aspects and I think folks for the most part have really responded well to it. It's not a conventional program in that sense.

(interview, 2010)

Part of the leadership and learning processes is found within the relationships students have with each other and in preparing for the unknown. Lorna Williams, emphasizes some of the unforeseeable teachings students receive through experiential learning:

[T]here are lots of things that we arrive at a place to learn that's not in the control of whoever designed the course. It's really people find themselves usually in a place where it's time for them to learn something. So they have to be able to have the space to be able to do that. Often, what they think they were meant to learn when they signed up for a course might not happen. The other thing is that students and participants have a voice that needs to be enacted and so my job is to be able to create the space for each of them to be able to do that. (interview, 2010)

### **6.3.5.2 Classroom Pedagogies**

A common thread that ran through students' responses was that their Indigenous classes were not all skills-based.. As mentioned previously, Wickham spoke to the teachings received from Indigenous faculty in Indigenous Governance as helping her to develop a way of thinking and being in the world. She feels this is a substantial responsibility, and is part of developing into a leader (M. Wickham, personal communication, 2010). Molly puts it this way,

for our cause (as Indigenous peoples) and in the kind of environment that we're negotiating with, it's not going to be easy and they kind of prepare you mentally for all those things that you're going to come up against. So for me that responsibility and expectations are pretty high, but I feel good about it because it's not just for me; it's for my community and my people and for everybody. So yeah that's definitely been transformative for me and to think for myself. (interview, 2010)

Molly articulated how this is applied in the classroom through one of her instructors who chooses to observe students interact with each other as a foundation of learning. Students are expected to have completed all of the readings and develop a critical analysis based on the concepts/ideas within those readings. Students can engage with the concepts from the readings for the entire class. The instructor does not formally lecture or describe the correct way to understand concepts; instead, she asks critical questions:

She asks the right questions that come up and then all of a sudden you're challenging yourself, you're challenging your own beliefs, you are challenging everything and talking through it and working through it. She just facilitates that process. She doesn't tell you what is right or wrong, and that's the way all of the professors are. So I think that's a really cool way to support somebody that has to become a leader in some format.

(focus group, 2010)

Several of the participants spoke of the importance of sitting in circle, which helps facilitate the pedagogical approach that "we are all teachers and we are all learners" (J. Green and R. Thomas, interview, 2010). Circles are an important form of cultural teachings

and represent values of connectedness, belongingness, respect and patience. Green reflects on the importance of circles in her classroom:

I wouldn't say they're very basic, but as an academic coming in with the Indigenous knowledge that I bring into the classroom is around sharing in circle that we all have an opportunity to teach and to learn. I think that's very cultural to have it in that way. The relationships that I build with students are life- long. I always try to strengthen those relationships. I hear from students that I've taught ten years ago and we go and have a coffee. I think the relationships that we have built are cultural.

(interview, 2010)

As an instructor, I now incorporate teaching circles using a format I learned from my former instructor in the doctoral program in Education at UBC, Gregory Cajete (Tewa). Gregory conducts "fishbowl" exercises whereby students are physically placed into two groups: inner and outer circles. Students in the inner circle are expected to discuss the readings for that class amongst each other for the first hour. After a short break, members of the outer circle, through observation of the original discussion, ask questions of the inner circle for the next hour. This form of dialogue builds relationships and critical analytical skills amongst students. The process also de-mystifies the hierarchy often created in academia, whereby the teachers are typically the carriers of knowledge. In this "fishbowl" pedagogical strategy, everyone engages in both teaching and learning.

### **6.3.5.3 Elders in the Classroom**

Elders are considered knowledge keepers/ leaders and they are respected for what they have learned. They honor us in academia by sharing culture, tradition, and knowledges based upon their experiences. Elders are important for their connection to the

past, and for their knowledge of traditional ways, teachings, stories and ceremonies. All students spoke to the significance of elders on their educational journey. Trish Pallichuk spoke to the significance of elders in the School of Social Work, both those who came into classes and those she needed to visit for advice, support and in completing assignments in the Indigenous Specialization:

I can't begin to speak of what visiting with one elder meant to me. I sat with her for hours, she is one who knows the teachings and knows this territory very well, so well that she lives her talk. And now she provides me with some of those teachings, she helps us to understand them because she's lived them.

(focus group, 2010)

Amanda Engen spoke to how elders have a way of grounding students' experiences, and she believes this is essential for the holistic well-being of Indigenous students who attend universities, where the administration and policies are difficult to adhere to on a continual basis:

I have learned from the elders at the school a lot about balance and what balance means in an individual context and what happens when you don't locate that. You tend to fall a little bit but the elders are there to help us find it. You know that they're kind of always that support system and that's a huge thing that I learned in there.

(focus group, 2010)

Each of the departments in this study calls upon and utilizes elders for the knowledge they have around traditions, philosophies and ceremonies. The First Peoples House also provides access to elders' support and teachings for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In November 2011, I attended the Canadian Association of University Teachers'

(CAUT) Indigenous forum and one of the keynote speakers, Dan Longboat (Mohawk) spoke to how at this time of our lives we have the opportunity to *not* have to concentrate on survival in the academy. “Many of our elders (and ancestors) sacrificed themselves for our privilege to move the agenda forward and we must take this responsibility up and part of this responsibility we have is to move forward based on the teachings of the past” (Keynote address,. November 10, 2012).

Green and Thomas articulated their reminder that leaders have an ongoing responsibility to ensure students come to know who the elders are in the local territory and in their own lives, and how to work with them (interviews 2010). Green also expressed concern about the vast expectations the university has of elders (interview, 2010). The elders are often required to fulfill multiple roles, and as a result, elders are often stretched to their limits.

## **6.4 The Western Direction: Leadership Challenges Within the University, and Working Through those Challenges**

### **6.4.1 Working Within Systems**

*Things have changed, but it's still an unspoken assumption that they are in control and we are the beneficiaries. And I think that that one constantly has to be challenged. (T. Alfred, interview, 2010)*

Participants in this study identified how contradictory higher administrative levels at the university can be. On one hand, they are seeking to bring in more Indigenous faculty, knowledge and pedagogies to meet the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. On the other hand, Indigenous professors are hired to make some changes within a system

that does not really want to change, or a system that thinks that the needs of Aboriginal people can be met without substantial change. Graham Smith (2003, October) refers to this as the “politics of distraction” whereby Indigenous people are provided small measures of accomplishment, while the status quo still prevails. Several faculty admitted that they could add an Indigenous course or two, or occasionally create Indigenous programs, but they were limited in anything further that they wished to do. They believe that the university still operates on the premise that everyone should have access to the same knowledge in order to graduate. Two faculty members spoke of their departments having goals and objectives of supplementing/maintaining Indigenous content; administrators at higher levels of the university, however, did not have an understanding of what this entailed.

Lorna Williams describes the current situation in the Faculty of Education:

It meant change at so many levels. And if you change things in one area, you're going to impact change in so many different other areas. I see how change at the university requires big steps. You have to take little steps. You have to know when to compromise and when not to compromise. When the time is right and when the time isn't right. You have to be patient, which is something that I'm not great at. I think that you have to be willing to work with people even if they don't really fully understand or accept what you're trying to do. You have to be very strategic. You have to maintain your balance and do things in your personal life that maintain that balance otherwise your soul and your spirit can't breathe.

(interview, 2010)

Alfred agrees, as all faculty have, that self-care is essential when working at public post-secondary institutions. He does, however, have a different way of looking at the struggles

and how to engage in them with the upper administration at the University of Victoria. He spoke openly about engaging in conflict for much of the 15 years he has been working at this university, due to the fact that most administrators have little understanding about decolonization. He did not worry about the threats to his tenure-track position at the university as he felt the imperative to advocate for Indigenous students. He spoke candidly about how he has actively taken up the role of challenging professors and administrators who are overtly or subtly racist towards Indigenous people. At an institutional level, these forms of racism needed to be challenged, and Taiaiake has taken on this task directly since he was hired by the University of Victoria in 1995. He spoke to many examples of students facing discrimination/racism through lectures in Anthropology, Education, or English. He has helped empower those students to challenge these attitudes/beliefs directly within the university. Today, he has engaged students in the Indigenous Governance program in that struggle by philosophically and practically challenging the many mechanisms, structures and processes of colonialism. While he acknowledges that there are people in the university who have some understanding of decolonization through their own critical reflection, lived experiences and education, many faculty and many of those in upper administration still fail to comprehend the importance and necessity of decolonization:

An element of the program I work in is the decolonizing context. So in a decolonizing context you also have to, on top of those traditional elements, add a context of anger and willingness to fight against the white supremacy. So you have to generate that in students. They come pacified or they come convinced that assimilation is the way out. You have to break them from that. (T. Alfred, interview, 2010)

#### **6.4.2 Continuous Subjugation of Indigenous Knowledge within the Academy**

As mentioned earlier, many non-Indigenous people in academia have not had to learn about Indigenous people in any lasting or meaningful ways. Whether in elementary, high-school, or post-secondary schooling, Western and Euro-centric knowledge has been privileged while other knowledges have been dismissed or marginalized. The belief that still prevails is that everyone needs the same knowledge and that there needs to be a standard means by which to measure that knowledge. This is particularly noticeable in post-secondary education where the policies, curriculum development/ delivery, research and employee education continue to center Euro-centric experience and frameworks which can have the devastating consequences of eradicating Indigenous cultures, identity and well-being.

Many of the faculty in this study spoke about the challenge of re-educating many of the non-Indigenous and even some Indigenous, students, faculty and administrators who hold and carry Western-based knowledge and continue to perpetuate these ideas through neo-liberal ideology. Michael Apple (2001) describes neo-liberals in education as economic visionaries who want educational policy to be centered around the economy, around performance objectives based on a closer connection between schooling and paid work. Ultimately, we end up seeing schools connected to a marketplace -especially the global capitalist market - and to the labor needs and processes of such a market. It is this capitalist marketplace which students and faculty are expected to engage with and adhere to. I once asked a student to help put tables away at the beginning of a class and to help form a circle of chairs to facilitate our interaction for that class. He snapped at me, "why should I do that...what's in it for me?" I told the student he did not have to do anything and invited him

to leave. He decided to stay but offered nothing in class. What this interaction made me think of is how all of our tasks, regardless of the value we place on them, need to be regarded in terms of the well-being of the collective rather than through the individualistic, competitive ideals espoused in my student's response, "what is in it for me?"

Jacque Green and Robina Thomas spoke of the difficulty in having Indigenous knowledge respected within the School of Social Work when they were first hired and how this continues today. Although they were hired to bring forward and centralize Indigenous knowledge, scholarship and pedagogical processes, both Green and Thomas found that some of the mainstream instructors became quite uncomfortable when it came down to their actual use of Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies in the classroom (interviews, 2010). These mainstream instructors had a difficult time stepping aside and allowing the voices from the margins to transform the epistemic and pedagogical processes at the School of Social Work. Green and Thomas also spoke of how non-Indigenous students have little understanding of the racist policies throughout history that have oppressed, and continue to oppress Indigenous peoples (interviews, 2010). For example, the policies which underlie the *Indian Act*, the Residential Schools system, the child welfare system and the criminal justice system have all resulted in the "institutionalization"<sup>46</sup> of Indigenous people. Non-Indigenous students have rarely had to learn about such issues, so when they come into the classroom, they may show little interest in learning about them or choose not to engage in any meaningful way because these realities have not been part of their past education. They have not been socialized to give value to other ways of knowing or

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<sup>46</sup> By "institutionalization", I am referring to ongoing colonial practices whereby Indigenous people are forced to accept punishment on a continuous basis and are subjected to living in institutions which reinforce subjugation to colonial authorities as the norm. They are taught to continue to rely on this cycle as the way existence has to be and is meant to be.

teaching. Jacquie Green relayed how problematic this can be and how it can be transformed:

I guess, I continue to learn every year and every time I come to the classroom around how to address that and how to confront those injustices on a daily basis. So those are the tensions. When they work well I guess for me is when students realize that they don't know a lot. When students realize that they are so privileged and they've come from a place of dominance that they go to a place of unlearning patriarchy. They go to a place of unlearning their place of privilege and then start learning about who they are as a person and how who they are affects the families that they work with. So to me that's always exciting when students get to that place.

(interview, 2010)

At the launch of her book in Victoria, *Unsettling the settler within: Indian Residential Schools, truth telling, and reconciliation in Canada*, Paulette Regan (2010) spoke of how her own learning was transformed through the Indigenous Governance program at the University of Victoria. She described how the program opened her heart, mind and spirit to really hear about the subjugation of Indigenous people, and she realized the role her own history had in that oppression. She further articulates, "Historically and to the present, we remain obsessed with solving the Indian problem, even as we deflect attention from the settler problem. In doing so, we ignore our complicity in maintaining the colonial status quo" (Regan, 2010, p. 236).

Regan (2010) speaks to what she has called an "unsettling pedagogy" (pp. 23-24). Unsettling pedagogy is based on the premise that "settlers cannot just theorize about decolonizing and liberatory struggle: they must live through it, beginning with

[themselves] as individuals, and then as morally and ethically responsible socio-political actors in Canadian society” (pp. 23- 24). As Green’s earlier comments imply, settlers need to come realize in their own minds the role of the privilege they have, and they must deconstruct that/live it and constantly reflect on it before transformation can occur (interview, 2010).

Corntassel (2011, January 12) goes beyond advocating an “unsettling pedagogy” and calls Indigenous people to challenge the continuing colonial discourse through *insurgent education*. He believes that, as insurgent educators, we have a responsibility to raise awareness of Indigenous histories and place based existences as part of the ongoing struggle against different forms of colonialism. Corntassel speaks of the necessity to “create decolonizing and discomfoting moments of Indigenous truth-telling that challenge the colonial status quo” (2011, January 12). Corntassel does this by questioning settler occupation of Indigenous places through direct, honest, and practical forms of engagement and demands for accountability. Insurgent educators epitomize Indigenous forms of leadership by relating their daily struggles for Indigenous renewal to bigger audiences “using new ways that inspire activism and reclamation of Indigenous histories and homelands” (2011, January 12).

#### **6.4.3 The Tenure Process**

*If Jesus applied for tenure at Trent University, he would probably not get it, but his disciples would because they wrote things down* (D. Longboat, personal communication, November 11, 2011).

The challenges of the tenure process were a recurring theme discussed by the Indigenous faculty involved in this study. Tenure is a complex process whereby faculty are recognized through their contribution to three areas: teaching, scholarship and community service, primarily within the university paradigm. For most universities in Canada, this involves demonstration of “competence” in teaching, “excellence” in research, and “service” within the institute and community as evidenced by the following measures:

### **Teaching**

- data from student evaluations – normally from all courses taught;
  - peer review of in-class teaching and course content;
  - publications and research about teaching and learning;
  - teaching awards;
  - contributions to program and curriculum development;
  - sample teaching materials.
- maintenance of a teaching dossier – Most of the materials noted above are common elements of a teaching dossier, a comprehensive collection of evidence of teaching contributions and effectiveness. This may also include a teaching philosophy statement, information on pedagogical strategies used inside and outside the classroom, sample student work, and evidence of professional development and mentorship. Some institutions specifically direct faculty to the comprehensive CAUT guidelines for such documents.

## **Research**

- significant peer-reviewed research publications in a faculty member's field. This might include books, monographs, journal articles and book chapters.
- participation at conferences and in meetings of professional organizations;
- receipt of research grants;
- review and editing responsibilities (e.g. journals, textbooks, etc.);
- non-peer-reviewed publications (e.g. policy papers);
- letters of appraisal from colleagues.

## **Service**

- participation on departmental/divisional/institutional committees;
- participation in institutional governance processes;
- academic administrative appointments;
- community service (where relevant to academic expertise);
- Faculty Association responsibilities. (Gravestock & Gregor Greenleaf, 2008)

Several faculty mentioned the challenge of maintaining their ethics and values while they are at the university because of the tenure and promotion process. This process is based on how well you can sell yourself, how you express the ways in which you excel, and it is a process that values individual interests over meaningful collective or community involvement. Faculty spoke of how the tenure process has an extensive and engrained past in post-secondary educational institutes that reflects dominant ideology and is contradictory to Indigenous worldviews. In fact, this process is shunned by many Indigenous communities. Writing a dossier in a way that you must speak to and center your individual achievements, while omitting many of the relationships one has outside of the

university has been very challenging for many of the faculty in this study. Lorna Williams spoke as follows about the process:

Your progress in the system depends on how well you can only think about yourself. For most Indigenous people who are tied to the Indigenous community, they have a real challenge at a university because Indigenous people are expecting you still to be a member of the community and to be a participant in giving in that community, but the university is expecting you to be individualistic and to think only of yourself and for furthering in a sense, the goals of the university. (interview, 2010)

Similarly, Robina Thomas reflected on how Western values compromise Indigenous ways of knowing and being:

Everything is about credentials and everything is about being able to prove yourself that way. How many publications do you have? What are your academic credentials? Have you ever been asked to be a keynote speaker at an international conference? How many SSHRC<sup>47</sup> grants do you have? I'm not saying those things don't matter as those things are so important to some people, but to other people our work is in the community. And our work is about building relationships. (interview, 2010)

Two of the faculty spoke to the humiliation of the tenure process and the need to challenge the current system. One recently tenured professor in the School of Child and Youth Care, Shanne McCaffrey, a Métis/Cree scholar did just that. When seeking tenure, Shanne placed ceremonial gifts that she received into various places within her dossier binder. These were affirmations of the relationships she built in communities, or as she so aptly put it, "my scholarship of engagement" (McCaffrey, Web log post, April 5, 2011).

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<sup>47</sup> Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council

Shanne also tied a Métis sash around her portfolio before handing it in to the Articulation Committee. Sadly, the sash was removed and never put back into place and the ceremonial gifts were placed in the back of the binder. This was a direct insult to her Indigeneity:

As I went through my portfolio, I experienced a deep sadness. I saw my community engagement work pushed to the side, as the writing, curriculum work, and course-based evaluations took up all of the space. I was told to keep it “scholarly” and “academic,” to take out the pieces that were connected to community, to relationships and to spirit.

(McCaffrey, Web log post, April 5, 2011)

Jacque Green, who recently became tenured, speaks to how change in this process might look from her perspective.

This does not mean Indigenous people cannot go through it; the tenure process can be violent, but we can change the face of the process. We should be given two different types of tenure/promotions. We are reflecting and implementing our cultural values and philosophies into the courses/programs we develop and teach, into our research and writing; therefore, we are translating Indigenous knowledge into Western academic paradigms. Non-Indigenous academics are doing this through a Western paradigm - from the beginning to the end. They don't have to translate what cultural teachings are, what ceremonies are, what dreams mean, what visions mean; therefore, it is easier for them to get through; they have access to scholarly journals. For us, it is harder to find scholarly journals that will publicize how we write about our potlatches, teachings, etc.

(interview, 2010)

What was common throughout the interviews was how writing the teaching dossier in a way that reflects your Indigeneity while also reflecting the criteria for the tenure process, proves to be very challenging. Jeff Corntassel, who has worked with our SAGE<sup>48</sup> group in the past reminds us that tenure is “our ticket in, but it comes with responsibilities!” (interview, 2010). Jeff articulates that since he received tenure, there is a tendency for Indigenous people/communities to view him as “part of the problem” or “part of the system.” He continues to examine notions of power and the responsibilities that come with that power. How will he use that added responsibility now that he is secure in his job, a security that very few people have?

I’m lucky to be here and lucky to be teaching all these great people and also learning from them. But also how do I stay uncomfortable and maintain that edge that I think you need to be an effective teacher, leader. You know at what point do you say, “Could I walk away from all this if the conditions weren’t facilitating the success of our students?” Would I walk away, or would I threaten to walk away and actually uphold that? So I’m constantly kind of testing myself, but fortunately there are a lot of folks that keep me honest around campus. Yeah, other Indigenous faculty, other Indigenous students: they hold us to account. (interview, 2010)

McCaffrey believes that Indigenous scholars have a responsibility to their identities, cultures and traditions and thus to challenge the status quo through the tenure process, but how might we do this? What might this involve? McCaffrey provides inspiration for Indigenous scholars everywhere: she challenged the system. “For me, there was no hesitation. I would present myself in my Indigenous ways. I would not disconnect or

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<sup>48</sup> Support Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Program

compartmentalize myself. I could live with the consequences of my stand of locating myself, with integrity and honor” (Web log post, April 5, 2011). She told the university’s tenure committee that she would be attending their meeting to assess her application in person, which is not normal procedure, so that she could explain the significance of the gifts she had placed in her portfolio and how they really are a form of “community evaluations, affirmations and ways of assessing” (McCaffrey, Web log post, April 5, 2011). McCaffrey also wrote a short letter of explanation, placed it on the front of her portfolio and handed it in for the final time. In that letter, McCaffrey introduced herself, her people and her responsibilities to her people. She also wrote on the conflict and discrepancy between mainstream education and her Indigenous teachings, especially as illustrated by the tenure process:

I have grieved, wailed and felt deep sorrow and confusion about this colonial process. I ask: “Am I assimilated enough to be accepted?” “Do I want to be assimilated enough?” “Is this the measure, the standard they speak of?” The only self that need appear is my Euro-Western self, while my Indian self shrinks and recedes to the shadows. “Can I really move forward this way?” My Indian self is an outcast in this process.

(McCaffrey, Web log post, April 5, 2011)

McCaffrey further stated to the committee that the tenure process would not take the “Indian out of or from her” as the Residential Schools tried to do years ago (Web log post, April 5, 2011). Shanne finished her letter by critiquing, assessing and evaluating the tenure process itself. In the end, there were various reactions to her letter and to her appearance

before the tenure committee, but I applaud her for standing tall and fighting for herself, her people and other Indigenous scholars. She received tenure in 2010.

Colonization has harmed Indigenous people; the tenure process is a struggle because tenure can be perceived as part of the colonization agenda whereby Indigenous people have to align their thinking, knowing, and ways of doing to a Western hegemonic idea. Based on the reflections of the faculty involved in this study, the process of being subsumed within hegemonic frameworks is beginning to change as Indigenous people are now graduating with undergraduate and graduate degrees at unprecedented levels. Because of the high number of Indigenous students and faculty in post-secondary education, they are able to complete the work that it was once illegal to do. Now they are able to do the work in *their* ways. This is not to dismiss the many challenges that Indigenous scholars continue to confront in the academy, such as the fear created through the current processes and/or the difficulty in transforming these processes. Despite the challenges they continue to face, Indigenous academic leaders continue to act as role models for upcoming students and young scholars. As Jacquie Green states, “We have to model what those tensions are, how we deal with them, whether we make sense of them or how we grapple with those intersections of knowledge and our identity, and place them within an academic dossier for tenure” (interview, 2010).

In the future, it is clear that as Indigenous people are positioned in tenured positions, recognition of Indigenous scholarship criteria will continue the process of transformation. The faculty members involved in this study demonstrate the ways in which they are setting a path for the future, so that when future generations come to the university, they will slowly transform the institute to meet their needs. The work done both

in the past and at present by those who have received tenure creates spaces for more Indigenous people entering post-secondary education. Indigenous-centered writings that give validity to Indigenous knowledge, pedagogies and leadership are forcing the academy to reconsider and change its policies and processes. The CAUT Indigenous Forum held in November 2011 spoke to some of these tensions and recommended a multi-pronged approach to transforming the tenure process. This includes the need to ensure Indigenous faculty sit on tenure committees and the imperative to bring Indigenous knowledge to Deans, to the Senate and to other senior administrators. Green also spoke to the notion that we need to have more Indigenous faculty in positions of power as a way of changing the landscape.

I just think we have to jump through the hoops in order to get these processes the way we want them. So that in the future, it'll be a lot easier, say when my grandchildren come to the university; the picture for them is going to be a lot different. There's probably going to be a lot more programs; maybe we'll even have an Indigenous president at the university. Maybe we'll have more Indigenous deans, so the work that we're doing now is to create those spaces. That's my hope.

(J. Green, interview, 2010)

#### **6.4.4 Academic Silos and Indigenous Solidarity**

Almost by definition, disciplines within academia create boundaries of focus that exclude even closely related topics. Departments create and sustain these boundaries by developing a unique language and demanding fluency in their terminology as a criterion for membership in their "knowledge community." Several faculty spoke of observing the effects of this bounded membership at the university, of how each faculty member has

created a space and a place within their faculty but rarely associates/socializes outside of his or her department. There is the belief that exclusion is realized because each department is perceived as being distinct, with each department espousing that it has its own culture. Some of the faculty discussed that it is time for Indigenous faculty to work across borders, to come together and break down some of the silos between departments because our responsibilities and experiences within higher learning are similar to our non-Indigenous counterparts. This is a key reason why the Indigenous Faculty Caucus was created. The other important responsibility is to Indigenous communities, not just locally but provincially, nationally and internationally. Lorna Williams spoke of the importance of sharing common experiences, “I think that we’re all involved in creating new programs and courses and hopefully impacting each of our faculties and so there needs to be a place where we feel there can be some shared understandings” (interview, 2010).

Faculty members’ opinions varied somewhat when speaking to the theme of unity. What I came to understand, as Alfred (2010) suggested, is that strength in numbers only works when everybody is really consistent and there is no internal conflict (interview). Borrows (2010) also spoke to the importance of not creating an overly ambitious view of how Indigenous faculty members might relate with one another. “We shouldn’t assume that because we’re Indigenous we are going to create a great power block because we come from different Nations and different perspectives” (interview, 2010). However, the ability to come together and realize *where* unity exists is important for faculty involved in this dissertation. Once this has been articulated, we can use the ideas that flow from this articulation to build on our collective strength and points of unity. Borrows spoke to how this might be realized at any educational site:

The celebrations and the ceremonies, the informal interactions, those kind of networks could probably be built up more so that when we are at the big house together and we're feasting, we can you know talk about what we're doing, just more informally. And when those more informal connections are built, it's then easier to build the formal connections 'cause you get a sense of I'm not going to get along with this person, or I can see this could work. So it allows you to work better as a group. So I don't think you could really say here's a structure, let's create this structure at this particular institution and have it work. It's got to be more organic saying well, let's have more feasting, let's have more celebration, more ceremony, more chances to get together, and then when that happens you designed a particular way for your own institution that worked to create some connections. (interview, 2010)

This form of relationship building begins to establish what the commonalities are amongst Indigenous leaders and based on that, what they are all willing to defend or move forward on collectively. Today, the Indigenous Faculty Caucus identifies issues that they can work on collectively. These include supporting those involved in the tenure process, sharing strategies around teaching and research, and challenging the upper administration on policy, student and pedagogical issues.

## **6.5 The Northern Direction: Envisioning the Future**

### **6.5.1 Students Sharing and Building Relationships**

During their focus group, students spoke of the desire to link arms more frequently through a calendar, blog site, twitter, moccasin telegraph, and/or a poster board. The intent

is to build relationships with other Indigenous people, cultures and identities at the University of Victoria. Pallichuk said that students can lead this process that could/should also extend these connections with those in the local territories, where community members can unite with students when possible (personal communication, 2010). Angela Antoine spoke about the importance of connecting Indigenous students from other departments at the University of Victoria through a shared electronic calendar,

I would really like to see... a UVic Indigenous calendar so it's not specific to IGOV, it's not specific to Law, it's not specific to the Native Student Union, but I can look on there and say, "oh there's some Indigenous law students who have this going on today. I'm going to go check it out," or "the medical students are convocating and I'm going to go support them." Whatever, it is because we're so segregated, and I don't know how to bring people together. Like I just wish I could find this information and that it was all gathered into a nice neat little package and I could connect with more students. (focus group, 2010)

All students spoke openly about not being able to take Indigenous courses outside of their disciplines and the frustration they have with not being able to learn from diverse teachings provided by Indigenous faculty in other departments. "I hear so many wonderful things about Indigenous faculty in other departments, some through their writings, some through special lectures, some through other students in those programs. I want to be a part of that experience" (A. Engen, focus group, 2010). Many of the students hope that Indigenous leaders will work towards changing the policies which restrict their ability to gain knowledge from diverse Indigenous courses. There was a strong hope/desire

expressed by all students that Indigenous faculty will fight for change so that Indigenous teachings would be available to them regardless of what department they are situated in.

### **6.5.2 First Peoples House**

Students emphasized the importance of the First Peoples House where students, community members and elders can share knowledge, teachings and culture in a designated space. Pallichuk and Antoine observed how the ceremonial hall is a place that reflects the spirit of the ancestors of the three Nations on Vancouver Island: Coast Salish, Nuu-chah-nulth and Kwakwaka'wakw (focus group 2010). The extensive cultural programming offered at the FPH was commended by most students, elders and faculty who participated in this study. As stated earlier, there is an ongoing need for students, faculty, elders and administrators of the First Peoples house to gather continually and collaborate on policies, processes and programs that guide its purpose and future. Some faculty interviewed for this dissertation feel that greater unity is required to contribute collectively to the long-term future of the FPH. They believe that setting a collaborative vision is essential to the survival of the FPH. As well, all participants believed that securing long-term funding to sustain programming is essential, and they also expressed the need to ensure that people who work within the House have knowledge of and are grounded in the teachings of the local territory. To this end, Robina Thomas has been brought in to bring the Coast Salish teachings within the administrative leadership and to provide a connection to the Indigenous faculty voice throughout the university.

### 6.5.3 Student Services Expansion

Students, faculty and elders all spoke to the increase in student recruitment and retention at the university today as being exciting and cutting edge. Elder Marie Cooper attributes this to the hard work being done in a variety of ways:

I think the fact that the student population has almost tripled in the past five years is amazing. And the faculty, I remember at one time when I worked with the Victoria School District way back the 80s I would go up to UVic and there would be no faculty members anywhere, and there was hardly any students as well. That area in itself is an indication of how UVic and Camosun College are moving. The First Peoples House is doing wonders now and will continue to do wonders. It's a place where we gather, we're sharing, we're being together; we're supporting each other. There've been a number of community members and elders and urban people involved at UVic and Camosun College. And as long as that's there, I think that it will bring about a change in itself.

(interview, 2010)

Two students (Pallichuk, personal communication, 2010; Engen, personal communication, 2010), spoke of the need to ensure the numbers of Indigenous students continue to increase in the future through the hiring and use of Indigenous advisors who have knowledge of all programs available at the university. Pallichuk stated, "I wish we could have more student advisors who could counsel students in the variety of programs that UVic offers; how can we increase our numbers in English, anthropology or Political Science?" (focus group, 2010).

### 6.5.3 Educated Non-Indigenous Faculty and Administrators

All participants spoke of their recognition that non-Indigenous faculty and administrators will always be a part of the structure of the university. Until more Indigenous universities are developed, it is imperative for non-Indigenous faculty to be educated on the relevance, strength and validity of Indigenous philosophies, traditions and pedagogies. Antoine spoke to this further, “The university is a political place; it is not always respectful of other ways of knowing. This needs to be centered at the highest levels of administration at the institute” (focus group, 2010). Joyce Underwood, elder, feels that the university needs to commit to funding initiatives that would ensure that cultural awareness is a requirement for all faculty upon hiring: “we have had to understand and learn their ways through education, and this should be reciprocal, whereby they should learn and understand our way of being” (focus group, 2010). The Indigenous Faculty Caucus has been at the forefront of ensuring that appropriate orientation for non-Indigenous faculty occurs through S-PACT training. The Caucus is currently revising and recommending policies which will ensure that training occurs when faculty in various departments are hired in the future.

What permeated through all of the themes for faculty and elders was how they positioned balance as a vision whereby everyone will live in balance with all living things, *not just in an educational context*. This includes balance with our relationships, the earth and the spirit world. As Corntassel stated, “We want to develop people that have a sense of place, that have a sense of their commitment to their responsibility” (interview, 2010).

## 6.6 Discussion

In this chapter I have offered my research findings based on the methodology of the Medicine Wheel. I convey the ideas and words of elders, students and faculty on issues of leadership, pedagogies and transformation. Each participant provided me with a rich and vast field of data, thus making the task of data analysis very rewarding.

Through the eastern direction, the theme of traditional concepts of Indigenous leadership was emphasized. This is the direction of all beginnings, where the sun rises and it denotes spring. In their response to thinking through traditional concepts of Indigenous leadership, it was striking that the participants spoke to its complexities. That is, the participants described how leaders are not only born to positions of leadership, but they are also groomed for such positions based on the ways in which they interact with the world around them. In this way, Indigenous communities collectively share in the knowledge that leaders are supported, nurtured and mentored in to their positions. Thus, there is a reciprocal relationship between leaders and their communities; while leaders are accountable to community members to provide strong, effective leadership for them, community members, in turn, are accountable for mentoring strong leaders.

It is also clear from the participants that leadership is a way of life, a practice where the emphasis is on leaders to act in accordance with the responsibilities of their position. This certainly resonates with the literature review particularly with Young's (2006) findings that leaders need to enact and model teachings in order to be effective. The literature review also spoke to the ways in which academic leaders need to be grounded in their communities and in their relationships with land, and in their teachings. Again, my findings support this view with the participants emphasizing the importance of leaders

living and modeling the values of traditional teachings. Living the teachings is an important attribute which defines leaders. This also provides an important pedagogical strategy for training future leaders.

In the southern direction of the Medicine Wheel, which is the direction of youth and the direction of summer when there is much movement, my findings again correlated with the literature review. The findings in the Southern direction also resonate with the findings in the Eastern direction, confirming Medicine Wheel teachings that everything is inter-related and interconnected in our world. The results are instructive due to the pedagogical emphasis that participants placed on the importance of land-based, experiential teaching as powerful form of learning. Academic leaders also need to be cognizant of the fact that students continue to require both formal and informal supports to reconcile the contradictions between their traditional teachings and those they receive while in the academy, where Euro-Western hegemonic frameworks are the measure of success.

In the western direction of the Wheel, the direction of adulthood and the fall season, participants spoke to the challenges faced within the University of Victoria. One of these challenges, which was discussed at some length, is the nature of the tenure process. Other themes that resonate with the struggles Indigenous peoples face at other academic post-secondary institutes include working within systems, the subjugation of Indigenous knowledge, and the compartmentalization of learning created by academic silos. Many innovative ideas were shared by Indigenous faculty, students and elders to transform these conditions today and for the future, and it is clear that transformational Indigenous leadership pedagogies are creating these changes.

In the northern direction, that of wisdom, analysis and understanding, and the time of winter, participants spoke about envisioning the future. Striving for balance in relationships with the earth and through the spirit world was deemed essential by elders and faculty. Students spoke to the importance of addressing how they might build relationships with other students and with Indigenous communities on Vancouver Island. Innovative ideas were shared in relation to ensuring Indigenous student services and knowledge stay centralized to help develop a place of belonging, identity and well-being for Indigenous students in the future.

## Chapter 7: New Beginnings

### 7.1 Introduction

*To Indianize the education of Indian people constitutes a major revolution. To Indigenize contemporary Western education would require a global transformation of proportions we have never seen. Such a gargantuan vision evolves from millions of smaller visions that we individually and collectively consummate. We move mountains by first moving ourselves, and the way we educate makes all the difference in the world. The choice is ours. We make the difference. It is we who decide to live, or not live, our visions. We are the Creators and realities we live in. We are the ones who must choose the path of our own learning.*

(Cajete, 1994, p. 69)

As Cajete reminds us above, transformational Indigenous leadership is not a small vision; rather, it encompasses complex, diverse, and multi-layered visions. Indeed, these interwoven and distinct visions require that we consider Indigenous leadership on multiple levels and within multiple sites. Resisting any framing of Indigenous leadership as singular, and in keeping with its dynamism and multidimensionality, the conclusions that flow from my research are varied and numerous.

This dissertation has been a conversation with the past, the present, and the future. Because of the vastness of the landscape offered in issues of transformation, leadership and pedagogies, this chapter is not so much a conclusion, but in some ways, a new beginning for other conversations to continue in order for the dynamic field of Indigenous education to

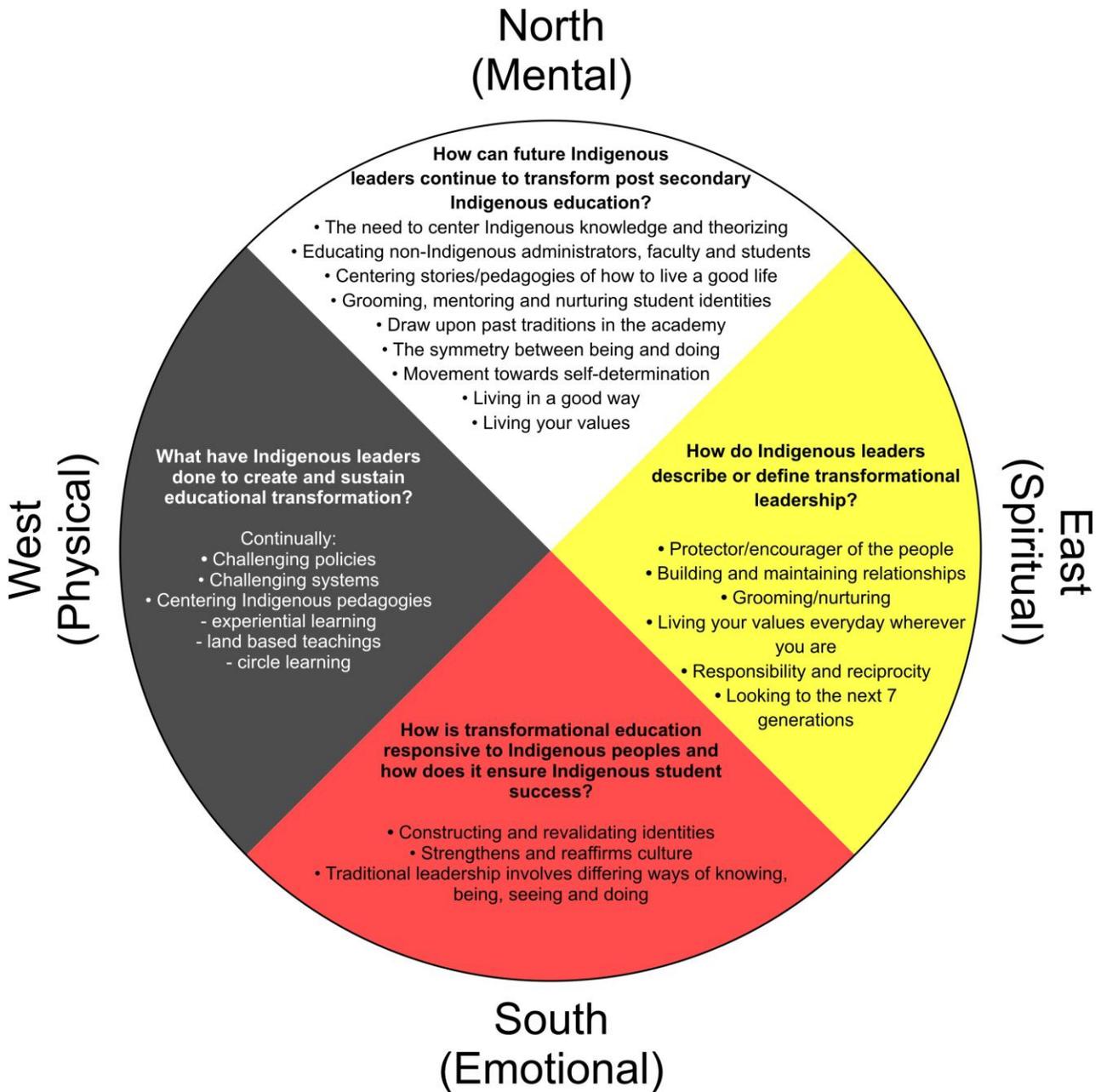
flourish and expand. As my dissertation shows, there is much excitement and passion on the part of educators, elders and students to seek out various forms of Indigenous knowledge and to continue with learning and teaching of traditions, ceremonies, philosophies and values, while reconnecting with the land, languages, and our responsibilities to all living things.

This dissertation has also been my journey to understand and connect with the varied meanings, understandings, interpretations and visions of Indigenous transformational leadership and pedagogies. There is tremendous pleasure in being immersed in the literature, having the privilege to sit and talk with faculty, elders and students, and being able to reflect on issues of leadership, pedagogy and transformation. In this process, I have learned much and have come to appreciate and understand the complex and diverse sets of ideas that frame our understanding of leadership, pedagogy and transformation. On the final leg of this journey, I will offer a summary of the key findings of this study and propose some action and direction to guide future considerations for Indigenous transformational leadership and pedagogies.

I specifically chose a non-linear and inter-related learning process, in the form of the Medicine Wheel, to examine the major concepts of Indigenous transformational leadership pedagogies. To this end, I developed four questions which could be strategically placed within the spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental quadrants of the medicine wheel (see p.64). Meta themes and sub themes emerged and the Medicine Wheel ultimately shaped the examination and analysis of the research questions and participants' responses (see Figure 30 on the next page). The medicine wheel guides education by organizing the four dimensions of human knowing: action, reflection, interpretation and understanding with

the four dimensions of human potentiality: the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional (Lane, Bopp, & Bopp, 1984a, pp. 11-12).

In the body of this chapter, I draw on my findings, my review of the relevant literature, and my Canoe Journey to offer some concluding thoughts on Indigenous leadership and pedagogies, their power and gifts of transformation.



**Figure 30: Analysis of Transformational Indigenous Leadership Pedagogies**

## **TRANSFORMATIVE LEADERSHIP IS:**

- **Action;**
- **Experience;**
- **A Way of Life;**
- **About Responsibility, Reciprocity, and Relationships (as opposed to Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic)**

### **Figure 31: Transformative Leadership**

Supported by the literature, and iterated, affirmed and expanded on by research participants, transformational Indigenous leadership calls to account four key issues. These are: 1) Action, 2) Experience, 3) Way of Life, and 4) Responsibility, Reciprocity and Relationships. Transformational leadership suggests that who we are as leaders is based on what we do and how we do it. This, in turn, relates back to who we are as leaders. As such, transformative leadership is a dynamic, in-process position that is constantly in flux, one that is negotiated and determined by the way that leaders conduct themselves. Therefore, the relationship between “being” and “doing” is always in play and always questioned; Indigenous transformational leadership is based in the symmetry between “being” and “doing.”

This correlation between “being” and “doing” is not merely a question of ontology; rather, it is also connected to epistemology. Transformational leaders hold particular forms of knowledge, and disseminating these knowledges in a mindful way is critical for considering student success, in connecting with communities, and in promoting strong Indigenous identities. Knowledges are understood to work on a number of levels: intuitive learning that speaks to a place of intuition that is recognized by others; particular

knowledges about families, traditions, ceremonies; and knowledge of land and territory and their relationship to identity formation.

The synthesis of epistemology and ontology is the place of action. The place, authority and legitimacy of transformative leaders are determined and established by how they conduct themselves as leaders. Almost all participants spoke of and reflected on the importance of conduct and action in influencing their ideas of strong leaders. My research suggests that action fulfils a number of leadership criteria, including accountability, building supportive communities, and ethical leadership. Critical to transformative educational leadership is “living the good life” or “living life in a good way.” Living an ethical life forms the heart of transformational leadership insofar as elements of respect and authority are predicated on a leader’s ability to live an ethical, accountable life.

My research also highlights that the core values of effective transformational leadership in the Indigenous context are responsibility, reciprocity and relationships. These three values are supported by the literature and passionately affirmed by the study participants. The findings in this study suggest that in order for transformation and self-determination to be possible, we must fulfill our obligations to incorporate and practice traditional principles and values. As such, these three values connect with the idea of “living in a good way,” which suggests that living in a good way means engaging responsibly, engaging in and valuing reciprocity, and facilitating and nurturing relationships.

## **INDIGENOUS PEDAGOGY EMPHASIZES:**

- **The grooming, mentoring and nurturing of student identity;**
- **Land-based education in Higher Education.**

### **Figure 32: Indigenous Pedagogy Emphasizes**

In this next section, I visit two key pedagogical emphases that my study proposes are imperative for valuing, enhancing and centering pedagogies that are relevant for Indigenous students in the quest for transformative Indigenous education. A synthesis of my findings informs us that Indigenous pedagogy emphasizes 1) grooming, mentoring and nurturing student identity; and 2) land-based education. Along with providing an account of the two elements, I offer some recommendations for and direction to Indigenous academic leaders that might augment or support current pedagogical strategies.

I am reminded of a story shared with me by one of the participants, Dr. John Borrows, late in our interview in 2010. He answered several of my questions with stories and then there was silence. John, like many other storytellers, does not interpret his stories; rather, he leaves the stories for the listener to ponder and to make personal meaning. On this particular afternoon at the University of Victoria Graduate Students' Center, I sat with him and asked, "How do you deal with the tensions of the institute and how might you transform those tensions within the institute?" (T. Ormiston, personal communication, 2010). The following story was his response; it is a story originally told by Basil Johnston:

A Nanabush<sup>49</sup> comes to the community and sees there are problems there, he searches all around for the answer for what they're dealing with in the community and doesn't find it there. So what he does is he listens to the world around him and listens and hears what sounds like laughter. He follows that sound to its source and he realizes that it's a brook and in the brook are some stones running over some other stones and it sounds like laughter. So he thinks about it for a second and he grabs the stones and puts them in his bag and takes them back to the community. He gets the community to stand around him and they're hesitant to do so. They don't actually come forward until the elders respond. The elders eventually respond to stand around him and he takes these stones that he has in his hands and he throws them up in the air; as they are up in the air, people think they're going to be rained down on by stones and they will be fooled by Nanabush again, but in fact when they reached the highest point they transform. They become butterflies and they float around the circle of the people and while floating around the circle of the people, the little children that are around suddenly become transfixed by this and fascinated by it and suddenly they start laughing and jumping up and down and things that they weren't doing before because the community was in such challenge.

(J. Borrows, interview, 2010)

There are many meanings that this story offers, and I would like to formulate some of my reflections around this powerful narrative. As I construe transformation from the story shared by Borrows, it really is about metamorphosis - taking what is growing or in a pre-existing form and nurturing it or allowing it to come through its developmental stages, like

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<sup>49</sup> A trickster in Ojibway teachings who provides teachings for the people.

a caterpillar to a winged creature or a tadpole to a frog. It is what it is, but it is also what it can become if viewed in a new light and in a new way. Indigenous educators have the responsibility to interpret and impart new knowledge with students, to continue to help nurture people to develop a sense of place, identity and responsibility to the past, present and future. As Borrows' story shows, the journey of transformation might begin with fear and with unfamiliar sights that can change and transform to unlikely and unimaginable things. In this way, the transformation process in schooling often begins with the educator and leads the student to experience new revelations, ways of knowing, being, seeing and doing not usually experienced in Western education. This was also exemplified in the narrative of my Canoe Journey where the elders provided particular teachings to prepare me for the long journey to help facilitate my personal journey in "coming-to-know."

Many Indigenous people who have been displaced<sup>50</sup> by colonial processes begin to learn about their identities through relationships with other Indigenous peoples who have a strong sense of identity and are willing to share their cultural knowledge. With the increase in Indigenous students attending post-secondary institutes today, many of them are coming to know their identities, histories, ontologies, epistemologies in and through colleges and universities. This is their starting point of a new journey or transformation – one which carries important responsibilities for the Indigenous leaders who teach them. More specifically, with academic sites comprising the catalyst for identity formation for many Indigenous students, Indigenous leaders in academia need to be mindful of their

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<sup>50</sup> Historically and contemporaneously, the displacement and fragmentation of Indigenous peoples are situated within colonial structures and processes. A few of these processes include: the Indian Act, Residential Schools, the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities, and their subsequent adoption to non-Indigenous families ('60s scoop'), policies legislating adoptees' access to family histories, and so forth. All of the various violent processes that have dislocated children from their families, communities, histories, and relationships to their land, their philosophies, their traditions and language have displaced countless numbers and generations of Indigenous children.

roles as “mentors” and not “gate keepers.” They have to be careful not to fall into the trap of creating labels such as “authentic Indian” through assertions of “who is” and “who is not” or “how much is” and “how much is not” Indigenous. Instead, my findings suggest that such leadership roles should not be about being gate keepers; instead, they require a need to become expansive in creating and fostering community, and to ensure mentoring in areas where people might not have knowledge of land, place, family, or ancestry.

How can Indigenous academic leaders ensure that they facilitate transformative learning for students who are displaced from their homelands rather than acting as gatekeepers? Based on my findings, I argue that it is incumbent on Indigenous leaders to find ways to nurture, encourage, support and promote Indigenous identity. Because many students may not have access to their traditional teachings, Indigenous academic leaders who have a strong sense of identity have a responsibility to mentor and facilitate these students’ “coming-to-know.” Thus, Indigenous academic leaders need to ensure that there are pedagogical tools in place to facilitate such learning to help students reconnect with their teachings and values. One pedagogical tool that leaders can use is to model for students through their own teachings and values so that students can begin to understand what is required for the process and journey of “returning home.” Joyce Underwood confirmed this in one of her interviews when asked whether she thought it was appropriate to teach students who do not know about their own culture, traditions or teachings, about other cultures, identities and pedagogies. She spoke to the importance of facilitating teachings whereby students can then feel empowered to return to their territories and know what kind of questions to ask as part of their own “coming-to-know” (focus group, 2010).

In the story that Borrows relates of Nanabush and the butterflies, I contemplate the part of his story where the butterflies float around the circle of the people. I have exquisite visions of children who become happy and start laughing, and these images remind me that transformation can evoke joy, healing, and become contagious. It is this contagiousness that needs to inform the relationship between leaders, students and the institute.

Facilitating transformative learning requires that we all focus on, attend to, and connect with land-based-teachings. We also need to consider how land-based teachings can come to be valued within academia; many of the faculty recognized the importance of this, but the question remains of how land-based teachings can be privileged, valued and graded in Western academia. Certainly, there are many initiatives underway to achieve this – faculty and students both spoke to these innovations and to their importance for holistic learning. Additionally, the presence of elders and the knowledges they bring forward within the university enables land-based teachings to flourish. Simultaneously, it is evident that Indigenous academic leaders need to continue to challenge Western hegemonic processes within the academy to ensure that land-based teachings are valued and measured as imperative and invaluable to decolonizing and transforming Indigenous education.

There are many teachings provided in the story of Nanabush which relate to the role of the land and how it provides endless knowledge/wisdom. For me, the rocks represent laughter and, with their transformation into butterflies, they provide happiness for the people. As indicated by participants in this study and through the Canoe Journey teachings, the purpose of land-based education is multi-faceted. For students and communities, land-based teachings can be an important reciprocal process whereby students learn the value

of connecting to identity, traditions and protocols, and communities are empowered in the areas of revitalization and self-determination. As Menzies, Archibald and Smith (2004) convey, "The ongoing cycle of First Nations education must be changed. Transformation of schooling and education is not merely a set of strategies related to changing learners' behavior, changing governance and so forth. Political, economic, and social changes also need to occur in the wider community context" (p.2).

The University of Victoria has realized this centering of land-based teaching and learning within Education, Indigenous Governance, Social Work and Law for quite some time now. These four departments offer a wide degree of programming in the territory of the three Nations on Vancouver Island which connects students with the local teachings/traditions. Such experiential learning includes canoe carving; cutting, smoking and drying fish; canoeing; and involvement in sweat lodge and reike ceremonies. Students are also encouraged to return to their own communities to participate in community projects or to seek out specific knowledges that the students deem important. In turn, students receive recognition and credit through the programs they are involved in. Such participation might take the form of a directed studies course, a specific assignment, a practicum, or a community project. The importance of these varied pedagogical strategies is that they allow students to be self motivated/self-directive around their own definition of what is meaningful and important to them and for their communities. In this way, students are able to reflect, contribute to and respond to issues that they view as important for the vitality of their communities. Additionally, such education fosters Indigenous ways of knowing that subvert Western epistemologies and their concomitant pedagogical strategies.

I would suggest that the value of land-based education needs to be emphasized/ realized by connecting Indigenous academic leaders and students with the elders every year, perhaps in late summer over a three-to-five-day period, for course credit. This connection, which could be in the form of a cultural camp on the land, would unite all with the values, traditions, pedagogies and protocols of the local territories the university resides on. Bernice Joseph, Vice-Chancellor at the University of Fairbanks, spoke with me about how such camps are set up in Alaska, whereby they help build relationships and trust between students, faculty and communities (personal communication, August 12, 2011). Green (2009) also emphasizes the importance of land-based traditions: “I see that there is so much resiliency and strength in how our people have sustained their livelihood just by maintaining traditional practices. We must all remember the traditional practices that are unique to each of our diverse communities” (p. 228). Along with this orientation to the land, teachings and relationships with those carrying traditional knowledge are essential for students as part of their educational journeys. As the Canoe Journey illustrates, paying attention to the linkages between Nations, territories, histories, and identities is about forging continuity, communal resilience and collective identity between Indigenous communities.

I now shift my focus to my final set of recommendations to elaborate on some thoughts for future pathways. Based on my findings, I offer two key recommendations for deliberation: 1) the need for a movement toward self-determination; and 2) the need for building and maintaining good relationships and connections.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PATHWAYS:**

- **Need for movement toward Self-Determination.**
- **Need for building and maintaining good relationships and connections.**

**Figure 33: Recommendations for Future Pathways**

### **7.2 Movement towards Self-determination**

In the story John Borrows shared with me, the community was reluctant to come together with Nanabush until the elders indicated that it was safe to do so. The elders carried important knowledge which allowed the community to feel safe. Similarly, Indigenous educators have gifts as leaders in post-secondary education which can be shared with students to help make them feel safe and to believe in and realize self-determination. In the area of education, we can work collaboratively to define how our futures will look through policies, pedagogies and knowledges.

Simply having large numbers of Indigenous educators is insufficient for creating transformation within systems. While there will always be multiple sites of struggle, these struggles will not simply be resolved by there being more Indigenous intellectuals. However, greatly increasing the number of “community-focused” educators who strive towards transformative leadership and support traditional, flexible, innovative and pedagogies, can lead to practices and movements toward self-determination. While Indigenous leaders must have knowledge of their own identities, cultures and values, it is equally important to have some knowledge and understanding of these within the traditional territory(ies) where they are working. To this end, community centered leaders must define, in consultation with communities, what it is we are striving for in education,

how we intend to get there and then begin moving to that place regardless of what policies may impede us in post-secondary institutes.

Maori scholar Graham Smith (2003) points out that we cannot continue to allow institutions to define/confine us by repeatedly reacting to their decisions. Instead we need to bring forth our own agendas and push them forward. I am not suggesting that Indigenous leaders and communities within a post-secondary institute work in absolute solidarity. This dissertation shows that this is not possible; however, there must be movement collectively on matters which ensure the survival, preservation and resurgence of people, communities and Nations-the process is just as important as the outcomes towards a self-determining future. As Alfred and Borrows allude to in their interviews, the ability to come together and realize *where* unity exists is important so that we can then collectively move forward on those issues (interviews, 2010).

One of the many struggles that Indigenous leaders must continue to challenge is the level of funding that universities provide for Indigenous education. Universities need to commit to funding the voices, knowledge, pedagogies and histories of Indigenous peoples. This must involve educating non-Indigenous administrators to understand Indigenous epistemic priorities and that these priorities are highly differentiated from Western academic discourses, knowledges, and their conventions. Accordingly, funding distribution for Indigenous scholarly endeavors may occur in ways that are very different from funding that supports Western scholarship. An example of such a differentiation is to have the university provide ongoing, secure funding for elders to be involved in the dissemination of knowledge to students and faculty. Making elders accessible to students and faculty will ensure continuity of knowledge and a relationship to community. Another form of funding

initiative for Indigenous programs could be to provide a cultural camp like the one that I previously suggested, thereby supporting Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy. It is also the university's responsibility to realize that Indigenous education cannot be compartmentalized and that Indigenous-centered learning is not just for Indigenous students, but for the well-being of all.

The First Peoples House, the Indigenous Faculty Caucus and the various departments highlighted in this dissertation are working towards self-determination under the auspices of their programs and disciplines. Many Indigenous academic leaders have worked hard and continue to work to instill Indigenous ways of knowing into their disciplines. Working on a shared philosophy of advancing Indigenous education, the First Peoples House, the Indigenous Faculty Caucus and Indigenous academic leaders have influenced many of the shifts that have resulted in a positive impact and enhanced student success at the university. Certainly, some of these innovations that are happening at the University of Victoria can be used as guides, or stepping stones for other universities. I firmly believe that the four departments I have focused on in my research are striving for self-determination in similar yet unique ways that build on and foster Indigenous epistemic paradigms.

### **7.3 Building and Maintaining Good Relationships and Connections**

Similar to the Ojibway teachings of Nanabush, Tlingit stories speak of a trickster by the name of Yetl (the Raven). Yetl can be conniving and deceitful, with little thought for anyone or anything other than his own stomach. Yetl can also provide teachings for the people and look out for the people even though the teachings may not be apparent to everyone. I interpret Borrow's story as a narrative that ultimately understands that the

community was having difficulty and Nanabush found a way, through sharing, to bring people together and to transform them into a happy community.

In most classes I teach, we share food. In fact, I ensure that our classes occur over the lunch hours so that we may feast together. Nurturing such a relationship in the classroom is a part of our collective well-being and is essential for creating a learning atmosphere that has a framework of support and mutuality. As Borrows stated in his interview, transformational leadership and pedagogies are also about attending to and caring for mundane things, such as preparing for feasts, fundraising with students, working with people in our communities. In these everyday acts, we are showing genuine compassion and concern for others, including students, and not separating their personal journeys from their educational journeys. These gestures also illustrate the relationship to the spirit world and mother earth. I would argue that Indigenous educational transformational leadership involves developing and maintaining good relationships with all living things. Part of my ongoing responsibility in developing and maintaining good relationships is characterized by having a stance of non-interference and by being non-judgmental. As a result, students are able to come forward and determine what they wish to disclose to me or to be self-directive in reaching out and identifying their own scholastic or personal needs while I emulate the quality of not interfering in or judging the affairs of others.

Important to my role as a male leader is recognizing and valuing the significance of my relationship to women in my life. The old people<sup>51</sup> speak to the value of sharing

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<sup>51</sup> In Coast Salish tradition, I have heard this expression used many times instead of elders.

between the genders<sup>52</sup> rather than having a relationship of domination and oppression of one over the other. As well, we must realize and nurture the valued the roles of the elders and children in academia. Recently, I have facilitated courses where I invite students to bring in their families to share in the teachings. How many of us invite the young people to sit in class? I value and nurture these relationships because they incorporate the teachings I have been given and my worldview that we are all teachers and all learners. Gregory Cajete (1999) believes that a foundational characteristic of Indigenous education recognizes that “true learning occurs through participation and honoring relationships in both the human and natural communities” (p. 30). In community, we must be mindful of the “social fabric” or unique collective consciousness that is both a part of them and unique to each one. As indicated through my Canoe Journey teachings, these relationships are not just between humans; rather, they relate to all things living, and in fact, there is spirit in everything in this world.

The University of Victoria provides bi-annual Indigenous student recognition ceremonies which honor/bring together all graduating Indigenous undergraduate and graduate students (and their families) at the university in the spring and fall. The ceremony is conducted in the traditional manner of the Coast Salish Lekwungen or Esquimalt people. The numbers of graduates are growing at such a pace that the ceremony is now spread over two days at the First Peoples House! This ceremony and recognition are highly important as they acknowledge and recognize the achievement of Indigenous students, and simultaneously allow for families and communities to bear witness to and honor their young people’s accomplishments. This recognition underscores the importance of

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<sup>52</sup> Tlingit teachings suggest there was no term used to describe “gender.”

imparting knowledge of the traditions and ceremonies of the Coast Salish people. As well, because families gather to stand alongside the graduating student, the younger family members can begin to consider the possibility of attending post-secondary education. Events such as the students' recognition ceremony can help normalize the academy as a site of belonging for Indigenous children, particularly in the context of the historical legacy of harm that Indigenous communities have faced with conventional Western education.

I recommend that we also nurture the relationships with Indigenous teachings/people worldwide, given that the struggles, aspirations and movements towards self-determination are interconnected. While there may be differing characteristics, different tactics of struggle, and different contexts that are faced, everyone can learn from their brothers and sisters, internationally, which will assist in strategizing the future. To this end, I have coordinated, fundraised and participated with students in my work at Camosun College to attend international Indigenous gatherings such as the Gathering of Nations powwow in New Mexico (2004), the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education in New Zealand (2005) and in Australia (2008) with the intent of collectively honoring the people and the histories while also historicizing, politicizing and strategizing Indigenous futures, as Dr. Lester Rigney (1999) reminds us to do. International Indigenous alliances bring Indigenous concerns, desires, aspirations and movements to a world stage; these alliances forge new beginnings and transformative action that can help guide people in the journey towards self determination.

#### **7.4 Significance, Contribution and Limitation of the Dissertation Research**

This study contributes to Indigenous scholarship about holistic leadership, pedagogies and transformation through holistic methodological analysis. In particular, the Tlingit principles, the Medicine Wheel teachings and the Canoe Journey narrative, as methods, can be useful tools for helping others to conceptualize. In fact, the way in which I have drawn together three distinct methodologies that reflect borrowed teachings (those of the Medicine Wheel), and my own teachings (through Tlingit principles and the Canoe Journey narrative), and my illustration of how they intersect in a respectful, harmonious way as a powerful means of instruction is important.

A second strength of this study is through the collection, analysis and dissemination of the Indigenous leadership pedagogies/approaches that have contributed to student success at the University of Victoria. In particular, the review of relevant scholarly literature intertwined with practical applications about Indigenous leadership pedagogies as they relate to the University of Victoria is unique.

A third strength of this study is the transferability and potential applicability of its findings to other Indigenous programs at both Indigenous and non-Indigenous universities. Likewise, advocates of Indigenous post-secondary success and communities may discover helpful aspects within the study that will move Indigenous-centered education forward.

One area of this research that could be perceived as a limitation is the fact that it was conducted by an insider, a sessional instructor at and former student of the institution/Indigenous learning community that was the focus of the study. This might be perceived as a significant limitation due to the potential for bias on the part of the researcher; however, it could also be viewed as an enormous benefit. My ability to speak

“the insider’s language” allowed me to focus this study on those who carry the knowledge, experience and desire to create meaningful change.

## **7.5 Future Implications**

This research has revealed much in the area of transformative Indigenous leadership pedagogies in higher education through a study of Indigenous academic experience at the University of Victoria. While it is clear that students need to learn about their identities, culture and traditions, future research could explore pedagogies of how people might locate their place, identities and histories. As mentioned earlier, many students are “coming to know” who they are, where they are from, what their traditions are through Indigenous education at post-secondary institutes. How might this be facilitated in a holistic way? What about those students who cannot return to their traditional homelands?

Future research could be focused more around gender issues, women’s roles as leaders, and women’s historical and shifting contemporary roles in leadership and pedagogy. What is needed to compliment this study is a more specific gender lens and analysis.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

While I believe that Indigenous pedagogies, leadership and transformation involve an important connection to place/land, languages, customs, traditions and ceremonies (Battiste, 2000; Cajete, 1999; Rigney, 2001 Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), they must play a vital part in post-secondary education. In many ways, the University of Victoria is setting new standards for others to see how this can be and is being realized. To this end, we all have a

responsibility to know the teachings/philosophies of the traditional territories that have sustained us since time immemorial and to bring them alive in academia. For those of us on this learning journey, we can learn from others as a start. As educators, we need to take the time listen to what is around us and, like Nanabush did when he went to the brook, we need to try and find places where we can engage in laughter, where we find health and healing. We need to recognize that sometimes those places of joy and healing are in nature and the world around us. So in this respect, Nanabush did just that: he followed that sound to its source. But when that was not enough, he had to come back to the center, and in the center place he was able to help bring the community together. As is necessary with Indigenous leaders, there had to be some trust in him: the people needed to trust Nanabush when he threw the stones up in the air and they became butterflies. As articulated in my Canoe Journey teachings and in the story of Nanabush and the butterflies, it is important for us to listen, to see what is around us, to find the pedagogies at our fingertips and then to recognize that there is a process unfolding: metamorphosis. Something is born or can grow from one form and transform to become something else.

Graham Smith states, "We cannot have advancement in Indigenous education unless we have a prior educational revolution" (as cited in Ormiston, 2006). He speaks to the Maori revolution of the 1980s as "a shift in mindset of large numbers of Maori people - a shift away from waiting for things to be done to them, to doing things for themselves; a shift away from an emphasis on reactive politics to and an emphasis on being more proactive; a shift from negative motivation to positive motivation" (Smith, 2003). It is incumbent on revolutionary Indigenous educators to pursue this notion collectively, both within and outside institutions and the state. The Indigenous Faculty Caucus, the First

Peoples House and much of the work being done in Education, Social Work, Law and Indigenous Governance programming at the University of Victoria attests to this: Indigenous people are deciding what is best for Indigenous people. This inclusive movement also involves many non-Indigenous educators, administrators and students, and the academic landscape is slowly changing to one where Indigenous programs are becoming the norm at the University of Victoria. All this is not to suggest that the programming for Indigenous students and for incorporating our knowledges is complete or beyond refinement. However, what is clear is that the Indigenous academic leadership at the University of Victoria is committed to engaging in a continual process to enhance collective interests, knowledge, values and identity as we attempt to increase student retention.

Upon reflection, I think back to the story of the crow that came to my window and spoke of how all forms of life can face difficulties: this reminded me that we all have hard work ahead of us. I have learned through this journey that everything we do has meaning in life. Connecting to land, community and traditions (histories) are important threads in the concepts of leadership, pedagogies and transformation. Teachings shared by students, faculty, elders and through the works of Indigenous scholars have enhanced my understanding of transformational Indigenous leadership pedagogies. The three methodologies and theoretical frameworks I chose to center in this dissertation -- Tlingit principles, the Medicine Wheel and my Canoe Journey teachings -- have all provided important teachings on leadership but, more importantly, I realize how integral they are in how I look at, perceive and make meaning of the world around me. Finally, transformation is really more of a process rather than an outcome; for me this is reflected through “coming

to know,” and learning “how to live a good life.” Who we are and what we do and how we do it are necessary components in our pedagogical practices and our quest for transformation. As Lee Brown reminds us, “leadership is both a gift and an important responsibility” (as cited in Young, 2006, p. 60).

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