INDIGENOUS ELDERS’ PEDAGOGY FOR
LAND-BASED HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS:
GEE-ZHEE-KAN'-DUG CEDAR
PEDAGOGICAL PATHWAYS

by
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Educational Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)
March
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Abstract

This qualitative research articulates and develops an Anishnabe-Nehiyaw Cree perspective of a tribal pedagogy. The author weaves elements of critical ethnographies, Indigenous oral histories and critical tribal and feminist theories throughout the dissertation. She describes five pedagogical pathways that were developed through an Indigenous conversation method (Kovach, 2010) in 8 research circles with 18 Indigenous Elders in central, rural Manitoba. The research utilizes Indigenous storywork methodologies to gather and interpret the research on Indigenous local land-based pedagogies. The specific Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar pedagogy is described by the Indigenous Elders who teach at a 24 year long land-based health education program. The author outlines five pedagogical learning pathways as key findings, which are: 1) culture: facilitating access to the revitalization of tribal Indigenous knowledges; 2) land: developing local co-partnerships and genealogies connected to territories; 3) orality: using story, ceremony, songs, prayers, language, dreams, performance, and genealogy as the primary modes of teaching; 4) community: aligning educators with local self-determining initiatives such as food sovereignty and access to healthy water and plant medicines; and 5) ethics: interweaving practices with sustainable, health-enhancing and decolonizing agendas.

From the example of this Cedar pedagogy, the researcher proposes a framework for educators who want to develop their own local, land-based pedagogies. This framework includes five elements: 1) research local Indigenous nation’s culture and stories, and partner with appropriate resource people; 2) prepare materials and information required for students to learn in the class and on the land, and make space for and provide access to Indigenous knowledge holders; 3) follow local protocol principles, including proper expression of the value principles, negotiate local relationships to land, and modify protocol principles for each context; 4) apply the pedagogy by taking people out on the land, encouraging the use of all of the senses, and engaging respectfully with local peoples and places; and 5) reflect on the experience by sharing local stories of transformation and reconnection to lands/plants. The research
concludes with a discussion on how Indigenous knowledge systems can inform land-based pedagogies, and how these pedagogies can have a pivotal role in strengthening peoples’ wholistic health.
Preface

The research in this dissertation is the original, unpublished work of the author. The Behavioral Research Ethics Board of the University of British Columbia Office of Research Services and Administration gave approval for the interviews in this study as recorded in Certificate Number H12-01559.
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List of Indigenous Vocabulary (Adapted from Rheault, 1999)

Anishnabe Kendaaswin: Traditional Anishnabe knowledge. Knowledge that is passed down generation to generation in a ceremonial environment.

Anishnabe (pl, Anishnabeg): The good being created and lowered down to Earth. Name of all people who are descendants of the people who speak various dialects of Anishnabemowin.

Anishnabemowin: The Anishnabe language.

Asemaa: Tobacco.

Asin (pl. asiniig): Rock, stone.

Aadizookan: Traditional cultural story.

Aazhikenimonenadi Bemaadizid: The study of the behavior of Me.

Biimadizid: A human being.

Bzindamowin: Acquired knowledge. Learning from listening. Knowledge shared through cultural stories.

Chinshinabe (pl. Chinshinabeg): Those beings that comprehend the Ancient Great Mystery of the “good” way of the essence of existence. The Ancient Ones.

Debwewin: Truth.

Enadizewin: Natural law. The natural way of behavior. The way of Me that is on land. Includes all aspects of living based on Creator’s Original Instructions.

Eshkakimikwe: Mother Earth.

Eyaa’oyaanh: Identity. The way everything is in me, or who I am.

Gchi Makade Makwa: A large black bear.


Gee-zhee-kan’-dug: Cedar.
Gnawaminjigewin: Knowledge observation. To look, to see, to witness. Following the knowledge from somebody. Seeing what is being done.

Gizhe-mnidoo: The Creator.

Kendaswin: Knowledge. Learning as in the way of counting.

Kenjigadewin: A known truth.

Kümüngona manda Kendaswin: The Original Instructions given to the Anishinaabeg by Gizhe-rnnidoo.

Makadeke: The act of Fasting.

Makadekewigaan: A Fasting Lodge.

Makadekewin: Fasting or vision quest. The way of the vision quest.

Manidoowabiwin: Revealed knowledge. Seeing in a spirit way.

Manidoo (pl. manidmg): A spirit.

Manidooke: Conduct a Ceremony.

Manidookewin: A Ceremony.

Midewiwin: Midewiwin is a spiritual, flexible, rigorous tradition that provides an institutional setting for the teaching of the worldview of the Anishnabe peoples. Also referred to as The Way of the Heart and The Grand Medicine Society. The Mide practitioners are initiated and ranked by "degrees." Much like a student in an apprentice system or an academic program, a practitioner cannot advance to the next higher degree until completing the required tasks and gaining the full knowledge of that degree's requirements.

Minidoo-minjimendamowin: Spirit memory, blood memory. Stitched into your spirit. The knowledge that enters this world when one's spirit fuses with the physical body. Spirit identity.

Minjimendamowin: Memory. Hold in and stitch together.
Mino-Bimadiziwin: The Way of a Good Life. In order to have a good life, one must have a goal. This goal is to be free from illness, to live to the best. Bimadiziwin is based on a concept of health and good living. One must work on prevention and not only healing. One must eat well, act well, and live physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually well. Emotional wellbeing is a key to Bimadiziwin.

MïsW: Medicine that comes from the Earth.

Mishkikiwin: The way of medicine. The way of medicine includes prayer, song, dancing, Ceremony, plants, Fasting, dreams, and the Sweat Lodge.

Mïshoomis (pl. mishoomisag): Grandfather.

Muskego Inniskwew: Women/people from the muskeg regions of Turtle Island

N’debewetawin: Belief. That is evident in the way of the action. One cannot know the truth unless one has seen or experienced it in a direct way physically or spiritually.

Ndebewewin: Faith. The heart that everything relates to Truthfulness.


Naanaagede’emowin: A spiritual vision. Like a meditation, reason through meditation. Sorting out your thoughts.

Naapewewinhademowin: Vivid, lucid dream.

Nebwakawin: Wisdom. From the root “nebwa”—in the kindness of putting yourself backwards but at the same time of bringing forward the wisdom one carries

Thinking back bringing forward and stitching all together; life knowledge holders.


Nenernowin: Thought. The will or power of a thought.

Nindinawemaganidog: All My Relations.

Nisaway’ayüng: At the center.

Niswi-Ishkodeng Midewigaan: The Three Fires Midewiwin Society.
Noodin: Be windy. Also the term used to describe the mind.

Nookomis (pl. nookomisag): Grandmother.

Nwenamdan: Choice. Browsing in one's thoughts. Seeking to make a decision

Nwenamdanwin: Making a choice.

O'de: Heart.

Odewegewin: The way of the drum.

Ogichita Anishnabekway: Women leaders of the Anishnabe good life ways.


Pimatisiwan Cree language term describing the Good Life Way concepts similar to Bimadiziwin and asserts the core value miyo-wicehtowin having good relationships, individually and collectively.

Waanizhijigeyanh: Free will. The way I am going to do things, the action.

Wanenenema: WU. Has to do with the ability to think independently.

Wiigiwaanatig: Lodge pole.

Zaagedewin: Love/caring, something emanating out of you (from the root “to bloom”). Not the same sense as the English “make love” (sexual) but rather of caring, based on mutual respect. You can feel but cannot touch it. All of you fills the heart of another (m’nadenemowin: feeding that heart with the thought of something). Out of Zaagedewina a human being is able to heal him herself.

Zhiishiigwan (pl. zhiishügwanag): Shaker, rattle.

(See Nichols & Nyholm, 1995, xxiv–xxvi; Rheault, 1999)

Note that double vowel systems are used if the original source uses that language system.
List of Additional Indigenous Terms

Numbers

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my academic supervisor, Dr. Michael Marker, and my committee members Dr. Leslie Roman and Dr. Tracy Friedel. Peguis Community Regional Health Authority and my community advisory committee also provided valuable support. Medicine Camp Community Advisory credits include Edna Manitowabi, Kathy Bird, Florence Paynter, Philip Paynter, Doris Young, Esther Sanderson, Betsy Kematch, Barb Cameron, Karen Blain, Doreen Sinclair, Pat Moore, Zacc Moore, Jacqueline Nobiss, Violet Caibaiosai, Arthur Lyle Leon, Lee Brown, and Tonya Gomes.

I would also like to acknowledge support from Opaskwayak Cree Nation Education Authority, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, UBC Awards, Aboriginal Fellowship Scholarships, Victoria Foundation’s Ike Barber Scholarship Society, Indspire Scholarship Awards, First Citizen Fund from the BC Association of Friendship Centers, and the Province of British Columbia for all their generous financial support.

The Provincial Supporting Aboriginal Graduate Enhancement Program members also provided me with insight, support, and inspiration. The First Nations House of Learning Sweat lodge Community, Institute of Aboriginal Health, Faculty of Education, and The Faculty of Land and Food Systems all provided invaluable in-kind support.

I especially would like to recognize my mother, who received the Order of Manitoba (previously known as the Order of the Buffalo Hunt) in 2014, the Medicine Camp Elders, The Medicine Collective, the Midewiwin Good Sounding Lodge members, The Three Fires Society, and my many extended family members who guided and provided their generous support. They have all been a part of this journey.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to all those Ancestors who persevered despite the genocide of this country’s first peoples, the generations who continue to repair the cultural harm caused by these ongoing practices, those who continue to live by the Natural laws of the land, and those whose duty it is to live as a good relative. For the benefit of all the beings, I raise my hands in thanks and gratitude.

I also dedicate this study to the many Indigenous men and women in my family who continued the leadership work, including my maternal grandmother, Elisabeth Jane Bignell, and great grandmother, Mary Umpherville, who had Indigenous Knowledge relationships with plants and wholistic health education as part of our great legacy. On my paternal side, I acknowledge Edward Papanaugsh and William and Nathaniel Asham (grandmother Dorothy Asham’s dad) who adamantly opposed the 1907 illegal land surrender and lobbied the government for justice. This work, in part, is dedicated to documenting our continued leadership.

In Vancouver, BC, a small group of PhD candidates sang an honor song for Dr. Verna Kirkness at the launch of her latest book Creating space: My life and work in Indigenous education (2013). Through her book she demonstrates storytelling as a relevant teaching method. In a room full of educators who are attending the First Nations Education Steering Committee annual education conference, the following question was asked: How long will we need to have Native Teacher Education programs? She replied until we have education that responds to the education needs of Indigenous communities. The pedagogy described herein is dedicated in part to fulfilling this need.

In this research project the conversations with Indigenous Knowledge teachers describe how we engage with the corresponding responsibilities and protocols for an Indigenous pedagogy. I weave together what we have discussed so far—and dedicate this unfinished story to those who will continue it.
PROLOGUE

I have a keen interest in the power of stories and the leadership role of Indigenous Elders because they have provided me with lifelong learning different from my conventional schooling. The powers of stories in my learning have provided pivotal experiences because of the ways the Elders teach. I became interested in the story of the Medicine Camp program and wondered how our stories could provide valuable insights into teaching practices for educators to consider. The teaching methods the Elders use are rooted in Canadian and Indigenous place contexts. As a neglected aspect of education, their revival could improve the overall health and wellbeing of communities. My intention for addressing the public sphere is to create dialogical spaces that critique power and unjust social relationships, and which can investigate possibilities for political action in Indigenous education intended to improve the educational success of all lifelong learners.

I listened to the Elders tell the stories of how they came to create the Medicine Camp programs over many years. The leadership of the women of this program inspired me because, historically, women’s perspectives are overlooked in texts and I wanted to explore this gendered gap. In part, the Elders and participants that attend the program did so in response to the growing health and education crisis among Indigenous people. In education, Aboriginal students are under-represented at graduation levels and overrepresented in health care systems. The Elders describe neglected knowledge systems, the context of colonialism, and how the Medicine Camp program serves wholistic health education needs of communities. My intention in taking the Medicine Camp program and in writing this thesis is to support a balanced and integrated health education rooted in Indigenous places and knowledges. Throughout this thesis, I weave a narrative of my learnings to demonstrate what I have learned so far from the ways the Elders have transferred knowledge in the Medicine Camp. Although site and case specific, there are some elements and principles common to many Indigenous peoples and places. What I call “All My Relations pedagogy” is
rooted in places and genealogies, and transmitted through stories and cultural ceremonies. Finding my way home is the parallel story of this re-search; the Elders and the Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar are my guides.

My fascination with Elders’ storytelling is all the more profound given Canada’s longstanding efforts to eradicate this traditional educational method, and more recent attempts to recognize Indigenous Knowledge and education. Historically, schools have served diverse social purposes, from basic literacy to shaping young people into productive and diplomatic citizens as defined by the state. For Aboriginal Indigenous communities in the last 500 years, this latter goal was devastating as schools functioned as a colonial mechanism to destroy Aboriginal cultures, languages, knowledges, and physical bodies, causing irreparable damage over many generations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Indigenous peoples. Two of the most egregious examples of the systemic violence against Aboriginal youth were the forced removal of Aboriginal children from their homes and placement in residential schools. Many generations of youth suffered abuse under the doctrine “kill the Indian, save the child,” which included physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual violence under the guise of education. In many cases, the harm of these abuses still affects current generations, as evidenced by measures of wellness and achievement in Aboriginal communities. Compounding the difficulty experienced by many Indigenous peoples and educators is the public ignorance of the long history of systemic violence and widespread misinformation about Aboriginal Indigenous peoples’ nation-to-nation status in Canada.

In response, Indigenous scholars have begun to examine, document, and challenge the ongoing marginalization of Aboriginal youth and communities in educational contexts. This growing body of scholarship has served two primary purposes: first, to speak back to the hegemonic system of colonization that continues to diminish Aboriginal Indigenous communities, and second, to recognize, recover, and regenerate Indigenous ways of knowing and educating. Consequently, this scholarship does not merely add some Aboriginal Indigenous content to existing systems, but instead pushes toward shifting and rupturing the Euro-centric paradigms that allow colonial damage to
continue at the cost of Aboriginal peoples and the shared resources in this country. Furthermore, the new research shifts the focus of education away from generalized, homogenized national rhetoric focused primarily on school aged youth and towards place-based, contextual, relationality centered on communities of lifelong learners.

At the national level, an awareness of Aboriginal peoples education and Aboriginal issues is slowly emerging. In 2004, the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education declared Aboriginal education a priority for Canada’s educational systems. Then, in 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to Aboriginal peoples across Canada for the educational policies and practices that caused (and still cause) so much harm, pledging his government to make amends for the diminished language and educational capacities of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. The Canadian Council of Ministers of Education reaffirmed their commitment toward addressing the needs of Aboriginal learners in their framework Learn Canada 2010. That same year, The Association of Canadian Deans of Education signed a national Accord on Indigenous Education. The Accord articulates a vision, a set of principles, and an extensive list of goals to create respectful learning environments and inclusive curricula that will recognize and promote Indigenous knowledge in education.

The national frameworks have inspired many institutions, communities, and educators to work toward educational reform, at all levels, to meet better the needs of diverse communities. Examples of a “decolonizing/Indigenizing” process can be seen in many different contexts, each seeking to establish respectful protocols of engagement with local communities and shared learning spaces. While other projects can provide guidance and points of reference, the place-based grounding of the process requires each community to consider their specific circumstances and negotiate the particular dynamics of place.

In theory, these shifts are generally accepted, though most non-Aboriginal students, faculties, and staff of educational institutions have not had adequate resources or guidance in recognizing the subtle forms of racism and implicit colonial oppression embedded within their educational roles. The task is not to uphold the status quo and
fit Aboriginal needs into the educational institution that functions to assimilate, marginalize, and oppress Indigenous peoples and theories.

What is critical about Nindinawemigonagog and Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar pedagogical pathways is that the Elders’ stories address how they understand complex interconnected and interdependent relationships as responsibilities, and share reflexive stories about how they negotiate the ongoing context of colonialism, gendered violence, and structures of imperialism. The Elders’ stories and teaching methods point towards a sustainable pedagogical example of direct actions that address the dispossession of both urban and land based settings, while moving away from state dependence and towards resurgence by participating in the construction of Indigenous alternatives to capitalism. Additionally, the Indigenous women Elders’ leadership provides and encourages multiple expressions built on the love and heritage of Ancestral knowledge, and the pedagogy they employ points to the relationship possibilities of places and of thinking, educating, and acting differently. Ultimately, Indigenous sustainability is about nurturing and honoring the relationships that promote the health and well-being of communities and individuals, and challenges peoples to connect more fully to the multiplicities of the places they inhabit (Battiste, 2014; Corntassel, 2014; Coulthard, 2014; Andreotti & Ahenakew, 2015; Ermine & Henderson, 2007; Nason, 2010).

One of the goals of academics is to transform the institution from the inside so that it functions to empower both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators and lifelong learners, promoting a diversity of knowledges and including many ways of knowing and educating while balancing the ethics of protecting Indigenous knowledges from exploitative practices. Thus, to mitigate harm, the focus of the research is not on curriculum because the content is protected Indigenous knowledge; instead, we negotiated that the research focus could outline the teaching methods Elders used in the Medicine Camp program. This research respects Aboriginal worldviews and attempts to change the practices of teaching and the processes of learning by shifting curricular content toward the inclusion of different perspectives and ways of knowing
and educating for all learners. This research plays a part in this transformation—and I am excited to share the pedagogy principles the Elders described for the collective benefit of all lifelong learners.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Rather than study Native people so that we can know more about them, I wish to illustrate what Native theorists have to tell us about the world we live in and how to change it. (Smith, 2010, p. 569)

In this chapter I describe the research setting, provide personal disclosures relevant to the research, and introduce the Elders’ pedagogy, storywork, transferring knowledge, and pedagogy of place. I then discuss Aboriginal epistemology, decolonizing education, land-based learning, and women’s leadership. I follow this by outlining the importance of place, people and pedagogy in introducing this research.

1.1 Overview of Earth Medicine Program

This research examines the pedagogy of Indigenous Elders teaching in the Earth Medicine Program, a four-year land-based health education program. The program is known informally as the Medicine Camp and began in 1992 and is located in rural central Manitoba. The Elders’ approach to teaching incorporates several elements crucial to Indigenous Pedagogy: it opposes colonization, emphasizes story work, and provides a wholistic experience that engages the mind, body, heart, and spirit.

The Medicine Camp opposes colonization by emphasizing Mino-Bimadiziwin Anishnabe kwe Ogichita, the Good Way Path, as expressed by primarily Anishnabe and

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1 Where appropriate, I use the term Indigenous as inclusive of First Peoples globally. The Constitution Act Section 35 (2), 1982 and the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) use the term “Aboriginal” to refer inclusively to Aboriginal, Inuit, and Métis peoples. I use the terms Aboriginal, First Nation, Native, and Indian interchangeably and note that all of these English terms are not how the diverse groups of people refer to themselves prior to European settler contact. For more information on the terminology distinctions see: http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/identity/aboriginal-identity-terminology.html?type=123&filename=Aboriginal%20Identity%20Terminology.pdf
Nehiyaw Cree women who provide an education pedagogy that transmits Indigenous Knowledge and endures despite ongoing colonialism perpetrated by the Canadian state. In this intergenerational setting, Elders, academics, and health educators collaborate to mobilize Indigenous Knowledge theories and pedagogies. Indigenous pedagogy is implemented for learners at the Medicine Camp program, thus mobilizing wholistic land-based education. This Indigenous land and place-based project demonstrate the key attributes of Aboriginal learning as a wholistic approach to education. The key learning attributes are wholistic, life long, experiential, spiritual, linguistic, communal, and synergistic of Euro-Western and Aboriginal knowledge (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). Vital to the success of Indigenous pedagogy is an understanding of the connection between spiritual ecology, ethics and relational laws, embedded in Indigenous stories, languages, and cultural practices. The Elders pedagogy includes spiritual ceremonies, the use Indigenous languages and concepts to tell stories, and they demonstrate a synergy between Indigenous Knowledge and Euro-Western education through role modeling. The ceremonies and cultural practices provide and encourage a life long relationship to the plants. Wholistic learning incorporates the aspects of body (senses), mind (thoughts), spirit (understanding of interdependent relationships), the environment (elements of earth, air, water, fire, and plant relationships), cultural customs, socio-economic status and political histories. The Medicine Camp students are given time to share wholistic lessons through interactive group storytelling activities.

Elders mobilize the stories that teach us that the Earth is Our Mother because she cares for us and sustains us. They teach us how to reciprocate with the Earth by caring for and sustaining the land. During the Medicine Camp, Elders and participants observe several protocols that contribute to and respect Indigenous education pedagogy. The protocols include explicit acknowledgement through announcing a genealogical account of place and people in Indigenous pedagogy.
1.2 The Importance of Place, People, and Pedagogy

Indigenous protocols provide guiding principles and help me to organize the topic headings for introducing this re-search. Indigenous protocols are cultural norms specific to particular places, peoples, and contexts. They are diverse and yet share some common unifying features. These include the importance of identifying the place, the people, and pedagogy. Place refers to the setting of the Earth Medicine Program, and includes the orientations to the land; people refers to my own position as a researcher, tribal genealogy, Elders, and personal relationships; and pedagogy includes a description of the specific teaching and learning methods observed during and used in this research, particularly storywork, epistemology, knowledge transfer, wholism, and decolonization.

This research considers how Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) philosophies, teachings, values, principles, and standards of inquiry inform research on health education. I describe how the relationships among Elders, the land, plant medicines, traditional ceremonies, and Indigenous Knowledge inform a unique pedagogy used when the Elders transmit Indigenous Knowledge to learners. With these insights, I then outline a culturally responsive process-oriented pedagogy. I provide information about the Medicine Camp, personal disclosures, and some theoretical considerations.

1.2.1 Place. Place refers to several significant orientations, including geographical and physical location where the research took place and a particular theoretical classification of my research position as location.

The geographical location and the program description of the Aki Mashkiki Na na da wi ii way win, or Earth Medicine Program, is in rural central Manitoba and within Treaty 1 territories. The physical location is important since it provides land-based community education that is extensive, experiential, and wholistic. It was started in 1992 to restore traditional culture by joining Indigenous Knowledge and ecological knowledge from Indigenous perspectives. The program is taught from the culture and languages of the people indigenous to the physical location, Anishnabe and Cree, and weaves into it English and Euro-Western knowledge as appropriate.
Applied Anishnabe kway-Neihiyaw Cree theoretical approaches require me to identify myself and provide an introduction to my genealogy, my people, and my places, and to acknowledge my obligation to maintaining these relationships as required by Wahkotowin law (Adams, 2009; Cardinal, 1979, 2005; Greymeyes, 2010; Kovach 2009; Lindberg, 2004, 2008; Makokis, 2008; Rheault, 1999; Sherman, 2007; Simpson, 2011b). The Elders’ pedagogy utilized this first protocol principle, which was modeled each time a person addressed the group, introducing themselves in their own language and helping everyone to remember how they are related and where they originated geographically. This helped to provide an account of one’s relational genealogy, which included the history of one’s family, kin relationships, and teachers. As a participant and researcher within an Indigenous context, I must respect this protocol and identify my own geographic locations and tribal genealogy, as well as my socio-political and academic standpoints. My Anishnabikwe-Neihiyaw Cree theoretical and relational genealogies inform my responsibility to perpetuate the principles of tribal-centered Indigenous Knowledge intellectual traditions and inspire me to participate in the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogical practice.

I am an Anishnabe kway Midewiwin and Neihiyaw Cree woman from the Opaskwayak Cree and Peguis Nations, currently living in the urban, unceded Traditional Territories of the hən’q̓əmin’əm̓-speaking Coast Salish peoples. I have been working with Indigenous Elders since 1985 because protocols teach me not only how to be engaged but also that I should be engaged with local Indigenous peoples, places, and pedagogies.

My Indigenous academic standpoints are informed by Neihiyaw, a Cree word which describes the people from my geographical region, Muskego Inniskwew (Cardinal, 2005; Lindberg, 2007). My paternal lineage is as an Anishnabe Ogichita kway Midewiwin woman from the heart of Turtle Island in the central plain region of North America. I describe a pedagogy that is derived from a specific place—my homelands—as described by Indigenous people who are my kin and my teachers who apply specific Anishnabe Cree Indigenous tribal teaching pedagogies.
My socio-political location is defined by imposed governmental terms; I am a status person as defined by colonial policy under the *Indian Act* (1876).² My maternal and paternal great-great-grandfathers were signatories to Treaty 1 (1871) and Treaty 5 (1875).³ Part of my relational kinship responsibility includes asserting the original intent of the treaties as they apply to contemporary contexts.

By declaring my self-locations in these ways, I accept and demonstrate the values inherent in various Indigenous protocols. Decolonizing education links Indigenous protocols with a tribal-centered relational genealogy while protecting Indigenous oral traditions as required by Indigenous protocols (Kovach, 2010; Young & Nadeau, 2006). The protocols will help guide the research process while maintaining the ethics of Wahkotowin law.

### 1.2.2 People

The Indigenous people who share common histories, land base, beliefs, languages, and cultural expressions distinctive from Euro-Western settlers are the community members of this study. The people of a given community choose the Elders according to who has the expertise in response to the task at hand. The authority is granted because the Elder demonstrates exemplary actions, discretion, and influence. Elders and knowledge holders provide wisdom in their counsel and are knowledgeable about ceremonial and cultural norms.

Two Midewiwin Elder women teach the Medicine Camp Program. The main teacher is Nehiyaw Cree Nakota, a professional nurse (BSc) working and living in Manitoba. The oral teaching methods used at Medicine Camp follow her Blackfoot Elder’s cultural ways of transferring knowledge and introduce students to a reciprocal, wholistic relationship with 48 plant medicines. She, her husband, and another female Anishnabe Elder from Ontario are the cofounders and primary instructors of these summer programs. Helping them are several oshkabawis health educators. They are

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graduates of previous Medicine Camp programs and return to deepen their knowledge and apply their learnings.

The oshkabaywis student participants are Indigenous Elders, knowledge holders, and professional health educators who have extensive experience working within both Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. Most of the Indigenous Knowledge apprentices who participate in this research are Anishnabe- Nehiyaw Cree and Métis from across Canada. They provide a collection of research conversations that consider the pedagogy taught at Medicine Camp. The conversations include how they might apply the pedagogy to their work in academic and health education institutions. The participants also discuss the limits and ethics of an Indigenous land-based pedagogy. The land-based pedagogy, unlike a place-based pedagogy, centers the tribal genealogy of the participants and explores how participants teach others to care for the land. The participants are descendants of Indigenous people from Turtle Island who are familiar with specific places and the corresponding knowledge that derives from the locations before and after contact with European settlers.

This four-year program has graduated approximately 140 traditional knowledge apprentices who can now engage in their own land-based health education processes in their respective communities. The Earth Medicine Program, or the Medicine Camp, provides a context for collective learning together as a community of educators who are interested in furthering their professional development, maintaining their relationships with homelands and networking with Indigenous professionals.

1.2.3 Pedagogy. Indigenous pedagogy animates teaching and learning. An *Indigenous pedagogy* is one that responds to the local context of practice and enhances local meanings, values, and identity. Indigenous Knowledge and pedagogy emphasize observation and doing, authentic experiences, individualized and collective instruction, and learning through enjoyment.

Indigenous pedagogy accepts students’ cognitive search for learning processes they can internalize, and Aboriginal teachers allow for a lag period of watching before doing. Indigenous knowledge is both empirical (that is, based on experience) and normative (that is, based on social values). It embraces both the
circumstances people find themselves in and their beliefs about those circumstances in a way that is often unfamiliar to Eurocentric knowledge systems, which distinguish clearly between the two. As a system, it constantly adapts to the dynamic interplay of changing empirical knowledge as well as changing social values (Battiste, 2002, pp. 18-19).

Indigenous pedagogy seeks to shake off centuries of colonization and re-assert healthy and functional identities for Indigenous people that benefit community and living on the land as self-determined sovereign peoples. To effect such a transformation through resurgence of Indigenous knowledge via direct reconnections to lands, Indigenous pedagogy must respond to and interact with people's natural environment, local languages, stories, and cultural experiences. It must build, maintain, and sustain the inter-connected relationships with community, the spirit, the stories, and the lands (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2007). Observing protocols such as describing your relatives and social locations from which you privilege information furthers decolonization and Indigenization.

Transformative education attempts to provide freedom and liberation from oppression, and encourages learners to develop a critical consciousness through questioning, analyzing, and acting on political, socio-cultural, and economic decisions that impact their lives (Friere, 1970). This dynamic process of dialoguing and problem posing develops awareness through analyzing social structures that may create inequality. In working with the concepts of transformative frameworks, Regan (2005) further elaborates:

The promise of working within a transformative framework is that our dialogue about history – our stories and our myths – beckons us not just to understand our paradoxical past, but to finally take that “genuine leap of imagination” to guide our steps today and into the future. Although the way is not clear and there will be struggle – the “new fork in an old road” is a powerful place of transformation if we are willing to take it. George Manuel knew this in 1974. Taiaiake Alfred, thirty-one years later, invites us again to choose this path. And they are right. We cannot leave this critical task up to governments and the courts. In reality, institutions do not lead social change. The people do. And so it is up to us. (p. 10)
Transformative frameworks include decolonization and indigenization principles that indicate whether you know who you are and where you come from, your assessment of contemporary colonialism, and the direction and intention of your work. Grande (2004) contends:

In this context, the voices of Indigenous and other non-Western peoples become increasingly vital, not because such peoples categorically possess any kind of magical, mystical power to fix countless generations of abuse and neglect, but because non-Western peoples and nations exist as living critiques of the dominant culture, providing critique-al knowledge and potentially transformative paradigms. (p. 65)

Pedagogies can promote an Indigenous resurgence and acknowledge the colonial histories and state-sanctioned policies of subjugation, violence, and dispossession by providing examples of how communities can reconcile their relationships with the colonial legacy. Leanne Simpson (2011a) in Dancing on Our Turtle’s Back, argues that reconciliation must include the resurgence of Indigenous peoples’ political traditions in their nation-to-nation relationships with Canada. Damien Lee (2012) summarizes Simpson’s writing on the topic of resurgence:

Simpson demonstrates that the resurgence of Anishinabek traditions is reconciliation. For example, the Anishinabek teaching of biskaabiiyang—a decolonizing theory based in Anishinabek thought—fights colonial erasure. Biskaabiiyang is a returning to one’s self, a verb meaning to look back and to reinterpret Anishinabek teachings in our contemporary context in ways that “bring meaning to our practices and illuminate our life ways” today. Biskaabiiyang means that our political relationships with Canada cannot be solely defined by the state, but must also be informed by Anishinabek political traditions.

Biskabiyang stories of decolonization based on Nehiyaw and Anishnabekwe spiritual and political life ways are described herein and demonstrate how the Elders have reconciled a contemporary lived pedagogy.

### 1.3 Storywork

Storywork is, in part, a cultural practice to preserve and transmit Indigenous Knowledge. Traditional Knowledge often takes the form of stories, which are frequently used at the Medicine Camp as part of a learner-centered approach to health education.
To introduce these traditions to Euro-Western medical practitioners, Indigenous Elder instructors from the Medicine Camp presented to the Institute of Aboriginal Health at UBC’s First Nations House of Learning in 2008. The event was intended to foster personal relationships across disciplines by exposing Euro-Western medical practitioners to the stories used by Traditional Knowledge holders to present information about health.

Storywork is more than just a cultural practice to preserve and transmit Indigenous Knowledge. It is also a research methodology that provides key pedagogical tools. For example, Archibald (2008) used storywork as a methodology to interview and learn from Coast Salish Sto’lo Elders. Through storywork, Archibald explored foundational pedagogic elements of Indigenous Education by witnessing the Elders’ teachings about ecological and cultural knowledge, and the responsibilities of learners to take direction, be prepared for learning, and know the protocols for building relationships with Elders, such as spending extended periods of time with them. Similarly, Kovach (2002) considers stories to be oral renditions of knowledge and understanding that act as portals for a wholistic epistemology.

Storywork is not simply telling tales for amusement. Stories are often political and relevant to specific cultural contexts. The motivations for using stories must be examined deeply and thus form part of the present research. If research is about learning so that one can enhance the wellbeing of the earth’s inhabitants, then story is research. Like conventional research, stories provide observational and experiential insight that suggests theories about a phenomenon (Kovach, 2002, p. 102). Stories, in an Indigenous context, are actually structures to record, organize, and then teach observations and hence provide a basis for theorizing.

Storytelling is a means of transferring and creating knowledge through discussion conversations, oral traditions, and oral testimonies. The stories have power to transform our awareness and to impart valuable lessons for survival. Smith (1999, 2008) refers to the appropriate use of stories in contemporary societies: “Story telling is a focus on dialogue and conversations amongst ourselves, as Indigenous peoples—to
ourselves, for ourselves—and reflects the oral traditions” (p. 144). Atleo (2000) describes the power of storytelling as a way to pass along the beliefs and values of a culture to the next generation, who are expected to learn the stories and pass them onto a subsequent generation. Beliefs and values encoded in the stories orient learning in various ways, providing not only content knowledge but also wisdom and knowledge about learning. Both provide deep cultural survival strategies that have sustained a people for millennia. According to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996),

Story telling plays a major role in the oral transmission of knowledge, skills and values needed to live. Stories speak of the origins of life, proper relationship to various forms of life and life experiences. The sharing of one’s life story and experiences is a well-established method of teaching. Stories act as mirrors wherein the learner is allowed to view him/herself and thus gain insights and understandings to help navigate the road of life.

Anishnabe and Nehiyaw Cree educational approaches are rooted in oral tradition. They are wholistic, student-centered, and experiential, and contain both formal and informal elements. The lessons contained in stories inform both tribal theory and methods of gathering information, and suggest how to apply the lessons to contemporary life.

1.4 Weaving Indigenous Tribal Theory and Methodology

In this section I discuss the Indigenous tribal theoretical concepts of Bimadiziwin and Pimadiziwin, and build on the theoretical concept Wahkotowin to position the research. I then describe the elements of critical and decolonization theories that complement Indigenous theories, describing the broader intellectual context of my research. The intent of the research is to link Indigenous Knowledge theory to practice, to describe an applied Indigenous tribal-centered Elders’ pedagogy and discuss how educators can learn from relational genealogies that are located within tribal theoretical and methodological frameworks.
1.4.1 Bimadiziwin, Pimadiziwin, and Wahkotowin. The Anishnabe and Cree theoretical concepts Bimadiziwin, Pimadiziwin, and Wahkotowin form the basis of this research. These concepts must be understood as part of an Indigenous epistemology, defined by Kovach (2010) as a set of social relationships involved in knowledge production. She further defines a paradigm as both a research theory and a method. She elaborates:

The term paradigm as used within a research context includes a philosophical belief system or worldview and how that belief system or worldview influences a particular set of methods. A paradigm is both theory and practice. Ontology is a theory or set of beliefs about the world (Strega, 2005; Mertens, 2005). The term epistemology is defined as knowledge nested within the social relations of knowledge production. It has been a term used by Indigenous researchers to express Indigenous worldview or philosophy (Ermine, 1995; Meyer, 2001; Wilson, 2008). (p. 41)

Indigenous theory and methodology are described by Makokis (2008) as the intellectual teachings or philosophical bundles of knowledge that educate humans on how to live a Good Life Path. Pimadiziwin and Bimadiziwin are the terms that express the spiritual ecology about how the world is related (Cajete, 1999, 2000, 2005; Kawagley, 2006). The spiritual ecology of both Anishnabe and Cree include reciprocal responsibilities expressed through Indigenous Knowledge beliefs, customs, and laws (Borrows, 2010; Craft, 2013). Wahkotowin, a Cree word meaning kinship or the state of being related, further describes this fundamental aspect of Indigenous worldviews and philosophies (Ermine, 2007). As Haig-Brown and Dannenmann (2002) noted when working cross-culturally, “Indigenous knowledge is about relationships” (p. 463). Kovach (2010) further describes an Indigenous paradigmatic approach, epistemology, method, and methodology as a dynamic relationship with self, other, and with the natural world. She states,

When using the term ‘paradigmatic approach’ in relation to Indigenous methodologies, this means that this particular research approach flows from an Indigenous belief system that has at its core a relational understanding and accountability to the world (Steinhauer, 2001; Wilson, 2001). Indigenous epistemologies hold a non-human centric relational philosophy (Deloria, 2004;
Ermine, 1995) and while tribal groups hold differing relationships with place, as evident in local protocol and custom, (Battiste & McConaghy, 2005) there is a shared belief system among tribal groups (Littlebear, 2000). This distinctive Indigenous paradigmatic orientation is a theory of how knowledge is constructed and as such it guides assumptions about what counts as knowledge (Kirby et al., 2006) and offers guidance for research methods. Such methods include sharing knowledge based in oral history and storytelling tradition (Hart, 2002; Henderson, 2000; Smith, 1999) and are collectivist (Deloria, 2004). It assumes that knowledge is transferred through oral history and story (Archibald, 2008) and that knowledge is co-created within the relational dynamic of self-in-relation (Graveline, 1998). The relational dynamic between self, others, and nature is central. (2010, p. 42)

The epistemological theory shapes one’s understanding of the world and the relationships with the Natural World. Pimadiziwin is also an ethical consideration, referring to the ways that constitute living the “good life” with a “good heart and mind.” Expressing reciprocity in maintaining the relationships with the Natural World include transmitting the laws, customs, values, lessons, and stories particular to a geographic region or teacher. For example, Makokis (2008) examines the Nehiyaw Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers as the methodology to guide values and behaviors of the Nehiyaw Cree region of Saddle Lake, Alberta. The values include honesty, bravery, wisdom, truth, honor, love, and respect, and the individual must demonstrate creatively how they “live the teachings.” People are expected to articulate publically their accountability to the collective at gatherings. Pimadiziwin and the Seven Grandfather Teachings were integrated into all aspects of individual and collective existence. Pimadiziwin, then, shaped the behavior of individuals in ways that prevented them from making choices or decisions that would jeopardize the health and vitality of the Natural World and the collective community members of a particular region.

1.4.2 Protocol principles. The research followed Indigenous protocol principles. Walter Lightning suggests, “A protocol refers to any one of a number of culturally ordained actions or statements, established by ancient tradition that an individual completes in order to establish a relationship” (cited in Archibald, 2008, pp. 37–38). Archibald (2007) also speaks to the values conveyed by following protocols, which are
negotiated for each context as practice principles. She indicates that knowledge must be shared in a manner that incorporates cultural respect, responsibility, reciprocity, and reverence because these teachings are cultural values, beliefs, lessons, and understandings that are passed on from generation to generation.

The protocol principles helped me to reconcile past research approaches and meld theory and practice through documenting pedagogy. For Indigenous peoples, reconciliation must be interpreted broadly and, for it to be a decolonizing force, it must be grounded in cultural generation and political resurgence. I draw on the ideas expressed by Leanne Simpson (2011a) who states that, “Reconciliation must support Indigenous relationships to lands, oral cultures, languages and traditional forms of governance and all that the residential schools tried to obliterate” (p. 22). Indigenous Knowledge protocols protect Indigenous peoples and ensure that non-Indigenous representations of Indigenous peoples are reconciled within a decolonizing agenda (Smith, 1999). Protocols are often context specific, so by working with local Indigenous peoples we have identified the proper protocols as principles of practice to guide how we begin relationships. For example, one protocol is to establish ongoing reciprocal relationships with the local Indigenous peoples in ways that they recognize. Another example is to recount an Indigenous relational genealogy, indicating a tribal-centered relational worldview and an applied research and pedagogical practice.

1.4.3 Critical and decolonization theories. I also use elements of critical theory to analyze structural oppression, racism, and gendered violence to understand the context of my inquiry. Critical social science helps uncover the genealogical roots of ideology and informs a critical transformative education practice that can be analyzed through the intersection of race, class, colonialism, and gender. Critical theories aim for transformational outcomes and can assist researchers to understand the ideology of eugenics that informed government policy in support of white supremacy and colonization in Canada and elsewhere. For the most part, the assumptions behind these ideological positions remain unexamined in many Euro-Western institutions, ideologies, and practices (Damer, 2010; Miller, 2008; Roman, 1993; Roman et al., 2009).
I also consider other related theories, such as institutional ethnography (Smith, 2002), sociology of education (Razack et al., 2010), critical literary theory and historiography (Cruikshank, 2002; Reder, 2007), law (Cardinal, 2005; Lindberg, 2008), geography (Anderson, 1997), and pedagogy of place (Bowers, 1997; Friere, 1970; Gruenewald, 2003; hooks, 1992; Orr, 1994). However, many of these theoretical approaches on their own are unsuitable for examining Indigenous Knowledge because they do not adequately address the theories and methodologies of Indigenous ways of knowing. As Kovach (2010) says, “While a decolonizing perspective remains necessary and can be included in a theoretical positioning within research, it is not the epistemological center of an Indigenous methodological approach to research” (p. 42). To date, Canadian government policies informed by Euro-Western ideas, including those informed by critical theories, have failed to produce baseline parity in health education for Aboriginal peoples (Kelm, 1999; Canadian Council on Learning, 2008c; Schissel & Wotherspoon, 2003). Nonetheless, the various critical theories share similarities with Indigenous theories and are therefore woven into my research, providing an example of decolonizing and transformative health education pedagogy.

1.5 Summary

My research seeks to describe and share an Indigenous Pedagogy based in Indigenous culture, orality, land, community, and ethics that will help preserve and expand Indigenous Knowledge and promote Indigenous well-being. Vital to the success of this pedagogy is the understanding that Nature is a sovereign entity interconnected with both human subjectivity and struggle for self-determination (Grande, 2008, p. 66). Indigenous scholars ground their visions of sovereignty through a deep connection to place and land, considered in the present and past (p. 117). Any attempt at decolonization for transformative education must strengthen relations to people and

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4 For more detailed information, see: [http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/subject-sujet/theme-theme.action?pid=10000&lang=eng&more=0](http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/subject-sujet/theme-theme.action?pid=10000&lang=eng&more=0)
places. Indigenous Elders provide educational leadership by using pedagogical principles that are informed by and deeply relevant to particular places. Clearly, the revitalization and resurgence of Indigenous Knowledge and its intellectual traditions involve many people to revive the best of this system, and to develop a contemporary perspective built on reciprocated respect for Euro-Western knowledge systems.

This qualitative study examines and documents the pedagogical approaches of Indigenous Elders in community land-based health education programs. Through oral histories of participants in the Medicine Camp program, this research examines how education promoting Indigenous Knowledge thrives through storywork and engagement with land, and how cultural customs of Indigenous Knowledge continue to combine theory with practice. As an Indigenous land-based project, the research demonstrates how the knowledge of Indigenous peoples derives from intimate involvement with a particular place and its ecology (Battiste, 2000), including the knowledge of the plants and their patterns within that space. In turn, this knowledge informs the research. The principles of Indigenous Knowledge are vital to education theory and practice because they inform the community's goals and practices for educational transformation. By identifying and deconstructing colonial structures, place-based education informed by Indigenous Knowledge helps transform social structures and supports the self-determined leadership goals of local communities. Thus Indigenous Knowledge Systems—the philosophies, knowledge, and ways of knowing and of being—continue to inform theoretical and practical pedagogical pathways for Indigenous peoples, educators, and advocates.

The remainder of this dissertation explores Indigenous Knowledge and theory, and how Medicine Camp Elders use it in their programs. Chapter 2 describes aspects of works by Indigenous scholars that influence Indigenous theory for Indigenous pedagogy literature. Chapter 3 describes the rationale of the conversation method and the collective storywork methodology used to interview eighteen Indigenous Elders and Knowledge keepers. Chapter 4 discusses the findings in several themes, while
Chapter 5 discusses the pedagogical implications, limits of the study, and personal reflections. The conclusion summarizes the study’s findings.
CHAPTER 2
Indigenous Theory for Indigenous Pedagogy

In this chapter I introduce Indigenous Knowledge and explain how Indigenous Knowledge theories are relevant for the investigation of Indigenous pedagogy. I also provide a synthesis of how aspects of critical theories, Indigenous feminisms and Indigenous theories of transformation help to situate and describe conceptions of Indigenous pedagogy. Bimadiziwin Good Way Life theory and Wahkotowin relational genealogy are then explored as relevant Indigenous tribal-centered frameworks central to understanding Indigenous pedagogies. I then provide a summary of how Indigenous theories are relevant for this investigation of Indigenous pedagogy.

2.1 Indigenous Knowledge

Aboriginal scholars describe Indigenous Knowledge as ancient knowledge about community life, wholistic well-being, and shared values. In Nehiyaw Cree the term pimatisiwan describes these concepts and asserts the core value miyo-wicehtowin, which means having good relations (Settee, 2008, pp. 46–47).

Parent (2009) explains that Indigenous wholistic theories are used for critical, emancipatory, and transformative purposes:

All Indigenous theories aim to question structural inequalities and social institutions that perpetuate the oppression caused by historical and contemporary forms of European imperialism and colonialism. At the same time, they privilege Indigenous epistemologies, build connections between various Indigenous knowledge systems, and ultimately seek to transform society. As such, Indigenous theories have a dynamic capacity to challenge Eurocentric biases; redress the cultural misappropriation of Indigenous knowledge that has endangered Indigenous ways of life; empower Aboriginal peoples as agents of change; and support the development of wholistic community-based programming. (p 54)
Indigenous Knowledge conveys values about what constitutes a good life. Young and Nadeau (2006) further describe:

Each Native culture has its own version of the Good Life Way: Bimadziwin in Anishnabe; Miyowicehtowin—having good relations—for the Cree of the Northern prairies; Sken-nen kowa—maintaining peace between peoples—for the Iroquois; Hozho for walking in beauty, walking in a sacred manner, or walking with a peaceful heart—for the Navajo. Common to these different versions of the Good Life Way are the lived values of relations, beauty, and balance. (p. 5)

Theoretical or conceptual frameworks describe a typical example or pattern of values and actions that help us to understand the world and the nature of our interactions and relationships. They are dynamic processes bound by context.

Indigenous Knowledge and theories can provide a basis for understanding concrete pedagogical approaches to learning about landscapes; they can undermine the racist assumptions that underpin the dispossession of Indigenous peoples physically from their territories and intellectually from the knowledge generated about those landscapes; and they can revitalize Indigenous connections to traditional territories (Henderson, 2000; Lindberg, 2008). Indigenous Knowledge promotes sound ecological practice as it incorporates valuable principles gathered over generations of interactions with the land, and encourages Indigenous peoples to revitalize stewardship of the land and the ecosystems that they inhabit.

Many Indigenous scholars call for Indigenous resurgence based on renewed Indigenous theories and systems of knowledge (Adams, 2009; Dorion, 2010; Greyeyes, 2010; Makokis, 2008; Simpson, 2013; Smith, 2010; Wildcat, 2010). To date the literature remains sparse on how Indigenous theories are relevant to Indigenous research and pedagogical pathways (Corntassel & Taiaiake, 2005; Coulthard & Simpson, 2014; Simpson, 2011). The present research is situated within this relatively new and growing field of Indigenous academic scholarship and directly connects to a decolonizing agenda through Indigenous theories of transformation and the study of Indigenous pedagogy. Turner (2008) suggests that Indigenous philosophers and activists must all be engaged synergistically to move beyond state domination. Utilizing Indigenous theories to describe Indigenous pedagogy is one pathway. Bishkaybiyang,
for example, seeks to reinvigorate Anishnabe thought and traditions that enhance Indigenous land literacies through pedagogy (Geniusz, 2009). Although many tribal and familial cultural differences exist within the Canadian context, including approximately 60 Indigenous languages, Indigenous Knowledge has some common characteristics across different groups.

### 2.2 Characteristics of Indigenous Knowledge

Diverse Indigenous Knowledge systems share several common characteristics. They are radically ecological and wholistic, and the knowledge is communal. In particular they exhibit the “four Rs” (responsibility, reciprocity, respect, relationships) and include all members of a local living unit (tribe) and all the life forms in Creation (Barnhardt and Kirkness, 1991). Indigenous Knowledge systems are living processes to be experienced, absorbed, and understood by all beings in Creation. The function of Indigenous Knowledge is to ensure the planet’s survival through the enhancement of life’s diversity. Indigenous theory is embodied, enacted, and performed through oral traditions. Indigenous theory is not actualized in the intellectual realm alone, but also through ongoing reciprocal responsibilities and relationships (Henderson, 2000; Simpson, 2011b). Indigenous theory is wholistic, diverse, emergent, and rooted in relationships with lands.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems begin with knowledge that existed prior to colonization and incorporate spiritual, communal, and wholistic orientations (Atleo, 2004; Deloria, 1999; Marker, 2009). Indigenous Knowledge refers to extensive interdisciplinary sources of knowledge that defy Euro-Western categorization, including systemic, individual, and collective understandings through the complex interplay between thinking, feeling, hearing, and sensing the inner and outer worlds. Indigenous Knowledge Systems comprise all of the knowledge that a particular

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5 I use the term wholistic to indicate a whole process.
Indigenous people possess regarding their territory and the relationship between physical and spiritual realms.

Kawagley & Barnhardt (1999) describes an Indigenous Alaskan epistemology as a worldview:

The time-honored values of respect, reciprocity, and cooperation are conducive to adaptation, survival, and harmony. Native people honor the integrity of the universe as a whole living being—an inter-connected system. As it is living, all things of the Earth must be respected because they also have life. Native people have a reciprocal relationship with all things of the universe… if he was to survive.

Kovach (2008), Castellano (2000), and Battiste (2000) recognize that Indigenous Knowledges come from many sources, are dynamic and inter-related, and require maintenance for renewal. Little Bear (2004) describes relational renewal and responsibilities to the land in the following ways:

A consequence of the idea of renewal is a large number of ceremonies revolving around renewal including but not limited to sweatlodge, sundance, and medicine bundle ceremonies. It may be said that Blackfoot history is not a temporal history but a history contained in stories that are told and re-told; in songs that are sung and re-sung; in ceremonies that are performed and re-performed through the seasonal rounds. In summary, the Blackfoot paradigm consists of notions of constant flux, wholeness and interrelationships, all creation being animate and imbued with spirit, and space (land) being the main reference point to relate to all else, and the manifestation of the constant flux in cycles, phases, and repetitive patterns. All of the above aimed at harmony and balance. Harmony and balance is accomplished through renewal. (pp. 3–4)

Renewal is achieved through revitalization while embodied relationships are guided by Indigenous protocols. Indigenous protocols include referencing an Indigenous relational genealogy, such as acknowledging who taught you the knowledge, how you gained the knowledge, and in what contexts the permission was given to use the knowledge. Relational genealogy is not the same as tracking and critiquing the histories of Euro-Western systems or genetic pedigrees, though they do share some commonalities. The distinction lies in the way knowledge is gathered, expressed, and utilized, or the way people interact with the knowledge. Interaction includes values such as interrelatedness (“Wahkotowin” in Cree language) that are expressed through
songs, stories, and particular ceremonies that have specific protocols, pedagogies, and contexts for expression. Primarily, Indigenous relational genealogy demonstrates how we are inter-connected with Creation and identifies certain tribal ways of teaching—often described as protocols, roles, and responsibilities. These protocols and principles ensure integrity and protect Indigenous knowledge from misrepresentation and exploitation, and inform the ways in which Indigenous pedagogy expressed. (Archibald, 2007; Atleo, 2000; Battiste, 2000; Castellano, 2000).

Reciprocity is also central to Indigenous understanding. The Indigenous scholars described here exercise their tribal-centered theory to further their intellectual traditions and practices for community wellbeing. I chose these scholars because they are closely related to my tribal genealogies and I thus demonstrate my own sense of reciprocity by building on their literature.

We can also learn from the international Indigenous scholars who strategically employ a “rights-based” approach in their struggle to raise the political consciousness and self-determination of Indigenous peoples through a critical examination of place-based education. Protection of traditional medicines, growing and using traditional foods, and teaching and learning about plants as medicine are examples of economic, social, and cultural rights articulated in international human rights documents which demonstrate Aboriginal rights in action. These elements combined help us to understand ways in which Indigenous Knowledge, theories, and pedagogies can bridge the existing views of land- and place-based education.

The land as the teacher, the classroom, and the provider is firmly recognized under the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations, 2007), The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). Rights-based discourses provide opportunities for coalition building that require a balance of applied specific local perspectives and the global context approach.

Human rights are fundamental to the Cree doctrine of law called Wahkotowin, which governs relationships (Cardinal, 1998, 2005). Thus, the primary theoretical
principle, law, or paradigm inherent in the term Wahkotowin is relational and is transmitted through Indigenous pedagogical elements such as language, song, prayer, and storytelling. In English, the phrase “All My Relations,” refers to this basic right as an operating principle that we are all related through, in part, a spiritual and environmental ecology (Kawagley, 1995).

Discourses that challenge colonialism and engage with the theories and practices that resonate within local and cultural framework will help to re-shape our collective contemporary identities, communities, policies, and education practices. An example of this is the work of Tracy Lindberg (2008) who builds on Harold Cardinal’s work (2005) and re-positions Indigenous Knowledge as Cree traditional law based on Natural Law. Indigenous laws are passed through the teachings and ceremonies. Cree Elders explain that by following the teachings of Wahkotowin, individuals, communities, and societies will be healthier because they consider the rights of all beings.

Although Indigenous rights and the corresponding responsibilities associated with the rights or laws and Indigenous ways of teaching and learning are conceived differently across disciplines, Archibald (2011), Battiste (2014), Castellano (2006), Monture-Angus (2008), Kawagley (2000) and Lindberg (2004) agree that Indigenous Elders represent a way of direct knowing and teaching based on their experiences in specific places through intergenerational engagement with the lands over millennia. Indigenous Elders are the teachers so an effective inquiry must begin with their knowledge and their understanding about Indigenous ways of teaching and learning (Wheeler, 2005; Valaskakis, 2000). Battiste, Bell, and Findlay (2002) believe that Indigenous theories require a decolonizing analysis and must employ a reciprocal and ethical relationship with Indigenous Elders and tribal knowledge holders.

An ethical reanimation [of tribal-centered theory and methodology] must begin with guidance from Aboriginal Elders and with the honor of sustaining ongoing relationships with them. Our decolonizing work cannot be undertaken otherwise, except in a manner as both opportunistic and neo-colonial. (p. 91)

Sources of Indigenous Knowledge include Traditional Knowledge passed down through stories and teachings since the beginning of time, empirical observation by the
many people who have interacted with the land over countless generations, and revealed knowledge acquired through dream, visions, and intuition considered to be spiritually derived (Castellano 2000). The nature and use of Indigenous Knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation and includes scientific, agricultural, technical, and ecological knowledge about, for example, plant medicines and the use of flora and fauna in particular locations (Battiste, 2000; Daes, 1993).

2.3 Indigenous Theory to Inform Indigenous Research

If Euro-Western knowledge and theory guides Euro-Western social research, it makes sense that Indigenous knowledge and theory should guide Indigenous research. Many Indigenous scholars take up the call for Indigenous resurgence by reanimating their tribal-centered theories as these theories provide practical frameworks to apply particular place-based practices (Kovach, 2007; Simpson, 2008). Indigenous projects that work from their own tribal-centered frameworks provide alternative models for education transformation that are rooted in relational Indigenous place-based paradigms that combine history, colonialism, and racism analysis with political practice. Truly useful and appropriate research must attend deeply to place, forms of social and economic life, and local Indigenous Knowledge systems. While there are vast differences between various Indigenous Knowledges, theories, and pedagogical expressions, they share some common characteristics. Contemporary Indigenous theories place tribal considerations at the center, and increasingly consider how an Indigenous form of feminism can simultaneously address Indigenous sovereignty, sexism and disrupt the privileging impacts of unequal power structures and neocolonial reproductions through decolonizing agendas (Smith, 2005; Stewart-Harawira 2012).

2.3.1 Tribal-centered theory. Because Euro-Western education for Indigenous peoples has for the most part failed, Indigenous scholars and Elders call for education using pedagogies that are based on tribal- or Indigenous-centered theoretical frameworks. Rheault (1999), for example, addresses “An Applied Anishinaabe Theory” where he defines and utilizes primary experiential knowledge as his method of inquiry.
He describes the process-oriented philosophical method as a way to convey his interest in the theoretical and practical meanings of Anishinaabe Mino-Bimaadiziwin (the Way of a Good Life). He describes working with Elders as a primary source of tribal-centered framework:

Philosophical thought has been at the heart of Aboriginal societies since time immemorial. There have always been philosophers amongst the people. The Anishinaabe have a tradition of intellectuals called the Chinshinabe. They are the Elders and traditional Teachers who are the caretakers of cultural and sacred knowledge. They take on the responsibility of maintaining the flow of Nebwakawin (wisdom) that passes from generation to generation. (Rheault, 1999, p. 28)

As a primary source of tribal-centered knowledge, Indigenous Elders model how to use the knowledge wisely and in ways that are practical and reflective of the Good Way Life philosophies so that others can benefit from the knowledge transferred.

Indigenous Anishnabe scholars Simpson (2011a; 2011b), Rheault (1999), and Nehiyaw Cree scholar Kovach (2009) have applied tribal theoretical frameworks and methodologies in their approach to Indigenous research. Indigenous theories are flexible enough to include multiple and trans-disciplinary intersections where appropriate because they are explicitly relational (Kovach 2010). Rheault (1999) explains his applied Anishinabe theory and method:

This method is the beginning of an active incorporation, recognition and use of one's own perspective as a critical source of inquiry and means of knowing. The sensing of the "self" and my cultural intuition are what necessitate a different approach because in Anishinaabe philosophy this method is a fundamental way of knowing: a fundamental epistemology, the absence of which would render this study invalid. This method is an introduction about coming to objective truths through a subjective method of inquiry and analysis not explicitly characteristic of any Western systems, but of Anishinaabe tribal-centered approach that works with theory and method. (p. 11)

2.3.2 Indigenous feminism. Adams (2009) explored how Indigenous female Anishnabe Elders engage with Anishnabe Ogichita kway, the female warrior teachings, to explain the link between resurgence and radical indigenous feminisms and their application to combating colonialism in the lives of Anishnabe women. In her research
she critiques the use of a rights-based ethic that seeks personal recognition from within a colonial system rather than an Anishnabekwe ethic drawn from its own teachings to inform how the transformation from colonialism may occur. The purpose of her research is to examine how Anishnabe *Ogichita kway* teachings form the basis of Indigenous tribal-centered theories and [pedagogical] practices (p. 8). Adams further looks for analytical tools that help to transform internalized colonial and patriarchal attitudes. This current research examines how Indigenous theories inform Indigenous pedagogy.

### 2.4 Indigenous Theory for Indigenous Pedagogy

Indigenous theories provide the theoretical foundations relevant for the exploration of this research on Indigenous pedagogy. Indigenous peoples need a critical mass of educators who can address the issue of Indigenous epistemology and its implication for education. This research examines Indigenous *place* as one of the standards set out by Eber Hampton (1995) in his dissertation entitled “A Redefinition of Indian Education.” Using a grounded theory approach, he interviewed experienced educators working to further Indigenous education. Hampton developed standards that should be addressed by any theory of Indian education that is of its own kind (“sui generis”), distinct from Euro-Western precedents or paradigms.

Hampton’s theory of Indian education includes place, identity, spirituality, culture, tribal affiliation, education, freedom, and service (p. 18). Hampton (1995) reminds educators to ask the following questions: what is education and what is the purpose of education? He calls for a redefinition of education and chronicles five educational strategies Aboriginal peoples have experienced: traditional Indigenous education, education for assimilation, education for self-determination, education by Indians for Indians, and education *sui generis*. A genuine Indigenous theory of education cannot be based on anything other than Indigenous Knowledge. I understand this to mean that scholarship is to be rooted in living experience and dialogical interaction as the basis of an applied Indigenous pedagogy.
2.5 Conceptions of Indigenous Pedagogy

Grande (2004, 2008) describes an educative process that centers and prioritizes the connection between Indigenous peoples and the land, and defines spaces for engaging multiple intellectual traditions. Grande's "red pedagogy" creates a distinctive space supported by placed-based history and discourses that works toward self-determined, self-directed communities. A red pedagogy approach aims to bridge the gap between "white-stream" theory and Indigenous philosophies and approaches to education, sustaining connections with Elders, storywork, and land as teacher (in other words, with Indigenous Knowledge Systems) as a form of decolonizing educational practice. Grande calls for a "revolutionary critical pedagogy" and the transformation of capitalist social relations as essential to the fundamental project of Red pedagogy: decolonization, self-determination, and sovereignty that are grounded in the spirituality and theoretical foundations of Indigenous tribal nations.

Grande (2004, 2008) employs elements of a neo-Marxist critical theory and initiates an applied localized Indigenista pedagogy. This approach to discourse analysis is necessary to transform the political structures of colonialism and raise the political consciousness to assist with struggles over land and strategies for local self-determination. She then articulates a critical theory of Indigenista in response to feminisms that overlook colonization as the primary basis of current and historical oppression of Indigenous women. She focuses instead on a "universal" patriarchy that denies the persistence of economic exploitation and, accordingly, colonization (p. 137-8). While revolutionary feminisms maintain this economic understanding, they are insufficient for addressing colonization and its consequences. Her red pedagogy encompasses valuable knowledge contained in Indigenous experience and world-views, seen as essential by Grande for transforming capitalist social relations between humankind and all of Creation.

Other models of Indigenous pedagogy include Vizenor's (2008) concept of survivance, which outlines the movements from violence toward a storied, living
landscape derived from Indigenous perspectives rooted in place, land, and community. In particular, Vizenor links civic responsibility to literary, geographical, and culturally diverse stories that balance both uniqueness and difference with land relationships. Indigenous theories of transformation rely on teaching pedagogies that address wholism, spiritual ecologies (Kawagley 1995), and relational laws that are grounded in landscapes.

Ermine (2000, 2006) believes that Indigenous theory and pedagogy can help create understanding between Indigenous worldviews and others, for mutual benefit. He considers European Western educational institutions as learning places where students often become entrapped in a monolithic worldview and mono-cultural monopoly. However, it is up to students to find where the theoretical bridge between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worlds lie. This bridge occupies an ethical space where we can understand one another's knowledge systems through sharing stories, the cornerstone of Indigenous pedagogies. Ermine and many like-minded scholar-educators hope we can learn from multiple knowledge systems including the natural world, artificial theories, the oral and written traditions, and a wholistic approach. He demonstrates a storywork educational approach to the meeting of worldviews by relating the following story:

My grandparents knew how to get medicine from a plant. They talked to the plant, studied it. Our people knew how to move and work with living entities that are intelligent in nature...It's a gift to walk in two worlds, but also a responsibility. Ethical space does not exist unless you look at it, [engage with it and] affirm it. (Ford, 2006)

Education theorist Greg Cajete (2005) similarly describes Native American Indian epistemologies, worldviews, conceptual frameworks, guiding principles, teachings, and values as coming to know a way of life, and asserts that the function of education must be to enhance life. He describes an education using a Pueblo-centered epistemology as the creative process of finding your face and heart via Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and to look to stories and theologies of places to provide a foundation
for Indigenous life (p. 41). The stories, languages, and ceremonies taught by Elders contain life and encourage people to live the teachings that are relevant to their regions and to their life paths. Cajete (1995) and many Indigenous scholars encourage current educators to participate consciously in the new, wholistic and story-oriented forms of education developing today.

Nehiyaw Cree scholar Kovach (2009) suggests that Indigenous theory and methodologies can inform research to address the education crisis. Research can influence public policy, and policy generates programs. Policies and programs that emerge from Euro-Western, non-Indigenous knowledge has largely been ineffectual with Indigenous communities. Kovach also proposes that Indigenous theoretical frameworks have the potential to improve policy and practice within Indigenous contexts.

### 2.6 Summary

Colonialism and racism continue in Canadian provincial curricula and provide an oppressive rather than liberating experience for many peoples (Calliou, 1995; Calliste & Dei, 2000; St. Denis & Hampton, 2002). Aboriginal people still experience the highest dropout rates and the fastest growing youth population across the country. This evidence suggests we have far to go to achieve the goals of decolonization of education and societal transformation. Despite this, Indigenous people continue to bridge

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6 Between 1996 and 2006, Canada’s Aboriginal population grew by 45%, nearly six times faster than the non-Aboriginal population. As of 2006, 1,172,790 self-identified as Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, or Inuit, comprising nearly 4% of the total population.

Aboriginal people in Canada are increasingly moving from rural to urban centers. In 2006, 54% lived in urban areas. The largest population concentrations were Winnipeg (68,380), Edmonton (52,100), Vancouver (40,310), Toronto (26,575), Calgary (26,575), Saskatoon (21,535), and Regina (17,105).

The Aboriginal population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population. 48% of the Aboriginal population are children and youth 24 and under, compared with 31% of the non-Aboriginal population.

knowledge and theories from one generation to another in new ways, mobilizing communities through our stories and re-establishing links to the land through Elders' pedagogies (Young, 2009).

I weave my understandings of critical social theories with those described by Anishnabe and Nehiyaw Cree scholars who promote the theories of Wahkotowin as a philosophical system based in tribal-centered knowledge and which inform how Indigenous pedagogy is understood and practiced. Elders and stories are the primary vehicles for conveying Indigenous theories of interrelatedness, wholism, and transformation—they contain the values and principles that form the basis of this pedagogical investigation. Kovach (2009) indicates that Nehiyaw Cree epistemology is about giving back to community and that, as researchers, we can do this by sharing our work so that it can assist others (p. 13). Linking to Anishnabe-Nehiyaw Ogichita kway-centered theories and practice of the P/Bimadiziwin—the Good life ways—is a decolonizing pedagogical intervention that helped me to bridge social theories, Indigenous theories, and methods of inquiry to investigate Indigenous pedagogy.
CHAPTER 3

The Conversation Method

Indigenous methods do not flow from Western philosophy: they flow from tribal epistemologies. (Kovach, 2010a, p. 36)

This chapter is organized into four sections. In section one I describe the process of identifying and choosing an appropriate methodology, critique conventional methods, and discuss the benefits of critical methods. In section two, I outline my chosen method and consider various options, describing the conversation method and reasons for choosing it, and providing examples of how it has been used previously. In section three I describe how I gathered the information and, in section four, how I analyzed the data.

3.1 Methodology

I chose information-collecting tools consistent with the values of Indigenous Knowledge that would contribute to Indigenous Tribal Knowledge and enhance Indigenous Pedagogy. I outline the challenges of choosing an appropriate method of gathering knowledge with research tools developed outside Indigenous paradigms.

Narayan and Harding (2000) describe research method as a technique or way of proceeding in gathering data. The method I describe next is an Indigenous conversation approach that centralizes Indigenous Knowledge traditions (Kovach, 2007). Indigenous theory informs Indigenous contexts and purposes. This research is primarily performed by and for the community contexts in which the study takes place. Consequently, the first phase of the research process includes the selection of a location and the people intimately connected to it. Pre-engagement ensures respectful research that is ethical, responsible, and reciprocal, and demonstrates the principles of Indigenous storywork methodology as articulated by Archibald (2008).
I originally presented the research as a case study method with interviews and focus group methodology, but in writing the thesis I concluded that the case study fails to meet the requirements of an Indigenous-centered paradigm. Thus I include rationales for research methods and methodologies closely aligned with or complementary to Indigenous research, Indigenous epistemologies so that others interested in similar research methods may also benefit from the investigation. I considered case studies method as a suitable method for this study in the early phases of the research as the approach looks at the accumulation of similar cases and infers a generalized understanding of phenomena. This, in turn, can help one to employ best practice principles in education and create appropriate action research agendas (Battiste, 2010). One of the objectives of the Medicine Camp is to train educators to develop their own local community education programs, suggesting that this current research is congruent with a community-driven, transformative action education agenda. However, case studies might not use an Indigenous-centered paradigm as this research does.

Also described in this chapter are complementary research method and methodologies such as critical Indigenous methodology, which combines Indigenous intellectual traditions, a tribal-centered epistemology, and Aboriginal storytelling methodologies.

Kovach (2009) differentiates Indigenous methodologies from other forms of qualitative inquiry but argues that Indigenous methodologies can embody some characteristics of more conventional qualitative studies (p. 25). She considers that Indigenous Knowledge Systems work together with the corresponding methods of inquiry. She posits that Indigenous methodologies can be affiliated with qualitative methods because both value relational processes and content elements, providing an important space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers can begin to understand and communicate with each other.

Kovach (2009) and many other Indigenous scholars (e.g. Archibald, 2008; Henderson, 2000; Meyer, 2001; Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2008) position Indigenous tribal
epistemologies at the center of their research methodologies, which makes their research distinctively Indigenous. Indigenous scholars note that neglect of this country’s colonial history effectively maintains its colonial reproduction. Going forward means looking back if we are to transform education and our relationships to research and to each other (Kovach, 2009, p. 76–8).

Methodologies informed by critical social theories are explored because their common elements suggest that learning from the past is necessary in order to transform the present circumstance. Indigenous place-based education and critical Indigenous methodology provides the contexts and addresses the protocol principle of beginning at your geographical location.

3.2 Study Methodology

This study used elements of critical ethnography, although this approach had to be modified for use in an Indigenous context. The study also used the conversation method, an Indigenous approach ideal for the topic.

3.2.1 Critical ethnography. In this section, I discuss the possibility of incorporating useful aspects of ethnography and the overlap between critical ethnography and critical Indigenous methodology, and I elaborate on the usefulness of critical race theories and feminist approaches.

Euro-Western qualitative research methods provided suitable considerations for this study, as they can be modified into a critical Indigenous methodology. Qualitative research uses non-mathematical (non-quantitative) processes of interpretation to find patterns that suggest theories. Qualitative theory is socially constructed and accounts for the dynamic interactive relationship between the researcher and what is studied within a particular context. Because qualitative research is interpretative, it requires researchers, through reflexive processes, to acknowledge their social location and to examine their own researcher biases. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches to research are products of Euro-Western paradigms of thought, yet Indigenous research
methods can accommodate aspects of both. One form of qualitative research, critical ethnography, is relevant to my study.

Elements of critical ethnography can complement Indigenous methods; particularly those that ask researchers to examine culture, knowledge, human action, and power relations within particular social contexts to create social change in the interests of those lacking political power. While ethnographers merely describe culture, critical ethnographers search for and encourage more equitable relations (Thomas, 1993). In particular, ethnographies informed by critical race theories, like critical Indigenous methodologies, attempt to build political coalitions for social justice and transformative change, including decolonization (Carspecken, 1996; Denzin et al., 2008; Sandoval, 2000). Critical race theory employs narrative methodologies that critique the ideology of white supremacy and seek social transformation (Dei, 2005). The critique of colonial contexts found in critical race theory parallel Indigenous anti-colonial analysis; however, critical race theory falls short of the standards for an Indigenous methodology by reverting to a rights-based counter-narrative strategy to combat racism and colonialism, and by not generating new theories of knowledge. Like other Euro-Western theories, critical race theory does not originate in tribal-centered perspectives, as do critical Indigenous methodologies, although both encourage education and action (Friedel, 2009; Parker & Lynn, 2002).

Critical race feminism is perhaps closest to tribal-centered epistemologies (Razack, Smith, & Thobani, 2010; Roman, 1993), as it privileges the voices of oppressed populations in decolonizing research designs whose focus is social transformation. Additionally, the growing Indigenous feminist literature provides another analytical lens for decolonizing research (Kleinman, 2007; Smith, 2007). The research agenda of radical Indigenous feminism focuses on the regeneration of tribal knowledge utilizing tribal-centered research methods and methodologies for the transformation of tribal contexts (Adams, 2010; Smith, 2010). The leadership of the women Elders relates to creation stories.
Despite growing dissatisfaction with Euro-Western theory and methodology in conducting Indigenous research, there are some benefits in using elements that are congruent with tribal-centered methods of inquiry. For example, critical theories are useful in the analysis of power, but often the discussion stops there and doesn’t continue to explore alternatives or responses to the abuses of power. The pedagogy used at Medicine Camp is an Indigenous critical theory and practice, one that is grounded in both a language of critique and a language of possibility because stories were shared about a common colonial history, the ongoing societal gendered violence against women, and the racism experienced at residential schools. The stories they shared critique these conditions, but they also include strategies of hope and survival within the context of returning to one’s relationship to the land, to the Indigenous languages, and to the Medicine Camp community. Most importantly, such an approach will help communicate Indigenous research to others who are interested in this methodology.

I recognize that adding Euro-Western elements to an Indigenous research approach is a strategic concession, as these elements do not fully capture the relational worldview contained within Indigenous languages and oral traditions. However, I deliberately use the Euro-Western tradition of privileging wholistic tribal methods of inquiry to facilitate a manageable research focus, while remaining useful and transformative to the community from which the research agenda emanates. For example, the conversational method is not unique to Indigenous research as it is used in qualitative research such as narrative inquiry (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009). Kovach (2010b) distinguishes between the two approaches:

The conversational method is found within western qualitative research. However when used in an Indigenous framework, a conversational method invokes several distinctive characteristics: a) it is linked to a particular tribal epistemology (or knowledge) and situated within an Indigenous paradigm; b) it is relational; c) it is purposeful (most often involving a decolonizing aim); d) it involves particular protocol as determined by the epistemology and/or place; e) it involves an informality and flexibility; f) it is collaborative and dialogic; and g) it is reflexive. (p. 43)
Other scholars who utilize the “conversation method” are Wilson (2008), Thomas (2005, 2001), Barrett and Stauffer (2009), Bessarab (2008), Bishop (2009), Kahakalua (2004), Graveline (2000), and Lavallee (2009). This method was selected because of its congruence with Indigenous ways of gathering knowledge, suitability to the research problem (particularly since stories and conversations build knowledge), and adaptability to particular Indigenous tribal contexts, epistemologies, and pedagogies about which the study is concerned.

3.2.2 Conversation method. Indigenous Knowledge methods of gathering information originated prior to colonization, and they follow spiritual, communal, and wholistic principles (Atleo, 2004; Deloria, 1999; Graveline, 2000; Lavallee, 2009; Marker, 2009). Using methods of inquiry consistent with Indigenous Knowledge further resists imperialist cognitive paradigms and encourages a decolonizing agenda to further Indigenous intellectual traditions and methods of researching, teaching, and learning (Battiste, 2013; Castellano, 2000; Kovach, 2007). The “conversation method” is an appropriate research method for this study because it is congruent with Anishnabe and Cree tribal relational worldviews and oral traditions for Elders to transfer knowledge to the next generations (Archibald, 2008; Castellano, 2004; Creswell, 2003; Cruikshank, 2005; Haig-Brown, 1996; Slim, 1995; Weber-Pillwax, 2001a; Wilson, 2008). This research falls within the conversation method because it stems and flows from Indigenous paradigms. Kovach (2010b) states that:

Indigenous methodologies are a paradigmic approach based upon an Indigenous philosophical position or epistemology. Thus it is not the method per se that is the determining characteristic of Indigenous methodologies, but rather the interplay (the relationship) between the method and paradigm and the extent to which the method itself is congruent with an Indigenous worldview. (p. 40)

The oral histories, narratives, and oral traditions bring rich local knowledge to discussions on the how the Elders’ teachings at the Medicine Camp are relevant for their context (Castellano, 2000).

As part of the conversation method, I employed semi-structured interview questions to prompt conversation and I participated in the knowledge creation process during research circles (discussed later). Kovach (2010b) explains,
The conversation method is a dialogic approach to gathering knowledge and builds on Indigenous relational traditions. It utilizes open-ended semi structured interview questions to prompt conversations where the participant co-creates knowledge. (p. 44)

Dialogue effectively collects information while conveying a collectivist orientation consistent with Indigenous Knowledge traditions. The research conversations are dialogical, reflective, and relational. Bishop (1999) introduces the “collaborative story” (p. 6) that positions the researcher as participant, a role I filled in this study.

3.2.3 Storywork. Closely related to the conversation method is storywork, used to analyze the conversations and described by Archibald (2008) as bringing together First Nations ways of knowing and research methodology. Storywork in this research focuses on the Elders’ stories as one pedagogical tool that teaches people how to remain connected to the land. Her storywork framework is based on the principles of respect, responsibility, reverence, reciprocity, wholism, inter-relatedness, and synergy. Relationships are modeled through creation stories, transformer stories, and life stories. The common goal of attaining harmony and balance among elements of nature, the spirit world, animals, and peoples is embedded in cultural practices and coded within stories and the oral traditions. Particularly relevant for this research methodology is Archibald’s application of Indigenous wholistic theory, using stories and storytelling for education pedagogy (Young, 2006). A research method and methodology that respects oral accounts and stories is therefore the most appropriate for this particular context. Collective storywork builds on the co creation of knowledge between the participants and the researcher was a feature of this research approach.

3.3 Information Collection

Information was collected over a period of six months through eight research circles that allowed conversations to flow wherever they went. They were prompted by interview questions when necessary, and followed protocol principles for respectful dialogue. Participants in the research circles included Elders who had previously been
Medicine Camp students, and one participant who administered a similar university-based Medicine Camp that was created by two of the other research circle participants.

3.3.1 Participant selection. The participants were deliberately selected to facilitate a deep rather than broad examination of knowledge. I invited eighteen Elder educators of the Medicine Camp program to participate because they had been Medicine Camp graduates who became teacher helpers of the program. The Elders/participants were also chosen because they have experience working within Euro-Western health and post-secondary education institutions such as hospitals, clinics, colleges, universities, and correctional facilities. They also have experience in urban and rural cultural settings, and are recognized by the Aboriginal community as experienced tribal knowledge keepers and educators. Of the eighteen Elders, four were males and fifteen (two-thirds) females, and nine spoke tribal languages fluently (four Anishnabe and five Nehiyaw Cree). The participants’ ages ranged between 40-75 years, with an average age of 55. Additional criteria were to balance representation of Indigenous cultures, age groups, and gender, and Elders’ familiarity with my genealogy and their availability and willingness to participate in the study.

These recruitment criteria comply with the cultural protocols requiring guidance from recognized Elders familiar with the Medicine Camp community and other health education contexts, thus meeting the informed consent criteria for this study required by the research ethics boards of governing institutional bodies. The purpose of the research was initially explained to Elders during informal meetings. Once someone expressed interest in participating in the study, he or she received a printed letter of invitation to participate and an emailed informed consent form. Invited participants had two weeks to consider the request, after which I contacted them to set dates at their convenience. Each person could choose to interview individually or participate in a research circle—all chose the research circle format.

3.3.2 Participant descriptions. The research participants were educators and cultural leaders who discussed the teaching methods used at the Medicine Camp. The research circle participants answered the guiding research question *how do Indigenous
Elders teach at the Medicine Camp? I here introduce the eighteen Elder/educators and summarize their initial responses to the research question.

**Mukwa Bezhik**, Niiyobesij Asiniikwe is Odawa Anishnabe Niiyo Midekwe, a Professor Emeritus and founder of an Indigenous Performance Studies Program and several Aboriginal women’s symposiums. An active researcher of Traditional Medicines and a ceremonialist, she introduces ways to come home to the land and to wear the teachings of the sacred bundle.

**Mikinac Bezhik**, Nizu Midekw is Cree/Nakota and the cofounder of Earth Medicine Camp in Manitoba. She is a nurse and health educator. Her teaching pedagogy follows Indigenous oral traditions, using Anishnabe Cree language and ceremonial protocols. She encourages people to reclaim their relationships to land, to learn from each other’s stories, and to generate land-based health education programs in their territories.

**Mukwa Nizh**, Nodinnahshehmehegbowet, Nswi Anishnabe Midekwe is a community health educator and an avid water walk advocate whose graduate research explores the revitalization of Anishnabe-Mino-Bmaadiziiya. She has been a Medicine Camp and Midewiwin oshkabaywis helper for over a decade.

**Myengan Peyak**, Nisto Midewiwin is from a Nehiyaw Cree Nation in Manitoba and has worked with justice and education institutions for over three decades. He discussed the role of ethics and wholistic health and wellbeing.

**Mukwa Nisto**, Niswi Midekwe, is from Anishnabe and Nehiyaw Cree First Nations. She has been an educator for three decades, working as a consultant for First Nations language development, a research coordinator for the province of Manitoba, and as an Elder-in-residence at universities.

**Ginew** is Métis and identifies as two-spirited. As a health educator and facilitator for over two decades, she is an advocate of Traditional Health Programs for professional health initiatives and for personal health and wellness. She is committed to making Indigenous knowledge accessible by applying the story teachings to everyday life.
Amisk Peyak, Mukami Benezhikwe-nisto Midekwe is from the Treaty 5 territory of northern Manitoba. She has worked with Women’s Councils, the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Canada, as an Advisor, and in the fields of health, governance, justice, and child welfare. She is a policy educator, program developer, and evaluator with teaching and administrative experience in several universities.

Amisk Niso, Wabikwani Nibawi Nisto Midekwe Nehinaw Cree, is also from the Treaty 5 territory. She is an education graduate who has worked in language revitalization for 30 years and recognizes that understanding Wahkotowin is crucial to a sustainable, self-determined relationship to our lands, our medicines, and our leadership.

Amisk Neyo, Nehinaw, Bezhik Midekwe is a graduate educator and ceremonialist. She has worked in post-secondary institutions for two decades and is interested in how the landscape, trade networks, and kinship roles and responsibilities form ways of educating.

Minkinac Nizh, is Midekwe Nizh from Manitoba and a PhD student who has worked in post-secondary education for over 30 years and as an oshkabaywis helper at the Medicine Camp program for over 10 years. She testifies that Indigenous education teaching methods used at Medicine Camp provide exemplary ethical and land-based learning.

Myengan Nizh, Nisto Midewiwin Nehiyaw is Cree from the Treaty 5 in Manitoba. He has worked with his tribal nation for over 50 years and has been an oshkabaywis helper at the Medicine Camp. He is committed to living the teachings of Bimadiziwin; he networks to protect tribal ways of life and advocates for sustainable medicine harvesting as culturally relevant land-based learning.

Myengan Nswi-Wabskanaquetaquay, Nashobequay is Midekwe from the Anishnabe-Métis community in Manitoba. For over 35 years she has worked as a ceremonialist, cultural advisor, teacher, healer, activist, and musician. A community leader and Elder,
she advocates for self-determined, culturally relevant health, justice, and social welfare training programs.

**Pisew** Wasay-abano-quay, an adopted Pisew clan member, is of the Okokatare Pueye (Jaguar clan), and of Caribbean Black descent. She works with Aboriginal health systems locally and internationally to build policies that protect, unite, and extend access to culturally appropriate Indigenous health practices. She advocates for decolonizing relationships and the resurgence of tribal, land-based learning.

**Myengan** Neyo, Midekwe Nizh-neegaunibinessikwe is a health educator who has worked for over 30 years as an advocate for Aboriginal peoples. She helps people navigate the criminal justice system and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and believes that the relationship with the earth medicines is part of the Good Way Life.

**Amisk** Nisto, Ozawa se Kay ekes I quay, Nswi Midekwe, is a Cree health educator who works with Aboriginal families. She provides access to appropriate health education as a human right, as outlined in the *Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. She advocates connecting with the Eshkakimikwe Earth’s medicines as self-determined health leadership.

**Mukwa** Nanan is Salish from British Columbia. She is a teacher educator and a leader in Aboriginal Education. She works in developing community- and tribal-based education programs. She believes that co-partnering with Indigenous communities to create relevant, local, land-based education is a transformative form of education.

**Wabishishi** is Salish from British Columbia. He works in mental health and within the criminal justice systems. He is a tribal cultural educator in the post-secondary system. He trains counselors in Aboriginal wholistic therapies, complex trauma healing, and culturally competent learning on the land.

**Myengan** nanan is from the Ts’lagi Nation and was born for the Wolf Clan. He has a PhD in Education and works in mental health and addiction centers. He is an author of culturally relevant tribal curriculum. He connects Aboriginal families with local land-based learning and avidly supports the *Idle No More* social justice movements.
3.3.3 Procedure. Research circles were conducted using the interview questions to generate open-ended conversations. Each participant sat in the circle and spoke in turn. A second round of discussions followed to allow each person to share additional thoughts and participate in building on each other's knowledge. I then reflected on the stories shared in the eight research circles and analyzed them for pedagogical clues. This format allowed participants to share their narratives, stories, and expertise on how Elders provide a tribal-centered educational pedagogy. The research circle and interview questions encouraged people to reflect on how the stories articulated meaning and contributed to their own understandings of how Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and axiologies operate within their own contexts (Weber-Pillwax, 2001b; Wilson, 2008). The circles followed local protocols such as offering tobacco at the beginning of each circle, providing food during the discussions, and giving small gifts at the end of each circle to demonstrate a respect for the insights offered. Research circles, as methodology, facilitate dialogue, allow for a diverse range of opinions, and build collectively on knowledge of the group participants.

Eighteen Elder knowledge keepers participated in eight research circles, seven held in Manitoba and one in British Columbia. Each circle had three to five participants and took one to two hours. Five research circles had three participants, two circles had four participants, and four individuals participated in three of the research circles. I participated in all circles to provide continuity of the knowledge exchange.

Research circles, as a methodology, are used to facilitate dialogue, to allow for a diverse range of opinions, and to build collectively on knowledge of the circle participants. Using research circle conversations with Indigenous participants who have taken the Medicine Camp program is consistent with an Indigenous method and methodology because the participants are able to describe their experiences and share their knowledge to facilitate learning (Barnsley & Ellis, 1992; Hare, 2001; Huntley, 1998; Marsden, 2005). The research circle fits the requirements of the Indigenous conversation method and a critical Indigenous methodology, which specifies that the
research must be grounded in cultural meanings, customs, and community settings that are already operational in specific communities (Denzin et al., 2008; Kovach, 2010b).

The research circles were conducted like a sharing circle format that was congruent with Anishnabe and Cree epistemologies and methodologies. (The research-sharing circle also resembled the sharing circles used at Medicine Camp to transfer knowledge.) The sharing research circle implies the inclusion of all aspects of being—the mind, heart, and body-spirit. This differs from a focus group where the participants only respond to the leader’s questions from, presumably, the intellect (mind) only. Circles are acts of sharing that give permission to the facilitator to report on the discussions. A sharing circle follows traditional protocols of a particular tribal group (Kovach, 2010b, p. 45; Lavallee, 2009; Parent, 2009). Despite the semi-structured interview question guide, the researcher and the participants were free to enter any dialogue on their own terms and participate in the co-creation of knowledge.

The research circle questions identified the experiences and stories of the participants who have attended the Medicine Camp. Specifically, to reflect the intent of the research, I asked about how the Elders teach. The questions that follow are guiding questions that helped to facilitate dialogue about Indigenous education pedagogy:

Why did you take the Medicine Camp program? What did you learn?

What roles do the Elders play in the camp? Describe how the Medicine Camp Elders teach.

What stands out for you about the teaching methods employed at the Medicine Camp?

How did the Medicine Camp Elders demonstrate their teaching and leadership?

In your opinion, what constitutes Indigenous knowledge (IK) or tribal methods of teaching?

Identify what knowledge principles and values were used at the Medicine Camp.

What are the most memorable experiences or stories for you?
What aspects worked for you and what didn’t?

What does reciprocity mean to you and was it demonstrated to you at Medicine Camp? If so, please describe how.

How do you understand ethics?

What does wearing and/or carrying your sacred bundle mean to you?

Are the Elders’ methods of teaching transportable (urban, rural etc.)? If so, please describe how.

What is important for others to know if they want to start similar education programs?

How can educational institutions, governments, and First Nations organizations support similar programs?

3.4 Data Analysis

Analysis of the data gathered from the research circle discussions began with an understanding of the Nindoodemag-Anishnabe clan kinship system. This system provided a way to organize data within a relational system and to identify participants while retaining their anonymity. I then set about identifying patterns in the discussions, looking for concepts and themes that described the Elders’ pedagogy. Together we identified a metaphor that expressed the principles inherent in the way Medicine Camp Elders taught.

3.4.1 Nindoodemag-Anishnabe clan kinship system. The Anishnabe root meaning for the term “Nindoodemag” comes from the term “ninoodadaewin” or harmony and indicates how we are part of a human collective kinship structure, how we are to get along with each other, and how we can achieve Good Life Paths. This relational structure helped me to organize the participants’ conversations and assign culturally appropriate identifiers so I could begin to analyze the findings. Sinclair (2013) states,
Anishinaabeg narrative bagijiganan [gifts] are embedded in principles found in the Anishinaabeg Nindoodemag, the totemic [clan] system. Articulating the specific and interconnected ways circles of Anishinaabeg relationality operate, Anishinaabeg Nindoodemag is formed through two concepts, *enawendiwin* (strands connecting all parts of creation) and *waawiwyeyaag* (interwoven systems of circularity). These come together to construct *Nindinaweymaganidog* (all of my relations), a law found in traditional expressions like treaties, birch bark, and beadwork and contemporary forms like poetry, paintings, and novels (p. iii).

Figure 1 is a tribal representation of the Elders’ participation in the research.

*Figure 1. Nindoodemag Research Circle Participant Descriptors.*
Source: Alannah Young, 2013; adapted from Saaed (2003).
Illustration: Clarissa Poernomo, 2014.
While not central to the analysis, the clan system represented in Figure 1 provides a culturally relevant example that helped me prepare for the analysis phase of the research. Figure 1 illustrates my Nehiyaw Anishnabe Midekwe interpretation of an Indigenous pattern of education based on an Anishnabe creation story. I suggest the sky- or star-world depicted in the creation story, while the star points represent the clan members who participated in this particular research. The sources of knowledge are illustrated in red between each clan and the operational values in dark blue encapsulate the outer circle. The cedar braid in the inner circle depicts wholistic pedagogical orientations and includes the interdependent relationship realms of the human being. This graphic references a contemporary understanding of sky woman’s journey as she was digging at the roots of the Tree of Life. She fell to this world as we know it today. She brought with her seeds—foods and medicines—for the people’s nourishment as they contain teachings to help us live a good life. As she fell from the sky she was helped by the animals to land safely on the turtle’s back, while many others helped to bring earth from the bottom of the ocean. All together they danced the earth into existence (Kimmerer, 2013; Simpson & Manitowabi, 2013). The lessons of duality can be learned from twins (depicted by the two loons), the ethical consciousness of the Thunderbeings, the transformers, and the beings such as the sasquatch who continue to illuminate other pathways to both individual and collective gifts rooted in Ancestral knowledge. These lessons are shared orally when the audience is ready for the knowledge. When the people became sick and forgot about our relational kinship responsibilities to creation, one of the young humans went to the Mother, the Earth, to seek guidance through prayer and fasting. The young human (no gender pronouns exist in most Indigenous languages) went through the dark side of the moon, or the place where grandmother Nokomis lives (this aspect could be interpreted as the spiritual, unconscious, or the personal gift place), and visited with the grandparents. The

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7 Grandmother Nokomis, sky woman, the moon, and the life enhancing relationship to Mother Earth and Water are the foundation of my understanding of radical Indigenous women’s leadership. The songs, the ceremonies, and stories are embodied and performed in myriad different expression and to some extent are reflected in the constellation I have depicted here. I acknowledge that the English terms constrain and limit the metaphysical and interrelated responsibilities and possibilities inherent in the Indigenous concepts.
grandparents are personified as the value teachings (depicted here as the dark blue sections of the star end points), while the gifts of the senses—taste, smell, sight, touch, hearing, and intuition—are illustrated by the blue stars. The cedar helped the human being remember the teachings, thus becoming the first medicine used to break the fast. These non-linear stories form part of the research analysis and help me to understand my responsibility to analyze and apply the teachings of the Good Way Life as depicted here.

Most of the participants in the study introduced their relational genealogy through an account of their clan systems. Some of the participants did not have clans in their tribal systems or were disconnected from that knowledge, so I incorporated the clans assigned to them during the Medicine Camp program. I listened to how the participants introduced themselves for pedagogical clues that could constitute a culturally relevant representation and analysis of the data while maintaining their confidentiality. I then suggested to the Elders and community advisories how the clan and kinship system might serve as an analytic tool and protect their English anonymity. To give the participants an overview of the emergent themes at the initial analysis stage, I organized the themes according to the participant’s identified clan and kept their English identity anonymous and confidential. Absolon (2011) describes how researchers must balance a variety of knowledge traditions and their respective research requirements. She states,

Sometimes confidentiality goes against the culturally appropriate ways of acknowledging the genealogy of knowledge. In oral traditions people spend time acknowledging who and where they received their teachings. Acknowledging peoples, animals or other realms as sources maintains the wholistic and respectful nature of knowledge production. (p. 162)

One of the ways the Medicine Camp Elders’ pedagogy helps to reconcile our educative practices despite generations of residential schooling is by modeling how one lives the clan roles and responsibilities. Reconciling the Medicine Camp Elders’ protocol, with its oral traditions that identify the speaker, and anonymity required by Euro-Western knowledge system research processes has in part been achieved by referencing a
contemporary expression of the Anishnabe Nindoodemac Clan system for this teaching context.

The Nindoodemag Anishnabe clan system helped me to identify participants’ in a way that met the university’s informed consent and confidentiality requirements. Assigning numbers to participants was inappropriate since all but three had attended residential schools where they were assigned numbers to erase their names and identities. Because tribal ethics require participants to introduce themselves and their clan affiliation, thus stating a genealogical relationship and creating an oral citation, the clan system provided a way to identify participants in culturally appropriate ways. This strategy incorporated both informed consent requirements and helped me to navigate and create an ethical space of engagement (Ermine, 2007). Ethical space means to negotiate both the informed consent requirements of the academic and of the tribal ethical requirements.

I have described the Nindoodemag Anishnabe Clan kinship system as identifying the participants in a culturally relevant demonstration of an Anishnabe pedagogical element reflecting the contexts of this study. Reciting this kinship relational genealogy also follows a protocol principle that helps us to remember how we are related to people and places, indicating particular responsibilities. I have described one interpretation of the Anishnabe clan system as a culturally appropriate descriptor that in practice is dynamic, varies from region to region, and adapts to the particular contexts (Sinclair 2013). The clans provided an initial pre-analysis activity that helped negotiate a culturally appropriate description of each of the Elder participants, embedded within a wholistic, land- and place-based context.

3.4.2 Analysis of oral responses. The data analysis consisted of identifying descriptions, emergent cultural concepts, and assertions based on the content of the research circles. To provide richer descriptions of how Indigenous Elder knowledge keepers teach at Medicine Camp, the participants had many opportunities for discussion and feedback during the analysis phases of the project.
I transcribed the information shared at the research circles into 180 typed pages and returned them to the Elders for verification. Once verified, I re-read each transcript and replayed the audio recorded sessions several times until I was familiar with the conversations. Then I analyzed the transcripts for emergent themes and pedagogical concepts and their implications, as I perceived them. I then presented my views directly to the Elders and the community advisory group in a slide show and through newsletters. After receiving feedback from the participants, I then used the MaxQ data analysis program to codify and crosscheck the findings and look for meanings across the research circles. During this phase, 380 codes were developed. Of them, 36 codes were examined and crosschecked with the Indigenous education literature and combined with my reflections and interpretations of the pedagogical experiences.

Using the transcripts, I then identified and developed five pedagogical principles that seemed to capture the participants’ account of the Indigenous land-based education programs. During this stage I developed another slide show and presented the initial emergent themes to the participants. We discussed the emergent themes to ensure accuracy in my interpretation of the data. We discussed what kind of a metaphor or medicinal plant could represent the participants’ cultural understandings and relationships with the plant, or the land relationships with which the study is concerned. We considered the plants that are common to the participants’ local and regional lands. We also dialogued on the possibility of using visual diagrams, metaphors, and symbols to aid in the interpretation of the data. One plant in particular seemed to summarize the themes best, suggesting an appropriate symbol or metaphor to organize the themes arising from the data. The cedar tree is common to all the participants, and holds cross-cultural meaning. The cedar tree is often an aid to transformation. Cedar then became the metaphor I drew on for the pedagogical framework.

I then considered the themes I developed earlier (Young, 2006). The themes the Elders discussed for supporting leadership development in post-secondary contexts were: language and genealogy; Indigenous Knowledge supports individuals, families,
and communities; reclaim cultural values: live the teachings; know the history of the Land and educate others; and demonstrate community responsibilities. These and the Indigenous education literature were assessed for relevance and then modified and further developed.

Kovach (2010a) argues that “thematic groupings often conflict with making meaning holistically” (p. 129), but if themes are understood as part of a whole and in relation to other themes generated, and include the larger social, political, and cultural contexts and personal experiences in which the study exists, thematic groupings can add to a wholistic analysis. Absolon (2011) identified common tendencies that Indigenous researchers use to gather knowledge. She utilized the flower as a symbol that visually illustrates a wholistic framework for an Indigenous search for knowledge. The roots of the flower represent Indigenous paradigms, worldviews, and principles; the Indigenous methodologies are represented by the stem and grounded by the roots; the leaves represent the journey or processes of transformation; the center of the flower represents the researcher or self; and the petals represent diverse ways of searching for knowledge (p. 51). I have similarly illustrated the pedagogies used in the Medicine camp programs using the cedar as a symbol representing the teaching and methods described by the participants. The cedar tree also provides an illustrated example of wholistic frameworks for research and provides a visual diagram that shows possible pedagogical pathways to enhance connections to Indigenous land-based knowledge. The roots of the cedar in this case represent the worldviews, contexts, values, and sources of knowledge. The stem represents the individual and collective interdependent relationships and potential for transformation. The five pedagogical pathways represent a few of the diverse possibilities for connecting with local lands and people. They are described in more detail in the next chapters.

Gee-zhee-kan’-dug is the Anishnabe term for cedar and the Cree term for cedar is kisikatik. The participants’ tribal affiliations are primarily Nehiyaw Cree and Anishnabe, the Anishnabe term for cedar is primarily referenced because the camps are held in Anishnabe territory. The specific uses of cedar vary from region to region, although
most Indigenous people recognize cedar’s ability to facilitate transformation. The Medicine Camp participants deepen their relationship with Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar through specific stories and cultural activities, such as ceremony.

Ceremonies are designed to facilitate connection with the natural world. In this context, because we were learning how to connect with plants as medicine, the pedagogy used can be expressed through the symbol of the tree of life to represent lifelong learning. Cedar branches from the tree of life—the Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar—are used for cleansing and purifying to help us get ready for knowledge. For me, Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedars’ power to facilitate transformation also represents the capacity to move from one system of knowledge to another. Because Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar has multiple meanings, like the tree of life, it is an appropriate symbol to help illustrate the pedagogical pathways used by the Medicine Camp Elders.

Many Indigenous people across Canada, not only the Anishnabe Cree, have unique cultural relationships with the cedar tree. In British Columbia, for example, the cedar tree provided food, medicine, clothing, shelter, transportation, and more. Artistic representations are expressed through house post design, masks, and capes. All relationships with cedar are formed through interaction with specific places, conveyed through stories and life experiences that are woven together here to illustrate possible pedagogical pathways.

I included socio-political relevance in my analysis because the participants addressed their shared history of racism and the ongoing oppression they felt during their schooling and other life experiences. I was also conscious that the goals of research must help inform and address community issues and concerns in ways that reflect a culturally relevant approach to the collection, analysis, and discussion of knowledge (Crazy Bull, 2004; Sandelowski, 2000). Therefore, because the participants address historical and ongoing socio-political and educational oppression, I used these themes as important features that influence the pedagogical context (see Figure 3 in Chapter 4).
The Elders stories were then selected to demonstrate the pedagogical process steps or pathways we identified. Quotations from these stories were minimally edited, and placed within the appropriate pedagogical pathways in the analysis phase to show answers to questions. The tribal knowledge provided both cultural protocol principles and metaphors to help analyze the data and reinforced my understandings about pedagogy. The interrelated pedagogical pathways included culture, land, orality, community, and ethics. I reviewed the literature on Indigenous knowledge to check for applicability to a general place-based pedagogy strategy. I then incorporated the literature on educative practices with the research participant data and included my personal reflections gathered from conferences, workshops, informal interviews, and conversations.

Throughout the process I continued to check with the Elders and the community advisory group to confirm that the values and principles identified were accurate, and to ensure that the analysis process continued to be meaningful for the participants (Smith, 2005).

Kovach (2010) discusses the differences between thematic coding analysis and Indigenous inquiry as interpretive meaning-making processes. The former decontextualizes knowledge by arriving at “meaning units” (Eyer et al. in Kovach, 2010a, p. 130) and the latter “involves a subjective accounting of social phenomena as a way of giving insight or clarifying an event” (p. 130). I combined the two English terms, thereby allowing participants to give their own meanings but still allowing me to use coding in order to understand the relationships between these meanings and to analyze my own pedagogical experiences as a learner at the Medicine Camp.

3.5 Summary

I used a methodology consistent with Indigenous Knowledge and Anishnabe tribal ways of gathering knowledge. Although informed by critical ethnography, I primarily used the conversation method and storywork to guide the practical steps of enlisting
participants, gathering knowledge, and developing my analysis. The result was the metaphor of the Cedar, or Gee-zhee-kan'-dug in Anishnabe, to encapsulate the pedagogical principles utilized by the Elders.
CHAPTER 4

Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar Pedagogy

How do Elders teach at Medicine Camp? The interview prompts were used to generate conversations about this central question, but not all the participants chose to answer them directly. The ways that Elders talk with others is intuitive and creative, and they often seem to answer questions indirectly. This is a typical pedagogical strategy of Indigenous Elders and how they convey knowledge. They often will share a story in response to the question and will give an oral account of where they learned certain knowledge, and will embody or show you how they learned it either directly or through a story. It is my job as the learner to listen, remember, and, when required, model that learning to others. The interview questions facilitated dialogue and provided an opportunity for the research circle participants to make contributions to the conversations about the specific Medicine Camp teaching methods and based on their dialogue I the developed Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar pedagogy which outline five possible pedagogical pathways.

In this chapter I describe in more detail Gee-zhee-kan’-dug, the Cedar pedagogy developed from the emergent themes of the research circles (see Figure 1). To begin, I describe a typical program format at the Medicine Camp. I then describe the five pedagogical pathways the Elders used at the Medicine Camp programs that answer the question *how do the Elders teach at Medicine Camp?* The five pedagogical pathways are culture, land, orality, community, and ethics. The pedagogical pathways are not distinct or linear as shown in the Cedar figure diagrams but are woven together throughout the research conversations to complement a wholistic worldview. Finally, I provide a summary overview of the learning environment at Medicine Camp as described by the research circle participants.
4.1 Medicine Camp Pedagogy Description

When we first arrived at Medicine Camp, we greeted the day with a sunrise ceremony outside in a ceremonial lodge setting. The helpers worked with the central fire, prepared the water, and set chairs in a circle around the lodge. The Elders told us to put our pens and papers away, and that there would be no tests in this learning process. The Elders said that the learning would require us to use all our senses (smell, taste, sight, hearing, and touch) and that we would address all aspects of our spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional selves, a little at a time. The Elders announced that individuals could engage in the learning at their own pace. The Elders introduced teachings, protocols, songs, and prayers, while telling us how they came to their current role in sharing this knowledge. They identified their own teachers. They presented their genealogy through a variety of story forms such as creation stories, teaching stories, and personal stories of their life experiences.

During the first day the program is all about getting ready for knowledge transmission and for making a good relationship with the Ancestors knowledge of the land and plant medicines. The Elders began by modeling protocol principles for the students to learn, and continued modeling them throughout the program. Preparations began with the opening ceremony at sunrise, followed by a feasting ceremony for the knowledge we were to receive, and various cleansing ceremonies. We were encouraged to follow their lead and, in a talking circle format, to tell the story of how and why we had come to Medicine Camp. People talked about their motives and described how they made connections by sharing dreams, and their personal stories of transformation. Many sought to build alternative wholistic health education networks and desired to maintain direct connection with the land and with Indigenous communities. Then we introduced ourselves to each other, stated where we are from, identified our interests explicitly, and declared our intentions to connect respectfully with the plants we were studying. Then we got to know one another better, and introduced each other to the larger group.
The Elders introduced dried plant medicines into these initial opening procedures. We listened, looked at the medicine, and learned their use through modeling and engaging in ceremonial processes. Still in a talking circle format, we individually acknowledged how we are related through our genealogies and relationships to place and peoples. Individually and collectively, we cleansed through a variety of ceremonies, such as a smudge ceremony, feast ceremony, and sweatlodge ceremony, all which gave us an intentional relationship with the plants and committed us to our learning. We were taught that in order to receive knowledge we must show our intentions and offer the gift we were asked to bring before we arrived. In this case we used tobacco and introduced ourselves to the plants and the lands, and we made one connection to a specific plant of our choice. These initial ceremonies prepared us for acquiring knowledge before we searched for the twelve plants we were going to work with during the year. For the next two days we looked for the twelve plants and built a relationship with them by visiting their natural homes. The Medicine Camp oshkabaywis helpers showed us how to gather; we watched, tried it ourselves, and then shared our learning.

We were taught that the plants know where their best growing conditions are, and we were encouraged to map the land so we can see where different plants like to grow. As we mentally mapped, we noted any correlation between the properties of the plants and their environment. We were encouraged to share the stories that emerged when we took the learning outside and so we all learned something new about the plants, the lands, and each other.

The night before the graduation a skit or talent night was held where small groups creatively demonstrated their learning for the larger group and other families and community members who were invited to attend. Many students pretended to be or embodied the features of the plants they were learning about. The graduation ceremony is held on the fourth day, the same day as the last talking circle where people reflect on their experiences through story and share what they have experienced. The medicines
they were introduced to during the program are framed as part of their medicine bundles of knowledge. The participants are supported wholistically, through the provision of healthy food and access to clean water. A collective team-teaching approach was utilized. I have focused on five of the many pedagogical themes the Elders discussed and describe them as pedagogical pathways.

Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar is a culturally relevant symbol that represents transformation and provided a visual prompt for organizing the pedagogical pathways (see Figure 2). I organized the five pedagogical pathways generated from the research circles into five process paths illustrated by the cedar branch. Each cedar strand represents one pathway. The five theme pedagogical paths demonstrate that many platelets or leaves can sprout from each path strand.

The roots of the regionally specific pedagogy could begin by identifying commonalities among Indigenous peoples’ values and by supporting the use of Indigenous land-based pedagogies through partnerships with Indigenous communities. Indigenous land-based pedagogies feature Indigenous stories and genealogies rooted in Indigenous lands, and interconnectivity and relational responsibilities for maintaining balanced metaphysical ecologies (Cajete 2008; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Kawagley &Barnhardt, 1999). The four “R-values” of respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991) can help start the process of articulating what decolonization means and contribute to local, self-determined, sustainable interactions with the land. For example, tribal Elders employed a protocol when they recited their genealogy to introduce themselves, their clans, and their geographic tribal locations. They introduced their teachers and used their Indigenous languages. Similarly, the research circle participants also introduce themselves in this manner.
Figure 2. Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar Pedagogical Pathways
Findings: How Indigenous Elders Teach at Medicine Camp
Source: Alannah Young, 2013.
Illustration: Clarissa Poernomo, 2014.
4.2 Participants

Each of the 19 Elders responded to the question of how Indigenous Elders teach at the Medicine Camp, describing how they came to understand reciprocal relationships and how they applied their learning research to wholistic health education. Through Indigenous orality that included performance, song, prayer, stories, dream sharing, and ceremony, the Elders modeled how they understand research and how to interact with the land as a family of interconnected relationships. The Elders also encouraged the students to learn to tell their own stories and celebrate their rich heritage of knowledge, and to balance the sacred with social, historical, and political ethics. The Elders described these ethics as unique expressions of sets of reciprocal relationship responsibilities, or the ways in which you carry or wear the sacred bundles of knowledge. Researching, writing, and voicing Earth-centered ways of knowing for wholistic wellbeing are key intentions for documenting this pedagogy as described by Mukwa Bezhik:

So when people say how do you do your research? Well for me it is from the swamp—the swamp of my core, the swamp of my being...I let the knowledge go through my body through my being so I could pass it on to not only my children but my grandchildren and great-grandchildren because for me in doing that I am extending my life and I am also learning how to take care of myself. How to be close to my mother, close to the land...just being close to the sacred, that is what fills me, what nourishes me and that is what guides me.

So I take my time, I try to be, become like the land. Like to feel, to really, really feel her...that gives me energy and nourishment to feel my hands in the Earth. It feeds me and it’s the core for me, the connection is very powerful and very sacred. I think of all of those grandmothers, those old people that have gone on...so even when I am working, when I am out there, they are with me. The memory of them the way they were when they were out there and I hope to remember some of that knowledge and being reconnecting to the land has always been kind of like a home base. So, not only going home but it is the base the Indigenous knowledge, it is our foundation—that’s our base, it is the core, that speaks to who we are as a

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8 The Medicine Camp is located in Treaty 1 territory and the region is represented by the buffalo. For me, the buffalo represents the civic leadership of the Medicine Camp collective of Elders and knowledge holders who are dedicated to maintaining and sustaining the wellbeing of the people and the beings in Creation.
Indigenous people and for years that’s how we survived is because of the knowledge of land. We are what we eat as the saying goes.

And back then we were healthy because the land and the Earth fed us, the animals fed us and that’s why we were so close. So we depend on the land for nutrition and it’s healthy and we were healthy and strong because it was the Earth that fed us and the moose in the swamp, with all of the medicines out there and they lived off of that. And today we are not healthy because we depend on IGA or Food Land or Sobees or canned food. I don’t consider myself a medicine woman but I am trying to learn as much as I can to pass it on to ensure that my children reconnect with the land too, and my grandchildren you know that they know where they come from and that they know who the Earth is and what she provides and that she is female and so respecting her. Again respect for the land.

And for me if our children know where they come from they will always have respectful relationships that are responsible and reciprocal and respect for the land as a female being. So all those teachings and all those stories that people share when they come, the ceremonies that are done and the passing-on of those stories. Like the feedback for instance, you pick up a lot from the stories that the people bring and they share their paths, their pasts, their loved ones, their grandmothers, that kind of knowledge and so again that feeds the soul, you know that feeds us and I hope that if we can put it down in writing so that our people maintain and continue to celebrate what we have as a people.

Balancing the wisdom and integrity of oral traditions with textual documentation so that others can learn and create healthy sustainable communities by connecting with lands, plants, and people can in part be achieved through documenting the pedagogies of the Elders.

I learned that reclaiming connections to land is a form of literacy and to some extent a cultural and heritage project that can be understood through pedagogies that connect people, places, and protocols to oral traditions. Celebrating the survival and revival of Indigenous land-based knowledge and the oral traditions includes balancing protocols and articulating appropriate principles to ensure mutually beneficial and ethical standards are met.

By using their Indigenous languages to introduce themselves orally, the Elders demonstrated a relational genealogy and the role of ceremony, song, prayer, dream sharing, and performance, among others. The Elders also demonstrated how to create learning partnerships with local Indigenous knowledge holders to understand how
local laws are expressed. The theory and method of generating learning environments is applied and grounded in specific local Indigenous places. I noticed that the specific pedagogy elements depend on the collaboration between the teacher, local community knowledge holders, and student genealogical knowledge. What follows is a description of the pedagogical pathways applied through the five themes the Elders generated through the eight collective storywork circles. The pathways are visually represented by the culturally appropriate land-based symbol, the Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar. Pisew clan member describes how cultural practices and protocols convey the value of respect, relationship, and reciprocity. These values were reinforced and modeled by the Elders’ teaching:

It is also really important is the responsibility to know how to commit to the four years and many of the people there are taking the knowledge back to their communities and it is also important to know where you are, what nation is hosting you and how to give back to the communities and how to communicate about Indigenous knowledge. Like raising awareness of the network of people who work with the medicines and rebuilding those teaching methods in communities and to me that is a sense of responsibility to transfer the traditional knowledge. This responsibility includes knowing about where that knowledge came from, how the knowledge is being passed down and where it comes from (the spirit) and how they acknowledge the teachers that they have.

And so that there is a passing down of tradition and knowledge and the corresponding responsibility to engage in the teachings to live the teachings and we are given the opportunity to engage with the knowledge and there is an expectation that you bring out who you are. You introduce yourself, and you bring your mind, your heart, and your spirit and you are expected to bring your whole being there, they take the time to help. You get there by starting with the prayers and by starting with ceremony, the sweatlodge, the daily cleansing ceremonies, all of that helps you to get present, to get ready for knowledge and so that takes a while it takes over a day and you continue to learn by the way they are preparing you to receive the knowledge.

I learned that Earth, land-based learning is a vast education field that takes many years to master, and so we began by introducing small incremental steps such as providing wholistic ways to connect with land through developing relationships with
plants. By introducing our tribal genealogies through ceremony, we learn about worldviews, ecologies, laws, and cultural protocols specific to a region, and how to participate in characteristic Indigenous knowledge traditions.

4.3 Pedagogical Pathways

Research circle participants identified five pedagogical pathways inherent in the Elders’ pedagogy: culture, land, orality, community, and ethics.

4.3.1 Culture. The English term “culture” has many contested interpretations and is used for different purposes across disciplines. Here I use the term to describe systems of ecologies, ways of interacting with the universe based on specific Indigenous wisdom traditions such as Bimadiziwin—the ways to a good life—a benchmark for tribal education. Culture that encompasses purposeful and practical pedagogy that seeks to invigorate connections to lands is not without struggles (survival) and contributes to decolonizing knowledge production.

The research circle participants described how they understand the tribal cultural laws of the Anishnabe Bimadiziwin and the Nehiyaw Cree Pimadiziwin—The Good Way Life—and how the laws of reciprocal relationships were applied in this pedagogy. Making space for Indigenous ways of teaching and learning methods was a central feature of this pedagogy. Getting ready for knowledge is the first step in the Elders’ approach to teaching at Medicine Camp. They begin within a tribal cultural context by working with local cultural teachers, the Elders who provide local cultural initiatives, and by networking with education and health practices of the local community. In cultural sharing circles, the Elders help to create opportunities for relevant cultural assessments. Though there were no formal tests, throughout the program the students were given time to reiterate their learning by sharing stories, teachings, and performances, and by demonstrating how they use and understand the protocol principles.
Cultural awareness appears in the protocol principles of respectful relationships and reciprocity, which are interwoven to form the cedar stem, feeding the pedagogical pathway leaf strands that interweave throughout the stories described below. The Elders and students demonstrated reciprocity by offering sema, tobacco. This offering demonstrates the teaching that we must give something to show respect when we are asking for Eshkakimikwe Kandosowin knowledge. The Wahkotowin worldview is respected through offering tobacco, acknowledging that we know we are interdependent on the rest of Creation. We show respect by positioning our self as a relative to the rest of Creation, as a learner who is asking for assistance from the plant medicines to restore health and wellbeing to the community of human beings. This Eshkakimikwe Kandosowin Earth-centered learning is taught within and through local ceremonial cultural processes, or by following protocol principles as a pedagogical guide.

We prepared for knowledge by using all our senses and integrating all of the aspects of our being. Trading knowledge across cultures and creating education that supports local self-determined agendas could help students to understand how the local environment, health, and wellbeing are interconnected. Mukwa Nanan clan member states:

I think that our teaching and learning methods will bring back the respect starting from the kids. I think they will respect the environment and so that will grow as they grow because they will be the ones, the future educators are the ones that are going to be taking care of the land. So that is one of the things that is really important to be aware of the encroachment of our medicines in the mountains and other areas because we have been up against that for a long time and it’s scary. And some of Elders are leaving us and so we need to revive and maintain this knowledge for the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Indigenous Elders, through their ways of teaching and relating to the land, will help people know how to be more self-sufficient and how to demonstrate the value of respect. I learned that one way to teach about respect is to revive and maintain the local cultural knowledge about the tribal relationships to landscapes. This requires educators
to support and negotiate with local cultures to ensure that they incorporate cultural and ethical protocols into their teaching practices.

Supporting local culture could begin by attending social events to get a sense of what sort of educational practices could work in a particular environment. Co-partnering with cultural educators to develop wholistic content and cultural assessments is then possible. The Elders demonstrated how to maintain interdependent relationships through such ceremonial processes as acts of reciprocity and story sharing to help students understand the protocol principle of offering something when asking for knowledge or requesting health and wellbeing for the family. Similarly, Mikinac Bezhik Clan member shares the importance of beginning with ceremony by addressing the sacred:

And we did all those ceremonies to ask, to acknowledge Creator, to acknowledge the plant world, to feed the Ancestors, we did our feasts; we talked to the spirit of those plants. I went out to look for them and I had my tobacco in my hand talking to the plants, talking to Creator, “show me this plant that we need to share with our family here.”

I learned that the pedagogy the Elders use tries to instill the values of respectful relationships, which is often described in English as sacred, heart, or spirit knowledge and which is integral for understanding and cultivating healthy and whole human beings.

Mukwa Nanan clan member shares her reflections on applying the Medicine Camp pedagogy; particularly how trading inter-tribal teachings for enhancing community health education could inform the development of relevant community-based cultural assessments:

We talk about how we can trade and that teaching and learning methods are important to build up our network of knowledges and resources...to balance that with the appropriate sharing of the knowledge in ways that demonstrate a collective approach to our health education and identifies our own assessments of education success.
Self-assessments could be encouraged based on the students’ initiatives, strengths, and values. The sharing of the Elders’ and students’ lived histories and experiences of decolonization and knowledge production are essential on-the-ground contributions that need to be prioritized. I learned that the stories, language concepts, song, prayer, and performance should contribute to the wholistic and collective wellbeing of the tribe/group and focus on reconnecting to land as an essential form of literacy for sovereignty and survival. These are not graded assessments per se, but are often experiential, creative, and collective in their orientation and expression. Collaboration in the co-creation of cultural assessments could evolve within the group once they are discussed in partnership with local Indigenous advisories.

Co-creating cultural assessments is an important task. Relevant cultural pedagogical pathways require research by the educators who must network with local people to develop and nurture their ongoing relationships. Supporting local cultural initiatives and seeking partnerships with appropriate knowledge holders can achieve this. Observing local customs during community events can help educators prepare properly to engage the protocol principles of each locale. Contacting the local Aboriginal liaison education coordinators is a great way to begin the research process. The researchers and co-partners can then work to identify relevant cultural assessments to articulate benchmarks for educational success. For example, the researcher should know some of the histories and languages of nearby Indigenous nations, and how they are related to land and Creation. A researcher should also understand local protocols for addressing relatives respectfully, telling particular stories and songs, and performing ceremonies. For educators cultural assessments could include participation in ceremonies and identifying cultural sequences such as feeding children, the elderly, and the guests first.

Developing a respectful relationship with plants and the local environments takes time, creativity, and commitment to reflect and act on how we can teach differently about long-term health and wellbeing. I learned that pedagogical strategies that help us
to critically examine, reassess, and reestablish our relationships could be enhanced through employing elements of Indigenous pedagogical processes. The ongoing reflection and application of this pedagogy requires the teacher to model their understandings of the local knowledge for the students. Mukwa Nizh reflects on the values of reciprocity and the importance of respecting relationships with communities of people, land, animals, and Creation:

Like our auntie spoke about reconnecting to the land, and so walking around the great Lake Superior was the experience of my reconnecting the spirit of the land and to the spirit of all Creation...I wanted to learn so much and I can run as much as I want but I can only learn when I am ready.... Helping myself, my children and my family, you know, through learning about the medicine and learning the relationship, acknowledging their existence acknowledging their spirit and offering that asemma [tobacco]...we are taught various ceremonies, we are shown how to offer songs and we sing for the plants we harvest and use our languages to communicate with the animals on the lands, because we had that respect and we understood that we had a relationship and how the water, plants, and animals took care of us. So those are some of most important lessons I have learned going to Medicine Camps.

Renegotiating relationships to landscapes can be facilitated through pedagogies that encourage Indigenous language use, sharing stories about the land, and involvement in community initiated activities such as water walks, art shows, and Idle No More events. I learned that after the community relationships are developed, a relevant cultural assessment process could be co-created for use by educators from outside the local cultural learning context. A team-based approach can often help to develop and secure a lasting relationship that benefits learning within the cultural context. The first step, however, is to understand how the land is integral to sustaining all life, and how these interrelations with landscapes are expressed uniquely in each region, culture, and family. Despite these differences, however, the similarities make it possible to educate students about creating sustainable relationships with land.

4.3.2 Land. The Elders taught the students to consider local tribal genealogies and to draw on their own genealogies to inform their learning. Elders also modeled in their teaching narratives how they developed land-based pedagogies with local Indigenous
peoples. I learned that when genealogies are connected to land, pedagogical pathways could facilitate cross-cultural, land-based education, especially when co-developed with local nations. Ensuring sustainable land interaction could be a unifying goal for students, educators, and community members.

The Elders encouraged the students to restore our tribal health ways by restoring sustainable relationship to lands, and by encouraging others to find their own stories and paths that regenerate wholistic health education. They taught by sharing their stories of how they came to understand their relationship with the lands and our laws, and through ceremonies and dream sharing. The Elders modeled how to connect story with sustainable relationships to land for health and wellbeing. Mukwa Bezhik explains further:

For me it’s a sense of empowering our people, empowering themselves to pick up and to go back to go home to their real mother the Earth [Mashkiki aki, the Anishnabe term for Earth] and go get that knowledge [from the Aki—land] that will help them and in the same way that it helped me in my healing because that’s why I came in the beginning. When I paid attention to the dream and the teaching stories for me this is where I got help and I encourage people to find something, find a way that will help them.

Empowering people to connect with Elders’ land-based knowledges, encouraging people’s aspirations and dreams, and listening to people’s stories can give educators clues about how to create pedagogies that facilitate wholistic learning on the land. For example, land as pedagogy could be addressed across disciplines. I learned that long-term goals for sustainable relationships include a multi-disciplinary approach to the co-development of land-based pedagogies. It is therefore essential to develop relationships with local resource management, wildlife, and health education organizations and to co-develop strategies for relevant Indigenous, land-based, pedagogies in support of the wholistic health of individuals and community relationships.

The Elders modeled the recounting of our individual and collective stories as constitutional narratives. These pedagogical features recount the treaties as agreements for mutually beneficial relationships and suggest how we understand them
from our particular regions and landscapes. Articulating these cultural expressions and restoring the spirit of the treaty relationships as the basis for respectful relationships showed how to educate about living our natural laws and respecting the land and the humans, a primary responsibility.

Connecting with other tribal leaders who want to pass on this rich heritage is an important feature of this Elder’s pedagogy because it allows for network-building and strategizing self-determined, land-based teaching initiatives. I learned that connecting stories to wellbeing are the primary pedagogical features of many tribal societies. Orality provides the mechanisms that transfer this knowledge and is central to both education and researching ways of knowing, being, and doing.

4.3.3 Orality. Indigenous orality refers to non-textual communication that includes Indigenous forms of literacy and the performative aspects of communication. Indigenous orality includes the development of consciousness related to the practice of transmitting worldviews through oral traditions (Webber-Pillwax, 2001a; Piquemal 2003). Orality connects our well-being to stories that impart important teaching and learning lessons that can help to change attitudes and promote critical thinking skills. Making meaning from the stories is a research methodology called storywork (Archibald, 2008). As discussed above, Indigenous storywork methodologies help to expand the research methods used in the social sciences and draw on the researcher’s ability to reflect on the stories and apply what is learned. Stories often teach us about respecting animals and plants as relatives, and illustrate how humans rely on the relationships in Creation for their wellbeing. Indigenous languages can help to facilitate this interrelated understanding and can transform and shift attitudes. The Elders taught by demonstrating the skills required by oral traditions. Amisk clan members reflect on some of these aspects:

Amisk Peyak: The Elders at Medicine Camp talk about their own experiences and about how they arrived where they are at their learning.... So the stories in their teaching relate to themselves but they also relate to what we are doing. This is the difference from Euro-Western teaching. Euro-Western teaching is very objective
and there is no relationship of their own experiences to what they teach. (So often there is no story). During the time we spend with them—four days a year—our Elders teach us through story work and the role that they play in that education. Their role is to bring back memory, to connect us to our "blood memory" and to connect those memories and the stories to what we are doing. They teach us how that relationship is related to the work that we are involved in.

Amisk Neyanen: So it is like an applied learning...so the way that they are making meaning through the stories they choose to tell are in relationship to a particular plant or context—so they provide a path for others and invite others to tell their stories and to share their experiences.

Amisk Peyak: It’s not like there is only one answer...or the right answer.... At Medicine Camp that is not what is not encouraged.... It is not about answers in the Western way—it’s about your experiences and how you bring that into your being. That is the teaching that you receive. Education becomes personal.... You share that experience with somebody else next time and so that process starts over again. At Medicine Camp we find out through one another what we know...and even if you are not going to be a medicine person you are there because you want to know about the land and you want to know about medicines. This approach gives you a whole new perspective about our environment. After Medicine Camp when I look at the land, I marvel at what I see—I know that those are not weeds [laughs] that I see in the bush, or on the side of the road, they are living sacred beings, they have life (like us) and they give life, they give wellness to the ones that are ill—they restore their health.

Amisk Neyanen: So when they invited different folks from a variety of local industries to Medicine Camp the Elders teachers were saying that the bogs are like the lungs and teaching them about how and why people want to protect the lands.

Amisk Niso: When the Department of Natural Resources staff came to visit Medicine Camp this year the Elders took it as a teaching opportunity. When teaching the Elders are aware of how much knowledge every group requires and can tailor teachings to their knowledge and understanding needs. For the Natural Resources staff, the Elders felt sharing land-based teachings was important and for them to observe ceremony in order for them to understand the importance of the land to Indigenous peoples and the significance of ceremony in taking care of the land.

The land is more than a place to walk on. It contains all different kinds of plants that give life to all beings. Stripping the land only for resources such as logging is mining and wrong. Elders tell us how we take care of the land is how it will take care of us. At the moment we are not taking very good care of the land, and the results put the future of our children and grandchildren in jeopardy. To honor the land, we do ceremony at the beginning of every day prior to going out to gather medicine. We are reminded through ceremony why we are going out onto the
land. We are reminded of our place in the big scheme of the universe, and we are reminded about the significance of protocol for gathering the medicine. We are reminded to walk softly and to be respectful of where we walk. The Elder teacher taught us how and where to gather roots, and again reminded us to be mindful of our location and surroundings of where we find plants and to notice what other plants were growing in the same location.

Survival, health, and collective well-being depend on understanding how we are related to Creation and how we demonstrate this awareness through gestures of reciprocity. I learned that mapping reciprocal relationships to landscapes could help humans to survive better and to thrive. I learned that the stories, languages, and performances characteristic of Indigenous orality contribute to the art and study of teaching and learning methods.

Orality includes sharing through stories, prayer, performance, languages, reciting of kinship genealogies, dream sharing, Ancestral relationships, and ceremonies. Sharing stories provide valuable life lessons and can be transformative when used to enhance healthy sustainable connections and wholistic wellbeing.

Orality also connects stories to wellbeing. Transformation can be facilitated through the use of language because it embodies unique aspects of culture, history, and philosophy. As Shirley Leon tells us, the language of a specific place helps learners to connect with Earth-centered ecologies and ways of knowing and researching because language is the principle means by which knowledge is gathered and shared with successive generations (cited in White, 1997). Oral traditions and Indigenous languages express unique methods of teaching for health and the collective wellbeing that begin with particular people and places. Wabishishi clan member states,

I think that the oral tradition teaches about respect, how to be in relationship with the land and the people from the land or territory. It builds a common energy within the circle...it’s more of an extended family and team approach. I know our generation lost a lot of that knowledge because of the state imposing illegal policies that interrupted this knowledge and how it is transferred and many don’t know how to gather traditional medicines or where to gather them. But they are still there—we find specific harvesting areas and working with other nations is
important to build good relations with the nations, their territories and between the people who work with the medicines. I learned that the networks created when interacting with local families, stories, and landscape knowledges are pedagogical strategies based on orality that the Elders discussed as possible resources to enhance relationships to land if the ethics of reciprocity are well established and in place.

We are taught through story that the land is the first mother, the first teacher, and the female aspect of Creation. We learn about this relationship through language, ceremonies, and teaching stories. Ceremonies help us to make an intentional and respectful connection to Creation. We are taught that language comes from the land and that through understanding the language structures, meanings, and sounds you can begin to see the relationships. So the land is the both a teacher and a pedagogical source. Ceremonies help us to renew these relationship responsibilities as an individual and as a collective. We are taught that humans are responsible to renew our relationship with Creation and we are taught to begin this relationship with the plant medicine at Medicine Camp by participating in feasting and cleansing ceremonies. We are expected to take responsibility for our own learning by using the languages in our introductions, in the songs, and in the prayers. Use of ceremony, song, story, performance, and Indigenous language helps us to get ready to receive the knowledge from the Ancestors and the lands. The study participants talked about how coming home to the land enhanced their identity and how belonging to the land was a decolonizing and transformative educational experience. Mukwa Nizh puts it this way:

I remember going to the water where I am from, I went there and said, I am coming back home. As I walked around the lakes, I was re-living what my parents had gone through, the difficulties that they had. It really made me aware of the power of the spirit of the land and all of Creation because I realized that the Ancestors, the ones on the lands and the Creator were the ones who were supporting me along the way.
I learned that Indigenous pedagogy includes language use and oral traditions (orality) to enhance connections to land, which, when used well, can restore identity and wellbeing.

Orality also provides cultural expressions of reciprocity, key for renewing relationship responsibilities. These renewal processes focus on maintaining good relationships through reciprocal gestures such as offering sema, or tobacco, when asking for healing or knowledge, remembering important information, and judging the time to apply the knowledge. Understanding how to express respect and reciprocity according to local protocols will help students prepare for knowledge. Participating in ceremony, song, and performance of their own stories allows both the students and the teachers to prepare to recognize and engage with knowledge as it is expressed in local contexts. The students are told that this knowledge is part of their heritage—their Ancestral Indigenous knowledge—and that they have a right to access their language, to know their educational contributions through their Ancestral genealogy, and to recognize that they belong to this land. The students are taught how to engage respectfully with the knowledge “bundles” by observing the Elders. Later, students are given opportunities to model what they learned and demonstrate how they understand their interrelationships. They are expected to self-assess to determine when they are ready for knowledge and for leadership in various activities.

The students will take on leadership roles by helping facilitate the processes after they observe the Elders, and then model for other students how to help create the learning environment through oral language, protocols, performances, and ceremonial processes. The Elders have been taught how to collect knowledge and medicine ethically through many years of direct experience, and teach us about respect through story, understanding the laws of treaty relationships, and personal modeling to enhance the over-all wellbeing of both humans and the Earth’s elements on which we depend.

Ginew clan member explains:
These are sacred teachings that are passed on to people when they are ready. It’s about the sacredness that lives and breathes in what we do...so that when we carry through with “we are our all treaty people” laws and agreements our leadership responsibilities is to find a common place of respect again.

I learned that restoring what it means to live according to the spirit of treaty relationships is a creative strength based on processes that can involve many pathways.

The oral, performance aspect of the pedagogy used at the Medicine Camp addresses wholistic learning, helps to identify leadership styles, and explores the role of creativity and humor in teaching and learning. Performance also provides appropriate assessment mechanisms for sustainable and ecology-centered education activities suitable to the local culture. Amisk Niso expresses this lesson well:

When we are at Medicine Camp we are using our intellectual and physical dimensions.... During fun night we shared our creativity, humor, laughter, and camaraderie amongst each other. As an educator participant I saw confidence grow from their creative roles and I recognized the strengths in their leadership styles as we prepared for our skits...and we need to recognize, honor and “wear” our Indigenous knowledge because Euro-Western knowledge doesn’t always suit our needs and purposes.

I learned that finding out what is needed in local communities is the first consideration when developing local pedagogies. Developing the ability to read a story orally for multiple meanings is another important pedagogical skill that can be achieved better by cultivating and creating local Indigenous partnerships over time.

Finally, orality is a key component in research as a way to explore and deepen our ways of knowing. Euro-Western approaches to research have not fared well when applied to Indigenous educational success, and we must find research methods that suit our own purposes to enhance Earth- and land-centered education. We must use Indigenous theories, methods, and methodologies that are relevant and congruent to the context in which the research is situated. Local storywork methodologies, for example, support oral pedagogies used in many Indigenous contexts. Educators can begin to interpret local oral stories by making relationships with local people and places, and then applying what they learn in the classrooms, in land-based education,
and also in further research. Researching local stories and oral traditions can lead to transformation and can be achieved well by centering Indigenous knowledge and research methods and by creating community partnerships.

4.3.4 Community. Indigenous knowledge must be the focus of community, land-based learning. The educators must fulfill their role as facilitators who commit to centering local Indigenous Knowledge and provide students with access to Traditional Knowledge Holders. The educator must research the local Indigenous histories and create reciprocal relationships with those familiar with the Earth Ways of Knowing, which include historical and genealogical relationships with the local landscapes. This research will assist educators to prepare students for applied learning that begins with where they live now. Educators must creatively address decolonization by discussing ways to transform relationships to the land and help facilitate positive relationships between settlers and local Indigenous communities.

Facilitating access to local Traditional Knowledge Holders requires building relationships with the local nations where the educator lives and works. These relationships require a reciprocal gesture that takes time to maintain. Educators must realize that their role is to facilitate access to the Knowledge Holders, not to appropriate their knowledge. The learners and the local peoples must be given an opportunity to develop a relationship on their own terms. Most of the Medicine Camp Elders modeled this aspect of the pedagogy, as they have lived in Anishnabe Treaty One or in unceded Coast Salish territories (in urban contexts). They have formed alliances and continue to make extended familial relationships and follow their local protocols when in their territories.

These contemporary lived expressions are about balancing our responsibilities for teaching and learning with the Indigenous people of a particular region, and clearly identifying our roles as visitors and guests who seek to learn how to sustain equitably the places where we currently live. Learning about local community histories and
protocols from Indigenous peoples can help us to engage ethically in wholistic ways. Myengan Neyo elaborates:

What I learn about the teachings is that where others see plants that are weeds, plants that are worthless or useless, we learn at Medicine Camp that there is a purpose for every plant and everything that grows. And so that is very, very different, how we incorporate the land relationships into our lifestyles and our understanding and without the Medicine Camp there would not have been some grounding of plants and medicine because in my community we have lost so much because of residential schools and Indian agents taking away our knowledge.

My own situation illustrates these principles. To acknowledge that I am living as a guest in another nation’s territory, I demonstrate respect for and maintain reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous people by making space in educational institutions for Elders and facilitating access to local Traditional Knowledge Holders who can provide appropriate land-based health education. I learned that it is my responsibility to use my privilege to make space for Indigenous Elders and to create pedagogical partnerships. The pedagogy described herein demonstrates educational leadership that reinforces alternative Canadian identities, while generating knowledge that inspires a more just, democratic, and egalitarian society. Amisk Nisto clan member remarks:

We have to let the people know and remind them through our ethics discussions. We have to guard it and respect it and it is not for sale and not to abuse it in any way. We need to teach them to know how to engage with folks who do the medicinal work and make space for those who have the knowledge and not to take over the knowledge but make space and facilitate access to those who do the work.

I learned that educators can take the learning position and model to their students how to use a leadership position to create space for Indigenous Knowledge Holders and work towards integrating a local, self-determined classroom discussion built on shared understandings developed through community partnerships.

Integration of local self-determination and decolonization must also be part of a wholistic, community-engaged approach to educational reform, the Medicine Camp Elders emphasized. Decolonization education can be achieved in part through
understanding how the past oral histories inform the present and through learning to articulate how the past affects the present and future choices for local self-determination. The Elders discussed how, if we are to generate relevant and mutually beneficial educational change, we need to form self-sustaining and self-determined collectives that creatively meet the wholistic needs of the local Indigenous people. Performing our learning at Medicine Camp was an embodied way to evaluate both the progress of learning and the leadership gifts of the learners. Through these performances, the Elders found collective embodied expressions of creativity to be a joyful pedagogical element essential to generating a positive wholistic learning environment. The Elders also discussed the need to fund our own programs and to decolonize our teaching and learning processes, and to protect the integrity of oral traditions and the continuity of specific tribal knowledge. Doing so would have enormous practical consequences, such as ensuring food security and supporting local Indigenous resource development. The Elders talked about balancing creative self-determined and self-sustaining education strategies with wholistic land-based learning. Indigenous education reform includes cultural Indigenous education for all Canadians as a crucial aspect of educational reform. Beaver clan member Amisk Peyak reminds us about funding education programs in creative ways that support local self-determined goals.

We are bicultural peoples and I can see that it would benefit us if we can find ways to fund our own education programs based on traditional knowledge; for me, that is part of the decolonizing process. As a teacher, I also learned about the value of including creativity in a collective learning process.

I learned that reflective and storied learning processes are valuable strategies demonstrated by the Elders that will help educators co-create paths with local Indigenous communities to decolonize our educational practices.

4.3.5 Ethics. Decolonizing education begins by reclaiming and researching relationships with our genealogies and local lands, and by learning how to make respectful relationships with the people, the knowledge, and the land resources
including, in this case, specific plant medicines. Critical aspects of this pedagogy are the ability to create wholistic learning environments, co-create learning assessments, and dialogue about our ongoing responsibilities to maintain ethical relationships. Mukwa Nisto clan member suggests we begin this investigation by reinvigorating the treaty relationship and respecting women’s leadership in creating right relationships:

I think when we talk about our treaties, our treaties are based and formulated on the basis of the tobacco you know the pipe and the stem coming together and also of the wampum belt you know that and like you can have a treaty in a very specific area you can have some treaty agreements built on mutual respect and relationship building and after Indian control of Indian Education I thought we would advance so much because we had agreements that were based on tobacco right from the beginning you know when the treaties were made. But you look at all the fights that are going on between all the sectors—that’s because they haven’t wanted to relinquish that rightful relationship. Then you look at the resources...I don’t know where that are going to go...in the same way we are talking about the protection of Indigenous Knowledge regarding medicines. Our people have always guarded that so much. So when we did with the “We are all Treaty People” curriculum there are treaties in all of the lands and that is about relationships and about understanding and supportive relationships. It is a good place to be, eh, because the doors are opening and if we look historically at our leadership right it’s always been the women, always.

I observed that right relationships require small, localized, incremental steps, and large decolonization projects directed at policy and systemic change when collective political will is ready. For example, Indigenous women’s perspectives are providing decolonizing and interdisciplinary lenses that can enhance and intersect with critical and feminist theories in their goal for social justice education and transformation.

The Elders suggest that decolonization education should begin with the examination of our personal and collective ethics by researching and reevaluating our attitudes and relationships to land, women, and Indigenous peoples. Indigenous knowledge has been misused and misappropriated for profit, but it loses its teaching efficacy when taken out of context. Teachers can model their own journey for students by sharing their reflections and providing an example of how to reexamine one’s understanding of treaty relationships, gender relationships, and relationships to land as
a resource for profit. Teaching these aspects as civic, democratic, and decolonizing education for ethical leadership is central to this pedagogy. Creating wholistic approaches to learning by including civics as described by the Elders will widen the scope of existing education frameworks.

The Elders discussed many ways in which to engage the ethics of weaving oral and text-based cultures, and added that discussions among all parties concerned should happen regularly. One way the Medicine Camp Elders teach the students to balance the ethics of weaving orality and land relationships is to introduce protocol principles and have the students introduce themselves to the land by recounting their relationship genealogy and announcing their intentions for learning. The learners are asked to engage all their senses and report back on their experiences after they have completed the activity. Many of the student stories reported how they overcame internalized colonialism instilled through generations of residential schooling and encroachment of colonial “civilization.” Through this activity, the Elders teaching methods creatively weave together the socio-historical, political, cultural, spiritual, and economic features of each geographical region. The learners have an opportunity to engage with all their senses, make meaning, and connect to the land and get a sense of each other’s shared values and ethical concerns through sharing their stories and experiences.

### 4.4 Create Wholistic Learning

The Elders’ teaching is wholistic in the sense that all the learners’ senses are engaged and spiritual in the sense that the laws governing respectful relationships are followed. Wholistic learning environments include the human family and the families of plant medicines. Myengan Peyak clan member warns that making a respectful relationship with the land is not about making an individual profit. The quality of the relationship is enhanced when the collective wellbeing is considered and must include wholistic ways of relating to the land. He says:
I would say our Elders who show how to work in a sacred way is something they will never forget and they will pass that on to their own families.... The people collecting medicines when they don’t offer tobacco and make a good relationship with them and they are just there to make a profit—it just doesn’t do the same thing.

Understanding expressions of reciprocity between regions, and in some cases from within families and from within nations, are required to create wholistic learning environments. I learned that the land knowledge is transferred from families and communities and that not all stories, songs, and ceremonies are for the public; some stories, songs, and teachings belong to particular people with particular responsibilities. Giving back something meaningful and engaging with the land’s wisdom (medicine) requires educators to engage with the protocol principles, the peoples’ oral traditions, and the knowledge of particular places in ways that create wholistic and mutually beneficial ways to address mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical dimensions; these considerations also affect the efficacy of the plant medicine. I learned that not all tribes use tobacco to express a respectful relationship, but observing what counts as cultural “currency” in each region helped me to understand the wholistic ways in which relationships are built and maintained.

The Elders discussed how teaching and learning help us to understand and mobilize knowledge through wholistic learning environments outside the classroom, on the land, and in partnership with local Indigenous peoples. As well, it is important to use all the senses to create a respectful relationship with the land and to learn to recount our genealogies and describe the corresponding responsibilities for taking care of land, food, and medicines.

The Elders modeled the ways we can begin to create wholistic learning that is often tied to specific places, peoples, and plants and is most often expressed through stories. We begin by learning how to introduce our families, clans, and the geographic regions we are from. We learn to declare explicitly our intention to learn and continue researching wholistic knowledge originating from a particular land. This includes recounting through story, through dreams, and through family genealogy. However, the
recounting of one’s story, familial relationships, and understanding of knowledge revealed in ceremony must be balanced with mechanisms that protect the knowledge. Elders described Indigenous tribal knowledge of plant medicines sold for profit without a proper genealogical account of how we know and how we are related. These genealogical accounts provide teaching moments that help us learn how to teach a basic level of cultural competency using local protocols, stories, and all our senses (sight, taste, smell, hearing, touch). Wholistic learning then extends from our senses (bodily awareness), to meaning making (finding our face or spirit), including emotional aspects (finding our hearts) and connects to specific knowledges (mind story integration) derived from peoples’ histories and relationships with particular landscapes or plants. By weaving a multi-disciplinary and wholistic approach to education, the protocols and principles provide a mechanism that protects the efficacy of the knowledge and our ability to maintain sovereign relationships to our food security and access to plant medicine.

Wholistic learning requires creativity and community participation. One of the ways the Elders addressed student wholistic learning was by inviting students to create skits about their learning and invite the community members to witness their unique collective and wholistic learning. The performances include stories that give educator clues about what is meaningful, decolonizing and transformative for the students and the community witnesses their own Indigenous knowledge learning engaged through the performances.

The Elders shared Creation stories, cultural protocols and life experience stories about how they reconnected with plants and then encouraged the students to engage with particular plants of their choosing and to report back to the group their experiences. The Elders teach through the creation stories and many learners reflect that the learning happens during the rest of the year. In other words, how you apply the values, teaching and learnings to life is a measure of your readiness for engaging wholistic knowledge. Another aspect of wholistic knowledge the Elders demonstrated
was to show how they understand their meaning-making processes contained in oral traditions and stories. The Elders shared their awareness that the knowledge received is sacred, evolving, and transformational. I learned from the Elders’ role modeling that wholistic learning involves the synthesis of the spirit body heart-the individuals’ internal awareness and the external relationships with family, community, and Creation. Wholistic learning situated in a socio-historical context and for Indigenous learning is tied to self-determined relationships to lands and the sacred, and rooted in orality. Sacred knowledge demands that we carefully maintain the integrity of the oral traditions and protect the alternative relationships that direct us not to bargain with the medicines or sell them for individual monetary gain. The Elders are responsible for teaching and learning that recognizes the impacts of the colonial relationship and engages us ethically with knowledge systems that are under threat. Ethical engagement includes reciprocal research approaches that refuse to objectify the subjective relationships with plants. Other ways to decolonize internalized racism include critically analyzing social relationships from multiple gender perspectives, confronting new age romanticization and dispossession of land and equitable laws through state-sanctioned policies, and developing strategies to change misrepresentation and misuse of lands for capitalistic or short term gain. Clan members Mikinac Nizh and Myengan Neyanen address their concerns regarding access to plants once the knowledge is written down and no longer shared through oral traditions, and the protocols that protect the ethical concerns and the integrity of the knowledge transmission are gone:

Mikinac Nizh: I am concerned about the patents that [Euro-Western] institutions put on plant medicines...like the ones we use and teach about—then we wouldn’t be able to harvest them anymore.

Myengan Neyanen: To patent something you have to own it and we are taught we do not own these medicines. How can you patent something you don’t own?. It is about our own leadership and how we all have to protect the medicines for our wholistic health and wellbeing.

The Elders discussed creative funding strategies as one way to maintain the pedagogical ways they teach and to address the wholistic and self-determined learning needs of
people while sustaining the environment. I learned that relational responsibilities of educators and students must be interwoven with political, social, and economic factors to provide a relevant pedagogical framework that can address the wholistic and self determined leadership needs of communities.

4. 5 Summary of Medicine Camp Learning Environment

When asked why they took the Medicine Camp program, the participants said that it was important to create and maintain community networks and to build on tribal or natural laws and on familial knowledge, and to renew their health education responsibilities. They learned that to continue to live the teachings and provide the people with health education they needed to deepen their relationship with lands and medicines, and to explore in a collective environment the education methods worthy of our children and for the health and wellbeing of the future generations.

The Elders in the Medicine Camp program provided leadership by modeling how to engage respectfully with tribal knowledge and the land’s knowledge. They taught in teams, and through culturally relevant teachings they shared their experiences of relating to the land. They focused on developing relationships with the plants and encouraged collective knowledge-building processes. They chose self-determined, wholistic, and experiential processes that engaged the five senses, such as guiding us through ceremonies and showing us how to get ready for knowledge through feast preparation and prayer songs. They taught us about cultural protocol knowledge and, through cleansing ceremonies, modeled an embodied ethic—how to wear the sacred bundle teachings. They taught us how to map the land by knowing which plants grow near each other so we could find our ways. They provided opportunities to share genealogical information about how to care for plants and how they can be used differently in various contexts. They encouraged us to share personal stories to deepen our relationships with each other and with the land, and to behave ethically by protecting the integrity of the knowledge sources.
The participants said that what stood out for them most about the teaching methods employed at the Medicine Camp was the courage and the ethics the women leaders demonstrated when using our knowledge as educational tools and engaging with difficult topics such as the need to protect the knowledge. These women often invited local conservation officers and resource managers to visit the Medicine Camp to see what we were doing, and then talked with them about the shrinking land base, access to clean water and food, security, and medicine patenting as crucial and growing educational concerns. The Elders physically demonstrated how to embody or wear the teachings. They shared practical, problem-solving strategies and stories of how they overcame adversities, and encouraged us to contribute our own stories of health, healing, and helpful education strategies. The ethics of protecting the knowledge for the benefit of community education was interwoven through the discussions using personal experiential and tribal cultural stories.

Many remarked that some of the attributes of oral traditions constitute Indigenous knowledge or tribal methods of teaching, and most folks mentioned that no pencils, pens, or tests were required. Instead, folks were shown how to engage holistically with their senses and only later received notes from previous program camps; the helper oshkabaywis would add to the notes when appropriate. We were cautioned that the notes are not to be shared outside the group, both to protect the knowledge from “pirates” who may want to misuse it and to prevent over-harvesting of plants.

The Elders repeatedly remarked that the Medicine Camp learning environment fostered a sense of belonging and provided genuine concern, and included all participants. The Elders’ pedagogy included responding to the emergent needs of the learners. Many of the Medicine Camp students had loved ones who were very ill and received wholistic support from the Medicine Camp as a collective of responsive people who applied the medicinal learning to everyday life circumstances.
The knowledge, principles, and values employed at the Medicine Camp were identified as respect, relationship, reciprocity, and responsibility. The teachings were conveyed through the Elders’ stories, ceremony, collective knowledge, and performance.

The experiences that the participants shared most animatedly through laughing were the performances—the talent skit night when student participants expressed their learnings through collective community performances. Another particularly memorable experience was a discussion of stories about the great significance of picking up this knowledge bundle in a contemporary context.

The participants discussed what reciprocity means to them and described how it was demonstrated at Medicine Camp, primarily through giving something in order to receive knowledge and returning something useful to the community. The meaning of reciprocity was often shared through stories about folks who wanted to use the knowledge for individual profit, or had no intention to use it for community knowledge generation nor to perpetuate Aboriginal knowledge for the overall health and wellbeing of Aboriginal peoples.

The participants did not directly identify what aspects of the Medicine Camp program failed to work for them, but they did describe stories about working through unethical situations and giving back appropriately. Giving back was initially recognized through understanding the value of a protocol principle as the first teaching of tobacco—offering it in exchange for knowledge. Participants then deepened their understanding by reflecting and watching, contributing back to the camp in a variety of ways, and finally by identifying what wearing and/or carrying the sacred bundle means to them.

Included in this discussion was whether the Elders’ methods of teaching are transportable into academic or other institutional contexts, and whether they can be applied to educational programs elsewhere. These issues will be discussed in the following chapter. The participants interviewed in this study have identified
pedagogical features required to support similar education programs. Key discussion items include accessing funding, accountability, limits, achievable priorities, policies, goals, and provisions for protecting knowledge when developing local pedagogical processes.
CHAPTER 5

Weaving Earth Way Pedagogies

In this chapter I describe how Indigenous land-based pedagogies informed by Eshkakimikwe Kandosowin, Earth Ways Of Knowing, could be applied more broadly. Based on what the Elders said about the teaching methods used at Medicine Camp and from my academic interactions with Anishnabe scholar Dr. Jan Hare, I suggest and weave together five pedagogical elements or steps: research, preparation, protocols, reflection, and application. Educators may use these steps as a beginning guide to apply in other locales.

5.1 Eshkakimikwe Kandosowin: Earth Ways Of Knowing

Eshkakimikwe kanandosiwin, or Earth Ways of Knowing, illustrates the general topic of land-based learning which nurtures the specific Geez-hee-kan’-dug Cedar pedagogy, with its five themes of culture, land, orality, community, and ethics as generated by the participants’ collective research conversations. Transformative education begins with creating local Indigenous community partnerships. Worldviews that include interrelated and relational genealogies can provide pathways to interact with the land. Educators and community partners could co-develop appropriate Earth Ways of Knowing or Indigenous land-based pedagogies that reflect the nuances of their locales. Rheault (1999) explains Eshkakimikwe-Kendaaswin, Mother-Earth Knowledge:

Eshkakimkwe is Mother to all beings: mineral beings, plant beings, animal and insect beings and, lastly, human beings. She is both the source of life as well as its unconditional nurturer. Gidisi’ewin means the navel way. It is the Mother connection. In the same way that my physical body was connected to my mother through my navel, my spirit is connected to Eshkakimikwe through my spirit navel.... Like a fetus in her/his mother, each of us is constantly drawing physical and spiritual nutrition from our Earth Mother. (pp. 96–97)
I learned that by exploring local relational, cultural, and tribal nuances through stories about the landscapes and by drawing tribal similarities and differences, educators can begin to examine and explore a wholistic local land- or earth-based pedagogy.

The following is an example of one wholistic and decolonizing approach, with each locale requiring community partnerships to facilitate culturally relevant land-based education. The Indigenous pedagogy five-step process outlined in this chapter can provide an initial map for educators to use as a guide. It is up to the educators to create responsible, reciprocal relationships that work with local cultures, and to adjust the pedagogical pathways to accommodate unique, local Earth Ways of Knowing. Pisew and Amisk Neyanen clan members describe their reflections on Indigenous land-based pedagogies and their experiences working with local Elders and oral traditions:

Pisew: I love the sense of community bringing together people to help one another and to help people, and the networking is really important where we discuss our ethical responsibilities, our commitments to our learning, our own nation building processes and learn many ways of helping and teaching the people, to help the people through the sharing of our stories and experiences in their own lives…. Respect is huge. They teach us how to listen and to remember and to learn in different ways. They demonstrate respect for the learners by providing a variety of teaching methods including the relational way, emotional way, and the spiritual way.

Through the performance and skits we do in groups on fun night the community is invited to come together and pieces of knowledges we learned start to come together and we could figure it out together. And teaching that way with the Elders is meaningful and they help us to bring the knowledge together and they don’t sit you down and say this is what the package is and this is what the program is and where it came from they are not doing all of that style of teaching [reading off the paper and text]…it’s not about looking for marks or grades from an external source it’s about your own sovereignty, your own honor from inside and within your relationships. Each year they teach you more if you are ready for knowledge and when it’s time, there are opportunities at the community health clinics to learn more with the Elders.

Amisk Neyanen: Then you learned to apply these teachings to the initiatives where you worked with Aboriginal health care providers to develop policy to provide access to culturally appropriate health care as an Aboriginal right and a responsibility…when we worked with the traditional healers and Aboriginal health practice council in BC to ask them how best could interface health
institutions and the Elders then created discussion points on how to manage the ethics and protection of the knowledge, through policy and integrated these concerns as part of our collective approach to Indigenous Education and Health leadership.

Creating wholistic environments means considering wholistic assessments. I learned that the pedagogical processes (pathways) inherent in the Elders’ pedagogy focused on the individual gifts and how they established relationships beyond the classroom with the plants and the land. The pedagogy also considered giving back (reciprocity) through story; helping with ceremonies, songs, and performances; cleaning up; establishing community networks; and including family roles. These wholistic considerations could include how to demonstrate unique education and health leadership, or, in effect, how to be a good relative in specific locales. These individual and wholistic considerations can then prepare learners to interact better in other contexts. I learned that Eshkakimikwe, Earth Ways of Knowing, and the Elders’ pedagogies outlined herein provide options for educator to explore in their own locales.

The Eshkakimikwe Kandosowin, Earth Ways of Knowing, illustrate a general pedagogical process (Figure 3). As demonstrated in the central cedar image, the pedagogical process includes research, preparation, protocols, application, and reflection. The specific applications of the Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar pedagogy that the Medicine Camp Elders described in the previous chapter are illustrated at the left, inside the circle. Each strand of the cedar platelets represents a theme that grows and transforms through the interactions of the partnerships from local peoples, protocols, and places. The Elders’ teachings and stories are situated in a social, economic, political, spiritual, and cultural context as illustrated by the tree roots. The values that feed the roots of the cedar tree demonstrate respect for Indigenous oral and intellectual traditions, include the inter relationships of the beings in Creation, and weaves the values of partnering with Indigenous communities to co-create reciprocal and relevant Indigenous land-based education. The cedar tree trunk rings on the right of the diagram outlines the specific Indigenous community education “resources” (family, nations,
Creation). In actual practice, however, the pathway themes cross over and are more fluid and dynamic than the illustration.

*Figure 3. Mobilizing Indigenous Land based Framework Eshkakimikwe Kaandossowin: Earth Ways Of Knowing Source: Alannah Young, 2013. Illustration: Clarissa Poernomo, 2014.*
I have outlined a general Indigenous land-based teaching pedagogy that educators interested in developing specific Indigenous land-based pedagogies can use in their respective regions. The Indigenous land-based pedagogy in Figure 3 indicates the roots that support a culturally relevant pedagogy must provide the students with a basic understanding of the local Indigenous cultural, spiritual, social, historical, political, and economic contexts. The roots of the plant represent education that must connect the local values of respect, relationship, responsibility, reciprocity, and relevance. The stem (trunk) includes developing the interdependent relationship with Creation, local nations, communities, families, and the Creator. This visual illustration is intended to map a possible teaching and learning process that is based on love, inter-relatedness, and relationality (Donald, Glanfied, & Sterenberg, 2012; Nason, 2014). As community partnerships develop, the cultural assessments could change as necessary to reflect the unique relationship with lands. The creative and ethical co-partnering with communities could potentially weave a unique multidisciplinary and pedagogical approach. Indigenous land-based pedagogies have many intersecting pathways and I have organized one such outline.

5.2 A Five-Step Indigenous Land-Based Pedagogy

In this section I organize the participants’ statements into a pedagogical framework that I used as an educator and demonstrate how this work can be applied to Indigenous land-based learning environments. Indigenous pedagogy is specific to particular locales and yet the principles can be applied to other contexts as a way to begin networking with others to revitalize and create land-based education programs. Pisew clan member reflects on Indigenous land-based pedagogies across tribes and revitalizing that knowledge for multiple contexts:

I think that there are a multiplicity of relationships required [for establishing a land-based pedagogy], there is the building of community where we build on our knowledge together as a community and transfer and exchange the knowledge between different nations and the network in our own communities wherever we
are from and then the international Indigenous health settings [which] are important networks that build and restore ecosystems in communities and build awareness about the importance of traditional medicines within the First Nations health systems and the Western ones too. The teachers at Medicine Camp are intentional about how they do this.

I think that the intention was in part to help build all these different relationships to partner with health systems where and when appropriate. They have done a good job in building awareness and in building community. We are just seeing the revitalization of the knowledge coming alive and showing up in different health systems like in Toronto, BC, and Winnipeg as well as Alaska, New Zealand, and Hawaii.

The Elders’ pedagogy helped to prepare participants to engage in similar land-based earth medicine programs by presenting research on who is working locally, nationally, and internationally on similar pedagogies. They showed us how to prepare by networking with other peoples and visiting their places, creating opportunities to share knowledge and protocols, and discussing ways to apply the knowledge in our own locales.

I learned that the first step is to make a commitment to center local Indigenous knowledge, and this requires research. Subsequent steps of preparation, protocols, reflection, and application could follow.

5.2.1 Research. Re-searching combines past ways of teaching, as they are relevant, with contemporary contexts so that sustainable self-determined local Indigenous relationships with lands are ethical, encouraged, and nurtured. Knowing how to search for and synthesize knowledge from many sources helps us to make better choices for long-term health and wellbeing. The Elders modeled how to research and update resources, utilize local languages, and connect with local peoples and places. Mukwa Neyanen explains:

We learned about major health issue areas for Aboriginal people since contact with settlers. We had three teachers with different teachings over the years and it was a great way of bringing back the ways that Aboriginal peoples teach, the oral tradition and hands on…we would go out and learn about the medicines and then we would go and harvest the medicine and then we were taught how to preserve the medicines...Because we can’t always rely solely on the other medicines used in
the medical models we have to go back to what we know and what works for us as required.

Learning about historical and contemporary community health education needs is part of the research phase. The research phase includes learning on the land or local waters, with knowledgeable community members. Identifying the harvesting and plant preservation practices through the activities suggested by the Elders provided me with inspiration and hands-on experience, and gave me ideas about how to provide access to tribal knowledge principles. We had to be prepared by knowing where plants grow and when to harvest and dry them. I was also inspired to apply the learnings across disciplines (e.g. in various academic Faculties—Education, Midwifery, Pharmacy, Social Work) and in rural and urban health centers, as required.

Educators must research available local resources for each context in which they teach. The research includes identifying the local history, the language spoken, the regional stories, and the local land resource knowledge. It also includes developing networks and partnerships to learn how to engage ethically with the people, the language, the stories, and the land. The research phase of the pedagogy helps to prepare educators better to sustain healthy learning environments.

5.2.2 Prepare. Once we have made space for educational land-based Indigenous co-partnerships, we prepare ourselves by learning about knowledge exchanges in this particular context. This may involve conducting research, making relationships with resource people, and attending cultural events they initiate to see, for example, what applied protocols and principles may be adapted for your learning context. Pisew clan member shares some additional distinctions

What is different about this type of learning is that the purpose of it is different. Reviving the knowledge and bringing it back to the people—that was important. That it wasn’t individual learning for commercial profit, the purpose of it was for the community building. We are given the opportunity to engage with and to get ready for the knowledge by the way they are preparing you to receive the
knowledge—even before you get there they are teaching you and preparing you by what they ask you to bring.

The Elders asked participants to prepare by bringing tobacco, cloth, feast food, and gifts to Medicine Camp. This preparation helps participants to get ready for tribal knowledge transmission and is guided by the local protocols and the value principle of reciprocity.

During the Medicine Camp, we are asked to “listen” with all our senses and to prepare to accept the role of learner. As part of the preparation we are asked to bring food each day for the Ancestors and for the bodies of students and helpers. We are asked to bring cultural gifts or plant medicines to trade so that the facilitators can use them in other teaching and ceremonial environments. We were asked to bring appropriate clothing for ourselves, and tobacco and cotton broadcloth, for example, for cultural giveaway or exchange for the knowledge we sought. The specific gifts or exchange items are chosen by each participant according to what they felt was appropriate to their own learning. The research and preparation phase of learning is helped considerably by networking and visiting local cultural events to observe how this exchange is performed. In identifying protocols, the values and principles are best learned through careful observation during the research and preparation phases.

5.2.3 Protocols and principles. Educators can negotiate with local community cultural educators who know local cultural protocols to develop shared principles to guide the educational process. Indigenous peoples have for millennia successfully negotiated similar processes inter-tribally, and could do the same across cultures. Myengan Niswi clan member reflects:

I was thinking about the exchange between other tribal people and that is where we enrich our knowledges, and our relationships. There are those connections to the lands, the traditional territories, and we are the caretakers. For me it is where we belong…it’s a process of knowing who we are and who we aspire to be using the protocols, stories, and languages to convey how we connect to lands through the relationships with plants as part of Mino-Bimadiziwin the Good Life ways and by sharing our stories as guides.

Stories based on millennia of experience with the land have the potential to transform the identities of all people, and can enhance a very different sense of belonging to the
land. I learned that many of the tribal protocols and principles provide protection from exploitative practices that dispossess peoples from places, and enhance healthy, mutually beneficial relationships.

Myengan Nanan and Pisew clan members discussed the values of reciprocity and respect in developing Indigenous pedagogies in other locations. They applied the five steps of research, preparation, protocols, application, and reflection, noting that they are not necessarily linear but describe possible approaches to developing land-based Indigenous pedagogies.

Myengan Nanan: I think that learning energies are enhanced when you emotionally connect people to the land... A lot of the folks where I work they don’t know how to respect the knowledge or they don’t know how to interact with it in a way that bring health and healing to people and the environment. Sometimes when I go the Indigenous gardens I go there to the fire or do a pipe ceremony or just to sit there and have that interactive communication with the plants and the land because the interaction between the plants and the people should make both healthy.

We should be interacting with the plants in a way that we think about them and respect them. When I used to gather fir boughs for my lodge, I always took the part of the branch where two good ones could grow back. So after ten years there were twice as many as when I started as opposed to breaking off in a place where it wouldn’t grow back.

So your interaction with the plants should be in a way that makes the plant healthier. You can harvest things in a way that spaces them and it makes it healthier for the system that they are in and always be thinking about how am I improving the health of the plants and so that is very important. So it is the going back and forth that makes both healthy. So it’s the reciprocity that is where the health is at that is strengthening the system...interacting with the environment in a way that acknowledges that the system, when it is strengthened, it strengthens us. When it is not done people can just deteriorate, and their health deteriorates, and the environment has deteriorated.

Pisew: So if we come from a place that strengthens the system that is an implication for our practice and come from there with that custodial responsibility and we do that with the people and the plants that is an implication of how we should be working together.

Facilitating relationships that strengthen a healthy, sustainable ecosystem requires a shift in how we understand and interact with land. I learned the value of creating
networks of peoples who can work together and strengthen each other’s relationships to local land knowledges and among themselves. I also came to understand that protocol principles are unique to this pedagogy, and play an important role in the research and preparation phases as well as the application and reflection phases.

5.2.4 Application and reflection. In the last two steps, application and reflection, the educator can model how to listen and apply the learnings by sharing their own stories of transformation and reconnection to lands, and can demonstrate the shared values of strengthening the wholistic health of people by enhancing their relationship with lands. Pisew clan member shares her reflections:

I noticed that the teachers allowed you to lead your own learning and develop your own relationships to the plant medicines. By the fourth year people are able to relate to the medicines on a different level. The daily preparations—the ceremonies, the sharing, and application of the research inherent in protocols—and through experiential activities, the cyclical learning reflections, and through the sharing of stories -together these constitute an effective wholistic land-based pedagogy.

The application phase includes oral traditions and wholistic learning. For example at the Medicine Camp we had no writing assignments or tests because we were expected to use all our senses to learn about relating to the land. Mikinac Bezhik clan member reflects on how she came to developing the Medicine Camp Indigenous pedagogy:

I would say that I am very grateful...for the opportunity to learn that you know through my main teacher when he offered to share his knowledge with me and...he wouldn’t let me write anything down. “You can’t write anything down you have to use your senses. You got to listen to what I am telling you. Your ears, your eyes to recognize those plants; you taste, you smell, you touch, you get to know those plants and that relationship.”

Those basic teachings and understandings he would tell me over and over again. Listening to his teachings about tobacco, talking about how he understood that healing work and it was how he was taught. Just stories and stories over and over again.

As soon as he would wake up he would smudge with sage and have his hand drum and he would start singing. He would sing his prayer songs, first thing in the morning. Then start sharing these stories and teachings. So sitting and working
with him in that way. Helping him with his cleansing ceremonies and he would explain things as he went along.

I went to his house for three Medicine Camps [12 years]. He would show me “this is where the plant grows, this is how it looks, feels, tastes, smells this is how you use it, now go find it....” He didn't take me out there and show me and he told me what I had to do and when I found it I had to sit with it. I had to look at the plant, see how it grows, put my tobacco down, talk to it before he let me harvest it.... And he said “make sure that it is the right one we are working with.”

Working with Elders and tribal land knowledge requires all the physical senses to interact with the spiritual and emotional realms of the whole human being, and includes developing enduring, wise relationships with plants, peoples, and places. I learned that developing relationships to places, peoples, and plants through land-based pedagogies could inform healthy lifelong learning and enhance sustainable environments.

Learning by listening watching and by doing over extended periods of time, and through repetition stories, ceremonies, and songs and then through helping is the outline she provided about Indigenous pedagogies. Distinguishing what is sacred knowledge and public knowledge is a required protocol discussion for working with Indigenous pedagogies. Making space for Indigenous Knowledge teachers to teach the knowledge and not to assume teaching the knowledge without an ongoing reciprocal relationship with a tribal knowledge holder is one way to interact with the protocols. Research and preparation phases can help to clarify these distinctions for the application phase and can be negotiated for each context.

The five-step process will vary according to the resources available to the educator. The application and reflection phase is also a time to assess the students’ capacity for leading their own learning, which can be a challenge for educators within a limited time. Educators can use multimodal mediums such as wild crafting, hunting, and fishing followed by show-and-tell activities to let students tell the class what they have hunted or how they gathered it (reciprocity gestures involving their senses). Alternatively, educators can have students demonstrate their relationships with plants.
through skits that include local stories as appropriate. Students can also grow small herb gardens in the class or prepare tea, jam, and salve as follow-up activities during the application and reflection phases. Integrating the learning across the curriculum creatively can enhance the land-based Indigenous pedagogies. Wholistic assessments could then follow.

These principles can be illustrated by my own activities. I began to prepare and apply the five pedagogy steps outlined here in the communities where I live and work. In the research phase I and another Medicine Camp graduate established relationships with local Indigenous peoples and Elders who are knowledgeable about local plant medicines. We developed co-partnerships and a team approach to creating the pedagogy in the preparation phase. Because of this preparation, we can follow local protocols every time we teach by acknowledging the Indigenous territories, our own family genealogies, and local languages. We reflect on and apply our knowledge (through ceremony, story sharing, and teachings about how to relate respectfully to plants) so that learners could see how we model being a good relative living in the homelands of other Indigenous nations.

We started applying this five-step pedagogical process in an urban post-secondary context over the last four years. We began by involving local Indigenous community members, three research circle participants and an urban academic health education researcher, to discuss how local Indigenous protocols could guide the development of Indigenous land-based pedagogy. During the research phase, I learned the histories, languages, and relationships to land resources of local Indigenous people, and learned how to connect with local Indigenous resource peoples, establish reciprocal relationships, and work to strengthen sustainable educational partnerships. We also researched how to support community-initiated events and alternative self-determined initiatives that connect people to the land. During the preparation phase, we created a body of community advisors and educators that could help facilitate land-based teaching events. An ongoing discussion on community access and ownership of the
knowledge shared (Schnarch, 2004) was a necessary part of the research and the protocols phase. Ownership Control Access and Protection (OCAP) of Indigenous knowledge and the Kwayask itôtamowin: Indigenous Research Ethics report (Indigenous Peoples’ Health Research Centre, 2005) are examples of protocol documents that I researched and put into action by creating mechanisms to facilitate relationship building and ongoing dialogue with community, staff, faculty and students.

Finally, the application and reflection phase of the process included agreeing on localized land-based symbols that best fit particular landscapes, a step to help to create co-partnerships with local Indigenous communities. For example, we created the Medicine Collective that serves as a teaching team and as an advisory body to interface with academic and community land-based learning. This account shows how the five-step, land-based Indigenous pedagogical process could be applied in different locales.

5.3 Implications

I further describe implications of the learning provided by Elders at the Medicine Camp program and elaborate on how I learned to become a good relative from their stories, the land, and Indigenous Earth Ways of Knowing and relating. The organization of wholistic knowledge can be set out in four stages: feeling, watching, reflecting, and doing. This description of wholistic learning is consistent with the Elders' descriptions of how Elders teach at Medicine Camp. These four stages of learning are woven throughout the following section as examples of how educational successes and barriers can be addressed using storywork and Indigenous land-based narratives. I also suggest possible next steps that follow from this learning.

Participants often described a critical moment when they experienced racism. The stories they shared are strategic pedagogical features that teach us about educational barriers and how people overcame them. These teaching stories are Indigenous constitutional narratives about the Canadian context and suggest how educators can use narratives (Dua, 2008; Friedel, 2010; Hare, 2007; Lovern, 2012; Marker, 2000;

Mohawk scholar Sylvia Maracle documents the Aboriginal identity formation process as having four interrelated components: 1) resisting negative definitions of being; 2) reclaiming Aboriginal tradition; 3) constructing a positive identity by translating tradition into the contemporary context; and 4) acting on that identity in a way that nourishes the overall wellbeing of our communities (as cited in Anderson, 2010). This model speaks to the reality of the historical and social forces that portray deprecating and incorrect representations of Aboriginal people across time (Goodwill & McCormick, 2012, p. 24.). The Elders stories have many possible interpretations, and we are left to examine the outcomes of each of the narratives. Narratives can “increase humans’ cognitive adaptability and stretch our imaginative capacities so that we can generate new ways of thinking and being in the world” (Nelson, 2013, p. 229). Perhaps through stories we can deconstruct the barriers of racism and create constitutional narratives beginning with local identities and places (Vizenor & MacKay, 2013).

Colonial definitions of Aboriginal identity have come largely from the legal system (Anderson, 2000; Lawrence, 2004; Restoule, 2000), where the Indian Act governs who is Indian and who is not. Shifting power away from the Indian Act or other state-imposed policies and toward Indigenous people themselves requires self-identification as the process of being and becoming who and what one is within a socio-political and cultural context (Restoule, 1999). Indigenous identity is interconnected with stories, narratives, and places. Simpson and Manitowabe (2013) state that we learn both from stories and the land, and that our narratives embody personal and performative ethics. The Elders’ Indigenous pedagogy informs us and shows us that we wear or embody our teachings through our Aandisokaanan, our stories, which implicate our responsibility in their words “to wear the teachings of the sacred bundle of knowledge.”

I follow the work of Manitowabe and Simpson (2013) and agree that our stories and learning processes are personal, and that our theories and methods of teaching
help us to learn how to embody an ethic of sustainable, mutually benefiting relationships. Simpson engages the stories relevant to this place, Turtle Island. Story and narrative forms teach and illustrate how colonial policies are used to control and subjugate Indigenous identities. Her ability to weave Indigenous feminist perspectives with scholarly and community perspectives is characteristic of the next wave of emerging scholars. Simpson addresses the need for readers and educators to be aware of the social, political, and historical complexities that face Canadians.

Like Andrea Smith, Simpson (2011a) challenges hetero-patriarchy and colonial practices (p. 60), and cites the need for decolonization practices and spaces where Indigenous women-centered models are articulated and mobilized. Through her writing, she models transformative pathways that point to alternative coalition-building that puts women and children at the center of teaching methods. Most of the Medicine Camp Elders (and participants in this study) are women who demonstrate a commitment to community wellbeing and an active love for learning, and who engage in alternative teaching to introduce the changes required in health education.

Indigenous women and men successfully continue to assert traditional tribal values, redefinitions of clan roles, and adaptations of old cultures to new conditions. Paula Gunn Allen (1998) argues in her book *Off the Reservation: Reflections on Boundary Busting, Border Crossing Loose Cannons* that the way to liberation for Native women is to focus on our own interests, creativity, concerns, community, and educational success (p. 175). These alternative knowledges still defy “outsider” representation and remind us that the university system of knowledge is not complete and that transformation can be achieved, at least in part, through pedagogical interventions.

One of the ways to stop the continued exploitation and dispossession of Indigenous people is to feature pedagogies that build on our laws and distinct positioning. Teaching methods that feature Aadizookaanag (sacred stories), debajamowin (personal account stories), and Anishnabe narratives inform Indigenous Elders’ pedagogy at Medicine Camp. Aadizookaanag and debajamowin stories distinctly
convey what we know and how we transfer knowledge. So we begin with describing a culturally relevant framework for education that is rooted in places.

Kandosowin is an Anishnabe term for how we come to know, and Eshakimikwe means Earth ways of knowing. What I learned from the Medicine Camp Elders is that we need to take responsibility for what we know and transfer knowledge in ways that convey a deep love for learning as a legitimate process for growth and change (Battiste, 2013, p. 190). The Elders’ pedagogy used in the Medicine Camp affirms that we learn primarily through our stories, our direct relationship with lands, and partnerships with Elders and community knowledge keepers to develop appropriate land-based pedagogies.

The Elders framed their pedagogy by asking learners what it means to wear the sacred bundle teachings. This question is primarily directed at the Medicine Camp program participants and conveys education as a path of lifelong learning. Educators could ask what would it mean to a live as a good relative and begin to re-examine and explore over time our relationships with local plants, foods, and peoples. I have thus chosen a pedagogical framework that relates to the land and specifically the plant relationships. Like the flower, the cedar leaf framework could start the conversation and be modified for land-based health education programs in different contexts. I learned from the Elders’ discussions that it is my responsibility to embody relational responsibilities to non-human and more-than-human realms. I reciprocate my gratitude by maintaining the renewal responsibilities through everyday acts informed by ceremony and by living the teachings. I learned explicitly that the way to begin to teach and learn is through their example and mentorship. We learned by listening, watching, reflecting, and doing. The Elders stressed that they were taught to convey the knowledge in the ways they learned it, and to make space in the learning environments for those who are practiced at teaching the tribal knowledge and to demonstrate partnerships with local knowledge holders, and model positive learning attitudes so students will in turn know how to listen and learn alterNative pedagogies. I also learned
that Indigenous pedagogies are beneficial for all learners. An example of collaboration among learners from diverse backgrounds is a digital learning resource developed at UBC to help teacher educators that is:

aimed at supporting the teaching and professional development of educators in Aboriginal/Indigenous education. This online learning tool is intended to promote the place of Indigenous knowledges, knowledge holders, and pedagogies in schools and communities that will enrich classroom experiences for all learners. (Hare et al., n.d.)

Eight topics relevant to current issues in Indigenous education are highlighted in this website and focus on Indigenous perspectives, curricular resources, multimedia, and literature that link theory to practice. The website provides educators with a variety of pedagogical tools such as stories, documentaries, and counter narrative approaches that help educator to interrogate concepts such as the “perfect stranger” (Higgins, 2013) and to ground pedagogies that facilitate relationships with Elders, Indigenous peoples, and places on the land.

We begin to get ready for knowledge by using local language such as the Anishnabe term Ayangwamizin, which means to walk carefully and in partnership with local knowledge keepers, to develop pedagogies appropriately that include stories as teacher and land as leader, according to natural laws. We are not siphoning knowledge out of communities but supporting the self-determined health education goals of the communities in which we are located, and working together to create sustainable pedagogies built on the shared understanding of respect, integrity, and ethics (accountability, responsibilities, and intergenerational genealogy roles).

Elders taught us the importance of being a good relative and ways to become one. They taught us to take the learnings and apply them where appropriate in our own contexts. Some of the research circle participants and members of the Indigenous community research advisory committee, particularly those living and working in Coast Salish territories, began to take their learnings of how to be a good relative home. Dr. Lee Brown, director of the Institute for Aboriginal Health (IAH), began growing tobacco
at the Indigenous Health Garden at the UBC Farm. While building relationships with local Indigenous health practitioners, Jeri Sparrow (Musqueam) and Dr. Jeanne Paul (Sliammon) helped to deepen our relationship with the plants and the peoples of these territories. The Indigenous Clinical Health Lead for Vancouver Coastal Health and I have taken the Medicine Camp training and the training offered by Dr. Paul through the Seabird Island College for Health for nurses on-reserve, learning about traditional and naturopathic medicines. We worked with IAH and staff from the Faculty of Land and Food Systems’ Indigenous Research Garden to develop culturally relevant medicinal gardens and provide health education as a Medicinal Collective, which models many of the pedagogical methods we learned at Medicine Camp. These examples demonstrate how we have worked together to bring the Medicine Camp pedagogies and teachings to our home communities. Furthermore, our Indigenous health leadership and pedagogies are structured by local protocol principles that provide frameworks for how we develop policy and practice (Brown, Gomes, & Young, 2014). This includes policies that ensure equitable compensation for Indigenous Elders’ knowledge. The pathways of culture, land, orality, community, and ethics have guided our pedagogical processes.

5.4 Further Steps

I infer several practical ways to demonstrate an Indigenous pedagogical process. The educator creates partnerships with Indigenous knowledge keepers to identify the values and protocols to guide their pedagogy. The educator identifies the local knowledge (stories) about sustainable land interactions and the protocols (actions like fir bough harvesting) that strengthen the eco-systems to create health. In the preparation phase, educators negotiate how to apply the values of responsibility and reciprocity to identify how the appropriate protocols could be modified for the specific teaching context. They also make space for the knowledge holders to teach in the class and on the land, and identify the items needed for the teaching events. Educators then apply the teachings through daily reflections.
The efficacy and the mobilization of the pedagogy discussed in this research are best supported by strategic intersecting interventions that include an anti-racism framework (St. Denis & Schick, 2005). These include educational strategies that incorporate lobby plans and demands for federal anti-racism legislation that considers international human rights laws and cases involving Indigenous peoples elsewhere, such as the Maori in New Zealand (Willmott-Harrop, 2006). The socio-historical context of this present research is political in that the oral history narratives are constitutional narratives that identify effective education as a fundamental right and responsibility. Additional policy strategies include legislated accountability mechanisms to ensure that services get to people and align with both local and international contexts (Turpel-LaFond, 2013). The Medicine Camp Elders chronicle the negative consequences of forced assimilation and the failure of current educational policies to bolster the social and economic conditions of Aboriginal populations.

Indigenous research often proposes new models of education and argues that the preservation of Aboriginal knowledge is an Aboriginal right preserved by the many treaties with First Nations. Current educational policies must undergo substantive reform, both locally and at international levels. Central to this process is the rejection of the racism inherent in colonial systems of education, and the repositioning of Indigenous humanities, sciences, and languages as vital fields of knowledge. The pedagogy described in this study is designed specifically for local contexts, although the research stories, protocols, and principles can also inform a revitalized knowledge system that incorporates both Indigenous and Euro-Western thinking. Strategic and practical educational approaches to sustainable food security and transformative research into alternative teaching methods must contribute to a decolonizing education. This decolonizing education maps a way out of colonial thinking by affirming Indigenous ways of life while building a collective focus on what it means to live out or embody, for example, the spirit of the original treaty relationships. Craft (2013) notes:

The inaakonigewin, relationships, are strong indicators of normative expectations and obligations that exist between parties...and are based in equality and
profound respect for all parts of creation... The core purpose of treaty was to create relationships—not to cede land. (Craft, 2013. p.p. 92, 114)

Relationships are understood as reciprocal and based in kinship responsibilities (Justice, 2005). Our approach and processes allow us the tools to explore in diverse ways how we can embody the spirit of treaty relationship with the peoples of these lands as well as the nonhuman relationships.

I think that the Elders’ stories help me to consider which pedagogies contribute to responsible, relational, Indigenous resurgence by striving to reflect what Indigenous language and concepts mean today. For example, by placing balanced relationships at the center of political action to protect land and water, both individual and collective movement ensure the continuity of life and sustainability of the lands. In retraining our sensory awareness to remember how we are related to the rest of Creation, we provide one intervention that seeks to decolonize the body’s sense of disconnection and provide an entry point for the Indigenous legal principle of Nindinawemaganidog—All My Relations. Sinclair (2013) notes:

Nindinawemaganidog is the principle that the universe is a multidimensional web with entities that rely on each other to live. Nindinawemaganidog is not the vague romantic chant of “we are all related” found in new-age books but is a binding, critical philosophy. It is, for most Anishinaabeg, a law devised through interactions between two Anishinaabeg philosophical principles: enawendiwin, the spiritual and material connections Anishinaabeg share with entities throughout Creation and waawiyeyaag, a law of circularity that gives shape, meaning, and purpose to the universe. (p. 105)

Decolonizing education requires a physical, social, and spiritual connection to Indigenous legal principles inherent in the Nindinawemaganidog. These are lived out in creative and ongoing everyday acts of relational resurgence that seek to build new houses of learning, restore relationships to lands through appropriate engagement with traditional knowledge and plant medicines, and create and embody new pedagogical strategies. Decolonizing pedagogies require a physical, social, and spiritual connection to Indigenous legal principles inherent in the Nindinawemaganidog.
These are lived out in creative acts of ongoing, everyday acts of relational resurgence that seek to build new relationships, restore traditional medicines, and create and embody new ways of being in the world. This means engaging in and moving beyond personal and community decolonization. Harsha Walia suggests moving “beyond a politics of solidarity towards a practice of decolonization,” which means being “active and integral participants in a decolonization movement for political liberation, social transformation, renewed cultural kinships, and the development of an economic system that serves rather than threatens our collective life on this planet” (Walia 2012, 241). This means taking responsibility for our role in the many relationships we have with both the human and non-human world, living out reciprocity in our daily lives (Young & Nadeau, forthcoming).

The focus on Indigenous land-based pedagogy as taught by Indigenous Elders aims to reconcile relationships with self and the non-human realms. Relationship with lands is the foundation of this pedagogy and demonstrates possibilities for Indigenous tribal resurgence. Resurgence, for me, means to restore knowledge from Indigenous knowledge perspectives and to articulate self-determined expressions while maintaining responsibilities for the wellbeing of the collective. To access knowledge from Anishnaabeg perspective, we have to engage our entire being (Simpson 2011). The core of this pedagogy is to transform our ways of being by being intentionally alive internally and using our senses to embody an Indigenous resurgence that reflects living in good standing relationships to all our relations.
CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

The current research project provides an example of a tribal, land-based, and genealogy-centered approach to education. The Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar pedagogy is an example of Elders’ Indigenous Knowledge applied in a land-based health education program. This research expands ideas of pedagogy by privileging a tribal-centered pedagogical approach and provides, in part, an applied critical pedagogical example that answers how we might begin to address the gap in health and education disparities that Indigenous peoples continue to experience (Graham & Stamler, 2010). Through my research into Indigenous pedagogy I have made explicit several common learning strategies within various learning systems (Anderson, 2011; Battiste, 2000; Donald, 2009; Nakata, Nakata, Keec, & Bolt, 2012; Yunkaporta & Kirby, 2011). Indigenous pedagogies intentionally demonstrate synergy, fluidity, balance, and harmony as learning objectives. Indigenous Elders, as a source of Indigenous Knowledge, provide intergenerational educational leadership by sharing their teachings, stories, and experiences. The Elders and Indigenous Knowledge apprentice participants discussed which pedagogies are used within a particular Indigenous land-based health education program. Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers talked about the pedagogy of land relationships and emphasized that both Indigenous protocols and storywork processes are foundational to their practice of education. The resulting Gee-zhee-kan’-dug “Cedar Pedagogy” provides a framework which demonstrates a path by which we can further the goals set out in Indian Control of Indian Education (1972), the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the report of the Canadian Council on Learning (2007), and the Accord on Indigenous Education (2010). As I look toward the next steps I will continue to balance cultural competency education with local Indigenous protocol principles and relationship building by co-partnerships with local communities.
The Medicine Camp programs demonstrate teaching pathways that oppose larger forces of cognitive imperialism by prioritizing local, land-based teaching methods congruent with tribal values and contemporary, Euro-Western ways of knowing. The Medicine Camp programs inform current Indigenizing efforts in higher education and teacher education through building an understanding of local Indigenous relational genealogy, roles, and responsibilities. Building cultural competency should respond to the increasing urbanization of Indigenous peoples through building Indigenous community co-partnerships that aim to generate shared understandings of what it means to be a good relative living in Indigenous homelands.

As an Indigenous intellectual and traditional practitioner who trusts, practices, and lives within the wisdom traditions, I demonstrate through this writing my commitment and devotion to furthering the collective projects of engaging in flexible plural conceptions of Nindinaweymaganidog (Hart, 2008; Aheniskew et al., 2014). I am accountable to existing kinship relationships as demonstrated for the last 30 years in my efforts to further Indigenous knowledge and heritage, and the wisdom traditions of a relational Wahkohtowin inherent in Mino-Bim/Pimadiziwin. This research aimed to move beyond the dichotomies and limits of current scholarships towards a concept of radical interdependence and responsible freedom as constant co-creation to “revitalize possibilities of existence based on ancestral wisdom and on the urgency of considering a shared fate in a finite planet facing unprecedented challenges” (Ahenakew, Andreotti, Cooper, & Hireme, 2014, p. 229).

This research is oriented towards a metaphysical transformation that ascribes agency and subjectivity to land and displaces humans, political dogmas, ideologies, institutions, capitalism, or deceptions of communalism from the center. The Elders’ stories and teaching methods point toward a more nuanced consideration of the complex histories of violent subjugation (Andreotti, Ahenakew, & Cooper, 2011).

I continue to be accountable to the traditional wisdom traditions, the Medicine Camp Elders and the relational beings in and on the lands and will continue to be
concerned with making a difference in this world with the help of our Indigenous philosophers, the Elders, and will continue this relational work well beyond the parameters of this research.

This research explored how Indigenous Knowledge Systems inform research and pedagogies. Indigenous research rooted in relational Indigenous land-based paradigms provides alternative models for transformative education and employs elements of an oral history approach. Through a collective storywork methodology process, 18 Elders and knowledge holders described the pedagogies used at the Medicine Camp Programs. Elders discussed how the teaching methods used in the programs provide culturally relevant pedagogy to improve health education. The applied pedagogy described here provides an example of how Elders continue to teach in ways that move beyond Cartesian bio-medical models of health education and consider complex self-determined, situated social histories (reflexivity) with cultural, wholistic, social, and spiritual ecologies (Waldrum, 2008; Vukic, Gregory, Matrin-Misener, & Etowa, 2011). The pedagogy they use re-imagines Indigenous Knowledge, research, and storywork methods through eight collective storywork discussion circles. This research articulates how the relationships of land and Elders inform a transformative Indigenous Knowledge—a tribal pedagogy. The five pedagogical principles developed herein are culture, orality, land, community, and ethics. These pedagogical pathways contribute to theoretical and applied tribal methods that can be used to improve Indigenous education, develop a better understanding about Indigenous Knowledge systems in decolonizing and transforming Indigenous education, and contribute to opportunities for knowledge mobilization about Indigenous research within Indigenous communities. Indigenous tribal leadership and the revitalization and continuation of Indigenous communities, knowledge, and culture are highlighted.

The Indigenous land-based framework developed herein builds on the following: research, preparation, protocol principles, application, and reflection. The discussion of this framework concluded by considering its implications for pedagogy, policy, and
practice. The Elders’ stories and teachings in the land-based health education programs have exemplified teaching methods that can help improve the gap in both education and health outcomes. This framework can easily be transferred to address the profound disparities in Aboriginal health indices where diverse, complex, strength-based, and wholistic conceptions of health and resiliency can be made. Improvements to health will result by providing access to both contemporary, Indigenous cultural practices and Euro-Western modes of wellness that are situated in socio-historical, political, economic, and neo-racist contexts as they are addressed through both discursive analysis and applied cultural practices with specific peoples and places (Aquash 2013, Andreotti, Ahenakew, Cooper & Hireme, 2014; Battiste 2014; Coulthard 2014).

I am committed to ongoing explorations of the ethical spaces of engagement where Indigenous knowledge, relationships with Indigenous knowledge holders, landscapes, plants, medicines, and conceptions of health and education can continue to enhance wholistic health and wellbeing through self-determined partnerships. These partnerships must, in addition, honor, engage, and protect multiple knowledges appropriately through ethical engagement using appropriate protocol principles that respect individual gifts and the collective in ways that are mutually beneficent (Ermine & Hampton, 2007; Corntassel, 2013; Hart, 2013; Kirmayer et al., 2000; Kimmerer, 2013; Vukic, Gregory, Matrin-Misener, & Etowa, 2011).

This study has several limitations. Although the research circle participants are adult learners who have been working with the rural, community-based Medicine Camp for many years, this is not a longitudinal study. Future research should include the intergenerational impacts of Indigenous, land-based education programs in urban areas and at different levels of the formal school system, from early childhood to post-secondary. The tribal perspectives presented in this project are limited to Anishnabé and Nehiyaw Cree and my own subjective interpretations. Further research that investigates land-based pedagogies in other Indigenous tribal contexts is required to provide a comprehensive comparative analysis. The Elders gesture towards sound,
land-based pedagogical pathways, but creative means are required to support them in the absence of legislated policy on antiracism, protection of Indigenous lands, and dedicated funding to support cultural and language revitalization initiatives. Most essentially, these initiatives must be balanced with the local and self-determined needs of Indigenous peoples.

The Elders’ reflections describe some of the challenges facing contemporary First Nations education. They outline the importance of knowing about history, places, peoples, and culturally relevant pedagogical approaches if we are to reconcile and transform the relationship with assimilationist education regimes characteristic of the Canadian nation state. Reconciling education strategies for Indigenous peoples provides sound pedagogies for all peoples. Educator Leanne Simpson (2011a) states:

Reconciliation must be grounded in cultural regeneration and political resurgence. Our inherent theories of resurgence are transformative and revolutionary. They are meant to propel and maintain social, cultural and political transformative movement through the worst political genocide: and I think it is important to understand them as such. (pp. 22, 24)

I agree with Simpson when she troubles “reconciliation” as the “new” way for Canada to relate to Indigenous Peoples. She asserts that reconciliation must be grounded in political resurgence and must support the regeneration of Indigenous languages, oral cultures, and traditions of governance. In short, in order for reconciliation to be meaningful to Indigenous people, we need to interpret it broadly and support Indigenous nations by regenerating everything that residential school and colonial institutions attacked and continue to attack. The Elders in this study provide perspectives on the struggles of Indigenous peoples and highlight the vibrant ways in which Indigenous peoples continue to engage themselves through Elders’ pedagogies, stories, and the corresponding responsibility for nurturing and renewing the relationships as contemporary forms of treaty and relational responsibilities.

The Gee-zhee-kan’-dug Cedar Pedagogy for me is about living out my responsibility to the treaty relationships with lands. My educational role and
responsibilities are informed by my maternal matriarchal clan system roles and responsibilities. The Amisk Beaver Clan is responsible for building and bridging sustainable and ecologically habitable learning environments. Additionally, I have woven my paternal clan and my land-based knowledge responsibilities into the documentation of this research. Thus, this research fulfills my role as an educator and my responsibilities to my clans. Because this research is consistent with my Indigenous worldview and of value to education and educators, it also fulfills my responsibility to Indigenous Knowledge. I learned that Indigenous Knowledge continues to inform research, theory, method, and methodology. The Elders’ teaching methods have helped me to deepen my heart-felt relationships to people, plants, and places.

Kinanâskomitin Nikaniganan

Nindinaweiymaganidog

All My Relations
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Appendix A: Forms

1. Letter of Invitation to Participate

APPENDIX A

Letter of Invitation to Participate

Project Title: Indigenous Elders’ Pedagogy in land-based health education

Principal Investigator: Michael Marko, Associate Professor
Facility of Education 2125 Main Mall Van, BC V6T 1Z4
Phone: Email:_________________________

Co-investigator: Alannah Young, Graduate Student Educational Studies, UBC
Greetings

This is a letter of invitation to consider interviewing for my doctoral research study. Should you agree to be interviewed, a complete letter of information with consent form will be sent to you for your signature.

The goal of this research is to inspire and articulate an Indigenous Elders’ pedagogy through the stories and experiences of the participants who have taken the Medicine Camp programs and to share these with educational leaders, curriculum writers and Indigenous communities who are interested in developing similar programs.

You will be asked to reflect on your experiences at Medicine Camp with how you were educated through stories and teachings shared at the Medicine Camp. You are invited to participate in this study because of your cultural education expertise and your involvement of these specific programs.

You are invited to participate as an Indigenous Elder or professional, or educator or expert in your field areas. You will be invited to share the pedagogies employed at the Earth Medicine Programs to expand the field of Indigenous pedagogical studies.

First you are asked to participate in a 1-2 hour interview or a focus group for 2-3 hours to reflect on your experiences and memories at the Medicine Camp for a total of 4 to 6 hours. You will be given a transcript of your interview to review and you will then invited to participate in a focus group with other research participants to discuss themes and initial findings. The time frame of your participation is from August 1, 2012 to July 31, 2013.

Please reply by return mail or by email to me, within two weeks.

Thank-you.

Alannah Young
2. Participant Consent Form Required by the University of British Columbia

APPENDIX B

Project Title: Indigenous Elders' Pedagogy in land-based health education programs - Medicine Camp

Principal Investigator: Michael Marker, Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
2125 Main Mall Van BC V6T 1Z4
Phone: Email: 

Co-investigator: Alannah Young, Graduate Student Educational Studies, UBC

May 28, 2012

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this research inquiry. The topic of the project documents conversations on how Indigenous Elders teach at the Medicine Camp.

This research project is being conducted as part of a thesis project for Alannah Young's PhD degree in Educational Studies with the 'Ts’kel, Indigenous education program at the University of British Columbia. This research project examines how Indigenous Elders teach in the land-based health education programs.

The study goals are to provide an example of Indigenous Elders Pedagogy by interviewing Indigenous cultural educators and Elders who are familiar with the Earth Medicine Programs (Medicine Camps).

By gathering and sharing the experiences of Elders and cultural educators who are familiar with the programs, a body of knowledge will be made available to educators and will assist in the ongoing development of similar programs.

Your participation will involve 1 interview session for approximately one hour and/or a two-hour focus group over the period of 4 weeks in August 1-31, 2012. Participants would be involved in the study from August 01, 2012 - July 31, 2013. The turn around time for participants to check transcripts for accuracy is approximately one month.

You will be asked to share your thoughts on the topic question:

How do Indigenous Elders teach in the Medicine Camp program?

The first interview will be audio taped and then transcribed and you will be invited to provide comments on transcribed interviews. If you wish to have your comments held in confidence, that will be respected and you may request to withdraw your participation at any time and you may request to stop the interview audio taped interview at any time.

Page 2/4
You are not required to give feedback and you may withdraw from participating in this process at anytime without any negative consequences whatsoever. Your identity will be protected and be held confidential and you will be given a pseudonym.

You do not waive any of your legal rights by signing this consent form and you may change your decision at anytime.

By signing you give consent to participate the study “Indigenous Elders Pedagogy in Land-based health education Programs”. In addition to the results informing your PhD thesis and the findings will be presented at various community initiatives and will be used for academic publications and conference presentations with permission from the community. Any proceeds will go towards the benefit of the Earth Medicine Programs.

The data will be kept confidential and secure (e.g. password protected computer and locked storage or filing cabinets). After 5 years the original recordings and discussions will be returned to you or destroyed and demagnetized unless you agree to have them stored in a specific place with specific access requirements.

If you have any questions about this research or the interview process, please contact me, or my thesis advisor, Michael Marker, at the numbers noted above.

Signature: ____________________________
Date: ________________________________

ORAL CONSENT OPTION

Participant has given oral consent to participate in the study “Indigenous Elders Pedagogy.”

Printed name: ____________________________
Participant: ____________________________
Co investigators Signature: ____________________________
Date: ________________________________
Journal Entry: ____________________________
Co Investigator: Alannah Young               Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z4
APPENDIX C

Interview Script

Thank you once again for agreeing to participate in this research inquiry. The topic of the project is to examine how Indigenous elders teaching in the Medicine Camp programs, and is a part of a thesis project for a PhD degree in Educational Studies with the Ts’el’ko’ (Golden Eagle) program at UBC. This interview script is provided so that you may reflect on the project’s topic. You will be asked to share your thoughts and stories on the question:

‘How do Indigenous Elders teach at the Medicine camps?’

Other questions you might like to reflect on include:

How is knowledge transferred at the Medicine Camps?

What is the impact of their teaching practices methods?
April 19, 2012

Michael Marker
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education
2125 Main Mall
Vancouver B.C, V6T 1Z4

Dear Mr. Marker,

Re: Alannah Young Leon, Research Project for PhD

Please be advised the we are in support of Alannah Young Leon conduction education research for her PhD study to investigate the teaching methods of Indigenous Aboriginal Elders, that work the land or in place-based health education contexts. She is a previous band member and continues to demonstrate and interest in supporting community initiated events.

She has outlined the intent of the study is to contribute to the study of teaching methods that will assist in the retention and success of Aboriginal learners.

Further we understand that the Elders interviews and the study findings aim to benefit and expand both health and education practices for the educators and practitioners to consider.

We understand that she will employ the values of respect, responsibility, reciprocity and relevance and to continue to research that will improve education outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and ultimately enhance the health and well being of Aboriginal Peoples.

Migwetch,

Yours Truly,

Doris T. Bear, Health Director