

TEACHING ABORIGINAL EDUCATION: RESPONDING TO THE TRUTH AND
RECONCILIATION COMMISSION'S CALLS TO ACTION FOR EARLY
CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS

by

DANIELLE DESJARDINS

B.Ed, University of Regina, 1998

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ABSTRACT

In response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015) Calls to Action, my capstone project explores ways in which to implement Aboriginal pedagogy in early childhood programs (Pre K-K) in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada. Grounded within socio-cultural theory, I focus on four aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy: relationships with family and community, experiential learning, storytelling, and relationship with the land. From the literature reviewed and the resources gathered, I found that implementing Aboriginal pedagogy, connected with place-based education and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) into early childhood classrooms enhances children's understanding of the cultural context, and strengthens their relationship with the place in which they live. In connecting this research to practice, I included my own experiences as a parent and a teacher, as well as draw from examples of early childhood educators who are currently incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy, history, and culture into their programs. As an outcome of this project, I developed a website that is focused on implementing Aboriginal pedagogy in early childhood (Pre K - K) in Saskatchewan in order to support educators, and as a response to the TRC's (2015) Call to Action in education to share lesson plans and best practices. Based on the findings from the literature reviewed, I recommend pre-service and in-service education on Aboriginal pedagogy, culture, and history, with a focus on place-based education, and building children's capacity for empathy to support both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young learners.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this capstone project I explore ways that early childhood educators can incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy into curriculum and classrooms. Canada's history regarding the education of Aboriginal children has not been a bright one. Colonialism and residential schools have had a long lasting negative effect on Aboriginal people in Canada and its impact can still be felt to this day (Hare, 2012; Greenwood, Leeuw, & Fraser, 2007). In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action" document in order to address the dark history of residential schools and how it has impacted Aboriginal people in Canada. This document includes calls to action in terms of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis language and education. There are three calls to action regarding education on which my capstone project will focus. The first call to action is to "develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families" (TRC, 2015, p. 2). The second is "building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect" (TRC, 2015, p. 7). Lastly, the third call to action is "sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history" (TRC, 2015, p. 7). These calls to action guide my capstone project.

My own experience also guides this capstone project. I grew up in a northern Saskatchewan Cree community. My mother is of British background, my father is Métis (from Ontario), and my stepfather is Woodland Cree. I was raised by my mother and stepfather, in my stepfather's Cree area. Because of my cultural background, this capstone project is my personal and professional response to the TRC's (2015) calls to action.

Key Terms

For this project, I will define key words used by early childhood education scholars and Indigenous education scholars. *Aboriginal* is considered to be an inclusive, general term used in Canada to describe three distinct Indigenous groups: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (Chartrand, 2012; Preston, Cottrell, Pelletier, & Pearce, 2011). *Aboriginal* is the mutually accepted term that is used in the Canadian Constitution of 1982 for Indigenous peoples in Canada (Preston et al., 2011). *Indigenous* is a term used in an international context to describe people throughout the world who have inhabited a certain region long before different cultures arrived to conquer, settle, and/or colonize (United Nations, 2017). Indigenous people are a group of people who have a distinct culture, language, beliefs, and socio-economic systems, which clearly differ from the current dominant culture in which they live (United Nations, 2017). In some of the research articles, both Indigenous and Aboriginal terms are used. When exploring education, it is important to understanding pedagogy. *Pedagogy* is defined as the understanding of how learning happens, including the theory and practice that supports that understanding (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014). Pedagogy is a belief in the way to educate children and includes cultural values that are held. One aspect of Aboriginal pedagogy that I will focus on is relationship with place, or place-based education. Place-based education uses the local community and environment to teach and educate, rather than using textbooks (Sobel, 2004).

Along with culturally relevant early childhood programs, the TRC (2015) specifically calls for student intercultural understanding and empathy. This falls under Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which is defined by CASEL (2012) as the process

of effectively applying knowledge, attitudes, and skills required to recognize and manage emotions, feel empathy for others, set and attain goals, begin and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible choices.

Context, Background, Rationale, and Importance

On March 3, 2016 I attended the Woodrow Lloyd Lecture at the University of Regina featuring the Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair. I had the privilege to listen to him speak about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as well as his own experience of growing up in Canada as an Indigenous man. In his speech, the Honorable Justice Murray Sinclair described what is arguably the most valuable teaching we can pass on to children; that is, who they are. He eloquently reflected:

(25:58) ...probably the most important process that you will engage in or that you have engaged in in your life, is to answer the question about where you belong, about what it is that is the meaning for your life. Every society has an obligation to help our children to answer four very important questions that they all need to know the answers for, at least need to be guided in finding answers for themselves. Sometimes we never find those answers until the very last moment of our existence, but none-the-less, addressing those four questions during the course of our lifetime is a very key part of our ability to, to live, to relate, to deal with life, and deal with others as part of our lives. And those four questions are: Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? And who am I? (26:53)

These words rang true for me, and connected to my experience as a child growing up in Saskatchewan. I am Métis and grew up in a community with a long history rich in Woodland Cree culture. The lakes, rivers, and islands were well known to my Kokum

(grandmother) who learned from her father. My Kokum spent the hunting season on the family trap line, 100 air miles north of town. Kokum's husband, my grandfather (who passed away quite young), built the cabin on the trap line, traditionally reached by dogsled in the early spring when there was still snow. In the summers, it takes a few days canoeing and portaging to reach it. This knowledge of the land and traditional ways of living off the land was passed down from my Kokum to my stepdad, and my aunts and their families, who continue to use their knowledge of the land and traditional ways of living off the land. Place is very important to my family and culture, as place holds our history, stories, and knowledge. However, in my early schooling (Grades 1-8) in my northern community, none of this knowledge was incorporated into daily studies, and none of the local culture or community was included in the curriculum.

My rationale for researching this topic is two-fold. First, with the consideration that 20% of children aged 14 and under in the province of Saskatchewan are Aboriginal, Aboriginal children are one of the fastest growing populations in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2011). Second, there is a need to support educators as they begin to introduce Aboriginal education into their classrooms. From my own experience of taking the UBC edX MOOC called "Reconciliation through Indigenous Education"¹, first in 2015, and then again in 2017, many people in the course expressed concerns about where to begin teaching Aboriginal education in their classrooms and worried that they did not have enough background information, experience, or understanding of Aboriginal culture.

¹ UBC MOOC: URL <https://www.edx.org/course/reconciliation-through-indigenous-education>

Their desire to meet the needs of their Aboriginal students and community were strong, but many expressed that they did not know how or where to start.

Incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy into Saskatchewan early childhood curriculum is important because it addresses the TRC's (2015) calls to action to provide culturally appropriate programs, and to promote cultural understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada. Flewitt, Messer, and Kucirkova (2015) stated, "mental processes are viewed as social in origin and mediated through interaction using symbolic representations such as language and cultural artefacts" (p. 291). Based on a sociocultural framework, a major theme in my project is that a child's development and learning cannot be separated from the context in which he or she is immersed. The context, in the case of my project, is being a part of Saskatchewan, which includes the history of its Indigenous peoples, the Aboriginal community and ways of knowing and being.

Overview of the Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical frameworks guiding my project are Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, Aboriginal pedagogy (Battiste, 1998), and place-based education (Sobel, 2004). When discussing pedagogy, it is important to first recognize that all pedagogy and curriculum involves the cultural beliefs, values, languages and assumptions of the people who create it (Edwards, 2003). My examination of how to implement Aboriginal pedagogy in early childhood classrooms begins with a socio-cultural theoretical framework.

I draw from Vygotsky (1978), Edwards (2003), Fleer (2002), and Sanchez (1999) to better understand socio-cultural theory and how it is applicable in early childhood

programs today. I use socio-cultural theory as a guide for this capstone project, which considers local culture, context, and relationships specific to Aboriginal pedagogy in Saskatchewan, and how this can be incorporated into early childhood classrooms.

Aboriginal pedagogy does not have a specific theorist who is credited (which is a Western concept), however, Aboriginal knowledge and pedagogy does exist in its own right (Battiste, 2002). I draw from Battiste (2002), Hare (2012), and First Nations Early Childhood Development Council (FNECDC), 2009 to explore what Aboriginal pedagogy is and how it can be implemented into Saskatchewan early childhood classrooms.

I draw on Sobel (2004), Bartholomaeus (2006), and Gruenewald (2003) to explore place-based education, which connects to, and learns from, the history, culture, language, and environment of place, and its importance in Aboriginal pedagogy.

I also draw from the SEL framework (CASEL, 2012) to examine the significance of SEL in early childhood education. I will additionally examine one of the core competencies of the SEL framework (CASEL, 2012), specifically looking at empathy and how it can be used to support intercultural understanding as it relates to Aboriginal pedagogy.

Introduction to the Review of the Literature

In the review of the literature I first introduce the TRC recommendations, to then explore four aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy and how Aboriginal pedagogy connects to place-based education, and SEL. The first aspect I examine is the importance of relationships with family and community (Ball & Simpkins, 2004; Hare & Anderson, 2010). Next, I explore experiential learning (Preston et al., 2011), language and oral storytelling (Hare, 2012; Moore & MacDonald, 2013), and relationship with the land

(Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2005; Johnson, 2012). I then review the literature on how to engage Aboriginal pedagogy with place-based education (Chartrand, 2012; Gruenewald, 2003) and with SEL (Ngai & Koehn, 2010) specifically focusing on the SEL components of social awareness (Bond & Hauf, 2004) and empathy (Findlay, Girardi, & Coplan, 2006; Geagnu, 2015; Trembley, Gokiert, Georgis, Edwards, & Skyrypnek, 2013). I expand on these topics in Chapter 2 in the review of the literature.

Purpose, Significance, and Guiding Question

The purpose of this capstone project is to conduct a review of the literature focusing on what Aboriginal pedagogy is, and different aspects of it, such as place-based education, and SEL. Through this review I identify and provide resources of knowledge and theory of Aboriginal pedagogy in order to guide Saskatchewan early childhood educators who wish to incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood curriculum. Considering the dearth of resources available for early childhood educators, the anticipated significance of my project is that educators will have a better understanding of how to implement Aboriginal pedagogy in the curriculum. This project offers theoretical frameworks and knowledge for early childhood educators to begin implementing Aboriginal pedagogy into curriculum or programs. Educators will also have access to more resources online through a website that I created. Given that Aboriginal children are the fastest growing demographic in Saskatchewan, and the TRC (2015) has called for culturally relevant early childhood programs, the question guiding my investigation is “What are ways in which Aboriginal pedagogy can be implemented into early childhood (Pre K – K) programs in Saskatchewan, Canada?”

Summary

In Chapter 1, I outlined my topic, key terms, and explained my purpose and rationale for this topic. I introduced the theoretical frameworks that guided my project, and the methods and approaches associated with it. I also introduced my guiding question. In Chapter 2, I provide a brief overview of the review of the literature on Aboriginal pedagogy, place-based education, and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) to illustrate how early childhood educators can implement Aboriginal pedagogy into their curriculums and classrooms. In Chapter 3, I draw implications from the theory and the literature in order to explore what curriculum and lessons are currently being used in Saskatchewan to incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood classrooms and any problems that have arisen. And lastly, in Chapter 4 I include my reflections and discuss implications for future research and practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I define socio-cultural theory and how it relates to Aboriginal pedagogy. I explain what Aboriginal pedagogy is and why it is important to consider in early childhood curriculum and classrooms. I then define what place-based education is and how it can be linked to Aboriginal pedagogy. I provide an overview of the literature pertaining to Aboriginal pedagogy, place-based education, SEL, and empathy.

Socio-Cultural Theory

The theoretical framework guiding my project is Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory. Vygotsky argued that human development process is rooted, not only in biological origin, but also in cultural contexts. This includes the tools and language of the culture in which the child is born and how it interacts and influences a child's development and learning. Vygotsky stressed that a child's socio-cultural history is an integral part of child development and learning. Vygotsky wrote "in order to study development in children, one must begin with an understanding of the dialectical unity of two principally different lines [the biological and the cultural], to adequately study this process, then, an experimenter must study both components and the laws which govern their interlacement at each stage of a child's development" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 123). Socio-cultural theory can then be defined as the interaction between people and the culture in which they live.

Socio-cultural theory situates the child in a social and cultural context in which development takes places (Edwards, 2003; Flear, 2002; Sanchez, 1999). Socio-cultural theory acknowledges the importance of interactions and relationships, positioning the child's family context and culture as a central part of a child's education and

development (Ntuli, Nyarambi, & Traore, 2014; Sanchez, 1999). When viewing socio-cultural theory from an Aboriginal pedagogical perspective, one realizes that socio-cultural theory shares the same beliefs about the connectedness of children to their families and culture, and how learning and development takes place within this connectedness and relationships with others. It is through this understanding of how socio-cultural contexts affect child development and learning that I approach my project on incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood classrooms and curriculum.

Pedagogical Approaches and Frameworks

In this section I present a review of the literature related to Aboriginal pedagogy with the purpose of shedding light on the significance and potential for implementation in early childhood. This section includes research and findings that contribute to understanding interconnected aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy, including place-based education, and SEL. This research also provides potential possibilities on how Aboriginal pedagogy can be incorporated into curriculum in order to create culturally appropriate early childhood programs.

Aboriginal Pedagogy

Although it is difficult to define Aboriginal pedagogy, as each Nation has their own specific teachings, there are some commonalities that can be used. Hare (2012) described Aboriginal pedagogy as “learning processes that are social, inter-generational, holistic, oral- and narrative-based, and experiential” (p. 392). With this definition in mind, I explore four aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy: Relationships within family and community, experiential learning, language and oral storytelling, and relationship with the land. I recognize that there are many ways that Aboriginal pedagogy can be

incorporated into early childhood curriculum and classrooms; however, for the scope of this project, in the review of the literature, I focus on these four aspects.

In Aboriginal pedagogy, in terms of relationships with family and community, children are viewed as sacred and are the heart of the family, community, and Nation (FNECDC, 2009). Children and the education of children are viewed holistically where the whole child (spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional) is acknowledged and each child is viewed as having capacities and gifts to contribute to the community (FNECDC, 2009). Aboriginal pedagogy includes learning through interactions and relationships with others. The principles of Aboriginal knowledge stresses “interaction, reciprocity, respect, and non-interference” (Battiste, 1998, p. 24). According to FNECDC (2009), Aboriginal pedagogy focuses on relationships (with people, nature and the land, and spiritual worlds) and each member has certain roles and responsibilities within the community.

Aboriginal pedagogy values experiential learning. This includes hands-on instruction in traditional skills based on a child’s evolving capacities and gifts, with limited questioning, instruction or intervention (Battiste, 2002). Children observe, listen, and participate with minimal instruction in order to learn new skills and knowledge (Battiste, 2002). Including experiential learning opportunities by observing adults and Elders doing meaningful tasks is an important part of Aboriginal pedagogy.

Aboriginal pedagogy includes Aboriginal language and cultural knowledge passed down from Elders through stories, which is an essential aspect of Aboriginal education (Battiste, 2002; FNECDC, 2009). Aboriginal language is a critical link to Aboriginal knowledge through oral tradition (Battiste, 1998). Stories convey and teach knowledge

about cultural teachings that have been passed on from generation to generation, where “teachings flow from stories” (Greenwood & Leeuw, 2007, p. 48).

Many different ways of knowing and being exist, and Aboriginal peoples have their own values and way of living that is connected to the land (Hare, 2012). This Aboriginal way of knowing is manifest in the way Aboriginal children view and make sense of the world. A fundamental principle of Aboriginal knowledge is the social relationship with others, including the land (Hare, 2012). Land and community are valued resources of knowledge, where meaning is made through the interaction with these resources.

Place-Based Education

In Chapter 1, I highlighted place-based education as integral to Aboriginal pedagogy. Place-based education is defined as using the local community and environment to learn concepts, knowledge, and skills through experiential and hands on learning (Sobel, 2004). Place-based learning, sometimes also referred to as place-conscious learning, envelops all aspects of place, its nature, environment, history, culture, and language(s). Bartholomaeus (2006) explored place-based learning, and defined it as utilizing resources outside the school walls to benefit student learning, to connect school learning to everyday experiences, and to be consciously concerned with what is happening in the place and community where the students are. Gruenewald (2003) argued that place and culture are deeply intertwined. However, he believed our relationship with place has been ignored by the educational system and he defined place-conscious education as a way to expand our notions of pedagogy, and a means to break down the divide that separates schools from the outside living world.

Place-based learning aims to include teachers and students in the experience of local culture and the political systems that influence the shaping and understanding of what happens there (Gruenwald, 2008). It includes any pedagogy, which will extend engagement into local communities. This includes experiential learning, environmental education, community-based education, and Aboriginal education, among others (Gruenwald, 2008). Place-based learning or place-conscious learning is expanding the pedagogy of education outside school walls, and acknowledges the place, the history and community in which we live and of which we are a part. I explore the research related to place-based education and its relationship with Aboriginal pedagogy in the Review of the Literature section.

Social and Emotional Learning Framework

As introduced in Chapter 1, The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) defined social and emotional learning (SEL) as “the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions” (CASEL, 2012, p. 4). CASEL (2012) identified five interconnected competency clusters that make up their social and emotional learning (SEL) framework: Self-awareness, Self-management, Social awareness, Relationship skills, and Responsible decision-making. Self-awareness includes recognizing one’s emotions, values, and thoughts and recognizing one’s own strengths and limitations. Self-management includes regulating one’s own emotions and behaviors in different situations, self-discipline, and self-motivation. Social awareness

includes perspective taking and empathizing with others from diverse backgrounds. Relationship skills include maintaining healthy relationships through the ability to communicate clearly, engage socially, and participate in teamwork. And lastly, Responsible decision-making includes making constructive choices through identifying problems, analyzing situations, solving problems, and reflecting on consequences of actions.

Review of the Literature

In the following review of the literature, I begin with a description of the TRC document and connections to the SEL framework in order to support Aboriginal pedagogy. I explore current research on four aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy: The importance of relationships with family and community, the use of experiential learning, language and storytelling as a mode of literacy and passing on cultural lessons, and relationship with the land. I then examine the relationship between Aboriginal pedagogy and place-based education. Finally I examine the role of SEL, particularly in teaching empathy for mutual respect and cultural understanding, and it's relationship with Aboriginal pedagogy.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls to Action

Within the SEL framework, a key issue in Canada is addressing the social and emotional consequences of Residential schools. The government of Canada was ordered to form the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) as a result of the 2007 class action settlement on the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (Government of Canada, n.d.). The TRC was created to facilitate reconciliation with former students, their families, and their communities. The members of the TRC spent six

years travelling across Canada and hearing more than 6,500 accounts of experiences at Residential schools (Government of Canada, n.d.). In 2015, the TRC presented its findings in its final report, which included ninety-four “calls to action”.

One of the TRC’s (2015) calls to action on education is to “Build[ing] student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect” (p. 7). This particular call to action relates directly to the Social Awareness competency cluster of CASEL (2012), which emphasizes the capacity to take other’s perspectives and to empathize with others from diverse backgrounds. For the scope of this project I will focus on one Self Awareness skill, empathy, which is an important skill to instill when teaching cultural sensitivity to both non-Aboriginal children and Aboriginal children.

As the TRC (2015) recommended, it is important for all children in Canada to understand Aboriginal culture and history in order for non-Aboriginal people to empathize with Aboriginal people’s experiences and build mutual respect. Therefore, empathy is an important skill to teach all children when incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood classrooms, especially when introducing the history of Residential schools in Canada.

Relationships with Family and Community

Ball and Simpkins (2004) interviewed early childhood graduates, administrators, parents, and community Elders in order to gain a deeper understanding of how Aboriginal knowledge can be integrated into early childhood practice. Indigenous knowledge was defined as knowledge within a local cultural community that is not only tied to place, but also to relationships and ways of being that change over time. Through these interviews the authors found that parents and families play an important role in establishing a child’s

cultural identity by sharing their genealogy and “knowing who you are” (Ball & Simpkins, 2004, p. 494). Community Elders also played an important role in passing on cultural knowledge while maintaining relationships within the early childhood community. Ball and Simpkins (2004) concluded that the development of relationships between community members (early childhood educators, families, and community Elders) in creating and participating in childcare programs, resulted in reconnecting people with Aboriginal ways of knowing and being.

In their study about Aboriginal children transitioning from home to early childhood centers, Hare and Anderson (2010) also noted the importance of relationships in Aboriginal pedagogy and how children live and learn from community Elders, grandparents, and extended family. Hare and Anderson interviewed Indigenous parents to explore their thoughts and feelings about the transition of their children from home to early childhood centers. The authors noted that many parents felt tension, due to the history of residential schools and the ‘sixties scoop’ (in the 1960’s many Aboriginal children were taken from their homes without consent and placed into the child welfare system), and how this has had an intergenerational impact on the parents and their children entering early childhood centers today. This tension points to the need for early childhood educators to understand the history of residential schools and the sixties scoop in Canada in order to support Aboriginal families entering early childhood centers. Hare and Anderson concluded that in order to support traditional values of relationships, early childhood educators should make an effort to build a relationship with the families and meet in family homes or in their communities, thus helping parents to become comfortable with sending their young children to school.

Experiential Learning

In their review of the literature, Preston et al. (2011) explored the need for, and the importance of, Aboriginal early childhood education and the impact it has on a child's academic and social development. The authors discussed Aboriginal pedagogy in terms of teachers increasing wait time for students to give answers, control over class pacing, and independence in student learning. In terms of experiential learning, the authors found that, from an Aboriginal perspective, learning is lived experiences through storytelling, cooperative learning, demonstrations, role-modeling, personal reflections, talking circles, and hands-on experiences (Preston et al., 2011, p. 8). They also suggested that a quality-learning environment for Aboriginal children includes “feasts, cultural camps and Aboriginal ceremonies in which students actively participate” (Regnier, 1995 as cited in Preston et al., 2011, p. 8). An experiential learning environment is one where children can watch and emulate adults who are involved in meaningful activities.

Language and Oral Storytelling

Hare (2012) looked at how indigenous knowledge contributes to young First Nations children's literacy learning, specifically looking at children attending Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) programs. Hare noted how families play a crucial role in the development of early literacy and how there are still discrepancies for children of minority backgrounds. When children's language and literacy practices within their families differ from the literacy expectations of school, children do not succeed (Hare, 2012). Hare explained that social-intergenerational settings, oral and narrative based language, holistic views, and experiential processes form indigenous knowledge systems. Theories of multi-modality propose that reading and writing are only a few ways of

making meaning, and that there is a whole range of literacies, including music, movement, images, speech and digital forms, that inform meaning (Hare, 2012).

Hare (2012) provided examples of how oral story telling is the traditional way of sharing and transmitting knowledge where children in her study attended ceremonies and community events, which exposed them to speeches, stories, prayers, songs, and cultural dances. These oral forms of Indigenous language exposed the children to a broad range of language and literacy that inform meaning in a different, multi-modal way, other than reading and writing.

Moore and MacDonald (2013) documented how the Halq'eméylem language was being preserved and spread by Elders, family members, and teachers in a Stó:lō First Nations community in British Columbia. In their review of the literature, which discussed how teachers at the Aboriginal Head Start Family Program communicated with Elders, Moore and MacDonald included the works of Archibald (2008) who emphasized the importance of referring to Elders for direction, recommendations, and confirmation of their teaching and storytelling. Moore and MacDonald also observed how the Halq'eméylem language was promoted through main traditional activities and practices that took place throughout the year. They drew from Carlson (2001), who highlighted how the cyclical seasons are a major part of the Stó:lō community's spiritual and social life. Moore and MacDonald concluded that traditional language was best learned when Elders, along with teachers and parents, created a learning environment that facilitated a range of literacy practices, including learning in a circle, using books, print, and computer games, as well as traditional protocols, drumming and songs.

Relationship with the Land

Relationship with nature and the land is a crucial part of Aboriginal knowing and being. In their theoretical article discussing learning processes within diverse knowledge systems, Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) noted the need for effective implementation of Aboriginal pedagogy in classrooms today and explored the issues that emerge when reconnecting education, particularly science, to a sense of place and its cultural practices. Barnhardt and Kawagley explained how Indigenous education is “carefully constructed around observing natural processes, adapting modes of survival, obtaining sustenance from the plants and animal world, and using natural materials to make their tools and implements” (p. 10). Barnhardt and Kawagley emphasized how Indigenous knowledge stems from direct experience with the natural world and the land in which they live.

In Johnson’s (2012) theoretical article about place-based knowledge, Johnson also discussed Aboriginal people’s connection to the land and how it has influenced the histories, languages, philosophies, and sciences of Aboriginal knowledge. Johnson argued that a critical pedagogy of place is needed in order to decolonize thinking and see alternative ways of viewing the world. He also noted how Aboriginal knowledge systems acknowledge place, its history and how place shapes who we are. Johnson further explained that place-based pedagogy acknowledges history, place, culture, and language, which are often ignored in Western scientific views. He argued that returning to a place-based pedagogy would include Aboriginal worldviews, and proposed that this would involve returning names of places to their original Indigenous names. Johnson concluded that learning stories about place would protect and encourage Indigenous language skills.

Engaging Aboriginal Pedagogy with Place-Based Education

Place-based learning is acknowledging the place, community, and culture where one lives. Place-based education is important to consider when discussing Aboriginal pedagogy, as place, culture, and self are all connected. In his theoretical article on place-conscious education, Gruenewald (2003) drew from Basso (1996), discussing how the Western Apache in New Mexico, USA connect mind, spirit, and principles to places, to specific place names, and to stories that explain the relationships between people and between people and places. Places themselves are products of culture (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 626). Place-based learning offers a different perspective from the euro-centric lens our current education system supports. In his later theoretical work about critical pedagogy of place, Gruenewald (2008) argued that a further benefit of place-based education increases student interest and understanding in many different areas of learning, as well as encourages students to look at the world through a multidiscipline, experiential, and intergenerational perspective (p. 315).

In her theoretical article on Anishinaabe pedagogy, Chartrand (2012) acknowledged the work on Aboriginal education currently implemented in the public system across Canada, but challenged the understanding of Aboriginal education that is currently being taught in Manitoba. Chartrand drew from her Anishinaabe cultural stories in hopes of creating understanding of Anishinaabe pedagogy and the importance of maintaining a place-conscious lens in Aboriginal education. In her discussion, Chartrand (2012) reminded educators that there are many distinctions between local First Nations' cultures and the general system of Aboriginal education. Moreover, Chartrand asserted

that educators must be place-conscious and to research local protocols and stories specific to their own communities when teaching Aboriginal education.

Aboriginal pedagogy and the strong beliefs about relationships with the land, understanding the history of place, and developing relationships with others in the community, influence children's attitudes and interpersonal relationships, thus emphasizing aspects of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).

Engaging Aboriginal Pedagogy with Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)

Ngai and Koehn (2010) conducted a study for a period of two years at a primary school in Missoula, Montana, looking at the cognitive and attitudinal gains place-based education has to offer. The study occurred at a school located next to a Salish and Pend d'Oreille reservation. The school was majority Caucasian, with some Aboriginal students. At the beginning of the study, a survey was given to all students. Another school close by was also surveyed for comparison. Teachers where the study was taking place were encouraged to use multicultural and intercultural education to implement a place-based education program. The school developed a relationship with Elders and teachers from the neighboring reservation, and collaborated with them to develop a curriculum and lessons about the local tribes, the history, culture and language. As part of the new curriculum, Elders made regular visits to the school and to each classroom. Fieldtrips to the reservation were included as an important part of place-based learning (Ngai & Koehn, 2010). This study found that primary students (K- Grade 5) gained in both cognitive and attitudinal areas over the two-year period, and interpersonal relationships developed between Aboriginal children and Caucasian students. Attitudes towards indigenous cultures had changed, in that children identified that although

Aboriginal people came from different backgrounds (cultural, social-economical) they were still people and could be good friends (Ngai & Koehn, 2010). The authors concluded that through building relationships with Elders and Indigenous knowledge keepers, the children had increased their cultural understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture and people.

Social Awareness and Aboriginal Pedagogy

Aboriginal pedagogy views children holistically, focusing not only on their physical, intellectual, and spiritual development, but also on children's social and emotional development. Social and emotional development, from an Aboriginal pedagogical lens, focuses particularly on building healthy relationships (Hare, 2012) and respecting themselves and others (Tremblay et al., 2013). Aboriginal pedagogy places the child as connected in relationships with others, and these relationships are based on an understanding of inter-relatedness and respect (Battiste, 1998). Within the SEL framework, building healthy relationships falls under the category of Social Awareness, which is defined as "the ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures" (CASEL, 2012, p. 9). Social awareness acknowledges the importance of teaching children the interconnectedness we have with others, including those who are from different cultures and backgrounds.

Drawing from Bond and Hauf (2004), researchers have deemed it important for educators to understand how to implement SEL in the classroom. In their review of the literature examining effective intervention programs, Bond and Hauf analyzed a number of intervention programs aimed at different aspects of SEL, and found that there are certain characteristics that make intervention programs effective. One of these

characteristics is cultural sensitivity. Bond and Hauf argued that cultural sensitivity is an essential characteristic of effective programs and that community based programs “can address the particular historical conditions of the community for which they are designed and thereby build on the specific strengths of their specific community” (p. 210). This conclusion underlines the importance of incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy in classrooms and curriculum.

Empathy. As noted by Bond and Hauf (2004), in order for children to develop healthy relationships and intercultural understanding, empathy is required. In Geangu's (2015) theoretical article about the development of empathy in young children, she explored what empathy is and the processes involved in the development of empathy in the first years of life. Geangu described empathy as the ability to feel with others, which requires a level of awareness of one’s own emotions and the emotions of others. In order to feel empathy, one must be able to recognize and regulate one’s own feelings, and be aware of the differences between one’s own emotions and the emotions of others (Geangu, 2015). When feelings for others are regulated, emotions can lead to an empathetic response, including sympathy and pro-social behavior. When feelings for others are not regulated and become too intense, it can lead to empathetic distress, resulting in withdrawal and a focus on self (Geangu, 2015).

Findlay, Girardi, and Coplan (2006) examined social behavior and social understanding of empathetic and low-empathetic children in order to gain a better understanding of empathy. In Findlay et al.’s study, 136 Kindergarten and Grade 1 students participated where 92% were identified as Caucasian, while the other 8% were unidentified. Parents filled out a ratings form about different aspects of social behavior

(aggressive, shy, and pro-social behavior) of their children, followed by interviews with the children. During the interviews, children were presented with hypothetical vignettes depicting children behaving in a variety of ways with peers. The results from this study suggested that empathetic children had a more developed social understanding than their less empathetic peers. Findlay et al. (2006) concluded that it is important for educators to promote empathy in order to improve children's social functioning within their peer group.

Tremblay et al. (2013) also found that emotional wellness and empathy is in an important part of Aboriginal pedagogy. In Tremblay et al.'s (2013) qualitative community based study, 37 Aboriginal participants consisting of parents, university students, youth, and an Elder, took part in focus groups to discuss what skills, resources, and strategies are needed for healthy social and emotional development in the early years. Through these discussions, five interconnected themes emerged: cultural wellness, emotional wellness, mental wellness, social wellness, and strong identity (p. 3). Emotional wellness included developing the capacity for love, empathy, and understanding. Love, empathy and understanding were considered by participants to be crucial for young Aboriginal children to develop as these were seen as necessary for acquiring positive self-esteem, for healing past hurts and learning to forgive, for better relating to others and for building positive relationships (Tremblay et al., 2013).

As the TRC (2015) recommended, it is important for all children in Canada to understand Aboriginal culture and history in order for non-Aboriginal children to empathize and have a stronger intercultural understanding with Aboriginal children, and to build mutual respect. The findings summarized by Findlay et al. (2006) and Tremblay

et al. (2013) in this review of the literature, confirm that empathy is an important skill to teach all children, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, when incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood classrooms. In Chapter 3, the next chapter, I outline and describe my connections between theory, research, and practice.

CHAPTER 3: CONNECTING THEORY TO PRACTICE

In Chapter 3, I link the three TRC (2015) calls to action outlined in Chapter 1 to the literature reviewed. First, I connect the theory and literature reviewed with practical examples in which to develop culturally appropriate early childhood programs for Aboriginal families. I draw from the literature reviewed to emphasize the need for educators to develop background knowledge and to learn the history and culture of place. I connect my own personal experiences as a parent and teacher in the local public school system, as well as from examples of teachers implementing culturally appropriate programs, which include Aboriginal culture, history, and pedagogy into their classrooms. Next, based on the review of literature, I provide practical examples of how early childhood educators are building student capacity for intercultural understanding and mutual respect through place-based education and children's literature. Lastly, I describe how I have chosen to share information and best practices through the website² I have developed, as well as through a workshop I have presented in March, 2018 for the first time.

Developing Culturally Appropriate Early Childhood Programs for Aboriginal Families

Although I was living and teaching abroad for 16 years, and I am not currently working in the school system, for the past four years, I have had experience as a parent of a child in the local public school system. I have had the opportunity to observe how and when Aboriginal history, culture, and pedagogy were (or were not) introduced at school. I have found, from both a teacher's and a parent's perspective, that although

² Our Spirits Soar. URL: www.ourspiritssoar.com

Saskatchewan has a high Aboriginal student population, the curriculum continues to be centered on Western understandings (Battiste, 2002). I have found that not much progress has been made since I last taught in the Regina Public School system in 1998. This finding strongly resonates with the three TRC (2015) calls to action that I introduced in Chapter 1. These calls to action require those in government and education to broaden curriculum to include culturally relevant values and perspectives that are currently lacking. In order to expand educators' capacity to develop culturally appropriate programs in Saskatchewan, it is necessary to have foundational knowledge of Aboriginal pedagogy, as well as background history about Aboriginal people and culture (Hare & Anderson, 2010). As described in Chapter 2, a socio-cultural lens acknowledges relationships and culture as central to children's development (Ntuli et al, 2014).

Building Background Knowledge

As recommended in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, it is beneficial for early childhood educators to have background knowledge on Aboriginal culture, history, and pedagogy (Hare and Anderson, 2010), that can then be used to support cultural sensitivity (Bond & Hauf, 2004) and intercultural understanding (Ngai & Koehn, 2010), as called on by the TRC (2015). Using this foundational knowledge, Aboriginal worldviews and understanding can be implemented into the curriculum. In doing so, and resonating with Preston et al.'s (2011) findings, I anticipate that this will not only enhance the curriculum but will also enhance the quality of the program for all children.

When I began my B.Ed. at university, I was pleased to find that the Saskatchewan provincial K-12 curriculum required First Nations and Métis content to be included into Social Studies units. However, in 1997, when I was teaching in a core community school

(K-8) in Regina, I noticed that most of the First Nations and Métis content were in the form of Art projects that did not give children background knowledge about specific cultures or protocols that might be involved in the projects. I have since noted, when visiting my son's first school he attended four years ago, that few changes had taken place. The ability to deeply inquire into Aboriginal worldviews and knowledge largely depended on the teacher's own understanding and relationship with Aboriginal people. Only a basic guideline is suggested by Saskatchewan provincial curriculum in terms of Treaty Education³. I concur with Battiste's (1998) findings that although there is an effort to include Aboriginal knowledge and history into the curriculum, it continues to be considered an "other" view of the world, that is, secondary to the values of mainstream, Eurocentric knowledge.

In order for early childhood educators to deepen their understanding of Aboriginal culture, history, and pedagogy, it is essential to consider the local socio-cultural context (Edwards, 2003). In Saskatchewan, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner⁴ provides speakers who travel around the province in order to educate residents of Saskatchewan about treaties and how to improve relations between all communities. I attended one of those talks and found it extremely valuable in learning about the history of treaties and residential schools specific to Saskatchewan. This example speaks to Chartrand's (2012) position of maintaining a place-conscious lens in Aboriginal education in order to fully understand local knowledge and history.

³ The Saskatchewan Kindergarten Curriculum (2010) has First Nations and Metis content in the Art and Social Studies strands, with Social Studies focusing on Treaty Education.

⁴ Office of the Treaty Commissioner: URL http://www.otc.ca/book_a_speaker.html

Culturally Appropriate Programming

The TRC (2015) has called for culturally appropriate programming for Aboriginal families. This would require an understanding of Aboriginal pedagogy. Returning to the definition guiding this capstone project, Aboriginal pedagogy includes “learning processes that are social, inter-generational, holistic, oral-and narrative-based, and experiential” (Hare, 2012, p. 392). An excellent example of how to support educators in incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy into their programs is an early childhood document developed in British Columbia called “BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Framework” (FNECDC, 2009) which explicitly explains BC First Nations view of early childhood, education, and pedagogy. This document also describes how colonialism and residential schools have negatively impacted First Nations families. This framework explicitly offers some suggestions for how to move forward, specifically focusing on relationships with family, community, and place (see Appendix A). I maintain, as suggested by FNECDC (2009), that young children can be taught about the place in which they live by building relationships with the people in their community, with nature, and with the history of their community.

As mentioned earlier, Treaty education is infused in the Saskatchewan Kindergarten Social Studies curriculum, in the form of exploring concepts such as sharing, promises, and agreements in order to set a foundation for learning about Treaties. I had the opportunity to discuss with Ms. Anna Rose, a Kindergarten teacher, about an on-going lesson she has developed to teach Treaty Education (A. Rose, personal communication, 2017). She uses a traditional Nehiyawak (Plains Cree) creation story and what she calls “Story of the Land” to explore life in Saskatchewan before, during,

and after newcomers arrived. She reads Cree traditional creation stories, and explains to the children what Saskatchewan looked like in the past, using a diorama approach, to create the landscape. She offers pieces of fabric, local flora to the children, such as pinecones and sticks, and real buffalo fur to create a prairie scene while discussing aspects of Cree culture, including traditional shelter and how Indigenous people have lived and continuing living off the land (see Figure 1). This lesson is on-going, where the diorama changes as the lessons cover pre-contact, contact and treaties, and present day First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan. She also uses children's literature to introduce the history of Residential Schools to the children. This local Cree creation story example speaks to Chartrand's (2012) position of including local Aboriginal stories into literacy areas, story time, and curriculum to incorporate place-conscious early childhood education.



Figure 1: "Story of the Land". Photo permission granted by A. Rose

This photo is of a diorama created by Kindergarten students about Saskatchewan pre-contact time, where First Nations lived off the land, and buffalo were a main source of food in the prairies.

Building Children's Capacity for Empathy, Intercultural Understanding, and Mutual Respect

Socio-cultural theory, Aboriginal pedagogy, Place-based education, and SEL all consider developing relationships as an important factor in children's learning. These

theories and framework conceptualize building relationships with others to include children's parents, families, siblings, peers, Elders, and other knowledgeable community members. In my experience, the most memorable lessons included Elders who shared knowledge, stories, and songs with the children. However, I have also noticed, that sometimes in schools, it is a one off invitation, and a deep connection between the Elder and children is not developed. I support Ball and Simpkins's (2004) notion that while "Aboriginal day" or "multicultural days" at school may provide some sort of intercultural understanding, the authors found that the opportunity to form a deep connection and learn specific knowledge that is held by certain Elders was limited. Therefore, it is recommended that inviting Elders, parents, or knowledgeable community members into the classroom might be better understood in terms of inviting to form a relationship, which would require organizing regular visits throughout the year (Ngai & Koehn, 2010). This can be done either through school administration, or on the educator's own initiative. In the Regina Public School system there are Indigenous support teachers⁵ who can be called upon to assist with this. For programs that do not have access to an Indigenous support teacher, it would be necessary to develop relationships with Aboriginal community members on one's own by connecting with local Indigenous organizations within one's own community.

I have become more aware of how the TRC's (2015) recommendations to build children's capacity for empathy, intercultural understanding and mutual respect (TRC, 2015) includes teaching about First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan, their

⁵ Indigenous Advocate Brochure: URL http://www.rbe.sk.ca/sites/default/files/indigenous_advocate_brochure_elementary_0.pdf

worldviews, the history of the treaties, and experiences at residential schools. When I have explained my project topic to educators, some have asked the question “Is teaching about the residential school experience in early childhood too early? Is it an appropriate topic for young ones?” I argue that the earlier we teach young children about Aboriginal culture and history, the better able these children will be able to express their ideas, thoughts, and feelings on this topic. In doing so, I echo the findings of Findlay et al. (2006) that it is important to promote empathy in young children to improve their social relationships with others.

One stellar example of teaching about residential schools in early childhood can be found at a BC early childhood center, where one educator was inspired to respond to the TRC’s (2015) call to actions after taking the UBC online MOOC course mentioned in Chapter 1⁶. In a CBC interview by McCue (2015), Kristen Webster explained how she uses place-based learning and children’s literature to explore First Nations culture and history in her community (see Appendix B). Using children’s literature, she taught young children in her care about the history of residential schools, drawing on their emotions to discuss feelings, rights, and fairness. Through place-based education and SEL, specifically focusing on feelings and empathizing with others, this educator was able to explore sensitive topics in an age appropriate manner. This example illustrates how teaching young children to take on other’s perspectives and empathize with people of diverse cultures promotes interconnectedness and intercultural understanding (Bond & Hauf, 2004), again lending support to the belief that teaching Aboriginal culture and

⁶ UBC MOOC: URL <https://www.edx.org/course/reconciliation-through-indigenous-education>

history, particularly about residential schools, to Pre K age children is possible and effective. This example also illustrates the effectiveness of using children's literature to address difficult realities, such as the history of Residential Schools in Canada and to give children the vocabulary to express their feelings and understanding about the context and history of where they live.

Description of Website:

“Our Spirits Soar: Responding to the TRC’s Calls to Action for Early Childhood”

Classrooms

Considering the TRC’s (2015) call to action on sharing information and best practices, I wanted to create a forum that could support information about Aboriginal history and culture in Saskatchewan, as well as provide current research on Aboriginal pedagogy and lesson plans in a multi-media format. Therefore, I chose to develop a website for this capstone project based on my own experience searching for information on this topic. I found that there were no websites that addressed early childhood Aboriginal pedagogy specific to Saskatchewan. I believe that a website is the best tool to share this type of information, and was inspired to create a website where educators can easily find and share information and best practices.

My website is guided by current research reviewed in this capstone project, documentation on Aboriginal pedagogy, and within the theoretical frameworks and methods mentioned in this paper (see Appendix C for a screen shot of the website homepage). This website provides a foundation for understanding Aboriginal worldviews, culture, and history in Saskatchewan for teachers to draw on when developing their own lessons. As well, the website provides one central location where

resources on Aboriginal history (including the history of residential schools and treaties in Saskatchewan), culture, and Aboriginal pedagogy that can be found. It also includes lesson plans and an annotated bibliography of children’s literature (Pre K – K levels). It is designed to invite educators to discover Aboriginal ways of knowing and to help them implement Aboriginal pedagogy into the curriculum. It is my hope that this website will become a hub for teachers to easily access information about Saskatchewan Aboriginal culture and history. As well, in response to the TRC’s call to share best practices and resources, I also hope this website will become a hub where early childhood educators will share ideas, lesson plans, questions, and thoughts, as they explore this topic and seek new and effective ways to teach children about Aboriginal education, culture, and history in Saskatchewan. A summary of the web page content is provided in Table 1 with the headings for the webpages, connections to the TRC’s (2015) Calls to Action, and specific content for each heading and subpages.

Table 1. Overview of Website Pages and Content.

Website page	TRC Call to Action	Content
Home	<i>Sharing information and best practices</i>	Introduction, purpose, rationale and blog postings
About Me		Introduction to my cultural background, experiences, and thoughts about why this topic is important to me personally and professionally as a part of my capstone project at UBC M.Ed. in ECE.
Treaties in Saskatchewan	<i>Developing culturally appropriate early childhood programs</i>	Treaties, link to the Saskatchewan government website, history of treaties, and the diverse First Nations that signed them. Maps, visuals, and a video about the treaties signed in Saskatchewan.
Residential Schools	<i>Developing culturally appropriate early childhood programs</i> <i>Building children’s capacity for empathy, intercultural understanding, and</i>	Introduces residential schools in Saskatchewan, maps and photos from the government website, as well as background information from the TRC’s website. Videos about the Residential School experience are also included.

	<i>mutual respect</i>	
Aboriginal Pedagogy	<i>Developing culturally appropriate early childhood programs</i> <i>Building children's capacity for empathy, intercultural understanding, and mutual respect</i>	Focuses on relationships with family and community, storytelling and language, experiential learning, and relationship with place. Videos that explain Aboriginal pedagogy, and each of those four aspects. A sub page addresses the value of inviting Elders into the classroom, and the protocols that are suggested by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education.
Lesson Plans	<i>Sharing information and best practices</i> <i>Building children's capacity for empathy, intercultural understanding, and mutual respect</i>	Guidelines to determine respectful and culturally appropriate resources, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education's Guidelines, lesson plans. A sub page on children's literature, connecting the SEL framework and children's literature to teach children empathy and intercultural understanding, and includes three annotated bibliographies. A second sub page is on learning kits, where I provide a summary of the learning kits available and links to purchase.
Professional Development	<i>Sharing information and best practices</i>	Blog, videos, books, PD workshops

I also have the opportunity to present this website capstone project at the Think Indigenous Education Conference⁷ at the University of Saskatchewan. I am looking forward to sharing this research and the relevance of my journey gathering information for my website. I hope it will become a sharing site with a focus on responding to the TRC's (2015) calls to action for early childhood educators.

In this chapter I connected theories, frameworks and literature reviewed in Chapter 2 to implementing Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood curriculum. I brought awareness to pedagogical strategies that invite early childhood educators to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal pedagogy, culture, and history. I have given examples of how educators are implementing Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood programs. Finally, I described a website that I have developed so that

⁷ Think Indigenous Education Conference: URL <https://thinkindigenous.usask.ca/>

educators can deepen their knowledge and understanding about the history of First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan and that provides resources on how to implement Aboriginal pedagogy into the curriculum. In Chapter 4, I present my reflections on this project, further research directions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this final chapter I reflect on my investigation of how to incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood programs. I have always strongly believed in including Aboriginal knowledge and culture into programs in Saskatchewan. However, through this capstone project, it has become apparent to me the importance of building relationships (SEL), and learning through place-based education. In the literature reviewed, findings suggest that Aboriginal pedagogy, using place-based education and SEL framework to support young learners in learning Aboriginal history and culture in Saskatchewan, not only benefits Aboriginal children, but also benefits non-Indigenous children, thus building mutual respect and intercultural understanding, as called upon by the TRC (2015). In the following sections, I draw from the findings of the literature reviewed, as well as establish connections between theory and practice, to address my guiding question “What are ways in which Aboriginal pedagogy can be implemented into early childhood (Pre K – K) programs in Saskatchewan, Canada?” Finally, I also consider limitations of this particular project and outline some possibilities for future study and practice in this area.

Reflection and Concluding Thoughts

My capstone project has elaborated on the importance of incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy and ways in which it can be included in early childhood programs. The findings from the reviewed research have suggested that incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy, while drawing from place-based education and SEL, enhances early childhood programs (Preston et al., 2011). In considering my question on ways in which Aboriginal pedagogy can be implemented in early childhood, it became clear to me the necessity of

teacher background knowledge, developing sustainable relationships with Aboriginal families and Elders within the community, and using children's literature to increase children's learning, empathy, intercultural understanding and mutual respect.

I have become aware of how important it is for educators to reflect on their own knowledge of Aboriginal pedagogy before implementing it into their programs, in order to ensure quality Aboriginal programming. I have realized that educators need to understand what they know, and what is unknown before they can consider ways to deepen their own understanding of Aboriginal knowledge and culture in their community, echoing Chartrand's (2012) recommendations for educators to become aware of local Aboriginal culture. Once educators begin deepening their understanding on Aboriginal culture and history, they can consider how to weave this knowledge into their programs. As I investigated this topic to then highlight these aspects in my website, I found that there are many opportunities for teachers to learn more about Aboriginal culture and history. Free online courses are available, and websites and blogs can be found online. Workshops and conferences exist across Saskatchewan to assist educators in further understanding Aboriginal culture, history, treaties, and experiences in residential school. The problem I identified is that none of these resources are centrally located, and this need for a central location of resources specifically for Aboriginal pedagogy in early childhood, inspired me to create a website to address this problem.

Along with deepening understanding of Aboriginal history and culture, I anticipate educators, including myself, will consider ways to build relationships with Elders or knowledgeable others in their community. I have become aware that it is through building long-lasting relationships that true learning and understanding can

begin. Aboriginal pedagogy weaves place-based education and SEL together in a way that requires educators to think outside the classroom and integrate learning into the community. I have always believed in the importance of inviting Elders into the classroom to share knowledge. Through the literature review it became clear to me that building relationships (Hare & Anderson, 2010; Ngai & Koehn, 2010) and learning the history in order to have background knowledge on which to build respectful relationships (Hare & Anderson, 2010; Johnson, 2012), are key aspects to understand local Aboriginal culture and pedagogy (Chartrand, 2010; Hare & Anderson, 2010). Therefore, I included a sub-page on my website outlining protocols for inviting Elders.

While exploring what resources are available for early childhood educators to teach Aboriginal pedagogy, I found a number of children's books about Aboriginal culture and history that can assist educators in implementing Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood classrooms. Early childhood educators already have the skills to use children's literature and these skills can be transferred to introducing Aboriginal pedagogy and SEL topics. Most, if not all, early childhood educators read children's books to their class already. All that is required is for educators to thoughtfully consider using children's books to introduce SEL concepts such as Social Awareness (CASEL, 2012). Excellent books are available that introduce Aboriginal culture and the experience of residential schools, which can be used to teach young children empathy (see Appendix D). On my website, I have included three annotated bibliographies that introduce Aboriginal culture, history, residential school experience, and present day events, along with suggestions on how they can be used to draw on SEL.

Overall, my review of the literature has shown that teaching Aboriginal culture and history is not only important for Aboriginal early childhood learners, but also for non-Indigenous children as well. By implementing Aboriginal pedagogy, which includes place-based education, and drawing from a SEL framework, children gain a better understanding of the context in which they live. I anticipate that this will change the way I approach building relationships with families and Elders I invite into the classroom, by focusing on building meaningful, sustainable relationships. I also anticipate more place-based education to occur in my program, where children feel integrated and a part of a community.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study and Practice

This project was limited in scope to Pre K and Kindergarten, and did not consider the importance of Aboriginal pedagogy in upper elementary school or high school. Preston et al. (2011) noted that many K-12 schools across Saskatchewan are currently incorporating strategies to support Aboriginal student learning, while Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) discussed the need for Aboriginal pedagogy to integrate with science within schools.

In addition, I focused on only four aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy (relationship with family and community, language and oral storytelling, experiential learning, and relationship with land) and did not consider other aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy, including reciprocity and non-interference (Battiste, 1998) and inter-generational learning (Hare, 2012), which would benefit early childhood programs. This project was also limited in scope to implementing Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood programs in

Saskatchewan, because it is too broad in scope to cover all Indigenous pedagogy across Canada.

Recommendations for future study and practice. I found that there is a vast amount of research and resources on Aboriginal pedagogy for upper elementary, middle school, and high school; however, a need exists for more research focused on early childhood. Due to the dearth of research available on this topic in the early years, and drawing from the findings of the literature reviewed and from my connections to practice, I propose that it is important that future investigations examine what are effective ways to implement Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood programs in Saskatchewan. I believe it would be beneficial to investigate the use of Aboriginal pedagogy and the impact it may have on children's later schooling and social and emotional development. Further, it would be valuable to study effective practices in Aboriginal pedagogy focused on oral storytelling and multimodality literacy learning.

Another important area I recommend for future study is on how Aboriginal pedagogy is being implemented in Aboriginal Head Start (AHS) programs across the country, including Saskatchewan. Hare (2012), Moore and MacDonald (2013), and Preston et al. (2011) mentioned AHS in their studies; however, specific information on the different aspects of the program is limited. I advocate for further study on the impacts of AHS in order to further understand effective practices for implementation to meet the needs of Aboriginal families.

Finally, I recommend that additional investigation is conducted that is specifically focused on place-based learning in early childhood. Investigating how to implement place-based pedagogy in early childhood education, including Indigenous culture and

language, would be beneficial. There is limited research on how place-based education supports Aboriginal pedagogy, and more is needed situated within the Saskatchewan context.

Recommendations for practice. Based on the review of the research on implementing Aboriginal pedagogy in early childhood programs, I believe a need exists for pre-service, and for in-service education on the topic of Aboriginal culture, worldviews, history, and pedagogy. This would also include training on place-based education and SEL. A need also exists for further support systems for educators who want to implement Aboriginal pedagogy into their programs, but who are unsure of where to start. I suggest that administrators and educators support each other by sharing lessons, books, courses, workshops, videos, and websites they find useful, in order to build a supportive network, as called on by the TRC's (2015) call to action to share best practices.

In sum, I consider Aboriginal pedagogy not as an “other” add-on to early childhood programs, but rather a pedagogy that can be woven into current early childhood practices, in order to support both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young learners in Saskatchewan, and hopefully elsewhere in Canada. I am hopeful that my website and my presentation at the Think Indigenous Education Conference will inspire early childhood educators to incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy into their programs so that young learners will have a deeper understanding of the place in which they live, the local Aboriginal knowledge, history, and pedagogy, and as a result develop capacity for empathy, intercultural understanding, and mutual respect, which will further reconciliation, as called for by the TRC (2015).

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APPENDIX A

Screen shots of pages 20, 21, and 22 of the BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Framework (FNECDC, 2009).

2.0 Developing the Framework

VISION – Healthy, culturally strong children

Optimal, culturally relevant opportunities for First Nations children that nurture social, emotional, physical, cognitive and cultural, linguistic and spiritual development within their families, communities and Nations.

Mission

To develop a coordinated, holistic early childhood system of programs, services, supports and resources designed to support children, parents, families, communities and Nations through collaborative and integrated approaches to planning, service delivery, governance and administration.

Values and Beliefs

- First Nations children are sacred gifts from the Creator.
- Each child is born with gifts.
- Children are the present and future of our families, communities and Nations
- Caring for children is a sacred and shared responsibility.
- Parents and families are recognized as the first teachers and caregivers of their children.

Guiding Principles for Quality First Nation Early Childhood Programs & Services

- **First Nations ways of knowing and being** - Relationships, programs, services, supports, practices, infrastructure and governance structures must be imbued and anchored in First Nations knowledge(s).
 - **Community-based and directed** - The care of children is a sacred and communal responsibility starting with parents and family and extending to community and Nation. ECD programs and services are developed through a community and Nation-driven process and delivered based on the needs of First Nations communities.
 - **Holistic, universal, accessible, and comprehensive** - ECD programs, services and supports should be accessible to every child, whether living off-reserve or on-reserve, in a small isolated community or in a large urban centre, and should support the development of the whole child including his/her social, emotional, physical, cognitive, cultural, linguistic and spiritual development. Programs and services should be comprehensive so that the diverse needs of children and families can be met.
 - **Integration and coordination** - ECD legislation, regulations, standards, policies, and program and service delivery structures that are synchronized and aligned result in an integrated and coordinated ECD system.
 - **Transparent and accountable** - Monitoring, evaluation and reporting on ECD programs, services and supports leads to quality offerings, and ensure that they are successfully meeting the desired outcomes for children and their families. Accountability measures also serve to identify gaps, overlaps and deficiencies.
-
- **Sustainability** - Sustainability means that funding for ECD programs and services should be continuous and consistent over time in order to facilitate parental/family trust, ensure programs and services are able to recruit and retain qualified staff, and have enough longevity to make a difference in children's lives.



3.0 Goals

There are three overarching goals in this Framework, with interconnecting linked strategies and actions for achieving these goals. However, the strategies and actions cannot all happen at once and some will need to be implemented first before work on others can begin.

The three goals that will lead to improved outcomes for all BC First Nations children are:

1. Increased availability, accessibility, and participation in ECD programs, services and supports by First Nations children and families;
2. Enhanced quality of ECD programs, services and supports; and
3. Increased integration and collaboration at all levels of a First Nations ECD system.

Strategies and actions for achieving these goals are set out in the following paragraphs and tables. Strategies refer to the broad areas in which specific actions or activities are undertaken to achieve the strategy and ultimately the overarching goal.

APPENDIX B

Screen shot of CBC News Video and story about a Vancouver early childhood educator who teaches young children about First Nations culture and the history of residential schools. URL <http://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/vancouver-daycare-teaches-residential-schools-1.3243358>

The screenshot shows the CBC News website interface. At the top, the navigation bar includes 'CBCnews | Indigenous' and a menu with categories like Home, Opinion, World, Canada, Politics, Business, Health, Entertainment, Technology & Science, and Video. The main headline reads 'VIDEO | Vancouver daycare teaches toddlers about Indian residential schools'. Below the headline, it states 'Children as young as 3 and 4 learn about dark chapter in Canadian history' and provides the author 'By Duncan McCue, CBC News' and dates 'Posted: Sep 25, 2015 11:00 AM ET | Last Updated: Sep 27, 2015 2:50 PM ET'.

The video player shows a scene with a woman and two young children. The video title is 'The National Daycare Teaching History of Residential Schools'. To the right of the video player is an advertisement for 'THE BOND' by PetroCanada. Below the video player, there is a section for '88 shares' with social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, Google+, and Email. The article text begins with 'It's story time at Salal Daycare in Vancouver. Children ages three to four crowd are at the feet of their caregiver, Kristin Webster. She tells them she's going to read *When I Was Eight*, a picture book about an indomitable Inuit girl named Olemaun who goes to residential school. "I like this one," says one little girl with curly blond hair. "It's scary," says a little boy solemnly. As Webster turns the pages, with its vivid illustrations of nuns shearing Olemaun's long braided hair, and aboriginal children in uniforms on their hands and knees scrubbing floors, she gently asks questions. "What happened to Olemaun?" asks Webster. "She got taken from her mommy and daddy," says one little girl. "Was she allowed to speak Inuktitut?" asks Webster. "No," the children chorus together. When their caregiver asks how that would make them feel, these children of many different ethnic backgrounds agree: It would make them feel sad. Indian residential schools were, for a long time, ignored as subject matter for classrooms in Canada, never mind daycares. Webster is determined to change that. "I was not taught about it, and I'm highly offended. And we're doing these children a great disservice if we don't tell them the truth."

The article also includes a photo of the author, Duncan McCue, and a detail from the book 'When I Was Eight' showing a young girl sitting on the floor. On the right side of the page, there is a 'Meet The Athletes' section with the CBC and Olympic logos, and a 'Latest Indigenous Headlines' section with several news items.

15 years, and is now based in Toronto. During a Knight Fellowship at Stanford University in 2011, he created a guide for journalists called Reporting in Indigenous Communities. Duncan is Anishinaabe, a member of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation.

- Video by Duncan McCue

Related Stories

- Canada's residential school story to be taught in classrooms this fall
- Charlene Bearhead galvanizes educators to move from 'apology to action'

External Links

- Reconciliation through Indigenous Education
- When I Was Eight

(Note: CBC does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of external links.)

'Never too young to learn'

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission into Indian Residential Schools (TRC) inspired Webster to imagine a residential school lesson plan for a daycare setting.

One of the TRC's key recommendations was for federal, provincial and territorial governments to make lessons about residential schools mandatory for all Canadian kids. But even that "call to action" was aimed at school-age children, from kindergarten to Grade 12, not pre-schoolers.

"You're never too young or too old to learn," insists Webster, an early childhood educator for over 20 years.

Webster took further encouragement from a free online course offered by the University of British Columbia called Reconciliation Through Indigenous Education.

Anishinaabe professor Jan Hare prepares teachers to incorporate

indigenous perspectives into their classroom. She calls Webster's efforts to teach residential schools to preschoolers "beautiful," but emphasizes lessons need to be age appropriate.

"You may not be teaching the very horrific dimensions of this history," says Hare. "We need to give them a language to talk about it in a way that we don't frighten them or trouble some of their emotions."



Early childhood educator Kristin Webster says Canadian children need to know First Nations history, even the dark parts. (Glen Kugelestadt)

- You didn't win: Singer Susan Aglukark publicly names her abuser at MMIWG hearings February 22, 6:54 PM ET

Don't Miss



FEATURE

Education aims to shift the narrative in racially-divided Prince Albert



VIDEO

Juno nominees include 10 Indigenous artists and groups



Meet Brigette Lacquette, the 1st First Nations woman on Canada's Olympic hockey team



Ontario law society investigating firm's handling of dying residential school survivor's claim

ADVERTISEMENT

Data integration and analytics

That was something on parent Paul Cyr's mind when he discovered his daughters — 18 months and five years old — would be learning the traumatic century-long history of removing tens of thousands of aboriginal children from their homes to be educated in church-run schools.

"As a parent, maybe there's some caution about how deep you go, but I think it's establishing an awareness early on," says Cyr.

"It's a positive, progressive thing to start so early in the education system. At this age group, they have a strong sense of right and wrong."

Building empathy

Webster doesn't broach the physical or sexual abuses many students suffered at the schools, simply referencing the survivors as experiencing "hurts," which she says the children understand implicitly when they learn about the disruptions experienced by aboriginal families. She says children don't get emotional about it.

"At this age group, the way they deal with it is different than we would," says Webster.

"They re-enact through play, through talking to each other. I've heard they have discussions at dinner tables about land rights and residential schools," she laughs.


Her lesson plan lasts 10 months. It includes trips to museums to learn aboriginal culture, and nature walks where she emphasizes which First Nations traditional territory they are on.

The toddlers learn aboriginal creation stories, something that inspired them to suggest carving their own totem pole. Last year, they were joined by a work study student from the nearby Musqueam First Nation, Kelly Louis, who shared stories about how loss of language and culture had impacted him.

'It's about building community and empathy.'
- Kristin Webster, early childhood education

cbc.ca

"I don't want to push my particular agenda on anyone," says Webster. "But I do think these children need to know their country, where they are, and the people who live in it. It's about building community and empathy."



Children three to four years old learn about Indian residential schools during storytime at Salal Daycare. (Glen Kugelstadt)

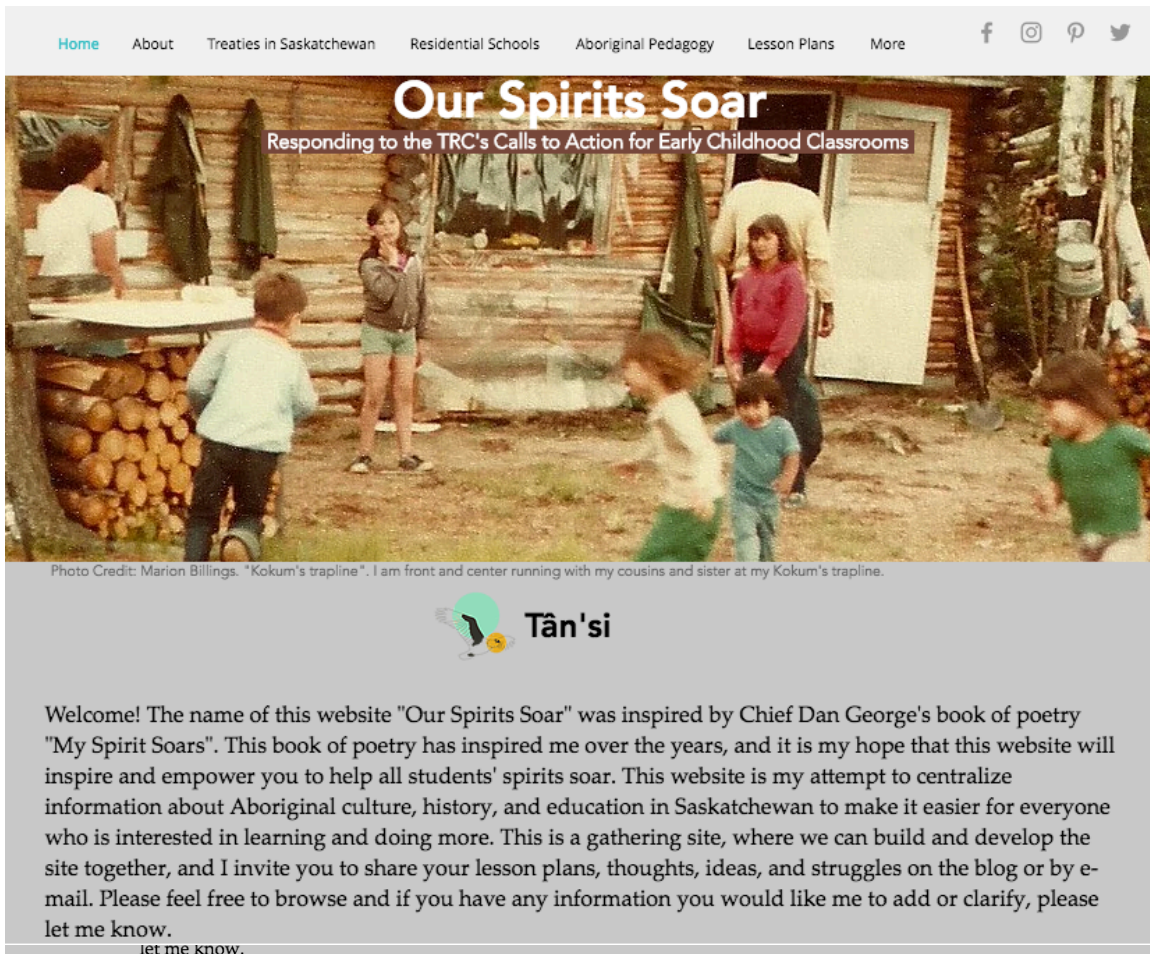
Webster is now in discussions about offering her residential school lesson plan at the 20 other daycares at UBC. She also hopes to expand it, to include participation from members of the Musqueam First Nation and perhaps residential school survivors.

Five books about Indian residential schools for young readers (ages 4-8)

- *Shi-shi-etko*. Nicola I. Campbell. Illustrated by Kim La Fave, 2005
- *Shin-chi's Canoe*. Nicola I. Campbell. Illustrated by Kim LaFave, 2008.
- *When I Was Eight*. Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. Illustrated by Liz Amini-Holmes, 2010
- *A Stranger at Home: a true story*. Christy Jordan-Fenton & Margaret Pokiak-Fenton. Illustrated by Liz Amini-Holmes, 2011
- *Arctic Stories*. Michael Arvaarluk Kusugak. Illustrated by Vladyana Langer Kryorka. 1998.

APPENDIX C

Screen shots of my website homepage URL www.ourspiritssoar.com



The screenshot shows the homepage of the website 'Our Spirits Soar'. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Home', 'About', 'Treaties in Saskatchewan', 'Residential Schools', 'Aboriginal Pedagogy', 'Lesson Plans', and 'More'. To the right of the menu are social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter. Below the menu is a large banner image of a group of children and adults in a rustic, log-cabin setting. The text 'Our Spirits Soar' is overlaid on the image in a large, white, serif font, with the subtitle 'Responding to the TRC's Calls to Action for Early Childhood Classrooms' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it. Underneath the banner image is a small caption: 'Photo Credit: Marion Billings. "Kokum's trapline". I am front and center running with my cousins and sister at my Kokum's trapline.' Below the banner is the 'Tân'si' logo, which features a stylized bird or spirit figure in a circle. The main content area contains a welcome message: 'Welcome! The name of this website "Our Spirits Soar" was inspired by Chief Dan George's book of poetry "My Spirit Soars". This book of poetry has inspired me over the years, and it is my hope that this website will inspire and empower you to help all students' spirits soar. This website is my attempt to centralize information about Aboriginal culture, history, and education in Saskatchewan to make it easier for everyone who is interested in learning and doing more. This is a gathering site, where we can build and develop the site together, and I invite you to share your lesson plans, thoughts, ideas, and struggles on the blog or by e-mail. Please feel free to browse and if you have any information you would like me to add or clarify, please let me know.' The text 'let me know.' is repeated at the bottom of the paragraph.

Why this topic is important and relevant today

Canada's history regarding the education of Aboriginal children has not been a bright one. Colonialism and residential schools have had a long lasting negative effect on Aboriginal people in Canada and its impact can still be felt to this day (Hare, 2012; Greenwood, Leeuw, & Fraser, 2007). In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released the "Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Calls to Action" document in order to address the dark history of residential schools and how it has impacted Aboriginal people in Canada. This document includes calls to action in terms of First Nations, Inuit, and Metis language and education.

There are three calls to action on which my capstone project addresses. The first call to action is to "develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families" (TRC, 2015, p. 2). The second is "Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history" (TRC, 2015, p. 7). Lastly, the third call to action is "Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect" (TRC, 2015, p. 7).

This website is my response to the call to action to share information and best practices on teaching young children about Aboriginal history and culture.

Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory situates the child in a social and cultural context in which development takes place (Edwards, 2003; Fleer, 2002; Sanchez, 1999). Socio-cultural theory acknowledges the importance of interactions and relationships, positioning the child's family context and culture as a central part of a child's education and development (Ntuli, Nyarambi, & Traore, 2014; Sanchez, 1999).

When viewing socio-cultural theory from an Aboriginal pedagogical perspective, we find that socio-cultural theory shares the same beliefs about the connectedness of children to their families and culture, and how learning and development takes place within this connectedness and relationships with others. It is through this understanding of how socio-cultural contexts affect child development and learning that I approach my project on incorporating Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood classrooms and curriculum.



Image Source: Image Source: Library and Archives Canada PA-182246



Image Source: Library and Archives Canada no.3247947



Image Source: http://portal.usask.ca/themes/turtle/images2/iPortal_Turtle-2.png

Purpose and Significance of this Project

This website is one of the outcomes of my capstone project, as required by the UBC M.Ed. program. My capstone project focused on Aboriginal pedagogy which included a review of the literature exploring what Aboriginal pedagogy is, and its different aspects including place-based education and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL). Through this review I identify and provide resources of knowledge and theory about Aboriginal pedagogy. My hope is that this website will guide Saskatchewan early childhood educators who wish to incorporate Aboriginal pedagogy into early childhood curriculum.

Considering the dearth of resources available for early childhood educators, the anticipated significance of my project is that educators will have a better understanding of how to implement Aboriginal pedagogy in the curriculum. This project offers theoretical frameworks and knowledge for early childhood educators to begin implementing Aboriginal pedagogy into curriculum or programs. Educators will also have access to more resources online through this website.

Given that Aboriginal children are the fastest growing demographic in Saskatchewan, and the TRC (2015) has called for culturally relevant early childhood programs, the question guiding my investigation is

"What are ways in which Aboriginal pedagogy can be implemented into early childhood (Pre K – K) programs in Saskatchewan?"

Aboriginal Storytelling

November 9, 2017 | Danielle



If you are like me, then you love a good story, and know that telling a good story is an art form. It takes many skills; language, creative, comprehension, as well as use of foreshadowing and metaphors. Aboriginal storytelling is an important way of passing on Aborig...

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Photo Credits: Marion Billings, Danielle Desjardins, Hope Hardlotte

About Me



Hi! My name is Danielle and I am a Graduate Student at UBC. I am Metis and grew up in Northern Saskatchewan. This website is my Graduating Capstone Project and my response to the TRC's (2015) 94 Calls to Action. I hope you find this site useful, and please feel free to comment and add your own resources, thoughts and ideas.

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1 comment

We have reviewed your Capstone Project and we are very pleased at what we've seen. The 3 TRC calls to action that you have chosen to focus on are each covered equally and thoroughly. The videos that are on this site are very interesting and extremely informative. You have suggested and provided example of websites that people can go to find further information on the topics as well as examples of lesson plans for new and more experienced teachers of indigenous and non indigenous students. What you are addressing in your project is very important and comes at a crucial time in Education within our province as well as Education nationally. In the past we were taught European history, their

About Me Web Page

Home
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Treaties in Saskatchewan
Residential Schools
Aboriginal Pedagogy
Lesson Plans
More

[f](#)
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[t](#)

About Me

Hi! My name is Danielle and I am a Grad. student at UBC in the M.Ed. program focusing on Early Childhood. Throughout this program I was asked to reflect on my own cultural background (my mother is of British descent, my father is Metis, and my step-father is Cree) and how my own schooling has shaped who I am as an educator. This led me on a journey to explore ways to weave Aboriginal culture, history, and pedagogy into our current programs.

Like many of us in Canada, I was moved by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC, 2015) 94 Call to Actions. This website is my response to the 63rd call of "Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history" (TRC, 2015, p. 7). The TRC (2015) also calls for developing culturally appropriate early childhood programs, as well as to build children's capacity for intercultural understanding and empathy (TRC, 2015, p. 7).

Although the focus of this website is on early childhood (PreK/K) I hope to expand to include lessons and resources for up to Grade 3 in the future. It is my hope that this website may become a hub for teachers to easily access information about Saskatchewan Aboriginal culture and history and be a site for teachers to share ideas, lesson plans, questions, and thoughts, as early childhood educators explore this topic and seek new and effective ways to teach children about Aboriginal education, culture, and history in Saskatchewan.

Contact Me:
d.senyonga@gmail.com



Socio-cultural Context in Which We Live/Treaties in Saskatchewan Web Page



Learning about the Socio-Cultural Context in Which We Live

It is beneficial for early childhood educators to have background knowledge on Aboriginal culture, history, and pedagogy (Hare and Anderson, 2010) which can then be used to support cultural sensitivity (Bond & Hauf, 2004) and intercultural understanding (Ngai & Koehn, 2010), as called on by the TRC (2015).

Using this foundational knowledge, Aboriginal views, and understanding can be implemented into the curriculum. In doing so, I anticipate that this will not only enhance the curriculum but will also enhance the quality of the program for all children (Preston et al., 2011).

Therefore, it is important to have background knowledge on the First Nations that live in Saskatchewan, the Treaties that were signed with the First Nations, and the context of those agreements.

Treaties in Saskatchewan

A treaty is an agreement that is made between two or more parties. According to the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website (n.d.), from 1701, the British entered solemn treaties in order to have peaceful relations with First Nations and the European settlers. Over several centuries, treaties were signed to define the respective rights of Aboriginal people and governments to use the lands that Aboriginal people traditionally occupied.

At the time there were over 30 Aboriginal languages spoken in what is now Canada, however the treaties were in English.

The Government of Canada and the courts understand treaties between the Crown and Aboriginal people to be solemn agreements that set out promises, obligations and benefits for both parties. These treaties are legal contracts.

Treaties include historic treaties made between 1701 and 1923 and modern-day treaties known as comprehensive land claim settlements.



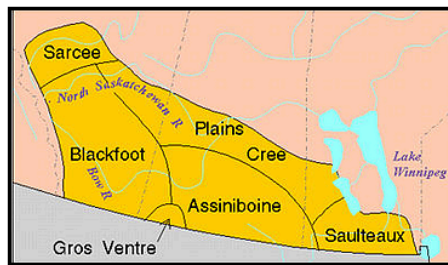
Map Source:

First Nations in Northern Saskatchewan: Woods Cree and Dene (Chipewyan)



Map Source: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/aboriginal-people-subarctic/>

First Nations in Southern Saskatchewan: Plains Cree, Sioux (Blackfoot), Assiniboine (Lakota, Dakota, Nakota)



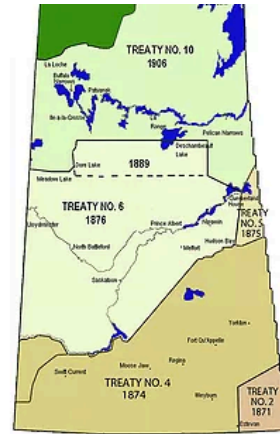
Map Source: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-plains/>

Different First Nations tribes spoke their own language or dialect. Some tribes agreed to sign treaties in order to keep peace and share the land, while others did not trust the British crown.



Meanwhile, the buffalo that roamed the prairies and were the primary source of food and clothing, were being massacred by European settlers for their hides, and food was becoming scarce. The settlers brought new diseases with them and First Nations people were becoming sick. Several First Nations Chiefs in Saskatchewan signed treaties to receive medicine and avoid the starvation of their people.

In Saskatchewan, Treaties 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10 are in effect, however, no peoples in Saskatchewan follow Treaty 2. Although there are three First Nation reserves on Treaty 2 land, the First Nations there signed Treaty 4 (Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Center, n.d.)



Map Source: https://s3.amazonaws.com/libapps/accounts/7309/images/treaty_map.png



Introduction to In Two Worlds

First Nations and Métis people are often required to accept many values and principles of larger society in order to operate within the cultural mosaic of our communities. Laws, history, the norms of society are presented at a school level that present a western philosophical perspective.

The elders connected to the VFNMEP project have identified several categories that they believe are fundamental to the understanding of First Nations and Métis people. Within these categories, there are several topics that have been identified as important topics to highlight. It has also understood that this information has been developed to be presented from a First Nations/Métis perspective.

In Two Worlds

In Two Worlds is a document that explains the history of Aboriginal people in Canada and gives a thorough explanation about the times when the treaties were signed in Saskatchewan.

Double click on the image for a PDF version.

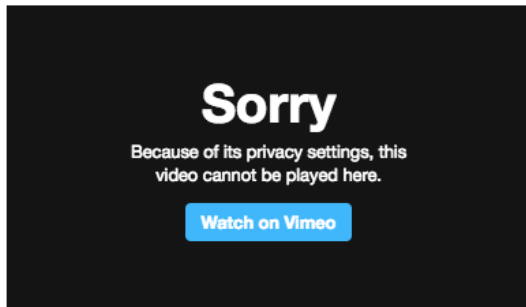
2. Worldviews

The worldviews shared by Indigenous peoples encompass despite many differences in their communities, the common values of their and sacred, all being in it are related and interconnected: the spirit, the earth, the waters, the winds, the mountains, the people, the spirit and so on. The human and natural world are to hold it sacred and to live in a balanced way which is, to put it as much as it takes while pursuing social and spiritual development.

(The Indigenous Peoples—Earth Dance Project, 2010)

Worldviews

Chapter 2 of the document "In Two Worlds" which describes the different world views of Aboriginal people who live in Treaty 4 land.





<https://vimeo.com/53450677>

Dr. Marie Battiste - Situating Indigenous knowledge systems within a decolonizing framework for education

Click on the "Watch on Vimeo" Button to watch video.

Use this side bar to scroll ↘

Canada  

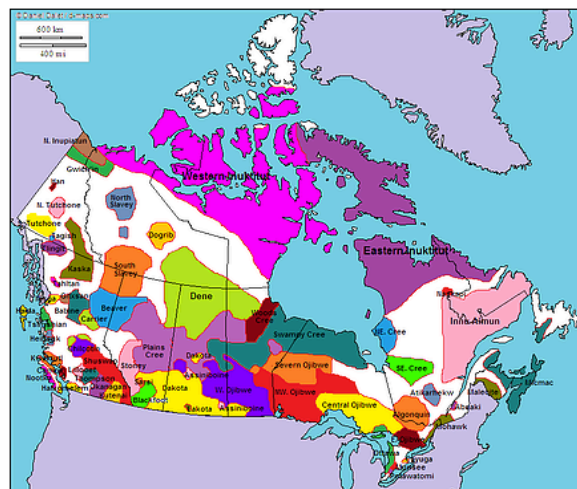
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

Home → Regional Offices → Saskatchewan Region → First Nations In Saskatchewan

→ [First Nations Map of Saskatchewan](#)

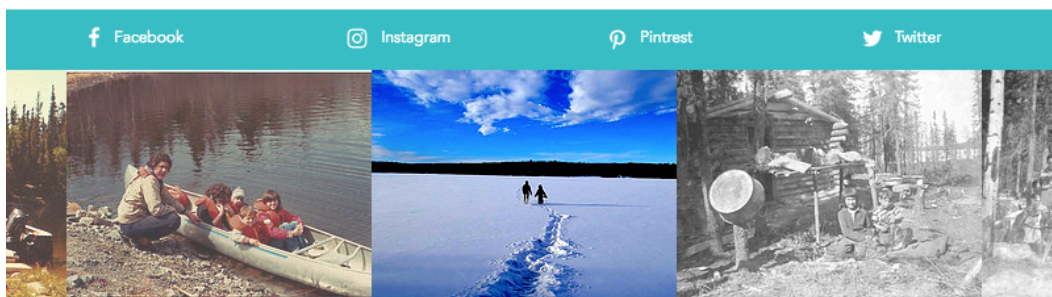
First Nations Map of Saskatchewan

I have found images for the Metis flag, the Treaty 4 flag, and the Treaty 6 flag, but was unable to find photos of the others. If you have a photo of Treaty 2, 5, 8, or 10 flags, please e-mail to me so I can add to this gallery. Thank you for sharing!

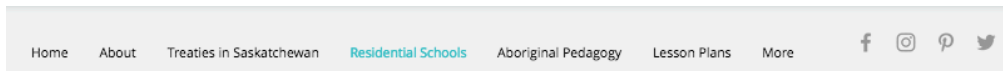


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- Bond, L. A., & Hauf, A. M. C. (2004). Taking Stock and Putting Stock in Primary Prevention: Characteristics of Effective Programs. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 24(3), 199.
- Government of Canada. (n.d.). A History of Treaty Making. Retrieved from <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1290453474688/1290453673970>
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- Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/index.html>
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- University of Saskatchewan Archives. (2008). Our Legacy. Retrieved from http://digital.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_nehiyawak_leadership



Residential Schools Web Page



Residential Schools in Saskatchewan

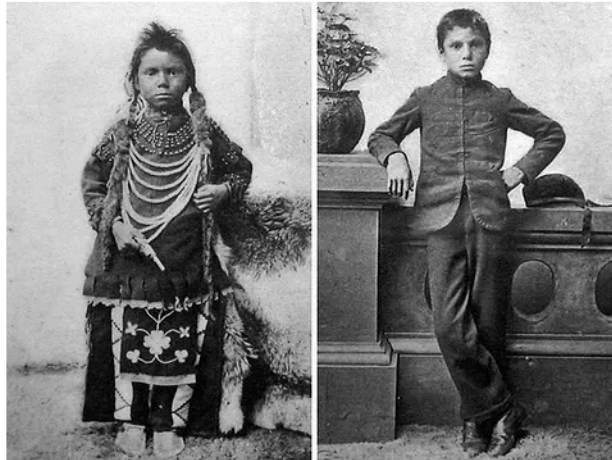
Education was valued by Aboriginal chiefs and Elders, so much so that they insisted on education being a part of the treaties that were signed. Church organized schools were already running in the 1870's to try to assimilate Aboriginal children into Western culture but were failing due to low or sporadic attendance. The Canadian government established the Indian Act in 1876, which established control over the lives of Aboriginal people and restricted their movements, limiting them to reservations. In 1879, Nicholas Flood Davin wrote a report on Industrialized Schools for Indians and Half Breeds (Davin Report) with a number of recommendations on how the American boarding school model, where children were separated from their families, could be implemented in Canada (Niessen, 2017).

Children were taken from their families by the Indian Agent and brought to the Residential School to learn tasks such as sewing and farming. Children were not allowed to return home on the weekends, and had to stay at school. Some children were allowed to visit home once a year, while others had to wait longer. Parents were not allowed to see or visit their children while they attended Residential School (TRC, 2015).



The Qu'Appelle Indian Residential School, LeBrett, Saskatchewan 1884
(Image Source: Library and Archives Canada PA-182246)

Once at the Residential School, children's clothes were taken away, their hair was cut short and they were given new names. At some Residential schools they were not even given a name, and instead were given a number. Many children were verbally abused, physically abused, and sexually abused. Many died from a lack of medical care. A recorded 3,201 children died while attending residential schools, however the number is estimated to be much higher (TRC, 2015).



Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School, 1874
(Library and Archives Canada/NL-Q22474)

Residential Schools of Canada
Residential Schools of Canada
which were apart of the settlement.

I noticed how the majority of Residential Schools are in the prairie provinces, Western and Northern Canada. Very few in Eastern Canada.

Use this side bar to scroll ↘

Residential Schools: Photographic

Collections - Saskatchewan

- To find more information about an image, click on the description to access the record in the

Watch these videos to learn more about the Residential School Experience



Video - Death at Residential Schools
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FydzizkndA>



Video - Educating our Youth - Truth and Reconciliation
 Commission of Canada
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRZYRIC69Bw>

For more information about Residential schools in Canada please visit:

<http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=3>

References:

Niessen, S. (2017). Shattering the Silence. Retrieved from: <http://www2.uregina.ca/education/saskindianresidentialschools/>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). (2015). Retrieved from: <http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=12>

University of Saskatchewan Archives. (2008). Our Legacy. Retrieved from http://digital.scaa.sk.ca/ourlegacy/exhibit_schools



Aboriginal Pedagogy Web Page



Aboriginal Pedagogy

What is Aboriginal Pedagogy?

Although it is difficult to define Aboriginal pedagogy, as each Nation has their own specific teachings, there are some commonalities that can be used. Hare (2011) described Aboriginal pedagogy as “learning processes that are social, inter-generational, holistic, oral- and narrative-based, and experiential” (p. 392). With this definition in mind, I will explore four aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy: relationships within family and community, experiential learning, language and oral storytelling, and relationship with the land.



First Peoples Principles of Learning - Laura Tait
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JY168904ocE>



First Peoples Principles of Learning: An Introduction
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0PgrfCVCt_A



First Peoples Principles of Learning
 Printable

Double click the image for a PDF version

I recognize that there are many ways that Aboriginal pedagogy can be incorporated into early childhood curriculum and classrooms, however, for the scope of this project I will focus specifically on these four aspects of Aboriginal pedagogy and hope to expand as people begin to share their experiences, thoughts, ideas, and lesson plans to the site.

Relationships within family and community

In Aboriginal pedagogy, children are viewed as sacred and are the heart of the family, community, and Nation (First Nations Early Childhood Development Council [FNECDC], 2009). Children and the education of children are viewed holistically where the whole child (spiritual, mental, physical, and emotional) is acknowledged and each child is viewed as having capacities and gifts to contribute to the community (FNECDC, 2009). Aboriginal pedagogy includes learning through interactions and relationships with others. Aboriginal knowledge stresses “interaction, reciprocity, respect, and non-interference” (Battiste, 1998, p. 24). According to FNECDC (2009), Aboriginal pedagogy focuses on relationships (with people, nature and the land, and spiritual worlds) and each member has certain roles and responsibilities within the community.



Traditional Parenting
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=traditional+parenting



Mossbag and Swing
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEn_pyJYI0g

Ball and Simpkins (2004) interviewed early childhood graduates, administrators, parents, and community Elders in order to gain a deeper understanding of how Aboriginal knowledge can be integrated into early childhood practice. Indigenous knowledge was defined as knowledge within a local cultural community that is not only tied to place, but also to relationships and ways of being that change over time. Through these interviews the authors found that parents and families play an important role in establishing a child's cultural identity by learning their genealogy and "knowing who you are" (Ball & Simpkins, 2004, p. 494). Community Elders also played an important role in passing on cultural knowledge while maintaining relationships within the early childhood community. Ball and Simpkins (2004) concluded that the development of relationships between community members (early childhood educators, families, and community Elders) in creating and participating in childcare programs resulted in reconnecting people in line with Aboriginal ways of knowing and being.

In their study about Aboriginal children transitioning from home to early childhood centers Hare and Anderson (2010) also noted the importance of relationships in Aboriginal pedagogy and how children live and learn from community Elders, grandparents, and extended family. They interviewed Indigenous parents to explore their thoughts and feelings about the transition of their children from home to early childhood centers. The authors noted that many parents felt tension, due to the history of residential schools and the sixties scoop and how this has an intergenerational impact on the parents and their children entering early childhood centers today. This tension points to the need for early childhood educators to understand the history of residential schools and the sixties scoop in Canada in order to support Aboriginal families entering early childhood centers. Hare and Anderson (2010) concluded that in order to support traditional values of relationships, early childhood educators should make an effort to build a relationship with the families and meet in family homes or in their communities, to help parents to become comfortable with sending their children to school.

Storytelling

Aboriginal pedagogy includes Aboriginal language and cultural knowledge passed down from Elders through stories, which is an essential aspect of Aboriginal education (Battiste, 2002; Greenwood, 2009). Aboriginal language is a critical link to Aboriginal knowledge through oral tradition (Battiste, 1998). Stories convey and teach knowledge about cultural teachings that have been passed on from generation to generation, where "teachings flow from stories" (Greenwood & Leeuw, 2007, p. 48).



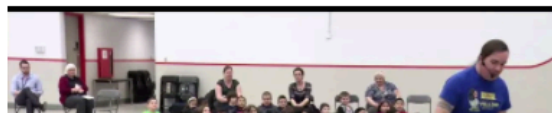
Learning from our Elders - Storytelling
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DqjKa75XVpI>



Ask An Elder: Winter Solstice in the Cree tradition
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dX5F9zRYfQ0>

Language

Hare (2012) gave examples of how oral story telling is the traditional way of sharing and transmitting knowledge where children in her study attended ceremonies and community events, which exposed them to speeches, stories, prayers, songs, and cultural dances. These oral forms of Indigenous language exposed the children to a broad range of language and literacy. Theories of multi-modality propose that reading and writing are only a few ways of making meaning, and that there is a whole range, such as music, movement, images, speech and digital forms, that inform meaning (Hare, 2012).





Rabbit and Bear Paws - CBC Saskatoon

Moore & MacDonald (2013) documented how the Halq'eméylem language was being preserved and spread by Elders, family members, and teachers in a Sto:lo First Nations community in British Columbia. They discussed how teachers at the Aboriginal Head Start Family Program communicated with Elders for direction, recommendations, and confirmation of their teaching and storytelling (Archibald, 2008 as cited in Moore & MacDonald, 2013). Halq'eméylem language was promoted through main traditional activities and practices that took place throughout the year, which are a major part of the community's spiritual and social life (Carlson, 2001, as cited in Moore & MacDonald, 2013).



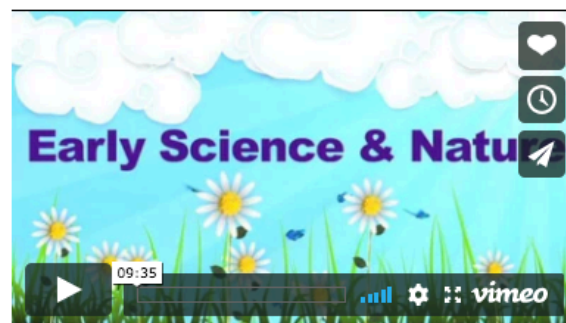
Learning from our Elders - Language Acquisition
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-0EBYffN-Q>



Learning from our Elders - Teaching Methodologies
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y8XzSrzdzvQ>

Experiential Learning

Aboriginal pedagogy values experiential learning. This includes hands-on instruction in traditional skills based on a child's evolving capacities and gifts, with limited questioning, instruction or intervention (Battiste, 2002). Children observe, listen, and participate with minimal instruction in order to learn new skills and knowledge (Battiste, 2002).



Early Science & Nature: Learning through observation and experience
<https://vimeo.com/67610501>

Preston, Cottrell, Pelletier, and Pearce (2012) explored the need for, and the importance of, Aboriginal early childhood education and the impact it has on a child's academic and social development. The author's discussed Aboriginal pedagogy in terms of increased wait time for teachers to give students to answer, control over class pacing, and independence in their learning. In terms of experiential learning, the authors found that from an Aboriginal perspective, learning is lived experiences through storytelling, cooperative learning, demonstrations, role-modeling, personal reflections, talking circles, and hands-on experiences (Preston et al., 2012, p. 8). They also suggested that a quality-learning environment for Aboriginal children

(Preston et al., 2012, p. 8). They also suggested that a quality-learning environment for Aboriginal children includes "feasts, cultural camps and Aboriginal ceremonies in which students actively participate" (Regnier, 1995 as cited in Preston et al., 2012, p. 8). An experiential learning environment is one where children can watch and emulate adults who are involved in meaningful activities.



Lethbridge School District's Mini Pow Wows
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Az-Kqf1fB-c>

Relationship with the land

There are different ways of knowing and being and Aboriginal peoples have their own values and way of living that is connect to the land (Hare, 2012). This Aboriginal way of knowing is connected to the way Aboriginal children view and make sense of the world. A fundamental principle of Aboriginal knowledge is the social relationship with others, including the land (Hare, 2012). Land and community are valued resources of knowledge, where meaning is made through the interaction with these resources.



Place-based Education: Star 3 to 3rd Model
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtyWvODdv9E>



Place-based Education: Dr. Suzanne Stewart
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0kRVhva0w4>

References:

- Ball, J., & Simpkins, M. A. (2004). The Community within the Child: Integration of Indigenous Knowledge into First Nations Childcare Process and Practice. *The American Indian Quarterly*, 28(3), 480-498.
- Battiste, M. (1998). Enabling the autumn seed: Toward a decolonized approach to aboriginal knowledge, language, and education. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 1(22), 16.
- Battiste, M. (2002). Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy in First Nations Education: A Literature Review with Recommendations. Retrieved from https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/24_2002_oct_marie-battiste
- First Nations Early Childhood Development Council (FNECDC). (2009). BC First Nations Early Childhood Development Framework. Retrieved from [http://www.fnesc.ca/Attachments/ECD/ECD Consultation Document Dec 17 09.pdf](http://www.fnesc.ca/Attachments/ECD/ECD%20Consultation%20Document%20Dec%2017%2009.pdf)

Greenwood, M., & Leeuw, S. de. (2007). Teachings from the land: Indigenous people, our health, our land, and our children. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, 30(1), 48.

Hare, J. (2012). 'They tell a story and there's meaning behind that story': Indigenous knowledge and young indigenous children's literacy learning. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 4(12), 389-414.

Hare, J., & Anderson, J. (2010). Transitions to Early Childhood Education and Care for Indigenous Children and Families in Canada: Historical and Social Realities. *Australasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 35(2), 19-27.

Moore, D., & MacDonald, M. (2013). Language and Literacy Development in a Canadian Native Community: Halq'eméylem Revitalization in a Stó:lō Head Start Program in British Columbia. *The Modern Language Journal*, 97(3), 702-719.

Preston, J. P., Cottrell, M., Pelletier, T. R., & Pearce, J. V. (2011). Aboriginal early childhood education in Canada: Issues of context. *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 10(1), 3-18.



Photo Credits: Marion Billings, Danielle Desjardins, Hope Hardlotte

Inviting Elders Sub-page

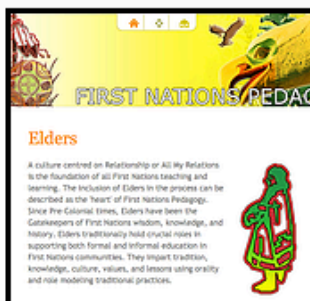
Inviting Elders into the Classroom

Who is an Elder?

According to the Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Center, an Elder is any person recognized by a First Nations community as having knowledge and understanding of traditional life, the history and heritage of the community, speak a First Nations language fluently, and is knowledgeable and supportive of First Nations ceremonies, protocols, and songs. An Elder is not determined by reaching a specific age, but rather is someone in a First Nations community who has knowledge and wisdom in all aspects of a traditional life.



Ask An Elder: What's An "Elder?"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bylWr0TAQlo>



First Nations Pedagogy <http://firstnationspedagogy.ca/elders.html>

This website offers a beautiful explanation of who an Elder is, an Elder's role, and protocols to follow.

Click on the image to go to the website.

Protocols when Inviting an Elder to Your School or Classroom

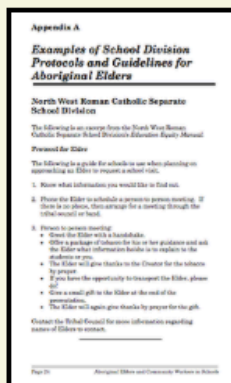
Inviting an Elder into the classroom is a great way to develop relationships with a First Nations community member. It not only benefits First Nation students, but will also help non-First Nations children develop a better understanding of First Nations culture and build relationships with First Nations people (Ngai & Koehn, 2010). In order to honor First Nations culture, it is important to be aware that there are certain protocols when asking an Elder to share their knowledge. This usually includes greeting with a hand shake, giving of tobacco and perhaps some cloth. Each area has its own protocols, so if you are unsure of the protocol in your area, feel free to always ask. For more information click on the document below.



Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools

This Saskatchewan Learning guide has been produced to assist boards of education to develop policy and guidelines if they choose to initiate programs involving Elders, Aboriginal community workers or other resource people. It will also assist school division administrators and their community partners to design and implement local initiatives in schools.

[Download PDF here](#)



An example of protocols from "Aboriginal Elders and Community Workers in Schools (2013, p. 24)

[Click on image to download page.](#)



You may need to ask your school/board for funding to provide tobacco, an honorarium, and/or money to cover transportation to and from the school.

Here is an example of a letter I wrote requesting funding.



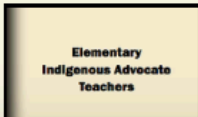
Invite an Elder to speak at your school

Building relationships within your community is important to support children's understanding of Aboriginal pedagogy and inviting families, community members and Elders into the classroom plays a large role (Ball & Simpkins, 2004). School boards or school administration might already have specific contacts and partnerships, or may have Indigenous Advocate Teachers for your area. If you are not sure where to find an Elder, the Office of the Treaty Commission have speakers who are available. Please check out the website below.



The Office of the Treaty Commission have a number of speakers available to speak about First Nations culture, history, Treaties, and residential schools. Some of these speakers are respected Elders.

Click on the image to go to the website.



Regina Public Schools Elementary Indigenous Advocate Teachers

Contact information and a description of their role is included in this pamphlet.

Click on the image to go to the website.



Click on the image to go to the website.

References:

- Ball, J., & Simpkins, M. A. (2004). The community within the child: Integration of Indigenous knowledge into first nations childcare process and practice. *The American Indian Quarterly*, 28(3), 480-498.
- Ngai, P. B., & Koehn, P. H. (2010). Indigenous studies and intercultural education: The impact of a place-based primary-school program. *Intercultural Education*, 21(6), 597.
- Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Center. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.sicc.sk.ca/index.html>

APPENDIX D

This is an annotated bibliography of children's books that I compiled for my ECED 531 final paper. A condensed version of this bibliography is on the children's literature subpage on my website.

Annotated Bibliography of Aboriginal Children's Books

Bouchard, D. (2006). *Nokum is my Teacher*. Markham, ON: Red Deer Press

This book is a poetic dialogue between the author and his Nokum (grandmother), where the author is questioning why he has to go to school and read when he would rather be outside exploring nature, or listening to traditional drummers drum and sing. He wonders if knowledge outside the reserve has any value to his way of life. His Nokum explains how reading opens up so many possibilities, even though she never learned to read. She skillfully questions him and guides him to understand the importance of learning about the world around him, while maintaining and respecting his own culture on the reserve. In the end the author is determined to learn as much as he can, through reading.

This book is in both English and Cree, and comes with an audio recording of David Bouchard reading the story accompanied by the drumming group Northern Cree. This story is both poetic and thoughtful, questioning the importance of school and reading when he would rather be on the reserve practicing and learning about his own Aboriginal culture. This book elicits discussions on feelings about school, reading, being outdoors, music, and learning. This book has thought provoking questions, which can be used with young children, as well as poetic language, which would challenge older children.

The book is beautifully illustrated, with paintings of life on the reserve by Aboriginal artist Allen Sapp. It is suitable for children in PreK – Grade 3.

Campbell, N. (2005). *Shi-shi-etko*. Toronto: ON: Greenwood Books/House of Anansi Press.

Shi-shi-etko is a little Aboriginal girl who is counting down the days until she will go to residential school. She is excited to go to school however her mother is worried that she will forget her home and the songs and dances of her people. She memorized everything she could, including the way the grass moved in the wind. Her relatives all came to visit and say good-bye before she left for school. Her Yayah (Grandmother) gave her a small leather bag to keep all her memories in. When the truck arrived to take the children away to school, *Shi-shi-etko* buried her small bag of memories under an old tree.

This story captures the excitement of the little girl going off to residential school for the first time, and beautifully describes the love her family has for her. Nicola Campbell does not introduce *Shi-shi-etko*'s residential school experience in this story; however, there is a page at the beginning of the book, where the author explains aspects of First Nations culture. She introduces that Aboriginal people have always lived, hunted, fished, and gathered food off the land. She also describes how traditional Aboriginal families loved children so much that everyone helped raise them, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and elders. Nicola Campbell also tells the history of residential schools in Canada (as well as the US, Australia, and New Zealand), and how parents would be arrested and put in jail if they did not send their children. She asks two very important questions:

“Can you imagine a community without children?” and “Can you imagine children without parents?” This book gives a beautiful introduction to traditional Aboriginal culture and children can discuss how the family must have felt sending their little girl off to school far away. It is colorfully illustrated by Kim LaFave. It is appropriate for PreK-Grade 3.

Campbell, N.(2008). *Shi-chi's Canoe*. Toronto: ON: Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press.

This book is the sequel to *Shi-shi-etko*. *Shi-shi-etko* is on her way back to residential school with her younger brother *Shin-chi*. We learn that *Shi-shi-etko* had been punished at school for not understanding English and the teacher cut her beautiful braids. When the truck came to pick her and her brother up, her mother cried, and *Yayah* gave them both a big tight hug. Before leaving they asked their father to build them their own canoe. In the back of the truck, *Shi-shi-etko* comforts *Shi-chi*, telling him its important to remember their beautiful home and everything about where they live. Once they arrived *Shi-shi-etko* gave *Shi-chi* a little canoe that their father had made and told *Shi-chi* to keep it hidden. At the residential school, they were not allowed to talk to each other, and had to use their English names, *Mary* and *David*. They worked very hard doing chores, and by wintertime *Shi-chi* missed his mom and dad. He snuck away to the river and placed his little canoe in the river, so that it could find its way home. In the summer they were taken back home, where they found their father making them their own canoe.

This story goes into detail about what residential schools were like for Aboriginal children. From leaving their parents, to getting their haircut short and not being allowed to speak their own language or to speak with their own family members, there are many opportunities to discuss feelings with children of all ages. At the beginning of the book is another description of the history of residential schools, going into more detail about the hard work and difficulties Aboriginal children experienced at these schools. Discussions can center around Shi-sh-etko's experiences, as well as Shi-chi's longing for home. The story provides children with insight into these Aboriginal children's loving family and cultural traditions, as well as the hardships they encountered once taken to the residential school. This story is appropriate for PreK – Grade 3 children.

Condon, M. (2000). *Changes*. Saskatoon, SK: Gabriel Dumont Institute

This story follows a little Métis girl named Kona as she experiences the changing seasons, and with it, changing emotions. She asks the Gathering Spirit for guidance, who leads her through a range of emotions; sad, angry, surprised, and loved. Kona learns that her emotions change like the seasons, and that they all exist together.

This book is a great introduction to exploring different emotions. Children have opportunities to think about what makes them feel sad, angry, surprised, and loved. They can also discuss times when they felt angry and could not stop and share what helped them get over their angry feelings. This book uses simple language and sentence structure and is appropriate for younger children in PreK to Grade1.

Dupuis, J.K., & Kacer, K. (2016). *I Am Not A Number*. Toronto, ON: Second Story Press.

Irene and her family live on the reserve. One day the Indian Agent came to take all the children to a residential school far from the reserve. Irene's parents did not want to let Irene and her two brothers go, however, they had no choice. At the residential school the nuns separated the boys and girls, and each were given a number for a name. Irene's name at the residential school was 759. Her hair is cut short, and she was punished for speaking her Aboriginal language.

Throughout all of this, she never forgot her name, nor who she was or where she came from. When she returned home she was warmly greeted by her parents. At night she had nightmares about the residential school. She told her parents what had happened and they decided to hide the children when the Indian Agent came to take them back to school.

This book is based on a true story. Irene is the author's grandmother and there are photos of Irene at residential school at the back of the book. This book gives a detailed account of some of the abuse that children experienced at residential school. This book elicits discussions about how it feels to leave your family, and what it would be like to be at school with teachers who hurt children. Children can also discuss how to talk about difficult situations with parents, and how Irene's parents felt once they knew what was happening to their children. This book explores some harsh realities of residential schools and might need to be simplified for younger children. This book is appropriate for children in PreK-Grade 3.

Eyvindson, P. (2011). *Kookum's Red Shoes*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Pemmican Publications, Inc.

Peter Eyvindson tells the story of a Kookum's (grandmother) experience of leaving her family for the residential school and how it changed her relationship with her family and culture when she returned. The story centers on a pair of special red shoes that her parents bought for her, which never wore outside and kept safely in a box. When she returned from residential school, two years later, the shoes no longer fit. Like her shoes that no longer fit, she no longer fit in with her family or community.

This book references the story "The Wizard of Oz" and explores what it is like to love something only to have to leave it behind. Children can discuss how it felt to have to leave for residential school, and leave your family and belongings. Children can also consider how the parents in the story felt when their little girl was taken away to school, and how their own parents might feel if they were ever taken from them. This book also allows for discussions about change, and/or instances when children might feel out of place, or do not belong. This book is appropriate for children PreK- Grade 3, however it might need to be simplified for younger children. It is important to note that neither the author nor the illustrator appear to be of Aboriginal descent.

Hadubiak, M. (2012). *The Treaty Alphabet Book!* N.P.

The Treaty Alphabet Book goes through the letters of the alphabet, discussing topics with words that start with that letter. Under Aa the author discusses how Aboriginal people were the first people to live in Canada and that

they signed an agreement called Treaties. Each letter is accompanied with photographs of Aboriginal tipis, buffalo and beaver pelts, and other historical accounts. Different aspects of how the treaties were agreed upon, who were the parties involved, and where the treaties were signed in Canada is well explained.

The photographs of Canada's history clearly help the explanation of each term and piece of history, which makes it more interesting. This book is a thorough explanation of the history of treaties for children to learn and understand. The only part of the book that I did not feel was accurate, was under the letter "Rr", that described the time when "First Nations gave up their rights to the large areas of land they occupied, [and] they received smaller plots of land called reserves" (p. 18). The idea that First Nations gave up their land is disputable and is a topic that First Nations communities continue to argue. This book comes with a booklet for discussion and review for children in Gr. 2-3.

Johnson, L. (2003). *Fancy Dance*. New York: Lee & Low Books Inc.

In this story, a little boy named Joe practices to prepare a Fancy dance for a pow wow for the first time. The author explores the little boy's feelings as he faces his fears and nerves of dancing at a pow wow for the first time. Children can discuss Joe's feelings and relate it to their own fears or times they have felt nervous, learning to empathize with Joe.

The author is a cultural anthropologist who taught Native American history and culture for many years in the States before writing children's books. This book is illustrated by Mohawk artist Kayeri Akweks. This book is a good introduction to First Nation dancing and culture. The author uses short and simple

words and sentence structure to introduce fancy dancing as a part of pow wows and makes it easy and relatable for young children. It can also be introduced that pow wows and dancing used to be illegal in order to stop Aboriginal people from practicing their culture. It is appropriate for young children PreK-Grade 1.

Jordan-Fenton, C. & Pokiak-Fenton, M. (2014). *Not My Girl*. Richmond Hill, ON: Annick Press Ltd.

A ten year old girl named Margaret excitedly returns home by boat after being at a residential school for two long years. On the shore her family is waiting for her. She runs to them, only to find that her mother does not recognize her and says in what little English she knew “Not my girl”. Her siblings also do not respond to her. Margaret is saddened, however, her father embraces her tightly and calls her by her Inuit name, Olemaun, and then her mother also joins the embrace. Her cultural food is now unfamiliar to her and she no longer feels a part of her family or culture. Her first few weeks home were difficult, as she tried to relearn her language and hunting skills. Even her old friends she used to play with were not allowed to play with her anymore, because she was considered an “outsider”. She must relearn her language and culture to find her place in her community again.

This story describes elements of Inuit culture, including food and traditional ways of hunting and fishing. This story evokes feelings of sadness as the little girl struggles to become a part of her family and community again. Children can discuss what it would feel like to have to leave home for a long period of time, learn a new language and not be able to speak their own language.

This book is appropriate for PreK-Grade 3, however, it may need to be simplified for younger children.

Jordan-Fenton, C. & Pokiak-Fenton, M. (2013). *When I was Eight*. Richmond Hill, ON: Annick Press Ltd.

An eight-year old Inuit girl describes how she knew many things about her culture, however she did not know how to read books. Her older sister knew how to read, and she longed to learn to read books by herself. Her father would not let her go to residential school, however she insisted, and he eventually gave in. He took her to residential school and left her there. A nun cut her hair and took her parka and clothes. She was given a smock and socks that were too big for her. She was given an English name, Margaret and was made to do many chores. She longed to learn to read, however instead of learning to read, the nun just gave her chores to do and punished her for not knowing how to read.

This story introduces children to Inuit culture and traditions. It also exposes them to some of the hardships experienced by Aboriginal children when they attended residential school and how difficult it could be. Children can discuss and reflect on what it feels like to be at a school with a teacher who does not like them, and how it would feel to do chores all day long. This book is accessible to young children. It is appropriate for children in PreK-Grade 3.

Lindstrom, C. (2013). *Girls Dance, Boys Fiddle*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Pemmican Publications Inc.

A little girl, Metisse, is learning about her Métis culture. She wants to learn to fiddle, however, her parents tell her “Girls dance, boys fiddle”. Her

mother wants her to learn the butterfly dance to perform for her grandmother's birthday, however the little girl does not feel confident dancing and continues to want to learn to fiddle. Her grandfather agrees to teach her to fiddle, at the same time as she learns to dance. She performs at the community dance, even though she feels nervous. She also performed her fiddle for the dance, and everyone danced to her fluid fiddling, including her grandparents.

This story is written Carole Lindstrom who is a Métis author from the States. She uses this story to describe some elements of Métis culture in a playful way. This book can be used to give children an insight into an aspect of Métis culture, either confirming for children of this cultural background or as cultivating knowledge of a culture in order to foster empathy. It can also be used to discuss children's feeling about when they want to learn something but are told by others they can't due to tradition or other obstacles. Children can be encouraged to understand and relate to Metisse's feelings and to empathize with Metisse as she struggles to learn the butterfly dance, as well as accomplishes her goal to learn the fiddle. This book would be appropriate for children PreK- Grade 3 but may have to be simplified for younger children.

Malis, P. (2008). *Kookum and Me*. Canada: Bookmates Inc.

This story is about a little boy who is having a sleepover at his Kookum's house. They play games together, like hide and seek, and stay up late. Kookum makes bannock for breakfast. They go for a walk together into the woods to pick blueberries. They return home together and make blueberry pie. The story ends with the little boy stating, "I love my Kookum very much".

This book introduces children to the Cree term “Kookum” (grandmother) and some traditional Aboriginal food. Throughout the story, Kookum calls the little boy different animal names during his sleepover, and in the back of the book, there is an explanation of the qualities that each animal symbolizes. This book is written in simple language and can be used to introduce Aboriginal culture to young children who are non-Aboriginal, and reaffirm Aboriginal children’s culture. Children can discuss this little boy’s feelings for his Kookum, and how his Kookum feels about him. This book is appropriate for young children in PreK-Grade 1. It could be used as a reader for an older child.

Patton, A., & Burton, N. (2007). *Fiddle Dancer/Li Daanseur di Vyaeloon*. Saskatoon, SK: Gabriel Dumont Institute.

This story takes place on New Year’s Eve, where a young Métis boy, Nolan is at a dance. He is dancing to lively fiddle music and copying other dancer’s moves. His Moushoom (grandpa) was also dancing and Nolan wished he could dance as well as his Moushoom. Nolan fell asleep under a bench, watching all the shoes and moccasins moving to the music. When he awoke he was at his Moushoom’s house. His Moushoom made him bannock and told Nolan the story about how he learned to dance and became a great fancy jigger. He taught Nolan how to jig, and wrapped the traditional Métis sash around Nolan, which gave him confidence to dance.

This book informs children about Métis culture in Saskatchewan. The book is written in both English and Michif and introduces children to various aspects of Métis dancing. Children can discuss the feelings Nolan had of wanting

to learn something new and what it takes to become good at something, such as jigging. This book is beautifully illustrated by Métis artist, Sherry Farrell-Racette. She incorporated moccasins and shoes into the pictures at the dance, as well as traditional Métis clothing. This book is appropriate for children in PreK-Grade 3.

Pelletier, D. (1992). *The Pow-Wow*. Saskatoon, SK: Gabriel Dumont Institute.

This story is about a boy named Alfred who goes to his Kokum's reserve for a pow-wow. His cousin Leroy will be dancing in the pow-wow and Leroy shows Alfred his pow-wow regalia. He has a headdress, leggings, and shiny bells. Their Kokum did all the beadwork on his regalia. Everyone danced and at the end Alfred joined in a round dance.

This story introduces children to pow-wows in Saskatchewan, and pow-wow regalia. It is illustrated with cartoon drawings, which enhance the joy of being at a pow-wow. This book is part of a series of books, which also includes: *Alfred's First Day at School*, *Alfred's Summer*, and *Lisa and Sam*. The author is from Regina, Saskatchewan. This is suitable for children in PreK-K.

Sanderson, E. (1990). *Two Pairs of Shoes*. Toronto, ON: Pemmican Publications Inc.

For Maggie's eighth birthday her mother bought her a new pair of black leather shoes. Maggie was thrilled that they fit perfectly. She ran down the road to her Kokom's house to show her Kokum. Her Kokom was blind, so Maggie let her Kokom feel the shoes. Her grandmother thought the shoes were very nice, then told Maggie to retrieve a box from under her bed. Maggie brought the box to her Kokom, where she told Maggie to open it. Inside were the most beautiful beaded moccasins Maggie had ever seen.

This story introduces aspects of Aboriginal culture, specifically traditional shoes called moccasins. Children have an opportunity to discuss how Maggie felt receiving birthday presents, as well as explore the idea of receiving a handmade gift from someone, how much time they put into making it. They can further discuss what thoughts and feelings were put into the gift from Maggie's mother and her Kokom, and how Maggie felt receiving the two different pairs of shoes. The author portrays the love of a Kokom for her granddaughter. This book is appropriate for young children in PreK-Grade 1.

Spalding, A., & Scow, A. (2006). *Secret of the Dance*. Victoria, BC: Orca Book Publishers.

This story takes place in 1935 where a little boy's community decided to have a potlatch, which was forbidden by the government. That night, the little boy, Wat'l'kina, slipped out of bed to sneak out to the potlatch. He saw masked figures dancing and drumming around a fire. Wat'l'kina realized one of the figures was his father, and it was the only time he had seen his father dance. After the potlatch, the masks were wrapped in blankets and hidden from authorities. The little boy reflects that now he is older, and potlatches are no longer illegal, he rejoices every time he wears his traditional regalia.

Although this story is fiction, it is based on an incident in the life of Wat'l'kina, the now retired judge and Elder, Alfred Scow. The book portrays how controlling the government was at the time. The children can discuss what it feels like to be told they can not do something, such as dancing and wearing masks. This story encourages readers to explore the feelings of the community and gain

an understanding of the history of government control of Aboriginal people in Canada. This book is suitable for children in Pre K-Gr. 3.