

KAKANJEGAWIN, TO KNOW.

ANISHINAWBE EPISTEMOLOGY AND EDUCATION:
A PHILOSOPHIC AND HOLISTIC EXPLORATION OF ANISHINAWBE APPROACHES
TO KNOWLEDGE AND IMPLICATIONS IN EDUCATION

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Abstract

This literature-based study explores the holistic and tradition-based Anishinawbe knowledge systems and what it means to *know* in the Anishinawbe sense. Several aspects of discussion include the source from which knowledge is attained, the manner in which knowledge is passed down through the generations, and how one can recognize that knowledge through various ways of knowing. Or, what does it mean to 'know' in a traditional Anishinawbe sense? Implications and the importance of Anishinawbe epistemology and culture in traditional Anishinawbe education are also discussed.

This study is holistic in the same basis as that of the Anishinawbe knowledge system which is interconnected with all things. This provides some understanding of the complexities of this and provides insight to the roots of traditional Anishinawbe teachings and knowledge acquisition.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Dr. Ruby Slipperjack-Farrell and Mr. Patrick Farrell, M. S.W., to the memory of my Cocom (Grandmother) Daisy, to Anishinawbe students and educators, and to those who seek out Anishinawbe knowledge and all of its complexities.

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CHAPTER I

The Research Problem

Personal Background

As an Anishinawbe student from Thunder Bay, much of my educational experience has been void of elements of my culture. Only rarely was my culture included within classroom lessons and learning. During my university experience and education, I realized that there was something missing in my life, that for some reason I had not felt whole. It was this lack of culture in many aspects of my life which I found to be the reason for this un-holistic feeling. In completing assignments and essays, I tried to integrate aspects of my culture into them, to include that which had been neglected during most of my early education in elementary and high school.

During my two years of teaching at a high school for Anishinawbe students, I was fortunate to be able to modify government curriculum profiles, which lacked greatly in Anishinawbe and Indigenous content in general, and to develop my own, which were geared toward and included the Anishinawbe culture. While this was more fulfilling, I still continued to need something more, to talk more about this subject that had been absent for many years in my own education.

It was recently, while writing a paper for a graduate course, that I discovered a great interest in Anishinawbe epistemology and the understanding of Anishinawbe knowledge systems. It is my great interest, if not need, now to delve into this subject more deeply and, hopefully, come

out with a better understanding of what it means to *know* in a traditional Anishinawbe sense.

Statement of the Problem

Just as the Anishinawbe people in my culture believe in the holistic quality and interconnectedness of the natural world (Four Worlds Development Project 1988), in terms of teaching and learning, this thesis examines and brings forth the concept of a holistic and traditionally based Anishinawbe knowledge system; as Cajete (1994) states, "education for wholeness" (p. 208). The purpose of this thesis topic is its relevance to education when understanding Anishinawbe epistemology.

By means of a literature-based exploration, I examined a traditional approach to Anishinawbe knowledge, the process of knowing, and the implications on Anishinawbe education.

To do this, I explore four central questions around which the thesis is structured:

- (a) How is traditional knowledge acquired, or, in other words, the manner in which knowledge is passed down, taught or shown (such as through Medicine Wheel based teachings and models, types of experiences, dreams and visions, and Elders)?
- (b) What are the sources of traditional knowledge (such as legends, ceremonies and traditions, spirituality and beliefs, and life experiences)?

- (c) What does it mean to *know* in a traditional Anishinawbe sense? In other words, once we recognize from where Anishinawbe knowledge is traditionally derived and how that knowledge can be passed on we can better understand what it is to *know* in an Anishinawbe sense.
- (d) What are some implications of Anishinawbe epistemology for traditional Anishinawbe education?

Rationale

This study examines practical, theoretical, and philosophical literature related to traditional Anishinawbe ways of passing on knowledge; or attaining knowledge and learning, and understanding what it means to *know* in a traditional sense. I am examining the idea of what it means to *know* (*kakanjegawin*, in the Ojibwe language), in other words, Anishinawbe epistemology, and the importance of this epistemology in Anishinawbe education. As Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) write, "Indigenous scholars have begun to identify the epistemological underpinnings and learning processes associated with Indigenous knowledge systems" (p. 18). I examined literature to draw together threads of understanding from Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars in order to create a broad understanding of these four questions. This thesis is in preparation for a larger study to be conducted in a PhD where I will examine these issues with Anishinawbe Elders—specifically around the theme of legends.

While these research questions are very large and there are many ways to address these questions, including going to Elders and oral literature on the topic, this will be reserved for the doctoral study. In preparation for the large study, I decided to look at what was published in the field of Anishinawbe education in reference to the question of Anishinawbe knowledge and what it means to *know* in relation to this culture. This is taken up through a discussion of ways in which traditional Anishinawbe knowledge is passed down or acquired, and specifically to holism and holistic education, Medicine Wheels and Sacred Circles, and spirituality, all of which are discussed in Chapter 3.

To begin to answer the question of the sources and content of Anishinawbe knowledge, I discuss the role and responsibility of Elders, Anishinawbe legends, language and the land, and I also carry out a discussion of ceremonies, spirituality and beliefs, and personal experiences in Chapter 4.

In order to address the question “what is knowledge and what does it mean to *know*?” (in a traditional Anishinawbe sense), I examine traditional Anishinawbe epistemology, Anishinawbe ways of knowing, followed by a discussion of ways knowledge is developed, received, and applied through four spheres of understanding. These four spheres include land, spirituality, Elders, and time and space. A definition regarding the spheres are in the section “Definition of Terms” under the sub-section “Spheres of Understanding.”

Implications of Anishinawbe epistemology in education is taken up through three themes including Anishinawbe knowledge and the future of education, some Anishinawbe teaching methods and models in education, and possible contemporary uses of Anishinawbe education and teaching models. This thesis is holistic in that this draws upon an interconnected knowledge system and these questions I address are interconnected. Just as our actions affect the environment and the creatures in it and consequently affect our lives as humans (traditionally at least), there is an interconnectedness between all things; I take this approach and Anishinawbe belief into consideration in this thesis. Additionally, I have my own particular way of organizing the questions and sub-topics in my thesis, but they could be organized differently. This is one approach that is used for this particular application.

I feel there is a need to recognize Anishinawbe epistemology and knowledge systems as ways of learning and understanding within current mainstream education. The balance between education and the self could be reflected in an education that encourages the development of the students' culture and knowledge, and which supports the gathering of one's own knowledge in education and in life. Only when one values oneself and those around oneself in an equal space, can one reach one's full potential and become balanced and whole as an individual (Cajete, 1994; Deloria Jr., 1999; Four Worlds Development Project, 1988).

Anishinawbe peoples traditionally learn from their experiences, from Elders, from spiritual avenues (such as from dreams and vision quests), from beliefs systems (such as those in connection with the land), traditions and ceremonies (Cajete, 1994; Graveline, 1998; Hanohano, 1999). Anishinawbe knowledge, then, is the knowledge which is acquired from traditional teachings, experiences, spirituality, cultural beliefs and practices, protocols, and ceremonies.

I propose that current mainstream education can more firmly support this type of traditional Anishinawbe education by educating with a more spiritually-focused means of attaining knowledge and learning and by teaching in a manner which is conducive to those methods used in a traditional teaching and learning setting. A traditional teaching and learning setting would be identified by the features of learning through observation and listening as well as by an inclusion of the balancing of the spirit, mind, body and emotions within the teaching methods and content to be learned.

I will note here, however, that while I make some preliminary suggestions in regard to the usefulness and importance of traditional Anishinawbe education, no analysis of mainstream education will be completed given that a fuller discussion of that topic is more appropriate to a larger study and perhaps one to be included within my PhD dissertation. In addition, although I include a discussion of cultural teachings, I will not examine traditional Anishinawbe knowledge delivery systems, such as teaching and learning methods or strategies, due to thesis length restrictions

and lack of space. A dedicated discussion of traditional Anishinawbe knowledge delivery systems is more appropriate as part of a larger study on that topic.

While there are many spiritually-focused or spiritually-based methods of acquiring knowledge and learning, including Medicine Wheel teachings and models, what I further suggest here is the exploration of how Anishinawbe peoples, traditionally, actually gain that knowledge and those teachings, where that knowledge derives, and an understanding of the epistemology and ultimate sense of knowing. What does it mean to understand those teachings and knowledge given to and absorbed by us? How is it that we *know*?

Definition of Terms

Anishinawbe

For Ojibwe people, Anishinawbe is the term with which we use to identify ourselves. The term Anishinawbe also includes, in a broader sense, other First Nations or Aboriginals and, to an extent, other Indigenous groups. Our common history as Indigenous peoples connects us. The commonalities of belief and spiritual systems are something which we also share. I use Anishinawbe in this thesis to both define the cultural group to which I belong and to attend to the broader Indigenous literature that informs my understanding.

Aboriginal

The term Aboriginal is used by government to define the Indigenous peoples of Canada. The term Aboriginal includes three groups of Indigenous people native to Canada: (a) First Nations, which includes both Status and non-Status; (b) Inuit; and (c) Metis.

Indigenous

Indigenous refers to a group of people native to a particular place. It is a term which may be used to collectively or globally identify people who are native to a particular area or place.

Spheres of Understanding

While Hanohano (1999) uses the term "realms" to define Anishinawbe epistemology by discussing the four realms of the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual (p. 211), I find that this term becomes too disconnected or abstract from my own and traditional Anishinawbe ideas of Anishinawbe epistemology. The term "realm" inspires, by definition, images of kingdoms and abstract thought (Bisset, Canadian Oxford Paperback Dictionary, 2000, p. 852), features which are too removed from Anishinawbe knowledge, which is rooted in the land. The term creates an abstraction of the attained knowledge of the Elders, in the spirituality, which is embedded within all of these, and in the characteristics of time and space which connects them all. However, it is through my own removal from my ancestors language (I do not

speak the language) that I also have difficulties finding a term which best suits my purpose and description of what I am trying to say. So, it is through the term "Sphere" which I use to describe the features of what it means to know in an Anishinawbe way. "Sphere" connotes more tangibility of presence and thought, and of purpose of being, as its definition relates directly to fields of action, influence, or existence (Bisset, Canadian Oxford Paperback Dictionary, 2000, p. 1008). Additionally, by its suggested shape, "sphere" also supports the interconnectedness of the four areas, which will now be called spheres.

In my understanding, perception and experience, knowledge is developed, received, applied and achieved through four spheres: (a) the land, (b) the spiritual and personal experience, (c) the Elders, and (d) time and space. The land, the physical space around us including all living, plant and atmospherical/space materials, is a sphere in which knowledge can be attained as it comprises many aspects of our daily lives. The spiritual and personal experience is another important sphere of knowledge as it is through this sphere that we understand ourselves. This sphere enables us to acquire knowledge with particular and individual perceptions of the world in which we live. Lastly, Elders are a sphere in which knowledge, which has already been developed, received and attained with traditional customs and ideologies, is able to be passed down.

Culture: Spirituality and Beliefs, Ceremonies and Traditions, Legends, Experiences, and Elders

Legends and stories, spirituality and beliefs, and the language itself are the sources of knowledge and content that are in the teachings and explanations of why things are the way they are in this world. These legends and stories, which are a part of the spoken language and oral tradition in my own and other cultures, are respected and are integral to the knowledge and the content of the teaching that is passed on. These various features within the Anishinawbe culture are the sources from which knowledge can be accessed and passed on through experience and learning.

Holistic knowledge

Holistic knowledge is an encompassing view of how to know and of ways of knowing. It is a view that all things are interconnected and that there is a cyclical nature to knowing and to life in general. Holistic knowledge allows and creates a wholeness of the self. This knowledge is interconnected through the self, the spirit, the mental, and the emotional—which are aspects of learning and of knowing. Holistic knowledge is also the basis for the Medicine Wheel teachings and other spiritual and belief systems in the Anishinawbe culture.

Holistic education

Traditional Anishinawbe education includes a holistic style of learning where the inner self is examined and attempted to be understood, where the study of the inner self allows for an ability to understand the outside world and the outside environment. Traditional Anishinawbe education is a holistic style of learning usually based upon the teachings of the Medicine Wheel (or Sacred Circle), and of realizing the interconnectedness of all things (between the self, the animals, the environment, between ideas and concepts, and other people). Holistic education includes the body, mind, and spirit as part of the entire educational process. It is important for these aspects to be present in Anishinawbe education for the learners, for educators, and for others who pass on knowledge (such as Elders) to be truly open for learning, for obtaining and passing on knowledge, and for wholeness and interconnectedness to be understood and created in the learning and teaching environment.

Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle

The Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle is generally a symbol of interconnectedness between the inner self, the spirit, and with the many different facets of life and surrounding world. The Medicine Wheel is also a representation of the stages of life and the cyclical qualities in nature. Medicine Wheel teachings are based on the interconnectedness between the spirit, the body, the mind, and emotions. As Regnier (1995) states,

"Education through the Sacred Circle allows people to see harmony and balance in their interconnectedness with all things" (p. 316).

Although the visual design of the Medicine Wheel is fairly recent and before the publication of the Medicine Wheel teachings, the concept of interconnectedness and the design of spirals and circular symbols have always been used since the beginning of time. Medicine Wheel sites have often been linked to spiritual practices of the Indigenous people who constructed them. Some sites, including: (a) Big Horn Medicine Wheel located near Sheridan, Wyoming which consists of a large central stone cairn surrounded by a stone circle and six ancillary cairns, with radiating spokes, having a diameter measuring 88.6 feet or 25 metres, and constructed some time after 1760 (Brumley, 1988); and (b) the Majorville Cairn and Medicine Wheel site in Alberta which consists of a large central cairn surrounded by a stone circle and twenty-six to twenty-eight radiating spokes, having a diameter of 94.6 feet or 28.83 metres, and was constructed accretionally beginning around 5000 years ago (Calder, 1977), are only two of the many examples of such Medicine Wheel sites.

Further, art historians Berlo and Phillips (1998) have found examples of such circular designs in Mississippian and other Woodlands cultures in which "the most common form of decoration on the fine pottery . . . was the spiral, a motif whose symbolic meanings may be related to the circular and cyclical concepts of time and sacred and ritual movements" (p. 84). Further, in what can be seen as a comparison to the concepts of the more modern Medicine

Wheel or Sacred Circle, Berlo and Phillips (1998) describe one of these bowl's circular designs in which

Fundamental cosmological beliefs are combined on this bowl: the central circular form of the world and the sun, the four points of the cardinal directions, and the four, activating, spiralling lines that may indicate winds, seasons or the spinning motion of the cosmos as a whole. (p. 256)

Through these examples, it is evident that such concepts of the four directions, of the four various symbols which are present in the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, and that these same concepts and belief systems have been around for millenia.

Elders

Elders are the holders of a culture's knowledge, traditions, ceremony, song, protocols, rituals and ceremonies, legends and language. In a sense they are the holders and keepers of the culture itself. A holistic education cannot be complete without the presence of Elders and are an inclusive part of that interconnected education (Deloria Jr., 1999, p. 140). Elders can be distinguished from those who are of advanced age and who are not necessarily cultural keepers. I use a capital "E" on Elders to identify the keepers of cultural knowledge, and, in this instance, Anishinawbe knowledge. A deeper understanding of the complex role of Elders will be examined in Chapter 4.

Nature of the Study

While examining the topic of what it means to know in the traditional Anishinawbe culture (Anishinawbe epistemology), I also examined how knowledge is acquired or passed down, and the source and contents of that knowledge. I chose articles related to my research question to help support these more philosophical ideas, including those by Alfred, 2005; Cajete, 1994; Cheney, 2002; Ermine, 1995; George, 2003; Graveline, 1998; Hanohano, 1999; Regnier, 1995; and Shumaker, 2007. Articles and books were chosen that had relevance to my four thesis questions and the sub-topics. I chose to focus upon the articles that are peer-reviewed in order to examine what has been published in accessible sources in the academic literature. I supplemented these articles with selected book chapters that addressed the specific questions in my study or spoke to a specific sub-topic.

The thesis addresses four questions in regard to what it means to know in a traditional Anishinawbe sense. The introductory chapter of this thesis is followed by a chapter which offers a discussion of the methodologies for selecting the literature which has been included in this thesis. Chapter 3 addresses the first of the four questions and begins the process of examining the literature in regard to the first question for the thesis: Ways in which traditional Anishinawbe knowledge is passed down or acquired. Chapter 4 addresses the sources and content of the knowledge which are acquired or passed down. Chapter 5 speaks to the question: What is knowledge and what does it mean to know? by examining and discussing attributes of

Anishinawbe epistemology and by taking a look at some examples of modern Anishinawbe teaching models. Chapter 6 focuses attention on the implications of Anishinawbe epistemology in traditional Anishinawbe education. Finally, Chapter 7 draws together the understandings from the preceding four chapters and presents some conclusions and implications for further study.

As this is a literature-based study, the literature review itself is incorporated into the four chapters which are organized into a series and provide answers to the research questions.

Significance of the Study

The exploration of knowledge, in practice, in content, and most significantly in understanding of what it means to *know*, has been rarely explored in the literature I have examined in preparation for writing this thesis. I wish to explore Anishinawbe knowledge and what it means to *know* from a traditional Anishinawbe perspective. I want to examine (a) how it is that we (Anishinawbe people) *know*, and (b) how we have come to know and access this knowledge through our traditions, beliefs and spirituality, ceremonies, legends, elders, and our experiences. What I provide is a holistic examination of the process of knowledge (sources, process, and realization). Examining Anishinawbe epistemology and what it means to *know* in a traditional Anishinawbe sense, does not occur often in conjunction with contemporary Medicine Wheel teachings or with discussions of the content

of knowledge (of legends, spirituality, and so on) through an examination of specific literature.

Delimitations/Limitations of the Study

In this study, the findings, while being supported by many respected and well known researchers and scholars, for practical reasons, it ultimately lacks the voice of the Elders who are significant holders of the knowledge and topics this thesis discusses, but this will be the focus of my PhD study.

CHAPTER II

Design of the Research

Introduction to Research Method

This section describes the design of my research and the methods which are used. My primary method of research is through the examination of published peer-reviewed journal articles which help to support, validate, and help to ensure that my theories are reliable.

I have selected authors who have written specifically on the topic of what it means to *know*, the process of coming to *know*, and explore how it is that we *know*. Specifically, authors who have spoken of themes of, (a) how knowledge is traditionally passed down, (b) the sources and content of traditional knowledge, and (c) Anishinawbe epistemology were examined. I have limited my search to sources that were peer-reviewed and to textbooks, both of which provide insight to the answers to the questions in my thesis. Some authors were chosen because of my familiarity with them through previous graduate courses. I searched in journal databases for articles which were similar to ones with which I was already familiar with. I found other authors through examinations of the reference pages of articles with which I was already familiar and determined their relevance to my thesis by reading them through. Once I gathered several articles, I compared the reference lists between them, searching for additional authors and articles they had authored which could be relevant and important to my topic. I also searched for authors whose articles appeared in two or more of the

articles I had already gathered in order to help ensure the relevance and accuracy of article content. I discarded articles which I felt would not be useful in addressing my thesis questions, and whose content was not relevant to my culture.

Theoretical Foundations

I am taking a qualitative approach to this thesis in which I examine literature as the foremost strategy, along with some personal reflections on the four questions I pose. The themes and issues related directly to the four questions in my thesis are not based solely upon themes found in the literature I have examined. The themes and issues arose in part from my own ideas and thoughts concerning Anishinawbe epistemology (how knowledge is passed down or acquired, the sources of knowledge, and what does it mean to *know*, or, what is Anishinawbe epistemology?), and the implications that may result in traditional Anishinawbe education. My thoughts concerning Anishinawbe epistemology had initially stemmed from personal interests on the subject. While in a philosophy graduate course, I was propelled to write a short paper during that course on the subject. It was also the research and the writing of that paper which helped to inform my initial knowledge of the subject. These were the catalysts which spurred me toward the envisioning of this thesis.

The literatures I have selected articulate these themes and issues that I have presented. I have sorted them according to headings and categories

that I have created. The review of the themes revealed that this particular topic has not been addressed as ideas which are interconnected and interdependent to each other.

The process of my analysis include: reading the articles, making notes, noting the themes and issues in the margins of articles and textbooks. To sort these out, I divided the articles and texts into separate categories and headings which corresponded with the themes and issues I wished to discuss in my thesis. There were also some emerging perspectives on these themes which were later incorporated. These four themes became the four questions and ultimately the main body of my thesis (Chapters 3 through 7) which include: (a) ways in which traditional Anishinawbe knowledge is passed down or acquired; (b) the sources and the content of knowledge; (c) what is knowledge and what does it mean to *know*?; and (c) importance and implications of Anishinawbe epistemology in Anishinawbe education.

I compared my own analyses and interpretations and noted similarities and differences with those of other researcher's views (Creswell, 2003, p.14) while using primarily an analytical approach to examine various articles that articulate Anishinawbe theories. The methodology that I applied to choose articles and the procedure which I used to find them are discussed in "The Research Context," "Introduction to Research Method," and in "Characteristics of the Research."

I also generated some personal reflective journals which acted as a place in which I recorded my thoughts for my research questions and sub-

topics which were also supported and validated by peer-reviewed articles. I often reflected upon my questions and how they connected to each other. Any problems I was encountering during the writing process of my thesis, or of any possible implications of these questions to education later became a chapter in my thesis. The reflective writing process also became a method in which I was able to learn more about my questions and sub-topics by reflecting on them (Creswell, 2003). During the writing of my thesis I found that I could imbed some of my reflective notes as ways in which I could examine selected questions and sub-topics more fully.

The Research Process

In preparing for the research of this thesis, I gathered articles and information from books which supported my topic. The journal articles were primarily gathered from an article database, from Lakehead University libraries and from an interlibrary loan service. I also used articles which were provided from some of my Graduate course reading lists. Books were gathered from Lakehead University libraries and from interlibrary loan services, borrowed from a professor in the Indigenous Learning department at Lakehead University, and from personal collections. The journal articles gathered included those from the *American Indian Quarterly*, *Anthropology of Education Quarterly*, *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, *Canadian Journal of Native Education*, and *Ojibwe Cultural Foundation Publications*, to name a few. The types of books gathered included those

from curriculum publications, First Nations organizations, articles in books, and books which included topics on my questions and sub-topics. I limited my search by including, in search fields in article databases and library searches, words or phrases which best described the questions and sub-topics that I wished to discuss.

These searches for articles were carried out by entering search phrases in journal databases within the subject fields of Education, Native Studies, Anthropology, and Philosophy. Some phrases in which I searched under include, "epistemology," "Native epistemology," "knowledge," "traditional knowledge," "education," "Native Canadian," "Medicine Wheels," "Sacred Circles," "legends," "wholism," "holism," "holistic learning," "Elders," "ceremonies," "land," "Native language in education," and "Native spirituality."

The themes which I found most compelling and which provided evidence that informed the answers to my research question were those topics which are now part of this research (the sources and content of knowledge, how knowledge is passed down, and understanding what it means to *know* in Anishinawbe epistemological terms). As Creswell (2003) elaborates, "the researcher begins by gathering detailed information . . . and forms this information into categories or themes" (p. 133). Further, I fleshed out the themes by expressing personal reflections which were based on the thesis question. After gathering detailed information from articles that helped to inform my themes, these themes were then compared with the

Anishinawbe traditional knowledge in existing literature on the topic. These themes now form the four main questions, with sub-topics, and the chapters in my thesis.

This research contributes to a deeper understanding of Anishinawbe knowledge systems by helping educators understand some of the complexities of the Anishinawbe culture. Educators are catalysts for change for the reason that they are the persons in direct contact with students. The implementation of educational models based on traditional Anishinawbe models (such as the Medicine Wheel) and the knowledge which could be gleaned from this thesis may help educators to gain a new, if not deeper understanding of the Anishinawbe culture. Such an understanding and growth of this cultural knowledge could also assist Anishinawbe students to become more connected with the school experience in general. As history tells us that, their culture has been largely excluded from such an education, and thus an education of interconnectedness on all levels would be more beneficial (Archibald, 1995; Gay, 2004; Graveline, 1998; Hanohano, 1999; Leavitt, 1995; Stairs, 1995). As Kind, Irwin, Grauer, and De Cosson (2005) also express and which also helps to make this thought more reliable,

Education is longing for a deeper more connected, more inclusive, and more aware way of knowing. One that connects heart and hand and head and does not split knowledge into dualities of thought and being, mind and body, emotion and intellect, but resonates with a wholeness and fullness that engages every part of one's being. (p. 33)

Chapter III

Ways in which Anishinawbe Knowledge is Traditionally Passed Down or Acquired

This chapter includes a literature review within a discussion on how traditional Anishinawbe knowledge is passed down or acquired. The chapter examines the sub-topics of holism and holistic education. It includes a discussion of Medicine Wheels or the Sacred Circle and Spirituality.

Holism and Holistic Education

Anishinawbe knowledge is passed down or acquired through holism and holistic education (Kind, et. al., 2005; Hanohano, 1999; Graveline, 1998; Regnier, 1995; Cajete, 1994; Four Worlds Development Project, 1988). Traditional Anishinawbe education includes a holistic style of learning where the inner self is examined and attempted to be understood, where the study of the inner self allows for an ability to understand the outside world and the outside environment. Traditional Anishinawbe education produces a holistic style of learning usually based upon the teachings of the Medicine Wheel (or Sacred Circle), and of realizing the interconnectedness of all things (between the self, the animals, the environment, between ideas and concepts, and other people). Some researchers write of the benefits of such an education to both students and teachers (Kind, et. al., 2005).

This holistic education is *the* model of education for Anishinawbe students and which has been used for thousands of years by members of

their cultural group. As Leavitt (1995) adds, "traditional Native education relies upon ways of knowing, ways of interacting, and ways of using language which are not normally exploited in formal school" (p. 125). Stairs (1995) continues this idea by stating, "The Native traditions of contextualized and shared learning may offer clues for schooling directed towards more effective living in our environment and with each other" (p. 150).

Holistic knowledge is an encompassing view of how to know and of ways of knowing. It is a view that realizes that all things are interconnected and that there is a cyclical nature to knowing and to life in general. Stewart-Hawawira (2005) explains that, "For many indigenous authors, one of the signifiers that differentiate indigenous and Western forms of knowledge is the holistic nature of indigenous knowledge" (p. 35).

Holistic knowledge allows and creates a wholeness of the self and this knowledge concerns also the self and the spirit in connection to all other aspects of learning and of knowing. As Calliou (1995) states, "The production of knowledge is a holistic, self-constructed process" (p. 53). Holistic ways of knowing connects the inner with the outer world and it is through rituals and ceremony and daily activities that allow this to occur in a harmonious way. As Cajete (1994) describes,

Educating and enlivening the inner self is the imperative of Indigenous education embodied in the metaphor, "seeking life" or for "life's sake." Inherent in this metaphor is the realizations that ritual, myth, art, and learning the art of relationship in a particular environment, facilitates the health and wholeness of the individual, family, and community. Education for wholeness, by striving for a level of harmony between

individuals and their world, is an ancient foundation of the educational process of all cultures. (p. 208)

Holistic knowledge and holistic ways of knowing and education are different from colonial (Euro/Western) forms of education in that there is a cyclical rather than lineal concept of knowledge and knowing. This holistic education connects all part of an individual to their community and environment, again keeping in mind that all things are interconnected, that actions affect other events and other actions/reactions. Spirituality, as practiced in customs, song and dance and so on are just as much a part of an education as is the attainment of practical and philosophical knowledge.

Graveline (1998) also adds that, "A Traditional Aboriginal perspective pays attention to learning and teaching as an embodied experience. . . . Traditionalists continue to believe that the more of our senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch—that we use in learning/teaching something, the more likely we are to understand and remember it" (p. 77). The Anishinawbe style of education, the holistic approach and the inclusion of the senses, spirit, and inner self, contrasts greatly with Euro/Western education which focuses primarily on cognitive abilities (attainment and understanding of knowledge) and verbal instruction. As emphasised by Swisher and Deyhle (1992), "In most classrooms teachers tend to introduce almost all new concepts and give all instructions verbally. . . . This teaching style conflicts with the traditional cultural patterns reinforced in many Indian communities, where visual perception is encouraged" (p. 92). The use of all of the senses in education

is also an important feature of a holistic Anishinawbe education and curriculum. As Cajete (1994) supports, "The cultivation of all one's senses through learning how to listen, observe, and experience holistically by creative exploration was highly valued" (p. 33).

Traditional Anishinawbe knowledge has been passed down and acquired through a variety of methods and manners. These methods and manners of passing on knowledge are often derived from a holistic sense, from a means in which the method or manner is interconnected with the knowledge which is being passed down—one cannot be without the other. Knowledge and the manner or methods in which it is passed down, I propose, are interconnected.

I may be taught how to make snowshoes, but it is the connection between that knowledge of knowing how as well as the manner in which it is being taught that are cyclical and holistic and a part of knowledge gaining. Further, I may be shown the proper way to clean, cut, and stretch the raw leather for use in creating the snowshoes, but, in addition, it is the manner in which they are shown or taught which is also interconnected with the purpose and reasons for doing such an activity.

Yet, it is not just the use of the raw leather which is interconnected with Anishinawbe ways of knowing. It is also the treatment of the materials which is intrinsically important in the creation of the snowshoes as well as in those ways of knowing. It is all interconnected. For instance, the killing and processing of an animal is expected to be carried out with certain protocols

and respectful handling. An example of this includes the protocol that an animal's bones, skulls, or antlers, may not touch the ground and should be hung in a tree, according to Ojibwe beliefs (Niezen, 1998, p. 28). Such an act by the hunters ensures that proper respect is given to the animal so that they may be allowed to hunt that animal again in the future. Niezen (1998) expands upon this custom, and its correlation with the imbedded knowledge gained with the skill of hunting, in the following,

Respect for animals is . . . not a mere appendage to one's skill as a hunter. Success in the forest economy depends entirely on a hunter's consistency in establishing mutual respect with the game he is pursuing. Boasting of one's ability and wasting meat are serious breaches of etiquette that will disturb one's relationship with game and discourage animals from being killed. Respect is shown through a patient attitude toward the hunt and proper handling of game that has been taken. (p. 27-28)

In this example from my upbringing, I understand the key lesson is that the animal offers itself to the hunter to be killed. In the Anishinawbe culture, it is not the hunter's skill alone that kills the animal. Further discussion related to animals and the land appears in Chapter 4 in the sub-section "Land."

In holism, I propose, all aspects of the self and the actions one takes are treated equally and with equal actions or reactions. Protocols and respect are intrinsic aspects of a holistic education where not only is the natural world being respected, but by carrying out these acts of respect and following of protocol, in doing so the inner self is also being shown respect from the act of carrying out those protocols. As Harris (2005) further elaborates,

Indigenous knowledge is holistic, rather than reductionist, seeing the universe as a living entity; it is experiential, rather than positivist, contending that experiences which cannot be measured are no less real than those that can be measured. . . . Indigenous peoples do have tested methods for creating knowledge. Observations are made of phenomena by many people over long periods of time and under different conditions. Information is pooled and passed on orally from generation to generation. (p. 37)

Holism in Anishinawbe view places emphasis on balance and wholeness. Holistic education also shares this same view. In a holistic education, the four elements of a person (physical, emotional, the mental, and spiritual) are connected with the knowledge that is taught and gained. Such a connection ensures not merely memorization of that knowledge is valued, but an internalization of that knowledge that ensures deeper understanding of it as well. Graveline (1998) expands upon this idea by writing that, "A Traditional Aboriginal perspective pays attention to learning and teaching as an embodied experience. . . . the more of our senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch—that we use in learning/teaching something, the more likely we are to understand and remember it" (p. 77). Furthermore, holism and holistic understanding recognizes the universe as a living being (a) in which all is connected and interconnected to each other; (b) in which Anishinawbe peoples used methods of observation and respectful interaction to learn from the environment; and (c) in which such learned information was primarily passed down orally from generation to generation through stories, narratives, legends and myths (Harris, 2005, p. 37).

It is the holistic ideal that is possibly of the foremost concern of the Anishinawbe culture. In holism, balance and harmony can be reflected in many facets of life. Holism, for instance, plays a great part in Anishinawbe spirituality.

Medicine Wheels or the Sacred Circle and Spirituality

In the tradition of holistic education the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle may be used to employ pedagogy. Many Anishinawbe researchers use the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle as the basis for an Anishinawbe pedagogical and educational tool representing the holistic self (George, 2003; Graveline, 1998; Cajete, 1994). Calliou (1995), for example, developed a peacekeeping pedagogy model which is also developed from the Medicine Wheel. She writes that the Medicine Wheel shows that the tensions and balances between the four elements of a person (emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical) do not exist as singular entities and that there is an honest, open interaction between these elements which also emphasizes our own humanity and our shared journeys (p. 55). Graveline (1998) also uses the Medicine Wheel as the basis for much of her thought bases and ways of understanding. She explains, "Through the use of the Medicine Wheel, people are taught to acknowledge the essential immanence and interconnectedness of all things . . . all life is a Circle" (p. 75).

The Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle is generally a symbol of interconnectedness between the inner self, the spirit, and with the many

different facets of life and the surrounding world. Regnier (1995) provides an explanation of the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle in the following:

The symbolic Sacred Circle [Medicine Wheel] is divided into four directions (north, south, east, and west) representing the four races (white, black, red, and yellow), the four aspects of humanness (emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual), the four cycles of life (birth, childhood, adulthood, and death), the four elements (fire, water, wind, and earth), and the four seasons (spring, summer, fall, and winter). . . . The cyclical movement in these patterns is the process of attaining wholeness, interdependence, and balance in four phases. . . . Education through the Sacred Circle allows people to see harmony and balance in their interconnectedness with all things. (p. 316)

The Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle can also be adapted as a pedagogical means to education and supports claims of Anishinawbe education as the best form of education for any student because of its holistic and balancing nature. Yet, the teachings and purposes of the Medicine Wheel need to be accompanied by the sources and content of knowledge, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

The interconnected use of Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles in education, as methods which are also connected to those protocols and acts of respect (such as those carried out during hunting), are an important aspect of an individual's education. Since Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles teach balance and interconnectedness, the traditional teachings which are modeled on these forms are therefore also balanced and interconnected. As Graveline (1998) writes, "Through the use of the Medicine Wheel, people are taught to acknowledge the essential immanence and interconnectedness of all things . . . all life is a Circle" (Graveline, 1998, p. 75).

A teaching which is derived from the model of a Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle will consequently be embedded with the interconnectedness between the spirit, body, mind and emotions. Hanohano (1999) agrees with such teachings of the Medicine Wheel by emphasizing that "The journey toward harmony and balance in Native education begins with the Sacred Circle. The Circle of Life thus speaks of the interconnectedness and interrelationships of all life. All are looked on as being equal and interdependent, part of the great whole, and this view permeates the entire Native vision of life and the universe" (p. 212-213). In addition, the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle also emphasizes the unity and wholeness in things and is a visual and spiritual reminder of the place we have in our world. We are beings who have a relationship with all that is living and existing around us and have therefore a responsibility to help and contribute to that life system by living in harmony and balance with every living and being that is interconnected around us (Portman & Garrett, 2006, p. 457).

There are four parts of a person. Those parts are the physical, emotional, the mental, and spiritual and are developed through our own actions and intentions (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 31). Further, "a person cannot learn in a totally whole and balanced way unless all four parts of her [or his] being have been involved in the process"(Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 31).

According to the Anishinawbe belief system, we are part of the entirety of life. Being a part of and involved in the interactions and

interrelations of the world around us as a whole, requires that we are not simply separate beings that interact with what is around us. We are an integral part of holistic living and of holistic learning and being. The Medicine Wheel can be seen as an instrument in which the holistic nature of Anishinawbe knowledge and experience is also representative of the circle of life, of all of life's experiences, of every living being, and, of the past, present and future (Castellano, 2000, p. 29-30).

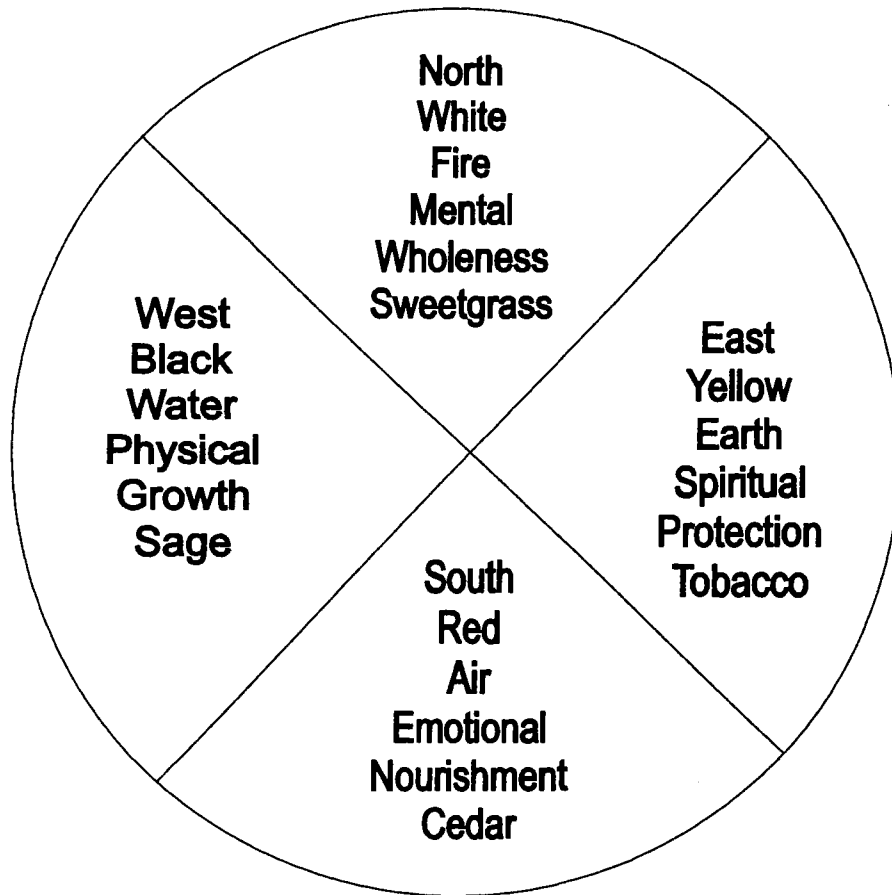
The Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle has within it, due to its intention of use as something which represents wholeness and interconnectedness, the capacity of being used in a variety of ways. For example, it can be used to represent and teach "the four grandfathers, the four winds, the four directions, the four stages of life" and it can also be used "to help us see or understand things we can't quite see or understand because they are ideas and not physical objects" (Four Worlds Development Project, 1988, p. 11). Additionally, the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle carries teachings about the sacred plants, of our relationship with the land and all that is in it, and of the ways in which to live an honourable, positive, and a spiritually aware life (see Figure 1). These frameworks of teaching through the use of the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle, in which knowledge is passed down to subsequent generations, demonstrate interconnectedness between education and the self which are important and achievable.

Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles have been used, more recently, as frameworks of helping to further develop an Anishinawbe holistic approach

FIGURE 1

Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle

The Medicine Wheel, or Sacred Circle, consists of a variety of teachings. Listed here are a few of the teachings and representations in the different quarters of the circle.



Listed in order from top to bottom in each quadrant are:

1. Four Directions
2. Symbolic Races
3. Four Elements in Physical World
4. Four Aspects of Human Nature
5. Four Meanings in the Cycle of Human Development
6. Sacred Plants

Information compiled from: Buswa, E., & Shawana, J. (Eds.). (1994). *Nishnaabe bimaadziwin kinoomaadwinan: Teachings of the medicine wheel*. Ojibwe Cultural Foundation and N'da Gkenjge Gamig., and, Four Worlds Development Project. (1988). *The Sacred Tree*. Lethbridge, Alberta: University of Lethbridge.

Note: The two sources interchange red and yellow in the east and south sections.

to education in order to find an effective balance between the two styles of education--in terms of teaching and learning and the affect on student well being. Such frameworks are embedded with spiritual beliefs and connections between the inner and outer self as well as the environment around us. The implications of Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles in education are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

Antone (2003), describes the use of a Medicine Wheel Model in an Anishinawbe owned and operated school in Ontario. She explains,

Aboriginal peoples have also been developing ways of incorporating traditional Aboriginal knowledge and methodologies into the learning situations of Aboriginal learners. The First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI) established in 1985, an Aboriginal-owned and operated education and training facility located on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory near Deseronto, Ontario, developed a Medicine Wheel Model of learning. This model incorporated four stages: Awareness, Struggle, Building, and Preservation. This wholistic approach to learning centers on spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical attributes. I have heard Elders say there are as many ways to see things as there are people to see them. The beauty of the Medicine Wheel as a conceptual framework can describe many different situations in life. (p. 11)

What Antone (2003) describes is a method of teaching in which traditional knowledge is passed down through a model based on Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle spirituality and teachings. This model includes aspects of the inner self (the spiritual, the emotional, and the mental) with the physical (the body) as well as with outside facets including Elders and correct behaviour and protocol as a means of carrying out teaching and learning.

A second model, based on the Sacred Circle, concerns a person's relationship with the people and their surroundings of their life. This model is

made up of a series of circles which lay around each other, like "the rippling waters of a lake" (Portman and Garrett, 2006, p. 461). Such a model of life's relationships is important in order to understand the holistic view of where we are placed in terms of the relationships we are a part of (see Figure 2).

Portman and Garrett (2006) describe how the relationships include not only those within the self (the mind, body, spirit, and connection with natural surroundings), but also of the self to circles of "immediate family, extended family, tribal family, community, and nation; a circle consisting of all relations in the natural environment; and a circle of universal surroundings" (p. 461).

Such an interconnected circle is important for our understanding of how Anishinawbe peoples view themselves in relation to those that are around them. It also demonstrates the importance of first understanding that we must be balanced and whole selves before we are able to understand that which is around us.

Knowledge is passed down also by means of the spirituality integrated in Anishinawbe belief systems and ceremonies. Spirituality is also a source of the content of knowledge because of the information it holds. Spirituality is a key aspect of Anishinawbe way of living and being. Spirituality presents itself in many aspects of the culture including ceremonies, belief systems, legends, and protocols of respect. For instance, if Holistic styles of Anishinawbe education, Medicine Wheels and Sacred Circles, and Spirituality are ways of passing down knowledge, what is then the source and the content of this knowledge?

FIGURE 2

Relationships of Self



Chapter IV

The Sources and the Content of Knowledge

This chapter, which includes a literature review within the discussion, examines the sources and the content of knowledge, or from where Anishinawbe knowledge can be derived. This discussion is organized into three sub-sections: (a) Elders, (b) Anishinawbe legends, language, and the land, and (c) ceremonies, spirituality and beliefs, and personal experience. This discussion begins with an introduction before each of the issues within this theme which help to set the tone and the position taken.

Elders

Elders are the holders of a people's knowledge, traditions, ceremony, song, rituals and ceremonies, legends and language (Hanohano, 1999, p. 216). A holistic Anishinawbe education process cannot be complete without the presence of Elders as an inclusive part of that process. As Graveline (1998) contends, "Elders continue today to take shared cultural Traditions, use them to interpret events from their own experience and then pass them on to succeeding generations. Traditional narrative is used to explain life experiences with an emphasis on common themes" (p. 64-65). Elders use those legends and Anishinawbe knowledges to teach and help people understand the events around them. Additionally, it is through an Elder's use of that knowledge which demonstrates the care and respect they have for it. Graveline (1998) observes,

The Elders' concern for accuracy and "truth" allows us to see that validity claims for Traditional minds are embedded in the actual experience. But, simultaneously, experience is understood as particular, subjective and contextual. What, then, is a true story? To an Elder, it is one narrated by a person who either participated directly, observed first hand or heard it from someone who did. . . . The story is a living thing, an organic process, a way of life. Stories are fragments of life. . . . truth is fluid and changing. (p. 66)

The handling of these knowledges by an Elder is just as important as the knowledge itself. It is important that this encompassing knowledge is passed on and included within and as a part of this holistic Anishinawbe education. Battiste (1995) emphasizes that an Anishinawbe education should strengthen the Anishinawbe language and culture, build on the strength of the long-rooted traditions and culture, and make use of the invaluable knowledge and assistance from the Elders (introduction, p. xi).

Elders are also responsible to ensure the thoughtfulness of their advice and the knowledge they pass down is not given in haste but that many factors are considered. Cardinal (2001) describes an event in which a group of Elders reflect on and then pass down their thoughts and knowledge in a holistic process,

[The Elders] would have their personal ceremonies, maybe go into a sweat lodge, or a pipe ceremony. Early the next morning, by six o'clock they would already be meeting while the government officials were trying to get themselves organized. The Elders would talk about their dreams. . . .The other Elders would listen closely, trying to understand what [the dream] could mean. Then they compared information from their dream or vision work. They realized that the various symbols were dictated to them from a different part of their being. And suddenly they would come up with an answer. This whole process of Circle work and Dream work are methods: Indigenous methods that speak clearly to an Indigenous perspective, and Indigenous world view. (p. 181)

An Elder is a keeper of all of their culture's knowledge, traditions and ceremonies, beliefs, and legends. Elders have a great responsibility to those who follow them to ensure that the knowledge is passed down with great care and respect.

No persons are more greatly respected in the Anishinawbe culture than Elders. The reason for this is that Elders are the holders of the culture's knowledge. Couture (2000) puts it simply, "In the native way of knowing, elders and tradition are primal givens" (p. 161-162).

The Elders are the keepers of the legends, the ceremonies and traditions, the spirituality and codes of conduct and behaviour, and all aspects which make the culture a culture. It is their knowledge that allows a culture to continue on and thrive. Yet, there were periods of time when such teachings and knowledges were disrupted and endangered. That is why residential schools were such a threat to the cultural survival of Anishinawbe people (Adams, p. 40-42, 1999). It is more important now than every before to ensure the continuance of our cultural knowledges and the passing on of Elders' knowledges. Hanohano (1999) discusses the importance of Elders as the source of a culture's knowledge in the following,

Where is the source of this Native knowledge and teachings? Without question it is the Elders: keepers of the wisdom, the libraries of Native communities, repositories of knowledge from time immemorial, a sort of Native World Wide Web. These are the three areas that I believe Elders are especially attuned to, and these are Stories, Ceremonies, and Values. The Elders bring this knowledge and teachings home to the community, and more especially to the children. (p. 216)

Anishinawbe Elders, through their vast reservoir of knowledge, are also in turn the source of the knowledge itself. Elders hold knowledge of ceremonies, for instance, which are an integral and key part of the Anishinawbe culture. As Hanohano (1999) explains, "Elders bless us in so many ways, such as in their stories and ceremonies. It is through their teachings that traditional ceremonies have yet survived. One such ceremony is the Vision Quest"(p. 217). A discussion on ceremonies occurs later on in this chapter in the sub-section "Ceremonies, Spirituality and Beliefs, and Personal Experiences."

Elders, who are those keepers of a culture's knowledge, pass on those teachings of the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle as they teach and show. In addition, they pass on all other aspects of the culture's spirituality, customs, proper behaviour, traditions, and ceremonies through their acts of teaching and showing.

Growing up, I would visit my Cocom (my Grandmother), who was a gifted crafter, and watch as she made moccasins, and mukluks—only a couple of the many traditional arts and crafts that she knew how to make. I particularly remember watching as she sewed with deft hands, each bead into a perfect, taut line. I would watch as she transformed each bead upon bead into a beautifully shaped and colourful flower or leaf. I would watch her and my mother as well, making these things. It was only when I was older I realized that by watching her, I was learning. I remember also watching my mother beading vamps for moccasins while I was growing up. On one

particular occasion, after many times of watching her as she sewed bead after bead, I asked to try. I know now that she was waiting for me to ask, that she was waiting for me to be ready to learn and to try beading for myself, when I was comfortable enough with the knowledge I had gained from watching.

In most Indigenous societies the wisdom of elder generations is greatly respected and Elders are assigned major responsibility for teaching the young and passing on their knowledge (Castellano, 2000, p. 23).

Additionally, Ball (2004) writes that "the Elders usually model ways of storytelling, listening, encouraging sharing, and facilitating the elaboration of ideas and action plans that are themselves expressions of Indigenous cultures" (p. 469). It is also through watching an Elder's successes and disappointments in life that our own excitement in our successes is strengthened and we are eased in our own disappointments (Deloria & Wildcat, 2001, p. 45).

Through an observation of an Elder's actions during various ceremonies and in daily life, youth can learn from those actions and behaviour, the proper codes of conduct expected of them in the community and in life. It is through these observations that the youth also come to know what is expected of them as people who will some day be expected to maintain the cultural practice of the community. In many ways, Elders are sources of knowledge, not only for what they can pass down orally, but also for what

they can model to the youth. Elders provide models of positive contributors to the community.

It is also through the stories and legends that Elders pass on that youth may learn what they need to learn at various times in their lives. Graveline (1998) explains that,

The Elders' stories are our identity statements. . . . Elders continue today to take shared cultural Traditions, use them to interpret events from their own experience and then pass them on to succeeding generations. Traditional narrative is used to explain life experiences with an emphasis on common themes. (p. 64-65)

Yet, while Elders may tell these legends, ultimately, it is up to the listener to derive their meanings. Meanings are not told or taught. Meanings are to be heard when the listener is willing and ready to hear them. In addition to knowledge and wisdom modeled by Elders, Elders' vast knowledge of the Anishinawbe culture is supplemented through legends, language, and the land.

Anishinawbe Legends, Language, and the Land

Legends and stories of the Anishinawbe culture are an integral aspect of Anishinawbe education. Legends and stories express their connections with the land through Anishinawbe language and methods of communicating teachings. These legends and stories, being a part of spoken language, are as respected as the knowledge being taught. Legends and stories often appear in the form of written words (as literature). Legends not presented orally by an Elder may still contain the same

important messages when being used in written form. We must keep in mind the important fact that these were meant to be told orally.

Anishinawbe Legends, while being an integral part of a source of knowledge, are also usually about connections with the land. Legends immerse themselves in the animals and features of landscape. Legends are where figures such as the Anishinawbe and Cree characters Chakabesh (a young man with supernatural qualities) and Weesquachack (a trickster figure) emerge as characters that influence the animals and land around them. Such characters also help to describe why things are the way they are in the world and society around us. "Chakabesh reaches for the giant beaver" (Sutherland, 1995), for example, is a legend of giants attempting to trick Chakabesh into catching a beaver for them, but it also provides instruction on beaver trapping.

In a retold example of the connection of Elders' stories to the land, Shumaker (2007) describes the importance of bringing landscape into and beyond the classroom. He describes an event where he takes one of his classes on a hike where they are told legends which have deeply rooted connections with the landscape,

we hike into Canyon De Chelly with . . . a Navajo guide . . . we meet with . . . a Navajo storyteller who tells us about her culture and the role of stories in that culture and takes us on a walk along the rim of the canyon so we can see how stories arise from features of the landscape and are inseparable from places such as Spider Rock. (p. 40)

Hanohano (1999) furthers this connective quality with the land by adding that,

The Native notion of place or sense of place refers to appreciation and recognition of certain lands, locations, natural monuments, and places as sacred and imbued with special power and spirit. . . . Thus for Natives, sense of place anchors their being and identity in who they are and their relationship to Mother Earth, and the places that have special meaning for tribal groups and members. (p. 215)

Anishinawbe legends and stories about land are an invaluable part of a holistic Anishinawbe education and can aid in decolonizing Euro/Western curriculum and education. We are empowering and educating ourselves through legends.

Anishinawbe Legends

Legends contain a culture's traditions, spirituality, codes of conduct and behaviour, ceremonies, and beliefs. For instance, while examining some legends, I discovered that I was able to find at least one of the Seven Grandfather Teachings in each legend. The Seven Grandfather Teachings include the teachings of wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth. One example of this is evident in the legend "Iyas Meets Wa-Quish, the Fox" by Ray and Stevens (1988) in which the sound advice from the fox to Iyas can be seen as the Grandfather Teaching of Wisdom. This legend, which appears within a series called "The Plight of Iyas," tells the story of how the fox that Iyas encounters gives him a test, which Iyas passes. The fox then gives him four medicines which would help him overcome obstacles on the road of life. The fox shares her knowledge of life and demonstrates

her wisdom as she contributes to and foresees some major life events in Iyas's future.

Throughout a culture's legends, the reader can find a great deal of variety in the teachings. Legends are a significant source of knowledge within the Anishinawbe culture. Castellano (2000) describes this statement in the following,

Traditionally, stories were the primary medium used to convey aboriginal knowledge. Stories inform and entertain; they hold up models of behaviour; and they sound warnings. Recounted in ceremonial settings and confirmed through many repetitions, they record the history of a people. They teach without being intrusive, because the listener can ignore the oblique instruction or apply it to the degree he or she is ready to accept, without offence. Stories of personal experience can be understood either as reminiscences or as metaphors to guide moral choice and self-examination. (p. 31)

Various aspects of the Anishinawbe culture can be seen in these stories and legends that contain the morals, values and the code of ethics of Anishinawbe people. The legends themselves can have different meanings depending on an individual's ability to understand and gather the meanings. Meanings are determined by one's own readiness to accept these meanings--all of which also depends on what is happening in one's life at those times. As Angel (2002) also explains, "Sometimes the point of the story might be easy to comprehend, but often it was difficult to determine, and it would be only with repeated tellings, sometimes with additions, that the story would begin to make sense"(p. 17). However, it is from the personal perspective that an individual can determine meanings from these legends and stories, however difficult it might be to determine.

It is through personal experience that an individual is able to derive meanings from these legends. Since each person experiences events in life differently than others, meanings derived from legends can often be unique. In addition, the meanings can be shared by many, perhaps because others have also had similar life experiences. It is from life experiences that individuals derive similar understandings from the stories and legends.

Further, how a listener pictures the stories and legends in their mind as it is being spoken is also unique. For instance, a tree mentioned in a legend may be pictured mentally by one individual as a birch tree, while to another that same tree in the legend may be depicted as a spruce tree. Profeit-LeBlanc (1996) writes of her instruction to students when she travels to schools to tell stories:

When I go to schools to tell stories and later have the students ask questions about these stories, the first thing I point out to them is that each person hears the story as they are meant to hear it. Each person sees the scenes in their own way, through their own cultural eyes, and each interpretation is correct for that individual. (p. 17)

Interpretation is dependent upon unique personal experiences.

Interpretation is also influenced by how one may wish to perceive legends and what one is ready to learn from them.

Meanings, lessons and teachings can be seen, or not seen, depending on a person's readiness to hear and understand. Throughout a person's lifetime meanings, lessons and teachings become visible only when the individual is ready to see them. As Iseke-Barnes (2003) explains,

through this process of storytelling over time the listener to stories learns to view the story from many sides and learns different things each time the story is told. Over time the listener learns to view experiences in a variety of new ways using creativity and intuition. Through this process of living and hearing sacred stories listeners learn who they are so they can become all they were meant to be. (p. 219)

Piquemal (2003) confirms this tendency through her stance that often Anishinawbe legends and stories do not have clear or open and obvious morals at the end. She also writes that (a) any meanings derived are constructed individually, (b) meanings may arise much later on after first listening to the legend or story, or (c) that several occasions of listening to the legend or story may take place before a meaning or teaching becomes apparent (p. 4, 5). However, as Castellano (2000) points out, the Elder who passes on these legends and stories has the obligation to consider whether or not the listeners are ready to use that knowledge responsibly (p. 26). Such a situation would be dependent, for example, on telling certain legends to children and whether or not such content in a legend would be appropriate for very young children who may or may not have the experience to be able to understand meanings in the legend. Additionally, such teachings through legends include not only intellectual content but also the emotional quality of the relationship between speaker and listener. Interpretation of meaning also draws upon the shared experience of a common environment most likely shared through generations of ancestors (Castellano, 2000, p. 26-27).

Legends and oral traditions are considered sacred among Anishinawbe cultures and are by no means easy to understand fully and

completely. Legends can often be perceived by Western traditions, to be less worthy of scholarly interest (Piquemal, 2003) due to the inability or challenge of critically analyzing legends. Yet, Anishinawbe oral traditions, quite strong and prevalent in today's world, are testament to the fact that these legends and stories are integral parts to Anishinawbe knowledge. In telling legends, we pay respect to Anishinawbe traditions and culture. In discussing writing and storytelling as resistance, Iseke-Barnes (2003) explains that "In telling stories we honor the experiences of Indigenous peoples and epistemologies and the contributions made to multiple, collective, and collaborative readings of our world (p. 219).

It is in common legends of the Anishinawbe culture that the shared environment and landscape act as a background for all which occurs in the legends. However, Legends are not the only significant source of knowledge within the Anishinawbe culture. Language, and the uses of language, also provide a source of knowledge within the Anishinawbe culture.

Language

Anishinawbe language is an additional and important source of knowledge. It is through the language that knowledge is passed down and received. The Anishinawbe language is in itself a means of passing down many insights and a great many other teachings. Language is intrinsically embedded within the method of knowing and serves as a mediator between

knowledge and attaining that knowledge (knowing). As Cajete (1994) describes,

The cultivation of all one's senses through learning how to listen, observe, and experience holistically by creative exploration was highly valued. In addition, the ability to use language through storytelling, oratory, and song was highly regarded by all tribes as a primary tool for teaching and learning. This was because the spoken or sung word expressed the spirit and breath of life of the speaker, and thus was considered sacred. (p. 33)

Further, Bruchac (2005) explains that the "oral traditions reflect a spiritual world that is imbued with life, sentience and potential power. Within the context of a story, a character, or even a part of the natural world, might transform in both physical shape and animacy. Concepts of consciousness and power are deeply rooted in Algonkian [which includes the Anishinawbe] languages (Bruchac, 2005, p. 61). Such transformation is evident in legends such as those featuring Weesquachak who disguises his physical form by wearing the furs of other animals. He also changes his shape completely to suit his purpose. However, he/she/it (Weesquachak) can only do so with the permission of the things he turns himself into. It is through the language, that may be seen as being deeply rooted in the land, that these events in legends hold deep meaning and potential for understanding.

The Anishinawbe language itself also holds the content of knowledge. The language of Anishinawbe people developed with the land in which they lived. Words became unique to the landscape that was around them and the language was formed by their interactions with the environment over

many generations. For instance, while some Anishinawbe groups have many words to describe various types of trees, other groups may have many words to describe the various types of snow. Kawagley (2001) describes the connection between language and the land in the following:

Our Native words come from the creatures and things of Mother Earth, naming themselves, defining themselves through the action of words. That is reality. Nature is our teacher. You see, information and rationality are a small part of the knowledge and learning that our modern school systems espouse. In the use of our Native languages we come to live life intimately, because we are enmeshed in it rather than looking at it from a distance through a microscope or a telescope. (p. 201)

Since the land is a source of our knowledge, it is clear that the land may also influence our language and thus language also becomes a source of knowledge.

Land

Land is a very important source of knowledge to the Anishinawbe culture. It is the place in which Anishinawbe people developed their spirituality and codes of conduct, their ceremonies and traditions, and their legends. It is the place in which the ancestors of the Anishinawbe people lived and gained their knowledge and culture. The land is also a significant feature in legends in which it is the setting and perhaps also a catalyst in which all things occur.

The land is also highly respected as it is a source of food, protection, and home. The Anishinawbe learned to live off the land in harmony, realizing

that all in nature and life is cyclical. We are told, "What you do comes back to you." As Hanohano (1999) elaborates, "Related to [the Sacred Circle], and of equal importance, is the concept of Mother Earth, and the wholeness of her being is of utmost concern to Native people, past and present" (p. 213).

Respect of the land is evident and the land is treated with great importance. When respect is given to the land, the land gives back and ensures that for food and shelter, for example, our needs are met. As Deloria Jr., (1999) explains, "In the moral universe all activities, events, and entities are related, and consequently it does not matter what kind of existence an entity enjoys, for the responsibility is always there for it to participate in the continuing creation of reality" (p. 47). In keeping with Anishinawbe beliefs, all that we do to the land comes back to us—we are interconnected, we rely upon each other for survival and existence, and, for this reason, we must respect each other.

In regards to hunting, many ceremonies are carried out to ensure that the land and all of the creatures on it are treated with respect. The hunter would ensure that female animals were not hunted in times when they could be conceiving. Other rituals, such as those including the offering of tobacco, ensure that proper respect has been given to an animal that has given permission for its life to be taken. Such practices help to ensure successful hunting in the future. As Niezen (1998) explains further,

The uncertainty surrounding human relationships with animals, the sometimes inscrutable offences that can make game unavailable even to the most accomplished hunter, are an incentive to use rituals, divination, charms, and dream revelations to predict animal behaviour and improve hunting success. The most common actions performed to enhance productivity of the hunt involve the handling of animal carcasses. Skulls and antlers of game animals are hung in the trees as gestures of respect, and as requests to the animal that it continue offering itself to hunters. (p. 28)

Moreover, the manner in which animals were killed and the treatment of their carcasses reflected respect and care. In addition,

Thus it was a rule that although Indians hunted and fished wild game, they made it a rule that unless they were starving and needed food for survival, they would not take the animals and birds until these creatures had enjoyed a full family life and reproduced their own kind. Even today when taking eagles, the Apaches restrict the hunt to late summer or autumn to ensure that the eagles have the chance to mate, raise a family, and go through the major cycles of life experiences. (Deloria Jr., 1999, p. 51-52)

Ensuring that respect for the animals and the land are being carried out, such rituals and customs of the Anishinawbe peoples help to maintain the livelihood and survival of proceeding generations. Knowing that what is done in the present can have an affect on the future, the Anishinawbe peoples ensured that moderation in taking from the land and animals was practised.

What is taken from the land is taken in moderation and with respect. To ensure successful hunting and good growing seasons, the land was not plundered or over hunted or over picked of food sources and living materials. As Deloria Jr. (1999) puts simply, "responsibility for maintaining the harmony of life falls equally on all creatures" (p. 52). It is important to maintain a balance

between what we take from the land and the respect we show to the environment around us.

The land is a source of our knowledge and as such can also be considered a teacher. The land, contains an abundance of sustenance and is a source of nutrition to the Anishinawbe people. Traditionally, the land is also something which can be fragile at times, but can also be fierce in retribution. Thus, treating the land with respect is an important aspect of the Anishinawbe culture. Hanohano (1999) writes, "Related to [the Sacred Circle], and of equal importance, is the concept of Mother Earth, and the wholeness of her being is of utmost concern to Native people, past and present"(p. 213). Deloria Jr. (1999) also observes that

the universe consisted of living entities . . . that every entity had a personality and could exercise a measure of free will and choice. Consequently, [Anishinawbe] people carefully observed phenomena in order to determine what relationships existed between and among the various "peoples" of the world. Their understanding of relationships provided the Indians with the knowledge necessary to live comfortably in the physical world, and to not unduly intrude into the lives of other creatures. (p. 52-53)

Due to the great necessity of maintaining balance with the land and with the close relationship that the Anishinawbe peoples have with their environment, such relationships appear in many of their legends. In Anishinawbe legends, what are quite common are themes on how something in nature came to be, or cautionary themes relating to the environment. For example,

Stories explaining how people came to hunt the buffalo, how the salmon came to be the major food supply, how bird feathers were incorporated into ceremonial costumes and medicine bundles, all derive from early interspecies communications in which other forms of life agreed to allow themselves to be used in ceremonial and economic ways. A covenant places responsibilities on both parties and provides a means of healing any breach in the relationship. (Deloria Jr., 1999, p. 51-52)

As Deloria Jr. wrote, life forms, chiefly animals, allow themselves to be hunted. The Anishinawbe people believe that the ability to hunt and kill an animal lies not only with the skill of the hunter, but mainly with the animal who has given permission for it to be killed so that it can provide food and a means of survival for the Anishinawbe tribes. In hunting, the difficulty of tracking and the inability to see any clear shots to the animal signal that the animal has not given its permission to be hunted and killed.

Upon the land are the animals which can be sources of knowledge as well. With animals, learning can also come. Animals play a key role in the relationship between Anishinawbe people and the land and how knowledge can be gained from the land as a result. Animals, just as the seasons and other facets of the environment, also provide knowledge. Kawagley (2001) describes the teachings of the loon, from an Anishinawbe point of view, in the following:

Another strength of the loon is that it teaches and nurtures its young to live as loons. It does not need someone else to do the teaching. The loon develops the loon world view of its young by remaining closely connected to others and its place. As it migrates from place to place, it remembers and appreciated the diversity and beauty of nature. (p. 201)

As I mentioned earlier, the land is a teacher. And as a teacher it must be respected and kept in balance. Maintaining harmony is the key in maintaining a close and respectful relationship. The land, as a source of knowledge is linked with the Anishinawbe identity. As Marker (2006) explains, "Identity is connected to the land and their ancestors' relationships to the ecology of that land; it is intimate, mythic, and sacred without being abstract" (p. 491).

It is evident in the above quote that nature is interconnected. All things in nature can learn from each other and are therefore sources of great knowledge. But, ceremonies, spirituality and beliefs, and personal experiences are also other sources of knowledge.

Ceremonies, Spirituality and Beliefs, and Personal Experiences

Ceremonies, spirituality and beliefs are sources of knowledge which are typically shared and passed down by Elders and through community events and interaction. Ceremonies, such as vision quests, for example, can assist Elders in decision making (Cardinal, 2001). Yet, it is through the spirit and spirituality which aid in the holistic development of the self and through the attainment and passing on of knowledge. In education, a balanced spirit can aid a students' learning. As Hanohano (1999) writes,

Spirituality is the fundamental principle that Natives have been searching for in their university experience. It is the search from within that helps to give Aboriginal and other students the harmony and balance that is needed to meet the demands and rigors of university

study and lead them to discover their true selves. And it is this search for truth that leads us to consider Native education. (p. 211)

Spirituality, in a holistic sense, is not only made up of a person's individual beliefs, but the spirituality held in the world around them, in the land and animals, and in awareness that there is always something out there from which to learn. Kawagley (2001) writes that,

In the Yupiaq world, everything that Mother Earth possesses is spirit. This spirit is consciousness and awareness, so the wind, the river, the rabbit, the amoeba, the star, the lily, and so forth possess a spirit. The human consciousness, with its ability to merge into one with all consciousnesses of this world, produces a holotropic mind. The holistic mind is given to the nurturants of health and environmental ethics. Thus if all possess a spirit or soul, then all possess consciousness and power that it gives to the physical counterpart. It enables a Native person to have the aid of the spirit. (p. 205)

Yet, despite the recognition for a need of holism of the self in education, this is not generally being done on a large enough scale. To be balanced in life we have to recognize and take care of our spirit, mind, body, and emotions.

Yet, it is not only the spiritual which helps us to understand that which is around us. Our personal experiences in life also become important sources of knowledge and understanding. Personal experiences are important in the attainment of knowledge. The manner in which those knowledges are attained is also important. We, as educators, know that much of what we learn is also based upon what we experience and how we experience things in life. While what we learn is varied, so is the experience of each individual. Experience is also education. One way for personal experience to provide knowledge is through participation in ceremonies.

Ceremonies

A source of knowledge is something that provides an opportunity for learning and teachings. Ceremonies, spirituality and belief systems, as well as personal experiences are sources of knowledge. Ceremonies, while also being acts of spirituality and tradition, are ways in which understandings of the world around us, and even of ourselves can occur. Ceremonies, such as the sweat lodge ceremony, the pipe ceremony, or even vision quests are ways in which a person can connect with spirituality and learn from what they experience or even discover. Portman and Garrett (2006) describe the Sweat Lodge ceremony as "a purification ceremony. . . . considered by some to be a rebirthing experience. . . . the sweat lodge ceremony can be viewed as a cleansing and a fresh start to life" (p. 463).

Similarly to sweat lodge ceremonies, in terms of cleansing and purification, are smudging ceremonies in which one of the sacred herbs (cedar, tobacco, sweet grass, and sage) are burned, typically in natural vessels such as shells or clay, to cleanse the self, homes, sacred ground, sacred objects, or places of ceremony. In discussing traditional holistic healing practices, and in particular the sweat lodge, Schiff and Moore (2006) write that sweat lodge ceremonies are holistic experiences that improve emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being (p. 50).

Likewise, pipe ceremonies are a means of sending prayers or messages to the Great Spirit or Creator as the physical and spiritual realms connect through the rising of the smoke. O'Reilly-Scanlon, Crowe, and

Weenie (2004), describes a pipe ceremony as a ceremony, traditionally, which

is used to acknowledge new beginnings and to ask for guidance and direction . . . the pipe ceremony was the first step towards ethics approval using Indigenous research protocols. The sweatlodge ceremony served as an opportunity to strengthen our trust and bond as a research team by sharing a time of physical and spiritual exertion. The Elders say that when one goes into a sweatlodge, it is like returning to the womb to be nurtured by Mother Earth. It is a time of cleansing, a time of prayer and a time for asking for guidance from the Spirit World. (p. 36)

It should also be noted here that the actions carried out in each ceremony have incorporated within them: (a) the teachings of; and (b) demonstrations of respect for, the Medicine Wheel or Sacred Circle.

Anishinawbe vision quests, contrary to sweat lodge ceremonies which take place in the presence of a group of people, are carried out in a spiritual solitary in which the individual is removed from outward influences of life and in which self-reflection and visions can occur for the purpose of personal experience and growth (Portman and Garrett, 2006, p. 463). Irwin (1994) explains that "each vision or dream contributes to a general Plains epistemology in which visionary experience is integral to everyday waking consciousness" (p. 258). While he specifically discusses the Plains tribes, Irwin's description can be applied to many other Anishinawbe and Indigenous perceptions of vision quests. Vision quests and the knowledge gained from them are enmeshed into the knowledge gained from all other resources. Vision quests are treated with as much importance as knowledge

that is gained from learning a skill, for example, or teachings of the Medicine Wheel.

In discussing ceremonies as an overall topic, O' Reilly-Scanlon, et al., (2004) also describes the importance of ceremony to knowledge in the following, "ceremony is an important consideration in Indigenous epistemology [and knowledge gaining]. . . . Ceremonies are opportunities for prayer, to acknowledge and ask for guidance from the Creator, and to give thanks for the gifts we have been given" (p. 36). Additionally, in terms of ceremony, the Sacred Circle, and spirituality, Portman and Garrett (2006) write that

a person seeks to learn by giving thanks to each of the four directions for the wisdom, guidance, strength, and clarity that one receives. . . . most tribes have some representation of the four directions as a circular symbol of the harmony and balance of mind, body, and spirit with the natural environment (and spirit world). As such, symmetry and reverence for special harmony become integral parts of healing ceremonies conducted in a traditional Native way, usually with an eagle feather or a sacred pipe. Specific examples are in the ceremonies . . . that give thanks in the four cardinal directions based on myths and legends passed down from ancestors. (p. 457)

Ceremonies of giving thanks are also integrated into such acts as hunting in which an offering of thanks is given to an animal once it has been killed. Such ceremonies ensure that not only respect towards animals and nature is ensured, but also to ensure that only what is needed is taken. These ceremonies and protocols are taught primarily through observation and experience. It is evident here that the idea of respect is shared across many

avenues of the Anishinawbe culture, from the treatment of the land to giving thanks.

Spirituality and Beliefs

It is the spirituality and wholeness of each person which can be considered a source of knowledge. After all, understanding the self leads to the ability to understand that which is around us. Spirituality, as mentioned in a Chapter 3, is not only made up of a person's individual beliefs, but also in the spirituality in the world around that person. To learn spiritually is to understand that the four parts of our self, the four parts which are also distinctive to Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles--those being the spirit, the emotional, body, and mind--must be in balance and in harmony in order for the attainment of knowledge and learning to be holistic and successful.

Shahjahan (2005) explains that,

I am interested in the discourse of indigenous knowledge because of my interest in spirituality and knowledge production. I found the stuff of indigenous knowledge was an arena of knowledge production that acknowledged the spiritual. . . . It helped me connect and map out many of the aspects of my life, which were transitional. Why say all this? Who cares? This is the way we can affect our own agency in our scholarship, by bringing in the personal. . . In short, this paper is more than an intellectual journey. It is a journey of self determination and spiritual healing. (p. 217-218)

Spirituality is also used in healing practices, such as in sweat lodge ceremonies where it is also the spiritual quality of the experience that helps healing occur. Spirituality in connection with healing practices are common

among many Anishinawbe and Indigenous groups where it is the belief in the spirit world that allows those spirits to help, heal and guide (Portman & Garrett, 2006, p. 455). These healing practices through Anishinawbe spirituality are a means of gaining knowledge. These personal experiences in healing and in being a part of a holistically spiritual life that we learn. It is also with the understanding of the self that one is able to learn from personal experiences and which is also a source of knowledge.

Personal Experiences

We all go through life learning and experiencing. The experiences we gather throughout life lend themselves as ways of knowing—through experiences we gain knowledge. Calliou (1995) writes that “The production of knowledge is a holistic, self-constructed process” (p. 53). This is true in the sense that by gaining knowledge we are personally involved in the attainment of it, that we contribute ourselves to the process of knowing, and that we are there along the route to knowledge, holding on to those spiritual and other cultural elements along the way.

Additionally, by looking into ourselves as sources of knowing, by examining what we have learned and what we may still need to know, we can do this by also examining our memories. Spiritual ceremony may call for the ability (a) to be receptive to receive visions, (b) to understand and be knowledgeable of the inner self, and (c) to be open to spirit guides. But, such spiritual ceremonies do not necessarily need to occur in traditional

ceremony, such as sweat lodges or vision quests. Spiritual ceremonies can occur through other, more individual, means such as dreams, signs, animal messengers, or purposeful experiences (Portman and Garrett, 2006, p. 458-459). O'Reilly-Scanlon, et al., (2004), while studying a group of Aboriginal students in a school and the impact of memory in education and language arts classes, explains that,

By reflecting on how their personal memories are, in many ways, socially constructed and socially integrated, we anticipated that the students would gain a better understanding about how their own experiences in the language arts classroom relate with others'. Considering that many of our students' memories and experiences historically have not been validated by educational systems, this project . . . a "social dialogue" through the sharing of memories of literacy development in order to increase the cross-cultural understanding of our students . . . was designed to help students develop a sense of control over and an appreciation of their own narratives. The project also asked students to analyse their memories within the larger context of the social, racial, and gendered experiences of their peers. In many Indigenous communities, the authority to speak derives from direct personal experience. (O-Reilly-Scanlon, et al., p. 34, 2004)

It is important to note that in the Anishinawbe culture there are many stories that deal with personal experiences. Such personal experiences in these stories are meant to teach something particular, whether that be something simply for humorous purposes or as a caution against improper behaviour. At times these stories of personal experience include spiritual and spirit world qualities in which features of the land and animals are anthropomorphized. An example of such a story, with snow being given anthropomorphic qualities, concerns a relationship with the land. The story, told to me by my mother, as I can recall, concerned a man and his brother during a cold and

stormy winter. Over some weeks, it became difficult for the brothers to chop and gather firewood and on one snow-stormy night, the brother ventured out in the night to try to gather firewood to heat the trapper's shack. In the morning, the man discovered that his brother had died in the snow. The man, in his sadness and anger, began to kick and yell at the snow, blaming it for his brother's death. The snow then said, "Just you wait." The man became frightened. The next year, after gathering wood and grease to fuel the fire, the winter storms were bitterly cold. Yet, the man continued to wait for snow to arrive. That night, the snow came into the trapper's shack and sat down so that it could freeze the man. A battle ensued between the man's fire and the snow. The fire kept dying as the man continued to add more wood and grease to the fire. Eventually, the snow began to melt. It was then that the man realized that it was not the snow's fault for his brother's death. The man apologized to the snow. The snow left and soon after the weather warmed.

This cautionary tale also appears with slight variations in Xavier Sutherland's (1995) story "Chahkabesh Reaches for the Giant Beaver," which appears in Ellis' (1995) book *A Talohkana Nesta Tipacimowina/Cree Legends and Narratives: From the West Coast of James Bay*, in which he presents patamowin stories (cautionary stories about not to anger nature or mistreat animals or helpless things for the same will happen to you or your loved ones), and also in Ray and Stevens' (1988) novel *Sacred Legends of the Sandy Lake Cree*.

In the Anishinawbe language, the snow is an animate thing, which is why the snow has a voice and appears as a person in the narrative. I will not tell the moral here, as it would be my own interpretation of the narrative or cautionary tale. I am not here to tell you, the reader, what to understand and learn from such a story. However, I will write that it is such stories as this that can contain metaphors and even guidance. As Castellano (2000) corroborates, "[Stories and legends] teach without being intrusive, because the listener can ignore the oblique instruction or apply it to the degree he or she is ready to accept, without offence. Stories of personal experience can be understood either as reminiscences or as metaphors to guide moral choice and self-examination" (p. 31).

In such cautionary (patamowin) stories, which also serve as stories of personal experience as the one just told, it is the story and what we learn from it which can help us during our own experiences in life. Stories teach us and guide us.

Personal experience is also known as empirical knowledge. It is through our experiences in life, the good, the bad, and even the mundane, that we can learn. Such learning can be in forms of understanding appropriate codes of conduct, in understanding the beliefs and ceremonies of our culture, and in a great many other ways. While empirical knowledge is often gained through direct experiences, it can also be gained, as Castellano (2000) writes, "through careful observation" (p. 23). While

discussing personal experience, Castellano (2000) also goes on to explain that,

Aboriginal knowledge is rooted in personal experience and lays no claim to universality. The degree to which you can trust what is being said is tied up with the integrity and perceptiveness of the speaker. . . . The personal nature of knowledge means that disparate and even contradictory perceptions can be accepted as valid because they are unique to the person. . . . Knowledge is validated through collective analysis and consensus building. (p. 25-26)

It is a blend of participating and observing that can be most beneficial to the gaining of knowledge. But, as Steinhauer (2002) points out, empirical knowledge is also gained through listening (p. 74). However, it is not only watching and listening that offers knowledge based on experience. It is the sum of all the experience an individual may take in, including those experiences from visions, from ceremonies, from actions taken or not taken and the results of those actions no matter whether they are positive or negative. It is evident that the impact on examining the personal experience as a way of knowing is integral in understanding what it means to *know*.

The sources and content of knowledge have been discussed through the teachings of the Elders, the teachings gleaned from the legends, the exploration of language content and the teachings from the land. The learning and teachings embedded in the ceremonies and the spiritual aspects of Anishinawbe life also contribute to the acquisition of knowledge. Beliefs and protocols also guide the person's journey through the personal experience of living.

Chapter V

What is Knowledge and What Does it Mean to Know?

This chapter, which includes of a literature review within the discussion, examines the question: what is knowledge and what does it mean to *know*? The issues surrounding Anishinawbe epistemology which will be addressed in relation to this theme (the question posed) include: (a) a discussion on Anishinawbe epistemology; (b) a discussion on how knowledge is developed, received, and applied by means of an examination of the four spheres of understanding which attempt to explain this issue; and (c) through a discussion on the relations between traditional Anishinawbe epistemology and Anishinawbe education.

Traditional Aboriginal epistemology is the “study of the nature and attainment of knowledge, and which much of the literature describes as holistic, encompassing the intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual realms (Barman, Herbert, & McCaskill, 1987)” (Hanohano, 1999, p. 211). With this definition in mind, then, in terms of Anishinawbe knowledge and knowledge systems, what does it mean to *know*?

I propose, from an Anishinawbe perspective, that to know is not merely the creation or the attainment of knowledge; it is also in the manner in which these knowledges are developed, received and applied. We know something when we understand how that knowledge is connected to something else. The manner in which knowledge is developed simply means how knowledge is unfolded or realized by actions or discipline by the

individual. Likewise, the manner in which knowledge is received can be understood in how knowledge is acquired and how that knowledge is treated once it is attained. Similarly, the manner in which knowledge is applied is shown in the proper and respectful treatment of the application of that knowledge. These manners of knowing are essential to the attainment of knowledge. It is not simply the feat of attaining knowledge which is important, it is how and the manners in which this knowledge is acquired that are significant.

It is important to reinforce here the concepts interconnected in all types of life and events. This interconnection, for instance, is between the land and the self in which we learn the relationships of everything around us. We learn that everything we touch causes some type of impact whether it is immediate or further down in the span of time and in the space in which that event occurs. This impact is also apparent in the connections between the relationships with knowledge and how it is developed, received, and applied in an individual and also within a community. As Simpson (2000) elaborates,

Aboriginal culture, world views and the construction of knowledge are dynamic, complex and intricate. . . . Knowledge is cyclical, holistic and dependent on relationships and connections with living and non-living beings and entities . . . There are many truths, depending on individual experience . . . Everything is alive . . . All things are equal and related . . . The land is sacred . . . There is an important relationships between humans and the spirit-world (p. 171)

The connections between the land, spirituality, Elders and knowledge are deeply rooted among each other and are therefore interconnected. What we do now occurs as a result of what has happened in the past and in a

particular space, and what we do now will have an affect on what will happen in the future and in that particular space.

How knowledge is developed, received, and applied, is achieved through four spheres: (a) the land, (b) the spiritual, (c) the Elders, and (d) space and time (which act as a connector between all of the spheres).

The land, the physical space around us including all living, plant and atmospherical/space materials, is the sphere in which knowledge can be attained as it comprises many aspects of our daily lives.

The spiritual is another important sphere of knowledge as it is this sphere which allows us to understand ourselves. Consequently, this also enables us to obtain knowledge, with particular and individual perceptions, of the world in which we live and from our Elders.

Lastly, Elders are a sphere in which knowledge, which has already been developed, received and attained with traditional customs and ideologies, is able to be passed down. It is through their own personal experiences of having knowledge which has been developed, received, and attained that warrants them as a sphere of knowledge in which a person can learn from, just as one can from the land and from spirituality.

These four spheres are the primary focus of this paper.

In preparing my understandings of what it means to know, these four spheres listed above became the most apparent aspects of Anishinawbe epistemology and knowing that it is through these four that a wholeness of knowledge and manners of knowing can be possible. As mentioned in

Hanohano's (1999) definition of Aboriginal epistemology, the emotional, although used as part of a holistic definition of Aboriginal epistemology, is not provided in this description of what it means to know as it is integrated within the sphere of Spirituality. I have included within the sphere of Spirituality the four teachings of the Medicine Wheel (mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical) since these are all interconnected.

The four spheres which I introduce are areas that are always interconnected and in which the potentiality of the development, reception, and application of knowledge is possible. Language is another example which I will not include as a sphere of knowing. The reason for this decision is that the spheres of knowledge are intrinsically embedded in traditional Aboriginal knowledge and it is this understanding of the world, through the spheres, that is directly connected with the traditional stories and language of the people. I propose that Anishinawbe language and culture can be thought of as intrinsically connected, and as a result they become an essential component of this description of knowledge and what it means to know.

There is the interconnectedness of the spheres to knowledge through the concept of time and space which should be taken into consideration and acknowledged when discussing traditional Aboriginal epistemology and what it means to know. What is evident in this explanation is that knowledge is not singular, meaning that it is not something which is individualistic. It, like other Anishinawbe cultural beliefs, is interconnected and holistic. What

should also be kept in mind is that although the spheres are separated in the context of this paper, there is an inextricable connectedness among these spheres of knowing and what it means to know. Wilson (2001) explains this idea of knowledge as interconnected in the following:

An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational. Knowledge is shared with all of creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all of creation. It is with the cosmos, it is with the animals, with the plants, with the earth that we share this knowledge. It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge. (p. 176-177)

In advancing traditional Anishinawbe epistemology I draw upon Willie Ermine (1995) who explains the importance of Anishinawbe epistemology and seeking knowledge in ways beyond those commonly understood in mainstream thought. He writes,

Those people who seek knowledge on the physical plane objectively find their answers through exploration of the outer space, solely on the corporeal level. Those who seek to understand the reality of existence and harmony with the environment by turning inward have a different, incorporeal knowledge paradigm that might be termed Aboriginal epistemology. (p. 103)

Ermine's paper helps us understand the inclusive nature of Anishinawbe epistemology in its capacity to produce corporeal knowledge and incorporeal knowledge. I propose here that in the Anishinawbe epistemology these are not separate entities: corporeal and incorporeal knowledge and that the senses are interconnected. Cheney's (2002)

discussion on moral epistemology in First Nations stories touches upon this interconnection of corporeal and incorporeal knowledge. He writes,

Imagine a deep practice of universal consideration for all things, a consideration that is . . . a dimension of one's very *perception* of the world. Such a conception is present of the notion of "respect" for all beings that is pervasive in First Nations cultures. . . . to indigenous ears [respect] signifies a mode of presence in the world the central feature of which is *awareness*, an awareness that is simultaneously a mode of knowing—an epistemology—and what might be called a "protocol" (p. 91-92).

As Cheney suggests, it is through turning to the self and our morals that we also are able to more fully understand our connection with the outer world and our ability to understand those knowledges we experience from the outer world. In traditional Anishinawbe spirituality, interactions with the environment respect and protocols go hand in hand—we carry out certain actions (protocols) as methods in which we also show respect. It is also in these actions of respect and protocols which have inherent within them the traditional Anishinawbe spirituality and belief systems.

As in Anishinawbe belief systems, in connection to the beliefs of the Medicine Wheel teachings and spiritual beliefs in connection with the environment, all aspects in nature are interconnected. Not only how knowledge is passed down but also to the sources and content of that knowledge are interconnected, one cannot be without the other. What we experience in life has a great impact on who we are as individuals, and as a result, have an impact on our emotions and mental states.

Determining what it means to *know* and what knowledge is, from an Anishinawbe point of view, also requires an understanding and examination of not only how knowledge can be passed down, with traditional and contemporary methods, but also a look into where it is this knowledge is derived from.

Anishinawbe Ways of Knowing

I asserted earlier that knowing is the manner in which knowledge is developed, received and applied. In order to understand what it means to know, from an Anishinawbe perspective, we must understand how knowledge is developed through the awareness of received knowledge based on the experience of an individual. Additionally, how knowledge is received is based upon how that knowledge is acquired and subsequently treated. Lastly, the manner in which knowledge is applied is also important in understanding what it means to know.

The methods of knowing, the sources and content of knowledge are indeed also a part of what it means to know. Barnhardt and Kawagley (2005) state,

Until recently, there was very little literature that addressed how to get Western scientists and educators to understand Native worldviews and ways of knowing as constituting knowledge systems in their own right, and even less on what it means for participants when such divergent systems coexist in the same person, organization, or community. . . . Native people may need to understand Western society, but not at the expense of what they already know and the way they have come to know it. (p. 9)

It is here that I discuss what it means to know and the process of knowing.

While some scholars describe traditional knowledge systems in terms of purely education, I propose a knowledge system encompassing many Anishinawbe belief and traditional systems. To compare, Barnhardt & Kawagley (2005) write that,

The study of Indigenous knowledge systems as they relate to education can be categorized into three broad interrelated research themes: (1) documentation and articulation of Indigenous knowledge systems; (2) delineating epistemological structures and learning/cognitive processes associated with Indigenous ways of knowing; and (3) developing and assessing educational strategies integrating Indigenous and Western knowledge and ways of knowing. (p, 17-18)

I propose, however, that how knowledge is developed, from a traditional Anishinawbe sense, is based on four spheres. While some scholars, Hanohano (1999) for instance, take the position that there are three realms of knowledge—in which Hanohano writes that “the core of Native knowledge [are] the Sacred Circle, Mother Earth, and Elders” (p. 210), I suggest that, in keeping with the teachings of the Medicine Wheel and Sacred Circle, that there are four spheres of understanding what it means to know. These spheres of knowledge include: land, spirituality, Elders, and, time and space. What I also put forward later in this discussion are ways in which this knowledge system, and understanding what it means to know, can also be applied in an educational sense.

During this research, I have become quite taken with many of Hanohano's ideas and the questions he poses as I find that they are closely

connected with many of my own theories. One such example occurs in the beginning of his paper, in which he asks the reader, "What is the spiritual nature of Native epistemology and how can it be incorporated into higher education so that individuals, institutions, and communities are benefited?" Then, more interestingly, he focuses that question to asking more specifically: "What does spirituality mean to you?" (Hanohano, 1999, p. 208-209). It is that former questions which spurred me to develop my own thoughts and theories about my own spirituality as an Anishinawbe person, as well as my own theories about Anishinawbe Epistemology and ways of knowing and learning.

Ways Knowledge is Developed, Received, and Applied through Four Spheres of Understanding

The First Sphere: Land

The manner in which knowledge of the land is developed, received, and applied is what it means to know the land. Land is the physical area around us which is made up of the various living beings, plants, and the atmosphere and space. Traditional Aboriginal knowledge has always included, by means of the development, reception, and application of knowledge, the respectful treatment of and ways of understanding the land around us. For example, Barnhardt & Kawagley (2005) explain that,

Alaska Native people have learned to decipher and adapt to the constantly changing patterns of weather and seasonal cycles. The Native elders have long been able to predict weather based upon

observations of subtle signs that presage what subsequent conditions are likely to be. The wind, for example, has irregularities of constantly varying velocity, humidity, temperature, and direction . . . behind these variables, however, there are patterns, such as prevailing winds or predictable cycles of weather phenomena, that can be discerned through long observation. (p. 5-6)

We see in this example that the development, reception and application of knowledge involve important steps in understanding and attaining knowledge. The treatment of knowledge, the ways and manners of knowing, are shown with respect. Thus, the manner in which knowledge is developed or gathered, how it is received, and how it is applied are what it means to know. LaRocque (2001) supports this by stating, "In so far as Aboriginal world view is tied to the land and its resources, its basis and collection of knowledge is fundamentally tied to the land. This quite literally grounds Aboriginal knowledge" (p. 65). Knowledge of the land is also rooted in time and space. This means that knowledge that was developed, received, and applied by previous ancestors were passed on to present Elders who are now responsible for passing this knowledge on to the next generation.

It is not simply in the land itself which must be considered in the ways of knowing. Knowing the land, and being aware of the manners in which to know, also means knowing how the land is connected to human life. Humans rely on the land for survival and it is because of this connection that a deeper relationship has developed in Aboriginal epistemological beliefs. For instance, the video *The Teaching Rocks* (1987) discusses traditional Aboriginal belief systems and cultural traditions and explains that, "There's a

time when you're hungry that you have to kill an animal. But, co-exist with it when you don't need to kill it because . . . you're honoured that you can be near them without them running away from you. That's what co-existence is all about." *The Teaching Rocks* (1987) also points out that "Every plant, every blade of grass has a right to grow. And whenever you set your teepee up, or your shelter, don't leave it there for long because you will kill the grass if you leave it there." Barnhardt & Kawagley (2005) also support this idea of the human/land connection and write that,

Indigenous people have long recognized these interdependencies and have sought to maintain harmony with all life. . . . Just as the whole contains each part of the image, so too does each part contain the makeup of the whole. The relationship of each part to everything else must be understood to produce the whole image. (p. 6)

Hanohano (1999) elaborates,

The Native notion of place or sense of place refers to appreciation and recognition of certain lands, locations, natural monuments, and places as sacred and imbued with special power and spirit. Man is thus required to maintain these places with honor and respect to ensure that the spiritual essence and power continues to benefit each succeeding generation of people, whether Native or not. (p. 215)

To know land means to understand all aspects of that knowledge from the land; being aware and understanding how that knowledge is developed or gathered, how it is received, and how it is applied. As Cardinal (2001) states, "When you create something [such as knowledge] from an Indigenous perspective, therefore, you create it from that environment, from that land in which it sits" (p. 2).

Knowledge is gained from daily activities, such as in the hunting of animals. "Animals are spiritually powerful beings that can 'offer' themselves to the hunter or conceal themselves and obstruct the hunt and animal behaviour is linked to a spiritual relationship with humans that must be cultivated by ritual activity and symbolic exchange" (Niezen, 1998, p. 25-26). Animals, when hunted, are approached with certain methods of respect, just as they are when they are killed and how their remains are treated.

In my perspective, and from a traditional Aboriginal epistemological point of view, the land is an important sphere in knowledge and understanding what it means to know.

The Second Sphere: Spirituality

Spirituality is a second sphere of knowledge. To know, in examining the spiritual, is to understand all aspects of that spiritual knowledge. How it is developed or gathered, how it is received, and how it is applied. Spiritual knowledge, as Hanohano (1999) explains, "is essential to all Native cultures that we hope to rediscover and restore to our current mainstream educational systems to bring harmony and balance back into the lives of Native people—thus education for meaning" (p. 211). Spirituality is connected to the whole being of a person and all that is around them. The knowledge of spirituality is to recognize the spirit in all of nature and in the land. It is to recognize the place of the self in relation to the land and culture.

Spirituality is developed in the manner in which knowledge is attained through understanding of the self, and of the knowledge of the land and Elders. Additionally, when the physical world, the land, becomes unbalanced, it affects the spiritual world. Likewise, when the spiritual is unbalanced, it affects the physical. To explain, when a forest which has been used for generations in a traditional Aboriginal hunting family is clear-cut by a forestry company and thereby destroying the habitat of the birds and animals of the area, a sense of grief ensues that affects the balance of spirituality in connection with the land among those family members.

Wholeness of the spiritual can also be seen in the traditional Aboriginal teachings of *The Sacred Tree* which "represents life, cycles of time, the earth, and the universe" (Four Worlds, 1988, p. 22) and is a concept of looking at the connectivity and wholeness of life and community. Four Worlds Development Project (1988) write of the Sacred Tree and the concept of wholeness explaining that, "We are born into this world with wholeness. Along the path of life we sometimes have experiences that shatter this wholeness. If we have been hurt and somehow broken apart, we need to be made whole again. This can be done through natural healing processes and the spiritual lessons in the teachings of the *Sacred Tree*" (Four Worlds, p. 26).

The interconnectedness of the spheres, of the ways of knowing (as one step cannot happen without the other) is also a part of what it means to know in spirituality. Having spiritual knowledge then, is to recognize and

understand the inner self and with this recognition one can understand all that is around them. For instance, and to further connect with the previous story, when we clear-cut the land, all of the beings in that environment are affected on all levels of being (emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental).

Ermine (1995) writes that,

Aboriginal people found a wholeness that permeated inwardness and that also extended into the outer space. Their fundamental insight was that all existence was connected and that the whole enmeshed the being in its inclusiveness. In the Aboriginal mind, therefore, an immanence is present that gives meaning to existence and forms the starting point for Aboriginal epistemology. (p. 103)

The immanence is described as "the laws of nature, the laws of energy, or the laws of light" (Ermine, p. 104). Ermine goes on to say that, "Aboriginal people have inherited from earlier ages a mission to explore and seek metaphysical knowledge. We know that this quest for knowledge took place along various avenues. Mythology, ritual, and ceremonies, the Medicine Wheel, nature, and language all reveal vestiges of grand discoveries and communion with the universe within" (p. 109-110).

Spirituality is also connected with the land and nature. It is an understanding that, in connection to the land and all that is around them, humans are not the centre. Humans are an inclusive part of the interconnectedness of nature, land, and spirituality; this understanding is an important, though not the only, manner of knowing. Spirituality has been a long standing aspect of Aboriginal epistemology and ways of knowing.

LaRocque (2001) explains that, "Native knowledge is informed by an ethical

and spiritual basis which is intimately linked with Aboriginal people's relationship with each other, and with the land and its resources" (p. 67). Ermine goes on to explain that, "For the Cree, the phenomenon of *mamatowan* refers not just to the self but to the being in connection with happenings. It also recognizes that other life forms manifest the creative force in the context of the knower. It is an experience in context, a subjective experience that, for the knower, becomes knowledge in itself. The experience is knowledge" (p. 104).

Spirituality and knowledge are interconnected through time and space as it is with the other spheres, land and Elders; this understanding of how the knowledge is developed and applied is part of what it means to know. As Deloria Jr. (1999) says,

... the universe is a moral universe. That is to say, there is a proper way to live in the universe: There is a content to every action, behaviour, and belief. The sum total of our life experiences has a reality. There is a direction to the universe, empirically exemplified in the physical growth cycles of childhood, youth, and old age, with the corresponding responsibility of every entity to enjoy life, fulfill itself, and increase wisdom and the spiritual development of personality. Nothing has incidental meaning and there are no coincidences. The wise person will realize his or her own limitations and act with some degree of humility until he or she has sufficient knowledge to act with confidence. Every bit of information must be related to the general framework of moral interpretation as it is personal to them and their community. No body of knowledge exists for its own sake outside the moral framework of understanding. We are, in the truest sense possible, creators or co-creators with the higher powers, and what we do has immediate importance for the rest of the universe. (Deloria Jr., 1999, p. 46-47)

Thus, experience and understanding are ways in which knowledge is gathered and applied; they are a part of what it means to know. Elders are the means for which these knowledges can be passed down to the next generations.

The Third Sphere: Elders

Elders, as I have stated, are a Sphere in which knowledges are developed and received and applied. Elders pass on these knowledges and all aspects of knowledge from the land and the spiritual. This knowledge is intrinsically integrated within the traditional Aboriginal view of the world which is directly connected with the traditional stories of the people. Since language and culture cannot be divided, they become an essential component of this knowledge. Elders are the holders of this culture and the language. It is the Aboriginal Elders who, in developing knowledge, as Ermine (1995) states, "[seek] to gain understanding of many of the greatest mysteries of the universe. They sought to do this by exploring existence subjectively; that is, by placing themselves in the stream of consciousness" (Ermine, p. 104).

Elders, as part of the connectedness of knowledge, of the land, nature and the spiritual are the source and holders of Aboriginal knowledge and teachings (Hanohano, 1999, p. 216). I agree with Hanohano (1999) when he states that Elders are "keepers of the wisdom, the libraries of Native communities, repositories of knowledge from time immemorial . . . Elders are

especially attuned to . . . Stories, Ceremonies, and Values. The Elders bring this knowledge and teachings home to the community, and more especially to the children" (Hanohano, p. 216). In discussing Elders and their knowledge, Couture (1996) writes that, "[Elders'] wisdom is attuned to the Immanent in time and space, in the dimensions and seasonal rhythm of the universe, and to the Transcendent, the Above of the confines of historical space and time" (p. 48). Further, while examining Couture, Farrell (2003) explains that "I understand the word 'Immanent' to mean the inherent internal knowledge and the 'Transcendent' as knowledge beyond human experience. The traditional stories [which Elders tell as a means to pass along knowledge], then, surpass the concepts of time and space as the passage of time and the 'then, here, now, and into the future'" (p. 189).

Elders have passed on knowledge with the respect and appropriate manners or protocol that reflects the action of *knowing*. Elders, who have spent most of their lives in and around their community, pass on stories and narratives related to that particular area. As Bruchac (2005) explains, "Oral traditions are generally at their strongest where the crucial elements—language, traditional beliefs, kinship networks, and physical landscape—are in closest physical and spiritual proximity to the community or origin (p. 63). Thus, a bond with that land is further developed and that knowledge of the land is passed down through generations. It is through Elders that Aboriginal epistemology and Aboriginal traditional knowledge thrives. It is through

Elders that the manner in which knowledges are developed and received and applied are kept alive.

The Fourth Sphere: Time and Space

In discussing Aboriginal epistemology, to *know* is the manner in which knowledge is developed, received and applied. This is a view which is also rooted through time and space. In each discussion of the spheres, I have related each sphere to the idea of time and space. Wilson (2001) states that, "Our [Indigenous people's] systems of knowledge are built on the relationships that we have, not just with people or objects, but relationships that we have with the cosmos, with ideas, concepts, and everything around us Because this relationship is shared and mutual, ideas or knowledge cannot be owned or discovered" (Wilson, *Electronic*, p. 3). The source of this knowledge is the land, the spiritual, and the Elders.

These sources are connected through time and space—the knowledges have always been there, and they will continue to be in the present and future. As LaRocque (2001) elaborates, "What will keep Aboriginal knowledge vibrant and meaningful is our ability to translate it into contemporary terms from generation to generation" (p. 67). To *know* is in the manner in which knowledges are developed and received and applied. To *know*, then, also surpasses time and space, as knowledge is in the past, in the present, in the future, in what we already know, and what we have yet to know.

Time and space and traditional cultural beliefs remain unchanging while present-day changes and technology are accommodated. For instance, the simple action of putting a bit of food into the fire as an offering to the land or animal would be repeated with the same knowledge and belief that had been practised for thousands of years, but in the present time, this fire could be a modern wood or gas stove.

For Anishinawbe people, a sense of place is integral to the belief systems and ways of living. As Hanohano (1999) writes, "The Native notion of place or sense of place refers to appreciation and recognition of certain lands, locations, natural monuments, and places as sacred and imbued with special power and spirit. . . . Thus for Natives, sense of place anchors their being and identity in who they are and their relationship to Mother Earth, and the places that have special meaning for tribal groups and members" (Hanohano, 1999, p. 215).

The relationship which Anishinawbe people have with their environment and the land around them is one of responsibility and respect and connection which in turn create a sense of identity within an individual which is in part based upon this connection to the land. Curthoys & Cuthbertson (2002) explain that "the very identity of any individual in a particular place depends on the continuous re-construction of that individual by the rest of the living and non-living elements of that place" (p. 228). A knowledge of the land in which one lives and is connected to spans of time. What we know now is based upon the past. What we knew in the past was

based upon the future and what the future could entail. Being connected to the land means being connected and having a generational bond with that space in which the ancestors lived and gained knowledge.

What it means to *know* in terms of the land, is dependent upon the relationship with the land and of that space in which a great amount of knowledge is derived. What we do now in a particular space will have effects on what we can do in the future. Time is interconnected within that space.

Knowledge is rooted in the land, as well as through the Elders who pass down that knowledge of the land, and of the spirituality which connects the belief systems and all aspects of the culture in which the spirituality lends itself.

All methods used to pass down knowledge, all sources and contents of knowledge, and understanding what it means to *know* and learn are all interconnected. It is the realization of this interconnection that also assists in understanding what it means to *know* and learn in an Anishinawbe sense.

Epistemology and Education

In terms of education, as Hanohano (1999) writes, to know (how it is developed, received and applied) is also "the search from within that will help give Aboriginal and other students the harmony and balance that is needed to meet the demands and rigors of [their education] and lead them to discover their true selves"(p. 211). In the spheres of knowledge (the land,

the spiritual, and Elders, as well as the traditional manners of knowing which are passed down by the Elders) Aboriginal students can be offered a type of completeness or holism. This balance between education and the self would be reflected in an education which encourages the importance of the students' culture and knowledges and which supports the gathering of their own knowledge in education and in life. Only when students value themselves and those around them in an equal balance, can they reach their full potential. Personal experiences are also important in the attainment of knowledge as well as the manner in which those knowledges are attained. Experience is also education.

Smith (2006) goes on to explain that

Indigenous epistemologies rather than, say pedagogical styles, can lead to a different schooling experience and produce a different kind of learner. Possibilities such as this open up new vistas in educational research that relate to Indigenous epistemologies and schooling, but we have to recognize them amidst the usual concerns raised by educational research and evaluation. New epistemologies that inform schooling will produce new questions and raise new challenges for research. (p. 95)

It is this understanding of epistemology, of what it means to know, which results in the understanding and even the use of traditional Anishinawbe models of teaching such as Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles. As a result of this resurgence of Anishinawbe and other Aboriginal epistemologies,

Today Indigenous peoples worldwide are deconstructing Western paradigms . . . and articulating and constructing their own distinct paradigms based on Indigenous epistemologies and rooted in self-determination and social justice. A vital aspect of these efforts is the "rethinking of our thinking" and a re-examination of our priorities as a means for reconstituting, reproducing, and validating our own

intellectual traditions and cultural knowledge. (Romero-Little, 2006, p. 399)

By re-using these Anishinawbe epistemologies, these holistic ways of knowing, in a modern application in education we are also holding on to and preserving our culture.

What is knowledge and what does it mean to know discussed the meaning of Anishinawbe epistemology. I explained how knowledge is developed, received and applied, using the four spheres that I introduced earlier. This section concludes with the assertion that a balance between the self and education can be achieved if that education values the students' cultural knowledge and sense of place. This allows students to take ownership of their education and subsequently, their lives.

Chapter VI

Implications of Anishinawbe Epistemology in Education

This final chapter, which comprises of a literature review within the discussion, discusses the implications and importance of Anishinawbe epistemology in traditional Anishinawbe education. This chapter serves as a foundation for discussion about the role in which each of the questions taken up in the previous chapters is or should be a part of education. This chapter discusses, first, the relevance of Anishinawbe knowledge traditional Anishinawbe, second, the role of Anishinawbe teaching methods and models in both traditional Anishinawbe, and, third, how Anishinawbe education and teaching models can be adapted and used in traditional Anishinawbe education.

I will remind the reader here that I am discussing Anishinawbe epistemology for Anishinawbe education. While some would like to draw these conclusions concerning Anishinawbe culture into current mainstream education, I will leave this for the reader to do as it is beyond the scope of my study. What I will say, however, is that it is possible to include many of these traditional teachings and cultural components into current mainstream curriculum—I myself have done it during my years of teaching. I encourage all educators to embrace this and to do so with their best efforts.

Anishinawbe Knowledge and the Future of Education

Anishinawbe people need an education that they can relate to in which their physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional needs are being met. Kind, et al. (2005) has put it quite directly that "Education is longing for a deeper more connected, more inclusive, and more aware way of knowing. One that connects heart and hand and head and does not split knowledge into dualities of thought and being, mind and body, emotion and intellect, but resonates with a wholeness and fullness that engages every part of one's being"(p. 33).

Many researchers have stressed the importance of a culturally relevant curriculum which helps to re-create and maintain that balance which makes a person whole (Archibald, 1995; Aylward, 2007; Ball, 2004; Battiste, 1995; Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Gay, 2004; Kawagley, 2001; Kind, et. al., 2005; Roppolo and Crow, 2007; Shahjahan, 2005). Such a curriculum would include teachings from the Elders, land, and the spirituality which appears in many of the beliefs, ceremonies, legends, and various other aspects of the culture itself. Without any culture in school education,

Many ethnically diverse students do not find schooling exciting or inviting; they often feel unwelcome, insignificant, and alienated. Too much of what is taught has no immediate value to these students. It does not reflect who they are. Yet most educators will agree that learning is more interesting and easier to accomplish when it has personal meaning for students. (Gay, 2004, p. 319)

It is up to educators and those in the field of education to work together to generate culturally reflective lessons in all subject areas.

Throughout the years, many Anishinawbe programs have been developed in hopes of assisting educators to include in meaningful ways the Anishinawbe culture into their classrooms. Many researchers have also discussed this inclusion and the subsequent trend toward many culturally relevant and holistic lessons in classrooms. Ball (2004), for instance, writes that “Many First Nations in Canada are actively moving toward a vision of improved community health and social and economic development that includes a substantial measure of control over health, education, and social services. . . . and foster among First nations children positive identities with their Indigenous cultures of origin” (Ball, 2004, p. 454-456).

There are many researchers and Anishinawbe education groups who have developed and implemented such programs into schools; works by Buswa and Shawana (1994), for example, who, with members of the community and other educators, developed an Anishinawbe curriculum package in which lessons and materials were developed with Anishinawbe culture and belief system content. As Archibald (1995) writes Anishinawbe people have contributed greatly to the quality and quantity of locally developed curricula over the past twenty years. She also explains that students who can now receive that curriculum have the opportunity to learn about their culture's past and present in meaningful and positively impacting way—which is a primary purpose of the involvement of Anishinawbe people in curriculum (p. 297). Such incorporation of the Anishinawbe culture into all aspects of education, while important, can be a challenge for some

educators less familiar with the Anishinawbe culture or those who are without the necessary resources since “traditional Native education relies upon ways of knowing, ways of interacting, and ways of using language which are not normally exploited in formal school” (Leavitt, 1995, p. 125). This challenge is not impossible to achieve, it just takes effort, cooperation, and time.

Including the Anishinawbe culture in meaningful and impacting ways into the various subjects not only helps to ensure that students are able to experience an education which is more holistic, but also helps to ensure that the culture carries on for the next generations. Marker (2006) explains,

Encouraging students to see their own surroundings as constructed from ideological and ecological histories will produce more cross-cultural consciousness and awareness of indigenous perspectives than a curriculum unit on Native Americans—usually an abstract notion of people remote in both time and geography. Educators who wish to take up the indigenous challenge must help their students to conceptually focus a mirror rather than a magnifying glass at native people. (p. 499)

So, it is also important to ensure that while including Anishinawbe content into the curriculum that educators also show that students can also learn from themselves. Looking into the self to learn about the Anishinawbe culture can also be more meaningful than merely learning about Anishinawbe people.

However, it has also become common to generalize learning styles of Anishinawbe students. It is a common understanding that Anishinawbe, and perhaps Indigenous peoples in general, learn more by observation than by listening. While conducting a one-week course to Indigenous students in an Oklahoma college, after carrying out a test to determine each students'

learning strengths (visual or auditory preferences) and the subsequent assignments carried out, Roppolo and Crow (2007) concluded that it "is not that these particular students tested more auditory because they were more assimilated nor that their test results might be skewed because they were 'reacculturated' and might be testing more traditional than they really were but rather that the visual-auditory split was so even because teaching in traditional settings involves both senses almost equally" (Roppolo and Crow, 2007, p. 22). What Roppolo and Crow uncovered makes sense when considering the holistic beliefs of the Medicine Wheel teachings and of Anishinawbe education overall. A balance of visual and auditory learning styles and teaching methods seems valid. However, it is the observation of ceremony, of learning skills, of events in daily life which is the key to learning. We can learn, perhaps more so, from watching than by simply hearing instructions. In observation we also learn correct procedures in carrying out tasks and ceremonies as well as learning proper behaviour. The experience of watching these tasks and ceremonies may foster more learning and understanding than simply listening to an explanation. It can also become unnecessary to explain instructions if one is learning and understanding by watching them being carried out.

Many researchers have conducted studies in a number of schools in which Anishinawbe or other Indigenous content and teachings methods are taught in a holistic and meaningful manner and found results indicating that such an education is successful in terms of retaining and validating the

Indigenous culture and traditions with lessons and teaching styles (Ball, 2004; Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005; Cowan, 2005; Fletcher, S. D., 2000; Manuelito, 2005; Marker, 2006; Kind, et al., 2005; O'Reilly-Scanlon, Crowe, and Weenie, 2004; Roppolo and Crow, 2007; Shumaker, 2007). After carrying out lessons which included a great deal of information on local history and culture to a small group of Anishinawbe students in a college in Oklahoma, Roppolo and Crow (2007) found that "the education we offer has to be something families and tribes can really believe in, an education that values traditional ideas and ways of thinking; local language, culture, and knowledge; and an education that causes the kind of change in a human being, in a family, and in a people that is necessary for survival" (Roppolo and Crow, 2007, p. 22). While it may be difficult to begin the inclusion of culturally relevant and culturally holistic content into classroom, it is clear that it is necessary and needed.

Anishinawbe Teaching Methods in Education

While keeping a traditional education can be difficult to do in today's time, many of the traditional methods of teaching and learning can still be applied and used successfully. It is important for the Anishinawbe, and other Aboriginal cultures, that this occurs. To teach only content and not to use the traditional methods of teaching is not holistic and does not interconnect with that education and the self. In discussing the importance of culture, Ball (2004) writes,

We must be able to feel confident that our world view is clearly understood by our own children, and that they will know that their culture has value in modern times as it did in the past. We must be able to teach our children appropriate skills and understanding and control how our children are taught. (p. 454)

Such knowledge can indeed be included and taught using modernized versions of Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles as such scholars including Graveline (1998) and Cajete (1994) have done. It is important, as George (2003) writes, that we must create balance in our lives and take care of those four elements of ourselves (mind, body, spiritual, emotional). It is also important, she continues, that educational institutions recognize and create a balance of all four of those aspects. Some mainstream education has, historically, placed heavy emphasis on the mind through cognitive results and even some emphasis on body through physical activities. Spiritual and emotional have been put on the sideline and are not being cared for (George, 2003, p. 32). Such an imbalance of the four elements of a person can be perceived, then, to create an imbalance of the self.

Traditional Anishinawbe spirituality and educational models proves to be successful in not only retaining that culture's history and traditions, ceremonies and belief systems, and all other aspects of that culture, but it also helps to re-attain some that may be close to being lost. Cajete (1994) writes of the connection between culture and the inner self in terms of education in the following:

The legacy of the traditional forms of American Indian education is significant because it embodies a quest for self, individual and community survival, and wholeness in the context of a community and

natural environment. Tribal/Indigenous education is really endogenous education, in that it educates the inner self through enlivenment and illumination from one's own being and the learning of key relationships. Therefore, the foundations for Tribal/Indigenous education naturally rest upon increasing awareness and development of innate human potentials. Based on this orientation, American Indians and other Indigenous groups used ritual, myth, customs, and life experience to integrate both the process and content of learning into the fabric of their social organizations. This promoted wholeness in the individual, family, and community. (p. 34)

Traditional Anishinawbe education centres on the entirety of personal growth and community involvement, not only focusing on individual successes.

Traditional Anishinawbe education focuses on providing an education which prepares students for their lives of personal growth and future community contributions, rather than only providing an education which prepares students for living and surviving in a work-oriented society and where cognition is separable from emotions.

It is apparent through much of this discussion that there is a great need for traditional Anishinawbe models of teaching and learning. Many Anishinawbe students need to include the ideas of the interconnections between the self and the outer world, and in the joining of the body, mind, spirit and the emotional self in curriculum and pedagogy. As Cowan (2005) writes,

the inclusion of Aboriginal students' spirituality is essential to the provision of culturally relevant learning . . . The proposed interrelationship between spirituality, the environment and learning is perceived to be a means to create relevant curricula, empower individual students by enriching individual and collective lives, as well as challenge power relations arising from colonization. (p. 54)

The interconnectedness between Anishinawbe education and Anishinawbe epistemology, and between Anishinawbe epistemology and the Anishinawbe culture is such that without one, education cannot be whole. For instance, without including the emotional or spiritual in education, the education becomes flawed and incomplete. It is in this way of knowing that without those interconnections in an individual's education, from a traditional Anishinawbe perspective, learning cannot be fulfilled. It is with the inclusion of all facets of a student into their education which allows for a sense of knowing to be completed and understood by the student. What it means to know is dependent upon those facets to be wholly included. As Marker (2006) describes,

For indigenous people, the conduit for both learning and healing is the narrated past and the ways that their ancestors' relations with animals and plants merge into the present reality. Everything has a story connected to it that explains what it was before it arrived at the present moment. Creation stories affirm both the deeds of ancestors and the points of reference on the landscape. The land is alive and meaningful by reference to a past that affirms relations between humans and the natural world. Schools, on the other hand, seem to arrive on the landscape out of nowhere. They are institutions plopped down in a place without regard to the local history or ecology of the land. (p. 492)

Learning about the Anishinawbe culture not only means learning about how knowledge is passed down, about the sources and content of that knowledge, about how they understand what it means to know and learn, but it also requires that individuals situate themselves within their environment in the process of doing so. Just as the ancestors gained knowledge within and from the environment, the same can be done in contemporary ways.

Contemporary Uses of Anishinawbe Education and Teaching Models

Methods in which Anishinawbe knowledge can be brought into the Anishinawbe curriculum and classrooms can include teaching models based on Anishinawbe spirituality and knowledge systems. Many communities, including Anishinawbe or other Indigenous groups, and experts in the field of Anishinawbe education have developed and continue to develop culturally relevant and culturally imbued curriculum and lessons concerning the Medicine Wheel and other traditional Anishinawbe teachings and knowledge (Benton-Banai, E., 1988; Buswa, E., & Shawana, J. (Eds.), 1994; Caduto & Bruchac, 1989; Cajete, 1994; Chisholm, A., Green, H., Toulouse, P., Toulouse, G., & Fox, M. L., (Eds.), 1992; Common, R., & Frost, L., 1994; Four Worlds Development Project, 1988; George, 2003; Graveline, 1998; Pelletier, J., (Ed.), n.d.). To be more specific, Ball (2004) has produced a Generative Curriculum Model in which,

What is taught and what is learned takes a different shape each time a course is delivered, reflecting the unique knowledge that resides in the local community and the experiences of the students . . . the result is a holistic experience, grounded in the social context. Generative curriculum development begins with ensuring that the privilege of knowledge is diffused. Inviting community members as collaborators in co-constructing curricula and placing culturally embedded constructs at the core rather than at the periphery of education has profound implications for educators. This approach affects the kinds of questions we ask about the roles of teachers and students as agents of learning, cultural articulation, and social development. (p. 468)

Additionally, Ningwawke Priscilla George, a literacy author, uses the colours of the rainbow as the basis for a holistic educational model of teaching.

Within that model Aboriginal cultural beliefs and traditional knowledge and

customs are incorporated as Anishinawbe types of literacy are represented by the colours of the rainbow. For instance, Orange is referred to as

the color of the rainbow is understood by some Aboriginal cultures to mean balance, the place of choice where we are taught to exercise self-confidence, self-assuredness, self-control, and self-esteem in order to keep emotions such as fear in balance. Orange is often used to denote fire. The first source of fire is the sun, which is the center of the universe. People are like the universe in that they also have a center, a fire wigin. For Aboriginal peoples, that center is the teachings. Aboriginal teachings have been orally passed down from generation to generation. *Orange symbolizes the skills required for oral literacy (speaking, listening, etc.).* (George, 2003, p. 35-36)

Furthermore, yellow,

is the colour often used in reference to the moon and the gathering of food. In Aboriginal tradition, crops are planted and harvested according to the phases of the moon. Some Aboriginal cultures understand yellow to mean creativity. Yellow refers to the *creative means by which Aboriginal peoples had to learn to communicate with others who spoke another language or through other than the written word by using symbols (pictographs and, in contemporary times, artwork, music, and/or sign language)*" (George, 2003, p. 36).

While such examples of more modern applications of the Anishinawbe cultural belief systems may seem experimental, it is their content which is important in maintaining Anishinawbe culture in the curriculum. Such examples ensure that education is meaningful and holistic. Learning to adapt to new models of education takes time and patience and is not an easy task to undertake. However, the results often lend to success and students take from them meaningful instruction and personal growth. Furthermore, it is such creativity that can spur the generation of future Anishinawbe models of knowledge systems and teaching tools.

In recent years, many researchers have been able to incorporate their traditional knowledge into more creative teaching strategies. Graveline (2001; 2002) and Willis (2005), for example, discuss artwork or visual representations of the four directions of the Medicine Wheel in "spiritual, ceremonial and social practices" (p. 32). Through the use of poetry and metaphor, Graveline (2001) is able to discuss the importance and teachings of smudging ceremonies as wholistic lessons while also bringing forth many important and sensitive issues. For instance, "Smudge prepares the mind / to be receptive / aware. / to focus our thoughts. / 'Stop. / Slow Down. / Focus on what is happening here and Now. / Be open to what is to come.' One commented." [her punctuation; line breaks added] (p. 7). She also brings out issues such as colonization and injustices within the same poetic work writing such stanzas as, "Do I surrender to what people Expect / or continue my work / and be harassed? / Surrender is not a Language / easily spoken by my people / or by me. / I find Domination / by an overriding culture / a pain-full experience. / I do not wish / to unwittingly perpetuate / cultural submission. / What about freedom? / academic freedom? / cultural freedom? / empty words?" [her punctuation; line breaks added] (p. 11). Such examples of implementing poetry carry the purpose of describing sensitive Anishinawbe and other Indigenous issues. These poetry-based teaching tools can be used within classrooms as means of presenting such sensitive materials in a structure which can be more accessible to all persons in the educational

field, to students and teachers alike, if only for the reason that it is under a poetic and creative form.

However, as Kanu (2005) and Kirkness (1999) report, such a system is still difficult to implement effectively if, for instance, educators know little about the Anishinawbe, or Indigenous, culture they are expected to teach, if there is a lack of resources for those educators to have access to, if we do not acknowledge the importance of Elders in schools, and if we do not include all members of the school in such an undertaking (Kanu, 2005, p. 65; Kirkness, 1999, p. 23). Kanu (2005) also suggests that

schools and faculties of education should provide opportunities for all teachers, non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal alike, to learn about Aboriginal culture, issues, and perspectives. . . . Curriculum development units and schools should provide teachers with easy access to Aboriginal resources for classroom use. . . . Curriculum development units must include Aboriginal culture, content, issues, topics, and perspectives as an integral part of the school curriculum in every subject area. . . . The roles and expertise of Aboriginal resource persons must be recognized and respected by teachers, students, school principals, and school divisions" (p. 65-66) among several other suggestions to help ensure more successful approaches to Anishinawbe cultural inclusion in education (p. 65).

Overall, it is the responsibility of Anishinawbe people today to do what they can to ensure the cultural survival of the Anishinawbe people for tomorrow. It is through Aboriginal epistemology that models of teaching and learning can be developed and implemented in classrooms for Anishinawbe and non-Anishinawbe students and educators alike. It is also important to ensure the cultural accuracy of such models so that meaningful learning and teaching experiences are possible. The Anishinawbe culture is filled with

many different teachings. In everything that is done, in every legend that is told, in every moccasin made, there is teaching and learning to be experienced. As Hanohano (1999) writes so simply, in truth, "Native culture is what Native education is all about" (p. 209).

In this chapter, the discussion on the implications and importance of Anishinawbe epistemology in education addresses the relevance and roles of Anishinawbe knowledge in traditional Anishinawbe education. Additionally, education for primarily Anishinawbe students needs to be an education that they can relate to and one that validates their cultural identity. Therefore, it should be one that reflects their physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional needs; a holistic education which addresses the holistic needs of students. The final concluding comments that follow will discuss the entire thesis and the implications in Anishinawbe education.

Chapter VII

Concluding Thoughts

In order to understand what it means to *know*, or to understand Anishinawbe epistemology, I first needed to discuss how it is and how it was that Anishinawbe knowledge was acquired or passed down. I also needed to then examine the sources and content of this knowledge which was being acquired or passed down. These sources and content include Elders, legends, language, land, ceremonies, spirituality and beliefs, and personal experiences. In examining the traditional Anishinawbe approach of understanding knowledge and the process of knowing, I have discovered the implications of such knowledge in Anishinawbe education. I discussed how knowledge is acquired and the sources of traditional knowledge. I broached the question of “How do we know we *know*?” and “What does it mean to *know*?” in a traditional Anishinawbe sense. This led to the discussion of Anishinawbe epistemology and finally a discussion of the implications of Anishinawbe epistemology in Anishinawbe education.

To elaborate, holism in traditional Anishinawbe education was traditionally represented through the use of Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles and included spirituality. The Medicine Wheels or Sacred Circles and the spiritual practices intrinsic to those teachings are a means in which knowledge can be passed down and acquired, and in which knowledge can be holistically learned. This holism is important in the fact that it helps to

create people who are balanced and whole and who are, as a result, better equipped for life.

Knowledge cannot exist without there being something to learn. Elders play a key role in this knowledge acquisition. Elders, the holders and keepers of the Anishinawbe culture, pass down their knowledge and all that they know of the culture and of life. Further, legends, language, the land, ceremonies, traditional spirituality and beliefs, and life's personal experiences also make up the sources and content of traditional Anishinawbe knowledge. Since legends contain a culture's tradition, spirituality, codes of conduct and behaviour, ceremonies, and beliefs, again the Elders become extremely precious as they are the people who pass on these legends and therefore maintain the culture. Yet, as I discussed earlier, legends hold different meanings for each individual and they also hold different meanings for different periods of life—a legend can hold different morals for youth than at an older age when there are more experiences to draw meanings from. This ensures that the legend continually evolves, keeping pace with the learner.

To understand what it means to *know*, or Anishinawbe epistemology, I asserted that the ability to *know* rested upon the combination and interconnection of four spheres—Elders, Land, Spirituality, and Time and Space. These are important because each act as a conduit between the other three spheres.

In the final literature review chapter, I examined the implications of Anishinawbe epistemology and traditional Anishinawbe education to the schooling of Anishinawbe students. One model of Anishinawbe education that was discussed centered on the colours of the rainbow as forms of literacy which also represented various aspects of the Anishinawbe culture and acted as a means in which to pass down knowledge.

Through a discussion of the self, from a traditional Anishinawbe point of view, I examined emotional, spiritual, mental, and physical aspects that are important to a balanced education. Providing one definition for each of the four aspects of self cannot be written here as these four aspects of the self are for the individual to define for themselves. I know what they mean to me. You, the reader, will know what they mean to you.

Having explained to the best of my abilities it is all these things that encompass Anishinawbe epistemology or ways of knowing, I come now to the implications this has on Anishinawbe education. It is evident from the research covered that it is imperative that a balance of education in all areas of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical be offered for Anishinawbe students in particular as only with the inclusion of all areas can education encourage the development of a well rounded individual. Since much of what we learn is based on what we experience in life, if we understand the self and the environment around us, we can understand the balance between education and the self. Value must be placed in the students'

culture and existing knowledge, in order for students to take ownership of their own education and ownership of their future.

Anishinawbe knowledge was a fact of relevant life in the past and its relevance is even more paramount today. Anishinawbe knowledge must become the core of Anishinawbe educational programs. Anishinawbe teaching methods and models should reflect this important aspect of the Anishinawbe culture. By including the Anishinawbe people of the community, teaching models will have relevance and provide people resources for educators. This ensures an education that is more connected to community, more inclusive of the community, such inclusion will encourage people to become members of the school community. For instance, in the development of a more traditional and holistic education, input for such a curriculum would be gathered from Elders, from members of the community, and from students and teachers. By incorporating the community's knowledge base of Elders who are knowledgeable in land and resources, spiritual aspects, ceremonies, legends, traditional knowledge, protocol, and belief systems, schools can create a full and whole education where teaching is done in a meaningful, holistic, and inclusive manner. This would present an Anishinawbe student with an environment that is welcoming, inviting, culturally validating, and one that values the student as an Anishinawbe. How we acquire knowledge and what that knowledge is (the sources and content) has a deep impact on who we become as individuals. Since Anishinawbe education has an epistemology which is

holistic and which concerns the entirety of a person and who we are as individuals, it is models based after a traditional Anishinawbe education and ways of knowing that can help to better the education for all. After all, we *are what we know*.

An Important Afterthought

This paper, by necessity, must adhere to the holistic sense of Anishinawbe knowing that allows the individual to understand and internalize this way of knowing. This allows the reader the full autonomy to understand and take what is possible from this thesis. The reader will need to come up with the reader's own understandings. If this thesis is to be received as a fully validated example of the Anishinawbe identity and method of learning and teaching, it will also have to be received with its inherent belief system as an example of holistic learning.

As with Legends, the morals and teachings reveal themselves to the individual at the individual's pace, and at the individual's readiness to hear and take in those morals and teachings. I could not provide one interpretation, *my* interpretation, of the Legends provided in this thesis (see "Anishinawbe Legends" and "Personal Experiences" in Chapter 4), since there is no *one* answer to a teaching or moral in a Legend. I also cannot provide the reader with *one* answer to the understanding of this thesis, and I cannot provide the reader with *my* interpretation for the same reason. It would be against the Anishinawbe holistic teachings for me to do so.

I hope you, the reader, have learned something along the journey of reading this thesis, and what that something is, is up to you.

Giitchi Meegwetch.

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