

ABORIGINAL LITERACY:
MAKING MEANING ACROSS THREE GENERATIONS
IN AN ANISHINAABE COMMUNITY

by

JAN HARE

B.A.Sc., University of Guelph, 1988
B.Ed., Nipissing University, 1989
M.Ed., University of Western Ontario, 1996

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Department of Educational Studies)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

June 2001

© Jan Hare, 2001

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Educational Studies

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date June 22/01

Abstract

The changing functions, uses, and value of literacy in the lives of three successive biological generations of Anishinaabe residing in the same community form the basis of this study.

Aboriginal people need and value western notions of literacy for participation in mainstream society. They are, at the same time, aware that western literacy has been imposed upon them, damaging their own forms of literacy which are closely rooted in their cultural traditions. The study describes three prevailing ideas about literacy among these seven sets of Anishinaabe families. The cultural traditions rooted in their relationships with land and family represent the understandings of Aboriginal literacy for the first generation of Anishinaabe, the oldest of this study. These Aboriginal women and men have constructed broader meanings for literacy that include print traditions and dominant languages, but also respect Aboriginal ways of knowing and incorporate cultural practices that give meaning to how people live and make sense of their world. A shift in cultural traditions and language is apparent as members of the second generation discuss their understandings of literacy within the contexts of family, school, and society. Formal schooling attempted to supplant Aboriginal literacy with the traditions of print in official languages that characterize western literacy. Western literacy becomes the means by which members of the second generation have re-asserted their rights to self-determination. The third generation, the youngest of this study, experience a greater orientation towards western literacy. The features that distinguish Aboriginal literacy are in decline. At the same time, their hold on western literacy allows them to assert their identities and prepare for a future beyond their community. The thesis is intended to challenge western notions of literacy, which privilege the written word and English/French languages, arguing for a broader

conceptions of literacy which include languages, narrative traditions, and rich symbolic and meaning-making systems of Aboriginal culture.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Dedication	viii
1. Joan's Quill Boxes	1
2. There's a Method to my Study	17
The Aboriginal Community	18
Participants	22
Locating the Researcher	26
Community Consultation	29
Data Collection	34
Data Analysis	37
3. First Generation Participants	40
Literacy within the Family	41
Schooling and Literacy	50
Literacy Beyond Schooling	67
4. Second Generation Participants	72
Literacy within the Family	73
Schooling and Literacy	81
Literacy Beyond Schooling	84

5. Third Generation Participants	97
Literacy within the Family	98
Schooling and Literacy	108
Literacy Beyond Schooling	116
6. The Quill Box of the Future	127
Implications for Aboriginal Literacy	132
Implications for First Nations Education	138
Implications for Future Research	143
Conclusion	145
References	147

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Participants in the study by generation and age	23
---	----

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many people to acknowledge in this learning process. I am grateful to my community for their support and encouragement in my studies and to those in the community who participated and helped with my research. My father, Joe Hare, helped guide this research process with his experience and wisdom. Miigwech!

Thank you to the members of my research committee. I have great respect for Dr. Jim Anderson whose openness to new ideas demonstrates the kind of learning and research to which I would like to aspire. Dr. Michael Marker's enthusiasm for my ideas has been an important part of this work.

I am extremely grateful to Dr. Jean Barman for her roles as supervisor, mentor, and friend. She has been influential in shaping me for my role as a scholar.

I would also like to thank Dr. Jo-ann Archibald. I have worked with Jo-ann over the years in several research capacities. She has provided opportunities that have allowed me to define myself as an Aboriginal scholar.

Thank you to my family and friends who have been patient, generous, loving and kind to both my son and I during this work.

Above all, I am grateful to my son Atticus. He is a source of inspiration and has a spirit from which we can all learn.

In memory of Dr. Murray Elliott,
for his support and encouragement
of First Nations students.

Chapter One

Joan's Quill Boxes

Joan was sitting at the table garnishing a small birch bark box with gray and white porcupine quills when I came to call on her. I was struck by how the design that she was creating with the quills seemed different from much of the quill work that at one time characterized the Anishinaabe of the area. The geometric pattern that she was crafting out of different sized quills gave a sense of depth to the top of the box. Joan was one of the artists of the area who was challenging traditional displays on the birch bark boxes by including complex designs, three-dimensional effects, and brilliant displays of color. Sharing some of her quill boxes with me, she pointed out how she was blending the earlier and traditional styles with new forms and designs that she and others had developed.

Joan's son was also there to greet me. "Bojou Janice," he said, using a common Anishinaabe greeting. As Joan speaks only Anishinaabe, her son was there to translate for me, as I talked to her about her understandings of literacy. After admiring the quill boxes and saying hello to Joan's son, we were ready to begin. Joan needed to sign an informed consent letter to indicate her willingness to participate in this research. Given that Joan does not read or write in English or Anishinaabe, this posed a challenge which was closely related to our conversation about literacy. Following a paraphrasing of the written document and its translation into Anishinaabe, Joan reached over and took my pen in hand, in a manner indicating little concern, and marked the bottom of the form with an X. She then turned her attention back to her quill box while we got on with our talk about literacy.

The research interview with Joan offers insights into the relationship of literacy to Aboriginal peoples in three ways. Firstly, the conversation could only begin once Joan had confronted an artifact of the dominant literacy discourse, represented by the consent form and signature. The form assumes Joan is used to working with the written word, and it is only by virtue of this form of literacy that her rights, within this research project, were to be protected. Such a perspective on literacy is short sighted. The literacy apparent in Joan's weaving of themes and traditions into her quill boxes argues against investing the written word with superior authority. Aboriginal people work with alternative systems of representation and traditions that are not limited to print. Joan's craft communicates its own sense of cultural continuity and meaning in a way that written words cannot. It is clear from the way Joan marks her consent that she can neither read nor write. The conversation with her takes a considerable turn away from schooling and literacy, to give a rich picture of the traditional and nomadic lifestyle that she and others in this community once pursued.

Secondly, the reference points for Joan's experiences were hunting, fishing, and gathering from the land. The relationship to the land marks one of the key features within an Aboriginal worldview, which is the way in which Aboriginal people interpret their world. Aboriginal literacy includes the interpretations Joan makes in her life within this traditional lifestyle. The land becomes a text as she reads her surroundings. Leroy Little Bear (2000), a Blood member of the Blackfoot Confederacy, supports this notion of Aboriginal literacy when he explains, "In [Plains] Indian philosophy, certain events, patterns, cycles, and happenings take place at certain places. From a human point of view, patterns, cycles and happenings are readily observable on the land: animal migrations, cycles of plant life, seasons, and so on" (p. 78).

Thirdly, the interview with Joan points out how closely academic notions of literacy are associated with languages that have a long written tradition such as English. For Joan, who speaks only Anishinaabe, literacy cannot be defined, or even discussed in such terms. Yet, the very issue that I, also an Anishinaabe woman, am pursuing is how the English language continues to be the focus of prevailing ideas about literacy, ideas that have undermined the place of Aboriginal languages in these communities. Within the Aboriginal literacies that I am discussing in this dissertation, Aboriginal languages have often been acknowledged as vital to the transmission of Aboriginal culture. While language is intimately connected to literacy, the thesis does not deal explicitly with Aboriginal languages. Language issues for Aboriginal issues are complex and deserving of their attention.

Providing the foundation for what I have termed Aboriginal literacy in this thesis are: the alternative representations and traditions seen in Aboriginal culture; our worldview, which serves to interpret, preserve, and transmit Aboriginal culture; and our Aboriginal languages. Framing literacy in this way is intended to challenge notions of mainstream literacy and legitimize Aboriginal ways of knowing and the ways Aboriginal people make sense of their world. Western literacy has been limited to conventions of print in official languages, ignoring other symbolic and meaning making systems.

Allan Luke's (1995) framework for viewing reading as a social practice sees cultural ways of viewing and appraising, judging and analysing the social and natural worlds as literacy, referring to these functions as social epistemologies. Representations include all symbolic and linguistic expressions, which are interpreted from cultural standpoints and locations. Making sense of our world is synonymous with making sense of the word,

according to Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1987). Both involve decoding and interpreting representations, either written text and features inscribed in our surroundings.

While Joan shared her stories in Anishinaabe, I was overwhelmed by two opposing feelings. I admired the depth of her knowledge of the past and how engagingly she conveyed that history, laughing much of the time. It gave me a sense of pride for who I am, an Anishinaabe, connected to this community, to these People. But the visit also left me feeling dislocated, having lived most of my life in urban places, spending summers on the “rez.” Joan’s stories reminded me that I have always lived in two worlds, without really feeling like I belong to either.

Despite growing up in an environment that was concerned with Aboriginal issues, this aspect of my identity has now become far more important to me. The racism that I experienced growing up left me not wanting to think about my Aboriginal identity. My education in urban schools and at university led me to reflect on how I needed to reposition myself in relation to my Aboriginal identity. I soon developed an Aboriginal voice, one which has shaped and affirmed my identity as an Aboriginal woman and underlies my commitment to Aboriginal peoples. This has required me to negotiate my identity in two different worlds -- an Aboriginal community and a dominant society – leaving me feeling disconnected to both. But, like Patricia A. Monture Okanee (1992), a Mohawk scholar who situates herself in a similar place, I can find solace in being in the middle. For she says, “it is in the middle, the place between the two cultures, where any bridges of understanding will be constructed” (p. 129).

It is a desire to build bridges of understanding that motivates my university work with Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal world-views need to have a respected place within the thinking of such institutions, as well within the society at large, if Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

peoples are to live in harmony with one another, and past injustices are to be redressed. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996b) stated, "Canada and Canadians must realize that they need to consider changing their society so that they can discover ways of living in harmony with the original people of the land" (Vol. 1, p. 382).

Much of my professional and scholarly work with Aboriginal peoples has been concerned with education. Education has been a particular site of struggle for Aboriginal peoples. Their perspectives and experiences have for too long been excluded from Western thinking about teaching and learning. It is within this struggle to secure a place for Aboriginal approaches to education within the larger society that my place in the middle acquires meaning. As I embark on this thesis on Aboriginal understandings about literacy, I am also reading and writing my story for the first time.

The thesis is intended to broaden the ways we think about literacy by examining Aboriginal peoples' understandings, both on a personal level and within the context of a changing world. It describes, among three successive biological generations of Anishinaabe whom I interviewed, three prevailing ideas about literacy: Aboriginal people need and value western notions of literacy for participation in mainstream society; those notions of literacy have been imposed upon Aboriginal people, damaging their own forms of literacy which are closely rooted in their cultural traditions; and Aboriginal people have constructed broader meanings for literacy that include print traditions and dominant languages, but also respect Aboriginal ways of knowing and incorporate cultural practices that give meaning to how people live and make sense of the world.

This thesis captures how ideas about literacy have changed across the generations. The first generation was made up of the oldest participants in this study including Joan. They

possessed a strong hold on the land and language and expressed an Aboriginal literacy that was theirs alone to share with the other generations, who were, in some sense, already living in a different world. The second generation took their greater exposure to western literacy and schooling to heart by directing it toward the open assertion of Aboriginal rights and political action, as well as toward a rejection of how Aboriginal people were schooled. The third or youngest generation reflected a far greater orientation toward western literacy and educational sensibilities, an orientation supported by their parents and a source of real pride and confidence, even as it was achieved amid a sense of loss of Aboriginal literacy, most notably their inability to speak as their grandparents spoke.

It has become apparent that as Aboriginal people increase control over the governance of their lives, we are faced with the task of reclaiming a broader conception of literacy that will work for our communities and culture, that will enable an extension of Aboriginal culture, not only into the future but into a larger world which is engaged in overcoming Western legacies of colonialism that have left their mark on Aboriginal conceptions of literacy. Jim Dumont, a spiritual leader among the Anishinaabe, has stated that “there will be a different kind of literacy for Native people...It will say different things in a different manner” (Ontario Literacy Coalition, 1990).

The dissertation draws on a body of literature that supports the notion that oral language and literacy have been shaped by the social and cultural contexts of one's environment (Hamilton, Barton, and Ivanic, 1994; Heath, 1983; Street, 1993; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988). Baynham (1995) explains the advantages of attending to social context:

Researching literacy in social context involves stepping back from pedagogical issues involved in the teaching and learning of literacy and trying to find out how literacy is actually used in a range of contexts... This approach to the study of literacy has greatly extended our understanding of the functions and uses of literacy across social groups and in different settings. (p. 42)

The study of literacy in its social context has included investigating the social uses of literacy in cultural contexts. "Research in cultures that have newly acquired reading and writing draws attention to the creative and original ways in which people transform literacy to their own cultural concerns and interests" (Street, 1993, p. 1).

More importantly, this socio-cultural approach to literacy research has repositioned oral and literate cultures. It has struck the divide that has situated print-based cultures superior to cultures possessing an oral tradition. The argument which separates oral and literate cultures asserts that there are cognitive consequences to the acquisition of print literacy. Described as the "great divide" theory, this research assumes the introduction of print to oral cultures results in a higher level thought process that allow for logic, rationality, subjectivity, abstract thought, and the possibility of science (Ong, 1982; Goody, 1968). Contending that convention of western literacy in Greece made possible the disciplines of history and logic, Goody and Watt (1988) explain,

Literate societies, [on the other hand], cannot discard, absorb, or transmute the past in the same way [as oral cultures]. Instead, their members are faced with the permanently recorded versions of the past and its beliefs; and because the past is thus set apart from the present, historical enquiry becomes possible.

This in turn encourages scepticism; and scepticism, not only about the

legendary past, but about received ideas about the universe as a whole. From here the next step is to see how to build up and to test alternative explanations; and out of this there arose the kind of logical, specialized, and cumulative intellectual tradition. (p. 26)

Literacy conceptualized within a framework that separates oral and literate cultures in a hierarchical manner creates "crude and often ethnocentric stereotypes of 'other cultures'" (Street, 1993, p. 7).

Recognizing the cognitive consequences of literacy as real, but limited, has been the work of Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole (1988). Their research of literacy practices highlights how the Vai people in Liberia engaged with English, Arabic, and Vai scripts. Comparison of those literate in Vai and non-literates on a series of sorting and verbal reasoning tasks revealed that there was no significant difference between the two groups on these tasks that had been suggested as especially sensitive to experience with a written language. The consequences of literacy that they identified through their interviews and observations are highly specific and closely tied to actual practices with particular scripts. Literacy in Vai is acquired without formal schooling. Pointing out how the Vai script can be learned within a two week to a two month period, these researchers suggest that most of our notions about literacy are associated with school-based learning, perhaps ignoring non-schooled approaches.

Yet, the conventions of western literacy have been imposed on cultures in the name of education, presenting itself as the only valid option. Heath's (1983) landmark study of three communities in the Piedmont Carolinas demonstrates poignantly how the literacy of the schools reproduces itself through members of mainstream society. Over a ten year period, she

observed the numerous differences in the literate traditions of the black working-class of Trackton, the white working-class of Roadville, and the "mainstream" townspeople, who were black and white educated middle-class. The nature of the oral communication in Trackton differs from the other communities. Children of Trackton are immersed in a world of oral communication, where they are generally asked open-ended questions and presented with almost continuous communication. Adults of Trackton do not simplify language by labeling items or features and stories, though based on an actual event, maybe highly fictionalized or wildly exaggerated. "The best stories are "junk," and anyone who can "talk junk" is a good story-teller" (1983, p.166). Literacy in Trackton is highly functional, using reading and writing to accomplish the practical goals of everyday life, such as paying bills, reading street sign or calendars. Parents then, do not facilitate children's reading through story-book reading.

For the people of Roadville and the townspeople oral and literate traditions differ from those in Trackton. Adults engage in a wider range of literacy events and there is emphasis on the importance of reading, which is transmitted to the children. In Roadville, mothers and fathers read to their children, focus their attention on illustrations, question them closely about items and events in the text, and buy them storybooks. However, adults do not facilitate literacy beyond book-reading. The townspeople orient their children to literate sources from an early age. Support for literate and oral traditions continues as children grow older.

The school achievement of the children from these communities is notably different. The children of Trackton do poorly in school when they enter and continue to experience little success. As a result many end up dropping-out. The children of Roadville do well upon entering school. The skills they have developed at home meet the demands of the early years of schooling. But as those demands change and as other skills become necessary, these

children begin to experience failure. It is the children of the townspeople that continue to experience success throughout their schooling. The literacy practices they engage in at home mirror those of the school. Heath's study demonstrates how schools support only "one literacy," failing to recognize, validate, or build on the literacy practices of students from diverse communities.

The very demands of schooling require Aboriginal children to relinquish their own literacy traditions. Comparing the communicative patterns of Athabaskan Native students with those of the white-middle class children, Scollon and Scollon (1981) observed the challenges for Native students on written tasks. Native Athabaskan children assuming the dominant prose of essay writing taught in the school experienced internal conflict similar to the cross-cultural conflict that can be produced in oral communication when two speakers from different ethnic groups share a different understanding for language patterns. These examples demonstrate how a monolithic conception of literacy, perpetuated by the schools, continues to represent a narrow view of literacy.

Among the more promising developments for an expanded understanding of literacy has been the concept of multiple literacies, which acknowledges the diversity of languages and literacy practices, introduced by sociolinguistic and educational researchers (New London Group, 1996). These scholars have shown how meanings attached to literacy, the ways literacy is acquired and mediated, and the functions and uses of literacy are socially and culturally constructed. This body of research draws on ethnographic traditions, detailing the literacy practices of diverse groups and questioning school based learning as the measure for literacy. Crediting the possibility of multiple literacies is one way of redressing the imbalance of power relations within culturally and linguistically diverse communities. As these

communities continue to look to literacy as a means of making sense of their own world, as well as connecting themselves to the larger society, there is a need for a critical study of what counts as literacy.

Brian Street (1993) uses the term “ideological” to describe a model of literacy that seeks to recognize the variety of cultural practices associated with reading and writing in different contexts. This approach to literacy challenges the “great divide” and even brings together oral and literate modes of communication as opposed to placing them in opposition. Distinctive in Street’s framing of literacy this way is the relationship of literacy to power structures, and not just aspects of culture. In his book, Cross-cultural Approaches to Literacy, Street presents literacy studies that take into account an ethnographic perspective. That is, an approach to research which assumes an understanding of literacy requires detailed, in-depth accounts of actual practice in different cultural settings.

While research on multiple literacies continues to be concerned with how individuals and communities construct their identities (Barton, Hamilton, and Ivanic 2000; Norton, 2000), the research has in some cases become politicized in its discussions of power. Not only does this research point out how inequitable power relations limit opportunities for those whose literacy falls outside the dominant definitions of educated literacy, but it also indicates how individuals and groups can respond and act upon these relations of power to create new opportunities. The study of multiple literacies pays attention to formal institutions beyond schooling and informal settings as places where multiple literacies operate. Further, the research has expanded to include intersecting factors of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality.

Describing the experiences of five immigrant women learning to speak English, Bonny Norton (2000) draws together the many facets emerging within multiple literacies. She argues that these women's opportunities to learn English at home, the workplace, and the community are hampered by the fact that knowledge of English is a pre-requisite of entry into these social networks. While struggling to acquire the dominant language of English, these women experience changing identities in their roles as mothers, wives, and co-workers. When confronted with inequities, several participants of her study resisted:

When Katarina felt that her English teacher in the skills course fails to acknowledge her professional history [as a teacher in Poland], positioning her as an immigrant, she was angry. When, indeed, the teacher appeared to discourage Katarina from taking a computer course that would give her access to the very professional social networks she sought, she dropped out of the course. Katarina refused to take up the subject position of the uneducated, unskilled immigrant in her language class... It was an act of resistance on her part to remove herself from the scene of conflict. (2000, p. 141)

This thesis will situate understandings of literacy for Aboriginal peoples within the multiple literacies research and demonstrate that despite discussions of multiple literacies moving ahead, the dominant literacy still pervades and understandings of multiple literacies remain at the level of research. The thesis extends the research on multiple literacies. Rather than locating this research in a fixed place in time as does most multiple literacies research, this study is located within shifting historical contexts. It examines the functions and values of literacy across life spans and from one generation to the next within the context of broader social, cultural, and political changes.

My thesis examines how family and schooling have shaped the meanings Indian people in the same community attach to literacy. It addresses literacy practices for themselves and with their families, messages they convey about literacy, and the needs and functions of literacy for Aboriginal people. My research does so by spanning three biological and successive generations within seven Anishinaabe families with the goal of informing our understandings of Aboriginal literacy. The literacy narratives of these participants are situated within the larger social, political, and historical contexts that have influenced their lives. This research provides the text for my own story and demonstrates how a relationship characterized by dominance and paternalism between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies has contributed to the dynamic and contextual nature of how literacy meanings and practices have developed for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal people did not use literacy in the same way as Europeans prior to contact, yet forms of literacy did exist for them. "Through the use of pictographs, petroglyphs, notched sticks, and wampum, early North American Indians achieved a form of written communication and recording which served the social, political, cultural, and spiritual needs of the early period, fully describing the ideal and material world. Aboriginal literacy embodied tribal epistemology in Native texts, which interacted with and depended upon the oral tradition" (Battiste, 1986, p. 25). It is the nature of Aboriginal literacies and the lack of understanding of symbolic literacy that led Europeans to believe that Aboriginal peoples possessed only an oral tradition. Marie Battiste, a Mi'kmaq scholar, says the myth of the illiterate savage justified the need to teach them European literacy and knowledge.

Assertion of western literacy on Aboriginal peoples was fundamental to changes in relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. "An ideology proclaiming

European superiority over all other peoples of the earth was taking hold. It provided a rationale for policies of domination and assimilation, which slowly replaced partnership in the North American colonies. These policies increased in number and bitter effect on Aboriginal people over many years and several generations” (Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a, p. 12). Central to such assimilationist policies was ridding Aboriginal peoples of what were perceived to be their undesirable cultural practices, languages, and traditions. All of this is to say that undermining the very basis of Aboriginal literacy was central to the educational policies imposed on Aboriginal people.

This long-standing insistence that western literacy must supplant Aboriginal literacies, in order for Aboriginal education to take place, has presented the greatest challenges for Aboriginal peoples. Missionaries, who first introduced Aboriginal peoples to print literacy, particularly as a means of reading the Christian Bible, either destroyed, transformed or neglected most of the Aboriginal literacies for their own purposes (Battiste, 1986). Education was an essential tool of colonialism. Formal schooling instituted English language only policies and devalued Aboriginal cultures. The reality that formal schooling has never really worked for Aboriginal peoples suggests resistance rather than deficits in learning. Schooling is only emblematic of the broader forces which have acted to undermine Aboriginal literacies. Government policies, enacted in legislation such as the Indian Act, have contributed to Aboriginal peoples’ marginalization from Canadian society and weakened their cultural base. Yet, Canadian historian Gerald Friesen (2000) has concluded, “Aboriginal culture has not been obliterated. Aboriginal people are simply not like other Canadians. Why not? Their belief in an unbroken chain between past and present remains unshaken, as is evidenced by a thousand stories about Aboriginal cultural resurgence in contemporary Canada” (p. 47).

Chapter two presents the methodological approach that I have taken in the research. It will introduce the setting and participants of the research, providing a social context for the interviews that follow. It covers the form and process of interviews, as well as the method of analysis. This chapter on my method also describes the ethical issues raised in researching Aboriginal communities, as well as locating my own position as a researcher who exists both within and outside of the Aboriginal and academic communities.

Chapters three, four, and five present the literacy experiences and meanings of three generations of Aboriginal people all residing in the same community. Each of these chapters will highlight the social, historical, and political forces which have shaped the dynamic and contextual meaning these participants give to literacy. Their narratives about literacy correspond with the social and political movements of their generation. Each chapter is divided into three main sections; literacy and the family, literacy and schooling, and literacy beyond schooling. Each of the sections leads with the narratives of participants and then moves into literature which contextualizes participants' responses.

Chapter three describes how first generation of Anishinaabe, and the oldest participating in my study, held on to a traditional lifestyle, closely connected to family and land. Their experiences with schooling are situated within the literature surrounding the introduction of formal schooling. The functions and uses of Aboriginal and western literacy in their present lives form the discussion for literacy beyond schooling.

In chapter four, I present the literacy experiences of the second generation Anishinaabe. They reflect on their literacy experiences with their family, offering insights into the changing nature of literacy for them. Their experiences with schooling echo many of the same sentiments of their parents from the first generation. As they articulate the needs for, and

uses of, literacy in their present lives, the collective function of literacy for Aboriginal people emerges. The important political movements for Aboriginal people resonate within the narratives of this second generation of Anishinaabe.

In chapter five, the role of family in encouraging and supporting literacy for the third generation, and youngest Anishinaabe, is revealed. Their reflections on schooling differ from previous generations, making known their greater orientation toward western conventions of literacy. Literature pertaining to contemporary Aboriginal education issues has been used to interpret the experiences of these youth. The dominant presence of western literacy in their lives becomes apparent as they discuss the value of literacy to them beyond schooling.

The final chapter of this dissertation looks at the implications of this study for future generations of Aboriginal peoples. With reference to my study, I suggest how the current understandings of literacy can be expanded to include Aboriginal meaning making systems, rooted in symbolic and oral traditions. I further consider the implications of my study for First Nations education, arguing that shifts in Anishinaabe understandings of literacy could provide meaningful suggestions for policy and practice. Finally, directions for future research in literacy, education, and methodological approaches within Aboriginal communities are considered.

Chapter Two

There's a Method to my Study

This study uses a qualitative case-study design to investigate Aboriginal peoples' understanding of literacy across three generations within a community situated in the Great Lakes region. This approach, drawing heavily on interviews with the participants, provided for rich, detailed descriptions of the beliefs about literacy and expectations for its uses and usefulness against a backdrop of the changing historical situation of Aboriginal people within the Canadian context. Merriam (1998) characterizes qualitative case studies as having three qualities: they are particularistic, meaning that they focus on a particular situation or phenomenon; they are descriptive, resulting in a product that is "rich" in detail; and they are heuristic, illuminating the reader's understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. This research reveals a particular phenomenon, the understanding of literacy for this group of Aboriginal peoples. It is descriptive, documenting beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, events, and processes related to the participants' understandings of literacy. This study is also heuristic, as it explores the functions and uses of literacy which can be used to inform schooling and family literacy practices.

Yin (1994) suggests the value of case study method when investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context as allowing for real-life events to retain meaningful and holistic characteristics. In this thesis, the historical, social, economic, and political conditions that have operated in the lives of the participants and the community reveal how Aboriginal peoples' understandings of literacy have been shaped. Still, Yin and

others (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994) share a concern that case studies provide little basis for generalization. Or as Stake has put it, the case study is about "refining theory and suggesting complexities for further investigation, as well as helping establish the limits of generalizability" (Stake, 1994, p. 245). With this caution in mind, I have sought to present the complexities of Aboriginal understandings of literacy while carefully drawing lessons from this study that will broaden our understandings of literacy more generally, and situate Aboriginal conceptions of literacy within the multiple literacies discourse.

This research study utilizes three sources of information or data in developing its description and analysis of Aboriginal understandings of literacy. It draws on the voices Aboriginal people who have long been making sense of literacy for themselves, their children, and Aboriginal people generally. It supplements these voices with observations and knowledge of the community and homes, gleaned from my experiences and family there. Thirdly, the thesis integrates the relevant literature surrounding the history of First Nations people as it relates to schooling and political policy.

The Aboriginal Community

After having turned off the main highway that leads to the island and driving down the hill that leads into the reserve (which is referred to locally as the community), you can catch sight of the deep-blue of the North Channel on one side of the road, and on the other the grey rocky bluffs, with the forest running along their base, that forms a backdrop for life here. My father long ago told me that you'll always find Indians living near the water. You know that you've entered the community proper when you enter the first of its two villages. Along the road are several stores, a gas station, the craft shops, the church, the Administrative office, and a

recreation center. At an intersection is the newly built Ojibwe Cultural Centre. This is a busy area of the community with many of the homes close together. The other "village" of the community is most commonly referred to as "up in the country." This is where the school, the daycare, the nursing home are situated. Again, people live with their houses within sight of each other. As you begin to drive to the periphery of the villages, you notice several changes. The openness of space becomes evident. Homes are located much further apart, spread among larger allotments of land. As you travel even further beyond the village, the houses are now off by themselves, separated by large fields or small woods. The main roads through the community are the only roads paved, with side roads and driveways made of gravel and dirt. There is a wide range of houses. There is the standard house which was once provided by the community, consisting of a rectangular box, often with a broken window these days, and the paint withered over time. Other houses are more modern, showing more design, some a little unkempt in their appearance, with perhaps a garage added over time. Like most reserve communities, there is the big dog that runs out to chase and bark after your car as you drive by, signaling an absence of leash laws. Such is a drive-by glimpse of M'Chigeeng.

M'Chigeeng is one of five First Nation communities located on Manitoulin Island in Northern Ontario. The community is comprised of approximately 1,800 members, with only 1,000 currently residing in the community. The community is spread out over some 8,000 acres, with a great deal of the population and services located in the two villages. Before becoming a reserve, the community was known in Anisihnaabe as Chigeeng. The speakers of the language have always referred to the community as such, and it was referred to in treaty documents as the same. The community has taken on several names following treaties. Once

known as Excelsior, then West Bay, the community has become officially and legally as M'Chigeeng in July of 1998 by initiation of the community.

Aboriginal people have always lived on the island. It was considered a sacred place, spiritual, by the people of the Island and surrounding area, hence the word Manitou. It has long been shared among Aboriginal people that those held in high regard by their own People were brought from the surrounding areas to be buried on the Island. The Aboriginal people who lived on the Island traveled about freely, living in families, groups, and clans, with hunting and fishing as their main means of survival. Deer, partridge in the fall, rabbit come winter, and fish were plentiful. Berries, plants, and roots provided another reliable source of food.

With the increasing assertion of the British colonial government over this region in the nineteenth century, a treaty with the Aboriginal people was introduced. The McDougall Treaty of 1836 set aside the island for use by Indian people on the island and surrounding region. It was considered a way of containing the Aboriginal people within a region that would support them. But the Aboriginal peoples from the surrounding areas off Manitoulin did not come as the government had intended, instead choosing to remain in their familiar areas. As more land was sought for white settlement on and off the island, the Aboriginal peoples of the Island were introduced to yet another treaty. The Manitoulin Treaty of 1862 ceded parcels of land on the Island to the Aboriginal people and resulted in specific settlement patterns, known as reserves. The Indian people of the Island went to one of the five reserves to settle. As a result, there are now five First Nation communities located on the Manitoulin Island.

Despite residing in settlements, Indian people continued to live off the land, seeking only a few staples like flour, sugar, and lard brought in from outside. New economic opportunities emerged for the people of the area. The railway and pulp and paper industries sought the timber of the Island. Indian people turned to timbering, in what became called “working in the bush.” It was seasonal work, and when the forests on the island became depleted, many traveled to areas off the island to continue with this kind of work. Economic opportunities within the community were few at that point.

In the early 1950s, the people of the community came to take control over many of their own affairs, starting with local economic, social, and political projects that were directed at building opportunities within the community. Over time, the community has come to provide the greatest economic opportunities for those who live there. Responsible for services of education, health, recreation, justice, and economic development, the community is the largest employer of its members. Still, there are those who are independent of the community for employment. They may operate businesses catering to tourism or offer their own services, such as carpentry, mechanical work, or domestic work. The island’s population is still limited, and so the opportunities for operating independent businesses are limited and risky.

Lakeview School in the upper village, or “the country” as it is most referred to, is an elementary school which runs from kindergarten through to grade eight and has been controlled by the community since 1980. The high school, which serves the surrounding Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, is located down in the lower village. The high school is a provincial school. In an earlier era, there had been a small school located in the village, built in the nineteenth century, which was run originally by an order of nuns. There

was also a Catholic residential school established in the town of Spanish, roughly a hundred miles away, and a number of the children were sent to it for the duration of their education.

The local school in the lower village was eventually taken over by Department of Indian Affairs who hired returning World War Two veterans to teach in the school. This school evolved from one room to several rooms. In the late 1940s a two-room school was built up in the upper village for children in that area of the community to attend. In the early 1960s a newer building was erected beside the upper village school, housing three more classes and a gym. It was at this time that the school in the lower village ceased operation and all children went to school up in the country, except those attending kindergarten. They went to school in the lower village in the community hall. Towards the mid 1980s the original building of Lakeview School was torn down and rebuilt. This resulted in a library being added to the newer building and all children from kindergarten through to grade eight attending there.

Participants

The Anishinaabe, as they refer to themselves, are known to others as the Ojibwe. Anishinaabe, translated, means "man lowered from above." The twenty-one participants in this study identify themselves, like other Aboriginal peoples, with their land base. They are members of the M'Chigeeng First Nation. In conversations, they refer to themselves mostly as Indian, Native, or Anishinaabe.

The participants of this study represent seven families within the community, with one member drawn from each of three successive, biological generations (Table 2.1). However, I have not identified who belongs to which family to respect the families' anonymity. They are

all of First Nations ancestry and residing members of the community. Though some have left the community and returned, there are some who have lived there all their lives, and others with notions they will one day leave the community for one reason or another. The range of activities in their lives such as their jobs or their other interests, their economic and social status, and life experiences demonstrate the diversity of the community and the participants themselves. It is within each of their respective generations that we begin to see shared characteristics and circumstances of their lives.

Table 2.1 Participants in the study by generation and age

Generation	Participants	Ages At time of study	Birth Dates
First	Joan	82	1917
	Edith	64	1935
	Thelma	69	1930
	Annie	74	1925
	Irma	81	1918
	Millie	62	1937
	Ned	72	1927
Second	Leo	58	1941
	Mary	48	1951
	Carol	39	1960
	Darleen	47	1952
	Jeff	61	1938
	Ralph	41	1958
	Abe	51	1948
Third	Libby	16	1983
	Violet	28	1971
	Noelle	16	1983
	Denise	26	1973
	Tod	23	1976
	David	16	1983
	Norton	16	1983

The first generation of participants, who I have called Joan, Edith, Thelma, Annie, Irma, Millie, and Ned, have lived on Manitoulin Island most of their lives. They ranged in age

from 62 to 82 years at the time of the interviews. All are fluent speakers of the Anishinaabe language and, despite the impact of their formal schooling experiences, their identification with Aboriginal culture remains largely intact. They have knowledge of the traditions which sustained their families, their community, and Indian people. Formal schooling for these participants resulted from a policy which required compulsory attendance at schools operated under control of the government and administered by religious institutions. For Joan, Edith, Teresa, and Annie, this meant going to the Indian day school located in the community. Irma, Millie, and Ned left the community to attend residential school at Spanish, located across the North Channel of the Island. Ned recalls the longing for home while at Spanish when on a clear day you could see across the channel to the bluffs which marked the community's location.

At this point in their lives, this first generation of participants have small economic interests which create income opportunities, such as selling their crafts or taxiing people about the Island. For leisure, most enjoy the popular community activity of bingo. They are closely connected to the community, with relatives, children, and grandchildren living there. As part of a small community, they know almost everyone in it, and are a vital part of the family and community dynamics that operates there.

The second generation of participants, Leo, Mary, Carol, Darleen, Jeff, Ralph, and Abe, ranged in age from 39 to 61 years of age. Their fluency in the Anishinaabe language differentiates this generation from their parents. Their ability to speak the language has been interrupted, with only Jeff, Leo, and Mary remaining fluent. The others either lost their fluency and can understand some of the spoken language or were never taught to speak the language in their homes. Schooling and fears by parents indoctrinated through formal

schooling that the language should be eradicated were reasons given by second generation participants explaining why their language had not being taught or retained. All went to school in the community, at least for a part of their formal education.

Despite the disruption in the Anishinaabe language for some of these participants of the second generation, they have maintained close connections to their Aboriginal culture. They have been influenced by the political landscape which continues to shape the lives of Aboriginal people. They grew up in a climate of political unrest for Aboriginal people, experiencing both the ongoing oppression of policy and practices directed toward Aboriginal people, not least of all through the Indian Act, and the liberating, continuing struggle for self-determination, reflected in path-breaking document, Indian Control of Indian Education (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972), and community-control of other services of the community. These people are engaged with Aboriginal issues through their work and their interests.

Libby, Violet, Noelle, Denise, Tod, Daryle, and Norton comprise the third generation and ranged from 16 to 28 years of age. Libby, Noelle, Daryle, and Norton were in high school at the time of the study. All attended elementary and high school in the community. Most of these participants reside at home with their parents, with the exception of Violet and Denise, who are married with young children of their own. None of these participants speak Anishinaabe. Those in high school have the option to take a language course in Anishinaabe, building on the language instruction given in elementary grades at Lakeview School.

Locating the Researcher

I am officially registered as a member of the M'Chigeeng community, and although I have not resided there, my family ties and connections to this place remain strong. A good number of my immediate family were born here and continue to reside here, and I spent summers on the "rez" when growing up, both here on Manitoulin and in the Temagami area located in Northern Ontario. I'm not familiar with all the names and faces of the community, yet most are familiar with me and our family's name. This is because my father has been an active member of the community, holding leadership positions within the community stretching back some twenty years. Both my identity and family connections to the community situate me as an "insider." Further solidifying that relationship is a shared Aboriginal history, one which is marked by racism and marginalization, just as it is also marked by hope in our cultural resilience and empowerment.

If the researcher is regarded as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998), then this particular position of "insider" has both its advantages and disadvantages. As an "insider" to the community, I have access to knowledge and resources that would be otherwise difficult to obtain. My understanding of community dynamics and family relationships informed the research process. For example, there are individuals in the community who have particular interests in community politics or education. They participate in forums whereby community members can express their views. These individuals served as a "research-based support" as they were consulted at various stages of the research process. As Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) points out, "insiders have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day-to-day basis for ever more, and so do their families

and communities. For this reason insider researchers need to build particular sorts of research-based support systems and relationships with their communities" (p. 137). Knowledge of the community on an intimate level created an atmosphere of trust allowing participants to feel secure and free to express themselves.

This closeness to the community and its families also leads to biases. Some of the experiences shared by participants evoked emotions to which I felt the same response. As one woman shared her experience of being rejected by the church, I could recall a similar sense of hurt and anger from my own treatment as an Aboriginal woman. This "insider" relationship had to be considered in both the data collection and data analysis.

I am also an "outsider" to the community in several ways. Living in urban centres most of my life has distanced me from the community. I have been schooled in Western institutions that did little to value or acknowledge Aboriginal culture. I have lived my life in a society that has not respected Aboriginal peoples. I was seen by those who have lived in the community as a participant in a non-Aboriginal world. All too familiar was the nickname given us on the "rez." Coming from the city for our summer holidays, we were named apples, meaning red on the outside, white on the inside. Being part of these two worlds may have produced barriers to the research.

I am a member of an academic community, engaged in research for my own personal fulfillment, but also for communal purposes. That is, I have a deep and abiding commitment to use my education to serve the interests of Aboriginal people. This "world" positions me as an authority on certain types of knowledge, and more specifically, literacy. The level of education I have achieved may have been perceived by those in the community I was researching as threatening, leaving participants to feel their knowledge was less valued, even wary of the

research process. Aboriginal peoples have encountered research in all forms. For far too long, their communities have served as a researcher's fishbowl, studied by a fascinated outside world, with little involvement by the participants themselves in the research process. These voyeuristic practices have served to misrepresent Aboriginal peoples and distort their reality. In their distrust of my intentions, there may have been reluctance to participate or to share knowledge which would inform the research.

This research project, then, is marked by an insider/outsider relationship, both with the community I study and yet also with the university community. The research tradition used with this study has been informed by Western thought and theory, which has long made it its business to contrast its superiority to forms of Indigenous knowledge and worldviews (Battiste and Henderson, 2000; Smith, 1999). Traditionally, those who have done research on Aboriginal peoples have either misrepresented or exploited, romanticized or denigrated Aboriginal peoples. As an Aboriginal researcher, I am an "outsider" to the traditions of this academic institution, which have often been openly hostile to Aboriginal interests in its policies, practices, curriculum, and pedagogy. I find strength in bringing another worldview to this institution and research process, especially as I am not alone in a place where there are Others who have also been equally alienated over the years and are struggling to create alternative means of informing their research.

To conduct this research, I have had to learn the discourse of the academy, a way of "saying-writing-doing-being-valuing-believing" that represents the interests of the white middle-class and carries with it social power and access to economic success. (Delpit, 1995). I have had to learn these "codes of power" which are the rules of the power structure. "[P]ower plays a critical role in our society and in our educational system. The worldviews of those with

privileged positions are taken as the only reality, while the worldviews of those less powerful are dismissed as inconsequential" (Delpit, 1995, p. xv). In asserting that there is a place "inside" the institution for Aboriginal perspectives and interests, I join a long line of Aboriginal scholars who have worked hard to change the university so that Aboriginal perspectives and experiences are not simply objects of study but contribute to the very working knowledge within these institutions.

Holding an insider/outsider relationship with two, sometimes conflicting, communities poses particular challenges for this Aboriginal researcher. It poses a double burden. The Aboriginal scholar must meet the criteria of the university community, but also the principles of the Aboriginal community. Throughout the research process, I have made every effort to be cognizant of these relationship dynamics. The responsibilities that arise from them have served to guide the research process, which included consultation, data collection, and data analysis. The following section delineates these aspects of the process and highlights some of the challenges when research meets reality, or, when culturally specific expectations are juxtaposed with university criteria.

Community Consultation

My father's role in my research must be acknowledged, both out of respect and out of appreciation. He was born and continues to live in the community and has helped guide the research process, keeping me close to the people of the community and the participants of this study, their voices, and their needs. He knows the community, historically, socially, and politically. He knows the people, their "ways", the relationships of the families to the community. It is his understanding of the community that has informed this research. He is an

insider to the community and has served as a cultural broker for this work. By this I mean, he has selected and conveyed his personal synthesis of knowledge, values, and human relationships (Stairs, 1995) within this Aboriginal community to me, who is both an insider and an outsider.

Prior to starting the research, I spoke with my father many times, sharing my research interests and obtaining from him a sense of what the research process might look like, and what might serve the interests and needs of the community with respect to literacy. There began our research relationship. His initial response to me was, "Literacy! What do you mean by that? For these people literacy could mean so much or it could mean nothing!" After further discussion, I came to see that it was the term literacy that might be perceived as problematic. My father was determined to remind me of my place within the community. Despite university degrees, I was not to elevate myself above others. "Talk about what people know," my father said to me at the outset of the research. The use of an academic term like literacy may only serve to alienate me, emphasizing my outsider relationship to the community. Modesty is an unspoken rule, a cultural tradition among Aboriginal people which is learned. It was a rule I've tried to adhere to throughout the research.

My father had raised an important question about the use of literacy, which led to a process of consultation among various people in the community. This required two separate visits to the community. Before beginning the research, I asked specific others in the community, "What does literacy mean to you and what would be useful to others to understand about literacy?" I visited educators, band employees, and other community members to assist in defining the research topic. From informal consultation with some community members, I was able to glean what some thought of as literacy. I also learned what

some thought might be relevant to the people of this community grappling with issues related to literacy because of my father. They didn't have to try and please the researcher or speculate what it was this researcher wanted to discuss about literacy, particularly for those who may have viewed me as a representative of the university, trying to do something "academic." For example, when one woman was asked during an informal discussion about what literacy meant to her, she responded, "...well, what do you want me to tell you about it?" Reading and writing became the starting point at which literacy would be discussed for this research.

The term definitely meant something to those in the community. These initial conversations gave a clear picture of the community's concerns about literacy. Language and skills related to reading and writing were important. As one Anishinaabe language educator put it, "Our kids eh, they need to be able to read." School was identified as a key site of struggle for acquiring skills of reading and writing, both past and present. Another woman responded immediately to the question with only one word, "language." Although I am arguing in this thesis for a broader conception of literacy, as a way of moving beyond the great divide struck between oral and literate cultures, in the course of my interviews I did use the terms "reading and writing" as a way of speaking about schooled forms of literacy.

Understandings of literacy discussed as only reading and writing present a narrow view. Certainly literacy has come to be seen as a much broader phenomenon or event (Auerbach, 1989; Street, 1993). Yet, for these participants school achievement, economic success, and cultural continuity were of concern. Skills of reading and writing are linked to these concerns as they serve as a measure of school achievement and have become expectations for participation in the work force.

These informal visits served yet another purpose. Community people identified for me families in the community where there were three successive, biological generations who might be interested in taking part in the research. Many of my initial visits to them were mediated by my father, taking place in the Anishinaabe language. He translated my interests and information about the research. They often communicated back to him both their questions and comments about the work, which he relayed to me. But often, the visits would end with myself and others finishing the conversations. My father's involvement gave me and the research project credibility. Introductions facilitated by him served to gain the trust of community members and provided an unspoken consent for the research to take place in the community. As Smith (1999) reminds us: "Consent is not so much given for a project or specific set of questions, but for a person, for their credibility. Consent indicates trust and the assumption is that the trust will not only be reciprocated but constantly negotiated - a dynamic relationship rather than a static decision" (p. 136). Principles of respectful research in Aboriginal communities articulate the necessity for consultation and consent for the research by the people of the community (Battiste and Henderson, 2000; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b; Smith, 1999).

Since the community had no official process for approving research endeavors, I attempted to seek out informal consent for the research with the various members of the community. I asked these people, "Do you think it would be okay to be doing this research in the community," and "How do you think people might respond to this research project being carried out here?" Implicit in people's responses was a responsibility required of the researcher. "This work is important to our people," an education councilor responded. I asked which Elders in the community might be consulted, as "it is common practice in many

Indigenous contexts for elders to be approached as the first point of contact and as a long-term mentor for an indigenous researchers" (Smith, 1999, p. 137). This initiated a set of discussions I had not anticipated, largely because consultation with Elders is also part of respectful principles to guide the research process. "No single individual can ever be aware of all the cultural concerns that may exist in the community; a broad process of consultation with different groups and elders may be needed" (Battiste and Henderson, 2000, p. 141).

Consultation with Elders raised issues around the role of Elders within this community. There were some in the community who were concerned that the capacity of Elders to maintain and convey traditional knowledge and ancestral teachings had diminished through colonial forces. "There are no real Elders," replied one person. Their roles and the way that their responsibilities are carried out has changed, and, understandably, they face increasing isolation in their communities. There is an uneasiness for them in being sought out for guidance if they are unable to articulate traditional views. The lack of identified Elders in this community in itself raises a literacy issue, if Elders are to remain the core of the meaning-making systems in Aboriginal communities. Among the community members, it was thought that what I sought to learn from people was not a form of sacred knowledge which would require the approval of, as well as consultation with, Elders. I should add that this loss of Elders is hardly particular to this community, as noted by Couture (2000):

For some decades now, significant numbers of communities across Canada have lost all their traditional Elders. Many individuals, forced to seek out Elders in other tribal traditions, initially encounter some difficulty because of differences in ways... The range of kinds of Elders also is bothersome...

Certainly a significant part of this difficulty phase is attributable to "instant"

Elders, overnight wonders who, with limited ceremonies and an abundance of clichés, confuse and stall many in their personal journey... “True” Elders are those who have gone through painful encounter with spiritual realities and who become thereby, in the perception of the People, intermediaries between their respective cultural communities and the spiritual forces of the universe and defenders of the community’s psychic integrity. They are those who have enacted and sustained a personal relationship with Nature. (pp. 41-42)

This experience suggests to me that the role of Elders is becoming increasingly defined by their communities and that protocols to research, which suggest consultation with Elders, may only be contextual, depending on the community. We must be careful of what we expect our Elders to provide.

Data Collection

Interviews with participants took place over the period of a year, during three visits to the community. I initially identified fifteen families, that had three successive and biological generations residing in the community. These were identified from two previous visits where I consulted with the community about the research. Some of these family members were part of that consultative process, indicating an interest in participating at that time. The selection of participants for this study was not random, being limited by families with three generations who were willing to participate from the M’Chigeeng community. Once there was an indication that a family generation might participate, other generations were sought through snowball or network sampling. It occurred three times within the research whereby three generations agreed to participate and following interviews with one or two of the family

generations the remaining generation opted out. Their decision not to participate and their privacy was respected. Instead, new families were sought out. At least one family member from thirteen of the fifteen families identified was contacted for participation in the study. There were some not interested or unavailable, others dropping out, and time constraints that led to seven families taking part in the research.

The generational approach to the research impacted the data collected. Examining how literacy has been shaped for each generation within the contexts of family, community, and school at differing historical periods provide for differing perspectives. Hareven (2000) applies, what she refers to as a life-course paradigm, to her research of families and the historical events which influence their life transitions, family patterns, and relationships. Although she does not work strictly with biological generations, defining others by time frames, her generational technique provides an historical window across a life span, concluding that how individuals interpret turning points, transitions, and stages in their lives is shaped by historical events they experience and their cultural orientation. Going as far back as the 1920s, my research captures the perspectives of three successive and biological generations revealing the change and continuity in their understandings of literacy and of life in this Aboriginal community.

Respondents' consent for participation was by way of a consent form, written in English. There were two respondents within the first generation of participants where this posed a particular challenge because their reading and writing skills were limited. As introduced in the opening of this thesis, the form was read to Joan orally. She indicated her understanding by way of an X. Another participant asked that the form be read, though she was able to indicate her understanding by writing her own name. It was only part way into the

discussion that she indicated, what she believed to be, her limited reading and writing capabilities. I was both embarrassed and shamed at this event. Embarrassed, that I represented an institution that required this kind of consent, though knowing full well it was to protect her and the university institution, but that our trust relied on this piece of paper. I was ashamed at having made the assumption she could read well enough to interact with the document on her own. It was her frankness with me throughout the visit that relieved the tension I initially felt.

A further challenge to the interview process with one of the participants, Joan, was the language barrier. I neither speak nor understand Anishinaabe. She neither speaks nor understands English. This required a translation for our discussion. Her son made communicating possible. He asked Joan the questions in Anishinaabe and relayed her responses back to me in English. Literal translations of words are sometimes impossible as none exist within either of the languages. Meaning can be lost in the translation and then it becomes the translator's interpretation of events and information. Researchers can become vulnerable to an added layer of meanings, biases, and interpretations that can lead to disastrous misunderstandings (Fontana and Frey, 1994).

Discussion with participants took place either at their homes or places of work and averaged forty-five minutes to an hour. The interviews were tape recorded. An open-ended semi-structured interview format was used, with probing questions to clarify and expand. Notes were also taken during the visits. Observances of literacy materials and events in the setting were made. Expressions and gestures of participants were noted, as were my own reactions.

Data Analysis

Marshall and Rossman (1995) tell us that "data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat" (p. 111). This insight holds true for this particular analysis whereby meaning of literacy for Aboriginal people within this community was sought. Data analysis had three stages. Interviews were transcribed by a third party, who had signed a confidentiality agreement. These twenty-one transcriptions were read and re-read several times before the analysis began. Returning to my place of study following the interview stages of the research, I felt distanced from the community by time and location. These re-readings brought me back into the research process and made me feel more connected to the participants.

Following numerous readings of the words of these participants, these transcriptions were coded for emergent themes. They were also read alongside my field notes and observations that I made during conversations with participants and visits with other community members. This enabled me to base my initial analysis on the feelings, experiences, ideas, and knowledge of these participants. I followed this first stage with a second analysis that set what I had learned from the participants within the context of the existing research surrounding schooling and political policy for Aboriginal people. Looking at the narratives of these participants in the context of this literature enabled me to see how their thinking about literacy fit within a larger Aboriginal history.

Reflecting on my interpretation of the interviews, I must acknowledge that at times I intimate further conclusions from the participants' responses. I do this because I feel I can. I

am drawing on my own life experiences as an Anishinaabe woman, and shared understandings of the community, to interpret the data. At the same time I recognize some of the limitations this might pose for the researcher being “too close” to the data.

The third and final stage of the analysis required returning to the participants again. I did not seek their words recorded in transcripts, but their responses to both my analysis and interpretations of their words. This has become increasingly emphasized in the Aboriginal community, whereby Aboriginal community representatives participate in the consultation, planning, information gathering, analysis, and evaluation of the research. Returning interpretations to the participants to ensure accuracy is not specific to the Aboriginal community. Stake (1994) notes that,

With much qualitative work, case study research shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances. Those whose lives and expressions are portrayed risk exposure and embarrassment: loss of standing, employment, self-esteem. Issues of observation and reportage should be discussed in advance. Limits of accessibility should be suggested and agreements heeded. It is important but not sufficient for targeted persons to receive drafts of how they are presented, quoted, or interpreted, and for the researcher to listen well to cries of concern. (p. 244)

So I was surprised by the initial responses I received when attempting to carry out this responsibility. There seemed to be a sense of trust bestowed upon me, the researcher and insider to this community, to do “what’s right.” This responsibility to represent accurately the community and their interests was explicit by some of the participants to whom I spoke about what they had shared. This response raised several concerns for this researcher. The literature

suggests returning to participants of the Aboriginal community to verify participant responses (Battiste and Henderson, 2000; Haig Brown and Archibald, 1996; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b; Smith, 1999). This is to protect participants and the community from previous practices which misrepresented Aboriginal peoples, continuing to objectify them. But Aboriginal peoples are not victims to whom others are to be accountable. They are beginning to demand accountability from the researcher. For this researcher accountability may not have meant returning the research for verification and editing of the work. Rather, the trust and responsibility given to me was intended to ensure reflection and that my underlying purpose for the research, which is to assist the people of this community to address issues of literacy, remained at the forefront. I have tried, to the best of my ability, to represent the intended meanings these participants conveyed about literacy. However, I also recognize Stake's (1994) point that "many a researcher would like to tell the whole story but of course cannot; the whole story exceeds anyone's knowing, anyone's telling. Even those inclined to tell all find strong the obligation to winnow and consolidate" (p. 240).

Placing my own experiences as an insider/outsider to two distinct communities, the academic and an Aboriginal one, against the literature concerning respectful research in Aboriginal communities reinforces for me the dynamic and contextual nature of the research process. While Indigenous scholars may articulate guiding principles for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, these may not be universal in the Aboriginal community. Each community has its own set of historical, social, and political circumstances. While Elders may play a key role in treaty negotiations or research guidance in one community, their capacities within another community may be limited. Therefore, each community will require its own contextual response to the process of research.

Chapter Three

First Generation Participants

This chapter analyses the interviews that I conducted with Irma, Annie, Millie, Thelma, Edith, Joan, and Ned, who represent the first or oldest generation of the community members in this study. I seek to understand the role that both western and Aboriginal forms of literacy have played in their lives as they recount their earliest childhood with their families, their time in school, and their life in this Anishinaabe community. This chapter also integrates the relevant research literature as a way of extending and contextualizing these participants' experiences with language, learning, and working. The lives of the first generation on Manitoulan Island were connected to the land, much like those living in Aboriginal communities elsewhere. The nature of their literacy, I contend, was a matter of learning to read symbols and inscribe meanings across these landscapes. It was only with the introduction of formal schooling that attempts were made to supplant this way of life, their way of making sense of the world, with the values of a white society that neither valued nor respected their worldview. Schooling, as a colonial apparatus, imposed upon Aboriginal peoples western notions of literacy through English/French language only policies and reading and writing skills in print literacy. Yet, Aboriginal people have survived this assault, gaining a respect for the potential value of English and French language literacy on their own terms.

Literacy within the Family

The first generation with whom I worked in my study recalled their childhood days as a family time closely interwoven to the themes of the land and the seasons. You can hear this, for example, in the way Irma describes her early days of berry picking: "You were out all day with your family. I picked berries, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, cranberries. I was always berry picking. Then I had to bring them home. And we had to can them. Make preserves. I was always making preserves or jam," Annie, too, remembers the "old folk" watching for the ripening berries, which would draw them across the countryside harvesting a winter's supply of fruit: "The old folks used to do it. And when they go picking, they see the strawberries are ripening, they go and pick them. The same with everything, blueberries. They used to go out to the north shore to pick blueberries and low bush cranberries and they would do us all winter." For the young who went along, it was all very much a sense of learning to read where and when, with the benefits both immediate and long term, both personal and communal.

While families hunted, fished, and picked berries together, the adults would also work the bush, cut and sell wood, as well as farm to sustain themselves. "There was always lots of work for them to do. Like for everybody, you know. There was no welfare in them days. You got to work for your living," was how Annie described it for her family. These first generation participants in my study were still closely connected to a tradition of families working together closely, following the land and the seasons as it drew them about the Island. Ned gives a vivid sense of what had to be worked season by season, on the farm and off, to keep the family going:

Fish in the fall. Put fish away for the winter. In the winter pulp. Feed the cattle. Pulp some more. We used to put apples away. Everything we'd put away for the winter. We used to have a big root cellar. Everything would be in there, cabbage, carrots, apples, potatoes. Yeah. We would keep them in the root cellar until.... Hog or cow. You have your meat... In the spring we'd start getting ready for planting. Well, maple syrup first. We make maple syrup, we'd start about March making maple syrup. We would tap trees, haul sap, boil it down, haul sapping in, and empty the pails... I just followed my Dad. My Dad was there. We did it together, everything was together. The whole family was involved.

When asked how he knew it was time to start the maple syrup, Ned explained it in a way that captures both the difficult and obvious lessons that had to be learned in the living: "When the weather gets, well, just watch the weather. When the weather gets warm. You tap the trees, then if it runs, then it runs. If it doesn't run, then it don't run."

With this generation, you can see just how nature's patterns framed the Aboriginal family's experiences (Friesen 2000). Their place in the world was defined by this close connection to the land and water they knew so well. Aboriginal people make sense of their world through their relationships with living things, with animal, plants, and people, and the natural environment. These relationships, especially as they are seen as woven together, provide a deep source of respect for life among Aboriginal people. Marie Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) have put it this way: "Mutual relationships exist among all forces and forms in the natural world: animal, plants, human, celestial bodies, spirits, and natural forces. Indigenous peoples can manipulate natural phenomena through the application

of appropriate and ritualistic knowledge. In turn natural phenomena, forces, and other living things can affect humans. Everything affects everything else" (p.43). This worldview, reflecting an Aboriginal way of reading the world and transmitting from one generation to the next, is a key feature of Aboriginal literacy this dissertation describes.

Instead of written protocols, literacy, for these participants, is located in symbolic systems which are deeply encoded across many dimensions of their environment. They knew when and they knew where to pick berries and draw sap from trees through the rotation of the seasons. They knew where to hunt by land markers, when to harvest crops by weather and time indicators. It is helpful to think of this rich knowledge as a form of literacy because it is imbued with this sense of reading what is written over the land. It is a productive, sustaining form of literacy out of which their lives were shaped by the dimensions of the environment, inscribed by memories of life on the land and with their families toward a way of thinking to which western literacy has paid too little attention. The weaving together of these patterns, phases, or cycles, as they are read by these people, represent the holism that is often articulated within an Aboriginal worldview. By describing the events in their lives, they are describing the ways in which they make sense of their world. For Aboriginal people there is no separation between living and learning as they make meaning of the land and their lives within it.

Yet it would also be unfair to suggest that this Aboriginal literacy was without a textual tradition. Though the oral tradition served as the primary means for cultural transmission, there were Native texts which embodied tribal epistemologies and understandings which drew from and reinforced the oral tradition (Battiste, 1986; Vastokas, 1996). These texts were rooted in symbolic literacy, which included pictographs, notched

sticks, totems, wampum, and syllabic script. Marie Battiste, a Mi'kmaq scholar, describes a form of Algonkian record-keeping:

Using ideographic symbolization of concepts and ideas, Algonkian Indians supplemented the oral tradition with ideological catalogues which helped to record and store valuable knowledge, information, and records on available natural materials such as birchbark, rock, and shells... The various Native texts in tribal North America represented the worldview of tribal people, particularly their ideas and beliefs about knowledge, power, and medicine. (1986, p. 25)

Joan Vastokas (1996) suggests that Aboriginal representations have a crucial role to play in the writing of Aboriginal history from an insider's point of view. These representations served many functions in traditional culture and new functions have been given to them with the arrival of Europeans to North America. She argues that Aboriginal "art" was produced intentionally as "history" and pictorial depiction is a Native American form of writing.

Vastokas describes the bark records of an Ojibwa Medicine Society known as the Medewiwin of the Great Lakes region:

These bark record comprise an enormous array of pictorial representations which vary in form and imagery from depictive through symbolic, to entirely abstract in character... The most important scrolls for historical as well as spiritual purposes are those which describe the origin, history, and rituals of the Ojibwa and of the Medewiwin society. These are the scrolls that are used by Mide members to record, narrate, and thus preserve their history and traditions. The bark records serve a vital role as a visual narrative "texts," as pictorial mnemonic aids for the recitation of oral traditions. (p. 54)

Though many Aboriginal groups read and wrote their languages in syllabic scripts or representations, this literacy went unrecognized by Europeans who held to the belief that Aboriginal people possessed only an oral tradition. This, says Battiste (1986), justified the imposition of European knowledge and literacy. "When people refer to the process of becoming literate in terms of the youth of their own culture, literacy is called cultural transmission. But when a certain literacy is forced upon youth outside that culture, it becomes cultural and cognitive assimilation" (p. 23).

The missionaries introduced syllabic scripts for Aboriginal languages in some communities for the purposes of conversion. These efforts did increase the Aboriginal engagement with written texts within the scope of their own language, particularly where this symbolic form of literacy was introduced with a minimal degree of cultural interference (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1990). Evidence of this can be seen with the Inuit of Labrador:

Inuit literacy in Labrador was introduced in the late 1700s by the Moravian Church as an essential tool of conversion and involved a minimum of cultural interference – an approach first used by the Moravians in Greenland. This approach was notable for its reliance on the Inuktitut as the language of instruction for reading and writing and for learning academic subjects... From 1771 until the 1900s when a cultural assimilationist trend began to take hold, literacy was a part of everyday Inuit life and there is evidence suggesting that the vast majority of the Inuit population of Labrador was literate. The spread of literacy was accomplished through Inuit religious teachers working with

their own people and through schools established by the Moravians in their settlements. (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1990, p. 16)

It was at the complete stage of cultural assimilation, the final stage of education, that literacy rates, within Inuktitut, fell dramatically.

Battiste (1986) also traces the use of syllabic script created for the Micmac by French missionaries who used Micmac symbolic representations to produce new character designs for words and prayers. She asserts that missionaries attempted to restrict them to hieroglyphics, fearing access to political and religious knowledge would incite them, undermining their proselytizing efforts. The French missionaries continued to manipulate scripts, with the Micmac adapting to each of the combined variations. In some places efforts were so successful that Micmac literacy was used in the band schools as a means of teaching Christian fundamentals. It was only when the government instituted English language policies in Indian day schools that this symbolic literacy began to disappear. But as Battiste points out, Aboriginal forms of textual literacy, as practiced by the Algonkian and Micmac, still persist in ways that make an important contribution to the people that practice them, a contribution from which those who study literacy could draw important lessons:

The resiliency of early Algonkian literacy processes in Micmac consciousness has demonstrated that any system can function as long as the people value it and have use for it. The aboriginal forms of literacy served a function for Algonkian society: universal symbols represented concepts and ideas and its legitimacy for contemporary tribal society has not been replaced. Rather, missionary and governmental education have attempted to assimilate Micmacs to the functions of cultural transmission of and adaptation to Canadian society.

A contemporary assessment of Micmac education suggests the need for the continued development of traditional and contemporary functions of literacy and knowledge. Although the forms of literacy to which the Micmacs have been exposed have been intrinsically different, the symbolic literacy and its consciousness have persisted. Micmac literacy remain spiritual and family-based, rather than public. It continues to favour collective dialogue and ritual.

(p. 40)

There is then, with Aboriginal communities, the hope for a mix of languages and traditions despite the educational efforts of others to completely displace Aboriginal culture with western conceptions of literacy. Nowhere, in this study was the displacement more clearly felt than in this first generation in which the critical cultural factor of the Anishinaabe language, as a mother tongue spoken on an everyday basis, was present in their lives.

The participants in this generation of my study all came from homes where Anishinaabe was spoken. To this day, Joan, our quill box maker, speaks only Anishinaabe, understanding and speaking very little English. Edith, who began schooling at eight years of age, says that her family always spoke Indian. It was at the day school in West Bay where Edith learned the English language and to read and write in English:

My parents didn't even send me to school. We just stayed at home. I learned to hook, hook rug. I used to feed the chickens... I was the only one who went to school 'cause I guess it was somebody from the government's idea, I don't know. They said I should go to school. I started [school] late. I was eight years old when I started. We went here, West Bay. They had a school house. That's where I learned. I didn't even know one English... My mom took me to the

school and said “you stay here all day.” All day! How come? I didn’t want to stay. And I couldn’t understand the teacher. I didn’t know what to say to her. I didn’t even speak one English.

Some of these participants recalled that their parents wanted them to attend school, whereby they would learn to speak, read, and write English, believing that these western conventions of literacy were necessary to a changing way of life for these Anishinaabe. Annie, who attended the Indian day school in the village, shared her sense of the importance and difficulty of learning English:

They used to send me to school, to go to school, they sent us, all the kids. That is where you learn to speak English they say. Like in those days, eh, they may go out working and you know, you have to know what you are saying, like if you want to talk to the woodman ... It was kind of hard [learning to speak English]. You didn’t understand what the lady is saying. For me it was anyway. But I catch on pretty quick.

The need for their children to learn literacy in English was the primary motivation for sending their children to school, and yet Ned really questioned the good that it served at that time:

You see at that time education wasn’t that important, eh. You went out and you got a job right away and a lot of old people grew up that way believing in that. Like Theodore, all his kids, eh. Even your Dad’s father believed in that. They just wanted to go out and work. [Neighbour] and the [Neighbour] did that. They didn’t need education. When they taught Latin in school, they didn’t like that. They’d say, “what’s Latin going to do for you?” It’s not going to do you any good after you finish work, school. Work is what you need. You need

to learn how to work. That is what the older people pushed, how to work in the bush.

Yet Ned also recognized that things have changed and that there were those who saw education as important to the future of their children:

But now that is not there anymore. You have to educated and go to school and go to work. My dad eh, he said you go to school, it will help you in the long run. I think he saw something ahead of us, ahead, seeing ahead into the future. He'd seen the future, forecast, or whatever you call it. Seen ahead, what things are going to be like ahead. He told Leo one time 'just put your boys in school'. They had an argument, they were calling back and forth. Some day, maybe we won't see it, but your boys are going to need it. They are the ones who will suffer. You see, there weren't the machinery that there is now. Mostly horses. Then there were no horses. It's all equipment, machinery. At that time all the machinery started coming in, that's where you need education.

If Aboriginal people, for the most part, accepted schooling as a means for acquiring skills needed to participate in a changing world, they did not anticipate that this introduction to formal education would be at the expense of their language, culture, and traditions. "While some Indians looked upon formal education with suspicion, other families felt there were practical advantages to be acquired through their offsprings' acquaintance with the dominant society, particularly where schooling could be acquired alongside a traditional education" (Ralston, cited in Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1986, p. 5). Many parents, if not most, wanted their children to be able to speak, as well as read and write, English and in that sense to become literate. The ways of the world were changing, and Aboriginal people realized they

needed to accommodate if they were to continue their preferred ways of life. This schooling in literacy offered a gateway, indeed the gateway, to the newcomer's world. For Aboriginal parents it was not a matter of either/or, but of both. Literacy, through schooling would make it possible for the next generation to maneuver between two very different cultures.

Schooling and Literacy

There were family circumstances within this first generation of participants that made staying at home to attend the Indian day school difficult. Ned, Irma, and Millie attended residential school, while Thelma, Edith, and Anges received a minimal education at the West Bay Indian Day School. The St. Joseph's Residential School for girls and the Garnier Residential School for boys, were referred to as one school, called Spanish. It was located in northern Ontario in a small town with the same name. For these participants formal schooling meant the suppression of the Anishinaabe language and limited opportunities to acquire English literacy skills.

Ned, Millie, and Thelma all had at least one parent who passed away when they were quite young. The surviving parent faced the hardships of raising their children on their own. Thelma went on to live with her grandparents and continued at the Indian day school for a few more years before she quit school all together. Millie and Ned faced a different fate. "I went to school here for a while. I used to walk from here down to West Bay" Ned told me, "About two years, and my mother died and it was real hard on us, like my Dad. So he put us in Spanish. We were there for about three years."

Millie describes going to the Spanish residential school as a refuge for many Indian children who faced difficult family circumstances. This refuge was not always a safe haven,

but an only option for many Indian families. She describes her situation, "It was an environmental thing. My dad died when I was four years old. My mom had a hard time. So I went to Spanish, and my brothers too. My mom remarried and my stepfather didn't accept his four stepchildren." Thelma suspects her mother wanted her to go to school because, "she didn't go I guess." Her grandparents encouraged her to attend school, but Thelma felt most of her learning occurred at her grandparents' farm.

Irma, Annie, and Edith attended school due to imposed government policy. Edith speculated earlier that it was somebody from the government's idea. Irma articulated a similar thought when she says, "I suppose I had to go, we all had to go. That's the way it was then." Edith and Annie attended the Indian day school in West Bay and Irma went on to Spanish.

Government and religious groups viewed formal education for Aboriginal people as a means to civilize and christianize them and assimilate them into mainstream society. Formal schooling took several forms. As early as the 1600s, boarding-schools operated under French missionary influence for Aboriginal youth, with intent to convert the Natives. Their efforts proved unsuccessful due to Aboriginal parents' resistance to separating from their children and the French concluding that the schools were not essential to conversion (Miller, 1996). Yet the residential school ideology persisted and was taken up again following British conquest. Boarding schools remained and by the nineteenth century industrial schools were making their mark. Industrial residential schools were located away from reserves while boarding schools for younger children were located closer: "They would be taught the precepts of religion, the social manners of a polite settler, and the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. But more to the purpose, they would be instructed in the essential skills of settlement" (Milloy, 1999, p. 15). Over time, the distinction between the two types of

schools broke down, the terms boarding and industrial disappeared, and they all became known as residential schools (Hare and Barman, 2000; Milloy, 1999).

The spread of missionary groups throughout Aboriginal communities led not only to the establishment of churches but to day schools on the reserves. "In the 1900s, 65.9 percent of Aboriginal children were registered at these school; by the 1940s, the number was still as high as 50.9 percent" (Hare and Barman, 2000, p. 335). Even though more children were going to day schools, these institutions were deemed less satisfactory agents of cultural assimilation (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1986). While there has been work done on the church's residential schools, the function and nature of day schools on Indian reserves have yet to be fully explored within the history of Aboriginal schooling. Certainly, the children who attended continued to participate in their communities with a good deal of their culture remaining intact.

Residential schools were the showcases for transforming the young Aboriginal child, even though a growing number of accounts of residential schooling shed light on the darker side of this history of schooling, revealing the atrocities of abuse, denigration, and cultural genocide (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Bull, 1991; Furniss, 1992; Grant, 1996; Haig Brown, 1988; Ing, 1991; Jaine, 1993; Johnston, 1988; Knockwood, 1992). Revised policy towards educating Aboriginal children institutionalized this form of schooling in 1910. New regulations, which forced schools to exercise prudence in their financial management, expanded the schools and their facilities. Parents resisting separation did so not only because they were bound to their children, but also because they were concerned with the deplorable conditions of the schools that resulted in sickness and death of their young. Compulsory

attendance in school would mute parents' ability to keep their children at home. Though some Aboriginal families resisted formal schooling, others gave in.

Many children came to school speaking only their Native language. Although instructed to speak only English or French, depending on the institution, many had difficulty adhering to this rule. Ned says about his experiences at Spanish, "Language was forbidden. They caught you talking Indian, you would get a rap over that hand. They told us nobody talk Indian." Irma confirmed this when she said, "they would hit you right there, right on the hands." For those who attended day school on the reserve, the consequences of speaking the language were similar. Edith said, "we got caught speaking Indian all the time. We'd speak Indian and we get caught and they told us to get in the school and stand in the corner. They would strap us too... Yeah we would always get caught. We'd be standing and crying 'cause it hurts to be strapped." Teresa, who lived most of the time with her grandparents, explained that is why she left school after only a short time. She couldn't recall how long she remained at the West Bay Day School. "I didn't stay. I don't think I even stayed there for a year. I got sent home because I wouldn't talk English... Every time they caught me speaking Indian, they'd spank me... We had to speak English all the time, but I didn't know how to speak English."

The inability to speak English or French upon arrival at the schools posed considerable challenges for students and teachers:

For many children, the language barrier they faced when they went off to residential school meant that weeks, months, perhaps in some cases even years of academic instruction were wasted... there was little understanding among authorities and teachers of the difficulties of teaching English as a second

language, and probably there would have been little sympathy even if such knowledge existed. (Miller, 1966, p. 173)

Knockwood (1992) recalls her own struggles with English language acquisition in residential school:

We were trying to learn and understand English, which was completely foreign to us, and apply it to everyday life by watching others and imitating their behavior, acting through trial and error, sometimes with horrible consequences... The first three years went painfully slow as we struggled to learn our ABC's, to count, recite, sing and play, as well as pray. All this was either in English or Latin---both entirely new languages. (pp. 48-49)

As a consequence of such policies, many Aboriginal children lost the ability to speak their language so that the vast majority of Aboriginal languages in Canada are now threatened with extinction. Nearly two-thirds of Aboriginal languages in communities are declining or endangered (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1990).

Despite the varying agendas of formal schooling, the effects have been devastating for generations of Aboriginal peoples. It has meant the loss of language and closely related elements of culture, along with the erosion of the Aboriginal family system. These essential structures of meaning for Aboriginal peoples caused a break in the cultural continuity that led to the passing on of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next. It meant a rupture of Aboriginal forms of literacy. Formal schooling, in both residential and day schools, assumed that displacing Aboriginal cultures and languages and with them any notions of literacy outside the framework of mainstream culture was a small price to pay for bringing these children within the folds of a civilizing Christianity.

Ironically, the government mandate for public schooling among Aboriginal children, which was to educate them in skills of English reading and writing, tended to subvert the acquisition of English literacy. The schools, for all of their intent to prepare children for participation in mainstream society, contributed to their participation on the lower rungs of that society (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1986).

Several attributes of residential and day schooling have played a key role in ensuring that Aboriginal peoples did not achieve successful kinds of literacy learning and the kinds of academic and economic success associated with them. The first problem was that the curriculum of Aboriginal schools was focused on vocational skills and religious training (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1986; Haig Brown, 1988; Hare and Barman, 2000; Knockwood, 1992; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999). Though children were expected to learn academic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, a great deal of time was spent acquiring domestic and laboring skills. Boys were given training in trades and skills such as agriculture, carpentry, blacksmithing, and shoemaking. Vocational training for girls was limited to skills which would prepare them for domestic work as wives, mothers, and housekeepers (Miller, 1996). They were to learn sewing, baking, knitting, laundering, and some minor cultivating. Goodburn (1999), in her analysis of literacy artifacts from a U.S. off-reservation boarding school, notes that the ideology of assimilation promoted at the Genoa Indian School, which stressed vocational education over academic education, frequently confused students and sent mixed messages about literacy.

Students' participation in such a restricted curriculum ultimately served a more immediate purpose. Many of the schools operated on limited budgets from the Department of Indian Affairs. In order to keep these schools self-sufficient in their day-to-day operations, the

religious orders which ran them used the children to complete necessary chores as well as services which provided the school with an income. Basil Johnston (1988), a former student at the Spanish Residential School in Ontario, remembers just how extensive work at the schools was:

In addition to the daily chores, such as milking the cows, cleaning out the barns, feeding the chickens and so on, there were many other tasks required for the general upkeep of the institution. Painters never finished painting... Plumbers armed with wrenches and plungers followed Joe Albo in search of leaks and drips... Electricians trailed behind Gerry Labelle in his tour of the buildings... Carpenters were as busy as the plumbers and electricians.

There was always something to repair. (p. 85)

Haig Brown (1988), in her book Resistance and Renewal, found that with the thirteen Native people who attended Kamloops Indian Residential in British Columbia "memories of chores were mentioned by all those interviewed, frequently in greater detail than memories of academic work... Not only did work occupy considerably more time each day, it also occupied a greater portion of the students' consciousness about their lives" (pp. 69-70).

Alongside vocational training was religious indoctrination. The rigid schedule of school included prayer and daily church services (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Jaine, 1993; Johnston, 1988, Knockwood, 1992; Miller, 1996). Lois Guss, who attended the St. Paul's Residential School in North Vancouver, British Columbia, recalls the relentless routine everyone conformed to that stressed prayer: "Pray, learn, pray, obey, pray, eat, pray. Up at 6:30 a.m., Mass at 7:00 a.m.... The next day it started again" (Jaine, 1993, p. 91-92).

The belief that Indians were morally corrupt and that traditional Indian religion was primitive led missionaries to adopt a religious emphasis in the schools, which would assist in the assimilation process. But Indian people were really being judged by Euro-Canadian standards and racist attitudes held by missionaries who were in charge (Miller, 1996). As Haig Brown (1988) explains, "The inculcation of [Catholic] values was of paramount importance. At the bottom of the list of priorities for both parties [church and government] was an introduction to basic reading, writing, and arithmetic" (p. 74).

Given the schools' emphasis on vocational training and religious indoctrination, the support for academics and acquiring basic literacy skills of reading and writing is doubtful. Many former students of residential schools indicate that the education they received was minimal and the levels of academic achievement attained by many student was quite low (Barman, 1996; Bull, 1991; Haig Brown, 1988, Ing, 1991; Knockwood, 1992; Miller, 1996; Milloy, 1999; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoplesb, 1996). Barman (1996) cites how "...up to 1920, four out of every five aboriginal boys and girls attending a federal school across Canada were enrolled in Grade 1, 2, or 3" (p. 281), indicating children acquired no more than a basic literacy.

A second attribute of residential and day schools which contributed to dismal levels of literacy among the Aboriginal students, was the poor quality of academic programming offered by the schools, which manifested itself in different ways. First, was the small amount of time spent in the classroom, as Miller (1996) explains:

Down to the 1950s the distinguishing feature of the instruction found in Native residential schools was its adherence to the "half-day system," in which theoretically, children spent morning or afternoon taking instruction in their

classrooms, while devoting the other portion of the day to learning usable skills....The theory behind it was sound so far as it went: academic learning and vocationally oriented instruction would give the student "practical" education, while supporting the schools financially. (p. 157)

It was not unusual for children to spend only two to four hours a day in the classroom. And as children got older or times of the year necessitated certain chores to be done, some children did not even go to class. This practice was common to many of the schools including, for example, the Indian residential school at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia:

The older boys who tended the furnace never went to classes except of course Sunday school. The other boys who were not working in the barn were taken out of school during the coal-shoveling season for weeks at a time until all the coal was put in the bins. Then they returned to classes only to be called out again...Their classroom hours were irregular and an afternoon session once or twice a week was the average. Full-time barn and furnace boys worked fifteen hours a day seven days a week. (Knockwood, 1992, pp. 57-58)

Aboriginal children successful in completing grade requirements were given little support to continue their academic studies. School staff held low expectations for student achievement and government policies did little to support continued studies by children. Students were receiving literacy instruction, yet denied opportunities to engage in higher educational pursuits "because most educators did not truly believe that their Indian students could be as successful as their white counter-parts" (Goodburn, 1999, p. 47). At one point in time, Indians were enfranchised, and so lost their status, if they opted for university or college (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b).

The lack of qualified staff was responsible for yet another aspect of the poor quality of programming at these schools. Often situated in isolated locations, considered undesirable places to teach, offering lower salaries compared to their provincial counterparts, the system had difficulty attracting qualified teachers (Miller, 1996; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). An overview of the residential school system by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996b) notes an educational review, which found, as late as 1950, over 40 percent of teaching staff had no professional training. Some had not even graduated from high school. Miller asserts that, since schools operated under a missionary influence, teachers who possessed a "missionary spirit," as opposed to a sound school or university training background, were preferred candidates to teach in the schools. Their lack of training meant that they were not versed in pedagogy of teaching. Knockwood (1992) recalls, "that rather than trying to inspire us to be creative or motivate us to do well, the teachers at the school relied on orders, threats, and ridicule" (p. 82). The authoritarian teaching style left little opportunity for student-teacher interaction. Children attempting to acquire even the most basic of literacy skills met with little success (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Miller, 1996; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b).

Another aspect of the programming that hindered Aboriginal children's acquisition of western literacy was the limitations to kinds of literacy resources. Essentially, there was little reading material, if any, from the outside world (Bull, 1991; Hare 1996). One former student recalls, "They didn't have nothing. All they had was just a great big room there where you sat down. You could talk to people there. They had a blackboard there. You could draw if you wanted to... But they didn't have no books, no magazines, or nothing. There were no papers" (Cameron, in Hare, 1996, p. 59). Most prevalent in reading material was the Bible. Religious

training, which included daily prayer, church attendance, and moral instruction would necessitate exposure to the Bible. What remains in question is whether children even understood the “good” book’s intended meanings. Opportunity to develop literacy skills was minimized by the absence of reading materials, other than primary classroom readers or the Bible. Reading and the role that literature played in the overall goal to civilize and assimilate Indian students is often overlooked (Goodburn, 1999).

The curriculum of the schools and the poor quality of programming served to stunt the intellectual capabilities of Aboriginal children. The focus on vocational and religious training left little time for emphasis on academic skills, as did a program which only devoted half-time to classroom endeavors. Programming delivered by unqualified staff who held low expectations for their charges and offered little academic or social support to them resulted in children’s inability to attain levels of achievement comparable to their non-Aboriginal counterparts. Cognitive skills essential to the acquisition of literacy were suppressed by policies and practices which related to language, curriculum, and programming. Yet, the school’s attempts to subvert the acquisition of literacy extended beyond its cognitive aspects to include undermining the social dimensions of literacy.

A good number of the physical, social, and emotional and motivational conditions which have been identified as critical social dimensions of literacy within the family system have simply not been present for Aboriginal families. Having been disrupted through the process of formal schooling, Aboriginal families have not been given opportunities to assist their children in becoming literate, both in the traditional Aboriginal sense described earlier and in relation to reading and writing in English. Forced separation of children from their families and communities and policies and practices of the residential school have contributed

to the disruption of Aboriginal families. This disruption of the family has had an impact on generations of children who attended these schools, but has also had implications on socio-cultural dimensions of literacy acquisition among Aboriginal people.

Many students recalled a warm, supportive family environment prior to their attendance at residential schools (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Grant, 1996; Ing, 1991, Jaine, 1993; Knockwood, 1992) Parents, extended family, and Elders served as role models for learning. With fewer adults present at the schools, opportunities to develop positive adult-child relationships were limited (Frideres, 1988). As a result, many former students have reported they lack not only the confidence and ability to parent, but also lack interpersonal relationship skill (Assembly of First Nations, 1995; Bull 1991; Ing, 1991):

Children learn parenting skills by the way they are parented. Those who spend eight, ten or more years at K.I.R.S. had limited experience as family members.

In the same way that their language use is based on the knowledge they gained before going to school, so their parenting skill must draw on that limited experience. (Haig Brown, 1988, p. 123)

Lack of opportunity to develop parenting skills is given attention in numerous accounts of residential schooling (Assembly of First Nations, 1995; Bull, 1991; Fournier and Crey, 1997; Grant, 1996; Haig Brown, 1988; Ing, 1991; Jaine, 1993; Knockwood, 1992; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b), and raises the critical question: if children have never been parented at residential school, how could they possibly, as adults, parent their own children? The impacts on Aboriginal families and literacy will be explored more fully in the discussion of second generation participants.

The schools represented an education that can only be described as hostile for Aboriginal children. Teachers were in no way attuned, or even sensitive to the social and cultural environments from which Native children came (Miller, 1996). As Phil Fontaine, a well-known political leader and former student at Fort Alexander Indian Residential School, has made clear, the schools reinforced the idea that Aboriginal culture and children were inferior and unworthy of appreciation, learning or study:

Everything we learned from [that book] was about someone else. We never learned anything about ourselves, or the history of our people in this country. Everything had to do with the French or English, the discovery and the contact between the Europeans and the 'savages'. There was never anything that represented a positive reinforcement of who we were, even if we were of mixed ancestry, so we never developed a positive image of ourselves. We were taught to forget who we were and accept everything about the outside so we could emulate the non-Indian. This kind of approach didn't allow for any creativity or innovative kinds of approaches to learning. (cited in Jaine, 1993, pp. 57-58)

This approach to learning, which portrays Aboriginal people negatively and tries to impress upon children European values, raises an obvious question: what possible motivation could there be for children to engage in reading activities if reading materials reinforced a negative image of Indian people or taught nothing about Aboriginal people or their world views?

A curriculum which focused on vocational skills and religious training, poor quality programming, disruption of the family system, and degrading Aboriginal culture have had serious consequences for the educational achievement of Aboriginal children. Residential

school and day schools, aimed at providing the most basic of literacy and numeracy skills, failed Aboriginal children dismally. Barman (1996) gives an indication of the serious gap in literacy rates between mainstream Canadians and Aboriginal peoples, "In 1921, about 2 percent of Canadian youth were illiterate, compared with fully 40 percent of aboriginal youth. Over the decade, the illiteracy rate for Canadian youth halved to one percent; that for aboriginal youth also fell, but still stood in 1931 at about 25 percent" (p. 281).

As Goodburn (1999) points out in her examination of the texts used at the Genoa Industrial Indian School, what children were given for reading materials was intended to acculturate them to Western values. Analyzing two literary texts written by white women, she presents different types of images regarding Indian assimilation promoted at the school. She explains:

As a text, *Stiya* was useful not only because it reinforced the value of the boarding-school experience in which students were located but also because it anticipated future experiences that Genoa Indian School students might face and attempted to model strategies that students could use to resist the "temptations" they would encounter upon returning home... In this sense, *Stiya* served as an assimilationist handbook for Genoa Indian students' behavior both at and beyond the school campus. (p. 39-40)

Those Aboriginal students who did engage in literacy activities, as a way of connecting with their families, for example, were closely monitored by the residential school authorities who were clearly not totally comfortable with their programs. Ned, a first generation participant, describes letters to his family that he viewed when he got home from school:

I'd seen the letters after I got home. What I had wrote. A lot of words were taken out... It's things that were going on at the school... they kept it away from your parents... Whatever goes on there. What the priest was doing, who goes in the hospital in Espanola. Over two months, I broke my hip playing hockey and the priest would come over everyday, bring my work, school work. He would say, "do you have any letters?" Yeah. They were all mailed from school [Spanish] when I say they go my letters, eh. I should have mailed them right from the hospital. They screened my letters... Cross it out. I told my Dad at home. You never said anything about you being in the hospital. You were in the hospital? Yeah. I was there for two months. I went back to the letters. There was stuff crossed out.

Ned's father confronted the priest at Spanish saying, according to Ned, "If anything goes wrong with my boys you let me know. Don't try and hide anything, 'cause I will find out anyway." Not surprisingly, the priest denied knowing anything of the incident which Ned had described.

Millie, another participant, experienced the same kind of literacy censure when writing to pen pals from school:

I used to write to somebody out in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, and somebody out in Manitoba... It was during this time that I was home that I was involved with pen pals. I didn't keep them up in Spanish because all of your letter there were opened. So I just wrote the family there. You weren't encouraged to communicate with friends. You were lucky to get a letter from home. And that was about the extent of what was tolerated in terms of communication... I

don't know why, but to family...that was accepted, but they didn't encourage you to write to friends at all.

Despite attempts by school to control the kinds of literacy materials and activities, Aboriginal children resisted literacy impositions. Goodburn (1999) describes students who used writing as a form of resistance, sending letters to the government to complain about the treatment they received, making requests for a leave to go home, or requests to transfer to other schools. Those whom I interviewed among this generation reflected a similar kinds of resistance in their memories of the schooling. Since the students were separated by gender, boys and girls sent notes secretly to one another inside their shoes. Ned, who worked in the barn sometimes doing shoe repair, would find notes in the shoes of girls to be distributed to many of the boys. Millie and Irma reported the same kinds of incidences. As for reading material, students made attempts to access sources of reading otherwise not permitted (Goodburn, 1999; Hare, 1996).

There were children who, through forms of resistance, were able to maintain their culture and language (Grant, 1996; Haig Brown, 1988; Miller, 1996). Children would talk to other children in their language when outside earshot of staff. With schools housing a wide variety of language groups or dialects, some children were able to learn languages other than their own. Many students who returned home or lived at home while attending day school continued to speak with their parents in their language and carried on with many aspects of their traditional life. What is unique to this set of first generation participants is that despite efforts to eliminate their culture and language, these features of their identity have remained intact. They have retained their identity as Indian people, in possession of the Anishinaabe language and its associated cultural understandings of the traditional ways of their people. By

this, they have resisted the assimilative efforts of government and church, while still recognizing that Western educational practices had some practical value for them.

In an earlier study, I examined the perceived functions and value of literacy of those who attended residential school, which I compared and contrasted to Aboriginal students who lived with their families and attended provincial school (Hare, 1996). I found that for a small number of participants who attended residential school, literacy was a means to an end, its prime importance was to assist in obtaining employment. As one participant put it, "It means you have a job. If you couldn't speak, read, write English you couldn't work no place. Nobody would want you" (p. 50). This understanding was extended to the discussion of literacy for their children. Simply put, "It's their bread and butter. It's their paycheck... It will give them a job" (p. 54).

In my earlier research, I found that those who experienced literacy support from their families, by staying home and attending the provincial school, were able to construct broader meanings for this western concept of literacy. This form of literacy then could become connected for them to self-esteem, economic success, opportunities for higher education, and self-determination for Aboriginal peoples. It also allowed them to re-connect with their Aboriginal culture, as one participant explained: "I'm finding out who I am basically and what my purpose is here within the community... I'm finding out more about the residential schools, the role of the Children's Aid Society in Native people's lives, the church, and probably a little about the Medewin society" (Hare, 1996, p. 51). Themes were extended into the discussion of literacy acquisition for their children. "The times are getting faster... I'm hoping [my daughter] will finish her secondary school and possibly go on to college. I'm looking at her towards further her education."

There is no failure on the part of the Aboriginal people to recognize the value of this Western education. They are sensitive to the changing demands that we all face. It remains a question of the extent to which, for this generation, this education had to be obtained through such difficult circumstances and at such a cost.

Literacy Beyond Schooling

Some members of this first generation interacted with print literacy beyond the schools from an early age. When asked what kinds of reading or print material was found in the home when they were children, five out of seven respondents indicated there was always a catalogue in the home. "We would sit and look at what we wanted and how much it cost," said Irma. Millie and Ned came from homes which were the exceptions to the others. Millie remembers her mom and aunts reading to her. "Reading was something that was happening at home...I had penpals and we got the newspaper at home," she recalls. For Ned, books written in the Anishinaabeg language were plentiful. Though Ned could speak the language, he was unable to read the language, nor could his brothers and sisters. It was his parents who made use of these language resources. Joan, Edith, Thelma, and Annie indicated that their caregivers interacted little with print. Thelma lived with her grandparents on their farm and they read very little. Annie said, "there were no books at home...and mother didn't have much reading." Irma's father was sick with tuberculosis and she too had a mother who didn't read much. These kinds of recollections could easily lead to the erroneous assumption that the homes of these Aboriginal participants did not support or value literacy. This is simply untrue. Parents' of first generation participants assumed that reading and writing in English would be learned through formal education.

The most interesting observations made by these first generation participants relate to their current perceptions of literacy, and more specifically, what they view as reading and writing activities. They allowed that they “don’t read much” or “don’t write much of anything,” yet my observations of the home and the kinds of responses I elicited revealed that these people were engaged in functional reading and writing tasks. While talking with Annie at her kitchen table, I asked what are some of the things she reads. She responded that she “doesn’t read now.” However, when I came to call on Annie, I had interrupted her working on a cross-word puzzle. While we sat and talked, I noticed on the kitchen wall a calendar, whereby events and appointments were marked on certain dates. I could see on the fridge door a poem hanging by two magnets.

A visit to Irma’s home revealed similar observations. She told me that “she reads the paper, and that’s about it.” As for writing, she feels she “has nothing to write. I don’t write letters. I don’t do much writing.” Irma’s home is filled with various forms of print. On the kitchen table I could see bins containing numerous medication bottles. Her husband has serious eye damage and she must administer both his oral medication and eye drops. She says she has a hard time keeping them straight as there are “so damn many pills to give him and different kinds of drops that I really have to pay attention to the bottles.” There are various kinds of greeting cards, magazines, and catalogues visible on the shelves in the living room. A holder on the wall is stacked with envelopes and letters. Her calendar by the phone has appointments listed and beside the phone is a phone list with names and numbers. While she was engaged in a word-search puzzle, Thelma told me that she reads only novels. But like the other homes, print could be found in both the living room and kitchen. There were mother’s day cards, newspapers, letters, magazines lying about.

This generation was engaged with a range of print genres, such as novels, books, newspapers, magazines, or the Bible. Letter writing was viewed as the most prevalent kind of writing activity. Functional reading activities, such as reading flyers/ads, community newsletters, band notices, viewing the community events channel, preparing a meal by recipe book, and reading prescriptions were not considered part of their literacy experience. Preparing grocery lists, filling out forms, performing crosswords or word searches, paying bills, and marking events on a calendar were not viewed as writing. Yet these kinds of functional literacy activities are fundamental daily activities in the lives of these people. They were not perceived as literacy activities, presumably as a result of lessons learned in school and through the media about what it means to read and write.

There was a clear relationship of reading and writing to work or employment for Ned, Irma, Millie, Thelma, and Edith. Reading and writing were a means to attaining a job and necessary within employment. Ned says he can “make up a resume when looking for a job. Write time sheets.” When asked about the different ways that she uses reading and writing in her life, Millie responded first to her work. “I use it every day in my work and in my job here. In carrying out my duties. In just about everything I do here requires reading and writing... things that I have had to read that are associated to my work, reports and different kinds of discussion papers.” Outside of work she says she used it for leisure purposes: “I get more pleasure out of reading novels or magazines and stuff like that than watching T.V.”

Thelma and Edith did not perceive themselves to be capable readers in their youth. Thelma indicated that she could read “just simple words” after she finished her schooling:

It didn't really bother me [not being able to read well] until I started working, eh. When I went to work it started bothering me... I needed to work because I

had a baby, eh, so I had to work to support it.” She learned to read at work.

“When I started working in Toronto...that’s where I learned to speak English and read too, eh. You learn a lot when you read...if I didn’t know the word, how to pronounce it or what it means, I used to ask my boss. Then she’ll explain it, eh.

For Thelma, reading and writing were essential to supporting her child and in order to do this she knew she must work.

Edith attributes employment opportunities to schooling: “It’s the only way. You have to learn if you want to support yourself” she says. Having started school at age eight and going only as far as grade six, she felt she could only read a little bit. Her reading capabilities have since improved: “I can read now...I was 40, my husband died. I was 43 when I took upgrading...I got paid to go to school. That’s why I took it...That’s where I learned to read more.” Though Edith reads for enjoyment, her interests have focused on Bible studies:

I just do the reading. I do the Bible study. I learned it. I go to Jehovah now. Jehovah Witnesses. I don’t go to a church, Catholic...I was told not to go there anymore...he said to me, Flattery. He told me once, why don’t you stay at home on Sundays and let the tourists have the seats. I couldn’t understand it. He was telling me I guess they wanted the tourists to go there now. Because I had lots of kids we were just filling those seats. that’s what he told me. I was not going back. It was when I quit. So I don’t go to church anymore. And then those Jehovah Witness kept coming. You should go to church. I wouldn’t bother, but then they kept coming. So I said okay I’ll have the Bible study with you. So that is where I learned, to understand more I guess. They pick me up.

Somebody comes and picks me up when it's their turn and I go there and have Bible study and Sunday they have a service.

The emphasis on vocational training was to prepare students to obtain employment opportunities within the mainstream society. Aboriginal people would be able to work alongside their non-Aboriginal counterpart in all aspects of the economy. Aboriginal communities could attain economic self-sufficiency with the assistance of the schools' graduates. However, the glaring irony was that the focus on domestic and trade skill was simply preparing Aboriginal students for employment status on the lower economic rungs of that society (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill 1986). Aboriginal people would be prevented from attaining economic success in the many Canadian industries (Carter, 1990; Newell, 1993).

The conceptions of literacy among Irma, Annie, Millie, Thelma, Edith, Joan, and Ned have been narrowed, I would claim, far more than they needed to be. There was no lack of appreciation for the value of western forms of literacy. This generation overcame considerable hardships and a general disparagement of their language and culture in acquiring the ability to read and write in English. They still have in memory and the spoken word much of an Anishinaabe way of life, one that has responded to changes driven by government and church, as well as new technologies, but one that has retained many of its connections to its Aboriginal roots.

Chapter Four

Second Generation Participants

Leo, Mary, Carol, Darleen, Jeff, Ralph, and Abe represent the second generation of participants interviewed for this study. I have again grouped the results of their interviews around three themes: their early literacy experiences with their parents, their time in school, and their literacy experiences beyond schooling. What becomes clear from their comments is that the parents of this second generation did not have a sufficient command of western literacy to be able to support its development among their children, nor did they have an opportunity to foster the development of the Anishinaabe language and culture among these children, given the demands of a schooling system that did not recognize the value of this language and culture. This second generation's experiences with literacy in school echoed both the enabling and disabling aspects of their parents' generation. That is, even as members of the second generation continued to learn to read and write in English, they learned hard lessons about both the limits of their skills with this form of literacy and the school's lack of regard for their Anishinaabe way of life. Despite the disabling aspects of this education, this second generation was to learn how this western tradition of literacy can further one's interests and rights within the Canadian system. That is, a political discourse of Aboriginal rights tended to dominate the second generation's discussions of western and Aboriginal forms of literacy. The search for meaning within their lives continues to be connected to the Anishinaabe language and culture, especially as it is focused on the struggle for self-determination of the Anishinaabe people

Literacy within the Family

When I asked the second generation about their literacy experiences within the home, they tended to describe parents who, for the most part, did not support their children's reading or writing. They recounted the limited forms of print material in their homes as young children. This second generation recognized that their parents possessed limited skills of English print literacy. In a response to a question about letter writing, for example, Jeff described why he thought he received few letters while at Spanish Residential School: "My dad can hardly write, so he really couldn't be bothered to write the letter. But my mother picked up writing I guess when she went to school. So she could write a little bit. I am sure my Dad could write a little bit but not enough to write a letter and its just something we were not familiar with, letter writing." He added that his parents did not need reading and writing to live as they did:

The things that you use reading and writing for today is not what you needed it for in their day. So for example, to do the things they did, like my Dad was working in the forestry so you don't need nothing there. All you need is muscle and brawn you know. But you know you just need a little bit of arithmetic, but you learn that pretty quickly. You cut this much wood and you have to calculate its value then you want to get paid. So the things that they had to do to survive in the community and outside of it even, those activities never required any reading or writing. They required learning some English, which they did learn. But I think that's the main reason. There was no need really for those things and they never had time either. We had no hydro. Like the environment for those things wasn't there. There was no quiet place. There

was one big room as it were. Poor light, no lighting. We just didn't have those things.

Two participants had parents who could not read or write. Carol described her mother as "illiterate," although her dad read lots of books. Her parents didn't help her or her siblings with their school work: "My mom couldn't help me. I found it kind of hard. My brothers and sisters didn't help either. I had to do it [homework] alone." Leo also allowed that his mother did not read: "We have to help her read soup can labels and things like that." Mary, Abe, and Darleen also noted that their parents did not assist them with their homework. Mary said that her parents didn't assist her or her siblings with school work because, "they couldn't really help me. There were a lot things that they didn't learn." Abe shared the similar experience when he described learning to read and write: "I found that it wasn't that difficult. I found that it wasn't that easy either. Because going home I remember my parents always telling me, they didn't help, 'but make sure you do your homework.' That was the message."

Ralph provided the exception: His mother was a school teacher and encouraged Ralph and his siblings with their school related tasks. His father, however, was unable to help:

My mom was a school teacher. So if we had any trouble reading or writing she would spend time with us. I'd say probably half and half I guess. We got quite a bit at school, but at home too at nights. The work we got at school, brought it home, and my parents, my mom would, my dad wouldn't, my mom would say, "look, what do you have to do?" and basically check it quickly or you know, "you have to read this or you have to write that out... My dad, my dad didn't read or write very well either. My mom used to teach him. She would spend time with him in the evenings. When he wasn't in the bush, she would be

reading with him and give him the basic writing skills too. He never went to school...His dad owned a sawmill back then and they said, ten years old working in a mill and then he just went to school for a short time and he left...I just accepted that he didn't have time to learn, he had to go and he had to work. I just figured that we're getting an opportunity now and we have more time and my mom, of course, it was pushed for her...she said it was used on her and then she learned to read and write, a lot from the school in Spanish. But it was pushed on her, the reading, writing side of the English language, I guess.

Within the home, the most common forms of print were the newspaper and the catalogue, referred to by Jeff as the "wish book": "We would sit and go through the catalogue, thinking of all the things we wanted." Other participants referred to the letters that were sent and received at home, either by pen pals or family, located at residential school.

The connection to the land, which marked the first generation's memories, was less striking with the second generation. There are fewer references to the places they went for berry picking or other activities; there was less talk of the seasons. The second generation did speak of family responsibility and reliance on the land as necessary chores. This is clearly a generation that had to balance means of survival with the demands of formal schooling. There were still daily routines that needed to be carried out to ensure the family would be sustained year round, or as Darleen tells it:

We had to make a big garden to survive. Then pick berries. I remember in the fall. We would have to go pick cranberries for cranberry jelly. My dad would give us two baskets each and we had to fill those up, eh. 'You come back by

noon,' he would say. And we would have to fill those baskets... Then we would can beans, put potatoes in the cellar. We would put apples we picked away for the winter.

Explaining what things they did with their families Jeff, Mary, and Abe recalled activities that were similar to those recalled by the first generation participants, if with less talk of the land and time: "We just shared the chores," Jeff said, "just normal everyday activity you know. We bring wood, help your father or mother, sometimes sweeping and water, haul water, set snares, you know." Chores described by Mary entailed carrying wood and water:

We had lots of chores 'cause we didn't have a heating system like today. There was a wood stove and water to carry you know, wood to bring in. All those chores we had to do. I think it took most of our time just getting water. I had to walk all the way, quite a ways just to get water and drinking water.

Everybody had to bring in the wood so it doesn't take as long and ah... that's mostly what we did when we were growing up.

Abe explained that he always had work to do around the home: "Like chores, hauling lettuce, hauling water, feeding animals. We had a barn, so of course there were horses, cows, chickens. They needed water and I had to haul wood and all that."

While all parents of these second-generation participants spoke Anishinaabe, some of their children gradually lost their ability to speak the language. Leo, Jeff, and Mary remain fluent speakers of the language, with the others having lost mastery of the language or never were taught to speak Anishinaabe. Ralph suggested that the boarding schools contributed to this loss of language skills:

I think a lot of it has to do with when she went to the boarding school at Spanish. I think it was kind of bred in, told so many times raise your kids in English. You need English to get by in the world and the Ojibwe language is not going to get you anywhere. She learned that young in school. I remember them talking, but they wouldn't...every time they spoke to us it was in English. I would go listen to my grandma and grandpa sometimes, but even then they would usually instruct us in English too and not, well very little in Ojibwe.

Abe pointed out how his parents didn't speak Anishinaabe around the children, again as part of the schooling legacy:

They did speak it [Anishinaabe], but not around us. They spoke it. I picked up some from them I guess. But they never spoke it to us because I guess they were taught not to speak it also. They both went to Spanish. My mom went to Spanish and they were told not to speak it. It was forced out of them, but they still retained it. But myself, I never was taught by my parents 'cause they felt that it maybe it was a hindrance to speak Indian.

It is not surprising that this second generation of participants experienced a language loss and a changing relationship with the land. The language and culture of their parents were often denigrated by their teachers, making the continuity of their own literacy problematic while undermining their confidence and motivation when it came to attaining western notions of literacy. Aboriginal families were disrupted by this schooling, with this undermining of their culture, as well as by having family members attending residential school. Residential schools, which were used to used to educate aboriginal children from roughly 1850 to 1950, physically removed children away from their family, taking away the rights and responsibilities of Indian

people to parent their own children. Children were educated in an environment devoid of nurturing parental support. They missed out, for a good part of the year on parents, extended family, and Elders who served as role models for learning about relationships, both with the land and with each other. Opportunities to develop positive adult-child relationships became limited (Frideres, 1988), while the transmission of traditional knowledge learned within the Aboriginal family and community was severely hampered.

A devastating effect of removing children from the Aboriginal family and community has been the inability of these children to develop interpersonal skills essential to parenting (Assembly of First Nations, 1994; Bull, 1991; Haig Brown, 1988; Ing, 1991):

Children learn parenting skills by the way they are parented. Those who spent eight, ten or more years at [school] had limited experience as family members.

In the same way that their language use is based on the knowledge they gained before going to school, so their parenting skill must draw on that limited experience. (Haig Brown, 1988, p. 123)

The effects of residential schools on Native child-rearing practices is explored more fully by Ing (1991). Her small case study of three former students reveals that parenting, caring, loving, or teaching of interpersonal skills and cultivating personal relationships was absent in these schools. The self-esteem and self-concept of former students was to be deeply affected into adulthood. They lack confidence and ability to nurture their own young preventing them from becoming good parents. As well, traditional ways of care-giving can not be emulated. This, she describes, is one of the inter-generational impacts of residential schooling. Ing has extended this research further in her doctoral thesis (Ing, 2000)

Further, policy at the schools required children to be separated by age and gender. Children were not only isolated from their parents, but from siblings as well. During the few moments that children were able to visit their families while at school, which usually occurred on Sundays following mass, many reported that their parents and siblings soon felt like strangers (Assembly First Nations, 1994; Jaine, 1993; Ing, 1991).

Differing expectations for behavior between home and school created confusion and conflict for many students. Knockwood (1992) describes a few of the inconsistencies that existed between their two worlds:

Traditionally, we were all taught to take responsibility for the protection and nourishment of others, especially the very old, who had the wisdom and knowledge of the past, and the very young who held the future. Older brothers and sisters were absolutely required to look after their younger siblings. When they went to Residential School, being unable to protect their younger brothers and sisters became a source of life-long pain... When people come to your home, you are allowed to look at their faces to see what kind of message they are bringing. After that, it is considered rude to look at their eyes. At the school however, when we followed our training and avoided looking directly into the faces of the priests or the nuns, we were punished for being so insolent. (p. 16)

The ignorance and arrogance shown by church and school toward these children affected their cultural ties to family and community. So harsh were the punishments meted out by school staff that abuse is surely the more accurate term to describe what these children endured.

Humiliation, isolation, denial of basic nutrition, whippings, and beatings have all been reported

by former students in residential school accounts. Punishment and other forms of discipline became a learned behavior for children. When they became parents, they transferred this learning to their own families.

The forced separation of children from their parents has left many Aboriginal people unable to cope with the requirements of family life. Any transference of parenting skills from one generation to another has been disrupted, and has left generations of Aboriginal peoples with the inability to possess feelings of self-worth, express feelings appropriately, and to care for their children. The disruption of the Aboriginal family was inevitable and creates a dilemma for Aboriginal families attempting to support notions of Aboriginal and western literacy. If the family is the primary medium of cultural continuity and an invaluable part of the social context in which literacy occurs (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1990), how can Aboriginal families be expected to participate in western literacy practices and ensure maintenance of traditional knowledge which ensure cultural continuity if they have not had opportunities to learn even the most basic parenting skills? It all speaks to how this second generation's access to the physical, social, and emotional conditions that facilitate both Aboriginal and western understandings of literacy was severely limited.

Although this generation spoke of their parents' limited support for school literacy activities, as well as limited opportunities for their parents to convey the traditions of their own Aboriginal cultural literacy, some participants did recall their parents conveying to them the message that schooling was important. Abe, Ralph, Leo, and Jeff had parents who held expectations for school achievement. Ralph told us earlier that his mother was a school teacher. "If we had any trouble with reading and writing she would spend time with us. We

got quite a bit of school at home at nights,” he shared. The importance of schooling was also communicated to Abe, Leo and Jeff by their parents, or as Loius tells it:

My older sisters went through the residential school system and we were expected to read before we started school. I didn’t, but they always read to me when they came home so I was naturally curious...Its a family thing. It was almost a family thing that we all read. We were told to read...there was an expectation by my parents. We have to do good in school. The perception out there was very much against us when we started school at the local high school. We were taking up good space and breathing good air. And it was a challenge. As a matter of fact I think it was more anger that got us through.

Other family members may have been able to assist siblings with school-related literacy activities, much like Leo’ sisters. Mary indicated she too helped her brothers and sisters with homework.

Schooling and Literacy

The formal school system imposed upon this second generation an English language only policy that posed considerable challenges and contributed to the language loss experienced by some of these participants. Primacy was given to the written word and oral traditions not recognized. The transition from Anishinaabe-speaking homes to school where English was the only accepted language of communication made initial learning difficult for some of these participants. Mary describes her first experience at Lakeview:

It was difficult because the teachers can’t really communicate with you and you have to pick it [English] up really quickly... You know the teachers at school,

they kind of make you afraid and stuff like that. They'll slap you on the hand with a ruler or something so you feel you must have to learn the English language. So you made great effort to learn it so you don't want to be those people that get a strap everyday. You know, cause I've seen a lot people like that. I felt like there was nobody to really talk to or somebody, like parents today I think they can stand up for their children today if something is happening at school, something is not right. The parents of today can go up there and talk to the teachers. But most parents weren't like that, at the time, I don't think. You know, to stand behind you. These things shouldn't happen.

Jeff explains what the language transition from home to schooling was like:

I guess I started [to speak English] when I went to school. They started to speak English first. I didn't speak it or write it. But when they brought us to this building and then the teacher started explaining things and then I guess it doesn't take too long to catch on. But when you don't speak it [English], it's hard to learn. They wouldn't let us speak our own language.

Darleen describes how the language difference between home and schooling made learning to read difficult:

It was hard back in those days. I couldn't speak English when I started school I spoke only Indian and they'd say, "Don't bring that kind of tongue voice here. Do it on your time at home." It was hard at first. My parents only spoke Indian to me at home. That's how I was raised. At school I had to learn English. It was hard. It was really hard when we had to read. That was the part that was really hard. They'd just expect you to know English...I remember them days.

If we were talking Indian the teacher would hold our hand out like this, wet our hand under water like this. I'd just close my eyes. And then once day I thought to myself, "No way, I'm not going to let him hit me." And I went like this [pulls hands away] and he hit his leg, eh! It made it worse 'cause he got real mad.

English literacy acquisition was seen as an intrusion into Darleen's home environment resulting in mixed messages about learning for her. She describes these feelings as she recounts bringing home a book from school she had to read:

I had a hard time. I had to take it home and learn how to read it. And my dad would say, "You don't bring have to read that. That's white man ways." That's what he would say. So it was kind of a mixed up feeling, eh. It was really hard. "You don't have to learn what the white man teaches you. I'm teaching you our way!" That's what he would say to me.

This conflict and struggles with learning resulted in a negative attitude toward schooling for Darleen:

We'd have to stay in at recess and learn how to do it [read English]. That's the only way we'd get outside... It wasn't easy. And it was very hard when a teacher hits you on the knuckles with a ruler. You close in, eh. That what happened to me... I wouldn't say nothing. I would just sit there. I wouldn't even read. I'd have to stay in at recess. I didn't care. I was just thinking that as soon as I get old enough I am not going to school. And that's exactly what happened 'cause I carried that, eh. As soon as I was of age 14 or 15 I quit school. I didn't want to be taught by the white man anymore.

Carol echoed similar sentiments about wanting to get out of school as fast as she could. She says, "I didn't like school. I didn't like it there. I didn't like the teachers. I went to grade twelve. When we got to high school they didn't like us. They didn't like Indians. I got out quick. I had a baby in grade 12 and just worked in a store at the post-office."

Feeling inadequate was how the schooling experience affected Abe. He reported, "When I was going to school I didn't think I was good enough to be anything, like a professional, such as a lawyer or school teacher or you know all that. I didn't think that way because the way we were treated in school. I guess not very many people thought we could achieve that level of learning."

What this second generation learned about literacy and schooling was very much directed by what they were learning about themselves as Aboriginal within a non-Aboriginal world. An education in literacy was about what they did not have to offer and could only hope to acquire by becoming less of who they were. Literacy may have been regarded as a source of their salvation by this generation of teachers, especially in the church-sponsored schools, but it was also the point of their condemnation as students, warranting their ill-treatment. It is part of a legacy that needs to be overcome, I am arguing, by broadening notions of literacy to include what it means to find the meaning of life written and read across people's lives.

Literacy Beyond Schooling

The second generation's engagement with literacy outside of school had its casual, informal side. Mary, upon several prompts, revealed she actually read and wrote a great deal as it related to her personal interests. She was creating a family journal with pictures and recorded events. Traveling with her husband led to collecting tourist materials and maps, and always

sending postcards. A look around her home revealed many forms of print literacy. There were books, magazines, newspapers, lists, and postcards in sight. Much of her literacy activities stem from her travels: "I journaled our, you know, the things I saw in our travels. Just to remember people and names and the places we've been and... postcards, letters. And what I'll be doing next is writing letters telling people that we met and just let them know how we are, you know, just the daily activities we do and how everybody is."

Darleen's minimal interest in reading and writing was an exception among the participants of this generation, and yet you can still see that it has a hold on her as well:

I don't write at all. I don't have any interest in that. Only if I had too. Once in awhile I'll jot something down, what I need, but I wouldn't call myself a person who sits down and really get into reading and writing. Only if I have too. I used to read books, True Confessions, all those books. Then I just didn't bother... I read the Expositor or if something interests me I'll read. I try and force myself to read sometimes. She's got a book there. I try and force myself to read it sometimes.

One reason for her reluctance, Darleen pointed out, was her negative experiences in school, just as that need to try to please the teacher must still weigh on her sense of having "to try and force" herself to read a book:

I don't really care for reading and writing. I was never really interested in it. Ever since the teacher told me I wasn't a good writer. I must have been in grade six. "You can never write a good journal," she [the teacher] says to me. "This is not the way you start a paragraph."... I always felt good when I put my hand up. Sometimes I knew the answer, sometimes I had to wrong answer.

And she'd say, "You're not paying attention. That answer is wrong." Well fine, I thought, I won't put my hand up anymore. That's the kind of attitude I started to have then. Then I didn't participate in nothing. It felt like I didn't fit there.

There is no question, then, that the western tradition of literacy played an important part in the daily lives of this generation. It was necessary for work purposes, learning opportunities, communicating, and connecting with their children. "I could use that to get a job if I wanted to get a job," Jeff said, "I could write up information, or gather information for people. I could write statements or position papers. I could write newspaper articles. I could write to organizations about issues and matters. I could write to the government about how I feel, how they are doing, a lot of things." Leo and Abe described its necessity to their work when asked what can one do if one can read and write well. In his responses during the interview, Leo acknowledged western literacy's symbolic hold on his life: "I couldn't imagine life without reading and writing. But I think it would be...you couldn't...you can't...you have to rely on it and it's a form of reading and writing...little pictures where the washroom is, but that's a form of reading also." Mary and Carol used writing as a way of organizing their thoughts, connecting with others, and feeling good about themselves, both spiritually and emotionally, or as Carol explained:

I keep a daily journal. I put everything in there, my feelings, everything.

Everyday I wake up I thank the Creator for my day. In the evening I have my writing in my journal... The way we grew up was different. They [parents] didn't talk about anything. I'm very different. Today with my own kids, we

talk about things. I write to talk about things, express how I feel. My father passed away. My journal helped me to heal and grieve.

Carol records dates and notes on the backs of pictures, sayings, "I like to mark things down. It helps me to remember things. Writing it down brings back those memories when I look [the pictures] again." Mary kept a journal too about everyday activities as she explained earlier. She felt good about herself in a way different from Carol: "Your own self-esteem, putting your own thoughts and feelings into your writing. I guess the more you write, the more you get comfortable with it and if you put this together it makes you feel good about yourself. Everything is in its place and organized."

Several of these participants, including Carol, Abe, Mary, made connections between their own literacy activities and their children. Carol reported that her journal writing allowed for greater communication with her children. Expressing herself in her journal has allowed her to express herself with her children, fostering relationships that differed from the one with her mother. "My mom was like that, not saying anything. I didn't want [kids] to grow up like I grew up." When I was attempting to confirm with Abe the purposes for which he reads the paper, he extended the purpose beyond his leisure and work interests to describe the indirect effects his reading choices have on his children: "Well the kids are starting to catch on to that, eh. Like at home, they read the papers. I only have one boy at home now. He is going to high school. One goes to high school in North Bay and Junior goes to school down here, and he picks up on it."

When asked about the value of reading and writing Mary refers to when she spent time reading with her children when they were young:

When I see my own kids, I made sure they started reading not right away, but I would make sure that when I read to them that they were listening and sometimes they would just lie in bed and listen to me. I guess they absorbed everything. If I miss something in the book, they would say. Sometimes I would feel in a hurry to read something and I would quickly skip over it and they would remind me that I missed something there.

Western literacy is important to the daily lives of this generation. It has proven necessary to their jobs, learning opportunities, communicating, and connecting with their children. It was also significant to personal use and enjoyment. Jeff, retired from his work but still active in his community, spoke of this necessary sense of literacy's political dimension:

For me a lot of the stuff is related to work I have done over the years, so it's more about Indian issues, issues on First Nations business affairs and that kind of stuff...I read a lot of Indian stuff because, well, this is where I live and everything, or a lot of stuff is different for Indian people...for example, the way we acquire things and what we have comes to us in a different way from what other people or how other people get it. Take housing for example. You can't just mortgage a house, buy it, and sell it here [on the reserve]. It's only good to keep you warm and that all a house on the reserve is good for. So it is very different then. So you have to know about how and why that is and what you can do to improve it. And so that is why the way we do things, much of it is governed by different ways of doing it and different laws, especially the Indian Act. And you gotta know that.

Along with these expressions of support and appreciation for western literacy, often in the face of an oppressive schooling system, this literacy had also come for this second generation to form part of the political struggle to define and defend themselves as Anishinaabe people. There is an irony in that western literacy which was used to assimilate Aboriginal peoples, is now used to re-assert Aboriginal rights. This reassertion is being used to revitalize language and culture embedded in their own notions of literacy, or as Jeff puts it:

We need to adapt and change our way of surviving. You can't do the things that historically they did before where reading and writing was not an essential skill. You could get by without that. But today those days of living and surviving, it's no longer there. The way we lived, the hunting and fishing are not there anymore. The resources, the availability of resources has changed... The government controls basically everything now. You can't just go and trap, you just can't go and fish, you just can't go and cut wood, you just can't... The way of doing things is using computers and calculators and cash registers and that what they have to use. You got to learn their [the government] game and to learn their game reading and writing is essential. You can write papers, letters, correspondence, communicate. You have to go to school and learn those things, gain knowledge about those things so you can play their game.

Abe, employed by the community, reads to be knowledgeable about issues related to Aboriginal people:

I get the paper everyday. And I get a couple of other papers every other day. I get the Sudbury Star, the Toronto paper all the time and the Globe and Mail

once in a while. The local papers we get every week. Of course I get the Native newspapers. I get these publications for references 'cause they always refer to some treaties or what's going on in different areas of Canada on different reserves...My job requires me to read a lot...I don't really enjoy reading that much...I don't read for hobby like some people do. I mostly just read for my work. My job deals mostly with [band] membership, eh. So reading this stuff helps me understand stuff for Native people here.

Aboriginal concerns within this political context also remained in the forefront of Leo's interests in literacy:

I got involved with First Nations people back in the 60s. It was a crisis situation, where following the Hawthorne Report in 1967, the government came out with a policy to transfer responsibility for the well being of native people to the provinces. That was the White Paper. We countered that. We were recruited, there were seven of us, the Magnificent Seven. And to counter that we were locked up in a hotel room, a bunch of know-nothing rookies. We were straight off campus to counter that. Somebody failed to tell us we weren't suppose to win. We were not suppose to win, but we did anyway.

His writing demonstrates the same kind of commitment and began at a young age when he first began to explore the power of the written word:

We did a lot of writing. Nasty letters to Indian Affairs, Dr. Cecil King. They should be on record. My sister and I were good at writing nasty letters. We would write about how negligent he was as a councilor because he would never come and visit us at school when we were having problems. I mean we

were good at writing nasty letters. We'd write for other adults. As a matter of fact I earned some extra money that way. I'd write letters giving collection agency hell and things like that.

Leo's writing for First Nations people has continued. He writes now for enjoyment and has written a story about living in the community: "I have an old manuscript here I wanted publish. This was years ago. Still have it, 'Don't Kill the Fence.' It's a parody of being brought up on the reserve eh! So I need to take that out and brush the dust it [the manuscript] off."

Carol, whose father passed away, reveals her interest in Aboriginal issues which she attained from her father's personal belongings:

I read about Indian history. I read all his stuff. I go down to the basement and spend hours reading them. I have all his stuff, eh. I have his books, newspapers, diaries, and letters. It's all the stuff he kept over the years. He worked with Indian people all his life, eh. So I read all his stuff. I learn about all he did for our People. He did a lot. And I tell my kids, eh, the things he did. My daughter reads this stuff too. We have to know these things.

Within the second generation's narratives lies their commitment to the future of Aboriginal people within a larger world. They know the struggles that Aboriginal people endured and make efforts to reclaim for themselves and Indian people a respectful and rightful place in Canadian society. The lived experiences of these second generation participants are located within political movements characterized by resistance to assimilation and integration. The assimilationist ideology, perpetuated by church and government, school and court, prevailed until about the 1940s. By the 1950s, our people began to participate in their own

empowerment in their own struggle for civil and sovereign rights. With some of these second generation participants, we begin to see important political movements among our people that contribute to the assertion of Aboriginal rights.

Creation of independent Indian organizations paralleled changing government policies regarding Indian people, construed as "acts of resistance." Final authority over Indian matters had always rested with the Crown, the Department of Indian Affairs, and the Indian agent (Cassidy and Bish, 1989). Yet Aboriginal people's alliances have always struggled to contest the authority that the government wanted for its own. Even as early as 1870 the first Indian political organization in Canada was formed, the Grand General Indian Council of Ontario and Quebec, out of a concern for the government's implementation of Indian policy (Frideres, 1988). Indian organizations continued to develop throughout Canada. The 1940s saw the evolution of a national organization that would come to be known as the National Indian Brotherhood, that exists as the Assembly of First Nations.

As a result of Aboriginal efforts to address questions of jurisdiction, the government responded with a Special Joint Committee in 1946 to re-examine the extent of power exercised by the government over Indian Affairs. This hearing brought some attention to the conditions under which our people lived and the role of the government in controlling our lives. The hearing brought about changes to the Indian Act in 1951, addressing minimal power relations that existed between government and Indian people. The Indian Act has undergone many amendments to redress gender and racial discrimination, yet according to Cardinal (1999) in his newly written introduction to The Unjust Society, it still remains filled with problems for our people:

True, Canada has adopted a more multicultural approach to its policies and appears to have ingrained this as basic constitutional value. Yet when it comes to “Indians”, the federal government continues to insist, in its comprehensive claims policy and its comprehensive settlements, the “Indians” must give up or extinguish their rights and identities as “First Nations” in order to embrace new municipal-like identities. These new identities, while perhaps retaining the aura of Indian beads, paint and blankets, would in essence become no more than slightly glorified municipalities, with their citizens becoming just like other Canadians. (p. xiv)

Assimilation was intended to take place through forms of integration during the 1960s and 1970s. Despite changes to the Indian Act that would emphasize practical measures for integrating services to First Nations peoples with services to all Canadians, its primary goal remained assimilation (Armitage, 1995). In 1969, the government moved to transfer responsibility for Aboriginal peoples to provincial governments. Under the guise of equality, it proposed to repeal the Indian Act and bring treaties to an end in a policy paper known as the White Paper. In simple terms, Indians would become like all other Canadians, their unique status in Canada terminated.

Not anticipated by the government was the strong Aboriginal rejection to what was thought of as a policy of termination (Cardinal, 1969), represented in the White Paper. Rejected so strongly, it actually served to strengthen First Nations organizations, particularly the National Indian Brotherhood (Armitage, 1995). In The Unjust Society, Cardinal (1969) led the Aboriginal critique of the White Paper: “Cardinal’s was a leading voice in the opposition to the White Paper. His ideas foreshadowed many of those that would become

more prevalent throughout the 1970s. His emphasis on culture mirrored a reinforced personal and social consciousness among Indian peoples that would gradually become incorporated as a key aspect of the emerging organizational culture of many Indian governments" (Cassidy and Bish, 1989, p. 9). Although Cardinal provided an extended commentary on the White Paper, more formal responses by Aboriginal groups came from a series of policy papers, including the "Brown Paper" from British Columbia Natives, "Wahbung" from Manitoba Natives, and the "Red Paper" by Alberta Natives.

The "Red Paper" is best known and made specific recommendations concerning education and economic development (Frideres, 1988). Situated in the Red Paper was the spawning of the path-breaking paper, "Indian Control of Indian Education," which defined Aboriginal goals for education as a matter of local Aboriginal control: "In the mid-1970s, 'Indian Control of Indian Education' was a very influential document in Indian communities across the country. By placing an emphasis on the question of jurisdiction and control at the local level, it made education a key issue, as the drive for self-government emerged as a priority in many Indian localities" (Cassidy and Bish, 1989).

"Indian Control of Indian Education" asserted the right of Aboriginal peoples to have a voice and decision-making powers in their children's education. Overall, the aim of the policy was to "prepare Indian children for total living with the freedom of choice of where to live and work, and enable Indians to participate fully in their own social, economic, political and education advancement... achieved without resorting to assimilation" (Brookes, 1991, p. 175). The government could not help but respond to "Indian Control of Indian Education" and it began to transfer jurisdictional control of education to Aboriginal communities. This move was not enough in itself and proved ineffective in enabling First Nations communities to

govern education for themselves (Hare and Barman, 2000). As Verna Kirkness (1998) aptly put it in "Our People's Education: Cut the Shackles, Cut the Crap, Cut the Mustard":

For many of our communities that have taken over their own schools and other educational institutions, much time has been lost either emulating the federal or public school system or merely Band-Aiding, adapting, supplementing when they should have been creating a unique and meaningful education. At the base of this attitude is the difficulty of overcoming colonial domination. (p. 12)

This overcoming was to take place in ways that go well beyond literacy in the schools. Certainly, the assertion of political and educational sovereignty had a profound influence on the literacy of the second generation participants in this study. It turns up in their discussion of how they read and write, whether for work-related or personal use. You can see this when Ralph explains the scope of his reading and writing:

Initially when I first came out from training we were reading books on laws, different things. But now basically I would say 80% of my reading is newspapers. You know, find out what's going on in the world. I used to read history...very little writing now. I do a lot of typing. Our job is pretty well computers now so that is the only place I get at it. But I still write out things. I'm the old fox. I don't like doing everything on computer. A lot of time I will write my crown briefs out...Sometimes its sports. I do very little writing, but for sports. Like the kids I'm coaching all the time. You know, writing proposals up.

As I suggested at the outset of this chapter, there is both an enabling and disabling quality to the second generations' experiences with western forms of literacy. Western literacy

practices in the family were encouraged, though not supported in their practice. Indoctrinated by language policies of the school, some parents of these second generations did not teach them their first language. The second generation's schooling contributed to their struggle for sovereignty and identity, even as it continued to deny its most fundamental basis in Anishinaabe language and cultural traditions. This generation was the first to take a politically-active stance on Native control of schooling, recognizing that schooling and its associated forms of literacy were now critical to their children's futures. If there was no going back, there was a way forward that could maintain the vital spirit, the cultural knowing and language, that have always marked Anishinaabe forms of literacy.

Chapter Five

Third Generation Participants

The third generation of participants in this study consisted of Libby, Violet, Noelle, Denise, Tod, David, and Norton. They were the youngest persons I interviewed, having been born between 1970-1982, and ranging in age from 16 to 28 years of age at the time I talked with them. This generation's introduction to western literacy was strongly supported by their families, with their mothers playing a central role. These families, reflecting the strength of Aboriginal cultures generally, reveal the unique inter-relationships not only among immediate family members, but among the extended family, community, and Aboriginal Nation. This generation was the most fully engaged in western literacy and this proved far more than just a one-way transmission from parent to child, as these participants give back to their families and communities by drawing on their literate accomplishments.

On the other hand, this generation reflected a sense of loss over their inability to speak Anishinaabe, and they were to make little reference to any sort of relationship with the land. Although it may be because this generation was still largely in school at the time of the interviews, their comments indicated that they may be more strongly influenced by schooling and schooled notions of literacy than the previous generations. However, they had not yet come to reflect critically on their education experiences, in terms of the literature on contemporary First Nations education which asserts that both community-controlled and provincial education systems still have a long way to go to meet the cultural and linguistic needs of First Nations children. Consistent with the previous generations of this study, this

group holds that western literacy conventions are of value to Aboriginal people. The participants from the third generation perceive western literacy as one means of challenging racism, asserting their identities, and engaging with non-Native society whether or not they continue to live within their own community.

Literacy within the Family

The participants of this third generation recalled how they found support for western literacy practices within their homes. The literacy activities they engaged in with family members included book reading, helping with homework, language games, and writing activities. Their recollections further reveal that for these particular members of the third generation, it was primarily the women of the household who were active facilitators of literacy. Tod shared how important his mother was to his development as a reader:

Learning to read and write, there was... for me, personally, I was really interested in it. I think because, when I was young, I always remember my Mom...she used to read to me all the time, eh. She would help me with my spelling and things like that, eh. My mom was really big. She made it into a game. I think that's why I really took to reading. She made it really fun. When we traveled she'd ask me to read the signs on the road to her, or we would play spelling games all the time when we were kids, me and my sister. We'd have spelling games all the time, contest, see who could read the farthest during a trip to Toronto in the books, things like that, eh. We did those all the time. They weren't formal, but we did things like that all the time. So she had

me reading, made reading really enjoyable for me so that really helped me right off.

When asked about his father's involvement Tod described how his father didn't play as strong an instructional role as his mother:

He wasn't the guy. He'd read stories to us once in a while or if we had a question about something he was the one we'd go ask. But he wasn't the one who sat down and read the books to us, or pointed out that you read left to right on the page or something. He wasn't the guy to do that, eh. He was always, you know, he'd be outside working. He was never involved with that.

Similarly Noelle indicated how her mom read to her all the time, while her dad only read to her sometimes and yet the reading worked to connect her to both of her parents:

The earliest I can remember is like Sesame Street, and my mom reading to me like bedtime stories or just asking me questions: what does this say Noelle? Like what color is this? What does this mean? My mom mostly did that. My Dad was just, like, there, but more sports-wise and stuff. Like, I could talk to him. Like my friends are like, how can you talk to your dad like that. But I can. And my mom. So it's cool.

When asked what kinds of literacy activities he did with his family, David recalled how "more or less my mom used to read stories and when she would read a line, and I would read a paragraph and we would go along in stories like that...working...she'd make me write out things if I got them wrong." Violet recalled reading at home in the evenings with her mother: "My mom used to read to us every night. She would always say just one more, but we'd always end up reading lots of books." You can see how these parents played an active

educational role in fostering western literacy among their children, in something of a collaborative partnership that supported the schools' programs.

This was not the case with every parent. For example, Denise's mother did not engage in literacy practices of reading and writing with her, and yet she ensured that Denise and her siblings remain committed to their school work:

Because there was a lot of us and my mom couldn't pay attention to all of us at the same time, because we were like little kids, and she was still having babies too...and so I was...I felt I was going to give my child a lot of attention...My mom was the type of person who made us do our homework. She was stern with us, and we had to have our work done when we got off the bus at home. She would help us if she could, if he had time. She had, like eight of us so her time was limited with all of us. But she made us do our work.

Most of these third generation participants indicated that it was their mothers who participated in literacy practices that mirrored school literacy tasks. They read to their children, provided literacy materials, engaged in language games, and even modeled literacy behaviors. The mothers of these third generation participants could be said to be following family literacy models which represent the practices of mainstream families who emulate the culture of the schools. Have they bought into the promise of western literacy? Perhaps. It is certainly understandable that the mothers of these third generation participants wanted western literacy skills for their children to ensure not only their school success, but a basis for participating in the larger society.

This third generation's reflections on how their literacy was fostered within the family does support current family literacy models which assume that mothers are primary facilitators

of literacy for their children (Mace, 1998). The focus of family literacy education programs has been to teach parents to engage with their children in the literacy practices of the schools. Within these discussions, Mace believes “the word ‘parents’ is used to mask the woman at home, and ‘family’ too often stands as a euphemism for the maternal parent” (p. 132). She raises the important question of why, in its inception, did the family literacy “idea” place such a strong emphasis on women in the family. Mace has been critical of this approach to family literacy, concerned that women are prevented from experiencing literacy for their own needs and purposes. She and others (Auerbach, 1989; Barton, 1994; Hannon, 1995) have suggested shifting the meanings of family literacy to be more inclusive of relationships which reflect the reality of peoples’ lives.

I also found examples of this shifting among the third generation, reflecting how the Aboriginal understanding of the family includes a collective responsibility that extends to all family members. It is not unusual for grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and even neighbors to share responsibilities generally assigned, by western culture, to the nuclear family unit. These third generation participants identified significant others who assisted them with literacy tasks. Tom, whose parents were often absent for their own work and schooling purposes, found other family members and friends to be literacy supports:

My Mom couldn’t always be there or wasn’t a person that was there to read to me all the time. So myself and a friend, [name], he lives around here, when we were little kids we helped each other read...and then at home my older brother, he’d help me, he’d teach me...My family, my older brother, my mom, my dad, my teachers and indirectly John and his mother. I think that’s where I kind of got started.

When discussing learning to read and write, Libby acknowledged her parents and her uncle as those who encouraged her: "They were always pushing me and they always try and teach me different things and by the time I got to a certain grade...I was already beyond that reading level, beyond that writing level, so I would have to say my parents and my uncle." Explaining how literacy connects one to their past, Noelle described how her grandfather attempted to introduce her to certain kinds of literacy experiences when she was young, too young she believes to appreciate his efforts. "I was too young and he [grandfather] always tried to sit down and tell me about politics. He wanted to tell me things, like Native stuff. And I never was really into that. But now that he passed away, it made me really think," she said.

Though Tom, Noelle, David, Violet, and Denise came from two-parent households, this does not always reflect the family dynamics of all Aboriginal families. Statistics reveal that the proportion of Aboriginal children in a single-parent household is double that of the mainstream population (Statistics Canada, 1998). These larger family networks within the Aboriginal community, in some sense, work against the sense of isolation suggested by the statistics. Mothers, supported by other family members, played the largest role in supporting literacy among these participants, yet this should not necessarily be seen, in the case of Aboriginal families, as a matter of women's weaker social position (as it is portrayed by those critical of family literacy education).

One possible explanation for why women are seen to support literacy practices within the family is found in the traditional roles played by Aboriginal women in tribal societies, as reported in the anthropological literature: "The role of Aboriginal women in the health of family systems from one generation to the next was one of immense power. The immensity of the responsibility of bearer of life and nourisher of generations is just becoming clear in its

relationship to all societal functioning” (Armstrong, 1996, p. ix). While it was once thought that Aboriginal women took the lead in developing survival skills as a result of European contact, current research would indicate this substantial role, in partnership with men, goes back much farther. And so today, Aboriginal women have retained their leading positions within families and communities, despite complete disruption to the family system from colonial forces.

In traditional Aboriginal societies, learning occurred through the oral tradition and men and women shared this responsibility. In the Ojibwa Women, Landes (1938) observes the critical relation between talk and work:

While women work they talk. They talk a great deal, but never with idle hands. Men on the contrary can talk only when they are idle, from the nature of their work. In the absence of the men, the women form a closed world where each woman is distinctive, where women’s work is valued explicitly, and where women’s values are pursued... In the relaxed smoking hours after the hunt and at the feasts, men talk about the “important” things within their experience: about adventures of the hunt and war, quarrels of shamans, metaphysics of the midé rite. The women listen and say little. In their continuous busy hours, while the men are gone from the lodge, women talk about their important experiences... From living in the same lodge with the older women, listening to their talk, assisting them, trying to imitate them, the girl learns the duties and also the opportunities of her sex. (p. 18)

Traditional gender roles for men and women varied among Nations. Men were often providers and protectors, typically hunting, often away from the community. Women assumed

responsibilities of preparing and gathering. Though they would involve themselves in fishing and trapping or even participate in the primary role of men to hunt, they were mainly left to harvest foods, prepare food and materials for later use, and care for young children and the elderly. "While clear divisions of labour along gender lines existed, women's and men's work was equally valued" (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Vol. 4, 1996b, p. 20).

The colonial relationship between First Nations and Canada forced upon Indian people many changes. Changes have resulted in a shift in gender roles, and therefore, changes in the way literacy and orality is mediated by men and women. The reserve system resulted in a sedentary lifestyle. The ways peoples could sustain themselves economically were diminishing with the disappearance of the animals they traditionally hunted. Many groups were forced to survive by agricultural pursuits (Billson, 1992, Carter, 1996). What this meant for males of the community was a loss of connection to the land. To no longer hunt large game or serve as warrior within the community meant men had little to share with younger generations. There were no longer "relaxed smoking hours after the hunt and feasts..." where "men could talk about the 'important' things within their experiences" (Billson, 1992, p. 218). In a study of Blood couples in Alberta, Billson goes on to report how the changing role patterns worked for Blood men and women:

Historically, then, a Blood man relied on game and nature to provide sustenance for his family. Now he has to depend on twentieth-century means of earning a livelihood through wage employment. His success as a provider rests not on his cunning, strength, and knowledge of terrain and animals, but on his ability to adapt to a nine-to-five job in which he is expected to follow rules and operate in another culture... The traditional balance of labor reinforced the

balance of power between men and women. Since the failure of agriculture and the shift to serve jobs and welfare dependency, the man's work has all but disappeared – but the woman's work remains. (p. 219)

Billson (1992) looks at the role reversal of Blood couples from the late nineteenth century to the contemporary period:

In the early twentieth century, Blood women began to leave home for wage earning jobs... Gradually, as the male role of hunter, warrior, pony raider, and breeder, farmer, and rancher have one by one dissipated, women have found themselves in positions of increasing responsibility... Many Blood women have completed university educations and have developed professional careers off the reserve. (p. 219)

As they move into positions of responsibility, Blood women still maintain much of their traditional domestic roles, creating a double burden.

Though colonization altered the status of Aboriginal women, they have maintained elements of power, influence, and authority in their own communities (Klein and Ackerman, 1995). Fiske (1987) demonstrates how Carrier women of central British Columbia have retained control over crucial aspects of social production and distribution. Tracing the role of women in the economic activities of the fur trade, farming, and fishing, Fiske shows how their adaptability to the industries resulted in political status and economic prosperity for them, even taking into consideration the role of government in limiting economic opportunities. "Resource depletion and state intervention have reduced Carrier access to subsistence resources... men rarely participate in the fishery. Moreover, state control over moose hunting has marginalized hunting as a subsistence activity" (p. 196). This, says Fiske, "reduces the

ability of men to provide for others, it alienates them from the land of their forefathers” (p. 196).

The argument that women’s traditional domestic roles persist, and even advance, while male roles have one by one dissipated has been influential in discussions of transition to reserve life, with some analyses portraying women as “empowered” and others depicting Aboriginal women as rendered powerless (Carter, 1996). How men have generally been situated within these discussions has been disconnected to the land, despite their economic, political, and social positions in communities. This dislocation destroys their identities, which are land-based, leaving them without experience to draw upon and therefore, without literacy nor any conventions of that literacy to share with their children. Women take up their roles as caregivers of their children, having literacy traditions upon which to draw. For the contemporary Aboriginal family this has meant engaging in the literacy of the schools.

Against this strong, largely maternal support, for western literacy, there was a loss of Aboriginal literacy found in the comments of this generation. This third generation has experienced a complete loss of language, despite coming from homes where Anishinaabe was spoken. “There was no one really to speak Ojibway to,” Denise explained, “She [mom] spoke it with her parents or her sisters, her own siblings. She never spoke it when we were small. And my dad really, he understands it, but he doesn’t speak it. I would have liked to learn it, but it wasn’t in my mother’s way of talking to us.” Norton made it clear that he wished he could speak the language, stating “when I hear my grandparents talking, I would like to know what they are saying... Our language is dying.” For several, this sense of loss evoked mixed emotions. Tod made this clear when he spoke of how members of his family were fluent speakers of Anishinaabe:

I don't think I learned to speak it because I wasn't raised in that environment, eh. My father and my grandmother could speak fluently, as well as the older members of my family can speak fluently, as well as older members of the community. But my household never used it. I was never spoken to in that language, myself and my sister and my older brother... I feel somewhat angry because he [father] didn't talk to me in my language. I missed it. He didn't, he neglected to give me the opportunity to be able to speak eh... I am a traditional person. I went to a lot of ceremonies and stuff like that and pow wows too.

They use a lot of language at things like that. And I feel ashamed too.

Something that I don't ... I can't understand what they are saying, eh... But I know that generations of people went to residential schools. When they came out they were trained to think that using their language is a bad thing, so they don't want their kids to have to go through what they did so they never spoke it to their children after that. So right there it is cut off. You see the way we learn is orally, generation to generation and then the residential school system was in place, it severed that process, eh.

Similarly, David felt that he was missing something as he did not possess the language that distinguished Aboriginal people: "It's a part of you that is not there, because it is part of your heritage. Because of English, it's not there. All Native people should be able to speak their language... if I am able to speak my language, I think it would make me feel more stronger than I am right now. So many people speak it in the community, but the younger kids don't."

Although these participants look to their families when it comes to the loss of language, it should be noted that the literature on contemporary First Nations education argues that formal

schooling has done little to respect, support, or even re-affirm Aboriginal languages and cultures (Battiste, 1998; Battiste and Barman, 1995; Brant Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000; Kirkness, 1998).

Schooling and Literacy

While first and second generations were critical of their schooling experiences, pointing to the schools' efforts to suppress their language and culture, this third generation did not appear to think of school in that way. There were no indications that schooling, as an integral experience in their lives, is a source of inspiration or resistance for most of these participants. They accepted the demands of attending school as an integral part of their lives and literacy. When asked about how reading and writing is used in life, Norton responded that "school work, that's about it school... In my English class we are reading Canadian short stories. That's about the only class I read in. Well maybe Geology. I guess on rocks. I'm still in my grade ten English. Its the last compulsory course I need ... I use writing for school notes and assignments."

Noelle, who indicated she really enjoyed school, discussed some of the activities of schooling with regard to western literacy:

I'm doing Shakespeare and advanced English study we're doing Macbeth. We have to do reports, think about the different, like, fate, ambition. We have to write essays on them and we are just learning to write essays, like more descriptive ones... We will have discussion in class, like we'll maybe talk about past stuff or present stuff. Like the Colorado incident. We brought up that about violence and how it is related to Macbeth. It always has to be related to

something in class and we have to put the comparisons between them...I've been reading poetry lately 'cause we have to do an anthology. Like it took me two months to do it, so I have been reading a lot of poetry. I'm getting really into poetry now. The classics. I read the classics.

These kinds of descriptions of high school were given by Libby, David, and Tod. They reflected on the day to day activities of schooling, but not in a critical manner.

For some of the third generation, it was their elementary schooling in the school operated by the community, that evoked critical reflections, but the critique was as much about the school's lack of educational engagement. "I wasn't really into reading until I got to high school," Noelle noted, "then like I said, when I was in grade school my parents were like, you know, what happened in the world today. And I would go 'like no,' because our teachers never discussed that with us. Just the teachers there, we never really read anything. They read to us. Like we never got to read to ourselves." In a similar vein, Libby didn't feel challenged until her later years of schooling:

I found it, well learning to read and write at school, I found it kind of boring. It was something I'd already learned in my own time with my family. The books that we had to read were so simple and I was reading a grade up or a couple of grades up... We were reading really kind of boring books and then when I got into grade eight I got a new teacher. He brought different books to read that were at higher levels. And I found it more of a challenge. He brought books that were at a high school level. He was bringing in Lord of the Flies, which we read in our advanced eleven English. And we read it in grade eight. In grade eight we got into poetry. That's when I started liking it. I found it a lot easier.

It was alright... Grade eight was what I liked the best because it was a lot more challenging.

Violet, having finished high school and college, and Denise, who returned to an adult education program in the community, were much more negative of their elementary schooling at Lakeview School. Violet recalled a reading program used in one of the grades and how it made her feel stupid:

It was horrible stuff. I remember this one program we had. It was Distar [Direct Instruction reading program]. It was horrible. I felt so stupid when they were trying to teach us. I felt like I'm not that stupid and they were using this kind of program with us... That was grade one or grade two, but I still remember that it was so horrible... I felt there must be something a little more challenging than this. I kind of went through the motions... I learned easily so I think I was kind of bored with that kind of approach that they had there... I remember they didn't gave us very much time to do any writing. I think they could of gave us a little more.

Denise felt that the problem was amount of time given to the students, as she found herself in adult education achieving well in a way that she hadn't been able to in elementary school: "I didn't really like it there [Lakeview School]. They, um, I found that they didn't really give the slow ones time... I found that when I was at adult ed. I was getting good grades, but when I was in elementary I was getting D's and F's and I couldn't understand that. If they would have paid attention, some of us students that were there then we would've had good grades in elementary."

It is interesting to note that all of these participants attended Lakeview School, some while in its early phases of community-control which may explain why it was not yet delivering the best of educational programs. The community took control of its own education around 1980. Though it is impossible to draw conclusions from only a few recollections to the nature of schooling provided by this community-controlled school, the literature documents the challenges communities face trying to implement and proceed with their own vision of education for their children (Assembly of First Nations, 1988; Dyck, 1997; Kirkness, 1998; Kirkness and Bowman, 1992; Morris and Price, 1991; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b; Watt-Cloutier, 2000).

In thinking about the participants' responses to schooling, one factor that must be taken into account is the generational approach of this research. While I am interested in the differences in how school was experienced at different historical points by each generation, we need to allow for how one's schooling can look different when one is young and still caught up in it, compared to when one is older. The functions of age and the juncture of schooling in which they are at may well contribute to the variations in perspectives. The participants in this third generation do not necessarily accept their schooling as perfect, but they are not ready yet to challenge its larger goals or its ability to offer them the education that would serve them best. In contrast, the scholarship on contemporary First Nations education has insisted that "the promise of an education that delivers the skills to survive in a post-industrial global economy while affirming the ethical and spiritual foundations of Aboriginal cultures is far from being fulfilled" (Brant Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000, p. xiv).

This third generation has yet to become fully aware of how Aboriginal peoples are making a mark on educational policy (Brant Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000) and how

negotiations between government and Aboriginal people within a political realm has been important to the educational goals of our people (Abele, Dittburner, and Graham, 2000). The landmark policy paper, "Indian Control of Indian Education," was intended to give greater participation and control of education to Aboriginal communities by allowing for parental involvement in children's education, as well as for the development and design of culturally-relevant education programs and curriculum, and jurisdiction over their own education. Despite reluctance by the Department of Indian and Affairs and Northern Development to relinquish control and their efforts to discourage Aboriginal communities from establishing their own schools (Battiste and Barman, 1995), Aboriginal people persisted and "as of 1998, there were 466 schools under First Nations management and only eight federal schools managed by the Department" (Auditor General of Canada, 2000).

Yet what also has to be recognized is that this policy has proved ineffective in enabling First Nations communities to govern their own education in an effective manner (Assembly of First Nations, 1988; Battiste and Barman, 1995; Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000; Hare and Barman, 2000; McCue, 1999). Kirkness (1998) explains how the critical policy statement has led to more of the same:

Sadly, the policy of Indian Control of Indian Education has not unfolded as was expected. Two factors have been at play that have negatively affected the process. One was the manipulation of Indian Affairs to have us simply administer the schools as they had in the past. The second was our own peoples' insecurity in taking control and failing to design an education that would be based on our culture, our way of life, and most important our world view... Our progress has also been hampered by the interpretation of Indian

Control of Indian Education. For people in some of our communities who are making changes in the curriculum, they have taken "local control" literally to mean doing everything themselves for their respective schools. They develop programs, methods, and materials, but do not share these with other schools, nor are they prepared to use materials designed by other First Nations schools. This results in duplication, and the value of sharing is lost. (pp. 11-12)

Though "Indian Control of Indian Education" remains at the center of education of Aboriginal children, as Kirkness (1998) makes clear educational policies in band schools often fail to recognize the goals that might be said to define Aboriginal education in a larger sense. The study, Tradition and Education, Towards a Vision of Our Future (1988), revealed many of the shortcomings in First Nations education that still exist. "It pointed out that education programs to which Indians are exposed are predominantly assimilationist in the curriculum, learning materials, pedagogy, learning objectives and the training of teachers and educational administrators" (Kirkness and Bowman, 1992; p. 20). The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996b) confirmed that schooling was not making the contribution that it should for Aboriginal people: "Rather than nurturing the individual, the schooling experience typically erodes identity and self-worth. Those who continue in Canada's formal school systems told [the commission] of regular encounters with racism, racism not only expressed in interpersonal exchanges but also through the denial of Aboriginal values, perspectives and cultures in the curriculum and the life of the institution" (Vol. 3, p. 434).

The Auditor General of Canada (2000) produced an equally damning report on the government's continuing contribution to Aboriginal education:

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada cannot demonstrate that it meets its stated objectives to assist First Nations students living on reserves in achieving their educational needs and aspirations. For example, the Department does not have the necessary assurance that First Nations students are receiving culturally appropriate education. Moreover, the progress in closing the education gap for Indian student living on reserves has been unacceptably slow. At the current rate of progress, it will take over 20 years for them to reach parity in academic achievement with other Canadians. (p. 1).

Equally important in discussions of First Nations education is the education of Aboriginal children residing off-reserve. McCue (1999), in his report of First Nations education noted,

The off-reserve population is large and growing. In 1996 about 42% of the total First Nations population in Canada resided off-reserve... To ignore this statistic is to ignore a reality. The urban First Nations represent a major constituency in First Nations education matters and there is growing evidence that the educational problems that led to the AFN [Assembly of First Nations] National Review on First Nations education 25 years ago exist in the schools and education programs that off-reserve First Nations students attend. p. 4)

Lorna Williams (2000), an Aboriginal educator from British Columbia, points out the many challenges of providing appropriate education services for the urban Aboriginal population. She documents the historical evolution and current profile of services developed in response to the needs of First Nations students in the Vancouver School Board. The issues of curriculum, programming, instruction, and funding that face on-reserve schools pose similar

challenges for off-reserve schools attempting to deliver an education which reflects the cultural and language needs of Aboriginal children. Struggling to secure funds for Aboriginal programs, the needs of students are framed in terms of deficits, serving to perpetuate stereotypes. "The dominant position of provincially accredited curriculum and practices ensures that school environments continue to emphasize ideas that reflect Western knowledge and belief systems" (Brant Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000, p. 99).

Aboriginal children persevere in education systems that are limited in their support of their cultural and linguistic heritage, although those systems do not deny this heritage altogether. Still, Aboriginal children are slowly making gains. Statistics reveal the growing number of Aboriginal children remaining in school and going on to pursue higher education. However, Hare and Barman (2000) caution, "the statistical gains are deceptive: far too many Aboriginal students lag behind non-Aboriginal students, and the conditions under which Aboriginal children were schooled inequitably in the past still exist for the children being educated today" (pp. 347-348). The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996b) reports that "the majority of Aboriginal youth do not complete high school. They leave the school system without requisite skills for employment, and without the language and cultural knowledge of their people" (Vol. 3, p. 434). Even where Aboriginal people have assumed control of the education of their children and have met with success, their "initiatives struggle at the margins of education systems that operate under provincial and territorial jurisdiction and that continue to deliver curriculum that has a strong assimilationist bent" (Brant Castellano, Davis, and Lahache, 2000, p. xiv).

The comments of this third generation on schooling, in showing a relative disregard of Aboriginal issues, reflects this sense of formal education as devoted to western literacy

practices. If less openly hostile to Aboriginal culture and interests, compared, for example to the residential schools, the schooling of Aboriginal youth still fails to explore and develop all that this generation has to offer by way of a broader conception of literacy that embraces both Aboriginal and western traditions.

Literacy Beyond Schooling

As should already be clear, the western literacy experiences of this third generation were abundant. Whereas the first generation did not readily identify western literacy activities as a major part of their lives, this generation easily recognized that reading and writing play a big part in their lives, and not only with regard to schooling. Reflecting on how they used literacy in their everyday lives, they talked about the communicative, social, and work functions that it served. Tod explained, "I use it to write letters and stuff like that, eh. Perhaps to the Board of Education or something in regards to my schooling or whatever the case may be with them. I write notes. I leave notes all the time to my family members here. Things like phone messages and things like that, eh. Its an everyday thing." Writing letters was the most common writing activity reported.

Reading for leisure purposes was the second most common activity reported by this third generation. They described a wide range of reading material that included novels, magazines, resource books, newspapers, catalogues, and letters. "Right now I like reading Time magazines and stuff," Noelle reported, "I just think of the government and things how they supposedly created the AIDS virus. I like reading that kind of stuff. At home we subscribe to Time and McLean's." In Libby's spare time, she enjoys reading poetry and resource books:

I read poetry when I have strong feelings about things. I read a lot of resource books, instead of regular paperbacks. Some are just basically just about Native people, like residential schools and culture, just to see different aspects of what happened. Sometimes I read books about inner- self, like Buddhism and stuff like that... It just helps you find your inner-self. I say it makes me feel a lot better. I read the paper too. Just to see what happening in the world. Like sometimes there are things about Native people. So I like to read them... I'll read the odd fiction book. I like thrillers. I read a couple of Stephen King books, some Ann Rice.

Tod's reading selection also pertained to his culture: "I try to read books that I can learn from like... ah... One book I have just finished reading was a biography on Sitting Bull. Things like that, eh. Black Elk Speaks is a series there. Things like that. Those are the types of books that I try to be reading all the time."

Reading and writing, for some of these participants, was a social function as they engaged in literacy activities with other family members. Violet and Denise extended the use of literacy in their lives to their children, while Noelle and Libby shared literacy activities with their parents and grandparents. Violet explained how she was a book club regular as well as keeping a journal:

With my daughter I talk about all that stuff. Like letters and numbers and singing and just putting it into our whole life. We belong to a couple of book clubs... Me and my mom we did some writing. We did a baby journal for my daughter. We are kind of going through the years and telling about our story so we could tell her later on. I am doing one on my own too, another little

journal for her to give her when she gets older. Just to tell her about the things that we were doing.

On the other hand, Denise, with her young daughter playing close by, said, "I don't like reading. I only read if I have too. But I read to her [points to daughter]. That I have to. She always wants me to read to her. She is always reading her own books. So we sit there and we read books together."

The grandparents of both Noelle and Libby were thought to have limited skills of reading and writing in English. The activities they share with their grandparents challenge the assumption within family literacy discussions that view literacy as a one-way transmission from parent to child. Libby explained how she uses her literacy in support of her family: "Sometimes I have to read things to my parents and explain to them what its about. And I read to my grandma when she gets letters 'cause she can't read English. My parents don't really get what the letter is saying to them. They'll ask me to read it and explain to them in an easier way that they can understand." Noelle's experience is similar. She told, "Like my grandparents, they can barely read or they can't spell right. Its hard for them now and they are old. And they are more dependent on you. You have to help them write things."

In a way that did not happen in their formal education, this generation appears to be using western literacy outside of school to develop an awareness of their own history and identity, as well as an understanding of the larger world. Literacy also remains a tool for mediating between their families and the demands of that world. This ability to read and write was important to employment opportunities for all participants of this generation. Possessing adequate literacy skills would allow one to seek a job, prepare for interviews, and necessary to the tasks of any job. Libby described how western literacy as an economic tool:

If you can read or write you can basically do anything that you want. Its so much easier if you learn how when you are smaller and its so much easier at school. Its just a lot easier in everyday life. That means you can do anything. You can go start a business. It means that I could easily go out and get a job, like for an interview. Like even talking and doing my resumes.

Tod noted that "there are some occupations you can get without having that ability, but if you want to make a few bucks, it really helps." Noelle commented on the relationship of literacy to employment. Reading and writing she said, "will help you with your stuff. Like it depends on what you want to be. It depends on what kind of occupation you have. It will help you with your resumes. If you have good writing skills, resumes will look awesome and your cover letters."

Pursuing higher education was another opportunity expressed when discussing the perceived value of being able to read and write. Most of the participants indicated they could further their education by going to college or university. Tod suggested how this ability to read and write was the key to completing the necessary schooling for success or "going all the way":

Schooling is a big thing. You can go far if you can read and write. You can learn more in school. You can understand the information that is being presented to you...you can further your education. You can go as far in elementary school and then drop out, but after that you are condemned to a life of labor I guess. But if you learn to read and write you can go do your

schooling. You can finish your grade school, go to high school, you can go to college, you can go to university. You can go all the way!

Tod makes it clear how important schooling has become for this generation, how it is accepted as the way forward, with proficiency of western literacy at its core. While Tod is understandably caught up in school life, he does seem to have thoroughly absorbed the educational rhetoric that insists school is the means of going far, and of avoiding being “condemned to a life of labor,” with its criminal and imprisonment implications.

Motivated by her young daughter, Denise returned to an adult education program later in her life. She explained how her lack of schooling had been a burden for her to carry, and how proud she was to be able to complete her education:

It was pretty hard to get into the groove when you’ve been out of school for so long. The only reason why I went back to school is she [daughter] wanted to go to school [preschool daycare] when she was small and the only way she could go is if I went to school. So I went to school and she went to school. Then there was a time when I didn’t have to go to school anymore because she was old enough to attend [public school], but I stayed in because she was looking up to me always going to school. Like hey, my mom’s going to school, cool. It feels good. I applied for college for this year but I turned it down because I am not ready. I don’t feel like I’m ready and don’t want to spend somebody else’s money when I know I am not ready... It makes me feel good because I have finished doing my schooling, what I didn’t finish when I was going to high school and I don’t know, just that day I did my last test I felt like

a big pile of bricks were lifted off my shoulder and I don't know it was just an exciting feeling that I did finish something.

Like Tod, Denise also reflects a sense of education as critical to one's well being and to being a part of the world. The "big pile of bricks" that were lifted from her shoulders would seem to affirm the power of schooling for this generation as it can determine whether one is complete, fully developed, and free.

Western literacy is seen by this generation as critical to personal development. Through schooling, this literacy can give a sense of confidence and increased self-esteem, although it was not always associated with the classroom. Violet commented, "I think [reading] is the best part of life. You get to learn about different things... If you want to read for pleasure, if you want to read to learn or just everything I guess in life is reading. You can get a higher education... I think you just feel good about yourself. You get a better self image, better self-esteem. You improve yourself." Violet also contrasted this against families in the community who don't read and write well:

I think when you see family who are not as, you know, great with it,. You can tell in a family that they don't feel good about themselves. A family that can read, you can tell the difference, eh? Around here anyway it is quite obvious in some families... the people I worked with... most of them, a good 75% of them were from families that had not had an education, eh? They may have just finished maybe grade eight or something. And you could tell. You could tell there probably weren't too many books around the house or that there wasn't too much support for that kind of thing.

Violet is obviously concerned with improving the levels of western literacy among the members of her community, as she sees this source of pleasure and self-esteem as something that needs to be made more widely available there.

Libby attributed being able to read and write well to her confidence. She shared, "It just makes me feel better. It makes me feel that I could understand a lot more. If I go to conferences and people start talking about something, it is usually something that I've read and I understand what they say. I feel a lot more confident when I understand other things. I won't be shy to say what I want to... It really does give me a lot more confidence." David also said you could feel good about yourself if you could understand what you were reading. There is little question, then, about the central role of western literacy among this generation. This sense of literate accomplishment and confidence distinguishes the schooling of this generation, even as it signals a greater absorption of the standards and norms that mark Western culture.

Although most of the participants from this generation have lived their whole lives within this community, they recognize the presence of the non-Native society in their lives. The high school is a provincial school located on the reserve and is attended by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children from Manitoulin Island. The community is only hours from several small cities in northern Ontario. This third generation views western literacy as a means to face what they see as the challenges posed by non-Native society, whether they continue to live in the community or move from it, in their pursuit for higher education or employment opportunities.

It is also important to note that literacy, for this generation, was seen to offer the individual an opportunity to learn, to enjoy, and to succeed. When this generation spoke about literacy, it had little to do with the collective efforts of Aboriginal people to address issues of

sovereignty and the rights of Indian people. Rather, literacy was seen to enable Aboriginal youth to defy stereotypes, affirm their identities, and negotiate relationships with non-Native society. In responding to why Native people need to be able to read and write, David said, "They should...they need to speak out pretty much...about everything. There's a stereotype that people look at us...they just need to be proud of who they are. If they can read and write they can express it. They can write about it, or read about things that are just going on about it."

Similarly, Libby saw that challenging stereotypes was another reason that reading and writing were so important:

You have a lot more freedom. The people you meet, well definitely you will meet a lot of non-Native people and occasionally run into the non-Native people who think that you can't do anything. And you just prove them wrong...If you are Native it just goes back and its just people. Non-Native people think they are superior to the Native people. They call us dumb and stupid like that, but they don't really understand what is going on and what some of us are doing to get out there. When they finally do that, the other people are surprised 'cause those Native people may even surpass the people who are saying those things.

For Libby, the challenge is whether to leave the community and face this challenge. Because of her acquisition of western literacy, however, she does feel that she has a choice, one that her generation must weigh at this point in their lives:

I think it [reading and writing] is really important. It is something that is needed in the world outside the reservation. It would make things a lot easier.

Sometimes there are people on the rez who just go and drop out because they can't handle anything. Outside, well it is like fast. On the rez it's slower than the outside. You need a lot of guts to go out there and make your stand in the world. And over here you can just go and get a Band job. But it is not really anything exciting. That's what I think any ways... It is just so different. Like the rez and other communities. Its not the same 'cause a lot of things are so lenient on the reserve. And then outside they are much harder and you have to cope with that even if you don't think its fair. I know that reading and writing will help you socially too, to interact with other people. And it will be a lot easier if you know how to do that. It will be a lot easier for you to speak your mind outside...

Reserve life is seen to lack the challenges of non-Native society, in Libby's eyes, if she has yet to recognize what sort of exciting work still needs to be done on the "rez," Violet held that western literacy might provide Aboriginal people with a better life both outside of but also within the community (if as something of an after-thought): "They might be able to compete and get better jobs in life. Jobs that Native people didn't hold before. They can be more competitive and anywhere, not just in your community. Well, your community too."

One contribution of western literacy that bears on life in the community is seen in the relationship forged between Aboriginal people and the government. For example, Tod shared how he felt that managing the constant presence of the government was a matter of being able to command the tools of western literacy:

We deal largely with the federal government, well all levels of government really. And to be able to communicate effectively with these people is very

important, otherwise things won't get done properly or they won't get done at all... There's no place government forms don't get to these days. I don't think its possible to get away from it and live life and get by not being able to read and write the English language. Its everywhere you go, eh. I mean you can't get a driver's license unless you can read and write.

Tod also made a rare reference references to what might be lost of Aboriginal culture in all of this educational accomplishment. He held that literacy is "important obviously, but it's not deemed the most important thing." Asked to explain further, he spoke of how possessing an Aboriginal language needed to be considered in relation to the pressures to be literate in that western sense:

Its just the way of our people is oral, not reading and writing. I mean I learned a little bit about the teachings. They weren't written down on a piece of paper and handed to me and they said 'study this, there's a test.' They spoke it once to me and I had to listen, eh. Then its up to me to remember and interpret it the way I see it... Now it is not uncommon to hear people say learn your language. I am Ojibway so feel I should learn my language because my language is a big part of my culture. That's what they say, they say learn language first and then after you learn that, then learn the white man's reading and writing. If you have those, you're much better off to face the world.

This young man's understanding of Aboriginal literacy and western literacy represents what previous generations have articulated. He said, "I think it is really important to know both. It is important to know our language because its our language, its our culture, it is who we are. But it is also important to learn English reading and writing because that's the medium of

everything. The medium of advertising, communication. That's the universal language of almost everything." However, it needs to be said that Tod's references to his experiences with the Aboriginal oral tradition represent the only reference any of these participants to Aboriginal literacy.

This third generation has clearly moved away from the degree of understandings and experiences of Aboriginal literacy that marked the previous two generations. Instead, this generation has found itself almost fully within what is for them the promise of western literacy and the cultural and economic opportunities it holds for them. Though they have expressed a sense of loss over the absence of an Aboriginal language in their lives, they offer no suggestions as to how they may recapture this aspect of their Anishinaabe culture. There is no reference to developing a greater relationship with the land, nor to fostering any of the other features that define an Aboriginal world view. There has been a recognition by them and their supportive families that schooling in western literacy is what matters most at this point in their lives.

Through no fault of their own, their life experiences within the family and through schooling support literacy practices of the dominant society, where English is the mode of communication and primacy is given to print. This has worked well for them.. They are rightly proud and empowered by their accomplishments, and seem destined to make contribution that will make a difference for themselves and their communities. The question that remains, not surprisingly, is one of balance. Is there a place within their schooling and their sense of literate accomplishment for a balance of Aboriginal and western notions of making meaning, reading symbols, telling stories, honoring a way of life written on the land and reflected in the oral tradition?

Chapter Six

The Quill Box of the Future

The history covered by these three generations extends over nearly a century, a century that has seen radical changes in how the Anishinaabe people live, learn, and work, in relation to the their land, language, and culture. At one time the Anishinaabe sustained themselves from the resources of the land by trapping, gathering, fishing, and hunting, supplemented by farming and cutting pulpwood. Learning was a natural part of their days spent with the family out on the land. Their families served as the main means for cultural continuity, serving to provide the foundations of a literacy by which they read and wrote the course of their lives on this land.

Misled by the promises of church and state schooling, the first generation of Anishinaabe resisted schooling's annihilation of their language and culture, despite its harsh practices and racist policies. Schools systematically attempted to deny the first generation participants their language and Aboriginal literacy. The experiences of my participants were all too consistent with the literature surrounding the history of Aboriginal education. Day schooling, as Joan, Thelma, and Edith made clear, prevented them from speaking their language and provided little motivation for learning to read and write. It was no better for the children who were removed from their families and community to attend residential schools. The students' apathy towards learning the literacy of the schools formed its own resistance towards the schools' assimilationist agenda. Yet, against all odds, Irma, Annie, Millie, Thelma, Edith, Joan, and Ned acquired basic reading and writing skills while maintaining their own forms of literacy, as they reconciled the differing uses and functions of Aboriginal and western literacy in their lives.

These first generation participants express limited uses for western literacy in their lives. They don't pay much mind to how they actually engage with western literacy, with some indicating that they don't read much or rarely write anything. Yet, their homes contain an abundance of print material. Their responses to how they actually use reading and writing in their lives required a great deal of probing. They did not hesitate to clearly articulate the value of reading and writing. They have come to see western literacy as a means by which they or their children might hold jobs within non-Native society.

A shift in the stance toward this blend of culture and language takes place with the second generation. While Leo, Jeff, and Mary remain speakers of the Anishinaabe language, others blamed the language policies of the schools they and their parents attended from preventing them from learning the language. Their orientation to the land also changed. Obtaining resources from the land, whether through trapping and hunting or farming, became chores rather than learning experiences as with their parents. Within the family, the parents of this second generation were thought by their children to be unable to provide much direct support for the acquisition of western literacy. Their parents did, however, encourage the acquisition of western forms of literacy, sending clear messages about expectations for schooling.

Leo, Mary, Carol, Darleen, Jeff, Ralph, and Abe were, much like their parents, forced to attend schools that attempted to suppress their language and culture. The inability to speak English upon entering school posed learning challenges for some of these participants. Others reflected on their ill-treatment at school. Being an Indian posed challenges to learning, resulting in negative attitudes towards schooling. From my own personal knowledge of the

participants, I know that some of them surprisingly overcame these discouraging educational experiences and went on to college or university.

Much like the first generation, these second generation participants saw schooling as necessary to their work, but they constructed broader meanings for its uses and functions. They saw reading and writing in English as useful for communicating beyond the community and for developing their relationships with their children's own education. Schooling is only emblematic of the broader colonial forces which have acted to shape the lives of the Anishinaabe. Yet the western literacy learned there helped some of these second generation participants to critically assess the political, economic, and social policies marginalizing Aboriginal people. Taking exception to the treatment of Aboriginal people, the political responses of this second generation used western forms of literacy to act upon the inequities posed by government and mainstream society. Their actions established how western literacy could assist Aboriginal people to re-assert their right to self-determination.

In the third generation, there is a greater orientation towards western literacy and schooling, with a correspondingly diminished relationship to Aboriginal forms of literacy. For this youngest generation, the family not only encouraged the acquisition of western literacy, but also engaged in literacy practices with them following the values of the dominant society. By reading to their children, supplying literacy materials and resources, and engaging in language games and activities, they are fostering for their children notions of western literacy that they hope will help them in school. The marked relationship to the land, present in the previous two generations, did not come up among in the third generation's shared experiences with the family. Similarly, the continuity in language has been disrupted. They are unable to speak the Anishinaabe language. Yet, they are well aware of what has contributed to language

erosion and express a sense of loss in their inability to understand the language spoken by their grandparents or parents. They offered no recourse for language revitalization, despite the fact that an education counsellors for the community indicated there was Ojibway language instruction taught in the community-controlled elementary school and offered as a course in the provincial high school, located in the community.

In their discussions of schooling, Libby, Violet, Noelle, Denise, Tod, David, and Norton expressed just how engaged they are with schooling and the western forms of literacy it promotes. Rarely critical of their educational experiences, this generation has made schooling a meaningful part of their identities, even as that schooling has done little to recognize or take up the Aboriginal culture that forms these students' heritage.

This third generations' greater orientation towards forms of western literacy contributes greatly to their personal development. Success with the dominant literacy of society gives them increased confidence and self-esteem that their lives will be enhanced. They will defy stereotypes and take advantage of economic and social opportunities on and off the reserve. The possibilities for non-Native society to develop a greater understanding of Aboriginal culture is expanded as these youth assert their identities and prepare for a future beyond the community.

This thesis has made several arguments. The first is, that among the three generations of Anishinaabe from the same community, western forms of literacy have been consistently valued as a means of participating in the mainstream society. The importance of western literacy was clearly recognized by all three generations. First generation participants, experiencing changing social and economic conditions in their lives, believed western literacy would allow for economic opportunities in non-Aboriginal society for both themselves and

their children. The conventions of western literacy were the means for second generation participants to challenge oppressive forces that serve to disadvantage Aboriginal people socially, economically, and politically. Third generation participants anticipated relationships with non-Aboriginal to be fraught with stereotypes and assumptions about Aboriginal people. Their use of western literacy would allow them to assert their identities and overcome barriers posed by racism. Western literacy is seen as a vital tool for all three generations to re-position themselves in a respectful place in relation to the mainstream society.

Western notions of literacy as imposed upon Aboriginal people, damaging their own forms of literacy which are closely rooted in their cultural traditions and language, represents the second argument of this thesis. Schooling has been a key site in which western literacy has attempted to usurp any notions of Aboriginal literacy, most evident with first and second generations' experiences with education. This is consistent with the literature surrounding the history of education for Aboriginal people whereby residential schools and day schools denigrated the foundations of Aboriginal literacy, determined to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into the mainstream society. Simply ignoring the cultural and language needs, as evidenced in the contemporary literature on Aboriginal education, has proved just as effective in suppressing understandings of Aboriginal literacy. Limited reference to notions of Aboriginal literacy by third generation participant lends support to claims by Aboriginal scholars that western ideologies continue to pervade the curriculum, pedagogy, and policies of education of Aboriginal youth.

My inclusion of the culture and worldviews of Aboriginal people within a broader understanding of literacy is the basis for the third argument I have made. First and second generation participants are still in possession of the foundations of what I called Aboriginal

literacy, evidenced in retention of their cultural traditions. Though, in some cases, it may be somewhat fragmented, Aboriginal literacy still has much to offer future generations of Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal society. It is necessary to have a far more inclusive understanding of literacy as one of education's basic principles, encompassing not only the print traditions of this society's dominant languages but also honoring the languages, narrative traditions, and rich symbolic and meaning-making systems of Aboriginal culture.

Based on what I have learned from conversations with these participants, this more inclusive approach would ensure educational approaches to literacy no longer require diverse groups to make cultural sacrifices related to their language and ways of knowing, as has been observed with these three generations of Anishinaabe schooled by church and state. Such an approach would allow Aboriginal education and cultural perspectives on family, language, land, and community, central to discussions of Aboriginal literacy with these three generations, to be celebrated within and outside Aboriginal communities.

Implications for Aboriginal Literacy

Aboriginal perspectives on literacy are fundamental, challenging the very conceptions of literacy. Recent shifts in perspectives on literacy, emerging from the socio-cultural research, tend to focus on how theory is applied or what theories emerge from the study of literacy practices. Street's (1993) compilation of essays that look at literacy in cross-cultural contexts merely describe the literacy practices among various groups, "showing a broad commitment to the new theoretical approaches to literacy generated by the ideological model. They all, distinctively, illustrate the theoretical implications of these recent shifts in perspective through one or more specific case studies" (p. 2). While the research describes nicely the uses and functions of literacy within varying cultural contexts, the practicality of their findings is

limited. This dissertation makes concrete what has only been generalized in the literature, offering specific suggestions for educators working with Aboriginal communities and implications for policy surrounding language and literacy programming more generally.

Aboriginal language is central to understandings of Aboriginal literacy, yet Aboriginal languages remain in a precarious state with the vast majority of the 53 Aboriginal languages at risk of extinction (Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1990). Within the three generations I interviewed for this study, there has been a complete loss in the Anishinaabe language across time. Second generation participant Jeff, commented, "Nobody is learning it. That's the trouble. Nobody. None of these kids, like Tom, nobody will know it. Nobody uses it. Nobody knows how to write it. Nobody knows how to spell it... There is no answer because when you live in this country, the working language is English. That's what people have to learn. It displaces our language. It's displaced it already." Establishing and promoting meaningful contexts for using traditional languages, in a society increasingly dominated by English, poses challenges for Aboriginal people. The Northwest Territories Literacy Council (1999) shared,

The loss of Aboriginal languages in Canada is acknowledged as being far more serious than the loss of any other of the many languages used and spoken in this country. All other languages are immigrant languages and therefore have a "homeland" in another part of the world. French and English, Chinese, and Greek, for example, are all spoken in other parts of the world. If these languages are "lost" in Canada, they are not lost to the world... If the [Aboriginal] languages are lost here, they are lost forever to the world. (p. 9)

Issues of language retention and revitalization are of great urgency in our communities. Status accorded to them through legislation which would ensure the maintenance, promotion, and revitalization is only a partial solution. The value that each language community, each culture, places on its own language is significant. Any language strategies aimed at language retention and revitalization must include the family, school, and community.

Community-controlled and provincial schools responding to language maintenance and revitalization have produced only limited effects. Schools responding to culture and language differences generally prescribe remedial programming (Battiste, 2000; Noll, 1998). In an overview of Aboriginal language education in provincial school boards, Fettes and Norton (2000) note the varied responses to Aboriginal language policies indicating,

No province has expressed a willingness to provide regular instruction through the medium of an Aboriginal language. In public schools, such instruction is common only in the school boards of northern Quebec and the Eastern Arctic (and only for the first few years of schooling). In the absence of strong, balanced bilingual programs, the overall effect of schools on Aboriginal language use and transmission is likely to remain negative. (p. 49)

Given the school's inability to support language in ways that ensure continuity, Aboriginal communities must establish their own language priorities that involve all social networks of the community, including schools.

Interviews with the three generations of participants have shown that official language capacities also have value. The co-existence of Aboriginal languages alongside dominant languages has been articulated in Aboriginal language and literacy reports (Assembly of First Nations, 1990; 1992; 1994; Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs, 1990). Aboriginal

literacy programs recognize the languages of the learners, structuring their programs in ways that give priority to Aboriginal languages. Unfortunately, funding sources are primarily concerned with official languages, leaving Aboriginal literacy programs with limited resources to support the languages of their Aboriginal clientele. Literacy programs must find ways to legitimize languages, other than English and French, if they are to be meaningful to learners.

Equally important to the notion of Aboriginal literacy is the knowledge and traditions of the culture. Aboriginal ways of knowing, which include reading and inscribing the landscape and season with their own meaning systems, have not been afforded status as valuable forms of learning. In mainstream society, the ways that Aboriginal people make sense of their world have not counted as legitimate literacy activities. Yet, as with the Inuvialuit of the North, their reading of the landscape provides vital data for documenting the pace of global warming, enriching scientific research in the Arctic. (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2000). Oral histories of Inuvialuit Elders and community members which describe their life and understandings of patterns and cycles that take place on the land and features and changes which mark the landscape have been collected to determine the nature and extent of rapid weather changes. Their traditional knowledge, local observations, and adaptive strategies further contribute to current science-based knowledge of wildlife and climate change. This example represents the richness and diversity of Aboriginal literacy has to offer non-Aboriginal society.

Educators must take seriously the knowledge claims of Aboriginal people and their relationship to literacy in both research and educational settings. Baynham (1995) warns:

There is a danger that those who have through the mainstream culture successfully (for example, those who have ended up as teachers) assume

that how we learned to use literacy is the only way that literacy is used.

Classroom-based research, designed to improve the work that goes on in literacy groups (or in other types of education for that matter) should be accompanied by attempts to study the uses of literacy in day-to-day contexts outside the classroom. Teachers should come to understand more about class, cultural or ethnic bases for difference in communication, both in spoken and literate modes. (pp. 44-45)

Jenny Horsman (1999) has carried out extensive interviews with literacy learners, instructors, and practicing therapists to examine the role of violence in women's lives on their literacy learning. She explains the difficulty for literacy workers to hold on to an awareness of the equality of learners as they try to teach a form of "reading" that they do not know well. She tells,

Instructors struggle to maintain a belief in the value of many other forms of knowledge and "reading" that learners do know well from their life experiences. It is hard to recognize the value of such knowledge when it is devalued in society and even by learners themselves...A society that values only one form of reading - the reading of print - discounts all other forms. First Nations educator Priscilla George talked about how she stresses the value of traditional "reading" of the environment - the weather, tracks, and so on - skills that many First Nation people know well and which are often now discounted...Recognition of this "parallel" knowledge, they argued, is empowering for First Nations students. They talked about "fanning the fire within people," recognizing that fire has been dimmed by school and life

experiences that have not recognized or validated their identity or their traditional knowledge. (pp. 30-31)

Horseman's (1999) discussion of literacy learning in a context of violence or abuse has relevance to First Nations learners. First Nations students bring the legacy of residential schooling with them to their learning, even those who did not experience it directly.

"Instructors told me [Horsman] that in First Nations programs they take it as a given everyone has experienced violence. If learners did not experience the residential school system itself, then they are sure to have experienced the violence of its aftermath and on-going racism, insults which will inevitably have at least assaulted their self-esteem and pride" (p. 71).

Literacy workers and educators must re-conceptualize education and violence so that new teaching approaches and curriculum might be developed in light of these emerging understandings about the impact of trauma on learning.

It is only by expanding the very sense of literacy, as a system of meaning making through symbols, so that it includes the reading and writing of the land and seasons within the lives of these Aboriginal people which can preserved and transmitted through the language, can we begin to estimate the costs and recover what has been lost across three generations of this community. The shifts in this community echo over many other Aboriginal communities in Canada. These are lessons that need to be reviewed, critiqued and returned to, as a starting point for a new generation's learning experiences. Only by breaking down the long-standing divide that has placed text-based cultures at the top of a hierarchy while oral cultures, whose worldviews are preserved and transmitted through their oral traditions, remain on the bottom, can western literacy's long standing anthropological and educational legacy be confronted.

Implications for First Nations Education

This thesis has argued for ways of thinking about literacy that move the concept beyond its fixed association with Western educational ideals. Its primary implication for First Nations education is to suggest the value of assisting Aboriginal youth in seeing that there can be more to what is valued in literacy, and to schooling more generally, than this western tradition. This would allow forms of Aboriginal literacy to have a recognized place. It would enable the schools to embrace something larger, finding the educational advantages to creating space for Aboriginal approaches to education. Aboriginal students would have the possibility of finding themselves among a range of cultural options and orientations, western and Aboriginal, whether in acquiring the Anishinaabe language, developing Aboriginal narrative traditions, or learning about relationships to the land and environment. The school's inclusion of a wider range of cultural approaches would also, it almost goes without saying, enrich the education of non-Aboriginal students.

Battiste (1998) states, "As Aboriginal people approach the 21st century, the need is great for a transformed education that enriches our character and dignity, that emerges from one's own roots and cultural experience" (p. 22). Thus far, Aboriginal education in the context of this transformation continues to face numerous challenges. Battiste is hardly alone in judging that Canadian educational attempts to include Aboriginal content and perspectives in the curriculum are, at best, limited or superficial. The government's support of First Nations communities' control of their own education systems has been based on First Nations' use of provincial curricula, which ensures that a culturally irrelevant curriculum continues to be utilized. As Battiste points out, accepting provincial school curricula as a base of foundational knowledge has had dire consequences for Aboriginal knowledge:

Indigenous knowledge, embraced in Aboriginal languages, is thus being supplanted in First Nations schools with Eurocentric knowledge supported by federal policies that mandate provincial curriculum. Instead of an education that draws from the ecological context of the people, their social and cultural frames of reference, embodying their philosophical foundations of spiritual interconnected realities, and building on the enriched experiences and gifts of their people and their current needs for economic development and change, education has been framed as a secular experience with fragmented knowledge imported from other societies and cultures... In effect, Eurocentric knowledge, drawn from a limited patriarchal sample remains as distant today to women, Indigenous peoples, and cultural minorities as did the assimilationist curricula of the boarding school days. For Indigenous peoples, our invisibility continues, while Eurocentric education perpetuates our psychic disequilibrium. (p. 21)

Efforts to rethink Aboriginal education within a framework of self-determination is producing innovative examples to guide us. Joe Duquette High School located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, demonstrates how Aboriginal approaches to education can lead to success for Aboriginal youth. The school "is a healing place which nurtures the mind, body and soul of its students. The school offers a program of studies which affirms the contemporary world of Indian people" (Haig Brown, Hodgson-Smith, Regnier, and Archibald, 1997, p. 46). The focus on healing is directly related to the spiritual practices and values of the Plains Cree culture. There are sweet grass and pipe ceremonies, visits to sweat lodges, and spirituality and culture are embedded in the curriculum of the school. Yet, the educational commitment focuses on both Indian and non-Native community values, needs, and decision making

processes involved in social, economic, and cultural matters. This is intended to strengthen academic and social functioning so that students may acquire competency in their own communities and the larger society.

The Akwesasne Science and Mathematics Pilot Project (Lafrance, 2000) is another example of ways Aboriginal communities are transforming approaches to First Nations education so that Aboriginal children might experience an education from Aboriginal and Western perspectives. This innovative science and math curriculum reinforces Aboriginal contributions to the fields of health, science, and technology, demonstrating the historical and current importance of math and science in First Nations culture. It integrates Mohawk ways of knowing into concepts and themes of the curriculum:

Water is looked at from an Aboriginal ecological perspective, and its chemical composition and properties are studied. Animals form the basis of the Haudenosaunee clan system, or family organization, which is incorporated into the curriculum, as are classification systems and ideas concerning cells and cell functions. The study of “energy” includes units on the Haudenosaunee teachings of the Four Winds, Thunder, Lightning, and Sun, along with overall notions of conservation stemming from Western science. (Lafrance, 2000, p. 107)

Developed in consultation with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal groups, the curriculum is supported by parents and Elders who believe that our youth need to have both First Nations teachings and wisdom and an understanding of Western ways of knowing. A project such as this is being heralded as a model for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal school programming and curriculum.

The third generation of my study attend a provincial high school. Though located in their community, the school was not specifically for First Nations students. It is attended by youth from neighboring communities. The school's efforts to make visible the culture, knowledge, and perspectives of Aboriginal students provides opportunities for non-Aboriginal youth to experience the local Aboriginal cultures of the surrounding area, while validating for Aboriginal youth their own cultural expressions and identity. Yet one has to wonder at the extent of this approach when it did not come up in the conversations that I had with the participants attending the school. Their anticipation of having to face racism and discrimination, as the backdrop for their experiences and relationships beyond schooling, might only suggest what they struggle against currently. Schools must find ways for students to more fully engage with the experiences and perspectives of Aboriginal people.

There are further lessons for Aboriginal education that can be drawn from my study. As evident with the second and third generation participants, the written word or text has become a major part of the landscape that shapes their lives. It describes the paths to employment, as well as the course of the continuing struggle to assert their Aboriginal sovereignty through treaties, court documents, and legislation. The way ahead, it is clear to all of the participants, now requires a firm hold on the written text. But in the spirit of reciprocity, internalized in our Aboriginal worldview, the text can also be used to define new traditions of living with the land, as seen with the Inuvialut of the North who are using their experiences, observations, and perspectives to participate in global efforts to track climate change (International Institute for Sustainable Development, 2000). Approaches to education must include Aboriginal people's connection to the natural world as a legitimate text for learning alongside the print traditions learned in school.

New programs for the schools need to address the changing cultural dynamics of Aboriginal life, from language retention to self-governance. Those programs need to be informed by the experiences and knowledge represented by the community's multiple generations, like those interviewed for my research. Each generation has a different perspective on the history they have experienced and the future each faces. Students need to learn, by looking at the experiences of each generation, how groups have responded to the changing political and social dynamics they have faced. They need to learn how these generations challenged, took issue, and made their peace with these changes. Students today are the inheritors of the responses, challenges, and solutions, and as such they need to explore how they are going to make their own choices in light of these previous histories. In turn, they will empower future generations in asserting their claims to self-determination as individuals and as Aboriginal people.

As we call on each of the generations to help to inform the educational processes today, we must be careful of the responsibilities we ask them to assume. For example, Elders face continuing pressure to provide guidance in numerous capacities, education and research included. However, many are unable to fulfill these roles in ways that they were carried out traditionally, as they may be limited in their possession of traditional Aboriginal teachings.

The challenge is to create a place for Aboriginal culture in the schools, not just as a special topic or as a special class, but so that culture can contribute to the very way that we educate, in ways that add to what it means to really be literate. The aim is to add to the education of non-Aboriginal students as well as to that of Aboriginal students. It is about working with Aboriginal communities to enable the schools to encompass a greater range of cultural approaches that are vital to building the community's own sense of contribution and

continuity. We need to think about the way forward in Aboriginal education, about what is most valued within our communities so that future generations may contribute to cultural continuity in ways that build on aspects of the past.

Implications for Future Research

I have examined what constitutes what I have called Aboriginal literacy in a single community from my position as insider/outsider. I have respected the literacies of these participants as meaningful ways of life with the potential to persist into the present, rather than romanticizing them as a traditional lifestyle rooted in the past. Cross-cultural approaches to literacy have been critiqued for “romanticizing” local literacies (Street, in Prinsloo and Breier, 1996), despite the fact that “researchers now suspend judgment as to what constitutes literacy among the people they are working with until they are able to understand what it means to the people themselves, and from which social contexts reading and writing derive their meaning” (pp. 2-3). This has implications for researching the literacies of Aboriginal people, where issues of language retention and revitalization have been studied, at the expense of work on the social uses of print and symbolic literacy in their lives. The issues of language retention and revitalization for Aboriginal communities are multiple and complex, deserving their own attention in research.

The generational approach I used to investigate meanings of literacy across three biological generations offers a means to look at the changing nature of Aboriginal and western literacy within a century. Brandt’s (1999) work has used both oral history and life history approaches with more than eighty people born between 1895 and 1985 to determine how

literacy learning within the economic and cultural movements that have influenced a particular geographic area. She says of her method:

Of key significance of this approach are similarities and differences in the lives of people who have experience similar social structures or have lived through the same historical events. This method is useful for gathering information about changes in the materials and the social networks through which people have learned and practiced literacy across time. It also exposes the dynamic changes in definitions and expectations for literacy and the ways they are experienced at different times by different groups and generations.

(p. 375)

Such a methodology has implications for literacy research and the Aboriginal community, at which Aboriginal literacy is at the intersection. We can begin to explore ways in which change affects literacy learning or influences its transmission over life spans. The change and continuity in literacy practices of other groups over time can be explored. In the Aboriginal community, other social and political changes that intersect with individuals over time may be examined.

I have interviewed successive biological generations for my study. This ensured a greater similarity of experience within the context of family, than if participants within each of the generations had been randomly selected. This has given a certain legitimacy to the findings, as well as provided some relevance for those interested in the study of family literacy. Yet it also narrowed the range of experience that my work tapped into, and this suggests how additional generational studies need to consider different ways of developing their sample.

Much more work needs to be done on how traditional knowledge can contribute to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies, in the contemporary sense. It is tempting to think that we should go back to a traditional lifestyle, that research can help us better understand the value of this knowledge. Some may chose this path. But our research efforts need to be directed, perhaps even more so, at understanding how Aboriginal people continue to move forward, making gains and facing new challenges, to the benefit of themselves, their children, and those among whom they live.

Conclusion

The generational approach to this research makes apparent the shift in these Aboriginal peoples' understandings of what I have described as western and Aboriginal literacies. This historical look affords a sense of the changes in the uses and functions of Aboriginal literacy in the lives of these participants. Traditional representations and Aboriginal worldviews, often, transmitted and preserved through the Anishinaabe language, become displaced by the focus on print literacy in the dominant languages of our society. Aboriginal literacy, represented in the cultural continuity of Joan's quill boxes, might seem to be threatened. Yet, if you look closely at her quill boxes, you can see, as I mentioned at the outset of this thesis, just how skillfully she has incorporated contemporary designs into traditional patterns, giving new life to both design and pattern, without separating the meeting of the two. Joan has worked out new ways of bringing these different perspectives together, and it has afforded her a living, as well as enriching the lives of those who have come to appreciate the quiet and comforting beauty of this art form.

The lesson to be gained from Joan and her quill boxes is one of inclusion. Aboriginal literacy has been cast for far too long as the antithesis to a western literacy that is regarded as necessary and sufficient for progress. What I have learned from the participants in this study is that there is hope that different cultural perspectives might work together to ensure Aboriginal culture, languages, and ways of knowing will continue, with their contribution valued and respected.

References

- Abele, F., Dittburner, C., & Graham, K. A. (2000). Towards a shared understanding in the policy discussion about Aboriginal education. In M. Brant Castellano, L. Davis, and L. Lahache (eds.) Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise (pp. 3-24). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Armitage, A. (1995). Comparing the policy of Aboriginal assimilation: Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Armstrong, J. (1996). Invocation: The real power of Aboriginal women. In C. Miller and P. Chuchryk (eds.) Women of the First Nations: Power, wisdom, and strength (pp. ix-xii). Winnipeg, MB: The University of Manitoba Press.
- Assembly of First Nations. (1988). Tradition and education: Towards a vision of our future. Ottawa, MB: Assembly of First Nations.
- Assembly of First Nations. (1990). Towards linguistic justice for First Nations. Ottawa, ON: Assembly of First Nations.
- Assembly of First Nations. (1992). Towards a rebirth of First Nations languages. Ottawa, ON: Assembly of First Nations.
- Assembly of First Nations. (1994). Breaking the silence: An interpretive study of residential school impact and healing as illustrated by the stories of First Nations individuals. Ottawa, ON: Assembly of First Nations.
- Assembly of First Nations. (1994). Breaking the chains: First Nations literacy and self-determination. Ottawa, ON: Assembly of First Nations.

- Auditor General. (2000). 2000 Report of the Auditor General of Canada. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. Elementary and secondary education. Available at: <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/0004ce.html>.
- Auerbach, E. (1989). Toward a social-contextual approach to family literacy. Harvard Educational Review, 59 (2), 165-190.
- Barman, J. (1996). Aboriginal education at the crossroads: The legacy of residential schools and the way ahead. In D. Long and O. Dickason (eds.) Visions of the Heart, Canadian Aboriginal Issues (271-303). Toronto, ON: Harcourt Brace Press.
- Barman, J., Hebert, Y., & McCaskill, D. (1986). The legacy of the past: An overview. In J. Barman, Y. Hebert, & D. McCaskill (eds.) Indian education in Canada: The legacy. Volume 1 (pp. 1-22). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Barton, (1994). Literacy: An introduction to the ecology of written language. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Barton, D., Hamilton, M., & Ivanic, R. (2000). Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures. New York: Routledge.
- Battiste, M. (1986). Micmac literacy and cognitive assimilation. In J. Barman, Y. Hebert, & D. McCaskill (eds.) Indian education in Canada: The legacy (Vol.1). (pp. 23-44). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Battiste, M. (1998). Enabling the autumn seed: Toward a decolonized approach to Aboriginal knowledge, language, and education. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22 (1), 16-27.

- Battiste, M. (2000). Maintaining Aboriginal identity, language, and culture in modern society. In M. Battiste (ed.) Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision (pp. 192-208). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Battiste, M. & Barman, J. (eds.) (1995). First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Battiste, M. & Henderson, J. Y. (2000). Protecting Indigenous knowledge and heritage: A global challenge. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing Ltd.
- Baynham, M. (1995). Literacy practices: Investigating literacy in social contexts. London: Longman.
- Billson, J. (1992). Standing tradition on its head: Role reversal among Blood Indian couples. In D. Miller, C. Beal, J. Dempsey, & R. Heber (eds.) The First Ones: Readings in Indian/Native studies (pp. 215-225). Craven, SK: Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.
- Brandt, D. (1999). Literacy learning and economic change. Harvard Educational Review, 69 (4), 373-394.
- Brant Castellano, M., Davis, L., & Lahache, L. (eds). (2000). Aboriginal education. Fulfilling the promise. Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Brookes, S. (1991). The persistence of Native education policy in Canada. In J. Friesen (ed.) The cultural maze: Complex questions on Native destiny in western Canada (pp. 163-180). Calgary, AB: Detselig.
- Bull, L. R. (1991). Indian residential schooling: The Native perspective. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18 (Supplement), 1-64.

- Cardinal, H. (1969). The Unjust Society. The tragedy of Canada's Indians. Edmonton, AB: MG Hurtig.
- Cardinal, H. (1999). The Unjust Society. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Carter, S. (1990). Lost Harvest. Montreal, QU: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Carter, S. (1996). First Nations women of Prairie Canada in the early reserve years, the 1870s to the 1920s: A preliminary inquiry. In C. Miller and P. Churchryk (eds.) Women of the First Nations: power, wisdom, and strength (pp. 51-75). Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.
- Cassidy, F. & Bish, R. (1989). Indian government: Its meaning and practices. Halifax, NS: Institute for Research on Public Policy.
- Couture, J. E. (2000). The role of Native Elders: Emergent issues. In D. Long and O. Dickason (eds.) Visions of the heart. Canadian Aboriginal issues (pp. 31-48). Toronto, ON: Harcourt Brace Canada.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). Qualitative inquiry and research design. Choosing among five traditions. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Delpit, L. (1995). Other people's children: Cultural conflict in the classroom. New York: New Press.
- Dyck, N. (1997). Differing visions. Administering Indian residential schooling in Prince Albert 1867-1995. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.
- Fettes, M., & Norton, R. (2000). Voices of Winter: Aboriginal languages and public policy in Canada.. In Brant Castellano, L. Davis, and L. Lahache (eds.) Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise (pp. 29-54). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

- Fiske, J. (1987). Fishing is women's business: Changing economic roles of Carrier women and men. In B. Cox (ed.) Native people, Native lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Metis (pp. 186-198). Ottawa, ON: Carleton University Press.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (1994). Interviewing: The art of science. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds) Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 361-376). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fourneir, S., & Crey, E. (1997). Stolen from our embrace. The abduction of First Nations children and the restoration of Aboriginal communities. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Frideres, J. S. (1988). Native peoples in Canada: Contemporary conflicts. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada.
- Friere, P., & Macedo, D. (1987). Literacy: Reading the word and the world. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.
- Friesen, G. (2000). Citizens and nation: An essay on history, communication, and Canada. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Furniss, E. (1992). Victims of benevolence: Discipline and death at the Williams Lake residential school, 1891-1920. Williams Lake, BC: Cariboo Tribal Council.
- Goodburn, A. (1999). Literacy practices at the Genoa Industrial Indian School. Great Plains Quarterly, 19, 35-52.
- Goody, J. (1968). Literacy in traditional societies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goody, J., & Watt, I. (1988). The consequences of literacy. In E. R. Kintgen, B. M. Kroll, & M. Rose (eds.) Perspectives on literacy (pp. 3-27). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

- Grant, A. (1996). No end in grief. Indian residential schools in Canada. Winnipeg, MB: Pemmican Publications.
- Haig Brown, C. (1988). Resistance and renewal: Surviving the Indian residential school. Vancouver, BC: Tillacum Library.
- Haig Brown, C., & Archibald, J. (1996). Transforming First Nations research with respect and power. Qualitative Studies in Education, 9 (3), 245-267.
- Haig Brown, C., Hodgson-Smith, K. L., Regnier, R., & Archibald, J. (1997). Making the spirit dance within: Jeff Duquette High School and the Aboriginal community. Toronto, ON: Our Schools/Our Selves Foundation.
- Hamilton, M., Barton, D., & Ivanic, R. (1994). Worlds of literacy. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.
- Hannon, (1995). Literacy, home and school: Research and practice in teaching literacy with parents. London: Falmer Press.
- Hare, J. (1996). Meanings attached to literacy in a First Nations community. Unpublished Master's thesis. University of Western Ontario, London, ON.
- Hare, J., & Barman, J. (2000). Aboriginal education: Is there a way ahead? In D. Long and O. Dickason (eds.) Visions of the heart: Canadian Aboriginal issues (pp. 331-359). Toronto, ON: Harcourt Brace.
- Hareven, T. K. (2000). Families, history, and social change: Life-course and cross-cultural perspectives. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Heath, S. B. (1983). Ways with words. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Horsman, J. (1999). Too scared to learn: Women, violence, and education. Toronto, ON: McGilligan Books.

- Ing. R. (1991). The effects of residential schools on Native child-rearing practices. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 18 (Supplement), 65-118.
- Ing. R. (2000). Dealing with same and unresolved trauma: Residential school and its impact on the second and third generation adults. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. University of British Columbia.
- International Institute for Sustainable Development. (2000). Inuit observations on climate change. Community adaptation and sustainable livelihoods. Available at <http://iisd.ca/casl/projects/inuitobs.htm>.
- Jaine, L. (1993). Residential schools: The stolen years. Saskatoon, SK: Extension University Press, University of Saskatchewan.
- Johnston, B. H. (1988). Indian school days. Toronto, ON: Porter Books.
- Kirkness, (1998). Our peoples' education: Cut the shackles; cut the crap; cut the mustard. Canadian Journal of Native Education, 22 (1), 10-15.
- Kirkness, V., & Bowman, S. (1992). First Nations and schools: Triumphs and struggles. Toronto, ON: Canadian Educational Association.
- Klein, L., & Ackerman, L. (1995). Woman and power in Native America. Norton, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Knockwood, I. (1992). Out of the depths: The experience of Mi'kmaw children at the Indian residential school in Shubenacadie. Lockeport, NS: Roseway.
- Lafrance, B. T. (2000). Culturally negotiated education in First Nations communities: Empowering ourselves for future generations. In M. Brant Castellano, L. Davis, and L. Lahache (eds.) Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise (pp. 101-113). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.

- Landes, R. (1938). The Ojibwa woman. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (ed.) Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision (pp. 77-85). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Luke, A. (1995). The social practice of reading. In The Australian Reading Association, Conference Proceedings. (pp. 167-187). Brisbane, AU: ARA.
- Mace, J. (1998). Playing with time: Mothers and the meaning of literacy. London, UK: UCL Press.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1995). Designing qualitative research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCue, H. (1999, March). An analytical review of First Nation elementary-secondary education. Unpublished report, Assembly of First Nations, Ottawa.
- McKay, S. (1992). Calling creation into our family. In D. Engelstad and J. Bird (ds.) Nation to nation: Aboriginal sovereignty and the future of Canada (pp. 28-34). Toronto, ON: Irwin Publishing.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. San Fransico, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Miller, J. R. (1996). Shingwauk's vision: A history of Native residential schools. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Milloy, J. (1999). A national crime. The Canadian government and the residential school system, 1879-1986. Winnipeg, SK: The University of Mantioba Press.

- Monture, P. (1992). Self-portrait: Flint woman. In L. Jaine and D. Hayden Taylor (eds.) Voices: Being Native in Canada (pp. 126-134). Saskatoon, SK: University of Saskatchewan, Extension Division.
- Morris, J. S., & Price, R. T. (1991). Community education control issues and the experience of Alexander's Kipohtakaw Education Centre. In J. Friesen (ed.) The cultural maze: Complex questions on Native destiny in western Canada (pp. 181-198). Calgary, AB: Detselig.
- National Indian Brotherhood. (1972). Indian control of Indian education. Ottawa, ON: National Indian Brotherhood.
- New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing social futures. Harvard Educational Review, 66 (1), 60-92.
- Newell, D. (1993). Tangled webs of history: Indians and the law in Canada's pacific coast fisheries. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Noll, E. (1998). Experiencing literacy in and out of school: Case studies of two American Indian youths. Journal of Literacy Research, 30 (2), 205-232.
- Northwest Territories Literacy Council. (1999). Languages of the land: A resource manual for Aboriginal language activists. Yellowknife, NWT: NWT Literacy Council.
- Norton, B. (2000). Identity and language learning: Gender, ethnicity and educational change. Harlow, EN: Pearson Education Limited.
- Ong, W. (1982). Orality and literacy: The technologizing of the word. London: Methuen.
- Ontario Native Literacy Coalition. (1990). Native literacy: A healing Energy. [Video]. Owen Sound: Ontario Native Literacy Coalition.

- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996a). People to people, nation to nation: Highlights from the report to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996b). Report to the royal commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.
- Scollon, & Scollon. (1981). Narrative, literacy and place in interethnic communication. New York: Ablex.
- Scribner, S. & Cole, M. (1988). Unpacking Literacy. In E. Kintgen, B. Kroll, and M. Rose (eds.) Perspectives on Literacy (pp. 57-70). Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Stairs, A. (1995). Learning processes and teaching roles in Native education: Cultural base and cultural brokerage. In M. Battiste and J. Barman (eds.) First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds (pp. 139-153). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Stake, R. E. (1994). Case studies. In N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln (eds.) Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 236- 247). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Standing Committee on Aboriginal Affairs. (1990). "You took my talk": Aboriginal literacy and empowerment. Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer of Canada.
- Statistics Canada. (1998). The daily. 13, Cat. No. 11-001.
- Smith, L. (1999). Decolonizing methodologies. Research and Indigenous peoples. Dunedin, NZ: University of Otago Press.
- Street, B. (1993). Cross-cultural approaches to literacy. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

- Street, B. (1996). Preface. In M. Prinsloo and M. Breier, The social uses of literacy: Theory and practice in contemporary South Africa (pp. 1-9). Cape Town, SA: Sached Book.
- Taylor, D. & Dorsey-Gaines, C. (1988). Growing up literate: Learning from inner-city families. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Vastokas, J. M. (1996). History without writing: Pictorial narratives in Native North America. In Gin Das Winan Documenting Aboriginal history in Ontario. A symposium at Bkejwanong, Walpole Island First Nation, September 23, 1994. Sponsored by the Champlain Society. Occasional Papers, Number 2, Edited by Dale Standen and David McNab, pp. 48-64. Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society.
- Watt-Cloutier, S. (2000). Honouring our past, creating our future: Education in northern and remote communities. In M. Brant Castellano, L. Davis, and L. Lahache (eds.) Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise (pp. 114-128). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Williams, L. (2000). Urban Aboriginal education: The Vancouver experience. In M. Brant Castellano, L. Davis, and L. Lahache (eds.) Aboriginal education: Fulfilling the promise (pp. 129-146). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). Case study research. Design and Methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.