

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LAND IN THE EDUCATION AND HEALTH OF
ANISHINAABE YOUTH FROM PIC RIVER FIRST NATION**

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ABSTRACT

This study shares the experiences of twenty-one Anishinabek youth from Pic River First Nation, Ontario, Canada in relation to how the Land¹ is significant for their education and good health.

This thesis is meant as a small part of my family's role in protecting the Land; my upbringing and connections to my Anishinabek community have influenced my desire to learn about traditional education and its role in supporting Anishinabek learners. Understanding the significance of Land for Anishinabek youth and what they see as its connection to their education and health is important. These findings support the position that we should continue to keep the Land the way it is so our future generations can experience this too.

This research study contributes to the need to hear from Indigenous youth. The stories shared here reflect how Pic River Youth situate themselves and thrive from the Land, community and family in Pic River. Though there is research on Indigenous ways of knowing, and how Indigenous youth learn, there are fewer studies on how Land is significant for the youth, how the Land makes them feel, and how this contributes to their education and good health. In my findings, I heard that "the Land is everything." Miigwetch in sharing this journey with me.

Figure 1. North Shore of Lake Superior, Marathon ON, Photo Credit, Diane M. Richmond

¹ Land is capitalized throughout this thesis because of my belief that the word needs this emphasis and is a highly important concept for Anishinabek people. Capitalizing the word is my way of signifying this. Another term I could have used is Mother Earth, or Mama Aki which is the Anishinabek word for Land. While I was finishing my thesis, Bolivia was set to pass the Law of Mother Earth (in Spanish La Ley de Derechos de la Madre Tierra) granting nature rights and protections similar to humans (Deppe, 2012). This was initiated by Bolivia's first Indigenous president, Evo Morales. A strong environmentalist, in 2009 Morales said: "If we want to safeguard mankind, then we need to safeguard the planet. That is the next major task of the United Nations" (cited in Deppe, 2012). Bolivian foreign minister David Choquehuanca has also stated: "Our grandparents taught us that we belong to a big family of plants and animals.... We believe that everything on the planet forms part of a big family. We indigenous people can contribute to solving the energy, climate, food, and financial crises with our values" (cited in Deppe, 2012). I think that the work of Bolivia speaks to the relationship we as Anishnabek feel about Land in Pic River First Nation, Ontario Canada. We are all related! Gakina awiia!

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I thank Pic River First Nation Youth for offering their stories and experiences. Your stories are so important! Keep telling them! Stories are medicine.

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And a big thank you to all the future youth of Pic River First Nation!

Taiiaki Alfred (1998) writes "Learning, doing...reawakening to who we can be. This is the positive sense of self-determination that we need to carry us forward." (p. 175)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to share the voices of youth from Pic River First Nation who expressed a desire to be a part of this study which looks at their relationship with the Land, with a specific focus on their education and health. This work is unique in Canada and globally where there is a lack of studies in this area, which I show in the literature review in Chapter Two. The stories of the youth of Pic River are an important contribution in understanding how one group of Indigenous youth view, define, and share their experiences and relationship with the Land. Equally important is the greater links that this connection to the Land has to their education and health.

I situate this research in Indigenous Methodology and as an Indigenous researcher I am guided by Wilson (2001) who discusses the term “relational accountability” (Wilson, p. 177). I was intrigued by this term, and I kept returning to it while I analysed my data which I discuss further in Section 1.7. With this methodology, I resisted defining a *problem* in my research which I felt would take me away from being accountable in a relational manner. When sitting down to carve out my thesis proposal, the idea that I had to start with a *problem* took up a large part of my concentration and led to much frustration. I learned through Smith (1999) that Eurocentric positivist research has often looked into our communities to find a *problem*, and then answered in paternalistic ways which have had real consequences and problematic outcomes for our communities. While this research responds to issues present in Pic River, I prefer to frame it in terms of celebration. Smith’s (1999) “Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects” (p.143), and specifically “Celebrating Survival” (p. 145), are projects I feel are important, and in my thesis I show the connections that the youth of Pic River have to the Land, and how these support them in their life experiences. Smith cites Cajete who writes:

Celebrating is a natural outcome of spiritual sharing and it too can take on a diversity of forms. It is an individual and communal process that celebrates the mystery of life and the journey that each of us takes. Celebration is a way of spreading the lights around. (1999, p. 145)

For too long, we have not had the opportunity to share and spread the lights of our survival around. A part of my contribution in this act of spiritual sharing is spreading light by sharing the stories told to me by the youth of Pic River.

We learn from stories (Peltier, 2010; Wasam-Ellam, 2001). They connect us to our histories and to the Land we are born from. Stories provide a point of origin and a destination. The stories from the youth of Pic River are expressions of a greater narrative of how one community connects to Land, and the relationships which spring from this. The literature review in Chapter Two supports the work I am undertaking and that is understanding how and why Land is significant for Anishinaabe learning and good health. In Chapter Three I discuss my methodology and methods. Chapter Four unveils the findings. Lastly, Chapter Five is the conclusion and final recommendations.

1.1 Situating Myself as an Indigenous Woman in Educational Research

I am a member of Pic River First Nation or Begtekong, which means *where the river meets*. Pic River is located along the north shore of Lake Superior in Canada. We are part of the Anishinabek Nation and one of seven Anishinabek communities that line the north shore of Lake Superior, yet our Nation spans through the provinces of Ontario and Manitoba and the northern portions of the United States along the Great Lakes regions. Although Pic River is located in the Robinson Superior Treaty Group, our community has never been a signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. We have maintained our position on this through our comprehensive Land Claim agreement initiated in 1985, but not yet signed (Chief Roy Michano, personal communication, July 7, 2010). This is important in situating this research because it shows that

Pic River is engaging in a political and economic platform that seeks to move the community and membership forward. It also shows the community's commitment to protecting the Land.



Figure 2. Mouth of the Pic River looking south to Lake Superior, Photo Credit Brenda Rousselle.

My Anishinaabe name is Makadaygobewiik and I am from the Moo-ki Dodem. In the spring of 2010, I had a dream and another name came to me in English: Standing Shield Woman. I was told in my dream that I was a protector. I see this as significant, as it came just before I was beginning to plan my thesis research, and I honour it because I believe it reflects my roles and responsibilities as a mother and an Anishinabek woman who is a guardian of the Land and Waters. Cook, an Akwesasne Mohawk Midwife says that women are the “carrier of culture” and speaks about the resiliency of women and our responsibilities:

When we find ourselves in a crisis, like the one colonialism has created, it is our responsibility as the base of the generations, to lead the resurgence by bringing forth a generation of children that are strong, healthy, and properly prepared to live in their traditions. Reclaiming our responsibility as the carriers of cultures, whether we have children or not, means reclaiming our responsibilities as aunts, grandmothers, teachers and visionaries. Without the voices of women at the table when our leaders talk about governance, we are missing the ones responsible for protecting culture, our language, our knowledge and our philosophies. (Cook, cited in Simpson, 2006, p. 29)

I am a mixed race Anishinabek born in North York, Toronto, Ontario to Diane (nee Michano) from Pic River First Nation, Ontario and Reginald, from Greens Cove, Newfoundland. Growing up as a mixed race Anishinabek, I have been told I was blessed to walk in two worlds—the one of my mom and the one of my dad. This has not always been easy, though. As a young girl, maybe about three, my mother tells a story about me and my Shomie (grandfather). She says he sat me on the table and drew an imaginary line down my forehead to my toes, telling me to be proud of both of my identities, likely preparing me for the road ahead in my life. Walking in two worlds is a rich experience, and multilayered, and this was his way of acknowledging this.



Figure 3. My maternal grandparents', Adeline and Matthew Michano- their home behind them, today the only the tree pictured in Figure 5 only stands. Their home was torn down in the '90's to build a new building without entire family consent. Pic River First Nation, Photo Credit, unknown.

For my first seven years, my family lived in Scarborough, Ontario. Our neighbourhood, Malvern, was bordered by Finch, Markham, Morningside, and Sheppard, and was one of the most multicultural neighbourhoods in Toronto. We then relocated to northern Ontario and my mother anticipated she would live in her community. Due to Indian Act rules around citizenship and mixed-race marriages our family could not live there. Lawrence (2003) writes about how the Indian Act severed families like mine, our ties and relationships, to the communities to which we belong “by forcibly removing tens of thousands of Native women and their descendents from their communities for marrying non-status or non-Native men” (p. 6). For temporary shelter, we moved to a home off-reserve in an area bordering Pic River, and lived in what my mother refers to as a cabin—hardly so, it was a retired gas station in Heron Bay North. Within a few months of living at the cabin, my parents were fortunate to purchase a home in the nearby town of Marathon, where they still live today.

A little piece of home for me in Pic River was at my grandmother’s house. I would visit mostly on Sundays after church, and on holidays. I have the typical childhood memories - watching the sparrows nest along the sides of her home, following the long grasses down to the bottom where the Pic River flowed, sliding down that same hill in the winter where all the kids came, and being with my cousins - eating, visiting, laughing, being. Since I lived in Toronto for the first seven years of my life, the trips to Pic River were a wondrous thing. I treasure those visits. Especially important were my five boy cousins who I followed everywhere.

When my grandfather passed on and my grandmother moved to an Elder’s residence, I would go there. Her home became reoccupied by another Pic River resident, and was eventually torn down. When I am there, I still drive by the place, sort of homesick, and look at the tree my Auntie Velma remembers as a child - which was one that was planted by her dad. She has

watched the tree grow, and it serves as a memory of her youth. My Auntie Velma, late Uncle Donald, and my granny's sister Theresa attended the Residential Schools. The rest of the siblings were spared and attended the shoddy band operated schools that Indian Affairs offered.



Figure 4. Matt and Adeline Michano's children: Donald, Roy, Caroline, Diane, and Velma, Photo Credit unknown (aka) my Uncles and Aunts on my mom's side.

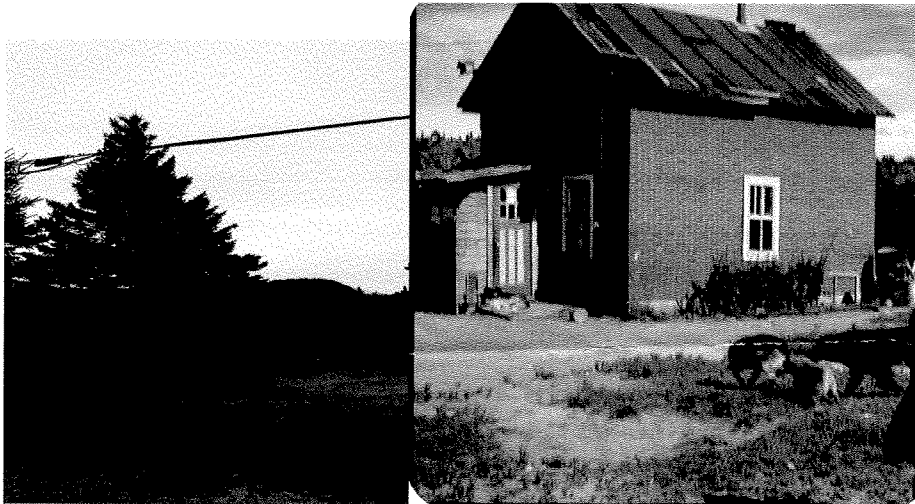


Figure 5. Tree planted by Matt Michano, 2012. Photo Credit, Jamie Michano.

Figure 6. My grandparent's first home, and the place of my mom's birthplace & first home, date unknown, photo credit, unknown.

My mom tells stories of her schooling on the reserve where teachers, who could hardly speak English, were hired to work with the children. My mom tells of how when she entered high school her grades were very low, and consequently she failed both grade nine and ten, yet still persevered to complete high school and go off to Nursing College. She also tells how the priests who came into the community would recite a fierce sermon, usually about *hell*. At the same time, my grandmother graciously welcomed outsiders into her home and to her table. My mom tells me the priests always ate well at their home. My Auntie Velma attended St. Joe's in Thunder Bay. I have never sat with her to ask about her experiences. I can only imagine how this impacted her life, yet she is a strong woman who leads with a peaceful and creative spirit. My mom's youngest sister plays a very important role with the youth of Pic River in working as a guidance counsellor in the high school. I see her as an usher of sorts, helping the youth move through school and transition to the next stage of their education. My mom and her two sisters have always been a source of inspiration.

My Uncle Roy became Chief of Pic River in his twenties, and has been successful in maintaining this role for the longest time in Canada. His focus with his Council has primarily been on three main areas which I believe has given the community a strong position - economics, education, and housing. It is my belief that economic development safeguards us from the disparities which other communities face, because without jobs people lose hope. This can lead to the high statistics of risk factors which fills reports on Indigenous communities. Within the past ten years, Pic River has initiated a partnership with the Hemlo goldmines where community members are able to train and become employed. Their work around the Kagiano Hydro project has also created jobs. Pic River's attitude, in my opinion, is proactive, where people want to do better for themselves and contribute back to the community. My parents' generation saw a wave

of healing programs which have been concentrated in Pic River, and this has been crucial to moving forward. Pic River is an innovator on many levels, and this has taken years to establish, notably with the development of their Biidabin Healing Lodge. This is not to say we have not had our struggles. The community has had their share of issues and it is my opinion that this is what motivates the community to move forward. We want better things for our children and our children's children.

I situate myself as a member of the Pic River community, even though I reside in a different city. I see my work as an expression of giving back and sharing, reciprocal in nature for all the support I have received educationally, socially, politically, and spiritually from Pic River First Nation. As an Anishinaabe woman I am inherently born into the role of a nation builder. Maracle (2006) discusses this role and argues that Aboriginal women have worked off-reserve to create and shape community. She states that "Aboriginal women are leading the way in recovering our health as peoples, implementing the prophecies, recreating our communities and birthing new dreams" (p. 79). As an Anishinabek researcher and mother, it is important to me to strike a balance between these responsibilities, because I see my work as contributing to community well-being. I thank those who have given me those opportunities to learn with our people. In 2001, I was hired to work on the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Education Jurisdiction process and worked alongside Dr. Emily Faries, and the rest of the Jurisdiction Team (T. Waboose, L. Baxter, G. Kakegamic, M. Sault-Coates, & A. Fraser). This was my first experience in community based Indigenous research. During this time I travelled to many fly-in communities throughout northern Ontario where Dr. Faries taught through a gentle approach. In most instances, I learned by watching her. This was my beginning in research practices with our people, and Dr. Faries is one of the nation builders who helped in lighting my fire. This

experience also opened my eyes to the experiences north of us, and told a story I did not learn in school. The stories I learned about in the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory, and within Thunder Bay, speak to the perseverance of the Anishinabek and Mushkegowuk Cree families, and the hope that resides in all of us.

My identity is inextricably linked to my upbringing on the North Shore of Lake Superior, the traditional territory of my mother's family. My ancestors have lived along these shores since time immemorial, and the combined efforts of the community have kept the Land in a pristine way. In 1982, my Uncle Roy, Chief Michano, with the support of his Council and community, initiated the protection of the territory of our people with our long-standing comprehensive Land Claim which covers more than 10,000 square kilometers. I never learned about this in my formal education. It is my belief that it should be a part of our learning as it is imperative to know where we come from as Pic River community members. The same goes for the settlers who moved to our territory, in recognizing how their families have gained sustenance from the resources in the Pic River territory.

It is my opinion that we need to learn this from our own perspective, and from our own community and leaders. This learning does not need to be formal, but can be done the way we conduct our business as Anishinaabe people: in feasts, on the trapline, out on a boat fishing, down the beach walking, at the kitchen table. This is how we learn. We talk, share, offer tobacco, and dream about these parts of our identity as Pic River people. We should decide this. Along the same lines, schools can and should be a site of recovery for First Nation youth as reiterated by Faries (2004). She identifies that we can use schools as a site of building nations and decolonizing. She states, "just as education has been used in the past to destroy First Nations

cultures and languages, education can now be used to build, restore, and revive First Nation cultures and languages” (p. 3).

In conclusion to this introduction, I have situated myself and some of my deep beliefs. Next, I describe the research question, where the research took place, the conceptual framework, and my broad philosophy of Indigenous Methodology.

1.2 Research Question and Thesis Objectives

My central research question is: *What is the significance of Land for Anishinabek youth from Pic River First Nation in their education and health?* Two overarching objectives are embedded in this research question:

1. To understand how Anishinabek youth value the Land in regards to their education;
2. To understand how Anishinabek youth value the Land in regards to good health.

These objectives will be approached through the lens of Indigenous Methodology and addressed through narratives that illustrate connections to an Indigenous Epistemology.

1.3 Genesis and Significance of the Research

This study is part of the research that began in 2008 with Dr. Chantelle Richmond (my sister) from the University of Western Ontario, on a Canadian Institute of Health Research Grant. It was called *Anishinabe narratives about health and environment: A participatory approach for preserving Elder knowledge and promoting positive experiences for youth*, which covered three years from 2008-2011. Dr. Richmond identified five key theme areas for her research which was centred around knowledge transfer between youth and Elders in three communities from the Robinson Superior region. Dr. Richmond’s project was split over three years: Phase 1: Development of Community Research Agreements (Spring 2010), Phase 2: Youth Photovoice Project (July – August 2010) and Phase 3: Summer School & Interviewing of Elders and Youth

(June 2011 – September 2011). As the groundwork for her research took place, I was invited to be a Research Assistant to examine youth understandings of the links between health, Land, social relationships and learning, utilizing Photovoice methodology. I was included because of my background in education and knowledge in Indigenous Methodologies. Since another outcome of her project was to increase capacity within the community, my role in her research was also welcomed as I am from the community. Dr. Richmond's other assistant, K. Big Canoe, came with a geography background, and is from Georgina Island First Nation. Dr. Richmond's research began with her own concerns about environmental degradation. Pic River was one of the three communities Dr. Richmond worked with, and is also her home community.

Pic River is a dynamic community, and has not escaped the negative impacts of development. Instead the community has been vulnerable to environmental consequences through the activities of mining and pulp and paper mills. Pic River was even on a bottled water advisory in the late 1980s and early 1990s because of water contamination from the mines. Furthermore, the long-standing Land Claim of Pic River remains unresolved, and this causes concern for the community because of new developments proposed in the area by outside interest groups who have not consulted with the community. For example, new developments around a future mine are in discussion without community consultation.

In my discussions with Dr. Richmond about her work on health and the environment, she noted that Elders and other members of Pic River were worried about industrial development. They have expressed concerns about how industrial development impacts their connection with the Land and how they feel that youth are becoming disconnected from the Land. If youth are feeling alienated from the Land, the need to reconnect with the Land is vitally important, so that Traditional Knowledge is honoured and remains an integral part of what defines Pic River (C.

Richmond, personal communication, February 9, 2009). My research question responds to the concern expressed by Pic River leadership and Elders, about youth connection to the Land.

1.4 Definitions

I offer definitions for some of the key terms which appear throughout this thesis. These definitions are important for understanding the context of this research as it connects to Indigenous Research, and because the terms are sometimes used in different ways by different authors.

Anishinaabe: Ojibway term for “the people”, or “original people.” In Anishinaabemowin, or our original language, this is how we define ourselves as Anishinaabe for singular, or Anishinabek for plural. From our Creation Story:

In the beginning, Gizhemanidoo created the universe as we know it today. He created Grandfather Sun and Grandmother Moon, Mother Earth and Father Sky. And on the earth he created all things, living and nonliving. He created life in the earth, on the earth, in the sky and in the water. He created the plants, rivers, four-legged and winged creatures, and the swimmers. After this was done, he created one of the greatest mysteries of all – the four seasons – to bring harmony and balance to all.

After all creation was complete, he created man. After he created the first Anishinaabe, he came to him in a dream and instructed him that he was to name all things in the language that he gave him, Anishinaabemowin. So the first man went about on his journey and named all things he saw – all the animals, insects, birds and fish – however long this took. Afterward, he spoke to the Creator Gizhemanidoo in his dream and said, “I have finished what you have told me to do.” Then the Creator Gizhemanidoo spoke back to him and said, “Yes, you have indeed done so, and now it is time for me to give you your name. Your name shall be Nanabozho, and whenever your people meet and greet one another, they will say a part of your name. That is why whenever the Anishinaabe people greet one another, they say the word Bozhoo.

Our creation story tells us that we originally migrated to the Great Lakes region from the East Coast. There are many settlements of our original homes that still exist to this day, like Manitoulin Island, the Island of the Great Spirit.

We have always been a nation, and we knew one another as the Anishinaabek. (Anishinaabemdaa, n. d.)

Indigenous Person: Martin-Hill (2007) defines an Indigenous person:

as someone who (a) was born into the Lands with which she/he maintains an intimate and spiritual relationship; (b) belongs to a distinct linguistic cultural group; (c) has maintained a collective oral memory reaching as far back as creation; (d) has unique customs and ceremonies that sustain her/his cultural survival and well-being; and (e) has maintained the view that Elders are the knowledge carriers and cultural historians. (p. 9)

The youth of Pic River meet Martin-Hill's definition as being Indigenous because they honour their unique ties to Land, and have connections to the oral memories.

Land: I adopt the term by Farrell (2008) who looks at Traditional Knowledges as including “four spheres: (a) the land, (b) the spiritual and personal experience, (c) the Elders, and (d) time and space” (p. 9). These four areas are central to Anishinaabe epistemology. I expand further in looking at how Land is interpreted by Anishinaabe youth who are from Pic River First Nation and how it contributes to their learning and health. Land is an intricate part of who we are as Anishinaabe people; this includes the Waters, and all Creation.

Formal Education: This is the material learned in schools. In school, I rarely learned anything about traditional education because I was not exposed to traditional people in schools, or given an opportunity to learn on the Land. This is not to say I did not bond with my teachers or gain a valuable experience. I was fortunate to have a few teachers who facilitated my learning similar to how Wasam-Ellam (2001) discussed mainstream education.

Traditional Education: I grew up with the term *traditional education* from the Elders I have learned from. This means the education we get from our relationship with our people, to the Land, and all Creation. In our language, the Anishinaabe would call this Kendaswin (Diane Richmond, personal conversation, January 2009). Simpson (2000) speaks about worldview and outlines seven principles of Indigenous worldviews which relate to Indigenous Knowledge. Cited in Hart (2010), Simpson outlines that:

First, knowledge is holistic, cyclic, and dependent upon relationships and connections to living and non-living beings and entities. Second, there are many truths, and these truths are dependent upon individual experiences. Third, everything is alive. Fourth, all things are equal. Fifth, the Land is sacred. Sixth, the relationship between people and the spiritual world is important. Seventh, human beings are least important in the world. (p. 3)

These principles of Indigenous worldviews reflect a connection to Land, which in turn relates to the learning and health of Anishinabek youth. Cited in Hart (2010), Simpson states further in her definition of Indigenous Knowledges that “instead of trying to define Indigenous Knowledge, the process of understanding would be more important” (p. 4). I have dedicated an entire section to Ways of Knowing and Indigenous Epistemology in the literature review with the purpose of facilitating an understanding.

Medicine Wheel: I have grown up seeing the Medicine Wheel used amongst many Anishinabek circles for learning and health. I use the Medicine Wheel in my research, as it is something I have learned from my Elders. I acknowledge that our community of Pic River has used this tool frequently, and is one I am familiar with. I use my own wheel and acknowledge that this is my own interpretation, however, interpretations of the wheel as displayed in my thesis also used by some of the members of our community. There are many versions which are used for different purposes. As my conceptual framework I chose to use the wheel in the Data Analysis and Findings in Chapter Four.

1.5 Research Site

Pic River First Nation is located along the north shore of Lake Superior. In our language, we refer to our community as Begetikong, which means *where the river meets*. Our community is located in the heart of the boreal forest, home to the white birch, black and white spruce, evergreen, and tamarack trees. We also share our territory with the bear, beaver, lynx, moose, wolf, fox, and those who live in the water, and those who fly. Several lakes are within our

territory, as well as important wetlands. The Pic River First Nation community sits on the shore of the Pic River, approximately four kilometres inland from Lake Superior. At the mouth of the Pic River, where the river empties into the lake, the shores are filled with sand dunes and the special places where we find solace. The *Mouth of the Pic*, as it is known to community members, is a traditional community gathering place.



Figure 7. Our two sons on the beach, 2010. Photo Credit, Michelle Richmond-Saravia.

***My mom speaks of how happy she is her grandson's can enjoy the same beach she did.**

Although the Mouth of the Pic is not captured by the reserve Land *per se*, the Land was purchased by the Pic River First Nation and is used and occupied by community members year round. Dozens of semi-permanent camps have been constructed just inland from the shore, around the perimeter of the grounds where the annual powwow is hosted every year in July. This is a site where we build camp fires on the beach, we fish, we gather, we laugh and we tell stories. The beach is used year-round for various reasons: fishing, healing ceremonies, and, along with other places in the community and territory, as a place to meditate.

The ownership of territory of the Pic River First Nation is currently being litigated in the Superior Court of Justice Canada, and while the boundaries of the lands set aside for the Pic River reserve are small, only 800 hectares, the Land that continues to be used and enjoyed by Pic River First Nation members is expansive. Members access their traditional territory deep into the bush to hunt, fish and gather berries. These are places where no highways run, and members will take to old logging roads or rivers to travel inland. Recently, a teaching encampment was established at Deadhorse Creek which is about forty kilometres from the community. Lessons are given in Anishnaabemowin (Ojibway language), and traditional hunting and gathering techniques are passed on between generations.

Pic River First Nation claims more than 10,000 square kilometres within its shared traditional territory area. Currently the population is 964 people (Pic River Administration, personal communication, December 12, 2011). Our community sits on one of the largest gold deposits in the country, connected to the Hemlo Property, just 20 km to the east, which “produced 492,100 ounces of gold in 1992” (Hemlo, n.d).

Historically, Pic River is recognized as being in a strategic location as the river was a highway to the north and connected several communities. For example, access to James Bay is

made possible through the Pic River (Ojibways of Pic River, n.d., para 1). Parks Canada recognizes the area as a National Historic Site for a few reasons, and the most important may be because of the long standing human presence dating back “thousands of years” (Parks Canada, n.d.).

Pic River has political affiliations with the Chiefs of Ontario, which is the coordinating body for 133 communities across Ontario, and the Anishinabek Nation, which politically advocates for 39 communities spanning Ontario and “is the oldest political organization in Ontario and can trace its roots back to the Confederacy of Three Fires, which existed long before European contact” (Anishnabek Nation, n.d.). Pic River has partnerships with organizations and corporations who contribute to the sovereignty of Pic River, and increase community capacity building.

Pic River has done much to advance their community’s future. One advance is the installation of the 1998 hydro project, Kagiano Power, a renewable energy development incorporated entirely by Pic River. Other progressive traits demonstrated by Pic River include the community’s dedication to education, including early childhood education administered through Head Start Programming and Mama Aki Daycare, and a community-based high school program in the area of adult education. On a social level, the community has The Biidaaban Healing Lodge, a 12-unit facility that provides the Aboriginal population in the Robinson-Superior area with residential and community-based programming for maintaining good emotional health. On an economic level, the community has its own internet server and cable company, and recent partnering programs with the local mines to train members to work in the field.

Pic River has been vulnerable to environmental consequences through the activities of mining and pulp and paper mills. The long-standing Land Claim of Pic River remains unresolved, and this sparks a concern for the community because of new developments proposed in the area by outside interest groups. For example, new developments around a future mine are in discussion. Still, meaningful discussion around Land use is crucial during this time. As J. C. Michano (2010) stated: “It is without question that Pic River First Nation is right in the active heart of mineral exploration activity” (para. 15). Finding a balance between development and keeping the Land the way it is, is the constant push and pull that many communities feel. At the same time, undertaking projects that push communities economically, so that communities build a workforce for the benefit of community members, is necessary to help them maintain sovereignty.

From an educational standpoint, Pic River has experienced successes in supporting numerous students who have graduated from various post-secondary programs as doctors, writers, lawyers, engineers, educators, and workers in other sectors who can support the community on the path towards self-sufficiency. In the past five years, Pic River has seen fifty-nine students graduate from post-secondary education (R. LeClair, personal communication, March 24, 2011).

Pic River is a successful community, as evidenced by innovative projects dedicated to community growth, and the success of the students educationally. Understanding the youths' experiences can provide a blueprint that is unique in understanding how First Nation youth value the Land in health and education-related contexts. This can help to carry on the success of the Pic River community, and support other communities by providing a glimpse of what the youth value as this relates to Land.

In Appendix C I have included a map of Pic River's traditional territory for readers who are unfamiliar with northern Ontario. In Appendix D I have included a map of all First Nations in Ontario which shows Pic River in relation to the other First Nation communities of Ontario.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

Smith (1999), drawing upon a decolonizing approach, discusses "a simple representation of an indigenous research agenda" (p. 116), and uses the metaphor of the ocean tides which shows the interconnectedness of the Maori people and the Waters. Her chart, while drawn from a Maori or Pacific People's perspective, can be related to a Medicine Wheel. This wheel is important because it acknowledges research as a continuum that relates to other important areas of one's life, and has an impact on self-determination. As Smith states (1999):

The chart takes the Maori equivalent of the four directions that can be named: the northern, the eastern, the southern and the western.... The four directions named here – decolonisation, healing, transformation, and mobilization – represent processes. These are processes which connect, inform and clarify the tensions between the local, the regional and the global. (p. 117)

The Medicine Wheel is used by many organizations as a healing and education tool. Upon beginning research and thinking about how I would analyse my data. I asked my cousin Andrea, the Healing Centre Director, for her advice on this portion. Andrea is someone who is gifted in vision, and in moving things forward. When I told her I wanted to use a Medicine Wheel she pulled out some of her own conceptual frameworks for use in projects which she was working on at the time. We both discussed how important this framework is for us, as it made our information clearer (A. Michano, personal communication, November 12, 2010). I felt secure in using this method of analysis for my research as it is a culturally relevant framework. I have seen this model in the community of Pic River as it has often been used in workshops, and is something the community will be familiar with. The areas representing the directions are

specific to the questions and objectives of this thesis. The data I will be using will be broken down into the four quadrants in understanding how the Land is significant for the education and health of Indigenous youth, which I discuss further in the Chapter 3, Methodology, and Chapter 4, Findings. The diagram of the model (called Figure 11) is in Chapter 4.

1.7 Indigenous Methodology

This research is guided by Indigenous Research Methodologies. Indigenous Research Methodologies are broad, similar to Indigenous research itself. Writing about Indigenous research began to proliferate in the early 1990s and can be understood by the work of Wilson (2003), who maps out Indigenous research practices and the process by which Indigenous peoples took back research. The Indigenous researchers who guide my process in the methodology phase have included Archibald (2008), King (2003), Kovach (2010), Smith (1999), Wilson (2001, 2003, 2008), and Weber-Pillwax (1999). According to Wilson, the research by Indigenous scholars of the present day is a significant part of decolonization. Wilson's (2003) article is important as it looks at the historical context of research, and connects events to purposes of research. Wilson acknowledges the work of five scholars who he credits for "mapping the progression and articulating the stages that Indigenous research and researchers have taken and are now entering" (p. 162). All of these researchers are either Indigenous to Canada or to Australia, and there is a significance to the Canadian-Australian connection because of similar genocidal policies which occurred on both continents.

In a later article, Wilson (2008) defines Indigenous Methodology, and this quote is particularly important to my research methodology as it serves as my guide. It directs how I see my relationship to my research, participants, analysis and findings. I found this quote important in how I use the data where I ensure that relationship accountability will be

integral to this process as it recognizes the unique way Indigenous Methodology and the Indigenous researcher work together:

To me Indigenous Methodology means we are talking about relationship accountability. As a researcher you are answering to all your relations while researching. You are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgements of better or worse. Instead you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you. So your methodology has to ask different[ly]: rather than asking about validity and reliability, you are asking how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship? What are my obligations in this relationship? The axiology or morals need to be an integral part of the methodology so that I am gaining knowledge, I am not just gaining some abstract pursuit; I am gaining knowledge to fulfill my end of the research relationship. This becomes my methodology, an Indigenous Methodology, by looking at relational accountability or being accountable to all my relations. (Wilson, 2008, p. 177)

My understanding of relational accountability in my research is that I am a member of Pic River, and my research takes place in the community with the youth membership. The research takes a non-argumentative approach and was conceived of through discussions with the community initiated by Dr. Richmond in 2009. For the Indigenous researcher, what I understand in Wilson's (2008) relational accountability is that it is not my role to be preoccupied about validity or reliability. In following this methodology, I focus upon all my relations, and in telling a story. For this work, telling the story of the youth, and what Land means to Pic River Youth, is what I set out to do. In terms of maintaining my relationality, my role as an Anishinaabe woman is always present, and within this role as I have previously stated, is the inherent obligation to be a part of nation building. This means I strive to be continuously contributing to the community of Pic River. My work does not finish once my research is finished, instead it builds upon what needs the community has, and what strengths I have to contribute to this act of spiritual sharing.

Wilson (2008) also looked at research as being sacred like a ceremony, which points to the significance of knowledge building, and the importance of reclaiming it. When I think of a

ceremony, I realize there is a purpose guiding the research; it is rooted in something that is alive. Research involving Indigenous peoples is about our stories and maintaining an integrity as we use them to understand the larger contexts to which they are related. These are alive. They are our lives.

Pic River has many unique stories and strengths as a community. The community is relatively remote; even given its road access, it is still a three-hour drive from an urban centre - Thunder Bay, Ontario. Over the years the community has built a strong network based on the use of hydro electricity and is a role model community to many First Nations because of its ability to be innovative. It is also unique because of its comprehensive Land Claim process with the Crown, ongoing for over thirty years. The stories that arise from the youth are interesting in understanding how they understand the Land and the significance of it for them. Bringing reciprocity into research means that communities will be able to build upon the knowledge you bring as a researcher, and that the work you do is mutually beneficial. In line with an Indigenous Methodology (Wilson, 2008), a community feast and presentation of findings will take place in the community in the summer of 2012.

For the youth from Pic River First Nation, understanding that knowledge is not just from books, and understanding what they have contributed to my thesis, will, I hope, empower them. An Indigenous Methodology allows for an open relationship that builds upon their knowledge. The Indigenous Methodology I am following is rooted in the Three R's: "Respect, Reciprocity, and Relationality" (Steinhauer, 2002, p. 73).

1.7.1 The First R: Respect

Indigenous research is important because it illuminates our stories and maintains their integrity. These stories play a role in decolonizing and challenging dominant society's

perceptions of knowledge (Iseke-Barnes, 2003): “in this telling [of a story] I honour the experiences of Indigenous peoples and epistemologies expressed in their stories” (p. 221). The youth voices and experiences with the Land were identified as an urgent concern within the community focus groups held prior to the funding proposal for the broader research which this thesis is a part of (personal communication, Chantelle Richmond, July 12, 2009). Work with youth respects a story that is often untold. My study will investigate how youth experience the Land in their learning and health, and will offer the stories of their experiences that can support change and growth in these areas. In doing this, respect is about learning from the perspectives of the youth.

1.7.2 The Second R: Reciprocity

Reciprocity in Indigenous research is a crucial component of respectful research. Wilson (2008) refers to “the heart/mind of the researcher” and writes that “checking your heart is a critical element in the research process” (p. 60). He believes that researchers need to be connected to the research, bringing no harmful intention or feelings to the work. Reciprocity reflects the relational worldview and the understanding that we must honour our relationships with life. I see this research as being my way of saying Meegwetch to my community for their continued support and on a broader scale as an opportunity to continue to support my community and the larger Indigenous community with research and advocacy.

1.7.3 The Third “R”: Relationality

As I began to think about what I wanted to work on for my thesis, I realized that I wanted to work with my own community and look at how Land is significant for the youth. During this time, I was torn because I wanted to also look at Indigenous Mothering, and the lived experiences of our mothers. When the opportunity arose to work with Dr. Richmond, I realized

the connection to her work related to my place as an Indigenous mother, and researcher. I realized that my perspective as a mother was important because this relates to how I situate myself in this research as a nation builder. I see the telling of these stories from the youth, about the Land and in relation to their education and learning, as being related to my role in building nations. I see myself as a storyteller in this role. I have talked at length about stories in the methodology sections, and I remember King (2003) who points to the importance of stories, writing that “the truth about stories is that’s all we are” (p. 153) - where he reminds us of this humbling concept. In “A Million Porcupines Crying In The Dark” King (2003) writes of his dear friend, a writer who he lost to suicide. The story tells the importance of the sharing of stories, and how when we speak and share, we grow strong from this place. He wonders if stories could have saved the life of his friend. King (2003) believes that it is the stories that keep us alive. As I try to understand the concept of relationality, and relate it to my experience of what this means, the closest that I can come to is in knowing that as a mother and as a researcher that listening is a part of this, as is the telling, and the protection of stories. Wilson (2003) writes about an Indigenous perspective and that: “An Indigenous Knowledge comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all creation” (p. 177). It is with this concept that we are also all related. I have grown up hearing this over and over, that we are related. Upon participating in this research, even as the researcher, I see that, yes, I am fortunate to be related as well, even as I wear the researcher hat. The way that I contribute back is through the sharing of the knowledge produced from this work and the sharing of my own story in this process. At the same time, it is my responsibility to tell the story in a way that brings no harm.

1.8 The Purpose of Narrative and Story in Indigenous Methodology

Kovach (2009) has identified the use of stories in Indigenous Methodology as a

decolonizing research method. Smith (1999) states that individual stories are powerful and that the story of each person is a contribution “to a collective story, in which every indigenous person has a place” (p. 144). Belonging is captured in stories, and for this reason, stories are healing and decolonizing. They strengthen our connection to our histories and past. Kovach (2009) cites Little Bear, who says that “in Blackfoot the English word story literally translates as involvement in an event” (p. 94). Silko (1996) writes too about the unifying aspect of stories, explaining that “the stories are always bringing us together, keeping this whole together, keeping the family together, keeping the clan together” (p. 63). King (2003) shares his belief in stories, and that he and another dear friend believed that “stories were medicine, that a story could cure, and that the same story told another way could injure” (p. 92). Kovach (2009) writes on Indigenous epistemologies and how stories serve two purposes:

There are stories that hold mythical elements, such as creation and teaching stories, and there are personal narratives of place, happenings, and experiences as the kokoms and mosoms (aunties and uncles) experienced them and passed along to the next generation through oral tradition. (p. 95)

Stories are integral to, and the lifeblood of, Anishinabek people. They sustain who we are because this is the way we learn. Cajete (1994) writes that “stories have deep roots, stemming not only from the physiology and contexting process of the brain, but also from the very heart of the human psyche.... Indigenous stories related the experience of life lived in that time and place” (p. 137). Young (2002) speaks about how our “Elders teach by telling stories and we listeners learn to make up our own conclusions on what the teachings or the stories mean” (p. 102). While interviewing the youth in Pic River, simple questions were asked, and in some cases, stories from the youth were part of their answers. These are part of what Young speaks of, that stories and experiences in the case of Pic River Youth, tell about their world and how this is intertwined with the Land.

The first nineteen years of my life were spent discussing everything around the kitchen table with my mother, my dad, my aunties, friends, and visitors. The kitchen table is a metaphor for me as a learning place, and carries within it an intimacy and a connection to family and food, which are symbols of nourishment and connection to lineage and family. Stories connect us to our past, and reveal who we are. In qualitative research they illuminate our experiences and as such, offer an open hand - meaning that a relationship is built by the sharing of these stories. An open hand symbolizes friendship. In research, not only are we learning from each other, we are learning from each story.



Figure 8. Hands. (Adeline, Michelle, Diane, Angie, Vivian and Caroline. 2005. Photo Credit, unknown.

Stories teach, stories heal, stories continue. King (2003) writes: "I tell them to myself, to my friends, sometimes to strangers. Because they make me laugh. Because they are a particular kind of story. Saving stories, if you will. Stories that help keep me alive" (p. 25). Cole speaks of her experiences growing up, talking about the "academy of the kitchen table" (cited in Knowles & Cole, 2008, p. 56) while speaking of storytelling as a methodology. Her conversations at the table were where she "learned opinions of her own, felt pleasure and pain, learned compassion, made promises to myself about how I would be in the world and what I would do" (p. 56).

The recognition of story as a healing place, as acknowledged by Anderson and Lawrence (2003), Silko (1996), King (2003), and Harjo and Bird (1997), speaks to the significance of stories in our well-being. Anderson and Lawrence (2003) and Harjo and Bird (1997) put together two separate anthologies that look at the role of Indigenous women in communities and how their expressions of creativity through essays and poetry addressed pertinent issues. Lawrence and Anderson (2003) recognize another element of stories: the need for healing, recovery, and social change; specifically, how "finding our voices is also about articulating the circumstances we encounter as we work to bring about social change" (p. 17). Lawrence and Anderson (2003) write about how their collection of Native stories reflect "where our communities are now and where we want them to go. What are Native women doing for themselves, their families, their communities and Nations as we recover from the past and work towards a healthier future" (p. 11).

Kovach (2009) writes about the treaty process and how the Delegamuukw decision was determined as the Supreme Court of Canada recognized that "oral testimony has the same weight as written evidence in Land entitlement cases" (p. 95). The acknowledgement of oral tradition in

describing relationship and ties to the Land was a first in the Canadian courts. Mills (2010)

writes about the case:

The star witness was Johnny David, a 90-year old Witsuwit'en Elder. He was the first Witsuwit'en Elder to present his testimony in support of the Gitksan and Witsuwit'en court case against the Crown seeking the rights to their traditional territories. From September 1985 to April 1986, he gave official court testimony in his own home in Moricetown (Kiya Wiget) about the nature of Witsuwit'en society both prior to and after the arrival of non-native settlers. (para. 2)

Hearing youths' stories to build knowledge in Indigenous communities can help guide educators and policy makers in understanding what is important for Anishinaabek youth. Within their stories, the subtext of their lives is revealed, as well as their unique epistemological positioning. The literature review which follows seeks to understand these important concepts, and how these relate to the Land, education and health, which in turn, can effect positive change.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I consider current literature that supports my research questions relating to the significance of the Land to Anishinaabe Youths' health and education. I also provide an historical context that examines literature surrounding an Indigenous Epistemology. The historical context informs how these sections tie together and how each is an integral part of Indigenous Knowledge. Especially important is the links between health and education as they are deeply tied to the Land and to community in Indigenous Ways of Knowing. In this review I have consciously drawn almost wholly on Indigenous scholars, including Anishnaabe and others from Turtle Island and Indigenous scholars and researchers from Hawaii and New Zealand. In recognizing their home territories, I have included this information within the first citation of their work for introductory purposes.

By framing this literature review with an overview of an Indigenous Epistemology, it is anticipated that a greater understanding of Indigenous Knowledge will be achieved and will provide a preparatory base for understanding how and why the Land is significant for the learning and health of the youth interviewed in this study. It is also anticipated that this will promote understanding of how Indigenous Youth experience the Land, in relation to their health and education. Farrell (2008), an Anishinaabe scholar, identifies that Traditional Knowledges are developed through “four spheres: (a) the land, (b) the spiritual and personal experience, (c) the Elders, and (d) time and space” (p. 9). These four areas are central to Anishinaabe Epistemology. In this review, I expand on Farrell’s definition of Traditional Knowledges with a focus on the first three spheres: (a) the land, (b) spiritual and personal experience, and (c) the Elders, as these three components are related to the question of understanding why and how

Land is significant to Anishinaabe Youth in their education and good health. I adopt Mohawk, Wolf Clan scholar, Martin-Hill's (2007) definition of an Indigenous person:

Someone who (a) was born into the lands with which she/he maintains an intimate and spiritual relationship; (b) belongs to a distinct linguistic cultural group; (c) has maintained a collective oral memory reaching as far back as creation; (d) has unique customs and ceremonies that sustain her/his cultural survival and well-being; and (e) has maintained the view that Elders are the knowledge carriers and cultural historians. (p. 9)

This literature review provides insight into how Indigenous people value the Land and how the Land contributes to good spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental health, which subsequently supports the maintenance of Indigenous Knowledges. By providing a review of the literature and completing research that adds to the literature, it is hoped that this study will influence policy makers and educators in their efforts to communicate with Indigenous Youth. Additionally, understanding the importance of the Youths' relationship to the Land and how this relationship is tied to their education and health, could lead to more focus on community-driven projects which connect Youth to the Land, with community, and with Elders.

2.1 Ways of Knowing and Indigenous Epistemology

In this section I explain how Indigenous Ways of Knowing are complex and holistic. Understanding the way that Indigenous Knowledge is transferred shows how these Ways of Knowing are still important in contemporary times. Further on in the review, I will also address how these Ways of Knowing have been damaged through environmental dispossession, as discussed by Richmond and Ross (2005).

Brant-Castellano (2000), a Mohawk scholar, identifies knowledges within Indigenous communities as being “derived from multiple sources, including traditional teachings, empirical observation and revelation” (p. 23). Traditional teachings vary from nation to nation and include knowledge that is passed on to youth from Elders, which “reinforces values and beliefs” that

“provide substructure for civil societies” (p. 23). Empirical observation occurs through “careful observation” (p. 23), and revealed knowledge or revelation is related to “dreams, visions and intuitions that are understood to be spiritual in origin” (p. 24).

In addition to these Ways of Knowing and inquiry, Holmes (2000), a Hawaiian scholar, writes about “heart knowledge” and “blood memory.” Heart knowledge is “not based on personal achievement; rather it is conferred ‘by God’, is related to others unseen, and exists beyond the earthly human experience” (p. 40). Holmes writes that this knowledge “surpasses the intellectual realm and lodges itself into the emotional realm” (p. 41). Holmes also writes about blood memory as being of your relationship to “family or genealogy” (p. 41). She cites Kalo, one of the participants in her study, who speaks of the interconnectedness of Hawaiians, and that for Hawaiians:

...when you say you are Hawaiian, we never say ‘how much Hawaiian do you have?’, which is a total...*alien* concept, but the fact that you are Hawaiian that you are ohana [family] and that we eat out of the same poi [a food made from taro] bowl.... And that we have the same roots. And that’s the connectedness that brings all Hawaiian’s together. (p. 41, emphasis in original)

The connectedness to family is essential in the building of knowledge, and is seen as being like a web that stretches out to include how knowledge is obtained and valued in the spirit of belonging. Experience also builds this knowledge and is interwoven in the relationships with ourselves, our families, the Land, the spirit world, and all of Creation. Knowledge is holistic, and built upon interactions with family and community. The understanding of heart knowledge is, for me, linked to ceremonies in the Anishinaabe tradition that draw upon the symbolism of the strawberry to represent our heart; hence, the translated Anishinaabe word *ode’imin* means “heart berries”(personal conversation, Diane Richmond, June 2010). There are numerous teachings around the strawberry, and the symbolism to our heart in the Anishinaabe culture. I have heard

this in detail in several of the lodges I have been a part of. This is one way of linking Holmes' (2000) explanation of heart knowledge to Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing.

McGregor (2004), an Anishinaabe scholar, states that “teachings are gained from animals, plants, the moon, the stars, water, wind and the spirit world” (p. 388), and that Aboriginal people “understood their relationship with Creation and assumed responsibilities given to them by the Creator” (p. 389). Cajete (1994), a Tewa scholar, acknowledges the respectful living value in relation to the Land and how “in Indigenous societies, living ecologically is also about living in a harmonious relationship to “a place” (p. 46). He writes about how communities are guided by this vision and the story where “each Indigenous community identifies itself as a sacred place, a place of living, learning, teaching, and renewal; a place where the “People share the breath of life and thought” (p. 46). Importantly, this involves recognizing that each person is connected to a learning process “that begins with birth; each individual, from the youngest to the oldest has a role to play” (Cajete, 1994, p. 46).

For the Anishinabek, it is recognised that roles and responsibilities are crucial to being part of a community, and communities thrived because of this. Roles and responsibilities are tied to Anishinaabe Ways of Knowing because of the Creation story. Kelly (2008), an Anishinaabe scholar, writes that “the spiritual meaning of ‘Anishinaabe’ comes from two components: ‘niisiina means descended’ and ‘naabe means male.’ Hence, ‘the man descended’” (p. 34), which refers to the Creation story of the Anishinaabe. The responsibility of the two-legged, or mankind, is recognised as “being dependent on everything else in creation” (p. 34). Women are seen as being “endowed with all the spiritual powers of the star spirit ladies, and are therefore, inherently sacred” (p. 35). This refers to how the star spirit beings guided the first man as he was lowered to

the earth from the sky through the help of Kizhemanito, or the Great Spirit (personal communication, Fred Kelly, 2010)

Other roles and responsibilities stem from the stories, such as how men are responsible for maintaining the fire as firekeepers and how women are responsible for the waters. In ceremonies men tend the sacred fires and the teaching they bring as firekeepers is respected. Water is seen as life-giving and related to women; because of women's gift to carry children and give birth, the waters are seen as the responsibility of women. Elder Josephine Mandamin, originally from Wiikemikong First Nation and now living in Thunder Bay, Ontario, reflects this teaching of the role of Anishinaabe women through her organized Mother Earth Water Walk². The Water Walk was initiated to raise awareness about water and the issues surrounding the pollution of the Great Lakes. This example provides a living metaphor of how Anishinabek women's roles and responsibilities are embedded in the caring for the waters.

Vizenor (1984), an Anishinaabe scholar, writes that dreams and visions are important, and that "the Anishabaabeg did not have written histories; their world views were not linear narratives that started and stopped in manifest binaries" (p. 24). This refers to the importance of dreaming to Anishinaabe people and that these powerful experiences were not linear in nature. Ermine (1995), a Cree scholar, writes that "dreams are the guiding principles for constructing the corporeal" (p. 108), which reiterates how epistemology is built upon these important experiences. Ermine writes that: "The Old Ones and the culture they developed, understood that dreams were invaluable in understanding self and sought to manipulate the external so dreams might happen" (p. 108). He suggests this is how "Aboriginal communities 'create' experience for the benefit of the community through the capacity inherent in *mamatowisowin*" (p. 108), which

² For more information on the Mother Earth Water Walk please follow the link:
<http://www.motherearthwaterwalk.com>

is “the capacity to connect to the life force that makes anything and everything possible” (p. 110).

In this context, Ermine (1995) writes specifically about how ceremonies are guided by spiritual knowledge and help Indigenous peoples gain knowledge. He also argues, as does Vizenor (1984), that western culture has a “‘fragmentary self world view’ that permeates the Western world [and] is detrimental to Aboriginal Epistemology” (p. 110) The education systems which our children are subjected to “promote the dogma of fragmentation and indelibly harm the capacity for holism” (p. 110). Ermine writes that it is necessary to keep a holistic worldview alive with the children and that “language and culture are our touchstones for achieving this” (p. 110). Brokenleg (2005) describes how knowledge is rooted with Old Ones, or the Elders:

My parents made certain their children were raised according to our traditional Lakota ways. Though poor in possessions, we were rich in personal relationships. My many uncles were my fathers and my aunts were my mothers. Surrounded by relatives, I experienced *Belonging*. Elders told me of our traditions and guided me in *Mastery*. I was cautioned to use wisely the power that gave me *Independence*. Under all circumstances, I was to know that *Generosity* would require work and selflessness but was always the right response. Literally, I was surrounded by the Circle of Courage. (p. 86, emphasis in original)

Brokenleg (2005) also writes of the tragedies of the Battle of Little Bighorn and Residential Schools, which directly impacted his family, and that despite these traumas, his parents did their best to raise him according to Lakota values. Kelly (2008) expands upon this and writes about the Seven Laws of Creation as being fundamental laws that “mediate our relationship with all other life,” encompassing “love, kindness, sharing, respect, truth, courage and humility” (p. 35). This relationship is expressed by the way Indigenous peoples relate to Mother Earth.

In this section I have touched on how Indigenous communities and people value knowledge and pass on knowledge. I have also discussed how knowledge is gained from nature and the spirit world, and how it is a highly personal process. Dreams and visions are important to

Indigenous Ways of Knowing and are experienced with those who Ermine (1995) calls “the Old Ones,”(p. 104) or Elders, who provide a mirror to the past and a vision for the future. I now move on to the section on the Land and how it is critical in regards to an Indigenous Epistemology. I felt this overview of an Indigenous Epistemology was important to include because it gives a deeper philosophical orientation to the research. As was my experience in taking Native Studies classes at Trent University, if an overview of Indigenous Epistemology is not provided, then there is a gap in the foundation of the course. Cherubini, Hodson, Manely-Casimir, and Muir (2010) write that these gaps can have profound implications for Aboriginal students attending the provincial school system in Ontario: “public school teachers are generally unaware of these complexities and in most instances are unprepared to address the uniqueness of Aboriginal epistemologies in their pedagogical practice” (p. 335). Without the acknowledgement of an Indigenous Epistemology, misinterpretation can occur, as well as a growing gap in the success of Indigenous students in the school system (Cherubini et al., 2010). Providing this section I hope to tie in the deeper philosophical roots of Indigenous Knowledges as related to Land, health and education to increase understanding.

2.2 The Land

In the previous sections I discussed how Ways of Knowing are experienced and understood across various nations and Indigenous peoples. In discussing the Land in this section, I will examine the importance of Land for Indigenous people for their health and education.

Land, as Farrell (2008) writes, is integral to Anishinaabe Epistemology: “the Land is a source of our knowledge and as such can also be considered a teacher” (p. 53). The Land, as she writes, “contains an abundance of sustenance and is a source of nutrition to Anishinaabe people” (p. 53). Cree scholar Wilson (2001) captures the importance of how Cree identity is connected to

the Land when he writes about the connection to the Land in regards to Indigenous self. He writes:

Indigenous sense of self is planted and rooted in the land. The sacred bond with the land is more substantial than a propertied relationship and entails a responsibility to all living forms that are sustained from the soil: grasses, medicinal plants, fruit bushes and trees.... As an Aboriginal person I am constituted by my individual self and by my ancestors and future generations, who will originate in and have returned to the land.... Like all living creatures, we as Indigenous people are sustained by our connection to the land. (p. 91)

Both Farrell (2008) and Wilson (2001) write about how Indigenous people are sustained by the Land and the relationships supported in this web. Akiwenzie-Damm (1996), an Anishinaabe scholar, captures the Ways of Knowing as being supported by these relationships and knowledge of the Land. She writes:

Love. Family, Community. Land. Each of us is born into a family, into a community in a specific place. Because of this, because we are born into a certain family and community and because the family and community and Land know and welcome us, we are who we are as Indigenous people. Family and community give us a knowledge base, a way of being, a world view. This is provided to us through arts, language, ceremonies, songs, prayers, dances, customs, values, practices, all of which have been developed over generations, over thousands and thousands of years of living in kinship with the Land. (p. 5)

Drawing from Akiwenzie-Damm, it is understood that Indigenous peoples have a relationship to the Land from which they come and that that relationship is rooted in belonging, and that from it a knowledge base and Indigenous worldview are developed. Song, language, prayer, and dreams are connected to the places that Indigenous peoples come from, and are a source of knowledge that has been echoed in other literature. McPherson (an Anishinaabe scholar) and Rabb (1993) write about the knowledges learned from a vision quest, which is a traditional ceremony, and conclude that “we are a part of the earth and other people” (p. 100). This illuminates how ceremonies connect us to the Land and brings us back again to Ermine’s (1995) discussion on

mamotowisowin, the spiritual relationship and life force which makes all things possible. Cajete (2000) writes about “medicine wheels and other sacred observatory sites” (p. xi) as a component of revealed knowledge which was expressed by Indigenous peoples in understanding how time was framed by the patterns, seasons, migration cycles, and cosmic movements. This is an example of empirical knowledge.

In this section I have discussed the connection between Land and learning, and shown that the Land is more than a place where Indigenous people live. I have also written about how Indigenous relationships are built by the passing on of stories from generation to generation. Maintaining Indigenous Knowledges is strongly tied to the Lands of our ancestors, and we strengthen our communities by being on the Land. Akiwenzie-Damm (1996) writes about sense of purpose as being tied to the Land and future generations: “My purpose in life is geared to my community, to forming and strengthening connections, to preserving my bond to the earth, to maintaining my link to creation” (p. 2). This speaks to the spirit of reciprocity that is ingrained in an Indigenous Epistemology, related to a love of the earth and a sense of responsibility to the next generation. Lastly, Farrell (2008) writes about the relationship to Land and how knowledge with the Land is seen as connected to self. She writes:

The relationship which Anishinawbe people have with their environment and the land around them is one of responsibility and respect and connection which in turn create a sense of identity within an individual which is in part based upon this connection to the land. (p. 84)

These words are powerful, and support the ties that Indigenous people have with the Land. I now move on to how Land is related to our good health.

2.3 Good Health: Relationship to the Land

In this section I discuss what good health means for Indigenous peoples and how health is tied to the Land. The work of Richmond (an Anishinaabe scholar) and Ross (2007) captures the

voice of Community Health Representatives (CHR) within First Nation communities and their experiences of health in relation to the Land, and offers an important expression of environmental dispossession and how colonialism has impacted the relationship with Land.

Good health in Indigenous communities is regarded as “a balance of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual elements” (Malloch, 2009, p. 467). Malloch, an Anishinaabe scholar, writes that “Good health is ours when we live in a balanced relationship with the Earth and the natural world” (p. 467); furthermore, bad health, which comes in the form of sickness, represents an “imbalance” (p. 467). Williams (2009), an Anishinaabe artist, writes about the Medicine Wheel or “The Search for Pimaatisiwin,” which is “the aim of living a Good Life on this Earth” (p. 467) and is the basis for the traditional quilts that guide her creative work. Within her article is a diagram of the Pimaatisiwin circle, illustrating how the circle guides good health.

Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) state that these expressions of culture, and good living, is important in “(re)building cultural capacity and a sense of Indigeneity [which] leads to positive health outcomes for Aboriginal people” (p. 49).

From their narrative analysis of interviews with 26 Community Health Representatives (CHRs) from First Nation and Inuit communities across Canada, Richmond and Ross (2009) write that:

The land is a fundamental component of Indigenous culture, and central to the health and wellness of Aboriginal societies. As a result, the physical displacement of Indigenous peoples from their traditional Lands and territories, in Canada and around the world, has negatively affected the collective well-being of Indigenous populations. (p. 404)

The Residential School era, from 1831-1998 (Kelly, 2008), is described by Richmond and Ross (2009) as a time when Indigenous people of Canada were “displaced politically, forced by colonial laws to abandon traditional governing structures and processes in favour of colonial-

style municipal institutions” (p. 404). They write that this era “forbade families from sharing their cultural practices (e.g., dances, ceremonies, language, songs), many of which tied Aboriginal peoples to features of their traditional environments such as water, plants and animals” (p. 404).

Richmond and Ross (2009) track how in contemporary times, environmental dispossession is experienced as a direct outcome of colonialism, where, “like other vulnerable populations” Indigenous people “are more likely to experience the adverse health effects of government and industrial decisions that can dispossess them of their environments” (p. 404). They also examine how contaminants entering the traditional food systems impact community health and leave the Indigenous communities vulnerable. They use the example of Grassy Narrows to demonstrate the impact that mercury had on the lifestyle of an Anishinaabe community in Northern Ontario. This community has been a defender of the Land and is now receiving national attention as they are currently protesting the “decades of mercury poisoning in their northern Ontario community” (CBC, 2010). Following their interviews with CHRs, Richmond and Ross (2009) conclude that:

The cumulative effects of environmental dispossession—whether operating in direct or indirect ways—and the compromised cultural connections between land and identity are fundamental contributors of the poor health experienced by rural and remote Aboriginal communities. In a physical sense, the effect of environmental dispossession has led to increasingly sedentary lifestyles and limited food choices, of which CHRs described as pivotal determinants of obesity, diabetes and many other chronic diseases that plague their fellow community members at near epidemic rates. In the face of a changing way of life, CHRs alluded to a sense of powerlessness by community members. (p. 410)

The study by Richmond and Ross (2009) bears resemblance to the work of Hawaiian scholar Lee (2008), who writes about Hawaii. She writes that Indigenous people speak of their community health as directly connected to the fishponds, and that the state of the fishponds

represents “the state of our Native Hawaiian people and our culture. Unfortunately, most of our fishponds in Hawai’i have fallen into disrepair from non-use” (p. 72). Lee (2008) continues: “It is sad to see that they have been filled in for developers' hotels, neglected or tangled in the red tape of bureaucracy” (p. 28). She expresses hope with the example of Ka Honua Momona, where:

Hawaiian’s are reclaiming their right—their responsibility—to take care of the fishponds. Not only are they restoring the rock walls of the ponds, but also they are caring for the land and sea, which is the cornerstone of Native Hawaiian’s philosophy. (p. 72)

The health of the Land and waters are seen as parallel to community health. Cajete (1994) describes the relationship between the learning process and good health: “Health, wholeness, and harmony of the individual, family, clan and Tribal community were the ideal state of life, and therefore the ideal goal of life in community” (p. 179). Embedded within Indigenous Epistemology is the spirit of caring for the Land, and that “the land is fragile at times but also can be fierce in retribution. Thus treating the Land with respect is an important aspect of Anishnawbe culture” (Farrell, 2008, p. 53). For the Anishinaabe who reside along Lake Superior, this would be integral to everything since our livelihood depends on all the waterways.



Figure 9. Blueberry Medicine, Photo Credit, Caroline Michano-Deschamps.

This discussion about how lifestyle has been changed by the impact of environmental dispossession shows how community health is compromised and emotional health is also implicated, creating a feeling of powerlessness in community members. LaDuke (2002), an Anishinaabe scholar, captures this powerlessness as she links the health of the environment to that of her child, writing that “it is not so much just how much sugar is in my son’s cereal, but how many PCB’s are in his tissue at this point in time” (p. 45). She notes that this is “a direct consequence of public policy” (p. 45). Clearly, the impact of environmental dispossession and its implications are detrimental to the health of Indigenous peoples. LaDuke (2002) also points to how Indigenous communities are a metaphor for Native environmentalism through their continual resistance:

Native peoples have courageously resisted the destruction of the natural world at the hands of colonial, and later, industrial society, since this destruction attacks their very identity. This resistance has continued from generation to generation, and provides the strong core of today’s Native environmentalism. This is why 500 or more federal reservations and Indian communities still exist, why one-half of our lands are still forested, much in old growth, and why we continue the work. (p. 58)

This quote from LaDuke (2002) is important because it captures the current efforts in Indigenous communities in protecting the Land and in ensuring that the children within the communities are able to participate in the Land, in the transfer of knowledge, and in the maintenance of culture.

In the context of the community of Pic River First Nation, this spirit of resistance is continually expressed. Pic River has embedded this philosophy into the decisions influencing the community because wholeness is strongly embedded in the way Pic River sees its future. As a community, Pic River’s leadership has been strong in respecting place. Ross (Northern Ontario Business, 2010) speaks of the current Chief Roy Michano, who stresses the importance of keeping the Land clean, realizing its impact on, and importance to, future generations. He noted that Michano has a “take-charge attitude, Michano is an outspoken critic of companies that

pollute and don't clear up, and government promises that aren't honoured” (Northern Ontario Business, 2010, para. 13). Ross writes of Michano:

He's been aggressive on a recent series of chemical spills from the dormant pulp and paper mill into the harbour at Marathon and said he would gladly kill any development on the North Shore if it's going to harm the environment. “We must make sure we leave the environment within our territory clean. I can't support anything or would be able to leave as leader only to see damage to fish and the environment. The waters must be kept clean.” (Northern Ontario Business, 2010, para. 13)

Michano's leadership is in line with Blackstock (a Gitskan scholar), Bruyere (from the Aboriginal Nurses Association of Canada), and Moreau's (2006) views about health and the responsibilities associated with the Land:

[This] means caring for the environment, water, air, preserving cultural knowledge, language and traditions, promoting respectful relationships among cultures and religions, and promoting well-being so that generations to follow inherit the essentials of life, a strong identity and peace. (p. 3)

Pic River embraces this vision and has taken a solid lead in ensuring that the Land is a place where health and education are embraced holistically. In this section I have shown the importance of Land to health and that the health of the Land and Waters are a metaphor for community health.

2.4 Contemporary Indigenous Youth

In this section I examine literature that speaks to the experiences of Indigenous Youth in relation to the Land. I open with recommendations from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report (1996) because of its Youth content, which is very important in this review. Understanding the voices of Indigenous youth sets the stage for appreciating how the Youth of Pic River understand their relationship with the Land.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP] took place in Canada from 1991-1996 to restore justice to the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in

Canada and to propose practical solutions to “stubborn problems” (RCAP, 1996). The goals of the report were vast and condensed into five volumes. The report highlights recommendations that speak to several themes, one of them being the theme of Youth. The report uses the metaphor of ghosts to explain the historical displacement of Indigenous people of Canada:

The ghosts take the form of dishonoured treaties, theft of Aboriginal Lands, suppression of Aboriginal cultures, abduction of Aboriginal children, impoverishment and disempowerment of Aboriginal peoples. Yet at the beginning, no one could have predicted these results, for the theme of early relations was, for the most part, co-operation. (RCAP, 1996, para. 8)

As recognized in the report, youth voices are integral in the healing process of Aboriginal people, and “56.2 per cent of Aboriginal people are under 25,” (RCAP, 1996, para. 69). It is the youth who will “carry on the initiatives and live the dreams of Aboriginal nations in the next millennium” (RCAP 1996, para. 69). The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples states that youth shared presentations which fell under three overarching themes: Recognition and Involvement, Empowerment, and Healing. Healing, it was noted, is very important:

Spiritual healing and rediscovery are necessary so that Aboriginal youth can get a firm footing in their cultures and traditions. This will protect them from the alienation and hopelessness that lead to drug taking, lawlessness and suicidal behaviour. The Commission supports the call by young people for more opportunities to learn about their cultures - not just as abstractions or relics but as living, growing traditions. (RCAP, 1996, para. 69)

As a way to heal from the past legacies, Rediscovery Camps, which are based upon Henley’s (1989) ideas (Henley is non-Indigenous but has worked closely with Indigenous peoples), were noted in RCAP Volume Four: “Aboriginal youth also recommended youth camps—places where they can get back to the Land and learn about themselves and their culture. It is noted in the report that Rediscovery Camps provide one model” (RCAP, 1996, p. 149). These camps are noted as important because they are culturally relevant, rooted within Indigenous Knowledges, and draw from the support of the communities involved. They are

important also in that they safeguard youth from the negative cycles of colonialism. To further explain the need for Indigenous youth to be supported in ways that are meaningful and culturally relevant, in *Tradition and Education*, the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) states that:

Unless a child learns about the forces which shape him [or her], the history of his [or her] people, their values, the language, he [or she] will never really know himself [or herself] or his [or her] potential as a human being. (p. 9)

On the theme of healing on the Land, Simpson (2002) reiterates the importance of Indigenous environmental programs as “one of the most important ways of strengthening our cultures, promoting environmental protection, the realization of sustainable local economies, and supporting students through healing and decolonizing processes” (p. 16). Her work is important as it offers a methodology in which to employ decolonization with Indigenous Youth on the Land, and she argues that “these skills are essential to enable Aboriginal students to return to Aboriginal communities and urban organizations and effect change” (p. 14). She suggests this is important because of the responsibility upon youth: “our continuance as peoples’ is dependent upon the ability of our youth to protect traditional Lands; reclaim, revitalize, and nurture our traditional systems of knowledge and language; and build sustainable local economies” (p. 15). She adds that “connecting to the land is critical if Indigenous ways of teaching and learning are to be employed and programs are to be grounded in Indigenous educational philosophies” (p. 19). Her work thus offers support in the development of culturally responsive environmental education, although it does not examine the voices of Indigenous Youth.

For the significance of Land for good health, the Indigenous Youth voice is largely missing from the literature. One article written by Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) does address the area of my research question - in understanding the significance of Land for the learning and health of Anishinabek youth. This article is very important; however, it is not an empirical study.

The article highlights many important commentaries about the relationship between the Land, and Indigenous youth, health, and learning. The article also speaks to the importance of building linkages to Land, and to “*learning sites* (family, community, and Nation)” (p. 51, emphasis in original) as being crucial for building good health and education for these youth. Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) argue that these *learning sites* will “stimulate an increased level of cultural identity and capacity in young children” (p. 51) as children cannot be “disentangled from the broader families, communities, and Nations that sustain them” (p. 51). The authors provide a commentary on the impact of colonialism on Indigenous communities and families, and restate that the way we build healthy communities is by ensuring that our youngest members are a part of this circle. Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) also suggest story is essential in the transmission of knowledge, and that “this can be learned from the land and from the connections with the land, and from the stories that Elders tell us about the land and our relationship to it” (p. 53). This article is important as it reiterates the need for building good healthy communities and the need to start with our youngest members.

As discussed in this section, a need for Land-based programming has been expressed by the youth in RCAP hearings, along with a genuine belief that the Land is a place where Indigenous youth can connect in culturally relevant ways and that being rooted in an Indigenous context is important. In looking at models of Land-based programming, I will now explore the limited voice youth are given in the literature about Land and its importance for learning and health.

2.5 Understanding How Indigenous Youth Relate to the Land: Empirical Studies

With an understanding of the context of the environment, I move to empirical studies that examine active projects that aim to restore Indigenous cultures through outdoor and

environmentally based programming rooted in Indigenous Knowledges in relation to Indigenous Youth. The first empirical study is the model of Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin program detailed in a thesis by Lowan (2008, 2009). It should be noted that Outward Bound is not solely based upon Indigenous Knowledges, but has this offshoot program for Aboriginal Youth. Lowan (2009), a Métis scholar, writes that his work began as he "wondered if, as our program literature stated... [we were] truly fostering an environment where Outward Bound and Aboriginal philosophies and traditions were equally represented" (p. 43).

Lowan's (2009) critical analysis of the Giiwaykiwin Outward Bound program involved nine participants - of the nine, only three of the participants were Indigenous. An age group is not given for the participants, but the specific Outward Bound program Lowan is analyzing was designed for youth. A key finding of relevance to this review concerned "the centrality of Indigenous connections to specific geographical areas" (Lowan, 2009, p. 47). A quote from one of the students from Lowan's thesis captures this connection to Land:

I think people are meant to be out there, it's our natural instinct to be in the bush. My spirit was like, "Thank you' for bein' out here!" To be in that canoe on the water, or on the rock, camping. That's the whole point. It really helped me prioritize what's important from a bigger personal perspective. I'm getting emotional now thinking back to being out there. I miss that. (p. 50)

This quote is important because it discusses how being in the bush helped the student to understand and prioritize their life. A sense of vitality is found in this quote, and it is apparent that learning was taking place by how the student discussed becoming emotional in thinking about being on the Land. This shows how important this experience was for the student participant, and how they found themselves within the Land.

While Lowan's (2009) work is important, and critical in understanding how Indigenous youth experience and benefit from Land-based learning, what is different in the current study is

that the youth from Pic River are speaking to their experiences and understandings of knowledge, health, and Land within the context of their *own* home within a First Nation community. Nonetheless, Lowan makes excellent recommendations in his findings which are invaluable for developing culturally competent outdoor education programs for Indigenous Youth and community as part of decolonization.

Rediscovery International, “established in 1978, and ecologically centred around cross-cultural understanding and global peace by adopting traditional Indigenous People's values” (Henley, 1989, p. 1), originated in the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. These camps are a part of a “broad network of affiliated programs spanning several countries, including Canada, the United States and New Zealand” and “are generally for youth between eight and 17 years of age and have a mix of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants” (Henley, 1989, p. 1). One main difference between this model and the Outward Bound program is that Rediscovery Camps are built with Indigenous communities in their home territory. Rediscovery is unique as their programming now also reaches to the urban community and is “intended to help urban youth rediscover their indigenous heritage” (Wihak, Hatley, Allicock, & Lickers, 2007, p. 137).

While it is important to acknowledge their efforts to work with Indigenous youth, again, no empirical studies have been generated in the area of Indigenous Youth and the significance of Land in their learning and health (personal communication with M. Lickers, Executive Director of Ghost River Rediscovery based in Calgary, Alberta, 2011). With regards to the importance of the current study, Lickers expressed that research in this would be welcomed by Rediscovery. He stated that “although Indigenous peoples have been researched literally to death, work around hearing from Indigenous youth is not there” (personal communication, M. Lickers, 2010) as there are limited studies on Indigenous Youth.

My literature search only uncovered a few related articles with a distinct focus on Indigenous youth and their experiences on the Land. From the literature search I conducted, one study, and those of Takano (2005, 2009), focussed on the experiences Indigenous youth have with the Land. Also, I found only one article - written by Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) which was an overview rather than an empirical study - that looked at the themes which I have previously discussed as important in this review. Takano (2005, 2009) and Lowan (2009) both concluded that few empirical studies have been undertaken in the area of Land-based learning and Indigenous youth.

Japanese Indigenous scholar Takano (2005, 2009) has captured Indigenous youth voice. Her work focuses on Land-skill training with Inuit, and looks to understand the “concept of connection with the Land, with particular reference to transmitting knowledge” (p. 463) through an Inuit-driven project called “Paariaqtuqtut organized by a group of Inuit elders, the Inullariit Society” (p. 465). In her work, she examines and questions “the growing trend within ‘traditional societies’ to restore a connection with the Land” (Takano, 2005, p. 464), and questions “what these endeavours actually are and why [the Inuit], who are perceived as having this deep connection already, feel the need to restore it” (Takano, 2005, p. 464). Takano (2005) writes that current attempts of Inuit “to bond’ young people with the land have not been extensively examined” (p. 263), and she links her work to environmental problems of the current day and sustainable living. This is important in the historical context of colonialism, which Takano (2005) discusses as she writes that current-day schooling is not meeting the needs of students culturally, “despite a governmental initiative to develop a culturally appropriate curriculum for Inuit children, completed in 1996 called Innuqatigiit” (p. 468). Revealed in her work is the finding that being on the Land is linked to “being and becoming Inuk” (p. 482). A view shared

by Youth participants was that “being on the Land made them [individuals aged 12-31] realize their connection with their ancestors, place and the bigger environment” (p. 482). Takano (2005) also writes in her findings that “‘being on the land’ included wellbeing, family ties, language, connection and survival training” (p. 475).

Takano (2009) connects the significance of Land to Indigenous families’ and communities’ connections. She writes about the Yupèik in Russia, where disconnection from the Land was seen to threaten identity and self-esteem, because the Yupèik worldview situates people in a web of relationships with one another, including the natural and spiritual world. Similarly, Anishinabek worldviews are situated within this web of relationships. Interestingly, Takano (2005), whose work was done with Inuit peoples, noted that “being on the Land” is linked to “being Inuk”, and it “made them realize their connection with their ancestors, place and the bigger environment” (p. 482). The insight and narratives contained in the work of Takano (2005, 2009) relate closely to the work I have undertaken. I found her work to be very descriptive, and respectful to the communities. Understanding how and why being on the Land is important for youth in one area suggests the significance of Land for Youth from other communities as well.

This section has examined literature that expresses the need to connect Indigenous youth with the Land/environment through an Indigenous framework. In attempting to provide perceptions of Indigenous youth in regards to the Land/environment, I reviewed empirical studies that tell of their experiences on the Land and their perceptions of how this relates to their health and learning. In each study, a gap in the literature was said to exist; thus, this research interviewing youth provides an important contribution.

In conducting this literature review I used keyword/key phrase searches, including: “Rediscovery International & Indigenous Youth,” “Rediscovery International & First Nation Youth,” “Rediscovery International & Aboriginal Youth,” “Outward Bound & Indigenous Youth,” “Outward Bound & First Nation Youth,” “Land and Indigenous Youth, and “Land and First Nation Youth”. In addition, I added in the words “Health” and “Education.” These searches produced very limited results in terms of actual empirical studies in the ERIC & CBCA databases and in Google Scholar. One area that turned up continuously in my searches was “culturally-responsive schooling;” again, I did not find documentation of a youth perception of Land and its importance to them. Place-based education offers support for the concept of home, and learning within one’s own environment; however, this area has not been extensively examined within the First Nation youth context or within a First Nation community in Canada.

2.6 Conclusion

Education, like research, has been one of the “dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (Smith, 1999, p. 1) because like research, education has been exploitive and destructive to our communities. An example of how education has been destructive can be found in Milloy (2008) who discusses how Anishinabek parenting has succumbed to tragedy due to the Residential Schools, and the absence of children in communities as a result of government policy which had direct impacts on the health of communities:

The Aboriginal Rights Coalition listed the consequences of a century of removing children from parents and culture: 'the loss of language ... the loss of traditional ways of being on the land, the loss of parenting skills through the absence of four or five generations of children from Native communities, and the learned behaviour of despising Native identity.' These factors produced further sorrowful results so evident in the 1980s - the large and growing number of children in care, the fact that 50-60% of illness and deaths of First Nations individuals were related to alcohol and the overrepresentation in prisons 'by more than 3 times their proportion of the population.' (p. 14).

Still in 2012, the Indian Act governs First Nations education frameworks in communities that desperately lack second and third level service, and greatly disserves First Nation children. I believe that Pic River First Nation places tremendous value on education and Land, and it would be beneficial for other First Nations communities to hear from these findings on how Youths' experiences of home territories affects good health and supports their educational paths. Understanding what Pic River Youth value can inform strategic decisions that can, in turn, shape policy with Anishinabek youth. Hooks (2003) writes: “My hope emerges from those places of struggle where I witness individuals positively transforming their lives and the world around them” (p. xiv). This quote resonates with the importance of positive transformation that is so integral to First Nation youth and the current state of their education.

Exploring the connection that Anishinabek Youth hold to the Land, their home, is important for many reasons touched upon in this literature review. When Youth feel supported in their home territory, I expect that they will be able to contribute back to their respective communities in a positive way by contributing to the community's sovereignty over Land and resources. This work investigates that significance Pic River Youth place on the Land in their health and education, and therefore helps fill a gap in the literature while contributing knowledge of practical value to the community.

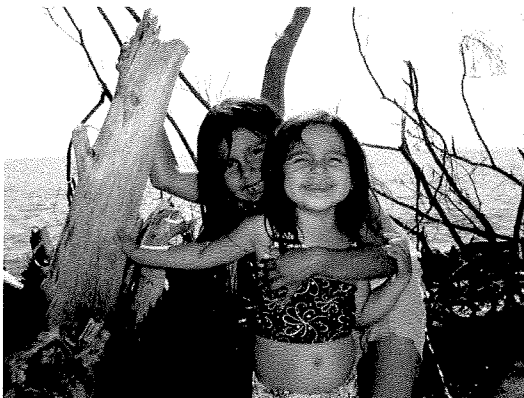


Figure10. Mackenzie and Madison Courchene, *Down The Mouth*, Photo Credit, Leona Michano.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 An Indigenous Approach

This thesis is based on the voices of Indigenous youth from Pic River, a community along the north shore of Lake Superior, Canada. Central to this research is Indigenous Methodology which supports these narratives. In using Indigenous Methodology I seek to respect the Ways of Knowing and inquiry which are central to my belief system as an Indigenous woman. Wilson (2008) believes that:

The foundation of Indigenous research lies within the reality of the lived Indigenous experience. Indigenous researchers ground their research knowingly in the lives of real persons as individuals and social beings, not on the world of ideas.... We as Indigenous scholars who wish to participate in the creation of knowledge within our own ways of being must begin with an active and scholarly recognition of who our philosophers and prophets are in our own communities. These are still the keepers and the teachers of our epistemologies. (p. 60)

I see the youth as the philosophers and prophets, whose story gives shape to the experiences and values that are important to them, and helps to inform the adults around them. The data itself are important for many reasons, as Wilson (2008) captures in an interview with his colleague Peter. Peter says, “The data itself I see as a bundle. And as I share the data, I am unfolding the bundle.... So I think that in my writing I can describe the different levels and then the opening of the bundles” (cited in Wilson, 2008, p. 124). For Anishinabek people, a bundle is where all your sacred items are kept which support your health and well-being. Your bundle is your sacred objects, and all that you value which helps you to feel whole.

Like Wilson (2008), I see my research and the interconnectedness of relationships:

Part of our methodology and axiology is a growing relationship between the community and whatever it is that is being researched. And how we go about doing our work in that role is where we uphold relational accountability. We are accountable to ourselves, to community, to environment or cosmos as a whole, and also to the idea or topics that we are researching. We have all these relationships we need to uphold. (p. 106)

This quote is important because in the concept of relational accountability I understand that not only am I accountable to the community, I am accountable to maintain a respectful relationship with the community well after the research is complete. This means that my role does not terminate when the research is done; instead, it means I continue to contribute to the betterment of the community, in respect to the needs of the community. The concept of relational accountability is about my role with the community, and about how I continue to contribute as a nation builder in opening up opportunities, or in providing support in the areas which I have strength in. Wilson (2008) also writes about how in the research process there is a ceremonial aspect to Indigenous research. For the ceremonial aspect, Stan Wilson (cited in Shawn Wilson, 2008) states that:

If you talk about research as a ceremony, that's the climax of the ceremony, when it all comes together and all those connections are made. Cause that's what ceremony is about, strengthening those connections. (p. 122)

While writing my thesis many dreams came to me which I believe was a sign telling me that I was on the right path. My dreams were strong ones; I dreamt about names, and even the specifics of a jingle dress for myself. I felt these dreams were part of the ceremonial aspect which were telling me I was on the right path in my life, and doing good things. Wilson (2008) writes about when he states that Indigenous research is spiritual, Indigenous Methodology necessitates this because it draws its strength from cultural Indigenous values.

In data analysis, Wilson says knowledge is not owned, and "while I may be the storyteller for my book, the knowledge I present does not belong to me or even to the amalgamation of friends who participated in the research" (2008, p. 121). Instead, he writes that "the knowledge is part of the relationships between us and cannot be owned" (p. 121). Furthermore, in analysis, Wilson (2008) writes that "accuracy does not play as big a part in describing the phenomenon

but is more important in describing the set of relationships that make up that phenomenon” (p. 122). With this in mind, what is important is in the current work is how the youth relate to the Land, and how it contributes to the areas of education and health for the strengthening of relationships between us all in the Pic River First Nation.

3.1 Data Gathering

I began this research study as a research assistant under the leadership of Dr. C. Richmond. It was formed within a larger three year Canadian Health Research Institutes (CIHR) project .. I was invited along because of my thesis interests. As a research assistant with this project, Dr. Chantelle Richmond, K. Big Canoe, and I, recruited 21 youth aged 18-29, a total of 15 females and 6 males ranging in ages from 18-30. Four main contacts were established for the research - Dr. Richmond, K. Big Canoe and myself (research assistants), and J. C. Michano (Lands and Resources), and are therefore mentioned as the *Research Team* throughout this section.

Research planning began in the early spring of 2009 when teleconferences allowed us to discuss how to proceed with the research study and who would take on different roles in the logistics and planning of the work. Dr. Richmond also took a trip to the community of Pic River where she discussed the details of the project with the leadership and interested community members. It was decided that in order to gauge an interest from Youth, advertising in the community needed to take place. For this, the *Research Team* used the community channel to advertise the project, and also advertised within the community. The Interview Guide was developed by Dr. Richmond, K. Big Canoe, and myself (see appendix A).

In June 2010 initial contact was made with participants via email. In July, we then started to call participants to see if they would be interested in being a part of the interviews. On July 7,

participants were invited to an introductory session about the project. At this gathering, the Research Team met at the Band Office Conference Room. A light dinner was supplied for the youth. The following evening participants were invited to a Photo Voice session held with the Research Team held at the Band Office. During this time cameras were distributed. The plan was that youth would photograph their 'answers' in Photo Voice as the chosen method. Consent would be asked from participants prior to the actual interviews, and this would be where participants would share their photos. At the end of July, the Research Team established a schedule of interviews and locations. From August 16-20, we were back in the community to conduct the actual interviews. Only one camera had been returned, so the Photo Voice component was dropped and the Research Team decided to just conduct interviews. Between August 17-20 interviews were conducted in a place where the youth requested; this was either their home, their workplace, the Band Office, or outside. Only the interviewer and the interviewee were present. Each interview began with a standard introduction by either K. Big Canoe or myself, and with the signing of the consent form. Prior to the interviews, it was explained that participant confidentiality would be protected, and that they could give a pseudonym to be referred by in the research. Each participant gave their own pseudonym. Participation was voluntary. During the interviews, participants were offered fruit drinks, and made comfortable. Indigenous protocols were respected and as a sign of appreciation youth were given thirty dollar gift cards for participating. Each interview was recorded with a mini recorder, and transcribed in early September 2010 by GMR Transcription, with the exception of two that were transcribed by K. Big Canoe. In total, 18 interviews took place, with one interview consisting of two interviewees, which means 19 participants were interviewed in August. In September, K. Big Canoe interviewed two more youth by phone for a total of 21 youth. I was

responsible for nine of the interviews. Interviews lasted anywhere from 27 minutes to 120 minutes and were transcribed to between 14 and 29 pages. Ethics approval was initially provided for me under the University of Western Ontario; I then applied for ethics approval through Lakehead University in order to use the data for this thesis. This was granted on October 7th, 2011. For the Lakehead University Ethics, I contacted the youth again, and had participants fill out consent forms (see Appendix B), in order to use the pre-existing data for my Lakehead University thesis.

3.1.1 The Youth

Pseudonyms were chosen by participants together with the indication of whether they are male or female. In order to protect the confidentiality of participants, I have inserted the pseudonym *Standing Strong* and used it several times when sensitive matters are discussed. This decreases the likelihood of readers connecting events to a specific participant.

1. Patrick (M)
2. Zack (M)
3. Zach (M)
4. Whistling Dixie (M)
5. Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa (M)
6. Delilah (M)
7. Jaelyn (F)
8. Phyllis (F)
9. Dances with Wolves (F)
10. Running with Caribou (F)
11. Storm (F)
12. Jane (F)
13. White Light (F)
14. Walking Turtle (F)
15. May Marie (F)
16. Denali (F)
17. Tia (F)
18. Little Blue Bird (F)
19. Victoria (F)
20. Yellow Bird (F)
21. Lydia (F)

3.2 Data Analysis

From the data I extracted sections from the transcripts applicable to my research question: *What is the significance of Land for Anishinaabe Youth from Pic River First Nation in their Education and Health?* In working toward an answer to this research question and searching for emergent themes, I used the interview transcripts to thematically analyze how youth answered the questions related to Land, place, and relationships.

I used the framework of a Medicine Wheel as a structure in organizing the data. This framework is discussed in greater depth in Chapter Four, which includes the model itself (Figure 1). In drawing upon the commonalities of the participants' answers, a main priority in analysing the data what determining was important to the participants in regards to the Land and its connection to their experiences in education and health. To begin this process I first printed out all interviews, and read all interviews making mental notes about important themes. These were Health, Education, Colonization, Community Intervention, Land, Family, Barriers to Learning, and Epistemology. I chose these themes because they related to my research question. From here, I went through all the interviews and copied pertinent text related to my thesis question in open files on my computer under the above subtitles. I read these often, and began the process of extracting quotes from within these key themes. For the final part of this process, I completed a final read of all interviews. Though all questions were important for me to look at, the most important ones were all the Health questions, all the Environment and Land questions, and the Social Network section. The least helpful section was surprisingly the last section on Education and Learning. My feelings here are that the Environment and Land questions were very concise, and therefore invited very detailed responses. One question specifically was very helpful: "Why is the Land important in your learning as Anishinaabe Youth." This was asked at the very

beginning of each interview and provided rich results. At the end, we asked a question on the Land Claim, and this led to an important finding as it pointed to the lack of knowledge and awareness on the Land Claim issue for the Youth.

3.3 Limitations

This research studied the experiences of Indigenous youth who are from a First Nation community in Canada. The findings will be of interest in the fields of Indigenous Health and Indigenous Education. Limitations to this research are that the sample size was small, with only twenty-one of the youth from Pic River First Nation. While it captures some of their ideas about the Land, Education and Health, it may not represent the views of all Pic River Youth.

As the Interview Guide covered four broad areas of Education, Health, Land and Relationships, it is possible that pertinent themes and data involving Land, learning, and health could have been missed. Another limitation could have arisen due to conducting individual interviews. Focus groups may have provided a more comfortable space for some of the youth who might have been prompted more by hearing other Youths' perspectives. Some Youth may have also felt insecure with one-on-one interviews. It is probable that a wrap-up focus group following the preliminary analysis could have produced richer data.

Youth often seemed uncomfortable when asked at the very end about their knowledge of the Land Claim for Pic River. For me, this pointed to the need to have this incorporated into their knowledge base so that they feel confident in speaking about their territory..

Lastly, some wording could have been too technical for youth; for example, the wording around social supports and relationships. We broke this down as much as possible; however, it is important to note that language used with youth needs to be youth appropriate.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

As presented in Chapter Three, all interviews with the Pic River Youth, except two, took place during the week of August 16-20, 2010 in the Pic River First Nation community. Two interviews were conducted by telephone in September 2010. I refer to the collective substance of these interviews as the *Pic River Youth stories*. The *Pic River Youth stories* are presented in this analysis as a means to understand how these youth value the Land in the Pic River traditional territory in two areas: how their traditional territory affects their education, and how their traditional territory is related to their health. This thesis confirms that Land is significant for these youth.

In this chapter I describe the Medicine Wheel framework used in analyzing the data collected from the *Pic River Youth stories*. Then, I present an overview of the analysis process, and describe my key findings. In analysing the *Pic River Youth stories*, several key themes arose and it became immediately apparent that the youth of Pic River highly value the Land in their learning and health. Indeed, the youths' relationship to Land has a positive effect on their educational achievements and their good health. The youth also linked their educational achievement and good health with family, learning, home, health, and safety, and these themes are explored below.

4.1 Conceptual Framework

I have chosen the Medicine Wheel as the conceptual framework for this thesis for two reasons. The Medicine Wheel is a wheel with four quadrants, with each quadrant representing a direction (north, east, south and west). Each direction is related to different aspects of health and well being (mental, spiritual, emotional and physical), and the equal size of each quadrant shows us that a balance is to be maintained between the different influences in our lives. In terms of my

research, I have broken down questions from my research into each quadrant. The Medicine Wheel was chosen because I am comfortable working with it, and because it is familiar to Pic River community members, including the youth, as described in Chapter 1.

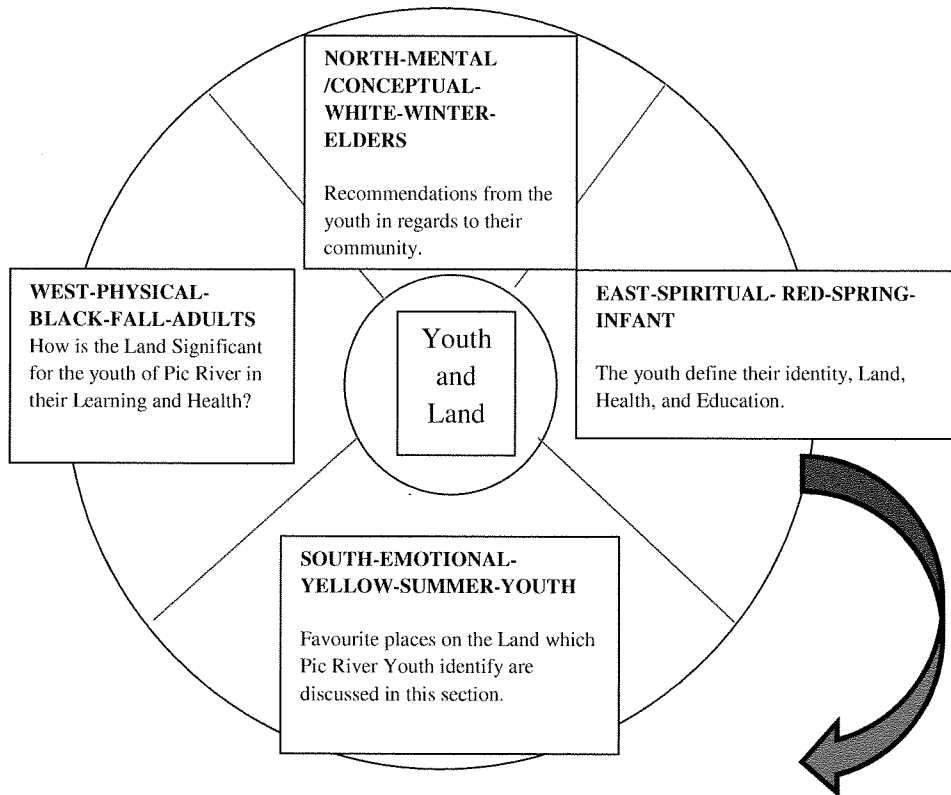


Figure 11. Conceptual Framework

4.1.1 The East

The *East* is the direction which represents the spiritual component of our lives. The East is the doorway to the other directions, and represents the beginning of new life. It signifies birth and spring. The East is the direction where the sun rises, and represents the continuum of life which we experience each new morning. The East is represented by the colour red.

With respect to the *Pic River Youth stories*, I attributed three things to the East within my conceptual framework. Since this is the direction for new beginnings, I felt it would be

appropriate to present how Pic River Youth *defined* the three underlying concepts of my thesis question: Land, Education and Health. These definitions were underpinned by even more foundational questions: How they defined who the Anishinaabe are? and, What this means in terms of their individual identity and their membership in Pic River? The Pic River Youth illustrated that they grasped these concepts so firmly that they were able to define them with a very keen sense of self-awareness. I wanted to honour these definitions as being a direct reclamation of what Smith (1999) would equate with decolonization. Importantly, I found it outstanding for young people to think so broadly about these complex concepts. The concepts they define are a testimony to their identity as Anishinaabe from Pic River First Nation, what the Land signifies to them, and lastly, how education and health relate to this.

4.1.2 The South

The *South* is the direction which represents the emotional component of our lives. The South represents youth. It signifies summer, the time of growth and nourishment. This direction also represents relationships. The colour for this direction is yellow.

In analysing the data for this section, I chose to focus on favourite places that the youth spoke about. Favourite places were chosen for the interview questions as *favourite* connotes emotion, and would ideally tell where youth feel and experience good feelings in their community. Interestingly, all but one youth chose a place on the Land as a favourite place. Yet even the youth who expressed a favourite place outside the Pic River traditional territory noted great joy in returning to their home community, and back onto the Land.

4.1.3 The West

The *West* is the direction which represents the physical component of our lives. Within this direction, adulthood is signified. The West is the direction which represents the fall season,

and is also signified with introspection. The colour for this direction is black.

In analysing the data for this section I chose to tie in how youth physically experience the Land, and how it is significant for their education and health. The physical experiences in relation to education and health are categorized using Gardner (1983, 1999) because his work takes learning out of the classroom and acknowledges the different and unique ways we all learn. This is explained more in Section 4.4.

4.1.4 The North

The *North* is the direction which represents the mental or intellectual component of our life. This is the direction of the winter, the time for resting. Within this direction, Elders are signified. The colour for this direction is white.

In analysing the data for this section, I chose to tie in what the youth recommend for their community. These recommendations appeared throughout the data in the various places during the interviews. These are important because they can guide the community leadership through the eyes of the youth. This area could be important for the community and leadership in developing policy and programs which address youth concerns.

4.2 East: Spiritual Quadrant: Pic River Youth Define The Land, Education and Health

This quadrant of the Medicine Wheel represents our spiritual nature as Anishinaabe people, and the foundation of our belief systems. I felt it was important to look through the data for key definitions used in this research in the participants' own voices. Additionally, the youth were asked to offer a definition of what it means to them to be Anishinaabe and, because of the depth of the definitions, I felt this was imperative to include.

As discussed in the literature review, Farell (2008) points to how the Land is embedded in the epistemology of the Anishinaabe people. This was reflected in my data analysis. The youth

had a very specific way of knowing that reflected their relationship with the land. In the *Pic River Youth stories*, the youth frequently described their experiences with the Land, and how important the Land was to them in the context of their daily lives. In deciding which passages to directly quote from all the definitions given in the *Pic River Youth stories*, I chose passages that provided strong yet concise definitions, and which provided insights into the participants' understanding of their identity and how it is tied to their connection to their traditional territory. For example, according to White Light: "If Pic River wasn't on this land it wouldn't be – we wouldn't be Pic River. If you move it anywhere else, it just wouldn't be the same." This comment typifies the tone of the interviews, in which participants showed strong ties to the community and the pride they hold as Pic River Youth, and it is suggestive of the metaphysical understanding Pic River Youth have of their connection to their traditional territory.

4.2.1 Pic River Youth Define "The Anishinabek"

We, the Anishinabek, are often defined by the outside. I know this to be true from my own experiences in life. It was Solomon's (1990) book of poetry which awoke me and spoke to me about what it was to be Anishinaabe. Solomon wrote a series of poems about his experience and understanding of his role as an Anishinaabe man, by explaining symbols of Anishinaabe cosmology, spiritual practices and ceremony and how these affected his growth and development. In the *Pic River Youth stories*, I often heard the same thing: Pic River Youth defined themselves by referring to aspects of their cultural heritage and explaining how these impacted their own self-definitions. Their definitions drew upon traditional medicines and approaches to health, importance of family and community, connectedness to Land and all living beings, Land use, and the importance of ceremony.

This process of self-definition speaks to Pic River Youth's pride and connection to their

culture. One of the participants also reminded us that to be Anishinaabe is to be privileged.

Jaelyn noted that the strength is in the medicine and the power of culture. She said:

I think Native people are like very strong. And the medicine is strong. I believe a lot of – like they can have visions and all that. People coming outside of our culture might not understand it and how powerful Native people really are. And I'm proud to be Native.

White Light emphasized how important her connection to her family was, and explained the value of closeness. She explained how life in a small community influences her perspective:

It's who I am. I know that a lot of my views, just on family, is a lot different than my friends that are in Toronto. And I was one of the only Aboriginals that I hung around with at my school. And they would just ask me millions of questions. Like, "oh my God, you live next to your, like, how many family members do you live next to?"

Denali noted the importance in how the "stuff he was taught when was younger", specifically regarding the Land, and how "we should respect it" and that to Anishinabek, there is a deeply embedded belief in the concept of "sacred land", that the reason it is sacred is because "All our ancestors are from here, and they lived here when they were younger", and that one of the reasons we use the Land is "for sacred stuff like sweat lodges and stuff like that." He noted that we can learn from the animals about life and how they live, which can teach you how to conduct yourself. Additionally he noted, that the way we use the Land for hunting and ceremonies, is important in maintaining culture and traditions, and that the key teachers in passing on this knowledge are the parents of the child.

Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa felt that to be Anishinaabe was to be "privileged" because of their connections to the Land and all living things:

I think to me, it's all a part of just a way of living and a way of thinking and a way of being. As Anishinabe people, we do have more of a connection to the land and to the animals and to all living creatures. And although it may be not as strong as it used to be, I think it's always still there and maybe covered up by so much technology and stuff like that in today's society. But I think it's still there and in

your heart and in Anishinaabe's heart to almost protectors of our land and living things.

The Pic River Youth stories spoke of a reverence for home and their connectedness to their specific home community. For example, Jane gave a visual description of Pic River, and her appreciation for home underlies her description:

To me, I think we're really – for me, I'm really grateful to be living in the area that I'm living. Like we have a lot here. We have a lot of trees, and we have these great beaches, and great places to go and stay out at camp. And to go blueberry picking and do different activities. There's a lot that we can gain from the land. Having been able to go out by myself hunting and stuff like that but being able to go out to be able to provide food for my family. Although it's not our only source of food, but it's something that my grandmother looks forward to and my parents.... And I'm really appreciative of what we have here and trying to take care of it as much as possible. And I know not everyone is like that.

Lastly, ceremony was seen as an important expression of culture and well-being for some, although not all, of the youth in Pic River. Two participants talked in detail about their direct experiences with ceremonies. Blue Bird recalled:

Well, for me, I attend [ceremonies]. When I come out of there, I feel like a new person. I feel everything that I went in there – I just released it all, and when I got out of it, I felt like this new person. I was just a ball of energy and had nothing on me, like no weight. I just felt like a feather. It just felt so great. So, attending like ceremonies that make me feel good, and I know people – other like that just attend ceremonies like that and even like doctoring ceremonies, and that.

Walking Turtle related the importance of her experience in the Sundance Ceremony, which is a four-day ceremony held during the full moon in July. The Sundance was hosted by Pic River for four years commencing in 1994. Walking Turtle linked these ceremonies both to her identity and to her cultural beliefs. When asked about her identity she talked about ceremonies and shared the link to her learning:

That involves a lot – not – it's some form of education, getting to – like back then, I was more involved in my culture and I didn't lose it. But I did lose it very fast. I was young and then I pulled out of it, but it was just like education. It's almost like school. You learn and then you basically learn how to respect it first. Then,

that's when you slowly but surely get into it. It took a lot of practice. Like, I did the Sun Dance. Sun Dance is a lot of preparation. I took three years to prep me for it because you gotta learn how to calm your body down because you don't get to eat for four days. That's one big thing that was really hard on me when I went there. So, it's something to really prepare yourself for and you gotta get all the teachings and know exactly what the Sun Dance is all about, stuff like that. That's actually where I became a woman. So, I didn't even actually get to finish the whole ceremony. So, but it was a really good experience.

I remember there was a lot of preparation for it though. Just like educating, but yet, the education is different than sitting in a classroom because all the education is basically hands-on, sitting there and watching, and observing, not being told, or taught. So, it's – being Anishinabe, it's almost like having a different way of life at the same time with being like civil, like everyone else. It's like, "Yeah, I'm just like you. I'm Anishinabe. That doesn't mean that I'm different, but it just means that I have a cultural background, which means that I have other teachings and another part of me that's over in ceremony. If you ask me what ceremony is, it's just my way of belief. You believe in God. I believe in Creator, just like some people believe in the Buddha. I'm not saying I don't believe in both because I believe in God and the Creator.

Dances with Wolves and Running with Caribou, who were in a joint interview for the research, noted the importance of dedication in those who attend ceremony, and that one has to be in a good frame of mind. To conclude this section, the youth viewed themselves in a unique way which is intertwined with the Land, and the home they come from. The Pic River Youth stories are strong and indicate their philosophical beliefs, and illustrate the importance of their identity to their learning, well-being and identity.

Next I explore the definitions which the Pic River Youth employed in respect of the Land.

4.2.2 Pic River Youth Define “The Land”

The first definition of the Land comes from one of the participants who drew upon how embodied the Land is in the context of this participant's life. Lydia exclaims, “I think it means everything, it's life!” Her comment also looked to the future, reflecting our responsibility to protect the earth and to ensure long-term sustainability:

We get everything from here rather it be locally, whether it be hunting, whether it be blueberry picking- this is home! It's important and again like I said it wasn't until the last two years of it that I started realizing how important it was. How important – you don't stop and realize that our drinking water is important, you don't stop and realize that recycling is important, you don't stop and realize how much garbage you put out. Any of that stuff, what kind of food you get, until you're told that you can – blueberry picking, you can't do because they spray insecticides, you know, but that was one of my favourite pass times, going out with my Granny and stuff like that, but you know what? Couldn't do it the last couple of years because of that and now you go out and you find little patches here and there, that just kind of concerns me for the future, you know what's it going to be like 20 years from now?

Lydia's comment reflected the common theme coming from the *Pic River Youth stories* - that the link to Land is everything; and that, therefore, the definition of Anishinaabe identity required some explanation of the relationship of the people to their traditional territory. Lydia's comment also emphasized her understanding that principles of conservation and management of resources must become important for the youth in regards to Land because even in her own short lifetime, Lydia had witnessed the environmental damage in the toxic spray and contamination in blueberry patches. Finally, Lydia's comments are underpinned by her important and meaningful relationship with her Granny, which she feels becomes impacted negatively due to spraying of insecticides on food sources. The interruption in traditional activities has a negative consequence for relationships and the passing on of traditional knowledges (Richmond & Ross, 2009).

Another participant, May Marie, explained that she had an obligation to protect the Land as part of her innate responsibility as a mother of the future nations. She stated that:

The land what it means to me as a youth is my home whatever. But I just can't think of the land as a youth. I'm still thinking of the land as a mother kind of thing. So I still want the land to be just as livable as it is now. And I still want that for my kids in the future kind of thing. So it means a lot to me. I just wish everyone would take care of it and feel the same way.

May Marie's comments are imbued with responsibility, and a hope that others would value and take care of the Land with the same sense of obligation which May Marie assumed. Lastly, the

Land is seen as an embodiment of the Seven Sacred Teachings or The Grandfather Teachings. Each sacred teaching associates one animal with one value: Eagle for Love; Buffalo for Respect; Bear for Courage; Sabe for Honesty; Wolf for Humility; Beaver for Wisdom, Turtle for Truth. The Seven Sacred Teachings are embraced by the Anishinaabe as a means to honour spiritual law and to ensure continued connection to the Land. In the words of Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa, the Land “means Mother Earth. Or, like a mother, and it needs to be treated with respect, love, basically use the Seven Grandfather Teachings. So, well that’s the basic description there.”

When asked about the Land’s importance in learning for Anishinaabe learners, he explained that knowledge is transferred through stories:

Well, like I was saying before, the Seven Grandfather Teachings are very good part of this. The mother is Mother Earth and its part of our traditions actually. We learn through stories and different stories tell about Mother Earth and how we live off the Earth to survive and if it wasn’t for mainstream society we would still be using these techniques and a lot of these techniques have been used and improved.

Later in his interview, Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa explained his view that the Residential School system and the removal of young people from their communities was a powerful mechanism for destroying the tradition of stories interrupting the transmission of knowledge. On his account, youth refrained from sharing their stories about traditions, culture and spirituality because they were “afraid to be punished”, and he said that “it was like they didn’t want the culture after the Residential Schools. And things like that, knowledge they may have had.” The comments of Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa echo the Royal Commission Report which speaks about how the youth of today experience the effects of colonialism, and this dark side of history, in the form of “ghosts of the past” (RCAP, 1996, para. 8). At the same time, Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa’s account is decolonizing because he has turned to the Seven Sacred Teachings and the

stories associated with the teachings as a way to explain his connection with the Land and to account for the transmission of knowledge.

In summary, these three participants provide an explanation of their relationship to Land and how their connection with Land informs their sense of identity and that the youth have an obligation to act as guardians of the Land. The transmission of stories through traditional teachings such as the Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings inform the youth of a decolonized worldview.

4.2.3 Pic River Youth Define “Education”

The *Pic River Youth stories* all reflected on their awe for the nature and scope of their traditional territory. For instance, Pukaskwa National Park is located fully within the traditional territory of Pic River First Nation and Pic River students are often hired for summer positions within Pukaskwa, giving them an opportunity to view their territory from other perspectives. Storm took great pride in explaining a trip she took by boat, down the coast of Pukaskwa, along the shore of Lake Superior:

Storm: Yeah, I've actually went out on the boat once. And I've seen the boundaries of Pukaskwa. And there was a few times I got to go see – I guess learn things that I don't really necessarily get to learn inside the office. And like when I went on the boat, they were telling me “Oh, this is this island, and this is this.” They showed me a few cabins. “And this is where the ecologists work and stay and stuff.”

And I found that really cool. It's really a good opportunity to get out and learn things that you can't learn inside here. I've heard of them, but no one's actually talked to me about them. So it was nice to get out and see them and actually witness them with my own eyes and know what everyone's talking about now.

Interviewer: So when you went out on the boat were you just kind of overwhelmed with the amount of land there is out there?

Storm: Yes. I couldn't – I honestly thought it was just this little small circle where all the campsites were and that was it. I thought that was Pukaskwa. Then when we went out, they were all telling me “This is that” and then we were on the boat

for a while; at least 20 minutes. And someone had said, “This is probably the most beautiful part of Pukaskwa.” And they showed me a waterfall that went to the lake. And I was so confused. I was like “Why do they keep saying ‘this part of Pukaskwa?’”

I thought Pukaskwa – we passed it already. And then I was like “Okay” – at the end I was like “Okay, I just have to ask something. You might think I’m weird, but was that all?” He’s like “Yeah that was all. It actually goes a little bit further.” I said, “Are you kidding?” He’s like “No.” I said “I honestly didn’t think it was that big.” It’s really – when you’re in here, you think it’s just this and that’s it, but it’s actually a lot more.

Interviewer: So do you think the youth have something to learn from all of that out there?

Storm: Yeah.

Interviewer: If they were facilitated in a way that was safe?

Storm: Yeah, definitely. I think you need to get out there and experience things that you can’t learn inside of classrooms and offices and buildings and whatever.

Interviewer: Why do you think that knowledge is important?

Storm: I guess it – because it gives you more of an idea. Me, here, I think it was a good thing that I went out there. If I talk to a visitor or something, I have a little bit more of a reference than of someone who didn’t go out and they only had the office aspect of Pukaskwa. So I think it’d be really good to know more; expand your mind and learn more things.

She defined her learning on the Land as an experience, “you can’t learn inside of classrooms, and offices.” Her explanation of the boat ride illustrated her enthusiasm from her understanding of just how vast Pic River’s traditional territory is. Storm noted that she actually did not realise how large the area of Pukaskwa was until she was in the boat. She acknowledged that her learning on the Land is something you can never capture in the classroom, and this reflected the importance of offering youth an opportunity to learn on the Land in a meaningful way.

Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa also explained how the interruption of the youth’s use and enjoyment of Land reflects the interruption of knowledge transmission. Until you use the Land,

for instance, you cannot learn how to hunt. He said:

Yeah, I guess say if you were to be living off the land you would have more understanding of how everything works and you would adapt to it, rather than if you were to learn about it in a classroom you couldn't necessarily know exactly how it is. You wouldn't be able to feel, you wouldn't have the sense of it. Like, say if you were to hunt you would understand that you would have to be quiet or something like that, you would know how to adapt. If you were to be just educated through a classroom there would be a lot of things you wouldn't know and then you might not be able to hunt very well.

Lydia noted how her perception of learning was linked to school, and yet “culture, my language. I learned that outside of the classroom,” and Walking Turtle stated that, “it's observing, basically. I'm a hands-on learner. So, with saying that, let alone I learn more better when I'm doing something, rather than hearing something. So, learning let alone is just living.” White Light adds that learning takes place all the time and that “if you're just open to learning, you could learn a lot from everything and everyone around you whether they're just the baby, to an Elder.” Lastly, Lydia related learning back to the Land, and she reminded us of the importance of respect, and the Seven Grandfather Teachings:

Just paying attention and taking care of the Land. If you start to destroy the Land, then future generations won't be able to have the opportunity to learn and experience the Land. Teaching me how to live by the Seven Grandfather Teachings, how to take those into account and how to practice them on a daily basis and stuff like that. I get a lot of history from him, he's just one person that I was always able to open up with and talk with that, I'd always learn something from him every time I talked with him. There was always something new!

Storm said: “So I think it'd be really good to know more; expand your mind and learn more things.” This comment seemed to captured how the *Pic River Youth stories* define the transmission of knowledge overall, by categorizing it with opportunity, and the ability to grow and learn more things. The youth seemed to see learning this way: ongoing and lifelong.

These quotes illustrate that Pic River Youth experience their learning on the Land and that the importance of learning outside the classroom should not be underestimated. Lydia noted

that her opportunities to learn about language and culture occurred outside the classroom, and Walking Turtle noted that living is learning. White Light noted learning can happen when we observe even the smallest person to the oldest. As such, learning is taking place outside of the classroom, and the youth of Pic River are actively seeking opportunities to learn on the Land. Learning can be done collectively and cultural exchanges which are focused on our physical, spiritual, mental and emotional health are important in building strong individuals and a strong community.

In summary, the participants showed vast understandings and definitions of learning. The relationships that the youth have with the community centre around the Land, their home, and all of Creation. The *Pic River Youth stories* elucidate that education can and should occur outside the classroom, in the activities of daily living and in the use and enjoyment of their traditional territory. The youth see learning as a key to moving forward and as something deeply entrenched in their philosophical outlook that coincides with respecting all life.

4.2.4 Pic River Youth Define “Health”

Having reviewed the definitions of Anishinaabe, Land, and education, I now move into my exploration of the Pic River Youth definitions of health. Health is related to the environment around us and is comprised of our spiritual, emotional, physical, intellectual, and “everything” (Malloch, 2009). This idea is captured by May Marie:

It doesn't just mean physical health to me. Good health means everything spiritually, emotionally, physically and everything. And it's really hard to define a healthy person, especially around here because there could be a person who is not over weight, who does eat, but yet they still have this problem with drinking or something. Or you could have this sober person who does eat and who does exercise, but yet they have still the mental health problems to work on or whatever because of the life they had before, because of their choices. So good health, to me, means having the balance between everything, between all those aspects in life kind of thing.

Poor health is all the other bad stuff. And it's not even just about the drinking and all that. Poor health is even the environment around us. It's like that affecting our poor health now, you know? And over weight, obviously. Those kind of issues, physical, being unphysically fit is poor health. Just all messed up mentally is poor health. No spirituality or whatever. No one to believe in is poor health. All that stuff.

May Marie's comments reflect a holistic view of health, which are consistent with the Medicine Wheel framework where different aspects of one's person need to be kept in balance. Phyllis noted that being healthy is defined as "someone who is active and not always inside." Zack noted how people made choices that were not good, and this impacted health. For example, smoking. He noted that "my dad's health's probably gone down because he's been smoking and he's getting a bit older." He noted that he was concerned for his dad's health because he was aware of the damage from smoking. Jane shared what she thought was important for maintaining good health. She linked the Land and traditional activities as being important for good health, stating:

I think just surrounding yourself with as much well being as you can. Taking in – going for hikes and taking in our scenery, trying to practice traditions. I know in the past couple of years, we've been trying to do stuff like that, trying to do hunting. Even different activities that people have done before you.

When asked if she felt opportunities were being made for youth in the community to use and enjoy the traditional territory, she responded "no". Jane felt that parents would have to take the lead role in providing these types of experiences for the youth. Almost all youth mentioned the children, but Zach looked at the issue of child welfare as defining bad health and said that when children are being neglected and removed: "It's like people when their families are getting broken apart like when people can't control – like can't even have their kids. They can't keep control of them."

Two participants, young mothers, shared how upon having children, their outlook on healthy living changed as they realized the immense responsibility they had in providing a positive foundation for their children. Jane stated the links between health and her family:

I think my family's health is okay. I think it could be a lot better, and I think in the past couple of years, we've begun to realize that. Like now we have kids and just really trying to work on everything. But a couple of years ago, we didn't have it really together. It was just living day by day, going to work, coming home, doing whatever. We didn't think about us as Anishinabe people. We should be trying to live the life we were supposed to live. There's just no real care or concern.

But we have our daughter now and just kind of starting to realize – I don't know if it took having her to realize the value that we want to be able to show her all those values that our grandmother tried to teach us when we were younger. So just trying to relearn that.

For Yellow Bird a similar theme arises around caring for her family:

Every decision I want to make, it has to have a positive effect on my girls' life. And so right now, I'm trying to have a happy, healthy family with my kids. So I'm trying to cut out all the bad stuff. I'm trying to break the cycle. That's what I'm trying to do, so we will have good health. So that's where I am with health and my family right now. We're healthy, but I think we could be healthier, and I'm trying really hard to get there.

Yellow Bird further noted the barriers in providing for a family and the importance in offering healthy choices for her children. She stated that she was well aware of the health conditions impacting the community such as obesity, and a lack of awareness around the consequences of eating bad foods. One of these participants mentioned the benefits of Moss Bag Teachings³ the community had brought in and suggested more of this should take place as it built upon the strength of cultural teachings around birth and the early years. Whistling Dixie noted the lack of ceremonies in the community presently, and that there were a lot when he was younger. This

³ Moss Bag Teachings are sacred teachings around birthing for Anishinabek families. A Moss Bag is a hand made blanket for the newborn baby's first months which replicates the womb, and is made of soft fabrics like flannel. It is designed with the mother's own special touch and creativity.

caused concern for him. He noted: “we have Pow Wows yearly. Ceremonies, we barely have them anymore”, and he said that fewer people were involved in the ceremonies:

I used to drum, and I don't do it anymore because – well, I have no time, I guess. Well, yeah, but – it seems like the youth nowadays, younger than me – I started drumming when I was like 9 or 10 years old. That's where I was really good at it. Seven is probably where I started. Probably when I got into high school – probably 14 years old – is when I quit.. Well, I just drifted off of it, but you see like 9-year-olds and 8-year-olds nowadays; they barely do it.. They don't have any drum ceremonies, and they don't have any of that stuff anymore. You don't see them doing it.

When questioned about their least favourite places, participants offered other views of health and well being in relation to death and dying. White Light's reflections about the graveyard capture the emotional experience of losing family members, and in her situation, many in a short time frame. She stated:

If you go down to the cemetery, the amount of people that you've known personally that's been buried, it's kind of sad and it's shocking, and scary to see....

The amount of deaths I think. Yeah. I don't think that somebody my age, especially when I was like 14 or something – no, I was 17. Within a short amount of time, I already lost like ten family members within that period. And it's just – it doesn't seem right. I shouldn't have experienced that many loss and death in such a short period of time.

The association between the graveyard and death is unsurprising, but the *Pic River Youth stories* personalise this association. In such a small community, the Pic River Youth often have connections to many of the people who pass away in any given year, and this can be illustrative of ill health or lack of good health. One participant expressed that the community graveyard was her least favourite place, and linked this negative reaction to her concern about health issues in the community and causes of death. Surprisingly, two participants, Dances with Wolves and Running with Caribou, said the church was their least favourite place as they both associated this place with funerals, and death.

In conclusion, this section identified how youth defined the Land, Education and Health. The spiritual connection shown between the youth and their identity, the Land, Education and Health, is indeed fitting with the Medicine Wheel framework. This discussion of definitions is done within the context of new beginnings. As this analysis continues, these definitions will guide us to the next section, the emotional quadrant.

4.3 South: Emotional Quadrant: What Are Favourite Places in Pic River for the Youth?

The Pic River Youth were all asked to discuss their favourite place within their traditional territory. These questions were answered with reference to their relationships with other people and with reference to their learning and good health. In the South direction of the Medicine Wheel, we identify this as a place where we express ourselves emotionally. Denali stated:

I think you have a really great emotional connection because it's your home. And like we talked about earlier, there's nothing – it's just such an unreal feeling to come home and to be surrounded by everything on the reserve and with a connection with the people and everything. It just gives you that sense that you're in the right place. Like you know you're home.

Understanding how youth experience Land is an emotional process as Denali expresses. In Figure 12 a breakdown of favourite places is presented; one person chose two places for a total of 22 tallies.



Figure 12. Lake Superior, Photo Credit, Geraldine Teresa Michano.

Favourite Place	Number of students
Mouth of the Pic River/Beaches	XXXXXXXXXX
Pow Wow Grounds	XX
Pukaskwa Park	XXXX
My Home	XXX
The Mountain	X
Mink Falls	X
Youth Centre	X
Didn't indicate a place within the community, but expressed a joy in returning to the community	X

Figure 13. Favourite Places

The youth were eloquent in describing their favourite places in Pic River. Each quote captured a unique experience with a different reason for the location being a favourite place. Tia stated the water as a favourite place, noting that she goes to the Mouth of the Pic River with her mom to sit by the Lake. She also reflected on what the Land means to her:

My favorite place is sitting on rocks and watching the water. I think it's just nice and calm. It's refreshing seeing how little things could just change like such the little, slightest wind could make a huge wave. And I think it's just beautiful. And especially with the sun going down type deal and looking at all the nature. At the park where we normally go swimming, you could sit on this rock and just look out, and there's a cove here and a lake. You can just see the lake forever. And there's waves, there's rocks on all the sides, and you can see waves just hitting, and it's just nice.

Sometimes, but normally I don't go alone. I go with my mom or something. We go for a walk and sit there and look at the waves and just talk. And land to me would probably like – mother earth, it's what we should respect, and we should take care of it because she gave us so much. She gave us life. And if it wasn't for the land, we would have nothing. And we should have to respect what we get.

May Marie noted that her favourite place is one close to her family's home, close to where she grew up, and as such this place offers her positive memories. Similar to Cajete (1994) and Silko (1996), she speaks about the importance of place:

I love being on top of the mountains in the wintertime. That's probably my favourite place. And I've always lived down in this part of the reserve, too, so I've always seen that mountain. And me and my granny, we have our stories about that mountain and always looking at that mountain, too. So it's like even special to everyone.

Walking Turtle spoke about the river, the mouth of the Pic and Pukaskwa as being her favourite place and noted the special landmarks within this area. She noted the many landmarks which are all special in their own way, and offered solace and a place where you can still feel in tune with the beauty of the Land, and Mother Earth.

I love like having the river go right down the side of our community, and having the accesses we have like Pukaskwa, and the sand dunes, and down the mouth let alone. We have everything here. Like, look at all – like I know hiking in the wintertime, you hike up the mountain across the river. In the summertime, you can hike up the mountain on this side behind us. It's just like – I don't know. It's beautiful here.

Denali expressed her gratefulness in being from a place with such rich natural landmarks. She spoke about the trees and the beaches which are so characteristic of Pic River and the traditional gathering spot at the mouth of the Pic. She spoke about blueberry picking as a favourite activity and noted that there are different activities that are engaged upon on the Land which brings so much joy to her family and grandmother:

To me, I think we're really – for me, I'm really grateful to be living in the area that I'm living. Like we have a lot here. We have a lot of trees, and we have these great beaches, and great places to go and stay out at camp. And to go blueberry picking and do different activities. There's a lot that we can gain from the land. Having been able to go out by myself hunting and stuff like that but being able to go out to be able to provide food for my family. Although, it's not our only source of food, but it's something that my grandmother looks forward to and my parents.

Patrick noted that his favourite is the beaches stretching along the Lake: “The shores of Lake Superior. I always liked them.... Outdoors, yeah, by rivers, lakes and stuff.... I always liked the water.” In his interview, Patrick also noted that hunting and trapping is very important to him. He noted that his times out on the trapline or at the moose camp were special to him and that his knowledge of hunting and trapping came from his Uncle. Patrick explains his relationship with his Uncle: “Well, just somebody that always took me out doing – took me out trapping, hunting and fishing and showed me the ropes when I was little.” Patrick stated he did not like the city. As such, we see that the emotional relationships between the youth and the important people in their lives figure prominently in their views of the importance of their traditional territory. It is not simply the fact of being on the Land that is important, but it is the social and emotional relationships that are fostered through the traditional activities, such as hunting, fishing, trapping and berry picking, that brought the youth closer to their families in making them feel more connected to their traditional territory.

Ga-Ba Bashgamate Mukwa noted that his favourite place is Pic River. Although he lives off-reserve, he cherished Pic River because his links to the community made his links to the Land, to his family, and to his culture much stronger. He stated:

Pic River.. because of the family I almost never see, my culture, like the pow wows, and everything. And just like, the freshness, compared to the city. You can have a fire every night if you want to.



Figure 14. Shiela and Mary Michano, Pic River Pow wow. Photo Credit, Leona Michano.

Victoria explained the calming feeling she experienced when she is close to the water. Victoria stated:

Well one of my favourite places—sitting by the water, just listening to it when it's quiet in the middle of nowhere, and you're just sitting by the water listening to the sounds of what's around you, it's just a peace and serenity that nowhere else in today's society there is. I mean, even sitting in here, there's so many noise caused by electricity.

These comments echo those of Tia who expressed the peace which she was able to feel when sitting by the water. Lastly, two participants, Dances with Wolves and Running with Caribou, noted that their favourite place was their home and that they appreciated greatly the effort that their dad had put into their yard, and specifically the grass in the front of their home where they loved to hang out either alone or with their friends and family.

The *Pic River Youth stories* expressed their connectedness to the Land, and several youth attributed this connectedness to their own personal well-being. Lydia expressed her fondness for the Land, and home of Pic River. She said, “that’s the one thing about being out here is you never lose that connection or you never feel alone, no matter who you’re with or you can just be by yourself and feel at ease”. She also explained her experience on the Land, to include how she felt ease in the community at all times, and in particular nighttime: “Especially at night, you sit there, you lay there and you look at the stars and stuff and it's so quiet and I love it, it’s one of those things you can’t explain.”

Lydia addressed the feeling of being safe while in Pic River, but how she did not necessarily feel the same way when living elsewhere. She talked about moving to a big city and how this experience made her appreciate back home:

It's just that it's beautiful. It doesn't matter if it's rainy. If you go for a walk in the rain, you just realize the rain for some reason brings out all the vibrant colors. Then you realize that no matter what, it's like if you see – you could see children running around. And if you're in Toronto, you see children running around, you're like, “Oh my God, where's the parents? These kids – something's going to happen to these kids.” But here, it's like you don't think twice if there's a child walking down the road. You just know that you have their eyes on them. And chances are, as they're walking down the road, somebody's watching out for them.

Further on in her interview, Lydia described Pic River as having “a big level of security”.

However, at least two other interviewees described a decline in the feeling of safety, and one shared two distinct concerns she had with the community. Standing Strong noted that there was a community member who was known to drive under the influence of alcohol. Standing Strong, an Auntie, felt protective of her nephew: “You know there’s drunks driving around this building and at a certain times I don’t let him go outside because I know this one guy who rides around here drunk all the time.” Additionally, she added that play areas needed to be maintained and currently, “there’s not a nice playground in Pic River. I think the band should invest in a

playground. Why should the kids have to go play at the school playground than a regular park playground?” Notwithstanding these concerns, Standing Strong emphasizes that Pic River is like nowhere else, and that she finds the community a safe place, but that the drunk driving and lack of parks were something of a genuine concern. Denali also addressed her concerns with respect to safety:

It’s one of the reasons why I always wanted to raise my kids here because I always had a great time living here. I always felt that a lot of times people treated you as their own kids, and they would tell you to go home if it was late. I may have not liked it when I was a kid, but I know I feel really comfortable having my daughter there. And if someone knows that she’s doing something wrong, that they would try and say something to her or come and find me. It’s just that extra protection and feeling of safety.

On the flip side of this, one of the participants noted that upon leaving the community, racism which interferes with a feeling of safety, occurs, and that she felt her safety and image were compromised. Jane stated:

I think for me, I’ve always had this – I’ve always wanted to do my best just for my own self just to know that I’ve done my best. And then for others’ perception has always played a big part in that as well. Just because growing up with my family, it was always people are going to see you if you’re not doing this. And people are going to see you if you’re slacking. So when I’m out in the public or I’m with other people, I’ve always had that in the back of my mind, and I should be proud of myself, and you’re a proud, Anishinaabe woman, and a lot of that stuff plays into it.

And when I’m not in Pic River and I’m out, there’s a lot of perceptions no matter how you try that Natives are drunks and we’re on welfare. And I think that alone, we have that much more of a barrier. And so even though we shouldn’t have to, I always feel that we should be trying a little bit more to show ourselves and to prove that we’re great citizens and stuff like that.

The emotional attachment to their favorite places illustrated that Pic River offered its youth a place of comfort and healing. The *Pic River Youth stories* expressed connectedness with the Land and how the Land fostered relationships with their family members. While the youth generally felt safe in their community, and drew strength from their traditional territory, more

research could be done to explore how the youth can and should be prepared for their interaction once they leave their community, off the reserve and out of Pic River traditional territory.

Racism has many impacts on your identity and well-being. If we can give the youth the tools to keep their connectedness to the Land and their relationships with their family strong, even when they travel to live in cities to work or for school, this can keep their sense of identity as Anishinaabe strong.

The youth expressed a positive relationship to the community with the Land and Waters. Their expressions around feeling a sense of safety and a recognition of beauty within their home territory expressed a love of the Land, and a relationship which is integral to their learning and maintenance of well-being and the passing on of traditional knowledge.



Figure 15. Trails at Pukasaw National Park, Kyren Starr-Lipari, Photo Credit, Juanita Starr.



Figure 16. Sand Dunes at Pic River Journey Rouselle, Photo Credit, Brenda Rouselle.

4.4 West: Physical Quadrant: How The Land is Significant for the Youth of Pic River's Education and Health

In this section I draw upon Gardner (1983), a non-Indigenous educational theorist, to help in processing the types of knowledge which the youth discuss. Gardner's contributions have always been helpful to me as an educator in understanding how we learn, and how this relates to our whole being. Gardner (1983) is known for his categorization of learning into a series of 9 Multiple Intelligences. The two most recent additions to his list of Multiple Intelligences were Naturalistic and Existential in 1999:

- Spatial/Visual-refers to “those who think in pictures”.
- Linguistic-refers to those who are gifted in language.
- Logical-mathematical- refers to those who are gifted in the area of mathematics, and logic.
- Bodily-kinesthetic-refers to those who enjoy movement, and working with their bodies.
- Musical- refers to learning based around music, and song.
- Interpersonal- refers to interactions with other people, and that this learner enjoys learning in groups.
- Intrapersonal-this person enjoys to work in solitude.
- Naturalistic- learning within nature, and the Land.
- Existential- Spiritual learning. (Gardner Learning Theories, n. d.)

Gardner's (1983, 1999) classification of learning into two expanded areas – naturalistic and existential – is particularly important for Indigenous learners because our Elders often link learning to a spiritual place (existential) and the significance of Land to our learning is naturalistic. While I was being educated in high school, these ways of learning were not acknowledged in the classroom though they were always a part of Indigenous Knowledges. The acceptance into mainstream schools of these Indigenous Ways of Knowing is very significant for Aboriginal youth. Additionally, Gardner (1983) has recognized other ways of knowing such as musical, bodily, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and spatial/visual. Only two, linguistic and

logical/mathematical, are generally used in schooling, while the others are usually ignored (Gardner Learning Theories, n. d.). This explains some of the deficiencies in Eurocentric classrooms where teaching does not reach the entire child or learner.

With respect to the *Pic River Youth stories*, the chart in Figure 3 illustrates the place where learning took place, the relationships involved, how youth experience these places, and lastly how it relates to their health. Locations are placed on the chart with adjoining tables which highlight the experiences the youth gain from the Land. Then the chart offers a brief discussion to link the importance of place to the maintenance of good health. I posit that the Pic River Youth health was impacted by these places as the places offer a sense of belonging, a passing on of tradition, a connection to reclaiming traditional and Indigenous knowledge, and a sense of security linked directly to the physical landscapes that provide spiritual significance, and that support their emotional and physical well being.

Location	Relation to Health	Type of Learning	Relationships Involved	Gardiner's Learning Type
The Beach	Meditation, exercise, emotional contentment	Traditional Knowledge such as passing on of family knowledge, traditional ceremonial learning, and observation of natural patterns and life.	Family	Bodily, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential, visual
Pow wow Grounds	Belonging, relationship building, emotionally and spiritually bonding.	Traditional Knowledges such as passing on of family knowledge, traditional and ceremonial learning, and learning by observation of people around you.	Family and community	Bodily, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential, visual
Pukaskwa Park	Reclaiming a physical space which became a federal national park in 1982. Belonging, and the expression of ties to the Land are large as we find	Traditional Knowledges are passed on through experiencing the Land, and the teachers at the Park who continue to enable this learning through the park	Family, community, and park employees	Bodily, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential, visual

	many historical links to our lineage in the park.	programming. (i.e. Maps of traditional territory, and increased community activities.)		
Home	Safety, security,		Family and community	All
The Mountains	Physical landscape which reflects Pic River, feels like home.	Traditional activities such as climbing the mountain and participating in bonding activities with family.	Family and community	Bodily, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential
Mink Creek	Meditation, serenity, connection with territory outside of the reserve which leads to reclaiming.	Participating in activities with family which increase family ties, and enable a healthy relationship.	Family and community	Bodily, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalistic, existential
Youth Centre	A sense of belonging and purpose.	Provides youth an opportunity to engage in healthy exchanges, and gain leadership.	Family, community, employees.	All

Figure 17. Locations of Youths' Favourite Places, and Relationship to Health and Learning.

In the column entitled *Type of Learning*, I expand upon the types of learning and how learning takes place. The link to Indigenous and Traditional knowledges as being passed on in these locations is an important theme. For example, Pukaskwa was mentioned by several youth as being their favourite place, and the youth described their activities within the Park – parking, camping, or walking the trails. While always a part of the Pic River traditional territory, and always used by Pic River members for their traditional activities, Pukaskwa was set aside as a National Park in 1980. I was at the Grand Opening celebrations where some American tourists photographed my cousin Jamie and I; we were aged 7 and 5 respectively. For us, the opening of the Park was an exciting new development. For my grandfather Matt Michano, when he saw the bridge for the first time upon entering the Park, he shed a tear. Matt used to fish in Hattie Cove, where many of our families gained a living from the Land. Hattie Cove later became the site of

the Park's Visitor's Centre, and I can only presume that my late grandfather recognized that his traditional way of life was being encroached upon and eroded by these developments.

For the youth today, Pukaskwa, although it has status as a National Park, is a haven of knowledge as there are records of the traditional history located there. It is also a place where the youth exercise their rights to the Land in the activities they do which contribute to their well-being. Simpson (1999, 2002) noted the importance of activities like map making as a way to expand our knowledge as Anishinaabe people of our traditional territories. While I was completing the research, in a personal conversation with the Park Manager, R. Heron, she noted that there are efforts the Park is undertaking to engage the youth in regards to supporting their emotional ties to the Land. For instance, Pukaskwa developed a map of the territory covered by the Park, and listed all the traditional place names in Anishnaabe-mowin (the Ojibway language). I see these as important strides, supported by Cajete (1994) and Simpson (1999, 2002), and important in decolonizing our territories (Smith, 1999). Other places youth felt were important were the beach, the pow wow site, their home, the mountain, Mink Falls, and the youth centre. All of these natural environments offer bonding and a reiteration of the necessities of social support which are so crucial to good health, and a passing on of knowledge.

In conclusion to this section, the Youth of Pic River see passing on knowledge of the Land to the next generation as important. Jane shared her desire to pass this on in regards to her daughter. She mentions the Waters as being significant and essential to her health, and her family's health. Jane stated:

I want to teach her about the land, as much as I know and as much as I can learn about keeping it as great as possible, and keeping our beach the way it should be, and trying to ensure that we don't have like a lot of industries and that coming in and taking over because this is where we live. We get our blueberries from here, and this is where we camp here, and different things like that. Our drinking water comes from – we get our drinking water from here.

Dances with Wolves and Running with Caribou shared the same sentiment around the importance of having access to good water. They spoke about the importance of this for their day to day lives, and realised that this was not the case for some communities including some that were even nearby. The importance of keeping the Land in a pristine and regenerative state for the future generations is crucial for the health of the community as she notes the connectedness to the food sources, and in this example, the blueberries, and the Water. As women, we are reminded by Solomon (1990) of our specific role as women to protect the Water.

The next section describes the key relationships involved in the youth's lives in their connection to their favourite places. The key people would be their families, the community, people who come to the community to work with the youth, and Park staff. All of these people are linked to the places youth noted as essential to making them feel a sense of connection and belonging.

4.5 North: Mental/Conceptual Quadrant: Recommendations from The Youth of Pic River

In this section I wrap up the analysis with the recommendations from the Pic River Youth about what concerned them in regards to the Land, their Learning and the maintenance of their Good Health. The youth had important recommendations threaded throughout their interviews and these contemplative thoughts came up during the interviews; they needed to be recognized within this thesis.

One common concern was the integrity of food and how many additives are in food sources, as well as the switch to eating processed foods which has had a negative impact on the health of the community. With respect to the diets of her ancestors, White Light stated:

They weren't exposed to what we're exposed to these days. They have so many additives and preservatives, and whatnot. Back then they ate a lot of wild game and that, and that's something that you rarely see around here. Because even as a child, I remember people used to go fishing, and they'd bring it around to the

houses so the people weren't doing that and so forth. And same thing with the hunters in the family. There's just hardly any of that. So now what we're putting into our bodies is just totally, completely different from theirs. The rate of – we were just talking about this too. One of my classes, the First Nation – the age at which their health starts to decline or the amount of deaths that you experience as a young child growing up to your adulthood, is totally different than somebody that's not Aboriginal.

The same respondent shared her concerns with the current state of physical health in the community which greatly impacted quality of life. Additionally, another participant offered a solution to these issues; Walking Turtle stated that land-based programming would be beneficial, and she stated how she would have loved to go hunting:

I would love – like, what I would – as Anishinabe youth – I would love it if they had programs where you take youth out and go snaring. I have never been snaring in my whole life. I've never been hunting. I've never been any of that. I've only been fishing. It's just – I would love – like, now that I'm getting older, it's like, 'Why haven't I done this yet? I'm turning 22.' It's like – so, I think that they should take kids out. They used to do that at one point. My mom and my dad used to tell me they used to do that with a small group of young boys. They used to take them out, go hunting for a week, and stuff like that. It's like, "Well, why don't they do that anymore?"

Focusing on youth health was an important concern raised by many of the youth. More support for parents who were struggling to put their child in organized sports, and providing transportation for the same parents so that they could participate in events, were barriers that were raised. Not all families have the funds for organized sports, or even have the transportation to do so. Little Blue Bird stated that it was the kids that worried her the most, and again this related back to poor choices around food. Below captures what she fears about the community's health:

Interviewer: So, what worries you most about your community's health?

Blue Bird: The kids.

Interviewer: The kids?

Blue Bird: The kids.

Interviewer: So, is there something that you see? You mentioned the store providing unhealthy choices.

Blue Bird: Yes, kids go in there at lunch time. Kids go in there after school buying chips and pop.

Interviewer: And what else are the kids eating at the store?

Blue Bird: Candy. I don't see them walking with a bottle water. I don't see them coming out of there – it's always big dollar candy, chips, and pop. My niece goes there every day and buys a bottle of iced tea and a bag of chips. Sometimes she'll buy gum. Like, there's always a line up there after school.

Programming around areas in educating young children about healthy choices is needed for the youth and community. Engagement in sports is also another, and making these opportunities available for all youth, with specific sensitivity to the fact that all parents may not be able to afford these programs. Additionally Zach noted that the value of summer programming for youth and families was needed because “some kids can’t afford to go on vacation, so we have day camp for the kids. So they just come here, and we take them to activities,” which highlights the importance of programs that run in the summer for the youth.

A last concern raised by the youth was the lack of programming and information for youth around the issue of the Land Claim. All youth but one felt it was important to learn about. Some youth knew a little about the Claim and some knew a bit more. The youth knew and understood that it was important to become educated about the Land Claim, as they would inherit the on-going struggle. Jane stated:

I think it is, and I think our youth don’t know enough. They think of land claim, and they think of something that maybe happened in the past two years. And I think a lot of times they don’t realize that when our elders were younger, they were working on this, and they were doing mapping, and they were still doing that kind of stuff and trying to push for their land. And I don’t think the youth know – I had the opportunity to be able to work in the Band office and see some of it.

But someone in high school doesn't realize that this has been going on for a long time, and they may never see it happen, but eventually some day, their great great grandchildren are going to have a lot better life, and they're going to have control over what happens to our land.

Additionally, some youth mentioned that there should be educational material providing information about the Land Claim in a youth-friendly manner. This could, for example, be as short videos. Lydia stated:

One of the things that had come up in one of the meetings was how come the youth don't care about the land, why aren't they coming to these meetings and stuff like that and I had to be forthright and honest and say you know what, it's hard for them to say no to a garbage dump going up in Dead Horse because they don't have that connection. It's our land, we know that it's our land, but from my point of view its saying unless you've been there, it's kind of hard to say that's your land. Unless you've done the hunting or you've been up and visited that place, it's so hard to say that because you don't feel that connection. I could say that some of the comments said, "Are we going to put a dump at the mouth of the Pic?" I would be upset because I use that all the time and it's hard to appreciate something you've never seen. That's one of the things, I know elders have always said that we should feel that connection, but it's so vast you don't realize it, but it's kind of hard to say no to something if you don't know or have never been there. You don't have that, not really connection it's just more like a tie to it, you've been there, you've seen it, and you've got to protect it.

Lydia's comments illustrated how important the connection to the Land is and the importance in providing opportunities for the youth with the Land. She spoke of ties to places which are significant because these are places we linked to our daily lives. She noted that when you have experiences with the Land, you feel the passion to protect it.

In this section I have aspired to share the voices and stories of the lives of the youth of Pic River in understanding how significant the Land is for their education and health. The participants spoke fondly about their home community and were compassionate in offering their concerns for their community's health. It is my hope that these stories situate them in a way that is meaningful for providing strategic changes, and for illustrating the important job that all members have in the community as guardians of the Land and the Waters.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Since I began writing this thesis, Pic River has initiated the *hunting project* at a site within their territory at Deadhorse. This experience has been noted by several community members as a positive effort to increase community involvement and participation in traditional activities. During this fall event last year, I regretted not being able to attend with our young family, but told myself I will attend in the future. From what I understand of the project, community members join in hunting activities for several days at a camp that has been established. During this time, community members stay together at the hunting camp. This experience gives people a chance to share stories between the young and the old. Food is prepared and shared. Hunting takes place as an option for those who want to participate. In a casual conversation with one of the above mentioned community members, he told me that this was especially beneficial for the youth in increasing their sense of belonging to the community and in building their self esteem. He noted a great positive change in one of the youth's lives since participating in events like this, and that this youth had a complete turnaround. It is upon this short conversation that I conclude my thesis; I believe this story is a very important one as it demonstrates how important the Land is for the youth of Pic Rivers' learning and good health.

As expressed in the interviews with Pic River Youth, the Land and the need to be on the Land - to experience the Land - is necessary for their learning and for their health. Youth stated that their learning was greatly influenced by being on the Land. One of the youth noted how important hunting was in bringing the community together; Phyllis noted that this "actually brought the community together when they went and hunted for food or whatever." Gardner's (1999) multiple intelligences point to how learning can and should incorporate a more open view than typical book learning. This research suggests that as youth have experiences on the Land,

there are more possibilities and more ways to engage youth to open up, and to experience learning on different levels. Especially important are the ways of our people, and the learning of Indigenous values and teachings.

For their health, Pic River Youth mentioned the Land as being a place where they connect with family and social relations, as well as where they gained greater emotional health. The ties to Land for Pic River Youth and their health was strongly expressed through their interviews in how they experienced the Land, and how they wanted to pass this knowledge onto their own children in the future. Smith (1999) writes about her position as an Indigenous woman - that it is because of her experience with her grandmother that her “sense of place became so firmly grounded” (p. 12). I believe experiences at Deadhorse can continue to foster these meaningful exchanges in helping youth become grounded.

Smith (1999) also wrote that she believes that our experiences with the Land are multifaceted, and that this experience is about the relationships we have with our families and the exchanges that are inherent in this process. She writes:

Our survival as a people has come from our knowledge of our contexts, our environment, not from some active beneficence of our Earth Mother. We had to know how to survive. We had to work out ways of knowing, we had to protect, we had to defend and attack, we had to be mobile, we had to have social systems which enabled us to do these things. We still have to do these things. (p. 13)

In thinking about what Smith (1999) means, we realise that knowledge of the Land is necessary, which points to the importance of passing on the ways we related to the Land, and the ways our families and communities related to Land. In strategizing how we can maintain this knowledge transfer, the building of learning sites is a way we can support the Learning and Health of the youth of Pic River. These are excellent places to learn through stories. As Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) argue, stories are essential in the passing on of traditional knowledge as

stories are educational, and in education exists the possibility in building healthy Indigenous children, and (associatively) healthier communities.... this can be learned from the land and from connections with the land and from the stories that Elders tell us about the land and our relationship to it. It rests on these connections to our children and to our future generations. These teachings can be passed on through story and they can occur in sites of early learning development and education. (p. 53)

In creating these learning sites, upon reviewing my findings - the stories of the youth - I suggest the following areas be built upon.

5.1 Recommendation 1: Establish Learning Sites on the Land in Pic River Territory for the Youth and Families

From the research conducted, it is evident that Pic River Youth feel connected to the Land in their territory; there was no suggestion that the youth are feeling alienated from the Land. This was a concern noted during a discussion with Dr. Richmond about her work on health and the environment. Dr. Richmond noted that Elders and other members of Pic River expressed concerns about how industrial development impacts their connection with the Land and how they feel that youth are becoming disconnected from the Land. Only 21 participants were interviewed, and it is possible that some Pic River Youth may not feel as strong a connection to the Land as was expressed by these participants.

In efforts to ensure that contact with the Land continues, Greenwood and de Leeuw (2007) have pointed out that the building of learning sites will foster this growth, and build “healthy adults who contribute to their communities and to the broader community” (p. 52). It is especially important to also remember the youth voices that this study did not capture. What would have been their thoughts on the importance of Land to their learning and health? How do we ensure that all youth feel a sense of importance and belonging to the community? While Pic River continues in their efforts to build more of these learning sites, I propose that these sites are greatly important, and that these experiences with the community, Land, and each other will

support the youth in their growth. Despite the strong connections to the Land expressed by participants, I believe more opportunities are needed. There is "strong evidence that cultural capacity and cultural continuity are deterrents to high-risk behaviours" (Chandler, Lalonde, Sokol & Hallett, cited in Greenwood & de Leeuw, 2007, p. 51). These authors believe that in order to "rehabilitate cultural capacity in communities a 'variety of infrastructural interventions' is required" (p. 51). This means that partnerships are essential in increasing cultural capacity within the community, and examples of places where relationship building could occur is with schools, the community health centre and the National Park that sits in Pic River territory with a focus on the youth, the Land, their learning and their well-being. Smith (1999) proposes "Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects" (p. 142). It is my belief that projects like these would serve to inspire the community of Pic River, and other communities.. Importantly, getting to know the places our ancestors have been is important, as is establishing relationships in the entire territory (see Appendix C for a map of Pic River's traditional territory).

5.2 Recommendation 2: Learning About the Land Claim

All of the youth stated that learning about the Land Claim was important. I strongly suggest providing informal and formal learning for all youth, and to extend this to the entire community on the importance of the Pic River Land Claim. This can include developing curriculum for the classrooms starting with JK to Grade 8, and also having more informal learning which could take place in the community, and on the Land. Faries (2004) talks about how schools should be a site of recovery, and this can include the learning of our language, and cultural ways as well as about the Land that sustains the families and their children. Toulouse (2008) has developed a guide for the Ontario Ministry of Education based on Anishinabek youth's self esteem and the Seven Sacred Grandfather Teachings. This is particularly useful for

building the esteem and confidence in Anishinabek learners in schools. All teachers working with Anishinabek children should be familiar with this, and more, around the importance of belonging and creating learning environments that reflect this with the support of community, Elders and leaders in Anishnabek education.

5.3 Recommendation 3: Healthy Lifestyles Promotion for Youth and Families

Most youth suggested that health and the concerns around nutrition were important. Youth are seeing the negative effects of a poor diet, and a lack of physical exercise. Efforts to incorporate this into the curriculum can lead to positive change. Changing policies in the school around what youth can bring for snacks, can support this further. Educating parents about the value of nutritional food choices is essential in raising healthy children. Some of the youth were really concerned about pop as a choice of drink for children. They were also concerned that children were eating too much candy. A community effort to re-learn about healthy eating is and was a genuine concern with the youth. Having more youth a part of gardening could support this learning, as well as encouraging activities that are Land based like picking medicines, participating in community berry picking, and interacting with the beautiful Land around Pic River territory.

5.4 Recommendation 4: Safe Outdoor Play Areas and Physical Spaces

A few of the youth who were parents suggested that playgrounds and safe areas be built for children. One participant, Phyllis, specifically mentioned the need to build these spaces to encourage “people to want to go there.” She also noted how physical spaces were not appropriate for all children:

even the basketball nets over at the school, they’re not that great and they’re too high up for the little kids to play with... And the skating rink, they were supposed to make a skating rink, but they took it back down. And they didn’t bother fixing up the old one or repaving it.

Running with Caribou noted the park by Beaver Crescent that was all rusted and should be torn down. The importance of having a safe place to play for children was noted among some of the other participants who noted that these environments would increase social engagements and physical activities for the youth and parents. The community could additionally look into more “green ideas” in regards to building playgrounds that work with the natural environment and support the landscape as it is in a natural state. For example, using wildflowers to beautify areas, such as milkweed which attracts butterflies, using old boom logs for climbing on, and tree stumps for balancing. This website contains many ideas on the importance of play for children, and having appropriate play areas.⁴

5.5 Recommendation 5: Promotion of Teachings Around Birthing and Early Childhood

One of the mothers interviewed noted how important it was for her to participate in the traditional teachings of the moss bag. The moss bag is a special blanket which encloses a newborn’s body and gives comfort for the baby as it represents the mother’s womb. There are distinct Anishinabek teachings around birthing for both mothers and fathers that would be very important in incorporating into programming.

Benton-Banai (2009) explains the role of the father in the early transfer of knowledge to their children. “Every child heard the creation story while yet in the womb. They learned what their clan was and they heard their clan song because their fathers sang it to them” (Martin, 2009, para 15). The role of the father was integral in sharing cultural values with the children. Simpson (2006) explains that parents “live largely in the physical world” (p. 26), and that because children are closer to a spiritual realm, they are seen as coming from a sacred place. Simpson

⁴ For more detailed information on green playspaces, please see <http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk/pubs/designfor-play.pdf>

continues: “For Anishaabeg people, the first seven years of a child’s life are very important. Children come from the spirit world, and they have a close and vital relationship with that realm” (p. 26). She further writes that the relationship that Anishinaabe parents have with their child is one based on respecting and acknowledging that: “Children are gifts. They are leaders. They are gifts that require respect, patience, love, attachment, listening.” (Simpson, 2006, p. 26). This extended family contributed to the passing on of knowledge, and the building of relationships, which “determines the wellbeing of the future generations” (Bedard, 2008, p. 75).

I suggest programming to recover traditional teachings take place on the Land. Smith (1999) notes the importance of the Land and regaining access over traditional territories and ceremonial practices amongst the Maori. She writes about a practice in New Zealand amongst the Maori, which I found to be really interesting as the Anishinabek, and our neighbours the Cree, do the same, at least according to the traditions I have learned. Smith (1999) writes:

The word for afterbirth is the same as the word for land, whenua. The practice was prohibited as Maori mothers were forced to have their babies in hospitals rather than at home. The policies and hospital practices have now changed and Maori parents have reinstated the practice of taking the afterbirth and burying it in traditional territory. (p. 149)

Dr. Emily Faries and her husband Bill Constance, both Cree, have talked about the importance of the early years, and our role as parents in providing a spiritual foundation for our children (Nishnawbe Aski Nation Youth Conference, 2006). They talked about the burial of the placenta as being an important part in the life of a child because it grounds our children, and it is with these ceremonies where we safeguard our children and give them strength.

5.6 Recommendation 6: Support for Families Who Have Lower Income in Access to Programs

It was noted by a participant that she was concerned about the cost of attending

sports programs. Helping support these families ensures that all youth have a fair start. Access to sports programs are very important in ensuring that all children feel they belong, and are supported in their efforts to learn and engage in extracurricular activities. For example, many youth in the community participate in sports like hockey, and this sport can be an expensive one. It also requires travel to the nearby community of Marathon. I recommend that the community examines the needs of all community members in regards to the component of extracurricular events. Not all families have access to the same economic resources, and for members who are existing only on social assistance as a means to support their young families, extracurricular activities will likely not be an option. Extracurricular events can greatly enrich a child's learning and engage a family in a positive way, and we should collectively work together to make sure all children benefit from this equally.

5.7 Recommendation 7: Preparing Youth for Leaving the Community

In the interviews, some of the youth spoke about the difficulties in leaving the community and the impact of racism. Preparing youth for the issues and complexities of racism is important for the well-being and safety of youth. This means supports in universities and colleges are crucial for the well-being of First Nation learners who leave their communities to achieve other levels of education. Other supports could include Friendship Centres, Schools, Health Centres, and other social supports. The *Sisters in Spirit Campaign* is particularly important for our Chiefs, leadership and communities to follow as many of our First Nation women have gone missing., and this Campaign has proved in their research that “there are more than 582 missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in this country” (Sisters in Spirit) is alarming, and points to the extreme importance of teaching our youth how to make safe decisions, and prepare them for the barriers of inequity. In another report the four main experiences of racism occurred as following for First Nation and Métis people by “a non

Aboriginal person 74%, businesses 42%, and schools 28%, and police 27%” (Ekos Research, 2006) as identified in research conducted with off reserve First Nations and Métis peoples in 2006 with Ekos Research.

5.8 Recommendation 8: Keeping Pic River First Nation Territory Clean and Safe

Youth highlighted the importance of place in the traditional territory of Pic River First Nation. They noted that these places make them feel safe, that they learn from these places, and that they contribute greatly to all aspects of their health. This suggests that maintenance of these places should be crucial and that creating engagements and learning sites on the Land are important for youth, and their families. The general feeling amongst the youth: Plan for the next seven generations. This means that developments in and around the Pic River First Nation territory needs to be discussed with the community in order to decide whether or not the development is environmentally sound.

5.9 Conclusion

In conclusion, I thank the youth for sharing this important knowledge with me and the Research Team. I also thank the community of Pic River for supporting this invaluable work. As threaded throughout this thesis, stories are essential for many reasons. It is through the sharing of our stories that we can build understanding amongst one another, and celebrate our unique history and growth as a community, as our families have done for generations. This is our strength. Importantly *doing* things together. Phyllis stated the joy she felt when she is with her community and family - that these moments give her a sense of comfort, and as she says, “makes you smile because you see everyone getting together.” Pic River is an admirable community and the youth stories situate the community as one with vision and, significantly, a place youth feel at home and want to be. As we continue to “spiritually share” (Cajete in Smith, 1999, p. 145), we

teach, we experience, we live, and we move on. So the circle of life continues, and another star is born. Gakina awiiya.



Figure 18. The Future. Photo Credit, Michelle Richmond-Saravia.

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Appendix A- The Interview Guide

Section 1: Health & Well-Being

1. What does **good health** mean to you?
 - When you think of good health, what image pops into your mind. Why?
2. What does **poor health** mean to you?
 - When you think of poor health, what image pops into your mind. Why?
3. When you think about your **family's** health, what's the first thing that comes to mind?
 - Why do you think that is?
 - Do you have concerns about your family's health? Which concerns, and why?
4. What worries you most about your **community's** health?
 - How might this impact future generations?
 - How might this issue be overcome?

▪ Section 2: Environment and Land

1. Can you describe for me your favourite place?
 - Why is this place special to you?
2. Can you describe for me your least favourite place?
 - Why do you not like this place?
 - What might make this place more appealing to you?
3. What does the land mean to you as an Anishinabe youth? <may need prompting>
4. Is the land important in your learning as Anishinabe youth? How so?

Section 3: Social Networks and Culture

1. What does it mean to you to be Anishinabe?
2. What makes you special as a Pic River Youth? For example, what is it about this place that shapes who you are?
3. Do you think that the Anishinabe culture is changing over time?
 - If yes, what is changing?
 - How might this change affect future generations?
 - How can we work to maintain Anishinabe culture?
4. What would you say unifies your community? How so?
5. What is it that makes this community a strong one? Is this important to you? Why?

6. In moments where you need to be your very best, what is it that encourages you to be your best.

Section 4: Education/Learning

1. Tell me about someone who is a role model to you
 - Why is this person a role model to you?
 - How has this person influenced and supported your learning?
2. Tell me about someone that you have a lot of respect for
 - How has this person gained your respect?
3. What does it mean to you to have wisdom?
 - How is wisdom gained?
4. When you think about learning, what does that mean to you?
 - Is it possible for learning to happen OUTSIDE of the classroom? How so?
5. Can you tell me about what you know about Pic River's Land Claim?
 - Do you see this as an important issue for youth in Pic River to learn about?
 - Why or why not?
6. Has your experience in this project caused you to think in different ways about your everyday life? If so, how?

Appendix B - Information Letter to Participants and Consent Form

September 7, 2011

Significance of Land in Anishinaabe Youth's Education and Health

Description & Consent Form

Dear Pic River Youth,

Last year you took part in an interview with me or with Katie Big Canoe for research conducted by Dr Chantelle Richmond of the University of Western Ontario called *Anishinabe narratives about health and environment: A participatory approach for preserving elder knowledge and promoting positive experiences for youth*. Katie and I were both research assistants for the project.

I invite you to take part in a research study to find out how Land is significant for your learning and health, by allowing me to use the interviews that were already conducted for my master's thesis. I am a student in the Lakehead University Master of Education Program and my supervisor is Dr. Paul Berger, a teacher and researcher at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Description of the project: We interviewed youth ages 18-29, asking about health and education with a specific focus on how Land is integral to this. This research will provide a greater understanding of how youth see the Land's importance for their good health and education, and barriers to these. In better understanding these key areas, educators and policy makers will have an opportunity to further support Indigenous students in their learning.

Risks & Benefits : No known risk is associated with participation in the research. Your participation will help to build a body of knowledge and literature around Indigenous Youth and their experiences with the Land, in relationship to good health and education.

Confidentiality & Data Storage: You will remain anonymous and your name will not be used, and a pseudonym which you have already given will be used. All interview data will be safely stored at Lakehead University by Dr. Paul Berger for a period of five years.

Research Results: Research results will be used for a master's thesis at Lakehead University and will be presented at a public meeting in Pic River First Nation in the Spring of 2012, and a

possible presentation for off-reserve members in Thunder Bay for membership residing in the city. Results may also be used in a report for the community and shared at conferences and in academic writing. You may request a summary of the results by providing me with your address or email address.

Michelle Richmond-Saravia

613 Castlegreen Drive, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7A 7M2

Faculty of Education

Lakehead University , 955 Oliver Road, Thunder Bay, Ontario, P7B 5E1

email: msrichmo@lakeheadu.ca tel: 807-768-5846

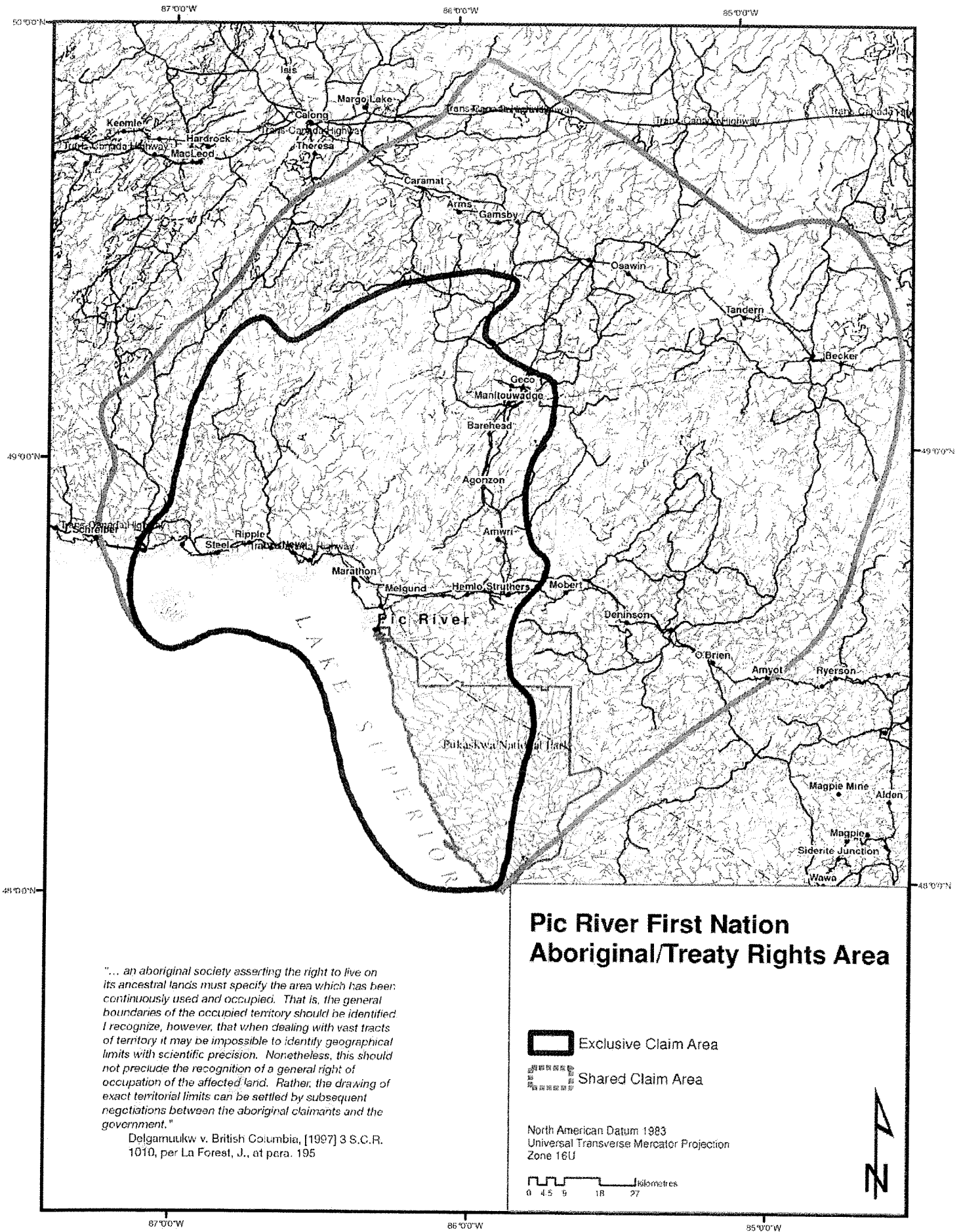
The research has been approved by:

Lakehead Research Ethics Board: (tel: 807-766-7289) # _____

I, _____, have been fully informed of the objectives of the research being conducted. I understand these objectives and consent to my interview data being used for this master's research.

Signature of the participant Date



Signature of the witness Date



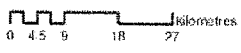
"... an aboriginal society asserting the right to live on its ancestral lands must specify the area which has been continuously used and occupied. That is, the general boundaries of the occupied territory should be identified. I recognize, however, that when dealing with vast tracts of territory it may be impossible to identify geographical limits with scientific precision. Nonetheless, this should not preclude the recognition of a general right of occupation of the affected land. Rather, the drawing of exact territorial limits can be settled by subsequent negotiations between the aboriginal claimants and the government."

Delgamuukw v. British Columbia, [1997] 3 S.C.R. 1010, per La Forest, J., at para. 195

Pic River First Nation Aboriginal/Treaty Rights Area

-  Exclusive Claim Area
-  Shared Claim Area

North American Datum 1983
Universal Transverse Mercator Projection
Zone 16U



87°00'W

86°00'W

85°00'W

50°00'N

87°00'W

86°00'W

85°00'W

49°00'N

49°00'N

48°00'N

48°00'N