



Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN)
Monograph Series II

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

COLLABORATION AMONG THE KENANOW BACHELOR
OF EDUCATION PROGRAM AND EDUCATION PARTNERS
IN NORTHERN MANITOBA

Number 3, Spring 2017



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

COLLABORATION AMONG THE
KENANOW BACHELOR OF EDUCATION
PROGRAM AND EDUCATION PARTNERS
IN NORTHERN MANITOBA

Al Gardiner, Ph.D.
Dean of Education (Retired)
University College of the North

Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN)
Monograph Series II

Number 3
Spring 2017

CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

COLLABORATION AMONG THE
KENANOW BACHELOR OF EDUCATION
PROGRAM AND EDUCATION PARTNERS
IN NORTHERN MANITOBA

Al Gardiner, Ph.D.

Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN)
Monograph Series II

Number 3
Spring 2017

Creating opportunities for inclusive education : collaboration
among the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program and
education partners in Northern Manitoba / Al Gardiner.

(Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN)
monograph series II ; no. 3, Spring 2017)

Includes bibliographical references.

This resource is available in print and electronic formats.

ISBN: 978-0-7711-7559-6 (print)

ISBN: 978-0-7711-7560-2 (pdf)

1. Native peoples—Education—Manitoba, Northern—Study and teaching.
 2. Native Peoples—Manitoba, Northern—Ethnic identify—Study and teaching.
 3. Inclusive education—Manitoba, Northern—Study and teaching.
 4. Teachers—Training of—Manitoba, Northern.
 - I. Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN).
- 371.82997

Copyright © 2017, Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) Monograph Series and the author. The views expressed in this monograph are those of the author and not necessarily those of any of the member organizations of the Manitoba Education Research Network. This publication may be reproduced without permission, provided that the author and the publisher are acknowledged.

The Manitoba Education Research Network has as its mission the improvement of education in Manitoba schools through the establishment of partnerships for research studies. It is committed to collecting and analyzing education related data and supporting other forms of research activities. The network is a collaborative effort led by the province's five Faculties of Education and Manitoba Education and Training. More information is available at www.mern.ca.

This resource is also available on the Manitoba Education Research Network website www.mern.ca.
Websites are subject to change without notice.

The Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) Monograph Series

The purpose of the MERN Monograph Series II is to publish, in hard copy and electronically, Manitoba educational research that is conducted by Manitoba researchers, in Manitoba, and/or is timely, accessible, and relevant to a broad audience of Manitoba educators and their partners. A call for proposals is posted on the MERN website at www.mern.ca.

Editorial Board

Stéfan Delaquis (Université de Saint-Boniface)

Heather Duncan (Brandon University)

Heather Hunter (Manitoba Education Research Network)

David Mandzuk (University of Manitoba)

Ken McCluskey (University of Winnipeg)

David Williamson (University College of the North)

Jon Young, Consulting Editor (University of Manitoba)

Further information on, and copies of, the monograph can be obtained from:

Heather Hunter

Manitoba Education Research Network

Email: heather.hunter@mern.ca

Abstract

The Faculty of Education, University College of the North, works with school divisions and education authorities across northern Manitoba, and with Manitoba Education and Training and other post-secondary institutions and community partners, to provide inclusive educational opportunities for children and youth. These partnerships support students in their quest to achieve a positive identity without which it would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to experience Mino-Pimatisiwin or the good life. As a result of this work, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its partners are enhancing the capacity of prospective teachers, current teachers, and administrators in the co-creation of inclusive schools. Through ongoing dialogue and inquiry, these partners work together to create visions of preferred futures for their respective school community members. Stories of these inclusive educational practices in northern Manitoba are told by participants about classrooms, schools, and education programs that are providing the preparation needed to function as effective teachers in inclusive educational environments.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to my partner, Catherine (Haines) Gardiner, for her support and assistance with this project.

I am grateful for the opportunity to pursue and complete doctoral studies through the Taos Institute and Tilburg University. I thank my thesis supervisor and advisor, Dr. Mary Gergen, for her guidance, encouragement, and good humour. The complete doctoral thesis, the basis for this monograph, can be found at www.taosinstitute.net/completed-dissertations.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the work of the Manitoba Education Research Network and its Director, Dr. Heather Hunter, for supporting not only this monograph but educational research in northern Manitoba.

I also acknowledge the Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) Research Project, a Community-University Research Alliance project, funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

CONTENTS

Abstract	vii
Acknowledgements	vii
Contents	ix
Foreword	1
Introduction	3
Chapter 1: Researcher and Research Focus	4
1.1 Researcher Biography: Al Gardiner	4
1.2 The Research	7
Chapter 2: Review of Literature	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Preparing for the Good Life	13
2.3 Aboriginal Focus in Education	16
2.4 Aboriginal Perspectives Embedded in Teacher Education Courses	18
2.5 Instruction	19
2.6 Culture-Based and Place-Based Education	22
2.7 Land-Based Activities and Experiential Learning	24
2.8 Social Constructionism and Schools of Hope	25
2.9 Funding Supports for Aboriginal and Northern Schools	27
Chapter 3: Methodology and Research Design	31
3.1 The Social Constructionist Lens and Education: Creating and Maintaining Inclusive Education in Schools	31
3.2 Collaborative Inquiry with Schools, School Systems, and Educational Partners: Participatory Action Research, Social Constructionism, and Transformation in Northern Manitoba	32
3.3 Research Study Procedures	33
3.4 Conclusions	38

Chapter 4: Collaborative Inquiries: Kelsey School Division and Mary Duncan School	39
4.1 Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School	39
4.2 Discussion of Interviews and Appreciative Inquiry Summit Data—Kelsey Community School	41
4.3 The Inclusive School: Lessons from Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School	42

Chapter 5: Collaborative Inquiries: Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program and <i>Into the Wild</i>	49
5.1 Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program	49
5.1.1 The Kenanow Learning Model	49
5.1.2 Specific Characteristics of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program	53
5.1.3 Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program: Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Schools—Discussion of Interviews, Observations, and Document Review	59
5.2 <i>Into the Wild</i> : Discussion of Interviews, Observations, and Document Review	63

Chapter 6: Collaborative Inquiries: Teaching and Learning Together	66
6.1 Discussion of Interviews, Observations, and Document Review	66
6.2 Educational Partnerships and the Implications for Inclusive Education Practices	69

Chapter 7: Conclusion	73
7.1 Summary of Findings	73
7.2 Final Reflections	75

References	78
-------------------	-----------

Appendix	88
-----------------	-----------

FOREWORD

BY DAVID WILLIAMSON

In 2013, I took on the formidable task of replacing Dr. Al Gardiner as dean of the Kenanow Faculty of Education at University College of the North. No one could replace an educator like Al, with his history and community connections; really, the best I hoped for was to not stray the course of the program too far from its obligation to the peoples of northern Manitoba and to the larger educational community. *Kenanow*, the *Ininimowin* (Cree) word for *all of us*, with its emphasis on collaborative concepts of place, people, and learning, does not lend itself well to allowing people to stray too far off, especially not newly minted deans. The path to *mino-pimatisiwin* (living a good life) rarely follows just one route but, in the end, it seeks to bring us together, threaded in purpose. *Kenanow*—all of us.

This transition of deans came at an opportune point. UCN had begun its new strategic plan, *Kiskinohtahiwewin* (guiding us in the right direction), the community-based programs were well in progress, Al was able to focus on much needed research and writing, and I was eager, if not somewhat naive, to learn where this role may take us. It was part of the natural cycle of changing roles. *Kenanow*—all of us.

As Al articulates, Kenanow is built on the intricate collaboration of partners, servicing communities of varied resources and experiences, especially in the arena of public education. Central to fostering the Kenanow relationship is the role of our Elders and their connection to the land. For our youth, so often lost in the education systems, to engage in *pimatisiwin*, the Elders provide opportunities to seek and confirm identity. A connection to traditional culture needs to be central in ensuring education is relevant and sustainable. The borders of the classroom, the goals of curricula, the overall system, need to be challenged. Teaching needs to involve the entire community—inclusive, intergenerational, and without hierarchy. *Kenanow*—all of us.

Within months into my dean-ing journey, I experienced Kenanow in a most profound way. Mile 20, the traditional cultural camp of the Ininiw people of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation, became our classroom for a week. Gathered together, in a place of learning thousands of years old, were Elders, university students, traditional teachers and conventional academics, youth from local elementary schools, Cree and Dene, Euro-Canadian and Punjabi, all drawing lessons from the land to support all domains of curricula. By week's end, the roles of teaching and learning blurred, traded, and transformed. It was *kiskinohtamatotan tapwewin*—a place of learning and teaching in honesty. *Kenanow*—all of us.

Al's writing illustrates that place-based, collaborative education has occurred in multiple settings, with varied populations. The community circle initiatives described reflect local community values. Acknowledging these values is essential for place-based collaboration. I was privileged to participate in the subtle differences of Kenanow in the local graduation celebrations of our four community-based teacher education programs, in Bunibonibee, in Chemawawin, in Peguis, and in St. Theresa Point. Each celebration offered its own expression of culture and community. Whether it was swaying to the beat of hand-drums made by each graduate in honour of their heritage, having a child take my hand to invite me into the round dance, or seeing the Christian cross and the medicine wheel shared in visual representations, I saw (and felt) each community's uniqueness. *Tapwe mino-keesikowak*—they were good days, truly.

To be an educator is to commit to the belief of possibilities. To document research is to commit to the value of *acimowin*, to continuing to tell our stories, to document various ways of *pimatisiwin*. In Kenanow, we have a long journey ahead but, more importantly, as you will read, we have strong footsteps which have lead us to where we are, to who we are. *Kenanow*—all of us.

INTRODUCTION

Given the impact of the residential schools on Aboriginal people and continuing inequality of opportunity for the socio-economically disadvantaged in northern Manitoba, schools must now not only teach but employ the relational processes needed to repair the broken generational links that Elder Neff, Chair of UCN Council of Elders, speaks so passionately about. (Neff, 2014)

You have an onion. You're going to have to peel it and figure it out. And some of it is a lot of crying and thinking about from where some of these kids are coming. There are a lot of positives and negatives in life, and some of the students might have more negatives than positives. . . . Their safe environment is the school so you've got to make their world as enjoyable as you can so that they'll want to learn. If that's their only way out, it is going to school that might be their way out in the future.

— Aboriginal Elder
(*Teaching and Learning Together* Interview Participants, 2013)

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education and its educational partners have made a concerted effort to enhance inclusive education opportunities for all children and youth. This monograph, in the main, is based on my 2015 doctoral dissertation, *Creating Inclusive Opportunities for Education: A Story of Collaboration Involving the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program and Their Partners in Northern Manitoba*. In Chapter 1, my background, educational philosophy, and research focus are presented. Collaborative inquiries about inclusive education are introduced as the focal point of the research. The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 explores the support in the research that lends credence to the philosophical and pedagogical underpinnings of the approach to inclusive education employed by the Kenanow Bachelor of Education and their partners. In Chapter 3, the social constructionist lens and the research process are described in detail. Starting from a social constructionist perspective, appreciative interviews, Appreciative Inquiry Summits, collaborative teams, document analysis, and participant observation were used in a participatory action research process. The results of each collaborative inquiry are discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Inclusive education practices and collaboration among educational partners in northern Manitoba are described in these chapters. In the final chapter, the overall themes emerging from those collaborative inquiries that promote inclusive education in northern Manitoba are summarized and discussed. The significance of the collaboration between the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its educational partners for inclusive education in northern Manitoba and its impact on children and youth is considered.

CHAPTER 1: RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH FOCUS

1.1 Researcher Biography: Al Gardiner

I came to public education in northern Manitoba from Toronto, Ontario, almost 40 years ago. As a new graduate from the University of Western Ontario's Faculty of Education, I came along with my wife, also a teacher, to begin our teaching careers in the north. My wife was offered a job at Scott Bateman Junior High, and the Superintendent of the Kelsey School Division in The Pas, Manitoba, told me to come along since they would have a job for me too. Before being hired by the Kelsey School Division, I was employed by St. Leonard's House, which is a halfway house for those parolees from the federal penitentiary system who require mandatory supervision. When I shared my excitement with the clients about moving to The Pas, one fellow told me know that he had been to The Pas a few times and had found it to be a little rough. He tried to assure me that things would be all right, though. Although moving to The Pas seemed to be a questionable life choice for this St. Leonard's House's client, Cathy, my wife, and I saw beginning new lives in northern Manitoba as an exciting opportunity.

During the past 39 years in my role as teacher, counsellor, principal, superintendent, and dean of education, I have had the privilege of working with many fine teachers, teacher assistants, and school administrators. Through their dedication and collaborative efforts, they have created a positive environment for the students in the educational jurisdictions located in northern Manitoba. Because of the efforts of these educators, I have encountered students who are excited about learning and actively engaged in creating futures for themselves. Upon graduation, some students make the decision to leave their respective communities while others, including many of the students enrolled in the Faculty of Education at the University College of the North, opt to stay in the north where they plan to work and contribute to the communities in which they will live.

Over the years, I have noticed that students are more likely to succeed when families, community groups, and organizations actively support schools. When given the opportunity and encouragement to be involved in their children's education, parents and even grandparents are supportive of the school that their child or grandchild attends. In a similar vein, schools are further strengthened when groups and organizations such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Rotary Club of The Pas, and the Chief and Council of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation contribute to education in the local schools.

In the broadest sense, I, in my capacity as Dean of Education, have been involved in developing the capacity of teachers and administrators working in northern Manitoba. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been developed to address the need for an appropriate teacher education model for prospective teachers who plan to teach in northern Manitoba. In order to support those teachers

employing the Kenanow Learning Model in our region's school divisions and those organizations that are seeking to improve high school graduation rates, I am collaborating with educational partners to develop programming for school leaders that is relevant to northern school administrators and consistent with the principles of equitable education for all students. I continue to be involved in the development of learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders in northern Manitoba.

As the Dean of Education at University College of the North (UCN) and a privileged member of the dominant group, I allied myself with Aboriginal and northern peoples for the purpose of expanding their life chances by transforming their schools into more inclusive community schools. In understanding and explaining my role in this process, I turn to Verna St. Denis who tells us that an ally is "a member of the dominant group (race, class, gender, etc.), who acknowledges and uses their position of power and privilege to create instructional and cultural change" (St. Denis, 2010, p. 12). The relationships among the educational partners constitute an emerging alliance co-created collaboratively for the purpose of creating inclusive schools.

As a researcher, it is important to clarify the multiple positionalities that I have included in the research process. Herr and Anderson (2005) point out that researchers should acknowledge their relationships to the co-participants involved in the research process and should include consideration of one's insider/outsider roles, hierarchical position, membership in the dominant group, and colonial relationship. Through the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and the *Into the Wild* initiative, I have provided leadership as the Dean of Education, and while holding insider status, have been an ally to those co-creating these programs. I have an outsider position in relation to Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School but have relationships with the personnel of both schools as a consequence of my past roles as a school administrator and superintendent of the Kelsey School Division. Additionally, I have collaborated with staff members in both schools for the delivery of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program. These schools have been practicum sites, have provided service learning opportunities, and have assisted with the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program instruction. However, I do have a direct role through my membership in the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, which operates under the auspices of School District of Mystery Lake and as a research member of the Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) research project. My relationships with those individuals who practise collaborative inquiry approaches are varied, but with each, I am an active participant in shared educational programming.

I encountered the Taos Institute and their doctoral program by accident. As a trained counsellor, I was interested in learning more about solution-focused counselling. Solution-focused counselling led me to Appreciative Inquiry and the Taos Institute. By reading articles and books about social constructionism and Appreciative Inquiry, I found a social philosophy and approach to organizations that appealed to me because they were strength-based and grounded in social relationships and

community, and have the potential to promote the transformation of organizations. I have thought a great deal about the social constructionist perspective and its relevance to increasing learning opportunities for children and youth. I see social constructionism as a social perspective that has great significance for schools and almost limitless applications in the field of education.

In my view, social constructionism provides the lens by which effective school practices can be identified and appreciated. For social constructionists, all meaning is embedded in relationships. The focus for social constructionists is “discourse, dialogue, coordination, conjoint meaning making, discursive meaning making and the like” (Gergen, n.d., p. 9). According to Gergen, social constructionists take four positions that are important to our understanding of the promise of inclusive education:

1. Meaning is indeterminate and never final.

Social constructionism takes the position that what exists in the classroom or the school today can change through altering our relationships. For example, a struggling student would benefit more if a teacher examines the relationships that the student has with the teacher and others in the classroom and school rather than labelling the student as being somehow incapable, as a result of genetics or socio-economic circumstances. Through discussion with the student and others, including colleagues, teachers can work with the student to co-create a different understanding of their shared interactions and, in doing so, change the circumstances for the student. Learning communities can serve as forums for continuing dialogue and meaning making by members of the school community.

2. While making meaning together, we bring multiple voices from other current and past relationships. Social constructionists refer to this as polyvocalism.

Polyvocalism acknowledges the impact of relationships from outside of the classroom and school. A student may currently have a teacher who is both capable and caring but, in the past, may have had a teacher who was not particularly encouraging. The same student may have been bullied by an older student but is supported at home by kind and caring parents. The aforementioned are examples of the multiple relationships that a student brings to school each day. In an inclusive classroom, teachers and students communicate about the complexities of their lives and the impact that these complexities have on their relationships and identities.

3. Meaning making occurs in a specific place with a particular group of people and a physical environment.

The physical and social contexts are factors that influence the specific speakers and actors in the creation of meaning. Social constructionists appreciate that individual students and teachers are situated in a particular classroom, school, community, and country, and social constructionists would expect that curricula, classroom surroundings, and school practices would reflect that place because of its historical legitimacy. In keeping with the view that the particular academic subjects are by

their very nature interdisciplinary and that the knowledge imparted should not be removed from its broader context, curricula should be integrated with their communities at the local, national, and global levels. It is within this context that the relationships that develop in a particular school will evolve.

4. Language is a function of relationships and is foundational to meaning making. Language enables students and teachers to discuss their relationships. Language is used by the teacher to convey expectations and to gauge the student's reaction to those expectations. Students and teachers can use language to provide feedback about learning and other dimensions of the relationships that exist in classrooms. Similarly, language provides a way for students and teachers to develop shared understandings. The teacher or other members of the school community may introduce the student to new ideas or experiences which may allow new possibilities for the student to emerge. While language may be limited by the experiences of the student, language can be used to convey shared understandings regarding joint experiences (Gergen, n.d., pp. 4–6). Language enables teachers to communicate with students but is also a means for students to provide feedback to their teachers about their learning and their life circumstances.

Appreciative Inquiry is a form of collaborative inquiry that is used by social constructionists to reflect on the nature and status of relationships especially as they pertain to the creation and evolution of shared purposes. Once this is ascertained, it allows the participants to plan the subsequent steps that they need to take in order to give life to the vision shared by members of the school community.

In order for schools to continue to evolve and improve in ways that are anticipated by members of the school community, there must be open communication. Opportunities for open dialogue and the sharing of perspectives among staff, parents, students, and other educators within the region about teaching, learning, and school practices lead to the creation of intersecting public spheres, which is essential in facilitating substantive change in education to northern Manitoba. Put more simply, educators in the northern Manitoba are talking to each other and with members of their school communities so that they may move forward collectively in order to create enhanced learning opportunities which, in turn, can create more and arguably improved life chances for children and youth in northern Manitoba.

1.2 The Research

I will draw upon the relationships that I have with a variety of educational partners in the Kelsey School Division, University College of the North, and the educational community throughout Manitoba.

The focal point is the following research question:

What evidence is there of the collaborative activities required to co-create inclusive schools in northern Manitoba?

In this study, as a participant observer and researcher, I have documented the relational processes and shared perspectives associated with inclusive education within schools, their divisions, districts, or education authorities in northern Manitoba, and the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program. As a participant in the shared programming along with being the researcher, I have outlined my position in each of the initiatives to be transparent about my vantage point.

The collaborative inquiries that are the vehicles for the research process are

- Inclusive Schools: Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School
- Program Development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program and Programs for Children and Youth—*Into the Wild* Summer Program
- *Teaching and Learning Together*

I have shared portraits of each school or initiative in each collaborative inquiry while employing the constant comparative method (Merriam, 2009) as a means to analyze the interviews, Appreciative Inquiry data, and observational data. With the indicators in each theme acting as the guide for the storytelling, I will tell the stories of the participants and then share my observations.

The twenty-five interviews and two Appreciative Inquiry Summits involved people in northern Manitoba including members of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its partners such as Elders, students, teachers, administrators, faculty members, and families.

I have drawn conclusions based on the analysis of the data and organized the conclusions for each collaborative inquiry. To ensure ecological validity, I have taken those results to members of the participating collaborative inquiries and have received feedback. Due to their important role in the development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, I have taken my conclusions to and received feedback from the Council of Elders. In each of the cases, the accuracy of the descriptions in the collaborative inquiries has been affirmed by the participants and the Council of Elders. The impact of the inclusive educational practices evident in each inquiry is discussed in the later chapters. Finally, there will be a discussion of the general conclusions about the collaborative inquiries concerning the partnerships and inclusive education in northern Manitoba.

The research process is a form of action research that used a social constructionist lens. Appreciative interviews, Appreciative Inquiry Summits, and analyses of the collaborative team meetings and focus group meetings, supplemented by document reviews, are used for this research project. Appreciative Inquiry, collaborative teams, and appreciative interviews ensure that the multi-voices from schools, school divisions, and communities are present. In essence, the research procedures might be better identified as participatory action research (PAR), which is a subset of action research (MacDonald, 2012). As MacDonald notes in quoting Reason and Bradbury (2002), PAR “is strongly value orientated, seeking to address issues of significance concerning the flourishing of human persons, their communities, and the wider

ecology in which we participate” (p. xxii). Participants in the research process co-create solutions in order to address issues that they want to be resolved in a manner that is meaningful to them. Data was collected through Appreciative interviews with participants in schools, districts, and education authorities; programs; and research initiatives and collaborative inquiries, including Appreciative Inquiry Summits with school staff members. Data was also collected through a review of divisional, district, and school records, and Manitoba Education and Training documents. Multiple methods are used in order to ensure a participatory approach in the research process.

Comments from the *Into the Wild* survey included the following:

I learned about gases, solids and liquids.

I would make Friday a whole day instead of a half day.

I would change nothing.

(University College of the North, Faculty of Education, 2013b)

Educational Partners and Collaborative Inquiries

University College of the North and its educational partners have been collaborating in the creation and implementation of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program along with other initiatives in order to enhance the life chances of children and youth in northern Manitoba. A review of these educational activities including the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program should provide insight into the successes and promise for providing inclusive educational opportunities in northern Manitoba. I believe that there is currently no other coherent perspective that articulates the appropriate approaches to education that serve to enhance the life chances of children and youth in northern Manitoba. It is my expectation that this study will provide considerable insight into inclusive educational practices that hold considerable promise for serving communities in northern Manitoba.

Educational Partners

The major educational partners involved in this collaborative effort to transform northern schools are Flin Flon School Division, Frontier School Division, Mystery Lake School District, Opaskwayak Education Authority, Kelsey School Division, and the Faculty of Education at University College of the North. Further partnerships have emerged subsequent to the creation of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, including Chemawawin Cree Nation, Peguis First Nation, Bunibonibee Cree Nation, St. Theresa Point First Nation, and Brandon University. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program partners with internal entities, such as Community-Based Services, Inter-University Services, and the Faculty of Arts and Science, to work together for the purpose of developing and delivering teacher education programming. Additionally, the Kenanow Bachelor program and its educational partners collaborate with boundary partners ranging from Manitoba Education and

Training to Vale Canada Ltd. to Opaskwayak Cree Nation Chief and Council. There are still challenges for educational systems, including low high school graduation and post-secondary participation rates, that need to be improved if northerners wish to take advantage of the emerging economic opportunities in the region. Each of the initiatives reflects the ongoing collaboration between the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its partners.

Collaborative Inquiries: Collaboration and Educational Partnerships

Presented as a collaborative inquiry, each initiative will offer evidence of collaborative activities between the Faculty of Education at University College of the North and various educational and community partners in northern Manitoba. Through this project, I am participating in the change process as a participant observer and have collected data by conducting appreciative interviews, using Appreciative Inquiry Summits, observing personally, and reviewing documents that tell the stories of those initiatives created and implemented by the educational partners in an effort to begin the process of transforming schools in northern Manitoba. Through the presentation of these initiatives, I am examining the impact that they and their associated activities may have for enhancing inclusivity in schools and the possibilities for actualizing preferred futures for members of school communities in northern Manitoba.

Although the notion of inclusive education has been enshrined by the province of Manitoba as a response to those with identified disabilities, I seek to extend the idea of inclusivity in education because, in my view, it is a *sine qua non* in any effort to address the social inequality facing children and youth resulting from ethnicity, race, poverty, or gender. An inclusive education might be understood as the alignment of curriculum, instructional practice, resources, and policy, and has success for all learners as its goal. Children and youth receiving an inclusive education should experience school as a place where their ethnic status, race, gender, or socio-economic status is not a factor in limiting their achievement, personal development, or emergence as citizens in their respective communities (Lindsey, 2012). I draw upon social constructionism as the overarching perspective for viewing the relational processes congruent to the co-creation of inclusive educational practices (Merriam, 2009). The transformation of schools requires the development and implementation of inclusive education for all.

Will collaboration among the major educational partners in northern Manitoba produce increased life opportunities for children and youth, including higher rates of high school graduation and post-secondary participation? The increased life opportunities for children and youth may lead to long-term yet unpredictable outcomes. It would not be reasonable to attempt to predict with any certainty the educational or vocational choices made by individuals or groups in any specific way. However, with the collaboration among educational partners, it may be more appropriate and arguably more reasonable to reach conclusions about inclusivity in educational programming already achieved and the likelihood of achieving

increased opportunities for children and youth in northern Manitoba. An important premise of this project is that collaboration among the educational partners will correlate with factors leading to school improvement including changed instructional practices and improved educational systems. School improvement is understood to be an educational process where increased opportunities to learn for all occurs especially for those students who are currently not afforded the supports needed to maximize their potential in the educational system. The perspectives of the participants in any change process should be indicative of the level and quality of the collaborative efforts already in place that are designed to create positive change in educational systems and that are congruent with practices indicative of inclusive education found in the literature (Earl, Carden, & Smutylo, 2001). Given the relatively recent collaborations among the partners, inclusionary perspectives and practices by teachers, school support staff, educational leaders, and prospective teachers will, we hope, signal greater success for all learners.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This review will focus on research, theories, and practice related to the creation and development of inclusive educational opportunities for Aboriginal and northern students in Manitoba. The research literature presented corresponds to the major themes related to Aboriginal and northern education.

Geographically, Manitoba sits in the centre of Canada and is bordered by the Canadian provinces of Ontario to the east and Saskatchewan to the west. The north-central American states of North Dakota and Minnesota are situated to the south, while the Canadian territories of Nunavut and Northwest Territories lie to the north. Northern Manitoba begins about 600 miles north of Canada's border with the United States and approximately 400 miles north of Winnipeg, Manitoba's capital city. Northern Manitoba encompasses much of the land designated in Treaty 5 and, as such, is largely inhabited by the Cree, Oji-Cree, and Dene along with the Métis, who are of Aboriginal and European descent (Tough, 1988).

Northern Manitoba's demographic trend and its socio-economic reality must be considered when one is attempting to find solutions designed to improve the delivery of education there. The population of the First Nations and Aboriginal communities is increasing dramatically and in 20 years about 20 percent of the population of Manitoba will be Aboriginal (Wilson, 2012). At this point in time, Aboriginal students constitute 70 percent of all students attending school in northern Manitoba. Moreover, the incomes earned by northern Manitobans, especially Aboriginals, are lower than the wages earned in other parts of the province of Manitoba (Loxley, 2010). Because of this disparity and because the life experiences of those residing in northern Manitoba are significantly different from those living elsewhere in the province, recommendations for educating Aboriginal and northern students need to be considered. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report, *Gathering Strength, Volume 3*, offers "a valuable summary of the recommendations of 22 previous reports, written between 1920 and 1992," which include the following:

- Aboriginal control of education.
- School courses in Aboriginal studies, including history, language and culture.
- Training and hiring more Aboriginal teachers.
- Inclusion of Aboriginal parents, elders, and educators in the education of Aboriginal children.
- Special support programs for Aboriginal students, for example, counselling, substance abuse education, remedial education and retention programs.
- Funding of support services for students in post-secondary studies.

- The resolution of federal, provincial and territorial conflicts over responsibilities, or recognition by the federal government of its funding responsibility for education.
- Training Aboriginal adults for teaching, paraprofessional and administrative positions.
- More emphasis on preschool and kindergarten education. (Bell, 2004, p. 33)

The aforementioned recommendations are essentially a response to the government of Canada's past policies that were designed to assimilate Aboriginal people through education and to the consequences of those policies. Additionally, the importance of continuous inquiry in a collaborative fashion for ongoing improvement cannot be understated. The literature review in this monograph will provide an examination of the research as it relates to the major issues in Aboriginal and northern education.

2.2 Preparing for the Good Life

Children and youth need to develop a positive identity in order to experience the good life once they become adults. More specifically, as it relates to this study, children and youth should develop a positive sense of self while they are students. An individual's identity should be thought of as a process whereby one's reflection of self is determined by their relationships with others (Edmunds & Edmunds, 2010). Through relational processes, an individual's understandings of the self are created and ever changing. If co-action creates individual identities, changing, multiple relationships dictate that self-identities are always incomplete and in motion (Gergen, 2009b, pp. 45–49). For pre-school children, the formative relationships are typically created as a result of their interaction with family. But, upon entering school, children and youth form new relationships with those outside their family environments such as teachers, school staff members, school administrators, and, of course, other students. As well, these school relationships have an impact on the formation of a student's identity. If a student's identity is a function of their relationships, the opportunities for a preferred future are only limited by those relationships. Students who attend good schools and have effective working relationships with their teachers can develop positive identities and, as such, have immeasurable possibilities for preferred futures.

It can be cogently argued that the teaching and learning process that is focused on relationships is critical for the creation and maintenance of positive student identities. Relational pedagogy or teaching holds some promise in this respect since the teacher "develops relationships with students as a starting place to teach course content . . . [they] create a *trust-generating* climate where students construct meaning from their individual point of view in balance with their prior experience" (Lindsey, Karns, & Myatt, 2010, p. 85). Relational pedagogy encourages the formation of an active partnership between students and teachers through the development of reflective behaviours by students, convening forums for dialogue, including classroom meetings and using teaching strategies that are deemed to be appropriate in a learning situation (Boyd, Sullivan, & MacNeill, 2006).

Hattie has concluded, on the basis of the research, that teaching and learning situations that have dynamic student and teacher relationships and are supportive of student learning have proven to enhance student achievement (Hattie, 2009). The student-teacher relationship must include teacher behaviours that reflect “debate, refutation and investigation” by the teacher about their expectations and understandings (Hattie, 2009, p. 1842). Studies have shown that learning outcomes are more likely to be achieved when schools are well funded (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996; Bosker & Witziers, 1996, as cited in Hattie, 2009, p. 301). As Deborah Meir has commented, “I’ll believe money doesn’t count the day the rich stop spending so much money on their own children” (as cited in Hattie, 2009, p. 309). When schools are resourced at similar levels, effective teaching grounded in relationships is the key to the development of positive student identities regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or socio-economic status (Hattie, 2009). Excellence in education can be achieved when students and teachers are monitoring their participation in the teaching and learning process and using those reflections to guide their behaviour.

Excellence in education should be synonymous with inclusive education. Inclusive education incorporates those practices associated with excellence in education and maximizes the learning for all students regardless of disability, gender, race, ethnicity, mother tongue, and socio-economic status. Kosnik and Beck cite both Ainscow, Booth, and Dyson (2006) and Verma, Bagley, and Jha (2007) to support their position that an inclusive education for all is the emerging international standard (Kosnik & Beck, 2011). Kosnik and Beck from their review of the literature and their study of new teachers have concluded that an inclusive education involves the following principles and strategies:

- Develop a strong sense of belonging in the classroom community.
- Get to know your students well since the student-teacher relationship is critical.
- Individualize the program through ongoing teacher adaptation, so it is student-centred.
- Study diverse cultures as a foundation for mutual understanding and respect in the classroom.
- Support students in developing their individual way of life by appreciating their culture and its significance in their evolving identity.
- Discuss issues of prejudice and discrimination explicitly so issues of inclusion are discussed openly. (Kosnik & Beck, 2011, pp. 465–493)

Implicit in Kosnik and Beck’s perspective on inclusive education is an emphasis on relationships that are caring and leading to connectedness. In discussing preparing pre-service teachers to provide inclusive education for students, Kosnik and Beck extend Hattie’s notions of excellence in education and Boyd, Sullivan, and MacNeill’s relational pedagogy (Kosnik & Beck, 2011, p. 901).

It is important to acknowledge that an emphasis on caring and connectedness can only be present in a school community if there is an authentic and open discussion about teaching and learning (Gilligan, 1982 in McNamee & Gergen, 1999). Open and

ongoing conversations in a learning community enable those in the community to be committed and accountable to their relationships, which McNamee and Gergen (1999) term “relational responsibility.” In these circumstances, members of a learning community can pursue shared purposes and constantly redefine those pursuits. Mary Gergen reminds us that valuing or appreciating our relationships rather than focusing on the responsibilities or obligations of those relationships is more likely to lead to sustainable, caring communities. With relational appreciation replacing or augmenting relational responsibility as a way of understanding our relationships, the caring communities could be “a seemingly foundational element in the building of a life” (Gergen, M., in McNamee & Gergen, 1999, p. 109).

What form does caring and connectedness take? Noddings and Rogers both contribute ideas that answer this question. Noddings (2007) reminds us that the teacher demonstrates caring by responding to the student as a person. In this case, inclusion is manifested as an interpersonal process that allows the teacher and student to act in tandem, and in that, a duality, so that the student’s motives and feelings about the learning are clearly understood and accepted. Noddings (2007) argues, “Inclusion as practiced by the teacher is a vital gift” (p. 373). Rogers might suggest that the teacher’s understanding of the student is facilitated by active listening, and the feedback that arises from this communication process is a sign of inclusion to both the student and the teacher (Rogers & Farson, 1997/2007, as cited in Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012). The caring is not complete until the student is freely and actively engaged in learning (Noddings, 2007). The establishment of a caring relationship between student and teacher might be aptly described as connectedness. Having numerous relationships in the school, the student will likely have multiple student identities that correspond to the various learning situations. These identities or self-theories have an impact on the student’s approach to different learning situations and can be determined by the subject matter, a particular teacher, or a combination of the two. Appropriate learning activities and relationships can remove barriers to learning imposed by the student’s self-theory or student identity (Dweck and Master, 2009, as cited in Marzano, Pickering, & Heflebower, 2011; Dweck, 2000). Teaching and learning situations where students and teachers appreciate their teaching and learning relationship, and where there is a connectedness between them, might be viewed as an example of the relational appreciation discussed earlier. Relational appreciation provides students and teachers with untold possibilities for continuous learning and provides the means for students to acquire a positive student identity so that they may experience the good life.

Children bring prior learning with them when they come to school, but children from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to bring those dispositions for learning that will enable them to thrive in school. From the research, Hattie identifies those dispositions that support student learning as “openness to new experiences, children’s emerging beliefs about the value and worth of investing in learning, and the manner in which they learn that can build a sense of self from their engagement in the learning enterprise” (Hattie, p. 2009, p. 187). Fortunately,

these deficits can be overcome because these dispositions can be taught at the school. Banks (2006) asserts that the research on multicultural education supports the view that identity “is multiple, changing, overlapping, and contextual rather than fixed and static” (p. 208). Through attention to the research, school communities can establish relationships in support of inclusive education and can find ways to create positive student identities for all students.

2.3 Aboriginal Focus in Education

The Deans of Education in Canada have prepared and signed an accord on Indigenous education that outlines the goals that can guide positive educational change. The accord is consistent with the aims set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007. The Declaration was accepted by the Canadian government (Galloway, 2011), which recently also committed to its full implementation (Globe, 2016). The principles of the Accord on Indigenous Education (AIE) articulate the following goals for teacher education programs:

- respectful and welcoming learning environments for all learners
- respectful and inclusive curricula, including Indigenous content
- culturally responsive pedagogies, including Indigenous pedagogies and ways of knowing
- mechanisms for valuing and promoting Indigeneity in education
- culturally responsive assessment in support of social justice
- affirming and revitalizing Indigenous languages through leadership in education
- Indigenous education leadership, with a focus on promoting Aboriginal leadership
- non-Indigenous learners and Indigeneity, with an emphasis on opportunities for authentic Aboriginal experiences, and the exploration of power and privilege (or lack thereof)
- culturally respectful Indigenous research through meaningful partnerships in support of transforming Aboriginal education

(Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds, & Williams, 2010, pp. 5–8).

As a signatory to the aforementioned accord, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program personnel should be obligated to use the framework while reviewing and developing their programs to ensure that education can be transformed by “working collaboratively to prioritize the educational purposes and values of Indigenous communities and people” (Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds, & Williams, 2010, p. 4).

The Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee (AEPAC) in Saskatchewan produced four broad recommendations that are compatible with the development of inclusive schools. First, students will thrive in schools where the schools reflect their lives and their community. Second, school decisions are to be shared between First Nations and Métis Elders, parents, community members,

and other educational partners in addition to those in school communities who traditionally make school decisions—administrators, teachers, support staff, and students. Third, the provincial curriculum as mandated by Saskatchewan’s Core Curriculum must contain First Nations and Métis content and perspectives, and it is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure that that aspect of the curriculum is implemented. It is understood that teachers need to be supported while they develop an understanding of First Nations and Métis perspectives and the strategies that are required for implementation in their classrooms. Fourth, the school shares the responsibility for teaching and learning in meaningful ways with First Nations and Métis Elders, family, and the community (Saskatchewan Learning, 2010). These four recommendations provided by the Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee are, in spirit, congruent with the inclusive approach to education previously outlined in this monograph.

Bruner reminds us that the culture is foundational: “Learning, remembering, talking and imagining; all of them are made possible by participating in culture” (Bruner, 1996, as cited in Saskatchewan Learning, 2010, p. 5). The Saskatchewan government consulted with its First Nation and Métis communities while it developed *A Time for Significant Leadership: A Strategy for Implementing First Nations and Métis Education Goals*, “a strategy to build local capacity through relationship and understanding, excellence and equity, and accountability to First Nations and Métis learners and to all learners across Saskatchewan” (Saskatchewan Learning, 2010, p. 2). *A Time for Significant Leadership* proposes to “restore and validate the knowledge, wisdom, and worldviews of First Nations and Métis peoples for the benefit of all” as a means by which to produce transformational change in schools (p. 2). Those creating and developing the Kenanow Learning Model at University College of the North in Manitoba share the visions of our Saskatchewan colleagues in creating educational systems that serve all members of the school community and are grounded in culture, relationships, and communities.

Elders

Saskatchewan, Manitoba’s geographic neighbour, has been proactive in identifying the role of Elders in schools. Saskatchewan Education, Saskatchewan’s department of education, recognizes the importance of Elders to schools and has developed a guide that outlines the role of Elders and community workers in schools. In its schools, Saskatchewan Education expects that Elders will promote cultural awareness and understanding; link the Aboriginal community to the school; encourage Aboriginal language acquisition and retention; guide and counsel students, families, and school staff; and assist teachers in introducing culture within the classroom (Saskatchewan Education, 2001). In Saskatchewan schools, Elders facilitate Aboriginal students in “seeing themselves” in their schools.

Aikenhead and Michell (2011) offer the view that Elders are “essential teachers of community-based Indigenous knowledge and wisdom” (p. 123). Elders can transmit knowledge about the history, culture, and language of the community. Elders

can give insight into important issues affecting the community. Elders will often share knowledge with teachers and students through storytelling. Each Elder in a community has a special gift, and common examples may include “plant gatherer, herbalist, storyteller, leather maker, beader, ceremony keeper, birch bark canoe maker, linguist, trapper, hunter, or midwife” (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 125). Contact with an Elder may be a catalyst for further inquiry by students about their heritage, their current role within the community, and their evolving identity.

2.4 Aboriginal Perspectives Embedded in Teacher Education Courses

Aboriginal perspectives in teacher education courses provide prospective teachers with the knowledge that they will need in order to teach and lead effectively in classrooms that have Aboriginal students. An understanding of Aboriginal perspectives provides teacher education students and teachers with knowledge about the history, culture, and language of local Aboriginal peoples and strategies for sharing this knowledge with their students. Toulouse (2008) suggests that the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in Kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms “can help to foster engagement in the learning process through increased relevance to their own experiences and culture, leading to increased self-esteem and better learning outcomes” (p. 1). Beckford and Nahdee (2011) describe how for other students, Indigenous perspectives “extend and enrich the educational experience, provide intercultural knowledge and experiences and afford opportunities to explore and appreciate Aboriginal socio-cultural, economic and ecological contributions to Canadian society” (p. 1). To present Aboriginal knowledge and pedagogies in Canadian classrooms is in keeping with the multicultural makeup of Canadian classrooms (Dei, James, Karumanchey, James-Wilson, & Zine, 2000, as cited in Beckford & Nahdee, 2011). Dave Anderson, a faculty member in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, reminds us that traditional Anishinaabe learning requires that teaching and learning opportunities should “enable students to learn by watching, listening, and participating in meaningful opportunities, provide the foundation for students to become more confident in their learning and abilities” (2010, p. 3). He goes on to say

Teachers, who plan and provide integrated, wholistic learning opportunities, will enable all students to understand the concept of Weweni—doing well in the activities they are engaged in. . . . The concept of Weweni is an essential teaching for all students. Learning to be proud of their accomplishments and to understand the importance of doing things well encourages all students to continue learning in deeper meaningful ways. (2010, p.3)

The inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in Kindergarten to Grade 12 classrooms enhances the experience for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, both their learning and their understanding of their roles as learners.

Culturally appropriate instruction needs to be balanced with high expectations for students in order for students to achieve academically (Wagamese, 2008). Kenanow Bachelor of Education students, through their course work and through participation in programs such as *Into the Wild*, are provided with opportunities to enhance existing cultural understanding while they learn to teach from cultural frameworks that can create conditions that promote student learning and high levels of academic achievement. Kenanow Bachelor of Education students are preparing to be teachers who have an understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and who use pedagogies designed to create meaningful opportunities for classroom learning with Aboriginal students (Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds, & Williams, 2010).

2.5 Instruction

The working relationships in any school are varied and many. However, positive relationships may be more difficult to maintain in those schools where many of the students come from economically disadvantaged homes. Fortunately, in the research, practices have been identified that have been shown to be effective in mitigating the breakdown of relationships in those schools where many students are economically disadvantaged. After having reviewed the research on student achievement in schools that are adequately resourced, Hattie and Marzano concluded that the effectiveness of teachers rather than school as a whole is a more important factor in promoting academic achievement. Arguably, this is because those who teach in well-funded schools are not distracted by what they do not have and can, instead, focus their energies on teaching their students. The longer-term impact of teachers on student achievement is clear: “those with effective teachers experience considerable academic growth while those with ineffective teachers show much less growth and the cumulative effect over the years of students having ineffective teachers is profound” (Marzano, 2003, p. 73). Instructional strategies such as co-operative learning, land-based education, and other experiential approaches meet the “need for active processing on the part of students” and several studies support this conclusion (Marzano, 2007, p. 30). After having completed his extensive review of the literature, Hattie (2009) drew conclusions that are congruent with those articulated by Marzano. Both agree that student achievement is positively impacted by teacher-directed learning where students are encouraged to be engaged in the learning (Anderson, Greeno, Reder, & Simon, 2000; Anderson, Reder, & Simon, 1995, 1996; Bruer, 1993, 1997, as cited in Marzano, 2007, p. 31). Thus, effective teacher-directed learning may incorporate a range of approaches and strategies in order to ensure students are engaged in their learning. It can be cogently argued that all students could benefit from attending quality schools and by being taught by effective teachers.

Reflective practitioners have a high level of awareness of the interactive process of the relations within the classroom and adjust their behaviour in accordance with their reflections (Schon, 1987, as cited in Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012, p. 5). Education students in the Kenanow Bachelor

of Education program, through ongoing dialogue, journalling, and evaluating their practice, embrace the role of the teacher as a reflective practitioner. Whether it is in a practicum experience, service learning or experiential learning through participating in *Into the Wild*, pre-service teachers discuss, critically think and write about their experiences as they relate to the learning process. Reflective practitioners develop their expertise in teaching through repeated efforts to think about the impact of their teaching and then adapt their instruction to maximize learning (Moxley, Ericsson, Charness & Krampe, 2011; Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer, 1993, as cited in Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012, p. 5). As a matter of practice, effective teachers attend closely to teaching and learning relationships and enhance their conceptual understanding of teaching and learning to increase student learning (Ericsson, Roring, & Nandagopal, 2007, as cited in Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012, p. 7). Effective teachers attend to the ongoing student-teacher relationships and listen and weigh the ideas of colleagues or researchers regarding the teaching and learning process. Drawing upon the research, Marzano and Brown (2007, 2009) argue that effective teaching must address: “(1) classroom strategies and behaviors, (2) planning and preparing, (3) reflecting on teaching, and (4) collegiality and professionalism” (as cited in Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012, p. 19).

It has proven to be helpful to have small groups of prospective teachers or current teachers work together to create lessons, implement the lessons, analyze the impact of the lesson, and adapt the lesson for future delivery (Mast & Ginsburg, 2010, as cited in Marzano, Boogren, Heflebower, Kanold-McIntyre, & Pickering, 2012, pp. 8–9). In the Vancouver School District, Appreciative Inquiry was found to be an important tool in schools enabling members of school learning communities to redirect “thinking towards valuing the many, many things that are working well in our classrooms, every day, as we participate in an enthusiastic dialogue with students and colleagues about what engages and excites us in our learning” (Filleul & Rowland, 2006, p. 8). Appreciative Inquiry can draw students and other members of the learning community into dialogue with teachers (Martin & Calabrese, 2011). Along with other members of the school community, individual teachers or groups of teachers can share their learning with small groups or even with an entire school as a means to promote the teacher or school improvement process.

The learning styles of Aboriginal students are as diverse as those who belong to any other population. Despite this diversity of learning styles among Aboriginal students, there is evidence of recurring learning strengths or favoured tendencies among the Aboriginal student population; as such, these learning strengths or favoured tendencies, which are listed below, must be considered by educators when planning instruction:

1. Holistic more than analytic;
2. Visual more than verbal;
3. Oral more than written;

4. Practical more than theoretical;
5. Reflective more than trial-and-error;
6. Contextual more than decontextual;
7. Personally relational more than an impersonal acquisition of isolated facts and algorithms;
8. Experiential more than passive;
9. Oriented to storytelling sessions more than didactic sessions; and
10. Taking time to reflect more than quickly coming to an answer.

(Hughes, More, & Williams, 2004; Alaska Native Science Commission, 2009, as cited in Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 131).

Aikenhead and Michell (2011) argue that the learning strengths of individual Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students vary, but effective instruction is enhanced if there is an opportunity in learning situations for students to experience a range of approaches in order to ensure their individual learning strengths are incorporated into the learning situation. The facilitation of learning styles can encourage students to be engaged and to take responsibility not only for what they learn but for how they learn (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011).

In regard to the importance of Aboriginal content knowledge being embedded in the curriculum as a means of fostering greater educational success for Aboriginal students, Aikenhead and Michell (2011) cite the Canadian Council of Canada (2002) and McKinley (2007), noting that educators worldwide have concluded that “a key to improving enrolment and retention rates of Indigenous students is to offer enhanced science curriculum that recognizes Indigenous knowledge as foundation for understanding their place in the world” (p. 9). When discussions take place regarding Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum, the teaching of the sciences is often the focus because success in this curricular area for Aboriginal students is too often lacking (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). Sutherland and Tays (2004) report that culturally appropriate science lessons developed by Cree teachers in northern Manitoba yielded positive results (as cited in Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). An Aboriginal focus across the curriculum not only supports the creation of positive identities for Aboriginal children and youth but also offers a different perspective on ways of inhabiting this earth (Davis, 2009). Aboriginal ways of living in the world are to be place-based, reflect the multiplicity of relationships that exist between people and nature, and account for the purpose of behaviour, that is, survival (Aikenhead & Michell, 2011). By incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into instruction in all subject areas, Aboriginal students can locate themselves in their relationships, which can contribute to the formation of a positive identity.

Walton concluded from the survey results of Aboriginal high school students in Canada that these students wanted “teachers who were friendly, helpful, patient, humorous, communicative, and honest, fair and consistent” (Demmert, 2001, p. 22, as cited in Bell, 2004, p. 39). Further, Demmert summarizes effective teacher behaviours in this way: “a warm but demanding style of teaching, a readiness

to become involved in community activities and spend time with community members, and the willingness to learn about the differences between home and school cultures and to adapt their ways of teaching” (2001, p. 9, as cited in Bell, 2004, p. 39). In the same article, Demmert shares the conclusion that the research supports the view that the curriculum should reflect the language and culture of the broader community. The delivery of culture-based and place-based curriculum in schools would ensure that appropriate working relationships with families and communities would exist and more support be available for students (Demmert, 2001, as cited in Bell, 2004). According to the research, effective teachers in Aboriginal communities have high expectations of their students and relate well to the students, their families, and the community.

2.6 Culture-Based and Place-Based Education

Brian Lewthwaite from the University of Manitoba helps us understand the opportunities that exist for those teaching and learning experiences that are culture-based and place-based. Lewthwaite argues that the ecological context and community must be united with curriculum to produce meaningful learning for students. Teachers using culture-based and place-based approaches incorporate the local cultural and physical environments into the learning that they provide for their students. Students in culture-based and place-based learning situations can relate the curriculum to their daily lives. Lewthwaite elaborates on this:

In place-based and culture-based education the role of schooling is to provide a secure, nurturing environment that reflects the culture of the community and promotes the participation of educational staff, students, families and the community in making decisions about learning (Funder’s Forum of Environment and Education, 2001). Teaching is grounded in what students are familiar with; actualities rather than abstractions. It emerges from the particular characteristics of place. It draws from the unique characteristics and strengths of the community and, thus, does not lend itself to duplication or replication. It promotes the use of community resource people and is inherently experiential, drawing upon the opportunities provided by the local context and its people. Although the processes by which schools achieve their goals might be quite similar, their aspired and achieved goals might be quite different. The goals of place-based education are inherently focused on broad, life-long learning outcomes. (Lewthwaite, 2007, p. 5)

As students mature, the notion of community expands from local to far beyond their immediate physical and social location. Lewthwaite and his research partner, Barbara McMillan, further argue that “in every subject, including science, students should learn about history, knowledge, and traditions and practice values and beliefs in order to strengthen their education and enhance personal identity” (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2008, p. 13).

Velma, an Aboriginal school principal in Lewthwaite's study, demonstrates how school leaders in a community can lay the cultural foundation for effective instruction in an Aboriginal community through the following:

That's where I started. I needed the community to step up and help me develop that environment—so that the kids whether they are in the community, on the land or in the school—carry the same values and beliefs of who they are. That's where we started. We brought elders of the community from each of the cultural groups together to identify the distinct and subtle differences and similarities among the three cultures. We spent time talking about these and identifying the key principles we thought should be the foundation of the school based on the values of the cultures within the community. In the first year of my principalship we wanted to work towards establishing the foundations of the school based on these cultural values. This was going to become a school based on the cultural foundations of the community. These values and principles had to be the foundation of the school and their lives (Lewthwaite, 2007, p. 8).

Dr. Lewthwaite's work has provided guidance for the development and implementation of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program.

Using the teaching and learning of science as a focus, Dr. Gregory Cajete provides an overview of the processes that can be applied in the teaching of various subjects in a culturally meaningful manner. Cajete helps us understand some of the strategies for merging the Manitoba curriculum with the cultural and physical contexts of Aboriginal and northern Manitoba communities. Again using science as a focus, Cajete (1986) offers the following processes as a means for uniting the Manitoba curriculum with community:

1. Create a model of the scientific content by introducing students to how this content is communicated or used in Aboriginal culture. The curriculum model conveys "the presentation of the basic principles of general [Western] science by first introducing students to the ways in which these principles are communicated, utilized, or otherwise exemplified in Native American culture" (p. 210).
2. "Students are then presented with a comparison of these cultural examples with similar elements in Western science" (p. 210). The idea is "to illustrate that these principles are the result of the creative thought process and to establish this as a point of commonality between both cultural perspectives" (p. 211). Students should see the content of Western science as a result of creative thinking that is applicable in both cultures.
3. Review and apply the content in a number of different contexts.
"In every culture, science as a cultural system of thought is influenced and guided by the myth-making process. Indeed, science in modern society has itself become a major generator and molder of myth as modern science becomes a center of focus in modern life. The possibilities of using perspectives of myth to enhance the presentation of science concepts to Native American students are, therefore, unparalleled" (p. 236).
4. Storytelling and experiential learning strategies need to be applied extensively (pp. 237-241).

5. “Situational” learning contexts are more easily developed and applied when there is a specific interface between science and culture—“making science ‘real’ for students” (pp. 242–246). “Identification of science with the cultural identity of the student is a basic intent of this curriculum approach” (p. 242).
6. An integrated approach to learning within a relevant cultural context can enhance learning in a significant way (pp. 254–256).

Similar to Lewthwaite and MacMillan, Cajete provides a perspective that enables teachers to engage students in learning processes where learning outcomes identified in the Manitoba curricula are made meaningful for students by connecting curricula to the local community. Furthermore, Cajete offers the view that place plays a significant role in the creation of the culture that shapes us, and people have a significant impact on a constantly developing and evolving community (Cajete, 2000, as cited in Aikenhead & Michell, 2011).

2.7 Land-Based Activities and Experiential Learning

Hattie, Marsh, Neill, and Richards (1997) determined that land-based experiential learning not only has a positive impact on student outcomes but also continues to have an impact after formal schooling has ended. Through their review of 96 studies, the authors found that experiential learning has a positive effect on those student outcomes related to academics, leadership, self-concept, personality, and interpersonal skills (Hattie, 2009). The authors argue that students involved in outdoor education programs learn “about facing challenge, seeking feedback, adapting to peer cooperative learning, and enhanced self-regulation about one’s skills and strengths” and that this impact “seems to last beyond the experience in the outdoors” (Hattie, Brown, Keegan, 2005 as cited in Hattie, 2009, p. 609). Land-based experiential learning can have a positive impact on the personal growth of students and student achievement.

The literature supports the use of a variety of teaching strategies in order for students to meet the objectives of instruction. Upon reviewing the literature related to the successful instruction of American Aboriginal students, Rowland and Adkins (2007) found support for land-based and experiential learning. When problem solving and problem-based learning are used by trained teachers, there is a positive impact on student learning regarding problem-solving skills and the application of knowledge (Hattie, 2009). Student achievement was enhanced in laboratory experiences where students tackled issues that required the use of a variety of resources and involved critical thinking (Rubin, 1996 as cited in Hattie, 2009; Weinstein, Boulanger, & Walberg, 1982). Of further note, active learning in science using strategies such as collaborative learning, inquiry, manipulation, and instructional technology had a significant impact on achievement because students are afforded the opportunity to connect their interests to the instructional goals (Schroeder, Scott, Tolson, Huang, and Lee, 2007). When thematic instruction and process skills are emphasized, integrated curricula programs have shown

to be effective in elementary schools, especially for ethnically diverse students (Hartzler, 2000, as cited in Hattie, 2009, p. 593; Rowland and Atkins, 2003, as cited in Aikenhead & Michell, 2011, p. 137). Effective teachers learn to be adaptable in terms of their methodologies and, as such, use a variety of strategies to meet the learning outcomes in the Manitoba Education and Training curricula.

Service learning by teacher education students can be valuable for prospective teachers, teacher education programs, and schools. Education students gain experience in a variety of teaching situations and apply theory in these settings. Service learning experiences offer prospective students with opportunities for growth in “academics, social maturity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and leadership skills” (Meyer, Hofschire, & Billings, 2004, as cited in Schoenfeld, 2006, p. 1). As a form of experiential learning, students engaged in service learning appreciate and connect with the community (Schoenfeld, 2006). Fenzel and Dean note that service learning can enable prospective teachers to examine issues related to “racism, unequal access, and unearned privilege in education” (Hess, Lanig, & Vaughn, 2007; Ladson-Billings, 2006, as cited in Fenzel & Dean, 2011) and further point out the “positive effects that participating in service-learning in teacher education programs has on university students” (Buchanan, Correia, & Bleicher, 2010; Coner, 2010; Darling-Hammond & Hammerness, 2005; Wasserman, 2009, as cited in Fenzel & Dean, 2011; Fenzel & Dean, 2011, p. 21). Service learning for teacher education students provides opportunities for students to value “social action, awareness and justice education” (Kezar, 2005; Lewis, 2004, as cited in Bates, Drita, Allen, and McCandless, 2009, p. 6). Soukup (1999) reports that service learning in learning communities can refocus prospective teachers and correct “self-centredness” (as cited in Levitt & Schriehans, 2010, p. 278). Thus, teacher education students are better able to relate to the lives of their students and incorporate their understanding of the community into the curriculum (Boyle-Baise, 1998; Balswin & Rudisill, 2002; Donahue, 1999, as cited in Bates, Drita, Allen, & McCandless, 2009, p. 8).

2.8 Social Constructionism and Schools of Hope

Social constructionism as a perspective is not a new tradition that replaces existing traditions like democratic behaviour but is, instead, a dialogue that “stimulates or inspires within the world” (Gergen, 2003, p. 40). As the social constructionist position relates to education, it is possible through processes such as Appreciative Inquiry to create spaces or opportunities for dialogue in those schools where the school community can create and actualize a shared vision for the school path based on common understandings even though varied perspectives about school practices, policies, and governance continue to exist. When these dialogic spaces evolve into true learning communities with a school and its wider community, a sense of equity exists that, in turn, promotes continuous dialogue and inquiry. As such, an opportunity for the exercise of the democratic process based on relational responsibility is provided.

Social constructionism and the perspectives offered by Sergiovanni, Fullan, and Hullely and Dier enjoy a commonality that provides hope that all learners can experience success. Sergiovanni reminds us that schools can be communities of hope. In school, communities of hope are facilitated when networks of relationships act in a coordinated fashion and strive to achieve the agreed upon purposes of the school (Sergiovanni, 2004). These purposes focus on the ends of education such as student achievement and on “how humans evolve over time, especially in relation as to how they relate to each other” (Fullan, 2001, p. 14). Fullan labels these guiding purposes as the moral purpose of the school and argues that the moral purpose includes shared goals or ends and the fostering of positive relationships within the school. The shared optimism about the achievement of jointly held goals and the creation of supporting relationships is integral to communities of hope (Hullely and Dier, 2009).

Schools that are communities of hope could be described as follows: “Schools that make a difference for all children are wonderful places where hope fuels all activities and futures created. They combine strong character with strong competence to provide conditions and support to ensure all students learn and are successful in school” (Hullely & Dier, 2005, p. 2). Sergiovanni (2000) cautions that communities of hope require that the purposes of the school or lifeworld need to be the central focus of the school so that they may guide actions within the school community. In Sergiovanni’s view, the actions taken by members of the school community that are guided by rules, procedures, and policies are detrimental to the lifeworld unless complementary to the lifeworld. When school community members are not focused on the purposes of the school, it is possible for rules, procedures, and policies to become the centre or focus of the school. When this occurs, new possibilities for the school and its members are diminished.

Community schools can be communities of hope. If the lifeworld is at the centre of the school, students have access to a range of activities and receive the needed supports for their learning. While the rules, procedures, and policies governing school life are critical to the creation and maintenance of communities of hope, it must be stressed that those rules, procedures, and policies should be aligned with the lifeworld. In the main, parents and other family members want to participate in the education of their children. Schools should take steps to facilitate greater parental involvement in the education of their children by making school facilities such as gymnasiums, libraries, and computer labs accessible to parents and their children after school hours and even on weekends. Similarly, teachers and educational assistants should not only be supported by the provisions of their respective collective agreements but also by each other and school administrators in their efforts to grow professionally. If the rules, procedures, and policies predominate at a school, the activities and supports available to students and other members of the school community are determined by established and, arguably, rigid criteria. Rules, procedures, and policies need to be directed by the moral purpose of the school if the school is to be a community of hope.

Schools as communities of hope are co-created by the members of the school community. From a social constructionist perspective, members of the school community can form relationships that will be a “source of identity for parents, teachers, and students from which their school lives become meaningful” (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 4). Even among diverse populations where multiple identities of participants in school communities are acknowledged, school relationships enable members of school communities to go forward together in an environment of shared values and identity (Kymlicka, 1995). Compatible with the democratic process, school communities that foster communities of hope direct the actions within the school through “dialogue and discussion” (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 172).

The dialogue and discussion found in school communities and networks of educators can “change society, to create new ideas and practices, and therefore new futures” (Wheatley, 2001, p. 46). The creation of Habermas’s internal public space or Wheatley’s local community circles within schools and among networks of educators if harnessed has the power to transform educational practices in northern Manitoba (Herr & Anderson, 2005; Kihlstrom & Israel, 2002; Wheatley, 2001). McNamee (1988) assures us that the transformation of education through dialogue and discussion involves encountering ideas and possibilities that are incongruent with current realities and have the potential to alter existing ways of acting jointly. As Wheatley argues, “we need to create the conditions where we can think, where we can notice what’s going on, and where we can develop companions for the work that is required” (Wheatley, 2001, p. 47). In communities of hope, educational leaders accept the responsibility of ensuring that continuous inquiry and coordinated actions are focused on shared purposes. Continuous inquiry, using methodologies such as Appreciative Inquiry, facilitates the ongoing conversation within learning communities. The exercise of relational responsibility within the community of hope might well be augmented by Mary Gergen’s notion of relational appreciation where care and concern for the relational processes are evident within the learning community (McNamee & Gergen, 1999). In the same vein as Mary Gergen, Fullan tells us that we must not only use relational processes to achieve shared goals but also to attend to the people in the learning community. From the perspective of social constructionism, the transformation of education and the creation of communities of hope begin when the caring, dialogue, and inquiry start.

2.9 Funding Supports for Aboriginal and Northern Schools

Educational achievement is significantly lower for Aboriginal people than it is for the general population in Manitoba. The Canada West Foundation report (2001) “links on-reserve income with education levels, finding 75% of reserve residents earn less than \$20,000 per annum” and “education attainments for on-reserve residents are consistently lower than those for off-reserve residents in all age cohorts” (Bell, 2004, p. 12). The same report notes that the dropout rate for on-reserve students before Grade 9 is more than twice as high as for those living off-reserve (p. 8). This difference between southern students and Aboriginal and

northern students continues to be evident in the data compiled by Canada West Foundation (Bell, 2004). The following excerpt is taken from the application for funding submitted by Brandon University and its partner, University College of the North, to the Social Science and Humanities Research Council: “The crisis concerns all Canadians, as the number of Aboriginal children is rising and will comprise the largest proportion of school-aged children in the Territories, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba by 2017” (Statistics Canada, 2005 as cited in Brandon University and University College of the North, 2012). The significance of these demographic changes must be considered in relation to the continued disparity between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal students in the key educational indicators such as high school completion and participation in post-secondary education (CMEC, 2008). To 2006, of all the Aboriginal youth living on reserves in Manitoba, only 28 percent had completed high school (Canadian Council on Learning, 2009, p. 39, as cited in Brandon University, 2010). The lower levels of educational attainment among the Aboriginal population must be addressed.

Despite decades of study and discussion focused on Aboriginal education, northern and Aboriginal students, particularly those Aboriginal students living on reserves, have tended to grow up in families and learn in schools where only limited future expectations are implicitly or explicitly articulated. In those schools in desperate need of repair and lacking basic resources such as textbooks and computers, it is no wonder that teacher turnover is high. But in spite of these less than optimum conditions, these schools can be places of teaching and learning. In its report, the National Panel on First Nations Elementary and Secondary Education enumerated a number of shortcomings associated with Aboriginal education, including schools being in a state of disrepair, limited program offerings, and low teacher retention. In regard to the problem of teacher retention, the panel’s report cited an example where in a particular Grade 9 mathematics class all the students failed the course largely because they had been exposed to a number of teachers throughout the course’s duration (Moore, 2012). In one community, it was estimated that 100 of the 300 school-aged children and age-appropriate youth attended school (Rabson, 2011). The report further indicates that computers, libraries, and special education are extras, and schools only open on those days when the water system is functional (Galloway, 2012b). When limited educational supports for students exist, their success and future options are negatively impacted.

Even in instances of new and well-maintained schools, children and youth in many First Nations communities see, via the Internet, schools resourced in ways vastly superior to their own. Sergiovanni’s distinction between lifeworld and systemworld should be important in considering the direction and resourcing of schools as well the impact on student development. Sergiovanni borrows from Habermas in order to differentiate between those dimensions of the school that provide “culture, meaning and significance,” that is, the lifeworld, and the management system or systemworld (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 4). Sergiovanni argues quite persuasively that colonization is the domination of the lifeworld by the systemworld. In other words, issues about rules, procedures, or resources take precedence over the

purposes of the school as determined by the members of the school community (Sergiovanni, 2000). Colonized schools are more likely to have less money spent on them (Sergiovanni, 2000). Fullan (2006) further argues that the colonization of these schools “seriously underfunds the poor, it puts the schools in question in a position of perpetuating the problem. . . . Education reflects society’s priorities . . . low investment perpetuates the status quo of wide income differentials” (p. 71). Wilkinson goes on to argue that it is not necessarily the actual inequality that is destructive of relationships within the school community, but is instead the ineffective relational processes that occur when community members see themselves within the school community as “looked down on, having an inferior position in the social hierarchy, and subordination” (Fullan, 2006, p. 3–4). The school needs to be viewed as an extension of the community and only “one part of an individual’s education” (Fullan, 2006, p. 9). While struggling to offer hope for the members of the school’s community, ultimately these colonized schools will be further hamstrung by perceptions among community members that these schools are then part of the problem.

A concern related to sustainable funding does emerge from the document review. The many fine initiatives that provide additional supports and services for students are dependent upon stable funding. It is evident from the document reviews that many programs in provincial schools receive special funding from the province or fundraising through grant applications and other funding activities. While provincial schools struggle to continue to find funding for programs, our educational partners in First Nations communities have the same challenges coupled with less core funding (Iverson, 2014). As James Wilson, who was Director of Education with Opaskwayak Education Authority at the time, points out, “In Manitoba, the federal government transferred roughly \$6,300 per pupil to band councils in 2006/07. By comparison, provincial schools spent \$9,000 per student in 2004/05 according to Stats Can. . . . The discrepancies in funding translate into lower academic outcomes for First Nations students” (Iverson, 2008, p. 1). The growing seriousness of this issue for Aboriginal students is evident from the following:

There are more than 21,000 school-aged children living on reserves in Manitoba. If current education trends hold true, roughly 7 in 10 of them will never graduate from high school. Most will bump along through a system that is underfunded and unregulated and drop out or be forced out long before they get to grade 12. (Rabson, 2011, p. 1)

The funding situation for reserve schools is worsened when First Nations students either through choice or necessity attend provincially funded schools. Because the tuition for these students is paid by their band, bands are required to “dip into education funding for other priorities such as health care or housing” (Rabson, 2011, p. 3). With respect to First Nations schools and provincial schools requiring additional supports and services for their students, Brownell, Roos, MacWilliam, Leclair, Ekuma, and Fransoo point out that “over 60 peer-reviewed studies have shown a strong positive relationship between school funding and student performance (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996)” (2010, p. 825). The research also

suggests that in order to positively affect student success, extra funding should be targeted on those resources and programs that are designed to promote student success (Hattie, 2009). Educators in northern Manitoba in provincial and First Nations schools have demonstrated that they can provide effective learning in classrooms and provide appropriate additional supports and services. However, accessing the sustained funding that supports teaching and learning for all students is a constant challenge.

It is evident that schools in northern Manitoba require that teachers constantly strive to be more effective, and that a school's resources provide the needed supports for students, staff, families, and the community. The effective school must also be able to pay its teachers and possess current resources, including appropriate technologies. Moreover, recommendations from The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report, *Gathering Strength, Volume 3*, (Canada, 1996) underscores the lack of financial resources that are allocated to the education of northern and Aboriginal people. Arguably, in order for northern and Aboriginal students to participate in those educational experiences that will create preferred futures for them, educational funding should be increased.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 The Social Constructionist Lens and Education: Creating and Maintaining Inclusive Education in Schools

From the social constructionist lens, dialogue is at the heart of the theory of change. Through dialogue, participants in a social situation co-create meaning about what exists and what can be created through joint action. In an inclusive classroom, the student, teacher, and educational assistant believe that the student can learn and progress. The teacher is an effective instructor, and the educational assistant supports teaching and learning in the classroom. Students, teachers, and educational assistants are talking and listening to each other on a continuous basis. Within the inclusive school, the students, teachers, administrators, parents, and support staff believe that all will be able to grow in a caring environment and that shared purposes are apparent through a common vision. School leaders have a unique responsibility to engage members of the school community to participate in the leadership of the school and ensure that the school is moving toward fulfilling the common goals. There are venues for both formal discussions about the progress of the school and informal, ongoing opportunities for members of the school community to communicate with each other. With their shared beliefs as a guide, members of the school community are collaborating to create their jointly held vision. At the school district level, district personnel share the beliefs held by the members of their respective school communities. They facilitate the implementation of inclusive practices through district planning and policy, leadership development, inquiry and research, and allocation of resources. District personnel seek to engage members of the school communities and the broader communities in discussions regarding their common vision. Given a broad and ongoing commitment to examination and renewal of the vision, continuous dialogue within the district leads to the emergence of shared ways of proceeding jointly in order for all members of the school community to thrive and together create more schools that are harbours of hope.

Appreciative Inquiry is best understood in terms of its two main elements, *Appreciative* and *Inquiry*. *Appreciative* encompasses the aspects of organizational life that move relationships toward further growth that should be replicated in order to create more of these positive forces. *Inquiry* refers to the questioning of selected aspects of community or organizational life (Watkins & Mohr, 2001). Appreciative Inquiry enables members of an organization or any social group to question what will enhance the relationships within the social group. Appreciative Inquiry provides a process for co-creating the change that stems from questioning.

But in the end, Ms. Tolley said, "I hope that every first-nations child in Canada will receive the same equal opportunity to realize their dreams and pursue their post-secondary education" (Galloway, 2011b, p. 1).

3.2 Collaborative Inquiry with Schools, School Systems, and Educational Partners: Participatory Action Research, Social Constructionism, and Transformation in Northern Manitoba

For the constructionist, our actions are not constrained by anything traditionally accepted as true, rational, or right. Standing before us is a vast spectrum of possibility, an endless invitation to innovation. . . . As we speak together, listen to new voices, raise questions, ponder alternative metaphors, and play at the edges of reason, we cross the threshold into new worlds of meaning. The future is ours—together—to create. (Gergen & Gergen, 2008, p. 12)

Participatory action research, which is consistent with social constructionism, is a form of collaborative inquiry that enables the researcher to engage with others through the process of discovery and to co-create preferred futures. The methodologies used throughout this study enable the researcher to function as a participant observer in order to more clearly appreciate the perspectives of the other participants and formulate the observations in a meaningful way (Wilson, 2008). The paradigm for participatory action research articulated by Heron and Reason (1997) takes the view that consideration must be given to ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology in the research process. The participatory inquiry paradigm was selected because it facilitates and documents multiple voices, collaborative action, and change within the community.

The research process should address questions regarding ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. First, ontology is the understanding of what exists and what we know with respect to the nature of reality. The ontological question has been stated as, “What is the form and nature of reality, and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?” (Heron and Reason, 1997, p. 2). The ontological question specific to this project might be, “What shared perspectives and values exist about education, schools, and communities?”

Second, epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge and often focuses on the relationship between the knower and researcher and what can be known. The epistemological question is, “What is the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?” (Heron and Reason, 1997, p. 2). With respect to what we know, Gergen states that knowledge should be viewed “as an outcome of relational processes” (Gergen, 2009b, p. 204). What we “know” is co-created through relationships, in which we use language to engage in dialogue to create meanings about the world.

Third, methodology refers to a framework for proceeding to explore issues under study. The methodological question has been stated as, “How can the inquirer . . . go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known about?” (Heron and Reason, 1997, p. 2). The methodological question in our study might be used to determine if there are working relationships that support open and sustained

dialogue among the school and school district communities, educational and community partners, and the researcher.

Finally, Heron and Reason raise the issue of axiology or what the relevant individuals, groups, or communities consider worth pursuing and knowing. Heron and Reason refer to this as the participatory question, and the question is, “What is intrinsically worthwhile and what . . . is [it] about the human condition that is valuable as an end in itself?” (Heron and Reason, 1997, p. 2). In this work, the specific question might be, “What shared core values do the educational partners have, and based on these core values, what goals or ends should be sought throughout this study?” Answering this question will lead to consideration of how these shared, core values relate to the provision of inclusive education, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, and the good life.

This project employs participatory action research to enhance the capacity of schools and their school systems. For example, Appreciative Inquiry empowers the researchers to enmesh themselves within the organization as participant observers. As a mode of study, Appreciative Inquiry provides a framework for community research that it is not only respectful of communities and their members but also respectful of their aspirations as well. Through their participation in inquiry processes, including Appreciative Inquiry, interviews, and collaborative teams, members of school communities, the educational partners, and the researcher identify change processes in the schools. Given the pronounced social inequality in northern Manitoba, action research is an appropriate research methodology according to Fals-Borda since it “emphasizes the acquisition of serious and reliable knowledge on which to construct power, or countervailing power, for the poor, oppressed and exploited groups and social classes” (as cited in Gergen, 2009a, p. 75). Action research facilitates the use of collaborative inquiries as a means of identifying the change processes.

3.3 Research Study Procedures

This research study embodies a collaborative inquiry with school and school district communities, University College of the North Kenanow Faculty of Education program, and other educational partners. The study uses participatory action research, including appreciative interviews and Appreciative Inquiry Summits to conduct structured dialogue about collaborative action in the schools. Collaborative committee meetings have included members of school communities, other educational partners, and the researcher. The identified schools have participated in collaborative inquiries in which Appreciative Inquiry Summits were used to discuss collaborative activity, inclusivity, and opportunities for further collaboration. Additional information about each of the initiatives has been supplemented by interview data, documentary evidence, and participant observation. Collaborative teams emerged during the research process and offered direction for further steps, including additional Appreciative Inquiry Summits or appreciative approaches.

Appreciative Inquiry Summits were held in schools to provide an opportunity for the local community to create a direction for collaborative activities within the school. The Appreciative Inquiry Summits consisted of sessions with stakeholders who worked through the discovery, dream design, and destiny stages of the Appreciative Inquiry process. As a result of commitments made to Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School in September 2011, the initial school sessions that used Appreciative Inquiry Summits commenced in February 2012. I conducted separate inquiry sessions at Kelsey Community School on February 17, 2012, and Mary Duncan School on March 16, 2012.

The research process, as articulated, was selected because it provides an opportunity for meaningful contributions from participants on an ongoing basis. The participants in participatory action research play a meaningful role in all phases of the research process. Since this was a collaborative undertaking, I recognized that the research would likely lead us to issues and discussions that I did not anticipate. Similarly, I have been open to other forms of inquiry suggested by participants. Finally, I have been conscious of the need to adhere to the principles outlined in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, Chapter 9: Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples (Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics, 2008). As I worked with different communities in northern Manitoba, I was respectful of the principles embodied in the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* and as they apply to each community. As the research unfolds, I am hopeful that open communication between participants and myself is sustained (Gergen, Chrisler, & LoCiero, 1999).

Study Participants

The study has engaged a representative sample of members of the collaborative inquiries previously identified. Those who participated in the Appreciative Inquiry Summits and collaborative teams are staff members from two schools in the region. In the project, I have, as the researcher, conducted interviews and focus group meetings with Elders, school superintendents, teachers, support staff, school administrators, Kenanow Bachelor of Education students and faculty members, students, community members, and researchers. I have conducted 24 interviews along with three focus group meetings to review the validity of the tentative conclusions that I drew from the study (Herr and Anderson, 2005). Participants had the project explained in ordinary language, and participants indicated their consent by signing an informed consent letter prior to the initiation of research activities. In situations where it was culturally inappropriate to request participants to sign the letter of consent, they instead provided verbal consent once the project was clearly explained to them.

Collaborative Inquiry: Appreciative Inquiry, Interviews, and Collaborative Teams and Record Review

Appreciative Inquiry offers a framework for educational partners to consider their strengths and to anticipate new opportunities for inclusive education. The Appreciative Inquiry model envisions leaders using four stages in order to promote change. While the four *Ds*—discovery, dream, design, and destiny—provide the framework for Appreciative Inquiry, the approach

involves collaborative inquiry, based on interviews and affirmative questioning, to collect and celebrate good news stories of a community—those stories that enhance cultural identity, spirit and vision. . . . Local people can use their understanding of the “best of what is” to construct a vision of what their community might be. (Dhar, 2009, p. 227)

Collaborative inquiry was used to determine the nature of the collaboration between educational partners and to gauge its impact on inclusivity in northern schools. Appreciative Inquiry, a form of collaborative inquiry, served to connect the members of the school’s learning community and, as such, was instrumental in creating a shared vision or purpose in the learning community. Using Appreciative Inquiry as a research strategy is effective in many northern Manitoba communities because of its congruence with Cree sharing and learning circles (Hart, 2002). Similarly, the Appreciative Inquiry process uses storytelling, which is integral to and consistent with the transmission of Indigenous knowledge. Participants can share their experiences within the context that they find themselves (Wilson, 2008). The unifying and circular nature of Appreciative Inquiry, which promotes communication and the sharing of ideas by all, is consistent with the value attached by Aboriginal people to multi-vocality and to viewing their reality, including the environment in which they live, in a holistic fashion (Wilson, 2008). Regarding linking the present with the past and the future, the procedures that are integral to Appreciative Inquiry are congruent with an Aboriginal knowledge framework that conceptualizes time in terms of generational relationships (Neff, 2014). As a dialectical process, the past is honoured and linked to the present, which allows a new synthesis grounded in shared perspectives to emerge (Wilson, 2008). Through the evolving teacher education program, professional development with teachers, and leadership practices, employing Appreciative Inquiry can facilitate sustainable change for members of educational systems.

In addition to Appreciative Inquiry Summits and a review of records, mandates, and regulatory issues, I have outlined the themes that emerged from the research as a means to describe education in northern Manitoba schools. I have drawn from the relationships that I have with a variety of educational partners but am telling the stories that have arisen from the perspectives of the partners. The varied voices evident in this project come from interviews, articles, websites, and other public sources. Wilson reminds us about the importance of including many different voices when he includes the conversations of his research partners, one of whom explains that multiple viewpoints represent different vantage points and create

“a bigger picture” (Wilson, 2008, p. 112). In part, these voices reflect the generative relationships that guide both the collaborative activities involved in the development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and the efforts to create schools that are more inclusive so that the preferred futures for members of school communities in northern Manitoba can be actualized.

Collaborative Teams

In terms of the research process, collaborative teams might be considered as a form of focus group. Focus groups have historically been used in social sciences to gather opinions about topics suggested by the researcher. Focus groups have provided opportunities for identified groups to engage in dialogue and explore multiple viewpoints about the topic at hand. Focus groups can empower the participants to explore the topic in a manner consistent with a frame of reference meaningful to participants (Bagnoli & Clark, 2010). The collaborative teams that I have observed appear to have the same benefits as focus groups. Collaborative teams comprising like-minded people meet on a regular basis to discuss either a mutually agreed upon topic or dialogue in a less formal, more spontaneous fashion, exploring new possibilities. Because of the enthusiasm that is generated through dialogue and discussion, the existence of collaborative teams offers a means by which positive change can be facilitated.

Appreciative Interviews: Stories of Existing and Possible Relationships in Schools and School Districts

The interview questions were developed and organized in a manner that was designed to elicit from each of the participants their understanding of their experiences. The interview questions have been organized to explore evidence of positive educational experiences for participants in each of the initiatives under study. These positive experiences are probed through the use of the four Ds—discovery, dream, design, and destiny. A provocative proposition regarding possibilities for more inclusive education in northern Manitoba was a guide in developing and organizing the interview questions (Browne & Jain, 2002). Consideration was given to Hornstrup, Leohr-Peterson, Madsen, Johnansen, and Jensen (2012) in the creation of the interview questions. These appreciative interviews enabled participants in the initiatives to tell the stories about what is best about their situations and the implications that their stories have for the advancement of inclusive educational practices in northern Manitoba.

Participant Observation

I had a specified role to play in each of the collaborative inquiries. I shared reflections about each of the collaborative inquiries as they relate to the overall theme of inclusive education. I then commented on the physical setting, participants, activities, interactions, and conversations along with my role as the researcher (Merriam, 2009). As a member of these educational organizations that participated in the research with a clear understanding of my self-declared research interests, I continued to function as a participant while taking steps to ensure that my observations were complementary to the role of participant in the educational activities (Merriam, 2009). As previously noted, I outlined my positions or relationships as they relate to the educational partners who participated in the research. Field notes were kept until the data collection phase in this project was completed (Merriam, 2009). In regard to my role as a participant observer, I made every effort to conduct myself in a manner that was no more obtrusive than my typical day-to-day interactions with the participants.

Document Review

In addition to Appreciative Inquiry Summits, interview results, and researcher observations, a review of the following documents occurred in the data collection:

- school, division, and education authority documents, including committee minutes, and behaviour and achievement data
- Statistics Canada data
- University College of the North documents
- public documents, including ones from Manitoba Education and Training and news media, such as photographs, community circles, and steering committee minutes

Data Collection

I used a digital recorder to record the interviews and then used software to transfer the recorded interviews to my laptop so that they could be more easily analyzed. *Nvivo 10* was the software that I used to analyze the data gleaned from the interviews. I used chart paper to record the results of the Appreciative Inquiry process. I kept field notes and integrated the data from documents previously identified into the findings. The data was stored electronically on my computer, and the data has been backed up on a flash drive that was secured in a locked filing cabinet. The interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription service, and the identities of the interviewees were withheld.

3.4 Conclusions

In the chapters outlining the research findings for each initiative, I have summarized the research data and offered tentative conclusions about the meaning of the data. The interview excerpts have been edited in order to preserve the meanings imparted by each of the individual participants, to conceal the identities of the participants, and to tell coherent stories that reflected the experiences that they shared with the researcher. As well, the participants in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 have been identified only in accordance with their affiliation with one or more of the collaborative inquiries as means of creating composite participants. In these later chapters, the participants' stories are interwoven with other data sources including researcher observations and are presented in the form of summaries of the composite participants (Merriam, 2009). The composite constructions were used primarily to preserve confidentiality while maintaining, "the 'essence' of the experience" (Cresswell, 2007, p. 159). The data used to create the composite participant perspectives is organized in accordance with the following affiliations: Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; and Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013; Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013; *Into the Wild* Interview Participants, 2013; and *Teaching and Learning Together*, 2013. I met with focus groups composed of participants involved in the research study to review the meaning that I had attributed to the data. During these conversations, each participant had the opportunity to comment on my tentative conclusions and provide feedback. I revised the conclusions that I had drawn from the data based on the feedback provided by the participants. In addition to establishing a shared understanding of the research, I hoped that the conversation would generate topics for further discussion and new possibilities for joint action (McNamee, 1988).

Through the research process, I hoped to determine the extent to which there is active collaboration between the educational partners. The four collaborative inquiries were vehicles by which to determine if there was evidence of the collaborative practices needed to enhance inclusive education. By using participatory action research, a variety of strategies, including Appreciative Inquiry, interviews, participant observation, and document review, have been employed to ensure that the research reflects the existence of collaboration between the educational partners.

CHAPTER 4: COLLABORATIVE INQUIRIES: KELSEY SCHOOL DIVISION AND MARY DUNCAN SCHOOL

4.1 Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School

Kelsey Community School is an Early Years school where students from Kindergarten through Grade 5 are educated. There is a high incidence of single-parent homes, transience in the student population, self-identified Aboriginal identity, and low family income (Kelsey Community School Special Area Group Presentation, 2008). Having established that the socio-economic level of the school population was among the lowest in the province, Kelsey Community School was designated as a community school by Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth in 2006 (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Aboriginal Education Directorate, n.d.). Many of the children and youth attending Kelsey Community School have family members who attend Mary Duncan Alternative School. Kelsey Community School also has significant community partnerships that provide additional supports for students and their families.

Peak attendance at Mary Duncan School in the three alternative programs was about 280 students. Mary Duncan offers three alternative education programs: Great Expectations for Middle Years students, PACE Senior Years, and for adult learners, the Kelsey Learning Centre. For many students at Mary Duncan School, the completion of high school enables them to escape a cycle of violence and poverty. Some students are single parents while many more are part of single-parent families where only 66 percent of parents have a high school diploma (Manych, 2013; Manych, 2014). The student population is notably Aboriginal and many come from families that are economically disadvantaged (Manych, 2013). There are currently a large number of active community partnerships, including University College of the North, that collaborate with Mary Duncan School.

"[W]e have to know the context. Beyond everything else, there is still a context of poverty."

— Heather Hunter, director of the Manitoba Education Research Network
(Paul, 2011)

In terms of architectural design, Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School are similar to most other brick schools that were built during the 1950s and 1960s in northern Manitoba. But upon stepping inside either school, one immediately realizes that these schools are very special places for students. Kelsey Community School has hallway walls painted bright blue and yellow. The vibrancy of the walls is matched by the smiling faces of the students and staff. Upon entering the interior of Mary Duncan School, one's attention is immediately captured by the equally colourful collages and symbols of success that decorate the walls. Throughout the school, the friendliness of all is notable but the staff members, in particular, are extremely welcoming. The physical environment and social atmosphere inside the school walls is a stark contrast to the building's drab exterior.

A walk through Kelsey Community School reveals a school community that is actively engaged. Hungry students eat breakfast, lunch, or a healthy snack. Older students can be seen reading to younger students while other students return to the school after having completed their traffic patrol duties. During school hours or in the evening, students are given the opportunity to learn about hoop dancing or Aboriginal art. Parents and children frequently gather in the family room, the gym, or the library where shared activities are enjoyed by all.

Students can be found in a classroom or out in the community with their teachers and classmates. Students are taught by a variety of individuals, including their teachers, fellow students, community guests, experts, and Elders. Those students who participate in drumming perform at school functions, outside the town hall, and at the Rotary District Conference, which was held in The Pas in 2013. At the school's Christmas store, students looking to purchase a gift for family members or friends could do so for 25 cents. It is not unusual for students, their families, and school staff to have shared a conversation or a meal at the annual Christmas feast or a school picnic. As visitors make their way out of the school and reflect on their experience there, the line from the school's yearly slide show, "It Is Your Time to Shine," may stick in their minds (Kelsey Community School, n.d.; Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013).

At Mary Duncan School, with its students ranging from elementary school-aged children to senior citizens, the activity at the school immediately strikes visitors.

On the school grounds, students and staff during the summer months planted and maintained school gardens, and during the colder months, especially February when Trappers' Festival takes place, they worked together to create ice sculptures. One who has an understanding of at-risk populations will notice that many of the students are not only present but are also constructively engaged. Rapport is made evident by the warm communication between staff and students that can be observed in the school's halls and classrooms. At Mary Duncan School, students have participated in a wide and varied array of activities including school feasts, Trappers' Festival activities, intramurals, and snowshoeing and hiking in the Clearwater Lake area. Some students have created and presented completed touch quilts for senior citizens with Alzheimer's disease while others have been involved in a Native Studies project called Moccasins for Mary where they learn the art of making moccasins. Staff members along with community partners have met for the purpose of creating a tablet project funded through the Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) project to boost student engagement in literacy and numeracy. Students have been at the airport waiting to greet a planeload of exchange students from Ontario, who were billeted with local students. High school graduation day at Mary Duncan School is a very moving event because the graduates along with their families, teachers, support staff, and members of the community gather to celebrate the achievements of the graduates. Anyone who has visited Mary Duncan School would almost certainly leave the school

with the impression that the school community has lived the school's motto, *Per ardua ad augusta*, or "Through hard work comes greatness" (Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013).

4.2 Discussion of Interviews and Appreciative Inquiry Summit Data: Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School

There was a high degree of congruency between the data that was gathered through interviews and that gathered from the Appreciative Inquiry Summit that took place at Kelsey Community School. The evidence suggested that there was a presence of an asset-based approach and of multiple experiences both of which promote and support the development of student identity, high levels of caring and trust, inclusion of all students in the learning process, shared leadership, linking learning to the community, and a highly collaborative learning community within the school. Despite the strong partnerships with families and the community, additional resources are needed to enhance current school programming. The results of the interviews indicated struggles to maximize the usage of the existing funding and acquire additional funding in order to ensure appropriate programming continues to exist. While consistent with the interview data, the findings from the Appreciative Inquiry Summit with Kelsey Community School teachers showed a strong commitment to continual professional growth and to persevering in the teaching and learning process. The interview results were highly consistent with the results of the Appreciative Inquiry Summit (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013).

As was the case with the Kelsey Community School, there was also a high level of consistency between data gathered from the Mary Duncan School interviews and from the Appreciative Inquiry Summit. Quite evident in both sets of data were the following themes: caring, trust, and mutual respect; learner-centred approach; connecting learning to the community; shared leadership for jointly held goals; continual dialogue, collaboration, and creation of learning communities; strong partnerships with families and the community; and the struggle to obtain and maintain sustained funding for programming. While the interviews highlighted the efforts to maintain consistent funding levels, the Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit focused on the ways by which greater collaboration within the school and the greater education community could be facilitated as a means of improving literacy and numeracy and counselling programs. Similar to Kelsey Community School, this Appreciative Inquiry Summit revealed a very clear desire to continue to demonstrate caring and mutual respect for students and to ensure that there is a supportive environment for staff members. A high level of congruency of the themes between the interview data and the Appreciative Inquiry Summit data was quite apparent (Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013).

4.3 The Inclusive School: Lessons from Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School

A good school attracts and retains support staff, teachers, and administrators. Staff members feel that the school is a comfortable and safe place. The staff members are actively involved at the school and have a clear voice in the school. There are shared dreams and a common vision for the future, and while staff members are team players, individual differences among staff members are respected. The vision is subject to change over time as the school evolves, but, in order to alter the existing vision, time must be allocated on a regular basis so that staff members are provided with the opportunity through dialogue to articulate their points of view. School staff members, especially teachers and principals, strive to improve their practices through ongoing dialogue, creating collaborative teams, and professional development. The school develops many partnerships, including with Elders, social services, and community groups, to ensure that the needs of students and their families can be met at the school. The characteristics of an inclusive school outlined above proved to aptly describe Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School. (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013).

Community members associated with Kelsey Community School and those associated with Mary Duncan School have established jointly held goals for their schools. The Kelsey Community School Priorities were as follows:

2012-13 Priorities

Aboriginal Programming—Cultural awareness activities, increased Aboriginal resources in the library, pilot Grade level Treaty Education.

Assessment—PM Benchmark Reading Levels, Observation Surveys, Schonell Spelling Continuum, Writing Continuum, Number & Subtraction tests.

Sustainability—Water Festival, Green Committee, Recycling, Garden Project.

Appropriate Programming—Programming to meet needs of students in Mathematics and Language Arts, Proactive Attendance.

(Kelsey School Division, 2013, p. 14)

Similarly, Mary Duncan School also has identified shared priorities for the school:

2012–13 Priorities

Night Hawks, PACE & Great Expectations Programs—Middle Years and Senior Years programs were implemented to increase graduation rates, improve literacy and numeracy for all students. A Student Referral System and Credit Recovery program were developed and implemented in order to improve attendance and student success.

Assessment Practices in conjunction with Department and Board Policies—Professional development in current assessment practices.

Community Perceptions of the School—Variety of initiatives including Duke of Edinburgh, Afterschool Program, Moccasins for Mary Project, Tile Project, School Garden Network, Extracurricular sports, Team Uniforms, Community Nights.

(Kelsey School Division, 2013, p. 18)

Each school had identified goals specific to its school community, and the goals supported teacher growth, student engagement and achievement, and connections to the community. In keeping with Manitoba Education and Training's multi-year school planning cycle, Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School altered the goals in their respective school plans because existing goals had been achieved while new ones have been identified (Manitoba Education, n.d.).

Students were given many opportunities to develop their gifts, and, because of this, the students increasingly accepted responsibility. Academic supports were developed and made available to students as needed. There were opportunities for students to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities. Encouraged and supported by school staff, students were given a voice in the school. Even when problems within the community and at home existed, students felt safe at school and had a sense of belonging. There were clear expectations set for students, and discipline was viewed as an opportunity for students to restore the relationships within the school. There was a commitment to have all students develop a positive identity regardless of gender, ethnicity, race, or socio-economic status. The celebration of a student's background through varied school experiences contributed toward the development of a student's positive identity (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013).

Students at Kelsey Community School have developed as learners at the school through the efforts of the staff members. A review of *Study of Early Literacy Achievement Kelsey School Literacy Plan* (Hnidy & Jones, 2014) illustrated a pattern of growth in literacy acquisition among Early Years students at Kelsey Community School. While individual student growth rates were uneven, the achievement data suggested a pattern of pervasive growth to literacy existed throughout the general student population. Indicators of student success were established at the school, and

the range of interventions used to support student success and their efficacies were identified and gauged. There were established indicators of success for students at the school and for the range and usefulness of the interventions that support the success. (Kelsey Community School, 2008). General improvements in attendance and discipline were indicated, and notable academic growth was realized by many Kelsey Community School students due, in part, to instructional interventions such as the project classroom (Kelsey Community School, 2008).

As with all schools in the Kelsey School Division, the priorities of Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School were congruent with the overall direction of the division. The mission statement of the division states, “We strive to be a respectful and enthusiastic school community, dedicated to quality education for all” (Kelsey School Division, 2013, p. 1). In keeping with the mission statement, the division “continues to focus on Professional Development on working with students of all ability levels. The professional development focuses on differentiated instruction, common reading and math training, and proper assessment tools” (Kelsey School Division, 2012, p. 2). As a result of these continuing efforts, there has been a 12 percent increase in the high school graduation rate (Kelsey School Division, 2013, p. 3).

Both Mary Duncan School and Kelsey Community School offered to their students an array of additional learning supports. At Kelsey Community School, in addition to those supports, the school, in an effort to enrich the lives and learning of the students, offered over 50 different events, learning experiences, activities, and clubs, most of which were featured in their 2013/2014 year-end slide show. Being a community school, Kelsey Community School is reliant on support from the community. In its 2013/2014 year-end slide show, Kelsey Community School identified approximately 30 community supports that provided services, programming, and funding. These community supports helped to maximize the learning opportunities for all students. The breakfast programs offered at both schools serve as an example of the commitment that both schools have made to meet the needs of students. At times, Kelsey Community School has served over 300 breakfasts a month to its young students (Kelsey Community School, 2008). With approximately 200 students on average registered annually at Mary Duncan School, the following number of breakfasts was provided to students during the three school years:

Table 1	BREAKFAST AT MARY DUNCAN SCHOOL
Year	No. of Breakfasts Served
2011/12	4,255
2012/13	3,288
2013/14	3,496

(Manyach, 2014)

Because there is no core funding for the breakfast program, staff members at Mary Duncan School have gained funding for it by accessing grants and soliciting support from local service groups. Mary Duncan School has provided all Middle Years students in the school access to tablets, which was made possible through the school's involvement in a research project with Brandon University and UCN. Through this project, 21 Middle Years students were actively engaged in literacy and numeracy learning using mobile technology (Kelsey School Division, 2013, p. 15). The attendance at Mary Duncan School has continued to rise as the following illustrates:

Table 2	ATTENDANCE SUMMARY, 2008–2012, MARY DUNCAN SCHOOL
Academic Year	Attendance as a Percentage
2008/09	43
2009/10	65
2010/11	67
2011/12	77

(Manych, 2013)

The perspective from a Mary Duncan School student captures the importance of the supports that students experience:

[In] the past my experience in school has not been great. . . . I just stopped going. . . . Mary Duncan's Nighthawks program has helped me because I now attend school regularly, and it has helped me get individualized learning and understanding. . . . I now plan on graduating school and I want to get further education beyond grade 12. I would like to go to college and get a good job.
(Manych, 2013)

In recognition of their support for all students, the staff members at Mary Duncan were presented a Spirit of the Earth Award in 2011. This award is presented to individuals and organizations that demonstrate an appreciation of Aboriginal culture and the environment in which they live (Spirit of the Earth Awards, 2011). School and divisional documents confirmed the conclusion that student development is supported in a comprehensive fashion by the school communities at both Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School.

Although many students had significant challenges, the practices followed in Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School have enabled educators to connect with their students and families and to support their students. The data concerning Mary Duncan School indicated that students require and use available supports and, as such, feel attached to the school. The 2012 *Youth Health Survey Report Mary Duncan School Grade 7 to 12* showed that 63 percent of the students at Mary Duncan School reported on their surveys that they had felt sad or hopeless during the

12 months that proceeded the date on which the survey was completed, and only 54 percent of students who responded to the survey's questions were deemed to have an acceptable level of mental health (Northern Health Region, Cancer Care Manitoba, Action Cancer Manitoba, and Partners for Healthy Living, 2012b, p. 17). Student usage levels of counselling and medical services were found in the data regarding student appointments and referrals kept by Mary Duncan School staff members during the 2011/12, 2012/13, and 2013/14 school years (Manych, 2014):

Table 3	MARY DUNCAN SCHOOL APPOINTMENTS AND REFERRALS
Services	Number of Appointments/Referrals
Alcohol Foundation of Manitoba	276
Post-Secondary Counselling	265
Public Health Nurse/Mental Health Services	199

The suicide rate in the area served by the Northern Regional Health Authority, which was twice the provincial average that spanned the 2002–2006 period, indicated how important it is for students to have access to the counselling services at Mary Duncan School. From 2007 through 2011, the suicide rate in northern Manitoba continued to grow and outpace the provincial average (Fransoo, Martens, The Need To Know Team, Prior, Burchill, Koseva, & Allegro, 2013, p. 65). Without Mary Duncan School taking steps to ensure that counselling services were available, students may not otherwise have sought access to counselling services found at other community venues. Under such circumstances, students may have been more inclined to attempt to take their own lives.

The *Youth Health Survey Report Mary Duncan School Grade 7 to 12* further suggested that Mary Duncan School students do form positive relationships within the school and that there was a caring, helpful environment:

Table 4	MARY DUNCAN SCHOOL STUDENT PERCEPTIONS
Statement	Percentage of Students in Agreement
Part of this school	87
Happy at this school	94
Feel Safe at this school	100
Feel Safe in the community	83
School Adults care	84
Adult who I trust	77
Help – counsellor/adult	83

(2012b, p. 14)

Despite being an alternative school, the above agreement response rates from students in each category exceeded the agreement response rates for all schools in the Kelsey School Division (Northern Health Region, Cancer Care Manitoba, Action Cancer Manitoba, and Partners for Healthy Living, 2012a, p. 14). In the words of a Mary Duncan School student, “Mary Duncan School has more opportunities, smiles, greetings, more upbeat,” and “I fit in. Everybody is so nice” (Manych, 2013). Overwhelmingly, students at Mary Duncan School believed that people cared and would be helpful, and students accepted support from these members of the school staff.

Students developed positive relationships within and outside the school, demonstrated personal growth, and achieved academically. School-wide events, including graduation ceremonies and feasts, were family, community, and school celebrations. At Kelsey Community School’s annual Christmas feast, between 800 and 900 individuals, including students, staff, family, and community members, attend each year (McKay, 2014). Every Tuesday night during the school year, Kelsey Community School hosts Community Night, which over time has gained popularity as attested to by the fact that during 2012/2013 school year approximately 1300 people participated in the activities that were offered. The success that Community Night enjoys is due, in part, to the 75 adults, including University College of the North students, who during the 2012/2013 school year volunteered their time at Community Night (Kelsey School Division, 2013). At Mary Duncan School, staff members have made an effort to reach out to parents and guardians of the Middle Years and Senior Years alternative program students. Due to this effort, staff members have made contact with 78 percent of the parents and guardians during each school year since 2010. As a means of ensuring that the relationship between school staff and parents and guardians remains intact, the school has instituted the practice of holding each year three parent-teacher conferences, the first of which is in early September (Manych, 2014). The principal of Mary Duncan School was explicit about the role of students and their families: “Students and their families work best with the school to determine what will work best for them in terms of how they learn, what they need for the future and how to reach their goals” (Manych, 2012, p. 12).

As is the case with the vast majority of students everywhere, high school graduation for Mary Duncan students is the pinnacle of their educational experience, and the joy and sense of achievement that they feel is vicariously felt by their families and teachers. The following reflected the perception of a student about her past school experiences and the impact of attending Mary Duncan School: “I didn’t really fit in. I was like a shadow over there. They looked at me like I can’t do it. They can’t see my future, but I can. I will prove them wrong” (Manych, 2013). At Mary Duncan School, high school graduation has become an expected outcome of the school experience and to that end 33 students in 2009 graduated with 215 students and family members in attendance at the graduation ceremonies (Kelsey School Division, 2010), and in 2013, “34 students were granted diplomas. Kelsey Learning Centre has had 628 graduates since 1997” (Kelsey School Division, 2013, p. 18). It should be noted

that all graduating students must write the English Language Arts Standards Test and the Mathematics Standards Test in Grade 12. Similar to other adult learning centres, Mary Duncan's Kelsey Learning Centre provides additional opportunities and supports to assist adult learners in their quest to earn a high school diploma. In 2011/12, of the 1,356 graduates who graduated from adult learning centres across the province of Manitoba, 530 of them self-identified as being Aboriginal (Manitoba Education, 2013). Schools like Mary Duncan with adult learning programs have provided additional opportunities for Aboriginal and northern people to experience educational success.

In order to meet the needs of all students, adequate funding needs to be in place and when it is not, it becomes an issue of concern. In 2012/2013, special grants in the Kelsey School Division's budget constituted \$603,778.00 of the approximately \$19,000,000 in revenues from Manitoba Education and outside resources (Kelsey School Division, 2013, p. 3). It is problematic when a special grant is discontinued or reduced by Manitoba Education and Training because school divisions that lack discretionary funds are unable to fund the program or initiative that had previously been funded by special grants. The special grants portion of the budget has supported important initiatives, but the lack of guaranteed long-term funding for special programs might leave staff members frustrated. Even with special grants, more funding was needed in order to procure additional academic supports, new technology, and the accoutrements that could be used to create a more inviting facility (Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; Mary Duncan Interview Participants, 2013). Finally, sufficient and sustainable resources are required in order for school community members to be effective in their roles and meet the school's goals.

CHAPTER 5: COLLABORATIVE INQUIRIES: KENANOW BACHELOR OF EDUCATION PROGRAM AND *INTO THE WILD*

5.1 Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program

The development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program demonstrates the merit of extensive consultation and collaboration with the appropriate partners have to create the desired change in Manitoba schools. The development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been an ongoing process, and the description below provides a snapshot of its evolution to this point in time. The foundation for the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program was the Kenanow Learning Model, which places great importance on an Aboriginal focus, emphasizing a place-based approach and appropriate pedagogical or instructional practices appropriate for the transmission of knowledge. The program also links western and Aboriginal educational perspectives.

5.1.1 The Kenanow Learning Model

The Kenanow Learning Model has been the foundation for the Bachelor of Education degree program at University College of the North and provides a northern-based and Aboriginal-focused teacher education program. Through our Elders, educational partners, and communities, the approaches and practices in the Faculty of Education are informed by what has worked well in the past and is currently working well. The program was created in response to educational issues specific to the education of northern and Aboriginal children and youth. With a multi-year development process that included extensive consultations, a Bachelor of Education program was developed and approved by UCN's Learning Council, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, and the provincial Council on Post-Secondary Education (see Appendix). To provide a firm foundation for the University College of the North's Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, the Kenanow Learning Model was developed as a key component for all education courses. The program outline for the Kenanow Bachelor of Education degree program incorporated the information gathered from extensive consultations with educational and community partners throughout Manitoba, and from directives and requirements mandated by Manitoba Education and Training.

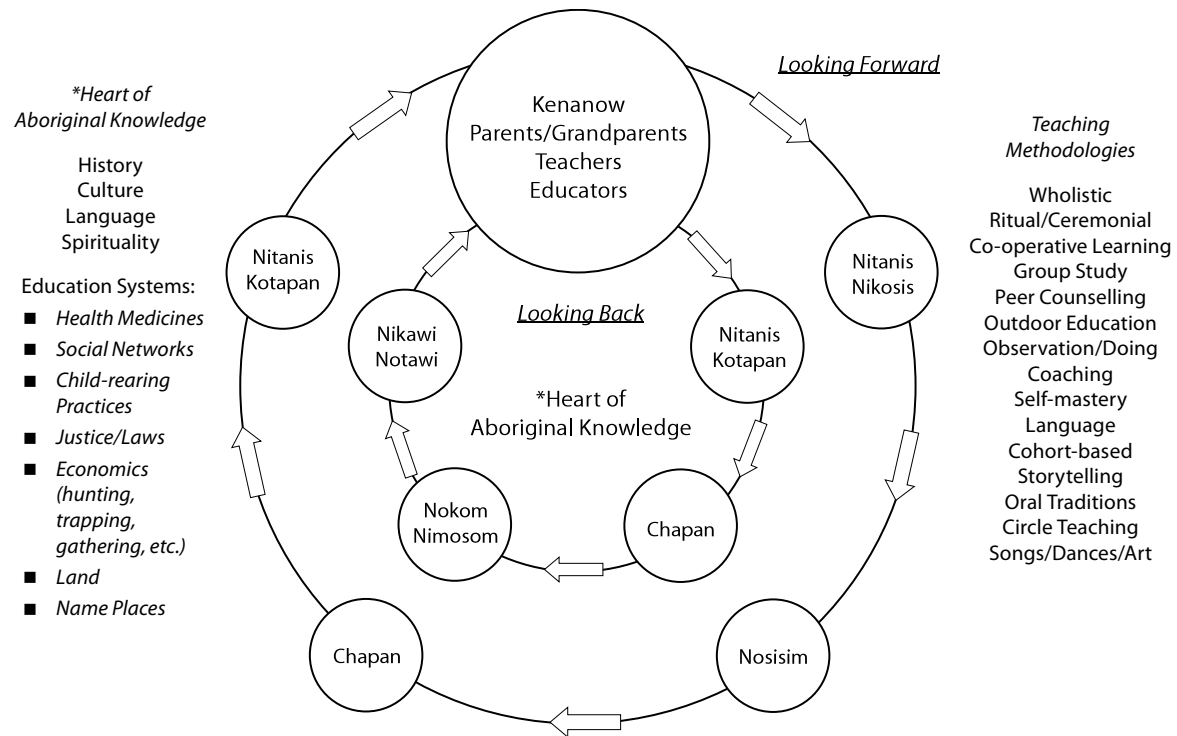
The Kenanow Learning Model was created by the Elders' group, and the following was prepared by Esther Sanderson and Doris Young and once completed, was reviewed by me (Kenanow Bachelor of Education program documents, 2008). Learning outcomes for the teacher education program were identified by the Elders' group and the Council of Elders at University College of the North, and these outcomes are represented by the following themes:

- ecological knowledge
- Aboriginal history and perspective
- interpersonal relationships
- leadership skills
- knowledge about and history of family and community
- Aboriginal teaching methodologies
- identity (*kiskenimisowin*)
- health and wellness
- Aboriginal language
- experiential and holistic learning

The program, through its courses, has provided teacher education students with an opportunity to achieve outcomes in these areas. Members of the Council of Elders at UCN played a supportive and active role in this teacher education program. Elders provided the connection between the goals of the program and the knowledge of the local communities that is necessary for the program goals to be achieved. The linking of teacher education to the community further reflects UCN's commitment to community-based education and community development. The use of the Kenanow Learning Model in the teacher education program enables prospective teachers to learn and employ the culture-based and place-based perspective in their teaching.

Figure 1

KENANOW LEARNING MODEL



Created by Mabel Bignell, David Lathlin, Pat Lathlin, Stella Neff, Doris Young, and Esther Sanderson. Used with permission.

The Kenanow model is an education system that served Aboriginal people well for generations throughout time and history. It is about identity, a place of belonging, community history, roles and responsibilities of generations of families, and the process of handing down knowledge in a larger context, the community that supports and nourishes the heart, mind, body, and spirit. For Nehiwaywak, the Cree, the education system was transmitted through the families and communities as represented in the Kenanow model (see Figure 1 above).

Kenanow was chosen by the Council of Elders at UCN as the concept for the framework of the UCN teacher education program. The choice was made because many of the Aboriginal youth are experiencing identity crises today, and it has played out in homes and communities through gangs, family violence, suicide, and drug and alcohol abuse. Major factors contributing to the identity crises in Aboriginal youth are residential schools and colonization. The residential school system and colonization deprived children and youth not only of the care of their parents and their community, but also of models for effective parenting. The valuing of Aboriginal culture, history, and language were lost. It is only recently that attempts have been made to rectify this situation in the education system, school programs, and curricula. Through this model, a new foundation will be created

that looks to the past, present, and future in education for northern and Aboriginal students.

The Kenanow Learning Model generates constructive solutions to systemic issues within the education system in the areas of literacy, language and culture, identity, teacher supply, training and retention, and community support for learning. Researchers and educators continue to explore the model's value as a tool for positive change in teacher education for Aboriginal and northern students.

Describing the Model

The model is circular, made up of three circles: an inner circle, an outer circle, and a circle at the top joining them (see Figure 1).

Inner Circle—Looking Back

The inner circle represents the past generations and is the heart of the Aboriginal knowledge base, protected and sustained by our Elders, ancestors, and memory. It comprises cultural histories that have been carried on from generation to generation via oral traditions of storytelling, ceremony, songs, and teachings, as well as rituals and sharing. These histories are reflected in the names of places, people, and elements of creation, and in a spirit that is alive in the land. They were then and remain today etched in the memories of the people and the land (Absolom & Willett, 2004). All families learned their political, spiritual, and social teachings and laws in their respective education and cultural institutions within their community.

Outer Circle—Looking Forward

The outer circle is the children, the youth, and future generations represented by our children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren—the children/youth of today and also those yet unborn.

Top Circle—Kenanow/Us

We, all of us, Kenanow, parents and educators, are represented by the top circle where the two circles meet. It is we Kenanow who are responsible for transmitting the knowledge and ways of knowing and teaching that we received from past generations (from the Inner Circle) down to our children and youth.

Kinship

The terms related to kinship must be explained to understand the model because the terms both implicitly and explicitly define relationships and responsibilities in families. These terms also serve as a means of identifying a person's place in society and their roles and responsibilities to the family for community sustainability.

The prefix *ni*, meaning “I/mine,” in front of all the terms is possessive in meaning; for instance, *nitanis* and *nichapan* translated mean “my daughter” and “my great-grandchild.” Explicitly and implicitly *ni* conveys roles and responsibilities to relationships, to *nitanis* and *nichapan*.

Nitanis/nikosis appears in both the inner and outer circles. Translated into English, it literally means “my daughter/my son.” But beyond this superficial meaning is the idea that this child becomes the first link in a chain of generations. It is crucial to teach all the values and teachings to all the children for it is they who will ultimately become our leaders and teachers.

Other kinship terms are translated as follows:

- *nikawi/notawi*: my mother/my father
- *nosisim*: The literal translation in English is “my grandchild.” However, the Cree prefix *noos* means female. The deeper meaning is that this child, male or female, has been given life by a mother.
- *nokom/nimosom*: my grandmother/my grandfather
- *nichapan*: my great-grandparent and/or my great-grandchild
- *nitaniskotapan*: my great-great grandparent and/or my great-great grandchild

I am grateful that Ms. Young and Ms. Sanderson shared the result of the discussions of the Elders with the professional educators who are attempting to transform education in our region. The interdependence of communities, articulated in the Kenanow Learning Model, reflects UCN’s responsibility to offer continuing support for teaching and learning, educational research, curriculum development, and the implementation of curriculum in our schools.

5.1.2 Specific Characteristics of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program

The Good Life

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program personnel has connected with its many partners to support students in their quest to develop positive identities and to experience *Pimatisiwin*, the good life. The good life can be explained as the preferred experiences and futures for children and youth based on the actualization of individual and group rights afforded to Canadians by the *Constitution Act, 1982*, and various agreements outlining group rights including Aboriginal treaties, which are protected by section 25 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Increasingly, children and youth imagine themselves graduating from high school, participating in post-secondary education or training, choosing from an array of career options, and being active community members. In order to maximize opportunities for students to experience the good life, teachers who graduated from the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program are ready to co-create inclusive classrooms and schools throughout northern Manitoba.

“One of the magnificent promises of the treaties is the right to an education,” says Ovide Mercredi, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations (Paul, 2011).

Aboriginal Focus

The Aboriginal focus of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program was grounded in the Kenanow Learning Model and is actualized by embedding Aboriginal perspectives in course materials and by approaching teacher education in a manner that is congruent with Aboriginal ways of being and knowing. Land-based education and Elder teachings are among the various strategies congruent with Aboriginal ways of being and knowing, and, as such, have been incorporated into the teacher education program. Kenanow Bachelor of Education graduates have developed an understanding of the Aboriginal experience in northern Manitoba.

Elders in northern Manitoba are positioned to make a unique contribution to northern education. It should be noted that the University College of the North was created with a Council of Elders as a component of the tri-council governance structure, making Elders partners in the education process. Through formally including the Elders in the governance of the university college, UCN recognized the important role that Elders play in their communities, and that Elders should assume the same role within the UCN community. Elders from northern communities were selected because of their ability to share the collective wisdom of their communities (University College of the North, 2004). Through a collaborative process, the following definition of Elders was created and agreed upon within the UCN community:

Elders are respected and honoured by their communities for their spirituality, wisdom, high intelligence, knowledge, life experiences and teachings. Elders have a deep understanding of people and communities. Elders are recognized for their gifts, for their love of the land and the language, and for their knowledge of traditions. Within UCN, Elders will be role models, resources and advisors, providing guidance and support for students, staff and administration. They will be ambassadors for UCN in the larger community. (University College of the North, 2004, p. 27)

Each community chooses Elders based on criteria developed within the community, but communities tend to select Elders who can use their knowledge of the community to teach and advise community members. The Elders at UCN, through their involvement in northern communities and the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, play a positive role in northern education.

Instruction

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has promoted the expectation that teachers will be reflective practitioners who will engage with others within the school community. Teachers are expected to use a variety of instructional strategies to engage students in the school program. Employed graduates of the program create safe and caring environments for students. Teachers who are educated in accordance with the principles of the Kenanow Learning Model are expected to engage in sustained dialogue with the school community members and take the collaborative actions that are required to create a school culture that has a positive impact on all members of the school community.

Culture-Based and Place-Based Approach

All courses within the program reflect a commitment to instruct prospective teachers in a culture-based and place-based approach so they will be equipped to deliver curricula and instruction in a manner that is consistent with these approaches. A culture-based approach promotes the culture and language of Aboriginal peoples and provides a means by which teachers can meet student needs in a holistic and relevant manner. A place-based approach provides students with an education that is focused on the local community and its environmental setting (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2008). Arguably, the inclusion of both a culture-based and place-based approach in a teacher education program helps to better prepare prospective teachers to teach effectively anywhere. When educators in local schools and members of the community are engaged in collaborative development and share educational and philosophic perspectives, the capacity of teachers to meet student needs is enhanced (Lewthwaite & McMillan, 2008). In implementing curricula mandated by Manitoba Education and Training, prospective teachers educated in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program have the ability to link provincial curricula in a culturally meaningful way to the life experiences of their students (Cajete, 1986). By using culture-based and place-based approaches in the implementation of curricula from Manitoba Education and Training, prospective teachers are better equipped to become effective teachers for our students.

Manitoba Curricula and Manitoba Education and Training

Public schools and most First Nations schools in the province implement curricula approved by Manitoba Education and Training. Manitoba Education and Training has been authorized by the Government of Manitoba through *The Public Schools Act* to approve the curricula taught in schools, and to monitor school organization and practice (Manitoba, 1987b). Additionally, the Minister of Education and Training through the department approves teacher education programs and determines if graduates of teacher education programs are eligible to obtain a provincial teaching certificate. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program was approved by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth in July 2008 (Manitoba, 1987b; Kenanow Bachelor of Education program documents, 2008). Prospective teachers

enrolled in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program are mindful of the fact that provincial curricula and approaches consistent with the Kenanow Learning Model should be incorporated into their lesson planning and teaching. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program is compatible with the mandates, directives, and recommended approaches of Manitoba Education and Training, such as inclusive programming and sustainable development (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007; Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004; Manitoba Education and Training, 2000). Culturally appropriate strategies and curricular focus are used in the implementation of Manitoba curricula.

James A. Banks's Multicultural Education Model

By using an adapted form of Banks's model for multicultural education (Banks, 2006) in the UCN's teacher education program and in professional development activities designed for current teachers, it could be argued that teachers are positioned to respond to the diversity of needs found in their classrooms. Banks has argued that there are four focuses for a culturally inclusive education model. First, teachers and prospective teachers should strive to employ content integration in order for students to see themselves reflected in the curriculum. In northern Manitoba with its large Aboriginal population, the curriculum is embedded with Aboriginal history, culture, and language. Concepts in the curriculum are explored in relationship to the local community, and as the students mature, links to broader communities such as provincial, national, and international communities are studied. Grounded in their identities as individuals and members of groups, students are encouraged to appreciate their past, consider the present, and contemplate a positive future.

Second, there should be a focus on what Banks calls "knowledge construction" in diverse classrooms. According to Banks, knowledge construction should be a key feature of any curriculum because it encourages students to consider their perspectives, biases, and roles in the world. In keeping with this tenet, instruction in the schools of northern Manitoba has included land-based activities, co-operative learning, service learning, cultural proficiency, and Elder involvement as a means to strengthening the links between the classroom and community. Students are presented with a curriculum that enables them to see the connections that exist across the various academic subject areas. Learning experiences enable students to make sense of their world by incorporating their perspectives into their learning. Kenanow Bachelor of Education degree program graduates can apply these skills in northern Manitoba or in educational settings elsewhere.

Third, Banks identifies equity pedagogy as the skill to implement a range of instructional strategies and approaches that best facilitate student learning. In order to be consistent with the equity pedagogy focus, teachers and prospective teachers should use a variety of strategies congruent with the Kenanow Learning Model and, as such, adjust their instructional strategies and approaches in response to a range of student factors, including learning styles, gender, and ethnicity. Teachers

in inclusive classrooms facilitate the acceptance of all students by their peers and other staff members. The implementation of equity pedagogy can create classroom environments with healthy racial and ethnic attitudes (Banks, 2006).

Finally, an empowering school culture offers an atmosphere that is supportive of students and their families, as a means by which the success of all students is facilitated and enhanced. Practices such as labelling and ability grouping that only serve to limit educational opportunity are not evident in an empowering school culture. In schools with an empowering school culture, teachers develop strong relationships with their students, colleagues, and the community. Furthermore, the actualization of educational opportunities requires the provision of appropriate educational resources in order to address the social exclusion that produces “unequal outcomes” (Hyman, Meinhard, & Shields, 2011). In an empowering school culture, students are supported, and they are provided with an opportunity to achieve the good life.

Cultural Proficiency

All members of an inclusive school community demonstrate high levels of cultural proficiency. According to Lindsey, Nuri Robins, and Terrell (2009), cultural proficiency encompasses

the policies and practices of an organization, or the values and behaviors of an individual, that enable that organization or person to interact effectively with clients, colleagues, and the community using the essential elements of cultural competence: assessing culture, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, and institutionalizing cultural knowledge. (p. 166)

With a focus on cultural proficiency, all members of the school community would be encouraged to celebrate their cultural backgrounds. In order to create and maintain culturally inclusive schools where school leaders are committed to “Success for All” (School District of Mystery Lake, n.d), leaders must be culturally proficient and committed to the community school model. Cultural proficiency has been an important focus in the teacher education program at University College of the North and in the professional development activities offered to current teachers. The School District of Mystery Lake, which has jurisdiction over the schools in Thompson, Manitoba, has created a strategic plan for the implementation of cultural proficiency in all of the district’s schools (Brown, Gardiner, Davis, Henderson, Dykun, & Cook, 2015). The work that the School District of Mystery Lake has achieved regarding cultural proficiency has been widely shared and constitutes a Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement or VOICE research project’s Success Pathway (Brandon University, n.d.). Many current and prospective teachers now have increased awareness of cultural proficiency and its application in northern Manitoba as a result of the VOICE project.

Teacher Education, Leading, and Professional Development

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has provided preparation for teaching, teacher leadership, and opportunities for collaboration with local educational partners. The following approaches have been taken in the education of those prospective teachers who are enrolled in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program:

1. Use pedagogy that reflects the value of experience, listening, observing, and sharing with others within the context of the local community.
2. Organize curriculum to facilitate learning experiences that are co-operative, engaging, and inclusive.
3. Create group cohesion among students and also with faculty.
4. Encourage continuous dialogue between students and faculty members.
5. Effectively communicate between faculty members and students.
6. Demonstrate flexibility by faculty so students have ample opportunities to meet program goals. (Kenanow Bachelor of Education program documents, 2011)

The values of equity, integration, and experience are key components of UCN's Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and are emphasized in all aspects of the program's curriculum.

The programming offered by the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program gives students the tools to become school leaders. Education students at UCN learn the principles of effective leadership through all aspects of their coursework. UCN education students learn to celebrate student success and engage in ongoing reflection, dialogue, and collaborative action and, as such, are equipped to become school leaders. Along with the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program's emphasis on joint program planning and shared leadership, experiences such as *Into the Wild* help teacher education students to develop and demonstrate leadership skills. Education students, through their volunteer work and program experiences in local schools, observe local principals and collaborative school teams demonstrating shared leadership. Pre-service teachers enrolled in UCN's teacher education program are afforded many opportunities to observe, learn, and practise school leadership (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013; Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013; *Into the Wild* Interview Participants, 2013; and *Teaching and Learning Together* Interview Participants, 2013).

Students and faculty members have participated in shared professional development with local schools and, in doing so, have explored a range of topics that have included universal design, classroom management, strategies for teaching students who are Deaf and hard of hearing, teacher professionalism, and later literacy training. As a means of promoting leadership education, students along with faculty members have provided sessions. Shared learning experiences between schools and the Faculty of Education including its students have been ongoing and mutually beneficial.

5.1.3 Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program: Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Schools—Discussion of Interviews, Observations, and Document Review

Generally, prospective teachers appreciate the challenges of educating children and youth in northern Manitoba. Given the legacy of residential schools and the social conditions that have disadvantaged Aboriginal people in northern Manitoba, the current high dropout and low graduation rates for Aboriginal students are disheartening but not surprising. Those who graduate from the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program understand that alternative approaches to education are needed to complement traditional practices in order to address the significant number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students underserved by education systems (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

Teachers who have graduated from the program become technically strong, and because they are armed with appropriate teaching methodologies, cultural awareness of Aboriginal perspectives, including history, language, and culture, and the capacity to demonstrate respect and empathy for their students, they quickly become effective teachers. UCN's small class sizes help to personalize the learning and provide an appropriate environment for educating prospective teachers. Faculty members with varied backgrounds create a rich learning environment for their teacher education students and constantly seek ways to enhance their programs. Aboriginal perspectives, which are embedded in all courses, are important for all teacher candidates to know regardless of their background. While the terminology between Aboriginal and Western perspectives on education differs, Aboriginal approaches to education are supported by the literature that deals with Western education practices. The involvement of the Elders in the program has helped to create an inviting and unique program for prospective teachers, and their presence has helped to forge a connection to the land and the community. Teachers incorporate culture and place along with the wisdom of the Elders into their classrooms in order for the students to experience a stronger connection to the curricula. Elders remind teacher education students of the responsibility that they have as educators of the children and youth of northern Manitoba. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program connects Aboriginal views of education with those stemmed in the Western tradition in an effective manner (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

Teacher education in northern Manitoba has been accessible to many prospective teachers because it is provided in their communities or in communities located in close proximity to their own. The following enrolment trends (Council on Post-Secondary Education, n.d., p. 24) for the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program support the view that the program is attracting individuals from the region who aspire to become teachers:

Table 5 UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE NORTH—KENANOW BACHELOR OF EDUCATION ENROLMENT	
Year	Full-Time and Part-Time Enrolment
2008/09	73
2009/10	87
2010/11	104
2011/12	210

(Kenanow Bachelor of Education documents, 2014)

The interest by Aboriginal and northern communities to establish programs in their communities received a positive response. The following community-based programs were established: Chemawawin Cree Nation with 28 students, Bunibonibee Cree Nation with 28 students, St. Theresa Point with 30 students, Peguis First Nation with over 30 students, and Opaskwayak Cree Nation/Kelsey School Division with 17 students. Most of the students enrolled in the community-based programs were already working educational assistants who aspired to become teachers in their respective communities (University College of the North, Kenanow Bachelor of Education, 2011). Increasingly, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program was providing a geographically accessible teacher education program for Aboriginal and northern people.

Prospective teachers have high expectations for themselves and their students and understand that being responsible and caring are key components of their professional identity. Future teachers understand that they have a significant role in each child's life journey, and because of this, teacher education students expect their students to maximize their potential. Prospective teachers consider student needs and attempt to provide the supports that they need. As students graduate from the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, they, as new teachers, contribute to the inclusive practices already occurring in schools such as Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School. These factors have promoted a positive approach to teaching and learning by pre-service teachers and, hopefully, have contributed to the development of positive identities by their students (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

Since the inception of UCN's Kenanow Bachelor of Education program in 2008, 86 students from the After Degree and Integrated Streams have graduated from the program's campuses situated in The Pas, Thompson, and Norway House. The first graduates from the After Degree Stream (two-year program) graduated in 2010, while the first graduates from the Integrated Stream (five-year program) graduated in June 2013. With students graduating from the five-year Integrated Stream Kenanow Bachelor of Education community-based programs in 2016, there should have been about 80 additional students graduating from the program. With the exception of the Norway House community-based program which has already produced Kenanow Bachelor of Education graduates, the first cohort of students enrolled in the community-based sites graduated in 2016. Approximately 80 students attend the community-based sites and 25 students attending the campuses in The Pas and Thompson graduated from the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program in 2016. This combined graduating class of 105 students constitutes the largest graduating class on the short history of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program (Kenanow Bachelor of Education documents, 2014).

Most graduates, according to anecdotal reports, have secured employment as teachers (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013). During visits to schools in northern Manitoba, I frequently encounter graduates of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program employed as teachers in the school. Moreover, it is anticipated that the vast majority of the students enrolled in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program's community-based sites will seek and earn employment in their own communities. Informal feedback suggests that the employment rate for the program's graduates is high. UCN has started to track the employment of its graduates including those who graduated from the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program.

The experience of the University of Regina's Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP), which is located in northern Saskatchewan, has been in many ways similar to the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program at UCN. NORTEP was developed to address the "lack of Aboriginal teachers, high teacher turnover, lack of success of northern k-12 students [and the] the impact of non-Aboriginal teachers on local communities" (Niessen, 2008, p. 28). In their report, researchers at the University of Regina have provided the following data along with their conclusions about NORTEP (Niessen, 2008):

Quality of Grads

Key informant interviews conducted in 2004 revealed:

- High levels of recognition of grads competence (school division officials)
 - High level of support for the relevance of the curriculum (school division officials, grand council staff)
 - Acknowledgement of high levels of student support (program graduates)
- (p. 30)

NORTEP Grad Employment

Bands	44%
School Divisions	31%
Post-Secondary Universities	2%
Other*	23%

*Other—In addition to teaching, graduates from teacher education programs in Aboriginal communities have leadership opportunities in their communities.

(p. 30)

NORTEP Impact on the 2 Northern School Systems

- Increased % of Aboriginal teachers
- Decreased teacher turnover
- Increasing number of role models and leaders
- Improvement in high school graduation rates

(p. 31)

Impact of NORTEP/NORPAC on Northern Communities

- Increased grade 12 graduation rates
- Increased post-secondary completion
- Overall community development
- Development of community leaders
- Support for Northern partnerships
- Increased provincial personal tax revenue
- Decreased reliance on social assistance

(p. 33)

Faculty members at UCN feel that their graduates have found the program to be accessible and supportive of their aspirations (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013), not unlike the “trust and caring” the NORTEP students experience in their familiar surroundings (Niessen, 2008, p. 19). Similarly, Kenanow Bachelor of Education graduates are well prepared for teaching and are readily offered employment by education authorities and school divisions in northern Manitoba (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

Teachers are viewed as educational leaders within the program, and the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program provides leadership experiences for students. Leadership has been understood within the program as the recognition and willingness to do what needs to be done. Prospective teachers are provided a well-rounded program with a variety of experiences. The more theoretical portions of the course are supported by assignments that require the application of theory. Future teachers gain practical experience through programs, including *Into the Wild*, Career Trek, service-learning projects, and WestCAST. Teacher education graduates have become leaders in their classrooms and their schools, and the demonstration of leadership by prospective students is an expectation of the program (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

Faculty members have taken steps to ensure that there are good working relationships with the schools in our region. Faculty members collaborated with teachers and administrators in our area in order to co-create the bachelor of education program and share professional development experiences. Local teachers and administrators have been quite supportive of the practicum experience in the schools. The program strongly reflects the priorities of Manitoba Education and Training, and faculty members have a voice in the creation and implementation of those priorities through course development, committee work, and workshops. Faculty members play an important role in sharing the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Framework with schools in our region. Faculty members and school staff members have built on existing relationships and develop more opportunities for collaboration with educational partners (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

5.2 *Into the Wild*: Discussion of Interviews, Observations, and Document Review

The *Into the Wild* program provides experiential learning experiences in mathematics, science, and culture for about 300 students every summer in Opaskwayak Cree Nation and The Pas. Kenanow Bachelor Education students acted as leaders for Early Years and Middle Years students participating in the program. The *Into the Wild* program enables teacher education students to apply the principles of place-based learning, demonstrate leadership, engage in collaborative practice, and participate in service learning. Education leaders have taken knowledge and skills acquired in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and applied their learning to the development of varied learning experiences for students (Kenanow Bachelor of Education documents, 2014). By developing lessons linked to Manitoba curricula with their fellow program leaders, Kenanow Bachelor of Education students learn to work collaboratively with other prospective teachers. *Into the Wild* is one of the many opportunities for Kenanow Bachelor of Education students to apply learning from their courses to practice. Education students take the materials developed jointly in the program and use the lessons in their practicum experience. *Into the Wild* provides enjoyable learning experiences for participants, is valuable

practice for prospective teachers, and enables teacher education students to contribute to the community.

The *Into the Wild* program was created to provide learning opportunities outside of regular school hours and to address summer learning loss for children and youth. Program fees are subsidized by Manitoba Education and Training and UCN to ensure that the program is accessible to children and youth in the region. Education leaders provide a service to the program's participants while developing their skills as teachers. The parent surveys suggest that the program is valuable from the perspective of participants, and that parents also viewed the program as worthwhile.

Sample parent comments include the following:

My daughter didn't even know she was doing math and science—so good.
Yes, the activities were well organized and fun! It made learning interactive with opportunities for hands-on discovery of math/science principles.
They talked about things they'd learned (life cycles, parts of bugs, etc.).
Your program and its staff should be commended. Thank you.
(University College of the North, Faculty of Education, 2013a)

All parents who responded to the survey recommended the program and would have their children attend again. The surveys of the participants indicated that the learning experiences were valuable and enjoyable.

Voices of *Into the Wild* students include the following:

It is awesome the way it is.
I really liked the crafts.
I learned how to cook.
I learned about bees. They make honey and help flowers grow.
I liked going to the lake. You have to be safe in the water.
I learned about plants that grow in a garden.
I learned about butterflies and their camouflage.
I learned how to use a compass.
I learned about birds, frogs and all types of bugs.
I learned about the dancing raisins experiment.
I learned what sinks, what floats and why.

(University College of the North, Faculty of Education, 2013b)

When asked about changes to the program, the most common answer was, "Nothing" (University College of the North, Faculty of Education, 2013a). Through re-registering in the program, participants have indicated their enthusiasm for *Into the Wild* (University College of the North, Faculty of Education, 2013a). The elementary students and their parents found these learning experiences to be

beneficial and enjoyable (*Into the Wild* Interview Participants, 2013). The *Into the Wild* program is but one example of the collaborative initiatives between the Faculty of Education and education partners that have been valuable for children in our region and have provided additional learning opportunities for prospective teachers.

Based on the principles of the Kenanow Learning Model, the approach adopted by the Faculty of Education to transform schools in northern Manitoba incorporates a culture-based and place-based approach to teaching and learning. Teachers can link provincial curricula to culture and place in order to facilitate learning environments that are reflective of the life experiences of their students (Cajete, 1986). Complementary to culture-based and place-based education, cultural proficiency and Banks's model for multicultural education are key components in the teacher education program that recognizes and responds to the diversity of needs in classrooms. In creating rich, positive identities for students that reflect the diversity of their experiences and relationships, schools must demonstrate relational responsibility and relational appreciation. These notions of relational responsibility and relational appreciation need to be extended or at least understood to include what might be termed cultural appreciation. Teachers demonstrating cultural appreciation would be committed and accountable, and would value school relationships and the diverse identities in school communities. A culturally appreciative approach might serve as an alternative to cultural proficiency or cultural competence training where additional awareness and nurturing of cultural relationships is deemed appropriate. A culturally appreciative approach would be respectful of the multiplicity of the relationships and meanings that members of the school community bring to school. Unlike the terms *cultural proficiency* or *cultural competence*, *cultural appreciation* does not imply an expertise in interpersonal relationships, but, instead, respect for and celebration of diverse cultural identities. Indeed, the adoption of culturally proficient approaches to education within the collaborative activities of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education and partners in northern Manitoba might be best described as cultural appreciation.

In a culturally appreciative school, all members of the school community would play integral roles in the relational life of the school. The learning environment would be student-centred and effective working relationships would be evident in schools. School community members would contribute to the conversation regarding the ever-changing school purposes. Culturally appreciative schools would promote sustained dialogue and collaborative action in creating a school culture that embraces and seeks to maximize the potential of all members of the school community. Through its teacher education program and collaboration with current teachers in professional development, this study suggests that the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its partners are creating culturally appreciative schools in northern Manitoba.

CHAPTER 6: COLLABORATIVE INQUIRIES: TEACHING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

6.1 Discussion of Interviews, Observations, and Document Review

The faculty members of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and school personnel create joint learning experiences for prospective teachers. At Mile 20, Elders and school district personnel collaborate with faculty members from UCN to create learning experiences for elementary students that were experiential, land based, and culture based. Student teachers participate as leaders in a community-based program in Thompson, Families and Schools Together, which allows prospective teachers to experience working with families. School personnel serve as instructors for Kenanow Bachelor of Education students and, in one instance, division teachers and faculty members co-teach a course. Current teachers and teacher education students engage in educational research activities in collaboration with researchers from Brandon University and University College of the North. Faculty of Education students, faculty members, and division personnel report that these learning opportunities have contributed to teacher education students' preparation for teaching. Similarly, the interviewees believe that this education for teachers produces teachers who will provide an inclusive environment for students in the schools (*Teaching and Learning Together* Interview Participants, 2013).

The school division's or district's divisional plan reflects the direction of its schools and communities. In the case of the School District of Mystery Lake, the district goals in the plan suggest that the schools within the district are striving to enhance the inclusiveness of learning environments in the district. With the district's past reported graduation rates being significantly lower than the provincial average, the impact of the relatively recent work of the school district is evident in the rise of graduation rates for the district. The district's graduation rates have risen almost 15 percent from 2009/2010 to 2012/13 while the provincial graduation rate climbed by 6 percent during a similar period (Manitoba Education, n.d.). While work has continued to raise graduation rates, one has to be encouraged that 80 percent of the district's Grades 7 and 8 students have aspirations to be graduates from high school, which is the Canadian norm (School District of Mystery Lake, 2012, p. 15). The School District of Mystery Lake has been committed to providing increased educational opportunities for its students.

Often, the schools are at the centre of the community and provide services to the community. Increasingly, students feel connected to the schools in Thompson, which are perceived by students as safe places. Schools are viewed by students as safer places than the community in general. The *2010–2011 Youth Behaviour Survey Highlights Report* reports the following:

In 2010, two-thirds of students (66%) reported “always” and/or “often” feeling safe in their community, an increase of 52% in 2008 and 58% in 2005. Students (82%) were more likely to report feeling safe in school in 2010 compared to 2008 (74%) or 2005 (68%). (2012, p. 10)

Future teachers in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program learn to become contributing members in these types of school communities. Prospective teachers have assisted in the operation of programs such as the Families and Schools Together (FAST) program for students and their families. Wapanohk Community School in Thompson, in addition to empowering 130 families over the last 11 years through the FAST program, also “fed 10,000 bellies again this year, thanks to the dedication of many individuals and community partners” (School District of Mystery Lake, 2014, p. 8). Teacher education students engage in dialogue regarding educational programming and collaborate with others for the effective delivery of programs. Of considerable importance, prospective teachers learn to connect with students, their families, and the community, and to appreciate the importance of these relationships. Given the strong commitment to land-based education along with community-based education, the allocation of resources to secure a land-based site for continued programming would be beneficial for students in the schools and Bachelor of Education students. The schools offer programming that meets the needs of students and their families through local partnerships, including the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program (*Teaching and Learning Together* Interview Participants, 2013).

Making Education Work (MEW)

Making Education Work (MEW) was a research project funded by Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation and the Province of Manitoba that evaluated the impact of additional supports and services on student retention in high school, graduation from high school, and post-secondary enrolment. The MEW program commenced in 2006/2007 with “on time” graduation date for students of June 2009 (Proactive Information Services, 2011). The project sites were in Aboriginal and northern communities, including R. D. Parker Collegiate in Thompson, Manitoba, and the program at each site had the following components:

- a MEW curriculum, with Aboriginal content for grades 10 to 12
- career development and guidance
- tutoring and mentoring
- cultural development
- community service activities
- parental involvement

(Proactive Information Services, 2011, p. 2)

The components of the MEW program were comparable to the practices of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and the collaborative activities of the educational partners. The results of MEW project outlined in the *Making Education Work Implementation Report* reflected the surveys of 83 MEW students and the 24 comparison students not receiving the additional supports or services:

- 88% of MEW students were still in high school during the 2008/09 school year, as compared to 64% of comparison students (p. 17)
- The MEW students scored consistently higher on the standards tests in Language Arts and Mathematics than the comparison group achieved (p. 16)
- 62% of MEW students graduated “on time,” as compared to 48% of students from the comparison group (p. 17)
- MEW students were more likely to be enrolled in a post-secondary program: 38 MEW students to 16 comparison students (p. 19)

The additional supports and services provided to MEW students had a positive impact on their educational success.

The MEW project corroborated that the educational practices for Aboriginal students identified in the literature and presented throughout this work did contribute in a significant way to the educational success of Aboriginal students (Proactive Information Services, 2011). The specific conclusions from the MEW project found in the *Making Education Work Implementation Report* (2011) were as follows:

- Students benefit from sustained, trusting relationship with a caring adult in the school.
- Students profit from a supportive academic environment (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, quiet and safe place to work).
- Learning about one’s culture and connecting to one’s heritage and community supports students’ confidence and school success.
- Building supportive trusting relationships between school and families supports student success. (p. 20)

The following voices of MEW students reinforce the accuracy of these conclusions:

I saw the path that I was heading down. . . . I needed to change. If not for [the MEW teacher] I would have dropped out.

Usually I am gone by the time the birds come back, but this year I got help and I got all my credits.

Just being in MEW made me think about my future more and what I want to do when I finish high school.

I hoped that it would help me get back in touch with my roots. It has done this for me.

(Proactive Information Services, 2011, pp. 13–14)

If the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its educational partners continue to provide caring teachers capable of delivering a culturally appropriate curriculum, ensure adequate supports for all students, and have collaborative relationships with families, the retention rates, academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and post-secondary participation should rise for Aboriginal and northern students.

6.2 Educational Partnerships and the Implications for Inclusive Educational Practices

Students deemed at risk due to a variety of factors, including socio-economic conditions, are thriving and eventually graduating from high school because the educational partners are seeking to serve all students. Students are involved in multiple learning opportunities and encouraged to try different things while exploring their interests and abilities in order to enhance their self-worth. Learning opportunities such as Literacy Camp, Numeracy Camp, Nighthawks, and *Into the Wild* have been made available outside of regular school hours to augment traditional learning opportunities. Trust is evident within the school community and foundational to the relationships supporting teaching and learning. Students are actively involved in student-centred learning situations that build on students' strengths. Students engage in academic learning, celebrate their culture, and feel connected to the school. Achievement is monitored actively through appropriate data collection (e.g., literacy wall), and there is evidence of a pattern of improved achievement rates by students. As a result of this monitoring, available supports are provided to students. Students benefit from grants through school improvement (and services/resources available to them) and awards going directly to the students. While attendance has proven to be variable due to transience, improved attendance for students overall is evident, and discipline referrals have decreased. Students demonstrate resiliency within the school community, and there are indications of transfer to situations outside school. There is a sense that students wanted to attend these schools (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; *Teaching and Learning Together*, 2013; Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; and Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013).

Families feel connected to the schools. For those with negative school experiences such as residential school survivors, the connection of families with the schools seems to be particularly important. School staff members, students, and families interact often in informal environments such as family fun nights, and this enables staff members to see students in a more holistic manner. Programs and personnel have been put in place to invite parents and other family members to participate in the school. Learning resources such as libraries and computers encourage parents and other family members to participate in the learning process. Since all parental contributions are valued, parents contribute to their child's school in a manner that suits them, which has ranged from taking home laminating to chairing the Parent

Advisory Council. A review of Kelsey Community School Parent Advisory Council minutes suggests that the school continues to have an active working relationship with parents (Kelsey Community School, n.d.). Parents and school staff members collaborate on shared goals such as fundraising for playground equipment for the school for students and the community. Parents request that their children attend these schools (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; *Teaching and Learning Together*, 2013; Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; and Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013).

A community school has allowed everyone to work together to improve the lives of the children, youth, and their families. Materials from Kelsey Community School's Chapters-Indigo grant were shared with the nursery school in order to improve literacy for pre-schoolers. Due to partnerships, schools have become sites for community agencies, and students and families have had their needs better met through the provision of services ranging from dental services to suicide prevention. Agencies also collaborate through shared writing of grant applications and support of each other's grant applications. The schools collaborate with the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program by providing practicum sites and other practice-based educational experiences for teacher education students. Current teachers mentor education students, and Bachelor of Education students share their learning with school staff members on topics that include interactive whiteboards and sustainable development. Collaboration with community partners and joint programming between school divisions and the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program have enhanced the quality of life for students and their families (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; *Teaching and Learning Together*, 2013; Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; and Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013).

Community schools permit school community members, including teachers, support staff, and parents, to play important roles within the school and to feel empowered by the experience. All school community members are valued and contribute to the creation and implementation of shared goals for the school. Leadership is shared within the learning community, and community members offer their unique passions and expertise to the education program. Team work and open communication are clearly evident within the school. School community members feel positive about being in a progressive environment. Community schools encourage the participation of school community members and this connection of the community members to each other enables the school community to move forward together.

All staff members have responsibility for the education of all students. Staff members encourage lifelong learning by students and are advocates for students. Staff members develop caring and mutually supportive relationships among themselves. Staff members share the joy of graduation with students and their

families. Staff members feel quite positively about their roles within the school and their connection with the school. Collaborative teams are in place within the school to respond to the needs of students. Through collaboration and experimentation, teachers imagine new possibilities. Teachers value professional growth and seek to improve their teaching through collaborative school teams and graduate studies. These are schools that attract good teachers, and these teachers want to stay at these schools (Kelsey Community School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; Kelsey Community School Interview Participants, 2013; *Teaching and Learning Together*, 2013; Mary Duncan School Appreciative Inquiry Summit, 2012; and Mary Duncan School Interview Participants, 2013).

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program is grounded in Aboriginal and northern culture. During their program, education students are exposed to the perspectives of faculty members with diverse experiences and backgrounds in education. The development of strong working and caring relationships between teacher education students and faculty members has been fostered by relatively small class sizes. Faculty members have demonstrated through the teacher education program a commitment to the preparation of effective teachers. Graduates of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program have learned to integrate their understanding of Aboriginal culture and history with Manitoba curricula. Teacher education students are joyous and have a great sense of accomplishment when their students are learning. Programs supporting the education of division students and pre-service teachers about Aboriginal culture and history are created and shared between UCN and school systems in the region. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has provided a relevant teacher education for Aboriginal and northern residents (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

Education students are given ample opportunity to develop their teaching and leadership skills. Through programs such as *Into the Wild* and Winter Fest, future teachers engage elementary students in learning activities beyond the regular classroom. Teacher education students have a variety of experiences available to them in order to develop leadership skills (e.g., Mile 20, Cultural Proficiency Institute, WestCAST, *Into the Wild*, Career Trek). Education students are active in the schools in their home communities and are role models for younger students, encouraging school engagement, high school graduation, career planning, and post-secondary participation. Kenanow Bachelor of Education students have been provided a variety of practical experiences to develop and apply their abilities (*Into the Wild* Interview Participants, 2013; *Teaching and Learning Together*, 2013).

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been able to flourish at least in part because the program has been co-created by the educational partners and has been widely supported throughout the institution. Program administrators and faculty members have the ability to collaborate with educational partners, UCN Elders, and northern communities in order to fashion a program that represents the shared values and vision of the partners. Similarly, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been viewed as a successful UCN program. The Kenanow

Bachelor of Education program has contributed to the emerging identity of the University College of the North in its mission to provide post-secondary education to residents in northern Manitoba (Kenanow Bachelor of Education Interview Participants, 2013).

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program continues to participate in joint undertakings with its northern partners and other post-secondary institutions in order to further develop educational research opportunities and to foster a spirit of inquiry within education. Faculty members and UCN students are involved in the Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) research project. Faculty members and education students have presented at many conferences, including the Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) conferences (Manitoba Education Research Network, n.d.) that support educational research and collaboration in northern Manitoba. Locally, students and faculty members presented at professional development days in the School District of Mystery Lake and Kelsey School Division. In order to build teacher capacity, northern educational partners and Brandon University collaborated to offer a community-based graduate studies program linked with the VOICE research project. Inquiry and research into educational practices among the partners have been increasing during the past few years.

Collectively, the educational partners have created teaching and learning environments consistent with the principles and strategies outlined by Kosnik and Beck for inclusive education (2011). Inclusive education creates the conditions that have enabled more and more children and youth to experience a preferred future. Noted Aboriginal educators, including Marie Battiste, keep us mindful of the purpose of Aboriginal and northern education when she writes,

Education is the belief in possibilities. It is a belief about knowledge systems. It is a belief in the capacities of ordinary humans. We as educators must refuse to believe that anything in human nature and in various situations condemns humans to poverty, dependency, weakness, and ignorance. We must reject the idea that youth are confined to situations of fate, as such being born into a particular class, gender, or race. We must believe that teachers and students can confront and defeat the forces that prevent students living more fully and more freely. (2013, p. 175)

Educators alone cannot overcome social inequality in northern Manitoba, but they can contribute to the continuous improvement of outcomes for their students and enhance life possibilities for all students. Through continuous inquiry and dialogue, educators in collaboration with their students and communities can continue the process of co-creating communities of hope in order to maximize the opportunities for residents of northern Manitoba to live the good life.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

7.1 Summary of Findings

As a qualitative study reliant on the perceptions of the students, teachers, prospective teachers, administrators, and faculty members, a number of themes emerged that are instructive about the co-creation of inclusive educational environments in northern Manitoba. First, the creation of inclusive educational environments has been grounded in trusting and caring relationships. Second, the blending of Aboriginal and Western perspectives and approaches to education was shown to be critical for the development of a new synthesis that provides an approach to education that is culturally relevant, place-based, and relationally proficient. Third, the Faculty of Education at UCN has provided an accessible teacher education program, including leadership training, and collaborates with teachers and administrators in order to enhance the learning opportunities and life chances for northern Manitobans. Fourth, a spirit of inquiry into educational practice and the co-creation of educational practices was evident in the Faculty of Education and schools throughout the region. Last, schools and post-secondary institutions, despite their collaboration and sharing of resources, have struggled to sustainably fund many of those initiatives that provide inclusive education in northern Manitoba. With their shared perspectives and unique contributions to the partnership, the educational partners seek to actualize the dream of success for all learners.

The teachings behind those words, and the kindness of the Elders, that is not a perspective one normally ever sees . . . And to marry that to our educational system, in some way we need to bring that kindness into the system. (Program Development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program and Programs for Children of Youth—*Into the Wild* Summer Program interviews)

The caring is fundamental. It is very fundamental. If you don't care, then what kind of teacher are you going to be? (Program Development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program and Programs for Children and Youth—*Into the Wild* Summer Program interviews)

Trusting and caring relationships proved to be foundational in the co-creation of inclusive educational environments. The literature and the interviews support the view that such relationships are a necessary condition of inclusive education. The literature further supports the notion that the connection between student and teacher based on mutual regard has the most significant impact on student success. Trusting and caring are evident when students and their families feel welcomed into the school. Given the effect of the residential school experiences on Aboriginal people and continuing inequality of opportunity for the socio-economically disadvantaged, schools must now not only teach subject content but provide leadership and employ the relational processes needed to repair the broken

generational links that Elder Neff, Chair of UCN Council of Elders, speaks so passionately about (Neff, 2014). Where residential schools, child welfare policies, or poverty have an impact on students and their families, teachers and administrators in the school should help students and their families become healthier people and live in stronger communities. Schools must be places where students feel connected and, as we have seen from the interviews, places where students do not want to leave at the end of the day.

Northern education has been created by northern people and has blended Aboriginal and Western perspectives. With the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its partners focused on relational processes in education, educators in northern Manitoba should adopt approaches and perspectives that reflect the history and culture of the communities in the region (Neff, 2014). Prospective teachers are provided with an understanding of the history and culture of Aboriginal people and provided with strategies to incorporate Aboriginal history and culture into Manitoba curricula. The strategies learned by prospective teachers are supported by the educational research, including Hattie's *Visible Learning*. Culturally appreciative or responsive teachers graduating from the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program have been teaching their students to appreciate their communities. Hopefully, a culture-based and place-based approach to education is contributing to the development of positive identities for students. The active collaboration between the School District of Mystery Lake with the UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education program in Thompson provides evidence of a culture-based, place-based, and relationally proficient approach to education. There are many examples in this research project of the shared projects and collaborations among the educational partners in order to synthesize Aboriginal and Western perspectives in education.

The provision of an accessible teacher education program at UCN and the continuing co-creation of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program by the educational partners continue to prepare northern people to be effective teachers in northern Manitoba. Created through broad consultations and collaboration, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been established to be accessible to northern people. The program has been established in the communities of origin of the education students in order to promote student access to and comfort with the learning environment. It is anticipated that graduates of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program will provide effective instruction in northern schools. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been made available and relevant to prospective teachers.

In partnership with the VOICE project at Brandon University, UCN through its Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has become a catalyst for educational research and continuous inquiry into educational practices in northern Manitoba. As previously noted, the schools and their educational systems have created research projects and were involved in inquiries jointly with the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program. Many examples of collaborative inquiry, shared resources,

and joint activities have been evident in the data (Teaching and Learning Interview Participants, 2013). The educational partners continue to be engaged in dialogue regarding the practices that best promote success for all learners.

Despite the collaboration and rationing of resources, the educational partners struggle to access the sustained funding needed to fulfill their visions for students, their families, and the community. Increasingly, the partners are showing a good understanding of what needs to be done to support their students, but the stable funding that matches their passion and vision for serving students, their families, and the community is elusive.

It is always celebrating the positives. . . not looking at the fact that a child that you've worked with all year hasn't grown as much as you would've liked. . . . They've grown, and they've been as successful during that particular year as they're going to be. . . . Part of the growth that you see occurs because everybody values everybody. It doesn't matter who you are, and everyone is important. (Inclusive Schools: Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School interviews)

We have high expectations for the kids. You can't just give them things. . . . But you encourage them to work hard. Encourage them and tell them that you can do this. You don't give up on them because each one is different. (Program Development of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program and Programs for Children of Youth—*Into the Wild* Summer Program interviews)

7.2 Final Reflections

Based on the Kenanow Learning Model and co-created on a continuous basis with our educational partners, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program approach to education that reflects the populations to be served has been developed. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program prepares prospective teachers through culture-based and place-based approaches to teach and lead effectively in northern schools and communities. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been evolving in a manner responsive to the priorities of Manitoba Education and Training, our educational partners, and northern communities. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program demonstrates that you can weave Aboriginal and Western perspectives together to create a new synthesis that reflects an Aboriginal and northern vision.

It is difficult not to be struck by the optimism of the schools in the collaborative inquiries. Kelsey Community School and Mary Duncan School staff view students as the centre of the school and respond positively to the students regardless of the students' challenges. Their policies and procedures reflect the focus on success for all learners and teachers. The culture within the school is viewed holistically, and the struggles and success of one member of the school community matter to everyone within the school community. Achieving this shared purpose has been

made possible by a staff that is caring, committed, and highly competent. The staff members are operating on the belief that, by working together and using a student-centred approach, they can make a difference for children, youth, and their families. It appears that this is the case.

The development of positive identities for members of the school communities can be achieved by creating and maintaining effective, working relationships. The Elders have stressed the importance of attending to not only the immediate relationships in the classroom but also to the relationships that each member of the school community brings into the school through their external relationships (Neff, 2014). The research literature, including Hattie's research on Visible Learning, reinforces the idea that the establishment of collegial relationships between teacher and student are foundational for learning, and further suggests that these relationships are more likely to occur where there is caring and relational trust within the school community. The relationships discovered through this research at Mary Duncan School and Kelsey Community School have provided ample evidence of the wisdom of the Elders. When members of the school community commit to collaborating to achieve shared purposes, children and youth see themselves positively, dream of their preferred futures, and spend their days with principals and teachers determined to make a difference in their lives, their families, and communities.

The study of the co-creation of inclusive educational environments has been grounded in the experiences of the educational partners in northern Manitoba. As Wilson (2008) suggests, the lessons learned from this project can be extrapolated to other situations, but the applicability of the findings decreases as the social conditions are increasingly dissimilar. This study draws upon the perceptions of students, teachers, prospective teachers, administrators, faculty members, and Elders specifically involved in the co-creation of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and inclusive educational environments. The MEW project provides some qualitative evidence of changes in student achievement levels, high graduation rates, or post-secondary participation. Additional support for the findings in this study can be found in the Conference Board of Canada's report, *Lessons Learned: Achieving Positive Educational Outcomes in Northern Communities* (Sisco, Caron-Vuotari, Stonebridge, Sutherland, & Rhéaume, 2012). Further studies involving the educational partners in northern Manitoba may provide quantitative indicators of success.

It is my wish that we would support learners in the north in a more sustainable way for the future . . . many of our places need some big investment. And if the province really is forward thinking they would be looking at the numbers, populations and the demographics, and they would be saying you know that we better invest now. (*Teaching and Learning Together* interviews)

In recent years, the Canadian media has drawn the nation's attention to the despair, hopelessness, and tragedy experienced by Aboriginal children and youth who reside in northern communities such as Attawapiskat, Ontario, La Loche, Saskatchewan, and Cross Lake, Manitoba. Without a doubt, the plight faced by these young northern people has not only appalled the Canadian public but has also surely caused them to wonder how such abject hardship can happen in Canada, one of the world's wealthiest nations. One could easily list a litany of the socio-economic causes responsible for the plight faced by too many of those who reside in Canada's northern communities. The legacy of residential schools, inadequate or non-existent infrastructure, geographic isolation, an abysmally high unemployment rate, and a lack of economic development are all factors that have given rise to the despair, hopelessness, and tragedy faced by those who live in many of Canada's northern communities.

No reasonable person could cogently argue that there is a quick fix for the aforementioned socio-economic problems. But, positive change can be facilitated through an education system that is not only academically rigorous but is also respectful and reflective of Aboriginal and northern culture. Fortunately, on that front, there are indications that progress is underway. In the schools, teachers and administrators work with students, Elders, parents, and community members in interesting and creative ways to enhance the life possibilities for children and youth. In addition to the overall supports needed to improve the lives of those living in the north, adequately resourced schools and educational systems can create, implement and sustain programs that better serve Aboriginal and northern children and youth. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its partners offering a teacher education program in a collaborative fashion is a case in point and is changing lives now. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program provides but one example of the strides that are being taken in the north through a culture-based and place-based approach to education to create within communities different narratives for the children and youth. The research summarized in this paper documents the efforts by the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program and its partners to increase the life possibilities for Aboriginal and northern children and youth in order for them to create new stories for themselves.

Through this participatory action research project, current and recent activities connected with the learning, teaching, and leading in support of inclusive education are documented in this monograph. The collaboration and ongoing dialogue present among educators across the region to support success for all learners has been captured. Networks of educators seeking to co-create more inclusive schools that serve as harbours of hope for all learners, their families, the school staff, and their communities have been identified. Together, the process of co-creating transformative change to schools in northern Manitoba is underway.

REFERENCES

- Absolom, K., & Willett, C. (2004). Aboriginal research: Berry picking and hunting in the 21st century. *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, 1, 5-17.
- Aikenhead, G. S., & Michell, H. (2011). *Bridging cultures: Scientific and indigenous ways of knowing nature*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Canada.
- Anderson, D. (2010). *How to grow a useful faculty of education: The creation of the Kenanow faculty of education*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Archibald, J., Lundy, J., Reynolds, C., & Williams, L. (2010). *Accord on Indigenous education*. Association of Canadian Deans of Education. Retrieved from http://www.csse-scee.ca/docs/acde/acde_accord_indigenousresearch_en.pdf
- Bagnoli, A., & Clark, A. (2010). Focus groups with young people: A participatory approach to research planning [Entire issue]. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13(1).
- Banks, J. A. (2006). *Race, culture and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bates, A., Drita, D., Allen, C., & McCandless, P. (2009). Service learning as an instructional strategy for the preparation of teachers. *The Journal of Effective Teaching*, 9(1), 5-23.
Retrieved from http://uncw.edu/cte/et/articles/vol9_1/Bates.pdf
- Battiste, M. A. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Publishing.
- Beckford, C., & Nahdee, R. (2011). *Teaching for ecological sustainability: Incorporating Indigenous philosophies and practices*. What Works? Research into Practice series, Research Monograph #36. Retrieved from www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/WW_Teaching_Ecological.pdf
- Bell, D. (2004). *Sharing our successes: Ten case studies in Aboriginal schooling*. Kelowna, BC: Society for Advancement of Excellence in Education (SAEE).
- Boyd, R., Sullivan, G., & MacNeill, I. (2006). Relational pedagogy: Putting balance back into students' learning. *Curriculum & Leadership Journal*, 4(13). Retrieved from http://www.curriculum.edu.au/leader/relational_pedagogy_putting_balance_back_into_stu,13944.html
- Brandon University. (n.d.). *Vital outcomes indicators for community engagement*. [Website]. www.voiceresearchproject.ca
- Brandon University. (2010). *Vital outcome indicators for community engagement* [Proposal to]. Retrieved from Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Proposal for Funding.

- Brandon University and University College of the North. (2012). *Vital outcome indicators for community engagement* [Research meeting with UCN Elders Council].
- Brown, C., Gardiner, A., Davis, J., Henderson, L., Dykun, L., & Cook, R. (2015). *Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway Thompson Community Circle*. (Unpublished Report).
- Browne, B., & Jain, S. (2002). *Imagine Chicago: Ten years of imagination in action*. Chicago, IL: Imagine Chicago. Retrieved from <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/uploads/Imagine%20Chicago-%20Book.pdf>
- Brownell, M., Roos, N., MacWilliam, L., Leclair, L., Ekuma, O., & Fransoo, R. (2010). Academic and social outcomes for high-risk youths in Manitoba. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 33(4), 804–836. Retrieved from <http://www.csse-scee.ca/CJE/Articles/FullText/CJE33-4/CJE33-4-BrownellEtAl.pdf>
- Cajete, G. (1986). "Science: A Native American perspective": A culturally based science education curriculum (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). International College, Los Angeles.
- Canada. Department of Justice Canada. (1982). *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice. Retrieved from <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html>
- Canada. Department of Justice Canada. (1982). *Constitution Act, 1982*. Ottawa, ON: Department of Justice, 1982. Retrieved from <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/const/page-15.html>
- Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: Gathering Strength* (Vol. 3). Ottawa, ON: Canada Communication Group—Publishing. Retrieved from <http://data2.archives.ca/e/e448/e011188230-03.pdf>
- Council on Post-Secondary Education. (n.d.). *Education and Advanced Learning Manitoba*. Retrieved September 20, 2014, from www.copse.mb.ca/compendium/previous.htm
- The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), in collaboration with The Canadian Commission for UNESCO. (2008). *Report two: Inclusive education in Canada: The way of the future* [The Development of Education Reports for Canada]. Toronto, ON: CMEC. Retrieved from <http://www.cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/122/ICE2008-reports-canada.en.pdf>
- Cresswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dahrendorf, R. (2008). *The modern social conflict: The politics of liberty*. London, UK: Transaction Publishers.
- Davis, W. (2009). *The wayfinders: Why ancient wisdom matters in the modern world*. Toronto, ON: House of Ananasi Press.

- Dhar, S. (2009). Knowledge as a change driver. In A. Chandra & M. K. Khanijo (Eds.), *Knowledge Economy: The Indian Challenge* (pp. 221–231). New Delhi, India: SAGE Publications India.
- Dweck, C. S. (2000). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
- Earl, S., Carden, F., & Smutylo, T. (2001). *Outcome mapping: Building learning and reflection into development programs*. Ottawa, ON: International Development Research Centre.
- Edmunds, A. L., & Edmunds, G. (2010). *Educational psychology: Applications in Canadian classrooms*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Fenzel, L., & Dean, R. (2011). Changes in students' social justice and racial attitudes in an undergraduate child psychology service-learning course. *Journal of Research on Service Learning & Teacher Education*, 1(2), 20–30.
- Filleul, M., & Rowland, B. (2006). Using appreciative inquiry in the Vancouver School District: A positive approach to enhance learning. *BC Educational Leadership Research*. June, 1–10.
Retrieved from http://www.aceconsulting.ca/ai/Using_Appreciative_Inquiry.pdf
- Fransoo, R., Martens, P., The Need To Know Team, Prior, H., Burchill, C., Koseva, I., Bailly, A., & Allegro, E. (2013, October). *The 2013 RHA Indicators Atlas* (Rep.). Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Centre for Health Policy. Retrieved from http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/RHA_2013_web_version.pdf
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. (2006). *Turnaround leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Galloway, G. (2011a, November 11). Native leader praises UN declaration as historic. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. 1–2. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ottawa-notebook/native-leader-praises-un-declaration-as-historic/article619288/>
- Galloway, G. (2011b, November 21). First-nations youth inhabit two different spheres. *The Globe and Mail*, p. 1. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/first-nations-youth-inhabit-two-different-spheres/article543608/>
- Galloway, G. (2012a, September 6). National education panel in jeopardy as native leaders withdraw support. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. 1–3. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/national-education-panel-in-jeopardy-as-native-leaders-withdraw-support/article595990/>
- Galloway, G. (2012b, September 6). Grim state of native education comes as a surprise to no one. *The Globe and Mail*. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/grim-state-of-native-education-comes-as-a-surprise-to-no-one/article543610/>

- Gergen, K. J. (n.d.). *Social construction and pedagogical practice*. Manuscript, Swarthmore College. Retrieved from http://www.swarthmore.edu/Documents/faculty/gergen/Social_Construction_and_Pedagogical_Practice.pdf
- Gergen, K. J. (2003). Action research and orders of democracy. *Action Research*, 1(1), 39–56.
- Gergen, K. J. (2009a). *An invitation to social construction* (Second ed.). London: Sage.
- Gergen, K. J. (2009b). *Relational being: Beyond self and community*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Gergen, K. J., & Gergen, M. (2008). *Social construction: Entering the dialogue*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publications.
- Gergen, M., Chrisler, J., & LoCicero, A. (1999). Innovative methods: Resources for research, publishing, and teaching. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 23(2), 431–456.
- Greenwald, R., Hedges, L., & Laine, R. (1996, Fall). Interpreting research on school resources and student achievement: A rejoinder to Hanushek. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(3), 411–416.
- Hart, M. (2002). *Seeking mino-pimastisiwin: An Aboriginal approach to helping*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing.
- Hattie, J. (2009). *Visible learning: A synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. [eBook]. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Hattie, J., Marsh, H. W., Neill, J. T., & Richards, G. E. (1997). Adventure education and Outward Bound: Out-of-class experiences that make a lasting difference. *Review of Educational Research*, 67(1), 43–87. doi: 10.3102/00346543067001043
- Heron, J., & Reason, P. (1997). A participatory inquiry paradigm. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), 1–16.
- Herr, K., & Anderson, G. (2005). *The action research dissertation: A guide for students and faculty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.
- Hill, B. (2016, May 11). Canada endorses United Nations Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples. Globe News.
- Hnidy, D., & Jones, M. (2014). *A study of early literacy achievement: Kelsey School Literacy Plan* (Rep.). The Pas, MB: Kelsey School Division.
- Hornstrup, C., Leohr-Peterson, J., Madsen, J., Johansen, T., & Jensen, A. (2012). *Developing relational leadership*. Chagrin Falls, OH: Taos Institute Publications.
- Hulley, W., & Dier, L. (2005). *Harbors of Hope*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.
- Hulley, W., & Dier, L. (2009). *Getting by or getting better: Applying effective schools research to today's issues*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree.

- Hunter, H. (2000). In the face of poverty: What a community school can do. In J. Silver (Ed.), *Solutions that work: Fighting poverty in Winnipeg* (pp. 111–125). Halifax, NS: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives—Manitoba & Fernwood Publishing.
- Hyman, I., Meinhard, A., & Shields, J. (2011). *The role of multiculturalism policy in addressing social inclusion processes in Canada*. Working paper series, Volume 2011 (3). Toronto, ON: Centre for Voluntary Sector Studies, Ryerson University. Retrieved from <http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/cvss/reports/2011%20v3%20The%20Role.pdf>
- Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics. (2008). *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*. Draft 2nd ed. Ottawa, ON: Interagency Secretariat on Research Ethics. www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/policy-politique/docs/TCPS-Draft2-eng.pdf
- Iverson, J. (2008, April 19). Investing in Aboriginal education. *National Post*.
- Iverson, J. (2014, November 15). Money there for aboriginal education funding, but no one seems willing to come and take it. *National Post*.
- Kelsey Community School. (n.d.). Home page. <https://sites.google.com/site/kelseycommunity/home>
- Kelsey Community School. (2008). *Kelsey Community School Special Area Group Presentation* (Rep.). The Pas, MB: Author.
- Kelsey Community School. (n.d.). *Kelsey Community School Year 2013-2014 Year End Slide Show*. The Pas, MB: Author. <https://sites.google.com/site/kelseycommunity/photos>
- Kelsey School Division. (2012). *Kelsey School Division 2011–2012 Annual Report* (Rep.). The Pas, MB: Author.
- Kelsey School Division. (2013). *Kelsey School Division 2012–2013 Annual Report* (Rep.). The Pas, MB: Author.
- Kelsey School Division. (2010). *Mary Duncan School Report 2009–2010* (Rep.). The Pas, MB: Author.
- Kihlstrom, A., & Israel, J. (2002). Communicative or strategic action: An attempt to test some of the fundamental thesis in the theory of communicative action. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 11(3), 210–218.
- Kosnik, C. M., & Beck, C. (2011). *Teaching in a nutshell: Navigating your teacher education program as a student teacher*. [eBook]. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Levitt, C., & Schreihans, C. (2010). Taking the plunge: Combining service and online learning. *Small Business Institute National Conference Proceedings*, 34(1), 276–291. Retrieved from <http://www.smallbusinessinstitute.biz/Resources/Documents/Proceedings/2010%20Proceedings.pdf>

- Lewthwaite, B. (2007). From school in community to a community-based school: The influence of an aboriginal principal on culture-based school development. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, 64, 1–18.
- Lewthwaite, B., & McMillan, B. (2008). Combining the views of both worlds: Science education in Oikiqtani: Progress report. In (Ed.), *Centre for Research, Youth, Science Teaching and Learning*. University of Manitoba: Annual CRYSTAL Manitoba Meeting.
- Lindsey, R. B. Nuri Robins, K., & Terrell, R. (2009). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Lindsey, R. (Ed.). (2012). *Equity*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Lindsey, R., Karns, M., & Myatt, K. (2010). *Culturally proficient education: An asset-based response to conditions of poverty*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Loxley, J. (2010). *Aboriginal, northern, and community economic development: Papers and retrospectives*. Winnipeg, MB: Arbeiter Ring Publishing.
- MacDonald, C. (2012). Understanding participatory action research: A qualitative research methodology option. *Canadian Journal of Action Research*, 13(2), 34–50.
- Manitoba. *The Education Administration Act*. C.C.S.M. c. E10. (1987a). Winnipeg, MB: Queen's Printer—Statutory Publications. Retrieved August 26, 2014.
- Manitoba. *The Public Schools Act*. C.C.S.M. c. P250. (1987b). Winnipeg, MB: Queen's Printer—Statutory Publications. Retrieved August 26, 2014.
- Manitoba Education. (n.d.). *Manitoba's high school graduation rate*. Retrieved September 20, 2014, from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/reports/grad_rate/index.html
- Manitoba Education (n.d.). *School and Divisional Planning*. Retrieved October 14, 2014, from <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/pie/index.html>
- Manitoba Education. (2013). *Adult Learning Centre Report 2011–12* (Rep.). Winnipeg, MB: Author.
- Manitoba Education and Training. (2000). *Education for a sustainable future: A resource for curriculum developers, teachers, and administrators* (pp. 1–69). Winnipeg, MB: Author.
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2006). *Appropriate educational programming in Manitoba: Standards for student services*. Winnipeg, MB: Author. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/pdf/Standards_for_Student_Services.pdf
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth. (2007). *Appropriate educational programming: A handbook for student services*. Winnipeg, MB: Author. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/aep/handbook_ss/

- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Aboriginal Education Directorate. (n.d.). Community Schools Partnership Initiative. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/cspi/>
- Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN). (n.d.). Home page. www.mern.ca
- Manych, T. (Spring 2012). Profile of inclusive education: Mary Duncan School, The Pas, Manitoba. *Education Watch*, 4(1), 12.
- Manych, T. (2013). *Mary Duncan School Project Arise: Attendance Initiative*. Retrieved from http://www.prezi.com/njjouzh_psqy/
- Manych, T. (2014). *Mary Duncan School Statistics* (Rep.).
- Martin, T. L., & Calabrese, R. L. (2011). Empowering at-risk students through appreciative inquiry. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(2), 110-123. doi: 10.1108/09513541111107542
- Mary Duncan School. (n.d.). Home page. <http://www.maryduncanschool.com>
- Mary Duncan School. (2017, Feb. 21). Principal confirms school won Spirit of the Earth Award in April 2011. [Email communication].
- Marzano, R. J. (2003). *What works in schools: Translating research into action*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Marzano, R. J. (2007). *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Marzano, R. J., Boogren, T., Heflebower, T., Kanold-McIntyre, J., & Pickering, D. (2012). *Becoming a reflective teacher*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.
- Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D., & Heflebower, T. (2011). *The highly engaged classroom*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research Laboratory.
- McNamee, S. (1988, Winter). Accepting research as social intervention: Implications of a systemic epistemology. *Communication Quarterly*, 36(1), 50-68.
- McNamee, S., & Gergen, K. (1999). *Relational responsibility: Resources for sustainable dialogue*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Moore, D. (2011, October 16). Native school conditions in Canada are shocking: Panel chair. *The Globe and Mail*, pp. 1-3. Retrieved from <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/native-school-conditions-in-canada-are-shocking-panel-chair/article557527/>

- Mystery Lake School District, Burntwood Regional Health Authority, and Addictions Foundation of Manitoba. (2012). *2010–2011 Youth Behaviour Survey Highlights Report*. Winnipeg, MB: Proactive Information Services.
- Neff, S. (2014, April 11). *Kenanow learning model*. Lecture presented at MERN Spring Forum Pedagogy of Place, The Pas, MB.
- Niessen, S. (Ed.). (2008). *Aboriginal knowledge exchange project self-study compilation report: Aboriginal ways of knowing in teacher education* (pp. 1–37, Rep.). Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit (sidru) Faculty of Education, University of Regina.
- Noddings, N. (2007). The one-caring as teacher. In R. R. Curren (Ed.), *Philosophy of education: An anthology* (pp. 372–376). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- Northern Health Region, Cancer Care Manitoba, Action Cancer Manitoba, Partners in Planning for Healthy Living. (2012a). *Youth Health Survey Report Kelsey School Division* (Rep.). Author.
- Northern Health Region, Cancer Care Manitoba, Action Cancer Manitoba, Partners in Planning for Healthy Living. (2012b). *Youth Health Survey Report Mary Duncan School Grade 7 to 12* (Rep.). Author.
- Paul, A. (2011, December 17). Teachers seek fix for poor Aboriginal education. *Winnipeg Free Press*. Retrieved from <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/teachers-seek-fix-for-poor-aboriginal-education-135787133.html>
- Proactive Information Services. *Making Education Work Implementation Report* (pp. 1–20, Rep.). (2011). Winnipeg, MB: Proactive Information Services.
- Rabson, M. (2011, November 26). Making the grade: Aboriginal high school education by the numbers. *Winnipeg Free Press*. Retrieved from <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/making---the-grade-aboriginal-high-school-education-by-the-numbers-134524973.html>
- Rowland, P., & Adkins, C. (2007). Native American science education and its implications for multi-cultural science education. In S. M. Hines (Ed.), *Multi-cultural science education: Theory, practice and promise* (pp. 113–120). New York, NY: Peter Lang.
- Saskatchewan Education. (2001). *Aboriginal elders and community workers in schools: A guide for school divisions and their partners*. Regina, SK: Author. Retrieved from <https://treaty6education.lskysd.ca/sites/treaty6education.lskysd.ca/files/Aboriginal%20Elders%20and%20Community%20Workers%20in%20Schools.pdf>
- Saskatchewan Learning. (2010). *A time for significant leadership: A strategy for implementing First Nations and Métis education goals: Implementation guide draft* [Working draft]. Regina, SK: Author. Retrieved from <http://publications.gov.sk.ca/documents/11/82960-ATFSL-pdf.pdf>

- Schoenfeld, R. (2006). Service learning: Bringing together students, parents and community to create a new world. *New Horizons for Learning*. Retrieved from <http://education.jhu.edu/PD/newhorizons/strategies/topics/service-learning/bringing-together/>
- School District of Mystery Lake. (2012). *Annual Community Report 2011–2012*. Thompson, MB: School District of Mystery Lake.
- School District of Mystery Lake. (2013). *Annual Community Report 2012–2013*. Thompson, MB: School District of Mystery Lake.
- School District of Mystery Lake. (n.d.). Home page. Retrieved September 10, 2014, from <http://www.mysterynet.mb.ca/>
- School District of Mystery Lake. (2014, June). *School District of Mystery Lake Newsletter, Issue 4*.
- Schroeder, C. M., Scott, T. P., Tolson, H., Huang, T., & Lee, Y. (2007). A meta-analysis of national research: Effects of teaching strategies on student achievement in science in the United States. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 44(10), 1436–1460. doi: 10.1002/tea.20212
- Sergiovanni, T. (2000). *The lifeworld of leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sergiovanni, T. (2004). Building a community of hope. *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 33–37.
- Sisco, A., Caron-Vuotari, M., Stonebridge, C., Sutherland, G., & Rhéaume, G. (2012). *Lessons learned: Achieving positive educational outcomes in northern communities* [Policy brief]. Ottawa, ON: The Conference Board of Canada.
- St. Denis, V. (2010, November). You don't have to be Aboriginal to learn Aboriginal content: Suggestions from the experience and professional knowledge of Aboriginal teachers. Presentation at *Learning from practice: An exchange of teacher knowledge and research*. Symposium conducted at the Dr. Stirling McDowell Foundation for Research into Teaching, Saskatoon, SK.
- Tough, F. (1988, Spring). Economic aspects of Aboriginal title in northern Manitoba: Treaty 5 adhesions and Métis scrip. *Manitoba History*, 15. Retrieved from http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/15/aboriginaltitle.shtml
- Toulouse, P. R. (2008). *Integrating Aboriginal teaching and values into the classroom*. What Works? Research into Practice series, Research Monograph #11. Retrieved from <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/inspire/research/Toulouse.pdf>
- University College of the North. (2004). *Bringing together the past, present and future: Building a system of post-secondary education in northern Manitoba* [Strategic Planning Document].
- University College of the North. (2008). *Kenanow Bachelor of Education program documents*. Retrieved from <http://www.ucn.ca>

- University College of the North. (2011). *Kenanow Bachelor of Education program documents*. Aboriginal Program and Services 2009–10.
- University College of the North. (2014). *Kenanow Bachelor of Education program documents*. University College of the North.
- University College of the North. Faculty of Education. (2013a). *Into the wild final report*. Author.
- University College of the North. Faculty of Education. (2013b). *Into the wild student survey* (Rep.). Author.
- University College of the North. Kenanow Bachelor of Education. (2011). *Minutes – B.ED. program advisory committee meeting, October 27, 2011*. (Rep.). UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education documents.
- Wagamese, R. (2008). *One Native life*. Toronto, ON: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Watkins, J., & Mohr, B. (2001). *Appreciative inquiry*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer.
- Weinstein, T., Boulanger, F. D., & Walberg, H. J. (1982). Science curriculum effects in high school: A quantitative synthesis. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 19(6), 511–522. doi: 10.1002/tea.3660190610
- Wheatley, M. J. (2001, Fall). Restoring hope to the future through critical education of leaders. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 24(3), 46–49.
- Wilson, J. (2012, January 26). Education is the key for Natives. *Winnipeg Free Press*.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing.

June 2008

Consultation and Development Process in Bachelor of Education Program

In the development of a Bachelor of Education program, there have been extensive consultations with stakeholders in Manitoba. The following is a timeline highlighting some of the more notable events:

2005

July–August	Letters requesting input and participation in Bachelor of Education process to: Education Directors Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Superintendents Manitoba Teachers’ Society Brandon University Teacher Education Program Dean(s) of Education Manitoba Education—Aboriginal Education Directorate Manitoba Association of School Trustees Fieldstone Ventures Education and Training Centre
November	Linkages Conference—Consultation about Steering Committee, characteristics of Bachelor of Education Program with stakeholders from communities in Region (notes to follow)

2006

January	Establishment of a Steering Committee for Bachelor of Education program Steering Committee Teleconference
March	Proposals from school divisions
April	Meeting with Neufeld and McNeill—Research on teacher training programs
May	University College of the North Sponsor’s Meeting
October	Northern Superintendents
November	Northern Languages Advisory Committee Linkages—discussion concerning Bachelor of Education Development

2007

- March Northern Superintendents Meeting—Bachelor of Arts and Education—integration of degrees
Bachelor of Science—Biology major and teachable subjects for Education from UCN staff member
- June University College of the North Bachelor of Education Planning Workshop—Provincial Stakeholders with Helen Robinson-Settee as Workshop facilitator with participants from Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth, University College of the North—staff, governance, Dean(s) of Education, school divisions, Brandon University Teacher Education Program, Professors—Manitoba universities
- July Draft University of the College of the North Bachelor of Education Proposal
- September Bachelor of Education Meeting—review proposal

2008

- January–March Development and review of program outline by educational stakeholders involvement of Council of Elders, Dr. John Hofley, UCN faculty, Steering Committee to meet and attend sessions like CRYSTAL and SAGE to ensure approach in proposal reflects best practice
Verbal confirmation—Bachelor of Education proposal meets requirements for certification (as amended) from administration, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
Meetings with working group from Faculty of Arts re development and delivery of breadth courses and more teachable subject areas—Aboriginal Language, English, History, and Biology
Steering Committee meets—number of issues to pursue regarding program implementation
Accepting applications for After Degree and Integrated BA/B Ed program for Thompson and The Pas
UCN Curriculum Committee approves Bachelor of Education proposal in principle identity
Orientation sessions with Enrolment Services regarding Bachelor of Education program and requirements for certification—ongoing
Draft budget for hiring of faculty received by Dean

Tentative approval for course development—May and June
with Staff Authorization Requests and Advertisements prepared

Tentative plan for workloads and scheduling for September 2008

Staff Authorization Requests and advertisements for faculty
prepared

Allocation of faculty for breadth courses—Math/Science

Arranging meeting with Education Authorities and School
Divisions for practicum

Development of a Proposal for Laddering within the Faculty of
Education and allied departments

Steering Committee Sub-Committee—Indigenizing the Bachelor
of Education program

Brandon University Teacher Education Program transfer to be
determined—role of BUNTEP faculty unclear

Further approval processes completed:

Written confirmation from the Manitoba Education,
Citizenship and Youth—certification of teachers

UCN Learning Council—June

COPSE proposal submitted (with provision for External
Review as required by COPSE)

