Examining the Integration of Aboriginal Cultural Content in the Elementary School Curriculum in a First Nation in Mid-Northern Ontario

by

Melanie Manitowabi, B.A, B.Ed.

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to compare the Assembly of First Nations and a northern Ontario First Nation’s definition of Culture Based Education (CBE). The study also explores how the integration of CBE takes place in the local First Nation school system. It incorporates an Indigenous Knowledge framework using qualitative data based on community interviews with Elders, a parent-teacher group and teachers from a local First Nation school. This research is of benefit to both First Nations in the areas of school curriculum planning and to academics seeking to understand CBE and its application in First Nation schools.
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# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................. i
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................... ii
List of Figures ......................................................................................................... iii
List of Tables .......................................................................................................... iii
Terminology and Abbreviations ................................................................................ v

Chapter 1 Introduction: My Journey of Gathering Sweetgrass .................................. 1
  Research Problem ................................................................................................. 7
  Purpose .................................................................................................................. 8
  Objective .............................................................................................................. 9

Chapter 2 Literature Review: Learning about Sweetgrass from Knowledge Keepers .. 10

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework and Methodology: Planning my Own Search for
  Sweetgrass ........................................................................................................... 26
  Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................... 26
  Methodology ......................................................................................................... 28
  Setting: Planning to Pick Sweetgrass ................................................................... 33
  Participants: The Search for Sweetgrass ............................................................... 34
  Ethics: Reciprocity .............................................................................................. 35
  Data Collection: Gathering Sweetgrass ............................................................... 36
  Transcription and Coding: Cleaning Sweetgrass .................................................. 38

Chapter 4 Results: Curing Sweetgrass ..................................................................... 39

Chapter 5 Discussion: Bundling Sweetgrass ............................................................ 54
  Themes: Sweetgrass Bundles ............................................................................... 55

Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusion: Braiding Sweetgrass .................................. 66
  Limitations of the Research ................................................................................ 70
  Implications for Research and Practice ............................................................... 71
  Braiding Sweetgrass ............................................................................................ 73

References ................................................................................................................ 75

Appendices .............................................................................................................. 81
  Appendix 1: Interview Guide Questions .............................................................. 81
  Appendix 2: Confidentiality form for Helper ....................................................... 82
  Appendix 3: Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee .............. 83
  Appendix 4: Community Band Council Resolution ...................................... 84
  Appendix 5: Queen's Ethics Review Committee .............................................. 85
  Appendix 6: Letter of Intention/Consent .......................................................... 86
  Appendix 7: Recruitment Flyer .......................................................................... 88

List of Figures
  Figure 1: RELATIONSHIPS .............................................................................. 58
  Figure 2: ICEBERG ............................................................................................ 62
List of Tables

Table 1: PARTICIPANT BREAKDOWN BY SEX ...........................................34
Table 2: ROLES OF PARTICIPANTS ..................................................35
Table 3: SHARING CIRCLE SCHEDULE ..............................................38
Terminology and Abbreviations

The following is the list of terms that refer to First Nation people, and current terms being used to explain the current trends in education.

**Anishinaabe**: (or the plural form Anishinaabek) is the autonym in use by Algonquian-speaking Indigenous peoples in Canada (the Odawa, Potawatomi, Ojibwa, Saulteaux, Chippewa, and Algonquin). There are various translations of this word, one of which is “good person”. The suffix *kwe* denotes female.

**Assembly of First Nations (AFN)**: is the national advocacy group in Canada representing on-reserve Indigenous peoples. The National Indian Brotherhood is its precursor organization.

**Ojibwa/Anishinaabemowin**: is the name of the language of the Anishinaabek.

**First Nation**: is a term that replaces ‘reserve’ and it is an Indigenous community recognized by the Government of Canada.

**Indigenous Knowledge (IK)**: refers to localized knowledge and in this thesis it refers to knowledge that is original to Indigenous peoples.

**Indigenous**: original to, or natural to a place or region. In this thesis this word is capitalized when used in reference to the original peoples of Canada. Alternate terms used to reference Indigenous peoples in Canada include Indian, Inuit, Metis and Aboriginal. These alternate terms are incorporated in this thesis when citing sources that use them.

**Mino-Bimaadiziwin**: means “good life”. It is an Indigenous Anishinaabe philosophy and worldview of holistic and healthy living (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional).

**Anishinaabe manidoo-aadzawin**: means a spiritual (manidoo) way of life (aadzawin...
CHAPTER 1

Introduction: My Journey of Gathering Sweetgrass

The key to the future of any society lies in the transmission of its culture and worldview to succeeding generations. The socialization of children, through education, shapes all aspects of identity, instilling knowledge of the group’s language, history, traditions, behaviours, and spiritual beliefs. It is for this reason that Indigenous peoples in Canada have placed such a high priority on regaining control over education for their children (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, 1985, pp. 1).

It has been 45 years since the national call to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of Indian people by the National Indian Brotherhood (1972). This call, expressed in the document “Indian Control of Indian Education,” emphasized that education must give Indigenous children a strong sense of identity with confidence in their personal worth and ability (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972). Since the release of this document, significant strides have been made in integrating Indigenous content in Provincial schools and First Nations schools in Ontario. Despite this, a 2011 national panel examining First Nations on-reserve education found lower educational attainment in comparison to non-First Nation people. This lack of success in school compromises self-determination and leads to dependency (Haldane, Lafond and Krause, 2012), and results in the ongoing legacy of colonialism (Wotherspoon and Satzewich, 1993).

This thesis examines the contemporary articulation of Indigenous control of Indigenous education by an Anishinaabe-kwe. Following standard protocol in Indigenous literature (e.g. Battisted, 2013; Wilson, 2008), I begin by situating myself in this study.
Anishinaabe endow. My family settled in both Wiigwaaskiniga (Whitefish River First Nation) and Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory (formerly known as the Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve), and their ancestors were spread out all over Turtle Island. Most of my extended family speaks Anishinaabemowin as their first language; however English is the spoken language for many, and my generation were not encouraged to learn and speak Anishinaabemowin as a first language. My relationship with my grandparents ran deep and ended much earlier than most of my peers. My memories of my grandparents are strong and are flooded with what I experienced while with them. My grandparents were very hard workers; my grandfather was a World War II veteran, farmer, fisherman, sawmill operator, and served his community as a Councilor for many years. My grandmother worked along with my grandfather living off the land, raising her family, and was known as a highly skilled crafter using many artistic mediums. She was a proficient berry picker and sweetgrass harvester, and a fantastic cook. Both my grandparents worked hard together to make ends meet, and my mother inherited this hard work ethic.

My mom was born and raised in a town close to her First Nation. The reasons for this remain unclear to me. Despite this, this upbringing would eventually shape my mother and her children’s lives, and so began my journey. Growing up my mom did not say that her life was all that terrible, but I know that she had to overcome both overt and systemic racism, and a challenging upbringing with aging parents. She therefore had to grow up fast and also learn how to cope with a variety of family obstacles. She eventually left high school early, making the decision to leave home to go to southern Ontario to
enter the workforce. She was quite self-sufficient on her own at the age of 15 with support from a variety of friends and family along the way. One memory she often shares with me is how she prided herself on helping her parents any way possible, mainly by sending them some of her wages that she earned out in the workforce, or by selling my grandmother’s crafts for a better price down south and then sending the money back home. After a few years of being away, my mother came back home and worked locally. At this time she met my father and then had me. They both were quite young and discovering who they were, so inevitably the union did not last more than a couple of years. My mother continued working and then met my stepfather who also grew up in the same town as she did. They eventually married and had two more children.

My upbringing was much different than my mother’s. I enjoyed school a bit more, and the pressure to complete high school was high, but beyond that, pursuing education lay solely on me. I too did not go without being affected by racism. It was however, not tolerated as much, thus growing up seemed much easier for my generation than previous ones, or so I thought this was the case. At that time, growing up in my community, I was surrounded by non-First Nation people, and for the most part, my peers accepted me. I formed relationships and was able to build a community of friends. However, there were no role models to look up to in the few careers in the small town where we lived, especially in the educational system. As I think back, I often wonder: Who were my role models? Who informed my direction? Who was shaping my identity? Why did I not think much more beyond graduating high school? How did my education shape my life choices? For me I normalized just going to school and learning with my peers and in hindsight my life was rather mechanical. I did not fully understand that I was different
than them, nor how, or even what made me different. I knew nothing about my identity, except that I was an “Indian” and not “white,” and that feeling at times was not a positive one. Those periods remind me of the variety of class and racial systems that made up my community, and that trying to blend in had its costs.

As I reflect, there were components of identity that I had, but it has taken me a long time to realize it. I did have overt knowledge of my culture and place; I just learned it in an internalized way. It was not through symbols or visual representation, but rather learned by listening, watching and doing and by continuing to be me, without the village or community members direct help in shaping our (my siblings and me) upbringing. Upon reflection, my journey involves an engagement in living, learning, and re-learning.

My parents’ generation is one where it is apparent the Indigenous knowledge associated with living off the land, speaking Anishinaabemowin, and promoting cultural teachings was not as strong, especially for my mom. Although it is still a part of who they are, they were the generation of children whose parents believed that for their kids to be successful, they needed mainstream education. This meant the connection to their land, language, and history was not a necessity to learn anymore, or pass on, since it was assumed a better future could be found in successful employment and advancement in mainstream Canadian society. However, this is not what took place. Many students did not graduate high school or post-secondary studies, and this remains the case to an extent at present. As a result, they were without their Indigenous knowledge, and they were not gaining the benefits of mainstream education, which is a direct consequence of the structural effects of colonial assimilation polices in Canadian society (cf. Wotherspoon
and Satzewich, 1993). Former residential school survivor John Tootoosis explains the impact of this experience in the context of education,

> When an Indian comes out of these places, it is like being put between two walls in a room and left hanging in the middle. On one side are all the things he learned from his people and their way of life that was being wiped out, and on the other are the white man’s way which he could never fully understand since he never had the right amount of education and could not be part of it. There he is, hanging in the middle of the two cultures and he is not a white man, and he is not an Indian. They washed away practically everything an Indian needed to help himself, to think the way a human person should survive (as cited in Battiste, 1986, p. 10).

Since the era of residential schools and the following period of integrating Indigenous students in the mainstream Canadian education system, there is now a demonstrated resistance to assimilation with the resurgence of Indigenous knowledge. The significance of this resurgence is illustrated by Lavallee (2009), “Indigenous epistemology is holistic, acknowledging the interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of individuals with all living things and with the earth, the star world, and the universe” (p. 23).

The cultural aspects of identity are returning and are becoming a part of the school practices in First Nation communities, and to some extent in the public school system (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007). This revival has led me to wonder how this pathway of learning Indigenous culture through a formal education system impacts student identity, and educational outcomes. In order to determine this, it is necessary that
I dig deeper into what the shared definition of “culture based education” (CBE) is to the Indigenous community. Is there a standard definition that is shared by Elders, teachers, community members and stakeholders? For example, the AFN’s definition of CBE uses the term “cultural responsibility,” along with many other terms such as cultural congruence, culturally sensitivity, culturally inclusivity, cultural synchronization, cultural compatibility and culturally appropriate. The most basic notion is that Indigenous language and culture are needed in programs to improve educational outcomes for First Nations students in both the classroom and overall school environment (AFN, 2012, p. 69).

In contrast to the AFN, the National Indigenous Education Association’s definition of CBE

…grounds high-quality instructional practices in culturally and linguistically relevant contexts. CBE is more than teaching language and culture as individual projects; it is a systematic approach fully incorporating and integrating specific constructive ways of thinking, learning, and problem-solving into educational practice. For Native students, these methods include recognizing and utilizing Native languages as a first or second language, pedagogy that incorporates traditional cultural characteristics and involves teaching strategies that are harmonious with the Native culture knowledge and contemporary ways of knowing and learning (NIEA, 2008, p.1).

So, do these national definitions match local Anishinaabe communities’ definition? What are the various teaching methodologies embedded into the school curriculum that incorporate CBE? At the same time, how are children responding to it? It
is my hope to provide answers to these questions, and provide recommendations for those who are unsure of how to embed CBE into their teaching methodology. A clear definition and criteria are needed to inform a CBE curriculum and framework. This is important since according to Porsanger (2004),

Each community will have its stories and understanding of how they have come to live in the world, and what they value as to how to live in their age. Indigenous methodologies then drawn from this ontology of being connected physically, spiritually with all things are then not theoretically constructed from imaginative thinking that emerges from a fact-finding mission, but conform to Indigenous knowledge according to local cultural imperatives (as cited in Battiste, 2013, p. 75).

Research Problem

My interest in this research topic stems from my experience as a grade 3-4 teacher at an Anishinaabe First Nation school. In that role I chose a variety of ways to integrate Indigenous culture into the curriculum with limited resources and understanding. I felt alone in the process, and the pressure of adding culture was always there since it was an expectation. I was not sure if I was accomplishing the effective integration of cultural content, and at times, I questioned what cultural education meant. This occurrence made me wonder how this experience compares to other teachers faced with this task. Is there a precise definition of what CBE methods are in the context of a Northern Ontario First Nation School system? If so, is there a framework that teachers can utilize to allow for
growth and understanding when planning their lessons for their students, with confidence and a non-biased approach?

The Purpose of the Study

There is extensive literature calling for the integration of Indigenous cultural content and knowledge into the classroom for on and off-reserve First Nations students in Canada (Kanu, 2011). Battiste (1998) and McAlpine (2001) suggest that this not only increases student motivation and achievement but also leads to closing the achievement gap between Indigenous students and their non-Indigenous counterparts. Furthermore, it increases the percentage of Indigenous students who graduate from secondary education (Simard, 1994).

The research conducted by Chandler (2010) provides evidence that there is a correlation between holistic teaching and success. Their overall study addresses the social determinants of health and how this impacts education. There is however, more to it than just getting through to graduation. It is about cultural continuity and the markers that help to focus the lens on student success (Chandler 2010). Kirkness (1999), has argued that First Nations people need to move forward with developing an innovative education plan for their communities based on community input. The AFN (2012) has also put a call out for more research on the definition of, and measuring tools, for CBE to ensure consistency and growth, leading to more positive student outcomes. As well, the Union of Ontario Indians (2005) states what most Ontario Anishinaabe First Nations communities envision for a framework (this includes my First Nation). In essence, the vision and mission statement is clear: the communities want the highest standards in First Nation
education, based on Anishinaabek value systems, which includes an education framework that recognizes their autonomy. They envision a system that prepares their children for success, inclusive of Anishnaabemowin, a culturally responsive curriculum, and guided by Anishinaabe aadiziwin. Given the political support for Indigenous education, my question is, what has since been done to integrate a culturally responsive curriculum and how is it monitored for success?

Objective

In the following thesis, I propose to answer the following questions: 1) What is the definition of CBE in a Northern Anishinaabe First Nation?; and 2) Is there a difference between Elder, community and school definitions of CBE? To accomplish this, I first set out to interview various groups in the community on the topic of CBE, and I compared their perspectives with existing definitions such as that of the AFN (2012). More specifically, I conducted interviews with two Elders and Knowledge Keepers of the community, nine teachers who are teaching students in grades K-6 in a First Nation school, three parents, as well as seven community members to gain their insight as to what they feel CBE is. I looked for specific methodologies they engage in, resources they have, and institutional supports they use. Lastly, I shared my findings with the educational stakeholders, with the objective of improving First Nations education outcomes in all subject areas.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review: Learning about Sweetgrass from Knowledge Keepers

Throughout this journey, it was critical to research history, educational praxis and how this has affected educational outcomes (e.g. The Indian Act, 1876; White Paper, 1969; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Indian Control of Indian Education, 1972; Truth and Reconciliation Commissions of Canada, 2015). It is critical to understand the political systems, which have imposed an unequal system on people who were self-determining before colonization. The Indian Act created dependency and control over First Nation people when it comes to daily living, and systems of education, health and social welfare (Barman, Hebert and McCaskill, 1986; Waldram, Herring and Young, 2006; Shewell, 2004).

The task of overlooking the well-being of Indigenous peoples was in the hands of those who did not share the same beliefs, values, and customs, yet had a sole responsibility to govern and protect. Consequently, this has not only caused hardship for the First Nations of Canada; but it has also caused intergenerational trauma within First Nation communities, families and persons. This being the case, there is also a legacy of resilience towards these policies that has led to a momentum of regaining self-determination amongst Indigenous peoples of Canada and the world. For example, First Nations communities have been consistently rallying for the change in the ways their children are educated. It is through these grassroots movements that policy changes are apparent, for instance, the Indian Control of Indian Education (1972). This policy was intended to take a stand against the forced integration of schooling of First Nation students and have communities take back ownership of teaching their children. This
position advocates for Indigenous communities, their people, and the fiduciary responsibility of the federal government to attend to education needs. It was released shortly after the federal government’s 1969 White Paper, which outlined the intent to break treaty obligations and abandon its fiduciary duties. That, coupled with the grim statistics of Indigenous graduates in post-secondary studies, meant that it was time to make a stand. This policy was therefore a strategy to move forward and create a more impactful education for First Nation children, so they too would have a better chance of academic achievement. Unfortunately, it was not enough, and education policies are still very much controlled by the federal and provincial governments.

Since then, more acknowledgment and stories have made their way through various research commissions held, such as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). RCAP heard from many First Nations people all over Canada revealing the truths of colonization, forced assimilation and blatant lack of respect for the First Nations people and their inherent treaty rights. The document opened the eyes of Canadians to the actual lack of care and responsibility the federal government has taken towards the people for whom they were responsible. The RCAP testimonies and stories indicate the spirit and intent of treaty relationships had long ago been severed. This document shares the Indigenous perspective and the historical practices that lay claim to broken promises. Many of these stories were in hiding for hundreds of years and RCAP invited Indigenous people to share and hear this Indigenous knowledge of the past. It was with high hopes that these stories of truth would eventually restore the people to what was once an identity linked to land, culture, and self-determination. This determination could only start once the government established a true nation-to-nation relationship, which at that
time was a challenging enterprise (RCAP, 1996). Over the years some doors have opened allowing for potential relationships to build with the federal government and First Nation people. However, these always seemed short lived. In the years since the White Paper, the Canadian government has given Indigenous communities more local control. They have included more Indigenous people in decision-making and handed over bits and pieces of the administrative apparatus that continue to shape Indigenous lives. However, governments need to affirm that Indigenous nations are self-governing and it is imperative to permit them to decolonize. It is by their actions, and not their policies, that governments continue to block Indigenous nations from assuming the broad powers of governance that would permit them to fashion their institutions and work out their solutions to social, economic and political problems. It is this refusal that effectively blocks the way forward. This is evidenced by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) that adds to the historical and policy documentation of Indigenous education in Canada. The TRC was a result of a class action lawsuit representing victims of Indian Residential Schools. The legal settlement of the lawsuit led to compensation for those who suffered physical, sexual, social, mental, and spiritual abuse while attending the federally funded schools operated by churches (TRC, 2015). As a result of the legal actions, former students and their families received an out of court settlement for what is deemed a ‘cultural genocide’ that had taken place in Canada for over a hundred years. This settlement is intended to help families now given the advanced age of many of the survivors. In addition to the settlement, it was integral that the people who endured the pain and suffering were able to tell their stories, so they were not to be forgotten. Therefore, the TRC was formed to collect, record and archive their stories for future
reference. One result of the TRC is a lengthy list of recommendations such as Indigenous Education sec. 62 (TRC, 2015, p. 7). The main argument is more autonomy and funding for programs to promote student achievement at all levels. As the reports reveal, the Canadian public ignores the past policies sharing the truths of injustices of Indigenous people, and we have seen that the suffering of peoples who experienced these atrocities first hand and the intergenerational trauma will continue if the stories just become archived and no action taken. Therefore, as the TRC asserts, now is the time that the education system can make a difference by creating a safe place for students to learn who they are, where they have come from, and where they need to go next. What is required is a system that is culturally based and inclusive of all histories. As Grand Chief Nepinak of Manitoba stated, “the outgoing Prime Minister Harper has awoken a sleeping giant in Indigenous peoples of these lands” (CBC, 2015). Thus, the TRC will be the stepping-stone for actions, and it will be the future government's responsibility to carry out a true nation-to-nation relationship on the basis of these recommendations.

I next turn to examining literature on Indigenous knowledge-based curriculum and self-identity. Purdie, Tripcony, Boulton-Lewis, and Fenshaw (2000) conducted a study on Indigenous high school students in Australia. The focus of their study was to explore the link between positive self-identity and student achievement. In their study, students were interviewed to explore the connection or disconnection between home, community and school and how this may affect student’s sense of self as an indicator of success. It found a positive sense of identity associated with the connection between home, community and school, but the results were inconclusive with respect to the connection to student success. Regardless of the inclusive connection with student
success, this result is important because we often think of Indigenous students having a compromised sense of identity, and as a result, they have a more difficult time succeeding in school. However, it may be that students grow up knowing who they are, but are challenged by this in their educational setting and if they do not receive active support, they may lose their sense of pride resulting in a weak sense of self. This study is relevant to this thesis because it relates the importance of the student’s having a positive identity and how this is associated to their success.

Chandler (2010) conducted a study in British Columbia that reviewed the effects social determinants of health have on student outcomes in education. The study discusses how an Indigenous community in British Columbia is addressing social issues and lists the variables that set the stage for well-being. This study includes re-establishing woman’s roles in leadership, litigation of land title, preserving the Indigenous language, establishing community facilities to preserve cultural artifacts and practices, and overall local self-governing control over health, education, welfare and judicial matters (Chandler, 2010). With these in place, it is suggested collective success towards community wellness, governance, will occur, which ultimately results in more students succeeding in academics.

Kanu (2012) conducted a Canadian study on the integration of Indigenous perspectives into the classroom with a focus on high school students. The study examined teacher pedagogy and the ability to integrate Indigenous perspectives with the appropriate level to increase student achievement through self-reflection and the purposeful integration of cultural knowledge. This study highlights the increasing teacher understanding of their role as the facilitator of cultural transmission. The research
provides an example of what teaching practices currently look like in non-First Nation schools, and challenges of decolonizing education in the school systems today. However, the question remains: Is this enough? Kanu’s research may be a start but it is not a comprehensive approach to addressing CBE.

Addressing CBE must be founded upon Indigenous teachings, knowledge, and a cultural understanding of people. As Battiste argues, “knowledge is not a commodity that can be possessed and controlled by education institutions, but is a living process to be absorbed and understood” (2002, pg.14). Battiste (2013) examines First Nation education, language immersion programs, holistic practices of education and the current systems in place. Her recommendations stress the need to begin decolonizing education, and by doing so, student achievement will prevail. Battiste (2013) makes a link to the past policies and theories, merging them with current trends in revitalizing languages and cultures which are vanishing at astonishing rates within communities. However, the solution is not an easy one. Battiste (2013) acknowledges the experiential challenges when surrounded by globalization and the English language. She also makes the connection to school and community planning, and the implementation of measuring tools, to determine if immersion schools are on the path to developing students’ oral fluency and comprehension. The challenge remains however, to the students who do not attend such unique schools, and may never do so. How do we create strong identities when knowing that their first language will be English? It is the hope that CBE will at least address the achievement gap for the future preservation of culture identity.

Archibald’s (2008) research examines the use of Indigenous stories of the Trickster and Coyote as a way to integrate teachings about the life lessons learned by
these characters along their journey. Her use of Elders to guide her research helps to connect the learner back to their cultural roots and create meaningful connections to the school curriculum. Her concept of storywork (use of storytelling in education) and guidance of Elders functions to increase student engagement, student success, and overall growth in student achievement. This is due to the connection with their family, community, nation and culture. This effect is important because often when this type of learning is taking place the cultural understanding shines through and addresses multiple teaching points. Each person takes away messages that are meaningful to them. If the educators do not understand this, then it is just a story and does not contain a cultural understanding of worldview.

Stevenson (2011) reviews the theoretical concepts of CBE as it pertains to other disciplines to get a sense of the various definitions coined by a variety of leading theorists (e.g. Bourdieu, 1987; Barth, 1969; Bruner, 1994; Giroux, 1983; Bhabha, 1994; Ermine, 1995; Cajete, 1994) using an action research methodology. He then uses these theories to arrive at a definition that would help Inuit teachers gain a better understanding of what culture means. The purpose of his approach is to evaluate if there is a transmission of cultural methodologies in their teaching through their inquiry-based methods. There are some shared similarities between his research and this study. This similarity is apparent through the community’s definition of what defines CBE, with concrete examples of what teaching methodologies should be employed. Doing this type of research is congruent within an Indigenous Knowledge framework, and is affirmed with the guidelines of the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (First Nations Information Governance Centre [FNIGC], 2007).
A study conducted by Guillory and Garnet (2014) in Alaska, arrived at a global definition of culture and ways of infusing culture into the curriculum to better educate their children. The study methodology incorporated focus group interviews including parents, teachers, principals and tribal community leaders with varied tribal affiliations. This study found that there is a broad range of perspectives on what culture means with some similarities. There seems to be a great divide with intergenerational definitions of what culture is, as well as urban versus tribal reservation definitions. Infusing culture was defined as very hands on approach that integrates community while ensuring they have a welcoming way to get parents involved which are critical. Lastly, there is a need to understand teacher capacity to incorporate the culture into the classroom. It is fair to say that not all Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers feel confident in this area and some shy away from including this area of learning, as they do not want to offend and believe it is up to the schools to mandate how this will look. As the study suggests most schools are swamped with testing students in this American Indigenous education system, and adding more professional development on ‘culture’ is not taking place. The study concludes there is the consensus that educators do need to learn more about the history and about the tribal group they work with in order to actually serve the communities’ cultural values. This knowledge includes but is not limited to: aspects of tribal life, language, traditional practices, history, tribal sovereignty, religious practices with a heavy emphasis on family, and giving back to the tribal community (Guillory and Garnet, 2014). The integration of knowledge can only be accomplished fully when all stakeholders are involved in the planning for their children’s future. Guillory and Garnet’s (20014) study closely aligns to what Canada’s First Nation leaders want to know as well. Their study
further points to the difficulty in arriving at a universal definition of culture. Despite this, if nations within nations arrive with a shared set of standards for the education system and base this on their current needs and knowledge of their communities, then perhaps this will lead to the basis of a stronger cultural understanding for all.

The AFN Cultural Competency Report (2012) states, “There do not appear to be any rigorous evaluation studies of culturally responsive education and its impact on Indigenous student achievement in Canada or the United States of a large scale compared to those in New Zealand” (AFN, 2012, p. 25). They have, however, come up with a definition of what CBE is, and have included a plethora of recommendations of how to achieve culturally responsive education into the school systems. They also have made numerous links to a variety of Indigenous cultures that have made some gains in measuring, tracking, and describing how they monitor student CBE by use of qualitative and quantitative data such as the Hawaiian Culture Based Education Rubric. These rubrics have established a baseline of where CBE is overtly and systematically taught and compared it to mainstream educational systems in Hawaii. This study looks promising, but like many studies, there is little information regarding the overall understanding that teachers have regarding CBE and what school systems have done to ensure that teachers are including CBE to its fullest potential. Another question that comes to mind is the validity of the predictions regarding student outcomes. The study does show a major correlation between CBE and student outcomes in academics. In Canada, we have many First Nation communities who have their schools, and yet the statistics show that students are not graduating at par with their non-First Nation counterparts, and the projection of student achievement is bleak (Haldone, Lafond and Krause, 2012). Therefore, something
is missing in these schools, and it appears that the study conducted in Hawaii shows that it is not only the schools that must include cultural education, but it is the community as well. The Hawaiian study also includes an extensive literature review, and all have similar themes such as the inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge, community planning, and a strong use of Indigenous language.

Demmert (2003) conducted a literature review on the influences of CBE on the academic performance of Indigenous American students. Most of the literature in some way focused on three areas, cultural compatibility theory, cognitive theory, and cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT). Demmert did not sense there was enough evidence to prove each theory on its own. Therefore, Demmert argues that it would be best to use all three approaches when researching if CBE has a direct correlation with academic performance. Thus, instead of looking for studies that focused on one of these three areas, he changes his scope and directs his attention to six criteria in his research. These include: recognition and use of Native languages, traditional teaching pedagogy of the group, cultural-based curriculum, community engagement/participation in educational decisions, and knowledge of community protocols. Demmert cites one study, The Kamehameha Early Education Program (KEEP) that holds promise. The KEEP study included a primary focus on adding CBE practices in pedagogy. The experiment included variances on the level of skill a teacher possessed regarding CBE, which may have had some effect on student outcome, but nonetheless still had favourable outcomes and was very successful. Students were measured based on the standardized reading scores and were scoring at or above the norm. The study also invested a lot of time, money, and resources, which may be a challenge to most Indigenous communities when it comes to
assessing student success in the context of CBE. It does however have so much potential because it proves that if programs are planned according to tribal learning styles that are inclusive of their cultural worldviews, and intertwined with a strong foundation, students will have a higher probability of success. Throughout Demmert’s (2003) research he found it hard to scientifically prove that there is a definite correlation between CBE and academic achievement; though there is promise that embedding it into the curriculum might may set the stage for student success.

Aside from examining CBE and student’s success, Demmert’s (2008) review summarized a generic ‘Indigenous Culture-Based Education Rubric system’ in partnership with a variety of organizations including the Kamehameha schools in Hawaii, whom originally developed the CBE rubric scale for their schools. The intention of the rubric is to get a baseline of data regarding CBE in the schools, and then use this information for further community planning. Despite that this study is based in the U.S., it does seem relevant to the communities in which I live given that its focus is on Indigenous peoples and CBE. As I subsequently show in this thesis, the Indigenous community in my study is undertaking initiatives in CBE. From what I have observed, there is not a set baseline of where they are, and a focus on where they need to go next. My study will set a baseline understanding and a recommendation of a future course of action. The result of my study is a visual reminder of goals and criteria with suggested examples derived at in a good way with the objective of starting a conversation and setting a future direction.

Corbiere (2000) speaks to the current need for a transformative First Nation educational curriculum model, which is wholistic (his spelling) and meaningful to the
student, family, and community. He states that having a solid foundation in school will in turn create a positive Anishinaabe identity in a mainstream world. He arrives at his conclusion by examining the past and present education systems of First Nation people through a continuum. Citing the work of Hampton (1995), he traces education from a time of a traditional education delivered by their own people, which then lead to the ongoing process of colonization and assimilation policies, which has constructed a detached model of education for First Nation learners. The model has five stages on its continuum: 1) a traditional school before contact; 2) education for self-determination (which was short lived and only included a few test schools); 3) education for assimilation (the residential school era); 4) education by First Nation people through a Western curriculum and methods (which is currently the leading education in most schools today); and 5) school curricula and methodology that meets the needs of Anishinaabe people through a wholistic model (including education for Anishinaabe people by Anishinaabe people and is infused with Anishinaabe epistemology, pedagogy, and way of life). This approach serves not only their Anishinaabemowin language requirements but also their culture and identity of being Anishinaabe. This model of education is a First Nation perspective on all ways of knowing, or ‘seeing with a Native Eye.’ This type of knowledge is not included in a standard curriculum, yet it is what sets Anishinaabe people apart from a detached conventional educational system that occurs today. Thus, the education system that Corbiere (2000) describes in stage five is beginning to unfold in various communities through their efforts to maintain their identity. Many schools are re-establishing Anishinaabe ways of knowing, such as the Immersion schools. These schools where instruction is given in Anishinaabemowin, are a
vehicle to ensure that the language transmission continues throughout the generations. Corbiere (2000) however cautions that language instruction may not be enough, especially if it is only transcribing and regurgitating the English curriculum. The curriculum and methods of teaching Anishinaabe students must be congruent with their worldview based on past knowledge inclusive of their beliefs, histories, culture and language, in order for it to become an actual wholistic educational model. This model builds on the relationship held with Elders as teachers, animals, and land Knowledge Keepers, and the inclusion of spiritual messengers who create balance. With this model, we will then see our philosophies, pedagogies, and epistemology as the foundation of Anishinaabe manidoo-aadzawin.

The study by the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL, 2009) describes Holistic Lifelong Learning Models developed in partnership with CCL, the University of Saskatchewan and the First Nations Adult and Higher Educational on Consortium (co-leads of CCL’s Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre), and Aboriginal learning experts from across Canada. This large-scale study went beyond the typical studies that share the despair of Indigenous peoples in the educational system, and focused on what is needed to create a better system that is inclusive of Indigenous voices who need to be leaders in defining success criteria that meet the needs of their communities. This framework builds on a body of knowledge of an earlier study conducted in 2007 on the Aboriginal learning experts from across Canada. The current structure is based on elements common to all three learning models and is inclusive of Indigenous perspectives such as Sources and Domains of Knowledge, The Lifelong Learning Journey, and Community Well-Being. These templates include indicators aiding in a complete assessment of Indigenous
learning. The focus is not only K-12, but infancy through to the senior years and includes a variety of settings (school, home community, workplace, and land) (CCL, 2009). Overall, the study looks at strengths, weaknesses, wants, needs and next steps especially for indicators not developed in each area. It also describes the strong connection between learning and well-being. This leads to a broader and more holistic picture of how learning happens. It thus changes the conversation of what is deemed success in an Indigenous context that is more than graduation rates.

Little Bear (2009) examines the various studies in Canada and arrives at the conclusion that Canada’s educational systems are failing Indigenous students. This failing occurs mainly because Canada does not listen to what Indigenous peoples want, need, or see as their strengths and weaknesses. The current model of education resists changes to infrastructure, curriculum, and pedagogy. Therefore, Indigenous people are denied the possibility to make a change in today’s current education system because of the hierarchical structures in place. Little Bear (2009) cites a pan-Canadian study conducted by the Canadian Council on Learning, which is a not for profit organization that promotes and supports research improving all aspects of learning across the country. This particular study of Indigenous education included five Indigenous regionally based knowledge centres. These centres were organized to support the mandate that was addressed by the learning council, “The purpose of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre is to effect individual, community and institutional change in learning to advance the social, cultural, economic and political development of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples: recognizing Indigenous Peoples’ relationships to Canada, their relationship to place and naturalizing Indigenous world views, knowledge, experiences and
perspectives” (Little Bear, 2009, pp. 6). Thus it is recognized that there is the need for research in the following areas: 1) Learning from Place, 2) Nourishing the learning spirit, 3) Aboriginal language, 4) Diverse educational systems of learning, 5) Pedagogy of professionals, and 6) Learning with technology. This looks at education as inclusive and is a more holistic way to measure Aboriginal student success. Little Bear’s (2009) analysis goes in depth as to what the very essence of an Indigenous education model is, and what it must include for it to be effective. His review of the CCL study is similar to the research that is conducted in this thesis yet my focus is the collective voice of the community to establish and define how education is centered, which is set on a foundation of the community wants and needs and is based on their worldview and philosophies.

In sum, the literature on CBE indicates most studies have taken place outside of Canada. There is however minimal literature that focuses specifically on northern Ontario (Union of Ontario 2005), and some very broad definitions of what CBE is, and how this influences community planning. The existing literature does indicate that there is a foundation that upholds Indigenous peoples’ philosophies, worldview, pedagogies, and curriculum, and puts Indigenous people front and centre based on their epistemological lens of the world around them. This lens reveals a legitimate knowledge system revealing their ontology and axiology that is inclusive of relationships and ways of knowing. It is through this lens that a definition of CBE is possible. Literature on CBE calls for an increased awareness across the Indigenous communities to contribute to school curriculum planning, and raising a consciousness of what the Indigenous education is.
This new Indigenous-centred pedagogy focuses on moving forward with the purpose of achieving change by transforming self, others and community.
CHAPTER 3

Theoretical Framework and Methodology: Planning my Own Search for Sweetgrass

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I introduce the theoretical framework that informs my study and outline my methodology. Brayboy (2005) explains an emerging conceptual framework he refers to as Tribal Critical Race Theory (TCRT). This interdisciplinary field places the colonizer at the forefront. TCRT was the best fit for Brayboy (2005) to get to the heart of how discrimination plays a significant role in the treatment of Indigenous Americans, and ‘other’ races when they are up against a problematic relationship with the United States federal government. Brayboy (2005) breaks down the process of assimilation that Indigenous people faced since the advent of colonization. He argues that the colonizer’s hierarchal knowledge is flawed and imbues racism, gender and class discrimination. This theory builds on the original works of Critical Race Theory, derived from the civil rights issues faced by African American people and their articulation of race issues. As a result, more groups have adopted the approach and have made it apply to their current situations because they too are not included in the conversations when forming policies. Thus, TCRT acknowledges Indigenous peoples’ voice through their stories and narratives and argues these are valid and embedded with theoretical knowledge and therefore academia should follow suit. By accepting ‘other’ forms of knowledge as being their collective truths and inherent right, Indigenous people will, in turn, reconnect community to their valid and theoretically sound methods of education. This approach is paramount because when doing research it is vital that the answers come from within the community and the way in which this data gathering occurs is through various stories and narratives.
Brayboy’s (2005) intentions are to make connections between different forms of knowledge and their application to a community oriented theoretical lens. He also stresses the importance of putting theory into practice as they are interconnected and lead to social change making the implicit explicit. Therefore, TCRT defines the legitimacy in the ways in which Indigenous people construct their realities and knowledge. This construct consequently places colonial practices and methodologies as being discriminative of the Indigenous other, and full of racist notions. To change this thinking would then alter how power and control would be defined and who defines it. Critical thinking allows for growth, is transformative, and allows for autonomy and self-determination.

Paulo Freire’s Critical Conscientization questions and decentres the dominant mainstream curriculum that exists today (Freire, 1970). In his agreement with Friere, Smith (2007) tells the story of the Maori people of New Zealand and their wish for change, to taking a stand against colonial processes and making a change for their people’s future, by putting Maori people at the centre (conscientization). As Smith states, this required “reawakening of the Maori imagination that been stifled and diminished by the colonization processes” (pg. 2). They resisted the politics of distraction, which previously had kept them needlessly busy by the colonizer, and most importantly the distractions between Maoris themselves, which was not allowing for positive community growth because of self-abuse and lateral violence. Smith engages with Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) work on hegemony, “…being a way of thinking-it occurs when oppressed groups take on dominant group thinking and ideas uncritically and as ‘common sense,’ even those ideas may in fact contribute to forming their own oppression. It is the ultimate way
to colonize a people; you have the colonized colonizing themselves” (as cited in Smith, 2003, p. 2). The Maori reawakening must rely on a counter strategy to hegemony, where Indigenous people rise and critically ‘conscientize’ themselves about their needs, aspirations and preferences” (Smith, 2003, pp. 2). Similarly, the Indigenous people in Canada need to know who we are, where we come from, and where we want to go next. This awareness then sets a momentum and is transformative. In an education context, it is aligned with CBE because it puts Indigenous people at the centre and allows us to make our map of learning for our students. Being critical and taking our needs and wants to the next level is a part of resisting the status quo, and doing what matters for the students now with the knowledge, skills, and resources that communities have and it requires not waiting for permission to do so.

Methodology

The methodology for this study uses qualitative methods in data collection and analysis with a focus on Indigenous research methods outlined by Kovach (2009) and Absolon (2011). This involves the metaphor of searching for wiingash (sweetgrass). This metaphor resonates with me because in my community, and others around me, we have a connection to, and value sweetgrass. This was not only for its spiritual use but because it had become a way of supporting one’s family through the art of craft making, as is the case with my grandmother. Like research, gathering sweetgrass is a process, which takes planning (thesis idea).

First, one must know where to go (the search). This is accomplished by enlisting the help of a Knowledge Keeper (proposal). The next step in gathering sweetgrass (my
research) is timing. Sweetgrass is abundant only during a particular time of the year, and must be collected according to environmental conditions that signal the best time to collect it, requiring a sense of location and plan to carryout in a good way that does not harm the sustainability of future yields of sweetgrass locations (ethics). A part of ethical research is the offering of tobacco (reciprocity) since one must make an offering in the research exchange. Therefore, it is imperative to give back. Then comes the hard work of gathering (data collection), cleaning (findings), curing (analysis), and placing it into workable bundles (themes). These bundles will eventually be interwoven together to build a strong, thick braid (discussion) with an unforgettable aroma that fills a room with its soft, sweet scent, which evokes a memory of what happened during that journey of finding sweetgrass (Recommendations, conclusion, and defense). This process is a modern-day reworking of an ancient Indigenous practice transformed in an academic setting.

Throughout this whole journey, I have come to be more mindful of the integration and belief of using the body, mind, spirit, and heart because this journey has become more than just attaining a degree. It has come from a place of healing, helping, challenging and transforming self and my belief systems. The ideas I carried have been a result of the assimilative practice of a Western-centred education, which at one point or another in my life became internalized as being the superior way of doing things. I have spent time learning about the past education policies, stressing on where to go next within the vast fields of knowledge, then finally struggling to think critically about how to accomplish this research in a good way. This effort is vital if one is to create and
transform how education will look for the 21st-century Indigenous teacher and learner from an Indigenous perspective.

Accomplishing the above requires one to think through the lens of ‘critical conscientization’ and counter-hegemony. It requires me to know the history of my people and that of the colonizer to build an understanding and become a ‘change agent.’ This involves replacing the status quo because it is just not working for Indigenous people. This place is where I currently stand in the journey, practicing and sharing what I am learning so that others can rethink and perhaps reteach themselves where it is they need to go next, especially when what they are currently doing is not working, and is not sitting right with them. Therefore, each strand of the sweetgrass (data) represents the voice of those involved in education. It is the Anishinaabe researcher who is gathering, cleaning, bundling, and weaving a new braid, which collectively becomes one integrating mind, body, and spirit.

Having explained my methodological framework, I now focus on how I set out to obtain the answer to my research questions. These questions are: What is the definition of CBE in a rural Northern Ontario First Nation elementary school?; 2) Is there a difference between Elder, community and school definition of CBE?; and 3) How do these existing definitions compare to the Assembly of First Nations definition? Answers to these questions are arrived at using an Indigenous Knowledge framework. As I am immersed in Indigenous studies, I have looked at research through a different lens, more specifically a decolonizing lens with a shift towards an Indigenous paradigm. The Indigenous research paradigm is a relatively new concept in academia. For it to be impactful it must be grounded and situated in a way that not only works for the Indigenous researcher but
most importantly the community in which the research is centered (Wilson, 2008). Little Bear (2009) also explains this paradigm shift as follows:

Aboriginal paradigms include ideas of constant flux, all existence consisting of energy waves/spirit, all things being animate, all existence being interrelated, creating/existence having to be renewed, space/place as an important referent, and language, songs, stories and ceremonies as repositories for the knowledge that arise out of these paradigms (p. 8).

The shift in research design not only comes from the community’s wants but is also driven by their needs. It is known that Indigenous people have been “studied to death,” yet as Wilson (2008) states, these studies did not include the people in the research, and the researchers were merely in it for data, leading Indigenous people feeling resentful of research in general. However, when applying an Indigenous research methodology framework not only does the research have relevance to the people, it also follows a set of culturally appropriate protocols when gathering data such as cultural respect, responsibility, reciprocity and reverence (Archibald, 2008).

Thus when conducting my research, it is critical for me to ensure that I am following an Indigenous framework grounded in Indigenous Knowledge (Absolon, 2011). This way of doing research is becoming vital for our communities, but it can also be challenging because not only do we have to justify our approach to Western academics, this is also necessary to our people, due to dominant colonial values with which we live which have led to an internalization of Indigenous Knowledge as being inferior. Through the process of research design, I have listened more and contributed to dialogue in a way that not only has taught me Indigenous ways of knowing, but also how
to put theory into practice which has been very powerful throughout this journey. Brayboy (2005) argues that stories as “data” are important, and one key to collecting this data is “hearing” the stories. There is a difference between listening to stories and hearing them, and this is central to TCRT. Listening is part of an ongoing exercise of acting, engaging and allowing individuals to talk. Hearing stories means attributing value to them and both the authority and the nuance of stories are thus understood. Stories lead the hearer to explore the range and variation of possibilities of what can happen and have happened (pp. 440).

By listening and learning, Archibald (2008) argues that the researcher becomes “researcher and learner” ensuring they are building a relationship with their Knowledge Keepers. By learning to listen before analyzing the information they are gathering, knowing the community, and their ways of communicating through social and cultural principles and practices, researchers can collect more official data. Therefore, my learning journey has given me the chance to practice an Indigenous Knowledge (IK) framework and has led to me to develop the skills needed when doing community-based research. This has been evident in the work that I do in my communities as an educator.

To illustrate the above by way of example, in a First Nation school, for the most part, they will not ask you to do something straightforwardly but will ask in a way that may lead into what they prefer you do, but if not, nobody is left feeling unbalanced. Prior to my experience working in a First Nation school, I would not have understood this type of discourse because it is incompatible with my Western education training in which it is expected direct lines of communication take place, with a direct expectation of outcomes. As Spielmann (1998) has shared, it is through Ojibwa discourse that one also learns about
culture and community and it is important to seek further clarification or at least have a good understanding of this to get the message right. This was a significant shift in my learning to provide culturally relevant education in a First Nation school. Acknowledging elements of IK is important because as Archibald (2008) points out, without reflecting on information, a researcher (or teacher) may miss an opportunity to learn because he or she is not following cultural protocols. My experience and attention to cultural protocols helped me in the respectful gathering of data in a way that is meaningful for the community. At the completion of my study, my results were returned by way of a community presentation.

Setting: Planning to Pick Sweetgrass

When venturing out on my research journey, I used community mentors and Knowledge Keepers to help plan and guide me as I embarked on searching out the data. The community members were the participants for this project and their perspective is captured in narrative accounts based on responses to research questions. Based on preliminary discussions in preparation for this study, I came to know that this research question is something that communities would like to explore further, and therefore this would be keeping within an Indigenous framework.

Nelson (2013) states the dimensions of cultural context are challenging. It’s easy to make unintentional stereotyping or assumptions about the nature of students or the community. Likely the most important lesson to be learned is that context is exceedingly important in defining the cultural base with which educational practices are to be focused. Kana’iaupuni (2007) discussed the dimensions of the heritage language, family, and
community involvement, culturally ground curriculum, assessment, structure, and culturally linked accountability. These are critical dimensions for local reflection (p. 14).

Participants: The Search for Sweetgrass

The recruitment process was through community posters that were sent out in the student mail and posted at frequently visited places within the community, such as school, post office, band office, and health centre. I aimed to recruit an equal representation of educators, parents, community members/knowledge holders, and Elders with equal representation by gender. My recruitment efforts however resulted in a stronger proportion of educators and community members/Knowledge Keepers and women as participants, for a summary see Tables 1-2.

Table 1

*Participant Breakdown by Sex*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
**Roles of participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community/Knowledge Keepers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elders</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To be respectful, I kept the study confidential and allowed the participants the choice to use their name, spirit name or a pseudonym during the session. I ensured that they knew that once I transcribed the data, I would be using codes for names to make sure that their identity was kept confidential. The First Nation political leadership and community members ensured this research would be treated confidentially and the names of participants would not be released to the public.

**Ethics: Reciprocity**

In keeping with an Indigenous framework, it was imperative that I seek permission from the Chief and Council to do the research. I had met with the Education Director first requesting his assistance in this endeavour. I went over my research proposal and asked if he thought that this would be useful research project for the community. He thought it would be perfect for me to do, and he offered to help me in the process. I then gave him an offering of tobacco as a sign of reciprocity and respect. After receiving the Band Council Resolution (see Appendix 4), the ethics application was sent.
out and after some careful screening of the research process, and the testing of open-ended questions, both Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board and the Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee (MARRC) approved it (see Appendixes 3, 6). This process is essential to ensure that the participants are protected and the parameters of informed consent are in place. The research followed the set of protocols to protect the participants and the information they shared, such as their stories and Indigenous Knowledge. As well, it was important to ensure the Anishinaabe Seven Grandfather teachings (love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility and truth) would be integrated and respected which is a requirement of the Guidelines for Ethical Aboriginal Research (GEAR) (Noojmowin Teg Health Centre, 2003). The GEAR is a research framework in use by the MARRC and my adherence to this community-based research protocol is consistent with OCAP (2007). It is through recognizing and honouring our ways of knowing that we remember to treat each other well by being a good person. This is what local Elders in my study area call mino-bimadizawin. Thus, it is important to remember that when doing research with Anishinaabek people, it needs to occur in a right way and ensure the research is useful in a good way. Once the review was completed and granted, the interview dates were set, and recruitment notices sent out.

Data Collection: Gathering Sweetgrass

As part of my data collection, I chose sharing circles, which is an appropriate and accepted Indigenous research methodology (Kovack, 2009). When gathering story through the sharing circles, I presented the goal of the research and presented each participant with tobacco. I also went over the pedagogy of using the sharing circle and the
protocols we needed to adhere to when sharing information with others. I also, went over
the sharing of ideas and the importance of showing respect to those who are speaking. I
then gave the group the choice of looking at the questions to get a sense of what I was
asking them, and so they could refer to them if they needed to. I created the list of open-
ended questions, using some items that were used in similar studies reviewed earlier
(Purdie et al, 2000; Steven, 2011). The research questions are attached (see Appendix 1).
I also made sure that the participants were aware that they were free to withdraw from the
study at any time with no penalty. After the participants read and signed the Letter of
Information and Consent, I commenced the sharing circle. As a sign of gratitude, at the
end of the sharing circle, the participants received a food gift card and a small feast.

Sessions were recorded to keep track of all the data collected. Before the meeting,
I made sure that the group understood that this was the process and they had the right to
pause the recorder at any moment, and I would take notes in the event of recorder
malfunction. No participant declined being recorded, though there was a moment when
the recorder was stopped due to a participant becoming emotional. As it turned out, the
emotion was due to an overwhelming sense of joy of the merits and passion she held on
the topic of culture as discussed in the sharing circle.

The location for each of these discussions varied. Most interviews happened at the
school and the Health Centre due to availability of gathering places. All the interviews
were conducted in English in June-July 2016. I expected to complete sharing circles in
June, though due to a death in the community, I paused my research. The final session
was conducted in July and in total, four sharing circles were held with each participant
group: parents, educators (in two parts) and Elders, community members and Knowledge Keepers (combined), see table 3.

Table 3
Sharing Circle Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>June 15, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Part One</td>
<td>June 16, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Part Two</td>
<td>June 17, 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elders/community members/Knowledge Keepers</td>
<td>July 20, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transcription and Coding: Cleaning Sweetgrass

At the completion of the interviews, I transcribed the recordings into electronic format, and I manually went through each interview pulling codes to analyze each participant’s thoughts and ideas based on the questions asked, and I then put them into workable bundles (themes). I used chart paper and plotted keywords and points from the data based on the posted questions. Secondly, I reanalyzed the data and started to circle the key words that became repetitive in the sharing circles. I then plotted those onto separate paper. This allowed the data to be narrowed down. From that point I started to write out the major themes and to extract data that fit with the major themes, which was extremely helpful as this helped to pinpoint commonalities.
CHAPTER 4

Results: Gathering Sweetgrass

An analysis of the data yielded from the educators, parents, community members, and Elders through sharing circles are presented in the following. Teachers, parents, community members, and Elder participants’ responses to the semi-structured questions were grouped to correspond to the research questions and then categorized into major themes or patterns. In this chapter, I will explore the data through the questions that I asked, including sample quotes from participants to demonstrate the content of the answers that were received.

**Question 1:** What is the relationship between positive self-identity and school success of Indigenous people?

The participants in this study spoke of the relationship between the family and a positive self-identity, which helps them to take risks in schools and take chances within a stressful situation, such as overt or systemic racism. The data revealed that the relationship with positive self-identity links to family. Families build and foster the child’s sense of pride in ‘who they are,’ before entering the school system.

So I feel like a lot has to happen in the home before they even arrive at the school setting, where they know exactly who they are, where they come from, who their relatives are and what the strengths of their family and community are. And then when they get to school they are more able to meet the challenges and resolve whatever problems they are going to encounter and so for me there is mutually reinforcing, so the moment you have good self-esteem you walk into a
challenging test you can draw on those reserves to help yourself do better. By doing better you show others that you do have and that our kids are cut out and equal to the task, any standard tests for example, so when I think about school success that I think it’s measured by testing, but it’s not only measured that, but I think by how they are able to carry themselves. School success is about being able to work around social situations in the school (Parent Sharing Circle June 15, 2016).

The data also revealed that the school shares in honouring the child’s identity by teachers including local histories, knowledge, culture and teachings into their everyday routines and curriculum, and by being an active place to be. The data also revealed that a child could have a positive self-identity and not be successful in school due to the conflicting worldviews of the teaching staff and students. From the sharing circle interviews, these conflicts tend to occur more in mainstream high school settings with regards to the high level of systemic and overt racism. These educational institutions are then a place to survive and not necessarily a place that gives them a sense of belonging and knowledge worth attaining.

What comes to mind for me primarily is that the current education system is racist, right. It doesn’t teach you of the real history, I’d say it glosses over how colonists started this whole education system, added to that you have residential schools which is segregation, so you have indigenous students already operating in a racist system. So to me, if they had a better self image, if they value their identity more, and are grounded in who they are, then be less intimidated by that system, then I think they would be more successful in that system because they
can already understand who they are, and they can see those differences, they are not trying to learn at other ways to be successful (Community Member Sharing Circle July 15, 2016).

This above question does speak to the realities that students are up against when entering an education system that does not share the same worldview or culture of the ‘other.’ Therefore the political structure at work denies that the school system is the problem and that is the other factors that students face before they get to school. However, the research conducted by the Aboriginal learning knowledge centre states that there is a problem with racism and it does hamper learning (Little Bear, 2009). With systems challenged, this notion they are in denial and defensive and argue that racism and colonization are things of the past. This attitude passes the blame back onto the child as not being studious enough. Therefore, a lack of understanding about how the system is structured means that it goes unchanged and does not look towards facing the truth or validating people’s voices.

**Question 2:** What does self-identity mean in a First Nation context?

The data revealed that the First Nation educators and community members feel that it means everything. This question was similar to the first, and therefore, the data shows similar notions about ancestral lineage and traditional knowledge practice, as well as a child’s relational ties.

In our house we know who we are specifically, tribe, who’s our grandparents, territory, upbringing, this is what I take as self identity, not the legal definition. We first ask the question: where are you from, which means what tribe do you
come from? Where did you originate, land, connection to land, not land title, where did your ancestors come from, hunt, use the land, your spiritual identity (Parent Sharing Circle June 15, 2016).

The data revealed that having a self-identity is the overall sense of belonging within the community. It means knowing one’s place within the community through its expectations of its members that share their collective roles and responsibilities, which is reciprocal in nature. It also requires knowing where one comes from, in order to know where one is to go next.

Identity is closely tied to belonging, it’s you know, I taught in TO (Toronto) for many years to First Nation adult learners, you could tell, half way through our conversation…if they were adopted, especially if the parent was white, because of how they interact with you, what their interest were, and behaved. So you can really see, when someone’s disconnected from their community, family, and culture. They don’t have that belonging, so I think that belonging is the foundation of identity, because that starts to say who you are in this world. You have to know where you are coming from, in order to stand and say this is who I am (Knowledge Keeper Sharing Circle July 20, 2016).

The sharing of findings that took place in the community are similar to previous studies that look at how positive self-identity attributes to success in everyday life. This sharing, however, may be cultivated in various ways such as home and community relationships. Most importantly, self-identity reflects how educational systems value and embed culture into the everyday. It then allows for a nice start to holistic education because there is respect for students as individuals, as a community member and by their
governing nation. It may be a challenge for those who did not have a choice as to where they lived, were raised, and where they see themselves today. It is important to note that with the previous historical assimilative practices many individuals did not get a say, and others chose not to share their knowledge with their children because the lack of value it was given by society and assimilative policies.

**Question 3(a):** What does Cultural Based Education mean to you?

The data revealed from the community educators that they feel that CBE means incorporating cultural teachings that intertwine in everything as part of the day. It would include seasonal patterns of living on the land, hands-on learning, the use of the Anishinaabemowin outside of language class, various spiritual perspectives, Elders as teachers using an intergenerational lens of teaching, and community stories of past and present. The inclusion of First Nation artists, literature, song, and dance, a well-rounded understanding of the collective story of First Nation people, and use of local knowledge and positive role models are also common themes. Overall, it is clear that the community wants history, traditions, and Anishinaabek values and beliefs embedded in Anishinaabe aadizawin (life).

The other thing is, to me it means our story…past, present and future. And kind of reiterating what we said earlier, we can fit all of this stuff and use examples, and stories or whatever in every aspect of the curriculum. In art, we have great artists. We don’t need to be studying Picasso. We have great artists that we have to be proud of and that we should know about…we’ve got math, our people have the history of stars, the way of doing math. Language, we’ve got a lot of great First
Nation poets, kid authors, all of that could be fit in…I think that should be the priority, over the other stuff, because all the other stuff will come, it’s everywhere, but we have got to focus on our own here, because this is the only chance we get to be first (Teacher Sharing Circle Part One June 17, 2016).

The data revealed by the community Knowledge Keepers and parents that it is important for students to have a firm understanding of community values and beliefs, and what it means to be a real person that shares in community activities and is involved in the betterment of their community.

The data also revealed the importance of learning the protocol of community when asking for something, such as help, based on respect. Event planning takes place as a collective group that shares in the celebrations such as powwows, which are based on tradition and histories, songs and dance and is reciprocal throughout the seasons. These teachings come from the community and incorporate the integration of Indigenous knowledge, and should be embedded in everything that the education system does, rather than a checklist of things to do, and then forgotten. It is because students will internalize that their knowledge is just as valid as the Western, and they will learn more about who they are, and where they originate.

**Question 3(b):** In what ways do you feel cultural based education can be integrated into the school curriculum?

The results revealed that the community does not want the ‘same old same old’ curriculum for their children. There is a place for Western curriculum, but there is so much that students do not learn at this moment. The CBE curriculum could be filled with
richer local culture, history, and traditions that matter to the children who are living within it, and perhaps maybe not learning about it. Therefore, a community-based curriculum could strengthen and excel students’ learning about themselves and the world through the perspective of their people. This curriculum delivery could be through a varied approach. For example, schools can teach community-based curriculum by utilizing Knowledge Keepers, Elders, and community members and inviting them to be guests in the school and learn through experiences, and by using other community resources that may have programming offered that share in the tradition and culture of the people. The chosen literacy in the classroom should be reflective of Anishinaabek values and beliefs and honour Anishinaabek authors. The arts and music should be from local Anishinaabek artists that reflect a place-based knowledge that is reflective of the children. As well the history of their people based on the concept of Turtle Island (Anishinaabemowin word for North America), which reflects their perspective of time and place and on their lived realities should be taught.

I’ve been thinking about that, it is not just written down. Medieval times, why would they study that, why study that when we have a vibrant history, why wouldn’t we use that instead? In the curriculum, natural science, why wouldn’t we use the vibrant topics of land and our teachings, draw on our own indigenous culture into those topics? To me it should be intertwined in all the different courses, the language, history, our First Nation history first. I think it is important to know, I want to know about our history, social studies, like our own First Nation local stuff. Like he (referring to a participant in the sharing circle) said, there was an old copper mine here, where did that come from, and how does that
link to any of the material sciences? Why don’t we study the moon season in
math? To me that is what the cultural based education could be. I mean the
mainstream is a nice tidy package, that they can check off, but cultural based
education is a whole new way of thinking, so to me we just can’t box it in to one
little place, here you go a nice little package. To me cultural based education is,
you know Kenjgewin Teg Educational Institute (an Indigenous education institute
on Manitoulin Island) did a lot of work on curriculum, like seasons, there is a lot
of work that can be taught, seasonal cycles of living that we sort of ignore that we
can bring into the curriculum, we could be studying that. Natural science, it
doesn’t only have to happen in the classroom, it can happen out our backyard.
We have the water, the land, we can learn from. We still practice traditions of
fishing, making maple syrup, we have all those things, maybe not everyone does,
but there are people that still do. We draw on those teachers. I also think that there
are different things the school does, maybe just out of habit, why don’t we
celebrate National Aboriginal Day, school powwow and incorporating all these
ideas and end in a culminating activity like that, they accomplished something. It
is like studying music for example, you learn all about different parts of the music
whatever, then you have a recital, you can do that with powwow…it’s all the
teaching protocol, the regalia making, the songs, the prayers, there are teachings
in all that, for cultural based education then we can have the powwow to
celebrate. I don’t think our school does that, lately, but I think that it can still be
brought back. Something you can do is call upon your community resources that
knows these things; you wouldn’t want to task that teacher that doesn’t have that background, support from the community (Parent Sharing Circle June 15, 2016).

The data revealed that CBE requires that teachers from another culture must learn the pedagogy of the community. It also means learning the histories of the families, community, and nations. It’s about understanding what the community’s wants and needs are and making the educator aware by immersing them into the community.

It has to do with relationships, how you deal with other people, that’s actually considered it, to be a proper person, because we see this all the time, when someone is not acting right, we just go oh, like we know they are behaving in a proper way which is usually being respectful to other people, because you can’t learn that from the curriculum…kids watch people do it right, and that’s how they learn, and see how people are interacting, they see people helping, do they see people volunteering or bringing stuff, kind of pay attention to it (Community Member Sharing Circle July 20, 2016).

This data also reveals that how knowing each other and families is a big part of the community. This knowing is where the sharing of who one is, a sense of belonging and concern for the general well-being of others because everyone knew each other at a different level, which builds good relations.

I can’t talk about other communities, but in this community it is. I remember how even though there were not cultural gatherings when I first arrived here, but there was a lot of church going, a lot of church gatherings activities, everybody went to church but what was important was the after church, that’s when everybody visited with each other, it was a social gathering…but their cultural gathering was
taken away, so everyone used to gather after church, people would exchange news, kids got to know each other, played around you know the church ground, and then it gradually stopped later, might have been an American priest that started, he came out of the church, the priest never came out before, and the people just stopped talking. And now nobody goes to church, hardly anybody, anyway, the only time there is a social gathering is when somebody dies, and even years ago when there was a wedding, there was no invitation, everybody just went, you heard so and so is getting married, everybody went and you always brought something. A dish, because you were poor, you brought something to contribute because you were poor, you didn’t have any money, so maybe you might have a nice dish and you brought that to the bride, you know or you brought a shovel to the groom, something that they would use, now there is now, they have to have fancy invitations, “are you going to the wedding,” I didn’t get an invite why should I go, so, it was kind of like spiritual I guess, now it lost, it’s become whitewashed (Elder Sharing Circle July 20, 2016).

It is clear from the data that there are a plethora of things that one can do to make CBE accessible for students. The surface level culture that one can see and do is vital in an education system, as students must see themselves in all things that they do, to make meaning from what they are learning. This preference is complicated if the curriculum does not reflect the community, or if the pedagogy of the teacher is different. It is because we teach from a lens of what we know, and have learned to be true. Based on the literature most have been taught in the mainstream education system, which is in a colonial system that privileges Western philosophies. Unless one has been exposed to a
decolonizing school system, or raised with a solid foundation of Anishinaabek teachings that guide their practice, they are not able to transfer this knowledge to a deep level of understanding, which gets to the heart of CBE.

**Question 4:** How can cultural based education be increased in order to improve school outcomes for Indigenous students?

The results revealed that culture is living and it is in the everyday. The school, community, and families all live culture, but it is really about developing, reconciling and making culture a priority so that youth feel connected, and grow up being proud of who they are and where they originate. It can occur in several ways. One example comes from a community Knowledge Keeper who shared a way that connected the students through a story and cultural understandings that were embedded all the way through the grades.

It’s harder because we’re heading a suicide prevention program, so the idea, the concept is, that all the kids get the same story, the creation story or whatever, something that has a moral and people are involved…so the kids hear the story, but as the grades go up they are to extrapolate more and more info from it, so when you get to the high school level, where there is this layer that says, Nanaboozhoo (Anishinaabe trickster) did this for this reason, but the best example that my teacher gave, he was in Indigenous governance, he started off with, ‘What do you guys think leadership is?’ So we would talk about what this means...Then he said, ‘what type of qualities does a leader have?’ So we had to do that…then he said, ‘okay now I’m going to tell you a story. It’s about the one about the deer in this community. So the deer were being mistreated and the deer left...so it took a
while for people to notice this, and it took a while for people to know this, and then they said, the deer left, and now we’re going to starve…so they sent people east, west, north, and south, to go find the deer…one comes back, couldn’t find it, another comes back, couldn’t find it etc…. Then the one from the north said, okay, I found the deer, but they are not happy of the way we were treating them, so they don’t want to come back, so the community said, we need to convince the deer because we need them, so they sent a little delegation to go meet with the deer and said, we will make sure we aren’t over hunting, we will take care of the environment, this is a negotiation, so the people didn’t starve.’ So now he said, ‘okay now what is leadership?’ Well you have other qualities, you had a runner, you didn’t send your slowest people, you want to send the people who were the fastest that could go the distance right, you need a negotiator, diplomats, and that was the party that went to go negotiate with the deer…. be able to give something, you needed to make promises that you would give something, but the idea what leadership and qualities, expanded. So that’s where that idea came from, so that if kids are learning through these stories, through legend or whatever you want to call them, and you want them to see what they mean, their own personal idea of what it means, and let’s expand it from what the group thinks it to mean, and what they are learning and seeing and can you learn from this, so the idea is to do the story legend once a month, that all the grades at the same time, that’s the idea, strengthen their identity, their sense of belonging…and teach them about who they are (Knowledge Keeper Sharing Circle July 20, 2016).
**Question 5: How can culture be assessed or measured?**

The results revealed that most participants do not feel one/we can assess culture in the everyday living of it. The results reveal that educators believe that through various means of the curriculum that is currently being used one/we can assess the knowledge the children have but regarding placing a grade on a culture that simply should not be a direction CBE should head. The results revealed from the community Knowledge Keepers that a tracking system could be put in place to monitor if the school is setting benchmarks in the delivery of CBE, and use this to help plan their Student Success Plans or school planning. It would be useful to know if the integration was being successful with students based on how students respond to the increased integration through surveys or other methods and personal interviews with students and family.

If you’re looking at the program, how would you do that? Whatever program you are doing, how would you know that? With cultural based curriculum how are we going to measure that? So, you are probably not going to do it quantitative with numbers, right? So, it’s more qualitative stuff, so basically, earlier, you may not know the effects right now, but rather later on, just to see your five year school evaluation it might not come up then but it might come up with a parent remembering, oh, she was the kid that brought in the claw (belonging to a partridge), mind you that wasn’t a positive experience, but there are going to be long term experiences that you are not going to find out in one year. It might take a long time, but you could probably look at absenteeism, did we start to see a change in absenteeism? That’s the indirect way, you don’t know if that was the cause of it but it may have a link to it. It’s not causation it’s relation, there is
indirect ways of looking at it I guess, but looking at the program as a whole and not the individual (Knowledge Keeper Sharing Circle July 20, 2016).

The results from school educators found that there is a need for planning as a community and that it should be a collective voice. The goal is to build a cultural base and learn with each other, similar to the Indigenous CBE rubric adapted from the Hawaii model by Demmert and Towner (2003, p. 1). This rubric provides a list of six features that describe a CBE system that is an enriched educational plan that embeds cultural knowledge:

1. Use of heritage languages whether bilingual or as a first or second language.
2. Pedagogy that builds on traditional cultural ways and values and adult child relationships as the starting point for teaching and sharing.
3. Education that utilizes teaching strategies congruent with traditional culture as well as contemporary knowledge systems.
4. A curriculum on traditional culture recognizing the value of spirituality.
5. Participation in the school by the community both in the curriculum and in out of school activities.
6. Community cultural values permeate the school.

I agree with (sharing circle participant) too, in the beginning, only focus on a few because we don’t want to overwhelm ourselves being it our first year, if we do one per season and maybe that’s too much. As long as we sit together and plan it, how, with strategies, teachers always need to have a background for the non um white teachers, I said…Even all could go, for summer based refresher program
that is culturally based...so we can all partake in it, so we can all be prepared for the school year (Teacher Sharing Circle June 16, 2016).

The results from the parents revealed in order for CBE learning to be effective, evaluation of the current program needs to be made a priority.

I’m not sure if it is in the school success program, I don’t know, but because we are on First Nation I think they can, because if you don’t make it a priority, you don’t express it as a priority it doesn’t get done, again it is diminished as an importance, again they don’t give money to it, or resources to it. I don’t know if they give time for it (Parent Sharing Circle June 15, 2017)
CHAPTER 5

Discussion: Bundling Sweetgrass

During the process of typing of the interviews, it became apparent that the definition of CBE was extensive and the ideas and knowledge shared were immense. It took the time to pull each code out and then place it in its respectful bundle but it was very helpful to do this manually because I was able to synthesize conclusions based on what each participant was saying directly and how indirectly. Themes that were stated clearly were:

• The members shared what education traditionally looked liked in the past and the present from the community’s collective memories, and how this has changed over the generations;

• The participants shared the history of learning from day schools, to preparatory schools in core competencies, to separate and public school systems, to First Nation locally controlled school. This power connects to how education may have shaped and challenged First Nation identities over time;

• The participants shared how schools have integrated culture and identity in the past and how it looks today. Also what could or should be done next to enrich the current First Nation learning environment for students in the future, to ensure that education is leaving students with a firm foundation once they transition into a more mainstream hegemonic educational systems.

The themes are a result of the data collected, the analysis of the results and the overall knowledge shared in the sharing circles. The data is immense and extracting the themes to define CBE was enriching. This is because the collective voice speaks to
various levels of what CBE means to different groups of people and generations. The more we move forward in educating our students, the more we need to ensure that they are grounded in who they are as Anishinaabe children. If this does not start now, then the holistic learning becomes less than the whole. The following are themes that were most apparent throughout the research process.

Themes: Sweetgrass Bundles

**Theme 1-Bundle 1: Positive Self-Identity**

According to sharing circle participants, the concept of student success goes beyond academic achievement. The participants do feel that academic success in school is a great success. However, it is not the totality of success in life. The community group emphasized that student achievement is not at all what should be focused on, but rather we need to broaden what success means. To achieve positive self-identity, the sharing circles all agreed that this development starts at home. Ensuring that the child has a firm grounding in who one is, where they come from, who their relatives are, and what are their strengths in family and community. All of which are then intertwined with high values and beliefs. If students have these strong foundations they will be able to tackle difficult situations they are dealt with in life, such as racism in educational settings because they already know what it is to be an Anishinaabe. With that, there is an equal relationship that can build an even stronger identity, and that is the connection with community, school, and nation. These are the fundamental pillars that can develop the foundation the child needs to stand tall and become confident, and have an active self-
identity. They may live in two worlds but they are one person, and they should grow up
knowing this. This is illustrated by one of the parents in this study,

School success is about being able to work around social situations in the school.
And other measures not just the numbers that end up on the card, so for me
anyway I think if you know all the children that are coming here in that circle feel
really good about themselves, then they make this school a really happy place,
and that is school success to me. And they are able to resolve their differences,
they are able to cooperate then it’s more than the scores they are achieving, and I
think it starts within themselves, positive self-identity. So if they have that self-
esteeem and then they will be able to relate to others better. And it’s a happier
school community or family if you want to call it that. So that is what I think the
relationship is (Parent Sharing Circle June 15, 2016).

**Theme 2-Bundle 2: Family-School-First Nation-Community**

The sharing circles revealed that it is crucial that family, community, and
leadership are a common part of the transmission of culture. The child comes from a
home, and that is where the child develops a foundation of who they are. They then are
transitioned into the education system where teachers and staff are also collectively
responsible for sharing the cultural beliefs and values of their community by being a part
of it, and ensuring the pedagogy and worldview are congruent with being Anishinaabek.
The First Nation community also has a collective responsibility when it comes to
education and the well-being of the child because they also nurture the child’s
development based on mino-bimaadiziwin through gatherings, community projects, and
relationship building. It is when all three work together collaboratively that the children become active in identity, are grounded in culture, and become the next generation of nation builders who are collectively working for the betterment of their Anishinaabek people. This is demonstrated in the words of a Knowledge Keeper,

I would agree with what is being said but I think the other, the research that they have done on student success with Aboriginal people points to the individual having a positive self and cultural identity to, and that’s usually because of family support. If you look at a school that is crappy, if they have family support the kids will do better no matter, and if the family can’t do it and the community stands up, and they support the kids they will do better. It spreads out to the individual, the family and the community, and the Anishnaabek nation, and if they support the nation then the kids will do better (Knowledge Keeper Sharing Circle July 20, 2016).
Theme 3-Bundle 3: Culture Based Education

The sharing circles have many similarities in their definitions of CBE, and a strong emphasis is on the need to have a strong positive identity. As previously discussed, knowing who one is as an Anishinaabe was a major theme that is apparent in this research. The participants stated that CBE ties into everything from family values and
beliefs to community traditions, history, and teachings. Therefore the process of learning is considered a lifelong journey that is on life teachings, and based on lived experiences. The teacher is the land and holds ecological knowledge that one can learn from, which is intergenerational because it is through Knowledge Keepers that these understandings are passed on. The embodied experience is the ways in which community comes to know and how things occur. There is an expectation of giving back to the community through various activities such as fundraising initiative and the taking care of families after the passing of community members. Knowledge of roles and responsibilities of women and men and how these functions are carried out through the community is also important. For example, women prepare the feast and men provide wild meat. Intergenerational values and the sharing of beliefs are through story and narratives when visiting community members. Included are evaluations of various learning styles, which must include hands-on learning, and the importance of planning different activities based on the seasonal patterns. It is important to utilize Knowledge Keepers and Elders in the school to support student learning, help to advise teacher planning, and ensure their engagement is in activities throughout the school year. In sum, there is a strong concept of what CBE is and how it may look in a First Nation education system. As well, there is a community concept of how a framework can be designed to ensure that CBE is relevant to a particular First Nation because it includes their story, from their perspective, and through their voice.
Theme 4-Bundle 4: Cultural Based Curriculum

The participants had ideas of what CBE should look like in the classroom as it pertains to the curriculum. This curriculum includes learning about local ecological knowledge in sciences, such as teaching about natural plants, land, animal cycle, seasons, moon, stars, snowshoeing, fishing, and maple syrup. The teaching of past holidays such as National Aboriginal Day would be a natural way to infuse history into the curriculum. Through this history lesson, students could be taught throughout the year, and then events could be celebrated within the community. The inclusion of a school powwow as a culminating activity based on teachings throughout the year would be a way to learn more about history, ceremony, dance, the various gatherings that happen throughout the Anishinaabek nation, and the difference between the different meetings since some are traditional and some are competitive. The use of Knowledge Keepers is vital to help pass on what they know about the many aspects of the powwow, and why it means so much to so many people. Overall, it also builds a sense of pride and community because this is one aspect of the community working together to organize an event, and highlight their strengths.

There is an extensive bank of human and land resources within the community that schools can utilize that will ultimately lead to intergenerational learning experiences that are rich in community knowledge. The teachers see these important values in the learning environment, which is experiential and land based. With this in mind, it is also important that First Nation history instruction must be at every grade level with the use of a culturally competent curriculum and skilled teachers that can transfer this knowledge,
all the while including the proper use of protocol when in search of guidance and knowledge.

There is also the culture that is not in the curriculum but rather the cultural teaching that is learning by watching, which is the embodied experience. Embodied knowledge is the knowledge that is below the surface. There are many metaphors used for this, but for the sake of this project, I will share the iceberg analogy employed by the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN, 2010) and is described as follows, “Indigenous people are defined by their culture. Most people outside the culture recognize certain aspects of the Indigenous people. Those aspects are the tip of the iceberg. There is so much deep knowledge embedded in the culture, [sic] that does not appear on the surface. This model was developed by the Lower Kuskokwim School District” (ANKN, 2010), see figure 2.
Theme 5-Bundle 5: Cultural Based Pedagogy

Participants emphasized professional development for Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers, including how to teach cultural based knowledge in the curriculum. The sharing circles of educators and staff shared that to have the tools needed to effectively integrate cultural knowledge into the curriculum they need guidance, a school
curricula framework. These tools allow for them to search out the knowledge required to support their planning, and ongoing professional development because as educators, regardless of their cultural background they do not feel they have the confidence to infuse this into their teaching practice from the education they received. Therefore, cultural competency in this area would assist everyone in building their capacity within themselves and their First Nation students. Therefore, it is important to know that the basis of CBE rests on developing effective Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy. This CBE is based on cultural knowledge such as language, the oral history of the land, their proper names and use, ecology, worldview, cosmology, traditions, spirituality, stories and legends that shape identity, the use of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and proper cultural protocols.

Overall, the community is looking for students to be active human beings and following the teaching of the Seven Grandfathers previously stated. As Corbiere (2000) has argued, the curriculum and methods of teaching Anishinaabek students must be congruent with their worldview based on tribal knowledge. It must also be inclusive of their beliefs, histories, culture and language, for it to become an accurate holistic educational model. It is built on the relationship we have with Elders, and animals as teachers, lands as Knowledge Keeper, and not mere objects to study. Lastly, the inclusion of spiritual messengers must be brought back to create balance (Corbiere 2000). Within this model, it is only then we will witness Anishinaabek philosophies, pedagogies, and epistemology as the foundation of Anishininaabe aadiziwin, which will be the foundation of developing mino-bimaadiziwin.
The finding presented above indicates that educators, parents, and communities want the best education for their students and that includes a First Nation perspective based on cultural beliefs and founded on community ancestral knowledge. The sharing circles reveal the participant’s knowledge of what CBE could be, should be, and how it could integrate into the school system. However, these discussions have not been had amongst the collective group and the opportunity to interweave in their curriculum has thus not taken place. Still, sharing the story is to share in a common framework that can be used by all. With that said, this collection of community knowledge is vital, and it helps those who are unaware of what the community wants and is a road map to where the educational system needs to go. The education system has been through a tough journey throughout the passage of time, and yet through all of it, the community has held on to their strong belief that education is important for students to become who they are meant to be. The only difference is that this educational system needs to be through Anishinabek ways of knowing. This knowing can only occur with a community framework that encompasses the non-negotiable of what the curriculum must include, which requires ongoing community planning, and professional development. As Indigenous groups all over the world have started to recognize, for things to change, the change must come within first.

Smith (2003), shares that according to the Kaupapa Maori approach from New Zealand, transformation requires confrontation in two key areas: facing the colonizer and confronting self. This model is known as an “inside – out” model of transformation to first free ourselves before we can free others (Freire, 1971). As we move forward with accepting an increased responsibility to change our social conditions, there is a widely
held recognition that it is imperative to “get out from under the influence of the reproductive forces of dominant society” (Smith, 2003, p. 2).

This momentum existed for the Maori people and is also occurring presently in Canada and for Anishinabek people. This way forward is under the guise of being “consciousness raising” using a proactive and positive standpoint so that we can imagine our future, along with what we want and what we are inherently about (Smith, 2003). The pulled and gathered themes and findings were placed into their respective bundles are culturally relevant and speak to the truths of individual voice and the community’s wants and needs. The importance of practical knowledge is shared throughout all the groups. The embedded knowledge, which is the fabric of who Anishinaabek people are, was also shared. However, the collective voice of how this may look by all individuals was limited. A greater presence of community in the school to allow for intergenerational learning amongst staff, students and Elders is instrumental in CBE. As this is the knowledge that does not come from a prescribed textbook, mandated from a standard curriculum, which in a sense is a detached model.

The sharing of this document is not the end, but a mere beginning. It will be through further collections of the story that we can learn more about the spirit of education that encompasses so much of the Anishinaabek epistemology, ontology, and axiology. The investment of moving forward is vital for the overall CBE framework to become fruitful and well worth the investment for the next generations.
CHAPTER 6

Discussion and Conclusion: Braiding Sweetgrass

In this thesis, I examined the integration of CBE in the current curriculum of an Anishinaabe First Nation. I set out to answer the following, 1) What the definition of CBE is in a rural Northern Ontario First Nation elementary school?; and 2) Is there a difference between Elder, community and school definition of CBE?; and 3) How does this compare to the definition used by the AFN?) The following discussion answers these questions and critically discusses each throughout this section.

Throughout this work I have collected, listened and synthesized what CBE could be through the eyes of a local First Nation Community to better understand where First Nation education models need to go next. It was through this discourse that the community was able to share what they would like to see within their school system, and what outcomes they would like students to come away with, when they are on their journey, without the community supports directly around them. There are many obstacles that First Nation children face whether they have grown up in their First Nation or off. These experiences profoundly impact their life journey both positively and negatively. However, it is a solid foundation of knowing where one comes from that one can make a choice as to where they want to go next. It also gives children the feeling that they come from a place where they belong. Still, it is important to note that place does not directly define who children will be. It is the relationship they have with land, family, community, and nation that allows for them to understand underlying cultural ways of being. The only way is to ensure all aspects of the community are cohesive in the child’s upbringing is in a culturally congruent school system. The education system has a direct impact on what
students learn, believe, and share as being knowledge. The knowledge that educators possess links to what they have learned through their experiences and ultimately pass this on to the next generation of children who come after them.

Therefore, for the current education systems to be inclusive of First Nation perspectives, there is a level of knowledge that teachers need to acquire to successfully play this out in a school system. There are a plethora of examples of what people should know and share with their students; but is this getting at the core of what First Nation people want for their children? There is the visual culture that we see around us through direct instruction, which is important and includes elements such as dance, language teaching classes, art, literature, and history as the teachers have shared. These are wonderful and have their place in the CBE curriculum. However, the content requires more in depth Indigenous pedagogy, in order for it to be a holistic model of education, which is shared by the Knowledge Keepers, Elders and parents. Therefore, the other piece that is missing is the actions, the thoughts, the feelings, the ecological knowledge of the way land is the teacher; the animals and clans are more than subjects to study, but are also teachers, and hold experience beyond the conventional textbook as shared throughout the literature and Knowledge Keepers. The relationship to the community is more than just showing up, but rather learning how mino-bimaadiziwin occurs intergenerationally through the community and Elders. Giving back to community keeps the community robust and healthy, as long as the community is robust and healthy too as reverberated by the Elders.

The next piece is to ask the question of how this way of learning becomes the fabric of the education system where all participants have an equal understanding of how
this plays out. In many communities, the task of ensuring that they have a curriculum framework that defines what CBE should and must include has yet to reach completion. There are suggestions and perhaps school success plans that include what schools are encouraged to do to include a culturally relevant curriculum, but a document created by all stakeholders does not exist. Therefore, a roadmap of where schools want to go next is limited to Ontario Curriculum standards, which for the most part rely on standardized test results and graduation rates.

The overall perspectives do reflect what the Assembly of First Nation (AFN) has been advocating for regarding a holistic education. This perspective, in turn, will have more meaning to the Anishinaabe learners on and off-reserve and will lead to more students succeeding both academically and spiritually. Although the AFN definition is much broader and encapsulates lots of terminologies, it still encompasses much of what this local First Nation would like to see in their education system. As the AFN states:

First Nations take a broader perspective on student success to identify authentic education; this includes social and emotional competency factors, culturally based curriculum, civic engagement or service to one’s people, character education, community control of education, culturally responsive pedagogy and assessment and relationships between school and community. These are key factors to be embedded in cultural traditions, languages, cultural protocols, ceremonies, land-based learning and the wisdom of Elders. Excellence in academic education is also a goal of First Nations along with meeting and exceeding national standards of literacy and numeracy (AFN, 2012, p. 7).
The daunting task of creating a roadmap or framework, whichever the preferred terminology is, depends mainly on what areas the community would like to see their children become successful in. There is no doubt that different people measure success differently. The fact that educational success always comes to mind is only one measurement. Through the process of researching what success means, I have found that it apparently comes down to how one carries oneself through life, and how one treats others. Success means to stand tall and work hard through all adversity in the journey of life. How does this happen, if time is not given to create, develop, and execute a meaningful, culturally relevant success plan? What happens when the efforts become one sided and not collective? How does a community strive for change and make it a priority amongst the plethora of ‘things’ to do? The answers will need to come. However, this journey of research has revealed many recommendations that can be utilized to help with the planning of a relevant curriculum that is needed and wanted in the First Nation school system, that is transformative, and that is inclusive of Anishinaabe ways of knowing. Now is the time, as the review of the literature has suggested, to create a strong First Nation education framework and a global definition of CBE needs to be defined by the community, the outcomes need to be in line with criteria that define success, with clear expectations of what should be taught and by whom. Professional development is available by local Knowledge Keepers and Elders to ensure that Indigenous knowledge is at the centre of the learning framework.
Limitations of the Research

A limitation of this study is that I did not get more Elders to share their insights in what CBE education should include. Although my intention was to have a greater representation of Elders and Knowledge Keepers, the timing of the study and changes to the dates due to the community funeral did have an effect on those who could make it to the data collection sessions. Nevertheless, I feel the overall participants who were involved in this study provided a reflective representation of the lived experience of community members and what they perceive as being important in the educational system of this First Nation.

Another limitation of the study was the overall flow of some circles conducted, as they did not seem to flow as well as I had imagined. This constraint mainly had to do with confidence and knowledge of circle work and as well to respect how groups come together and share knowledge. For this study, most of the circles flowed well, and what matters the most is that everyone’s voice and their thoughts, ideas, and stories were shared and documented for the particular purpose of this study.

Finally, from the start of this study, it was my intention to capture specific details of what CBE should entail through a shared definition amongst a collective group. Although this was somewhat accomplished, I feel more meeting times would have captured more voices, and sending more flyers out and allowing time for more than one meeting for each group would have been more ideal. Also, including a day session rather than all evening sessions with community members could have captured more of an audience as well.
Implication for Research and Practice/Sweet Aroma of Sweetgrass

There is a “sleeping giant that has awakened within”, and it is telling us to remember our past and re-establish how our future should look. The truth of what happened in our historical revelation to the world has started, and this is only the beginning of where these facts can take us. It is up to the Anishinaabe people to use this and stake claim to our education system that sets the standards of what students learn holistically. This action will then pave the way for what the future will represent to the next seven generations. Listed below are compilations of recommendation that can be established throughout the planning of Anishinaabek Education systems that is inclusive of CBE standards:

1. Develop teacher training programs that provide a holistic understanding of student well-being, which includes Manidoo aadzawin, Anishinaabe aadzawin and mino-bimadizawin. Examples of this are history, language, land, Indigenous knowledge, pedagogy, epistemology, ontology, story, and narrative. Overall the embedded knowledge is in planning of lessons using family, community and Knowledge Keepers, and spirit, all of which puts Anishinaabe people at the centre;

2. Develop mentorship programs between teachers and community members, and students and Elders;

3. Prepare lunch and learn sessions that bring intergenerational learning into the educational system;

4. Develop a bank of community resources that teachers can pull from when lesson planning;
5. Develop a culture and language committee committed to enriching local First Nation traditional knowledge;

6. Design a framework from the ground up that includes education outcomes, and that is based on First Nation standards;

7. Develop and complete an Indigenous Culture Based rubric to gather knowledge of where school and community are with respects to culture and language and set targets or goals as to where they see themselves in the next five years;

8. Develop language nests within the community;

9. Develop curriculum resources that can be used by the community;

10. Establish and conduct community surveys and sharing circles on gathering more ideas on traditional knowledge transmission within the community;

11. Design and offer ongoing professional development for staff to help plan lessons, and learning programs that are on the foundations and principles of Anishinaabek people and that centre Anishinaabek ways;

12. Utilize current frameworks developed by other Indigenous groups which seek similar cultural shifts in their education systems such as Maori and Hawaiians; and

13. Continue to fight for self-government, and First Nations control of First Nations education, including the development of locally relevant curriculum, taught through culturally based pedagogies by Indigenous or appropriately trained non-Indigenous ally teachers.
Braiding Sweetgrass

The completion of this research project has come together, and the questions that guided this project were forefront and centre at all times. The findings and results revealed that there are a variety of ways to describe CBE in an educational setting. The Elders were able to share stories of what education was like and how there were significant changes throughout the generations to ensure there was cultural continuity. It was the local community teachers that created change to support culture and language in their local community school, and it was the community that cultivated this change. The community was a place where traditional knowledge sharing occurs within families. The school would ensure that community was involved in the child’s learning by incorporating family, extended family and Elders in everyday life of the children. The education system today has also been an extension of the household and it educates children in a way that is inclusive of parents and caregivers. While the teachers include culture to the best of their knowledge, they would like to include more into their pedagogy in a way that is inclusive of Indigenous Knowledge. However, they need more support in extracting what this would look like through the input of community Knowledge Keepers. The parents also have many examples of what school could include more of, in the education system, which reflects the community’s worldview, curriculum, and pedagogy. This research journey has been exciting, terrifying, and the most rewarding part of my path towards my Master’s degree. I anticipated through conversations with others on their educational journey that this research would not be easy, but well worth it in the end. I often wonder why my journey led me here, and I think it was, as some of my Knowledge Keepers would say, “developing, nurturing and
finding my inner spiritual gift.” First Nation people believe that everyone is born with a gift. It takes special people to help nurture this gift so that the individual can see their full potential. This journey not only transforms their relationship with themselves, but it will also change their relationship with family, their community, and their Nation. I believe that teachers are a unique link for students, along with their family, community, and Nation. I believe that is why my learning journey led me here.

It is my hope and desire to help communities move forward in their educational systems and improve First Nation students’ outcomes. I think it is through educating students in a way that creates meaning, and draws connections between life and their community’s knowledge, that they will become stronger and healthier. They need to understand who they are, where they come from, and how they can achieve their next steps with guidance and a nurturing environment that reflects themselves and their history. As stated by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples:

First Nation people want education to prepare them to participate fully in the economic life of their communities and Canadian society... [and] that education must develop children and youth as Aboriginal citizens, linguistically and culturally competent to assume the responsibilities of their nations (1996, p. 433).
References


Appendix 1

Research Questions

Question 1. What do you think school success is?

Question 2. What is the relationship between positive self-identity and school success of Indigenous people?

Question 3. What does self-identity mean in a First Nation context?

Question 4(a). What does Cultural Based Education mean to you?

Question 4(b). In what ways do you feel cultural based education can be integrated into the school curriculum?

Question 5. How can cultural based education be increased in order to improve school outcomes for Indigenous students?

Question 6. How can culture be assessed or measured?
Appendix 2

Confidentiality Agreement (Language Interpreter)

I __________________________ agree to treat the research material of Ms. Melanie Manitowabi with the utmost confidentiality. I agree not to disclose any of the material in Ms. Manitowabi's research records to anyone other than Ms. Manitowabi.

______________________________
Signature

______________________________
Date
Appendix 3

Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee
c/o Noojmowin Teg Health Centre
Attention: Melissa Biedermann
Postal Bag 2002, Hwy 540
Little Current, ON P0P 1K0
Tel: (705) 368-2182 ext. 201
Fax: (705) 368-2229
melissa.biedermann@noojmowin-teg.ca

This is to certify that the amendment to the research proposal entitled Examining the Integration of Aboriginal Cultural Content in the Elementary School Curriculum submitted by Melanie Manitowabi on May 2, 2016 has passed an ethics review by a subcommittee of the Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee (MARRC).

Project Start Date: May 12, 2016
Project Finish Date: June 30, 2016
Conditions/Note:

Please note:
This MARRC Ethics Certificate does not authorize a project to proceed. Projects must be approved by the respective First Nation community and/or organization.

This certificate covers only the documents submitted, in the language in which they have been submitted. During the course of research, no deviations from, or changes to the protocol, recruitment or the consent process and form may be initiated without prior written clearance from the MARRC. If you wish to modify your research project please submit a letter outlining the proposed changes to the MARRC Secretary.

Within 6 months of completion of a research project, a report on the completed research project should be submitted to the MARRC secretary. The report shall include information on the following: the number of research participants, whether any problems were encountered during the course of the research as well as the main findings. Published articles would also be appreciated so that the MARRC can build a virtual resource library.

Congratulations and best of luck with your research!

Sincerely,

Lorrilee McGregor, Chairperson
MARRC

Date: May 12, 2016
MEMO

To: Health Director  School Principal
From: Education Director
cc: Melanie Manitowabi, Queens Master’s Candidate
     Band Manager
Date: April 11, 2016
Re: Culturally Based Education research study

As pertaining to First Nation Chief & Council Motion 03-14-16
(Moved by Consensus):

First Nation hereby provides consent to Ms. Melanie Manitowabi,
Queen’s University Master’s Candidate, to conduct research on
First Nation regarding Culturally Based Education (CBE).

The Master’s Thesis Study will commence the Spring of 2016 at
School, and the Centre, through focus group
interviews.

The study will be conducted over the next few months, followed by a write up of
a Master’s Thesis. The collection of data will be collected the Spring of 2016.

This Cultural Based Education study with Queen’s University will be guided by
research supervisor Lindsay Morcom of Queen’s University. A copy and
presentation of the study will be provided to First Nation after the
completion of the Thesis write up.

If you have any comments or questions regarding this study, please feel free to
contact me at the Band Office.
Appendix 5

May 31, 2016

Mrs. Melanie Manitowabi
Master’s Student
Faculty of Education
Queen’s University
Duncan McArthur Hall
511 Union Street West
Kingston, ON, K7M 5R7

GREB Ref #: GEDUC-809-16; Romeo # 6018326
Title: “GEDUC-809-16 Examining the Integration of Aboriginal Cultural Content in the Elementary School Curriculum in a First Nation in Mid-Northern Ontario”

Dear Mrs. Manitowabi:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB), by means of a delegated board review, has cleared your proposal entitled “GEDUC-809-16 Examining the Integration of Aboriginal Cultural Content in the Elementary School Curriculum in a First Nation in Mid-Northern Ontario” for ethical compliance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (TCPS 2 (2014)) and Queen’s ethics policies. In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (Article 6.14) and Standard Operating Procedures (405.001), your project has been cleared for one year. You are reminded of your obligation to submit an annual renewal form prior to the annual renewal due date (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html; click on “Events”; under “Create New Event” click on “General Research Ethics Board Annual Renewal/Closure Form for Cleared Studies”). Please note that when your research project is completed, you need to submit an Annual Renewal/Closure Form in Romeo/traq indicating that the project is ‘completed’ so that the file can be closed. This should be submitted at the time of completion; there is no need to wait until the annual renewal due date.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB of any adverse event(s) that occur during this one year period (access this form at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html; click on “Events”; under “Create New Event” click on “General Research Ethics Board Adverse Event Form”). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that all adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be cleared by the GREB. For example, you must report changes to the level of risk, applicant characteristics, and implementation of new procedures. To submit an amendment form, access the application by at http://www.queensu.ca/traq/signon.html; click on “Events”; under “Create New Event” click on “General Research Ethics Board Request for the Amendment of Approved Studies”. Once submitted, these changes will automatically be sent to the Ethics Coordinator, Ms. Gail Irving, at the Office of Research Services for further review and clearance by the GREB or GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Sincerely,

John Freeman, Ph.D.
Chair
General Research Ethics Board

c: Dr. Lindsay Morcom, Supervisor
Dr. Liying Cheng, Chair, Unit REB
Ms. Erin Wicklam, Dept. Admin.
DATE: May 17, 2016
DURATION: 45 minutes to 2 Hours

LETTER OF INFORMATION / CONSENT

Examining the Integration of Aboriginal Cultural Content in the Elementary School

Curriculum in a First Nation in Mid-Northern Ontario

Principal Investigator
Melanie Manitowabi, B.A., B.Ed.
Faculty of Education
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
(705)285-1350
E-mail: m.manitowabi@queensu.ca

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to compare the Assembly of First Nations and a northern Ontario First Nation's definition of Culture-Based Education (CBE) and explore how the integration of CBE takes place in the local First Nation school system.

What will happen during the study?

During this study, the Elders, parent group, and teachers will hold a talking circle at the Elders' and student center. We will also pass a small audio recorder along with a talking rock. You will be asked to reflect on your educational journey and the current education journey of the children within the community, and define what Cultural Based Education is and how it is integrated into the First Nation School curriculum.

Are there any risks to doing study?

There is little risk to taking part in this study. You may feel some anxiety, but I will make you as comfortable as possible. If you are not comfortable being recorded, you are welcome to pause the recorder and un-pause it when you have finished speaking. As always, because talking circles involve and are dependent on your physical, spiritual, emotional and intellectual state, you are never required to say anything, and if you choose not to join the circle, this will be respected. As well, contact information to local mental health workers will be provided in case of painful memories that occurred during this session. If you wish to participate but do not want to be recorded, please pause the recorder and request that I take notes on your contribution to the talking circle. To ensure that there is no risk to you as a participant you may withdraw from the session at any time.

Are there any benefits to doing this study?

The research will value community knowledge by integrating their ideas into a holistic model of education for their community. This will be completed by defining what CBE is in their community. This could then help with the planning of curriculum standards that not only serves their educational system but also the nation's development of curriculum standards. Recommendations will be provided to this effect.
Privacy

At all times, I will make sure your privacy is protected. No one but me will have access to the consent forms or recording. Once the talking circle is complete, I will transcribe and code the results using a number and the digital recording will be permanently erased. At no time will your name ever appear with the transcription. I will keep all identifying documentation such as recordings and consent forms in a locked cabinet in my office. No data pertaining to your personal identification including your name, will ever appear in any publication. I will do my best to make sure that your privacy is protected, but please keep this in mind when you decide what to say in the talking circle. The results of this research may presented at academic conferences or in academic articles.

What if I change my mind about being in the study?

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or to pause the audio recorder while you are speaking with no penalty. If you decide later that you do not want to be included in the study, please contact the researcher and any information you offered will be removed from the transcription, however this is time sensitive and will not apply once the document is ready to be published.

I would like to show my gratitude to the participant for taking the time to participate in my study by offering a $15 grocery card to the Independent Grocery store. I would also like to share with you my study results when they are ready for publication. If you are interested in receiving a copy please let Melanie Manitowabi know at the end of the study or you can contact Melanie to request it later.

Questions about the Study

If you have any questions about participating in the study, please contact Melanie Manitowabi by e-mail at m.manitowabi@queensu.ca, or by phone 1-705-285-1350. If you have any ethical concerns, please contact the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board at chair.GREB@queensu.ca, or by telephone at 613-533-6061. Or Melissa Biedermann Secretary / Treasurer Manitoulin Anishinaabek Research Review Committee via email: melissa.biedermann@noojmowin-EG.ca.

This study has been granted clearance according to the recommended principles of Canadian ethics guidelines, and Queen's policies.

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Master's student, Melanie Manitowabi of Queen's University. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this study and to receive additional details I requested. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

Signature: ____________________________

I consent to be recorded as part of my participation in this study. Note: If you do not wish to be recorded but still wish to participate, please state this during the talking circle and I will take notes on your contribution.

Signature: ____________________________

Your name (printed): ____________________________

Your e-mail, if you would like a copy of the completed study: ____________________________
Would you like to help improve the transfer of cultural knowledge into the First Nation educational setting?

◊ Are you willing to participate in a 60-120 minute sharing circle, and are 18 years and up?

◊ Would you like to share your knowledge about Cultural Based Education (CBE)?

◊ Would you like to help educate and inform educational institutes about what CBE is and how culture can be integrated into the school curriculum?

If yes, then I would like to hear your story!!!

Group Session dates, time and location:

**Elder group**
Time: May 17th at 6:00 pm at the Elder’s and Youth Centre

**Parent/community group**
Time: May 24th at 6:00 pm at the Elder’s and Youth Centre

**Teacher group**
Time: May 21st at 6:00 pm at the School

There will be a grocery gift card offered for your participation and a small feast afterwards. If you require further information please call Melanie Manitowabi, Queen’s University student at 705-285-1350. This is a research study that will contribute to the study of Indigenous Education.