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**PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION:
VOICES FROM AN ISOLATED RESERVE COMMUNITY
IN NORTHERN CANADA**

by

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

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Abstract

This qualitative study describes the perceptions held by the stakeholders of education in a self-governed northern isolated community of the goals of education and curriculum for Aboriginal children. The study recognizes the uniqueness of individual Aboriginal communities and represents a departure from previous studies which attempt to attribute a common educational/curriculum base for all Aboriginal children. Eight respondents were interviewed. Four themes emerged from the analyses of the data: general perceptions of education and curriculum, concerns and issues, goals for education and curriculum, and dimensions of curriculum. The study found that the school is the heart of the community. Respondents were unsure of the teaching methods, curriculum and policy-making procedures used within the school. Respondents indicated that there is a need for updated resources and a curriculum which is relevant to Aboriginal culture and which focuses on the unique needs of the community. The respondents were unanimous in their hopes that the students would finish secondary school and continue some form of post-secondary education to enable them to make career choices. The researcher anticipated that the Christian fundamentalist roots of the community would influence the perceptions of the goals of education and curriculum. Although the Christian roots were evident, the influence was not pervasive.

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CHAPTER 1

THE OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study describes the perceptions of the goals of education and curriculum for Aboriginal children of the stakeholders of education in a self-governed northern reserve community. Many of the community members have adopted fundamentalist Christian beliefs. The research design was qualitative and non-emergent (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The respondents were a representative sample of eight stakeholders of education in the community who participated in individual interviews, thus allowing for maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990). Interview questions were developed in a standardized open-ended interview guide (Patton, 1990).

Rationale

Aboriginal self-government is not a new ideology. It was established thousands of years before the Europeans purportedly discovered Canada (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1998). Snipp (1995) asserts that “initially before the arrival of the Europeans, the indigenous societies of the Western Hemisphere were self-governing entities with political systems of varying degrees of complexity” (p. 251). After the arrival of the Europeans, First Nations people gradually were assimilated into non-Aboriginal lifestyles, thus losing their cultures, self-sustaining lifestyles, spiritual traditions and autonomy (Akiwenzi-Damm, & Sutherland, 1998).

Self-government of Aboriginal peoples in Canada became a reality in August of 1995 when the federal government established a process to negotiate arrangements which allowed Aboriginal peoples the right to make decisions on affairs that affect their own lives and lands (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1998). According to Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, First

Nations people now have the right to define and administer their own system of government within each of their individual communities. The control of their communities includes defining their own police services, health and social services, housing, property rights, language and culture, the enforcement of Aboriginal laws, adoption and child welfare, and defining their own educational systems.

Traditionally, the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs was responsible for the education of Aboriginal peoples across Canada. Reservation schools typically followed the provincial curriculum policy of the province where their community was located. One issue which has emerged with self-government then, is the need for each community to establish its own vision of education, the goals of education, and develop a curriculum policy which will guide curriculum planning, development, implementation and evaluation.

There are differing points of view about the philosophies Aboriginal communities should take to guide their selection of educational goals and policies. Many researchers contend that a cultural/traditional education should be the eventual goal of each Aboriginal community (Cajete, 1994; Emerson, 1987; Medicine, 1995; Perley, 1993). Emerson (1987) describes the issue: On the one hand some researchers argue that the goal of Aboriginal education should be concerned with introducing "Indian values, culture and language into the school system" (p. 42); on the other hand, some contend that Aboriginal education must prepare students "to exist in two worlds simultaneously" (p. 42). Cajete (1994), Medicine (1995), and Perley (1993) agree that Aboriginal education must prepare Aboriginal students to survive in Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal cultures, albeit while striving to maintain Aboriginal cultures and traditions. Cajete argues that to accomplish this, the policy makers must engage in "critical exchange between modern educational thought and practice, and the traditional philosophy and orientations of Indian people" (p. 218). By "putting our

minds together” (Medicine, p. 45), Aboriginal children will be experiencing a more thorough and “truly pluralistic education(al) system” (Perley, p. 125). Laenui (1987) argues that an “Indigenous education of our children, in our traditional values, in our own language, aspiring to our own goals, is our primary source of strength for retaining our cultures” (p. 7).

One criticism of the existing literature is that most writers assume that a cultural/traditional education is the right goal for every Aboriginal community (Cajete, 1994; Barnhardt, 1990; Emerson, 1987; Laenui, 1987; Lomawaima, 1995; Snipp, 1995; Steinhauer, 1992, 1993, 1996). Arguments against the goal of a cultural/traditional based education are discussed and dismissed by such writers. For example, Emerson (1987) articulates three reasons why communities might not value traditional education: The adults of Aboriginal communities might have “given up” on Native culture and view it as no longer viable; the stakeholders of education who should have a voice, such as Elders and school board members might view Aboriginal culture and language as obstructions to the educational process; or the stakeholders of education might believe that to survive in a contemporary society, immersion into that society’s norms and practices will guarantee the future of their children. Emerson contends that this type of reasoning must be overcome and that a cultural/traditional education is the only way in which Aboriginal children will survive in contemporary society.

Snipp (1995) suggests that obstacles such as those cited by Emerson (1987) are not necessarily barriers to developing educational philosophies which reflect the cultures, traditions and values of a First Nation. He illustrates his point with reference to “neotraditional” practices which have emerged in branches of the Native American Church {N.A.C.}. “N.A.C. combines elements of Christian religion with traditional religious beliefs and practices” (p. 254). Snipp contends that education is similar in regards to the conjoining of beliefs and recognizing each Aboriginal

community is unique; each will differ in its practices of education. Adaptations will be made and “blending” can take place.

Medicine (1995) and Tafoya (1995) share the concern that broad generalizations concerning Aboriginal peoples and their communities underestimate the uniqueness of each community. Every separate locale is diverse in its practices and all have different priorities and perspectives. Tafoya acknowledges that to plan a curriculum which is a “definitive” answer for all Aboriginal peoples is impossible. Medicine criticizes broad generalizations of all Aboriginal peoples and communities: “Many people who talk about Native communities do not know how they function” (p. 44). Curriculum design needs to be distinctive for each community. Just as every individual perceives and understands the world from a different perspective, so too does every community.

Self-government is a new initiative for Aboriginal communities. There is no body of literature which describes what the stakeholders of education perceive to be the goals of education, the processes of establishing policy and curriculum guidelines, and the processes for planning, developing, implementing and evaluating curriculum. Conceivably the stakeholders of education may wish to find a balance between their culture and traditions, Christian values and the already established curriculum. Possibly the community members will be seeking an alternative choice that has yet to be brought forth as an alternative method of education. There is a need for research which illuminates how individual communities negotiate meanings between/among culture, tradition, values and the goals of education.

This study describes the perceptions of the goals of education of the stakeholders of education in a self-governed northern reserve community which has adopted fundamental Christian beliefs and values. Thus, it represents a departure from previous studies which impose a value system of cultural/traditional based education as a “necessity” for all Aboriginal communities.

Research Questions

The questions guiding the research are listed below.

1. What are the espoused goals of education and goal of curriculum?
2. By what processes is the community articulating its vision for curriculum policy?
 - 2.1 What are the beliefs and values guiding the development of curriculum policy?
 - 2.2 What are the educational needs of the community?
3. What is the nature of curriculum which will enable the Aboriginal children and adolescents to realize the goals of education and goals of curriculum?
4. What do the stakeholders of education believe are the outcomes of student learning upon completion of elementary and secondary schooling?

A Personal Ground

I am a Caucasian female in my early forties. I have experienced the educational systems on three different reserves, two of which were in isolated communities in northern Canada. These latter communities were quite different in cultural and/or traditional patterns although the communities were very close in geographical proximity to each other. As a teacher, I became interested in the local traditions and culture of the communities.

My first posting was on an isolated reserve with a band membership of 1800-2000 members living on the reserve at any given time. The elementary school population varied between 400-500 students. This particular school had a time allotment for a Native Studies curriculum. There was no curricular outline to follow nor suggestions for implementing the course. As a non-Aboriginal teacher new to the community, I tried to resolve the dilemma by asking my Aboriginal teacher-aide to take on the instructional components of the Native Studies curriculum. He distributed to the

students photocopied colouring book pages that had been reproduced from a colouring book developed by local Aboriginal artists. The colouring was done for the entirety of each lesson. To do the course the full justice I believed it deserved, I went to the community (Elders and parents) and to the other Aboriginal staff to discover the local culture and traditions to prepare myself to develop a significant curriculum in Native Studies. I believe that my endeavours were successful for I had much positive feedback from the administration, parents, Elders and students in this community. I delighted in discovering the local traditions and culture. My students seemed to be equally enthused about discovering their own heritage. Cajete (1994) explains that: “ by exploring Indigenous ‘ways’” both the learner and educator co-create a learning experience and mutually undertake a pilgrimage to a new level of self-knowledge. The educator enters the cultural universe of the learner and no longer remains an outside authority” (p. 219).

My most recent teaching position was on a much smaller reserve community setting which is approximately 45 miles from the above-mentioned community. Here, too, I developed an affiliation with the people in terms of friendships and in-laws. My husband and children are band members. My husband was also a teacher in this community for three years and the principal/director of education for one year. My children attended school in the community for three years. I have gained the respect and trust of the members of this locale although my husband and myself do not share the same Christian principles as do many of the community people. The band membership is approximately 500, although the number of members living in the community varies from 200-250 residents. The elementary school population fluctuates between 60-75. Native Studies was not listed as part of the curriculum although I personally believed that it was essential to incorporate it into my timetable.

The students' responses to the course were different from the community described above. For example, during one of my Native Studies classes, an Aboriginal male student said of his ancestors, "But they were all savages!" After another Native Studies session, my Aboriginal teacher's-aide took me aside and warned me against referring to "The Great Spirit" in the same context as "God Our Father". Since the community has fundamental Christian beliefs, I was attempting to present an analogy between past traditions and Christianity.

Such incidents still disturb and perplex me. Why would Aboriginal people respond in this manner when discussing or reflecting on their own past heritage? My belief is that the students have a right to know their true history and identity. Benedict (1934, cited in Wiggins 1997) asserts that "as humans we assume our individuality under the guidance of cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point and a direction to our lives" (p. 162).

I believe that the Aboriginal students deserve and have a right to understand their histories and the impact of colonization on their identities. On reflection, however, I realize that Aboriginal communities hold a range of different beliefs and values regarding the goals and purposes of education for their children. It is important to understand not only communities which espouse a cultural/traditional education, but also to understand the communities which may be guided by non-traditional beliefs and values. In this study, I try to put aside my assumptions so that the respondents' voices are respected and faithfully described.

Limitations

One of the limitations of this study is that the sample is relatively small. Secondly, this is a case study of one community and the study cannot be generalized to other northern Canadian

communities. However, the findings may be transferrable if readers recognize similar characteristics when compared with their own communities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Significance

Because self-government is a relatively new concept in Aboriginal Canadian communities, little research has been conducted on the beliefs, values and processes of community members influencing policy-making and curriculum decision making. This case study provides insights into the perceptions of the stakeholders of education in one community and how they articulate and negotiate meanings concerning education. This research is of value to the community under study as well as other Aboriginal communities which are engaged in the policy-making process.

Chapter two provides a literature review of curriculum policy, colonialism and its impact on Aboriginal peoples, new perspectives on Aboriginal education as well as overview of schooling and curriculum as it applies to the landscapes of Aboriginal education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of the literature addresses four main themes. The first section discusses the orientations to curriculum as well as curricular issues which must be addressed in the planning and development of curriculum. The second section traces the chronology of Aboriginal education in Canada in the context of colonialism and describes the impact of a colonial education on contemporary Aboriginal people and communities. The third section discusses new perspectives on Aboriginal education. The fourth addresses curriculum issues emerging vis a vis the nature of curriculum for Aboriginal peoples.

Curriculum Policy

Meta Orientations to Curriculum

Education is shaped by conflicting conceptions of what curriculum should be in terms of its goals, context and organization (Eisner, 1994). Some of these controversies arise due to varying priorities regarding what the curriculum should entail. Controversies pertain to form, content and goals. As there are varying priorities concerning curriculum, so too are there many conflicting definitions of curriculum. Gordon and Lawton (1985) note the implications:

A narrow definition would limit curriculum to a 'programme for instruction' wider definitions would include all the learning that takes place in a school or other institution, planned and unplanned. In recent years curriculum has increasingly been defined as a selection from the culture of a society; and the curriculum planned by a process of cultural analysis. (p. 44)

Historically, many competing conceptions of curriculum have been advocated by the stakeholders of education. Conceptions of curriculum represent diverse and often contradictory

assumptions about the nature of curriculum, learners and learning. Miller and Seller (1993) have articulated three meta-orientations to curriculum which describe these positions: transmission, transaction, and transformation. They maintain that these meta-orientations are intertwined with “the philosophical, psychological, and social contexts that shape them” (p. 5).

The function of education from the perspective of the transmission position is to transmit skills, values, and factual information to the students. Mastery of curriculum is accomplished through rote learning and traditional teaching practices. Textbooks are the primary methods used to facilitate education. The transmission orientation to curriculum is described by Miller and Seller (1993) as being a “primarily one way movement to convey to students certain skills, knowledge and values” (p. 6).

From the perspective of the transaction orientation to curriculum, the learner is viewed as a rational being and capable of intelligent problem solving. Education becomes a dialogue between the learner and the curriculum. The central element in the transaction position is the significance of strategies which facilitate problem solving and cognitive skill development.

The primary foci of the transformation position are personal and social change. This orientation encompasses three specific orientations:

Teaching students skills that promote personal and social transformation (humanistic and social change orientations); a vision of social change as movement toward harmony with the environment rather than as an effort to exert control over it, and the attribution of a spiritual dimension to the environment in which the ecological system is viewed with respect and reverence (transpersonal orientation). (Miller & Seller, 1993, p. 8)

The educators who view curriculum as transformation view the learner and the curriculum as interpenetrating one another in a holistic manner.

Miller and Seller (1993) explain that it is important for teachers to understand the three major positions. First, knowing the different curriculum orientations can enable a teacher to clarify

his/her personal approach to teaching and learning. Secondly, the three major curriculum orientations can provide a conceptual framework for planning and understanding curriculum and curriculum guidelines. Moreover, curriculum materials can be analyzed if the curriculum orientation is familiar to the educator. Thus, the educator will be able to determine if the material is conducive to particular learning contexts. Finally, Miller and Seller (1993) note that the curriculum orientations can be useful for staff development and developing school philosophies. When staff members or other stakeholders of education have clarified their own assumptions in regards to which orientation they wish to implement within their own educational setting, they will be better able to develop goals/aims and objectives consistent with their curricular beliefs.

Eisner (1994) is critical of the adherence to traditional education which persists in schooling and curricula. He explains that this phenomenon persists for several reasons. Firstly, “we do what we know how to do” (Eisner, 1990, p. 525). He likens this tradition to a factory metaphor:

Education becomes converted from a process into a commodity, something one gets and then sells. For the lay public, the rise of industrial metaphors is reassuring. Schooling, is after all, serious business. It is not surprising that business procedures should be regarded as more effective than discussions about mind, culture, wisdom, imagination, sensibility, and the like. (Eisner, 1994, p. 362)

Secondly, Eisner (1994) suggests that obsession with tests and test scores has resulted in a narrow focus for schooling, a focus often clothed in performance objectives and standardization. He argues that these “formalized rites of passage” (p. 366) are more than likely to restrain further endeavours to put into practice a much broader view of human development, even though curriculum developers and educators may aspire to the contrary. Not only do we do disservice to the students and teachers but to society as well. Eisner asserts that “the canons of measurement indirectly influence what is taught in schools and what priorities will be established among those fields that are taught” (p. 366).

Eisner argues that the emphasis placed on mathematics, verbal skills and reasoning ignores other ways of knowing and responding in areas such as music and visual arts. Eisner (1997) contends that school programs must ensure that all students perceive and develop their own interests, minds and distinct talents. He believes that curricularists must consider culture when they design curriculum. He speaks of culture in two different senses, the biological and anthropological. In the biological sense, a culture is a place where things grow. In the anthropological sense, culture is a shared way of life. Eisner argues that schools should embody both of these cultural senses. The mind becomes the medium for growth and the school environment becomes the medium where ways of sharing occur.

Eisner (1994) notes that when designing curriculum and incorporating curriculum policies, too often the quality of the experiences the student has within the school walls is ignored or neglected (Eisner, 1994): “We must seek an empathetic understanding of the kinds of lives children lead in school” (p. 367). If we develop an “empathetic understanding” of the children we serve, we will get to know them as learners with individual identities. It is important that children’s lives outside of school also are considered in planning the curriculum. Both facets are part of each student’s lived experience.

Eisner (1994) explains further that many voices are needed to bring innovative techniques to education. Hence, all stakeholders of education need to be given a voice to determine the development and direction of education. Too often there is an absence of other views of knowledge, mind and intelligence.

Administrators of the school or school board “can help initiate the kind of dialogue that might educationally enlighten a community about an educational policy” (Eisner, 1994, p. 374). An administrator can encourage stakeholders of education to discern the significance of their

educational values and appreciate alternatives to the current educational practices. The stakeholders within a community should work with the experts such as the Elders to “inspect the culture to discover what might be called cognitive artifacts” (Eisner, 1997, p. 350). He describes “cognitive artifacts” as the products of thought that we use every day to reveal meaning and enable a deeper understanding of our experiences of the world. Eisner (1994) submits, however, that the existing frameworks of education (political science, sociology, psychology, economics or cultural anthropology) are not adequate to direct the analysis of educational goals or to suggest where curriculum should be developed. He adds that knowing and extracting what is educationally significant from within an individual community and then conceptualizing an academic educationally significant curriculum for the students. Eisner (1997) suggests that each school population is made up of a diversity of students with varying values, traditions and cultures. Students have distinct talents which may have been influenced by their cultural experiences. Each culture should be respected and recognized within the curriculum.

As Aboriginal people implement self-government, it will be critical that they consider the goals and purposes of schooling and curriculum. Cajete (1994) recommends this approach: “We must establish dialogue about what our visions might be and try things out. We must appreciate what others have done in formal and informal ways, big and small, past and present. In this way we energize our visions as we live and grow” (p. 192).

Cajete (1994) describes Aboriginal education as historically having a variety of teachers and teaching methodologies, although he acknowledges that each community may have differed in its approach. As each community was unique, so too were the teachers within it. The Elders offered wisdom and guidance, historical knowledge; parents and extended family members provided

learners with important virtues such as humility, a pride in self and survival skills. Cajete (1994) describes the view of children held by Indigenous communities:

All children were considered special, sacred gifts from the Creator. They were seen to have a quality all of their own that was respected and prized by the community. The children were considered to have a direct connection to the spirits in Nature. They appeared as special players in the guiding mythos of some tribes. They were bringers of light and good fortune to the community. Indeed, they were the physical example of the vitality of the tribe. They were the carriers of the future. (pp. 172 - 173)

Cajete notes that traditional Aboriginal education was primarily experiential; knowledge was mastered in the course of doing. It was up to the learners to decide how they would learn and to what extent they would learn. Watching, listening, experiencing, and participating were all incorporated into the learning process. Schooling was about life, participation and relationships in the community with the people, the plants, the animals and with the whole of nature. Moreover, each person also was considered his/her own teacher: "Learning how to care for one's self and others, learning relationships between people and other things, learning the customs, traditions, and values of the community: all of these understandings and more were the daily course of Indigenous education" (p. 176).

Cajete (1994) maintains that Aboriginal educational philosophy is part of an ancient foundation of the educational processes of all cultures. The educational process seeks to promote the health and wholeness of each individual, family and community, thereby reaching a level of harmony between each individual and their individual community. Cajete (1994) defines Aboriginal community in the following way:

Community is the context in which the affective dimension of education unfolds. It is the place where one comes to know what it is to be related. It is the place of sharing life through everyday acts, through song, dance, story, and celebration. It is the place of teaching, learning, making art, and sharing thoughts, feelings, joy, and grief. It is the place for feeling and being connected. (pp.164-165)

He recommends that each community develop its own philosophy of education and curriculum through dialogue because each Aboriginal culture and each Aboriginal community are unique.

Medicine (1995) is an Elder within her own Aboriginal cultural tradition as well as an anthropologist and writer. Like Cajete, she recognizes that Aboriginal communities are unique. The stories and traditions from one community cannot be generalized across all Native cultures. She cautions educators against attempting to create a common curriculum for all Aboriginal peoples: “Unless we know that the Plains Cree in Canada are culturally different from the Menominee of Wisconsin, even though they are linguistically Algonkin, we will fail” (p. 44).

The first section of the review discussed meta-orientations to curriculum and the limitations of a narrow view of schooling and curriculum. The development of curricula which are inclusive of non-mainstream populations, whether defined by race, religion, culture or special needs, raises additional issues. Pinar (1993) argues that curriculum is a “racial text” (p. 61).

To develop a curriculum which is diversified and which details a more precise and accurate account of who we are individually and collectively, we must come to understand that curriculum is “racial text” (Pinar, 1993). Pinar speaks of racial text primarily as it applies to Southern African Americans, but this argument holds true for Canadian Aboriginal people as well:

We are what we know. We are, however, also what we do not know. If what we know about ourselves, —our history, our culture, our national identity—is deformed by absences, denials and incompleteness, then our identity, both as individuals and as (Canadians) is fragmented. (p. 61)

Pinar (1993) maintains that, “Identity formation is constructed and repressed through representation, for example, the construction of ‘difference’ and is negotiated in the public sphere. Curriculum is one significant site of negotiation” (p. 61). He argues that marginalized societies lose their true history and culture through the schooling process. Like Pinar, I query how a culturally literate curriculum might be composed after so many years of repression, distortions and silences.

In Canada, the curriculum has been dominated by European history and traditions. For Aboriginal Canadians, as we shall see in the following section, this perspective has been devastating to the culture of the people. Simplistic models of cultural relativism incorporated within the curriculum are not enough to invert the supremacy of Eurocentrism. Curriculum consists “primarily of Eurocentric and patriarchal knowledge systems” (Pinar, p. 63). Pinar criticizes the schools for not providing enough role models for minority students and admonishes the stakeholders of education for producing and allowing racial text within the curriculum which leads the students to “misunderstand who they are as racialized, gendered, historical, political creatures” (p. 62).

Laenui (1987) offers this advice when the stakeholders of education attempt to develop an anti-racial text:

We can more vividly imagine the various races, as many cords bound together forming a rope, stretching from ‘before’ time and traveling into a continuing future time. Through the travel into time, these cords are spread further and further outward, reflecting the distance, not only in space, but also in physical characteristics, in languages, customs and beliefs... The result is essentially the same human species but with a rich diversity of human experiences and experiences.
(p. 5)

Discussions concerning curriculum as a racial text cannot be complete without including issues of gender. A draft document (1995) put out by the government of Ontario entitled *Engendering Equity: Transforming Curriculum*, submits that to transform curriculum to engender equity is to hear and listen to the many voices that have been traditionally marginalized from the diversity of racial, ethnocultural and class backgrounds of the world. It is only in this way that curriculum within our schools will become more inclusive and the students within our schools might come to comprehend women’s perspectives. This draft document contends that the history of Canada is more than just public figures, those who fought battles and those who governed. The narrative needs to be transformed to include the social history, the structures of family and the

studies of liberation movements made by all women, and all diversities of cultures in the making of Canada. Thus, the patterns and causes of all forms of discrimination might be further challenged and examined by the students.

In order to challenge discrimination, we must first examine the roots of systematic racism. The following section examines the impact of colonialism on Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Colonialism and Its Impact on Aboriginal Peoples

Blauner (1969, cited in Perley, 1993) describes colonialism as a term traditionally used to characterize the creation of an economic and political domination of a powerful colonizing country usually over a people of a different race and culture. He suggests that the colonized people are first: “subordinated and then dependant upon the more powerful colonizing country” (p. 119). There are four basic components which typify a colonized people (Lomawaima, 1995; Perley, 1993). First is the forced entry into the colonized group by the more powerful society and the forced relocation of the subordinated groups into new (well-controlled) communities which are established separate from the dominant group. Secondly, the dominated group is forced to restrain, transform or destroy their language, values, orientations and ways of life and to adopt policies of the “civilized” society. Another and third component of a colonized people is the shaping of the new communities by conversion to new religious practices thus furthering to serve or destroy previously established traditions and religions. The final and fourth component characteristic of a colonized group of people is that the economies of these people are restructured to fit the dominant society’s economic needs because the economics and ways of life of the subjugated group are seen as infantile and inferior. In short, Iverson (1978, cited in Perley, 1993) describes

colonialization as the “historical development of underdevelopment resulting from world wide European invasion” (p. 122).

Ng (1993) contends that gender and racial issues have systematically developed over periods of history to support the notion of superiority of the white European over Canadian Aboriginal peoples and Canadian Aboriginal women. She notes that before the arrival of the Europeans, the Aboriginal peoples of Canada existed by subsistence and consisted of a myriad of nomadic tribal groups. After the “discovery” of the Americas, the Aboriginal people of Canada became subordinated and racialized in the colonialization of Canada.

A Chronology of the Colonialization of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada

Ng (1993) begins her chronology of the colonization of Aboriginal people in Canada with the beginning of the fur trade (late 1600's and 1700's), when the French and English recruited Aboriginal men to act as intermediaries between the French and English and other Aboriginal tribes. At this time alliances between the colonizers and the varying Aboriginal communities were established. Ng suggests that at this time, Aboriginal women also began to be maneuvered politically and economically. The women not only became the slaves of the French and English officials, but also became the officials' wives and concubines. These Aboriginal women became the unsuspecting pawns, allowing the Europeans further access to the Aboriginal kinship systems and furthering alliances within the trading relations.

These Aboriginal mothers of the voyageurs and the “keepers” of European homesteads contributed to the destruction of the Aboriginal people's communal lifestyles which are characteristic of a hunting and gathering society:

In this period, Native women's sexuality was also deployed politically and economically. In addition to being slaves to English and French officials, they were taken as wives and concubines. This was the one way that white men, both traders

and officials, gained access to the Native kinship system and lured Native groups into trading relations with Europeans. (Ng, 1993, p. 53)

Bourgeault (1991, cited in Ng, 1993) suggests that the new alliances were the originating source in transforming an old way of life (hunting and gathering) into the beginnings of mercantile capitalism:

These relations, initially established to facilitate the fur trade, ultimately destroyed the communal way of life characteristic of hunting and gathering societies and transformed this mode of production into one that facilitated the implantation of mercantile capitalism in Canada. (p. 53)

A new “race” of people were the offspring of these alliances between the Aboriginal women and the Europeans, the Métis. The Métis acted as further intermediaries between the Europeans and the Aboriginal groups until trading relations became stabilized. The Métis soon lost their important status and became the most oppressed people in the new colony. They were denigrated by the Europeans and the Aboriginal peoples alike for they were considered inferior by both groups. The Métis were not considered Aboriginal nor could they be considered European because of their “mixed” blood.

When the wars between the French and English (1763) and the wars between the English and the United States (1812) ended, the Aboriginal people were no longer deemed necessary as allies for trading or military efforts by the Europeans. Clubine (1991 cited in Ng, 1993) submits that the alliances made earlier between the colonizers and the various Aboriginal tribes enabled the procurement of Upper Canada (1791) by the British. The period between 1763 and 1812, (when the military efforts of the Aboriginal people were again needed) obscured the nationhood of Aboriginal people (Ng, 1993). It was during this timeframe that the varying cultures and societies became ranked according to the culture’s production means.

In the 1700's the notion of European supremacy reigned and was linked to private property, Christianity, and farming/land ownership (the superior economic system). Clubine (1991, cited in Ng, 1993) observes:

The criteria for ranking cultures into a hierarchy of superior-inferior stocks was based on the group's means of production. For example, William Robertson's popular work, the *History of America* (1777), ranked cultures from savage to civilized by this criterion ...Robertson's evaluation of (Aboriginal people's) mode of subsistence appeared in his *History of America* when he wrote that "{i}n America, man appears under the rudest form in which we can conceive him to subsist."... The Europeans were "civilized" and by the implication the Indians were "rude" and "uncivilized" since they lacked the traits and hallmarks of English culture. (p. 53)

Clubine (1991) suggests that the above ideologies were also used to justify the colonialization of Aboriginal people.

As the colonial economy moved from mercantilism (1700's) to industrial capitalism (late 1700's, 1800's), the need to provide food for England and Upper Canada gave rise to the priority of agricultural development. The nomadic way of life of the Aboriginal people was incompatible with the fur trade and more so with the agrarian-based economy (Ng, 1993). Aboriginal people became displaced and exploited for labour purposes.

Ng (1993) describes the education of Aboriginal peoples as an "assimilationist tool" which had two main purposes: "to make the 'Indians' into dutiful and loyal subjects of the Crown and to prepare them to adopt a new mode of production" (p. 54). It was through religion and education that the "superiority" of the Europeans was enforced and used for eliminating the Aboriginal peoples' cultural heritage. Clubine (1991, cited in Ng, 1993) cites a statement made by an English woman visiting Upper Canada in 1837:

The attempts of a noble and a fated race to oppose, or even delay for a time, the rolling westward of the great tide of civilization, are like the efforts to dam up the rapids of Niagara. The moral world has its laws, fixed as those of physical nature. The hunter *must make way for the agriculturalist*, and the Indian must learn to take the bit between his teeth, and set his hand to the plow share or perish. (p.54)

Aboriginal men were taught farming and labour skills. Women were taught wage labour and domestic skills (Ng, 1993). The male/female roles were not the traditional roles among Aboriginal people but were more appropriate for the new colonial society in which Aboriginal people were to assimilate.

Hodgins (1909, 1910, 1911) an historiographer compiled three volumes of historical papers/documents relating to the progress of education in the province of Ontario. He notes that efforts to civilize and assimilate the Aboriginal peoples of Upper Canada between 1826 and 1831 were carried out largely by the missionaries and the Church of England. In 1830, a different society was formed under the direction of the Bishop of Quebec “for the converting and civilizing of the Indians of Upper Canada” (Hodgins, 1911, p. 100).

The missionary schools were seen as a benefit for the Aboriginals and it was commonly believed that the Aboriginals wished for instruction by European standards. The Superintendent of Indian Affairs (Captain Anderson, 1835, cited in Hodgins, 1911) claimed that: “The Indian wants instruction. He everywhere appreciates the superiority of the Whites in possessing the Arts of Reading and Writing. He earnestly begs for the benefits of Education” (p. 101).

Manual training was important to the first missionary efforts to educate the Aboriginals. Manual Labour Schools near Alderville, Ontario (1836, 1837) were established. Hodgins (1911) recounts one story of Reverend Case, a missionary who traveled frequently to different cities on behalf of the Indian Missions. On one such visit to the United States, he took some Aboriginal children from the Alderville Mission School with him. The children were described by Reverend Doctor John Carroll (a missionary) as “delighting” the people with their singing. On the same visit, Reverend Case also exhibited the articles which these children had made in the duration of two

weeks at the Alderville Mission School: “172 axe handles, 6 scoop shovels, 57 ladles, 4 trays, 44 broom handles and 415 brooms” (Hodgins, 1911, p. 102). Manual training was reaping its rewards.

Hodgins (1911) describes a conference held in Toronto in 1837 to promote the religious and further improvement of Aboriginal youth in the province of Ontario at which the participants decided to found a Central Manual School that would “provide for the religious, literacy, mechanical and agricultural education of those Indian Youths whose parents may consent to place them within its walls, where a provision will be made for their maintenance” (p. 103). Two resolutions passed at this conference were cited in the Minutes from the Extract of the Conference (1824-1845):

Resolved, 1. That the Conference feels the great importance of the proposed Establishment, more especially since the Indians themselves desire it; and that it be commenced as soon as possible.

Resolved, 2. That the Board of Upper Canada Academy be requested to direct their immediate attention to this deeply interesting and highly important undertaking, and devise such measures as they may judge expedient to carry it into effect. (Hodgins, 1911, p. 103)

The participants noted that by methods of this nature, Aboriginals would be gradually and permanently “elevated” to the “civil” society. Aboriginal people’s inclination for roaming would be cured and “an interesting class of our fellow men rescued from degradation” (p. 98).

Hodgins (1910) reports that the government of Ontario commissioned a report on the condition of the “Indians and the State of Education” (p. 184). The appointed commissioners prepared a report on the administration of the Indian Department. The commissioners report (1839, cited by Hodgins, 1910):

In addition to the Mission Schools which are already formed in the different settlements of Christian Indians for the education of the rising generation, means should be furnished for the establishment and support of two or more Central Schools, in which the most promising youths should be placed and gratuitously boarded, educated and clothed for five to six years at least. By such an arrangement,

the children of the Indians would be removed from their imperfectly civilized parents, and placed under the exclusive direction of their religious and secular Instructors. (pp.184, 185)

Further inquiries were not made into the actual conditions of the schools or the educational affairs.

Hodgins (1911) cites from reports on the education of Indians in Canada which further exemplify how Aboriginal boys and girls were educated deliberately to fit the European notion of civilization. An excerpt from an 1839 report by Sir James Macaulay on industrial schools further illustrates this notion:

And while attention is thus paid to mental training, many of the pupils are carefully instructed in industrial trades, such as shoemaking, tailoring, blacksmithing, plastering, carpentering and printing... I have indicated the present condition of these pupils, from which it will be seen that the instruction afforded is bearing excellent fruit. A similar institution called the 'Mount Elgin Institute' exists in the Munceytown Reserve; here special care is devoted to the female department, which is by no means neglected... careful training in household duties, such as washing, laundry work, knitting, sewing, spinning, cooking and baking... The aim of all these Institutes is to train the Indian to give up his old ways, and to settle among his white brethren on equal terms and with equal advantages. (p. 98)

Reverend James Evans was one of the most "noted men" in contributing to the "betterment" of the Aborigines (Hodgins, 1911). He established Norway House in the Northwest in 1840. Prior to his death in 1846, Reverend Evans developed what is known as the Syllabic Systems. The Syllabic System consists of syllabic characters which represent the sounds of the Cree language. Reverend Young, who administered education and religion at Norway House at the turn of the century, describes the syllabic alphabet:

He (James Evans) invented a wonderful new alphabet, called the Syllabic characters, which is such a grand thing for the poor Indians that Lord Dufferin once said to me, after I had explained it to him, and showed him how by the use of it, Indians could learn to read God's Word in a few days, 'It is one of the most wonderful things I ever saw'. (Hodgins, 1911, p. 106)

In 1870, Consul Blake wrote a Report on the Condition and Education of the Indians of Upper Canada for the State Department of Washington which described a school near Brantford, Ontario, established by the New England Society. He describes his visit to the Indian School House:

It is pleasantly situated on a Farm comprising two hundred miles of fertile land. At the time of my visit the number of children in attendance, including both sexes, was eighty two. They were taught, fed, and clothed at the expense of the Society. None were admitted before the age of ten. The Writing of several was very good, and their Examinations in Spelling were highly creditable. There is no attempt to confer more than a plain English Education, but provision is made for consecutive advancement to Higher Schools if the proficiency attained seems to justify them. The Farmer of the establishment carefully instructs the Boys in the work of the Farm at all seasons of the year, taking a limited number with him into the Fields and Barns on all suitable occasions, and adopting specific work to each of them, subject to his inspection. In addition to the common branches of Education, the Girls are instructed in the ordinary household work of the Farm, including Spinning and Sewing by hand and on the Machine. (Hodgins, 1911, p. 104)

It is interesting to note that when Consul Blake asked the teacher, who had taught in European schools, if there was any difference between the two races (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal), the teacher thought that Aboriginal children were the “quicker” of the two. Mechanical arts were no longer taught at this school for the teacher had discovered that the Aboriginal youth preferred the independent life as farmers compared to the confined and systematic approach to Mechanics.

Consul Blake described his perceptions of a Council House Meeting while he was visiting the school house near Brantford. The proceedings of the meeting were held in Six Nations language with an interpreter present. Blake describes the Council: “Even when highly educated, our own race seldom attains the absolutely unembarrassed fluency of language, the self-possessed and easy intonations and gestures, and the quiet and dignified courtesy which distinguished the speakers” (Hodgins, 1911, p. 105).

In 1920, under the direction of Duncan Campbell Scott, every Aboriginal child between the ages of seven and fifteen was mandated to attend school, even though in 1907 the Department of

Indian Affairs' chief medical officer, Dr. Bryce, had found an extremely high percentage of tuberculosis of Aboriginal children in industrial schools (Akiwenzi-Damm, & Sutherland, 1998). The percentage of tuberculosis among Aboriginal children remained high when Aboriginal children were mandated to attend school in 1920.

In 1922, the industrial schools were deemed a failure and the model was abandoned for favour of the residential school (Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998). Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland note that the residential schools were established when Aboriginal and Inuit peoples were not highly valued by non-Aboriginal societies. Miller (1991, cited in Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998) attests that the attitudes of those who created or instituted the residential schooling system were that the Aboriginal people were to be eliminated. In 1938, the per-capita grant for Aboriginal residential schools in Ontario was \$180.00 as compared to other Aboriginal institutions in the United States and Manitoba operating on per-capita grants ranging from \$294.00 to \$642.00 (Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998).

In the 1940's, the federal government took command of the residential schools that had been originally established by various religious groups. Students, however, still did what their parents and grandparents had done in the 1800's: farming, maintenance, cooking and cleaning. Haig-Brown (1988, cited in Akiwenzi-Damm, & Sutherland 1998) describes these "tasks":

These tasks filled two objectives: they met the government requirements for training in work-related duties, and they helped to maintain the school and defray the operating costs with the students' labour. Their manual labour was not intended to leave them with skills to compete with the outside economy. (p. 6)

Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland observe that in 1950, over 40% of the instructional staff at residential schools had no professional training in education.

In the 1940's, the Aboriginal people of Canada were beginning to assert themselves and demand direct involvement in the decision-making processes concerning the education of their

children (Green, 1990). The federal government initiated a number of Joint Committee Hearings to elicit Aboriginal opinions on the educational issues affecting Aboriginal children. The primary Aboriginal organization in the 1940's, The North American Indian Brotherhood, demanded that "All denominational schools within the reservations should be abolished ... and the education of Indians be committed to regional boards upon which Indians in the region's district shall be represented by Indians" (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1984, cited by Green, 1990, p. 36). As a result of the Joint Committee Hearings, the education of Aboriginal children was removed from the jurisdiction of the churches and placed under the Department of Indian Affairs.

Following the Joint Committee hearings (1946), a new Indian Act was passed in 1951 (Green, 1990). The federal government dealt with some of the Aboriginal educational issues such as school administration, religious instruction, federal-provincial agreements, appointment of teachers, and truancy. Green (1990) acknowledges that many of the inconsistencies pertaining to Aboriginal education were addressed at this time; however, as with past historical Aboriginal educational policy making, there was no direct Aboriginal parental involvement or involvement from other Aboriginal stakeholders of education concerning the decisions made on behalf of Aboriginals. The educational decisions were still being formulated and controlled by the dominant society: how long Aboriginal children would attend school, what they would learn while they were in attendance at school, and in what language instruction would be given.

Green (1990) notes that 1969 marked a major turning point in Aboriginal education. The partnership between the churches and the government was formally ended and the federal government became directly responsible for the 52 schools still in operation.

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB) developed a policy paper entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education* (Green, 1990). The position paper outlined the NIB's philosophies, goals

and principles of education. The voices and perceptions of Aboriginal people were being heard. An important aspect of this position paper is that the stakeholders of Aboriginal education were seen by the government and by the stakeholders of Aboriginal education as important elements in the control of Aboriginal education:

Indian parents must have full responsibility and control of education. The federal government must adjust its policies and practices to make possible the full participation and partnership of Indian people in all decisions and activities connected with the education of Indian children. (NIB, 1972, cited in Green, 1990, p. 37)

The first school in Canada to move towards local control of its own educational system was the Blue Quills school in St. Paul, Alberta. In 1970, a group of Aboriginal people were incorporated to administer the Blue Quills Student Residence (Green, 1990). The residence provided education for both Aboriginal children and Aboriginal adults. The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs (DIAND) has financially supported local involvement of Aboriginal schools ever since (Green, 1990).

Since the early 1970's, Aboriginal communities have become more deeply concerned with the direction Aboriginal education is taking and have demanded more dynamic involvement into the affairs of the educational systems such as teacher selection and curriculum development (Green, 1990). For example, the progression of events has resulted in Aboriginal communities gaining control of their own band operated schools.

In 1995, another major turning point in Aboriginal education took place. The federal government of Canada began a process to make self-government for Aboriginal communities a reality. The implications of self-government are discussed below. Green (1990) suggests that by the 21st century, Aboriginal education will have “a distinctive Native flavour; and Indian education will begin to do what all education systems should do - promote the culture of the society it serves” (p. 37).

New Perspectives on Aboriginal Education

Self-Government

In 1995, the federal government of Canada began a process to make Aboriginal self-government a reality (Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1997). Consultations with Aboriginal leaders at the national, regional and local levels enabled a process for negotiations. Self-government for Aboriginal people includes the areas of education, language and culture, police, health and social services, housing and property rights, the enforcement of Aboriginal laws as well as child and adoption services (DIAND, 1997).

According to the *Federal Policy Guide* (1995), many definitions of self-government exist. The Policy states that the time for debates is over and self-government should become a reality for the Aboriginal people of Canada. The policy recognizes the inherent right of the Aboriginal people of Canada to exercise control of their own “unique cultures, identities, traditions, languages and institutions” (*Federal Policy Guide*, 1995, p. 4). It acknowledges the varied and diverse circumstances of Canadian Aboriginal peoples and recommends that arrangements for self-government be negotiated to comply with the unique needs of each individual Aboriginal community. While the policy recognizes that not all Aboriginal communities will wish to exercise full authority and jurisdiction straightaway, the current legislative system will continue to apply in these communities.

Self-government as applied to education allows First Nations communities to implement laws concerning primary and secondary education in schools on First Nations lands (Section 5.4.1. *Federal Policy Guide*, 1995). If a student wishes to transfer to a “non-Aboriginal” school there will be no academic penalties incurred onto that student (Section 5.4.2.). Section 5.4.3. states that when conflicts occur between First Nations laws and federal laws, the First Nations laws will take precedence.

The *Federal Policy Guide* (1995) mandates the creation of a Federal Steering Committee which is responsible for coordinating, monitoring, implementing, and maintaining an overview of all self-government activities. Treaties which are already in existence may be expanded upon, renegotiated, or reinstated as new treaties. Each First Nation is responsible to provide the Government with an implementation plan which will include identification of activities, timeframes and necessary resources. To be included within the implementation plan will be feasibility costs, capital requirements, capacity and duplication of services (*Federal Policy Guide*, 1995).

Implementing Education in a Self-Governed Community

Despite the potential of self-government and the ongoing negotiations, Steinhauer (1992) views the promise of self-government as both elevating and troublesome: "Like the cycle of poverty, the legacy of paternalism is difficult to end" (p. 97). The reality of establishing a self-governed educational system requires scrutiny and careful monitoring:

Reserves are like the child who grows from a highly dependant infant to an adolescent who demands greater independence. ... The establishment of self-government is not an easy undertaking and unless all factors are considered, the care must be taken to avoid both the extremes of paternalism and the heavy idea of unchecked freedom. (Steinhauer, 1992, p. 97)

According to Steinhauer (1996), the term , self-government, is ambivalent. The political jargon associated with the policies and agendas proposed by the federal government lacks clear definition (Steinhauer, 1996). This leaves the stakeholders of Aboriginal education confused and at odds with one another.

Taylor, Crago, and McAlpine (1993) expand upon the ideas articulated by Steinhauer (1992). They suggest that one of the difficulties of self-government is that the Aboriginals who are involved in making decisions about education may have little knowledge or experience of Aboriginal culture.

Steinhauer (1995) notes that in reserve communities, the school is usually the largest source of employment. As a result, the school often exists in a “fishbowl”, and when something goes wrong in the community, the school can become the “scapegoat” (p. 92). Such a situation invariably affects the children and staff.

In a study of Aboriginal teachers in her community, Steinhauer (1993) found that the teachers perceived themselves to be under scrutiny, that every area of their lives was “closely monitored” (p. 92). The teachers reported that the community expected many things from them, from being second mothers to entertaining students long after the school had been closed.

The Impact of Subjugation

The impact of colonialism on Aboriginal education has been addressed by a number of researchers and authors. Cajete (1994) describes the impact in terms of syndromes. One syndrome is ethnostress which happens as a result of the upheaval of a valued cultural life and belief system. Cajete describes the effects as ranging from the loss of self-image to losing one’s feeling of belonging to the world: “Ethnostress has many faces in Indian life, each presenting barriers to attaining authenticity in ourselves and our communities. When we don’t acknowledge and deal with the reality of ethnostress, we act out its all too familiar effects” (p. 190). Ethnostress can result in the perpetuation of dysfunctional relationships, divisive behaviour, as well as a mistrust of the self and others.

A second syndrome Cajete (1994) attributes to colonialism is the hostage syndrome which is similar to ethnostress in that the psychological effects range from “states of alienation and confusion” to “an attempt to identify with them (the captors) and become the same” (p. 190). The hostage syndrome experience is manifested when individuals adapt to the loss of freedom and/or develop adaptive behaviours, attitudes and beliefs or states of mind. Cajete (1994) believes that

the impact of the hostage syndrome is still manifesting itself in many Aboriginal communities which are struggling with their identities as a group and as individuals: “Reservations, and the status of being wards of the government have had syndrome-like effects on the individual and social psychology of Indian people” (p. 190). Cajete suggests that the perpetuation of dependence occurs, perhaps, because the stakeholders of education have never questioned their own conditioning through mainstream educational institutions and will continue to maintain dysfunctional relationships unless they overcome notions of separate and overpowerment.

Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland (1998) attribute to colonialism the “residential school syndrome. It is widely believed that those who attended residential schools lost their ability to parent and their identity as Aboriginal people. This psychological wound has been passed on to subsequent generations of children” (p. 5). This syndrome is similar to Cajete’s descriptions of ethnostress and the hostage syndrome. Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland contend that this syndrome may explain the high rates of suicide, solvent and alcohol abuse and the family violence exhibited in so many Aboriginal communities today:

We speak of multi-generational affects. The grievous levels of suicide, alcoholism, solvent abuse, and family violence in some First Nations communities are attributed to the lingering effects of Residential schools. This includes the psychological pain which could not be mentioned; the sufferings which could not be named, but which rippled through the lives of survivors and their children. (p. 5)

Education for Aboriginal youth over the centuries and the continued insistence that the Aboriginal could be “civilized” if they gave up their values and traditions and replaced them with the European’s values and traditions were/are inconsistent with the traditional education of Aboriginal societies (Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998). In 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples released a report on Residential schools that had operated in British Columbia between 1890 and 1984. Haig-Brown (1988, cited in Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998) suggests

that, “Many people testified to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples that after residential schools, they experienced confusion about their identity, that afterwards, they fit into neither native or mainstream society” (p. 5).

Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland (1998) discuss some impacts of the residential schools on Aboriginal peoples: “The schools alienated Aboriginal people from their culture by separating children from their families, forbidding them to speak their language or honour their traditions” (p. 5). To accomplish the “conversion,” Aboriginal people were disciplined when they spoke their language or practiced Aboriginal traditional beliefs. These schools were seen as severe even by some Euro-Canadians at the times when discipline was more readily accepted. Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland assert that:

There was a great deal of physical abuse. There was use of things which would not have been accepted in Euro-Canadian institutions at the time. These methods included isolation cells, severe floggings and whippings, and public humiliations. Routine stories of bad food, cold dormitories, head shaving upon admission to schools and issuing of uniforms are reported by residential schools. Sometimes it seemed that punishment and mistreatment might more accurately be called torture as we now understand it ... For example, sticking needles in the tongues of children who spoke their native languages must be considered excessive and cruel. (pp. 6-7)

Not all schools were run by abusive or punitive methods. Some Aboriginal children had positive experiences in the institutions deemed residential and mission schools (Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998). Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland explain that there were administrators who encouraged parents to visit and encouraged teachers to learn the language of their students. Often, the administration would fight for better shelter and food for the students. Laenui (1987) contends that such instances were few and not always consistent with the actual philosophies of Aboriginal peoples:

Often the destroyers of indigenous cultures are clothed as friends of indigenous peoples, either in religious garb to save our souls, military uniforms to protect us

from their enemies, or multi-national corporations to raise our economic status with their jobs, their fast foods, and their eventual control over our economy. (p. 7)

Education for Aboriginal people still walks hand in hand with politics and the past injustices done to them under the guise of improving an Aboriginal nation (Lomawaima, 1995). Past removal from home communities and the effects of a government deemed to “civilize” the indigenous people of Canada has led the stakeholders of today’s educational systems to have “very negative attitudes towards all schools” (Butterfield & Pepper, 1991, cited in Lomawaima, 1995, p. 336). Promises of self-government and the new consciousness of the colonializers do not make some Aboriginal people less skeptical of federal promises. (Lomawaima, 1995; Snipp, 1995). Aboriginal peoples have a long experience with education in the “European” tradition under the pretense of the good will of missionaries and federal authorities (Snipp, 1995). The impact of residential and industrial schools on Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal peoples will take a long time to overcome. The destruction of personal security, freedom, dignity, health, and the life and death situations which many Aboriginal children faced will continue to be felt by succeeding generations (Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998). Moreover, a great many Aboriginal people have learned to hate their cultures, values and traditions, a legacy of the mission and residential schools. This hate has been established in their home communities and their families (Akiwenzi-Damm & Sutherland, 1998).

There are different dilemmas to consider when we talk of implementing a self-governed educational system in Aboriginal communities and the lasting affects of colonialism. “ The hostage syndrome has given rise to a view of Indian culture as being of the past: the so-called ‘culture under glass’ that has dominated the view of Americans since the late 1800's” (Cajete, 1994, p. 191). Emerson (1987) describes Aboriginal communities and the stakeholders of education as viewing Aboriginal history as a “foregone conclusion”:

Many people from native cultures (or people who work within the culture or community but grew up outside the culture) have come to view the Indian way of life as a foregone conclusion. These people who may be Indian or non-Indian teachers, administrators, parents, school board members, or the students themselves, indicate that the native culture and language are primarily deficits or obstacles to learning. (p. 43)

Emerson submits that many Aboriginal communities are experiencing identity and cultural loss. One reason for this is a break in the cultural transmission process:

One reason is that the adult has given up on native culture, does not adequately understand a replacement culture, and essentially refuses to mediate to the child. Perhaps a faulty comparison between the native culture and the dominant culture has taken place with conclusions drawn such that the native culture is no longer seen as viable. (p. 42)

Emerson suggests that when the children have been educated by western hemisphere standards, they return to the community with the dominant educational system's ideas. When these children, in turn, become adults and return to their home communities and attempt to overcome cultural and identity loss within the community, the European standards are perpetuated.

Christianity was linked to education in colonialism. A legacy of the missionaries is that the conversion to Christianity has left some stakeholders of education viewing "participation in other religious ceremonies (as) a violation of their beliefs" (Snipp, 1995, p. 254). Gary Quequish (1999, cited in Atcheson, 1999) who runs a First Nations non-denominational church in a northwestern non-Aboriginal community argues that European missionaries "proselytized our Native people. They brought the gospel within their denomination and tried to squeeze Native minds to this religion" (p. 1). The religious affiliations of Aboriginal peoples not only reflect their tribal membership but the denomination of the missionaries that had originally converted the tribe in the beginning of colonialization. Snipp (1995) gives an example: "...there are many Catholic Indians in the Southwest, while American Indians in the Midwest are often Lutheran, to mention only a few examples" (p. 254).

Some Christian Aboriginal people participate in neotraditional religions. Many belong to the Native American Church (NAC) which combines elements of Christian religion with past traditional religious beliefs and practices. Quequish (1999, cited in Atcheson, 1999) observes: “You take an authoritarian figure like a church and people fall prey to cultic leaders. People are in the victim mode (because of assimilation and schooling), they think what they’re being taught is normal and it’s not” (p. 1).

Father Randal Morriseau (1999, cited in Atcheson, 1999), an Aboriginal Roman Catholic priest raised in non-Aboriginal society explains that Christianity and Native spirituality are intertwined. Both are based on honouring the Creator: “The Creator bestows gifts upon us and whether the gift is to dance, be an eucharistic minister or a lector, all are equal” (p. 11). He notes that:

The key to a faith is its recognition of the inherent goodness of people and its ability to bring that out. Who am I to judge it’s (a sweat lodge) not good when it produces goodness from the people? I believe we are all unique and at harmony with the Creator. They should not try to follow me, but follow the journey that God has called them to go with. (pp. 1, 11)

Conflicts about religion have given rise to conflicts in Aboriginal communities. Weiben Slipperjack (1999, cited in Atcheson, 1999), an Elder on an isolated reserve community in northwestern Ontario, describes the impact of such tension on Aboriginal youth: “Some Christian people have said Native spirituality is the cause of the young people’s distress... but the conflict between the beliefs is causing an unbearable imbalance for the youth” (p. 1). Slipperjack distinguishes between ceremonies such as Pow Wows and religious ceremonies. He submits that the former are not evil practices nor are they religion, but rather a way of life for Aboriginal people.

Although there are many challenges to be addressed in the implementation of self-government, Cajete (1994) believes that true empowerment can take place in Aboriginal education:

But the cultural roots of Indian ways of life run deep. Even in communities where they seem to have totally disappeared, they merely lie dormant, waiting for the opportunity and the committed interest of Indian people to start sprouting again. Indigenous education is one of these dormant roots. The tree may seem lifeless, but the roots still live in the hearts of many Indian people. (p. 191)

The final section examines issues and concerns related to schooling and curriculum.

Schooling and Curriculum

A spectrum of orientations to curriculum permeate the landscape of Aboriginal education. The most significant issue focuses on whether the goals of education and curriculum should emphasize the “heritage culture” or the “dominant culture” (Taylor, Crago, & McAlpine, 1993, p. 120). Taylor et al. explain: “The dilemma here is whether to educate children with a view of assimilating to mainstream culture, or whether to concentrate on education that prepares children for life in their home communities” (pp. 119-120). They relate this dilemma to economics:

Related to this dilemma are economic issues that go beyond schooling per se. The basic dilemma for communities is how to create a community-based job market so that children can relate their schooling to future employment in their community. Without attention to this problem at a systemic level, attempts at making education meaningful for the children are inherently difficult. (p. 120)

A number of researchers have investigated issues related to students’ success in school. Wall and Madak (1991) conducted a quantitative study to investigate Aboriginal students’ academic self-concept. They compared two groups of students—those who attended a reserve community school (20) and those who attended a public secondary school (22). The researchers found that it did not matter which school the students attended. There were no differences in self-esteem. However, the students who attended the band-controlled school perceived that their favourite teachers and their parents held higher educational aspirations for them than did the students who attended the secondary public high school. The researchers conclude that a strong support system seems to be

a key factor in developing and planning educational programs for Aboriginal students. They contend that the solution is to have education under the control of Aboriginal people and band-controlled schools. They cite Whyte's (1986, cited in Wall and Madak, 1991) argument that:

If schools are to do justice to Indian and Métis students, they cannot continue to represent a culture that ignores and oppresses and denigrates the indigenous culture. Courses and materials which reflect the positive impact of Indian and Métis people have and can be further developed and used. The traditions, heritage, and folklore by one's group can be material for school today. The spiritual heritage of the community can become part of the school experience. A curriculum infused with content of and Indian and Métis cultural heritage will go a long way in helping generate interest and motivation among Indian and Métis youth. But this alone will not alleviate the alienation and rejection of the school. First, Indian parents must feel the school is their school and not an alien culture unwilling to listen to their concerns. (p. 49)

Turner (1997) conducted a phenomenological study of seven Aboriginal secondary school graduates who were attending a post secondary institution to examine the relationships between Aboriginal students' traditional tribal values and secondary school retention. He found that family and life experiences contributed to the development of strong positive identities and empowerment to balance and exist in the two cultures. Each of the participants in the study had a positive role model and at least one teacher with whom he/she had a positive relationship. Turner suggests that this positive rapport appeared to have helped to reinforce the success of these learners, while at the same time helping to balance negative experiences with teachers. Turner concludes: "The findings suggest the key stakeholders such as family, Native agencies and organizations, the community, and educational systems have responsibilities in promoting the successful retention of Amerindian secondary students" (p. ii).

Wilson (1992) contends that low-student performance in non-Aboriginal schools is not generally attributed to an environment which is hostile to the Aboriginal student, but rather to the low self-esteem of the students. She conducted an ethnographic study of Aboriginal students to

discover why Aboriginal students who performed well in the elementary school in their home community did poorly when they transferred to a non-Aboriginal mainstream high school. She discovered that macrostructural factors, factors that had been created by a history of social relations between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals, made the transition between the elementary school on the reserve to high school off the reserve, often very difficult for Aboriginal students. Wilson had four critical findings. The first was that the “students’ limitations in academic performance were consequences of macrostructural factors rather than observed characteristics of individuals or characteristics common to the group of students” (p. 53). She found that, more often than not, administrators and teachers in the mainstream school blamed the problems pertaining to the education of Aboriginal students on the students themselves. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students were treated differently.

The second finding was that the students felt an overwhelming sense of isolation and frustration which adversely affected their academic performance. Of the 27 teachers interviewed, all but one had the pre-conceived notion that the Aboriginal students could not speak English properly, could not read and had no desire to mix with the non-Aboriginal students. This negativism further undermined the efforts of the Aboriginal students. One student stated: “We get disqualified before we even know what the rules of the game are” (p. 51). Wilson suggests that treatment of the Aboriginal students within the elementary school compared to that in the high school might also have contributed to their feelings of inadequacy. In the elementary school every student was treated with respect:

They (the teachers) laughed with the students, and they often placed a hand on the shoulder of a student as they walked by in the classroom. Teachers moved about in the classroom and in most cases made either verbal or physical contact with each student. Teachers spoke to students often about professions they might enter. Their expectations were high. Students thrived in this atmosphere. Test scores were high.

Students appeared happy and involved. Psychological test scores showed that the students were intellectually and academically prepared for high school. (p. 50)

Wilson also found that the lack of understanding of the cultural conflicts experienced by the Aboriginal students by the school personnel further contributed to student failure. Frequently they were forced into “low-level” academics because counsellors assumed that the Aboriginal students could not handle the “high-level” academics. According to Wilson,

A classic example came from a student who wanted to enrol in a computer class. His teacher advisor suggested that he take a mechanics course instead because “There will always be old broken down cars to repair on the reserve but I doubt there will ever be computers to work with”. (p. 52)

The fourth finding was that the pre-conceived ideas on the part of the school’s personnel were played out by the Aboriginal students themselves. The low expectations became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Cajete (1994) views education as a social and political struggle to make possible a modern education for Aboriginal peoples, combining the best that modern education has to offer with Indigenous educational knowledge and orientations. He proposes that instead of being recipients of European education, each Aboriginal community should become the creator of its own unique educational system. “Authentic dialogue” (p. 218) opens avenues to enable Aboriginal people to explore past histories, present status and future possibilities:

I view the next phase of Indian education as requiring the collective development of transformative vision and educational process based on authentic dialogue. This development requires that new structures and practices emerge from old ones through a collective process of thought and research. These new structures and practices can only be generated by an ongoing and unbiased process of critical exchange between modern educational thought and practice, and the traditional philosophies and orientations of Indian people. (p. 218)

Stairs (1994) suggests that Aboriginal education needs to be approached from both cultural perspectives. She cautions that there is “no single dimension—political, pedagogic, linguistic, sociopsychological, or otherwise (as) the answer to understanding or negotiating Aboriginal

education” (p. 123). She recommends that the stakeholders of education focus on the what, who, how, and why’s in the “continuing saga” of cultural negotiations within each unique community’s dialogue.

Barnhardt (1990) reports a case study of a bilingual Yup’ik Eskimo community which provides a model of dual cultural approach. For 20 years the school (pre-school to grade 12) in the community of 500 has aspired to provide educational experiences for students which promote the cultural heritage of the Yup’ik community and the values and skills needed to survive in the non-Yup’ik community. Barnhardt notes: “The higher than average presence of St. Mary’s graduates in institutions of higher education and in leadership roles in the state, indicates that its perseverance is paying off” (p. 63).

Barnhardt (1990) had four critical findings from this study which he describes as lessons to be learned by other communities and schools in their own endeavours to establish a dual cultural curriculum for their students. Firstly,

The most critical factor in the success of any educational effort such as that described in this case study is its initiation from the cultural community being served and the strong, sustained and unequivocal support provided by representatives of that community. (p. 63)

Second, Barnhardt (1990) discovered that “it is possible to approach the infusion of culturally appropriate content into the curriculum through an integrative rather than an additive or supplementary approach” (p. 63). He suggests that teachers should be on staff who have local and global cultural knowledge and are equipped to articulate the knowledge, values, and skills the students are to learn in appropriate cultural terms. Thirdly, Barnhardt stresses that “the school cannot do the job alone” (p. 64). All of the stakeholders of education need to take a participatory and active interest in their children’s education, not only within the school environment, but outside, in the home and within the community itself. Parents and other community members in

this Yup'ik community are active participants in contributing their indigenous expertise within the school. The students are expected to demonstrate their acquired skills within the home and community, and the school.

Lastly, Barnhardt (1990) states: "A cultural system is more than the surface or visible attributes of the language, arts and crafts, eating habits and other subsistence practices" (p. 64). For the members in this community, being a Yup'ik Eskimo means ways of thinking, a way of seeing things, a way of behaving and doing things and a way of relating to the world. Barnhardt suggests that education needs to take all of the above into account if it is to be truly culturally appropriate to a community implementing a dual cultural mandate.

Planning, developing, and implementing a curriculum for Aboriginal students which is both sensitive to the cultural heritage of each unique community and empowers individuals to negotiate in the broader educational context poses many challenges. Three such challenges resolve around questions of who teaches, what should be taught, and how it should be taught. Frequently, educational models applied to education in Aboriginal communities are drawn from the dominant mainstream orientation. Cajete (1994) is critical of outside experts who "observe a situation from the outside, and at a distance, then develop a solution or dictate an action or policy" (p. 216). He argues that education should concern participation and relationships with the cultural, natural and historical realities in which one lives. The experts from the outside reduce education to an intellectual exercise which neglects the interrelationships and participatory learning so necessary to education. Cajete suggests that when the dependence on the outside authority is perpetuated and the "political power brokers" (p. 216) ultimately continue to retain authority, Aboriginal people's self-determination process of education becomes substantially decreased.

Taylor et al. (1993) suggest that a viable solution to the problem is to have Aboriginal teachers. They note, however, that there are few trained Aboriginal teachers and these teachers are overburdened with their teaching responsibilities. Often, teachers in a community are unable to leave their community to seek professional certification. Although a number of educational institutions in Canada offer innovative programs for Aboriginal teachers, some which are delivered within Aboriginal communities (Stairs, 1988, cited in Taylor et al., 1993), there have been debates over the uniformity of academic standards when compared with teacher training programs of non-Aboriginal teachers. These debates over academic standards have left Aboriginal teachers alienated from the teaching profession altogether.

Such debates over the legitimacy of their education have left even some certified Aboriginal teachers feeling “second rate at best” (Taylor et al., p. 123). Some have said that they don’t feel like real or legitimate teachers. To compound this, Aboriginal teachers do not feel legitimate when they teach in an Aboriginal language. They claim that they only feel real when they are teaching in English or French. An Aboriginal teacher’s lack of self-confidence cannot be conducive to the Aboriginal student who needs confidence and support within the classroom environment (Taylor et al.). What then constitutes a good teacher?

Malin (1994) conducted a study concerning what constitutes “good teaching” from the perspectives of three panels. An Aboriginal teacher panel, an Aboriginal parent panel, and a non-Aboriginal teacher educator panel viewed videotapes of three teachers: a Yup’ik Eskimo teacher, a non-Aboriginal Australian teacher and an Aboriginal Australian teacher. Malin found that there are profound differences across cultures regarding what constitutes good teaching.

Malin (1994) discovered that what some individuals perceive as a caring and comfortable educational environment, others may perceive as a non-caring and threatening environment. One

cultural group may find a teacher to be democratic, polite, caring and concerned, all the while valuing the students' contributions, while another cultural group might perceive the same teacher as "aloof, detached, bossy and sterile" (p. 95). Not surprisingly, each cultural group preferred the teacher from their own cultural background, however all of the panels agreed that the non-Aboriginal teacher was more task-orientated and that the Aboriginal teacher exhibited less authority and monitored the students less than the non-Aboriginal teacher. These aspects, however, were viewed differently by each of the three panels. The aspects which the panels of Aboriginals considered positive, the non-Aboriginal teacher educators viewed as being negative. The Aboriginal teacher's non-authoritative stance was considered positive by the Aboriginal panels and yet seen as a weakness by the non-Aboriginal panel.

Malin (1994) also discovered that the majority of conflicts in the perceptions of the three panels of the three teachers they had viewed on videotape were culturally based. Conflicts related to "communication style: that is, the use of eye contact, and of personal names, the dialect, and the intonation when adults talk to children" (p. 108); the proper adult-child relations; the amount of autonomy which should be allowed by the teacher for the children; the relationships of peers within the classroom; the amount of demonstrated affection and physical contact between the teacher and the students (including the degree of comfort felt by the students); and the respect shown by the teacher to and for the students.

Malin (1994) juxtaposes two issues emerging from his study:

Should all teachers, regardless of ethnicity, be expected to teach according to an established western/industrial culture model of communicating, relating, and valuing? Is it appropriate for a teacher to speak to her or his class in a non-standard dialect of English? Is a teacher speaking a Scottish English dialect considered in the same light as one speaking in an Aboriginal English dialect? Is the 'Aboriginal way' of teaching that was highlighted in this study as effective in conveying curriculum as the 'western way'? (pp. 112-113)

Malin recommended that the culture of schools needs change. There should be more Aboriginal teachers. The Aboriginal teachers should not be expected to teach by western/industrial standards. The language used by the teachers should not necessarily be the “proper” dialect of English. An interesting question arose from Malin’s study. Is a Euro-Canadian way of teaching better than an “Aboriginal way”? However, Malin questions the motivation to recruit Aboriginal teachers:

Many Aboriginal parents and teachers feel that Aboriginal teachers are better able to communicate with Aboriginal students, to understand their needs, and to operate as positive role models. If, however, we as a society only accept those ethnic minority teachers who fit our culturally specific model of what is considered a good teacher, aren’t we defeating the purpose of having Aboriginal teachers in the first place? (p. 113)

The issue of having Aboriginal teachers who are able to speak the Aboriginal dialect which is used in their own community is another related difficulty. Where does one find those Aboriginal people who are fluent in their own community’s language? Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland (1998) explain that language loss in many Aboriginal communities has resulted from generations of children who were penalized for speaking their own mother tongue and who did not teach their own children the language to protect them from penalization as well. Successive generations have since lost the ability to speak fluently in Aboriginal languages. Lomawaima (1995) contends that the challenge to find fluent speaking Aboriginal teachers is compounded by the “English chatter” which is continually bombarding Aboriginal people through modern technologies such as cable television, satellite dishes, and video machines. The actual time spent in conversing with family members and others who might be able to transmit the language is lost to these modern technological devices.

More often than not, the only fluent speakers of a community’s language are the Elders within the community (Taylor et al., 1993). Elders are highly valued and respected members of the community and are usually unable to leave their home communities to be trained as teachers. If

Elders are used within the school environment as instructors of heritage and Aboriginal language another dilemma surfaces. Stairs (1994) queries: "Should elders be paid for instruction they are traditionally expected to offer, and if not, are they legitimate and full participants in the new institution of school?" (p. 124).

A final challenge is that of what should constitute the curriculum. Medicine (1995) argues against attempts to develop curriculum which result in a contrived culture that does not reflect the real culture of Aboriginal peoples. Such a contrived culture may be the result of an inadequate education, the erosion of kinship and Native belief systems and the ever-present pressure to change. Thus, culture becomes made-up or contrived not only by the non-Aboriginal society but by Aboriginal peoples as well. Medicine sees the trappings such as jewellery-making and beadwork or drumming and singing or accouterments of First Nations education as major obstacles in the education of Aboriginal children. Medicine reflects that the jewellery-making and beadwork, drumming and singing, do not reveal the real culture. She contends that when researchers, teachers, policymakers, and curriculum planners come to understand the values of the people they are working with, only then can they be effective change agents to benefit the societies of Aboriginal peoples.

A curriculum which legitimizes and promotes the uniqueness of each Aboriginal community's history, language and learning style should be the goal of all stakeholders of Aboriginal education (Cajete, 1994; Perley, 1993; Taylor, Crago & McAlpine, 1993). Many Canadian Aboriginal communities follow the provincial guidelines in which their community is located. Lomawaima (1995) observes that there is not a single method of teaching, a single learning style, or a school environment for all Aboriginal communities:

Too much research has been predicated on the hope that one teaching method or learning style or classroom environment or curriculum packaging will serve all

Native Americans equally well... Educators need to acknowledge the diversity of native cultures and experiences, and work locally to develop relevant content and methods. (p. 342)

Each culture prioritizes information available to them from different perspectives, and the choices to be made are considered in different ways. There is no one definitive answer for curriculum packaging across all Aboriginal communities. Lomawaima submits that the diversity in each classroom must also be addressed. She cites Fiordo (1988, cited in Lomawaima, 1995) who states that there is no single "Indian Learning Style":

The impulse is there for well-meaning teachers, curriculum developers, school administrators and federal policy makers to discover the perfect learning style, pedagogical method, or curricular content for all Indian students, be it left-brain learning, whole language instruction or generic spirituality. (p. 342)

Much of the literature on Aboriginal education supports an emphasis on cultural heritage and/or a dual model. The stakeholders of education in the community in the proposed study have eschewed traditional tribal values in curriculum for their children. The study is significant because it attempts to record the voices of a particular community which holds to fundamentalist religious beliefs. It may be that this community will choose an alternative school model to address its goals of education and curriculum. Historically, alternative approaches to schooling have been selected by groups who seek alternatives to regular public systems (California State Department of Education, 1998; Taylor, 1997).

This chapter has provided a review of the literature as it pertains to the study. The next chapter discusses the research design and decision-making process in which the researcher engaged.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 describes the research design and methodology of the study and the research and decision-making processes in which the researcher engaged during the study. As noted in Chapter 1, the study describes the perceptions of eight stakeholders in a self-governed Aboriginal community of the goals of education and curriculum for the children. The design of the study is qualitative and non-emergent (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). Participants were interviewed with a standardized open-ended interview guide (Patton, 1990).

Research Questions

1. What are the espoused goals of education and goals of curriculum?
2. By what processes is the community articulating its vision for curriculum policy?
 - 2.1 What are the beliefs and values guiding the development of curriculum policy?
 - 2.2 What are the educational needs of the community?
3. What is the nature of curriculum which will enable Aboriginal children and adolescents to realize the goals of education and goals of curriculum?
4. What do the stakeholders of education believe are the outcomes of students' learning upon completion of elementary and secondary schooling?

Design

The design of this study was qualitative. Patton (1990) explains a qualitative study as:

- 1) a focus on what people experience and how they interpret the world (in which case one can use interviews without actually experiencing the phenomenon oneself) or
- 2) a methodological mandate to actually experience the phenomenon being investigated (in which case participant observation would be necessary). (p. 70)

Borg, Gall, and Gall (1993) describe qualitative research as being “predicated on the assumption that each individual, each culture, and each setting is unique” (p. 195). They submit that qualitative research “typically yields verbal descriptions, largely derived from interview and observational notes. These notes are analyzed for themes and patterns, which are described and illustrated with examples, including quotations and excerpts from documents...” (p. 199). The primary method of data collection for this study was the interview. The researcher maintained a journal throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study.

This study’s design was intended to explore the participants’ perceptions of education and curriculum as they apply to their own unique community. The qualitative design enabled the respondents to articulate personal meanings in their responses to the standardized open-ended interview guide.

Maykut and Morehouse (1994) distinguish between emergent and non-emergent design: With an emergent design, data are collected, analyzed and questions are developed which broaden and/or narrow the researcher’s focus; with a non-emergent design, the research questions/foci remain constant across cases. In this study the design was non-emergent.

Patton (1990) describes three different approaches to interviewing: the informed conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview. Each approach varies in the purpose, preparation, conceptualization and instruments used for the interview. Each approach also has its own strengths/weaknesses.

The first of these approaches, the informal conversational interview, depends completely on the spontaneous generation of questions. Its purpose is to make the respondents feel at ease and sometimes not even realize that they are being interviewed. The second, the general interview guide approach, has no set of standardized questions but serves as a basic checklist during the interview. In this approach, the interviewer adapts wording and sequencing of questions. The third approach, the standardized open-ended interview, relies on carefully worded and sequenced questions. Each interview incorporates the same set of questions so that variations in the questions are minimized. The standardized open-ended interview was used in this study to focus the stakeholders' perspectives and perceptions on the same matters relating to education and curriculum.

Patton (1990) defines the standardized open-ended interview as follows:

The standardized open-ended interview consists of a set of questions carefully worded and arranged with the intention of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words. Flexibility in probing is more or less limited, depending on the nature of the interview and the skills of the interviewers. The standardized open-ended interview is used when it is important to minimize variation in the questions posed to interviewees. (pp. 280-281)

The interview guide was piloted with two individuals. Revisions to the questions were made and probes were incorporated, however the questions remained constant across all interviews. It should be noted that English is a second language for four out of the eight participants interviewed. The guide appears in Figure 3.1. Each respondent was interviewed individually. Interviews were audiotaped and lasted approximately 30-60 minutes. The setting for each interview took place at a location that was convenient to each respondent. For example, the interview with Jerold, the school principal, took place in his office.

INTERVIEW GUIDE
Perceptions of Aboriginal Education:
Voices from an Isolated Reserve Community in Northern Canada

Pseudonym _____ Male/Female (CIRCLE ONE)
 Languages spoken _____

1. General Information
 * What is your role in the school? _____

2. Education and Curriculum
 *What role does the school play in the life of the community?

“Self-government provides the opportunity for Aboriginal communities to decide what goals of education and curriculum will best meet the needs of their children and their unique communities. My questions will focus on your perceptions of what exists now and what would be ideal in the future.”

3. What does the curriculum emphasize now?
- subjects
 - content
 - problem solving
 - anything else?
- 3.1 What methods do the teachers use to teach the students?
 3.2 What resources are available to the teachers and students? (books, computers, etc)
 3.3 Give me some examples of what the children are learning and have learned.
 3.4 What educational needs/problems/concerns in the community should be addressed in the curriculum?
 3.5 How might these be resolved?
 3.6 What do you think a curriculum for your children should emphasize?
 3.7 How is this different from the current curriculum?
 3.8 What qualities would you like to see in a teacher for your children?
4. What is the purpose of education?
- 4.1 When the children in your community finish secondary school, what should they be able to do? What options should be open to them?
 4.2 Would this situation (4.1) be the same or different from the options available to students who completed school in the past five years? Explain.
5. How is the community developing its policies for the goals of education and curriculum?
- process?
 - who is involved?
 - sources? (consultants, provincial curriculum guidelines etc.)
- 5.1 What recommendations would you make to strengthen the curriculum?
 5.2 What emphasis should be placed on traditional or tribal values in the curriculum? Explain.
-

Figure 3.1. Interview Guide.

The interview was the primary data source for this study. Below is an example of a typical research memo:

[changes needed for interview][change vocabulary]

* 3 - change word "emphasize" to "focus"

* 3.1 - explain what "methods" are

* 3.2 - may need to explain what resources might include [community, people, etc.]

* 3.5 - change "resolve" to "solve"

* 4.2 - explain and elaborate upon what "options" means

During my stay in the community, I asked to attend any school board meetings and to have access to documents describing existing policies. There were no board meetings during the data collection period. I was given a policy manual which had been borrowed from another Aboriginal school board, but was informed that it had not been modified by the school in Animoosh Lake to fit their philosophies of education and curriculum.

Timeframe

A period of one week was spent in the community. Data collection began in May, 2000.

Setting

The setting was an isolated Aboriginal community in northern Canada. The band membership is approximately 500, although the actual number of members living within the community at any time is approximately 200-250. The community initially was established in the early 1980s when the original members began moving from a larger reserve community to this new setting. Initially, the living conditions were primitive. The original people lived in log cabins and winterized tents. Gas-powered generators provided electricity and heating fuel was generated by fire wood. Water was accessed from the surrounding lakes. In the early 1990s, trailer homes were brought in on a "winter road."

Official reserve status was granted in the late 1990s. After funding had been approved, the band members began to plan the community. They have recently built an airport building and

runway and a health clinic serviced by community members trained as community health representatives. A nurse visits weekly and a doctor visits once every three or four months. The community also has acquired plumbing and hydro, although most homes still have a wood stove for heating.

The community is accessible by air transport. Some years a winter road is constructed and is functional for about one or two months.

The school population is 60-75 children. The school has Junior Kindergarten to grade eight. Most classes are combined. In the year in which the study took place, there were four Aboriginal teachers, three Aboriginal teacher aides, and one non-Aboriginal teacher. The principal was a male Aboriginal. Secondary students attend various high schools. One is located outside a small urban centre in a bush setting where the students reside on the same site that the school is located. All students attending this school are Aboriginal. Other students attend high schools in larger urban settings, attending school with students from many cultures.

Sample

A representative sample of eight stakeholders of education were selected to participate in this study. The researcher asked the Chief and Band Council to recommend a variety of stakeholders of education to allow for theoretical sampling. Participants consisted of the following individuals: three band council members, one of whom was an Elder; the other two were parents with children attending the school; three additional parents, one of whom was an aide, one a teacher, and one the principal of the school; and, two young adolescents, one still attending the school; the other a grade 8 graduate. The sample was purposive and allowed for a variety of stakeholders of education to have their voices heard concerning the education/curriculum in the community school. It was coincidental that the sample included stakeholders whom also had children/grandchildren in

attendance at the school during the time of the interviews. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper and Allen (1993) discuss the benefits of involving a diversity of respondents in the following manner. "In the qualitative study of a school's strategies for teaching values, for example, a holistic picture of the educational program would involve the perceptions of a wide array of people, including teachers, students, parents and community members" (p. 91).

Research Process

Entry

A letter requesting permission to conduct the study (Appendix II) was sent to the Chief and Band Council of the community. The researcher did not receive official permission until after arrival in the community, although permission was granted to conduct the study over the telephone, to allow for travel arrangements. The researcher asked the Chief and Band Council to recommend a variety of stakeholders of education. This allowed for theoretical sampling. The stakeholders included band council, parents, educators, Elders and students. The purpose of the study was explained to each respondent and each was asked to sign the informed consent forms (Appendices III, IV). Times and locations were arranged for the interview. The consent forms were signed before each interview took place.

Data Collection

Participants were asked permission for the interviews to be taped at the beginning of the interview. In one case, permission was not granted and notes were taken as the interview unfolded. Each interview lasted an average of 30-60 minutes.

The research log served as one means of triangulation by alerting me to problems or issues which arose during interviews. I also recorded emerging categories/themes. I made changes to

some of the questions and vocabulary if the respondent did not understand the question. It should be noted that some respondents spoke English as a second language, however all were able to converse in English. Questions remained consistent across all interviews.

Data Analysis

As the interviews proceeded, it became apparent that the researcher needed to refine questions with the addition of various probes or alternate words, as well as secondary questions.

Below is an example of the typical use of a probe and secondary question:

Q. When the children in this community finish secondary school, what should they be able to do?

A. In terms of jobs?

Probe. Not necessarily just jobs. What options should they be able to choose from?

A. Secondary. You mean high school? Okay. I think there should be a program where... emphasis is on post-secondary programs, I mean college and university. 'Cause a lot of the kids that go to college or university... they have a hard time finishing it and a lot has to do with finances... I know they only get about \$600 a month to feed themselves, and although their education is paid for, and a lot of parents don't work up north to send them money to make... and it helps a lot to do extra stuff other than your studies. I mean it could get boring and lonely at times. Some don't make friends out there. Whereas you have somebody going to school from the city, they don't have their parent there already, families and they don't feel that loneliness, that culture shock for some. We need something for that area to... I think we could have a higher rate of success if we had something in place for that.

Probe. So...when the kids finish high school, they should be able to attend the post-secondary institutions... what other options should they have?

A. They could choose to do training for example... heavy equipment. You have a lot of heavy equipment operators in the community but you don't have anyone or many people qualified... and a lot of machines get broken down. Carpentry. For example, here in Animoosh Lake, we don't have any carpenters to build our houses. A lot of money leaves the community with jobs lost there...welding, mechanics. Vehicles are breaking down left and right and there's no one to fix them. And they should be given the first choice to go through this. (Randy, pp. 17, 18)

The constant comparative method was used to analyze the data to determine patterns and themes. Goetz and LeCompte (1981, cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985) describe the constant comparative method:

This strategy combines inductive coding with a simultaneous comparison of social incidents observed. As social phenomena are recorded and classified, they also are compared across categories. Thus, the discovery of relationships, that is, hypothesis generation, begins with the analysis of initial observations, undergoes continuous refinement throughout the data collection and analysis process, and continuously feeds back into the process of category coding. As events are constantly compared with previous events, new typological dimensions, as well as new relationships, may be discovered. (p. 335)

The constant comparative method is an exceptional method for the continuous processing of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is by using the constant comparative method that grounded theory may be developed. Glaser and Strauss (1967, cited in Strauss & Corbin, 1994) explain:

Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed. Theory evolves during actual research, and it goes through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. A central feature of the analytical approach is a general method of constant comparative method. (p. 273)

Strauss and Corbin (1994) suggest that: “grounded theories can also be relevant and possibly influential either to the understanding of policy makers or their direct action” (p. 281). In this study, grounded theory was developed using triangulation and the constant comparative method.

The majority of the data analysis took place after the interviews were completed. It took place in three stages: Initially, the transcripts were read several times. Common phrases and ideas were highlighted in coded colours while at the same time, key ideas were written in the margins of each transcript. The researcher cut and pasted each highlighted response and sorted them into categories. These categories were then clustered into themes. Figure 3.2 displays the codes and themes and provides an example of each category.

Categories	THEMES
General Perceptions of Education and Curriculum	
Role of the school Current curriculum Teaching methods Current resources Policy-making procedures	"Pretty much everything. Even right up to the parenting" (Jerold, p. 20). "Math, spelling, reading, history, Native arts and Native language and geography" (Charlene, p. 1). "Normal, like regular seatwork and... the board (Barbara, p. 28). "Computers, encyclopedias, pencils, pens (Cheryl, p. 8). "Nothing. I don't see anything in place" (Randy, p. 18).
Concerns and Issues	
Community involvement Social concerns Resources	"Well people around the community. They could do more" (Leonard, p. 34). "I hear the bigger kids were really fighting each other about this and that's not right. They have to be stopped" (Anna, p. 45). "But like I said before, there's not enough tools or resources in this community, so therefore, we're sliding behind" (Jack, p. 40).
Goals	
Purpose of education Getting "on par" with urban school Teacher qualities	"To get a good job in the future" (Charlene, p. 4). "I think we should be on par ... we should have the goal of getting on par with the schools down south" (Jerold, p. 23). "I would say someone that is kind, that is strict, that's well-balanced, that would give work, enough work for a student or me..." (Cheryl, p. 9).
Dimensions of Curriculum	
Traditional and cultural education Bi-cultural education Oral language Christian studies Healthy lifestyles	"I should have told you about beadwork too. I think that's important ... from the culture" (Anna, p. 45). "I believe we should have something like that in place... a bilingual, bi-cultural program" (Randy, p. 15). "We need more of the culture ... like Native language" (Barbara, p. 31). "Christian Life... the Biblical... I don't know how often, but there should be more of that" (Leonard, p. 34). "Like just basic hygiene, and parenting skills ... and sex education" (Jerold, p. 22).

Figure 3.2. Categories and themes.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

A letter requesting permission to conduct the study (Appendix II) was sent to the Chief and Band Council of the community and respondents were contacted (Appendix III). Before student participants were approached, parents/guardians were contacted by the researcher. After permission was granted, the study was explained verbally to the students. The purpose of the study was explained to each respondent and each was asked to sign the informed consent forms (Appendices II, III, IV).

The letter to participants described the purpose of the study and the methods of data collection. All participants were informed that the ethical procedures guiding the research were consistent with the ethics guidelines in *Ethics: Procedures and guidelines for research on human subjects* (Lakehead University). The letter of informed consent included the following:

Voluntary participation. All participants were informed that their participation was on a voluntary basis and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were informed that anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed (both self and community) by the use of pseudonyms.

Risks. There were no risks to the participants involved in the study or to the community.

Storage of data. All participants were informed that the data will be stored securely in the researcher's home for seven years.

Dissemination of research findings. Participants were informed that once the thesis has been defended and accepted, the of research findings will be available in the Faculty of Education Library at Lakehead University.

This chapter described the research design and methodology used in the study as well as the research process and decision-making in which the researcher engaged. The next chapter presents the findings and discusses the interpretation.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the research findings of the study which investigated a cross-section of eight stakeholders' perceptions of education and curriculum. Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data: general perceptions of education and curriculum; concerns and issues; goals of education/curriculum; and dimensions of curriculum. The first section presents profiles of the respondents. The second describes the themes. The final section discusses the interpretation of the findings.

Participant Profiles

Eight respondents were interviewed representing a purposive sample of the stakeholders of education. They included: band council members, parents, educators, adolescent students, and Elders. With the exception of the two students, all respondents who were interviewed had children or grandchildren attending the school in Animoosh Lake.¹ Below is a brief profile of each participant. Names used are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

Charlene

Charlene is a shy, soft-spoken fourteen year old Oji-Cree Aboriginal student. She was raised by her mother and father and has lived on the reserve since she was four years old. She has attended school in Animoosh Lake since 1992 and is currently in grade seven. She remembers that

¹Pseudonym

initially classes were multi-graded and the school site was an abandoned cabin. She hopes to become a teacher or a police officer.

Cheryl

Cheryl is a fifteen year old, Aboriginal female student who has been raised primarily by her grandmother and grandfather. Cheryl has lived in Animoosh Lake off and on since she was five years old and has attended school in urban settings as well as in her home community. She is finishing grade nine in an all-Aboriginal high school located in an urban setting. She aspires to becoming a police officer after her education is completed and servicing her home community.

Randy

Randy is a male Oji-Cree teacher in his early thirties who grew up on a reserve close to Animoosh Lake. Two of his children are in the school and Randy has had both of them in his class. Randy received his Bachelor of Education through a Native Teacher Education Program (NTEP) three years ago and began his teaching career in the school at Animoosh Lake. Randy plans on teaching in the community for several years and then, perhaps, moving to another Aboriginal community to teach.

Jerold

Jerold, the principal of the school, is an Oji-Cree male in his mid thirties. Jerold grew up in reserve settings and urban areas. After completing his Bachelor of Education, approximately five years ago, he was hired to teach in the school. Jerold attended high school in an urban setting and was very active in sports. He is the father of two school-aged children but taught neither in his classes. His parents and two siblings are teachers. Jerold would someday like to teach in an all-Native high school in an urban area.

Barbara

Barbara is an Oji-Cree parent/educator in her late thirties. She is the mother of a new-born infant, a ten year old and a young woman. Barbara was one of the early settlers of Animoosh Lake. She describes herself as a religious woman: “because we’re more into the Biblical things” (p. 32). She is a teacher-aide in the school and is currently working on her Bachelor of Education, part-time.

Leonard

Leonard is an Oji-Cree male in his late thirties and a member of the band council. He is soft spoken. He is the father of three children, one of whom still attends the elementary school in Animoosh Lake. He has lived on the reserve since its settlement.

Jack

Jack is an Elder and band member in his early fifties. He has lived on reserves for the better part of his life. One of his children attends elementary school in Animoosh Lake. Like Barbara and Leonard, he has lived on the reserve since its establishment. He hunts, fishes and traps.

Anna

Anna is an Elder and band member in the community and is in her sixties. She has lived in Animoosh Lake for ten years. Anna is an avid church member and has grandchildren attending the school. She is a talented crafts-person.

Themes

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data: general perceptions of education and curriculum; concerns and issues; goals for education/curriculum; and dimensions of curriculum. Each is discussed below.

General Perceptions of Education and Curriculum

The first theme which emerged from the data analysis illuminates the respondents' general perceptions of education. The eight respondents had varying perceptions of what was happening in the school at the time of the interviews. These perceptions focused on: the role of the school, the current curriculum; the teaching methods, existing resources, and current policy-making procedures.

Five of the participants responded to the question of what they perceived as the role of the school in the community. Barbara's view of the school's role illuminated the significance of that role: "...in this community, I think it's the only thing that, like uh... it's the only thing that the children do, so the school is very important. It's very important... uh... thing in their lives in this community" (p. 27).

Jerold, the school principal, described the extended role of the school in the Aboriginal community. He observed that the school did, "Pretty much everything. Even right up to parenting":

Well we're supposed to teach them the regular school, but we need to ...look after their lice, and uh... discipline... For example, if there's a problem inside the school, they... the parents call us to discipline them... and even if it occurs in the home, they still make it a school issue. (p. 20)

Jack, a band counsel member, described the school as a haven where children might be "safe" or to "just be kids:"

Uh... the school provides a certain focal point... a certain... uh... in certain areas... a place where I think the kids are safe. And you know that's... that's the school's, I guess... the school being a place, where, I don't know, where the environment is safe for the kids to be kids. (p. 36)

The eight respondents provided insights into their perceptions about the curriculum in operation at the school. For example, Jack, found out by chance the his daughter was learning syllabics. While he had known that Native language had been added to the curriculum, he did not know that the Syllabics system was being taught:

Well, I guess... initially at the beginning, like ... when like the one kid in school, here locally... she came one day ...with the... she asked me to read something in Syllabics. Now, I know a little bit of Syllabics, so like I told her, you know, I could read it. She read it all! I read off first, and then she read it off. So that was something that, you know, that I can... kind of surprised me a little bit because... I figured it was just a very simple. One, two, three, no (beeshanee) you know, that sort of thing. Uh... and numbers, and, that's basic, Native language, but not written, like written stuff... so that's what I figured. (p. 38)

Anna, an Elder and band counsel member, noted that the traditional subjects were being taught as well as Bible stories and Syllabics:

Math, spelling, language arts, science, geography... Bible stories, homework... I haven't seen Syllabics but I heard they were doing that... I don't know who is teaching it? My grandkids don't understand it, but they know a little bit. (p. 44)

Barbara believed that attempts were being made to "follow the curriculum:"

Well... we try to follow the curriculum and they... they... just last year we started a ummm... like a Native Language... and that's all. Just the curriculum, I guess because... like we don't have... there's like we're the religious... there's nothing like that. We just put our own into it... (p. 27)

Charlene's description of curriculum also focused upon traditional subjects: "...history, geography, language arts, reading ..." (p. 3).

Jerold noted that "Math and Language Arts and Native language is uh... starting to come up" (p. 20) while Randy explained that "just basic English and basic writing and reading and... you can't do much with them because uh... How do you say that? Anything in novel studies, writing poems, for instance... you can't get far with the kids" (p. 13).

Jerold described a new initiative taking place in the district to encourage the students in their understanding and interest in science and technology. Jerold reflected on a recent science fair:

For example, this year we had a science fair, third year running. I think... science and technology is miles behind for our area, as Native people. It's a start for where we are... doing for students... to get them thinking that way (our community). Science and technology. First place in the big division (grades 5 and 6) and... second place in the seven, eight division. We did quite well. (p. 22)

Cheryl , a student, described a past experience when she was asked what she had learned in terms of the curriculum: “We learned how to survive. A couple of years ago they took us camping and we learned how to gut fish and to set up traps for rabbits and set up snares and traps for animals” (p. 9).

Jack assumed that the curriculum was being adapted to fit self-government concepts in terms of adjusting the curriculum to include Native content.

Uh... I'm not too familiar in terms of... but you know I assume that the subjects are... in the original self-government... concept, I guess. Basically the main thing would be... the Syllabics and the Native language... teachings and I guess, and in the other sense to be able to conceptualize... what I guess what you would want, when you say self-government in terms of the subjects, that, to be able to understand, you know, what being self-governed... being able to understand the rules and regulations. That's a hard card to follow. (p. 36)

Respondents other than the educators and teacher aide were not aware of any particular teaching methods being implemented in the school, although several respondents mentioned the use of the chalkboard and seatwork. Charlene noted that the teachers read to the students: “They read to us” (p. 2). Anna noted: “ I've never been at the school so it's pretty hard for me... but they do, I mean for Syllabics... I see them writing some at home. (Anna, p.45)

The participants who were employed at the school discussed their perceptions of teaching methods currently in use. Barbara described one of her own methods:

Normal, like regular... seatwork... the board... and... Regular... Well, we do, like we get them to read, like it involves reading and writing and colouring with the younger grades. Well, with me... I work with the grade one's and they just do... they follow along when I read, and they just... colour the picture and they do some exercises after that. (pp. 27, 28)

Jerold responded in the following manner: “Lecture... like that style... lecture... one to one... student to student... and teacher to teacher” (p. 21). Randy, a teacher, referred to the strategies he used although he did not elaborate on how he had incorporated these strategies within his own

classroom: “Direct teaching... group activities, cooperative and collaborative teaching... visual... There’s a couple more that I know of but basically I try to cover all of the areas of teaching methods (p.12).

When asked about available resources, the participants mentioned the computer, the internet, encyclopedias and school supplies. Charlene also mentioned the Elders. Jerold noted that the internet was available, but that more and better resources were needed. Cheryl was certain of some of the resources available to the students and teachers but did not know what learning discs were available. Among the responses were the following:

The internet. Yeah. And books. Encyclopedias. (Charlene, p. 2)

Well, most of the children, they, they start from grade one to, they start from grade one, I guess, to... with the computers. (Leonard, p. 34)

I think they use computers. I wouldn’t know but I see kids coming in here (referring to the band office) and in the clinic and go to the computers. (Anna, p. 45)

(The Elders)... they just talk about it, how they usually make stuff. (laughs)
(Charlene, p. 3)

Randy and Barbara spoke of how the surrounding environment is another available resource to be utilized. Barbara described using the environment for “science” and “nature walks.” “...like nature, like we just go out into the bush and gather some stuff. When we do science... when we do science, or just go for a nature walk. I guess that’s about it” (p. 28).

Randy stated: “Oh yeah. Some teachers do. I haven’t this year, but I... I’d like to. I’ve done it before and I... it was really great. I was teaching three and four” (p. 13).

When participants were asked about existing policies and procedures, none were aware of any in place. Several of the respondents were uncertain about who was involved in policy-making. Barbara’s response exemplified the uncertainties conveyed by the respondents:

Uh... Well the education director, I guess. That’s all I really know there.

Probably they use the provincial guidelines, and there's the school board, and probably... I don't know what they do. (laughs) (p. 31)

Jerold expressed that there were no policies in place and that no one was pursuing putting a policy in place. I thought that I had seen a policy and asked Jerold to explain:

Jerold: Nothing. I've been here five years... Nothing. We had someone come in to do a school evaluation though. That's a start. But with our reserve... the continuity of the uh... administrators... it's been changed year after year. And that's the reason why there's no policy in place.

Janice: I did see a policy?

Jerold: Yeah. It's (a school policy borrowed from another reserve school board) right here somewhere.

Janice: It's not being implemented?

Jerold: We use it as a guide. It needs to be ratified by the band. (pp. 24, 25)

Randy commented:

Nothing. I don't see anything in place.

No. I don't see it. Maybe the principal. Like in the past, from what I've seen, I've been here three years, it was just the principal and director, and the board. I think the community should be involved... and policy makers... professional policy makers. (p. 18)

During my stay in the community, there was no Director of Education or School Council Board to clarify questions regarding policy-making procedures. Due to budget-cutting, the positions had been eliminated by the Band Council members. Jerold informed me that he had recently requested an evaluation of the school by some external consultants. The evaluation included a survey of the stakeholders of education, analysis of curriculum, and submission of a report with recommendations for policy and curriculum. The report had not been received by the community at the time of this study.

Randy's response noted the community should be involved in some way within the school.

As the conversations with the other respondents continued, there seemed to be a consensus

emerging regarding the need for more community involvement within the school. Concerns and issues voiced by all of the participants emerged as another theme.

Concerns and Issues

Concerns and issues articulated by the respondents focused on: (1) more community involvement within the school; (2) social concerns affecting the students; and (3) better and more resources for the school.

More community involvement within the school . Each participant voiced the concern that there was a need for greater interest in the school on the part of community members. Randy suggested that perhaps the reason for the lack of interest and participation within the school by the community members was a lack of communication between the school and the residents of the community:

I haven't seen that happening in the last three years that I've been here... and uh... I believe part of it is because there's not enough... ummm... enough... uh... information being given out to the parents and the community to educate them on how important education is. (p. 11)

We need more parent involvement, community involvement. Ummm... get involved, tell us some ideas about how they want the school run... and... that hasn't happened yet. And uh... still hoping that someday we'll get there. (p. 14)

Jack's response was similar to Randy's. He spoke of the possibility of community members meeting with some of the educators to ensure that the students were given "the tools" to succeed. Jack explained:

And what we need to do is to be able to... is sit down with the teachers and everybody else involved with education and make sure the kids are, are given the tools to, to... uh... you know, to be able to cope. (p. 40)

He believed that this strategy would enable the school board (when one was once again appointed), band council and educators to meet the educational needs of the community more effectively:

Uh... but we need people that have the... like the teachers at the school and the school board and the band council to... to understand that we have to grasp, you know, that they have the opportunity to better their... the community's educational needs. (p. 41)

Six participants suggested that different organizations in the community such as health officers, the police, and drug and alcohol counsellors should be making regular visits to the school and to the classrooms. Randy believed the reason for the absence of such organizations within the school was because they preferred not to come or a precedent had not been established regarding their presence. Randy, however, believed it was their duty to come:

...we could use, bring in people from organizations. For example, the police, (NADAP) It's drugs and alcohol. They focus on drugs and alcohol and problems like that. But the problem is... they don't want to come here. Not that they don't want to come here, but, ummm... maybe it hasn't been done enough, for them to create some sort of schedule and curriculum with the school, but that's lack of... I believe it's their duty to come to the school with different ideas and ummm... areas to touch on with the kids, although we've sent them invitations to come... here and there. (p. 13)

Barbara mentioned that NADAP had come into the school, but felt that "they didn't do much:"

I mean, well in some parts, I guess. I mean uh... there's hardly any, like from the community, because we really don't have anybody this year. I think it's twice that they came in and talked to the children. It's nothing. We... they didn't, they just uh... had like a drug and alcohol... they just talked about, the, those, uh, they do. Nothing... (p. 28)

Jack and Leonard admitted that even though they were part of the Band Council, they and others in the community had not spent enough time in the school.

Uh... another, that's the other... the Band Council sometimes go, but not in, maybe once a year they go but not very much. (Jack, p. 38)

Well... me and people around the community, I guess. They could do more... uh... survival, or some kind of resources... uh... around the community that... they need to learn to... in order for them to survive in the future for the way we live in the community. (Leonard, p. 34)

Anna believed, as well, that there should be more community involvement. As an Elder, she included herself and church members as resources needed within the school:

I think myself in to teach... even for half an hour would be better than nothing. Church members should go into the school to teach it (Christian studies)... deacons from the church... four or five could teach it. (pp. 44, 45)

Jack felt that it was unfortunate that involvement from the parents within the school came only when there was a “crisis situation” or when there was a “parent’s night” at the school. He asserted that this type of involvement was “not enough:”

...when there’s a crisis situation, some will stand up or, and that’s when the parents get involved. They get involved to a certain extent, like ummm... for parent’s nights, uh... teachers get most of the information from parents but, but it’s not enough. Not enough parent active involvement. (p. 42)

Leonard explained why he did not want to become involved with the school: “I would rather leave it to the uh... the people that are involved with the uh... education in our school” (p. 33).

Social Concerns. Six respondents identified several social concerns and issues which have an impact on the well-being and future of the children, particularly when they leave the community to attend secondary school. Charlene and Jerold expressed concern for young women who have unplanned pregnancies. Charlene said that “I know sometimes they don’t make it or get pregnant” (p. 5). She mentioned that “sometimes they go back out to school” (p. 5).

Anna expressed concern about the relationships students form when they leave the community to attend high school: “It’s hard for parents to uh... I mean like... they go for girlfriends and boyfriends... it is really messing up their education. That’s what I think. The city’s dangerous” (p. 46). She also noted problems with alcohol: “If they drink, they won’t make it, if they stay away from it, they will keep on going” (p. 46).

Randy articulated concerns about the students when they were attending school outside of the community.

Secondary. You mean high school? Okay. I think there should be a program where uh... emphasis on post secondary programs, I mean college and university. 'Cause a lot of the kids that go to college or university... they have a hard time finishing it and a lot of that has to do with finances. I know they only get about \$600.00 a month to feed themselves, and although their education is paid for, and a lot of parents don't work up north to send them money to... to make... and it helps a lot to do extra stuff other than your studies. I mean it could get boring and lonely at times. Some don't make friends out there. Whereas, you have somebody going to school from the city, they have their parents there already, families and they don't feel that loneliness, that culture shock for some. We need something in that area to... I think we would have a higher rate of success if we had something in place for that. (p. 17)

Randy reflected on his mother's experience with post-secondary education: "I remember my mom in school... the last week or two of the month... we'd be eating bread. That's it. You know. That was really tough" (p.17).

During the time in which the interviews were taking place, the community was involved in an upcoming election for a new chief and band council. Anna asserted that the political turmoil was not good for the children in the community. She discussed how some of the teachers were dealing with it.

Yeah... the kids know about it [referring to the political turmoil]. I don't know that. I mean... the teacher Christians [the teachers in the school who were practicing Christians] are trying to make them understand the problems here... trying to teach the kids. One time, I hear that the bigger kids were really... fighting each other about this... and that's not right. They have to be stopped. (p. 45)

Randy discussed how he dealt with the concern of the political unrest within his own classroom.

Okay. I did it once already. I talked about "talebearer" [tattletale]. Talebearers, you know, gossip... and... I talked to my kids about that because I know some of them were getting into that already... in grade five and six... and how people got hurt and how things... get uh, get turned around. By the time it reaches back to the person, it's totally different. And so I did a little lesson on that. (pp. 14, 15)

Cheryl was so alarmed with the dissension the political turmoil was causing amongst the adults as well as the precedents the adults were setting for the children, that she wrote the following letter.

Below is an unedited copy of a letter which Cheryl wrote to the community members. The letter is included with her permission:

My Thoughts and Problems About My Community

When I look at my Past, Today and Future.

When I look at my past I see fights and arguments among my community.

A place where People hate each other, talk about each other.

It looks like or what I see is when I look at the younger kids then me

I see them following the steps. They look up to the people around them and probably think I wonder if that is how life is, as they get older they will follow the steps as they seen when they were younger.

My future what I think I see is still people fighting and arguments. I keep thinking is this going to happen all the time? Will there always be fights and arguments among my community.

I want to have PRIDE in my community not SHAME!

All I see and hear is people hating each other.

When I look at people in my community it seem they want things for themselves not really thinking of the people around them. What they don't know is they are hurting the youth around them they don't think about us.

They don't know how we feel or think inside most of us are hurting.

They don't do thing right. It seems like people are getting selfish and greedy always wanting things for themselves and not thinking of other peoples's

needs. I see people saying to people I will do this for you and, they never get around to doing the thing that they said they would do. If they say there going to do something they should do it and not break it!!

I want my community to be a place where people get along not fighting and arguments.

It hurts me to think of these things because the younger kids will follow the steps as they seen as they were younger.

I see my community falling apart. Why is my community slowly falling apart??

It takes one to change and, and fix things and someday I think I will want because I want my COMMUNITY to be a place were I could have PRIDE, HAPPINESS to live in, and GLAD I have a place to call HOME!!

I know I could change if I keep my mind to it. My community gives me SHAME in my heart but, I don't want to feel this for my community. I feel so sad thinking of the people among my community, but soon things will start to go bad if things don't start getting better! Is the people suppose to help people in need but, I don't really see it.

A long time ago... People one day helped each other never really fought because if they did they would die and want makes if different them long time ago.

People might of had fits with other people but they must have worked things out. I don't see this here I see people being MAD at each other for a long time, not saying there sorry's. (Cheryl)

Many of the problems Cheryl mentions are perceived as recent issues. Randy contrasted the current social issues with those experienced by the northern communities fifteen years ago:

...because the social life of the north has changed so much, and the thinking, and the mentalities have changed so much, it's not the same. We have so many (more) social problems now than we had 15 years ago. We have suicides now that you didn't hear of before. (p. 19)

Resources. During the interviews, the need for more and updated resources was noted by respondents. Randy and Jerold felt that to build greater resources, they needed money from the band council. Randy explained:

...Basically we just have the... we just had the school evaluation... Right now in terms of subjects, we're not covering all the subject areas the way that we're supposed to... and a lot of that has to do with the lack of resources. (p. 11)

Jerold noted that "the curriculum that we have is outdated." "...Yeah. If the band gave me \$70,000 so that I could buy all of the resources... that would give us a good start" (p. 25). Both Jerold and Randy interchanged the words "curriculum" and "resources." Randy seemed to equate textbooks with the curriculum:

Randy: I think our curriculum is outdated and we need a new one, a stronger curriculum and... you know how they're saying everything is always changing ummm... a few years from now these textbooks that we have are going to be outdated and we'll need new ones... and uh... they're just so outdated, some of our textbooks. For example... our encyclopedias are 1990.

Janice: Okay... you have the curriculum guidelines, but you don't have the resources to follow up with the curriculum guidelines?

Randy: Yes. (p. 12)

Jack's response was similar to Randy's and Jerold's:

Yeah. Well they can't do their job. In that question, I don't know if there's... there's enough resources to, to... uh... supply them with you know, the tools that they need. If they don't have the tools, well, you know that... you can't teach them. It's not a teacher's problem, it's the uh, the uh, the school has a hole that they can't get enough resources there. You know that kind of thing that if it could be done... I guess the... we have to see that there's enough resources to, to uh, in the school. Maybe they don't have enough resources to uh... to use. Uh, maybe books or those kinds of... the tools I think we need to be able to teach our kids. (p. 37)

A final concern expressed by respondents was the belief that students in the school were not “on par” (Jerold, p. 22) with students attending school in urban societies. The reasons for this were unclear. The concern relates to the goals of education, the third theme, which is discussed below.

Goals of Education/Curriculum

When asked about their perceptions of the goals of education, each respondent identified at least one goal. Goals included, the purpose of education, getting “on par” with urban schools, desired teacher qualities, and dimensions of curriculum. Dimensions of curriculum had five sub-categories. These were, tradition and culture, Native language, bi-cultural education, Christian studies, and healthy life styles.

Respondents believed that the goal of education was to prepare students for success in the future through pursuing either post-secondary education or through other choices which would enable them to live comfortable lives. Randy’s statement exemplifies the participants’ responses:

...to educate, and meaning... to prepare kids for life... later in life, whether it’s academically or socially to a certain extent. A lot of that comes with the parents too. And choices for the future... to let them know what’s out there. To inform them... teach them the difference between right and wrong. (p. 16)

Jerold’s response indicated that he hopes that the children will “have happy successful live(s)”:

To teach children... in my eyes? To teach life skills that would enable them to have a happy successful life. (p. 24)

Jack hopes that education will prepare students to “control what’s out there”:

...we need to make them understand, the concepts and the rules and regulations of being...uh...just being able to control, you know, what’s out there. And to be able to understand and then... formalize what needs to be done. (p. 36)

Anna spoke of her own experience with education:

I know that everyone needs to be educated. Why I say that is... a long time ago they weren’t... and... you know why I’m saying that... I was sick. I was sent out first to

the hospital and then to the residential school. I was hungry, but I'm really grateful that I got my education... I'm really thankful that when I listen to white man talk... I'll know what they're saying. I'm so grateful that I went to school a little bit... grade seven... white man may talk about me and they don't know that I can understand them. (p. 46)

Cheryl and Charlene indicated that the purpose of education was to prepare them for the future. Both young women aspire to continue their education and return to the community. Cheryl said that the purpose of education is, "To learn, to get a job in the future" (p. 9). Charlene described her goals in an essay which she wrote in class. This essay is included with Charlene's permission.

Dreams and Goals

When I grow up I want to be a Teacher because I want to be just like my auntie because she teaches hard and she's kind. I don't know why I want to be a teacher, maybe because I like kids. I always babysit for people, maybe that's why I want to be a teacher.

When I was smaller, when I first saw my auntie I said to myself, "I want to be like Jacqueline when I grow up."

Or maybe I want to be a cop like Tanya, but I won't be able to drink, steal and get arrested. Tanya is kind to me sometimes. She asks me to babysit for her. My mom and dad want me to be a teacher so I can give money to them, just kidding. Sometimes, Tanya takes me for a ride in her truck.

I admire two people and that's Jacqueline and Tanya, so I don't know if I want to be a teacher or a cop. Right now, I don't have a record so maybe I'll be a cop. If I follow my dreams I have to finish school to get my education.

P.S. Follow your dreams. (Charlene)

In response to a question about the outcomes of student learning upon completion of high school, respondents felt that post secondary education should be "a choice" that the students should have. Anna commented: "I'd like them to go to college... if it's not too hard for them" (p. 46). Charlene and Cheryl referred to college or university education as options that should be available to students after successful completion of high school.

Jack, Barbara, Jerold, Leonard and Randy noted that the students should be able to make choices when they completed secondary school. The choices included continuing with an academic education or learning the skills needed to work in the labour industry. Jack explained:

Well, if they finish... if they're given all the tools, and... to be able to ...if they have the right capacity, and to do what's out there... I think they can, they can do a lot to... to be, to go to work or to go higher in their education. (p. 40)

Both Jerold and Barbara spoke of life after high school as dreams/goals to pursue and to attain. Barbara's response illustrates this point:

They should, like after they finish that, they should continue their education, to be uh... to be uh... better if they like... to be better like they want to be... like to go after their dreams or their goals in life. Not just to give up because they're... because it's um... because they still need to go after their dreams and they still need to get jobs and things. (p. 30)

Jerold spoke of choices in terms of "how many hurdles (were) in front of them (the students):"

Oh! They should be able to uh... They should be able to have a choice. Either do manual labour or post secondary. Because each person has their choice to decide whether they... how many hurdles are in front of them. They all have that choice. (p. 40)

Randy believed that the students should have choices as well:

So... when the kids finish high school, they should be able to attend the secondary or post-secondary institutions but... um... they could choose to do training, for example... heavy equipment. You have a lot of heavy equipment operators in the community but you don't have anyone or many people qualified... And a lot of things get broken down... Carpentry. For example here in Animoosh Lake, we don't have any carpenters to build our houses. A lot of money leaves the community with jobs lost there. Ummm... welding, mechanics. Vehicles are breaking down left and right and there's no one to fix them... (p. 17)

Five of the eight participants expressed concern that the students attending school in Animoosh Lake were not "on par" with students attending school in urban society. As noted above, respondents did not articulate reasons underlying this perception. Jerold described the education on reserves as "northern norm."

Oh, it's just, I think, we should be on par... we should have the goal of getting on par with the schools down south. Like math, science and technology, computers, language skills. Just all of the shabam that... that's usually taught. None of this norm... northern norm thinking... (pp. 22, 23)

Randy, Barbara, and Jack identified the need to bring the students up to perceived standards in the language arts. Randy related his response to critical thinking skills, similes, and figures of speech.

...Language. There's poor reading, poor writing and students that go into high school now have a hard time understanding the language and they're not able to do the work. They can't think... critically think... logically think. That's all I have to say there.

...Reading and writing and critical thinking of the English language. For example, you have, have... ummm... in the English language, you have figures of speech. They have no idea what they mean. Similes and things like that... you have kids in provincial schools, they can handle these [literacy devices] because they've heard it all of their life and ... things like that... That's what I'd say there should be more of a focus on. (p. 15)

Barbara had the same concerns as Randy. She too was troubled with the poor language arts skills that she witnessed daily with the students. Barbara added some humour to her explanation:

Well I would uh... ummm... like language arts is the most important thing, I guess, uh... for our children. Like around here, they're so... they have a broken English (laughs) so they, so we need to focus on, on the language arts and get them to get proper English. (p. 29)

Jack's response linked a concern with student performance to available resources. As with most of Jack's responses, he wished to ensure that the students had the "necessary tools" to succeed in the future.

Uh... like I said before, there's not enough tools... or resources in this community... so... we're, we're, you know, sliding behind. That's my concern. Then... even though we may provide them with the tools with what's here now... we find out that it's not enough. (p. 40)

Yeah, but when we, when we go out there, we... uh... our kids don't have the necessary tools to be able to do grade 9. (p. 41)

Jack explained that having the students learn the basic three R's and self-discipline would further ensure their achievement in the future:

...we teach our kids to be able to cope with the stuff that's coming up in their lives and that's the training ground [said with emphasis]. Now, if we can teach the kids to, our kids to be able to, to, do the three R's, and, and, and also, I guess the other part of the thing is uh... discipline in, in... how to, you know, study, and be able to, to, uh... put yourself down to sit and do something. And, and teach the kids, our kids like that, in terms of, you know, when you have to do a thesis [laughs] and a, like these kinds of stuff. That's where the training ground is, at the school. (p. 39)

Jack wondered why the students of Animoosh Lake were not quite up to standard when compared with the schools off the reserve setting.

I don't think we, in the back of my mind, I've got the feeling that uh... you know, we're not on par in terms of the education our kids are, are, are getting ... so... I don't know why. I ask myself why we're not on role. Maybe it's the teachers. (p. 37)

When the participants were asked about the qualities they would like to see in teachers for the children of Animoosh Lake, the responses were similar. The characteristics included teachers who were tender yet firm and assigned challenging work. They might be Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal. Charlene explained, "Someone that's a hard worker, I mean gives us hard work, and is tender." When asked if it would matter if the teacher is Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, she said, "It doesn't matter to me" (p. 4). Cheryl noted, "Me? I would say someone that is kind, that is strict, that's well-balanced, who would ... that would give work, enough work for a student or me that's not too much work, but work [laughs] and I don't know ... whatever" (p. 9).

Anna and Leonard shared similar responses but added that "full qualifications" and "credentials" were necessary. Leonard commented, "Uh... someone to... have a role model type person... and also to be certified and ...have all the credentials" (p.34). Anna stated that:

I like... I think it would be better to have someone who is tender, but not too tender... because some kids are really tough... but not too tough. It doesn't matter if the teacher is Native or non-Native or male or female. I think that full qualifications are the best. (p. 46)

Jack believed that if the students felt comfortable with their teacher, the students would “learn more” from that teacher:

...maybe just a, maybe soft and kind and caring and uh... person but also to be able to... uh... what I guess I'm trying to say, is firm... but, but... that teacher's got to know when to, to, to be aggressive, to be aggressive in the discipline of the kids. And that's the kind of person I'd want. If the kids are comfortable with their teacher then they'll learn more from them. (p. 40)

Randy preferred hiring teachers from the community. At the same time, he realized that teachers who specialized in language arts, whether they were Native or not, were needed.

And another one would be to have one of our own people in our own community to a certain extent... because... in order to really understand these kids you have to really understand how they grew up, how the mentality is and how different it is from the mainstream society. It is quite different. And, but I'd also like to have someone, how do you say, out of town teachers come in. And, like when there's English, where they're a lot stronger. (p. 16)

Dimensions of Curriculum

Respondents described a number of dimensions or components of curriculum which they believed would strengthen the curriculum. Dimensions noted were traditional, cultural, and tribal values, including oral language, Christian studies, healthy lifestyles, and bi-cultural education. Although respondents did not define explicitly their understanding of terms such as “traditional, cultural, and tribal values,” their responses provide insights into their assumptions and meanings.

Jerold blamed the residential schools for the loss of values and parenting skills:

Traditional values and... you know... you could go on and on. When people talk about the values... where are they? I don't see them in this community... Well through the residential years. Like the parents... the kids that went to school at that time weren't around their parents, so they lost the meaning of how to be a parent and it made a big generation gap there. And the people that are trying to come back [to past culture, tradition and values] they're doing it out of bitterness. And anytime you do anything out of bitterness, it doesn't work. (p. 26)

In discussing traditional, cultural, and tribal values, respondents included traditional life, survival skills, indigenous language instruction, native crafts, and Christian studies. Cheryl expressed concern that the Native culture was “fading away:”

The Native culture. They should focus on Native culture because the culture is fading away. And we should learn more about survival skills. (p. 9)

They should learn it every day because by the end of the year, they will know lots, like the Native culture. They need to know it because it is dying, people are not, they are starting to forget about the Native culture. (p. 10)

Jerold and Randy focused upon traditional life skills. Jerold noted that: “Traditional. Okay. I think it would be more of a lifestyle... learning more to hunt, fish, trap. Yeah. Survival skills” (p. 26). Randy stated: “Okay, let’s say... setting traps and fishing and beadwork and visiting people... Elders” (p. 15).

Several respondents believed that the Elders could play a vital role in teaching the “cultural” and “life skills.”

...With the cultural... I think we need more Elders. We need more of these kinds of resource people being brought into the school and actually come into the classroom for a few minutes and do some sort of lesson with them. Life skills... (Randy, p. 19)

Jack too, felt that the “Elders need(ed) to be there” (p. 38). Jerold suggested that not only the Elders should play a role within the school setting but added that other professional people “with jobs around here” (p. 21) should be involved within the school to meet the students’ educational needs.

Anna thought that it was important to retain the traditional crafts and to have more instruction within the school in this area. She suggested that these artistic skills would provide the students with a type of economic base for their future:

I think the crafts are important. I should have told you about beadwork too... I think that’s important. Not just the beadwork. Like when I do mine... I get lots of money... like for their future, it would help them if they know the art. (p. 45)

Two respondents explicitly stated that cultural/traditional activities should not include historical ceremonies. For example, Anna said, "I don't think they should go into any historical ceremonies like the dancing and drumming and stuff" (p. 47). Randy noted, "I mean cultural... not with the pow-wow type of stuff. Not in this community anyway" (p. 15).

Another dimension of curriculum mentioned by four respondents was to enable students to develop fluency in their mother tongue. Jack spoke of traditional education and language instruction as beginning in the home:

...they need traditional... I guess traditional education... uh... education starts at home, when you're a baby. If you're not told your language, if you're not taught your language at that, at that age... you know, you won't be able to learn when you're three or four years old... because you're having problems and trying to cope with the second language that is coming at you. One of them usually loses out. It's either the English or, uh, your Native language that loses out... With the pressures of being a [unclear] education, you know, the... it's your language that loses out. And that's a big problem for us and... in terms of traditional values and roles that we find... in the school. We want to be able to retain our cultural... and in order to do that, language is the key. So we're caught between the heart and the rocky hard place. (p. 42)

Barbara related culture to Native language:

Well, we need more of the culture... like Native language... Native culture, not really culture but the Native language ... because most of our students have lost their language.

...it's just that what I'm concerned about is just the language, the language of the Native... our language... that we keep it alive. (p. 31)

Charlene thought that the curriculum would be strengthened by incorporating "Native language.

Both... speaking and writing" (p. 6).

Charlene and Randy mentioned the amount of time scheduled for the recent Native language program. Randy explained: "We do have Native language twenty minutes a day and that's it. And that's just basically Syllabics" (p. 15). He also spoke of having the goal of a bi-cultural

education as part of the school curriculum. This type of program would incorporate the Native language, cultural activities, and bi-cultural activities within the school curriculum.

I'd like to see a bi-cultural program. At least some bi-cultural activities and programs added to the provincial curriculum. (p. 18)

One idea that I know, some schools are going toward is a bi-cultural, bi-lingual program... Some First Nations communities. And some communities are stronger in one language than the other, and I see that working quite well. Whereas in Animoosh Lake, we have, uh... a mixture of both. None of the kids are strong in either one. I believe we should have something like that in place... a bilingual, bi-cultural program. It would really... really help in terms of learning. So much time on English per day and so much time on Native language per day and throw some cultural activities in there. (p. 15)

Randy felt that by teaching the students the language and cultural activities, the students might begin to "feel proud about themselves:"

I think that there's so much more that can be used to stimulate kids, give them confidence, feel proud about themselves. I believe some of the kids are afraid to... to learn or even try to learn. I don't know if this would help them. Maybe it would... I don't know. (p. 15)

For Anna, a product of the residential schools, tribal values and Christian values were synonymous.

"What are tribal values? Those are taken care of in the Christianity" (p. 47).

Barbara, Anna, and Leonard suggested that more Christian Living activities and instruction be incorporated into the curriculum. Anna spoke of her perception of what was happening in terms of "Bible stories" at the school and how she would "like to see more Christianity in the school:"

I would like to see more Bible stories... I think they do that... Lana [a teacher's aide]. Whatever spare time she has, she does that... more Christianity in the school. (p. 45)

Barbara noted that more religious or "Biblical subjects" were needed as well. She felt that "around (t)here... (they're) more into Biblical things." Barbara explains:

...for our students, like for us around here, we need more... like religion, like Biblical subjects being taught to the children in our school... because we're more into Biblical things. (p. 31)

Leonard felt that more time should be spent on “Christian Life (and) Biblical” studies as well: And... Christian Life... the Biblical... like maybe... I don’t know how often, but... I know they’re doing a little bit of that and there should be more (p. 34).

Jerold mentioned another dimension of curriculum - healthy lifestyles and living:

I think... we should move towards more of a lifestyle. Like basic hygiene, and parenting skills even for the sevens and eights. And sex education. It seems to be just put on the back burner. They don’t want to talk about it or... they don’t have a clue about it. (p. 22)

The above section of the chapter described the research findings. The following section discusses the interpretation of the findings.

Interpretation of Findings

Four themes emerged from the analyses of the data: general perceptions of education and curriculum; concerns and issues; goals of education/curriculum; and dimensions of curriculum. These themes illuminate eight stakeholders’ perceptions of education and curriculum.

The school is the heart of the community. The role of the school extends beyond the teaching of curriculum to include health care and discipline for incidents which occur in the home and community. Jack perceived the school as a “safe environment for the children to be children” (p. 36). At the same time, two of the respondents commented on the burden of responsibility felt by the educators as they try to meet these expectations. This finding is consistent with Steinhauer’s (1993) finding that the Aboriginal community expected many things from the teaching staff, from entertaining the students, even after school hours, to parenting them.

There was a lack of clarity among respondents regarding the curriculum and teaching methods used to promote children’s learning. There are no policies or procedures in place to guide decision-making vis a vis goals of education or curriculum. Jerold mentioned one policy manual

borrowed from another reserve which the Band Council had not yet ratified. It is not clear whether the Band Council intends to adopt this policy or to use it as one example. At the same time, Jerold, the principal, had hired a consulting firm to evaluate the curriculum. This initiative is proactive and attests to a concern to develop educational policy. Coupled with the lack of policy and procedures for decision-making, the roles of school board, education director and principal are not defined. As a result, there is no individual or group charged with leadership. Miller and Seller (1993) argue the importance of having a conceptual framework in place for development of school policies and philosophies.

The participants in this study voiced a concern that there was not enough community involvement within their school. Cajete (1994) advocates authentic dialogue between/among community members. Eisner (1994) also points out that it is important to know and extract what is educationally significant from each community. Many voices are needed to bring culturally relevant and academically strong curriculum to Aboriginal education. Barnhardt's (1990) study of a Yup'ik community found that it is possible for all stakeholders of education "to unite in a coordinated education/socialization process" (p. 63) to strengthen the curriculum both culturally and academically.

There was a general sense that attempts were being made to "follow the curriculum" (Barbara, p. 68) and that traditional subjects were being taught. Anna mentioned that Bible stories were part of the curriculum. A new addition to the curriculum was Native language. Respondents outside of the school learned of the program incidentally. A departure from the traditional curriculum was a cooperative science project for schools in the district described by Jerold. This project is an attempt to keep the students on par with the science and technology of Euro-Canadian society. Emerson (1987) addresses the perpetuation of traditional subjects being taught in

Aboriginal communities. He suggests that the reason for this is that the teachers are educated by western hemisphere standards and perpetuate the same methods in their home communities.

Teaching methods mentioned by respondents were for the most part, Euro-Canadian traditional. For example, “seatwork... board... colouring with the younger grades... exercises” (Barbara, pp. 27, 28). Although Randy mentioned previous units he had done where he built upon the natural environment, this use of natural resources was sporadic. He had not done this in the year in which the study took place. Eisner (1994) criticizes the strong adherence to traditional western education methodology. Whether it be the curricula or the methodologies employed by the teachers, Eisner (1990) suggests that we continue to follow the Euro-Canadian traditions because “we do what we know how to do” (p. 525).

Several comments made by the respondents when they discussed issues and concerns suggest that the curriculum is equated with textbooks and other resources. Jerold commented: “The curriculum? If the band gave me \$70,000 so that I could buy all of the resources... that would give us a good start” (p. 25). Cajete (1994) contends that the dependence on resources to ensure a successful education is a perpetuation of dependence on mainstream society due to the unquestioned conditioning through mainstream educational institutions. The recipients of European education have continued to perceive the need for these resources and finances, yet failed to take into account the possibilities if these resources did not become readily available. The participants have relied on outside experts. Cajete is critical of this reliance on outside experts who “observe a situation from the outside, and at a distance, then develop a solution or dictate an action or policy” (p. 216). Randy pointed to one of the challenges he has found in teaching the children: “just basic English and basic writing and reading... you can’t get far with the kids” (p. 13). This points to an emphasis on teaching rather than children’s learning. The operational definition of curriculum

suggested by the respondents is that of a transmission-oriented curriculum (Miller & Seller, 1993) and is reminiscent in part of what Eisner (1995) refers to as traditional education. There was no evidence presented, however, that the educators shared the preoccupation with performance objectives and test scores which typically characterizes such curricula.

When asked about the availability of resources to support learning, the computer and internet were mentioned as well as the more traditional resources such as books, encyclopedias and school supplies. It is significant that respondents included the Elders and the natural environment as resources. These resources are described more fully in relation to goals of education, specifically, dimensions of curriculum. Cajete (1994) describes Aboriginal education as involving the unique members of community. Historically this has been the Indigenous method. The Elders offered guidance, wisdom, and historical knowledge. The parents and extended family members provided the children with the virtues (humility, pride in self and others) and survival skills. All members were responsible for the education of the children.

In interpreting the data, two factors must be considered. Firstly, self-government for Aboriginal communities in Canada is a relatively new phenomenon. It has existed for little more than a quarter century. Secondly, the school in the community in this study has been operating for six years. The school building has only been in existence for four of those six years. Steinhauer (1992) recognizes the challenges to Aboriginal communities as they implement self-government: "Like the cycle of poverty, the legacy of paternalism is difficult to end" (p. 97). She recommends "care" is essential when considering self-government in reference to both paternalism and "the heavy idea of unchecked freedom" (p. 97). Inexperienced people who are put in self-government roles of authority may have difficulty with "unchecked freedom."

Two related concerns articulated by respondents were the need for involvement of the community in the school and the “lack of communication” (Randy, p. 17) between school and community. Several respondents noted the benefits of greater community involvement. Randy suggested that if the parents and other people from the community would become more involved, the educators within the school would be enlightened “about how they (referring to the parents and community members) want(ed) the school run” (Randy, p. 14). Jack believed that by involving the community people/parents, the students would become better equipped and have the “proper tools” to cope with their futures. He was concerned that the parents seemed to get involved with their children’s education only when there was a “crisis situation” or when there was a “parents’ night.” Jack observed that this was not enough.

Leonard, a parent and a band council member provided one reason for little or no parental involvement within the school: “I would rather leave it to the, uh... the people that are involved with the, uh... education in our school” (p. 33). Green (1990) notes that even after the 1946 Joint Committee hearings and the new Indian Act of 1951 was passed, there was still no parental or community involvement from the Aboriginal population concerning the education of their own children. Education was still in the hands of the “paternal” dominant society. The 1972 policy paper developed by the National Indian Brotherhood (cited in Green, 1990) states that: “Indian parents must have full responsibility and control of education” (p. 37). This was not happening in Animoosh Lake.

Randy expressed concern with the lack of communication between the school and the parents and community. He believed that it was the responsibility of different organizations from the community to come to the school. He noted that while invitations had been sent out to some of these community members/agencies, there had been no response. There was no mention in any

of the interviews of any formal attempts to develop linkages or partnerships with agencies to discuss how they might fulfill roles in the school which would support students' learning and lifestyles. Wall and Madak (1991) assert that there is a need for a strong support system from the community/parents and that this support is a key factor in developing and planning educational programs for Aboriginal students. Whyte (1986, cited in Wall & Madak, 1991) believes: "Indian parents must feel the school is their school and not an alien culture unwilling to listen to their concerns" (p. 49). In Turner's (1997) study of Aboriginal students and secondary school retention, he concluded that all stakeholders of education have an important role in sending positive messages to the students: "The findings suggest the key stakeholders such as family, Native agencies and organizations, the community and educational systems have responsibilities in promoting the successful retention of Amerindian secondary students" (p. ii). Barnhardt (1990) also concludes that the "school cannot do the job alone" (p. 64).

Respondents were sensitive to and concerned about issues which affected children within the community and those who left the community to attend secondary schools. At the time of the study, there was political tension in the community which had begun to involve the children. Cheryl's letter is a testimonial to the adverse affects of the conflict. Steinhauer (1996) speaks of politics and how the stakeholders of education in her community become confused and at odds with each other when an election is upcoming. She (1995) notes that such situations invariably affect the students and staff in the school. Cajete (1994) attributes this phenomenon to ethnostress which results in the perpetuation of dysfunctional relationships, divisive behaviours, as well as a mistrust of self and others.

Other issues which were mentioned included what Randy described as the "social problems" (p. 19) of the north such as suicide. Other social problems noted were the difficulties experienced

by secondary students off-reserve such as teenage pregnancies, alcohol abuse and the negative influences of relationships contributing to attrition of secondary school. This finding is consistent with Turner's (1997) finding regarding the impact of peer pressure on student retention. Secondary students off-reserve must also cope with loneliness. Wilson (1992) found that often times the students who had left the community felt equivalent feelings of isolation and frustration. She found that the lack of understanding on part of the school personnel pertaining to the type of cultural conflicts Aboriginal students faced, point to the need for a strong support system.

In responding to questions concerning the goals of education, each participant voiced a common purpose for education; to enable students to complete secondary school so that they have choices for their futures. Choices included continuing through post-secondary education at university or college or learning trades in which they might gain employment in the community. Randy noted the need for skilled trades-persons in Animoosh Lake.

They could choose to do training, for example... heavy equipment. You have a lot of heavy equipment operators in the community but you don't have anyone or many people qualified... and a lot of machines get broken down. Carpentry... we don't have any carpenters to build our homes... Vehicles are breaking down left and right and there's no one to fix them. (pp. 17, 18)

This comment recognizes the relations among education, skilled labour and the economics of the reserve. Barbara too, related the economics of the community to outcomes of student learning upon completion of high school: "...they just live on welfare. They don't even have jobs around here" (p. 30). Taylor, Crago and McAlpine (1993) suggest that economics should play a role in the outcomes of student learning: "The basic dilemma for communities is how to create a community-based job market so that children can relate their schooling to future employment in their community" (p. 120). Randy's perception of choices after the completion of secondary school might alleviate the

economic dilemma faced by Aboriginal communities. It is significant that both student respondents, Cheryl and Charlene, indicated that they expect to return to the community for their future careers.

Jack stressed the importance of education that prepares students to “control what’s out there.”

...we need to make them understand, the concepts and the rules and regulations of being... uh... just being able to control, you know, what’s out there. And to be able to understand and then... formalize what needs to be done. (p. 36)

He also said that having the students learn the basic three R’s and self-discipline would further ensure their achievement in the future:

...we teach our kids to be able to cope with the stuff that’s coming up in their lives and that’s the training ground [said with emphasis]. Now, if we can teach the kids to, our kids to be able to, to, do the three R’s, and, and, also, I guess the other part of the thing is uh... discipline in, in... how to you know, study, and be able to, to, uh... put yourself down to sit and do something. And, teach the kids, our kids like that, in terms of, you know, when you have to do a thesis [laughs] and a, like these kinds of stuff. That’s where the training ground is, at the school. (p. 39)

This points to a dilemma which Taylor, Crago and McAlpine (1993) stress that Aboriginal communities must resolve. Should Aboriginal communities educate the children to fit into life in their home communities or educate them to fit into mainstream culture?

Randy recommended that a bicultural curriculum be juxtaposed with the provincial curriculum guidelines. This recommendation is consistent with one noted by Wall and Madak (1991). They suggest that the curriculum should reflect the common heritage, traditions and folklore of the community while still maintaining the traditional European curriculum. Barnhardt’s (1990) study of a Yup’ik Eskimo community established that a balance between both cultures is indeed possible. “The higher than average presence of St. Mary’s graduates in institutions of higher education and in leadership roles in state, indicates that its perseverance is paying off” (p. 63). In his research on the relationships between traditional tribal values and secondary school retention,

Turner (1997) found that both Native philosophy and the regular curriculum contributed to the self-esteem and retention of Aboriginal students and were a means of enabling students to balance both cultures.

When asked about the qualities they envisioned for the ideal teacher, respondents mentioned the following: empathetic, dedicated, soft, kind, caring, tender, well-balanced, strict, and good disciplinarians. Randy was the only respondent who preferred hiring Aboriginal teachers, preferably from the community, so that they could more fully understand Aboriginal children and Aboriginal culture. However, he recognized that expertise in language arts might necessitate going outside the community. These responses differ from Malin's (1994) finding that Aboriginal stakeholders of education desired Aboriginal teachers for their children. Consistent with Malin's participants, respondents in this study did desire a non-threatening individual who was strict yet caring. Three respondents noted that teachers must also be fully certified.

Jerold believed that there were no parenting skills or values left in the community. He attributed these losses to the residential school system. He viewed those who were attempting to return to traditional values as doing it out of "bitterness." Akiwenzi-Damm and Sutherland (1998) attribute the loss of parenting skills and Aboriginal values to residential schooling as well. They contend that those who attended residential school have lost their ability to parent and their identities as Aboriginal people. Goals of the residential school were to have the Native people give up their values and traditions and to replace them with the values and traditions of the dominant society. Pinar (1993) speaks of racial text:

We are what we know. We are, however, also what we do not know. If what we know about ourselves - our history, our culture, our national identity - is deformed by absences, denials, and incompleteness, then our identity - both as individuals and as (Canadians) is fragmented. This fragmented self is a repressed self, that is, it contains repressed elements. Such a self lacks access both to itself and to the world. Repressed, the self's capacity for intelligence, for informed action, even for simple

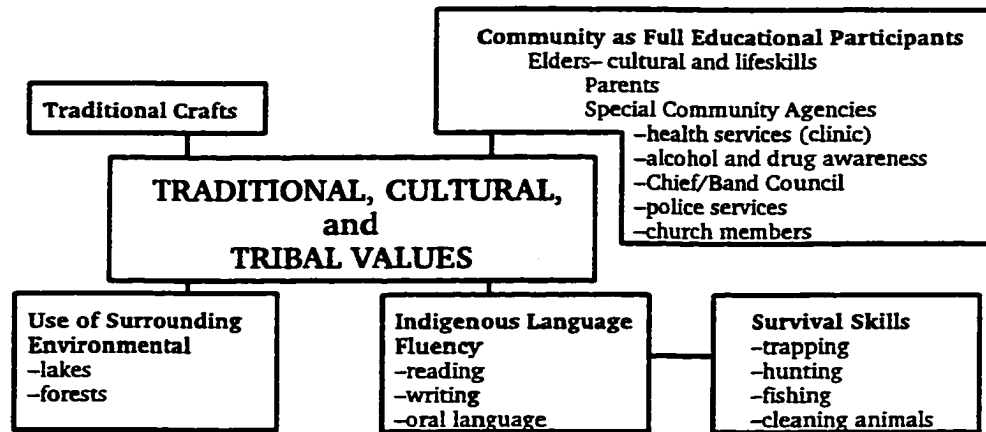
functional competence is impaired. Its sense of history, gender, and politics is incomplete and distorted. (p. 61)

He argues that marginalized societies have lost their true history and culture through the educational process.

Respondents described a number of dimensions or components of curriculum which they believed would strengthen the curriculum. These included, firstly, an emphasis on language arts which would enable students to achieve language proficiency comparable to students in schools in the south. Other dimensions noted were traditional, cultural, and tribal values, Christian studies, and healthy lifestyles. Although respondents did not define explicitly their understanding of terms such as “traditional, cultural, and tribal values,” their responses provide insights into their assumptions and meanings. In discussing traditional, cultural, and tribal values, respondents included: traditional life, survival skills, indigenous language instruction, native crafts, and Christian studies. The Elders were mentioned as a major resource for teaching cultural and life skills. Two respondents explicitly stated that traditional or cultural activities should not include historical ceremonies. For example, Anna said, “I don’t think they should go into any historical ceremonies like the dancing and drumming and stuff” (p. 47). Randy noted, “ I mean cultural... not with the pow-wow type of stuff. Not in this community anyway” (p. 15). Jerold mentioned the importance of healthy lifestyles in the curriculum. Figure 4.1 summarizes the examples articulated by respondents concerning traditional, cultural and tribal values.

One goal that preoccupied a number of respondents was that their children were not, but should be “on par” with children in urban schools. Although respondents did not cite any evidence for their assumptions regarding their children’s levels of academic achievement in comparison to other students, their concern is pragmatic. Jerold described the education of the north as “northern norm”. When the students leave the community to attend secondary school, they must attain the

credits through Ontario's secondary school creditation system to meet provincial standards. The school located on the reserve may choose to follow the provincial curriculum or not, but if they do



not follow it, the students may have trouble in their future educational endeavours.

Figure 4.1. Traditional, cultural and tribal values.

Barnhardt (1990) describes culture as “ more than the surface of visible attributes of the language, arts and crafts, eating habits, and other subsistence practices” (p. 64). It is “a way of thinking, a way or seeing, a way of behaving, a way of doing things, and a way of relating to the world” (p. 64). Medicine (1995) contends that the “pow-wow stuff” is not “real culture” anyway but “a contrived culture” (p. 44). She cautions educators not to become overly “involved with the accouterments: the jewelry making, the beadwork, the drumming, and the singing than with real culture” (p. 44).

Only three respondents mentioned Christian studies, even though the community is fundamentalist Christian. For the participants in this study, traditional values encompassed the people, the language, the land, the traditional crafts and survival skills which have enabled the Aboriginals to live in this environment for centuries.

This chapter presented a profile of the participants in the study, the data, and the four themes which developed from the analysis of the data. It also discussed the findings in relation to the literature.

Chapter 5 presents the conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I am writing to empower their strength, courage, creativity, and the contributions they will make. (Cajete, 1994, p.24)

This thesis response describes the perceptions of the stakeholders of education in a self-governed northern isolated community of the goals of education and curriculum for Aboriginal children. The design of the study is qualitative and non-emergent (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). The respondents in the study formed a purposive sample of eight stakeholders of education in the community of Animoosh Lake. Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (1) general perceptions of education and curriculum; (2) concerns and issues; (3) goals for education and curriculum; and (4) dimensions of curriculum. The following sections discuss the conclusion and recommendations which grow out of the findings of this study.

The advent of self-government for Aboriginal peoples has the potential to enable Aboriginal communities to articulate goals of education and design curricula which are consistent with Aboriginal philosophy and unique to the communities. These initiatives will involve complex, dynamic, and lengthy processes. The community of Animoosh Lake and the institution of schooling are recent initiatives.

In Animoosh Lake, the school is the heart of the community. Cajete (1994) describes Aboriginal education : “ Education is at its essence, learning about life through participation and relationship in community, including not only people, but plants, animals, and the whole of Nature” (p. 26). The role of school extends beyond the teaching of curriculum to include health care and discipline for incidents which occur in the home and community. The staff at the school in Animoosh Lake feel the burden of responsibility for care giving without community support. This

was evident in participants' perceptions of the lack of partnership with agencies and individuals who might provide support in addressing issues which affect the welfare of children and youth in the community.

There was a perception among the stakeholders of a lack of communication regarding the goals of education and the goals of the curriculum. They reported that they were not aware of policies or procedures in place to guide decision-making vis a vis goals of education and goals of the curriculum. Decisions should be made with reference to a guiding framework.

The perceptions of respondents were that the current curriculum is essentially based upon mainstream educational endeavours and textbook-based with the addition of a Native language program. Given the relative newness of the school, it is understandable that the curriculum is based on available resources. Participants, however, indicated an interest and a compelling need for a curriculum which is relevant to the Aboriginal culture and the unique needs of the community. Cajete (1994) advises: "Traditional learning was always geared towards understanding and applying what is useful and beneficial" (p.175). When invited to share their perceptions of traditional, cultural, and tribal values, participants noted that all members of the community should be participants in the institution of schooling and that the values which they espouse include indigenous oral language, the environment, and the traditional survival skills and crafts.

Respondents also identified social concerns and issues which have an impact on the well-being and futures of their children and youth. These included the students' transition to secondary schools at a distance from the community and the difficulties which they encounter as well as societal problems such as suicide and substance abuse.

When asked about the goals of education, participants were unanimous in their hope that all students would complete secondary school so that they would be able to make choices regarding

their futures. The choices included continuing their education through post-secondary education at college or university or learning trades in which they might gain employment in the community.

Initially, the researcher anticipated that Christian fundamentalist roots of the community would influence the respondents' perceptions of the goals of education and curriculum. While there was evidence of this influence in the Bible classes given in the school, this influence was not pervasive. In essence, the stakeholders of Animoosh Lake want for their children what parents and caregivers everywhere want from an educational system for their children : an education which will enable their children to have choices for their futures. This common purpose may well serve as the foundation for the development of an educational system in Animoosh Lake which balances Aboriginal culture and the uniqueness of the community with a strong academic base.

Recommendations

The recommendations included in this section reflect upon the philosophies of Aboriginal education. Cajete (1999) explains the value of a system of education which is consistent with traditional values:

To have authentic empowerment you must have a system of educating that not only trains for vocation but prepare individuals: for self-actualizing themselves, fulfilling their human potentials, enlivening their creative spirit, and finding their personal meaning, power, and what in earlier times Indian people called medicine. This is exactly what traditional Indigenous processes of education did. This education helped people find their way to the center of their individual and collective power. This is the essential meaning of the word empowerment. The implementation of Indigenous ways of educating is toward this most basic human need. It authentically empowers and perpetuates the development of the spirit of families, communities and tribes. (p.190)

Education is always in the process and is being built from the stones, and upon the foundations, of prior structures. Indigenous education has prior structures, i.e., stone and foundation from which it can again be built. (p. 28)

The greatest challenge to the community/stakeholders in education will be to develop a framework which recognizes the uniqueness of the Aboriginal community and the aspirations for education of the members of the community for its children and youth. It is recommended that the Board of Education initiate a consultation process to invite dialogue among community members about their visions for education in the community. This process should be in keeping with traditional Aboriginal ways of communal decision-making. While such a process may be lengthy, it is the springboard for any educational plan which is rooted in the unique community.

A second recommendation is for the Board of Education to examine exemplary case studies of other Aboriginal communities and the ways in which they have begun to address similar issues. In tandem with this recommendation is a further recommendation that the Board cultivate partnerships with Aboriginal agencies and communities so that these groups learn and grow collaboratively. These recommendations are supported by Cajete's (1994) vision of Aboriginal education:

To accomplish this, Indian people must open avenues of communication and establish a reflective dialogue toward evolving a contemporary theory for Indian education that originates from them and their collective experiences. (p. 27)

Traditional [Canadian] Indian forms of education must be considered conceptual wellsprings for the "new" kinds of educational thought that can address the tremendous challenges of the twenty-first century. Tribal education presents models and universal foundations to transform education and develop a "new" paradigm for curricula that will make a difference for Life's Sake. (p. 27)

Future research into schooling and curriculum is needed in Animoosh Lake and in other Aboriginal communities to investigate and illuminate the ways in which unique communities transform the legislation of self-government in education into reality. Such models will contribute to the creation of a body of knowledge which will inform solutions to the challenges and issues encountered by Aboriginal communities as they endeavour to provide quality education for

Aboriginal children and youth, enabling them to enjoy success and satisfaction in their future life choices and lifestyles as Aboriginal adults... heirs to a rich heritage:

Indigenous approaches to education can work if we are open to the creative message. (Cajete, 1994, p. 188)

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APPENDIX I
Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Perceptions of Aboriginal Education:

Voices from an Isolated Reserve Community in Northern Canada

Pseudonym _____

Male/Female (CIRCLE ONE)

Languages spoken _____

1. General Information

* What is your role in the school? _____

2. Education and Curriculum

*What role does the school play in the life of the community?

“Self-government provides the opportunity for Aboriginal communities to decide what goals of education and curriculum will best meet the needs of their children and their unique communities. My questions will focus on your perceptions of what exists now and what would be ideal in the future.”

3. What does the curriculum emphasize now?

- subjects
- content
- problem solving
- anything else?

3.1 What methods do the teachers use to teach the students?

3.2 What resources are available to the teachers and students? (books, computers, etc)

3.3 Give me some examples of what the children are learning and have learned.

3.4 What educational needs/problems/concerns in the community should be addressed in the curriculum?

3.5 How might these be resolved?

3.6 What do you think a curriculum for your children should emphasize?

- 3.7 How is this different from the current curriculum?
- 3.8 What qualities would you like to see in a teacher for your children?
4. What is the purpose of education?
- 4.1 When the children in your community finish secondary school, what should they be able to do? What options should be open to them?
- 4.2 Would this situation (4.1) be the same or different from the options available to students who completed school in the past five years? Explain.
5. How is the community developing its policies for the goals of education and curriculum?
- process?
 - who is involved?
 - sources? (consultants, provincial curriculum guidelines etc.)
- 5.1 What recommendations would you make to strengthen the curriculum?
- 5.2 What emphasis should be placed on traditional or tribal values in the curriculum? Explain.

APPENDIX II

Letter asking for Access to Community

Letter asking for Access to Community

Dear Chief and/or Band Council:

I am a graduate student at the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University. I am writing to ask your permission to conduct a research study in your community for my master's thesis. The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of the stakeholders of education in a self-governed northern reserve community of the goals of education and curriculum for their children.

There is a need for this type of research in Aboriginal communities. To date we know very little about how Aboriginal communities are implementing self-government and what individual communities envision as priorities in developing educational policies and practices conducive to the unique and individual needs of each locale. This research will contribute to the literature on curriculum and may be of value to your community and other Aboriginal communities which are engaged in this process.

I ask your permission to interview stakeholders of education in the community: two Elders, two parents, two teachers, two students as well as the chief and/or several band council members, Each interview will take approximately 30-60 minutes and will be audiotaped. The location of each interview will be arranged with the individual.

I hope to spend about one week in the community. During this time, I would ask your permission to attend any educational board meetings. I would appreciate receiving a copy of any policies which have already been established.

If consent is given, it is important that you understand the following:

1. This study is consistent with the ethical guidelines articulated in *Ethics Procedures and Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects*.
2. There are no risks to the community or the participants.
3. The community and/or participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
4. Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. The community and participants will have pseudonyms (names that are not their own) in the report.
5. In accordance with the Lakehead University's ethics guidelines, the data will be stored securely in my home for seven years.
6. The report of the study will be available in the Faculty of Education Library, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

If further clarification is needed, please contact Janice Mosher-Rae at 807-344-0754 or email janicerae@hotmail.com. You may contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland, at 807- 343-8696 or email mccourtcl@mercury.lakeheadu.ca.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Janice Mosher-Rae

Consent Form (Band Council Permission)

I have read the cover letter explaining the purpose of the research study being conducted by Janice Mosher-Rae. I understand the following:

- This study is consistent with the ethical guidelines articulated in Lakehead University's *Ethics Procedures and Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects*.
- There are no risks to the community or the participants.
- The community and/or participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. The community and participants will have pseudonyms (names that are not their own) in the report.
- In accordance with Lakehead University's ethics guidelines, the data will be stored securely in my home for seven years.
- The report of the study will be available in the Faculty of Education Library, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

I/we grant permission/do not grant permission (**CIRCLE ONE**) for Janice Mosher-Rae to conduct research for her master's thesis in the community.

Signature (Chief) DATE _____

Signature (Band Council Member(s)) DATE _____

DATE _____

APPENDIX III

Cover Letter

Cover Letter

Dear Participant:

I am a graduate student at the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University. I am writing to ask your permission to participate in an interview in your community for my master's thesis. The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of the stakeholders of education in a self-governed northern reserve community of the goals of education and curriculum for their children.

There is a need for this type of research in Aboriginal communities. To date, we know very little about how Aboriginal communities are implementing self-government and what individual communities envision as priorities in developing educational policies and practices conducive to the unique and individual needs of each locale. This research will contribute to the literature curriculum and may be of value to your community and other Aboriginal communities which are engage in this process.

I ask your permission to participate in an interview. The interview will be approximately 30-60 minutes. I also ask your permission to audiotape the interview. The location of the interview will be arranged at a location convenient to you.

If consent is given, it is important that you understand the following:

- This study is consistent with the ethical guidelines articulated in Ethics Procedures and *Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects*.
- There are no risks to the community or the participants.
- The community and/or participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. The community and participants will have pseudonyms (names that are not their own) in the report.
- In accordance with the Lakehead University's ethics guidelines, the data will be stored securely in my home for seven years.
- The report of the study will be available in the Faculty of Education Library, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

If further clarification is needed, please contact Janice Mosher-Rae at 807-344-0754 or email janicerae@hotmail.com. You may contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland, at 807-343-8696 or email mccourtl@mercury.lakeheadu.ca.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Janice Mosher-Rae

Consent Form (Participant)

I have read the cover letter informing me of the research study being conducted by Janice Mosher-Rae. I understand the following:

- This study is consistent with the ethical guidelines articulated in Ethics Procedures and *Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects*.
- There are no risks to the community or the participants.
- The community and/or participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. The community and participants will have pseudonyms (names that are not their own) in the report.
- In accordance with the Lakehead University's ethics guidelines, the data will be stored securely in my home for seven years.
- The report of the study will be available in the Faculty of Education Library, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

I _____ agree/do not agree (**CIRCLE ONE**) to participate in this study.

Signature _____ **DATE** _____

APPENDIX IV

**Verbal Explanation to Minor
Participants**

Verbal Explanation to Minor Participants **(the minors being interviewed will be 14-16 years old)**

I am doing a study in your community concerning education and schooling. I am interested in knowing about what you think about education and your curriculum. I will ask some questions about what you wish to do or be when you have completed secondary school. We shall talk about these things for 30-60 minutes.

I would like to tape our talk. All of the people that I am interviewing will be asked the same questions. After, I shall write about what I have discovered from listening to all of the tapes.

I am hoping that you will agree to participate in my study. You will be given another name which is called a pseudonym when I write the final report. Perhaps you have a name that you would like to choose? This will ensure that no one knows who you are when the report is read by others. If you feel uncomfortable at any time during our interview, let me know. If you wish to stop the interview, you have the right to do so at any time.

Respectfully,

Janice Mosher-Rae

Consent Form (Parental Permission)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am a graduate student at the Faculty of Education, Lakehead University. I am writing to ask your permission to include your child as a voluntary participant in my study for my master's thesis. The purpose of this study is to describe the perceptions of the stakeholders of education in a self-governed northern reserve community of the goals of education and curriculum.

There is a need for this type of research in Aboriginal communities such as your own. To date, we know very little about how Aboriginal communities are implementing self-government and what individual communities envision as priorities in developing educational policies and practices conducive to the unique and individual needs of each locale. This research will contribute to the literature on curriculum and may be of value to your community and other Aboriginal communities which are engaged in this process.

If consent is given, it is important that you understand the following:

- This study is consistent with the ethical guidelines articulated in Ethics Procedures and *Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects*.
- There are no risks to the community or the participants.
- The community and/or participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. The community and participants will have pseudonyms (names that are not their own) in the report.
- In accordance with the Lakehead University's ethics guidelines, the data will be stored securely in my home for seven years.
- The report of the study will be available in the Faculty of Education Library, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

If further clarification is needed, please contact Janice Mosher-Rae at 807-344-0754 or email janicerae@hotmail.com. You may contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Mary Clare Courtland, at 807-343-8696 or email mccourt1@mercury.lakeheadu.ca.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Janice Mosher-Rae

Consent Form (Parental)

I have read the cover letter informing me of the research study being conducted by Janice Mosher-Rae and understand the terms and agreements as laid out by the researcher:

- This study is consistent with the ethical guidelines articulated in Ethics Procedures and *Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects*.
- There are no risks to the community or the participants.
- The community and/or participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.
- Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed. The community and participants will have pseudonyms (names that are not their own) in the report.
- In accordance with the Lakehead University's ethics guidelines, the data will be stored securely in my home for seven years.
- The report of the study will be available in the Faculty of Education Library, Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, Ontario.

I _____ agree/do not agree (**CIRCLE ONE**) to participate in this study.

Signature of Parent/Guardian **DATE** _____

Signature of Student **DATE** _____