

OUTWARD BOUND GIWAYKIWIN:
WILDERNESS-BASED INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

by

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ABSTRACT

This study takes a critical approach to Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program through a lens of decolonizing Indigenous education. The worldwide organization of Outward Bound, and assumptions about the universal benefits of expeditionary adventure education, are also critiqued. Former Outward Bound staff and students involved with the Giwaykiwin program were engaged in a collaborative interview process. The study was also informed by the author's own experiences as an instructor with the program. Five main themes and 6 key recommendations emerged. The main themes relate to program design and philosophy, participants' experiences with cultural aspects of their courses, diversity, cross-cultural relationships, the involvement of Elders, instructor training and development, and participants' experiences with the collaborative research process. The resulting recommendations include: recognizing the diversity of contemporary Aboriginal youth, increasing Elders' and community members' involvement, recognizing the complex cultural dynamics of Giwaykiwin courses, increasing Aboriginal instructor development, and non-Aboriginal staff's cultural awareness training. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that, in order to satisfy contemporary models of decolonization, Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program should take a more localized approach, grounding their courses philosophically and practically in the traditions of the specific Aboriginal communities with whom they work. The significance of this research is that it will give Outward Bound Canada insight into the design and delivery of the Giwaykiwin program. It will also add to the limited body of literature in this area and offer insight for other organizations considering a land-based approach to working with Indigenous youth.

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This work is dedicated to future generations. This is for you in the hope that your world will be a place of joy and beauty, where you may feel proud of who you are, where you come from, and where you choose to go.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of youth participants, instructors, community members, and program organizers with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin Program through qualitative collaborative ethnographic inquiry under a lens of decolonizing Indigenous education. Similar to Lotz-Sisitka (2002), I also follow a reflexive research model while exploring my own experiences as an instructor still involved with Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin program. Brookes (2004, 2006) highlights the importance of this kind of critique within adventure education programs and the worldwide organization of Outward Bound specifically. He describes an abundance of insider research that has been conducted within Outward Bound that appears more as a program advertisement than an attempt at improvement through critical analysis. It is my hope that this constructive reflection on pedagogical practices and program structure will result in enhanced program quality for the benefit of students and instructors alike.

Terminology

In order to recognize and honour the importance of certain cultural terms and concepts, I will follow Graveline's (1998) example by capitalizing them in this thesis. These terms include: Aboriginal, Ancestors, Creation, White, Western, Indigenous, Earth, Elder, Four Directions, Medicine Wheel, First Voice, Métis, Halfbreed, Sweatlodge, and Universe. The terms "Indigenous" and "Aboriginal" will refer to global community of people whose cultures and languages are shaped by a profound connection to a specific land-base and who have often been displaced and oppressed by colonialism (Cajete, 1994; Simpson, 2002; Takano, 2005).

Personal Background

I will follow the example of Absolon and Willet (2005) by situating myself culturally within this research at the outset. Similar to the famous Cherokee writer Louis Owens (2001), I am, “a person of deeply mixed heritage and somewhat unique upbringing” (p. 11). I am proud to claim Francophone and Anglophone Métis roots as well as Norwegian, and Austro-Jewish ancestry. The four streams of my family converged on the Canadian prairies in the 1800’s and early 1900’s. Growing up in Calgary I was raised conscious of my family history and my identity as a Métis person.

On Being Métis

I was recently reminded of my own family by Adams’ (1999) description of his experiences of publicly claiming a Halfbreed, or Métis, identity. He describes the angry reactions of his family and community members when he declared on public television that he was proud to be a Halfbreed from a Halfbreed community. Despite internal pride and acceptance of their heritage, his community was fearful that it would be publicly known that they were Métis. Adams suggests that they were angry because they could be discriminated against further if their community was identified as Métis.

I’ve experienced this phenomenon too. On both sides of my family there is a quiet understanding that we are Métis. However, when it comes to sharing this information with outsiders, I often perceive hesitance and a desire to blend into mainstream White society. I understand that previous generations of my family experienced overt racism and understandably, often tried to hide their Aboriginality. This is not to say that racism and discrimination do not persist, rather there seems to be a growing and unifying voice

coming from contemporary Métis people, especially youth. In my personal and work life, I am continually connecting with other mixed-blood and Métis people and writers (Adams, 1999; Lawrence, 2004; Obama, 2004; Owens, 2001) who tell similar family stories. In these situations, I often find a comfortable, yet unspoken understanding of our shared lived-experiences.

Another common phenomenon in mixed-blood families is that some family members are born dark and others fair (Campbell, 1983; Leclair, 2002). It makes life difficult for both darker and fairer members because people often make assumptions about one's background based on their physical appearance. For example, some of my family members have darker complexions and Aboriginal features and people often inquire into their backgrounds. Those who are not comfortable with their heritage may describe themselves as White, negating their Aboriginality. Conversely, someone who is fairer may have a tougher time being accepted when self-identifying as Aboriginal.

Four Directions Man

Ralph Johnson, an Ojibway Elder, once called me a "Four Directions Man" (personal communication, May 30, 2006). He was referring to my diverse cultural background and activities. The Four Directions represent unity and interrelatedness and are sacred in many North American Indigenous cultures (Bopp, Bopp, Brown, and Lane Jr., 1984). As a Four Directions Man, I am a bridge for people from different directions to come closer together. Like Obama (2004), my diverse cultural background and experience helps me to appeal to relate to a broad spectrum of human experience. However, similar to Owens (2001), I do not presume to speak from any perspective other

than my own. In the course of my research and writing, I explore themes common to Indigenous peoples here in North America and abroad. I am informed by my own experiences along with those of my family, friends, and Ancestors, and the teachings shared with me by Elders and other cultural knowledge keepers.

As a person of mixed ancestry growing up in a multicultural neighbourhood in Calgary, my experiences were unique and diverse. I've always had a strong interest in the cultures of my own family and those of my peers. Languages have also been a lifelong interest—I attended French immersion junior high school and studied Japanese for three years during my undergraduate degree. I've recently been learning Spanish and Ojibwa. I am also connected to the Ojibwa people through my nephews who are members of an Ojibwa community and through regular involvement with ceremonies and events in Ojibwa territory where I now reside.

Stan Wilson (1995), a Cree scholar, describes the deep sense of connection that he has felt to various places throughout North America. He writes about feeling welcomed by the spirits of his Ancestors in unexpected places. I also feel this sense of connection to this land known as Turtle Island or North America. Knowing that some of my ancestors have lived in North America for thousands of years evokes in me a deep sense of wonder and respect. These feelings are strongest for me during while out on the land and I love relating them to my students and peers. As an educator working with Aboriginal youth, I draw on the teachings of many Indigenous cultures, most often those of the Algonquian peoples with whom I am most familiar: the Métis, Ojibwa, Cree, and the Miq' Maq.

Outward Bound: History and Philosophy

Outward Bound was founded in 1941 in Aberdovey, Wales through the vision of Kurt Hahn and a small group of supporters (Miner & Boldt, 2002; Outward Bound Canada, 2006a). Hahn was born in Germany to a middle-class Jewish family in 1886 (Miner & Boldt, 2002). As a young teacher in the early 1900's he became concerned with what he perceived as a lack in social and ethical development in youth at the time. With the assistance of various supporters, Hahn endeavored to create holistic educational opportunities in Germany, promoting the development of well-rounded youth by placing equal emphasis on physical, moral and academic pursuits. He drew on the teachings of Plato and Jesus Christ, among others (Outward Bound Canada, 2006a). World War I derailed his efforts as an educator as he was enlisted by the German army as an administrative liaison. However, during his time with the army, he made contacts with significant members of the British Government and Royal Family that proved important later on (Miner & Boldt, 2002).

Upon the conclusion of the First World War, Hahn returned to teaching in Germany, eventually opening a new school, Salem, in 1920 where he hoped to enact his holistic educational philosophies. Hahn successfully ran the school until 1932 when he spoke out against the beating of a young communist by Nazi storm troopers. As a result, Hahn was imprisoned until appeals by his contacts in Britain resulted in his release into their custody (Miner & Boldt, 2002).

Upon arriving in Britain, Hahn successfully founded a new school in Gordonstoun, Scotland based on his holistic concept of education (Miner & Boldt, 2002;

Outward Bound Canada, 2006a). However, the school was taken over by the British military during the Second World War as a training base.

Hahn soon found a new opportunity in Aberdovey, Wales where concern was growing in the naval community about the declining maritime skills of young sailors. In partnership with a shipping company, Hahn founded the first Outward Bound school. They named it Outward Bound in recognition of its maritime roots—"outward bound" is the term used to describe a ship leaving its port for the sea. Miner and Boldt (2002) quote Lawrence Holt, one of Hahn's founding partners, who said that the purpose of Outward Bound was, "...training through the sea, not for the sea." (p. 36). The training that students received at this first Outward Bound school involved primarily maritime activities, but the broader purpose was to develop a sense of teamwork, responsibility to community, and personal agency in students. The overall philosophy of Outward Bound that continues today is described by Miner & Boldt (2002):

Life enhancing experience is obtained through the sea, the mountains, the wild lake country, the desert. Outward Bound has evolved since those early Aberdovey days. But it has not departed from the essential essence of Hahn and Holt's essential concept of an intense experience surmounting challenges in a natural setting, through which the individual builds his sense of self-worth, the group comes to a heightened awareness of human interdependence and all grow in concern for those in danger or in need. (p. 37)

This quote illustrates the Outward Bound philosophy that personal development may occur through overcoming physical, emotional, and intellectual challenges in a natural environment. It is important to note that there is an emphasis that the natural world and its inherent challenges are presented as a *vehicle* for personal and group development. This concept is distinct from the connection that most Indigenous cultures express to the ancestral lands that shaped their cultures and languages (Cajete, 1994;

Simpson, 2002). For Indigenous people, the land—the natural world including both physical and spiritual entities—is considered home, not a wilderness ripe with challenges.

Since the founding of the first school in Wales, Outward Bound has spread around the world to every continent, comprising approximately 50 schools (Miner & Boldt, 2002). The first Canadian school opened in 1969 in British Columbia with subsequent schools in the Yukon, Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick (Outward Bound Canada, 2006a).

Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin Program

The Giwaykiwin Program was founded in 1985 by Outward Bound Canada in response to a recognized need for programming specific to students from Indigenous backgrounds (Outward Bound Canada, 2006a). The program aims to integrate Outward Bound and Aboriginal philosophies and traditions. Giwaykiwin means, “coming home” in Ojibwa and signifies the program’s philosophy of creating an opportunity for students to reconnect with their Indigenous cultures and the land. Giwaykiwin participants come from a variety of backgrounds— some are referred by social service organizations, while others enroll with the support of their families or communities. Communities or organizations may also request exclusive contract courses. Giwaykiwin courses typically consist of a 10 to 15 day canoeing or backpacking expedition and may also include rock climbing and ropes course activities and a Sweatlodge ceremony¹. In the past, Aboriginal

¹ While many variations exist, the Sweatlodge ceremony is a healing ceremony that is a part of the spiritual life of many First Nations. The ceremony involves praying and singing in a dome-shaped structure that represents the womb of Mother Earth. Hot stones, also called the Grandfathers and Grandmothers, from a sacred fire, heat the lodge. (Anishnawbe Health Toronto, 2008; Portman & Garrett, 2006).

Instructor Development courses have also been conducted for adult participants. The students and staff members interviewed for this study were involved with a wide variety of Giwaykiwin courses.

I led my first course as an instructor with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program in July of 2006. It was a 21-day course that I shared with two non-Indigenous instructors and six Indigenous high-school aged students from across Canada. The course included a 15-day flat-water canoe expedition following the Shining Tree route on the West Montreal River in northern Temagami, Ontario and was punctuated by a rock-climbing day, a service day at base-camp, and participation in a Sweatlodge ceremony.

On our course we had a wonderful mix of students from Canada's West Coast to Northern Quebec and Southern Ontario. The diverse Indigenous members our group created a unique learning environment. We had some students with experience in the teachings of their Indigenous Nations and others with none of this. Like myself, some of our students were raised in the Christian tradition. Over the last few years I've been expanding my familiarity and practice of the cultural and spiritual practices of my own Métis culture, along with those of the Cree and Ojibwa, the cultures of many of my friends and teachers. Ceremonies such as smudging and the offering of tobacco were a routine, but optional, component of our course. Some students participated regularly, while others did so periodically or not at all. A smudge is a purification ceremony that involves the burning of herbs, also called sacred medicines, such as sweetgrass, sage, and cedar to produce a cleansing smoke (Portman & Garrett, 2006). The smoke from a smudge may be used to spiritually cleanse people, places, and objects. As Portman and Garrett (2006) suggest, most forms of North American Aboriginal spirituality are

founded on the interconnectedness of self, family, community, and all other physical and spiritual beings. While ceremonial practices across the Aboriginal cultures of North America are quite diverse, common intentions of ceremonies include: giving thanks to the Earth and the rest of Creation, honouring Ancestors, healing yourself and others, and seeking balance of mind, body and spirit.

For me, one of the most powerful moments of the course occurred at our takeout on the final day. We maintained a ritual throughout our journey of singing a drum song that was taught to me at Ghost River Rediscovery, a land-based Indigenous education program in southern Alberta (Henley, 1989; Lertzman, 2002). This song was introduced to Rediscovery by David Lertzman (D. Lertzman, personal communication, July 10, 2004). It is in Cree and English and speaks of leaving loved ones for an important journey. It is sung in four verses with each verse led by a different singer. This song resonated with students and staff alike as we had all left family, friends, or partners behind. I introduced the song on our first night and we sang it each night before bed and at the beginning and end of important portions of the course. Pepper and White (1996) describe the importance of recognizing songs as sacred in Aboriginal cultures. They suggest that, "The passing along of songs... represents a gift" (p. 7) and that songs can be used to tell stories, heal, pray, and give advice. On our final morning, we rose at five a.m. On the students' suggestion, we sang our song and then paddled the final few kilometers in silence. Upon reaching the takeout we broke the silence by singing one final time in unison. It brought me to tears. We had gone through an intense experience together and overcome significant physical, social, and emotional challenges. Our growth as a group and as individuals seemed clear at that moment. I was touched to hear everyone singing

together. Students who were too shy to speak in talking circles three weeks earlier were proudly singing our group's song in full voice.

New Directions

My experiences with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program and other Indigenous outdoor education programs have been transformational both personally and professionally. I have also witnessed what appeared to be profound transformations in my students. Despite these successes, I am left with several questions regarding the partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors, the cultural balance or imbalance of the programs, and the co-existence and integration of Outward Bound and Indigenous philosophies. As reflected in my research questions that follow, I want to find out, "What are we doing and why, are we doing the best job possible, and how can we improve?" My hope is that this reflexivity in research will result in enhanced instructional practice and programming and will also add to the body of literature on contemporary land-based Indigenous education—the sharing of Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and epistemologies in the context of the specific geographical and cosmological area where they evolved.

Research Questions

Overarching Question

What are the experiences of former participants, staff, and community members involved with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program?

Guiding Questions

1. What are the experiences of the research participants of engaging with Aboriginal course content during an Outward Bound Giwaykiwin course?
2. What ways have these experiences made a difference in the lives of the research participants?
3. How do the research participants' experiences relate to contemporary thinking in land-based Indigenous education?
4. How might these findings apply to improving the Giwaykiwin program?

Outline of Chapters

In this first chapter I introduced myself and related some of my experiences with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program. I also set the direction of my research and introduced my research questions. Chapter Two is a literature review, covering topics related to Indigenous and outdoor education generally, and land-based Indigenous education specifically. In Chapter Three, I introduce the methodology, methods, and limitations of this study. I also discuss pertinent issues in conducting research with, for, and by Indigenous peoples. The findings of my research are presented in Chapter Four. I discuss the findings and their implications in Chapter Five. This thesis concludes with my final reflections in Chapter Six.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Indigenous education is rooted primarily in relationships with specific land-bases (Armstrong, 1987; Cajete, 1994; Simpson, 2002). This is especially relevant to my research because there is concern over the degradation of this connection to the land in Indigenous communities worldwide (Takano, 2005; Thiong'o, 1986).

Simpson (2002) and Takano (2005) suggest that despite the existence of many land-based Indigenous educational programs, there is a distinct need for further research into their origins and outcomes. In this chapter, I review a selection of literature relevant to Indigenous land-based education from related fields such as outdoor and environmental education and Indigenous studies. Initially, I explore Takano's (2005) study with Paariaqtuqtut, a land-based Indigenous education program developed in Igloolik. Next, Simpson's (2002) recommendations for developing Indigenous land-based education programs are used as a framework for discussing other relevant literature.

Paariaqtuqtut

One study that does examine Indigenous land-based education is Takano's (2005) description of a community-developed land-based cultural education program based in Igloolik, Nunavut. Takano, a researcher of Japanese descent, participated in Paariaqtuqtut, a 400 km journey through the community's ancestral territory in May 2002. Paariaqtuqtut means "meeting on the trail" in Inuktitut and was developed by a group of community members and Elders. Paariaqtuqtut aims to connect young people with cultural skills and teachings in a land-based context. During the journey, Elders and other community members used Inuit modes of education such as role-modeling, small

group learning, infusing cultural values into practical lessons, and hands-on learning in real-life situations such as hunting and fishing. Takano employed a case study approach using ethnographic data collecting techniques. She wanted to explore the motivations behind the development of Paariaqtuqtut. She also hoped to record the experiences of the participants and their instructors during and after the program.

Takano (2005) found that the community members in Igloolik were concerned that many youth were losing connections with their land and culture. Those interviewed observed that this leads to youth feeling lost between two worlds, disconnected from their community and culture, yet unprepared to live in the Western world. Takano also recorded the experiences of several participants who felt that Paariaqtuqtut had helped them to reconnect with their land and culture. This article provides a solid example of an ethnographic study of a land-based Indigenous education program. However, the Paariaqtuqtut program differs from Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin program in that the expedition was developed and led by community members, rather than contracted to a culturally disembedded outside organization.

Indigenous Outdoor and Environmental Education for Cultural Survival

Simpson's (2002) work in Indigenous environmental education draws on her experiences as an Indigenous student and program developer in a Western educational system to suggest guidelines for creating culturally-relevant and authentic learning environments for Indigenous students of environmental education. These include: supporting decolonization, grounding programs in Indigenous philosophies of education, allowing space for the discussion and comparison of Indigenous and Western

epistemologies, emphasizing Indigenous ways of teaching and learning, creating opportunities to connect with the land, employing Indigenous instructors as role models, involving Elders as experts, and using Indigenous languages when possible.

Lotz-Sisitka (2002), a South African of European descent, discusses her journey as an emerging researcher in the multicultural post-Apartheid context of the early 1990's in South Africa. Her use of her own story and reflections as the basis for discussing reflexive research as a valid form of qualitative inquiry provide a valuable example for my approach to this thesis, examining my own experiences with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program along with the experiences of former students and staff members.

For the remainder of the literature review, I use Simpson's (2002) guidelines as a framework and Lotz-Sisitka's (2002) example of reflexivity in research, to critically analyze my experiences with Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin program and to guide the direction of my research. I begin with a discussion of Simpson's theoretical suggestions and conclude with her more practical recommendations.

Supporting Decolonization

Simpson (2002) suggests that supporting decolonization is a key consideration for contemporary Indigenous education programs. The devastating impact of European colonialism on Indigenous people worldwide has been widely discussed. Widespread genocide, marginalization, and assimilation through the degradation of land, language and cultural traditions along with higher rates of health and social problems are commonly identified as the results of colonialism (Adams, 1999; Battiste, 1998, 2005;

Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Adams (1999), a Métis scholar and educator, also identifies “dispossession, subjugation, [and] political division” (p. 5) as the common results of European colonization. Adams proposes that colonization is perpetuated in societies where the colonizers have gone home or assimilated with the local Indigenous people such as Canada, the United States, or New Zealand in various ways. These include neocolonial education practices and restricted access to government services.

However, along with recognizing and addressing the impacts of colonialism, Longboat (personal communication, May 26, 2008) advocates an active revitalization and restoration of Indigenous cultures. Battiste (1998) also states, “Aboriginal peoples throughout the world have survived five centuries of the horrors and harsh lessons of colonization. They are emerging with new consciousness and vision” (p. 16). The revitalization of Aboriginal languages, epistemologies and pedagogies, recognizing the importance of the land, privileging Indigenous voices, the involvement of Elders in education, and Indigenous control of Indigenous education are key factors in the decolonization process (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002). In this study I examined the implications of decolonization and cultural revitalization for Outward Bound Canada’s Giwaykiwin program. I was interested in participants’ and other stakeholders’ perceptions of how successfully the Giwaykiwin program addresses the concept of decolonization.

Grounding Programs in Indigenous Philosophies of Education

A solid grounding in Indigenous philosophies is a key aspect of any Indigenous education program (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Cajete, 1994; Graveline, 1998; Goulet, 2001; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Takano, 2005). Simpson discusses the difficulty of achieving this grounding in contemporary Western educational environments. Battiste (2005) describes Inuit education as being, “derived from knowing the land where they live, including knowledge of the interrelationships among everything in their environment” (p. 129). She goes on to say that Inuit education comprises a holistic method of teaching young people how to live well in the world, equipping them with practical knowledge as well as social, spiritual, and emotional skills. She recognizes this holistic nature in the educational practices of many Indigenous cultures.

According to Outward Bound Canada (2006b), “Gawaykiwin courses combine the philosophy of Outward Bound with the values and teachings reflected in the Aboriginal community.” Hermes (2000) who cautions that, when Western and Indigenous approaches to education are blended, Indigenous approaches are typically subjugated to more dominant Western norms. In my experience, the blending of Outward Bound and “Aboriginal” philosophies is a challenging mandate to uphold and is distinct from the concept of grounding a program entirely in Indigenous philosophies.

Brookes (2004, 2006, 2007), following another line of critique, challenges the inherent value of outdoor education philosophies and pedagogical practices. He problematizes Outward Bound and other outdoor education programs that he proposes are based on a myth that long-term changes in character may occur through experiencing the physical, mental, emotional, and social challenges of completing, for example, a 10-

day canoe or backpacking expedition with a small group of peers. The concept of carrying over physical, mental, emotional or social skills that have been acquired during a short-term course into everyday life is called transference. Brookes suggests that while significant achievements may occur during Outward Bound courses, there is little evidence suggesting that a student who has participated in a one-three week Outward Bound course will successfully carry new skills in areas such as conflict resolution or decision making back into their everyday life. He even suggests that adventure-based courses can result in a decreased feeling of satisfaction with life post-course after experiencing such an exhilarating adventure. Brookes (2007) cites current psychological research and proposes that environment (social, pedagogical) is the primary influence on students' behaviour. Based on this position, he challenges the long-term pedagogical benefits of intensive one-three week Outward Bound courses because most students return to their usual home environments post-course. He suggests that while students may exhibit behaviour changes during their time at Outward Bound, they will most likely return to old patterns of behaviour upon returning to their original environments.

Outward Bound Canada claims that Giwaykiwin courses consist of a blend of Outward Bound approaches to adventure education as well as aspects of Aboriginal philosophies and pedagogies. The success of this blended approach is questioned. Questions also arise when considering the success of adventure programs in general, instructors' background and experience, the availability of curriculum materials specific to the Giwaykiwin program, and the challenge of balancing Indigenous course content with Outward Bound philosophies and requirements.

Comparing Western and Indigenous Philosophies

Simpson (2002) emphasizes the importance of creating a learning environment where Indigenous students are able to *critically analyze and compare* Western and Indigenous epistemologies. Historically, Outward Bound schools have adapted their programming in order to accommodate the specific needs of the communities that they serve (Richards, 2004). The integration of Outward Bound and Indigenous philosophies is a goal of the Giwaykiwin program (Outward Bound, 2006a; 2006b). As Giwaykiwin instructors, we are charged with the challenge of balancing our own cultural experiences and teachings while recognizing the diversity of our Indigenous students, as well as incorporating the philosophies of Outward Bound. For some students, this may be their first Outward Bound course as well as their first exposure to Indigenous epistemologies.

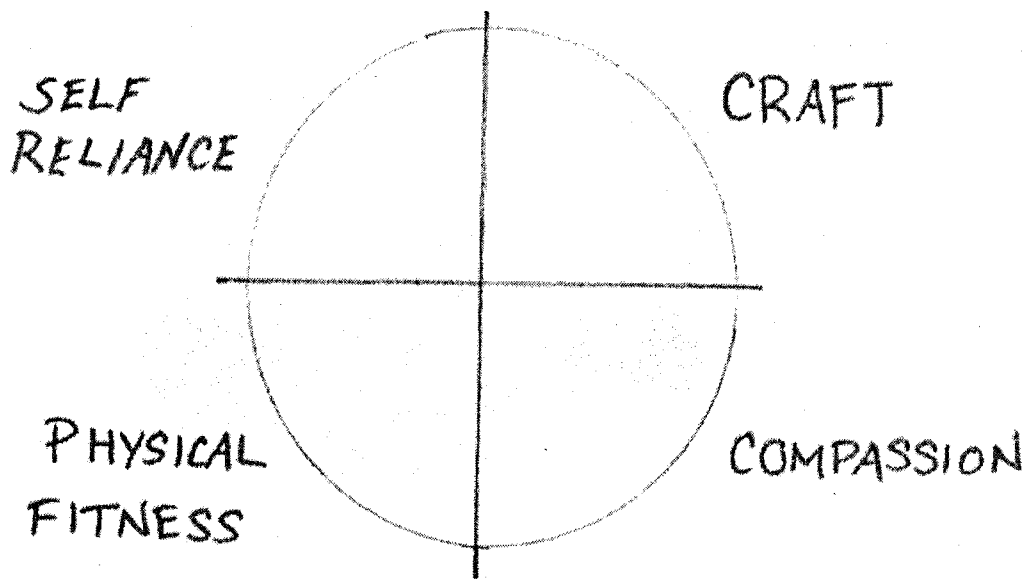
I've reflected on these issues both as a course participant and an instructor. Prior to my first Giwaykiwin course in July of 2006, I had the opportunity to go on an overnight solo at the conclusion of a staff canoe trip. Outward Bound courses greater than five days in length typically include a twenty-four or forty-eight hour solo (Outward Bound Canada, 2006a). While on solo, students are isolated from each other and provided with a moderate ration of food and a small tarp for shelter. Instructors check in with each student at regular intervals to ensure their safety. Intentionally created solitary experiences have been an important rite of passage in many cultures for millennia (Bodkin and Sartor, 2005). Discussion between instructors and students about the significance of solos in Aboriginal cultures and Western-style outdoor education is an

example of an opportunity to engage in the kind of analysis and comparison described by Simpson (2002).

During my own solo, through journaling and fireside meditation, I worked through significant learnings and experiences that I'd had on my staff trip. I also experienced an important epiphany. While thinking about my upcoming Giwaykiwin course, I realized that Outward Bound's four pillars: Physical Fitness, Self-Reliance, Compassion, and Craft (Mckenzie, 2003; Miner & Boldt, 2002; Outward Bound Canada, 2006a) might fit well into a discussion about the Medicine Wheel. The Medicine Wheel is common to some of North America's Indigenous cultures. As described by Bopp, Bopp, Brown, and Lane Jr., (1984), it is divided into four sections and represents, among others, the connectedness of the four seasons, the four directions, the four elements, the four races of people, and the four aspects of balanced health—emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual.

Examining Outward Bound's four pillars using the Medicine Wheel provides an opportunity to discuss the interconnectedness of the pillars (Lowan, 2006). From the perspective of the Medicine Wheel, if you are very strong in one pillar, but ignore another, your wheel will be lopsided and out of balance. I used this concept to discuss the four pillars and the Medicine Wheel with my Giwaykiwin students in July of 2006.

Figure 1. Medicine Wheel with Outward Bound's Four Pillars.



My students responded positively when we discussed the four pillars in relation to the Medicine Wheel. However, upon further reflection, I have begun to question whether this sort of cultural blending borders dangerously on post-colonial cultural appropriation? I find this to be an interesting concept, but I am left with questions such as: "Should we really be integrating these two concepts?" and if so, "What are the similarities and differences between these two models?" and finally, "How could this concept be presented to students and fellow staff members in a way that honours Indigenous knowledge?" I have also realized that my true understanding of the Medicine Wheel is limited. The following section explores these kinds of issues in greater detail.

Four Pillars, Four Directions. One important distinction that immediately emerges when comparing the Four Pillars and the Medicine Wheel is that while the Four Pillars is a model conceived as part of an educational philosophy, the Medicine Wheel represents an entire epistemology that transcends personal development and recognizes

the interconnectedness of all things, an entire way of viewing the world (Bopp et al., 1984; Cajete, 1994; Hampton, 1999; Kaltreider, 1998). While I have recognized that both approaches share the intention of developing healthy, balanced people, I realize that comparing them in this way reduces the Medicine Wheel to a model, rather than a representation of an entire epistemology.

Outward Bound's philosophy of healthy human development is encapsulated by its Four Pillars—Physical Fitness, Craft, Service (sometimes Compassion), and Self-Reliance (McKenzie, 2003; Outward Bound Canada. 2006a). The Four Pillars are representative of Outward Bound's educational philosophy—the hope is that students will complete their Outward Bound experience having improved in all of the Pillars and transfer them back to their daily lives, “transference” as described by Brookes (2006).

Several authors (Bopp et al., 1984; Cajete, 1994; Graveline, 1998) discuss the Medicine Wheel using the Four Directions—East, South, West, and North as a guide. The Medicine Wheel is used by some of North America's Indigenous cultures and while the terminology and specific teachings of the Medicine Wheel may vary from Nation to Nation or even person to person, the overarching themes are consistent (Bopp et al., 1984; Hampton, 1999; Kaltreider, 1998). As described by Bopp et al. (1984) it is a circle divided into four quarters and represents, to name only a few, the connectedness of the four seasons, the Four Directions, the four elements, the four races of people, and the four aspects of balanced health—emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual. It is important to recognize the interrelatedness of all of these concepts. Bopp et al. (1984) emphasize that no part of the Medicine Wheel can stand-alone—they are all related and in order for a

person to be healthy, they must seek balance, with themselves at the center of the Wheel.

This is an ongoing, lifelong process.

Another distinction that emerges when comparing the Medicine Wheel and the Outward Bound philosophy is in their approach to the natural world. Connectedness to the Earth and the rest of the Universe and their relationship to our health as people is integral in the Medicine Wheel (Cajete, 1994), while Outward Bound approaches the natural world as a learning environment where personal development may be achieved. Many Outward Bound schools promote a “Leave No Trace” policy of low-impact camping (Miner & Boldt, 2002; Outward Bound, 2006a), but this is very distinct from recognizing our constant relatedness to the Earth and all of Creation.

Emphasizing Indigenous Pedagogies

Armstrong (1987) discusses Indigenous pedagogy from her experiences of growing up in the Okanagan tradition in British Columbia. She also examines the process of knowledge generation and transfer in Indigenous cultures as well as problematizing contemporary Western educational methods. According to Armstrong, prior to colonial intervention, Indigenous education was intended to equip children with a holistic set of skills necessary to live a healthy and successful life. Simpson (2002) also highlights the holistic nature of Indigenous education:

Employing Indigenous ways of teaching and learning, including ceremonies, dreams, visions and visioning, fasting, storytelling, learning-by-doing, observation, reflecting, and creating, not only allows students to share and learn in a culturally inherent manner, but also reinforces the concept that Indigenous knowledge is not only content but also process. (p. 18)

Armstrong (1987) contrasts approaches to Indigenous education with contemporary Western schools that she describes as filling our students with very specialized knowledge, but failing to teach them basic skills necessary to lead successful lives upon graduation. Armstrong and Cajete (1994) suggest that Indigenous modes of education were developed through thousands of years of experience with the surrounding landscape. Armstrong describes Indigenous pedagogies such as learning through observation, role modeling, hands-on learning, and seasonal learning. In my experience, Giwaykiwin instructors effectively employ many of these techniques on a regular basis. Learning-by-doing, observation, time for reflection, creation, and storytelling are regular components of our courses. However, utilizing these pedagogies in a discreet short-term course is significantly different than their regular daily use by Indigenous peoples over thousands of years.

Connecting to the Land

Simpson (2002) recognizes that because Indigenous cultures developed out of a direct relationship with the land, it is most effective to teach culture out on the land. She also mentions that Elders are most comfortable teaching in natural environments where the topics that they are discussing are often more tangible. Cajete (1994) discusses this connection to the Earth in the Tewa tradition in everything from clan names and hunting rituals, to regional ethnobotanical knowledge of plants as food and remedies. Landmarks are also integral in the identities of many cultures. Referring to a conversation with Alfonso Ortiz, a Tewa Elder, Cajete (1994) discusses the Tewa saying of, "Look to the mountain," referring to Tsikomo, a sacred peak from which their people draw strength.

Cajete also emphasizes the importance of regional diversity amongst Indigenous peoples in their connection to the land. He states that:

Every cultural group establishes this relationship to its place over time. Whether that place is in a desert, a mountain valley, or along a seashore, it is in the context of natural community, and through that understanding they established an educational process that was practical, ultimately ecological, and spiritual. In this way they sought and found their life. (p. 113)

Cajete's (1994) description of Indigenous peoples' feeling of connection to a specific land-area, also known as a sense of place (Andrews, 1999), contrasts with the foundational philosophy of Outward Bound that persists today, as described by Miner & Boldt (2002):

Life enhancing experience is obtained through the sea, the mountains, the wild lake country, the desert. Outward Bound has evolved since those early Aberdovey days. But it has not departed from the essential essence of Hahn and Holt's essential concept of an intense experience surmounting challenges in a natural setting, through which the individual builds his sense of self-worth, the group comes to a heightened awareness of human interdependence and all grow in concern for those in danger or in need. (p. 37)

This quote illustrates the Outward Bound philosophy that personal development may occur through overcoming physical, emotional, and intellectual challenges in a natural environment. It is important to note that there is an emphasis that the natural world and its inherent challenges are presented as a *vehicle* for personal and group development. A growing number of scholars (Brookes, 2004, 2006; Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006) challenge this approach, common to many outdoor and environmental education programs, and argue for greater consideration of fostering a sense of place. Brookes (2004, 2006) questions the validity of philosophies and techniques developed in Western Europe and North America when, for example, working with Indigenous youth in the Australian outback. He suggests that outdoor

education programs must be acutely grounded within their geographical and cultural surroundings in order to deliver the most effective courses.

Regional considerations become acutely important in land-based Indigenous education where geography and culture intersect. A challenge that I have recognized in my work with Outward Bound is reconciling logistical, financial, and safety concerns with cultural and geographical considerations. For example, when I recently suggested that an upcoming Giwaykiwin course be conducted in the partner community's ancestral territory, I experienced resistance from Outward Bound. I was told that it is Outward Bound's policy that expedition routes must be scouted prior to conducting a course in that area and that for logistical and financial reasons, scouting was not possible before that particular course. It was stated that the long-term goal was to conduct courses in this particular community's territory, but that presently the expense of sending instructors out to scout the area was prohibitive. I also recently discovered that the same course is scheduled to run again in 2008 on the same river as last summer, several hundred kilometers away from the partner community's home territory.

Another issue is the selection of suitable instructors for culturally-based adventure courses. Brookes (2006) suggests that it is ideal to select instructors with significant knowledge and experience with the territory in which an expedition is conducted. This becomes especially critical on courses where knowledge of the land is inextricably linked with cultural understanding (Cajete, 1994; Simpson, 2002, Thiong'o, 1986). Perhaps the Giwaykiwin program would satisfy these concerns and greatly enhance the cultural authenticity of its students' experiences if they were to consciously seek out and employ instructors from particular regions with local geographical and cultural knowledge and

background. This issue links into another important consideration proposed by Simpson (2002), which is the inclusion of Indigenous instructors as role models.

Emphasizing Indigenous Instructor Involvement

Many authors recognize the importance of Indigenous people taking control of Indigenous education (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 2000; Kirkness, 1998). Simpson (2002) proposes that one aspect of this process is providing young Indigenous people with knowledgeable Indigenous instructors who are able to teach whatever course content is required and also relate to their students' issues and struggles. Lickers (2006) describes the contrasting approaches of contemporary, directive Western leadership and Aboriginal leaders who role model through example. He also states that within this general model of Aboriginal leadership, there exists a diversity of subtle differences from community to community.

The concept of providing culturally appropriate role models is not isolated to Indigenous peoples. Sleeter (2000/01) describes the importance of providing inner-city African American youth with African American teachers as positive role models.

Moore (1997) adds to this discussion from the perspective of a female professor teaching sociology courses on sexism. She describes the power of bringing a male professor into her classes as a guest speaker in order to provide an alternative, non-female perspective on sexism, the "ally" concept common in anti-racist discourse (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Graveline, 1998; Weiss, 2002). Allies may provide support to oppressed and subjugated peoples. They may also role model an attempt to understand and empathize with their experiences and advocate for their voices to be heard. This concept is relevant

to Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin program as instructor teams are often composed of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff members.

This is a topic that often comes up in discussions. People ask me how I feel about non-Indigenous instructors working with Indigenous youth. I am familiar with several instructors of non-Indigenous ancestry, who are very aware of Indigenous teachings and have many years of experience in working with Indigenous youth. These instructors are often powerful teachers for other instructors and students, Indigenous and otherwise, working as educated cross-cultural allies while being careful not to simply adopt or misappropriate Indigenous cultures. Pepper & White (1996) emphasize the importance of cultural teachers being properly trained and approved by their communities. This seems especially important when considering non-Indigenous instructors' involvement with programs such as Outward Bound Giwaykiwin.

The concept of creating cross-cultural educational environments is supported by Henley (1989) and Lertzman (2002). In his description of the Rediscovery program, an outdoor education program based on Indigenous cultures, Henley states, "Rediscovery brings together people from many different racial backgrounds ... when people from different races have the opportunity to talk to one another, to work and play together, then inevitably they begin to learn about each other's lives and cultures" (p. 35).

Brookes' (2004, 2006) discussion about the generic use of outdoor instructors in any geographical region could be extended to the area of cultural instruction as well. I often question the generic employment of Aboriginal instructors by Outward Bound and other organizations. As a southern, middle-class, urban-raised Métis, my cultural background and life experience are significantly different from that of students from, for

example, a northern Inuit community. What we might have in common is a shared perspective of being an Indigenous person in the modern political state of Canada, but beyond that the similarities are sparse. If the goal of a course were to impart wisdom specific to a particular culture, Inuit, for example, then wouldn't it be ideal to have an Inuit instructor or Elder present on course? Alternatively, one might argue that a northern-raised non-Inuit instructor familiar with Inuit culture could do a better job than someone like myself.

Through my work with Outward Bound and other organizations, I am often put into situations such as this. When faced with these kinds of potentially awkward cultural encounters, I just try to represent myself as honestly as possible and expect the same from my co-instructors. It is not my place to assume the role of a universal Indigenous instructor. I can only be myself.

Including Elders as Experts

Simpson (2002) and others (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Graveline, 1998) emphasize the importance of including Elders in all aspects of Indigenous education programs. She outlines their importance as keepers of traditional knowledge and culture. Simpson highlights the support and guidance that Elders provide not only for students, but also for instructors. She describes the importance of structuring programs to include Elders on a regular basis, not just as occasional novel guest speakers. This continuous format creates an environment where Elders are comfortable and able to teach in a more relaxed and natural way. Battiste (2005) speaks about the importance of a generational transfer of knowledge: "By building relationships with the land and its inhabitants, they [Elders]

come to understand the forces around them. Each generation then passes their knowledge and experience of the social and cultural contexts of their ecological origins to succeeding generations” (p. 122).

On our course last July, we spent one full day with an Ojibwa Sweatlodge Conductor in preparation for a Sweatlodge ceremony at his family home. He shared many teachings with us, but it was a regrettably short period of time in the context of our twenty-one day course. Our students expressed great pleasure in their time spent with the Conductor and his family. They welcomed us into their home and invited us to camp on their land. We shared a post-Sweatlodge feast and breakfast with him and his wife. We were treated as family, which was a real comfort after three weeks of expedition. For some students, this exposure to a healthy family life was somewhat new and several expressed a feeling of great security. Spending this time with the Conductor together with our students brought to light for me how similar in age I was to my students. I realized that the wisdom that this Conductor could provide for us was so much greater than my own as a young instructor. He taught from the perspective of his own Anishnabe (Ojibwa) culture, but in a way that welcomed those of us from different backgrounds. We were taught the history of the Sweatlodge and men and women’s unique roles in the ceremony. He strongly encouraged our students to use their Indigenous languages in the Sweatlodge even if no one else could understand them. Our time with him was invaluable, but short when compared to the total length of our 21-day course.

During my student teaching at Pelican Falls First Nations High School in Sioux Lookout, Ontario, Elders were always present. In our culturally based land-skills course we had an Elder present in class at all times. His leadership and wisdom were a

grounding force for students and teachers alike. He shared many stories of his time spent on the land hunting as a young man. He also taught the students many useful skills ranging from choosing the proper materials with which to make snowshoes to reading the weather and tracking animals. When students were having a tough day, rather than being scolded, they were encouraged to sit with an Elder in a quiet corner of the school. I found that the presence of Elders brought a sense of peace and security to the school environment. Teachers and students alike often sought them for advice. While I have had similarly positive experiences with Elders in my work with Outward Bound, I believe that the Giwaykiwin program would be enhanced by increased, longer-term involvement of Elders (Simpson, 2002).

Using Indigenous Languages

Simpson (2002) describes the importance of using Indigenous languages in Indigenous education. Indigenous languages developed through a relationship with the land and as with most languages, are highly reflective of cultural values and epistemologies. She emphasizes that using Indigenous languages is a tool for enhancing students' understandings of Indigenous knowledge as well as promoting cultural preservation.

Thiong'o (1986) speaks about the erosion of Indigenous language and culture from an African perspective. He recognizes the link between colonial domination, which included the forceful destruction of Indigenous languages, and a subsequent deterioration of culture. Thiong'o describes the importance of revitalizing Indigenous languages in the preservation of cultural knowledge due to its historical relationship with the land. This

echoes the statements of many Indigenous North American authors (Battiste, 2002, 2005; Cajete, 1994, Simpson, 2002).

On our Giwaykiwin course in July 2006, three students shared a common language but none of them spoke it fluently. Another student was quite familiar with her language and another was fully fluent in his language. Amidst this diversity of languages and experience levels, a beautiful thing happened. I would like to think that my role modeling the use of Ojibwa as much as possible, the Indigenous language with which I am most familiar, encouraged the students to use whatever language skills they had. Our students began teaching one another whatever bits of their own languages they knew. By the end our course we were speaking our own unique blend of Cree, Ojibwa, Mohawk, and English. In that situation, the significance was not in the technical use of each language, but in the celebration by our group of Indigenous language and the proud sharing that occurred between the group members. This leads me to question what is truly important—an Indigenous person's capacity to communicate in their language with other speakers or simply the freedom to reclaim the language in one's own life?

Conclusion

Conducting this literature review has been a dynamic process. Through comparing the works and opinions of various authors with my own limited experience, I have come to a greater understanding of pertinent issues in outdoor and Indigenous education. Following Simpson's (2002) guideline's for the development of culturally responsive Indigenous education programs provided me with a framework to shape my initial inquiry.

One of the significant challenges that I encountered in completing this literature review was not to come to final conclusions based solely upon my own experiences. I was constantly reminded of the importance of maintaining an open mind. The literature provided the framework for this study and helped me to design the methodological approach that I describe in the following chapter. I hope that the combination of a well-balanced literature review with an engaging methodology will lead the reader to experience increased understanding of the issues discussed in this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

This thesis is comprised of a case study in collaborative ethnographic inquiry (Lassiter, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Papa & Lassiter, 2003). Contemporary thinking about research with, for, and by Indigenous peoples is central to my methodological approach. My methods were shaped with these considerations in mind.

Conducting Research with Indigenous Peoples

The historic misuse and abuse of research conducted with Indigenous peoples has been well documented (Deloria, Jr., 1997; Lassiter, 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). A history of positivist anthropological and ethnographic approaches have left Indigenous peoples worldwide wary of researchers generally, especially non-Indigenous researchers. It was my intention to conduct this research in an empowering manner for all participants. Many of my research participants are Indigenous and I structured my methodology and methods to reflect my concern for their treatment. As a novice researcher, this was a daunting, but rewarding task. I received positive feedback regarding the methodology from several participants.

In developing my methodological approach, I was heavily informed by the work of Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) who has written extensively on the subject of decolonizing dominant academic research methods. Her experiences as an Indigenous Maori researcher in New Zealand have shaped her writing and influenced Indigenous researchers worldwide. Tuhiwai Smith uses Kaupapa Maori, a form of Maori-centered research as an example of an empowering form of Indigenous research. Kaupapa Maori is

research that is conducted by Maori people, for Maori people, to explore topics of concern to Maori people.

In this study I take the perspective of an urban-raised Métis person conducting research and working within a non-Indigenous educational organization seeking to provide culturally relevant education for Indigenous youth. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) identifies the challenges that exist for contemporary Indigenous researchers conducting research with Indigenous peoples. She discusses an insider as someone conducting research within his/ her own community of interest. A community of interest could be a workplace, a cultural community, or a sports team. Tuhiwai Smith cautions that insider researchers must seek a balance between their insider insights and maintaining a level of researcher objectivity. Similar to Lotz-Sisitka (2002), she proposes that constant reflexivity on the part of the researcher is one path to achieve this balance. Tuhiwai Smith also identifies the possibility of a shifting insider/outsider role as a researcher. In her own work she noticed that taking on the role of researcher within her own Maori community sometimes compelled other community members to treat her as an outsider. There appears to be an insider/outsider continuum at work in many research environments.

My own Indigenous ancestry situates me as an insider in my research activities within the Aboriginal community. However, I must preface this designation by recognizing the significant differences in culture, personal history, and family background between myself and many of my Aboriginal research participants. It is important for me to make this distinction in order to recognize the diversity of Indigenous people in this country, and I hesitate to speak generally about a “Canadian Indigenous culture.” I also share the experience of working as an instructor for Outward Bound

Canada with some of my research participants. My position as an instructor, involved in the development and implementation of the Giwaykiwin program, also situates me as an insider within the Outward Bound Canada community. Therefore, to some extent I have adopted an insider academic's voice and perspective in this study (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

Creswell (2002) describes reciprocity as a mutually beneficial, reciprocal relationship between a researcher and the people with whom they are working. This is an especially important characteristic in contemporary Indigenous research owing to a history of culturally destructive research (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Reciprocity recognizes that while you may be conducting research with a select group of individuals, they are members of a greater community, and that it is important to honour that community. Sometimes special cultural knowledge is shared in the course of research. As such, it is important for the researcher, whether an insider or outsider, to be aware of the regulations governing the use and dissemination of that knowledge. This relationship of reciprocity extends to post-data collection when it is important for the researcher to share his/her findings with his/her selected community to ensure its accuracy and to gain approval for its use. However, in this study I have engaged with collaborative ethnography, a methodology that requires an even greater level of reciprocity.

Methodology: Collaborative Ethnography

Lassiter (2000) extends the discussion around reciprocity further by proposing a new participatory methodology called "Collaborative Ethnography" (p. 610). Lassiter states, "Collaborative ethnography forces us to ask a question that may be difficult for some: What is more important—the people with whom we work or the discipline in

which we work?” (p. 610). This statement questions the fundamental motivations behind research—Are we pursuing research to advance our own careers, gaining status in the academic world while paying our participants mere lip-service? Or, are we truly committed to pursuing research as a form of activism, committed to our participants with the hope that the research will also be of some kind of emotional, social, or cultural benefit to them as well as furthering our own academic pursuits? Collaborative ethnography challenges us to go beyond simple member checking—verifying our findings with our research participants. In collaborative ethnography the researcher and research participants collaborate to discuss the *meanings* of the findings. This provides the opportunity for voice from what Lassiter calls a “Native point of view” (p. 611). Fyre Jean Graveline (1998) would call this First Voice, the opportunity for Indigenous and oppressed peoples to speak for themselves. In collaborative ethnography, the research participants are provided with the opportunity to participate in the production of the final product in such a way that their voices emerge more authentically in the text. Lassiter proposes that this form of inquiry produces work that is accessible to a wider range of people outside of the academic world and most importantly the research participants themselves. In conclusion, Lassiter quotes Vine Deloria Jr. (1997), an eminent Sioux scholar, “we have an opportunity to leave the colonial mentality behind us and bring the accumulated knowledge and insights of anthropology to bear on the larger arena of human activities.” (p. 611-612). Collaborative ethnography is a way of adapting the old methods of anthropological research to a new culturally empowering approach.

Methods

Glesne (2006) discusses a decision that must be made by qualitative researchers when determining sample size. She suggests that large samples allow for breadth, while smaller samples allow for greater depth in exploration. Following these suggestions and taking into account the in-depth nature of collaborative ethnography (Lassiter, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Papa & Lassiter, 2003), I began this study intending to recruit eight to twelve research participants: four to six former Giwaykiwin students as well as four to six Outward Bound staff members, Aboriginal Elders, and community members who have been involved with the program.

I successfully recruited nine adult participants. Outward Bound Canada provided me with contact information for two of the participants. I knew the other seven through my previous association with Outward Bound and Lakehead University and already had their contact information. Three of the participants were Aboriginal and had been Giwaykiwin students. One of these former students had also worked as an Assistant Instructor on non-Aboriginal specific courses. Four of the participants were former Giwaykiwin Instructors who would self-identify as "White." The remaining two participants were program administrators from Outward Bound who would also self-identify as "White." Unfortunately, no Elders were successfully recruited.

Participants were initially approached via a brief introductory electronic mail. If they expressed interest in participation, an official letter of invitation was presented along with appropriate consent forms by land-mail or in-person. Once consent was established, interviews were conducted.

Along with following standard ethics protocols, I attempted to honour Aboriginal cultural protocols. As Lickers (2006) describes, this can be challenging for the contemporary researcher owing to the cultural and religious diversity within Indigenous communities. Keeping this in mind, I also offered participants a small gift of tobacco, a practice for requesting the sharing of important personal information (CIHR, 2005 in Lickers, 2006). Maintaining this as a constant part of my study proved personally challenging when I was faced with non-Indigenous participants or those who were unfamiliar with the offering of tobacco. It challenged me to be transparent and consistent in explaining my intentions and the meaning of the offering to all participants. Regardless of their cultural background, all participants had the chance to receive tobacco if they wished.

My research data collecting techniques included keeping a limited field journal, collaborative examination of participants' course journals and other course artifacts (photos and souvenirs) and informal tape-recorded interviews. I developed a series of questions distinct from, but reflective of, my research questions to assist research participants in reflecting on their experiences with the Giwaykiwin program.

Following the suggestions for collaborative ethnography by Lassiter (2000, 2005a, 2005b), I provided the participants with repeated opportunities to be involved in the construction of this thesis. After transcribing the interviews, I sent the raw transcripts to each participant via electronic mail along with three guiding points for reflection. I asked them to share any further reflections that they had had since our initial interview, thoughts that arose after reviewing the transcript, as well as their ideas for sharing the findings of this study. Following Creswell's (2002) suggestions, once I had collected

their responses to these questions, I employed a colour-coding system for strongly emerging themes and sub-themes. Next, I began analyzing and interpreting the findings (Chapter 4). I selected portions of the interview transcripts that seemed relevant to my original research questions as well as others that spoke strongly to the participants' experiences. Finally, I presented these findings organized in themes from all nine interviews to each participant for data verification, confirmation of their anonymity, and any final reflective thoughts that they wanted to share. This final process was conducted primarily by electronic mail. In two instances, I carried on an extended dialogue with participants over areas of concern that arose through the collaborative process. In both instances this resulted in three more rounds of dialogue by electronic mail. These specific instances are discussed further in Chapter 4.

Limitations

This research studied the experiences of nine people who had been involved with the Giwaykiwin program as participants, instructors, and administrators. The findings will be of interest to the fields of outdoor, environmental, and Indigenous education. These findings were simultaneously limited and enhanced by my inherent perspective as an insider academic. They were also limited by the openness and willingness of participants to be forthcoming, which I attempted to enhance by being culturally and socially sensitive. Several potential Aboriginal participants, both former students and staff members at Outward Bound, indicated initial interest but withdrew before interviews were arranged. This affected the participant sample size and ratio of staff members to students and Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal was also a limiting factor.

Conclusion

The following chapter presents the findings of this study. The findings are organized by emergent themes (Creswell, 2002). Data was included or excluded based on its relevance to the original research questions, respect for participants' anonymity, and the requests of the participants themselves who had several opportunities to review the findings. Through collaboratively exploring our experiences and telling our stories, insight is provided into Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program. This information will be of benefit to the research participants themselves, the Giwaykiwin program, future Giwaykiwin students and staff, and the outdoor and Indigenous education communities in general.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

In this chapter I present the findings from the nine interviews that I conducted over the summer and fall of 2007 along with notes from ongoing collaboration with participants and my own field journal. Following the collaborative ethnography model (Lassiter, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Papa & Lassiter, 2003), I have included a significant amount of unedited interview transcriptions. This is intended to provide a clearer representation of the participants' thoughts and feelings than more traditional, heavily edited and interpreted data presentation.

The Participants

The nine people I interviewed have been involved with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program in various capacities. The sample included 2 students, 4 instructors, a peer-support instructor, a course coordinator, and a program director. The individuals (identified by pseudonyms) were

The Students:

Julie— An Aboriginal woman of Ojibwa heritage who participated in a 30-day Giwaykiwin Instructor development course for Aboriginal adults within the last five years. The course included preliminary activities at the Outward Bound basecamp, an extended canoe expedition in northern Ontario and a Sweatlodge ceremony in a northern Ontario First Nations community. One of Julie's instructors was Aboriginal and the other was White. Julie found out about the Giwaykiwin program through an Indian Friendship Centre.

Lisa— An Aboriginal woman of Ojibwa heritage who participated as a student on the same Giwaykiwin Instructor development course with Julie. Lisa registered after Julie told her about the course.

The Instructors:

Reggie— An Aboriginal man of Algonquin heritage who participated in a 21-day introductory staff training course in the early 1990's with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal participants and non-Aboriginal instructors. Reggie was also a participant in a 7-day Giwaykiwin instructor training course with exclusively Aboriginal participants and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors. Both courses were conducted in northern Ontario and included a canoeing expedition, along with high-ropes course activities and rock-climbing. After these courses, Reggie spent a summer working as an assistant instructor on a variety of non-Aboriginal specific courses.

Dan— A British man who participated with me on a recent Giwaykiwin course as a peer-support instructor. This was Dan's first significant experience with Aboriginal people in Canada. Peer support instructors are instructors-in-training, usually in their late teens or early twenties. They often serve as valuable bridges between instructors and students.

Candace— A Euro-Canadian female instructor who instructed on the same Giwaykiwin course as Dan and me. Candace came from a strong background of working with youth at risk in outdoor education. She had a limited amount of experience working with Aboriginal youth prior to our course.

Steve— A Euro-Canadian male instructor who led a Giwaykiwin course in northern Canada. Steve came to his Giwaykiwin experience with a strong background in expedition and youth leadership, but very limited experience with Aboriginal youth. His co-instructor was an Aboriginal woman who did not participate in this study.

Jack— A Euro-Canadian male instructor who led a thirty-day Giwaykiwin Instructor Development Course. The course was designed to train young Aboriginal adults as future Outward Bound instructors. Jack had extensive instructional experience with Outward Bound, but no prior experience working with Aboriginal youth or adults. His primary role in the course was providing expeditionary and paddling expertise, and leadership from a traditional Outward Bound perspective. Jack's co-instructor was an Aboriginal woman who did not participate in this study.

The Administrators:

Natasha— A Euro-Canadian female course coordinator who has coordinated several Giwaykiwin courses. Natasha had been involved with Outward Bound for over ten years, but had never instructed a Giwaykiwin course. She had a personal interest in Aboriginal culture, but limited direct experience with Aboriginal youth. Course coordinators supervise and provide support for instructors. New course coordinators typically receive general training at the beginning of each season. Giwaykiwin course coordinators do not receive any special training. They are often responsible for two to four courses at a time. They may also provide extra support to instructors for students who are ill or having serious behavioural

difficulties. Course coordinators do not typically accompany groups during the expedition portion of their courses. They remain at basecamp and may communicate with instructors using satellite phones.

Tim— A Euro-Canadian male who has been involved with Giwaykiwin program development for several years in an administrative role. Tim works with Aboriginal communities and social agencies to develop Giwaykiwin courses. He also recruits and selects instructors. Tim's duties also include screening and interviewing potential students, welcoming them at the beginning of their course, and coordinating closing celebrations at the end. Tim had some experience personally, professionally, and academically with Aboriginal communities prior to working for Outward Bound. He also comes from an extensive background of working with youth-at-risk.

Data Analysis

Following Glesne (2006), after completing interviews with the nine participants, I repeatedly read through each interview transcript both electronically and in hard copy. At first I simply read through the transcripts without making any notes of my own. Then, I began to make note of comments that stood out because of their relevance to my original research questions or their significance to each participants' experiences. For example, while important in building trusting relationships, especially in an Aboriginal context (Graveline, 1998), small-chat that was recorded and transcribed was not typically included in the findings.

After reading through the data several times and making initial notes, I began to note themes that appeared to be emerging. I began with general themes such as “Issues of Culture” or “Relationships” and eventually developed sub-themes that fit under these more general themes. For example, the sub-theme “Sweatlodge Experiences” fit under the general theme of “Issues of Culture.” These themes and sub-themes were organized using a colour-coding system. I noted Glesne (2006), who cautions novice researchers from over-coding text into tiny, fragmented sections, and refrained from breaking up individual sentences. After colour-coding themes in each individual transcript, I organized the data into themes in a new document that eventually became this chapter.

After organizing pieces of each individual transcript into themes and sub-themes and linking them together with my initial interpretations with reference to relevant literature, I sent the entire document (this chapter) back to all of the participants. Along with the document, I also asked them to respond with any further reflections they might have had since our initial interview, any new thoughts that arose after reading my initial interpretations, their impressions of the collaborative research approach, and also any thoughts they had for sharing the results of this study. I make reference to this throughout the findings, often noting whether the participants comments are from the initial interview, or follow-up dialogue. The participants’ experiences with the collaborative approach and their thoughts on sharing this study’s results are presented in Chapter 6.

The final stage involved deepening the discussion and interpretation of the participants’ experiences with reference to further literature. Throughout the writing process, I kept in touch with the participants through electronic mail, letting them know

when I reached significant points in the study, asking for clarification on certain comments, and if requested, sharing findings as they developed.

Emergent Themes

Out of the previously described analysis, four main themes with 12 sub-themes emerged.

These were:

1. The Outward Bound Giwaykiwin Experience: Blending Philosophies
2. Instructor Training and Program Development
 - Pre-Course Instructor Training
 - Instructor Development
 - Program Development
2. Issues of Culture:
 - Diversity
 - Ceremony
 - Sweatlodge Experiences
3. Connecting to the Land
 - Solo
 - Course Location
4. Relationships
 - Student-Instructor
 - Co-Instructor
 - Elder Involvement
 - Cross-Cultural Experiences

In what follows, I present these themes, emphasizing data from the interview transcriptions, along with support and discussion from relevant literature. The findings presented in the first section will help to frame the remaining themes. Along with the diversity of participants' experiences came a multitude of ways to interpret and organize their thoughts. The following presentation of the emergent themes presents the findings in one logical and organized fashion, bringing the participants' voices to the forefront.

The Outward Bound Giwaykiwin Experience: Blending Philosophies

Outward Bound founded the Giwaykiwin program in 1985 in response to a perceived need for programming specific to the needs of Aboriginal youth. Outward Bound Canada's literature and promotional materials (2006a, 2006b) describe the Giwaykiwin program as a blend of "Outward Bound" and "Aboriginal" philosophies and approaches to education. However, Hermes (2000) argues that blended educational programs situated in Euro-North American systems typically result in Aboriginal content being subjugated and devalued. In this study, many of the participants described their experiences with this concept from philosophical and practical perspectives. This seemed to be an appropriate starting point for presenting the findings as it responds to Outward Bound Canada's overall philosophical approach to designing Giwaykiwin courses.

During the interview sessions, the participants sometimes described their positive and negative student experiences with Outward Bound in general. For example, when I asked Lisa, a former student in a Giwaykiwin Instructor Development course, to describe what really stuck in her mind from her time at Outward Bound she replied:

Hahahahahaha... It was a... challenge.... That's the... point of Outward Bound uhmmm me and [Julie] have reflected upon the Outward Bound experience quite a few times and we both can't articulate how it changed us, but we just know that it has. But I think what sticks out is that it was hard at an interpersonal level for sure uhmm and not so much the physical stuff more I can't even describe.... I guess it was frustrating, that's the only word I know, it was frustrating.... And I think for me when I went into that experience I had a whole lot of high expectations I really did, I wanted to go in there and have this intense experience and ya know have it change me and everything would go la-dee-da and you go on with your life and I had a very different experience. So I think I was really disappointed at the end of it, but I wouldn't take back that experience either, like I think that it was really valuable to me.... I learnt a lot that I didn't expect... and the dynamics of the whole kind of group was a challenge, but I think that even though it was challenging, it did change me and I don't really know how.... Even now I look back and think... damn, I can't believe I did that.

Lisa described both positive and negative outcomes from her experience as a Giwaykiwin student. She identified that the physical and social challenges were significant and while she expresses some frustration with her overall experience, she recognizes that she was seeking these kinds of challenges when she came to Outward Bound. Her friend Julie also commented on the physical and social challenges of her experience:

Yeah, it was cool, we did some really cool stuff... like things that I never thought that I could do and it was really physically challenging for me... it was great... and I realized like, for my body how much it can handle, like so much... and how good I felt about being outside and being physically active all day long.... It was so awesome... I loved it.

After our interview, she reflected:

Being a part of it, that was what made my Outward Bound experience. On a whole, the experience has only furthered me as an individual. It has affected the way I think and it has pushed me to question where I am from and what do I want and need from this short time on earth.

Lisa also described her experience from a more philosophical perspective:

It felt like it was a focus... because... what did they always say... something about challenge... you gotta face the challenge! Some [expletive] that just got so tiring after awhile! I felt like it was... like they so believed in the values of OB,

that's great cuz OB is doing really positive things in the world but it almost got like cultish... you know? I felt like... no... I don't need OB in my life to be a good person.... But I think that I did learn.... Service was definitely something that I took from OB and brought it into my own life now and even though they're always talking about challenge.... I look back now and I'm like, if I can do that, I can adlib anything ... in terms of confidence in different situations, that they helped me with that for sure and again fear, facing your fear and pushing through ... appreciating the challenge ... those were the values that stood out for me.

Lisa's thoughts about the "cultish" aspects of Outward Bound are not new. In fact, Mallet (2004) briefly discusses the "cultish" reputation of Outward Bound. In my own experiences, instructors at Outward Bound also regularly joke about its cultish environment. Lisa's comments are reminiscent of Hermes' (2000) concerns about the predominance of Western content in blended programs and emphasize the powerful presence of Outward Bound philosophy during her Giwaykiwin experience. Lisa also described some further frustrations with Outward Bound philosophy and history:

It didn't really interest me ... the whole Kurt Hahn thing ... I couldn't relate to it ... was he German? See I remember ... I just couldn't relate to some German guy, but I guess that something did stick ... you could kind of tell it was just something they had to do too ... so it kind of felt like they weren't really invested in it ...

When I asked, "Would it have been more effective if it was less canned? Like in conversation?" She responded, "Yeah, more casual ... I don't know how else they could provide that info ... maybe have us read a booklet or something ... read it on our own ... I don't know." In her comments provided below, Lisa gave suggestions for how her Outward Bound experience could have been better. She identifies two key areas where Outward Bound could improve its course delivery for Aboriginal students—less focus on time and also to soften the focus on Outward Bound philosophy to allow for more "Native" content. Lisa's comments point to Simpson's (2002) suggestion that Indigenous education programs must be rooted and shaped by Indigenous philosophies. Taking this

into consideration may result in a dramatic shift in the way that Giwaykiwin courses are designed from a logistical, course planning perspective. In our interview, Lisa also shared her thoughts on approaches to time during her course:

Not to push so hard, you saw it, every day we had to be from this point to that point by this hour, and the next day the same.... I know that's the Outward Bound philosophy, push, push, push, but for Native people, it doesn't quite work that way, what's the rush? Let's appreciate a good sunset... or "we're tired we wanna sleep" that I really struggled with... there was always this frantic feeling of go gogogogogo, we missed opportunities to just sit and be together as a group and I don't think our group was ever cohesive because I felt they didn't do a strong enough job of building trust within the team... I felt like I trusted [instructor] because of [instructor's] air, I felt closed though, they should have asked us more about ourselves... to me that's basic group stuff, context, they never did that... and the feedback at the end was hard to take because of that, some of it was helpful, but it was kind of weird... they gave [Julie] a hard time... overall it was good though, I wouldn't take it back... it's hard to summarize... I think they need to tweak the program to teach Native people at their level and learn from them. Their agenda was so strong the entire time, Outward Bound has an agenda, but it almost conflicts in some ways with the Native way.... Time, time, time, it lost some magic because of that... I felt like I lost some of the experience... not being able to appreciate things....

Lisa's comments on approaches to time during courses relate to Simpson's (2002) assertion that courses that are truly grounded in Indigenous epistemologies will be designed and implemented in fundamentally different ways than those based on Western ideologies. In my experience, Giwaykiwin courses are designed using a standard Outward Bound template based on the original concepts that were developed by its founder, Kurt Hahn, in Germany and the United Kingdom in the early 20th Century (Miner & Boldt, 2002). As an instructor in my first season, I experienced the "pushiness" that Lisa described, trying to keep a group on track to complete a long expedition in a set time frame. Prior to my second season I was able to consult with Outward Bound and suggested that our Giwaykiwin expeditions be shortened to allow more flexibility with time. This resulted in a much more relaxed atmosphere where we were able to enjoy

being out on the land, modifying our schedule according to weather and the group's needs, rather than rushing from campsite to campsite.

Steve, an instructor on a recent northern course, expressed concern for what he perceived as an overemphasis on standard Outward Bound course content with a lack of Aboriginal content:

My understanding was that basically what we were doing was more of a regular style Outward Bound course with Aboriginal youth on this northern river... the [funder] that was helping facilitate this in the North gave us a few ideas of what they were framing the course as and those were things like developing skills, leadership skills, inner confidence, and things that very well overlapped and meshed well with the Outward Bound philosophy and process ... which was great. And I think well, there wasn't a strong cultural component added to the course and I don't know why that was and personally I find that disappointing in one sense. But I think more accurate is just that it's not developing this course to it's full potential because I think that there's a lot more that could be done in terms of drawing on First Nations... or Aboriginal philosophy and how that can even mesh with the Outward Bound process because I think there's... opportunity for more to have been done in that regard on this course ...

Steve comments are reminiscent of Julie and Lisa's thoughts on the lack of Aboriginal content on their courses.

From a managerial perspective, Tim had some thoughts on customizing course content:

For me it's the idea of having programming that's custom made for communities and being able to fine-tune the elements of the program to particular cultures, not just using a standard approach.

Hermes (2000) problematizes this type of blended approach and states that in blended courses, Aboriginal content is often devalued and underemphasized. Tim also related his experiences with Aboriginal peoples and philosophies to his understanding of Outward Bound philosophy:

Whenever I'm going to have a meeting or a community discussion or presentation, I feel like I'm always trying to look at what the core beliefs of OB

are and what it is that we express through our work and trying to find those parallels that exist in their communities, so that they're able to see that it is moving in a similar grain to what is important to them so they don't feel that we are imposing a system of education or a system of philosophy that is alien to what is important to them. I think that by trying to create that fluidity in talking about what we do has caused me to examine what it is that we do. I've found different ways of saying that or illustrating that through photos so that people can really see through the window of what we do and see the heart of our courses. I think it's a constant process of reassessment.

Tim's comments in this last passage raise a point of caution. While his comments are encouraging and reflect on the obvious care and thought with which Tim engages in his work, I think that we still need to be very careful when engaging in comparisons between Outward Bound and Aboriginal philosophies and ideals. Tim himself recognized in his interview the diversity that exists in contemporary Aboriginal communities. The concept of interpreting Outward Bound's mission and values to appeal to different communities seems natural, but I believe that caution must be exercised. Hermes (2000) suggests that blending Aboriginal and Western approaches to education usually results in Aboriginal elements being subjugated to dominant Western norms. However, Longboat (personal communication, May 26th, 2008) also proposes that if programs are built on an Aboriginal foundation, successful blending may be possible. While some similarities do exist, as I discussed in the introduction and literature review with reference to Outward Bound's four pillars and the Medicine Wheel, Outward Bound and Aboriginal philosophies are far from identical. While potentially effective in building relationships, such comparisons could be construed as manipulative. Also, as mentioned in the literature review, comparing Outward Bound's educational philosophy with Aboriginal epistemologies reduces these epistemologies to models rather than representations of a worldview. The results of this study suggest that Outward Bound Giwaykiwin programs are strongly

situated in Outward Bound philosophy and practice with varying degrees of Aboriginal content. Perhaps a more critical approach to comparing Indigenous and Western philosophies as suggested by Simpson (2002) would provide a transparent format to engage in philosophical comparisons.

After reading the previous passage, Tim responded by e-mail:

I guess what I would like to clarify is that I don't think when I am meeting with communities that I am trying to demonstrate that our philosophies are the same and would agree that would be a naïve and simplistic notion. What I am trying to say is that it is important to identify the places where some of our objectives and values are aligned, because it helps to forge a bridge upon which students can travel between the landscape they are from and the landscape of their course experience. In our conversations together, community leaders are coming to us with a shopping list of objectives and values that they are hoping to craft in their youth. During that conversation, we identify together those objectives, assets and values that can be promoted through the course experience. Things like respect, courage, self-reliance, community, communication, co-operation and compassion are all assets that communities have said that they would like to see fostered in their youth. These are things that regardless of cultural framework, Outward Bound delivers powerfully.

Again, while this type of comparison seems promising, it ignores the holistic nature of Aboriginal epistemologies represented by teachings such as those represented by the Medicine Wheel (Bopp et al, 1994). If these courses were more founded upon Aboriginal cultures, these kinds of concepts would be taught through role modeling, as natural aspects of healthy people and their surrounding environment. They would not be isolated and delivered as desirable "assets." Tim continued in his response:

I want to be clear that in no way do I subscribe to the belief that the philosophies of Outward Bound and those of Aboriginal communities are identical. True partnership comes from investing the time in discovering together where those two worlds can and do overlap and then to help youth explore and develop those assets that lie upon that common path. I don't want to sound defensive, I just really want to make sure that you understand my comment in the transcript.

There are two important things to consider:

- 1) That programs from further in the past may not have operated with the same intent as those that are being created today.
- 2) That the [current northern partnership] operates with little or no specific cultural content at the request of the community. So to say that Giwaykiwin programs are strongly situated in Outward Bound philosophy and have varying degrees of Aboriginal or cultural content would be an accurate one, but its presence or absence is not the key ingredient that definitively identifies it as being a Giwaykiwin program or not.

I would say that Giwaykiwin programs are simply those that work with Aboriginal participants.

Tim's comments at the end of this last passage illustrate clearly that Giwaykiwin courses are based on a standard Outward Bound model, with varying degrees of "Aboriginal" content. This differs greatly from the suggestions of proponents of decolonization (Battiste, 2002, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) who propose that Indigenous education programs must be grounded primarily in Indigenous philosophy and pedagogy.

Tim continued:

Each contract is then specifically designed and defined in conjunction with the community to reflect the course objectives and values they would like to see promoted. This includes the level of cultural framework and traditional content. For the Arctic... expeditions, this means very little cultural content and more of a focus on cultural sensitivity to learning styles as leadership curriculum is delivered. For the [Northern Cree], this means creating a forum for youth to develop specific assets that Outward Bound delivers strongly on and for youth to spend time in the presence of inspirational and appropriate role-models.

In the previous passage, it seems interesting that communities are requesting "little cultural content." Lickers (2006) discusses considerations for contemporary Aboriginal leadership and education. He cites Yukl's (2002) description of contemporary Western-style leadership who states, "Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it

involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization” (p. 2). From an Aboriginal perspective, Lickers describes ideal leaders as kind, warm, humorous, generous, community-minded, culturally and spiritually knowledgeable, and someone who leads by example rather than directing others.

Lickers (2006) suggests that contemporary Aboriginal leadership development should include historical stories and teachings from an Aboriginal perspective and that Aboriginal leadership methods can be adapted by Aboriginal organizations working within modern society. However, he also cites Alfred (2005) who recognizes the challenge for contemporary Aboriginal organizations to utilize Aboriginal approaches to leadership in contemporary, Western-dominated society where Aboriginal land and culture have been eroded or lost completely. Lickers also recognizes the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and therefore states that no singular definition delineates the components of Aboriginal leadership. Rather, each community or Nation must reflect on their own understanding of what it means to be a good leader and how leaders are developed.

In the same email previously presented, Tim concluded:

This is a starting place with a goal for the future of moving towards more community involvement and more specific traditional teachings as our relationship deepens. These things exist on a real spectrum just as each community is. We definitely have things to develop and improve to ensure that course objectives are clear and easy to deliver, but I wanted to remind that some of the absence of traditional content is by design and by request.

Tim’s final comments illustrate the dynamic complexities of the Giwaykiwin program in delivering uniquely tailored courses for specific communities and populations. He seems to be aware of the desirability of higher levels of community involvement and mentions

the inclusion of cultural teachings. A community-centred approach similar to Paariaqtuqtut (Takano, 2005), the land-based program in Igloolik, could be one model to follow. Also, it would be important that if cultural teachings are included, that they are led by properly trained and approved people, ideally from the participants' home communities (Pepper & White, 1996).

The previous two pages represent hours of thoughtful reflection by Tim and myself exploring a topic of significant concern to the Giwaykiwin program. This kind of ongoing dialogue follows the model for collaborative ethnography described by Lassiter (2000). This last passage represents the third official round of communication between Tim and I regarding this topic. Wrestling with the issues presented in this section provided the original impetus for me to begin this study. As the participants have also related, I had the sense that many of my students were having generally positive experiences with the Giwaykiwin program. However, something was not quite sitting right with me philosophically. The concerns raised by the research participants have confirmed some of my suspicions, describing the philosophical ambiguity created on some Giwaykiwin courses. Julie and Lisa described some positive experiences that they had with challenging themselves in the Outward Bound fashion. However, similar to Hermes (2000) concerns, they also expressed frustration with the dominance of Outward Bound philosophy over genuine "Aboriginal" contents. Tim clearly described current Giwaykiwin courses as being strongly situated in Outward Bound philosophy and simply those courses that work with Aboriginal youth. This approach seems to come into conflict with contemporary decolonizing literature (Battiste, 2002, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith,

1999) that suggests that Aboriginal education programs should be primarily situated in Aboriginal cultures and traditions. Models such as Paariaquqtut, a community developed and delivered program (Takano, 2005) could be used as models for Outward Bound to follow in their partnerships with Aboriginal communities and organizations.

Instructor Training and Program Development

Issues surrounding instructor training (pre-course) and development (longer term) often came up in the interviews. The discussions ranged from instructors stating that they needed more extensive training prior to their Giwaykiwin experience to suggestions for future instructor and program development. Some participants also discussed how their Giwaykiwin experience related to their personal and professional development. I chose to place this theme near the beginning of this chapter because many of the other themes seem to be fundamentally related to staffing and course design and it seemed appropriate to introduce this section as background information.

Pre-Course Instructor Training

While most of the instructors interviewed began their Giwaykiwin courses with high levels of experience leading standard Outward Bound courses, several described beginning their Giwaykiwin courses with minimal or no experience with Aboriginal people. While most had related experience working in the outdoors with youth-at-risk or the occasional Aboriginal student, most non-Aboriginal instructors described feeling culturally unprepared for their Giwaykiwin courses. Scholars of White privilege warn that Whites are often unaware of the power that is afforded them based on skin colour

and ethnicity and unintentionally perpetuate racist attitudes and practices towards marginalized peoples (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002).

Steve, an instructor, discussed his experiences:

Myself basically, I have an overall general interest in Aboriginal programs and Indigenous education coupled with wilderness experiences, but very little first hand experience facilitating these experiences in the past. So it was a first for me... and it was a treat for me so it's something that hopefully has begun more experiences that will happen in the future...

Candace, another instructor, shared similar thoughts:

I was hired as an instructor specifically for Giwaykiwin... because a lot of the students were youth-at-risk... I have some background with youth-at-risk and I was really excited about the learning that I could also have from participating in the course.... I'd worked out west with a few [Aboriginal] groups... but not necessarily with a First Nations focus. The focus was on experiential education and they just happened to be First Nations people.

In the previous passage Candace described her lack of experience with Aboriginal programs and her hope to learn about Aboriginal culture while also instructing. This seems somewhat problematic and suggests that Outward Bound is perpetuating aspects of unconscious White Privilege (McIntosh, 1989) by placing inexperienced White instructors in leadership roles with Aboriginal students. This assumes that the Euro-Canadian norms perpetuated by inexperienced White instructors are the standard with the hope that instructors may learn a few things about Aboriginal cultures and people during their courses. If courses were more community-based, these kinds of situations could also be avoided by including more culturally experienced community members as instructors. Also, culturally inexperienced staff could be provided some form of cultural sensitivity and knowledge training prior to their courses.

Jack, also a former instructor, gave an example of a cross-cultural conflict from his course that he felt could have been avoided if he'd been more culturally prepared:

I remember having a stare-down with a participant, thinking that it was my role as the instructor to not show weakness and just turning into a very quick and unhealthy power struggle. So I realized that I need to end this with some degree of humour or something and we're just on two different playing fields... and I didn't understand the eye contact thing until reading a pamphlet after the course had finished and going, "Whoa, I just pulled a no-no!" So yeah, I could have been better prepared and knowing what to expect and how to deal with blanket statements of native populations... some of the keys to communication and faux-pas, like eye-contact....

Jack's comments here are troubling. They not only raise concerns regarding cross-cultural interaction and generalizations about Aboriginal cultural stereotypes, but also instructor/ student power imbalances (Brown, 2002, 2003). Again, similar to Candace, Jack seemed to have been placed in an instructional position with no prior cultural understanding, experience or training. His comments suggest that he was unaware of the cultural that he held as a White male instructor working with Aboriginal students. He described feeling the need to exercise authority over his student and initially did this by having a "stare-down," unaware of Aboriginal cultural norms regarding eye contact and effectively exerting White cultural norms over an Aboriginal student. Jack also recognized that he was unprepared for these types of cultural conflicts and gave suggestions for improving Giwaykiwin instructor training:

I think that, looking back to my own culture shock, making more info available to instructors on what to expect potentially and just capturing some of the stereotypical cultural norms that are part of Native culture, giving you a bit of a headstart.

While making constructive comments, Jack also refers to "stereotypical cultural norms," seemingly unaware of the diversity of North American Aboriginal peoples (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000).

When I asked Natasha about what she felt could have improved her experience as a Giwaykiwin course coordinator, she replied:

Being on the course! Hahahahahaha! Well, having more knowledge to bring on culture and if I understood... like an example is... the offering of tobacco, but I don't know what the boundaries are.... I'm not Native and I think that everyone has different interpretations of what those boundaries are and whether it would be appropriate for me... as coordinator I am supporting folks... but I need more knowledge....

Natasha's comments suggest that improving Outward Bound's cultural awareness should extend beyond the instructional staff to coordinators and managers who are also involved with the program. A community-based approach, similar to that of Paariaqtuqtut (Takano, 2005), could be one way to address this issue. If experienced community members from the students home communities were more involved with courses, they could serve the dual role of being culturally aware leaders for students while also providing cultural training for other instructors unfamiliar with their community's particular culture and traditions. Another strategy would be engaging students in discussions about their understandings of their culture and further learning expectations throughout their course experiences.

Instructor Development

Several of the participants interviewed had suggestions for long-term instructor development. Tim, a manager, identified finding and maintaining a qualified staff pool as an ongoing challenge:

When I first arrived here this was a branch of programming that I wanted to see flourish more and I think that we're on our way. I think that the next step will be to find ways to build a base of instructors, whether those are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal and finding that balance point to create really powerful programming.

He also identified the potential for developing instructors from within the communities that currently participate in Giwaykiwin programs:

The second thing is finding the opportunities for young people to become involved in a different capacity if they wish. Now that we have a couple of years behind us with these partnerships, the possibility comes forward for students who've become graduates to take a leadership role in their communities to help facilitate these programs at some point. Being able to provide internships for young people in a way that works for everybody. To find ways to draw on the resources in their communities, "Like, yeah they exist here," like mentors and people in their own living places that they can spend time with and get advice.

Proponents of decolonization would support instructor development within communities (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002).

This kind of approach would have to be primarily developed by the communities themselves, otherwise standard Outward Bound norms would simply be perpetuated and passed on to the future students of the newly trained instructors. Under this kind of scenario, perhaps Outward Bound could be involved as risk management and outfitting consultants, sharing their expeditionary experience but not designing curricula. Many scholars would also suggest that Elders must also be involved. This could create more culturally relevant and community-based programs similar to Paariaqtuqtut in Igloolik that was developed and led by a local Elders' organization (Takano, 2005).

Program Development

Participants also discussed their ideas for improving the overall design of the Giwaykiwin program. Reggie, who grew up in an Aboriginal community, had an interesting idea for exposing youth from remote communities to urban centres:

What would be really good is... like New York City's urban courses... I've often wondered how that would work here for Indians coming off the reserve and getting lost in the urban centres... why not plan a course for Indians coming off

the reserve a 21-day excursion in the city? I always thought that would be interesting....

Jack also shared some of his thoughts on customized programming and increased instructor involvement with partner communities:

Well, the little that I know these days is that [program director] has been monumental in meeting with different communities and figuring out how we can carve out programs that are able to run effectively and are interesting and important for the Native communities that we are offering them too. What I do think is that we could be putting more people into Native communities... from [program director] to others running it, there's a watering down... unless you've seen it yourself or been part of the planning process. And so if we could offer opportunities for instructors who are going to be working these course to be involved with the communities I think that's a growth opportunity.

Natasha echoed some of Jack's thoughts and also suggested the need for more established cultural curricula, not only relying on Aboriginal instructors to provide cultural expertise solely based on their Aboriginal heritage:

I think that our curriculum is pretty loose... we're like, 'Okay we've got a Native instructor so they're going to bring the Native component.' And we definitely could focus more on curriculum development... more clarity on where we're coming from and I think connecting more with communities and building trusting relationships.

Natasha's comments on curriculum are interesting and they resonate with thoughts that I have had in the past as a Giwaykiwin instructor. However, given the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and cultures (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000), it would be inappropriate to develop a cultural curriculum that would be used for every course. At the end of the previous passage, Natasha seems to recognize this need for a more individualized, community-based approach that would allow for grounding each program in the cultures of respective communities.

When I asked Julie, a former student, for her ideas on program development she responded, "I think that this program could have been ... a lot stronger, but it wasn't."

Her suggestions for improvements included, "... more about ecology, survival skills, gathering plants for food and medicine, fishing...".

Jack concluded his comments on instructor and program development by recognizing the need for maintaining relationships with students after their Giwaykiwin experiences:

I believe that there's probably some value in offering participants on some Native programs a visual layout of an avenue that's available as they grow as leaders in their own communities or outside their communities... That it's not just a drop in the bucket where you go to OB once and you're now a leader... Going back to communities where the old stimuli, good or bad are there, and offering at least options down the road if they want to become leaders, we could be facilitators of that process in some ways... and really, really nailing the point of transferable learning... not just being a story they did once... we want to be more than that, a pivotal point in somebody's life in terms of helping them to define what they like to do or directions they'd like to take and how to start that.

Jack's comments on students becoming leaders in their communities relates to Lickers' (2006) discussion of the contrast between contemporary Western concepts of leadership with Aboriginal approaches. Lickers describes leaders in the Western tradition as directive while leaders in Aboriginal cultures lead through example. The kind of post-course continuity that Jack is describing would be more achievable if more Giwaykiwin instructors came from the same communities as their students. Brookes (2007) would most likely approve of a community-based approach as it would provide students with a consistent environment after their course experience. This could also result in situating courses more solidly in local cultures rather than in a pan-Aboriginal or Outward Bound philosophy.

Issues of Culture

Various topics around culture inevitably became the focus of many of my interviews. The major sub-themes that arose in this area were: diversity, ceremony, and the Sweatlodge experience.

Diversity

The importance of recognizing diversity emerged as a very strong theme in my data analysis. Students and staff interviewed repeatedly discussed issues of cultural and regional diversity within Giwaykiwin courses as well as at Outward Bound in general. Several participants also discussed the linguistic diversity of their Giwaykiwin experience.

Diversity of Aboriginal Participants. Several research participants commented on the diversity that existed on their Giwaykiwin amongst course participants. This was repeatedly emphasized as a crucial point of consideration in respectfully delivering Giwaykiwin courses to contemporary Aboriginal youth. For example, at one point Lisa described the composition of her group:

[Student] was a city Indian from down in [southern Ontario city], but her family is very traditional in their practice. There was the other two guys. One guy was from down south near [southern Ontario city], on the border and he was like this... Mohawk... I don't know what their tribe is, And there was [student] who was a total, total, full-on... Cree from up north ... only speaks Cree with you know [Aboriginal instructor]. And then [non-Aboriginal instructor] and me and [Julie], we are mixed [Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal].... so there was definitely diversity within the group.

Reggie echoed Lisa's thoughts when discussing his experiences with his Aboriginal Instructor development course. He also described his experience as a mirror,

highlighting the differences between himself and other Aboriginal participants. Reggie commented:

The other thing that stuck out was the chance to meet Indians from all over Canada. And understanding that we are all different, we all have a different background. One of the students from BC, her family supported itself picking mushrooms. Quite a few of the students had been through residential schools and realizing how fortunate I was that my parents understood and acknowledged what happened to them and trying to better themselves by going beyond that... that was really interesting...

Candace, an instructor, also discussed the diversity of a course that she and I worked together:

We were a really diverse group traveling together and ... Yeah, I got to learn a lot from the participants and my co-instructor [Greg] just to learn how many different life paths First Nations youth can have and their experiences too. And relating it back to being First Nations youth because that was a theme of the course.

Tim, a program manager, put it eloquently:

I think there's times in the past when we've had some very unique groups that have been put together. Like groups from all over Canada. While that has its own challenges with bringing people together in the first place... has some really neat power from the point of view of the youth learning about each other and realizing how vast Aboriginal culture is in Canada and how diverse it is and that their experience of their own aboriginal identity can be very different to others living in other parts of the country in different communities... on-reserve, off-reserve, whether they're connected to family and heritage or not.

Overall Diversity of Outward Bound. Reggie expressed that he enjoyed the overall diversity around the Outward Bound basecamp. At one point he stated, "just meeting all the other staff workers — we had doctors, med. students, a stockbroker, just a variety of people, I remember a lot of that. Yeah, you know we learned that everyone laughed and cried and smelled funny!"

During our discussion, Reggie provided several insightful suggestions with regards to the structure and intention of Giwaykiwin courses. When asked his opinion about culturally designated courses, Reggie responded:

I believe it's situational... and who's teaching who? You know we talk about culturally appropriate, who's culture are we talking about... you know what works for Ojibways in Ontario may not work for plains people or the West or East coast... and who's spirituality are they talking about?

Linguistic Diversity. Steve also described the linguistic diversity of his course:

So we had... nine participants in the end and they were from various communities across [the North]... They were youth between the ages of 15... I think that the oldest one was 22. Although all of the students could speak their own Native dialect, they all chose to speak English. There was common conversation going on about different words representing different things in their own dialects and there was a few conversations in [students' language] and a few prayers being offered at dinnertimes in [students' language], which was quite enjoyable for me... but generally they tended to speak English.

Interestingly, upon reviewing the transcripts, I found only limited discussion about the use of Aboriginal languages on Giwaykiwin courses. While Steve mentioned respect for English speaking instructors as one reason for students not speaking their Native language, Julie and Lisa commented that one of their fellow students who spoke Cree as his first language, struggled with the English-only environment of their course. Simpson (2002) suggests that the use of Indigenous languages should be promoted in Indigenous education programs whenever possible. It seems that while diversity adds to the students' experiences, it may also restrict the use of specific Indigenous languages.

This discussion reminds me of a course from my last season with Outward Bound. It was an 11-day course with youth from a northern Cree community. While the students were all conversant in English, their first language was Cree and it was still the dominant language in their community. This presented an interesting situation for us—my co-

instructor was Plains Cree, but unfamiliar with the language and I speak no Cree myself. We decided that we would communicate with the students in English, but encourage them to speak Cree amongst themselves. Of course, they also had to communicate with us in English. In that situation (similar to Steve's description of his course above) it would have been ideal to have at least one Cree speaking instructor. While we felt that we were still able to get the gist of our students' conversations, there were significant communication gaps and the language of instruction was still English.

Jack, a former instructor on a Giwaykiwin Instructor Development course, commented on the strength that he felt diversity brought to his course:

I think there was tons of culture naturally embedded in that course and I think that it had a lot to do with the eclectic mix of Native participants on that course. You know Moose Cree, Cree, Ojibway... because they are all different people. It felt like they brought a different piece to the table and I found that awesome because I got a little snippet from each individual community. There were some individuals who I would say lived pretty much 90% in the bush and it was like, White culture was almost shocking for them, that's my interpretation anyway. To the point that socialization skills were minimal and the English language was their second language.

Jack's comments describe the diversity of his Aboriginal students linguistically and culturally. However, this particular group of students may have been more similar than they appeared as they share common ancestors as part of the Algonquin cultural and linguistic family (Keenan, 2007) and may have been able to understand one another if they all spoke their Indigenous languages.

Many of the participants recognized the diversity of staff and students involved with Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin programs as a positive aspect of their experiences. This diversity included cultural and regional differences within the Aboriginal student population, as well as the cultural and ethnic diversity of instructors and other staff

members around the base as well as the linguistic diversity of some student groups. The participants also discussed how this diversity often led to interesting cross-cultural situations that will be discussed later as a separate theme. However, as will be discussed in the following section, issues of diversity also seemed to create mixed experiences for participants when engaging with cultural activities during Giwaykiwin courses.

Ceremony

The topic of ceremony on courses often came up in our discussions. Some participants expressed positive experiences with the incorporation of Aboriginal ceremonies while others told stories of negative or cautionary experiences. Discussion tended to focus on ceremony in general or specifically on the Sweatlodge, a component of many Giwaykiwin courses. Lisa, a former student, had this to say on the topic of ceremony:

I think the cultural piece... they made assumptions that everyone practiced traditional ways which not everyone does... like with tobacco... they made assumptions that we all knew what to do with tobacco and not everyone did. Culturally that's what I didn't like... the assumptions like we should be giving tobacco in the morning and giving thanks or doing a smudge and suddenly it was going to be a cultural program and I don't think it fit for me.... I think there should have been more dialogue with us as a group. If we're gonna do rituals then the rituals we should do as a group rather than making assumptions and passing out tobacco and saying, "Here put it in the water." Which is what they did and like I knew what to do with it but [Julie] didn't and she just chucked it into the water.

Lisa's comments addressed a couple of areas of concern. She included cautionary thoughts on the diversity of students' backgrounds and experiences while also calling for greater instructional transparency and background when presenting ceremonies such as smudging or offering tobacco. She emphasized the need for open dialogue between

instructors and students about Aboriginal cultural aspects of Giwaykiwin courses. Pepper and White (1996) suggest that ceremonies should only be led by qualified and trained people. They suggest that while differences exist from Nation to Nation, permission to give teachings and lead ceremonies is usually bestowed on individuals through apprenticeship and ceremony with Elders. These points bring into question the inclusion of ceremonies in Giwaykiwin courses. Young Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors will most likely not be sufficiently familiar with and qualified to lead ceremonies. One strategy to continue including of ceremonies in Giwaykiwin courses would be to select instructors who are actually qualified to perform them, such as Elders and experienced community members.

With regards to ceremony on their course, Julie had similar concerns to Lisa:

In the morning on the way out [Aboriginal Instructor] kind of went around and gave everybody tobacco... But at that point in time I had no idea... I was like, "What is this all about?" And I like to be told things... I like people to tell what's happening and why it's happening... I don't like when people make the assumption that I already know and I don't wanna pretend that I do know when I don't, but that's what I did... I was like "I guess I'll throw it around here." I didn't know what to do... so that part of the program was a disappointment because nothing was really spoken about. It was just supposed to be understood or that's what I felt and... I should have asked... I let a lot of things go by without asking about it.

Again, Julie described a feeling of confusion and frustration and reinforced Lisa's call for increased dialogue between instructors and students when implementing ceremonies on Giwaykiwin courses, providing a greater cultural and spiritual context.

As a former Aboriginal student, Reggie recalled that the cultural aspects of one of his courses were quite negative. He described in detail the pressure that he felt to conform to Aboriginal cultural practices:

[Instructor], he rode me pretty hard because I didn't believe in Native spirituality at the time and him and [Instructor] rode me pretty hard on that and they made me out to be less of an Indian than I was and I didn't have the tools at that point to really say anything except you know... But they brought in an Elder and he started talking and he was really interesting, but it wasn't me and I said, "No, I don't want to participate." You should have that freedom, [but they still] rode me pretty hard.

However, he later expressed a more positive experience with other instructors who created an environment where he felt that he had the right to choose to be involved in cultural practices:

When I did the Native IDC [Instructor Development Course], the instructor at that point, said, "No, you don't have to. You know, you have that freedom of saying yes or no, your choice." And that relieved me much more because [you] don't force people, you know. So we ended up doing a 7-day course and rather than focusing on faith and practices and so on, she focused more on who you were and how you relate to your community, how you will take the experiences you learned here and take that back to your community because you were essentially being a leader in training and then going back to your community to serve....

Reggie's comments, based on his second experience, highlight the need for creating an open environment where students feel safe to gauge their own level of participation in the ceremonial aspects of the course. This is not dissimilar to the concept of students gauging their own comfort level with physical or emotional challenges that may be presented on Outward Bound courses. It also relates to Simpson's (2002) suggestion that Indigenous education courses should include opportunities for students to openly and critically discuss and analyse Western and Aboriginal approaches. Julie and Lisa's earlier comments are also rather alarming. Perhaps the confusing and negative experiences that Julie, Lisa, and Reggie described could be avoided if ceremony were left to qualified Elders and practitioners (Pepper and White, 1996) and discussed in greater detail with students and instructors alike.

While Lisa, Julie, and Reggie, all former Aboriginal students, expressed fairly negative experiences with ceremonies during their courses, other participants, all non-Aboriginal instructors and staff, expressed generally positive experiences. Dan, a non-Aboriginal peer-support instructor on a course that I instructed, described his inexperience with Aboriginal culture, but cast a positive impression of the cultural aspects of our course. When I asked him if the cultural element of our course affected his life in any way, he responded:

Yeah, definitely, I hardly knew anything about that kind of culture before the trip... and after the trip I haven't really carried anything on but it has made me interested in the cultures and practices... Just interesting to be exposed to different cultures to see how different people live their lives...

Dan also commented on his impressions of the students' experiences. When describing the attempt to combine Aboriginal and Outward Bound philosophies he said:

I think it worked well, there was a smooth transition between the two [Outward Bound and Aboriginal culture], so we had our morning routine in a certain way and the smudge ceremony before we head off and that was a nice way to start the day... they worked together well, a nice balance. I think they really enjoyed because a lot of them are not as much a part of the culture as they'd like to be back home and on the trip they managed to return to their roots a bit and the smudge ceremony etc... they hopefully remembered it back home to spur them on.

Dan also identified that the course was an opportunity for many students to connect with Aboriginal cultural practices for the first time and seemed to present a generally positive picture of their experiences. However, the question of what cultural practices were actually being taught on his course comes to mind given that Dan and his non-Aboriginal co-instructor were inexperienced with Aboriginal culture along with myself, also a novice with Aboriginal ceremonies. Our course did include a Sweatlodge ceremony with an Ojibway Elder, but that was only two days out of a 21-day course. Therefore, our students were being led by unqualified cultural novices for the majority of their course.

According to Pepper & White (1996) this type of scenario is problematic and would be best addressed by the integration of experienced ceremonial and cultural leaders.

In this section, a striking contrast appeared between former students' and instructors' experiences with the cultural elements of their courses. While the participant sample spans over a decade of courses, these differences in perspective and experience must be noted. It seems especially problematic that culturally inexperienced and non-qualified instructors are being supported by Outward Bound to lead cultural ceremonies during Giwaykiwin courses. Upon reflection and research for this study, I would include myself as someone not qualified to lead ceremonies. Outward Bound should note that ceremonial leadership is best left to qualified Elders and leaders (Pepper & White, 1996). Again, a stronger community base for Giwaykiwin programs could lead to more culturally authentic experiences for students and remove inappropriate responsibility from inexperienced instructors. A contradiction between students' and instructors' experiences presents itself again in the following section with regards to the Sweatlodge ceremony.

Sweatlodge Experiences

The topic of participants' Sweatlodge experiences came up quite regularly during our interviews. Again, there was a contrast of experiences. While some participants related positive experiences, others had negative memories and strong suggestions about how to improve. Interestingly, it appears that the Aboriginal students seemed to have negative experiences with the Sweatlodge and other ceremonies while the non-Aboriginal instructors memories are generally positive.

Students' Experiences. The former students interviewed in this study related quite negative experiences with the Sweatlodge component of their courses. Lisa shared a negative experience with a past Lodgekeeper who led her group's Sweatlodge ceremony:

The Sweatkeeper... I had issues with him because umm... I just didn't agree with how he was doing the teachings so I guess that was a personal thing... it was very ego... I did go into the Sweat with an open mind but... I didn't really feel comfortable or spiritually safe to let loose. I just kind of sat there and listened and that was it, I guess there's nothing wrong with that, and I wanted to support [Julie] cuz that was her first time so...

I don't know if at OB... if their purpose is to have a true cultural piece to their programming and if I could give feedback to that... they need to bring on an Elder and they need to bring on people who can explain to the instructors... umm the point of the ceremonies and to provide that mentorship role to the participants and I think that that would completely enrich the experience if that's the intention...

Julie also shared her thoughts on her Sweatlodge experience during the same course:

We went for a sweat... and I couldn't be a part of that... there was something wrong there.... And I remember my friend [male student] was really hesitant and I was like... "Come on, let's just go for it! And just experience it and see"... but anyways [male student] and I went in together and I only stayed in for one round and then hit the road and it was like... I don't know if I can describe how I felt in there... I didn't like it... [Lisa] stayed the whole time... but I'm kind of scared of those kinds of things and I didn't know anything and that was the other thing like, "Oh, we're going for a sweat" and no explanation, no nothing just going in there and some guy talking Ojibwa and I was like, "What's this all about?" And he wasn't an Elder. He was just some guy...

Julie's questioning of the Sweatlodge keeper is important to note. As Pepper & White (1996) suggest, ceremonial leaders must be properly trained and approved by their communities. Julie's further comments were even more troubling:

If you don't know what's going on then you're just wondering... like some situations it's easier to ask questions... but in a setting like that when someone's being all sacred... you don't wanna like butt-in, you feel like you have to be respectful and quiet and I just didn't know what was going on so I just didn't want to stay in there... I felt such a huge sense of relief when I got out... And then the other thing was the guy who was like... the guy who opened the door... he was like, "So, you party in [city name], what do you do over there? Yeah, I was there

last night....” You could tell he just had a crazy night getting all hammered... and stoned... it just didn’t seem right.

Julie’s comments from an adult student’s perspective are alarming. The situation that she described does not seem culturally or socially safe. Both Julie and Lisa emphasized the importance of their interactions with their Lodgekeeper and his assistants in dictating whether they had a positive Sweatlodge experience. Graveline (1998) highlights the importance of all students feeling safe, supported, and respected in learning environments. She suggests that building respectful relationships with students and community members is a key factor in contemporary Aboriginal education. Students’ interactions with community members and Elders is very important and will be explored as a theme unto itself in the following section.

Instructors’ Experiences. As mentioned, in contrast to the students’ negative experiences, the instructors that were interviewed seemed to have very positive experiences of the Sweatlodge component of their courses. For example, when asked about his experience Jack replied:

We went for a Sweat and I have a feeling that it may have been the hottest Sweat that has ever been created by a Native individual. Even [Lodgekeeper] said “Let’s get out of here, it’s a little too hot!” It was again another time when people from different backgrounds were sort of brought to an even playing field ... me going in there and all these individuals going in... dressed in very little, completely exposed and the process was really neat to be a part of... and an honour really... I felt like a guest and in some ways... a fly on a wall... We also did service in that community and picked up garbage in the neighbourhood. I think it was a really positive experience for everyone....

Jack’s comments reflect his position as an outsider White instructor and also raise concerns about instructor privilege and power (Brown, 2002, 2003; Ellsworth, 1989).

Ellsworth suggests that educators are often unaware of the implicit power that they hold

over their students. For example, Jack described the Sweatlodge environment as an “even playing field” when in fact it is an extremely revealing and often intimidating environment where participants share very personal things. One might suggest that the presence of instructors in that environment, especially those unaware of the power that they wield, may actually negatively impact the students’ experiences. Perhaps Outward Bound needs to examine the context and structuring of the Sweatlodge experience on Giwaykiwin courses.

Candace, one of my former non-Aboriginal co-instructors, shared her thoughts on the Sweatlodge:

It was huge. A lot of stuff came out there. In [the students] speaking and then we debriefed it as well. And mixing generations was huge as well. I loved being able to participate. It was incredible to be included and learn from that as well.

When asked about the Sweatlodge, Candace’s commented on her impressions of her students’ experiences, but did not explain her own experience with the Sweatlodge. I think that as Outward Bound instructors, we are put in a contradictory position in these kinds of situations. Outward Bound expects us to maintain a level of professional disconnection in order to supervise our students, but Graveline (1998) would suggest that effective Aboriginal educators must engage more *personally* with their students. This also relates to Lickers (2006) discussion of the difference between contemporary, directive Western leadership and Aboriginal leaders who role model through example. Instructors must be aware of the power that they hold in such situations and the influence that might have on their students’ experiences (Ellsworth, 1989).

Dan, a non-Aboriginal peer support on the same course as Candace and I, also shared positive memories from his Sweatlodge experience and the learning that he experienced through the guidance of experienced Elders:

Yeah, it was great. It was so hot! We were worried about the fire. Once we'd cleared the wood the Firekeeper came and started the fire and told us the tradition of the fire and the ceremonies, it was great to hear the whole group [of Elders] talking because they had so much experience with the Sweatlodge and how it's a part of the culture. I think we all learned a lot that day, I'd never experienced anything like that before.

While Dan and Candace described the illuminating experiences that they had with the Sweatlodge, my memory from that course in 2006 is that few of our students expressed that the experience was positive for them. In fact, only two out of six students completed the ceremony. However, they did seem comfortable with the Lodgekeeper and his family and I was glad they felt they had the right to determine their own levels of participation. My most recent Giwaykiwin students (2007) had a similar experience with the Sweatlodge component of our course—most seemed to enjoy spending time with the Lodgekeeper and his family, but did not want to participate in the ceremony.

Many of the remaining themes relate to the issues of culture and ceremony presented in this section. In-depth and often contradictory stories were presented from former Giwaykiwin staff and students regarding their perceptions of the cultural elements of their courses. While former Aboriginal students such as Reggie, Julie, and Lisa described in detail the generally negative experiences that they had engaging with ceremonies such as the Sweatlodge, former non-Aboriginal instructors with no cultural background like Jack, Candace, and Dan heralded the ceremonial aspects of their courses as exciting and enlightening experiences. Ellsworth (1989) may not find this surprising as she emphasizes that White educators are often completely unaware of their own positions

of cultural and institutional power and may be blind to the negative experiences of their students even in environments that attempt to be culturally empowering.

Given the limited and often negative experiences of students with ceremonies in general and the Sweatlodge in particular, I would suggest that Outward Bound seriously examine the inclusion and structure of these elements in the Giwaykiwin program. It also seems problematic that while the students interviewed expressed negative perspectives on the ceremonial aspects of their courses, that the instructors all described having positive impressions. Many of the non-Aboriginal instructors' comments suggest that they are often in the position of voyeurs, rather than participants in course ceremonies. Graveline (1998) proposes that Aboriginal educators must take a more personal approach with their students, leading by example rather than as outside observers and organizers. Pepper and White (1996) suggest that if cultural elements are included in an educational program, that they are led by properly trained and approved people, typically Elders connected to a particular cultural tradition, preferably the same as the participants. This seems to suggest that most Giwaykiwin instructors, myself included, and especially culturally inexperienced non-Aboriginal instructors, are not qualified in to facilitate ceremony on courses. If instructor cultural awareness training of some sort is to occur, it seems more appropriate for it to be prior to student contact and within the appropriate cultural context of each community, giving the instructors some background before accompanying their students during ceremonies such as the Sweatlodge.

Connecting to the Land

Several participants discussed their experiences of connecting to the land during their Giwaykiwin experiences. Specifically, experiences of connecting to the land during solo, a two-day solitary time for students, were described. Considering ancestral territories when selecting course areas was also a common topic of discussion. Here are some of Lisa's reflections from her course:

It's been three summers since going on that experience and I think spending an entire month in the bush... those memories of being outside, on the water, that feeling you can't get unless you're there, connected, a part of the world, a feeling you can't get in the city, that I've taken and I've brought into my life and it's something that keeps me inspired to working towards getting back in to the bush... every August I'm like... that was a year ago, two years ago... it definitely impacted me... spending that large time on the land and in tough situations, horrible weather, but despite that I learned to appreciate the elements and I learned humility—being a little speck of something so great and beautiful.

When asked whether her feeling of connection to the land or, experiencing a sense of place (Andrews, 1999; Wilson, 1995), happened naturally or due to the cultural context of her course, Lisa responded:

I think that it was a combination of things. I think someone could go and sit in the bush and feel that connection, but I think too with that experience, the connection happened with people. I think the connection, the length of time out there, the challenge of the portages, the canoes, point A to B affected us as well. Cuz when you did have time to sit down you really appreciated what was there. I think it's a combination of things. I think people are meant to be out there, it's our natural instinct to be in the bush. My spirit was like, "Thank you' for bein' out here!" Cuz when you look at the trip, what was the point except to go on the trip? No expectations, nothing. To be in that canoe on the water, or on the rock, camping. That's the whole point. It really helped me prioritize what's important from a bigger personal perspective. I'm getting emotional now thinking back to being out there. I miss that.

Lisa, who came to her course with previous cultural teachings, reflects in these comments the concept of "All My Relations" as described by Pepper & White (1996). They state:

First Nations people who continue to rely on traditional values and institutions look at the world and see themselves as a part of it—see themselves in a caring and supportive relationship to all human beings. They feel the earth is the source of life and give reverence to the earth and to the wonders of life coming from Mother Earth. They give spiritual regard and respect to the animals, the plants, the land, and to the universe. They feel related to everything and everything is a part of them—all things are connected. They see beauty everywhere. They respect themselves and others. (p. 5)

Steve, one of the instructors interviewed who led a Giwaykiwin expedition in northern Canada, also described in detail how he developed a sense of connection to the area used for his course. When I asked Steve to share a story about a special artifact, photo, or memory that he felt represented his Giwaykiwin experience, he responded:

The course artifact that comes to mind for me is a caribou antler. I found it on day three or four of the river... it's significant to me even though I don't physically have it on my person right now. It's significant to me because it represents the North and animals that umm are, you know, they help sustain the way of life for many... communities and it very much is when I think of the course and think of anything I'm taking away from it.... I've got memories and I've got pictures, but I don't even have that physical possession anymore and the fact that I had that and I carried it for several weeks is very strong for me and represents human connection with the land.... And so that would be the artifact that definitely means the most to me and has connections between myself and the youth on the course.

From Steve and Lisa's comments it is evident that students and instructors alike may develop strong connections to the land during their expeditions. However, it appears that people often experience this connection in a unique and individual way. However, not all participants spoke about connecting to the land in general terms. Some spoke more specifically about their experiences during solo, or the significance of certain Aboriginal peoples' connections to their ancestral land-base.

Solo

Intentionally created solitary experiences on the land have been an important rite of passage in many cultures for millennia (Bodkin & Sartor, 2005). As described in the literature review, Outward Bound courses greater than five days in length typically include a twenty-four or forty-eight hour solo (Outward Bound Canada, 2006a). While on solo, students are isolated from each other and provided with sufficient food and a tarp for shelter. Instructors check in with each student at regular intervals to ensure their safety. As an instructor, I find solo to be a powerful time. Students usually go out on solo mid-way through an expedition. This provides everyone in the group with a break from each other as well as time to rest and reflect upon their experience up to that point. Instructors are still responsible for supervising their students, but also spend long hours alone at camp. This quiet time often provides an opportunity for instructors to experience a level of solitude akin to their students. Solo is a time when I often reflect upon my own connection to the land.

Some participants identified solo as a time when they felt especially connected to the land. Some also identified solo as a catalytic moment when they had time away from the group to reflect on their Giwaykiwin experiences as well as their lives back home.

Lisa shared her thoughts:

Solo was awesome for an introvert who loves being by herself. I had no problems with it. Here's my solo letter [showing me and then reading from it]. "I'll be proud for reaching this challenge." The day that we got back... the next day I was in [western Canadian city]. That day, I was in a relationship and you know, you spend time in the bush and I totally knew I couldn't be in this relationship. It wasn't doing anything for me after three years and I broke up with him and left town. Totally intense.

Creator gave us a reprieve, we had no rain for three days and the weather was sunny and good... I loved it. I just sat there and wrote in my journal and just

enjoyed being on this rock that I was on. For me it was super positive. I saw a caribou....

You're on the earth, you can hear critters munchin' away down there.... It was just different, not hard, we didn't choose that connection. You can sit in the canoe and enjoy the moment.... But I liked it, cruising around the little area...

In our post-interview correspondence Lisa shared more thoughts with me:

I recall that the magic was/is in the day-to-day interactions with the water or with the sounds of the paddle hitting the water or with the silent comradeship of [peer support instructor] as we paddled or portaged. Those moments did change me.

Her friend Julie agreed:

It's crappy, but the best part for me was the solo. To be away from everybody, I loved it.

In her post-interview reflections Julie also stated, "Most of all, I learned that I need to time alone. That's how I recharge. Finding myself sitting alone on my solo was just right. Hearing every little sound around me." Similar to Wilson (1995), Julie found quiet time spent alone on the land to be healing and calming. Bodkin & Sartor (2005) propose that time spent alone on the land fosters a sense of place, a feeling of connection to the land (Andrews, 1999; Brookes, 2004, 2006; Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006).

Course Location

Most comments on selecting course areas came from research participants who were staff members. There appears to be recognition of the potential power of students exploring their ancestral territory. However, this was often qualified by logistical, safety, or financial concerns. Also, while some Giwaykiwin courses draw students from one community, others bring students from communities across Canada together. In these

situations, it is impossible for all students to be in their ancestors' territory. While it seems clear that students on these kinds of disparate courses may still have generally positive experiences, one might question their congruence with concepts of decolonization such as the importance of connecting to ancestral land, language, and Elders (Simpson, 2002). Concerns around choosing course areas would also relate to Brookes' (2006) questioning of the universal applications of adventure education techniques developed in Western Europe in other geographical and cultural areas around the world.

Candace related her thoughts on choosing expedition areas to transference of learning:

I think that tripping in your home area is great because powerful experiences in novel environments can seem removed and you have to go back to that place to remember, rather than your backyard you know? Something you can still access.

In response to a question about integrating Outward Bound and Aboriginal philosophies, Tim began by identifying the land as a common link:

I think the place where those two worlds meet is on the land and I think that that is the central tie that bridges all of the Aboriginal cultures in Canada—the importance of the land. Being able to find each person's unique and tangible connection to the natural world...

Tim also discussed the feelings of connection that he feels may be awakened during expeditions on ancestral lands:

For me one of the powerful things about these courses is for young people to walk in the places where their ancestors were and I think that's a real gift for us to share that with them, but also to provide the safety network to allow them to experience that as well, to travel on routes that were important to their ancestors.

While Tim's comments above are appealing and relate to a community partnership where students do travel on an ancestral river, they do not apply to the majority of Giwaykiwin

programs. As described in the literature review, I have encountered repeated resistance from Outward Bound Canada to scheduling other Giwaykiwin courses in communities' territories due to the logistical and financial constraints of pre-scouting expedition areas. Another important consideration is that historically and presently, Aboriginal people live all over North America, even in contemporary urban areas (Wilson, 1995). It is important to recognize that these areas are also ancestral territory. Also interesting to note are the suggestions by contemporary scholars in outdoor education who promote paying attention to fostering of a sense of place, or connection to the land, for all outdoor education programs (Brookes, 2004, 2006; Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006). However, it must be noted that this concept is quite distinct from the feelings of connections that Indigenous people might feel on land where their ancestors have lived for thousands of years (Wilson, 1995).

Following the example of Paariaqtuqtut (Takano, 2005), many scholars would also suggest that it would be more culturally appropriate for youth to be led on the land by their own Elders or other knowledgeable local community members rather than Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal instructors from other territories (Battiste, 2002; Brookes, 2006; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002).

Tim also discussed the role of a sense of place in environmental stewardship:

I think that without experience on the land, young people can't truly be good stewards of the land and unless they've had that moment of truly connecting with land and feeling it's pull that it's hard in less than a superficial way to be a strong steward or advocate for land. I think that seeing that on the map and knowing that that is a place that we're taking people to and to make that pilgrimage to those places as they sleep on the earth and spend that quiet time there that they are going to absorb some of the ancient feelings of those places that for many of them that will be an awakening and hopefully something that they remember for a long time... to know that their heritage and stewardship is a very ancient thing.

Tim's comments describe connections to a concern for the environment, not often mentioned in Outward Bound Canada's literature (Caspell, 2007; Outward Bound Canada, 2006a, 2006b). Does time spent on the land lead to feelings of connection to the Earth and environmental stewardship as Tim suggests? From a Western perspective, Orr (2004) suggests that spending significant amounts of time in natural environments is a prerequisite for any feelings of empathy or passion for environmental advocacy or stewardship. However, Simpson (2004) argues that contemporary discourse on Indigenous people and environmental stewardship often reduces and essentializes the Indigenous worldview, misinterpreting or ignoring the fundamental importance of spirituality and the concept of All My Relations, or connectedness and respect for all things (Pepper & White, 1996). As Durst (2004) also states, "All of Earth's creatures hold ... powers including animals, birds, fish, plants, trees, rocks and soil" (p. 4).

Indigenous (Cajete, 1994; Simpson, 2002; Wilson, 1995) and non-Indigenous (Brookes, 2004, 2006; Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006) educational scholars alike describe the importance of helping students to develop a sense of place, a connection to the land. From an Indigenous perspective, a sense of place may arise from ancestral memories (Wilson, 1997) and the knowledge that your ancestors have walked before you on the same land for thousands of years. From a non-Indigenous perspective, sense of place is often promoted as a means for enhancing students' understanding of their local communities or fostering environmental and social activism (Brookes, 2004, 2006; Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006). In this study, it is important to note, that both Giwaykiwin students and staff discussed their own experiences with connecting to the land. Some of these experiences happened during

structured exercises like solo, while others were more spontaneous like Steve's reflections on his caribou antlers.

The concept of conducting courses in areas traditionally associated with a First Nations' community is appealing. In my own experience, some communities appear very enthusiastic to organize courses in their home territories. However, others recognize the value for their youth in leaving their home communities and traveling to new areas of Canada. While Outward Bound Canada does seem to recognize the potential value of scheduling courses in communities' territories, they are sometimes resistant to the idea due to the logistical and financial constraints of pre-scouting expedition areas. I find myself questioning how these concerns fit into a model of decolonization? Proponents of decolonization suggest that rooting programs in local traditions, fostering a sense of place, involving local Elders as instructors, using local language, and community based development of educational programs are key factors in decolonization (Adams, 1999; Battiste, 1998, 2005; Cajete, 1994; Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). These considerations are not typically reflected in the delivery of Outward Bound Giwaykiwin programs which remain primarily situated in Outward Bound philosophy, often following expedition routes in territories foreign to the students and sometimes their instructors. From a decolonizing perspective, it would be advisable for Outward Bound to promote the development and delivery of courses in communities' local areas, privileging local Elders and community members as instructors, and developing course approaches primarily situated in local cultures.

Relationships

Relationship development and maintenance is a key aspect of any group, but especially in expeditionary environments. Attention within a group to relationships is a main focus of standard Outward Bound curriculum (2006a). Graveline (1998) also emphasizes the importance of relationship development in Aboriginal educational environments. The following text relates to the important relationships that participants' related from their Giwaykiwin experiences. Key areas that are examined are student-staff relationships, co-instructor relationships, Elder involvement, and the unexpectedly strong theme that emerged regarding cross-cultural relationships.

Student-Staff Relationships

Most participants shared valuable insights into the student-staff relationship. Understanding these relationships is key to any Outward Bound courses, especially so with Giwaykiwin courses where cultural issues are often at the forefront or underlying daily interactions. Lisa, a former student, described in detail some frustrations with her instructors. She seemed to desire a stronger connection with them that was not satisfied. She expressed feeling somewhat confused as an adult student on an Instructor Development course:

I never felt [Aboriginal instructor] open up and be herself... I saw her being really stoic, serious woman and [non-Aboriginal instructor] was fun, it was a good balance because, you don't [mess] with her, that was the energy she was giving off... and with [non-Aboriginal instructor], being this funny, easy-going guy, when he did his instruction, he is an amazing teacher and he made it really interesting and with [Aboriginal instructor] it was more, her history of working with youth, impacts her instructional style, sometimes she treated us like juvenile [delinquent] youth, maybe we needed that, but I just kept thinking "I'm an adult, so don't treat me like a kid." That's what I think of [Aboriginal instructor], but there was definitely moments where she was awesome... she's a strong woman,

physically, emotionally, and mentally and I do have a lot of respect for her... she walks her walk and makes no apologies and I like that about her, but it would have been nice for her to let down her guard, just relax...

Julie, a student on the same course as Lisa, identified that she did not feel that the quality of her relationships with her instructors was based on whether or not they were Aboriginal:

It just felt like okay, [instructor]'s Indian so [instructor]'s gonna take care of the Indian kids... it just felt weird. I guess I didn't really think of it... I mean being someone who's of mixed blood... I didn't really look at it as an issue... I think it's great to have a mix... you know, but I could see from someone else's perspective being like, "What the [expletive] is this White guy doing?" You know what I mean, some people can really have that attitude. But to me it's like, whoever that person is, there's a reason they're there and they're bringing something, so I definitely think there has to be one Native person.

Peer support instructors can play a valuable "go between" role on courses. A couple of participants commented on this—Lisa from a student's perspective and Dan who had been a peer support instructor. Dan said:

They [students] might have been able to talk more easily to me because I was positioned halfway between the instructors and students. I didn't have the skills and power of the instructors so they could approach me and tell me things in confidence with trust, but they were also able to speak freely with you two just as easily which was great..

Lisa had similar thoughts from a student's perspective on her peer support instructor:

I thought it was great... he [peer support] was in that dual role.... I really enjoyed having him on the trip. He just brought a whole new type of energy... he was really young and enthusiastic... on the days when it was raining for the tenth day in a row, [peer support] would be quoting inspirational quotes and singing in the canoe and totally just picking everyone's spirit up... that was a more personal connection that I had with [peer support] that I really enjoyed...

From an administrative perspective, Natasha and Tim had some interesting thoughts about feeling connected to students in a more intermittent, but meaningful way. When asked to describe a key memory or artifact from her experiences, Natasha replied:

For marathon [end of course challenge run] we drove out and my OBYC [Outward Bound Youth Challenge] course was running at the same time. I was in the front and this student just took off... it was 7 km which was a reasonable distance... me and [instructor]... and I'm a good runner and I swear this kid finished a kilometer ahead of us... he was so powerful.... A really tall, big guy... he just had a really powerful presence... He came in with his black baseball cap on and this huge eagle feather sticking out of the back...

It's interesting to note that when asked to describe a special memory, Natasha described her observations of one of the Aboriginal students. This seems similar to many of the instructors' comments about witnessing their students' experiences during ceremonies on courses, rather than describing their own experiences. This kind of perspective may result from the professionally detached orientation promoted in Western educational environments and suggests a lack of the personal, involved approach that Graveline (1998) advocates for in Indigenous education.

When asked how his Giwaykiwin involvement has affected his life, Tim also focused on his observations of students' experiences:

For me some of the most interesting opportunities have been to see students from the very beginning in the interview process and then see them at the end to see how the experience has affected them at the end of their journey with us. It's always amazing for me to travel to a community or school and see them on the first day when they're feeling shy and unsure and then to watch their interests emerge as they learn more and then to see the process unfold as they arrive on their first day, that real blossoming of their potential and talents that you see at the end at the banquet....

Tim's thoughts lead me to think about how the administrators of these programs often have the unique opportunity to have less intense, but often longer-term relationship with students. Perhaps this a positive aspect that could be highlighted with regards to Brookes' (2006, 2007) concerns regarding short-term adventure education programs? The longer-term relationships that are often formed between program managers, communities and students could be a starting point to provide the continuous social environment that

Brookes emphasizes as primary in determining transference of the emotional and social skills learned during adventure education courses. Might these longer-term relationships be utilized to facilitate mentorship or programming opportunities for students who have completed Giwaykiwin, or any other Outward Bound courses?

Co-Instructor Relationships

Healthy relationships within an instructional team are vital to effective course deliver. Outward Bound Giwaykiwin courses are often led by a culturally diverse instructor team (Outward Bound Canada, 2007). At least one instructor of Aboriginal descent, although not necessarily from the same Aboriginal Nation as their students, is usually included along with one or two non-Aboriginal instructors. The following section addresses these co-instructor relationships. It is important to note that Reggie was the only Aboriginal instructor interviewed for this study. Reggie did not instruct any Giwaykiwin courses, however he was involved with other courses open to the public. Cross-cultural relationships emerged as a strong theme of its own and will also be explored in a later section of this chapter.

Steve described a new role that he experienced during his Giwaykiwin course. As an experienced Outward Bound instructor working with Aboriginal youth for the first time, he found himself observing more than normal, following his Aboriginal co-instructor's lead more than he normally would on other courses. One area that he highlights in the following passage is his recognition of the multiple and varied pedagogies employed in Aboriginal cultures:

There's many stories that could be drawn on and I guess one that's a better representation of maybe our working experience and maybe this program in general was our approach to facilitating the course. And in my experience and my training I understand that First Nations and Aboriginal approaches is that education is done very experientially and learning while doing and through experience and figuring it out on your own and that can be done through various means such as what have you... Storytelling and other umm methods and... for us... my co-instructor and I, the story that I would tell is our approach to facilitating the course, so we'd set the students up and tell them what was going to happen, and we'd encourage them to journal about things and discuss things on their own, but we very much let the experience speak for itself which was new and a little challenging for me as an instructor who would tend to facilitate conversations more.... So that was a learning experience for me as an instructor... not so much a story as an observation of our relationship and being that I was very much in a learning or developmental role on this course, I was very much happy to take that approach and see what became of it...

Concerns relating to the concept of pan-Indianism, the over-generalizing and stereotyping of contemporary North American Aboriginal cultures (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000), seem to arise from Steve's comments. While similarities do exist between Nations (Pepper & White, 1996), it is important to recognize that there are also distinct differences in culture, values, language, pedagogy, and epistemology (Rosser, 2006; Waldram 2000). Pan-Indianism is common in contemporary society and seems to be reflected in Outward Bound's staffing approaches. Outward Bound could address pan-Indian concerns by recognizing the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and taking steps to match for example, Cree instructors with Cree students. This approach could also help to educate non-Aboriginal staff members, providing them with an understanding of the rich diversity of Indigenous cultures (Rosser, 2000; Waldram, 2006).

Candace, a former co-instructor of mine, talked about our co-instructor relationship. Similar to Steve, she identified the learning that she experienced following my lead with our students. I remember that this was balanced by her significant canoe

tripping experience and the fact that we were both first-time Outward Bound instructors.

Candace shared:

I loved working with you. I felt like I learned a lot and I loved having you take the lead on the First Nations' aspects of it and seeing you relate to the participants and seeing you emerge as a powerful role model for them.

This was reaffirmed by Natasha, our course coordinator:

My understanding was that you [me] brought a lot of cultural component to the course but the others brought lots of other experience like [instructor] with camp style things and other knowledge... natural history and the environment. I think it's a healthy dynamic for the youth to see... the multicultural instructing team... to open their minds a bit...

The theme of instructors balancing cultural and trip leadership duties depending on personal experience was a common thread in many of my interviews. However, Longboat (personal communication, May 26, 2008) challenges this dichotomous view and proposes that much of current mainstream outdoor and environmental education practice in North America is based on Indigenous North American knowledge. Contemporary practices like canoe tripping are the result of European North Americans adopting Indigenous knowledge and practices. Therefore, along with acknowledging their Indigenous roots, land-based skills such as canoeing or natural history knowledge should be understood as the domain of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors. Jack, a non-Aboriginal instructor, also described his relationship with an Aboriginal co-instructor in these dichotomous terms:

So I knew the river well and I was excited to work with [co-instructor]... I was also expecting [co-instructor], cuz she's a quiet personality that I would be leading the show a bit, she'd be a quiet leader.... So this brigade of ten students show up of all different personalities and excitement levels... so I was assessing the group and then out of nowhere I hear [co-instructor]'s voice like I'd never heard her voice before and I thought, "Whoa, where did this come from?" And she went to town, all over it... it was interesting to see her sort of professional facilitation style vs. her kind of quiet personal style and I'd never seen that

professional style... I was happy about that because I was a bit nervous... you know you're nervous with any new group, but I was also the only White guy in a group of 11 Native people and not knowing too much what to expect. So that was the first point that I knew from that point on things would get easier cuz [co-instructor] and I were going to make things work because our styles aren't that different from what I imagined... We had a good relationship. I was really keen to learn from [co-instructor] because she had been in the field for maybe six years on top of my three or so and so she was really experienced and I was happy to paddle with her because she's a really good paddler. I don't know if she ever gives herself credit for that....

Natasha, a course coordinator, described the positive co-instructor relationship that she observed between myself and two non-Aboriginal instructors:

The instructors who come to mind are the ones who were instructing last summer- you, [Candace], and [Dan]. It was my interpretation that you are passionate about your culture and feel very rooted in it and something that you're really interested in sharing with others, especially youth. And generally [Candace] had an open mind and pretty experienced with other groups of youth. I think it was really neat for [Dan] who'd never instructed anything before and my impression was that... that course really had an impact for him and partly for it having been an OB course and also partly connecting with traditional knowledge and perspectives... and [Candace] it was just furthering her journey. All passionate and accepting people.

Tim identified the ongoing relationships that he has developed with a diverse instructor base. He recognized that he often engages Giwaykiwin instructors as consultants to improve program quality. This is something that I have experienced myself. Tim commented:

I think... we've had over the years, such a great blend of instructors, coming from their own cultures and backgrounds and we've been very lucky to have really passionate people who bring excitement to share those traditional aspects of themselves and things that they've learned in their communities. For me to work hand-in-hand with those instructors and to be able to take their input and ideas has really allowed us to make the programs better. With some of the things that they're observing on the ground with students and trying to make space for people to bring their best gifts to courses, to craft a vessel to deliver the program, but allow them to inject that life-blood into what they're doing to make each course a unique experience.

Tim's final comments suggest that Outward Bound is open to instructors' input into improving courses. In my own experience, I have typically found this to be the case, although whether that input is transformed into constant course practice is less consistent. I have, however, found the management to be generally welcoming of my ideas on cultural and technical topics related to the Giwaykiwin program and seen many of them implemented. For example, last summer (2007), I provided significant input into the design of a Giwaykiwin course that I also instructed. My suggestions were enacted in areas such as course scheduling and student selection.

Along with acknowledging the importance of positive relationships, the participants' comments in this section emphasized the cross-cultural interactions that often play a major role for co-instructors of Giwaykiwin courses. Concerns also arose related to the pan-Indian approach used to match Aboriginal instructors with Aboriginal students who are often from distinctly different Nations. This approach only serves to perpetuate the myth of pan-Indianism (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000) and misinforms non-Aboriginal instructors and the greater organization of Outward Bound.

Natasha and Tim's comments also brought attention to the relationships between instructors and their management team. While perhaps less evident on a daily basis during courses, these relationships are fundamental to the functioning of Outward Bound's courses and in the case of the Giwaykiwin program, often influence future courses.

Elder Involvement

Simpson (2002) and others (Armstrong, 1987; Battiste, 2002, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Pepper & White, 1996) identify the regular and authentic involvement of Elders as a key aspect of effective Indigenous education programs. Many of the research participants acknowledged this and called for increased inclusion of Elders on Giwaykiwin courses.

Julie, former student, stated:

I guess the impression that I had before going into it was that um... it would be like a real cultural experience for me and at that point in time I was just sort of beginning my sort of... walk down figuring out where I'm at as a Native person... So I thought it would be a good opportunity to do this course and learn from the people who are instructing it... That's what I thought I was like, "Oh wow." I had this total idea that there was gonna be Elders and... my idea wasn't fulfilled, it wasn't at all the way I thought it was going to be... And I also had thought that there would almost be like an Elder there a lot... I had this dream that all my questions would be answered... sort of thing... it sounds crazy, but it definitely wasn't.

Natasha, a course coordinator, suggested bringing Elders along on expeditions:

I think it would be amazing to have Elders come in and travel with the group for four or five days or framing solo or something... longer term involvement of Elders not only in Giwaykiwin but also other OB courses ...

While Tim recognized the valuable role that Elders currently play as consultants for Giwaykiwin programs, he also recognized the need for their increased involvement in the programs themselves. He said :

Right now most of our involvement with the Elders and traditional people has been in the way of seeking their guidance and consent when we're setting these things up. It would be great to find ways to incorporate their presence through the courses and I think that there's some interest in that from the community side as well. Right now the process is more consultative, we want people to feel that we're not bringing an agenda that's purely our own.

Steve had an interesting perspective, but perhaps controversial perspective, when asked about his experiences with Elders and community members:

The only interaction we had with Elders was briefly at the course beginning and the course end where some of the directors of the [funding organization] were there to welcome the youth in and give a quick little schpeel and... it felt very genuine and I felt it was a nice touch to the program, but it wasn't very involved or very engaging.... Other elders that were involved in the program in a non-Native context would be the community director here from Outward Bound... I felt that if we can look at uh... being an elder as a sense of wisdom and knowledge that one brings to doing a program not in an age sense... I thought brought a great deal of wisdom... and lots of skill to the course and he was there on our course end and... I really valued his involvement with the students and his presence on the course and his guidance and leadership throughout the process.

While Steve's comments are interesting, I don't think that scholars of decolonization would agree that administrators or consultants, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, are appropriate replacements for the involvement of Aboriginal Elders (Armstrong, 1987; Battiste, 2002, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Pepper & White, 1996; Simpson 2002).

The previous passages demonstrate that both staff and students are calling for Elder involvement with Giwaykiwin programs. Some even suggested that Elders could participate in expeditions. While Tim recognized that Elders are often involved as consultants, he agreed that further involvement would be beneficial. The participants' appear to agree with contemporary scholars (Armstrong, 1987; Battiste, 1998, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Pepper & White, 1996; Simpson 2002) who assert that Elders must be involved as more than guest-speakers with Indigenous education programs. As Kirkness (1998) states:

We are great at having our Elders come to say a prayer or tell a story, but surely this is not what we mean when we say we must learn from the Elders. Elders possess the wisdom and knowledge that must be the focus all of our learning. It is through them that we can understand our unique relationship with nature, the order of things, and the values that enhance the identity of our people. (p. 13)

Perhaps the Giwaykiwin program could follow the example of Paariaqtuqtut, the community-driven land-skills program in Igloolik (Takano, 2005) led by Elders and other

knowledgeable community members. Using this kind of model, Outward Bound staff could participate by providing logistical or safety support as assistant instructors while local Elders and community members actually lead the courses. This approach might also satisfy concerns such as the promotion of Aboriginal language use, and delivering courses based on Aboriginal philosophies and pedagogies. Why not make the Elders the primary teachers? Pepper and White (1996) suggest that this is the only logical way.

Cross-Cultural Interactions

One surprisingly strong theme that emerged from the interviews was an emphasis by many participants on the cross-cultural interactions and learning that took place during their Giwaykiwin experiences. For some participants this involved Aboriginal students interacting with their non-Aboriginal instructors and vice-versa. For others cross-cultural learning occurred between urban and rural Aboriginal students or instructors of different backgrounds. Some participants even described the interactions that they experienced during their time at the Outward Bound basecamp with instructors and students from other courses. The following section will explore in depth a selection of these cross-cultural experiences. Due to the abundance of data I will first address students' experiences, then staff experiences.

Students' Experiences. Former students that I interviewed discussed both positive and negative experiences with learning about the different Aboriginal cultures and perspectives of their peers and instructors as well as relating to their non-Aboriginal instructors and other Outward Bound staff members and students around the basecamp.

Lisa had this to share about feeling culturally isolated during her first few days at the Outward Bound basecamp:

We were paired up with this younger group [of other students] from... to me I always assume people are from Toronto and that's totally my bias... these rich kids from Toronto cuz they're all outgoing... lalalalala... and like we were a bunch of Nish [Anishnawbe] adults. Hahaha... we must have looked like a sight cuz we all just stayed together and didn't mingle umm... yeah

While Lisa described her experiences at the basecamp with students from other courses, Julie discussed her impressions of a fellow student from a northern community:

He of all the people in the group was... the most Native, like he... grew up hunting... he lives off the land when he's at home.. and myself... I was attracted to him because of that and I learned a lot from him, just walking through the bush, he would be eating stuff and making tea with this and that and I was like, "Wow, that's who I wanna be learning from." So I learned a lot from him.... Yeah, it was really cool....

Julie's comment about her friend being "the most Native" is also important to recognize as it relates to the authenticity discourse surrounding Aboriginal identity discussed by scholars such as King (2005). In his book, *The Truth About Stories*, King describes the challenge often faced by contemporary Aboriginal people to validate their Aboriginal identity based on criteria such as language aptitude, connection to a reserve community, blood quantum, appearance and other identifying characteristics. As Julie's comment indicates, this discourse occurs both within and outside the Aboriginal community.

Julie and Lisa raise some interesting thoughts to consider in the context of the previous dialogue. One is the potential for students to share their own valuable experiences, especially those who regularly live close to the land and may have more experience than their instructors in some areas such as hunting, plant identification, and other land-based skills. However, they concluded by reflecting on some of the cross-

cultural struggles that their northern friend experienced. Julie commented, "For him, watching him interact, how the instructors wanted us to be ... he couldn't relate ... he could not relate" Lisa continued, "He couldn't speak English for one." Julie added, "Yeah, and nobody knew that, they just thought he had a chip on his shoulder... they were just like, 'He has a bad attitude.'" It seems very unfortunate that a student would be alienated on an Aboriginal program because he was more familiar with his Aboriginal language than English. This situation relates to Ellsworth's (1989) discussion of the common situation where critical educators often unwittingly continue to oppress their students in the very programs that are designed liberate them. Battiste (2005) takes a similar perspective and states that using Eurocentric educational approaches to develop Aboriginal programs is inherently flawed and only perpetuates colonialism.

These are important points for instructors, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, to recognize. When you have a diverse student group such as those on some Giwaykiwin courses, it is important to recognize that some students from northern or remote communities may not speak English as a first language or be comfortable and familiar with southern Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural norms. In these situations, instructors may not even be aware of the White privilege (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002) that they are unwittingly exerting over their students. Conversely, in a predominantly northern Aboriginal group, you may have southern Aboriginal students or instructors who are not comfortable or familiar with northern (Inuit, Cree, Dene) cultural norms or Aboriginal languages.

Lisa also had strong thoughts on her bi-cultural instructor team:

So [instructor] was the main Nish [Aboriginal] instructor and then there was [instructor] who was this White guy from down South and ya' know he was kind

of nervous, but he was super awesome and I don't think that any of us had an issue with him being White. I think that he had a lot of positive things to say to us....

With regards to her non-Aboriginal instructor, Lisa continued:

It was a big deal, yeah, but I think... he is who he is... a super confident guy and so I think in retrospect I thought he was an excellent instructor and I think OB's really fortunate to have him because he didn't present himself as nervous or scared, you know how some non-Natives kind of get freaked out, but he didn't present that way. But he told us later he was kind of nervous about this new experience. But he was awesome, very curious, appropriate, asked really good questions, like not dumb White questions. He was phenomenal.

Lisa's observations of her White instructor's behaviour seem positive. Her comments also suggest that she may have encountered unconscious White privilege (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002) before.

The experiences shared by Lisa and Julie suggest that cross-cultural dynamics were often at play during their Giwaykiwin course. From feeling awkward working with non-Aboriginal youth from southern Ontario, to learning land-skills and knowledge from a fellow student who struggled to relate to their instructors, to appreciating the efforts of their non-Aboriginal instructor, they revealed important insights into the cross-cultural undercurrents of their Giwaykiwin experience.

Staff Members' Experiences. The non-Aboriginal staff members interviewed also spoke at great length about their experiences with Aboriginal culture during their involvement with the Giwaykiwin program. Lisa and Julie's comments in the previous section resonate with the experiences shared by Candace, a non-Aboriginal instructor who discussed her experiences with her Giwaykiwin students and engaging with cultural elements of the course:

I can remember that was a big concern of mine beforehand talking to [program director]. You know this is a space that is made for First Nations youth and I'm not First Nations and wondering how that would be received. But [program director] showed me that that was important and that they [Outward Bound and Aboriginal elements] can be combined. For me the most important part of the course was that cultural element. But I think that they can be combined without losing too much. It felt to me that there was a lot of crossover too. Different rituals and ways but the same path....

Actually, it felt really comfortable and appropriate in the end... I didn't feel like I was intruding at all in that space. And that I had a good and positive role too and that I have a lot to learn and because we had an assistant instructor and an instructor who were non-First Nations', but both curious about that and so I thought it was important for them [students] to share with us too.

While Candace's comments seems positive, Hermes (2000) argues that blended approaches like that of the Giwaykiwin program, situated primarily in Outward Bound philosophy, results in an inauthentic cultural experience for both students and staff.

Steve, another non-Aboriginal instructor, discussed experiences with his students from a cultural and linguistic perspective. At one point he described how his group spoke primarily English despite everyone except the instructors being fluent in their own language. When I asked why, Steve responded:

Umm... you know, it's something that if I was to be there again I would ask them about, but ... as a general impression I would take it that it was out of respect... That the course was delivered in English and they definitely speak English in their schools, so it was something they were familiar with although there were several students who learned English later in life.

From a decolonization perspective, this situation seems problematic. Since Indigenous languages reflect specific cultural epistemologies and knowledge, it would be better to have instructors conversant in the students' languages rather than placing them in a situation where they are forced to speak English (Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986).

Steve also shared some the things that he learned from his students:

What I learned about their culture was more... adding specifics to what I already kind of gathered throughout my experience. I learned more about what it would

be like living in a far-northern community where a large portion of their livelihood is through gathering food out on the land, like going out and hunting musk-ox and caribou and whale with friends and with family and seeing how that actually plays out... like knowing that this stuff happens, but how does it actually happen and when do they do it and who actually does the hunting and cleans the fish or the animals all those sort of specifics are things that I learned... it varied from community to community.

Jack discussed his initial culture shock as a non-Aboriginal instructor with an

Aboriginal group:

The number one thing is “extreme difference in culture from what I was used to.” And these Native individuals, they had almost like an accepted practice of an unspoken culture... mostly regarding time and priorities... Like I really felt like if we said we were going to do this in the next little bit that we were really going to do it in the next bit, but that was to me anyway loosely read as, “We’ll get around to it when we get around to it.” There’s nothing that has that importance or schedule that needs to be attached to it, so I struggled with that all course and trying to really figure out how to adapt my style... It was met with some patience on my part rather than shift gears and become okay with the pace and figure out how I could really adapt my style vs. just adapting my outward image.

Jack’s comments were insightful. He identified issues such as communication and concepts of time along with his own attempts to adapt outwardly, but not inwardly, to the new situation. When I then asked what he learned about Aboriginal culture and philosophy, Jack shared some of his experiences of learning from his students:

I was almost craving the Native culture... I wanted to really understand what it was like to grow up Native in a predominantly White dominated society. And I wanted some natural history snippets to take on future courses. A combination of that all happened really and I’d say that it might not have happened if I hadn’t dug so hard. I made it apparent to individuals on the course, it felt like I had to become more disarming and there was always an element of me feeling privileged to know some of the stuff being told. There was one guy on the course who was into a lot of natural medicines and he was actually studying in his community, he was pretty good he knew what plants were used to treat what and how you use them. I would often ask him if he would teach me. And I learned that I shouldn’t be expecting that to happen. Maybe a trade should happen, like offer tobacco for that knowledge. And it wasn’t enough for me to be keen for the info, it had to be a trade-off. That was pretty neat that I learned that in that way and also the information was privileged in that this was a dying art in some ways and that by it

getting into the wrong hands could potentially be dangerous to the future of Native culture and medicine and so on.

Jack's previous comments suggest that as an instructor of an Instructor Development program for adults, he was learning as much as he was teaching. This seems great, but also raises concerns about the sharing of cultural information without the mentorship of properly trained and experienced Elders (Pepper & White, 1996). While seemingly positive and enthusiastic, Jack's comments about "craving the Native culture" and wanting to take "snippets" of information for future courses, also seem to reflect a level of cultural voyeurism, similar to the concerns expressed regarding the misuse of cultural knowledge and misappropriation in anthropological research with Indigenous peoples (Deloria, Jr., 1997; Lassiter, 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Jack also reflected on the role that he played as a non-Aboriginal instructor delivering Outward Bound philosophy on his course:

The difference between OB philosophy would be compared to just an expedition with just a bunch of individuals um ... there was I think... I remember having thoughts on the course of the participants feeling that OB was a "White creation". And therefore not always buying into the "OB experience." And for me as a White person feeling like I had a bit of helplessness as how I could help people and also be disarming and also wanting to stick up for what I represented for myself and not being tagged or labeled in some ways... It was very interesting to be the minority. To really see what that's like.

From his comments, it appears that Jack was also struggling to confront issues of White privilege and authority (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002). In conclusion, Jack reflected on the impact of his Giwaykiwin experience in his life:

Well, I can definitely say that my ignorance and naivety with Native culture has been tarnished a bit and I think that's good. I feel like I know a bit more what it means to be a Native person in North America or at least Canada. When I hear discussion on CBC or a guest speaker from a Native community who's a really

forward thinking person, bridging the gap between cultures, I understand a bit more what that's like and what I would deem as a need for that to continue on. I got a lot more empathy from being around the individuals on my course and feeling that it could easily be anyone and that level of understanding to be able to digest what it meant to be in their shoes...

In a post-interview e-mail, Jack again reflected:

I still firmly believe that opportunities should be made to bring more Whities like myself and others into the fold of Native Culture in a way that is disarming and a bit of a "trade" in some ways. "Will give tobacco for ancient wisdom"—You can quote me on that.

While Jack's comments above seem encouraging, they provoke caution regarding the potential for misappropriation in these cross-cultural situations. There seems to be a fine distinction between enthusiasm and misappropriation or insensitivity when it comes to sharing culture. While Jack was merely expressing his enthusiasm and genuine interest to learn, a comment such as, "Will give tobacco for ancient wisdom," may be interpreted by some as culturally insensitive, trivializing Aboriginal traditions. This is an important area to highlight for non-Aboriginal instructors before and after courses. An effort to illuminate the cultural learning that some instructors experience may go a long way to deepening their knowledge, understanding and self-awareness. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors alike may be able to relate to their students in various ways, but we must remember that understanding students' lives in their specific communities is most likely limited. Reminding ourselves of this point as instructors, will promote caution when discussing or engaging with Aboriginal issues.

After reading my response to his comment about tobacco, Jack responded in thoughtful detail:

I must say that from your original email highlighting my comments I had an extreme feeling of guilt and frustration that my words could be perceived in that way. I don't think that it is necessary to leave that section out, as it is quite

obviously a goldmine in terms of highlighting the simple misunderstandings that can often escalate or tarnish what may already be shaky ground in some instances.

I do however want to apologize to anyone that may read such a comment and perceive it as culturally inappropriate. I liken my comment to someone who is very honoured and excited to be learning about another culture and doesn't really know all of the reasons why certain practices exist, but is happy to go through the emotions to feel accepted and to not disrespect those who are teaching the customs....

In this last paragraph, Jack recognizes that he does not completely understand Aboriginal culture. It is also important to note that he expresses his good intentions and a willingness and responsibility to learn more. In the same e-mail, Jack continued:

The comment about trading tobacco for ancient wisdom was merely an enthusiastic remark from a memory I had with a Native man on my course who knew a lot about plants and natural medicines. I asked if he would teach me a little, and his response was that, it was customary to make an offering of tobacco with such a request. I may have quickly deduced that we were making a trade, but I cannot exactly explain what I was doing with the tobacco and why I was doing it, but that I was eager to “play along” so as to build some rapport, learn something new about another culture, and put the student in the role of the instructor. For me to know more about what I was doing, I would probably have to have grown up in the Native culture, or have spent a great deal of time studying it to fully understand the notion of offering tobacco, and to know the full value of the tobacco itself, or what tobacco represented. I can honestly say that to this day, I still don't even really know all of the nuances, but thought that at that moment, we were merely sharing, and understanding one another in a very special way.

I hope that this helps to explain how things can most certainly be taken out of context, and if we are looking for culturally inappropriate things they will present themselves far easier. (Not to suggest that you were looking.) It is also an important lesson in being very careful what you say, regardless of your good intentions and naiveté to another culture. Thanks for highlighting that.

Similar to the in-depth dialogue that I conducted with Tim regarding his thoughts on the blending of Outward Bound and Aboriginal philosophies, the previous text represents significant thought and effort on the part of Jack and myself as researcher. This is an embodiment of the spirit of collaborative ethnography (Lassiter, 2000, 2005a, 2005b) where the participants are encouraged to respond to the presented text, having a strong voice in the final product. Jack's response indicates the intellectual and emotional impact

that this study has had in his own life. He took my researcher concerns into great consideration regarding his comment about tobacco and responded in depth. I think that through this process both Jack and I had to engage with sensitive cultural issues. We handled the situation delicately but also were able to speak honestly in a constructive manner. I was nervous to address this issue directly, but felt that it was important because I found his initial comments offensive. As scholars of White privilege suggest, people in positions of cultural privilege are often completely unaware of the oppressive impact of their actions and words (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002). Naess and Jickling (2000) suggest that it is important to find ways to address these kinds of issues without completely alienating those whom you are attempting to educate.

Reggie, an Aboriginal man who was a Giwaykiwin student before becoming an instructor, focused on his experiences of being new to the Outward Bound community. He described what he perceived to be a very diverse basecamp and the learning that he experienced as a result of his interactions with people from many backgrounds.

One of the instructors was Jewish and more mythical than orthodox... and I had great conversation with her... I think I became more aware of Jewish culture and that helped me relate with other people....

We had a wide variety of people... and they put us together in camp for four months and we survived and we learned a lot about each other and learned to accept each other... I learned that there was more [to life] than being an Indian redneck... We weren't being tokened, we were all learning....

When I asked Reggie what he thought about having specific courses for Aboriginal students, he had some insightful and provocative thoughts:

It depends on what you're trying to get out of it... if you're trying to foster Aboriginal kids to be leaders in their community, I believe that it is beneficial to be kept separate, but it's been my experience that... non-Aboriginal people know very little about Aboriginal people, and it's beneficial to keep them all together to

show... that they are the same like you, same goals, aspirations... I believe it's situational... You know we talk about culturally appropriate, who's culture are we talking about... you know what works for Ojibwas in Ontario may not work for plains people or the West or East coast... and who's spirituality are they talking about? By keeping them separate are we further ghettoizing Aboriginal people?

Several important points emerge from Reggie's comments—the potential for raising non-Aboriginal peoples' awareness of Aboriginal people, recognizing the diversity that exists within Aboriginal culture (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000), and the ghettoizing of Aboriginal students in the Outward Bound context. Following Hermes (2000) I would also suggest that because the Giwaykiwin program is strongly situated in Outward Bound traditions and philosophies and not specific Aboriginal cultures, the authenticity of instructors' cross-cultural experiences are questionable.

From a managerial perspective, Tim described some considerations for instructor development and selection:

I think that it's been a big ongoing debate... we've gone through a whole spectrum to attract a pool of Aboriginal instructors who can deliver these programs at such a high level, but also looking at how we integrate really talented non-Aboriginal instructors in to that mix as well... and accommodate the communities. Many communities see a real value in having non-Aboriginal instructors also being present. And that sometimes that creates a bridge for their youth to explore other communication styles... to know that when they're going out in the world... as one person in the North explained to me—they feel that the world, and theirs especially, is getting smaller and that it's going to create the need to be more back and forth between cultures and they really want them to be equipped with the skills that they need to be fluent in those other cultures. So I think that's been a real challenge to walk that line of respect to bring strong Aboriginal role models, but also creating that balance to bridge the friendship and understanding and trust between cultures where it has been degraded and eroded in the past.

Based on a significant amount of experience meeting with Aboriginal community leaders to design Giwaykiwin courses, Tim raises some interesting points with regards to Aboriginal students interacting with non-Aboriginal instructors in the eyes of partner

communities. Tim's comments seem to represent a dilemma, that I have also observed, faced by many contemporary Aboriginal communities regarding how to revive and maintain Aboriginal cultures while also understanding the consequences of participating in Euro-Canadian society (Takano, 2005).

Tim also touches on the perceived difficulty of instructor selection and development. I would also propose that if courses were designed and delivered with greater input from communities, more opportunities could be made to select instructors based on criteria other than the standards typically used by Outward Bound. Selecting instructors based on standard adventure industry norms such as certifications may exclude highly qualified cultural teachers and leaders, like those who led Paariaqtuqtut (Takano, 2005) This would require a significant shift in perspective, as it would require that Outward Bound relinquish considerable control over the design and delivery of courses. However, this approach would result in greater cultural authenticity and a stronger program from a decolonizing perspective (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Kirkness, 1998; Pepper & White, 1996; Simpson, 2002).

Steve, an instructor, cast a slightly different impression than Tim of the experiences of modern youth in northern communities:

These were teenagers who back home have internet and iPods and how mainstream media and American media infiltrates small northern communities with rappers or like hip-hop music and you know national hockey league statistics and some of these other things that some of these youth were all into and in many regards some of these youth... If you saw them on the streets of Toronto... you wouldn't necessarily differentiate them from a southern youth... But when it comes to like going out on the land and some of the skills that they had like give them a fishing rod or a few other things that their skill base and experience shone through in those regards.

Steve's comments suggest that the youth with whom he worked were very well versed in southern mainstream culture and also comfortable in northern environments. This raises questions about the purpose of this particular Giwaykiwin program. Based on my own experiences and Tim and Steve's previous comments, I would say that this program was designed to provide northern youth leaders with opportunities to develop their leadership skills using an Outward Bound framework and ideals. This approach definitely seems to come into conflict with contemporary decolonizing literature (Adams, 1999; Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999) that suggests that Aboriginal programs should be grounded in Aboriginal communities philosophies and traditions. However, it also reflects the wishes of the communities that support this course.

Looking ahead to future programs, Jack, a former instructor, reflected on the potential for intentionally designed cross-cultural courses:

Makes me think of ideas like could you have a course that is bridging Native and White culture... how would you facilitate a course like that without obviously cliques developing and what not ... and more opportunities for instructors to work these courses ... because right now I think that it's rare that we send White instructors on a Giwaykiwin course each year... potentially five and five... Native and White students ... you know ...

However, Natasha also shared some interesting insight into a past program that included an equal number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students:

I was also close to another program that was five Native youth and four or five OBYC [Outward Bound Youth Challenge] girls. That year we had a number of youth drop out and we had a number of OBYC girls apply and had them on the waiting list. So instead of canceling, we brought them in too. It was a really fascinating dynamic ... I was a close observer and ... this is just my interpretation ... the girls were very loud and overpowering and the Native youth didn't really come out into their own ... not really a good balance on that course.. the Native youth were shy and quiet, but maybe didn't get to embrace the cultural aspect of the program as much ...

This situation seems fundamentally flawed in its design and appears to demonstrate White privilege at work (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002). To allow non-Aboriginal students to dominate the Aboriginal students in a course that was originally designed for Aboriginal youth is inappropriate and a misuse of community support. In response to this story, I asked Natasha, “How did the non-Aboriginal students respond?” [to cultural content]. She replied:

Like teenage girls! A bit of brushing it off, not taking it seriously, maybe taking in some things depending on the mood and the day. I remember that was a learning for OB— If you don't have enough kids then don't mix because the youth didn't get to fully embrace the cultural component.

Natasha's response raises cautions for considering these cross-cultural situations. We must be careful with our intentions, student selection, and course delivery. When asked her thoughts on intentionally constructing cross-cultural courses, Natasha responded, “Oh, yeah, that would be amazing... similar to Rediscovery [cross-cultural outdoor education program run by various Aboriginal communities] ... yeah... I think having it framed so they know what they're getting into to.... Not so last minute... it would lead to more understanding.” The difference between the Giwaykiwin program and the various Rediscovery camps (Henley, 1989; Lertzman, 2002) is that Rediscovery programs are typically grounded in a particular Indigenous community. Rediscovery welcomes participants from all backgrounds, but its programs are uniquely tailored and designed and implemented by Aboriginal people familiar with their local culture.

This section addressed the cross-cultural experiences of Giwaykiwin students and staff. Their experiences ranged from interactions between Aboriginal students and non-Aboriginal staff to a non-Aboriginal manager interacting with Aboriginal community

representatives. Several participants also recognized how the students' diverse Aboriginal backgrounds on some courses created opportunities for urban and reserve-based Aboriginal youth to learn from each other's life experiences. Non-Aboriginal staff members also described how their experiences with Aboriginal culture may have contributed to their own personal growth along with increased cross-cultural awareness. Cross-cultural learning is a significant theme that emerged in this study and one that warrants consideration in developing and delivering future courses. The pervasiveness of this theme throughout the interviews has led me to consider the role of cross-cultural interactions in the revitalization of Indigenous cultures.

However, as Kirkness (1998) asserts, colonial voices have been privileged for long enough, and it is time for Indigenous people to speak for themselves. While sharing culture can be a very positive and healing process, the control must lie in Indigenous hands. In cross-cultural educational environments, it is important that Indigenous voices, pedagogies, and philosophies are privileged. In order to avoid the trap for critical educators described by Ellsworth (1989) where historically oppressed students continue to be oppressed by the very teachers who are trying to "liberate" them, programs must be structured by and for Indigenous people, and founded using Indigenous epistemologies and practices. For a program like Giwaykiwin this means taking a serious look at the way that courses are currently designed and considering significant restructuring. Moving towards a more community based model similar to Paariaqtuqtut with local instructors and Elders would be an example of this approach. This kind of approach would ground programs more strongly in local traditions and teachings. It could also provide the opportunity for non-Aboriginal Outward Bound instructors to receive locally relevant

cultural training prior to beginning their courses under the guidance of recognized Elders (Pepper & White, 1996). This would be more desirable than having them learn about culture while simultaneously attempting to lead students, which often results in the instructors simply acting as outside observers of ceremonies and other cultural aspects of courses and does not seem to provide a culturally sensitive environment for students.

Conclusion

After much discussion and reflection with this study's participants, former and current staff and students, I've come to understand that the Giwaykiwin program is extremely dynamic. Based on the findings in reference to contemporary decolonizing literature (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), I think that it can be stated that the Giwaykiwin program is not founded in Aboriginal philosophy. As Tim said, Giwaykiwin courses are simply those that work with Aboriginal students.

Giwaykiwin courses are primarily rooted in Outward Bound Canada's traditions and philosophies with varying degrees of Aboriginal cultural content. From one Giwaykiwin course to the next, course objectives seem to change along with the wishes of the partner communities, and the mix of students and instructors. This presents constant challenges for the administrators of the Giwaykiwin program who try to custom design each course. As Hermes (2000) suggests, in programs where Aboriginal and contemporary Western approaches are combined, the Aboriginal content is often overwhelmed by Western norms.

A fundamentally unifying theme that emerged across the findings is a lack of grounding Giwaykiwin courses in partner communities' specific cultures and traditions

resulting in an ambiguous, pan-Aboriginal (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000) approach that is problematic, misleading, and perpetuates stereotypes. This was reflected in the findings by participants' descriptions of the inadequate cultural preparedness of non-Aboriginal instructors, the imposition of traditions from Aboriginal traditions different than those of particular groups of students, and a lack of participation by Elders and leaders from students' home communities. According to scholars of decolonization (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), this situation is problematic and would be best addressed by moving towards a more locally relevant approach similar to that of Paariaquqtut, the Elder-led education program in Igloolik (Takano, 2005).

A more localized approach would also help to address the concerns expressed around instructor development and training. These concerns included a *perceived* lack of qualified Aboriginal instructors by Outward Bound as well as inadequate cross-cultural preparation of non-Aboriginal instructors. In a more community based model, respected community members and Elders would be included as instructors, recognizing the merit of their locally-relevant outdoor and cultural experience rather than measuring them against Outward Bound's standard criteria for instructors.

A community-based approach could also provide opportunities for non-Aboriginal instructors to learn from Elders prior to coming into contact with young students. Learning from Elders and participating in more authentically culturally-based courses might help non-Aboriginal instructors to confront some of the issues of White privilege and dominance (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002) that also emerged strongly in the findings. Similar to Ellsworth's (1989)

critique of contemporary critical pedagogical environments, it appears that the very structure of Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin courses continues to privilege mainstream, Euro-Canadian norms through the dominance of the English language and Western culture in a program originally intended to provide culturally-sensitive learning opportunities for Aboriginal students.

Echoing contemporary scholars (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000), the students also reminded us of the cultural and regional diversity of today's Aboriginal youth and the importance of recognizing this diversity. There was also a recognition of the broad diversity of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors and staff members at Outward Bound. This diversity greatly impacts students' approaches to, and experiences with, Giwaykiwin courses. Recognition of these factors along with increased dialogue around this diversity was proposed as a strategy for creating courses where all students feel welcome and comfortable.

The former students who were interviewed also discussed their frustration with cultural aspects of their courses. Their experiences ranged from feeling uninformed during ceremonies such as the offering of tobacco to feeling socially and culturally threatened during Sweatlodge ceremonies. These points are alarming and suggest that Outward Bound seriously re-assess the inclusion of ceremony in Giwaykiwin courses. Pepper & White (1996) recommend that, in following the specific protocols of their respective communities, only properly trained and approved practitioners perform ceremonies. Graveline (1998) might also suggest that building stronger relationships between Elders, community members, students, and instructors involved in Giwaykiwin courses would alleviate some these concerns. This would require spending more time

together, getting to know one another prior to a significant experience like the Sweatlodge ceremony. This is another reason to ground programs in local communities.

With regards to ceremony, an interesting contrast that also appeared in the findings was non-Aboriginal instructors perceptions that their students were having positive experiences when, in fact, the students interviewed described generally negative experiences. Also, when asked to describe their own experiences with ceremony on courses, the instructors often shifted the focus of their responses onto their perceptions of their students' experiences, positioning themselves as outside observers or cultural voyeurs.

The topics of connecting to the land through being out on expedition and quiet time alone during solo, and the importance of considering geography and ancestral territory for expedition locations were also discussed. Former students Lisa and Julie both described the positive experiences that they had during solo and the sense of place, or feeling of connection to the land (Andrews, 1999; Brookes, 2004, 2006; Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006; Wilson, 1995) described by contemporary Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars that they felt to their ancestral territory.

Similar to Brookes (2006) and Cajete (1994), Tim suggested that it is desirable to run courses in students' and instructors home areas. Interestingly though, this is not the norm for many current Giwaykiwin courses where students and instructors are often in unfamiliar geographical and cultural territory. Another distinction arose in this section between Western and Aboriginal concepts of relation to the "environment." It was proposed that if students spend time out on the land, they will develop into environmentally conscious citizens. The problem with this notion in an Aboriginal

context is that environmental stewardship is a Western concept that divides human beings from the rest of creation and comes into conflict with Aboriginal epistemologies. This approach negates the concept of All My Relations, the fundamental connectedness of all things where humans are part of and connected to all aspects of the Earth (Durst, 2004; Pepper & White, 1996; Simpson, 2004).

However, despite the frustrations and issues that arose from the findings, the former students all expressed having positive interactions with their non-Aboriginal instructors at different points during their Giwaykiwin experience. They also related positive experiences with overcoming the physical, emotional, and social challenges that they encountered during their time at Outward Bound. These factors suggest that, if some of the serious concerns regarding the fundamental design and delivery of the Giwaykiwin courses are addressed, that non-Aboriginal instructors and staff members could be effectively brought together with Aboriginal staff and students to create a respectful cross-cultural land-based educational environment.

In the following chapter I summarize and discuss the findings in response to my original research questions.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the previous four chapters I described my motivations for undertaking this study, attempted to find resonance with the thoughts of respected scholars and thinkers, and surveyed the experiences and opinions of students and peers. Ultimately, I want this study to carry real-world implications so that it might inform Outward Bound Canada and other organizations conducting cultural education programs with Aboriginal youth. In the spirit of collaborative ethnography (Lassiter, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Papa & Lassiter, 2003), I also wanted the participants' voices to influence the final discussion.

I decided that the most effective way to frame the discussion and analysis of the findings would be to return to the concerns that led me to this study regarding the inclusion of Aboriginal cultural content on Outward Bound courses, cross-cultural instructor teams, and recognizing the contemporary diversity of Aboriginal peoples. My research questions were representative of my initial concerns and they will frame the discussion. My original research questions were:

1. What are the experiences of the research participants of engaging with Aboriginal course content during an Outward Bound Giwaykiwin course?
2. What ways have these experiences made a difference in the lives of the research participants?
3. How do the research participants' experiences relate to contemporary thinking in land-based Indigenous education?
4. How might these findings apply to improving the Giwaykiwin program?

I respond to the first three questions under the headings *Engaging with Aboriginal Course Content* and *Impact on Participants' Lives* through a discussion of the participants' experiences presented in the findings, related literature, and my own reflections. In response to my final research question on how to improve practice, I provide six key recommendations for the Giwaykiwin program based on this study's findings. In Chapter Six I conclude with a discussion of the collaborative research process.

Engaging with Aboriginal Course Content

During our interviews the participants expressed many valuable thoughts and feelings about their experiences with Aboriginal cultural content on Giwaykiwin courses. A central theme that arose was participants' impressions of the blending of Outward Bound and Aboriginal philosophies, which is a stated mandate of the Giwaykiwin program (Outward Bound, 2006b). Many of the participants echoed Hermes (2000) assertion that programs attempting to blend Aboriginal and Western often overemphasize Western approaches, resulting in the subjugation of Aboriginal content. Tim, a program administrator, confirmed this by stating that Giwaykiwin programs are, in fact, founded in Outward Bound philosophy, and that they are simply those that work with Aboriginal participants. This approach conflicts with scholars of decolonization (Adams, 1999; Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Graveline, 1998; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002; Thiong'o, 1986; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999), who suggest that Indigenous education programs must be grounded primarily in Indigenous epistemologies, processes, and practices. It also suggests that Giwaykiwin program is not adequately designed to

facilitate the engagement of students with authentic Aboriginal cultural content or context.

A complex characteristic of the Giwaykiwin program that was confirmed by this study's participants is that most instructor teams are composed of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors. Another related factor is that the Giwaykiwin program's Aboriginal instructors usually do not originate from the same communities as their students. This presents a structurally fundamental problem because Giwaykiwin instructors, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, are typically unfamiliar with the specific culture and language of their students. This approach is problematized by Rosser (2006) and Waldram (2000) for not providing for the significant diversity of Aboriginal peoples North America. The students and some of the instructors interviewed also recognized the contemporary diversity of Aboriginal peoples. However, the Giwaykiwin program's current approach to staffing and program design prevents the authentic engagement of Aboriginal students with teachings relevant to their specific communities.

The methods currently used to select and train Giwaykiwin instructors also contrast with the suggestions of scholars of decolonization who suggest that the involvement of culturally competent Indigenous instructors should be a fundamental characteristic of Indigenous education programs (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002). Using standard Outward Bound approaches for selecting and training Giwaykiwin instructors fails to recognize the invaluable experience of Elders and other Aboriginal community members who would be able to provide students and Outward Bound staff members, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, with much more culturally located experiences. Examples of this approach

are Paariaqtuqtut, the Elder-led land-skills education program in Igloolik described by Takano (2005) and the various Rediscovery programs (Henley, 1989; Lertzman, 2002).

Lickers (2006) also discusses the significant differences between contemporary Western and Aboriginal approaches to leadership. While recognizing significant variety between communities, he proposes that Aboriginal leaders typically lead through example and build strong personal relationships. This contrasts with the more directive, professionally removed approach emphasized in contemporary Western cultures.

Similar to Henley (1989) and Lertzman's (2002) observations, it is also important to note that former students Lisa, Julie, and Reggie suggested that, while the presence of Aboriginal instructors is important, simply being Aboriginal does not ensure that an instructor will connect with their Aboriginal students in a positive and healthy manner or that instructors will have cultural knowledge to contribute. Pepper & White (1996) agree, as they suggest that properly trained individuals only, usually approved by their community to give teachings and provide ceremonies.

All of the Aboriginal students that I interviewed shared some of positive experiences that they had with their non-Aboriginal instructors. For example, when Julie mentioned, "and then there was [instructor] who was this White guy from down South and ya know he was kind of nervous, but he was super awesome." Lisa and Reggie also shared fond memories of their interactions with their non-Aboriginal instructors.

Ellsworth (1989) suggests that despite the best intentions of White educators, they are often unaware of their own privilege and power and how this affects their students. Jack's comment, "Will give tobacco for ancient wisdom" comes to mind here, an off-hand comment that raised some questions and concerns for me. It helped me to realize

that while non-Aboriginal instructors on Giwaykiwin courses may learn a fair bit about Aboriginal culture and traditions and develop positive relationships with their Aboriginal students, they may still have a long way to go to truly understand the experiences of Aboriginal Canadians and their own positions of White privilege and cultural dominance (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002).

Participants often described their experiences with ceremonies on their courses. Describing his experience as a student, Reggie described how he felt extremely pressured and shunned from his group when he decided not to participate in ceremonial activities on his course. Julie and Lisa also described feeling very frustrated with the way that ceremonial elements were introduced during their course. Julie shared her story about being given tobacco, but having no idea what to do. She stated that if her instructors had given a clear explanation about the use of tobacco as an offering, she would have felt much more comfortable. Lisa also stated that she did not learn anything “culturally” from her Giwaykiwin course.

Julie and Lisa’s experiences reflect Graveline’s (1998) emphasis that educators must create socially safe cultural learning environments when they described their very negative experiences with the Sweatlodge keeper and his assistants on their course. Their comments also resonate with Pepper and White’s (1996) emphasis that leaders of ceremonies must be properly trained. Following Rosser (2006) and Waldram (2000), I would also argue that, unless it is explicitly presented as a practice of the host community, it is a pan-Indian approach to simply take all Aboriginal students to the Sweatlodge because it is not part of the practice of all Nations. Graveline (1998) might also suggest that spending more time together prior to the ceremony, getting to know one

another, building personal relationships, and sharing Sweatlodge teachings prior to the ceremony, would create a more comfortable learning environment.

When discussing ceremonial elements of their courses, there was a significant contrast between former student and instructor participants' impressions. In several cases, discussing the Sweatlodge ceremony for example, the Aboriginal students interviewed expressed negative and cautionary thoughts while the non-Aboriginal instructors in the study told generally positive stories about their impressions of their students' experiences. Lisa and Julie's negative memories of their Sweatlodge experience compared with Jack, Candace, or Dan's positive recollections are a clear example of this phenomenon. This contradiction is significant and suggests students' experiences do not always mirror their instructors' and also that instructors' may misinterpret their students' experiences.

Also problematic was that when the staff members were asked about their personal experiences with ceremonies on courses, they frequently shifted the focus of their response to their impressions of their students' experiences. The instructors seemed to be distancing themselves in the Western, professional manner described by Lickers (2006), rather than recognizing the importance of themselves as participants, personally invested in-relation to their students as Graveline suggests (1998).

Some of the instructors and administrators responses also seemed to reflect aspects of the White privilege described by several scholars (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002) and instructional privilege (Brown, 2002, 2003; Ellsworth, 1989), completely unaware of the negative experiences of their Aboriginal students or their own positions of privilege as members of the dominant,

Euro-Canadian culture. This was reflected in anecdotes related to the dominant use of the English language and Euro-Canadian cultural norms on Giwaykiwin courses. Ellsworth (1989) describes this as a situation where educators who believe that they are contributing to culturally responsive and liberating education of oppressed people continue to oppress their students through the very structure and assumptions inherent in their courses.

Simpson (2002) describes connecting to the land as an integral part of Indigenous education programs. Cajete (1994) also emphasizes the importance of structuring programs to reflect the regional and cultural diversity of Indigenous cultures' unique connections to their respective territories. The topics of connecting to the land through being out on expedition and quiet time alone during solo, and the importance of considering geography and ancestral territory for expedition locations were widely discussed in the findings. Former students Lisa and Julie both described the positive experiences that they had during solo and the sense of place, or feeling of connection to the land (Andrews, 1999; Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006; Wilson, 1997) described by contemporary Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars that they felt developed during that time.

Similar to Brookes (2006) and Cajete (1994), Tim suggested that it is desirable to run courses in students' and instructors home areas, but also stated that the partner communities express a desire for their youth to explore areas outside their home territory. The current norm for most Giwaykiwin courses is to send students and instructors into unfamiliar geographical and cultural territory. Brookes (2006) describes this kind of approach as an inappropriate and displaced application of adventure education practices,

originally developed in Western Europe. Similar to critics of pan-Indian approaches to teaching culture (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000), Brookes and others (Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006) suggest that outdoor educators must pay much closer attention to the specific cultural and geographical characteristics of their course areas.

Another distinction arose between Western and Aboriginal concepts of relation to the “environment.” It was proposed that if students spend time out on their Ancestral land, they develop into environmentally conscious citizens. This notion is problematic in an Aboriginal context as environmental stewardship is a Western concept that divides human beings from the rest of creation. This approach neglects the concept of All My Relations, a foundational principle in many Aboriginal Nations’ epistemology, that recognizes the fundamental connectedness of all things with humans as part of and connected to all aspects of the Earth (Durst, 2004; Pepper & White, 1996; Simpson, 2004). Elders and experienced community members would be able to role model the praxis of All My Relations if included as instructors on Giwaykiwin courses.

Overall, it appears from the findings that participants’ experiences with the Aboriginal cultural elements of their Giwaykiwin courses were fraught with inconsistency, frustration and contrast between students and instructors’ impressions. In the following section I interpret the impact, if any, of the Giwaykiwin program on the study participants’ lives. This chapter concludes with recommendations for addressing the challenges for the Giwaykiwin program revealed in the findings.

Impact on Participants' Lives

When I began this study I wanted to know what, if any, impact Outward Bound Giwaykiwin had on students' lives. I knew that these courses possess powerful potential, but I was also aware that, due to the broad range of courses delivered by the Giwaykiwin program, there is a significant variety of experiences for both students and staff. Therefore, I understand that the experiences of the participants in this study are not definitive. However, they may provide insight into the operation of the Giwaykiwin program and its foundational mandate of providing courses based on a blended approach of Aboriginal and Outward Bound traditions.

When asked if she learned anything culturally during her Giwaykiwin course, Lisa, a former student, emphatically stated that she did not. However, along with Reggie and Julie, the other former Giwaykiwin students, she also described, feeling a sense of pride after her Outward Bound experiences because they had overcome physical, psychological, and emotional obstacles. These experiences appeared to emphasize the value of the expeditionary component of Giwaykiwin courses. Julie also described how her Giwaykiwin experience motivated her, partly out of frustration with the course, to explore further into her Aboriginal roots. Lisa noted that her Giwaykiwin experience was catalytic in her personal life and that she returned home with a new outlook and motivation.

Lisa also described new connections between herself and the land, the sense of place as described by Andrews (1999) and others (Curthoys, 2007; Lugg, 2004; Stewart, 2004; Watchow, 2006; Wilson, 1995). Following Wilson (1995), I suggest that Lisa and Julie's feelings of connection to the land may have been influenced by their ancestral

connection to North America as an Aboriginal woman. Cajete (1994) also recognizes the significance of this connection for all Indigenous peoples and how long-standing relationships with specific land-bases greatly shaped Indigenous language, culture, and worldview.

Several of the instructors discussed how their Giwaykiwin experience positively influenced their comfort level with, and understanding of, Aboriginal people. This ranged from a heightened sensitivity to current events (Jack) to a motivation to learn more about Aboriginal culture (Natasha). Tim's description of his ongoing relationships with partner Aboriginal communities and the sense of accomplishment that he feels when he witnesses Giwaykiwin participants successfully complete a course was also important.

However, along with these seemingly positive reports, some instructors and staff members seemed to take the position of distanced cultural voyeurs at times during their courses, especially during cultural activities such as the Sweatlodge ceremony. This is problematic because it indicates that the non-Aboriginal instructors, unaware of their positions of White privilege (Bishop, 2002; Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2000, 2002; McIntosh, 1989; Weiss, 2002) and instructional privilege (Brown, 2002, 2003; Ellsworth, 1989), are learning about Aboriginal culture and people through trial and error with their students and co-instructors, often without the guidance and supervision of culturally located and experienced Elders who may provide a measure of stability and authenticity for everybody. It also reflects the concerns of Lickers (2006) who delineates the differences between Western and Aboriginal styles of leadership. Lickers suggests that Western leaders are expected to maintain a removed, directive, and professional distance from

their students, while leaders in Aboriginal traditions recognize the importance of building personal relationships with their students and leading through example.

Reggie, a former student who became an instructor, described the sense of community (Andrews, 1999) that he experienced, and still carries with him in his personal and professional life. He also discussed the diversity of the Outward Bound basecamp where he came into contact with people from cultural and social backgrounds with which he was unfamiliar. However, he also expressed considerable frustration with his experiences as a student when he felt pressured by his non-Aboriginal instructors to participate in Aboriginal ceremonies that did not coincide with his personal beliefs. Reggie's experiences appear representative of the former students who participated in this study—positive with regards to his overall Outward Bound experience, with significant concerns about the intentionally constructed cultural aspects of the Giwaykiwin program.

Implications for Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin Program

Fundamentally, the Giwaykiwin program, as described in this study, does not reflect major themes in decolonizing literature such as the revitalization of Aboriginal languages, epistemologies and pedagogies, recognizing the importance of the land, privileging Indigenous voices, the involvement of Elders in education, and Indigenous control of Indigenous education (Battiste, 1998, 2005; Goulet, 2001; Hampton, 1999; Kirkness, 1998; Simpson, 2002). As Tim, a program administrator stated in his interview, "I would say that Giwaykiwin programs are simply those that work with Aboriginal participants." From a decolonizing perspective, this is problematic.

I will conclude this chapter by providing recommendations for the Giwaykiwin problem to address this central issue by focusing on practical solutions. The implications from this study apply directly to the participants' Outward Bound experiences. However, some may relate to land-based cultural education in general and could be useful to practitioners from other organizations.

Based on the findings of this study, I have developed six recommendations for enhancing the Giwaykiwin program: increased involvement of Elders and other community members, increased Aboriginal instructor development, restricting the teaching of formal cultural elements to qualified people, increased cultural awareness training, recognizing the complex cultural dynamics of Giwaykiwin courses, recognizing the diversity of Giwaykiwin courses, and recognizing the potential value of cross-cultural interactions. A current that runs through all of these recommendations is the fundamental importance of taking a more localized approach to program design and delivery.

Increased involvement of Elders and other community members

As Simpson (2002) and others (Battiste, 2005; Graveline, 1998; Pepper & White, 1996) suggest, the regular involvement of Elders is key to any successful Aboriginal education program. Elders provide us with wisdom gathered during their long lives as well as a link to cultural traditions and historical perspectives. Student and staff participants in this study recognized the importance of this concept (Natasha, Tim, Julie, Lisa, Steve, Candace). They called for increased Elder involvement on Giwaykiwin courses. Natasha and Julie suggested that Elders should be facilitated to accompany Giwaykiwin courses on significant portions of their expeditions. This kind of extended

contact would provide students and instructors with the opportunity to learn from Elders, the most qualified cultural teachers (Battiste, 2005; Simpson, 2002; Pepper & White, 1996).

If Giwaykiwin courses were developed and delivered from a more local perspective, similar to Paariaqtuqtut (Takano, 2005) and Rediscovery (Henley, 1989; Lertzman, 1992) more opportunities could be created for Giwaykiwin students to maintain longer-term relationships with Elders and local mentors after their initial course has finished. This could address Brookes' (2006, 2007) concerns about the short-term nature of expeditionary educational approaches by providing former participants with longer-term relationships with healthy mentors and role models.

However, Julie and Lisa shared stories that remind us to be careful when negotiating relationships with Elders and other community members. They stated that they felt uncomfortable with their Sweatlodge keeper and his assistants. In my recent experiences with the Giwaykiwin program I have had very positive interactions with a particular Sweatlodge keeper and his family and believe that the students have as well. However, such relationships are subjective and I only truly know what my students report to me in person or in post-course anonymous written evaluations and interviews with the course coordinator. Ongoing and in-depth discussion with students and instructors about their experiences with community members is one way to address this issue. It would also be advisable to interview the Elders and other community members involved with Giwaykiwin programs before and after courses. Greater involvement of parents and other community members in the development and delivery of courses could ensure that only those Elders with positive reputations are asked to participate. Ultimately, Pepper &

White (1996) suggest that only Elders and community members who have been trained and approved following local traditions, should be granted the right to share sacred teachings and perform ceremonies.

Increased Aboriginal instructor development

Tim and Jack highlighted the ongoing challenge of attracting and maintaining a pool of qualified Aboriginal instructors. They identified two possible solutions to this problem—recruiting and training future instructors from partner First Nations’ communities along with actively recruiting other Aboriginal people for Instructor Development programs. I would also propose that if courses were designed and delivered with greater input from communities, more opportunities could be made to select instructors based on criteria other than those used by Outward Bound. Selecting instructors based on standard adventure industry norms such as certifications may exclude highly qualified cultural teachers and leaders. Perhaps Outward Bound could provide some form of safety and risk management training for those who are otherwise very qualified to lead culturally-based courses.

Another benefit of having increased numbers of instructors from students’ Nations is that they would be more likely to speak their Aboriginal languages and also to be familiar with the culture and realities of their lives at home. Local instructors could also act as translators for other instructors not familiar with the local language or customs.

Another suggestion that comes to mind is to provide cultural support and resources for current Aboriginal instructors and non-Aboriginal instructors. As Simpson

(2002) suggests, this support could come in the form of an Elder-in-residence or someone on-call or regularly available. I can attest to sometimes feeling culturally isolated and confused myself while living at the Outward Bound basecamp. We need to remember that as instructors, we are still young people in the grand scale of life and often require significant guidance ourselves. Having cultural support and resources available could provide non-Aboriginal instructors with further learning opportunities to better prepare them to work with Aboriginal youth. This approach could also provide them with a broader skill set and deepened understanding of Indigenous cultures that could also be shared with future Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike.

Restricting the teaching of cultural elements to qualified people

Former students Lisa, Julie, and Rob highlighted their frustrations with the ceremonial aspects of their courses. They stated that they often felt lost and confused, unsure of what to do while ceremonies were being conducted. Reggie even stated that he felt negatively pressured to participate. Their suggestions for improving students' experiences included increasing dialogue between staff and students about ceremonies and providing choice for whether or not to participate. Pepper and White (1996) suggest that only people who are trained, qualified and recognized in the traditions of their communities should deliver cultural teachings and ceremonies. Based on this recommendation and the students' experiences, I propose that the delivery of ceremonies such as smudging and even offering tobacco be restricted to senior community members and Elders. Also, whenever possible, these ceremonial leaders should come from the

same Nations as the students with whom they are working (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000).

Increased cultural awareness training

Several participants suggested that they could have been better culturally prepared as non-Aboriginal instructors or staff members on Giwaykiwin courses (Jack, Natasha, Steve). Natasha suggested that Aboriginal awareness workshops could be a part of annual staff training. Staff training could also be a time to introduce Elders into the Outward Bound community as part of increased ongoing involvement and program enrichment.

Ideally, qualified Elders and knowledge holders would provide cultural awareness training from specific communities' perspectives prior to instructors engaging with their students. Better preparation along with post-course discussions regarding cultural aspects of courses will lead to a greater awareness for instructors of what they have learned and what they still have to learn about Aboriginal people and the specific social and cultural contexts of specific communities. Perhaps if this type of approach was successful, non-Aboriginal instructors could become the cross-cultural "allies" that Bishop (2002) and others (Dei, 1996; Kivel, 2002; Moore, 1997; Weiss, 2002) described, reducing the need for Aboriginal people alone to speak out for themselves (Graveline, 1998), promoting cross-cultural cooperation and a deepened understanding of Indigenous knowledge, cultures, and people.

I would also propose that purposeful dialogue about cultural considerations both before and after Giwaykiwin courses could increase staff members' cultural awareness and also help Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal instructors understand each others' roles,

perspectives, and backgrounds. Post-course discussion might also help instructors, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, in transferring their cultural related learning to future courses or into their daily lives. Again, the increased involvement of Elders and other respected community members as leaders of Giwaykiwin programs could alleviate the responsibility of young instructors and provide more meaningful learning opportunities for students.

Recognizing the diversity of Giwaykiwin courses

Many of the research participants, staff and students alike, recognized the diversity of their Giwaykiwin experiences. This included diversity within the Aboriginal students and staff members, as well as diversity amongst non-Aboriginal Outward Bound staff who may have been directly or indirectly involved with the Giwaykiwin program.

Similar to contemporary scholars (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000), some Aboriginal (Reggie, Julie, Lisa) and non-Aboriginal (Candace) participants also brought attention to the importance of recognizing this diversity when considering cultural elements of Giwaykiwin courses. Reggie, in particular, recounted that he felt negatively pressured as a student to participate in cultural elements of his course. When he refused, he was alienated from his group. Reggie suggested that the ideal environment for him was found on a subsequent course where open discussion about spirituality and values was facilitated rather than mandatory participation. Creating this kind of open environment, where all students and staff are respected, should be a main goal of all Giwaykiwin courses. Perhaps if Elders and other senior community members were more

involved, students would feel more comfortable and young instructors would feel less pressure to “teach” students cultural knowledge that they do not possess.

Recognizing the complex cultural dynamics of Giwaykiwin courses

A majority of participants described in detail situations and relationships relating to culture during their Giwaykiwin experiences. Former students such as Lisa, Julie, and Reggie described the positive interactions that they’d had with their non-Aboriginal instructors. Staff members like Natasha, Steve, Jack, Candace, and Dan described in detail how much they felt that they had learned about Aboriginal culture and people. Jack and Natasha even proposed designing courses where Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students would complete an Outward Bound course together. However, Natasha also described a course composed of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth that was poorly received by the non-Aboriginal students resulting in the alienation of the Aboriginal students. Reggie also recognized the potential for future courses that could introduce Aboriginal students from northern and other remote communities to more urban southern areas to ease their transition into attending colleges and universities or seeking employment.

However, along with heralding these positive outcomes and opportunities, it is important to recognize that the learning does not end after a solitary Giwaykiwin course. Several staff participants in this study revealed that their Giwaykiwin experience had opened their eyes to the experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Canada, but did not, by any means, provide a complete picture. It also became clear in the findings that the very structure of the Giwaykiwin program reinforces non-Aboriginal instructors’ lack of

awareness of their own White privilege and instructor privilege and its potentially harmful impact on their students.

The concept of transference of cultural awareness is an area that could also be addressed during staff trainings and pre and post-course briefings. However, this study suggests that any discussion of this nature would have to be qualified by recognizing the diversity of contemporary Aboriginal peoples (Rosser, 2006; Waldram, 2000). Following Brookes (2006, 2007) concerns about short-term adventure education program, one might also question whether a discreet experience as a non-Aboriginal instructor of Aboriginal students, even with substantial cultural awareness training and debrief, would result in long-term changes in understanding of Aboriginal people in Canada.

Conclusion

I hope that Outward Bound will consider these recommendations in a collaborative and constructive spirit. The overarching theme that seems to run through all the findings of this study is the importance of grounding Indigenous education programs as much as possible in the culture and traditions of specific communities, providing the opportunity for learning and the enrichment of self and others in an Indigenous context. Programs such as Paariaqtuqtut in Igloolik (Takano, 2005) and the various locally developed Rediscovery programs (Henley, 1989; Lertzman, 2002) are examples of this approach. Once this key factor is recognized, changes in epistemological orientation, how instructors are selected and trained, involving local Elders and respected community members, honouring ceremonial traditions, recognizing White and Instructor privilege,

and recognizing the contemporary diversity of Aboriginal peoples and connections to land in an Indigenous context will hopefully follow.

CHAPTER SIX: FINAL REFLECTIONS

Conducting this study has been an intense personal and academic journey. Along the way I have confronted deep issues of identity and their implications in my life. Through extensive reading, study, discussion, reflection, and the research process, I would like to claim that I was able to come to peace with many of these issues. I realize however, that as a curious person, there will be always be issues nagging at my sub-conscious, pushing me into another round of study, reflection, and conclusions that will lead to even more questions.

Engaging with the collaborative ethnography model (Lassiter, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Papa & Lassiter, 2003) has been a challenging but rewarding experience. From the beginning, I hoped to conduct my research as an insider, in a way that allowed me proximity to my participants in a close but respectful way (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). This was especially important given my limited but growing understanding of the historically uneasy relationship between Indigenous people worldwide and the academic, economic, and research communities (Deloria Jr., 1997; Lassiter, 2000; Tuhiwai Smith, 1998).

Interpreting Participants' Experiences with the Collaborative Research Process

In collaborative ethnography an effective relationship between a researcher and their participants is crucial (Lassiter, 2000). The following section deals with the ongoing relationships between my role as the primary researcher in this study and the research participants. The data presented comes from my personal field journal along with post-interview reflections by the participants. The post-interview reflections arrived primarily via electronic mail, but also through telephone conversations. In response to my

solicitations, I have received a fair bit of positive and constructive feedback from the participants. Placing participants' comments in the concluding discussion may seem unorthodox, but it seemed appropriate given the collaborative spirit of this study.

After reviewing the transcript of her interview, Lisa emailed me to say:

You are a natural at this research biz. I quite enjoy getting to know you more through this project. I think the method of research you have chosen accurately reflects the story building (or creation) process of people's experiences. Having you listen does help re-call, re-create, re-member, re-alize the personal challenges and meaning(s) of the overall OB experience.

After my interview with Julie and Lisa I reflected in my field journal:

This was such a great way to finish my interviews. I feel like we embodied so much of my intended methodology. The process of setting up the interview was facilitated by [Lisa] as we were sensitive to [Julie] being a bit shy because I didn't know her very well. We ended up meeting at [Lisa]'s for breakfast on a Saturday morning. For the first couple of hours we just hung out and got to know each other, no business, just good food and sharing stories. Once we'd got to know each other a bit more and shared food (I brought bannock!) we moved to the living room for the interview. [Lisa] sat in and added her comments throughout (above). [Julie] said afterward that she felt really comfortable and also that she supported my efforts towards more collaboration. What a great feeling.

With regards to that interview, Julie commented:

I appreciated you sharing your roots with us. You should look into your friend's suggestion of writing a book. Take care.

I also had several important learning moments with negotiating the researcher-participant relationship. Deciding when and how to offer participants' tobacco, approaching potential participants in respectful ways, and maintaining friendships and working relationships with participants is an ongoing process. Take this excerpt from a recent entry in my field journal:

[Reggie] chided me when he gave me back his transcript with his comments. I'd set a deadline of two weeks for participants to respond with their reflections on the transcript. [Reggie] had told me that his was going to be a few days late. When two weeks came and only two had responded, I sent out a reminder email

to everyone including [Reggie]. When he brought in his transcript to me three days later he chided me by saying, "Why'd you send me that email? That's not how we do it in Indian Country. Auntie or Uncle would have come after you...." We laughed about it but there was an element of seriousness to it all. I should have known better. Still learning about walking gracefully in both worlds.

Throughout the research process I was having these kinds of learning moments, learning on the fly, sometimes learning new things about being a qualitative researcher in the field, at other times like with Reggie, being reminded of things that I already knew.

Tim also commented on the value to his ongoing program development work of being able to review his interview transcript:

I had a chance this a.m. to finish reading the transcript through and had some interesting reflections indeed. It was a real gift to hear our conversation reflected back to me 4 months later. Kind of like getting a solo letter in the mail. We're currently creating the program for next year and onwards and it was really great to see all of the nuances of our discussion on the screen again to help me to navigate those things that I and we hold important. So thanks for that. The transcript looks great to me.

I am glad that Tim is taking note and reflecting on the outcomes of this study. As somebody still involved with Outward Bound personally and professionally, I was nervous about challenging Tim on his statements about the philosophical approach of the Giwaykiwin program. However, based on my experiences with the organization and my growing understanding of decolonization, I felt that it was important. In the end, extending our dialogue about the philosophical approach of the Giwaykiwin helped to clarify that it is in fact, heavily situated in Outward Bound traditions with a limited and varying amount of Aboriginal cultural influences. This was a very important clarification.

I also learned a lot during the research process about conducting research in general, but particularly in an Aboriginal context. The reflexive research process (Lotz-

Sisitka, 2002) that I engaged with along with the participants also provided a measure of validity to the study. Repeatedly revisiting the findings with a critical eye provided the opportunity for multiple layers of interpretation of the participants' experiences with the Giwaykiwin program as well the significance of this study.

Engaging with the Participants

Throughout the research process I was forced to examine how I conducted myself in situations such as simultaneously offering tobacco and a consent form. To this end, I hope that through the conduct of this study, I have added to the body of contemporary literature demonstrating that it is possible to satisfy both worlds to an acceptable degree. I wonder though, how this might fit into a model of decolonization—would I only be offering tobacco and not consent forms? Only to Aboriginal participants? Or to all participants?

In terms of approaching the participants in this study, Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, the right to choose, but not be forced to accept tobacco seemed important. However, no one seemed to question the use of waiver forms. Perhaps this fact alone speaks volumes about decolonization in an academic context. Maybe if tobacco and consent forms were equally privileged within the academic institution as methods for gaining consent to share information, then more accurate answers to my lingering questions could be found.

I would also like to mention the interviews that did not happen. There were several instances of potential that did not come to fruition. It is important to note that all of these potential participants were Aboriginal people and some are friends of mine. I

constantly felt as though I was dancing a fine line, learning when a relationship was strong enough for me to request an interview and learning the hard way when it was not. I definitely feel as though I lost a few potential participants because I did not adequately explain the research or approached them too quickly or too abruptly with a proposition for an interview. Unfortunately, I believe that several experienced Aboriginal instructors are not represented in this research because of my bumbled attempts to attract them as participants. This point brings to mind Reggie's reminder that I was forgetting to respect cultural norms and perhaps being rudely insistent when repeatedly requesting his transcript review. At one point I also made a conscious decision not to approach Outward Bound's current Sweatlodge Keeper out of concern for disrupting a young relationship with him. I felt that while he probably would have been amenable to an interview, but I did not want to disrupt the growing trust that I felt was still developing between he and I as well as with Outward Bound. Graveline (1998) describes the importance of paying attention to these kinds of personal relationships in our professional lives within the Aboriginal community. Had I known the Lodgekeeper longer and felt that he completely understood my background and motives, I would have felt more comfortable approaching him for an interview.

Another issue with participants came up when I attempted to contact former students from my first Giwaykiwin course. After several attempts by email I did not receive any responses. I realized, however, that some of them had returned to challenging home environments and that participating in my research project was probably not on the top of their priority list. I was constantly reminded that what is really important, indeed why I was motivated to undertake this study in the first place, is the youth who

participate in these programs. In their interviews, Julie, Lisa, and Reggie reminded us of the importance of constantly considering our students' perspectives and experiences. I feel that it was no different for me while conducting this research. At times, I had to decide whether or not to proceed with pursuing a potential interview or not. Several former students whom I contacted responded to my e-mails, but did not seem interested in engaging in an interview. Rather, they seemed merely appreciative of the chance to reconnect on a personal level, if only by e-mail. In several instances, I sensed that this was the case and made a conscious decision not to pursue an interview.

The difficulty that I encountered in getting in touch with former students reminded me of the need to create opportunities for longer-term relationships with students (Brookes, 2006; 2007). Perhaps if programs were designed to include long-term post-course mentorship or more regular alumni courses, it would provide a consistently positive relationship for students with otherwise rocky lives.

Even with the non-Aboriginal research participants, I sometimes felt the need to emphasize that our relationship was more important to me than the interview. I know that this put some participants at ease, at least that's what they told me. I think that contemporary Indigenous researchers who advocate for personal rather than professional approaches would agree with this approach (Graveline, 1998). In her post-interview correspondence Julie thanked me for sharing stories from my own family background with her before we began her formal interview. Julie's comments reminded me of Absolon and Willett's (2005) description of the importance in the Indigenous world of situating ourselves first before engaging with the community. They also confirmed my methodological assumption that at times, I was acting as an academic insider with the

Aboriginal participants in this study. Sharing my family's Aboriginal background with Julie and the other Aboriginal participants revealed common ground between us that influenced how we interacted during our interview. She spoke to me as an insider, someone who would understand the perspective of someone of mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage like herself. However, this is not to say that our life experiences are identical or that I can relate to all Aboriginal people as an insider. Reggie reminded me of this when he chided me for bothering him about returning his transcript review when he'd already said that he would, an act that would be viewed as pushy and rude in many Indigenous communities. Perhaps if Outward Bound could learn from this approach, we would see more programs developed from within local communities with local instructors. Awareness of the concept of cultural location could also help non-Aboriginal instructors better understand their roles and the cultural and instructional power that they hold over their students.

Participants' Ideas for Sharing the Findings

Lassiter (2000) emphasizes the importance of research participants being involved as much as possible in every stage of the research process. This includes the dissemination of the results. In this study, our post-interview dialogue included a request by me for the participants to share their ideas on ways to share the findings of this study. Some participants seemed to put a lot of thought into this and came up with creative and meaningful responses. For example, Lisa's suggestions included:

Showing the results of this study... hmmm... of course, the usual paper format will have to be utilized. But wouldn't it be cool to use photographs. Get one photo from each participant that holds some sort of meaning for them.... I think presenting the material or information that it represents: like the photographs or

the use of student or instructor's poems/quotes— scattered throughout it. I suppose it depends on who the reader is... Or wouldn't it be fun to use metaphors to mark “chapters” in the thesis? Like using the river and paddling...

Lisa's ideas on river and paddling metaphors are reminiscent of Cole's (2002) work in Aboriginalizing methodology.

Tim also stated, “We occasionally have Board retreats (for our Board of Directors)... we could look to the one next fall potentially as a place that might work to share some of your findings.” Reggie suggested sharing the findings and stories from this study through the media, “Getting a story on APTN or something, sharing those experiences...”

All of the participants' suggestions were greatly appreciated. I will make every effort to consider all of their ideas. I am especially looking forward to sharing the findings in public presentations.

Final Thoughts

The collaborative nature of my chosen methodology has been challenging. It has required dedication and extra work on my part to maintain integrity, but in the end I believe that it was worth it. Several participants expressed their appreciation for this approach, even if they didn't have a lot of extra to add, they were happy to be kept up-to-date. I am proud of the work that it has required and I hope that it has addressed some of the concerns described by many authors surrounding the historical mistreatment of Indigenous peoples in research such as the misappropriation, distortion, and eventual disappearance of findings (Deloria Jr., 1997; Tuhiwai Smith, 1998; Lassiter, 2000). I am

looking forward to sharing the final results with the participants and the Outward Bound community.

Throughout the course of this research journey I have remained on-staff with Outward Bound Canada. From the beginning, negotiating my relationship with Outward Bound as an instructor turned researcher has been dynamic, challenging, and rewarding. I have maintained regular dialogue with the Outward Bound, keeping them up to date on the progress of this study. They also continue to regularly solicit feedback and advice regarding program development. I am grateful for this constructive relationship and hope that it will continue in the future.

The experiences and insights that I have gained through this research process will of course inform my future work as an academic and educational practitioner. I feel as though I began with quite strong opinions and ideas about the strengths of this particular program and Canadian society's relationship with Aboriginal people in general. I was primarily concerned that Outward Bound Canada's approach to injecting various elements of Aboriginal culture into the Giwaykiwin program was merely superficial decoration for what was still an Outward Bound course. Following Simpson (2002) or Battiste (2005), I did not feel that the Giwaykiwin program had been developed from an Aboriginal philosophical base. Tim confirmed this when he stated that contemporary Giwaykiwin programs "are strongly situated in Outward Bound philosophy and have varying degrees of Aboriginal or cultural content" and also that they are "simply those that work with Aboriginal participants." As stated in Chapter Five, embracing a more community-based approach to the Giwaykiwin program will help to address this fundamental concern.

Throughout the research process I was impressed by the participants' willingness and dedication to this study. As their comments in the findings suggest, they invested considerable time and thought in this study and I am grateful for that. I enjoyed the collaborative ethnographic approach. The rich amount of participant involvement has also led to reflexive validity as described by Lotz-Sisitka (2002) and Tuhiwai Smith (1999). Repeatedly reassessing and reinterpreting the data has deepened the meaning of the findings to this study as well as to the participants themselves. I hope that the recommendations that I have provided will assist future program developers and instructors to develop and deliver effective and respectful courses that will be of mutual benefit not only to Indigenous peoples and their communities, but to society at large in addressing cross-cultural learning as we work together to help protect the Earth and all of Creation.

Meegwetch

Merci

Thank-You

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APPENDICES

- Initial Introductory E-mail to Participants (Appendix A)
- Initial Introductory E-mail to Guardians (Appendix B)
- Cover Letter to Participants (Appendix C)
- Participant Consent Form (Appendix D)
- Use of Photographs Consent Form (Appendix E)
- Sample Interview Guide (Appendix F)
- Initial Follow-Up E-mail (Appendix G)
- Second Follow-Up E-mail (Appendix H)

Appendix A: Initial Introductory E-Mail to Participants

Dear Participant,

Hello, how are you? I would like to invite you to participate in a study into your experiences with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program. This project is part of my Master's research at Lakehead University entitled, "Outward Bound Giwaykiwin: Wilderness-Based Indigenous Education". Your knowledge and experience are vital elements in this research journey. It would be an opportunity for you to reflect upon your experiences and to contribute to enhancing the field of wilderness-based Aboriginal education.

Your commitment would involve meeting twice for 30-60 minutes over the summer and fall to discuss your experiences with the Giwaykiwin program. Our first meeting would be sometime between late-May and early-June preferably in-person (I'll come to you) or over the phone. The second meeting would be sometime in the fall at your convenience.

My research is approved by Lakehead University's Research Ethics Board and follows strict ethical guidelines to ensure confidentiality and your safety. If you agree to participate, you may choose not to answer certain questions or to withdraw at any time. It would be wonderful to meet for a visit, so if you are interested, please respond to this e-mail.

Yours truly,

Greg Lowan

Appendix B: Initial Introductory E-Mail to Guardians

Dear Guardian,

Hello, how are you? I am writing to request your permission for [participant's name] to participate in a study into their experiences last summer with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program. I was one of their instructors and I'm currently a Master's student in the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. This project is part of my Master's research entitled, "Outward Bound Giwaykiwin: Wilderness-Based Indigenous Education." [Participant's name] knowledge and experience are vital elements in this research journey. It would be an opportunity for them to reflect upon their experiences and to contribute to enhancing the field of wilderness-based Aboriginal education.

Their commitment would involve meeting twice for 30-60 minutes over the summer and fall to discuss their experiences with the Giwaykiwin program. Our first meeting would be sometime between late-May and early-June preferably in-person (I'll come to you) or over the phone. The second meeting would be sometime in the fall at your convenience.

My research is approved by Lakehead University's Research Ethics Board and follows strict ethical guidelines to ensure confidentiality and your safety. If you and [participant's name] agree to participate, [participant's name] may choose not to answer certain questions or to withdraw at any time. It would be wonderful to meet for a visit, so if you are interested, please respond to this e-mail.

Yours truly,

Greg Lowan

Appendix C: Cover Letter to Participants and Guardians

Dear Participant/ Guardian,

I would like to invite you to participate in a study into your experiences with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program. This project is part of my Master's research entitled, "Outward Bound Giwaykiwin: Wilderness-Based Indigenous Education".

The main question in my research is: "What are the experiences of former participants, staff, and community members involved with Outward Bound Canada's Giwaykiwin program?" Findings from this research may be used to enhance the delivery of Giwaykiwin programs as well as adding to the body of knowledge in contemporary wilderness-based Aboriginal education.

If you choose to participate, we will arrange a time to meet in-person or over the phone sometime between late-May and early-July for a 30-60 minute informal interview. If you'd like, please bring along your Outward Bound course journal and any other important photos or souvenirs. After our initial meeting, I will examine our interview and write an interpretation of your experiences. I will send this interpretation to you to read and reflect upon. We will then arrange a second meeting in-person or over the phone where we will discuss your reflections and any further thoughts that you may have.

For this reason, I plan to audio-record the interviews. Data collected will be kept confidential and I will not use any identifying photographs without your prior consent.

Should you choose to participate, you may withdraw at any time and you may decline to answer any question. Participation involves minimal, if any, risks. Your identity will be protected in my thesis and any associated writing and presentations. All participants will be asked to respect the confidentiality of other research participants. The data will be securely stored at Lakehead University for seven years.

The findings of this project will be made available to you at your request upon the completion of the project. The completed thesis will be available at the Education Library at Lakehead University.

This is an opportunity to extend and reflect upon your learning and experiences with the Giwaykiwin program. Your participation will play an important role in a larger on-going journey intended at improving and raising support for wilderness-based Indigenous education.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me (phone: (807) 343-8888 ext. 5738, email: gelowan@lakeheadu.ca), or direct your inquiries to Bob Jickling, my thesis advisor (phone: (807) 343-8704, email: rjicklin@lakeheadu.ca) or Lisa Norton, Research Ethics and Administration Officer, Lakehead University (phone: 807 343-8110 ext. 8283, email: lisa.norton@lakeheadu.ca).

Meegwech/ Thank you,

Greg Lowan

Appendix D: General Consent Form

I have read the accompanying explanation of “Outward Bound Giwaykiwin: Wilderness-Based Indigenous Education”, a research project by Greg Lowan. My signature below indicates that I understand the following ethical considerations:

- My participation is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I am under no requirement or obligation to answer every question.
- Participation involves minimal to no risk.
- All information gathered about me will be kept confidential.
- My identity will be protected by the use of pseudonyms.
- Photographs, of which I am a subject, will not be used without my prior consent.
- The data will be securely stored at Lakehead University for seven years.
- The findings of this project will be made available to me at my request upon the completion of the project. The completed thesis will be available at the Education Library at Lakehead University.

Name: _____
Please Print

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If participant is under 18 years of age:

Guardian Name: _____
Please Print

Guardian Signature: _____

Appendix E: Use of Photographs Consent Form

I am aware that photographs of me will not be used in this research without my prior consent and I give Greg Lowan consent to use these photographs, in the following parts of his Master's thesis research:

- Final thesis
- Research presentations
- Academic papers

Name: _____
Please Print

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If participant is under 18 years of age:

Guardian Name: _____
Please Print

Guardian Signature: _____

Appendix F: Interview Guide

Students:

Can you tell me briefly about yourself and your involvement with the Giwaykiwin program?

(While examining a photo(s) or other course artifact). Tell me a story about what this means to you?

What really sticks in your mind when you think of Giwaykiwin?

Can you tell me a story about how your Giwaykiwin experience has affected your life?

Can you tell me some of your memories of your instructors?

Can you tell me what you learned about Aboriginal culture and philosophy?

What about Outward Bound philosophy?

Can you tell me a story about your experience with the Elders involved with our course?

What could have made improved your experience?

Instructors:

Can you tell me briefly about yourself and your involvement with the Giwaykiwin program?

(While examining a photo(s) or other course artifact)- Tell me a story about what this means to you?

What really sticks in your mind when you think of Giwaykiwin?

Can you tell me a story about how your Giwaykiwin experience has affected your life?

Can you tell me a story about your relationship with your co-instructor(s)?

Can you tell me what you learned about Aboriginal culture and philosophy?

What about Outward Bound philosophy?

What was your experience with attempting to combine Aboriginal and Outward Bound philosophies?

Tell me a story about your experience with the Elders involved with our course?

What could have improved your experience?

Elder:

Can you tell me briefly about yourself and your involvement with the Giwaykiwin program?

(While examining a photo(s) or other course artifact). Tell me a story about what this means to you?

What really sticks in your mind when you think of Giwaykiwin?

Can you tell me a story about how your Giwaykiwin experience has affected your life?

Can you tell me a story about your relationship with Giwaykiwin instructors?

Can you tell me a story about your relationship with Giwaykiwin students?

Can you tell me a story about your observations of our attempt to combine Aboriginal and Outward Bound philosophies?

What could have improved your experience?

How could we improve the Giwaykiwin program?

Program Manager:

Can you tell me briefly about yourself and your involvement with the Giwaykiwin program?

(While examining a photo(s) or other course artifact)- Tell me a story about what this means to you?

What really sticks in your mind when you think of Giwaykiwin?

Can you tell me a story about how your Giwaykiwin experience has affected your life?

Can you tell me a story about your relationship with Giwaykiwin instructors?

Can you tell me a story about your relationship with Giwaykiwin students?

Can you tell me a story about your experience with the Elders and other community members involved with our course?

Can you tell me what you learned about Aboriginal culture and philosophy?

What about Outward Bound philosophy?

What was your experience with attempting to combine Aboriginal and Outward Bound philosophies?

What could have improved your experience?

How could we improve the program?

Appendix G: Initial Follow-Up E-mail to Participants

Dear Participant,

Please find attached a transcription of our interview. In a continued spirit of collaboration on my master's research into our experiences with Outward Bound's Giwaykiwin program, I would greatly appreciate if you could find a few moments to review the transcript. I would also be interested in any further thoughts that you might have on this topic. Especially:

1. Reflections that you've had since our interview or after reading the transcript.
2. Reflections on our on-going relationship as a researcher and a research participant.
3. Any suggestions that you might have for effectively sharing the results of this study.

Please feel free to respond via email. However, please let me know if you would prefer to arrange a telephone conversation. Also, feel free to share any other thoughts or requests regarding this study with me at any time. If possible, please respond by October 5th, 2007. Later in the fall, a draft of portions of my final thesis including your reflections will also be available for your review.

Many thanks,

Greg Lowan

Appendix H: Second Follow-Up E-mail to Participants

Dear Participant,

I've attached the findings section of my thesis. This is still a rough draft, but I wanted to share it with you and the other participants so that you are aware of some of the outcomes of the study. I also wanted to give you a chance to make sure that your anonymity is respected and that you're comfortable with how I've presented your experiences. I'm not looking for detailed comments here unless there's something that really jumps out for you. Just wanted to continue in a spirit of collaboration. The pseudonym that I used for you is [pseudonym]. Hope that's okay.

Thanks again. Your thoughts on all of this have been especially insightful. Hopefully some good will come out of all of this! Please respond with any comments by next Friday, December 14th, 2007.

Be well,

Greg Lowan