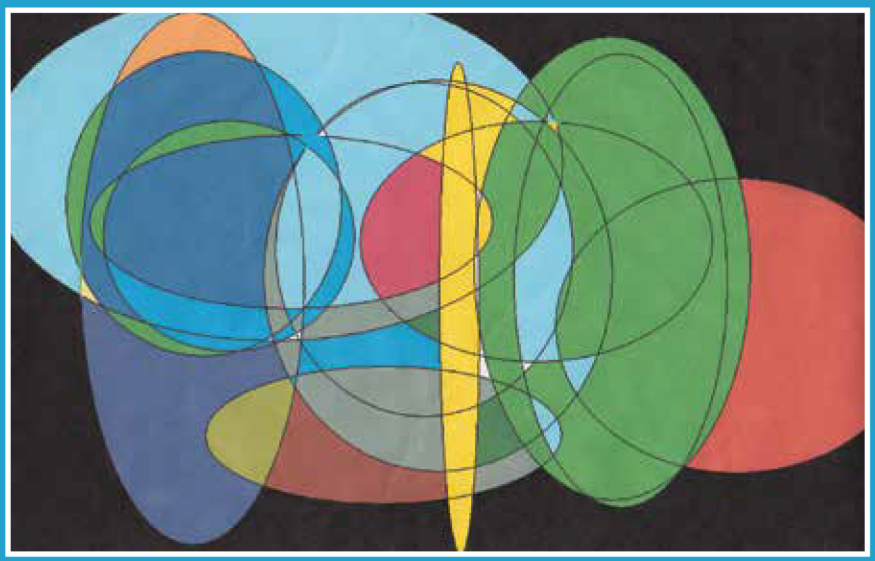
Connective Pedagogy

Elder Epistemology, Oral Tradition and Community



Rosemary Ackley Christensen and Lisa M. Poupart

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Environment and Geography

Aboriginal Issues Press
2013

The information and perspectives presented in **Connective Pedagogy: Elder epistemology, oral tradition and community** are the sole opinions of the authors and not those of the funding agencies, University of Manitoba, Aboriginal Issues Press, its employees, editors, and volunteers. All profits from the sale of this book are used to support the refereed publication of Aboriginal scholarship and the Aboriginal Issues Press Scholarship Endowment Fund at the University of Manitoba.

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Managing Editors Rick Riewe and Jill Oakes
Cover Design and Text Layout by Karen Armstrong Design, Winnipeg
Cover Illustration by Skye Webster Poupart
Printed in Canada by Hignell Printing Ltd., Winnipeg

Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Connective pedagogy : elder epistemology, oral tradition
and community / Rosemary Ackley Christensen ... [et al.].

Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-0-9867261-5-6

1. Traditional ecological knowledge--Study and teaching.
2. Indians of North America--Education. 3. Oral tradition.
4. Community education. 5. Learning. I. Christensen,
Rosemary Ackley

E97.C65 2012 371.829'97 C2012-906624-9

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Foreword

Linda E. Oxendine, PhD, Professor Emeritus, UNC Pembroke

Kim Blaeser, noted Ojibwe writer, observes in Stories Migrating Home (1999), that in the process of educating or training our young people, American Indians do not "instruct" but rather we "story" our children. I think most Indian people would agree. Teaching through oral tradition is a process of tribal education and has been since time before memory. Lessons in developing survival skills, explaining natural phenomena, understanding tribal histories and establishing moral values and acceptable behavior still are transmitted through the spoken word. Oral tradition is a time honored method which not only educates but also serves as a linkage through which tribal peoples can connect and reconnect with the members of their tribal communities. Common cultural knowledge becomes the glue bonding a people together while establishing and maintaining membership into the group. For Indigenous people, the most important purveyors of this cultural knowledge are our elders, those venerable tribal people of experience and wisdom who carry the responsibility of not only cultural transmission but community connection as well. It is their knowledge and teachings, their stories, that for centuries have sustained the unique world view of American Indian people and their communities. It is elder teachings which have provided the thread of continuity that for centuries has held tribal peoples together.

Today, in modern classrooms, particularly in higher education institutions, in which Native American courses are taught, integrating this elder knowledge and instructional methodology into the curriculum often becomes problematic. In many academic situations, instructors assume their only access to any form of elder teaching or traditional knowledge is through a

written text taught in a linear process. What once began as oral tradition now may be filtered through several layers of interpretation often resulting in either distorted information or misrepresentation. The essence of elder teaching becomes flat or two dimensional omitting the experiential aspect of the process.

The First Nations Program at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay has developed a multi-faceted approach to address this issue of accessing elder teachings, both in content and in process, for their students and faculty. Culture based teaching methods based on the three tribal r's: respect, reciprocity and relationship plus the fourth "r" of responsibility form the basis of the program and its curricula. The concept of the four pillars of Indigenous philosophy: Indigenous intellect, sovereignty, law and policies, and history underpin the fusion process developed to introduce and eventually integrate Native American thought and worldview into other disciplines. The fusion project is designed to create expanding concentric circles rippling from the base of elder knowledge through other aspects of the Academy. Traditional practices as the memory circle and the circle of learning impose a teaching/learning situation which at one time came naturally but now must be modified to fit a modern classroom environment.

The Oral Concentration component of the First Nations Program is perhaps the most exciting and assuredly the most challenging. Allowing students the opportunity to interact directly with tribal elders replicates a process with centuries of history supporting it. The traditional system of elder teaching that once provided time and encouragement from which students could learn today has been replaced by busy schedules or other societal demands as well as by electronic information and other technology. Through the Oral Concentration, students must slow down, sit down and listen to the important stories older tribal members have to share. It is a way of instruction that cannot be replicated in a textbook or in any formal classroom setting. The Oral Concentration process reclaims and validates elder knowledge in both context and content, and as education should do, opens our understanding to include learning processes other than the conventional linear classroom.

I call my own narrative "jumping off the porch." My cousin Ruth stopped me one day and asked if I remembered when we used to jump off the porch at her grandmother's house (her grandmother was my grandmother's sister). I quickly said yes and we began reminiscing about those days of our childhood. Many Sunday afternoons, my family would go with my grandmother "Sugar" to visit her sister, my great Aunt Emma. The routine was the same each time. While the adults sat and talked, the children would play games out in the yard under the trees. The most

fun and the most daring, however, was jumping off the front porch. We would take turns jumping off the three foot high porch of the farm house onto the sandy ground. When we got tired or needed a break, we would stop to listen to the older people talk. There was no interruption; it was not allowed. We would sit and listen until we were restless and then we would return to jumping again. It was such a wonderful way to connect with the older folks and of course to learn. After reflecting on these times with much laughter and sometimes a little sadness, Ruth and I remarked what a loss it was that our tribal children today no longer have the time nor the means to "jump off the porch," to surround themselves with the elders, to hear the important things they have to say and to experience the security of belonging to a time honored tradition. Fortunately, efforts as the First Nations Program at UWGB are finding answers by providing educational "porches" from which young people can pause and learn the valuable knowledge from our elders which is so integral to the survival of the cultural traditions of tribal peoples. It is a good thing not only for our tribal communities but for the Academy as well.

Blaeser, K. 1999. Stories Migrating Home. Bemidji, MN: Loonfeather Press.

Hello Readers,

My name is Skye Webster Poupart. I am member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. I am also of the Lac Du Flambeau Ojibwe community. The drawing on the cover is one I made when I started using the computer when I was age five. In my tribal practice, circles represent the life cycle, the connection to all living things and time itself, not as past, future and present but interwoven. I gifted this picture entitled "Circles" to my elder Rosemary, one of the writers of this book. She thinks my circle drawing goes along with the message in this book so it was chosen to be the cover! Thanks for reading.

Skye,
Age 12

Preface

Rosemary Ackley Christensen

Elder teacher subtlety, that is the nuance and sensitivity of traditional oral Elder teachings that encourage us to do analysis in a holistic way, in our own time based on what we think teachings mean relative to our age and experience, sometimes leads us to try atypical initiatives. In this case, pondering and musing over elder teachers and their methods has caused me over time to try and emulate them in the western-oriented classroom/academy.

As with any venture, it benefits one to own up to and discuss the principles or perhaps the doctrine behind offered ideas. In this case, the elder teachings on seven principles provide an analytical base for oral traditional knowledge (as we are reminded frequently that we humans are the youngest of creation and therefore must learn from other living things) and help us in understanding how to fold the teachings into our lives. The Seven interrelated Principles are

- Equity
- Connectedness
- Sustenance
- Gratitude
- Peaceful co-existence
- Balance
- The Circle of Life

These principles are discussed further in the introductory chapter.

As with any teaching philosophy, the methods and techniques discussed are based on experience of the teacher and how he/she listens, observes,

participates in and emulates the teaching and learning communicated by oral traditional elder scholars. The teacher in due course passes the insights gained, the discernment learned, and the possible acumen demonstrated to others. We each help the next generation with what we learn, using the gifts and skills given to us in ways that demonstrate our gratitude for them. I am a believer in and celebrate the indigenous intellect. My colleague Lisa Poupart discusses various aspects of policies, procedures and labels we practice and use in the First Nations program at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. The First Nations major is ensconced under headings or 'pillars' that give students an opportunity to see what is important to us and is reflected in the design of the major. I thought the word pillar was graphically descriptive especially as the first pillar is indigenous intellect (the other three are sovereignty, law and policies, and history). It was and is an on-going objective to recognize, acknowledge and appreciate on a regular basis the teaching and learning we Native people receive from our Elder teachers. In 1996 I began writing on this topic and presented a paper at the Tribal College Journal symposium, "A frame for the native intellect: celebrated, solicited, and revealed", at Orcas Island, Washington in July. The discussion by Colleague Poupart on the Oral Concentration phase of our major also celebrates Elder teachers as a regular part of the Academy. Although it was difficult to gain approval for the OC(as I call it) still it was worth the effort when we hear from students the things they learn that they admit they did not and probably would not learn in the classroom. The fusion effort for our work at Green Bay basically reflects the way Lisa and I forged our work together. I wrote the first draft of written work and she would add to it. Our writing went back and forth that way. We then presented the ideas to others at various conferences and settings. I recall that the notion of indigenous intellect was very difficult for other colleagues to accept, but I was adamant that it must be included as a firm basis for the First Nations Major definition. In Lisa's chapter, she mentions 'cultural competencies' related to fusion. I have been working on various lessons regarding competencies at least since I worked in the Minneapolis public schools in the seventies and eighties although I did a similar thing while employed at a regional lab (Upper Midwest regional educational laboratory, UMREL) in the late sixties. The unit, called a Unipac on Indian Values is in the lab files (144.B.17.9 B) housed at the Minnesota Historical Society Manuscripts Collection.

During my time in the school district I talked to various people about cultural competencies for teachers that they could do on their own and that once a group of units was finished, perhaps the Indian Education section could provide a certificate to that effect for the teacher. While at a Tribal language and curriculum center in Duluth, the staff and I provided

a packet of competencies to various organizations. A frame and assumptions for the competencies was presented in a paper given at a conference, Congreso Mundial De Arqueologia, The World Archaeological Congress WAC 2, in Barquisimento, Venezuela, September 4-8,1990.

I expect the Competencies to be able to be used by people on their own, or if desired, they can be taught in a class or used by a group. Consequently these units are still a work in progress.

In our proffering these methods and techniques for others to consider; perhaps extending one's current ways of teaching/learning to include some of the activities described, a suggestion is to keep in mind the age-old traditional principle of balance. Elders tell us that there are four natural elements, fire, water, earth and air. As these main elements are necessary for all life forms, harmony is important and each life form must be treated with respect. We can look, learn, observe, analyze and participate in differing forms of teaching and learning. It is a given in much of schooling in our country that it reflects dominant western culture. American Indians like others in the United States are required to go to the schools available to them. However, it is possible to look at the western model, and appreciate the reasons for the practice; it is also possible to look at, observe, analyze and participate in indigenous-based ways of learning and knowing. It makes sense to seek balance in the end result. Such an approach is possible in the Academy. This work makes an effort to clearly and plausibly provide a methodology and techniques that reflect in a perchance muted way the teaching/learning process and practice taught by our oh-so virtuoso elders during these now past eons of time since first connections were made with life forms and the younger ones learned from those older and more experienced in life.

Each of us nurtured in our youth in an indigenous community learned naturally and normally from those around us, those who were older, many of whom took it as a way of life to teach those who are younger. Such is the way of the community. It continues. I take for granted that to engage in learning I must seek out elder teachers and listen to their teachings. I do this on a regular, practiced basis in my life.

Each of us can talk about the lessons we learned, when we learned and from whom the first inkling came as to the lesson that is finally understood in context as well as its content. We frequently thank our Elder teachers for tutorial moments. So it is with me. I remember clearly Mindamouyae. She allowed me to help in her garden in my childhood village. She gave me lessons that I am still using. Elders in my home village provided the basis for my learning, and when I went to high school, college and graduate school, the basis for learning stayed with me so that I was able to analyze what I

was taught and choose what to keep with that base learned long ago. At the same time, I sought Elder teachers as a normal part of my existence and I continue to seek, listen to regularly and attempt to reflect their teachings in my daily work. These oral teachings formed an important part of my life in the Academy as I taught students each semester. It is a way of life.

As with those who went before me, it is not possible to thank adequately those who were and are my Elder teachers except to do as they did: pass on the teachings to others, and in all things, help the next generation in the best way possible. Errors made are the result of inadequate listening on my part and not at all an omission on the part of Elder teachers.

I thank the indigenous scholar, Dr. Linda Ellen Oxendine that provided the foreward. I met Linda Ellen Oxendine, Lumbee from North Carolina during her seminal work in Washington D.C. for the Office of Indian Education during its early seventies formative years. Linda taught at University of North Carolina, Pembroke and for many years served as chair of the Department of American Indian Studies. She retired recently as Emerita Professor. She is considered an expert in Lumbee History by her community, and actually continues to serve her community by teaching a Lumbee History course from time to time at the University. She and I have discussed our teaching techniques frequently over the course of our long friendship and not too long ago we presented a paper together at the International conference: Indigenous Peoples World Conference in Hamilton, New Zealand regarding our teaching techniques, Teaching methods based on American Indian Elder traditional knowledge and cultural values, Nov. 29, 2005.

I also thank the Humanistic Studies Faculty and Staff, University of Wisconsin Green Bay for the interactive relationship that was built and nurtured through the ten years I was in Green Bay. What an incredible place to work, and with such remarkable people! I used to tell people that asked how we got to do some of the things we did at Green Bay in First Nations Studies, and I said yes, we were blessed with great colleagues that listened, discussed and helped with what we were trying to do.

I also am grateful for the numbers of written materials that have been helpful in my teaching activities. I especially liked the books by Rupert Ross (1992; 1996) and for oral lessons used in classes frequently, I thank David F. Courchene Jr. , Ojibwe of Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba. Dave, bowing to the wishes of Elders' request, organized and presents Elder Gatherings on a regular basis which means that we have access to a 'library' of elder knowledge at the fall get-togethers held at Manitou Api (Manitoba) during customary four-year cycles.

As a group in the endeavor represented in this book we practiced oral traditional behaviors For example, we participated with each other in group meetings including giving, exchanging in a reciprocal, respectful way information to each other about each other's writings and how the writing came across to each person therefore helping greatly in understanding an individual's ideas; met often to exchange ideas and learn from each other ensuring that meetings were at a time and place that met each person's needs; took time to observe and participate in oral teachings; listened to each other to gain balance among ideas presented including how older people see something and equally important how younger people may see the same thing. We also were careful to give each other time that is necessary during such an activity. The book process itself utilized oral traditional practice during its formation. In such a manner these ideas are offered; with the expectation that a balance can be sustained between what the Academy is and has to offer, and Oral traditional Elder teachings that are a way to extend, expand and elucidate a proper education; one that strengthens, reinforces and toughens the connection we all must feel as relatives in the circle of life.

Chi migwech Chiaya'aag!

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Ross, R. (1992, 2006). Dancing with a ghost: Exploring aboriginal reality. Canada: Penguin.

_____.(1996, 2006). Returning to the teachings: Exploring aboriginal justice. Canada: Penguin.significant figure in late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Introduction

Lisa Poupart

Indigenous teaching and learning emanates from the oral tradition. It is sharing knowledge orally and gaining knowledge through lived experience in the world. Indigenous education is circular, reciprocal whereby peers at all age levels learn from one another, and Elder teachers learn from the younger generations. In this way, each individual is both a teacher and learner balanced by the need to acquire knowledge and the responsibility to share. Teaching and learning is an interconnected action that flows between individuals connecting them to one another and unifying the whole. To Anishinaabeg people, the relationship between fish and water symbolize the flow or interconnection between teaching and learning. Anishinaabeg scholar Basil Johnston (1990) explains, "To represent the noble vocation of teaching the fishes were chosen as emblems. Fishes lie hidden behind rocks, live unseen in the depths, but remain steadfast in the swirling content." The fish (both teacher and learner) spend their entire life in water (education) and everything that sustains the fish (teacher/learner) comes from water (education). When water passes over the gills, a fish absorbs the oxygen content of the water and diffuses it into the body. In this way, then, teaching and learning is inseparable from life itself.

In traditional culture, a primary purpose of indigenous education is spiritual enhancement of individuals and the community. Basil Johnston (1990) explains, "Men and women have to know as they have to grow in spirit. This basic premise presupposes the existence of teachers and imposes upon them the duty of teaching. The well being and continuity of a community require that the spirit be enlarged and passed from generation to generation" (p. 69). The role of indigenous education in spiritually strengthening the people is even more critical today as it was in the past

as indigenous people continue to experience cultural losses due to ongoing colonization and western globalization. Tewa Pueblo scholar Gregory Cajete asserts that contemporary indigenous education must spiritually heal the people and the disconnection or "split" with the spiritual world. This is also true for non-Natives as Cajete addresses "Healing the split is not a task for Indian people only. It is also the task of others who consider themselves people of place, and thereby experience alienation from mainstream society as do many Indian people" (Cajete 1999 p. 17).

As indigenous teaching and learning is central to spiritual survival and resurgence, education is inextricably linked to the physical world and the environment. Indigenous worldview sees the energies of all living things and the relationships between humans and the beings of the natural world. At Manitou Api, the Anishinaabeg creation site in the geographic center of North America, the rocks and their formations hold cultural knowledge for the people. It is a place of the teaching rocks in Whiteshell Provincial Park, Manitoba; a sacred site that Anishinaabeg people were dispossessed of with colonial occupation. Increasingly in indigenous communities throughout the world, cultural and spiritual survival and resurgence has centered on land reclamation and the struggle for the return of sacred sites. With the return to our homelands and sacred sites, indigenous spiritual identity is restored and education is transformed (Kana'iaupanui and Malone 2006).

Next week my eleven-year-old son, Skye and I will drive north to pick up our Elder teacher Rosemary Christensen. Together, we three generations of Anishinaabeg will make a fourteen-hour pilgrimage by car to attend four days of oral traditional Elder teachings at Manitou Api. At this formal gathering, oral teachings center on the ancient Anishinaabeg prophecies. We are in the time of the Seventh Fire and seeking to enter the time foretold in the Eight Fire Prophecy. My Elder and spiritual teacher David Courchene, NeegoneeAki Innini, from Sagkeeng Ojibwe First Nation Manitoba leads the gathering at Manitou Api. He explains the Eighth Fire Prophecy in this way:

The 8th fire is a prophecy that has been handed down to us by the Native people. The belief is that a time would come when the earth would enter into a change. And our people refer to this as the rebirth of the earth because a rebirth would have to take place if we are going to prevent the destruction of our own planet. The 8th fire, according to our people, says that there would be individuals that would come from all different cultures and they would gather in some way to seek greater advice and direction or to collectively seek out a vision that would lead what is referred to as the "new people." The new life will be represented by many different cultures

and somehow they would gather to share the uniqueness of each of their strengths and give teachings and knowledge that they have gathered from their cultures. So the 8th fire is the coming of the new people who will somehow find a way to create a new understanding of how we should live and behave as human beings—where we will go beyond the division we've created amongst ourselves. They will find a way of life collectively to prevent the violence we see in our communities, on the street, and in our homes. It would be a spiritual understanding that would go beyond the divisions and the separations that have caused the violence and wars today (Courchene 2007).

Thus, as Anishnaabeg we share our traditional teachings with others including non-Native people who are willing to learn. We believe that by sharing our cultural teachings with others, there is an opportunity to prevent global destruction and heal the planet. Sharing our teachings with others reflects the traditional Anishinaabeg value of inclusiveness. Not all tribal nations have the same prophetic teaching and do not share their traditional teachings with non-Natives or other outsiders. For some this is a response to the many losses due to colonization and an effort to prevent the appropriation and further erosion of traditional cultures. However, today, just as in the past, there is great diversity across indigenous North America. The differences that exist between Nations are not contentious, problematic or in conflict with one another. Instead, differences whether in worldview or in practice often reflect larger shared indigenous values like sovereignty and noninterference whereby distinct differences coexist unchallenged and uninterrupted. In other words, individual Nations are sovereign and one Nation does not interfere and impose their value or belief upon another Nation. In essence, then, there is balance between distinct differences between nations and their shared values and practices. Thus, while some indigenous nations in North America have prohibitions on sharing traditional cultures with outsiders others do not and work toward inclusiveness.

The work in this book reflects our effort to be inclusive and move toward the fulfillment of the Anishinaabeg Eighth Fire Prophecy. We share our understanding and application of indigenous teaching methods, techniques, and models as grounded in the ancient oral tradition as a strength that comes from the tribal world. We offer these not solely for indigenous teachers and indigenous learners. They are presented for teachers and learners across racial and ethnic groups to use in any educational setting.

Each of the chapters reflects where the authors are as learners within the larger circle. Authors are at a different stage in their learning and include authors across a spectrum of knowledge with a range of experiences.

The chapter by Dr. Rosemary Ackley Christensen features first. She provides a discussion of circle teaching as indigenous teaching methodology. Dr. Christensen was raised in the Bad River Anishinaabeg community, in a predominantly indigenous world with Elder oral traditional teachers. A great deal of her life work concerns the study and application of First Nations Elder epistemology. In her work in the academy in First Nations Studies, Dr. Christensen offers students an opportunity to study not only the content of the discipline; she offers them a way of learning that reflects the tribal world. This, indeed, is increasingly rare in First Nations and American Indian Studies programs. Today it is the norm today for teachers and professors of First Nations Studies to teach, research, and publish in the same western linear structures that have always defined academe. A student or mentee of Dr. Christensen's authors each of the successive chapters.

My contribution, chapter two, is a description of the work Rosemary and I collaborated on and instituted over ten years at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay in our effort to create a place for indigenous teaching/learning and Elder epistemology to proliferate within the academy. I am an Anishinaabequay teacher and scholar chairing a First Nations Studies program in the academy. I see myself as an apprentice to Rosemary Christensen's teaching methods, working each semester to move further into the circle and away from the lines that define academe and my own formal education.

We include the work of Deborah Dillon and Russell Reuter in chapter three. Russell and Deb are both non-Natives working with non-Native students in elementary school. They are implementing circle teaching and learning in their classrooms based on their understanding of Rosemary's methods and their study of First Nations worldview from outside of the tribal world. Their chapter is a discussion of teaching techniques that involve circle learning.

In chapter four, we include the work of Lah^te Louis Williams Jr. an Oneida graduate student who was raised in an urban setting away from his tribal traditions. Lou is dedicated to relearning Haudenosaunee culture and the study of circle learning. Louis took several classes with Rosemary as a student at UW Green Bay. He contributes to our work by providing definitions of key concepts used throughout the book.

Given that each author comes from a different level of learning, with different degrees of time spent with oral Elder teachers in the tribal world, there are mistakes and errors in the understanding, application, and discussion of our models and techniques. Such misunderstandings reflect where each author is on their individual path of learning. Our readers should approach the chapters as written by learners and not by "experts."

Collectively this group of authors worked both independently and as a part of the whole. We met often as a group and traveled many miles to meet face to face to honor the oral traditional way of working together. Our goal as a group is to make a difference for the next generation. As indigenous people we are told to fulfill our life purpose and, by doing so, to leave the Earth and all beings in an improved condition. This book is our collective effort to create something better for the next generation of children in education by moving us closer into the Sacred Circle.

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Connective Pedagogy: Elder Epistemology, Oral Tradition and Community

Rosemary Ackley Christensen

The greatest principle the circle symbolizes…equality that applies to all forms of life…no one form of life is greater or lesser than any other form (Marshall III, 2001, p. 225).

> "…a ten-year educational restoration effort aimed at bringing the indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing that have sustained the Native people of Alaska for millennia to the forefront in the educational systems serving all Alaska students and communities today…basis for a pedagogy of place that shifts the emphasis from teaching about local culture to teaching through the culture as students learn about the immediate places they inhabit and their connection to the larger world within which they will make a life for themselves (Ray Barnhardt, 2005,2007)[1].

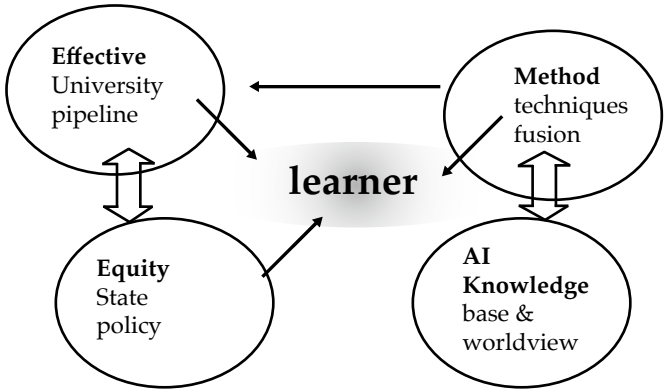
The Academy (reflected in grade school, middle and high school) throughout its long tenure primarily fosters methods based on a linear worldview. These methods are familiar to anyone that goes to school; primarily the teacher talks/lectures to students, usually in the front or head of the room with the students in rows one behind the other. Students are expected and requested to ask questions relative to the material. Teachers usually deal with a big group of students, time is set by teacher/school regarding schooling and primarily the written word is emphasized with written exams. This is a respectable way to learn; although there are other ways, reflecting other worldviews. I have written about another way of teaching and learning that I call the circle method at an earlier time (Christensen, 2004). Circle teaching is based on the oral traditional ways of learning and teaching as practiced by American Indian people for thousands of years in North America (Turtle Island).

In this book, this alternative way of learning/teaching is explored more thoroughly with more detail regarding teaching practice than earlier by not only myself but others that have learned about this way of learning and teaching through participating in my classes and or observing over an extended period of time during the semester classes at the university or working with me as faculty in First Nation Studies.

Chapters provide information not only on what is currently practiced in elementary school by teacher colleagues; but information is provided on what is possible in college classrooms and what can be taught to teacher-colleagues in both K-12 school and college. In actuality the classroom model is conceivably, appropriate for any age-group/classroom. Chapter three covers a practicum in elementary school written by a former First Nations Studies student and his elementary teacher colleague. She observed one semester in an evening class, and he was a student in several semesters in a number of my classes to 'learn' the methods and techniques I use. Chapter 4 provides definitions and application in higher education and is written by a graduate student. Colleague Lisa Poupart discusses and explains our fusion model efforts in her chapter. She talks about a fusion model that I thought might work for something that was lacking in the state of Wisconsin's legislative efforts to teach about Indians in school. I remember the days of conflict that occurred in Wisconsin over fishing rights after which the legislature came up with what we call 'Act 31' to assist students in understanding why Indians seemingly get to do things that other citizens do not. The project or fusion as I thought of it is based on how our elders teach us that we are all connected, and in some cases perhaps, at least in thought process, can merge one with another. The 'fusion project' discussed in chapter 3 (Poupart) designed for colleagues that might consider fusing American Indian-based knowledge is a paradigm based on work that I did earlier in the Minneapolis school district wherein our incredibly talented Indian Education staff worked together to assist in providing American Indian history through a treaty lesson that would be taught to all 8th graders. In order to do this properly, we had to figure out how to 'teach' the 8th grade teachers about the treaty, provide curriculum material, and deal with the fact there would be incoming teachers over time that would need to be taught about the material if the 8th grade history curriculum would continue to feature treaty instruction. The process involved and the notion of providing curriculum and other needed assistance is part of the fusion model used at UWGB through the notion of a center. I posed that a center was needed to provide information relative to Act 31, and Standards for First Nation Studies were needed. I wrote a standards piece in 2001 and later a brief entitled, The UWGB center for transformational instruction: diversity is more than a tang or an aftertaste

in 2004. I note in the brief that 'we learn from Elders in every generation that one must not be confused by wondering what type of dance is happening but recognize that we are dancing!' I go on to say that 'the model for the center advocates a new form of dancing' (p. 1). I first talked about possible standards (for American Indian studies) at a U-W system consortium meeting in 2002 (I still have the flipchart notes used to explain the model). The 'fusion' project that I proposed to UWGB FNS faculty is based on the need to provide information to elementary and secondary teachers who are graduating from UWGB. The chart I made to explain it to others is below:

Infusing American Indian knowledge into Teacher Education through the Ed pipeline



The fusion model (based on what we did in Minneapolis public schools) I brought to UWGB that occurred over a period of time with college faculty is explained and summarized by Lisa Poupart. Lisa is my young colleague in First Nations Studies at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. When I came to Green Bay after a visiting professorship at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, UWGB did not have a major in Indian Studies. I wrote a brief, Considerations for reorganizing an Indian studies program, a plan in action (Christensen, 2001) as I thought not having a major was unfortunate as we were located in a part of WI that is home to three Tribes (Stockbridge Munsee, Menominee and Oneida Tribes) of eleven federally-recognized Tribes that are in Wisconsin. As an Ojibwe 'visiting' in other Tribal territory, I thought it important to have a major concentration that centered on the three 'home' Tribes as one could look at Universities in Wisconsin, note the Tribal territory one was in and then ensure there is information about these tribes at the University nearby. I spoke to the need

to have both Menominee and Mohican languages added to our major as soon as feasible. Currently, Oneida language is taught at UWGB and is an important part of the major requirement. Also our Oral Concentration (OC) effort (discussed later) within the major requirement is a natural conduit to working with Tribal elders near-by. This did not mean that students could not work with other Tribal Elders. During my time at UWGB one student worked with a Medicine Elder from Canada, and another worked with a Lakota Elder from Pine Ridge. Lisa provides further detail regarding the OC in her chapter. Relative to the major as we worked out the details, I suggested we call our American-Indian knowledge base, pillars as that is what I saw as a way of describing what students learn about American Indians from us. In addition I was interested in adding something to the major that I had not heard or seen anywhere else (although certainly this is not a new idea, and it may exist elsewhere); that is, to add what I labeled Oral concentration or in brief, OC. An Oneida student was interested in working with elders to improve his oral education so I posed an 'oral concentration' meaning that he was to concentrate on elder teachers in a semester (for 12 credits) as his only class. The discussion for this was begun during my first semester at UWGB, with the new course ready by 2001. A copy of the first syllabus and course description is still in my files. Lisa Poupart discusses the OC more in detail in her chapter.

The pedagogical cultural methodology discussed in this book utilizes the "Tribal 3r's" of oral learning: reciprocity, relationship and respect with the added fourth r, responsibility added at appropriate intervals. Elemental constructs such as Experience, Participation and Observation are fundamentals that form the learning and teaching context. The core value emphasized in the form is personal sovereignty/autonomy or independence which means the notion of choices for the student is an important adjunct of the methodology. In a slightly awkward sense it is a paradigm shift of sorts loosely utilizing aspects of grounding theory techniques discussed by C. Urquhard (2000) based on the grounded theory method which is "a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 24).

The three Tribal R's of respect, reciprocity and relationship are the initially visible grid-lines in the frame of the pedagogical abode which is then fused with appropriate content, and the fourth r, responsibility is added or emphasized at appropriate intervals, therefore although important and germane as part of the grid, responsibility is perhaps less visible at varying times as responsibility is recognized as an individual matter, with the individual learning, practicing and demonstrating responsibility at a personal pace. The core value of personal sovereignty, participation learning and

observation and community/kinship-type interaction from oral tradition provide the structural pillars. The 3 tribal 'r's encourages usage of the bonding method with students, a strategy that employs respect between teacher and student as a base premise (as mentioned in gap literature). Such a cultural context needs to be part of instructional program rationality. Newman et al. (2001) define such a strategy as "a set of interrelated programs for students and staff that are guided by a common framework for curriculum, instruction, assessment and learning climate and that are pursued over a sustained period" (p. 297). The authors suggest that such an approach may make a difference in school improvement.

Conceptual points

This paradigm that features methods or techniques used in oral/traditional teaching/learning is based on the indigenous wholistic worldview and its values with discussed techniques harmonious within that world view. Deloria and Wildcat(2001) note "The Indian view of the world tends to see unities both in the structure of physical things and in the behavior of things, and we have recently been describing it as "holistic" in that it tries to present a comprehensive picture in which the parts and their value are less significant than the larger picture and its meaning. That is not to say that Indians could not deal with specific items of knowledge" (p. 155). Each individual will experience the values and behaviors differently than another albeit within the worldview purview. Cultural differences among Tribes exists, yet behaviors reflects the holistic world view. As individuals design, put into practice, and hone various methods/techniques based on the holistic world view, each will amend, visualize and experiment within the praxis, much as teachers do in the current method(s) (reflecting the western world view) practiced in schools today. The following are conceptual points for this teaching/learning method and its techniques.

Participation learning

A.O. Kawaglely and Ray Barnhardt (1999) tell us that:

> While western science and education tend to emphasize compartmentalized knowledge which is often decontextualized and taught in the detached setting of a classroom or laboratory, Native people have traditionally acquired their knowledge through direct experience in the natural environment. For them, the particulars come to be understood in relation to the whole, and the "laws" are continually tested in the context of everyday survival. Western thought also differs from Native thought in its notion of competency. In western terms, competency is based on predetermined ideas of what a person should know, which

> is then measured indirectly through various forms of "objective" tests. Such an approach does not address whether that person is really capable of putting the knowledge into practice. .Native sense, competency has an unequivocal relationship to survival or extinction. You either have it, or you don't, and survival is the ultimate measure" (p.117).

Students are involved in the process in an overt and observable way. Teacher is not so much a lecturer, as she is a coach/expert/Elder. Students teach and help each other using a total and small group process. When appropriate, teacher involves students in teaching particular concepts through presentations by students to other student groups. Thus they are heavily involved in learning through teaching and participating in learning. Students do learn part of the materials (that they present) very well, and the rest (learned from other student presentations) may not be learned or remembered as well, nevertheless, students do employ ways of teaching reflecting their age group/interests, and students do tend to find these more interesting (perhaps) than teacher lectures on a daily basis. Teacher learns also through this method, by experiencing reciprocity through the teaching-learning method. As they hear, from students, assigned materials, they ponder and perhaps gain insights from the students' presentations.

Participation learning was the way of learning practiced by Indians in earlier times and continues to be used by our traditional elders as a normal way to teach. Teaching the content through oral presentations emulate in a slight way, the teachings methods of our elders. Elders pass information in an oral traditional way. Learners demonstrate viable skills suitable for oral learning, learners listen with body, mind and spirit, they are quiet as they listen, showing respect for the oral transmitter and they seek to learn how to interact when, and how with the oral transmitter. The process is an experiencing process, utilizing participant learning. During my last semester, 2010, Spring, in Green Bay, one of the groups presenting utilized a game that was such fun!

I asked Andrew Geiwitz, Josh Kasinskas, Jessica Kuehlmann, Amber Maile, Emile Ose, Alesha Roth, Jason Vanman, and Karl Weyenberg (all from various towns in Wisconsin) to describe the game, and they did in answer to my email in June of 2010, "For our group's presentation, we had a class participation game that involved text messaging using the students' cellphones. Here is how the game would work. Our group has our PowerPoint presentation up on the projector. When we got to the part of our presentation that included classroom participation, we explained the game to our classmates. Each group would be given the cellphone

number of one of us presenters. Then we would put up slides with multiple choice questions. The groups could discuss amongst themselves, and then one person from each group would send a text message containing their answer to the presenter whose cellphone number they were given. We, the presenters, would then make a note of who answered correctly or incorrectly. We would go through all the slides, making sure every group had a chance to answer each of the questions. After each question, we had a slide showing the correct answer. At the end, we would announce which groups answered the most correctly. We thought this method was a nice idea, since everyone had a chance to answer each question and could attempt to apply what they learned from our presentation." Needless to say, the students loved fooling around with cellphones as part of a lesson, and of course they learned from each other both within their small groups and within the total large group during the game. During my classes, the students came up with fun, creative interactive ways to participate with the rest of the class. Participation was required with the others in the class, and their grade included points for participation. Too, they learned from each other within the form of participation each group came up with. I was so impressed with a group in a class I taught on Ojibwe history. They made a game based on the migration route of the Ojibwe from the East to the Midwest using points of information provided in the text for a floor map game that students could take turns working on, and getting prizes for making a correct move. There was lots of laughing and moving during class on that evening class in Ojibwe history. Their natural sense of competition could be utilized in making the participation fun, although I stressed the participation activity must reflect the material they presented. They were usually so keen to not be boring as they taught the lesson; and just about always, they were not. No, my classroom resounded with laughter and answers called out, or however, whatever the participation/action called for by the group in charge of the lesson during that class.

The beliefs, philosophy, epistemology and oral tradition found in a holistic world are reflected in its educational practices, learning and teaching pedagogy and interrelated activities with others. Techniques for learning and teaching vary from Tribe to Tribe yet tend to remain within the purview of the holistic measure of its oral tradition. Storytelling used by most tribes to teach its young is an example of a pervasive technique that reinforces and supports holistic values throughout the lifetime of the learner.

Personal sovereignty/Independence or personal autonomy

J.F. Bryde, 1971, noted in his book on Modern Indian Psychology (p. 39) that "Individual freedom means that you yourself decide to do the right thing in order to survive. Right from the beginning, you should memorize

that full definition well because every part of it is important if you are to understand the right meaning of individual freedom. …In the Indian system, the person himself, whether he is a child or a grown-up, makes his own decisions and no one forces him into making a decision."

Personal sovereignty or autonomy is a recognized core value among many Tribes within the holistic worldview; albeit with cultural differences among Tribes within that worldview and some have left the traditional world view altogether, and espouse the commonly held dominant linear world view (that in itself is an expression of personal sovereignty).

Rupert Ross, explains "The Ethic of non-interference, To begin with, (he says) I cannot do better than to quote directly from Dr. Brant (a Mohawk, and a practicing psychiatrist who spent a great deal of time exploring the underpinnings of both traditional and present Native societies) "The Ethnic of Non-Interference is probably one of the oldest and one of the most pervasive of all the ethics by which we Native people live. It has been practiced for twenty-five or thirty thousand years, but it is not very well articulated. The person who explained it best was a white woman, an anthropologist, named Rosalie Wax…" This principle essentially means that an Indian will never interfere in any way with the rights, privileges and activities of another person (p. 12). …This principle of non-interference is all-pervasive throughout our entire culture. We are very loath to confront people. We are very loath to give advice to anyone if the person is not specifically asking for advice. To interfere or even comment on their behavior is considered rude, (p. 13)".

One way of looking at this idea is to note that many Indians favor an indirect approach or interaction as a form of non-interference; yet the behaviors practiced as indirect may differ from Tribe to Tribe. To employ personal sovereignty as a technique, students or learners, for example, are provided with choices, as much as is possible within the schooling structural system. They choose which group to work with, & when the teacher is comfortable with it, an exam process that might include some oral exams with the total group or within the smaller groups. And within certain classes, it might be possible for the teacher to provide choices within time elements. In a college class for example, it is possible for the instructor to allow groups preparing for a presentation to decide for themselves when they want to meet to prepare meaning the group could decide to meet at a time other than class time as listed as long as the group put in as much time as was provided each group. So, although I gave the students one class period to prepare, in actually they need not meet on the Wednesday class date, but could choose to meet on the weekend, or another evening, or during the day.

Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Brockern (1992) say independence is an old practicing value, "A feasibility study by the French was highly pessimistic, concluding that any captain trying to command a company of Indian soldiers would be told curtly that he should do it himself, which of course would be a very bad example for French troops. The explorers concluded that Indians must have some defect in the capacity for obedience. "(p. 32).

Relationship

Students are in groups (which by their very (interactive) nature emulate community) as much as is comfortable for the teacher. This allows them to foster relationships throughout the class time, as well as foster relationship with the teacher, as he/she gets involved with groups through a small-size interaction. It is easy for the teacher to begin classes with time for group discussion (on particular selected topics) during which time instructor is able to move among groups, discuss items with them, or just listen to them discuss the topic. Students must solve several relationship functions through the group process. Sometimes that is not easy, as a group may find itself in conflict. However, students and groups can be guided and directed on how to work through such conflicts especially as conflict with others is a normal part of life and how we learn to work with it is an important part of enjoying a comfortable existence in society. Part of the process can involve entering and leaving groups at intervals relative to class or group choices & teacher rules. Grouping in class format provides for an experience in interrelatedness or community, while also engaging in participation learning, each learns while participating with another in the small group, and within the large group. With task fulfilled through group process, group effort on the task allows for each individual to learn the task quite well. Listening to other groups present (teach) information is a way of learning the material, with the probable outcome being that students may retain either more information, or specific useful information through this process.

Respect

One easy, simple way of beginning to foster the behavior of respect is to insist that students and teacher practice/learn how to listen to one another. Our elders teach us we need to assume a suitable listening stance. In the case of the classroom, it should be overt, that is anyone observing will know the individual is listening to someone. The teacher can insist on a respectful listening stance. Some of the behaviors that come to mind might be to ensure that cell phones are turned off during presentations by a group to other groups. A teacher can also model an appropriate listening stance simply by turning one's body toward the speaker and just listen. A

simple exercise, interactive listening among group members and between groups through an integrated learning technique can be used for this effort. In one such exercise groups were asked to read a short article, then in each group, each person must provide a short statement relative to the article and show it by checking name on the classroom attendance sheet. After group discussion, the instructor holds a total group discussion on the topic with each group providing its statement on the topic.

Smith (1999) explains, "From indigenous perspectives ethical codes of conduct serve partly the same purpose as the protocols which govern our relationship with each other and the environment. The term "respect" is consistently used by indigenous peoples to underscore the significance of our relationships and humanity. Through respect the place of everyone and everything in the universe is kept in balance and harmony. Respect is a reciprocal, shared, constantly interchanging principle which is expressed through all aspects of social behavior" (p. 120). The seven principles of the holistic world view (discussed in the form section of this chapter) are the principle of the circle, gratitude, equality, peaceful co-existence, connectedness, sustenance and balance. Great importance is placed on the principle of balance which is sought and practiced in the wholistic world. One feels good and right with the world when in balance. Kenny (2004) in her very informative paper discussing the holistic worldview notes how important balance is, " Elders are constantly reminding contemporary Aboriginal people about the importance of keeping our lives in balance. How "balance" is defined is, to a great degree, determined by people in specific bio-regions, with specific languages and cultural practices that reflect the land on which they live " (p. 8). As well, "holistic" is interpreted in specific ways depending on the location and context of each Nation, tribe or band. That is why research of any type demands considerable consultation and culturally appropriate protocol" (p. 8).

Reciprocity

Individual skills can be ascertained, and then used, within the group to promote group goals for learning and process thereto. This helps students feel connected, especially those who do not want, know how to, or like talking in class. Community is relationship**.** "It is the context within which we live and work. It is what we strive for with all our being. It is inclusive rather than exclusive, seeking to fold everyone into a relationship, one that ensures that all living things are in balance" reminds Cajete in his very helpful and interesting book on native science as he discusses how we are all related in the section of that name (p. 86). Individual gifts such as sketching, making puzzles, designing games, or having a fun way to memorize are helpful and appropriate skills useful to the group process and product.

Teacher and students interact and work in a reciprocal way. In a class, for example, one of the students used a wheelchair to get around. However, he was greatly skilled with computer and he worked with his group using this skill. Soon, the students showed great awareness of what he brought the group, and really took care that he got to the classroom and seated within the group comfortably as well as helping him to his next class.

Responsibility

Elder teachers work with us in our beginning stance of learning. We are not expected to be the same as others or be where they are in the learning range. They work with us as we are. As we move through the spiral of learning we experience our ways and means of responsibility. In this way of learning students are not expected to immediately demonstrate responsibility yet as the teacher (and possibly other students) model responsibility wherein for example, the teacher is always on time because he/she set the time both for beginning and ending the class, provides documents as stated, the student begins to see his/her responsible areas. They also experience what happens when they are not responsible; for example, not being ready for one's group presentation. It affects the whole group, and not in a good way. As the class progresses, the student is expected to be more responsible with teacher reminders at intervals relative to responsibility practice.

Oral learning

Oral presentations (approximating traditional oral learning through practicing passing knowledge in an oral way, and listening to the learning) assembles a cultural context that is designed to provide students with an experience resembling traditional holistic experience of Indian Tribes. Tribal people value experience; therefore they value the Elders, who by their very nature are the most experienced beings. As Brown (1988) notes, 'what is anterior in time has a certain superiority over that which comes later,' and it is this belief, he says, " that accounts for the enormous respect shown to the aged among Native American peoples" (p. 71). This ancient way of learning fostered by Tribal ways/world view through Elder epistemology can be experienced in the classroom.

- Oral presentations by groups, who choose materials among themselves.
- Memory Circle is utilized to learn, practice and foster oral remembering skills.
- Oral exams are used from time to time, (I used oral exams exclusively) with the practice of interactive grading.

In this technique, the instructor provides the group with a grade based on what she saw in the presentation, and then the group is asked if they did something 'good' that the instructor did not mention or perhaps notice. As the instructor is not with the group when they prepare it is often possible that the group learns and practices how to work with one another during the group prep that may not be always visible to the instructor. When they say what they did, the instructor is then able to raise their grade dependent on the information provided and whether in retrospect the instructor was able to see its effect. Thus, grading becomes interactive.

- Listening is overtly taught, with a listening stance pursued, therefore one is not shaking a foot, tapping an object, texting, yawning, talking to someone else (and so forth), and if an occasional note may be taken, it is done quickly so as not to distract oneself from a thorough listening stance being deployed. When it became necessary to have the groups practice listening, I would give an exercise on it. One evening class that met weekly was given such a task. Each student was to choose someone of his choice, tell the person he/she was going to listen, and the person talking was to 'grade' the person doing the listening. At the next class, each student presented his/her listening exercise during memory circle. Some choose their moms, others, girl friend or boy friend, or others, friends or work colleagues. The discussion was such fun, as they told how people reacted. One girl said her mother was floored by her attentive listening stance, said she got an 'a' for a grade, and then the mom asked if they could do it again sometime soon!
- Oral presentations by groups, who choose and schedule what to teach to others; for example, a group may come up with a creative, fun way to learn the multiplication tables.
- Discussion is taught, encouraged, and required through the group process. As Smith (1999) notes "The processes of consultation, collective meetings, open debate and shared decision making are crucial aspects of tribal research practices" (p. 129) with the notion of responsibility implied within.

One way to encourage discussion is to promote it at every opportunity, including the time when students first enter the room. Ask them to always gather in their individual group, and to either begin discussing the materials, or if preferred, just talk about anything of interest to each other

including non-school work, as it takes a while for groups to 'bond', and any effort to that effect is actually class work. During this time, students can be doing some necessary task, such as collect homework from the evening before, or start collecting attendance signatures and when the instructor comes in he/she can go around and speak briefly with each group, thereby using names, and paying attention to students, while collecting attendance or like tasks. Students like this activity, and why wouldn't they? More formal discussion periods can easily be built into the circle method, such as, during the school-year-start during the linear lectures discussing how for example, how groups work, how chosen and what materials are used. It helps to stop after 15 or 20 minutes, and give groups an opportunity to discuss what they heard, and again, tell at least one thing during a class go-around discussion. During the time provided for the groups to decide on what they are remembering, instructor can go around to each group, and see if there are any questions, and to ascertain if enough time is spent on the activity. Most groups finish quickly, but it is important to give the odd group several more minutes if needed, as everyone cannot finish exactly at the same time and this effort reinforce the notion of personal sovereignty. Memory Circle, a technique discussed in Christensen, 2004 is utilized at regular intervals to learn, practice and foster oral remembering skills. In this technique, groups are asked to respond with something remembered from learning presentations, usually after sometime has passed, such as, for example, at the next class period. During remembering time, each student either provides a comment, or if he/she cannot remember anything, pass, verbally, or instructor can give the option of coming back to that person. The student is reminded to listen and learn from peers so that when the teacher comes back, the student is able to give at least one lesson learned from others. This latter technique usually works, especially as repetition is a technique of oral instruction, and it is good for students to repeat something someone else said (showing respect for learning). Returning to a person after a period of time allows the person to listen to others, and be reminded in that way, or at least to say something that perhaps another said, in another way. The issue of each person saying something allows the individual to speak, which may not always happen in the grouping process unless it is an instruction; which it is at times for a particular technique I label, integrated learning wherein individuals speak but only after working with a group, and speaking from a group perspective. This technique begins with listening to individuals in a group, and proceeds to a spiral learning and listening between students and teacher which is what happens during memory circle. The teacher is in the middle of the circle where she listens to each student. She may make a comment, or add something or ask a question. The interactive spiral

activity between student and teacher is reciprocal, models listening, and utilizes repetition of the learning materials in the process.

Form utilized in these methods

When possible it makes sense to foster congruent form and function. Students may not readily use circular or spiral forms in their presentation of materials (content) but after being shown various aspects of the circular form not limited to just physical characteristics, students will come up with beautiful, creative circular ways (context). Therefore it is important to set the **context** as well as the content of classes to reflect, reinforce and teach a worldview derived from oral tradition and Tribal world view. In this model, the content and context are deliberately construed in a congruent fashion remembering Brown's (1988) reminder "American Indians traditions generally do not fragment experience into mutually exclusive dichotomies, but tend to stress modes of interrelatedness across categories of meaning, never losing sight of an ultimate wholeness" (p.71).

The seven principles of the holistic world view are an important basic in the methods and subsequent techniques used in practice. The seven principles provide guidance to humans in how to live and function with other living things. Humans need to listen to oral teachers frequently to understand the complexity contained within the fundamental simplicity of the principles.

- Principle of peaceful co-existence

Every life form has the right to exist as created. We are all a small part of the vast circle of living things, and it appears that when we know how to interact with each other appropriately we will live more comfortably and complete the life span within our being.

- Principle of Equality

Each life form is equal to the other. That does not mean we are all the same. We may have very different form and function yet all life forms have a purpose within the sacred circle of life.

- Principle of connectedness

All life is nourished and sustained, supported and energized by each other. All living things are connected in the web of life.

- Principle of Balance:

The natural essentials of Fire, Water, Earth and Air are the main elements that must exist in harmony to sustain other life forms. Each form of life is treated with respect. This means that in order to understand what respect is to another living thing, one must know first one's own creation, how it works and then proceed to observe, understand other living things, what

works for them, and seek a way to interact utilizing something important from each, that is look for and create a balance.

- Principle of the Circle

Whatever good is done is returned to the giver, unfortunately this rule also applies to negative energy. People who harm other living things bring harm to their own spirit. We need to protect our own spirit from negative energy.

- Principle of sustenance

Take only what is needed to survive. Taking more violates this law, and creates an imbalance that requires adjustment. When one has surplus, share it with other living things.

- Principle of gratitude

Give thanks. If the ability, capacity and willingness to give thanks is forgotten and not practiced, opportunities in many forms become limited. Human beings own nothing. For example, students and teacher can make sure the classroom looks as good as it did when the class began, thus giving thanks to those who clean it and keep it in order.

Techniques/strategies employed in these contextual methods:

Techniques and strategies used in the circle teaching method reflect learning and teaching utilized by elder teachers. An example is the seven principles cited above. The teachings are many and varied, as is the case in Academy-fostered techniques reflecting the linear world view. Circle methods include using questioning as a learning device, with required critical thinking and reflective skill elements utilized, yet questioning as a form of learning is muted compared to how it is used in academy techniques. When groups are first formed, for example, and are preparing to present information to others, the teacher uses critical thinking during the first cycle of presentations. After the group presents the other groups prepare a question that reflects critical thinking to the presenting group. While the groups are doing this, the teacher poses a question to the presenters, they use the time to prepare and give an answer to the teacher. The teacher is able to go around and check with each group to see if their question meets critical thinking attributes. It helps to give a listing of these to the groups to look and learn from during their preparation period. Thusly, the question form most students are familiar with, and have practiced during previous schooling is utilized during the first phase. During the second cycle questioning is not used, instead, the class is introduced to and learns to use memory circle.

Other techniques abound. A few have been discussed briefly, and some at length in subsequent chapters by the other authors to give a notion of

the ways indigenous people incorporate cultural norms within teaching. In the end, of course, we want what others want for their children. We want them to be resilient, work, love and live in community and always keep in mind the work we must all do for the next generation. Our elders taught us that each generation works toward the next; as they did for us, we do for those coming after.

Summary of concepts

The method and techniques in oral traditional learning reflect the following concepts and are listed and repeated as an guide to keep in mind while reading the chapters in this book.

Participation learning

Elder teaching depends on experience. Students are therefore heavily involved in the process of both teaching and learning. Teacher is coach/expert/Elder. Teachers learn through this method, by experiencing reciprocity through the teaching-learning method. As they listen to students present assigned materials, they ponder and gain insights from these presentations. Students learn from each other as well as the teacher, and through required participation learn through experiencing (presented material) and interacting with each other.

Personal sovereignty

Is a core value among many Tribes within the holistic worldview; albeit with cultural differences among Tribes within that worldview. Students are provided with choices as much as is possible. They choose a group to be in, participate in the exam process, decide when/how/where to work with others and are expected to utilize individual skills. Teacher is at times able to utilize time and space differently, thereby increasing choices.

Respect

Learning how to listen to each other (utilize the integrated learning technique), learning everyone's name, listening to how individual sees skills, allowing groups to use skills within groups according to need, comfort level.

Reciprocity

Individual skills are reviewed and then used within group process to promote goals, process. Reciprocity strengthens connection between and among groups.

Relationship (built through respect and reciprocity) is fostered through use of group process, from which is built the fourth 'r' responsibility.

Responsibility

Occurs later than (or after) the three r's. When one learns and shows respect for others, and is reciprocal, one then knows and shows responsibility. It is the 'backside' of personal sovereignty. It is something that must be enacted by each individual, and its profile may vary depending on the age, and learning (length of immersion) of each learner (including teacher).

Oral learning

Ancient way of Tribal learning fostered and focused through Elder epistemology

Listening skills (including the act of overt listening) are taught and encouraged through exercises. Repetition is valued and used.

(A limited form of) Questioning is taught through group process, teaching therefore respect/reciprocity and relationship

Oral presentations are by groups choosing the materials among themselves.

Discussion is taught, encouraged, and required through a group process.

Memory circle is utilized to learn, practice and foster oral remembering skills.

Oral exams are used, and Interactive grading is used (form of reciprocity).

Conclusion

Cited in Brendtro et al. (1992) "Coopersmith (1967) observed that four basic components of self-esteem are significance, competence, power, and virtue: Significance is found in the acceptance, attention, and affection of others. To lack significance is to be rejected, ignored, and not to belong. Competence develops as one masters the environment. Success brings innate satisfaction and a sense of efficacy, while chronic failure stifles motivation. Power is shown in the ability to control one's behavior and gain the respect of others. Those lacking power feel helpless ad without influence. Virtue is worthiness judged by values of one's culture and of significant others. Without feelings of worthiness, life is not spiritually fulfilling. Traditional Native educational practices addressed each of these four bases of self-esteem: l/ significance was nurtured in a cultural milieu that celebrated the universal need for being; 2/ competence was ensured by guaranteed opportunities for mastery; 3/ power was fostered by encouraging the expression of independence; and 4/ virtue was reflected in the pre-eminent value of generosity" (pp.44-45).

The method and techniques discussed ask students and teacher to practice the art of respect within the teaching/learning mode utilizing reciprocal

behavior toward one another thereby building relationships with each other and in doing so engage in community-like activities. One seeks to work in balance with another, to find ways to cooperate, lend a hand or assist each other as each learns from another.

As Brendtro et al. (1992) note "The benefits of cooperative learning in contrast to competition or individual learning are well documented. Research suggests that students' attitudes toward teachers and peers will become more positive, student self-esteem will increase, and students will develop higher levels of prosocial abilities (i.e., empathy and altruism) and social skills (i.e., communication, conflict management, sharing). Studies report, too, that achievement levels of students increase when they participate in cooperative learning. There are even indications that achievement on computer-assisted learning tasks will be maximized when the instruction is structured cooperatively"(p. 100).

Oral Resources

Observation and participation with elder teachers provided the oral learning for the teaching method/techniques and include the following citations:

- Elder teachers, Bad River Indian Reservation. Wisconsin. 1940-1955.
- Individual Elder Teachers:
  Boyd, Raining, Mille Lacs Reservation, MN.
  Boyd, Grace, Mille Lacs Reservation, MN.
  Jackson, J. Leech Lake Reservation, MN. 1980-90
  Courchene, David, Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba, Canada
  Sam, David (Moosey) Mille Lacs Reservation, Minnesota
  Commanda, W., Ontario: oral teaching, 7th Fire wampum.
  Ackley, Charles J., Sakoagon Reservation, WI
  Daniels, Don, Manitoba & Alberta, Canada
  Myers, Ruth, Duluth, MN and Grand Portage, MN.
  Gahbo, Arthur, Mille Lacs Reservation, MI
  Hunting Hawk, P. Rolling River Reserve, Manitoba, Canada
  Davids, Dorthy, Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation, WI

And many, many others throughout my life.

Endnotes

1 Ray Barnhardt gave me a copy of his paper, Creating a place for indigenous knowledge in education: The Alaska native knowledge network, at a conference we were both attending in Sante Fe, New Mexico on March 15-18, 2005. It was the Colloquium: Improving academic performance among Native American Students sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and organized by Dr. Wm. Demmert, Tlingit, Alaska. The quote is from p. 1 of the draft he so kindly shared with me. The paper was subsequently published (Barnhardt 2007). Barnhardt, R. (2007). Creating place for indigenous knowledge in education: The Alaska Native knowledge network. In G. Smith & D. Gruenewald (Eds.), Place-based education in the global age: Local diversity. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.

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The Balance of Young and Old: Indigenous Education in the Academy

Lisa Poupart

Traditional Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) people understand the importance of seeking balance in life. One of the ways balance is experienced in everyday life is through the traditional pairing of a young person with an Elder. My Anishinaabe Elder and colleague at UW Green Bay, Rosemary Christensen, shared a teaching with me several years ago that recalls the traditional importance of these pairings. The teaching she shared with me is one that I call "Star Maps." Star maps, or constellation patterns, are important to Anishinaabeg because they provide indicators of life, reminding us of such things as time, seasonal change, and direction. They remind us that we are the descendants of Giizhigoquay (Sky Woman) and of our larger kinship to the Universe.

Rosemary shared the Star Map teaching with me and told of an Elder spiritual man[1] who often traveled into the night to observe and study the stars. On these night observation trips, he regularly took with him a young boy who learned from the old man by listening -- the boy acting as an apprentice to the old man's knowledge. However, this apprentice was one without pen or paper. Relying only on his memory the boy will pass the Elder's knowledge along to others in the ancient oral tradition. The boy is like a lap top computer who holds this knowledge for the future generations of Anishinaabeg. One day, when the boy is an old man, he too will take a young apprentice into the night, to study the skies. Through the interaction of the young with the wisdom of the old, the teachings are imparted for generations to come.

The Star Map story reflects the important relationship between youth and Elders in the oral tradition. Anishinaabeg see ourselves not as individual beings isolated from each other and other living beings but, instead, as

beings connected to one another and, moreover, belonging to the family of all living things. Thomas Peacock (Anishinaabeg) and his writing partner Marlene Wisuri explain this as the Anishinaabeg path of life as one that seeks honor and wisdom in relationship to all beings:

> The individual journey in search of wisdom led people to try to live their lives in ways that would bring honor to both themselves and to all those whose lives they touched. .. Their pathway on how to live the gentle way, just like ours, is through prayer and fasting, through listening to everything for its deeper meaning, through observing all the subtlety and nuances of life, and through learning the whole story of things. The path was taught as part of the spiritual teachings of the Midewiwin (the Ojibwe religion)... The path was one of gentleness, humbleness, and respect (2002, pg. 74).

The Anishinaabeg path, then, is one that honors the interconnections of all things, including the spiritual beings and the world around us. It honors our relationships to Elders, young people, and those beings that proceeded us in the order of creation -- the water, plants, and animals, upon which we rely for survival. It also is a path of courage, peacefulness in body and spirit, moderation in our thoughts and actions, kindness to all, and upholding our promises (Peacock and Wisuri, 2002).

Within traditional tribal communities where respect for the interconnectedness of all living things is an expression in everyday life, young people are honored and respected while they learn honor and respect for others. Thus, young people learn they are an important and valued part of creation -- that their existence is meaningful to family, community and to the larger relationship of living things. The value of young people to community and nation is further underscored by the apprentice/teacher relationship between Elder and young person in the passing along of traditional culture.

My working relationship with Rosemary Christensen that began at the university emulated the traditional relationship between tribal Elder and young person. This kind of working relationship, one grounded in traditional indigenous teaching and learning, is rare in the academy yet possible as we were able to demonstrate. For this reason it is important to describe our work together in this chapter.

The Story Begins

I first met Rosemary in the fall of 1999 when she interviewed for a job as an assistant professor of First Nations Studies at UW Green Bay. Just prior to this, she completed her doctorate of Education at the University of

Minnesota, Duluth. Thirty years her junior, I already earned my doctorate several years prior and advanced to chairing the First Nations Studies program at UW Green Bay. Culturally, I found myself in an unusual situation -- hiring my own tribal Elder. As the chair of First Nations Studies, in the academic chain of command I was Rosemary's superior. However, from the moment we started working together it was clear and unspoken that western hierarchical power structures did not define our relationship with one another.

As the chair of the program I did administrative work of the institution - paperwork, forms, budgets, class scheduling, student advising, and personnel issues. As an Elder who had worked many years in the Minnesota public school system, Rosemary had already done more than her share of administrative work in education. She flatly declared that she was done with that kind of work and that as a younger person, it was now "my turn." Fortunately, my mother and grandmother fostered in me the importance of attending to details and an appreciation for paper work. My mother was an office secretary for 50 years in a university. My grandmother kept the books for our very small family logging business. In and outside of the workplace, both ran a tight ship. I learned well from them.

In addition to administrative responsibilities I worked closely with tribal members from the nations in our region - northeastern Wisconsin including the Menominee, Oneida and Mohican Nations. Balancing my duties, Rosemary worked on the macro level - connecting with tribal communities beyond northeast Wisconsin. With her traditional Anishinaabeg upbringing and decades of experience in education, her worldview formed each of our program efforts - the program standards, fusion efforts, the oral traditional concentration, and program assessment and evaluation.

Together we co-authored conference presentation papers and numerous grant proposals seeking to fund our projects at the university. Some of our grant proposals were unfunded as the dominant society rarely prioritizes elder epistemology and connective pedagogy in the academy. Over the years we co-presented numerous conference papers and prepared written presentations about our work. Our co-author writing projects began with Rosemary crafting an initial very rough draft providing the conceptual framework. I viewed myself as the bridge between this framework and application of the traditional world to the non-Native reader, educator, and academic. We passed many drafts of a single writing project back and forth between each another so many times that eventually it became so interwoven that we could not discern who wrote which words or parts. The section of this chapter entitled "Fusing First Nations knowledge into the Curriculum: A Model for Teacher Education" is a good example of the

coauthored writing process. The section began originally as much shorter grant proposal that we wrote together.

While our partnership was the basis of our writing and our collaborative projects, it was central and to the direction and administration of the First Nations Studies program itself. Decision making in the First Nations Studies program at UW Green Bay was based upon the tribal world values of respect and consensus. Policy directives and actions in First Nations Studies are formed in unanimous agreement of all faculty and with Rosemary's Elder oversight. Together we create win/win outcomes incorporating the ideas of the group. However, the pairing of Elder/younger and the concomitant expression of traditional values within the university does not easily lend itself to the nature and structure of that institution. Regularly I attend academic meetings and conferences where colleagues interrupt each other while speaking, talk over one another, argue, and often speak mainly to demonstrate intellectual prowess. Such behaviors are unthinkable and shocking within traditional Anishinaabeg where respect is the standard. It is common for those within the academy to demonstrate disrespect for their senior or Elder colleagues and regularly junior or younger colleagues are minimized or intimidated. Never in my academic experience outside of First Nations Studies have I ever seen decisions and actions formulated by consensual agreement, instead, staunch individualism, hierarchy, and majority rule are the norms.

The traditional relationship between an tribal Elder and younger person is not easy to maintain in the academy when both parties are faculty members and traditional tribal world values define that pairing. As the younger learner and apprentice this meant I always yielded my thoughts, ideas, and voice to that of my Elder. I generally sat silent during our conversations and at University meetings and gatherings where my Elder teacher Rosemary was present, deferring to her knowledge and wisdom. However, as the program chair, the academy expected me to speak, argue, articulate as an individual. Silence is rarely valued in the academy and more often it is seen as a personal and professional failure; one who is silent is shy, intimidated, or lacks either insight or self-esteem. Thus, as the younger person in this pairing I often struggled with the expectations of my colleagues and the norms of my tribal culture. It takes a particular kind of young person to uphold this relationship in the academy. For me it meant I chose to hold my tongue and not speak even when everything in side of me was screaming to contribute or add to the conversations. It also meant I chose to accept a scolding on occasion from my Elder as is accepted in the tribal world when warranted. It also takes a certain Elder in order for this relationship to work within the academy. It requires that the Elder is willing to suspend tribal values and norms to the extent that a bridge can be built between

the two distinct worlds of traditional culture and the western academy. For my Elder Rosemary, it required a lot of patience on her part as I was not always fast at learning that which was passed on to me.

In the fall of 2007 I took a sabbatical from teaching and formally focused on studying indigenous teaching methods of my Elders and integrating them into my classes. A good portion of the sabbatical included my silent observation in Rosemary's undergraduate First Nations Studies classes and one on one conversations with her about indigenous teaching methodologies. Through these experiences I developed a critique of the linear teacher I had become and the methods I incorporated into my own classes, those inherited from a lifetime in western educational structures. At first I worried that since I was not raised traditionally I would never completely and successfully integrate these methods into my classes and, for example, always cling to a linear lecture style and written overhead or Powerpoint presentations out of the need to control the dissemination of knowledge and out of a lack of trust that students can be full agents in the learning process. With Rosemary's guidance I came to understand that the integration of indigenous teaching methods is not dichotomous or black and white. It is not a matter of either you integrate fully or not at all. Instead there is a range of application of these methods with oral traditional Elder teachers offering the strongest models from which we can borrow. To further me in this understanding, Rosemary used the example of a spectrum; at first I thought she drew upon such a linear analogy to assist me in my rigid thought processes. She explained, on one end of this spectrum exist our oral traditional Elder teachers passing along our culture and language as they have for thousands of years. On another end of the spectrum are teachers in the classroom who are just beginning to integrate one aspect of the tribal world into their methods. Later I came to see that this spectrum of integration was not linear at all as one "end" is not valued or privileged over the other. Alternatively, they are not ends but expressions of indigenous world view within the circle that is connective pedagogy.

In the Spring of 2010, Rosemary retired from UW Green Bay and began a new cycle of work closer to home, further north in Anishinaabeg territory. Today as I continue on in all of the work we started together, I can no longer distinguish between what idea or effort was mine and what was hers. More importantly, I realize that such a question is irrelevant. The work we started together does not belong to either one of us, as a part of the circle it belongs to the future generations.

The following sections of this chapter describe two of our major collaborative accomplishments in education and First Nations Studies. First, the creation and implementation of academic standards for teaching

First Nations Studies in higher education with UW Green Bay offered as a model. Second, the fusion project. These descriptions of our work are presented for others to borrow and adapt to make their own.

Elder Teachers and the Oral Tradition: Academic Standards for Teaching First Nations Studies

First Nations Studies at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay is an interdisciplinary degree program that reflects the holistic world view of the indigenous people of Turtle Island (North America). First Nations Studies is committed to the study of American Indian culture, philosophy, history, language, and the social, economic, and political status of indigenous people and their communities. The program is designed to preserve and promote the cultures and identities of the indigenous people with an emphasis on the nations of the western Great Lakes. First Nations Studies incorporates the teaching and learning approaches of tribal people, offering students a new way to learn within the academy. The program places emphasis on the indigenous oral tradition as preserved and shared by tribal Elders. Students take part in oral traditional learning experiences within the university classroom described though out this book and, moreover, outside the classroom in tribal communities learning from tribal people.

The learning objectives and student learning outcomes for First Nations Studies at UW Green Bay emphasize the oral tradition, indigenous epistemology, tribal elder teaching and learning methods, and learning within a tribal setting from elders and indigenous oral scholars. The program learning objectives and student outcomes reflect the standards for instruction, teacher qualifications, and course content as created and passed by the University of Wisconsin System American Indian Studies Consortium (UWSAISC). The Consortium consists of faculty teaching American Indian Studies classes in the University of Wisconsin System across its 25 campuses.

The UW System American Indian Studies Consortium was originally organized under a UW System small grant collaboration between American Indian staff and First Nations Studies faculty at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. Grant money was used to pay travel stipends to bring together staff and faculty in First Nations Studies throughout the state. The Consortium discussed common issues and concerns facing First Nations Studies programs and faculty in the state and nationally. The Consortium recognized the discipline of First Nations Studies as relatively "new" to the academy. During the civil rights era of the 1960s, First Nations activists and educators turned to institutions of higher learning for assistance in addressing the social and politi-

cal issues facing indigenous people in the U.S. In response, First Nations Studies programs (also Native American Studies and American Indian Studies) were developed at universities across the U.S. Thus, the demand for First Nations Studies came from outside the academy, from citizens in cities and on reservations. Many of the first courses ever offered in the discipline of First Nations Studies were taught by university faculty with degrees in other fields. Often these university teachers lacked knowledge of and experience in the tribal world. For example, English Departments in the U.S. developed American Indian literature courses that were taught by faculty without training or tribal world knowledge. As are a result, courses like these often provided no education about First Nations people and culture and, thus, failed to challenge the social and political issues facing indigenous people and their communities. In some cases, these courses further contributed to the stereotypes and widespread lack of knowledge about First Nations.

The UW System American Indian Studies Consortium quickly recognized that although the discipline of First Nations Studies now grants doctoral degrees in the field, many faculty continue to teach in the discipline without any formal academic training or tribal world experience and without administrative censure. The Consortium immediately pointed out that other disciplines are not treated this way. For example, although Information Technology (IT) is a relatively new field of study in the academy when compared to physics or astronomy, universities would never hire or retain an IT professor who fell into the discipline because s/he had a side interest in computers, read a few books about computers or because s/he was married or related to a computer genius. Yet, many faculty teaching in the discipline of First Nations Studies or teaching First Nations content related courses are often allowed to do so because of ridiculous or meaningless "qualifications" such as these (a side interest in Indians, read books about Indians, or married/related to an Indian). While these instructors may use courses texts written by First Nations authors, they often have no knowledge of or training in First Nations culture, history, sovereignty, and philosophy. In 2001, with Elder First Nations Studies faculty leading the charge, Ada Deer (Menominee/UW Madison), Rosemary Christensen (Anishinaabe/UW Green Bay) and Larry Martin (Anishinaabe/UW Eau Claire), the Consortium created and passed a set of standards for instruction, teacher qualification and course content for all First Nations Studies courses. While we offer the standards here in this book to share for application in other programs, we are not the authors or owners of the standards. We were merely members of the Consortium made up of many UW faculty and staff who worked diligently as a team to craft and pass these standards through the process of consensus. We acknowledge and

are grateful to the work of our colleagues that contributed to the creation and passing of these standards, particularly the First Nations Studies staff and faculty at UW Eau Claire, UW Madison, UW Oshkosh, UW Stevens Point, UW Superior, and UW Platteville.

University of Wisconsin System American Indian Studies Consortium Standards

Preamble: The desire for standards emanates from the Native Peoples of Wisconsin to create and enforce a level of professional understanding about, and importance of, their various cultures. American Indian Studies programs have grown up in the academy as a response to these desires as a way to formulate and communicate a systematic and strengthened understanding of native cultures. Therefore, the purpose of this document is to establish standards for instruction, teacher qualification and course content of American Indian Studies in undergraduate general education classes, teacher education programs, and American Indian Studies programs. We desire the University System to reward and recognize faculty actively involved in these pursuits, to support the on-going implementation of these standards in future appointments while respecting the contributions by those whose pioneering work made these expectations possible. These standards are offered as an ideal guideline to serve as a tool to retain quality where it exists and to be cited as a vehicle to help encourage quality where needed. These standards should apply whether Native American topics appear within the context of various discipline-based courses or as part of a comprehensive American Indian Studies Program.

1. Principle among the major criteria proposed are that **materials must be presented from an American Indian perspective** (which include): The role of the oral tradition and boundaries that respect what sorts of knowledge may be shared, when and with whom. Indian cultures are part of a living culture that warrant sensitivity as students seek to approach different types of knowledge and levels of intimacy within tribal communities. Categories of information (such as stories, artifacts, images and objects) are not automatically subject to open and public examination at the convenience of the students.

   This is related to the fact that instruction in cultural awareness must include notions of the sacred along with spiritual practices and sources of knowledge; **pedagogical approaches should emphasize the inseparability of spiritual and cultural matters** and convey this in discussions of Native American peoples.

2. **There is a world view shared across most Native American cultures** reflecting a holistic appreciation of life, nature, and knowledge. However, **it is unacceptable to oversimplify** the Native American experience based on a generalized commonality of outlook at the expense of noting the wide variety of conditions (historic, environmental, and geographic), awareness of cultural complexity, religious practices and other elements that contribute to the rich tapestry of the more than 500 indigenous nations.
3. **Knowledge of the past is indispensable** for a variety of topics:

   It is imperative to **include the complex pre-contact cultures and achievements of Native Americans**; it is equally important to **include awareness of post-contact developments;**

   It is vital to convey the **continuity of experiences over time to the present** as seen in **adaptations, survivals and innovations;**

   Students need to understand the context of these dynamic interchanges among an **invaded, occupied and oppressed people;**

   Instructors need to know and convey awareness to students that **a unique element of this history is the special relationship of sovereignty and treaty rights** that separate American Indian Studies from other realms of race and ethnic studies.
4. **Given that language and culture are inseparable for Native American peoples, language issues need to be discussed** even if an educator lacks the working knowledge of a particular tribal language. Among those issues to be explored are:

   What happened to languages over time;

   The diversity of Native American languages;

   The issue of preservation;

   Teaching about language, its nuances and its importance as an issue within Indian communities (especially the implication for cultural identity and content if languages die out and are irretrievably lost);

   If possible, mastery of an Indian language by an instructor may permit students to acquire this language as part of a second

language component for an undergraduate degree within an American Indian Studies program.

5. **Instructors must be acutely aware of the Oral Tradition** to indigenous cultures and integrate that approach into the curriculum throughout the academic year so that students come to appreciate and respect that tradition. Given this importance, instructors should endeavor:

   To teach and impart knowledge by oral tradition;

   To give greater prominence and awareness to the oral tradition in student evaluation and assessment by augmenting written examination methods with oral ones, thus validating this key value within the Native American cultures;

   To appreciate that oral traditions have their own standards (with sufficient rigor) and assumptions that reflect part of a living culture and adaptation to changing circumstances; the Academy must not automatically place written expression above the spoken word.

6. **Elder epistemology** (ways of knowing, approaches to knowledge, sharing knowledge) **is a keystone in Native American cultures**. Acknowledging the role of tribal elders and incorporating their knowledge whenever possible and appropriate is essential to students in American Indian Studies. Contacting elders and integrating their contributions are the responsibility of the instructor. There are several options to consider as ways to achieve these ends:

   Elders visit campus (either in person, via videotaped presentation, or perhaps simultaneous audio-visual distance connection);

   Students will visit elders and be taught on site by elders;

   For a single visit or limited series of visits;

   For a longer sustained period as part of credit-based curricular requirement (e.g., an independent study);

   Have elders build a personal relationship with a faculty member who can then begin to incorporate the acquired knowledge and experience into a curricular format.

7. **Faculty must maintain a level of active involvement and first-hand knowledge of contemporary Indian peoples, conditions, and issues**. These shall be achieved in a variety of ways including:

   On-going evidence of working with indigenous peoples or communities (urban, rural, reservation);

Creative activities of scholarship, research, publication, public outreach, and other venues traditionally sanctioned by the academic community.

Demonstrated progress in acquiring the requisite skills along with first-hand knowledge, if necessary, as part of these series of proposed standards.

8. **Careful, considerate and accurate implementation of Wisconsin Act 31 at all levels of public instruction remains a central motivation for the establishment of the UW American Indian Studies Consortium and its proposal of these standards**.

   It is required in the statutory language of Act 31 (1989) that each school board, as part of the social studies curriculum, include instruction in the history, culture, and tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands in Wisconsin. This instruction must take place at least twice in the elementary grades and at least once in high school.

   Therefore, **students in the process of state teacher certification**, along with those undergoing re-certification in compliance with new state guidelines, should **expect to benefit from competent faculty in education at all levels** to help them fulfill the spirit and letter of Act 31;

   Campus-specific American Indian Studies programs should assume leadership responsibility in promoting these standards among faculty and offered courses, **advocating fulfillment of Act 31** within the university and the larger community, and finally serving as a resource to aid with implementation of these goals.

These standards recognize that American Indian communities are affected by all public policies that may change over time, and that it is the intent that these standards be flexible enough to respond to such changes. Therefore, this is to be an active and living document, reflecting the living nature of Native Peoples and their cultures, and oral tradition, and permitting a process for review and amendment.

The UW System American Indian Studies Consortium standards require that First Nations Studies courses and other disciplinary courses about First Nations people (i.e. a First Nations Culture course offered in an Anthropology Department) are taught from a First Nations perspective, one that can only be gained from first-hand knowledge and experience that emanates from Elder oral traditional teachers. While rigorous study of the written scholarship in First Nations Studies is necessary, it alone is not

enough. University faculty teaching First Nations content related courses must develop relationships with tribal people in tribal communities not as researchers building a scholarship file, nor as outsiders looking in, but as individuals serving tribal communities through the education of non-indigenous and indigenous students.

The standards can be used to draft faculty job descriptions and used in hiring practices as essential job functions and qualifications, particularly in the field of First Nations Studies. For example, the standard #7a might serve as a job qualification and used in the screening process: "Faculty must provide evidence of on-going work with indigenous peoples or communities (urban, rural, reservation)." Further, the standards can be used in the personnel review process concerning the retention and promotion of faculty teaching First Nations content-related courses. Thus, when building merit and tenure files faculty would demonstrate they are meeting the standards and provide supporting evidence written or oral.

In Wisconsin an e-mail debate circulated on a popular state-wide indigenous education electronic list-service. Controversy centered on whether non-indigenous people should be allowed to teach about indigenous people. The electronic discussion grew very contentious on both sides of the debate. Several indigenous teachers and scholars posted messages asserting that only indigenous people should teach their history, culture, and language. It is easy to understand this position as it is sometimes a reaction to the many scholars and educators who teach and write about First Nations, publishing, building academic careers and personal egos based upon falsehoods, stereotypes, misinformation, ethnocentrism, and gross generalizations about indigenous people. All too often in the discipline individuals such as these are looked to by the dominant society as the primary "authorities" on indigenous people. However, the debate ignored non-indigenous teachers and scholars of First Nations Studies who have long served as educational allies in the classroom and beyond in the struggles of indigenous people. As a member of UW System American Indian Studies Consortium, I entered the electronic debate, posting a copy of the standards document for all to share and stated that the issue of "who" teaches First Nations Studies is not as central as 1) the content and instruction of the First Nations Studies course work and 2) the qualifications of the teacher or instructor. The UWSAISC standards, thus, determine what should be taught and who is qualified to teach, thereby, transcending race-based arguments and building a field of study that is both grounded in the tribal world and rigorous, as the standards are not easily met.

Key to the standards for teaching about First Nations people and culture is the role of the oral tradition and tribal Elder knowledge in the classroom.

When faculty members meet the standards they, in turn, provide this knowledge base to their students. The American Indian Studies program at UW Eau Claire was the first UW campus to incorporate the Consortium standards into their program objectives and learning outcomes for students in the bachelor's degree and minor program. We at UW Green Bay followed UW Eau Claire's lead. Thus, in our program discussion here, we acknowledge our colleagues in the American Indian Studies program at UW Eau Claire for providing other programs, like ours, with a model for incorporating the standards into program objectives and learning outcomes and for allowing us to draw upon their work.

In the First Nations Studies program at UW Green Bay, our academic program objectives directly incorporate the standards, borrowing heavily from the actual language and guidelines of the standards and incorporate learning in the Four Pillars of Tribal Teaching and Learning, organizing content and subject matter into overlapping, nonlinear categories: History (traditional era, contact era, and contemporary era), Sovereignty, Laws and Policies, and Indigenous Philosophy.

UW Green Bay First Nations Studies Program Objectives:

To present First Nations knowledge from an indigenous perspective, placing emphasis on the oral tradition, Elder epistemology, and oral scholars. Thus, information and knowledge reflect traditional (pre-contact) tribal protocols, whereby, stories, images, objects, and artifacts are treated respectfully and not simply used for the convenience of students and faculty.

To teach First Nations Studies core knowledge while reflecting a holistic tribal world view, a world view which includes the concept of sacred or spiritual practice. First Nations Studies core knowledge is organized into Four Pillars of Learning. Courses in FNS reflect the Four Pillars: History (precontact, contact, contemporary periods), Sovereignty, Laws and Policies, Indigenous Philosophy and Intellectual Traditions.

To maintain and promote tribal oral knowledge in the traditional way of learning and interacting by working in tribal communities in the time-honored way of providing service through the use of skills and knowledge including acceptable research, scholarship, and useful publications.

To build and support collaborative relationships between tribal communities with particular emphasis on the nations in the region of northeastern Wisconsin – Oneida, Menominee, and Stockbridge Munsee Band of Mohicans, and Brotherton.

To provide students with oral traditional teaching and learning opportunities in the classroom and within a tribal setting.

In addition, we have defined student objectives in First Nations Studies at UW Green Bay. It is expected that during their academic course of study, students will meet a number of intended goals in our program.

Oral Tradition & Elder Knowledge:

1. Students will work with Elders in a tribal setting.
2. Students will demonstrate oral traditional learning, listening, and remembering skills.
3. Students will demonstrate the tribal values of respect, reciprocity, relationship, and responsibility.
4. Students will take part in and demonstrate an understanding of Elder epistemology.
5. Students will demonstrate protocols for learning and working in a tribal setting.
6. Students will take part in participatory learning and will discuss the form and function of this traditional teaching/learning approach.

History – Precontact, Contact, Contemporary Eras:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of First Nations history in each of the three eras – precontact, contact, and contemporary.
2. Students will demonstrate an in-depth developed historical awareness of the history of one nation in Wisconsin.
3. Students will draw upon the oral tradition in the study of history.
4. Students will use electronic and written sources in their study of history.
5. Students will identify the political, economic, and social status of American Indian nations in each of the 3 historical eras.

Sovereignty:

1. Students will define and understand pre-contact American Indian tribal sovereignty.
2. Students will explain the erosion and persistence of tribal sovereignty after contact.
3. Students will explain the federal trust relationship in the context of treaty-making.

4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of ways to promote and protect tribal sovereignty.
5. Students will understand and demonstrate personal sovereignty.

Laws and Policies:

1. Students will understand and explain the major formal (congressional acts, court cases) and informal policies that make up the body of American Indian law.
2. Students will provide a critical analysis of the major formal and informal policies in #1 above.
3. Students will understand the powers and limitations of contemporary tribal governments.
4. Students will use electronic and written materials in their examination of laws and policies.

Indigenous Philosophy and Intellectual Traditions:

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of Elder epistemology in the oral tradition.
2. Students will learn in a tribal community setting.
3. Students will demonstrate an understanding of American Indian philosophical teachings.
4. Students will demonstrate an awareness of American Indian historical and contemporary intellectuals.
5. Students will demonstrate an understanding of First Nations values and their expression in a cultural context.
6. Students will explain internalized oppression and approaches to decolonization.

Language:

1. Students will identify the major language families on Turtle Island and explain how languages change over time.
2. Students will understand the importance of language and cultural revitalization efforts.
3. Students will demonstrate some acquisition of a First Nations language.
4. Students will engage in language acquisition in a tribal setting.

Unique to learning in our program is the emphasis on the oral tradition and Elder knowledge. In the First Nations Studies major, students earning an undergraduate degree are required to complete a 12 credit **oral emphasis**. We use the term **oral emphasis** for this requirement as it

juxtaposes the University's mandate whereby all graduates must complete 4 writing emphasis courses to practice and improve their writing skills across the curriculum. The writing emphasis requirement underscores the value the academy places upon written communication and western writing traditions over oral communication and oral traditions. In First Nations Studies, we further value the oral communication skills of listening, remembering, and speaking through participation learning.

In the oral emphasis requirement, students choose one of two options. They may take 12 upper level credits of Oneida language in the Oneida Language Project. The Oneida Language Project offers all courses in the Oneida Nation community and are open to all Oneida tribal members to attend. The Oneida Language Project is a collaboration between the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin and the First Nations Studies program at UW Green Bay. Dr. Cliff Abbott, a non-Native linguist of the Oneida language, was hired over thirty years ago on a joint appointment with the University and Oneida Nation of Wisconsin. Since that time Dr. Abbott has worked closely with Elder, fluent speakers in the classroom -- with Elders as language teachers. A second option is the course FNS 399: Elder Epistemology and Oral Tradition, a course designed for students in their senior year of the program. This course recognizes that the foundation for study of native peoples is premised upon tribal Elders who preserve and transmit knowledge. Students who earn a degree major in First Nations Studies must learn not only how to use resources in libraries, but how to study the oral traditions by working with tribal Elders and language speakers. The FNS faculty members evaluate and grade students enrolled in the course, student learning takes place between an individual students and a tribal Elder. Students must learn how to approach elders and to conduct research using oral techniques, skills that are taught in their earlier course work. Then, students will interact and study with tribal Elders to synthesize and acquire oral traditional knowledge. The details of this course are discussed in depth in a different chapter.

Students, staff and faculty at UW Green Bay also have the opportunity to work with tribal Elders on campus. In a collaborative between First Nations Studies and the Education Department, the campus hosts four Elder oral scholars in residence. The Elders are available on campus four days a week during the spring and fall semester in an informal setting. The campus offers a physical space that is welcoming to both students and Elders. The space is windowed and overlooks the campus arboretum, with comfortable, non-institutional furniture - plush sofas, lounge chairs, dinette table and chairs, First Nations Studies educational books and materials, decorated with indigenous art work, and offering an area for coffee, tea and food. Here indigenous and non-indigenous students

gather in the morning with Elders for coffee or meet with the Elders over lunch. It is an opportunity for students, as well as staff and faculty to learn from oral traditional scholars by sitting and visiting with Elders, engaging in story-telling, building relationships with Elders, making connections to the tribal world, and by seeking counsel from the Elders. The Elders meet will all students, staff and faculty on campus but those who tend to seek out the Elders most often are First Nations Studies majors and minors, pre-service teachers needing Act 31 certification, graduate students in the Education program with an emphasis in First Nations Education, and students, staff and faculty of indigenous ancestry. There is always a lot of laughter when the Elders are in! The University provides a small stipend to each of the Elder oral scholars in residence but it is modest. The Elders come to campus not for the stipend but to work with young people for the benefit of future generations.

The opportunity to study with Elders in the academy is rare and unprecedented in the U.S. However, providing students with an opportunity to learn from Elders in tribal communities mirrors the tribal world as the indigenous people of Turtle Island have transmitted knowledge in this way for thousands of years. We recognize that offering students an opportunity to work with Elders one on one for a single semester as a part of course work or bringing Elders to campus to visit with students is contrived and is not the oral tradition in its original form, these approaches are attempts to incorporate indigenous learning and Elder epistemology into the academy.

Miin de baa gaang chi gaa deg[2] or, to measure what or where one is after a course of study, is an important part of the First Nations Studies degree program at UW Green Bay. We are interested in gauging student learning in the classroom and with Elder teachers. As an ongoing evaluation of the program, the faculty employ an embedded assessment, one in which the oral tradition and Elder knowledge are an important part. The objectives for the program are centered on the Four Pillars of knowledge (History, Law & Policy, Sovereignty and Indigenous Philosophy and Intellectual Traditions). The program is assessed in two ways. One, each student in the FNS major is required to complete a non-graded, senior comprehensive oral exit interview or exam upon completion of his/her course of study. The senior comprehensive oral exit interview/exam is given to students in advance so that they may review the questions and reflect upon their answers. It serves as an evaluation mechanism for the program but does not impact a student grades. The faculty created a set of collective assessment questions based on the learning outcomes (see Appendix A). A second method of program evaluation occurs each semester as the First Nations Studies faculty meet as an assessment team to evaluate each graduating seniors and the senior comprehensive oral exams. The faculty assessment

team discusses 1) the extent to which graduating students meets each of the learning outcomes and 2) how the program can improve based on our discussions of the oral exam. Further, from time to time, the First Nations Elders involved in the Oral Concentration also meet as a whole with the faculty to discuss the program outcomes. These discussions will serve as mechanisms for evaluating and improving the program.

The First Nations Studies program at UW Green Bay focuses on the oral tradition and depends on Elders from local First Nations communities to present the cultures of First Nations from the inside, from the perspective of tribal people themselves. This is historic in the U.S. - an academic program in First Nations Studies that presents the perspective of the First Nations themselves, not filtered by the assumptions of a very different culture. The program is also historic in its ability to connect two worlds. Drawing upon the knowledge and expertise of both oral traditional elders and academics with Ph.D.'s, all scholarly specialists in First Nations' cultures, most themselves members of First Nations, the program helps each world understand the other, preserving the integrity and standards of each. The faculty understand and value both the perspectives and importance of oral tradition and the values and expectations of western, written traditions connecting the two, moving them toward mutual understanding without diluting either while centering and promoting those of the tribal world. We offer this collaborative effort and the implementation into our program as a example for others.

In an effort to integrate or fuse First Nations Studies content and teaching standards as those described above into other disciplines, together Rosemary and I developed the fusion model and piloted it at UW Green Bay.

Fusing First Nations knowledge into the Curriculum: A Model for Teacher Education

Native history and culture is a central to every citizen's knowledge base. All citizens need to know about the indigenous people that were here before Europeans, if for no other reason than to understand the rights and relationships that exist between tribal people and the U.S. government. Given the fact that tribal sovereignty and rights retained through treaty negotiations are incorporated into American case law and federal policies, it is imperative that citizens understand why First Nations have rights and a status that differs from that of other citizens. In Wisconsin a lack of knowledge regarding First Nations treaties and sovereignty has led to tremendous and sometimes violent controversy.

The 1970s and 1980s were particularly difficult times for Anishinaabeg (Ojibwe) people in the western Great Lakes region of the United States. In 1974 the Lac Courte Orielles Band of Ojibwe Indians challenged the State of Wisconsin for violating the reserved rights to hunt, fish and gather in areas ceded in the Treaties of 1837, 1842, and 1854. During the decade of federal court litigation that followed, protest organizations threatened and harassed the Anishinaabeg people who exercised their court affirmed rights to spearfish. From this action the State of Wisconsin and the Anishinaabeg saw each other in court over a period of time. The mid to late 1980s brought confrontations at the spear fishing boat landings between non-Indian citizen organizations and Anishinaabeg people. During this time, Anishinaabeg were physically threatened and verbally harassed for practicing their federally court affirmed rights.

The Wisconsin legislature passed a law (s.11819(8) Wis Stats), commonly referred to as Act 31, to address the apparent racial conflict between its Native and non-Native citizens. Thus, the State of Wisconsin recognized that Native history, culture and philosophy are a necessary part of any citizen's learning base. All citizens need to know about the indigenous people that were here before Europeans, if for no other reason than to understand the rights and relationships that exist between tribal people and the U.S. government. Given the fact that tribal sovereignty and rights retained through treaty negotiations are incorporated into U.S. and Canadian case law and federal policies, it is imperative that citizens understand why indigenous nations have rights and a status that differs from that of other citizens.

Wisconsin's Act 31 requires that elementary and secondary students learn about Wisconsin nations at least three times before they graduate from high school. This means, of course, that the teachers within Wisconsin schools impart this information. Thus, the law implies that teachers are informed and prepared to teach appropriately about First Nations, sovereignty, and the historical and legal basis for treaty rights in the state. Unfortunately, no consistent standards or real enforcement provisions or assessment measures were included in the Act 31 policy. Consequently, school districts and universities that graduate k-12 teachers have great discretion regarding how the Act 31 mandate is met. By and large, these decision-makers themselves are unfamiliar with even the most basic, common factual data about indigenous people and tribal history.

Since Act 31 was passed, educators and school districts throughout the state have tried a myriad of ways to implement Act 31. While the UW System continues to lack a formal response to implementing the law, the individual campus responses vary greatly, with some not providing even

the most basic instruction for students in their education departments. While some institutions offer excellent instruction in meeting the Act 31 mandate, they reach only minor numbers of people. As universities continue to graduate teachers, the numbers of practicing teachers that need Act 31 training continues to grow.

This portion of the chapter describes the Fusion Plan, a model created to address this gap in several important ways. It uses an integrative approach to incorporate information about First Nations into the curriculum in a way that reflects a holistic tribal world view. It addresses several sources of resistance because it uses a democratic process characterized both by collaborative effort and individual autonomy to help faculty members develop the necessary expertise. It establishes a flexible process of guided inquiry through which students can build their understanding of salient issues and incorporate these understandings into their lessons as required by Act 31. Because it draws upon indigenous knowledge, it can facilitate the development of rich collaborative relationships with community members. Although it was developed from this specific context, it provides a systematic solution that may be replicated at any university around any diversity issue.

The Fusion Plan is Created

In 2002 the University of Wisconsin System First Nations Consortium (UWAIC) decided to pursue a systemic plan to address Act 31. This followed its acceptance of a set of standards for teaching First Nations Studies in the UW system. Within this set of standards, the UWAIC requires that the implementation of Wisconsin Act 31 at all levels of public instruction. At the request of the UWAIC, First Nations Studies faculty at UW Green Bay created the Fusion model for implementing Act 31 within the UW system and presented the model to UWAIC in the fall of 2003.

The Fusion plan developed at UW Green Bay draws upon First Nations Studies core knowledge (content) and utilizes traditional tribal teaching and learning methods (context). There are five distinct implementation phases within the plan and 2 levels of student competency. The goal of the plan is to fuse First Nations Studies core knowledge, organized into Four Pillars of learning, into existing education department courses. The Four Pillars of learning reflect information necessary to meet Act 31 and, further, provides a foundation for incorporating First Nations Studies core knowledge into other existing disciplines. It is possible to adjust or modify the Pillars to meet the specific individual needs of learners and teachers across regions. Each of the phases are discussed in the following sections:

Fusion Phase One:

In phase one, First Nations Studies (FNS) and Education (ED) faculty meet to discuss, engage in dialogue, and agree upon on the goals, activities and design of their plan for meeting Act 31. In this important activity time is a major consideration, in that, faculty must find time to prepare and read materials, and time to meet and discuss the information. Discussion is an important part of the process, in that it is a choice to teach this way, rather than requiring the FNS faculty to lecture to the ED faculty. Discussion allows for partnerships to build with each participant taking time to practice respect and reciprocity.

An important aspect of this phase is the emphasis on personal sovereignty -- a core value within the tribal world view, whereby, individual choice is practiced. Thus, it is critical that each institution implementing their own plan to fuse explore the individual ideas, needs, preferences, and choices of each of the participating faculty. In other words, the exact nature of fusion will vary by campus and the UW Green Bay plan discussed here is intended to provide general guidelines and practical experience for others to consider.

What is the Fusion Plan?

The Fusion Plan features an efficient, effective and institutionalized way of imparting selected information through the strategy of incorporating of "fusing" First Nations Studies (FNS) core knowledge into existing undergraduate education courses. The FNS knowledge is organized into four pillars of learning which provides a base from which education faculty draw upon for inclusion into their curriculum. The education professors are instrumental to the process in that they first learn the information, fuse it into their curriculum, and teach it to their students. Thus, First Nations knowledge becomes part of the basic curriculum for all students in the education program.

The education faculty are crucial players in the Fusion plan in that they first learn First Nations Studies core knowledge and, then, fuse it into their existing curriculum. Students in the education department, in turn, learn from these faculty members the essential knowledge for teaching in the elementary and secondary schools and First Nations Studies knowledge becomes part of that basic stream of information. It is then possible to incorporate this information into elementary and secondary students' normal educational environment in an efficient way.

The model features an effective and institutionalized way of imparting First Nations knowledge through the creation and use of Four Pillars of Learning which provide a core resource base from which education faculty

self-select reading and learning materials for fusing into their classes. In this process the education department (ED) faculty extend their pedagogical knowledge through interactive discussion with FNS faculty, after which the two groups agree to how to fuse new knowledge into ED classes. These techniques allow relationships to develop and grow between FNS and ED faculty through a culturally based teaching method embedded within the Fusion process.

Design of the Fusion Plan:

Further, within phase one, it is imperative that the Fusion plan or process take place in enough ED courses in order to reach all (100%) of the ED students. Thus, it is necessary to include as many ED faculty members as possible. However, at UW Green Bay we met 100% of the students with a minimum of two faculty. In phase one, then, ED faculty participants are identified based reaching all ED students, FNS faculty provide general information to ED faculty, and both faculty agree to a general time line.

Many states, like the State of Wisconsin, have an First Nations Studies consultant in the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The First Nations Studies Consultant at the Wisconsin DPI has state-wide Act 31 oversight responsibilities. Thus, in this Fusion model, efforts were made at every phase to include the DPI consultant in the project. The primary intent of including the DPI consultant is to ensure that Fusion practices meet Act 31 state certification for teachers. However, in our Fusion experience, the DPI consultant played an important role beyond certification by adding crucial materials and readings to the Four Pillars materials list, providing much needed funds to purchase books, and, by serving as an expert in FNS core knowledge during the group discussion between FNS and ED faculty.

Fusion Phase Two:

In Phase Two, FNS faculty members meet with one another to discuss a possible course of study for training the ED faculty in First Nations Studies core knowledge. This course of study is founded upon the Four Pillars of learning (described in detail below), and contains both written and oral learning materials that are consistent with Tribal ways. Thus, the FNS faculty create a list of written materials from their discipline. This list will naturally reflect the experience, expertise, and biases of the FNS faculty that assemble it. And oral traditional knowledge gathered from oral traditional teachers reflects their own individual tribal traditional experiences, beliefs, and life ways. Thus, Tribal, regional, as well as, individual differences are noted and emphasized in the creation of a course of study and, moreover, in the replication of this model elsewhere.

At the end of this phase, the FNS faculty gather the books, articles, etc. on the Four Pillars reading list for the first meeting with ED faculty. An sample of our Four Pillars reading list is found in Appendix B. Modifications including additions and omissions to the reading list are expected throughout the discussion phase and will reflect individual and group needs and interests. For example, it may be necessary to provide background information on the reality of the First Nations world and its relationship to the dominant culture. An adjustment to the reading list, therefore, might include adding several texts that address issues related to transforming knowledge to reflect these realities.

Fusion Phase Three:

In Phase Three, FNS and ED faculty meet to interactively teach and learn the materials assembled, visit and learn from Elder teachers, and discuss curriculum appropriate for fusion into ED courses. The written and oral materials assembled by the FNS faculty provide the content for teaching the ED faculty. However, unique to this model is the cultural context in which the teaching and learning takes place. Through an interactive teaching and learning process, the faculty engage in **participation learning,** whereby, each participant learns from one another on a level playing field. The interactive participation learning process with its emphasis on Tribal Elder epistemology models the traditional Tribal values of respect, reciprocity, and relationship. Thus, as this teaching process is embedded within traditional First Nations pedagogy it provides a cultural context for learning.

In this phase, FNS faculty also research, design, and compile cultural competency units for use with ED students in the second level of this plan. These units are shared with the ED faculty and, through discussion, changes are made to the units before they are finalized. There are six proposed competency units for use in instruction at the second level of the plan (described in depth below). The time involved in phase three is very important, in that, it contains the actual teaching of an First Nations Studies knowledge base embedded within a living cultural context or foundation. Faculty must devote two or three hours per month to this effort, which means that it may take as long as a year to work through phase three. The time spent in phase three will decrease if participating faculty receive release time from their teaching responsibilities.

Fusion Phase Four:

In Phase Four, FNS faculty, consults with the ED faculty, refine and implement their design into the ED curriculum by working with ED faculty, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI), and other appropriate partners including the states with similar policies to Wisconsin, for example,

Montana, Maine, and others, that may have First Nations Studies requirements for k-12 schools.

This is a crucial phase, particularly because First Nations professionals in teaching colleges and universities throughout the nation are interested in any model that educates incipient teachers successfully and with a real commitment from education faculty members. Further, during this phase First Nations tribal communities throughout the state and region can be approached for assistance, support and interest in the Fusion model.

Fusion Phase Five:

This phase is concerned with promoting large-scale systemic change. After completing a pilot Fusion model, like ours at UW Green Bay, efforts to replicate the model at other teaching institutions within the state occurs. In Wisconsin, it is possible to address Act 31 systemically throughout the University of Wisconsin System, with the help, assistance and consultation with other FNS and ED faculty perhaps. It makes sense to utilize any organized forces available. In order to create a national Fusion model, other states with similar policies and people of good will might form partnerships to change their teaching institutions.

Most importantly, in Phase Five evaluation research is conducted including developing, measuring and comparing Act 31 learner outcomes for k-12 students in the state in two groups -- those who received instruction from a UW Green Bay graduate of fused education courses and those who did not. Phase Five also includes formative evaluation efforts in other states with similar public policies and where assistance is needed.

Committed Faculty from other Disciplines

As the Fusion plan between FNS and ED progressed through each of the phases, faculty from other disciplines in the university heard about our work together and indicated an interest in learning FNS core knowledge in an effort to fuse this information into their own classes. Over time, we created additional Fusion groups with faculty from history and social work. While there is no state mandate that requires First Nations Studies in these programs, the faculty from these disciplines involved in Fusion were committed to teaching their students First Nations history, culture, and world view. The historians that joined the Fusion plan both taught U.S. history and were dedicated to incorporating First Nations history into their curriculum. The social work faculty as a whole are committed to diversity and working with tribal students and communities. Thus, for these faculty members, Fusion was not compelled by a legal requirement, it was necessary to teach classes that included First Nations content and world view.

The Four Pillars of Tribal Teaching and Learning:

As described above in Phase Two of this five phase Fusion plan, it is necessary for First Nations Studies faculty to design a course of study for training faculty in FNS core knowledge. In this Fusion plan, the course of study is designed and organized into four categories reflecting the First Nations communities in Wisconsin but shared by First Nations throughout the U.S. These four categories, named the "Four Pillars of Tribal Teaching and Learning are described here:

Pillar 1. History: Indigenous traditional, contact and contemporary eras

This category or pillar offers historical information about First Nations in three distinct eras: the traditional (before contact) era, the era of changes experienced by tribal communities as a result of European and American contact and invasion, and the contemporary or present era of First Nations tribal communities. The purpose of this pillar is to provide learners with an understanding of traditional First Nations cultures and communities as they existed prior to mass Euro-American influence. Further, learners will understand the impact of contact upon those traditional communities, gaining an appreciation for the unique differences and identities maintained by First Nations today.

Pillar 2. Laws and Policies

This category or pillar provides learners with an understanding of the public policies and laws that apply to First Nations people, Tribal governments, and First Nations lands. Within this pillar, it is possible to emphasize state and Tribal laws and policies in order to provide a more tailored approach to teaching that takes into account the region that which students work, live, and interact within. For example, in the western Great Lakes, it is necessary to focus on the legal history of Anishinaabeg hunting and fishing rights retained in the treaties of 1854 and 1857– rights affirmed by the federal courts in the past two decades. By contrast, in other regions this particular emphasis would have far less relevance and, therefore, other local laws or policies could be examined. For example, students residing in the west and southwest U.S. could focus on an examination of the riparian (water) rights of First Nations in those regions and federal court affirmation of those rights.

Pillar 3. First Nations Sovereignty

Pillar 3 is distinct from Pillar 2 in that its emphasis on understanding First Nations sovereignty and the authorities of self-government and self-regulation. Prior to Euro-American contact, First Nations were sovereign bodies with unique and sometimes highly complex governing systems. It

is central for learners to understand the basic authorities and structures of traditional tribal governance and the ways in which these systems were eroded by Euro-American incursion and the application of state and federal laws Further, this pillar provides learners with an understanding of the struggles of First Nations in maintaining and restoring their sovereign status through the hard work of Tribal organizations in adding to case law.

Pillar 4. Indigenous Philosophy

Pillar four provides an understanding of First Nations world view and intellectual thought as it is rooted in the knowledge of Tribal Elders and reflects the thinking and thought processes of tribal ancestors (i.e., Elder epistemology). An examination of indigenous intellectual world view and tribal philosophy offers learners a comprehensive understanding of the values, behaviors, and formative ideas within that community. As Cajete explains, "In its guiding vision a culture isolates a set of ideas that guide and form the learning processes inherent in its educational systems. In turn, these ideas reflect what the culture values as the most important qualities, behaviors, and value structures to instill in its members (25)". Thus, an understanding of the formative structure of the Tribal world is absolutely necessary in the pedagogical base of one who strives to embed First Nations knowledge into Western knowledge.

Fusion: Educating Students (Level 1) and Teachers (Level 2)

Once the education faculty have fused FNS core knowledge into their existing classes we reach one, basic level of educational need, we'll call this Level One. Here, at Level One, every student in the education department takes courses with that are fused with FNS content, taught by the ED faculty that worked through the Fusion plan with the FNS faculty. One example of a FNS/ED Fusion might include students in an ED course on children's literature in the classroom will use the 4th grade text *Indian Nations of Wisconsin* by Patty Loew (2002).

Thus, when every graduating student from the education program leaves the academy, they enter the school districts prepared to meet the mandates of Act 31.

However, there is a second educational need and that is to reach all the teachers how have already graduated from the academy (prior to Fusion) and are already teaching in k-12 classrooms. In the Fusion plan, we have designed a second level to reach those teachers already outside of the academy. We call this level of the plan Level Two. At Level Two, individual ED students can elect to concentrate their ED degree in First Nations Studies, in other words, they can earn a degree minor in First Nations

Studies. When these students graduate with a major in education and a minor in First Nations Studies can become Act 31 Teacher Trainers. In other words, they are prepared to train those k-12 teachers who are already in the school districts. These Act 31 Teacher Trainers (who elected to move on to Level Two) will serve as Act 31 "experts" throughout the state. Thus, Level Two provides a way to educate teachers and administrators who were working in their classrooms without sufficient FNS knowledge and unable to meet the spirit and intent of Act 31.

Cultural Competencies for ED Students at Level Two

First Nations Elder epistemology with its emphasis on oral traditional teaching and learning skills is an important intellectual construct, yet, it is neither practiced or even deemed relevant in the academic community and institutions of higher learning. Instead, primary emphasis is placed on the written word and upon reading and writing requirements. It is regrettable that the forms and structures of First Nations Tribal life and world view are overlooked, for when they are incorporated into existing structures, the academy is richer, more varied and distinct, as it reflects the contributions of the indigenous cultures of Turtle Island (North America). Elder epistemology provides a basis for First Nations cultural competencies because it reflects the holistic world view of traditional First Nations people. Elements of this world view are embedded in the values and practices of contemporary, 21st century First Nations people. Elder teachers customarily pass along oral traditional knowledge in a number of ways including using the indigenous Tribal language as a teaching/learning medium and, also, through other traditional ways that are customary to the community. Cultural competencies, as described elsewhere in this book, are provided through both written and non-written means by First Nations educators. The instructional techniques are based on the counsel, advice, and observation of teaching Elders through the process of participation learning. When possible, Elder teachers and their oral instruction are used in the teaching process.

An important part of the instruction is the specific nature of the cultural competency. Christensen's seven competencies aid in understanding First Nations cultures. Frequently when cultural diversity is included in higher education, broad based information is used to teach about difference. However, the cultural competencies units developed in the Fusion plan go beyond broad based instruction and add specificity. For example, it is a broad stroke to speak of 'respect,' within First Nations communities, but it is specific to provide and demonstrate behaviors that show or mean respect in Native society. Participants observe, practice, and discuss a form of listening, learning, and remembering practiced in Tribal oral traditional

communities. Dialogue and discussion throughout this process are not only encouraged but are, in fact, necessary.

The behaviors that accompany oral traditional routines, those of listening, remembering, dialogue, and discussion, are learned through and practiced in participation learning. This form of learning draws upon the tribal concepts and behaviors of respect, reciprocity, and relationship. Thus, participants engaging in the cultural competencies articulate oral forms and practice skills and behaviors that emanate from the teachings of traditional tribal Elders and reflect intellectual concepts that comprise the tribal canon. Materials, texts, and resources in the cultural competencies include units that can be used in a group or in an individual process and, further, provide guidelines for group processes and skills needed for building consensus.

Fusion Plan Resources

The greatest resource needed by the Fusion participants is time. The faculty need time to meet as a group. Moreover, the faculty members need time to meet with tribal Elders, to read and reflect upon the materials on the Four Pillars reading list, keep written journals of their progress in the Fusion process, and develop fused curriculum in their existing classes. We found that it can take several years for faculty to gain the knowledge needed in order to fuse FNS into their classes. Some faculty were eager and dedicated and started fusing within the first year of working with the FNS faculty and meeting with Elders. For others, the process takes much longer and even after a number of years of working with FNS faculty some have not taken steps to fuse the learning into their classes.

The FNS faculty also need time to engage in the following: research, design, and write the cultural competencies, obtain oral resources, assist with the faculty with Fusion details and disseminate information about the plan at the state and national levels.

The Fusion plan at UW Green Bay piloted without monetary funding or course release. The FNS faculty shared their personal copies of articles and books. Five years into the Fusion project, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction purchased 20 different book titles and video resources to support the Fusion efforts. Small grants were written to the University of Wisconsin System to fund the Elder teaching gatherings, these monies provided stipends to the Elder teachers and paid for lodging and meals for all faculty and the Elder teachers.

Finding Balance: Fusion Plan Successes and Struggles

Indigenous world views are premised upon notions of balance whereby we believe the positive aspects of the universe equal the negative aspects. Our

Elders remind us to search for the balance in all things. Thus, an explanation of the Fusion project is not complete without a discussion of the successes and struggles encountered along the way. We interviewed university faculty involved in Fusion in Phase Three to hear testimony of their personal experiences and journeys.

Fusion is not a simple process for participants and we experienced a number of difficulties throughout our Fusion efforts. As mentioned previously, time is a significant factor in the success of this plan. It can take great deal of time for individual faculty to develop a solid knowledge base in First Nations Studies before Fusion into the curriculum. Over time, we lost faculty along the way as they left the Fusion group before their classes were fused. Thus, for some, the priority to fuse waned and time requirements became too great. A few other faculty members dropped out along the way when Fusion did not meet their individual teaching or research agenda. For example, one Euro-American faculty member joined the group and candidly stated that she wanted to write and do research **about** First Nations and was hoping to get insight from the FNS faculty. At our first Fusion meeting with her, we lent her a copy of **So You Want to Write About American Indians?** by Devon Abbott Mihesuah (2005), a book that explicitly discusses the exploitation and appropriation of indigenous culture by Euro-American scholars. Shortly after reading the book, the faculty member dropped out of the Fusion project but, to date, has not published any work **about** First Nations. We also lost a member of the Fusion project when she retired from teaching.

It is central to note that the faculty working to fuse their classes all undertake a personal journey in this process. At times, this process is emotionally painful as they reexamine their own white privilege and experience feelings of shame and guilt when learning the details of the history of genocide experienced by indigenous people. Often faculty were confronted with the ways in which they were unknowingly perpetuating racism in their classrooms, in their research, and in their personal lives. While some met this challenge and persisted, others dropped out. Some of our most difficult Fusion experiences occurred around the topic of U.S. and Canadian boarding school and residential school atrocities. These discussions were difficult for everyone as some of the Elder teachers to the Fusion group were boarding school survivors who sometimes spoke candidly about their own unimaginable traumas and lived experiences. Thus, the Fusion faculty undergo a process of grief and critical self-reflection and, for some, this process is too difficult. Faculty left the Fusion group because it was easier to walk away than to continue to address these forces internally. One faculty member described the Fusion experience in this way:

> …to deal with these issues is such a journey. Sometimes I think that we find people that aren't in a place on that journey where they can listen and if you invite them to join, they will not be there. It asks for a lot and it took a lot of responsibility from me. I could see where someone might not be that position… There is a level of soul searching that is required if you are going to deal with these issues in more than a superficial way. It asks someone to take on a really personal journey and some people haven't come to the realization that this is required of them.

While there is struggle in the Fusion process, for those faculty members who persevere through the difficulties and internal challenges, the rewards are many as there is balance in all things. We interviewed faculty to find out why they initially joined the Fusion project and, moreover, why they stayed committed over time as there are no institutional incentives for taking on this additional work. All faculty who joined Fusion and continued to work with the project did so because, as educators, they felt it was a imperative to include First Nations in their curriculum. One faculty member saw it as the right thing to do as an educator.

> I see Fusion as such a huge resource that it would be irresponsible and unethical of me not to…when I think about how it has enriched my teaching and knowledge base and ability to make better connections with students and create better lives for their clients. In such a profession that puts forth this message of social justice and cultural competence… the more I learn, the more I can share with my students the more they can help improve the lives of clients, the more just our society will be. So it would seem wrong not to do Fusion.

Similarly, another faculty member saw Fusion as a way to address a lack of knowledge about First Nations, "I grew up here and did not even known where the Oneida reservation was… even before Fusion, I was thinking I needed to confront my own ignorance and begin to learn. I find I learn best from other people rather than going off into a corner and reading. So my tendency would be to find some opportunities to learn from other people." Another faculty member committed to Fusion because of dissatisfaction with the limited inclusion of First Nations in the teaching of U.S. history as a discipline, "I realized that Indians were there but only in a limited fashion, as ineffectual defenders of their land… they were fighting and they were losing and that was it. I didn't have a sense in those courses of how Indians were actually shaping the history that was unfolding on the North American continent. My graduate training didn't really prepare

me to do that… I knew enough to know that what I was doing was inadequate. I knew I needed to learn more."

Faculty involved in the Fusion project were asked how they actually fused First Nations core knowledge from the Four Pillars into their existing classes. Each provided excellent examples. One of the Fusion faculty teaching provided an example of how the tribal value or world view of personal sovereignty is fused into his U.S. History courses:

> I probably heard one of our Elder teachers in Fusion say "It's important to give students choice." That is a paraphrase but I heard it a million times and that started to sink in and it was being practiced right in our Fusion work. Now I try to give choices more often when it comes to assignments that my students are doing. I am convinced that it is important and that it is effective pedagogically because it means students can pursue something that interests them… It is not a revolutionary principle…I will give students options on the midterm essay and they can pick from a few things. For example, paragraph one, option A, there are different dates and topics they can write about. The heart of this idea came out of Fusion.

Another example of curriculum comes from this fused U.S. History course:

> This example is small but it has substance. I just put together a revised course packet for my Intro to U.S. History course up to 1865. It is supposed to start in 1607 but I start way before then. I just added a primary document and it is not an Indian source but it is a U.S. Supreme Court opinion. I made an edited version of Chief Justice John Marshall's opinion in Johnson V. McIntosh. My students will read it when we are talking about Indian removal to get back to how the powers at be in the United States are justifying Indian policy. This fall I will have 130 students reading this document.

Almost all faculty members started fusing their courses in some way, shortly after they started the Fusion project. One faculty member described how she started fusing her social work classes:

> I started using First Nations material in my classes right from the get go. I would say that the year after I started with the Fusion group I chose pieces from Rupert Ross' *Dancing with a Ghost* immediately as soon as I could fit it into the syllabus… I would never have picked Ross on my own because it was out of my field. Now I use a couple of different sources of information on First Nations

> written by social work practitioners, tribal members and Rupert Ross. I started to be able to talk with students about what I was learning in Fusion and how I was interpreting issues and how some of it was difficult.

Faculty who committed themselves to Fusion reflected back on how their efforts to learn First Nations core knowledge and fuse it into their existing classes impacted them personally as teachers and as individuals.

> Fusion has been an extraordinary and invaluable experience. Today in the humanities we have so many academics driven to publish, attend conferences, build their careers. As a result, this impacts how we educate students. Liberal education does not prepare students to live in the world. It does not prepare students for community engagement and service to community. We are not preparing students to be humanists. But Fusion impacts the whole person because learning is not compartmentalized and isolated. Learning is not separate from socializing and social values. Learning in Fusion is normal and natural and reflects the tribal world. Fusion taught me social values. It provided me more support for a liberal education than the entire rest of the university.

Another faculty member shared this about how Fusion impacted their learning:

> I believe that learning more about groups that I am not a member of helps me better interact and be with people and understand social issues with different perspectives. So the more I learn about First Nations groups and other racial and ethnic groups, the more I connect and become a better teacher and citizen.

All of our colleagues in the Fusion project felt the experience impacted them positively in a very personal way. One colleague summed up his experience, "Fusion has been a profound experience for me. Intellectually I experienced tribal culture in a radically different way. As a person, it offered me interpersonal support."

When Rosemary retired from UW Green Bay, I was uncertain about what would happen to the fusion group. I wondered if the group would go their separate ways with our Elder teacher gone. Certainly the faculty were well on their way to fusing their classes with FNS core knowledge. However, the faculty members in the group came to me and insisted that the fusion project continue on after Rosemary's retirement. In the fall of 2010, members of the fusion group and I started presenting our work together at national disciplinary and interdisciplinary meetings as a model for others. Somewhat reluctantly I stepped into the leadership position in the fusion

group. I was reluctant because we can never replace our Elder teachers but it is required of the younger generation to take up where the Elders leave off. Today fusion has not only continued, it expanded to include new faculty members providing from First Nations Studies serving as teachers and new faculty seeking to fuse FNS into their classes in psychology, human biology, women and gender studies, and social change and development. Our colleagues in history and social work have stayed in the fusion group to continue their learning and now serve as mentors and to the new members of the group. In our continued work together the fusion plan models the cyclic nature of indigenous teaching and learning.

Endnotes

1 For lack of a better term, I use "spiritual person" to refer to tribal people who have the gifts and abilities of healing others and bringing them back into physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual balance. I resist the terms "medicine man/woman" or "shaman" for the stereotypical connotations associated with it in the dominant culture.

2 This phrase was created by Ojibwe language speaker Lee Staples (St. Croix Anishinabe) through discussion with Rosemary Christensen about the evaluation process.

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Memory Circle and Circle of Learning

Deborah Dillon and Russell C. Reuter

Introduction

The circle has no perceived beginning or end. As with knowledge, we have no way of knowing where it begins or when it ends for any living being. Some say knowledge is taught; still others say it's innate; for us, the most profound is that knowledge is a continuum handed down in history through oral traditions utilizing the natural world as our teacher.

In the late summer of 2006, a rousing discussion took place between us. At that time, Deb was a second grade teacher with the Milwaukee Public Schools and Russell was about to start his final year of study in the First Nations Department at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay. This discussion centered on the non-linear teaching methods of the Anishinaabeg as used by Dr. Rosemary Ackley Christensen, a professor that Russell had during the majority of his coursework at the university. It became the catalyst and foundation toward a different and new approach for Deb's second grade students. Although little information was given to Deb about the use of this model or its theories, she decided to institute Memory Circle and Circle of Learning in her classroom through oral coaching only, with no hands-on or direct contact to her students. It was only later that she was given published articles and books to extend her circle of knowledge, and then, only when she asked and was ready to learn. Thus, as Russell was taught, he practiced allowing Deb the personal sovereignty to pick and choose what she would like to read and in what order, knowing it would all work in orchestration due to the teaching elements of the circle. In this case, Deb was no different than the child learner; steeped in linear educational practices, therefore making all of the decisions for her students. Obviously, this was a mere shot in the dark for her and a leap

to move even further outside the box. After much discussion between us, it was decided that the first piece of this model, Memory Circle, would be implemented in the classroom beginning on the first day of school. The use of this Circle, though not comfortable to the students initially, proved to be a familiar and enjoyable start to the day. It provided a focus and review for what lay ahead. By sharing memories of lessons learned from the day before, students appeared to increase their cognitive development and create a strong classroom community of learners unlike those of their counterparts.

Almost simultaneously, Russell began preparing for a final twelve-credit seminar within the First Nations Studies interdisciplinary degree. As with many undergraduate disciplines the academy affords each department the capability to develop criteria to finish a degree. The emphasis of the First Nations Studies program is embedded in traditional education, oral history and the cultural values of sovereignty and non-interference. First Nations Studies Oral Concentration is a course that fuses cultural worldviews while placing the Indigenous approach to balance and equality on sovereign choice. At the root of the final journey in First Nations Studies is the conjoining of Elder epistemology, or Elder guidance, where the Elder becomes the bridge or conduit toward breaking apart the cultural gap. This allows for better understanding on behalf of the students. Further, the students learn a different sense of responsibility toward the convergence of the dominant and indigenous worldviews. The insidious wall created by colonial imperialism, modern colonizing forces and racially oppressive otherness has ended with the decay of indigenous traditional values, language, the sacred, and First Nation communities. The First Nations Studies Oral Concentration is a time to see the rebuilding between dominant society and a slowly ebbing decay toward indigenous traditions of teaching and learning.

Thus began the marriage of ideas between Deb, a Milwaukee educator, and Russell, a University of Wisconsin Green Bay undergraduate. Because Russell had no formal training as an educator and Deb did not have any background in First Nations, initially this merger was very frustrating. Adding to this was the fact that Deb never saw this teaching model in action and was coached through this process by someone who never worked in a second grade classroom. After about four months of implementing Memory Circle without much success, Russell came to the classroom and began working in partnership with Deb. This was the point where the other piece to this model, Circle of Learning, was introduced to the students. Circle of Learning was the missing piece that completed the process for the students and elevated Memory Circle to new heights. The diverse backgrounds that we brought to the table proved to be a great asset. Since Russell was not steeped in all of the educational jargon that teachers are engrossed in, he

was able to come to the table without preconceived ideas of what second graders were capable of accomplishing. Deb was presented with a fresh set of untainted eyes in which to view what might be possible when students could present information in an oral format and work together as a community of learners. Through the values of respect and reciprocity, we were able to transform the classroom community and give her students a new way to learn, be assessed, and support one another.

The primary catalyst toward involvement in orally based Indigenous education was the strong emphasis on breaking down the achievement gap, not only among racial minority students, but, too, the cognitive gap found in every classroom. Memory Circle and Circle of Learning, as documented and practiced by Anishinaabe teacher Dr. Rosemary Christensen, was one way to bring Deb's students together and allow them to achieve on an equal playing field. Therefore, instituting the tenets of another piece to the circle method involved the teaching and implementation of the three R's plus one: Respect, Relationship, Reciprocity and Responsibility. This was done through Circle of Learning.

Our students are taught to be individuals making decisive delineation about those they believe deserve respect. Natural environment for the individual is self-serving and to be cared for only if there is a multi-fold benefit. Due to the dominant worldview the individual does not need or see a connection among all living things due to his/her inherent dominion. Finally, everything must fit into a framework or mainline educational construct in order for real education to take place.

Students are also taught early in the educational process to conform to a controlled linear agenda utilizing standard tools such as: desks in straight lines, individualism as the only vehicle to success, and an unconscious understanding of separatism paralleling social Darwinism. Singular accountability based on individual performance with very little student to student partnership in learning results in an unfortunate lack of community sensitivity with little student integration. Conversely, within the Indigenous identity there are different sets of values requiring concern for family to the outer world and to all living things because **ALL** things are related. Upon further examination you will also find that each human being is subjected to harmony as a result of blending, not rejecting, subsequently treating Mother Earth and living things with reverence and respect even if there is no benefit to the individual, and understanding that all living things are related. Finally, according to Yazzie (2008), there are seven keys setting the indigenous and dominant worldviews apart:

- participation
- general consensus among all living in the circle

- reciprocity
- accountability
- rationality
- equality
- trust in one another.

Memory Circle is the model technique, still under adjustments, for partnership learning by both the educator and the students. It might be a place to know if Deb has been successful in delivering concepts and knowledge, and a place to acknowledge student digestion through the laid out curriculum repast of Memory Circle. The students have the opportunity to use their minds in a completely different manner interacting in both a verbal and nonverbal way. Thereby, taking the concrete into the abstract, thus allowing student driven creativity through verbal and oral education and doing so on their own terms. Circle of Learning, on the other hand, is the place to incorporate the tenets of Memory Circle. Social issues such as bullying and community building can be investigated in a non-threatening way through the use of Respect, Relationship, Reciprocity and Responsibility. This in turn expands understanding of tribal oral traditions, student organic surroundings and social issues brought to the student on a personal and classroom level.

Although we believe there is little attention given to the health of the classroom community in mainstream education, we have given careful consideration to this in order to create an environment for better balance.

It is important to understand that we are simply practitioners of Memory Circle and Circle of Learning. Memory Circle and Circle of Learning are an approach within the bigger Circle, where all living things are connected. Hence, we leave you with greater questions as we move forward. These questions center on behalf of the students we are dealing with. We want you to think about how these questions may apply to your classroom community. Questions for thought: From what parts of your educational background do you base success? Is it through oral or written means? How would you assess long-term goals and accountability when using oral forms in the classroom? Is education best examined through the building spirals of the circle, continually spinning through time, or is finding balance between linear and non-linear methods the best answer?

Memory Circle

Memory Circle in its most fundamental form gives students socioeconomic, racial and academic equality, while at the same time giving them a level playing field to participate as individuals or as members of a group. Memory Circle and Circle of Learning, while in their early stages of imple-

mentation, have allowed the achievement gap to seemingly disappear, thereby giving students of every cognitive level the tools to achieve regardless of academic placement or development. The circles utilize areas of the brain often not explored by mainstream educational processes; they offer different avenues to heighten a child's learning. Most educators are of the belief that instruction must always come from them because they are the ones in charge. Given the chance, students have much to offer in the way of instruction and are sometimes able to reach their peers more readily than teachers are. While this aspect of the method is review based, the reality is that it is engaged, active instruction time from a non-linear framework. The instruction in this case does not come from the educator, but rather, the students.

Memory Circle is a process that is implemented in the classroom everyday. It involves the daily articulation of a memory based on some educational concept taught in the classroom the day before. Students are seated in a circle so that everyone is able to see everyone else. They are then asked to think about something they learned from the day before. If it happens to be a Monday, it may be something from the entire week before. How far back in the memory an educator chooses to go will depend on the age of the children and how long they have been using this process with their students. Once they have been given an appropriate amount of time to think of a memory a student is selected to begin. This can be done in many ways and is up to the educator as to how best to start. Children are then given an opportunity to state, in their own words, a memory from the previous day. The rest of the group sits quietly and listens as their peer gives a memory. This is not time for discussion. All students will get a chance to talk when it is their turn. Being able to sit and quietly listen is a very valuable skill that children will learn through this method. After the child has given his/her memory, he/she chooses which way the circle will flow, to the right or the left. At this time memories are given, one after another, until it gets back to the beginning. Children are allowed to pass the first time around the circle. If no-one has chosen to pass the first time around, Memory Circle is over. However, if anyone passed on the first round it will be necessary to go back and only hear from those students. There is no option to pass the second time around. The expectation is that each child will give a memory every day. Sometimes it will be necessary to have a certain amount of wait time. This can be uncomfortable at first, but through the respect of time, all will be able to perform the task. Do not be afraid to spend some time waiting, the results will be astounding.

After the students become comfortable with the process another dimension is added to the circle. When students choose to talk about a memory that has already been articulated, they must cite the person(s) who has/

have already spoken about this. They must add-on to the memory; they may not just repeat something that has already been said. Constant repetition is one of the key factors to this method that form the building blocks for long-term storage and retrieval in the brain. This is also a clear indicator as to how well students are listening to one another.

In an ideal situation, Memory Circle should commence on the first day of school and be implemented on a daily basis after that. Setting the tone by beginning at the very start of the school year allows this process to deepen at a more rapid rate, and creates consistency for the students who quickly become used to this method and look forward to it. While Memory Circle can be done any time during the day, we believe that it is best to start the day in the circle. This allows students to focus on the day ahead while reviewing the concepts taught previously and instilling them into long term memory.

Memory Circle, while appearing on the surface to be a very simple process, is in actuality very complex and builds upon itself to move students from a very concrete way of thinking into the abstract realm. As the process unfolds, layers are added, one at a time, until students become so adept at this that they can run the circle themselves. Initially, students are seated in a circle along with the teacher. In order to gain equality in the circle so that all become teachers and learners, everyone must be seated at the same level. This eliminates the typical hierarchical and linear structures used almost exclusively in classrooms throughout the country today. By placing oneself at the same level as the students, an atmosphere of mutual learning and teaching by all is created. In a kindergarten classroom this might be on the floor, where an upper elementary classroom may use chairs. Students are taught early in this process that when they are giving their memory they are the teacher and everyone else, including the teacher, is a learner. They buy into this idea and take on this task with a new level of seriousness. They must also remain quiet and still as others are thinking and talking. Students have a difficult time initially sitting still and practicing good listening behaviors, but, as with all things, they are able to do this very well after a short time. As was previously mentioned, students are allowed to pass the first time around the circle. This is done for several reasons. Some children just take longer to conjure up a memory. Others may have been absent. Through the use of visual clues that may be posted in the room, such as bulletin boards or information that may have been left on the board from a previous lesson, students will be able to come up with a memory. Others will often have their memories jogged from listening to their peers as they speak.

Memory Circle appears to have a pattern to its progression. In the first weeks of Memory Circle, students will spend the majority of the time trying

to figure out what is expected of them. Since they probably have never participated in anything like this before it can be an adjustment and they will need time to figure this out. This is a new skill set for them. There will also be issues about speaking in front of the group and difficulties remembering concepts from lessons taught the day before. Memories always start out being contextual in nature. That is, they may say things like, "I remember yesterday we played spelling bingo and I won three times." This is a legitimate memory but has nothing to do with something they learned. This memory is extremely important however, because if they can remember the context in which a memory was given often they will be able to remember the actual facts that were shared if they take the time to think about it long enough. This will lead them to remember that they were using the spelling words and then on to what some of the words actually were and then how to spell them. This then provides a foundation from which to draw on when completing class work, during a testing situation or when they actually start to move into providing content memories. Once students move into the content phase of the process, their memories gradually gain depth over time and the Memory Circle will take longer to complete. The picture of cognitive digestion of concepts taught will be much clearer for the educator once this occurs.

Because the method of Memory Circle is not subject specific, it may have great value across the curriculum. In our classroom observations, spelling scores have increased due to the daily repetition of these words and the opportunity for students to hear their spellings over and over again. In the area of mathematics, there are many competencies articulated. In the primary grades, there is a big emphasis placed on basic facts. While students are moving into the deeper phases of memories, they will often give rote memories of learning from the day before. This is a great lesson for all as it reinforces and cements these facts into long-term memory. Constant repetition is one of the key factors to this method and why it works the way it does. Memory Circle also helps move students from concrete to abstract thinking because they have nothing in front of them to manipulate or look at. It must all come from memory. This can often create a situation where students are forced to talk about more than one concept at a time in order to get their complete thought across. Example: "I remember yesterday when we talked about regrouping. If you borrow one from the tens place and move it to the ones place and then subtract, if you end up with a two digit number for the answer, you didn't need to regroup in the first place." This child, while conveying the idea of regrouping in subtraction, has now talked about place value, regrouping as a vocabulary term, one digit vs. two digit numbers and then assessed what the problem was, how she knew it was a problem and then, in a round about way, articulated how

to fix the problem so that it could be solved correctly. Children in the circle need to articulate, in order, the steps needed to complete multi-step problems. This requires them to logically think through an example they are giving and be sure not to leave any steps in the process out in order to get the correct answer. Also, key phrases may be discussed such as, how many in all, how many are left, how many more… Once again, these concepts are heard by all and strengthen everyone's understanding, not just the student giving the memory. In reading, vocabulary words as well as new words and their meanings can be talked about and reinforced. Comprehension improves and students, by the end of the year, can give a detailed retelling of a story after only one or two readings. As they articulate these stories in the Circle, the concepts are reinforced for everyone. Sequencing is another skill that is strengthened through the use of this method. For children to articulate a story, they must retell the events of the story in the proper order for understanding. In the areas of science and social studies we again see that the constant repetition of concepts presented helps students form new pathways in the brain and take in information in whole new ways. These are just some of the things seen through the circle process, there are many, many other things to see and observe.

In mainstream education today there seems to be a need to isolate individuals and set them apart from one another. Whether this is due to educators feeling that in order to assess accurately each student must work as an individual, or this is seen as a way to maintain control, the circle tears down these barriers and allows for individual expression within the group as a whole in order to achieve balance for all. Many teachers today arrange their classrooms in a hierarchical way with desks in rows, students who work individually on most if not all graded assignments and tests, and an educator who stands in front of them and teaches from behind a table or some other barrier that creates separation between the learner and the educator. The use of the circle creates equality amongst all. In a circle there are no obstructions to hide behind, and while this is not entirely comfortable at first, students and educators alike quickly adjust and are then able to reap the benefits this equality creates. The use of the circle allows everyone to see and hear all the rest in the group. The idea of sitting quietly and listening to one another speak, articulating in their own words what they have learned from a prior lesson, is foreign to the dominant society in this day and age. We are driven by time, which is a very linear construct, and are ever vigilant of it. Taking the time each day to sit and really focus on every student as an individual and what they have to impart can be extremely enlightening to teachers because, we have found, students always seem to know far more than the few pieces of information we may ask them to regurgitate on a test. Just when we think they have not learned

very much, we find they have indeed retained a great deal. The use of the circle is empowering for students as well. It gives them a chance to teach their classmates and an appropriate stage on which to excel. For many, especially students with exceptional needs, this is the first time they have ever been given this opportunity to shine and they gain self-confidence as well as public speaking skills in a safe environment.

In order to implement this process, educators are going to need to relinquish some of their instructional time. We realize there is never enough time to complete everything as it is, but, when implemented properly, this method actually frees up time needed to review and sets a focus for the class. It builds a community of learners, therefore requiring less time to deal with discipline problems. Sprenger (2005) reports: "When we are not doing two things at once, we must be wasting time. Educators talk about down time, wait time, and now time for reflection. Where do we find the time? The simple answer is that if we don't take the time to do many of these things, long-term retention will not be possible."(pp. 40-41) Isn't this what we are all striving for, long-term retention? The educators who have used this method actually report no change in the amount of material they are able to cover during the course of a school year. However, the depth of the learning is greatly enhanced. Because this process can take up to forty-five minutes to complete, it would be difficult to implement, on a daily basis, in a classroom that was not self-contained. Since most middle and high school students change classes throughout the day, this process must be modified. One way to do this would be to implement this at various intervals rather than daily, depending on the situation. While this is facilitated by the teacher, it is driven by the students and the ownership ultimately becomes theirs. Therefore, students could be divided into groups and more than one circle could be running at a time. We suggest that the groups change on a regular basis so that students get the opportunity to hear from all of their peers and not just a certain group.

During this process, the teacher must remain as neutral as possible. The goal is to have students articulate memories they feel are good and not always rely on the educator to determine this for them. Since they have already bought into the idea that they are the teacher in the circle, they will develop a good understanding about whether a particular memory is good enough or not. It is also extremely important for them to determine, within reason, when they are finished speaking. Invariably, if a teacher asks a child if he/she is finished, he/she will almost always say, "Yes." By asking this, children automatically assume they have said enough and will then stop, given the option. Following the guidelines of non-interference and personal sovereignty, they must determine when they are finished. Often, especially if this question were to be posed too soon, valuable information

the child has to impart will be missed. This is a loss to the entire community. Not only should the educator be aware of verbal cues during the circle, but also any non-verbal communication given to students during this time. Any type of non-verbal cue sent to students about the answers they are giving needs to be avoided as they will watch for these and feed off of them to determine how the educator thinks they are doing. This is difficult, especially when wrong answers are being articulated. There will be another time to address this where no one will be put on the spot or made to feel bad. This will also be discussed later in the chapter. Redirection in the circle is viewed as another matter, however. If it is necessary to redirect a student sitting in the circle, non-verbal cues are the way to do this. So as not to interrupt or interfere with the student giving a memory, non-verbal looks and facial expressions given by the educator work very well here and do not interrupt the flow of the circle.

Memory Circle allows the educator to actually see the understanding students have about the concepts that have been presented. There are several things to watch for as this process occurs each day. First, memories are either content or context based. Since they start out contextually, it is important to watch for the children to move into content based memories. This is when they will start to talk about things they have learned as opposed to events that have happened. Students will move from saying things such as, "I remember yesterday we did math and spelling. We played bingo and I won three games." to, "I remember yesterday in math we learned about turnaround facts. An example would be $5+3 = 8$ and $3+5 = 8$." This memory is still fairly rote, but the student is starting to move from the concrete into the abstract realm and, once this occurs, memories will start to gain depth and the understanding of concepts will be deeper for each individual. This can vary from student to student and they will move at their own pace into the content phase. Sometimes it is helpful, after students have had much practice with this, to ask a question or two of the student about their context memory to help move them forward in this process. However, students must never feel threatened if they do not know the answer to the question. They must feel free to state that they do not know and, at that point, the circle moves on. Second, checking for depth of the memories given is looked for. In looking at the depth of a memory, educators get a clear understanding of how well a student has internalized and can use the concepts that have been taught. Since the ultimate goal is to have a child be able to apply what they have learned from one situation to another, the deeper the understanding is the more readily they will apply the information in another area or another way. Students will go from saying things like, "I remember verbs show action." to, "We learned about verbs. In the sentence, 'Yesterday we watched a movie and

ate popcorn', there are two verbs, watched and ate." Lastly, listening for memories that give misinformation is crucial. This is a clear indicator of where reteaching needs to occur. Since it often takes awhile sometimes before papers are able to be graded and feedback given to students, this provides almost immediate feedback as this can be explained again that day during the instruction of the subject where the material was unclear. This also helps students to not feel bad or threatened. Chances are, if one student is thinking incorrectly about a concept that has been taught there are others that are thinking the same way.

As stated earlier, Memory Circle creates equality for all. Because this is orally based, students are given a chance to express themselves in a different way from the traditional format. Most of the time educators require students to write down information and hand it in to be graded. This places a great burden on children who do not communicate well in written form. This often leads others to believe that these children are not as smart or have not learned as much as those who are able to express themselves in writing. One of the biggest deficits found in students with exceptional needs is their inability to communicate in writing. Given the chance to articulate what they have learned they often do much better and will provide more information than they could express through the use of the written tool. For many students with exceptional needs, this is the first chance they have ever had to compete on an equal playing field with their peers. They are in a safe environment because of the classroom community that has been established through Circle of Learning (which is discussed fully later in the chapter) and can succeed at the same rate as that of their classmates, sometimes they do even better. The ability to put your thoughts into spoken word and have others understand the message that is being conveyed is a very valuable skill as well. Outsiders to the classroom, who only experience Memory Circle, are many times unable to discern the cognitive levels of the students. It is not until they start to work with the children or observe them in the academic setting that they are able to assess who is higher functioning and who is at the other end of the spectrum. This is yet another example of the equality the circle creates.

When looking at implementing Memory Circle and Circle of Learning, it is important to discuss abuse that can take place in the circle. Often we only equate abuse as coming from the educator, but this is not true. Abuse can occur from both the teacher and the students. Memory Circle and Circle of Learning must be implemented in such a way as to foster a nurturing and safe environment for all students to grow and change. When students are fearful in the circle about contributing an answer, they will shut down and only give contextual answers at best. This is a new procedure for many students and it is one that exposes them in new ways. There are

no barriers to hide behind, they are not in traditional rows, and therefore everyone can see everyone else. This is extremely uncomfortable for many students, especially in the beginning. At no time must students be made to feel like anything they might contribute in the way of learning is being judged in a negative manner. When digging for additional information, if a student does not know the answer to the question, they must feel comfortable stating that they do not know and that this is an acceptable response. There cannot be any judgments made from either the teacher or the students that would be negative in nature if the circle is to live and grow. Students, even at the kindergarten level, are masters at manipulation and, if given the opportunity, will use this to their advantage. Students may try to control what others should contribute or give hints about things others could talk about. This is interfering and does not allow for personal sovereignty on behalf of all. In the upper grades, students may try to disrespect others in the circle under the guise of a memory. This is also abuse of the circle.

In determining whether or not to implement Memory Circle and Circle of Learning, there are many questions that need to be answered critically before a decision can be made. Once a decision has been reached and the goals set, the implementation phase begins. As has been found in every case so far, what you think you need and what actually ends-up happening are two separate things. There are those that really want Memory Circle to reinforce concepts being taught in the classroom. For others, it is Circle of Learning and the four core values of Respect, Relationship, Reciprocity and Responsibility that are the driving force behind the desire to commit to this process. Since it is not practical to incorporate one without the other, as each relies on aspects of the other in building a healthy community, both are implemented simultaneously. Since the dynamics of every group are different, the needs of each one will become more apparent as this method unfolds. The underlying message is that it doesn't matter where you step into the circle or what your motives are; once you step in, the circle will determine for you where it needs to go and where it will give its teachings. This is a process that, once implemented, cannot be rushed. It needs to be allowed to grow and change at its own rate. The circle is a living entity and has many things to teach us all if we exhibit patience with the process.

Circle of Learning

The essence of building a healthy community is trying to find the simplest form of balance, through both linear and nonlinear constructs found in the dominant and Indigenous worldviews. It is essential for the teacher and learner to find a healthy perspective toward balance using Circle of

Learning. It is the Aboriginal practice to incorporate balance through the organic fundaments talked about further in this chapter. The organic fundaments are Respect, Relationship, Reciprocity and Responsibility. When working through the four above named R words, community building activities are incorporated while keeping the teachings of interrelatedness relevant. In turn, this places the individual in a healthy and sustainable state with constant improvement of their individual and community environment. Circle of Learning brings to the forefront four basic Medicine Wheel teachings: mind (mental), body (physical), emotion (emotional) and spirit (spiritual), better known as volition.(Lane. et al.,1985, pp. 40-41) Circle of Learning cannot develop into its highest form unless the partnership formed with each individual is spiraling in a sustainable generating balance. Balance between student and teacher, while understanding their contribution within the educational structure, is essential toward health and well being of their place in the circle. Klug and Whitfield (2003, p. 198) state,

> …By creating caring and trusting environments in our classrooms that honor culture and languages of our students, we can take the risks required to collaborate with our students in planning educational experiences that will be beneficial for all. This requires that we respect our students' perceptions and the abilities to make good decisions concerning the ways they learn best. When we provide opportunities for students to mull over what they have learned, they are able to incorporate this new knowledge into their cognitive schemata with additional insights. This aspect of, 'critically responsive teaching' allows us to adjust our teaching to our students' contexts and to incorporate 'students' experiences, insights, and intuitions as accurately representing reality even when these contradict dominant values and majority opinion. (Klug and Whitfield, 2003, p. 198)

Instituting the tenets of another piece to the circle method involves the teaching and implementation of the three R's plus one: Respect, Reciprocity, Relationship and Responsibility.

This is how Circle of Learning is structured. Like Memory Circle, all are seated in a circle, all at the same level in order to create equality on all levels. This circle is not as formal as Memory Circle and students are encouraged to participate without raising their hands, always being mindful of their classmates. In order to integrate the three R's plus one into the consciousness of all, we start with Respect. While we provide a definition of respect for the students, we want them to make this a living value in their world and so they are encouraged to define this for themselves. Issues brought

to light in terms of respect are sitting without speaking during Memory Circle and allowing their classmates to think without interruption, both verbally and non-verbally. This also extends to hand raising and correcting their peers when mistakes are made during Memory Circle. The citing of memories they would like to add-on to become a form of respect for the person who gave the initial memory. Respect is also reinforced in the classroom where appropriate with situations that may arise on any given day. Once students have become comfortable with respect, we move into Relationship. As with most things, relationship builds from respect. When introducing the concept of relationship, we talk about what happens to relationships when respect is absent from the equation. Students generate their own examples of relationships and then the ideas are widened to include the earth and trees and other inanimate objects so that they eventually see that they can have a relationship with anything because all things are related. After spending time with relationship, which proved to be a difficult concept for the students to grasp, we move on to Reciprocity allowing the students to digest relationship. Reciprocity is much easier for the children to understand and they are able to apply this and form their own examples with greater ease than with relationship. Catch phrases such as; pay it forward, pass it on, give back what you get are all used to define reciprocity. Since students become teachers in Memory Circle through the articulation of their memories, they apply that concept to reciprocity in that they are giving back what they have been taught to others in the circle that may have missed that concept or need to have it stated in a different way to fully grasp it. Responsibility is the last of the R's introduced and incorporates the understanding and implementation of the other three to fully appreciate its self-defined meaning. Once again, activities are included to deepen the understanding of this concept.

Form is often viewed as a secondary element in education, frequently sequential through linear means with set criteria and percentages. Thus, placing the smallest percentage of students at the top or best (hierarchical) while everyone else ends up below. One of the issues facing educational environments is the prevalence of survival. Rupert Ross (1996, 2006, pp. 83-84) eloquently addresses this issue with some thought provoking ideas and questions:

> …What if the violence we so frequently do to each other is not the result of a 'natural' dog-eat-dog predisposition towards life, but the result of being taught to behave in a competitive and often antagonistic way? Has the competitive model of nature polluted our thinking so much that the thought of helping others is a 'foreign' concept to us? To what extents do all our adversarial and competitive institutions require us to act in that way and so

> squash whatever generous impulses may lie within us? Why, in blizzards and earthquakes, and epidemics, do so many people shed their selfishness so quickly and come to the aid of others? Can our institutions be forcing us to deny who we really are? (Ross, 1996, 2006, pp. 83-84)

It is important to understand that while following a Darwinist approach to healthy students and classrooms we are denying those same students their right toward a level playing field for learning, regardless of what their learning style or heritage is. The need for equity in equality and necessity for community health shows the need for a living and breathing Circle of Learning.

Searching for balance within linear and nonlinear constructs for the student community is fundamental in Circle of Learning. Learning in the linear form is identified through straight lines with set curriculum giving state and federal agencies a rubric of educational expectations. As teachers, we know this creates secondary issues among the student communities. In modern society we are challenged with oppressive faces meant to keep the weaker in their place through bullying, socio-economics, race, gender and religious embossment. The truths we face when having to combat these issues seems overwhelming. But, on most levels we must look to our own participation in this process in order to whittle away at what we have helped to generate.

Part of understanding the indigenous nonlinear worldview is through the wisdom of our Elders. One of our Elders and teachers, Mr. David F. Courchene Jr., has written about love and the human being, "Human beings seek to understand the original vision of the Creator. This is an evolving, difficult and never-ending task. Just as the physical nature of Earth has taken millions of years to physically evolve so does our spiritual understanding evolve and grow. In our spiritual evolution there is much turmoil and darkness, as we strive to gain greater understanding and meaning of existence of the humankind. A human of great courage (see Seven Teachings), a big heart and vision is required to see and reach beyond the darkness humans create. To give and share is the essence of Love." (Courchene, 2004, p.5) Thus, balance in, and from, all living things according to the laws of Creator becomes trajectory to the most simplistic and/or complex of circles. We are all a part of the Circle, thus we are faced with the loving task of creating an inclusively balanced educational and community environment, by helping the students find an equal playing field and a balanced approach to their human being-ness.

Dr. Lisa Poupart conveyed important qualifiers when looking at the dominant societal skills we think are taught, but in fact, such elements as mind,

body, emotion and spirit, are usually only looked at as tertiary when relating to young learners. We say, "Now sit down and listen!" This is reactive, because it is what we want from the student learner. Often we don't know how to integrate these four elements into our classroom because we do not see the four parts making us living beings (mind, body, emotion, spirit). Therefore it is essential toward community development to teach our students about these four essential elements:

> It is important for you to focus more on teaching (indigenous) listening skills to your students. Just as you teach them about the four parts that make us living beings (mind, body, emotion, spirit), we must teach our children to listen on all four of those levels. In the dominant society, we usually teach children to listen only with their physical body. This translates into sitting the body still, eyes looking at the speaker, etc. Beyond body listening, we must also teach our children how to listen by offering our true presence on these other levels:
>
> Mind: This means teaching students to train their minds to focus by setting or pushing aside invasive thoughts or reactive thoughts while someone else is speaking. This is very difficult because almost nowhere in the dominant culture do we teach or talk about training our minds to inhibit all of the thoughts that bombard us. We often do not even consider controlling our thoughts and let them come and go as they please -- controlling us instead. This is a very difficult aspect of listening.
>
> Emotion: Similar to training our minds, we must also teach our students to suspend their emotions while listening in order to offer the speaker true presence. We do not want ourselves as listeners to be responding to whatever the speaker brings up in us emotionally until it is our turn to speak. This does NOT mean teach students to deny or bury emotions. This means we must teach children that we can set aside our individual emotional reactions (same as thought reaction) to what the speaker says until it is our turn to speak.
>
> Spirit: This is an aspect of listening for those who have an understanding of energy and how energy of living beings changes, shifts, responds to what is spoken. Children who are raised with a belief in the unseen are taught to pay attention to their energy/spirit as well as to that of the speaker. How does the speaker's Spirit look or feel when s/he speaks to us? Or as a listener, asking ones self, how is my energy as I listen? Am I grounded? This includes teaching children to ground their energy in Mother Earth

> when listening and helping the speaker to ground her/himself. This is all done at the level of the unseen.

When listeners are able to truly listen and offer the speaker her/his true presence beyond body listening, then there is less competition for speaking next, no vying to give an answer, less urgency to tell one's own story. No need to raise and wave hands for an opportunity to speak. In fact, the opportunity to speak becomes less and less important. (L.M. Poupart. (personal communication, August 16, 2007)[1]

There is causation and interlocking nuts and bolts holding the student community toward the negative disposition they show daily in the classroom. Since the onset of colonial assertion through European contact we have seen the use and infiltration of oppression through five primary faces as defined by Iris Marion Young in her book Justice and the Politics of Difference (1990, pp. 48-63). Before an explanation is given to the five faces it is important for you to understand why we utilize these faces and always have them in the back of our mind when working with all age groups. Often prevalent in larger public schools, schools on Tribal reserve borders and other urban out groups, we tend to see one or more of these faces become reason for student actions and parental negative motivation. If the students can begin to see what has been occurring and give a name to what has happened to them or their community, they can use the knowledge they have for a catalyst to pull themselves out of what is often generational. Internalized oppression and unresolved historical grief syndrome, become the activator towards using the five faces toward each other in the out groups, and become an ingrained force of action. We have found if the students can identify with one or more of these faces, explore their origins and imposed application they then, can begin a path toward change, self-empowerment and self-determination.

The five faces of oppression in front of students in many school districts are as follows: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. A short explanation of each of the faces will help with understanding. Exploitation is the dominant society's use of class structure. The class structure is used by instituting separation or arrangement toward grouping people from the haves, down to the have-nots, therefore perpetuating discrimination toward the have-nots. Marginalization gives way to racial oppression. Segregation is the result of Marginalization, which then decides who works what job or if they can work at all. Powerlessness is simply the lack of power; thus those in power exert their power over the perceived less powerful, keep the said individuals in their place and class structure. Cultural Imperialism is a power exerted over smaller populations of a different culture. For example, the dominant society has done

everything in its power to force Cultural Imperialism on Indigenous First Nation people living on United States soil by making dominant religion the authority. Finally, Violence is used to oppress people through damage, degradation or bodily harm. Violence is also used as a mental threat to control those dominated. (Young, 1990, pp. 48-63)

We bring these elements to the forefront because these are the same elements that have taken away personal sovereignty and the doctrine of non-interference; although dominant society doesn't necessarily see this through colonizing eyes. It is our Aboriginal Elders, with their wisdom, pulling us back toward the power of the Circle and the balance and equality it teaches. Teresa McCarty poses an interesting metaphorical question when writing about the struggle for self-determination at Rough Rock which we believe relates directly to Circle of Learning, "Can school be a place to be indigenous, a place to be non-homogenized, a place in which all children learn, question, and grow from a position that values and builds upon who they are? Can we create schools ... that are sites of social justice as well as creativity, competence, and joy? Then the larger question remains: Can such places of difference be sustained without denying equality of economic, social and educational opportunity to their inhabitants?" (McCarty, 2002, p.199) Breaking down the achievement gap among minorities, specifically Aboriginal people, is the premise for Christensen's Circle models of Memory Circle and Circle of Learning. It is to this end that we seek to utilize her model to break all barriers within the dominant educational process and show students respect for difference; no matter how they learn or view the world.

Christensen speaks to the teacher's role in Circle Teaching: "The teacher is not a being above the learner, more valued than, or better than the learner. The learner and the teacher strive to reach levels of respect, relationship, and reciprocity that must exist among living things to maintain a healthy balance." (Christensen, 2004, p.176) Thus, as is evident all over Mother Earth, the circle is continuous with no beginning and no end; it doesn't matter where we step into the circle, understanding will come as the circle continues its fluid motion and flow. To say there is a beginning and an end to the circle is, in our view, incorrect. However, in a more profound juxtapose, wherever and whenever we step into the circle doesn't change its depth or enrichment of knowledge. We will all end up with similar understandings through the circle's continuum.

It is here I want to begin the steeping elements involved in Circle of Learning. Circle of Learning is alloyed in the Three R's + One:

RESPECT + RECIPROCITY = RELATIONSHIP

With the undefined

RESPONSIBILITY

> **RESPECT:** Means to be considerate of each living thing, every day using a process that ensures that life needs are met in an honorable way. (Christensen, 2004)
>
> **RECIPROCITY:** Means action one to another on the base of mutual respect and giving in return. One cares more for a relative than oneself, thus whatever is done to, for, or with the living relative is done in that context. (Christensen, 2004)
>
> **RELATIONSHIP:** Means being connected one to another through unbroken, eternal ties that commence from birth to death and present constant obligations of responsibility and honor. (Christensen, 2004)
>
> **RESPONSIBILITY**: This is left to the learner to define as it is considered advanced understanding and a continuous development.

When we started the process of Memory Circle and Circle of Learning, it was with complete understanding that both were essential toward a stronger learning environment and healthier community. It was after four months of Deb doing Memory Circle daily and the obstacles presented in it that we began to implement Circle of Learning in January of 2007.

Russell had been a participant student in four of Christensen's classes where Memory Circle and Circle of Learning were modeled. Therefore, he was going completely on memory and memory perceptions when first introducing the students to Circle of Learning. Memory Circle is the time each student has to verbally illustrate and share his or her memories of learning from the previous day. Circle of Learning, however is not about the previous day and the academic process, but rather about the entire group learning to work together and gain their own perspective on their place in the smaller community of their classroom. On Russell's first day in Deb's classroom we took the time to set the stage for Circle of Learning because we realized the students probably didn't know why the circle was important. We also decided the first of the three R's should be revealed to the students. So we changed the location of the circle to the middle of the classroom, had the students discuss what they thought a circle was, what it did and how it was important to the memory and their classroom. At

this time the word Respect was introduced and the students decided how to define it, what it meant individually and then to the holistic classroom structure. We talked about the circle, memory, learning and respect as a spiral moving in its own circle illustrated through the linear building block configuration. When presenting Circle of Learning we realized we only had the tools present in the classroom to help the students teach one another. This was how we illustrated these concepts to the students:

1. We used the dry eraser board with multi colored markers.
2. We drew a big circle on the board and had the students tell us what it was and all the things the circle could be and what it could be used for. We wrote all of their conceptions down while the students thought through their ideas.
3. Then we had the students show us, by physically coming to the board, how learning fit into the circle. The students started to figure out that the fuller the circle got the more it would need to expand and start rolling into a greater circle.
4. The idea of spiraling came off of the previous idea. They finally began to understand how the circle just keeps going and doesn't have a beginning or an end. Everything is connected.

This is when we got to the point where we could talk about respect. Respect is a word students hear from very early on as very small children and then as they progress into the linear educational environment. Respect is a word that permeates the very vein of a child's being. Respect is about hierarchy from the dominant societal worldview. However, from the Aboriginal perspective and more specific Anishinaabe worldview, respect is about interconnectedness, a giver of honor and a consideration to all living things to make sure all their/our needs are met. (Christensen, 2004)

It is through observation of respect, reflection and mind that we are able to relate to all two-legged living beings. Respect is a collision and merger of the mind through reflection, while starting with the easiest relater –all that are two-legged. Due to colonial contributors, respect has been transformed into an 'older to younger', 'bigger to smaller', 'intelligent to a less intelligent', with the message being, stronger, bigger and smarter are at the top while all others are beneath and less than. This is a worldview difference, hierarchy versus equality; again, reflect on the words of Mr. Ross as discussed previously in the chapter. Hence, the recapitulation of ideas through the definition of respect as given by Christensen: Respect means to be considerate of each living thing, every day using a process that ensures that life needs are met in an honorable way. (Christensen, 2004, p.84)

Be Respectful.		Respect yourself.
Be prepared.	Or	Respect others.
Be on time.		Respect your school

(Whitaker. 2004, p.17)

The above comparison is yet another written illustration toward giving children different tools to develop respective living for the whole community while exercising personal sovereignty through love and care whereupon respect is afforded.

Although respect is primary in this discussion, an equally important element is balance. "Balance is between two things or more and it is the purpose in life for American Indians whose philosophy is inclusive of all things in the universe. At least five kinds of balance exist:

1. balance with one's self
2. balance within family
3. balance within the community
4. balance with external communities, including other tribes and the spiritual world, and
5. balance with the environment and the universe." (Fixico, 2003, p.49)

We spoke earlier about discovering a consigning environment that not only became a place to nurture our students; additionally it became a place to begin greater community nurture through better balance.

Balance is a fundament to the depth and width of the encompassing soul and lifeblood of respect. In the linear dominant society, respect has become a tool of control, rather than a place of enlightenment toward developing the constant and giving honor for living beings within the dimensions of earth (simply because they are living from our view). (Beck et al., 1992) Winona La Duke asks the question in the introduction of her book, Recovering the Sacred "What is Sacred?" Often the linear world sees a place or building as a sacred holy of holies, but instead within Aboriginal worldviews all living things are considered sacred. "Over time we have been here, we have built ways on and about this land. We have our own respected versions of how we came to be. These origins – that emerged or fell from the sky were brought forth – connect us to this land and establish our realities, our belief systems. We have spiritual responsibilities to renew the Earth and we do this through our ceremonies so that our Mother,

the Earth can continue to support us. Mutuality and respect are part of our tradition – give and take. Somewhere along the way, I hope people will learn that you can't just take, that you have to give back…."(LaDuke, 2005, p.9) Will we find a place of mutual respect allowing our children the balance place of Respect and honor and chip away at the achievement gap developed through the dominant view?

Again, returning to the original definition of Respect it is profoundly necessary if our children are to think of their designation as important members of the circle and important to the education of one another. Thus, the linear education and worldview of the respect construct isn't viewed as giving balance to the universe through education. Instead, children are considered naïve and without wisdom and knowledge.

The correlation between Respect and Relationship is looked at as a building block toward building Reciprocity. "Pay it forward." "Give back what is given." "Teach someone else what you've been taught." "If you take down a tree, plant a new one." All of these ideas represent reciprocity. According to Webster's dictionary, Reciprocity is: "The mutual exchange of privileges; acting in return or a mutual exchange."(Geddes and Gosset, 2002, p.312) Of course this is a linear thought process indicative of the ideals identified in the daily living of everyone in modern Euro-American society. The non-linear or Indigenous definition of Reciprocity says: "Reciprocity means: action one to another on the base of mutual respect and giving in return." (Christensen, 2004, p.176) Tuning in to the identity of Reciprocity we have spoken at length about the three R's and how we've presented them. Reciprocity seems to be the indicator of motion when moving forward with the seven teachings. As was articulated to Russell in a recent meeting with Drs. Christensen and Poupart, the circle is continuous with no beginning and no end; it doesn't matter where we step into the circle, understanding will come as the circle continues its fluid motion and flow. To say there is a beginning and an end to the circle is incorrect, however, in a more profound juxtapose, wherever and whenever we step into the circle doesn't change its depth or enrichment of knowledge because we will all end up with similar understanding through the circle's continuum. Again referencing Mr. Courchene's essay, two more revealing statements are made: "A human of great courage (Bear), a big heart and vision is required to see and reach beyond the darkness humans create". And finally, "To give and share is the essence of Love (Eagle)." (Courchene, 2004, p.1) Let me repeat this again: "To give and to share is the essence of Love." Thus, balance in, and from, all living things according to the laws of the Creator becomes trajectory to the most simplistic and/or complex of circles. Memory Circle and Circle of Learning encompass, for all intents and purposes, the basic fundamentals of Elder teaching and Responsibility

towards the seventh generation. Giving and sharing truly does become the essence of love when the circle is used to produce that which has been entrusted to us when considering all four races of humanity and dimensions of the earth. Interestingly enough, Teresa McCarty poses a metaphoric question when speaking about Navajo self-determination at Rough Rock, "Can school be a place to be indigenous, a place to be non-homogenized, a place in which all children learn, question, and grow from a position that values and builds upon who they are? Can we create schools . . . that are sites of social justice as well as creativity, competence, and joy? Then the larger question remains: Can such places of difference be sustained without denying equality of economic, social and educational opportunity to their inhabitants."(McCarty, 2002, p.199) As we've read Mr. Courchene's Seven Laws, referenced Identifying Race and Transforming Whiteness in the Classroom, and looked at A Place to be Navajo, the underlying teaching is sagacious to all experiences and concepts evidenced in the classroom. Out of deep respect for the assimilated and colonizing issues that took place at Rough Rock we certainly do not, in any way, want to diminish the struggle for self-determination among the Dine' community, however, McCarty does raise a valuable question: "Can school be a place to be indigenous, a place to be non-homogenized, a place in which all children learn, question, and grow from a position that values and builds upon who they are?"(McCarty, 2002, p.199) In our opinion, we believe the answer to be yes, but from the opposing view that has often times been stricken from the curriculum without a wince. School is a place to bring Indigenous worldview, and a place to teach the Elder values of the R's, and most of all the beautiful teaching of the circle. Much more is to be valued in non-homogenized learning environments, if we place great value in the equality and connectedness of the Circles. The Circle continues.

Reciprocity, and its development, is at first a difficult word for K-4 learners. We begin with students learning to spell reciprocity, and then we move into its literal form to how the perception will be causation for the growth of reciprocity. Here are some of the physical exercises we have the students participate in to learn reciprocal principals:

1. Have your students stand back to back and then slowly lower into a squat. This means no use of arms and or any other anchoring; just the simple trust that each other's weight will work one to another.
2. Take the students on a walk outdoors and have them look at the organic fundaments view outside. Where is Reciprocity evident and where is the mutual respect through reciprocity? The soil has the most simple of reciprocal properties, and then it expands from there.

3. Books in the classroom are a great reciprocity teacher. The roots of a book come from trees, the mind of another person, the art of another person, the ink from plants etc.
4. Draw a big circle on the eraser board/black board and write the names of every student on the circle. Then draw another circle around the name circle and write everything the students can think of that gives to them without expecting anything in return. Finally, draw a circle inside of the name circle and have the students write on this circle all the living elements they give to without expecting anything in return.
5. One final exercise which will allow for teaching about all the "R's" is to make a three sister's mound (LaDuke, 2005 outdoors, planting corn, beans and squash, in a collective effort (you can also do this in flower pots to do indoors). Developing an understanding of another Aboriginal teacher through planting and understanding of the three sisters, continues to break down the barriers dividing the cultures.

The more "hands-on" and "oral" we make the exercises illustrating reciprocity, the greater student understanding will be. Culturally relevant or responsive pedagogy entails the creation of a teaching/learning environment that takes into account the learning styles of groups of children, their ways of knowing, and their ways of interacting in social learning situations in the classroom. (Klug and Whitfield, 2003) The return to oral constructs is by no means a sailing away from the dominant view; instead it is an emergence of balanced learning, placing the student and teacher learners in a reciprocal environment. In this day and age, we are continually looking for physical renewable energy in order to live; keep our lights running, our water flowing from their faucets, and to stay warm in the winter. But how often do we look to our students as the renewable energy source for education and learning? Christensen affirms the reciprocal by saying; "Young people bring something very special to any learning situation. They have great renewable stores of energy, possess untapped reservoirs of creativity, and have new ways of solving problems. Plus young people are beautiful. An effort is made to build a learning environment comfortable for using individual skills in an exchanging, reciprocal way between the teacher and the learning." (Christensen, 2004, p.175)

Reciprocity among kindergarten through fourth grade learners is not taught; instead, the hierarchical methods of individualism are prized as the best motivator for learning, always placing the most "on paper super star" student as the leader and special child. Within the constructs of Reciprocity the students must look at how one cares for a relative rather than oneself,

thus whatever is done to, for, or with the living relative is done in that context. (Christensen, 2004, p.176) In all elements of the Circle of Learning we show the students how they are related, not only with their immediate families, but also to all those within the human condition no matter their ethnic/racial background, socioeconomic, or institutional base. Even for kindergarteners, being related, at first, is not something they grasp, due to the steeping of singular identity rather than holistic and circular identification.

The feeding of a child's spirit through reciprocal process is not only the job of the teacher but also of the fellow students, by recognizing the gifts and abilities each student possesses. The spirit of any living thing can work for them or be used against them, but in any case all living things must find solace and identity in their spirit. The spirits of children carry wisdom, honesty and truth, often lost through aging, but evident in the child's ability to see in a more pure and compassionate manner.

Relationship in its truest form is one of the most difficult for students to grasp and understand. The reasoning, for the most part, is environmental and colonial imperialism; however, if we look at assimilation and its drastic effects on Aboriginal people and their societies the answer is clear and unwavering. As has been mentioned in earlier text the dominant society forgets about the health of the individual and the greater community when thinking along the lines of educational development.

If, for an instant, you can carry yourself backward in time to a place you only hear about from history, a place where there was one teacher for forty or more students and the students had to rely on one another to learn from and teach for, you may have entered a place of healthier understanding and stepped into the Circle of Learning. We can all think of a time when things seemed better or more developed than in our current educational standard; for most, you do not have to reach too far back in history to acknowledge the difference and when it all seemed to go awry. Truth is truth and our truth is no less substantiated than any one dominant view. A great illustration of these truths and historical acknowledgement is found in The Journey.

> As we travel, we shall come to four buttes. We must be ready when we come to each of them in turn, for their sides are steep and rocky. If our steps are not careful, we may slip and fall and go no father. When we reach the top, which is flat and wide, we may stand there and look far in all directions, both behind us and ahead. But, sooner or later, if we would continue, we must climb down the other side. As we pass through the valley between that butte and the next, we are met by White Owl Man. He tests us to

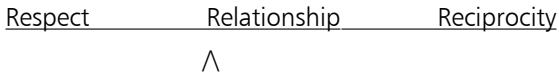
> see if we remember what we learned from our climb, from what we saw while we were there on the top, from our experience of leaving that former high place. If we remember all that our past experience taught us, then we are allowed to continue on until we come to the side of the second steep slope. Then we begin the hard climb again.
>
> So it goes for each of those four buttes in turn. We must make the difficult climb, stand for time on top seeing far vistas, but then, at last, descend and prepare for yet another ascent.
>
> Each of these four hills has a name. The first is Childhood. The second is youth. The third is the Middle Age. The last is Old Age. The journey which leads us up and down is called the Road of Life. (Bruchac, 2003, pp. 21-22)

As we enter into the realm of Relationships the story above, The Journey gives a poignant message and lesson about relationships. The key element is the word we; we insinuates the lack of aloneness, as does the word relationship. As the Elders have taught us, we are in constant fellowship with the "we" of all living things. In the same corridor, Relationship and its teachings are felt first through the individual human knowing, seeing, understanding and hearing, the seen and unseen elements in our surroundings. For kindergarten through 4th grade students, the only parallel understanding to Relationships is what they know between two human beings: Grandpa, Grandma, Mom, Dad, Aunts, Uncles, cousins and siblings. The shortfall in this thought process is the understanding of relativity from within other human structures such as school, others in their living community, cities, states/provinces, and perhaps even a country. The destruction of other living conductors like: trees, food sources, animals, fish, plants, water, air and etc., are perhaps the better place to see how we as humans take for granted such elements that grow on the earth and are causation for our very survival.

So then the question still remains; how do we teach students to become cognizant of their contribution to the whole world of relationships, and, just as important, the relationships formed in the classroom and/or academy in which they attend and participate? As with everything else taught from within the circle, using the physical environment of the classroom is the first effective place to begin. Decolonization or undoing what has been done, means changing the system to empower individuals or groups of people. In a sense, it is taking back, re-instilling previous values, family structure, original food staples and making them the norm of living rather than historical remnants. *For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook* (Wilson and Yellow Bird, 2005), has put it into

terms of empowerment, worthy and in our opinion; a necessity when looking at relationships. "Decolonization is a place we must first begin to undo some of the linear processes which continue to plague our academy: Decolonization is the intelligent, calculated, and active resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and/or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands and it is engaged for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation." (p.2) The definition of decolonization is substantiated through First Nation liberation, indeed some of the same tenets are necessary to decolonize our linear classrooms in order to find balance.

One of the ways we talk to students about relationship(s) is to have them look at everything in their surroundings and find how the interconnection of their singular lives contributes to that of the greater circle. Balance is like a teeter-totter; sometimes it takes just the right people sitting on either end to make it a balanced give and take. Sometimes it's not about the weight or size of the specific persons, but rather how well they are able to find a way to make it work.



Below is an exercise you can do to help students identify with interconnected relationships. If they can read there is one example, if they are just learning to read perhaps cutting out pictures is a better way to have them view relationships:

Show Relationships of Interconnection

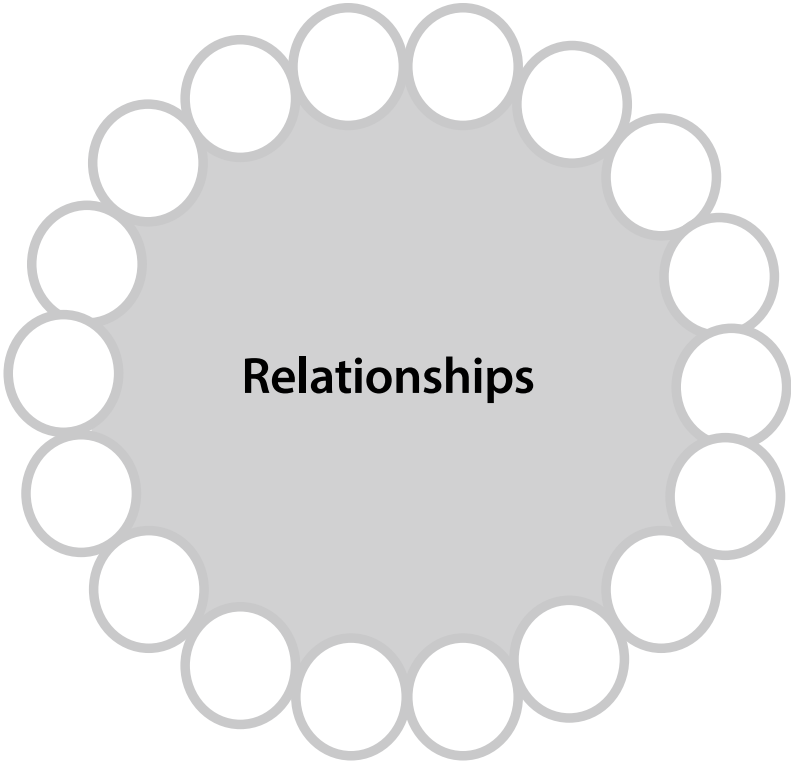


Figure 1

This idea could work for students of any age. Here is another example in a simpler form:

Show Relationships of Interconnection

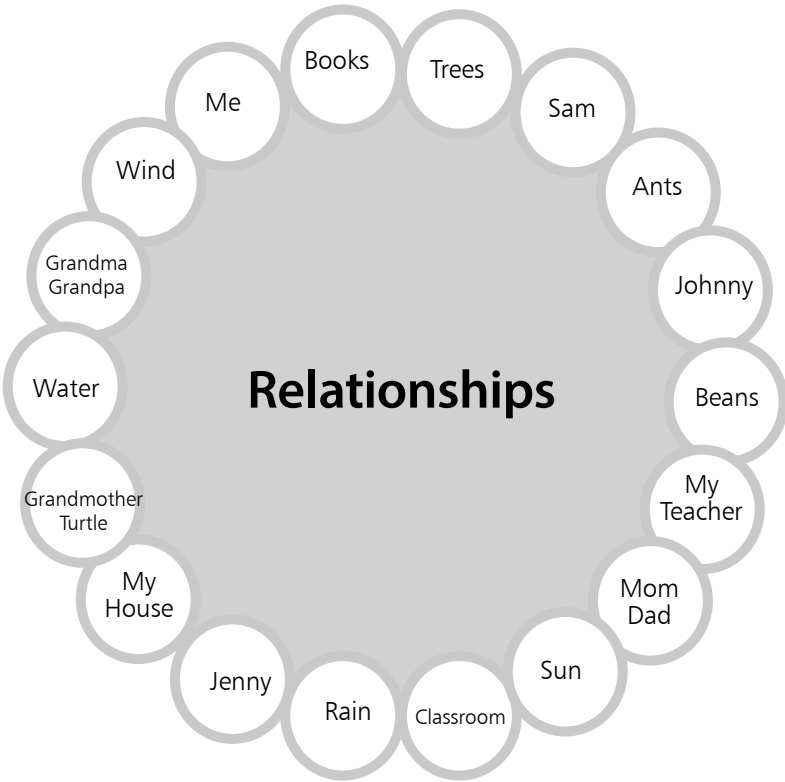


Figure 2

Writing for second, third and fourth graders may be a way for them to get more than one chance to do this. It would be of great interest to do this more than one time to see how the individual students' views change.

Figure 3

Placing all three "R's" together is a moment of triumph. But it goes even further as illustrated by the following, "A Letter Written by an Indian Parent" and addressed "to A Teacher." It was distributed by the "North American Indian Traveling College," "Will you help [my child] develop problem solving skills, or will you teach him that school is where you try to guess the answer the teacher wants? Respect my child. He is a person. He has a right to be himself. This process – oriented aspects of traditional teaching I failed to see, so strong was my Western focuses on teaching children by specific instruction. The problem in many Aboriginal communities, I now suspect, lies not in noninterference but in the fact that this approach is no longer accompanied by teaching about responsibilities or by any guidance in developing essential personal capacities."(Ross, 1996, 2006, pp. 87-88)

Indeed, the teaching in this whole passage is one of perspective. We would venture to believe that many of us could identify in the word of the passage. Just as important, however, is Mr. Ross' self evaluation, because we see ourselves in his words and along with the missing link of the all powerful Western focus and with great magnitude, teaching about responsibilities and guidance in developing essential personal capacities. The rendering of such truth often is beyond our grasp within dominant education, that our worldview makes the obvious a blinding event. Reflection of Relationship is a uniqueness we can only come to when we understand the importance of our individual biculturalism. Again, the equity of balance for plural individuals can only be indomitable when we choose health for the mind, body, emotion and spirit with an understanding of everything that makes up the earth.

Our final element before tying everything together perhaps can be described as two fold. The final "R" - Responsibility combined with The Seven Teachings of the Annishinaabe people. One of the ways we school the students to make their own individuality known is by exploring the Anishinabe – Seven Teachings.

The first, Responsibility, cannot and should not, be placed in the same category with The Seven Teachings. Although, it has been our experience that knowing the depth of the seven teachings ensures the students (in their wisdom) develop their own truth, comprehension and definition of Responsibility.

Second, The Seven Teachings:

It is with great humility we are writing the last segment of the Circle of Learning. As we have moved through the process of Memory Circle and Circle of Learning the strength of knowledge through Elder teaching and oral traditions have become more pronounced as we have found how little we know in relativity to millennia old teachings. We need the reader to know we have had great difficulty writing about the Seven Teachings because we have felt it was not our place to write about something we seemingly know little about. Over the years we have witnessed stolen teachings, debased curriculum and non-Native people taking knowledge not theirs, placing their names on them and saying this was their idea or chosen thought process. We have struggled on every level as to how we might better serve the Ojibwe people, traditions and the Sacred. Ours is not to speak about what the Seven Teachings are from a sacred understanding, but rather to speak about the Seven Teachings and how they allow us to teach in the now. Each of the Teaching Beings are present and still teaching our young learners the lessons they so graciously give. Again, by no means will we be speaking on the level of the Sacred about the Seven Teachings. Instead, know we are only conduits giving respect to the teachings we continually learn through. The Seven Teachings are a tremendous gift afforded all who live within the Circle, and further enrich our minds through the wisdom our young students bring us through their knowledge of being closest to the creator due to age. The Seven Teachings are sacred in nature for and in Anishinaabe culture. These teachings honor spiritual law and bring us back to our connection to the land, Mother Earth and creation. The Seven Teachings are represented by seven living beings. Each being offers a special gift and understanding of how we as two-legged in human form should live our lives on Mother Earth.

These teachings honor spiritual law and bring us back to our connection to the land, Mother Earth and creation.

Reconstitution of our linear thought and looking to other entities as teachers is generally outside the range of acceptance in education. Embracing knowledge with a pure mind (as children) makes for a more balanced and peaceful life. The Seven Teachings are presented to the students as elements of balance toward their classroom community; another way to combat the social and societal issues plaguing most, if not all, educational institutions today. As you read each of these Seven Teachings below, remind yourself of the internal and external health you are developing with your students and colleagues if the Teachings were in the forefront of your mind. Also keep in mind we associate Respect, Reciprocity, Relationship and Responsibility, because there is an equitable correlation students have

with the R's and with the living being teachers. We begin the school year starting with Respect but within two to four weeks add in the teaching of love and the living being of Eagle. Elementary school children make an instant connection to the action of love and certainly know the eagle. We have taught the students that the direction of North is represented by the color white. Hence, this allows us, through the Anishinaabe Medicine Wheel, to illustrate Love, the Eagle (Bald Eagle in this case), and whiteness of snow. We encourage students to understand the existence of Love and how it affects every part of their community albeit home, school or city through this teaching.

> ***Eagle - LOVE***
>
> Always act in love. Love the Creator. Love the Earth. Love yourself, your family, and your fellow human beings. (Courchene, 2006, pp. 4-5)

In a small group project during the 2008-2009 school year, two second grade students wrote about Eagle:

> Eagle is the bringer of love. Eagle can see the nest when it is in danger. He has great eyesight, he can see miles away. He can at least fly three miles high. The eagles have a lot of courage. When the Eagle is hungry, it swoops down and gets fish from the sea. This is respect because they share it with their babies and they don't waste one part of it. Once they go to bed they put their wings around their babies and that is showing love. Eagle is black and white. This is what we know about eagle. (Second grade student, 2008)[2]

> ***Buffalo- RESPECT***
>
> The two student authors of this piece also included their own artwork with the writing they submitted. Although I am sure the students didn't completely understand all of the connected elements they put into their writing, we as educators can see the depth and understanding they display and will keep with them. This is your opportunity to sit and reflect how you might approach your educational guidelines and still give this teaching.
>
> Buffalo is the bringer of Respect. Respect is one of the premises flowing through this entire chapter, if not the book. As we look at the ecosystem to the living creatures and beings of the plains and northern Midwest, we definitely are able to see how important the gifts of the Buffalo truly are. In the classroom we talk regularly about the sacrifice Buffalo gave each time it gave up its life for the most pitiful and last- created human beings. Such unthinkable

> respect is shown through the giving up of life for another. Thus, combined with the other six gifts tremendous power becomes participatory when the interconnectedness is realized. Respect all life on Mother Earth, respect Elders and people of all races. (Courchene, 2006, p. 6)
>
> When Buffalo is discussed in the classroom, we discuss, through critical thinking, all the ways Buffalo teaches respect. Some of the questions we pose to all ages of students are: What are all the physical parts Buffalo gives us (how can the body parts be used)? What does the Buffalo do to sustain life in the environment? Why do we no longer have Buffalo roaming freely and does Buffalo continue to teach?
>
> ***Bear - COURAGE***
>
> "The important thing about a relationship is that you know about something like a Bear. A Bear has fur. It can climb trees. The bear has to catch food for its babies at a stream. A bear hibernates in the winter in a cave so it can be warm for the whole winter. But the important thing about a relationship is what you know about something like a bear." (Courchene, 2006, p. 8)
>
> ***Sabe - HONESTY***
>
> Never lie or gossip, be honest with yourself and others. Speak from your heart. Be true to your word. (Courchene, 2006, p. 10)

While having discussions in Circle of Learning we encourage students are honest with one another about what hurts each other, classroom issues, or current community developments at school or at home. The time to learn from one another is when all of the brains are focusing on the same thoughts and critically thinking as one body. Within education, the idea of the Sabe will be very difficult for some to wrap their heads around. It is at these times that we must think outside of our own knowledge base and know there have been many things in this world we all have never been exposed to. Honesty is a core value and in this case a teaching that every human being needs to embrace at one point or another. During this past school year, our students became fixated with the idea of the Sabe. Of course it is always what we cannot see which causes curiosity, but in this case, there became questions about the similarity of Sabe to Big Foot/ Sasquatch. The great question posed to our students was, "What does it mean to be honest with yourself and others and how can this hurt your world if you are not honest?" We gave our students a writing prompt, to speak from their hearts and this was one such piece:

> Sabe is honesty because he does not lie at all.

> Sabe left because people were not showing honesty.
>
> People were hunting for Sabe to bring him to the city for a prize.
>
> Sabe is one of the seven teachings of life.
>
> Lots of people think that Sabe is still here but he is hiding.
>
> Other people think that Sabe is gone because we were not showing honesty. (Second grade student, 2009)[4]

Things to think about:

Must all things learned be tangible, and visible to the eye? How can the Sabe teach through "what ifs" or "in another cultures worldview" and increase the health and grace developed in the classroom and external environments?

> ***Beaver – WISDOM***
>
> Everyone has a special gift, show wisdom by using your gift. (Courchene, 2006, p. 12)

The following personal narrative of Russell's is one way to think of relating wisdom to our environment. When I was a child I spent a great deal of time with my Grandparents. On one side of my family my Grandmother was blind and on the other side of the family my Grandfather was a paraplegic and my Dad had lost one of his arms in a farm accident before I was born. In today's day and age, we know these things as disabilities, however, as a child I accepted all three of these influences the way they were. My siblings and I would often be confronted by other children asking why our Dad didn't have an arm. The first few times this happened, it was a huge epiphany for us to be asked about his lack of a limb because we saw it as normal and never expected there could be something different. Wisdom is in part and parcel very similar to this situation. Our identities were not about what Dad didn't have, but rather all of the gifts he did have, in part the building of wisdom bestowed on small children, or just as important, the lesson we taught the greater community. There is great wisdom in our life experience and with the people touching us. If we look at Grandfather Beaver and the teaching of wisdom along with the definition, the story is to know our gifts and utilize them, often in silence, to build up others.

My Grandfather lived life as a paraplegic, but he taught us many things we would never have known if he had not had this special challenge, which was more of a gift. Patience, silence, graceful dependency and humble intelligence passed along by living his life as an example; much like Beaver; the creation of dams and lodges through the use of his sharp teeth and perseverance.

Wolf - HUMILITY

Wolf is an interesting being, able to move in silence without detection, run at high speeds and is said to have eyes able to look in and through the soul. Why then do we fear a teacher of humility? Humans fear what we do not understand, and since so few of us spend the time watching and learning about the natural world we rarely are able to see gifts rendered by such quiet humilities. When our students learn to place each other before themselves something wondrous happens, they become teachers to one another. Humility is not something we've learned a great deal about in our lifetimes. We've wanted to be on top, get the best food, and think about our needs and ourselves first. From early in life we are taught, "If it's going to be, it's up to me!" not, "If it's going to be, we need to rely on those with different gifts than we possess to make what we have even better." Think of others before yourself; humble yourself to the Great Spirit by being thankful. (Courchene, 2006, p. 14)

In Circle of Learning we look toward books for material to help teach our students about the Seven Teachings. One of the books we use in some of the elementary classrooms we teach in is Jon J. Muth's book, The Three Questions. There is a great written illustration shown toward the back of the book that gives a different identity to Humility.

Yesterday, if you had not stayed to help me dig my garden, you wouldn't have heard the panda's cries for help in the storm. Therefore, the most important time was the time you spent digging the garden. The most important one at that moment was me, and most important thing to do was to help me with my garden.

Later, when you found the injured panda, the most important time was the time you spent mending her leg and saving her child. The most important ones were the panda and her baby. And the most important thing to do was to take care of them and make them safe.

Remember then that there is only one important time, and that time is now. The most important one is always the one you are with. And the most important thing is to do good for the one who is standing at your side. For these, my dear boy, are the answers to what is most important in this world.

This is why we are here. (Muth, 2002, pp. 22-26)

As you sit down to ponder this Teaching, think first how you've learned about humility. Does humility always have to be taught through discouragement and chopping down of our person? Does humility mean that we must always sacrifice ourselves in order for the community to be stronger? Is there equity in equality; while looking toward the circle community as the humility we need as our teacher?

> ***Turtle - TRUTH***
>
> Always seek truth, living the truth is living the Seven Teachings. (Courchene, 2006, p. 16)

We must repeat the final sentence from above, "The Truth shall always prevail." Living a strong and healthy life as stated above is what each of us living in the human condition strives to achieve. This is the teaching we spend a great deal of time discussing, acting out, and showing. Grandmother Turtle catches our younger students and even our middle school students; my favorite element that's discussed the most is the speed at which old Turtle moves. We help the students see that Old Turtle moves slowly and deliberately with little time for turning back, so to speak with Truth the first time is all she can do! This also leads us to see that old Turtle is always looking forward, not able to look back thus, there is nothing to do but reflect on what's been said and/or done.

In the area of the country that Russell lives there is a wonderful place called the Wildlife Sanctuary. The sanctuary was made up of two-leggeds and four-leggeds that have been hurt, injured, or just plain have moved in for a safe refuge. He has had many opportunities to go to this delightful place to just sit and watch and observe the turtle. The patience used while watching was unmistakable, and the greater lesson, nothing comes immediately and answers in the way of truth are hard won, without a word exchanged. However, just through observation, the shell of protection, the love of the sun and all parts making up Turtle are astounding. It is no wonder such reverence is given to Mother Earth here on Turtle Island.

We have a favorite book we use when speaking of Grandmother Turtle. In this book, Old Turtle lives at the top of the world where she is still the teacher of Truths, but more importantly the giver of time for each of us to find our Truth. In Old Turtle and the Broken Truth, there is a very important proverb or truth given, "You are loved and so are they!" (Wood, 2003, p. 46) Perhaps the truth in all things is that love, the first of the Seven Teachings mentioned, is also intricate to the teaching of Truth. Turtle has so many teachings to offer, we've only touched the surface.

Final Thoughts

Indeed, Memory Circle and Circle of Learning must seem overwhelming! You may be thinking to yourself, how can this be achieved in one classroom or even in one day? How can I implement Memory Circle and Circle of Learning, while incorporating the Seven Teachings in my classroom? My educational mandates are already overloaded, my curriculum load is never ending and I've only got so much time in my day! Please know as with life and education nothing is learned all at one time or expected all at one time, instead a continuous construction of knowledge, learning and development, personally, professionally and in our communities. An Elder teacher of ours has said many times to us, "You will learn things when you need to know them. The Circle continually teaches through repetition, repetition is good, foundationally important to growth." (R. Christensen, personal communication, 2007)[5] As with all things, take it one element at a time, and remember your place as a learner and creator to something new. When we reflect on the creator we often bring in religious premise, however, what if you placed yourself and your name in the place where Creator is written? This could possibly change the very direction you move in daily. We have an awesome responsibility to the people of future generations; what we do today, tomorrow, in the coming weeks and years will be reflected in the very students we walk beside.

One of the most important reminders we have when teaching our colleagues and students is the tremendous insight reflected to us through one another. Baldrica,(2006) author of *Tree Spirited Women*, offers some insight. "Children are the window to the future and the mirror to the past. A child allows one to see from where one has come and to dream about where on may go. Sometimes, as we age, it takes a child to help us remember our youth." (pp. 48-49) We hope you will keep this in mind when trying to render the achievement gap obsolete. By allowing students to have a place of equality, personal sovereignty, balance and equity, we believe, creates healthier individuals and classroom communities. We are grateful to our Elder teachers for giving their selfless gifts. We end where we began, knowing a bit more than at the start, always seeking knowledge from those living in the Circle and knowing the knowledge will come when we are ready to learn it.

Endnotes

1 L.M. Poupart. (personal communication, August 16, 2007).

2 All students authors name, school, city and state have been withheld due to specific school district policy.

3 ibid

4 ibid

5 Dr. R. Ackley Christensen. (personal communication, 2007)

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Effective Teaching Through Elder Epistemology

Lah^te Louis Williams Jr.

Native American Elder Epistomology (NAEE) and Indigenous teaching methods represent the worldview of our ancestors. I believe that every human being on earth has Indigenous ancestry. At one time we all had an understanding and knowledge of critical relationships formed thousands and of years ago. The reawakening of these old but familiar teachings is imperative for the next *Seven Generations*. This phrase *Seven Generations* comes from The Great Law of Peace, brought to the Iroquois around three thousand years ago, where The Peacemaker told our original titleholders (Chiefs) that no laws shall be passed that will be detrimental to our children seven generations into the future. It describes the state of mind we must have to project our good intentions to our great-great-great-great-great grandchildren. This means we must develop a way of living that will facilitate a healthy, prosperous way of life for the next seven generations of children. It is an ancient Iroquois way of living for our future children, not just for our own means at this moment in time.

The way we think forms our decisions and actions. Thoughts are the first step to considering whether an action should take place. When we use the *Seven Generations* way of thinking, we acquire the means to survival for an entire people. As a believer in The Great Law of Peace, one should always think about how our actions could affect the faces under the surface waiting to make the crossover into this world.

As I continue to learn, I realize how I can make a difference in the survival of my people. I include all human beings in the term *my people*. We are in the same circumstances, living in the same environment, on the same Mother Earth. It is all relevant. It is like the Butterfly Effect, one flaps its

wings and on the other side of the earth a hurricane begins. When we feel connected to creation again, beautiful and miraculous accomplishments are possible. This book should stir those feelings into thoughts and action about "what can I do next."

We need this connection with creation to cope with the circumstances we have put on ourselves as human beings. Somewhere our original instructions have been set aside for self-gain, our original ceremonies given to us by the Creator, have been misplaced. A shroud developed over the years, which causes us to be empathetically blind. We now forget about our fellow beings, consume and possess as much as we can, before the fictional "end of the world" comes. It is time to challenge these perceptions and become aware that there are other ways and we do have a choices other than the decisions that are made by mainstream society.

Through this work, we hope to awaken others to opportunities and possibilities for change. It is a guide to understanding that is imperative in order to find each other again. We will find ourselves embraced in the loving relationships of creation once again.

Not that these healthy relationships can be built overnight or in one day. Competitive attitudes have nearly ruined our ability to relate to different perspectives. We have moved away from working together and found ourselves in some sort of "King of the Hill" mentality where there is always a right and wrong answer. Mainstream society has been conditioned to believe that there a set of universal rules that apply to every civilization. Then we wonder why there are so many social outcries of violence in our world.

Today, we are redefining success using multicultural education techniques. We are learning that there are many ways to learn and teach. We are moving toward understanding and acceptance of the many faces and cultures alive in North America and around the world.

The necessity for the teaching of empathy and cooperation has been revealed. The classroom can be the proving grounds for reinventing feelings and relationships among human beings as well as the rest of creation. We now have the opportunity to enjoy diversity without being afraid. Fear, in the past generations, destroyed our ability to accept difference. Today there are many efforts to build bridges between cultures.

A good example of this effort is contained in ideas that bring our students back together somehow. Helpfully, Parker Palmer's book, *The Courage to Teach*, defines some principles that are at the foundation of unity and respect (Parker, 1998). He goes on to explain that there is a need for an environment that encourages differences within the classroom. Palmer calls these differences "paradoxes." These differences in opinion or belief

are very important to examine and listen to in a classroom. These differences let the students know that it is ok to have a differing, sometimes opposing views, on crucial issues facing our world today. Palmer speaks of a certain form of tension that builds a healthy examination of these opposites (p. 83). He continues, "we must teach our hearts a new way to understand the tension we feel when we are torn between the poles" (pg 83). Somewhere within this understanding is a teaching method that reflects freedom and discipline. A starting point for this method is the Tribal Three R's explained in the Introduction. We suggest a way to respect our students while challenging them to think differently.

This particular teaching method, here, will be referred to as Native American Elder Epistemology (NAEE), or worldview, and it is thousands of years old. It has its very core values set in a non-intrusive format allowing students to learn at their own pace. It also allows students to feel comfortable about their individual skills and knowledge base.

Within Indigenous cultures, we respect our elders. This ethic exists in almost every Indigenous culture in the world. Part of the respect mode is to *listen* to them. They have the experience and wealth of knowledge to provide many teaching tools. When we do not listen or carefully observe, we allow meaningful knowledge to go unheard. Selfishly we let the teachings of the past dissolve in an attempt to prove the old lessons do not apply today. Tom Porter, a Mohawk Elder says, "Don't wait for them to die, 'cause if they die they'll take it with them. So my advice is to not wait!" (Porter, 2008, p. 89).

In this style of teaching, there are more even grounds between students and teachers. The teacher becomes a facilitator and joins in the learning right alongside the students. Palmer reminds us, in *The Courage to Teach*, that our professional education for teaching tries to override this with all our knowledge of the subject. He reminds himself, "I need to spend less time filling the space with data and my own thoughts and more time opening a space where students can have a conversation with the subject and with each other" (p. 120).

Numerous pieces of literature reflect this position of cooperation and respect. In the field of multicultural or cross-cultural education, there are various references to this style of teaching. Constructivist Theory, developed by Rousseau and Dewey in the early 1920s, constructed new ideas and concepts based upon current and past knowledge or experience. This theory contains remnants of the NAEE teaching method. Constructivism connects to this teaching method by both using a way of knowing that reflects the individual student's current knowledge base. They both begin where the student is, not where teachers *think* students should be, or

where the teachers are.

Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, exposes students to a variety of differing forms of Circle Teaching and Talking Circles. For example, some Talking Circles involve circle chair arrangements, facing inward, and one participant is allowed to talk at a time. Although not all instructors use this methodology, it always seemed to be more effective for my personal learning style. This particular method shows how important it is to acknowledge the details of activity in the classroom. Every participatory activity has lessons or teachings conveniently attached. The style of teaching that is addressed in this literature has many perspectives of learning. It is not just sitting in a circle or using groups to work on projects or assignments. To use this pedagogy means to use respect, reciprocity and relationship in your every thought and action. Many teachers use Circle Teaching. It proves reliable and revealing of students' individual gifts.

While exploring this teaching technique, you may discover the morals and ethics of First Nations People. These lessons and ethics are in tune with our innermost human necessities or original instructions as part of Creation. These necessities are what it takes to live peacefully and in balance, or harmony, with ourselves, others and the rest of creation.

Introduction to Key Terms

The important terms within NAEE, that are the key points of learning in Native American Elder Epistemology, first I will put them into an Indigenous context. These terms are similar to what Rupert Ross refers to as the *Five Waves* in his book "Returning to The Teachings" (Ross, 1996, p. 73). Mr. Ross is one of few non-indigenous authors that has really done his research and has experienced Native People and Native communities first hand. He has a gift for relating First Nations Cultural information to a broad audience while remaining objective. The *Five Waves* story sites the variables an Inuit must consider before traveling the surf of Hudson Bay safely. The *Five Waves* are; (1) the waves of the winds that were building and not yet there, (2) the waves from the weather system that had recently subsided, (3) the waves caused by the ocean currents, (4) the waves that were caused by the Gulf Stream and (5) the waves that were caused by the rotation of the earth (p. 73). The important terms in this book are like the variables Ross has defined. One must understand and relate the inner workings of these terms before one may facilitate them effectively in the classroom. This is not to say that it will take a long time to understand these. Everyone's learning pace and styles are different. This is important to keep in mind when facilitating learning.

Glossary of Key Terms

Individual Freedom:

Dr. John F. Bryde studied among the Lakota People in South Dakota for many years. He became familiar with the behaviors and social nuances of the Native American community in which he studied. In 1971, he published Modern Indian Psychology, a thoughtful book with his insights and perspectives of American Indian behaviors and thinking. He says, "In the Indian system, the person himself, whether he is a child or a grown-up, makes his own decisions and no one forces him into making a decision" (Bryde, p. 39, 1971). According to Bryde, one is on his own once outside the camp and it is up to that individual to make the right decisions to survive. One would grow up learning that the only person you can rely upon is yourself. There is no one to force you into making those "correct" decisions. Therefore, **individual freedom** is a way of life from the time a child is able to get around on his/her own. He/she learns, from a very young age, that the decisions one makes are critical to survival. In the context of this specific teaching method, everyone in the classroom practices individual freedom. Allowing for one to learn by their own individual experience is the most successful way to retain knowledge, therefore letting one another learn on from their own experiences can be practiced in this classroom setting.

This form of individual freedom has its core in tribal communities. This freedom is strictly for the betterment of the whole community, therefore giving responsibility to the individual whom possesses such freedom.

To me, Individual Freedom means we have the freedom to learn at our own pace, express when and what we see fit and to have the freedom to change our minds. These important gifts should be inherent to any successful classroom.

Personal Sovereignty:

Personal Sovereignty is similar to individual freedom. Personal Sovereignty guarantees you a right to conduct yourself as you see fit in any situation as long as it is not detrimental to someone's well being. Personal Sovereignty is an active contributor in NAEE. It is utilized as a creative tool in order to allow students self-expression and more freedom. Comprehension has everything to do with culture and identity. One culture may learn and understand something entirely different from another even if taught the same exact content. That is why this teaching method is so critical to multi-cultural education. It allows for individual expression to experience the entire classroom, not just the teacher reading an individual student writing assignment.

In my experience, personal sovereignty gives the student the right to have a differing perspective on any issue or fact. It helps students hold their tongue when they think they have the right answer but someone across the room has said something totally opposite. One person talks at a time, there are no interruptions. We learn from listening to everyone's different and unique perspectives. We also shape our own perspective by listening to others.

Respect:

The Dictionary defines the word respect as, "To consider deserving of high regard: esteem. To refrain from interfering with (another's privacy)" (Merriam-Webster, p. 626, 2001).

In this dictionary definition we find the root of the meaning that relates most to the respect used for this style of teaching. One example of respect in this sense can be allowing one person to talk at a time without interruptions from the group. This creates a safe dialog environment for full ideas and critical thought.

Directly related to personal sovereignty, respect is defined as the exercise of personal sovereignty. When we allow others to speak their perspectives, we are showing respect by not interrupting and not saying that the particular perspective is wrong. We all have our own opinions, but in using respect in this context, we allow others to voice their opinion. The value we place on differing perspectives becomes more balanced, and equal to the value we place on our own perspective. There are no better or right ways of looking at something.

Reciprocity:

Defining, "The quality or state of being reciprocal; mutual exchange of privileges", the dictionary definition offers a simple explanation of the term (Merriam-Webster p. 610, 2011). In this teaching method, reciprocity is better defined as giving back or making a contribution.

Although not similar or exact same exchange occurs, one may opt to give a comparable gift in kind. For example, when I was visiting a friend in New York I opted to reciprocate in the form of a traditional Iroquois Friendship song. I performed this on the last evening of my visit. In the act of reciprocity, we exchanged the song for my accommodations.

Relationship:

In the root word, relation, the dictionary defines this as, "5: The state of being mutually interested or involved (Merriam-Webster pg 617). Relationship is what is continuously renewed between beings when respect is practiced. In NAEE, teaching relationship is inclusive to everything

in creation. Humans have relationships with each other, but we rarely stop to think about the relationships we have with the grasses and the trees or the animals and aquatic life forms. This thinking involves a mind set of "We are all related" and seeing each other as equals or just as deserving of life as any other being.

As an adult, I am still learning this value. Everyone knows that flies and mosquitoes are bothersome. Try to imagine that the bugs have just as much of a right to exists as humans. I remember one day I was over at a friend's house and I was stepping on ants that were close to my bare feet. That friend told me that those ants have just as much of a right to be there as I did. That made me think. If this relationship section makes you think, then it is doing its purpose. I still kill bugs that I think may bite or harm me, and I continue to learn.

Responsibility:

The root word responsible is defined as, "Liable to be called upon to answer for one's acts or decisions: answerable 2: Able to fulfill one's obligations : Reliable, Trustworthy 3: Able to choose for oneself between right and wrong" (Merriam-Webster pg 626). These definitions of the root word are most congruent with this particular teaching method. The word responsibility is last out of the three R's plus one. When one is ready, accepting responsibility shows the culmination of the three R's within a being.

I think of responsibility as a task that enables us to perform after we learn the skills to perform it. I have recently helped a professor with her beginning semester classes. I took this responsibility because I had been assisting this teacher for two years then and she believes me to be the best choice for explaining and relating the required material to the students. I have accepted this responsibility because I feel I have the correct training it takes to complete the task. I am sure I will not be perfect, but I will do my best, and that is all she expects.

Participation

Participation is the most important relational skill that human beings must acquire. One acquires it at an early age. Although some adults would rather work by themselves, we always return to working as a group, participating socially because we are social beings by nature. The teaching method, discussed in this book, defines participation as the key element in learning. There are differing forms of participation depending on the individual's learning style. Some are willing to actively participate. Others may feel obligated to wait and offer their assistance at a specific moment of relevance. Some may want a reminder of what is expected, work alone, and combine

their individual efforts with the efforts of others in the groups toward the end of the presentation deadline. All strategies are welcome.

Regardless of how participation is given, it is always necessary for making the group activity belong to an individual. Over the past several years, I have experienced the powerful feeling of that belonging through my own participation. I have felt the deep understanding of ceremonial participation, bringing me closer to creation and developing the love and gratefulness for everything around me. Belonging is taking ownership of such participation in various group activities. In my case, it helped me understand the original instructions given by our creator. It gave me sense of purpose in this world and helped me accept differences within human beings. Participation has definitely affected me profoundly in this context.

Depending on what one participates in, such efforts can be destructive or constructive within the individual, society and creation. Most recently, participation in gang activities by our young people have been extremely detrimental to our communities. The sense of belonging that all humans look for often manifests itself in destructive groups and individuals. Alcoholism, drug addiction and gang activity are only a few examples of these destructive forces. Introducing alternatives to destructive participation is key to helping our youth realize that there are choices for them to make for their own future and the future of our communities.

Within the college classroom setting, participation in this indigenous teaching method is imperative for group success. Regardless of how this participation comes to fruition, each individual is expected to participate in creating the final product. The Creator gave every human being a gift. Some educators refer to this as differing styles of learning or talents. These gifts, uniquely enable each individual to participate in their own way. Some are artists and can draw or paint, some are thinkers, philosophers, some bring their gift of public speaking, some love to research and some enjoy experiencing things hands-on. The most important aspect to producing a creative and thought provoking group presentation is bringing all of these individual gifts together in one harmonious demonstration. I have personally found that the more the students present materials to each other, or teach to the entire classroom, by both the presenter and the listener retain more information. This provides an understanding of interdependence, specific forms of empathy and finally compassion for their fellow students.

Games, Activities and Presentations

Within the presentations of each group, students may choose to express their knowledge of the subject matter in the form of a game or other

creative activity. This teaching method is open for most any form of expression. Song, dance, poetry, drawing, painting, games or sculpting are some of the many activities used to create relative expression of the material assigned. Since elders teach that there are no winners and losers in this style of teaching, many games were all about the journey and not the outcome. It was impressive to see the array of games presented. Some chose to implement a template from the internet in the form of the popular game show, *Jeopardy*. They were able to put the subject as chapter 1, 2, or 3 (for example) and the class chose the subject and dollar (points) amount. As the dollar amounts increased, the level difficulty increases. Students presenting would often give prizes in the form of candy or snacks. Others became very creative and made their own games and puzzles to reflect what they had learned in the material.

Every student, every human being, brings his/her own gift to this world. Each being has a certain technique that has proved successful for them in expressing him/herself. The classroom is a safe environment for students to then express themselves. NAEE gives the individual, and/or small group, the freedom to present the relevant materials/assignment to the class in any form imagined.

I remember one student who had made puzzles out of two differing turtle shapes. Every piece of each puzzle had a phrase on the back that coincided with the entire idea behind the formation of each turtle. One turtle was created to nearly true to form and the other was created somewhat warped with intentions for using it as a metaphor, intended to convey the ideas behind the materials. One was a constructive, decent way of approaching the topic, the other puzzle there was obvious room for improvements. (example #1)

Example: Turtle Puzzle Solutions, 2008

In 2008, I observed an undergraduate group present activity for participation that allows a visual representation of racism and its effects on Indigenous people. Puzzle #1 and Puzzle #2 are examples of differing, and potentially conflicting, cultures or worldviews.

While handing out pieces to the puzzles, they gave a brief explanation of what this activity was trying to accomplish. The groups put together two puzzles, without knowing that the pieces would eventually form two distinct, unique turtle forms. Every person received at least one piece for one of the two puzzles (there were approximately 45 students). Each piece was numbered in a chronological fashion to show what order the class put them together. One puzzle had red numbered pieces and the other had purple numbered pieces to distinguish the two different puzzles. The red pieces that went with puzzle number one, had an entire quote on the

back of each piece which each classmate read before placing the piece in the puzzle area. The purple numbered pieces went with puzzle number two and had a portion of a large quote on the front of each piece. Only the last person, with the last piece of puzzle number two read the entire quote that had formed the puzzle. The quotes related to racism as in the required class readings. There were designated areas on the floor in the center of the large group circle for the assembly of the two puzzles; signs read Puzzle #1 and Puzzle #2. They instructed their classmates to put tape on the back of each puzzle piece so they would stay put after assembled. They provided tape prior to the activity and explained how it would be used. Then the presenters called out numbers with coinciding colors to start assembly of puzzle number one. Lastly, the presenters called out the colors and numbers and began assembly on puzzle number two.

This is but one of endless possible games and activities that students create in order to share information in their presentations to their peers. Student groups create their own games and teaching activities and thus they practice personal sovereignty and noninterference from the instructor as they become the instructors. I offer only one example here in order to encourage teachers and students to come up with games and activities acknowledging that each individual will bring background, expertise, and knowledge to teaching and learning circle.

Conclusion

This Native American Elder Epistemology considers all human needs. It encompasses integrity and empathy for other beings. Every teacher/facilitator will bring his/her own flavor and technique to this method. As our Elders tell us, every individual brings a unique gift to this world. It is up to us to find that and bring it to the forefront. NAEE ensures that we have a better chance at living up to our potential as human beings.

References

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Merriam Webster Dictionary. (2001). Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam Webster Inc.

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Porter, T. (2008). *And Grandma Said…Iroquois Teachings as Passed Down Through the Oral Tradition.* Fonda, New York: Tom Porter.

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Undergraduate student group project at UWGB in Dr. Christensen's Intro to Tribal Religion class. (2008). Rachel Novotny, Allyssa Silvia, Amanda LeRoy, Erin Woelfel, Ashley Paul, Lindsay Neuens, Katie Martin, Angela Schuh.

Appendix A

First Nations Studies Program, UW Green Bay Senior Exit Questionnaire/Oral Interview

Christensen and Poupart

Introduction: Culturally-based instruction/evaluation does not always follow or fit within the western model. Indigenous people seek to assess and improve in a circular way by approaching evaluation relative to the four facets of self (mind, body, spirit and emotion) wherein one seeks balance. Within this sense of 'evaluation' one seeks participation within community so that personal and community growth is maintained.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Graduation date: _____

Amount of Time at UWGB: _____

Oral Emphasis: FNS 399 Elder Epistemology ☐ or Oneida Language ☐ (check one)

Minor: _____

As a result of the learning I experienced during my UWGB sojourn in FNS I will use my new knowledge and skills in the following ways:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

I will continue to seek learning/knowledge about the following:

_____

_____

In the following possible ways:

_____

_____

I gained knowledge and skills such as the following:

_____

_____

Please comment on the level of difficulty in the program: Identify a course or courses and indicate the level of difficulty of the course (or courses) according to l, 2, 3 (1 = low difficulty and 3 = high level of difficulty).

_____

_____

_____

If needed, please comment on how you overcame the difficulty or how difficulty was eased through additional learning or assistance. In addition, you may wish to give advice or make recommendations for future students.

_____

_____

_____

Please comment as desired relative to the major emphasis in FNS:

Oneida language or FNS 399 Oral concentration

_____

_____

_____

Please indicate teaching techniques/strategies that were helpful in learning FNS

_____

_____

_____

-Context or the methods used and way you learned in FNS classes

_____

_____

_____

-Content or what you learned in FNS classes

_____

_____

_____

Please evaluate the extent to which you are knowledgeable in each of the 4 Pillars of Tribal Knowledge. In each of the areas, please tell us how knowledgeable you were in each of the 4 areas before taking classes in FNS and how knowledgeable you are today, upon graduation. You may choose to use a numeric scale (0 = no knowledge, 5=very knowledgeable).

I. First Nations History

A. Before Contact

_____

B. After Contact

_____

II. Sovereignty (as a world view as well as a formal governing principle)

_____

III. First Nations Laws and Policies

_____

IV. Indigenous Philosophy (or intellectual traditions and world views)

_____

Please reflect on your First Nations Studies experience, and provide a commentary on this experience. You may include self-assessed acquired knowledge and any wishes, comments or 'you might think about' statements for FNS faculty to consider as adjustments to the FNS program, course work, teaching strategies, and techniques.

_____

_____

_____

Miigwech, gigawahbamin! Indina waymah gahnug

Appendix B

Infusing Fundamental Elements of First Nations Studies into the Education Curriculum: Four Pillars Reading List (An Example)

Rosemary Ackley Christensen and Lisa Poupart

The sources of information listed here are offered to faculty involved in the Fusion plan for their consideration. There are many sources that could be included, but this is only an example of what First Nations Studies and Education faculty involved in a Fusion plan might decide to include together in each of the Four Pillars of Tribal Teaching and Learning. Our list focuses on First Nations in the western Great Lakes with an emphasis on Wisconsin in order to meet the requirements of Act 31. We expect that faculty involved in their own Fusion plan will select their own materials to reflect their region, needs, and areas of study. In Fusion, some or in many cases, only selected portions of the suggested materials are used due to time constraints. Over time FNS faculty provide additional recommendations for further self-study. The materials and resources for learning also include oral Elder teachers that are accessed through personal visits and one on one instruction. The oral teachings from Elders are not listed here. The Fusion faculty members choose their Elder oral teachers through discussion and dialogue with one another and then approached their Elder oral teachers in a traditional manner and form, asking for assistance.

This resource listing here is divided into Four Pillars of Tribal Teaching and Learning, with FNS selected resources in each category. These categories are subtitled in a way that make preliminary sense, yet sorting is dependent on the thinking and learning limits of FNS faculty. Another way of sorting the information may make sense to the total group after study and discussion, as resources could easily fit into other categories than its resident grouping. The sources listed are appropriate to the Nations in our region.

History as a Pillar of Learning: Traditional, contact and contemporary periods.

Traditional Era:

Beck, Peggy, V., Anna Lee Walters, Nia Francisco. 1977. The Sacred: Ways of Knowledge, Sources of Life. Tsalie, AZ: Navajo Community College Press.

Four Worlds International Institute (Bopp, Judie & Michael, et. al.) 1984. The Sacred Tree: Reflections on Native American Spirituality. Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Light Publications.

Contact Era:

General Historical Reference Sources:

Hoxie, Frederick E. Hoxie (ed).1996. Encyclopedia of North American Indians: Native American History, Culture, and Life From Paleo-Indians to the Present. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Zimmerman, Larry J. and Brian Leigh Molyneaux. 1996. Native North America. OK: University of Oklahoma Press, Norman.

Ojibwe History: Thomas Peacock and Marlene Wisuri collection:

2006. The Four Hills of Life: Ojibwe Wisdom. Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press.

2002. The Good Path: Ojibwe Learning and Activity Book for Kids. Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press.

2002. Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in All Directions. Afton, MN: Afton Historical Society Press.

2002. Video Film Series: Ojibwe Waasa Inaabidaa: We Look in All Directions. (For teachers and students)

History of WI First Nations:

Davids, Dorothy W. 2001. Brief History of the Mohican Nation Stockbridge-Munsee Band. Bowler, WI: Stockbridge-Munsee Historical Committee.

Loew, Patty. 2003. Native People of Wisconsin. The New Badger History Series. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

Loew, Patty. 2003. Native People of Wisconsin: Teachers Guide and Materials. The New Badger History Series. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

Loew, Patty. 2001. Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

Lurie, Nancy Oestreich. 2002. Wisconsin Indians. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

Contemporary:

Internalized Oppression among First Nations:

Cook-Lynn, E. 2001. Anti-Indianism in modern America: A voice from Tatekeya's earth. Illinois: University of Illinois.

Duran, E. 2006. Healing the Soul Wound: Counseling with American Indians and other Native Peoples. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Duran E. & Duran B. 1995. Native American Postcolonial Psychology. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Pearce, R. H. 1988. Savagism and civilization: A study of the Indian and the American mind. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Poupart, Lisa M. 2003. "The Familiar Face of Genocide: Internalized Oppression Among

American Indians." Hypatia: Journal of Feminist Philosophy. Special edition, Intersections of Native Women and Feminism. M. Annette Jaimes and Anna Lee Walters, editors.

Waziyatawin Angela Wilson & Michael Yellowbird, eds. 2005. For Indigenous Eyes Only: A Decolonization Handbook. Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research.

Laws and Policies as Pillar of Tribal Learning

Education and Education Policy:

Cajete, Gregory. 1994. Look to the Mountain: An Ecology of Indigenous Education. Kaviki Press: Skyland, NC.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. 2001. Power and place: Indian Education in America. Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, Golden (and American Indian Graduate Center).

Mihesuah, Devon and Angela Cavendar Wilson, eds. 2004. Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2004. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. New York: Zed Books.

Indian Gaming:

Barlett, D. & Steele, J.B. 2002. "Look who's cashing in at Indian Casinos" in Time Magazine, December 16, and December 23, 2002 Part 2, "Playing the political slots: how Indian casino interests have learned the art of buying influence in Washington, and from Ernie Stevens, Oneida, Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Association, "Indian gaming: Response to Time Magazine article", January 7, 2003.

Mason, W.D. 2000. Indian Gaming: Tribal sovereignty and American politics. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Wisconsin Legislative Audit bureau Report (on Indian gaming in Wisconsin) released December 4, 2002.

Policies: Environmental Justice

LaDuke, Winona. 1999. All our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life. South End Press: Cambridge, MA.

Sovereignty as Pillar of Tribal Learning

Tribal Government, Sovereignty, Democracy, Federal Policy:

Taiaiake Alfred. 1999. Peace, Power, Righteousness: An Indigenous Manifesto. Oxford University Press: Don Mills, Ontario.

Deloria, Vine. Jr. and Clifford M. Lytle. 1983. "American Indians in Historical Perspective." In American Indians, American Justice. Austin TX: University of Texas Press.

Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. 2002. Treaty Rights: A Guide to Understanding Chippewa Treaty Rights. Odanah, WI: GLIFWC.

Lyons, Oren, John Mohawk, Vine Deloria Jr., et al. 1992. Exiled in the Land of the Free: Democracy, Indian Nations, and the US Constitution. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.

Mihesuah, D.A. ED. 2000. Repatriation Reader: Who owns American Indian remains. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

O'Brien, Sharon. 1989. American Indian Tribal Governments. University of Oklahoma Press: Norman, OK.

Pevar, Stephen. 2002. The Rights of Indians and Tribes: Basic American Civil Liberties Union Guide. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Wilkins, D.E. 1997. American Indian Sovereignty and the U.S. Supreme Court: The masking of justice. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Indigenous Intellectual Thought & Philosophy as Pillar of Tribal learning

Taiaike Alfred. 2005. Wasase: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom. Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press.

Bahr, Donald, Juan Smith, WIlliam Smith Allison, and Julian Hayden. 1994. Short Swift Time of Gods on Earth: The Hohokam Chronicles. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Black Elk series

DeMallie, R. 1984. The Sixth Grandfather: Black Elk's teachings given to John G. Neihardt. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press

Holler, Clyde. 2000. (ED). The Black Elk Reader. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Neihardt, J.G. 2000. Black Elk speaks: as told through J.G. Neihardt by Nicholas Black Elk (preface by Vine Deloria Jr.) Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.

Rice, J. 1991. Black Elk's Story: Distinguishing its Lakota Purpose. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press.

Cajete, G. 2000. Native Science: Natural laws of interdependence. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.

Deloria, Vine, Jr. 1999. Spirit & Reason. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Gaikesheyongai, S. 1994. The Seven Fires: An Ojibway prophecy. Toronto, Ontario Canada: Sister Vision Press.

Mohawk, J.C. 2000. Utopian legacies: A history of conquest and oppression in the Western world. Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers.

Ross, Rupert. 1992. Dancing with a Ghost: Exploring Indian Reality. Markham, Ontario: Reed Books.

Ross, Rupert. 2009. Returning to the Teachings: Exploring Aboriginal Justice. New York, NY: Penguin Global.

Swamp, Jake. The Great Law of Peace and the Constitution of the United States of America. Akwesasne, NY: Tree of Peace Society:

Warrior, Robert Allen. 1995. Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

World View: Music:

Diamond, B., Cronk, M.S. & von Rosen, F. 1994. Visions of Sound: Musical instruments of First Nations communities in Northeastern America. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

World View: Art:

Teilhet-Fisk, J. & Robin Franklin Nigh. 1998. Dimensions of Native America: the Contact Zone. Tallahassee, FL: Florida State University, Museum of Fine Arts.

World View: Tribal Language:

Ojibwe Language for Beginners: III Edition, Tribal College Edition. 1994. Duluth, MN: Ojibwe Mekana, Duluth. (With audio tape).

Christensen, Rosemary Ackley & Norman John Clark. 1995. "Waynji Mahji Tahyung, Meenahwah Gidishi'twahwi ninahn, Akina gaygoowaynji Mahji Tahmahguk (The Ojibwe world view infrastructure supported by the ether of Ojibwe spirituality)," in Susan M. Schacher, Editor, Celebration of Indigenous Thought and Expression. 22-45, Ojibwe with English translation. Sault Ste Marie, MI: Lake Superior State University.

Additional General Resources for Teachers:

American Indian Studies resources available from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, American Indian Studies Program, 125 South Webster Avenue, P.O. Box 7842, Madison, WI 53707:

American Indian Studies Program Information Packet. 2002.

American Indian Resource Manual for Public Libraries. 1992. Bulletin #2429.

Classroom Activities on Chippewa Treaty Rights. 1991. Bulletin #2150.

Classroom Activities in State and Local Government. 1989. (Includes a chapter on tribal government) Bulletin #9446

Indian Government/Law. 1990. Bulletin #0940

Classroom Resources for Teachers:

Slapin, Beverly and Doris Seale. 2005.A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children. Lanham, MD: Alta Mira.

Multicultural Literature for Children and Young Adults: A Selected Listing of Books By and About People of Color. 1991. Bulletin #1923.

Four Wind International Institute. 1984. Walking with Grandfather Curriculum Series.

Author Biographies

Rosemary Ackley Christensen, Anishinaabe, the daughter of two bird clans, is an enrolled member of the Sakaogon (Mole Lake) First Nation, Wisconsin Lake Superior Band of Ojibwe Indians, the band of her father, and raised on the Bad River First Nation, Wisconsin Lake Superior Band of her mother. She taught for ten years at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay, presently Emerita status, associate professor of Humanistic studies & First Nations studies. Prior to living and working in Green Bay from 2000 to 2010 she interacted with oral Ojibwe scholars at Ojibwe Mekana language research and curriculum facility located in Duluth, MN as the curriculum specialist. She spent fifteen years as director of Indian Education and curriculum specialist for the Minneapolis (MN) school district. Before her sojourn at the district she worked for the Minnesota Department of Education in the Indian Education section, after her time as a research associate at the Upper Midwest Regional Laboratory (UMREL). Her research and work interest centers on oral tradition and elder epistemology and she spends interactive learning time with her teachers, oral traditional scholars. She is modestly published and writes of and works with cultural teaching methods based on the tribal three r's of respect, reciprocity and relationship with the fourth r, responsibility added later. Rosemary has 2 wonderful sons and four remarkable grandchildren living in North Carolina.

Deborah Dillon has been a professional educator in the Milwaukee Public School System for the past twenty–three years. She has worked in both the elementary and middle school settings and currently teaches second grade. Ms. Dillon has a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from Marian College.

Lah^te, Louis Williams, Jr. Sheku Akweku,(Greetings friend). My Onyote^aka(People of the Standing Stone/ or Oneida) name and means, "He goes ahead." I belong to the Wolf Clan. I am an enrolled tribal member of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, one of three different Oneida Communities. I was born and raised near Ann Arbor, Michigan. There I attended the Brighton public school system in Brighton, Michigan. My mother is of Caucasian/ mixed descent and my father is Oneida, Iroquois/ Haudenosaunee. My Oneida Grandparents moved from Oneida, Wisconsin to Willow Run, Michigan in the early 1940s. They raised eight children in Brighton, a town north of Ann Arbor. My Oneida Grandparents are Peter and Belle Mae (Doxtator) Williams. I left Michigan when I was twenty to attend Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. I spent the summers with family in Oneida, Wisconsin. I earned an Associate of Science Degree in Natural Sciences and then later Bachelor of Arts in American Indian Studies both from HINU. My scholarship and life passion consists of Building and Maintaining Indigenous Cultural Identity, more specifically, Lotinosoni (Iroquois) and Oneida Identity. I completed courses toward a master's degree in Applied Leadership for Teaching and Learning at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay. Currently, I am in a doctoral program the University at Buffalo-SUNY. I believe that it is important to learn who you are and have the ability to draw on the knowledge of your ancestors for life's decisions. As a graduate student studying First Nations Cultural Based Education, I bring an optimistic, contemporary perspective to Indigenous teaching methods. The experience I have had working with secondary and post secondary students gives me an idea of what keeps the youth of today motivated and interested in pursuing their academic goals. Being a college student keeps me connected with the students and allows me to be objective to various teaching methods. It is a privilege and honor to contribute in this project.

Lisa Poupart is an enrolled member of the Lac Du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Anishinaabeg. She is an Associate Professor of First Nations Studies, Humanistic Studies, and Women & Gender Studies at the University of Wisconsin Green Bay. She serves as the chair and advisor of the First Nations Studies program and co-directs the Professional Program in Education's Center for First Nations Studies. Her work is concerned with healing historic trauma and internalized oppression in First Nations communities and the social problems that stem from these phenomena. She is currently involved with a number of state and national initiatives to standardize First Nations Studies curriculum and core knowledge in K-16. She earned a Doctorate of Philosophy in Justice Studies from Arizona State University with a concentration in First Nations law and policy. Her

son Skye is Oneida and Anishinaabe. Together they are adopted into the Menominee Nation wolf clan.

Russell Reuter has been involved in education since 2007. Mr. Reuter earned a Bachelor of Arts in First Nations Studies from the University of Wisconsin Green Bay in 2008. He is working in elementary education with emphasis in Memory Circle and Circle of learning. In partnership with education, Reuter works to promote cultural bridge building and cultural/achievement gap reduction, utilizing the wisdom and knowledge of traditional tribal elders and oral traditions.

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