Saasaakwe - to shout with joy

An investigation into traditional Indigenous learning systems through the lens of Anishinaabekwe (Indigenous women) sharing their stories within the Powwow circle and the settler-colonial world of academic education.

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Abstract

This research uses interviews and a storytelling approach to explore Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing through exploring Anishinaabekwe experiences within the settler-stream world of academic education and the powwow circle. The researcher interviewed 9 Indigenous women investigating if and how traditional Indigenous ways of life, Minobimaadiziwin (walking a good path) and Kinoo'amaadawaad (Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing) can be interwoven into teacher and learner experiences to enhance opportunities for truth, reconciliation, personal growth and peace.

First, this thesis outlines the perspective of the researcher, an Anishinaabekwe (Indigenous woman) jingle dress dancer from the Red Rock Indian Band, Lake Helen and the significance of the researcher's identity in this project. Next, it reviews literature and information pertaining to the history through to modern day utilization of Indigenous knowledges in the settler-stream academia. The methodology section explains how the research was completed, utilizing the Powwow circle as a framework for research. Through sharing interviewees' stories, common themes and ideas are highlighted and discussed. Finally, this thesis outlines suggestions and recommendations for others wishing to incorporate Kinoo'amaadawaad, specifically the Powwow, into educator and learner experiences to benefit all.

Dedication

One more, for the people…

Acknowledgements

Miigwech, Gichi Manitou, Aki, Nibi. Thank you, Creator, the Land and the Water for keeping me connected. Thank you to my family, my community at home, the Red Rock Indian Band friends and family, my community in Thunder Bay who continue to share with me as I continue to learn more about myself, Kinoo'amaadawaad and minobimaadziwin. Thank you to my grandmas, Agnes and Joann, who were an open ear and provided me with a safe space for reflection and space to learn in my own way as I worked through this project and life. Thank you to all the Aunties that have helped me along my learning journey, your warmth, love and kindness are not unnoticed. Thank you Celine, Storm, Anika and Dr. Lisa Korteweg for sharing your gifts in academic writing, for being the most amazing role models and always empowering and uplifting others. Your helpful spirits are so appreciated.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I Lost My Talk
By Rita Joe

I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie (shoe-bin-ah-cah-dee) school.

You snatched it away:
I speak like you
I think like you
I create like you
The scrambled ballad about my world.

Two ways I talk
Both ways I say
Your way is more powerful.

So gently I offer my hand and ask,
Let me find my talk
So I can teach you about me.

(Joe, 1978)

Context

Growing up in a small community with limited exposure to career opportunities, I always knew from a young age I wanted to be a teacher. The options were pretty limited: hockey player, teacher, doctor, Chief and Council, police officer, fire fighter or to work at the local paper mill. Academics came easy for me; it was always an easy area for me to receive praise through the coveted gold star sticker or A+ so I thought teaching was my best choice. Through elementary school not only would I complete my own homework, but I would also create worksheets and activities for my cousins who would roll their eyes at me and moan. By the early 2000's, I was basically vibrating with excitement in furthering my education as I approached grade 8 graduation transitioning from elementary school to high school. The spring before our first high

school fall semester, all the grade 8 students from our community were brought to the high school for the afternoon to pick our classes. For high school, students from our community were bussed for 30 minutes each morning to the town where the school is located on what everyone called the *Rez Bus*. I remember wearing my best clothes for that first visit, excitedly getting on the *Rez Bus* to check out the high school. We were directed to go to the cafeteria to pick our classes. Looking through the course list I wondered where the academic course list was as I only saw applied courses. I had my entire school path meticulously carved out by then, assuming like many other teens I knew at the time, that an education was my only way to escape the Rez. I knew I needed academic courses to go to university to become a certified teacher. When I asked about the other courses, my guidance counsellor coldly responded, "the academic course booklets were unavailable to *you*" she waived her arm towards my fellow community members – all young and bright students, "because *you students* would not be successful in *those* types of classes" she sneered. Like Rita Joe lost her talk, this was the beginning of when I lost my dance.

Transformative Worldview

I was reading a local Auntie's work when I found her quoting Creswell (2014) who describes "research conducted within a transformative worldview 'contains an action agenda for reform' (Creswell, 2014, p.9) … [Guthrie's research utilizes] this philosophical view [which] focuses on improving conditions for marginalized groups, such as Indigenous peoples based on their needs" (Guthrie, 2020, p.37).[1] I have described my story as an Indigenous person who has experienced learning in both settler-colonial education institutions and traditional methods. I have experienced first-hand the enrichment of my learning by utilizing different worldviews in learning, being and doing. Like Guthrie, this research project has an action agenda stemming

[1] I am quoting Guthrie instead of the APA best practice of going back to the original source as a way of being relational and providing the reader a better understanding of how I came to know and trust the information.

from my experiences. I hope the learning from this research will be helpful in creating resources to empower educators to include Indigenous worldviews and voices in learners' experiences. I expect this will have a positive impact for all learners who have been historically oppressed by the Canadian education system that favours the settler-colonial and Eurocentric methods of research, teaching and learning. This research contributes to truth and reconciliation and the Indigenization of spaces. Absolon (2021) shares, reflecting on their work:

> like other Indigenous scholars, we are generating knowledge and 'developing new syntheses and methodologies to decolonize [ourselves], [our] communities, and [our] institutions, as well as bring about a blended trans-systemic synthesis in an educational context' (Battiste & Henderson, 2009, p. 5). The layers of colonialism, decolonialism, and Indigenization in colonial academic environments are all around us." (p.70)

Where reconciliation focuses on the Indigenous/settler interface, this research is centered on Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, it is Anishinabecentric. I share my personal story along with the stories and experiences along with the stories and experiences of others to improve teacher and learner experiences within truth and reconciliation and minobimaadiziwin or living in a good way, walking a good path.

Introduction and Research Questions

This first chapter discusses my connection to the work. Chapter 1 introduces the general ideas of this research project and I introduced myself and my background to locate myself within this research. Through my own story I provide readers insight into my worldview as an Anishinaabekwe educator from Northwestern Ontario. This research explores the following research questions: Does including Indigenous worldviews, culture and ceremony contribute to learner success in the Eurocentric settler-colonial world of academia and or in living in

minobimaadiziwin? Does the Powwow circle fit into learning in the Eurocentric settler-colonial world of academia and or in living in minobimaadiziwin? And finally, how can educators create meaningful relationships with local Knowledge Keepers to ensure Indigenous worldview and voice are amplified in learners' education journey?

After the stage has been set, or those familiar in Powwow country might say, after the cedar has been laid and the grounds feasted and smudged, chapter 2 reviews and summarizes the historical and current landscape of Indigenous knowledge within the realm of settler-stream education systems followed by a review of Indigenous models and frameworks found in current academic work. Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used in this project, highlighting the use of the Powwow circle as a framework for this research. Chapter 4 describes each of the participants along with excerpts of stories shared through the interview process. Chapter 5 identifies common themes found throughout the interviews, discussing main ideas that must be considered when inquiring about Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing within the realm of settler-colonial education. Chapter 6 provides suggestions, recommendations based on these findings, and directions for those who are interested in incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing into the settler-colonial education system. Finally, Chapter 7 highlights my conclusions and understandings discovered through this project, providing insight into further research recommendations.

Locating Myself

Boozhoo, Ogichidaakwe nindizhinikaaz. Opwaaganisning nindoonjii. Anemki wajiew Binesii-wiikwedong nindoonjiibaa. Nigig doodem. My name was given to me by a community Elder who told me it meant I would be a warrior woman, but a warrior who fights with love. I am an Anishinaabekwe from Red Rock Indian Band, Opwaaganisning First Nation. My community

is located where the rivers connect two large Water masses and where the modern highways 11 and 17 meet, connecting neighbouring communities. The community, the Red Rock Indian Band, is known as a connector or peacekeeper community through our shared stories and history. (See appendix A: Opwaaganasining: Pipe Stone Band, Laframboise, 2011). I am from the otter clan. I now live in Thunder Bay. I am an educator, a jingle dress dancer and a storyteller.

Throughout this research project, I weave together all the different ways I come to know. The process I use in gaining knowledge includes methods from Indigenous traditions such as storytelling, orature, song and my own experiences as well as academic settler-colonial ways of gathering information such as a literature review and data collection. Indigenous research literature in northern Ontario has many successful local Indigenous scholars (Cormier, 2016; Bernard, 2021; Ray, 2016; Armstrong, 2020; Guthrie, 2020; Tom, 2022; McGuire 2010; Absolon 2021) illustrating their ability to balance worldviews in different ways, utilizing their gifts and sharing knowledge through storytelling in their own way. Bernard (2021) explains, "as Indigenous people, we restore our [her]stories by rewriting our journeys of coming to know ourselves through knowledge sharing and knowledge production" (p. 19). King (2016) depicts the importance of stories and orature within Indigenous worldview as "stories [that] bring us back to the fundamental teachings of who we are and what we are about. It is up to us to find our place in the story as we are a part of it just as the stories are a part of us. The breath of life is in the stories" (p. 72). I learn something new from stories even if I hear them multiple times as "it is by understanding our own connection to story that we allow it to change us as individuals" (Tom, 2022, p. 81). I find new meaning depending on what is going on in my life and how I make connections to new experiences I've had since the last time hearing the story. In Anishinaabe ways of receiving teachings, or stories in our Indigenous worldview, Anishinaabe

Knowledge Keepers encourage Anishinaabe learners to pick and choose what teachings learners take away. The rest, teachings that learners may not agree with or cannot relate to, are left.

When I started my MEd journey, it had been over a decade since I had been in an educational institution as a student. In those 10 years, I worked within my community and the broader Indigenous community in Northern Ontario. I have been able to hear different voices, different stories. This time around in academia, while in the Master of Education program learning the true history of Indigenous education and how the contemporary education system has emerged, I found hearing these stories difficult. I was gentle with myself, I took breaks. The journey of learning, unlearning and re-learning is hard work mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Still, sharing our stories through an Indigenous voice is important. As McGregor, Restoule, and Johnston (2018) remind us, "transformations are not just learning processes, they can be unlearning processes. Colonial ways of thinking and doing may need to be unlearned to make room for Indigenous knowledges and respectful relationships" (p. 23).

This work of unlearning has helped myself and others make room for Indigenous knowledges and respectful relationships in the realm of learner and teacher experiences. Throughout this project, I use a storytelling approach through stories around Powwow. My own style of learning includes a cyclical practice of seeking out information from others, relating others' experiences with my own, incorporating the information of others with my own lived experience, coming to my own way of understanding and then sharing my understanding. My learning is cyclical, like the Powwow framework. The frameworks I utilize in this research project are reflective of myself as a researcher and my own teaching and learning practices. Wilson (2008) explains the significance of utilizing appropriate frameworks, sharing that:

"if we're going to educate Aboriginal people through the hierarchical process, what

> you're basically teaching them is the hierarchical process. Therefore the process is the product. If you teach or do research within the traditions of the circle, which is inclusive, participatory, proactive, that sort of thing—very general terms on this—then you're teaching the individuals within that circle to become participatory, inclusive and so forth. (p. 103)

This research intends to inspire all educators and researchers to explore their own gifts and values and investigate *how* they share knowledge. By sharing in my own style of learning and research throughout this research project, I empower my own Anishinaabe voice through actively applying my own worldview.

As a member of the otter clan, which can be known to be playful, I come from a family of tricksters and so true to our trickster ways, there are some jokes, slang terms or moments when I utilize a voice that is sparsely found in the settler-colonial world of academia. It is not my intention to use a non-traditional voice to disrespect the traditions of settler-colonial academia, though the "people who made up the rules of the academy were predominantly white men" (Duran & Duran, 2002 p. 86); my Anishinaabekwe style of writing is a way for me to stay true to my authentic voice and to make room for future Anishinaabe scholars authentic voices. Duran & Duran (2002) argue that the Indigenous "community can help itself by legitimizing its own knowledge and thus allowing for healing to emerge from within the community" (p.99). My goal in this academic research is to inspire other Indigenous voices to be amplified in the academic world through authentic Indigenous structures utilizing our own individual gifts. This work will contribute to a unique narrative which includes Indigenous perspectives through Indigenous voices and healing the wounds caused by the violence found in colonial education systems.

For a long time in academia, research was presumed to be objective, politically neutral, unbiased, and impersonal; however, many critical, feminist and Indigenous researchers have critiqued these assumptions. Qualitative and post-structural research paradigms have long argued against quantitative methodologies and theories for decades. Wilson (2001) explains "positivism and post positivism are two paradigms that are based on [the idea] that there is one reality… our job as researchers, is to explore that one reality" (p. 176). As an Indigenous student in a settler-colonial school exploring Indigenous education through an institution that continues to be weaponized to perpetuate colonialism and enforce assimilation into the white-settler mainstream, I acknowledge my personal connections and partiality in this research. My research paradigm does not align with the idea of one reality like that found in positivism or post positivism. Instead, this research focuses on utilizing a more flexible Indigenous research framework.

Kovach (2010) comments on Indigenous research frameworks, explaining that "because so much of Indigenous ways of knowing is internal, personal, and experiential, creating one standardized, externalized framework for Indigenous research is nearly impossible, and inevitably heartbreaking for Indigenous people" (p. 43). Though there is not a one size fits all description of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, some authors have identified common themes in Indigenous research, learning and education. Indigenous education and research is experiential, ongoing or longitudinal, based in relationships or "ethical relationality" (Donald, 2012), and some Indigenous scholars, such as Wilson (2008) even argue that "research is ceremony". Wilson emphasizes that research is sacred as it engages with our relationship to our experiences, environment, others and ideas. These relationships are sacred and Indigenous researchers must be accountable to all our relations. This teaching means taking into consideration epistemology, methodology, axiology and ontology or as my Grandma might

explain, “we [as Anishinaabe] care about who, what, where, when why and how we do things and take long term affects into consideration”. On the Powwow trail, Anishinaabe people often hear the comment that we think about *seven generations*; meaning we reflect on consequences of our actions for the 7 generations before us and the 7 generations after us. Wilson (2008) explains research “is a ceremony for improving your relationship with an idea. It takes place every day and has taken place throughout our history” (p.110). A discussion about how both research and ceremony are continuous, lifelong journeys will be examined further through the powwow framework.

Research As Healing and Ceremony

Reflecting on my own ideas of research and healing and in reading the following excerpt, I considered it would hold true to me both in its original form and also if I replaced the underlined research terminology with ceremony. Absolon (2011) explains,

> Indigenous re-search becomes a healing journey when what we gather helps us to recover and heal a part of our self, life, family, community, knowledge, culture, language and so on. Indigenous searching is healing as it invokes restoration, repatriation, reclaiming, recovering and relearning. It is about healing wounded Spirits, hearts, minds and bodies. Indigenous methodologies facilitate healing individuals, families, communities and nations. Knowledge searches have facilitated a healing from post-colonial trauma and residential school atrocities. Re-search aids in healing from the dispossession of our homeland. Indigenous knowledge is healing through the use of our own culture, traditions, language and knowledge. (p. 91)

If Indigenous research, searching, methodologies and knowledge are ceremony and Anishinaabe learners are taught to honour ceremony, I wonder, how are Indigenous and non-Indigenous

educators honouring research or learning journeys? Do we as educators acknowledge our journey in research, education or learning as ceremony?

My favourite Indigenous ceremony to participate in is the annual gathering for many Anishinaabe communities like mine, the Powwow. Reflecting on my experience coming back to the circle, I am realizing that walking in Minobimaadiziwin and reconnecting with the circle was and continues to be re-search for me in finding my identity and place in the world as an Anishinaabekwe educator and researcher. In this thesis, I share my story, along with stories from my favourite Powwow Aunties, within the realms of both settler-colonial and traditional education to help us to better understand the history, journey and current state of both settler-stream and Indigenous systems of learning. These stories help all of us in navigating how to interweave or acknowledge Indigenous and Canadian worldviews, to walk in minobimaadiziwin, and continue to work in a good way for our communities.

Indigenous learning or research is cyclical, flexible, ever changing and ever growing. For many in the academic world this learning style may be uncomfortable as students have been programmed by the academic world to view research in a way that is linear, rigid and structured. McGuire (2017) explains "systems of social research within the resurgence of Indigenous societies will cause discomfort. For Indigenous people(s) this means the growth of their knowledge, which have been targeted and marginalized under the colonial regime in Canada" (p.374). Recognizing this thesis project must adhere to certain conventions (i.e., APA formatting, analytical writing, academic structure and language), I incorporate an Indigenous framework to demonstrate the flexible and cyclical nature of Indigenous learning; inspired by frameworks used in Dr. Paul Cormier's *Kinoo'amaadawaad Megwaa Doodamawaad – They Are Learning With Each Other While They Are Doing: the Indigenous Living Peace Methodology*.

My spirit name is Ogichidaakwe. It means warrior woman, but not in a necessarily physically violent way. My Elder explained to me that I have a fire within me that is like that of a warrior, but what I do with that fire is up to me. Fire must be cared for and tended to so it doesn't go out. If fire grows too large though, fire can be used to burn, hurt, or destroy. Fire, when balanced, brings us sustenance, warmth, and comfort. It is up to me to continue to nourish my fire in a good way. Using this teaching, I will balance utilizing methodologies from different worldviews, careful to keep our fire burning in a balanced and respectful way.

Semaa (Tobacco) First, Always – My Worldview

One of the first teachings I received when learning about minobimaadziwin, living a good life or walking in a good way through an Indigenous worldview was the teaching of offering tobacco and making connection. Semma, tobacco, is used to begin any ceremony. I began the journey for this thesis there, with tobacco, offering my intentions to complete this study in a good way. I smudged my tools and feasted my bundle, which includes my traditional items but also includes modern items like my computer, my textbooks, office space. My bundle also includes non-tangibles like my gifts, my learning, connections, and experiences. I took time to honour all those things as they relate to this study. Many Indigenous scholars share how they include ceremony as part of their methodologies (King 2016; Absolon 2011; Ray & Cormier 2012; Richmond-Saravia 2012; 2012 Guthrie 2020; Armstrong 2020; Tom 2022).

One of my first items I received for my bundle is my tobacco pouch. I received it along with my first ribbon dress, made by my family. I don't recall many of my family members dancing in the earlier days. Powwows started up again in my community in 1990; they had been outlawed as the federal government banned Indigenous ceremonies through the Potlatch Law in 1884 (Hanson, 2009). This legislation was one of the many horrific tactics that were utilized in

the colonization and assimilation of Indigenous peoples. Residential schools, which were used to continue to oppress Indigenous ways of life, have been recognized as genocide by the House of Commons, October 2022 (Lavery, 2022). Battiste (2002) comments that in modern times "public schooling has not been benign. It has been used as a means to perpetuate damaging myths about Aboriginal cultures, languages and ways of life" (p.194). Many of the participants commented on the idea shared by Gray Smith (2020) that communities worked to preserve Indigenous ways as "Elders and Knowledge Keepers secretly maintain[ed] ceremonies, languages, and traditions. Inside residential schools, children continue to try to speak their languages, despite being punished for it." (p.15-16). King (2016) comments on keeping ceremonies protected as "although we do not speak to this publicly, our healing ceremonies were forced underground and people became cautious in who they would share knowledge with, from the onset of colonialism" (p.62). Considering this history, this research must respect this knowledge, the Knowledge Keepers and if, when and how this knowledge is shared.

Before entering the Powwow circle, we stand in Grand Entry line up and hold our tobacco. I remember my dad showing me how to offer tobacco to the sacred fire. He explained the teachings he knew. After we offered our tobacco, he gifted me the tobacco pouch that I still carry with me 30 years later. I brought it with me on that summer day in 1993 as I nervously stood waiting with other dancers at Grand Entry line up. Someone came by and gave me more tobacco. I didn't know what to do with it, so I put it in my new pouch. I watched. The drums started and other dancers started to make their way into the circle. As the dancers entered, I saw them offer their tobacco to the cedar trees posted at the eastern door of the arbour. As I followed, I reached into my pouch and offered my tobacco to the cedar trees too. This is how I start most journeys, by offering first that connection, by offering tobacco. Summer of 1993, I participated

in Powwow in my ribbon dress, I participated in Indigenous ceremony and Indigenous knowledge sharing. The following fall I would attend the elementary school in town that implemented a different style of knowledge sharing.

Dance Your Style

My older cousins, Cara Ruth and Amanda Ruth wore matching jingle dresses; one green and one purple. I would watch them dance, in awe as they smiled and jingled around the arbour. I watched as they circled again and again then I asked their mom, my great Aunt, Sara, or as many in our community know her as Auntie Sam, to go dance. I want to pause for a moment here to explain the idea of *Auntie* from an Indigenous perspective.

As I was working through this thesis, around the same time I was noticing the coldness to my first draft and how uncomfortable I felt calling my relations, friends, and family *research participants.* I was driving by Intercity mall, like I do every day, but on this particular day I noticed the billboard advertising *Auntie Up* with a familiar Powwow Auntie face, Jolene Banning, a fellow jingle dress dancer smiling back at me. The connection called me to investigate. Through the voices of local women, I was inspired to describe my research participants as *Aunties*. The podcast describes the idea of an *Auntie* as an endearing term, someone "that's going to tell you the truth, that's going to keep secrets from mom, that's going to be a friend, that's going to be a confidant that knows just as much as mom but, you know, a little safer to talk to sometimes" (Taylor, 2021). An Auntie is "somebody who I knew that I could turn to" (Weikle, 2022). An Indigenous artist describes their idea of Aunties roles as of utmost importance explaining "in many Indigenous families, Aunties are the matriarchs who carry forward our traditions… They can be your literal Aunts, a close family friend, or a respected figure in your community. Regardless, they teach the next generation our

tribe's special customs, so that we can continue championing our heritage and keeping our culture alive" (Allaire, 2022). An Auntie is "someone who steps in when parents cannot fill a role, someone who the parents can rely on to assist in raising the children" (Weikle, 2022). My Auntie, Auntie Sam, fully embodies this idea of *Auntie* as she not only fostered many children but also cared for so many youth and adults throughout her life. Almost anyone in our community can recognize Auntie Sam's voice and laugh.

That day on the Powwow grounds, she hollered at the girls to "get over here and take your cousin dancing!" I remember them taking time to show me the basic steps; me in my little ribbon dress. Cara, a tiny and graceful dancer, showed me her step first using her toe to touch then a quick jump-step to bounce the jingles. Tip toe touch-step; touch-step; touch-step. Next, Amanda showed me her steps in more of a walking motion, as she used her knees to bounce the jingles; showing me one-bounce two-bounce; one-bounce, two-bounce. Both looked gorgeous, their hair braided, proudly dancing along with the bum, bum, bum of the grandfather drum. I gave it a try, jamming to the beat, mixing and matching steps as I made my way around the circle following my cousins. I was radiant, glowing with happiness or maybe it was just the sweat glistening in the sun as I was drenched by the time the day was over. My earliest forms of research within the Powwow circle came from first observing within my community, then asking my family for teachings, then trying it to find what works for me or resonates with myself, finetuning my steps along the way. It was my Auntie who encouraged my cousins to teach me to dance, and this is the role of an auntie: to ensure young ones are supported, included and empowered.

My dancing has evolved as I move along the Powwow trail. I began with steps from my cousins, adopted moves from Powwow Aunties and found my own style. The phrase *dance your*

style can be heard across Turtle Island during Powwow season. In this way we encourage others to engage, incorporate and develop their own way in whichever feels right to them. Prete (2019) in her article *Beading as an Indigenous Research Paradigm* explains research through beading as she explains,

> New beads and findings are being created and shared on a regular basis. It is up to me to decide whether or not to accept them and incorporate them into my bead art. I carry this attitude with me as a researcher. I will always be a student of research, since life is dynamic and constantly changing… As a researcher I am constantly learning, and new ways of conducting research are continuously being created. In the future new research methods will be developed, and we as Indigenous researchers will need to individually decide whether or not they fit with our own way of being and if we will employ these methods or not. (p.50)

Scholars have commented further on the idea of utilizing different sources of knowledge within research (Battiste 2002; Duran & Duran 2002; Ahenakew 2016; Wilson 2003). Highlighting the idea of gathering and incorporating knowledge from all sources, Kimmerer (2013) discusses the idea of asters and goldenrod, one of my favourite metaphors for research:

> In an 1890 treatise on color perception, Goethe, who was both a scientist and a poet, wrote that "the colors diametrically opposed to each other . . . are those which reciprocally evoke each other in the eye." Purple and yellow are a reciprocal pair. … A printmaker I know showed me that if you stare for a long time at a block of yellow and then shift your gaze to a white sheet of paper, you will see it, for a moment, as violet. This phenomenon—the colored afterimage— occurs because there is energetic reciprocity between purple and yellow pigments, which goldenrod and asters knew well

> before we did. If my adviser was correct, the visual effect that so delights a human like me may be irrelevant to the flowers. The real beholder whose eye they hope to catch is a bee bent on pollination. … goldenrod and asters appear very similarly to bee eyes and human eyes. We both think they're beautiful. Their striking contrast when they grow together makes them the most attractive target in the whole meadow, a beacon for bees. Growing together, both receive more pollinator visits than they would if they were growing alone. It's a testable hypothesis; it's a question of science, a question of art, and a question of beauty… That September pairing of purple and gold is lived reciprocity; its wisdom is that the beauty of one is illuminated by the radiance of the other. Science and art, matter and spirit, Indigenous knowledge and Western [Eurocentric] science—can they be goldenrod and asters for each other? (p. 62-63)

King (2016) comments "I feel at ease and I feel at home with two models of scholarly discourse combined with our own worldview, voice and vision" (p. 40). Hearing other Indigenous voices calling for the embracing of this complex intertwining of knowledges as exemplified by my Powwow experience, empowered this work to attempt, in my own way, to interweave Indigenous ways of knowing, being or doing - Kinoo'amaadawaad (discussed in detail below) along with the settler-colonial academic education resources available to better understand the current landscape of Kinoo'amaadawaad within the settler-colonial world of academia today. Just like I did in my Powwow journey, through utilizing and interweaving different voices, lenses, or worldviews educators can establish a clearer understanding of our current education system and where Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and learners fit in the next steps to ensure learner success.

Many describe the idea of interweaving Indigenous and settler-colonial worldview and knowledges as two eyed seeing (Bartlett, C., Marshall, M., & Marshall, A., 2012). This metaphor neglects the notion that one system of knowledge has been historically privileged while the other, Kinoo'amaadawaad, has faced systemic oppression. Shick & St. Denis (2005) caution "promoting racial equality in schools, discourses that do not take into account the effects of racial discrimination, such as multicultural discourses, are not only insufficient but even counter-productive. Without acknowledging racism and race privilege in curricular practices, the effects of colonization continue" (p. 296). The two eyed seeing metaphor does not acknowledge the inequalities between the two ways of seeing or acknowledge the privilege of the Eurocentric worldview. Duran & Duran (2002) explain "sincere work must be completed as we move toward a postcolonial paradigm. Put simply, a postcolonial paradigm would accept knowledge from differing cosmologies as valid in their own right, without them having to adhere to a separate cultural body for legitimacy" (p.87).

I resonate more with the example of combining the two distinct plants, asters and goldenrod. The plants use their own individual gifts, valid in their own right, in collaboration, working together in their own capacities to benefit both plants. Santos (2007) *Beyond Abyssal Thinking* describes an ecology of knowledges that "recognizes the 'plurality of heterogenous knowledges … and the sustained and dynamic interconnections between them without compromising their autonomy' … [where] every knowledge system offers both indispensable gifts and limitations … each requires the complementary co-presence of other systems" (Ahenakew, 2016, p.328). Much of the literature from Indigenous scholars speaks to an equitable (not equal) approach that must privilege Indigenous knowledges. Two eyed seeing implies a balance between two views, *equally.* Asters and goldenrod imply collaboration by utilizing and

nurturing each other's unique gifts for the benefit of all. My reality is that both of my eyes see through an Anishinaabekwe lens. I have a partiality that privileges my Indigenous worldview and knowledges. I pick and choose what resonates with me, what I find useful, as an Anishinaabekwe in my own unique human experience. As an Anishinaabekwe, I carry responsibilities within my community. I carry responsibilities when learning and sharing Anishinaabe knowledge and protocols. As educators here on Turtle Island continue our journey in Indigenous nation building and in reconciliation, we must privilege Indigenous knowledge systems. Eurocentric settler-colonial knowledge systems and ways of life have been violently favored for centuries on Turtle Island. How are educators privileging or championing Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing in learning spaces to ensure equity? Faries (2004) explains that though the settler-colonial world of academic education has historically oppressed Indigenous worldviews, there is an opportunity for these systems to do the opposite as she describes "just as education has been used in the past to destroy First Nations cultures, languages, education can now be used to build, restore and revive First Nation cultures and languages" (p.3). By celebrating and privileging Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing, educators promote a better learning experience for *all* teachers and learners. For *all my relations*.

Waabam Aki – Paradigms and Worldview

The first day of school in town in kindergarten, I vividly remember being harshly scolded about not running properly in gym class. Through my childhood, I had extremely flat feet that required multiple physician visits. As we moved on from the gym to the classroom, I recall jumping in my seat, being shocked, and surprised at how the teacher used the meter stick to slam the desk and berate students for not knowing a math question or something to do with numbers. I recall scouring my bag frantically for a calculator, which I knew wasn't in my bag, I hadn't ever

even used a calculator, nor could I even pronounce the word calculator at this point in my life. I was confused and scared and left crying. I had left my community which had a system that affirmed youth gifts and embraced uniqueness (dance your style!) to a system that believed there was only one way to run, that there could be only one definitive answer to a math problem. My early memories of navigating the education system were surrounded by social confusion. This confusion was exacerbated as time went on as I was enrolled in a Catholic elementary school attending both mass and traditional ceremony. Grandma had both cedar and a crucifix on her doorways, maybe I could learn to balance too. At an early age I used my ability to succeed in academics to deflect, amongst other things, my misalignment in social learnings in school.

Understanding one Indigenous worldview can be a challenge when considering how Loppie (2007) comments, "the most noteworthy preface to any discussion of Indigenous peoples is that a universal Indigenous paradigm does not exist" (p.276). Indigenous people are diverse. Wilson (2001) describes the influence of worldview and paradigms within their research as "a paradigm is simply a label for a set of beliefs that go together that guide my actions" (p. 177). As individuals, each of us carry our own unique worldviews and paradigms. Though Indigenous people coast to coast to coast have unique and personalized individual worldviews, those individualized worldviews are influenced by Indigenous community or a collective worldview. The collective Indigenous worldview provides a glimpse into the overarching commonalities within Indigenous worldviews that can be drawn when understanding differences between an Indigenous worldview and the current mainstream white-settler worldview that is dominant within the modern settler-colonial education system in Canada. Little Bear (2000) describes "one of the problems with colonialism is that it tries to maintain a singular societal order by means of

force and law, suppressing the diversity of human worldviews" (p.77) maintaining the settler-colonial and capitalist societal order.

Wilson (2001) describes the difference between Indigenous and dominant paradigms as the later "build on the fundamental belief that knowledge is an individual entity: the researcher is an individual in search of knowledge, knowledge is something that is gained, and therefore knowledge may be owned by an individual. An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational" (p. 177), collective, reciprocal and community focused. Indigenous beliefs are wholistic, which means all aspects are interrelated. By acknowledging differences in paradigms, educators can better identify which voices are being amplified and which voices are being silenced. The ideas of relationality and interconnectedness stem from an Indigenous worldview. Toulouse (2016) explains about education through an Indigenous worldview:

> What matters in education is that children, youth, adults, and Elders have the opportunity to develop their gifts in a respectful space. It means that all community members are able to contribute to society (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and are physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually balanced (Iseke, 2010; Marule, 2012). This ability to give and to be well comes directly from the joining of the sacred and the secular. It is about fostering identity, facilitating well-being, connecting to land, honouring language, infusing with teachings and recognizing the inherent right to self-determination (Lee, 2015). Living a good life is what matters. (p. 1)

Absolon (2011) first explains worldview or paradigms as the roots or the foundational elements in research. The paradigms, foundations or roots are described as:

> the Paradigms [that] are the understandings that ground us in the world, and our knowing, being and doing are guided by these. There can be many paradigms, and paradigms can shift. As our awareness, understanding and knowledge change, so can our paradigms. These understandings have a direct influence on how we search for knowledge, on our research, methodology, data analysis, dissemination of results and so on. (p.53)

For my comparison to the Powwow, the foundational elements will be compared to the Land[2] as the Land provides us with space to begin to create our Powwow circle. The Land establishes our paradigms and worldviews, our lens by which we see the world. *Waabam aki,* to see the Land, is our worldview.

Culture, ceremony and notably Powwow can help us to better understand worldview, living a good life. Oxedine (2020) explains how Powwow can help us to understand some Indigenous values as they explain "Powwow bases itself on the fundamental values common to Native Americans across North America: Honor, Respect, Tradition and Generosity." Though Powwow has many common foundational elements that emphasize minobimaadiziwin, Powwows also highlight expressions of locality. Different communities across Turtle Islands practice this same ceremony though there are local differences. Some examples of local differentiation include the order of dancers entering Grand Entry, the direction of dancing, the type of regalia worn, the way certain songs are sung – these are all beautiful, locally established protocols that can help to better understand the communities connections and values. Local differentiation is discussed further as interviewees explain how to navigate exploring local protocols utilizing local Knowledge Keepers in the findings section. The Powwow circle will be further discussed as Kinoo'amaadawaad through this research.

[2] Land and Water are capitalized throughout this thesis as they are central to Kino'amaadawad (Styres, 2011).

Many resources (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007; Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015; Ministry of Indigenous Affairs 2016; Ontario Teachers Federation 2023; Still waiting for Truth and Reconciliation 2023) point to educators interweaving Kinoo'amaadawaad into learning opportunities. The Ontario government has emphasized a commitment to "address the legacy of residential schools, close gaps and remove barriers, support Indigenous culture and reconcile relationships with Indigenous peoples" (Johnson, 2017). As there are so many calls to incorporate Kinoo'amaadawaad, the Powwow, a community ceremony, may be of significance to this discussion. King (2016) highlights the importance of this ceremony as he describes that "although Powwows are more contemporary, the roots of Powwows in terms of drum, song and dance stem from traditional culture. Powwows still work to affirm our identity and validate who we are as First Nations people" (p.15). The Powwow framework and Kinoo'amaadawaad could be a good way for students and learners to explore more about what it means not only to be First Nations people but also for others to explore what it means to be settler people and for all to explore their role in the modern-day circle here on Turtle Island.

Kinoo'amaadawaad – Learning and Teaching With Each Other

Understanding the worldview of Indigenous people allows us to understand that there is an interconnectedness in all things, including the cycle of learning and teaching. The Anishinaabe term Kinoo'amaadawaad is explained by Cormier (2016):

> Kinoo'amaadawaad or 'learning with each other' can also be translated as 'teaching with each other'. Through this worldview learning and teaching have the same meaning and is all encompassing in its application to not only learning from one another as people, but also, from the land (environment) … including the spirit. This concept is more than metaphysical and has very pragmatic application in Aboriginal culture. (p.103)

King (2016) comments on the complexities within Indigenous perspectives in sharing that "education is about a move toward holism. Holism includes the spirit. It is the understanding that we are whole beings of body, mind, spirit and emotion. These are the complexities of our being" (p. 58). Borrows (2014) describes Indigenous worldview through Indigenous pedagogy:

> The Anishinaabe have long taken direction about how we should live through our interactions and observations with the environment. People regulate their behavior and resolve their disputes by drawing guidance from what they see in the behavior of the sun, moon, stars, winds, waves, trees, birds, animals, and other natural phenomenon. The Anishinaabe word for this concept is gikinawaabiwin. We can also use the word akinoomaage, which is formed from two roots: aki: noomaage. 'Aki' means earth and 'noomaage' means to point towards and take direction from. As we draw analogies from our surroundings, and appropriately apply or distinguish what we see, we learn about how love, and how we should live in our lands. (Simpson, 2014, p.14)

Little Bear (2000) explains Indigenous languages "are, for the most part, verb-rich languages that are process- or action-oriented" (p.78). From my (limited due to settler-colonialism) understanding of the local Anishinaabemowin dialect, the language is focused on verbs, action words and processes. The idea of Kinoo'amaadawaad is encompassed through action. Some scholars have renamed the idea of reconciliation to *reconcili-Action in* their work to emphasize the work that needs to continually be done all along the way in our ongoing journey in seeking peace, together (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, 2023; Downie-Wenjack Fund, 2023; Engage for Change 2017). As this term, Kinoo'amaadawaad, is closest to my heart and pushes me to take action, this research will use the term *Kinoo'amaadawaad* to include

Indigenous education; research; Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing; how we come to know; the learning cycle; the learning journey.

Conclusion

I can relate to Prete (2019) in her article, *Beading as an Indigenous Research Paradigm,* when she describes her connection with beadwork:

> I had spent my entire life being involved with beadwork; thus, I had come to understand the world around me through my beading... At that particular moment I realized that Indigenous beadwork can be used as a research paradigm; one that would help guide me as I navigated through the research process. (p. 29)

Elder Dorothy Taylor explains the significance of incorporating the lessons learned in creating as she explains to Ray (2015) that "beading becomes a part of your life" (p.19). For Elder Dorothy, beading is more than creating something beautiful, "beading is a way to strengthen relationships and community knowledge" (Ray, 2015, p.19). Like Prete and Elder Dorothy, I am seeing my way of understanding the world (through creating my own regalia and finding my way in the circle; through ceremony and finding my way in life) are valid and a research paradigm that I could use to navigate through the research process. I see Powwows, beadwork, ceremony, the Indigenous way of life *Inaadiziwin – a certain way of life,* all of life as an "Indigenous research paradigm: as an act of knowledge; an act of resistance; and an act of resiliency" (Prete, 2019, 29). I am an Anishinaabekwe educator utilizing both settler-colonial and Indigenous ways of learning in this research. Like other Indigenous scholars (Battiste 2013; Tom 2022; Absolon 2021), I utilize a storytelling approach along with relationship building. The scholars above noted a similar experience in that my research is a part of me, in healing and ceremony for myself. By utilizing Powwow, my favourite ceremony, along with storytelling, and my Aunties, I

explore Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing or *Kinoo'a,aaadawaad* along with settler-colonial models of sharing knowledge to investigate if the two, like asters and goldenrod, can be interwoven to inspire teachers and learners; to inspire *all my relations.*

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

"The time has come for a radical change in Indian education. Our aim is to make education relevant to the philosophy and needs of the Indian people. We want education to give our children a strong sense of identity, with confidence in their personal worth and ability. We believe in education: As a preparation for total living; As a means of free choice of where to live and work; As a means of enabling us to participate fully in our own social, economic, political and educational advancement" (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972, p. 3).

Introduction

This section will provide a glimpse into the literature and knowledge available to me at this time. I gathered information, made notes, analysed, and categorized the literature. It is easy for me to gather, analyse and regurgitate information; not second nature but smooth, almost robotic. I completed the steps, but the first draft of my final product, though jam packed with facts, was lifeless, spiritless. I missed something. I felt the wind in my sails start to dwindle. My thesis advisor suggested I read the work by Morning Star Tom (2022) *No Longer Your Token Indian: Indigenous Stories of Navigation Through the Education System* and it was like we had thrown a big pile of shredded and dried birch bark on the smoldering coals of my fire. A big gust of wind to my sails and with that gust of wind, the birch bark reignited my flames. Indigenous scholars: your voice in academia is good medicine. I missed taking time to process the information in my own way. I missed grappling with my own experience and applying the knowledge I learned to my own experience. I was missing my own story. I tried again, to tell this story, but in my own way. Here, I have interwoven literature from the settler-colonial academic world along with my own experiences and learnings within the circle to provide a general sense of where the current state of settler-colonial and Indigenous education systems are now and how we got here. In the final section of the literature review, I share different Indigenous models and frameworks for research to better understand the methodology used in this research project.

Indigenous Pedagogies – Inaadiziwin - ***A certain way of life***

I was gifted the green jingle dress that I so coveted from my cousin Cara and my Auntie Sam. I remember wearing it dancing with my little cousin Jean-marc, a grass dancer, him and I bopping along to the beat. I was so proud to be able to show my cousin and my brother, they were about 3 years old then, how to dance. Jean-marc had a bit more of a heavy, slow waddle requiring assistance, holding family members hands (we don't carry our children in the circle) as he wobbled through the circle in his grass outfit. My brother on the other hand was born running and zipped through the circle full speed ahead. He was as fast as the bullet that came from the moose hunting bullet casings jingling from the leather frayed vest my mom had made him. My brother was born in the fall, hunting season. He received his name in the fall of 1996, the same year the last Residential School in Canada closed (Restoule, 2013). One fall evening, my dad came home from a day in the bush hunting wearing a dirty old bush jacket. He cooed and asked "how's my little hunter doing? You're going to grow up to be a hunter just like your dad, eh?" while watching his little baby boy giggle in his crib. My mom was watching and decided then and there that would be his name, Hunter. At an early age he began providing sustenance for our family, which continued throughout his life using his skills on the Land, hunting, fishing and trapping. His first regalia with the bullet casing jingles remind me of his identity and gifts; though he was never a fan of the academic world, on the Land and Water, he shines.

I taught both boys to dance at the Powwow that year, using the same steps my cousins had shown me, the same way our Aunties taught them, and their Aunties taught them, encouraging each of them to find their own steps. My first jingle dress reaffirmed to me that though I was participating in the settler-colonial world of academic education, I was also participating in Kinoo'amaadawaad. This dress in the colour green reminds me of my roots, of

my family's connection to spending time out on the Land. The colour green reminds me of the large cedar tree that grew between my dad's house and the Powwow grounds, just past where Creekside drive meets Powwow Road there is a trail up the mountain, where I would often visit. The cedar tree grew out of the mountain, in an L shape, shaped perfectly just for me. I would take solace in the natural cradle of this cedar tree, taking deep breaths of cedar filled air, maybe a faint hint of a woodstove smell in the distance, the fresh Lake Helen Water nearby making the air humid, the familiar mumble of the stream nearby, my Creekside origin stories. This spot provided me a space to learn in my mind, body, and spirit in all aspects of myself: mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. When I need to be reminded of my roots, of where I come from and of Indigenous worldview, I dance with items from this original regalia or dress or visit that special cedar tree. How can we as educators assist our learners in implementing learning in a good way? Toulouse (2016) outlines pedagogy that honours Indigenous learners. The pedagogy includes sharing influence; interpersonal relationships; raising awareness and taking action, mobilizing, creating meaning and making learning real and relevant to the moment. This also includes acknowledging all aspects of self-including spiritual, physical, emotional, and intellectual. How can I bring educators and learners back to the Land, to their own cedar tree? Styres (2011) asks, "in what ways can land inform pedagogy?" (p.726).

Absolon (2011) reminds us that "Indigenous Peoples have always had means of seeking and accessing knowledge" (p.23) and "Indigenous knowledge is as old as life" (p. 31). Prior to European invasion, Indigenous people successfully practiced ways of gathering, analyzing, and sharing information through Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing; through an Indigenous worldview. One of the Aunties interviewed commented on this idea as she learned the scientific terminology for healing methods she already practiced as young as a child, Nicole

explains, “it’s so funny, so these are the things, now that we learn these skills in a technical way, like we have meditation classes or classes about connecting with ancestors, we have terminology and words for these things, you can look back and say I was naturally doing that the whole time!” Loppie (2007) summarizes Indigenous knowledges, citing Battiste (2000), Gunn-Allen (1886) and Smith (2000) describing “Indigenous societies have always possessed sophisticated systems of knowledge, philosophy, medicine, and government” (p.277). Before colonization, Indigenous peoples controlled their own education, which utilized community, family, and Elders as teachers. Talking with Elders at community events, hearing our stories, seeing our sacred items have all provided opportunities for learning for me within the realm of Kinoo’amaadawaad. Indigenous people and communities are still practicing Kinoo’amaadawaad in a variety of ways across Turtle Island. Though this is true, maintaining Kinoo’amaadawaad has been challenging through the ongoing settler-colonization, attempted assimilation, and genocide of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island.

Indigenous people have continued in unique ways of learning and sharing knowledge. Wilson (2003) summarizes, “beginning in early post contact period, Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing … were progressively suppressed and significantly weakened by western [settler-colonial] societal influences. Colonialism, the impositions of western education, the residential school system and early government legislation served to alter the entire social culture of Indigenous peoples” (p.132). Duran & Duran (2002) argue the “legitimization of [Indigenous] thought in the western world has not yet occurred” (p.98). Dei et al. (2002) argue that “to a disturbing extent, patriarchal Eurocentrism continues to masquerade as universalism…Western science is presented as the only valid knowledge” (p.8). Battiste (2002) describes this as “cognitive imperialism, also known as cultural racism, [which] is the imposition

of one worldview on a people who have an alternative worldview, with the implication that the imposed worldview is superior to the alternative worldview" (p.193). Ahenakew (2016) highlights:

> the denial and denigration of non-Western ways of knowing has been part and parcel of European colonialism and a primary means by which the universality of Western knowledge was asserted (Andreotti, 2011; Satos 2007; L.T. Smith, 2012) and used as a justification for the dispossession, destitution, and genocide of populations who were perceived to be lacking knowledge of universal worth. (p.327)

Settler-colonialism continues to attack Kinoo'amaadawaad as "Indigenous ways of knowing, seeing, doing and being, are still not widely accepted within the Eurocentric educational system" (Armstrong, 2022, p. 6).

Indigenous Knowledges in the Settler-Colonial Education System

Toulouse (2016) comments on the 2009 report from the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health, which stated "Indigenous peoples' experiences with education in Canada has been a contentious one. The focus from the outset of imposed, colonial-based education has centred on assimilation and/or segregation of Indigenous peoples from their communities and worldviews" (p. 1). Ray (2012) summarizes Wilson (2003) describing the phases of Indigenous research (Kinoo'amaadawaad) is "rooted in Western traditions occurred primarily between the 1770s and 1990s in the following phases: Terra Nullius (European observation of the land); Traditionalizing (research to promote a colonial discourse on the inhumanity of Indigenous Peoples): Assimilationist (researching the "Indian Problem") and Early Aboriginal Research (academic research *on* Indigenous peoples)" (p.88). This research hopes to be the next step in these phases, to complete research *with* Indigenous peoples. As educators looking to include

authentic Kinoo'amaadawaad experiences, this must be *with* Indigenous peoples and with community. Toulouse (2016) comments on the problematic history of education for Indigenous people on Turtle Island as having "structural and societal roots mired in marginalization and subjugation. Today, the improved state of education for Indigenous peoples has its foundations in the resiliency of Indigenous communities and social justice movements advocating for inclusion and change" (p. 1). This research hopes to contribute to the decolonization of settler-colonial educational institutions and the Indigenization of the modern mainstream education system. This research hopes to contribute to the movement towards not only inclusion, but celebration of Kinoo'amaadawaad, to celebrate this knowledge and shout with joy!

I grew into the purple jingle dress my older cousin had worn. This dress was larger and allowed me to continue to explore new dance steps. I would smile and laugh as I tried forward steps, backward steps, stumbling over new style contemporary jingle dress steps, dancing my style, jamming away. After a summer of dancing in my purple jingle dress, trying on new moves and feeling successful even through my stumbling in the circle, I returned to school in the fall for a new academic challenge: to try learning some new steps in the education world through learning a new language. At this time in my life, 10 – 12 years old, my parents and I were coming to terms with the idea that Anishinaabemowin was not offered in my high school and that high school French would be a required course. Language is important as Battiste (2002) describes "Aboriginal languages are the basic media for the transmission and survival of Aboriginal consciousness, cultures, literatures, histories, religions, political institutions and values... [languages] are the means of communication for the full range of human experiences, and they are critical to the survival of the culture and political integrity of any people" (p.199). Though some change has occurred as in Ontario "between 2012 and 2022, the proportion of

schools offering Indigenous languages programs has increased from 4% to 13% for elementary schools and from 11% to 20% for secondary schools" (Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson, 2023) statistically, there is still work to be done.

My parents met with the school to sort out a transition plan to make sure I would be successful. My first report card came home, I received a D in French. My mother was livid. I was devastated as I had never received a D before, academics were my thing! My gold star, A+ student, my identity had been attacked! I was confused as to why I received the mark. I felt I was on track and always did my homework. We visited the school to find the transition programming was on track, that I was excelling in the new language when taking into consideration my own learning journey, that I had just started to take French language classes. The D reflected where I was in comparison with my classmates. This experience was in stark contrast to my experience in the Powwow trail. I was a new dancer, who would never be compared to anyone else in my dancing journey. In the circle, even my missteps were celebrated. In our circle, even the contraries are celebrated as a method of teaching and learning. Often the settler-colonial world of academic education celebrates those who meet a curriculum expectation. In Kinoo'amaadawaad even mistakes hold important teachings and lessons. Experiences are recognized as of value.

History of Indigenous Education in Settler-Colonial Institutions

My purple dress was retired when I graduated and went to high school where I experienced racism from my peers, teachers and ultimately the settler-colonial education system. This is not an experience unique to only me as Kerr & Parent (2018) explain "educational systems in settler nation-states such as Canada are marked by violence directed at Indigenous students, families and communities" (p.40). I remember I had come in to school on the *Rez Bus* as it was my dad's week and my brother, and I were staying in our community. We had the best

time together the weekend before, painting our kitchen floor and Dad, enjoying his limited time with his kids, had let us get a little wild with the paint. I had paint in my hair and on my hands. I was changing to get ready for gym class when a classmate made a remark about my paint-stained skin on my lower back, offering racist remarks and insinuating incestuous comments related to the racist remarks. As my classmates left, I stayed behind, painfully scrubbing my skin until it was bright red, trying to remove the paint. I looked in the mirror to my tear-stained face and denounced my Indigenous heritage and all the false, negative stereotypes that came along with that identity then and there.

I transitioned to high school, at the same time my parents divorced. My mom, brother and I moved off the reserve, out of the community to town. I was lost, confused and disconnected. I am very white passing, visibly fair skin with blue eyes. As I faced racism from others, I began to notice if I didn't mention I was Indigenous, no one asked or knew. I began to disconnect from an Indigenous worldview. In my search for reconnection I turned to drugs, alcohol, and unhealthy relationships. Evenings spent exploring the beach at the Chalet Lodge or playing sports outside the RRIB Community Hall were replaced with late night partying. If you asked my peers, they would tell you I had an excellent high school experience. I was popular, had lots of friends and even graduated as Valedictorian of my class. During this time though, I struggled with addictions, poor mental health, and suicidal ideation. The worst times in my life were during this time when I had no dress, when I lost my dance, when I lost myself.

I remember my grandma being one of the few people who knew my true reality. She pulled me aside and offered condolences for what I was going through and encouraged me to finish high school despite the family turmoil, that I was deserving of building my own future and encouraged me to break these intergenerational cycles, to write my own story. In grade 9, I met

a first-year teacher, Carole a.k.a Miss Davies, who connected me to activities other than the party scene in high school. She would coax me into joining the soccer team, bending the school rules to be able to bring one extra player; I wasn't very good and surely would have been the player cut from the team. She brought a group of us girls to a camp for young women, where we spent time on the Land learning about leadership. She connected me in my senior years to Indigenous students coming into high school and allowed me to mentor youth in our own way. Between my grandma and Carole in the high school, I was able to participate in other activities to make healthy connections within the school. Though I struggled with attendance, I knew I had to attend classes and have decent grades to participate in the extracurricular activities, even if that meant sitting in class hungover.

I graduated from high school as Valedictorian of my class in 2007, the same year my guidance counsellor apologized for my experience during my transition from grade 8 and the same year the Canadian Prime Minister apologized to Survivors and their families for the terrible harms of the residential schools. It was the same year Residential School Survivors sued Canada, the United Church, the Anglican Church, Catholic Entities, and the Presbyterian Church for the atrocities committed in these schools. This resulted in the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC was tasked with uncovering what happened in residential schools. The TRC heard from thousands of survivors. The report revealed the systemic nature of the harm inflicted upon communities, nations, individuals, and families (Hanson, 2009). The final report for the Truth and Reconciliation commission, including 94 calls to action, including calls specific to educational institutions was completed in 2015, 3 years after I graduated from my university undergraduate program (Hanson, 2009).

The recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Calls to Action* (2015) include the following: "to develop culturally appropriate curricula" (10 iii, p. 2); "to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" (62 ii, p. 7); and "to build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect" (63 iii, p. 7). There have been other calls to action that we can learn from in the postsecondary education institutions as well. *Walk This Path With Us* from Simon Fraser University (2017) lists of calls to action include space for ceremonies, culturally appropriate spaces, student voice, curriculum, transition programs, bridge programs, cultural awareness programming, education resources for Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers, community engagement – all through Indigenous control over Indigenous education. *Walk This Path With Us* (2017) calls for action include: academic responsibility to include Indigenous perspectives, knowledge and methods throughout disciplines; provide opportunities for Indigenous student learning and research; create space for exchange of fundamental Indigenous knowledges, perspectives and methods for non-Indigenous students; creating a safe space; space for ceremony; visual Indigenous representations, cultural awareness preparation and experiences. Important to this research is the call for protocols and ethics in approaching Indigenous communities or people (Simon Fraser University, 2017) as this research hopes to demonstrate one way this can be achieved. There are calls for space for teachers to learn about how to appropriately support Indigenous students, unlearning stereotypes and building teachers' capacities with(in) Indigenous knowledge (Gebhard 2018; Schaefli et al. 2018). I wonder, are these calls being heard? Are these calls being answered? If so, how? By whom?

Lakehead University: My Post-secondary Experience

Lakehead University was a place where education started to make its way into my bundle for my healing. I would need it as the city life provided more opportunity for new substances, people, places that as my Aunties might say I had "*just no business*" with. At Lakehead, I was exposed to so many different cultural activities and opportunities to learn from knowledge holders. I started my undergrad with little guidance and exposure to careers and fields, by default I chose to take education with an English major. I took my first Indigenous Learning class as an elective. In these classes, we learned some hard truths about the true history of Canada, a country founded on genocide (Matheson et al, 2022). Absolon (2011) agrees that "conscious Indigenous researchers must be familiar with the history of oppressive research methods, and also be aware of Indigenous history and knowledge. We have to undertake a journey of learning, unlearning and relearning, and this journey is difficult because we are inundated with the continuing effects of colonialism every moment of every day" (p. 141). I was instantly drawn to learn more about the true history of Canada, my community, and my people, I had to learn more. I was fascinated with the journals from fur trading posts and would spend evenings with the microfiche reels learning about the true history I was never told. I would spend 20 minutes sobbing in the parking lot after my Wednesday night classes with Dennis McPherson, unable to articulate or understand parts of what I learned or why this learning was so difficult. Why was I traumatized by the content of these classes where many of my non-Indigenous peers were not? I brought spiked coffee to class to numb away these feelings. Yes, these were excruciating growing pains, but my time at Lakehead also nourished my emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual self. It was the first time I learned the true history of Canada, Indigenous education, learned to speak my language, explicitly learned about the meaning of Powwow, and made my way back to the circle.

I learned about the collective history of Indigenous Nations here on Turtle Island. My learning complimented my personal learning in ceremony as I began to unlearn, relearn and rebuild my own worldview. I had opportunities to work through my academic learning in my other aspects of self: body, mind, and spirit. An education institution truly played an integral role in re-igniting my curiosity and exploring my identity and uncovering truths that connected how historical trauma, colonization and cultural genocide played a role in my modern day to day life and worldview. Coming to better understand my history and truth allowed me to grow into a better version of myself, for myself, my family, and my community. My learning in the academic world about the true history of Turtle Island complimented my learning in ceremony, in beginning to unlearn and re-learn in rebuilding my own worldview and identity.

Missing Voices

During my time in the Lakehead University Indigenous Learning program circa 2007 – 2012, I found limited literature from the perspective of Indigenous worldviews, even more limited in literature were articles around Indigenous frameworks, methods, or models. Many scholars comment on the lack of Indigenous perspectives, historically Indigenous research was done by others, not by Indigenous themselves. Moving forward into modern times, there has been an increase in Indigenous individuals conducting their research based on their own traditional beliefs. This has allowed the Indigenous community to speak out and provide others insight into another view of the world and new learning (Absolon, 2011; Webber-Pilwax 2001; Dumont 2002).

Many studies that have been completed with (or on) Indigenous people have been done by non-members of the community. As the Tri-Council Policy (2018) on ethical research involving Indigenous communities explains:

> research conducted ethically can benefit Aboriginal people and communities. However, intrusive or insensitive research can contribute to negative stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples, as well as inaccurate perceptions of research and researchers in Aboriginal societies. In the past, research concerning Aboriginal peoples has usually been initiated outside the Aboriginal community and carried out by non-Aboriginal personnel. Aboriginal people have had little opportunity to correct misinformation or to challenge ethnocentric and racist interpretations. In light of such experience, many Aboriginal people feel apprehensive about the activities of researchers. (Government of Canada, 2011)

The traumatic history of academic research *on* Indigenous communities must be acknowledged in understanding the apprehension of some Knowledge Keepers in sharing. The knowledge that is shared must be protected and used in a good way.

In my undergraduate years, with the guidance of Dr. McPherson, Dr. Robson, and Dr. Farell, I was able to learn and experience participating in Indigenous research within my community and the world of settler-stream education. This was challenging. The literature speaks to an overall lack of representation of Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing, being and doing within the settler-colonial academic world. Tuhiwai Smith (1999) comments on research in the academy as "research 'through imperial eyes' describing an approach which assumes that Western ideas about the most fundamental things are the only rational ideas, and the only ideas which can make sense of the world, of reality, of social life and of human beings" (p. 334). Since then, there has been an increase in Indigenous voices in the realm of education and research. Cocq (2002) comments on the idea that “data-driven narratives guide our imaginaries and govern what it means to live in contemporary urban societies (p.352); in these

narratives, minorities and marginalized voices are often neglected" (p.334). As an Indigenous scholar, I feel a calling to continue to use the tools in my bundle from both the settler-colonial world of academia and teachings from the Land, community and culture. As I continue on my learning journey, I hope to share in my own unique experience, from an Indigenous lens and worldview.

McPherson and Rabb (1993) discuss the idea that Indigenous communities have been "studied enough ... [this study has] no wish to treat the aboriginal people of Canada as the objects of yet another study" (p.1); calling researchers to action in working with communities in a good way. Eve Tuck (2009) echoes the call for reflection on the "ways research is framed and conducted and to reimagine how findings might be used by, for, and with communities" in *Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities*, addressing problems found in "damage-centered" (p.409) research. During my undergraduate program I was able to complete research projects in my own community, with my community, for my community. *For the people* they might say in the Powwow circle. As much of this research is completed with my own personal connections with friends and family, this research hopes to move forward in a good way, keeping relationships at the forefront. Absolon (2021) explains how in the Powwow circle Absolon is "acutely conscious that Indigenous knowledge is searched, accessed, and also created alongside of other people we engage with and through the events we participate in, experience, and learn from (p.70). I will use this research to learn alongside my community, alongside other Anishinaabekwe to amplify other Anishinaabekwe voices, perspectives and ways of being in our own way.

During the second half of my undergraduate degree, I started to reconnect to both my community and me. I connected to my Indigenous peers, I joined the Lakehead University

Native Student Association, and I started chumming around (visiting) in the *Nish Lounge,* the Indigenous Student learning space on campus. This was a change of pace from my first year where I spent late evenings in those "*just no business*" places. My culture and the Land along with my education brought me back to my cedar tree, back to walking a good path, living in minobimaadziwin.

Our Ways, Old Ways

After university I returned home to work at the Red Rock Indian Band (RRIB) Administrative Office, a.k.a *The Band Office*, a place I was set on not working throughout my youth but I now had a more educated and compassionate lens from which to view my home. Learning about how communities like mine have been able to continue to pursue moving forward in a good way despite the traumatic history of settler-colonialism allowed me to view the work being done at the Band Office as admirable. This was hard work! Through working with my community, I gained first-hand experience with learning our band custom, our protocols, and our ways, old ways. I took on the position of Executive Assistant and visited multiple communities and learned more about Anishinaabe ways of learning, being and doing. I was able to see what I learned about in the Indigenous Learning University program come to life. Through roles such as the Energy East Pipeline Liaison and Nuclear Waste Management Organization Liaison I was able to learn more about our (RRIB) community engagement plan. Our community developed our own consultation and development policy with the help of Band Member, Paul. This was the first time I had seen research and engagement done in this way. Again, it was emphasized that the research be done in our community, by our community, for our community. *For the people.*

At this time both Paul and I were working around our home community. Though I've known Paul probably my whole life, we reconnected through our mutual friend and Elder, Terrybun.[3] Paul was working on his academics and would bug me to pick up my studies again too. I don't know if Paul saw me struggling to find my place, to break intergenerational cycles or if he was just being a pest, but he roped me into helping with a local hockey team. During our time at home our friendship grew. At this time Paul was completing his own education projects. From his education projects with Brian Rice, Paul was introduced to Ma'iingan, an Elder and Knowledge Keeper from southern Ontario. Paul and Terrybun invited Ma'iingan, to help our community build a lodge and to host a community fast. I joined in on the action, looking for any opportunity to heal at this time in my life. Paul, Terrybun, Ma'iingan and I wandered the Chalet Lodge grounds before the fast, chatting about what the experience might be like. As we walked, we came across a large, pure white eagle tail feather. Paul told me it was for me and that I should bring it with me on my fast. I used it through my first four day fast. Not long after this ceremony, I received my spirit name of Ogichidaakwe, from Terrybun. Though Paul, Terrybun and I went our separate ways, whenever I need to feel connected to my name and identity or those teachings, I received during that first fast at home, I smudge with that white feather. There have been times in my journey that I have danced with that white feather, asking for reminders of the lessons of my first fasting ceremony on the shores of the Nipigon River. Fast forward nearly a decade later, Dr. Paul Cormier is my thesis supervisor for this project. Miigwech, thank you Paul.

In 2014, the Nuclear Waste Management Organization approached the Red Rock Indian Band (RRIB) to consult about the possibility of storing nuclear waste in RRIB territory. Using

[3] In Anishinaabemowin "bun" is added at the end of a persons name to indicate someone who has passed away. Other dialects use "baa" as well to indicate someone has passed.

Paul's framework for consultation, the community was heard loud and clear during the initial promotion and awareness phase that this was a hard pass, gawiin, no. Mni Wiconi, Water is life. As I continued to participate in ceremony in my community, I learned the story of the jingle dress. This dress is a healing dress. The work I was doing was around Water. Water is also healing; I was regularly spending time in and on the Water and this brought me great healing. I wanted to give back to the Water. As I signed up for more community classes, a regalia making came up in the flyer with Kelvin and Georgina Redsky. Somehow, the hall was overbooked, and we ended up hosting the session in my dad's living room. Here, in my own home, on my reserve at the corner of Creekside Drive and Powwow Road, I started to sew my way back into the circle, finding my way home. My dance was coming back.

Literature Review: Indigenous Models and Frameworks

Before I go any further, I would like to take some time to look at other examples of Indigenous Models and Frameworks. Some might ask, what business do all these jingle dresses, Powwows and Aunties have in the world of education or research? This research contributes to the body of knowledge that suggest appropriate means to complete searches for knowledge successfully and tactfully. I searched for different examples, theories and frameworks from Indigenous researchers utilizing Indigenous methodologies in their work. There are many communities that have created their own models and frameworks to guide research within community. The barriers between settler-colonial and Indigenous cultures and worldviews make it difficult for non-Indigenous and Indigenous researchers to appropriately conduct research within Indigenous communities. Educators looking to find Indigenous voices must do so appropriately. I was first introduced to community research models in my own community, Red Rock Indian Band. I will be utilizing *MinoGaabo,* the RRIB policy for engagement, as a

framework for this research as this is the framework I most identify with as aligning with minobimaadiziwin and completing this research in a good way.

Indigenous Models and Frameworks - Red Rock Indian Band - *MinoGaabo*

My community of Red Rock Indian Band (RRIB) developed its own policy for engagement. The policy reflects that there are many ways to consult and learn from our community. Through developing this process, I remember a common idea floating around our community that there is more than one way to skin a rabbit and don't even get the Kokum's started about all the ways you can cook a rabbit. Still, a general guide was created. The RRIB website outlines the process in the summer of 2009 leading to the policy that states:

> The Red Rock Indian Band conducted a comprehensive analysis of requirements related to consultation activities. This analysis was based on existing legislation and policy requirements and resulted in the creation of the Red Rock Indian Band Consultation Policy: MinoGaabo ─ 'Standing straight-be straight forward-walk the straight path' … Red Rock Indian Band has developed a clear Consultation Policy which seeks to address several core principles:
>
> - Our First Nation and its members have a right to contribute to and be informed about key decisions affecting their territory.
> - Our community should be provided with adequate information in order to make informed decisions.
> - Appropriate and timely opportunities are to be provided for our people to gain access to information and to be involved.
> - Every First Nation and community member has their own values and ideas according to personal culture and belief systems.

- An understanding and respect for Red Rock Indian Band history and culture will support effective communication.
- All people should be treated with dignity and respect. (Red Rock Indian Band n.d.)

In the RRIB framework, each individual is heard and respected. Many researchers have in the past over-generalized findings within Indigenous research projects. Within Indigenous communities there can be several differing opinions stemming from different worldviews, culture and belief systems. For example, some of our members believe in Catholicism where others follow an Indigenous spiritual path. Some of our members are very economic development focused, some are Land and Water warriors. Most, like all humans, are a bit of everything. Each person is acknowledged in their beliefs. This leads into the other point I think is of most importance, "all people should be treated with dignity and respect" (Red Rock Indian Band n.d.). I believe this is a fundamental teaching of my community that traces back to our original teachings and stories of our community. Ensuring participants are treated with dignity and respect through their knowledge sharing is of utmost importance to me as instilled by my community.

The RRIB Consultation Policy has seven (7) activities: Promotion/awareness; Pre-consultation; Consultation process design; Consultation process (done together with partner); Accommodation; Evaluation and feedback; Follow-up (Red Rock Indian Band n.d.). To my understanding, once the process is complete, it would start again with the promotion/awareness of what the process results were and what the next steps would be, following through the steps again. Though the community policy has many benefits, it also has some possible dangers or shortcomings. As the policy is well defined and outlined with clear objectives and goals, maybe even interpreted as check boxes, many settler-colonial researchers may find this appealing. That

being said, our community has participated successfully in many research projects within and with partners in a good way, learning with each other as we are doing.

Indigenous Models and Frameworks - Nanaboozhoo & Maple Syrup

The RRIB model mentioned was created with RRIB member, Paul Cormier. Dr. Paul Cormier and Dr. Lana Ray, both RRIB members, collaborated in a piece to utilize the process of harvesting Maple syrup to discuss Anishinaabe pedagogy and post-secondary research. Using a storytelling method, the authors discuss the story of Nanaboozoo and the Maple trees. The authors use ideas from the story and compare them to themes in education and research. Ideas such as "letting maple syrup drip into our mouths" is compared to memorization of facts highlighting the importance of engagement. Searching through the Maple tree grove was discussed through the lens of viewing Indigenous research through history. The authors connect research to the community term *Kinoo'amaadawaad Megwaa Doodamawad*, part of the RRIB community model discussed above (Ray and Cormier, 2012).

Indigenous Models and Frameworks - Making as Methodology: Beading & Bandolier Bags

Ray continued to utilize Indigenous frameworks to discuss research as she looked to beading to further her understanding of Indigenous research. Ray (2016) describes visiting with an Elder, "she would never be making something for herself; instead, she would always be working on something to be given away, whether it was regalia, a dressed feather, or ordinary everyday items that were beaded. What I came to understand through our ongoing visits and reflection was that beading is a way to strengthen relationships and community knowledge" (p.364). Prete (2019) explores Indigenous research paradigms and methodology through bead work. She explores bead work as an act of resistance, an act of knowledge transmission and an act of resiliency. She continues her piece to explore how these are interconnected and in

relationship with each other. Both Cotherman (2010) and Marsden (2014) comment on "the [important] role of beadwork in relationship building, explaining that through the exchange of bandolier bags, interpersonal and intertribal relationships were maintained. These relationships are multidimensional, including mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual domains" (Marsden, 2004, p. 68; Cotherman 2010).

Indigenous Models and Frameworks - Absolon & The Flower Model

Absolon utilizes the flower model to illustrate Indigenous research processes in *Kaandossiwin: How We Come to Know*. This wholistic framework for Indigenous methodologies in search of knowledge includes the roots (foundational elements); flower centre (self as central to the search); leaves (the journey, process transformation); flower stem (methodological backbone; petals (diverse ways of searching for knowledge) and the environment (academic context). Through presenting the cyclical nature of the growth of a flower, Absolon illustrates the importance of continuity and fluidity in Indigenous research methodologies. This model was used alongside my community model in assisting in developing the research methodology for this project. See the *Appendix A: Chart of Research Models and Frameworks* for a comparison visual.

Indigenous Models and Frameworks - Mi'kmaw Research Principles and Protocols

Another example of a community developed model can be found in the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch document *Mi'kmaw Research Principles and Protocols: Conducting Research With and/or among Mi'kmaw people*. The document outlines core principles, obligations for the community and researchers and community protocols. The document was created to "establish a set of principles and protocols that will protect the integrity and cultural knowledge of the

Mi'kmaw people" (Julien et al, p.1). There is also a fillable form available online for researchers to communicate with the Mi'kmaw community.

Indigenous Models and Frameworks - Storytelling Models

Little Bear (2000) explains "storytelling is a very important part of the [Indigenous] educational process. It is through stories that customs and values are taught and shared" (p.81). Ray and Cormier (2012) use the story of Nanaboozhoo as the basis for their discussion in post-secondary research. Absolon (2011) tells the story of a flower growing in a cyclical way to illustrate Indigenous research methodologies. Archibald (2014) tells a story of Coyote, Owl and a bone and needle as a motivator, pushing the author to "venture to unfamiliar territory of decolonization" (p.37) to find an Indigenous methodology within Sto: lo story theory. Stories can be told through song, dance, myth, legends, ceremonies and the like. For example, rooted in Indigenous ceremony, the sharing circle model allows for a flexible, wholistic approach to sharing information. Circles can be utilized as an Indigenous methodology if done appropriately (Archibald, 2014; Kovach, 2010; Kerr & Parent, 2002). Sharing circles and storytelling frameworks can be utilized in Indigenous Research.

Dynamic and Fluid Systems

Though many of these models describe Indigenous Research as segmented into different themes or ideas through an Indigenous metaphor, we must remember that there is fluidity and connectedness within these models. Not unlike other elements of Indigenous knowledge, Indigenous Research does not function as a static or closed model, rather it is a highly adaptive and wholistic system. *Kinoo'amaadawaad Megwaa Doodamawaad,* is roughly translated to mean 'they are learning with each other while they are doing' (Cormier, 2009; Cormier, 2010). Ray (2012) comments on the idea of *Kinoo'amaadawaad Megwaa Doodamawaad* in reflection

on her own research stating the idea of learning with each other as we are doing "has emerged as a means of thinking about and engaging in 'research'" (p.96). Ray (2012) shares that she has "come to understand this term as inclusive and without boundaries. Within this term, concepts such as theory, methodology, method, ontology, epistemology, and axiology do not exist as singular entities" (p.96). In areas where it has been able to survive, Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing or Indigenous Research has the knowledge base and adapted practices to changing times and circumstances, including the evolution of beneficial innovations and technologies. Indigenous research is dynamic and traditional knowledge can be applied to contemporary situations. Ways of knowing, being and doing should not be isolated into singular experiences; rather they should be viewed as interconnected with all things. Indigenous Research is interwoven with Indigenous values and beliefs and rely on the natural world as well as the spirituality of Elders and medicine people. This includes something some researchers described as intuition or heart knowledge (King, 2016).

Indigenous Methodologies

Literature surrounding Indigenous research methodologies is limited (in comparison to the vast academic literature on Eurocentric settler-colonial research methodologies) but growing (King, 2016; Absolon 2011). There are studies done pertaining to the collection of data within Indigenous communities; though through history, there are even more studies done *on* Indigenous communities extracting data from communities (McPherson & Rabb 1993; Cocq 2022). Though the literature around Indigenous Research methodology is growing and there is a solid body of scholarship on this topic that has been acknowledged in academic journals and books; still, the importance of such methodologies has not been appropriately acknowledged outside of Indigenous spaces (Armstrong 2020; Guthrie, 2020; Tom, 2022). This study looks to

answer the research questions mentioned and will contribute to the growing understanding and legitimacy of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing within the world of academia. The literature calls researchers to pay respect to Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous ways of knowing being and doing (Absolon 2011; Archibald 2014; Duran & Duran 2002; Johnston et al. 2018; Tuck 2009; Wilson 2018).

In exploring literature on Indigenous research looking to find my own framework; I was inspired to further investigate Indigenous methodologies from works completed by Indigenous scholars. My experience was similar to Lana Ray's in working through the preconceived ideas in my own mind about Indigenous methodologies. Ray (2012) comments on her experience, expressing her compassion for "others who may share [her] previous understanding that Indigenous methodologies are a singular methodology" (p.87) to which Ray and I both came to learn, Indigenous methodologies are not singular or easily defined. Unlike the math question on my first day of attending a settler-colonial institution, there is no one singular right answer or truth. Ray (2012) explains, "it is not an easy task to come to a definitive understanding of what Indigenous methodologies are. In regard to a methodology, the understanding I employ is wholistic, and includes theory, approach, ethos and methods" (p.89). Ray (2012) identifies Indigenous research "work[s] for Indigenous peoples, whether by forwarding anti-colonial and anti-oppressive agendas or incorporating Traditional knowledge systems within research methodologies" (p.96). The idea of flexibility was interwoven throughout the literature. Weber-Pillwax (2001) describes Indigenous research methodologies as, "those that enable and permit Indigenous researchers to be who they are while engaged actively as participants in research processes that create new knowledge and transform who they are and where they are" (p.174). As an Indigenous researcher my role is unique. As an Indigenous learner I felt a responsibility to

utilize an Indigenous methodology true to me to continue to amplify Indigenous voices and our ways, or old ways in research.

Conclusion

160 years ago, the Indigenous education system was very different than it is today. Toulouse (2011) describes the phases of the history of Indigenous education and where we are headed next. Pre-contact on Turtle Island, traditional education, or Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing included the Land, Elders and Knowledge Keepers. The second phase of segregation can be understood through examining residential schools created to "kill the Indian in the Child" (Young, 2015) as simultaneously assimilation was being forced on Indigenous peoples from coast to coast to coast. Though the last residential school closed in 1996, Toulouse describes the final phase of Indigenous education that continues in modern day as integration. As the true history of the settler-stream education system continues to surface, including the history of genocide of Indigenous people on Turtle Island, there is a call to action to understand settler-colonization, move towards decolonization and reconciliation, promote Indigenization and to find justice within Turtle Island (Kerr & Parent, 2018; Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015; Still waiting for Truth and Reconciliation 2023). Indigenous stories and voices are being amplified through work in academia and work on the Powwow trail. Absolon (2021) explains Powwow, "once outlawed under colonial rule, these gatherings are now active acts of reclaiming and recreating Indigenous knowledge and traditions through ceremonial land-based celebrations and community relationships. These gatherings are sources of knowledge" (p.70). Indigenous voices are being heard through community and through Indigenous scholars as well as allies. There is a general sense of searching for tangible methods to reconciliation and peace. An elementary school principal in Southwestern Ontario explained "we want to do more but need

help and direction with what to do and how to do it" (Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson, 2023, p. 6). Indigenous voices, models and frameworks are emerging. This research hopes to provide opportunities for educators to infuse Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing into their learning environments to promote nation building, peace, reconciliation, healing and minobimaadiziwin in learning spaces and within us.

Chapter 3: Methodology

"Our searches are about Indigenous peoples' survival, and in order to survive we remember who we are and what we know. Our search for knowledge is ultimately connected to an emotional and personal search related to: Who am I? And where do I come From?" (Absolon, 2011, p. 110).

Introduction

I continue to use stories of my experience in the circle along with Indigenous research frameworks and my knowledge gained through the settler-colonial world of academic education and research to outline how this research project interweaves different research methodologies.

Nibi (Water) and MinoGaboo

My Water dress truly showed me the process, journey, and transformation a dancer can have in creating those sacred items we bring into the circle and in being part of the circle. This dress showed me my responsibility as a Water carrier to my community, the Water, and the Land in all that I do. My Water dress gave me an opportunity to practice my community model or framework, *MinoGaabo*, though I probably didn't know I was doing this at the time. I started making my Water dress in 2013 when there were rumblings in the community about the potential for the burial of nuclear waste along our territory's Waters. There was a general **awareness** the Water is most important to our community and never worth risking. During my visit with Kelvin and Georgina Redsky, through **pre-consultation**, I was taught the story of the jingle dress, that it was a healing dress. As we discovered the correlation between the community need for protecting and healing the Water and the potential for the jingle dress to heal, we decided the dress would be made for the healing and care of the Water. As I **consulted** with different Aunties, more items were added to the regalia. I added moccasins with fish beaded on the vamp so I would remember to pray for the swimmers as I danced. One Auntie donated a yolke from her most sacred store, Value Village, upcycled with smaller jingles hanging from the

embroidered shawl, representing a fishing net. Finally, all Aunties, mom and my grandma (including my non-Indigenous family, true allies) came together as we hung my dress in the middle of my mom's living room and started coning, together. As we put final touches on the dress, it allowed time for **feedback** or other ideas. Pieces are always being added to our regalia and to our bundles as we move through our journey. Like Absolon (2021) explains "without delving into the intricacies of regalia making, the moments of coming together as a family were profound moments of restoring family relationships" (p.71); this dress helped me to learn from my relations. This dress has made its way to a young Water carrier in my community. This dress "much like my written scholarship, the regalia was shared and steeped in generations of knowledge" (Absolon, 2021, p.74).

I started the dress in 2013, but I didn't dance in the dress until 2016, when I awoke from a dream. Some might say I had been "acting up" for a bit. I was coming out of feeling so hungover and sick, I had been in bed for a few days. I woke up from a dream of my great grandfather, a war veteran, hollering at me like he would in my early days of school when we lived with my great grandparents. "Ash-lee! Daaaaaanis! It's time to wake up now!" he would holler down the stairs. I could hear him hollering still, as I opened my eyes, woken by the overpowering loud sound of jingle dresses along with the veterans' honor song faintly heard in the back. I woke up that day and shortly after went up the mountain to Fort William First Nation Powwow where I nervously made my Grand Entry, solo, but still carrying the teachings my family instilled in me from my first Powwow. I offered my tobacco to the cedar trees and danced in. As the veteran's song played, tears streamed down my face. I felt an overwhelming sense of healing, peace, and connection. My dance had returned. It was time to wake up now.

Methodology

In this section I will describe what I can of my research methodology used in this project. As an Indigenous learner, it was difficult for me to decide which parts of my methodology to include, and which parts were only for me. I hesitate to share the story just mentioned as this is so sacred to me. Do these healing stories belong in the world of settler-colonial academic education? Should they be shared here in a research project? What is private and only for me? Keller (2014) quotes Grant Bulltail as he explains to a classroom of students "I don't want to call it a sacred site because your idea of something sacred and my idea of something sacred are a little bit different" (p.88) highlighting the complexities in sharing Indigenous knowledges in settler-stream academic institutions. "Mr. Bulltail articulates a difference between the settler idea of the sacred and the Apsaalooke idea" (Keller, 2014, p.94) of the sacred. Due to settler-colonialism, sacred and private have become synonymous with each other despite being distinct from Anishinaabekwe point of view. Maybe there are some stories and lessons that are sacred, but can still be shared. I discussed some of these concerns with one of the Aunties during our interview. Morning Star shared in her interview her experience when she was working on her Master of Education degree:

> the concerns that you have, that was something that I had doing my thesis. My dad was just like, there's some things that don't belong on paper. You have to decide what you share because once it's out there, it's out there. I think its common, especially being First Nation to have those concerns. You want to do something that's for the good of your people and there's always going to be the ones who don't.

Another education Auntie, Storm, reminded me to be mindful in sharing; to be courageous in keeping some stories just for myself or my Indigenous community and that once my thesis is

complete, my learning journey and relationships still continue. Wagamese's *One Drum* (2019) discusses that ceremony is complete once it is shared. I am cautious in my own sharing of methodology as I hope this work is used in a good way, empowering Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing.

Morning Star Tom (2022) shared in her own research that participants "stories were shared through open-ended conversations and are presented… in both story form and in their own words. It is through the relationship built between the reader and the stories that true connection and meaning are made, allowing the spirit of the stories to create discussion and change" (p.ii). Wilson (2019) explains the importance of relationships in research:

> relationships don't just shape Indigenous reality; they are our reality. Indigenous researchers develop relationships with ideas in order to achieve enlightenment in the ceremony that is Indigenous research. Indigenous research is the ceremony of maintaining accountability to these relationships. For researchers to be accountable to all our relations, we must make careful choices in our selection of topics, methods of data collection, forms of analysis and finally in the way we present information. (Preface)

Wilson (2008) maintains the idea that research is ceremony. Though many scholars have identified that there are Indigenous knowledges that must be protected, there are some teachings that can be shared widely. I engaged in community and listened to participants suggestions as I navigated through which teachings can be shared and which should remain private and which ones should be protected. Rather than defining a strict list of *what* I could share and what I couldn't share, I learned timing and relationships influenced deciding *when* to share and *who* to share with. My methodology unfolded in consultation with others, acknowledging that our relationships shape our reality. Relationships are at the forefront of this research.

All My Relations - Locating the Researcher & Relationships

My friend Bess rolled up in her car one hot summer day, "I got something here for you" she hollered as she opened her car door. She pulled out a jingle dress. I was overwhelmed, I knew the value and meaning in the dress and could only respond by just hugging her. She told me about why I was receiving this dress and teachings about the jingle dress. I don't think she realized how much I needed that dress in that moment as I had just learned of my grandma's diagnosis with cancer. This dress helped me and our family through much of the emotions that came with that diagnosis and treatment. Bess made me feel so seen and loved when she shared her story and dress with me. Bess has a story of healing and a journey of her own. This experience helped me to understand that all dancers, all of us within the circle have a diverse way of searching for knowledge and healing, diverse and unique but still, we are all connected.

I began my literature review by first introducing myself, participating in what academia might call "locating the researcher". When I introduce myself in this way, I establish who I am in relationship to those I am speaking with. Duran & Duran (2002) describe "whereas the western [settler-colonial] approach to the world is one in which everything is categorized and named, the [Indigenous] way of being in the world involves a relationship and moving in harmony with the seasons, the wind and all of creation" (p.92). Bess reminded me of this reciprocal relationship. In my experience in my Indigenous circles, we always introduce ourselves to each other, to Creator, to our ancestors and to the Land. It was a similar experience reading through many of the Indigenous scholarly articles, many of the Indigenous researchers introduced themselves and spent some time locating themselves in their worldview and place in the world. Wilson (2001) highlights the importance of identifying our worldview as researchers are "interested in some of the similarities in our ways of thinking and ways of being in the world. A big part of this has

been looking at people's epistemologies or how they think, and how this affects how things are in their world" (p.175). Webber-Pillwax (2001) comments on her research and conversation style methodology as she "connected with people that [she] had known for years, not in terms of knowing their personalities, but knowing their connections. They also knew [her] connections" (p.170) highlighting the importance of establishing interconnectedness and generational relationships. The jingle dress Bess dropped off has made its way to another RRIB member who I have known since birth. She dances and inspires our youth to celebrate their own identity. Bess reminds us of the knowledge and power in relationships and interconnected relationships.

King (2016) comments on the importance of building relationships, that "unless a relationship is built, the deeper level communication will not happen" and refers to her conversations as *medicine talks.* I read works from many local Indigenous scholars that I am lucky enough to have spent time visiting with in different capacities. My thesis advisor and advisory committee member, are from my community. These connections, some intergenerational relationships, provided comfort in establishing a familiar connection to the unfamiliar world of academia. Miigwech to my connections, to the Indigenous scholars and community for the many medicine talks that have shaped this research, including the methodology. Dumont (2002) expands on the idea of Indigenous Intelligence, the gathering, analyzing and sharing data as impossible without relationships; Dumont states "we cannot be intelligent, act or think intelligently unless we are able to attach our Indigenous concepts, our way of being and Indigenous knowledge to our connectedness and relationship with everything else. Our responsibility within that all- inclusive relationship is an act of intelligence" (p.6). As I continued to work through my own methodology within the realm of research, I acknowledge the

importance of establishing self, my own interconnectedness within the learning journey and the importance of utilizing a relationship-based approach.

Participants: The Aunties

I began making a list of strong Anishinaabekwe that I have met on my journey. These women are active in the Powwow circle. I chose these women as I believe they are strong role models for who I would like to become. Each of these Anishinaabekwe have gifted me with their connection in sharing who they are, their stories and in their growth along the way. These women welcomed me into the Powwow circle with open arms when I joined the circle as my family and community (both had cultural base but was more of a Land-based focus) had not spent much time focusing on Indigenous culture through the Powwow circle. These women, at one point or another in my journey of balancing the world of settler stream academia and my learning in Kinoo'amaadawaad, have tended to my fire, keeping me going, watching and warning or helping if the fire burnt too hot or went to coals. These women have been recognized for their gifts in their own way in our communities and beyond for sharing in their own unique ways. These Anishinaabekwe have experience in the Powwow circle, in the world of education and in balancing to walk in minobimaadziwin. Those on the Powwow trail might call them *just ever real deadly, those ones*. I utilized what we might call *all my relations* on the Powwow trail, as discussed, relationships are at the forefront of this research.

I received my approval from the Research Ethics Board, March 2023. I wondered, where should I start? Who should I start with? I was overwhelmed and the interviews hadn't even begun. Simultaneously, my friend Dave Simard gave a call out for dancers. The call for dancers was for the Lakehead University Cultural night where athletes would have the opportunity to wear jerseys with artwork from a local Indigenous artist and Indigenous heritage and culture

would be celebrated. Usually, I don't like showcasing in larger events that are in an institution but one of my students was invited to the event through a student achievement program. The student felt uneasy and uncomfortable with the invitation to the varsity sports game. I responded to Dave to see if I could jump in to show my student that not only do we belong in these institutions, but we can be celebrated in these spaces. Dave let me know the spots had already been filled for honorariums but that I was more than welcome to attend and dance.

I arrived at the school nervous and excited, unsure of what to expect. I entered the dressing room to find some of my most favourite Powwow aunties: Cheryl, Nicole, Janine and Clara smiling back at me. And my newest scholarly friend, Morning Star. This was the first time I had the opportunity to meet and talk with Morning Star in person since reading their work. I felt starstruck. I felt included. I felt a connection to community. I felt powerful. To celebrate the start of my interviews I was gifted a dance with my favourite Aunties, right here in my own school. I felt so proud to dance in my school with my peers, community and students watching.

When the time came for us to head to the gym, we all walked together. As we walked through the hallways leading to the gymnasium, I heard it. This sound, louder than my own breath, louder than my own heartbeat, the sound of other jingle dress dancers. I looked around, there were only a hand full of us there to dance. Surely the sound couldn't be coming from only the few of us jingle dress dancers. I smiled at Clara; she smiled back. I felt safe. I felt like this was where I was supposed to be. I felt Creator. I felt all of my ancestors behind me, jingling their way through their healing, jingling their way through their traumas. I felt all of us walking together, in healing. In healing ourselves, in healing each other, in healing our families, in healing generations. As we made our way through the hallway closer towards the gym, the jingling got so loud it was almost overwhelming. The sound of thousands of jingle dress dancers

filled the hallway as we entered into the gym. Yes, Powwow belongs here. Yes, I belong here. The Aunties, they belong here. When we were done, I couldn't help but Saasaakwe, shout with joy.[4] I started my interviews with those Aunties I danced with March 2023 at the Lakehead University cultural night basketball game.

Research Questions

In 2018, my dad bought me what my Powwow family had dubbed, my wonder woman dress. To me, this was my Ogichidaakwe dress. My Ogichidaakwe dress is my backbone. This dress represents me, my name, Ogichidaakwe, warrior woman as the dress was created by Mary Magiskan and created based on (my favourite) superhero, wonder woman. As my employment contracts ended in community, I realized there were limited education jobs at home. I packed up my belongings including my Ogichidaakwe dress and returned to the city for employment in different positions that were focused more on culture and youth engagement. I was able to learn more about my culture through working at the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre in and out of schools alongside educators and Knowledge Keepers. We attended ceremony. I was able to further develop my bundle in tools relating to youth mental health and addictions through a Cultural Coordinator position at The Children's Centre of Thunder Bay working in and out of healthcare institutions alongside healthcare providers. At Dilico, I was able to work with youth in addictions, pairing culture with health and wellness resources from all realms to help youth achieve minobimaadziwin. All through these positions, I was balancing culture along with other resources to increase minobimaadiziwin for myself and others. I felt I was healing parts of

[4] I was introduced to the idea of Saasaakwe through the fullmoon ceremony in my community. It was explained to me by local knowledge keepers that this shout or yell is a release of emotion and to communicate intentions with all our relations. Simpson (2014) explains "Saasaakwe is a loud shout or vocalization of approval used to call in or acknowledge the spirits" (p.5). Cheryl comments on her teachings of Saasaakwe when she shares her story in chapter 4.

myself as well as helping others to grow. This time moving to Thunder Bay was different. Instead of spending time at bars and "acting up" I spent time at circle, at ceremony and dancing in my Ogichidaakwe dress. This dress brought me teachings about the strength within our communities, most notably the women in Indigenous communities. The strong women I made connections with through this dress continue to play a role in my healing journey today.

My Ogichidaakwe dress took me to places I never imagined I would go. Spring of 2022 I was invited to dance at Nip-Rock high school first Powwow. I've been invited to countless Powwows and gigs now and didn't bat an eye in deciding to accept the opportunity. As I made the drive to my home community, I began to reflect on my journey since attending the high school. So much had changed. As I walked into the school, the hallways and gymnasium seemed so much smaller than before. I made my way to the gym changeroom and began to put on my regalia. As I slipped on my dress over my head, pulling the jingles down gently, I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. The same mirror I had looked into over 20 years ago when I decidedly denounced my Indigenous heritage. Tears started to stream down my face, though this time they were not tears of shame, anger or hurt, they were tears of pride and joy. "Boozhoo Ogichidaakwe" I whispered to myself. At the high school Powwow, I was able to speak to the youth who proudly wore their ribbon skirts as I addressed the filled gymnasium. I was able to tell my story along with the story of the healing jingle dress. I was able to dance in my old high school gymnasium while simultaneously processing the emotions and new learning in my body, mind and spirit. As I danced, I caught a glimpse of my grade 9 teacher, Miss Davies, no longer a first-year teacher, proudly smiling as she watched. We connected later with some feast food and chats, sharing in the magnificence of a Powwow in the Nip-Rock high school. She asked if I knew that Marathon high school hosts a Powwow every year with a grade 11 class focused on

Indigenous learning. My interest had piqued: Powwows *were* in schools. By dancing in a school Powwow, I was able to experience the interweaving of both education systems: the settler-colonial world of academic education and my Indigenous teachings. Through experiences like these, as an Anishinaabekwe and as an educator and lifelong learner, I have come to wonder and ask the following questions, the questions guiding this research.

Research Questions:

1. Does including Indigenous worldview, culture and ceremony contribute to learner success?
    a. In the western Eurocentric world of academia
    b. In living in minobimaadiziwin

Secondary Questions include:

2. Does the Powwow circle fit into learning?
    a. In the western Eurocentric world of academia
    b. In living in minobimaadiziwin
3. How can we create meaningful relationships with local Knowledge Keepers to ensure Indigenous worldview and voice are amplified in learners' education journey?

These questions stemmed from integrating my own learning within the world of academia alongside my learning within an Indigenous way of life. Acknowledging both the Eurocentric world of academia and Indigenous ways of being, doing and knowing have enriched my life within both the realm of academia and walking in minobimaadziwin. I wondered, did anyone have similar experiences or was there a different story?

Research Design

As I developed the interview questions, I reflected on how to structure the flow and themes in the questions. In re-organizing my questions, I looked again to the Powwow circle. We, as Anishinaabe people, start by making our first connection with Semma, tobacco, or as Absolon (2011) might refer to as establishing our roots. Next, we dance in during the start of Grand Entry, entering the circle and I ask participants about their first Powwow experience. As we continue, on the Powwow trail we are told to *Dance Your Style*, where I ask participants about a significant Powwow experience. We continue to dance through the day at Powwow, practicing Kinoo'amaadawaad, we are teaching and learning with each other as we are doing. I ask participants to reflect on their learning journey in the Powwow circle. As we dance, we learn, and we heal (Absolon, 2021). This is ceremony. We reflect together on questions about how Powwow and the education system has helped in our own identity and healing. Finally, the Powwow concludes with the travelling song, reminding us that life is ceremony that we must continue to walk in a good way. In this final section of questions, I ask participants how we move forward in a good way. How do we interweave the knowledge systems to ensure all walk in minobimaadiziwin here on Turtle Island?

Foundational Elements – Roots - Promotion/Awareness - The Land

In beginning my research process, I offered tobacco from my first pouch from one of my first regalia in the green dress, I prayed and smudged. I reviewed several examples of Indigenous models and frameworks. I am very familiar with my community's model of research discussed in the literature review, see *Indigenous Models and Frameworks: Red Rock Indian Band: MinoGaabo*. This made me wonder, could the community consultation process be used as a framework for research design in Indigenous communities? How does this fit into my learning in

Kinoo'amaadawaad? This framework is what guided my own research methodology. For a visual representation, see the flow chart of methodological frameworks outlined in the *Appendix B: Chart of Research Models and Frameworks,* depicting inspirations from Absolon, RRIB and the Powwow circle, all contributing to the development of the research framework utilized in this research. I attended community events and Powwows and began to ask others questions about the idea of integrating culture into the education system. All along the way, ceremony was interwoven into this process. This included dancing with some of my informants and participants, feasting, laughing, smudging, singing, hand drumming and more. In our way, life is ceremony and there is no separating which part of the research was ceremony and which part was not – it was all ceremony. I let my connections know that soon I would be approaching them with tobacco to be a part of this process. King (2016) outlines their methodology, including offering tobacco and gifts as well, which I believe to be culturally appropriate in my teachings in this area.

Self as Central to the Search - Flower Centre - Pre-Consultation - The Drum

Next, I invited several Anishinaabekwe to my house for a potluck and to discuss the project and my research methodology. We met during the September full moon, exchanging ideas, laughter, and snacks. I offered my friends an open bar - an open medicine bar that is, and acknowledged the significance of our relationships. In this phase, we discussed: what issues were of significance within the intersection of Indigenous and settler-stream education in the contemporary world? What would be the heartbeat of this project? What were the big ideas and connections that needed to be made? Like my lessons in my purple contemporary jingle dress, would we celebrate each step of the way? Would we provide cautions for experiences like my French language experience, comparing learning journeys in a way that is unhelpful to learner

experiences and growth and rooted in colonial ideals or could we suggest a different way? Each of us could feel something starting within us as we shared, inquired, and connected.

The Journey – Leaves - Consultation Process Design - Dancing Your Style

In the consultation process design, participants were encouraged to participate along the way. I took into consideration what the community echoed over the summer visiting Powwows, what advice my Aunties gave me, my experiences and ceremony into account. Participants received the questions prior to the interview along with an outline of the project and local mental health resources. Interviews were conducted 1 on 1 with participants. Interviews were conducted using audio recordings. I made sure I let my Aunties know I was available for check ins along the way. Like the Water dress, all my relations gathered resources to help make the healing Water dress in a good way, the Aunties and I, along with my thesis supervisor worked together to ensure this research process would be done in a good way.

The Ogichidaakwe Dress Methodology

I first offered tobacco to the Aunties. The Aunties were interviewed during the spring of 2023. After the interview took place, participants were provided medicines (Sage), and a list of local community supports. Interviews were audio recorded, then I transcribed the recordings into written form using a word processing software. Like the Ogichidaakwe dress, the Aunties and I are doing the action, we are doing the work.

Academic Context – Environment - Evaluation and Feedback – The Circle

Transcriptions were analysed for themes and stories through using the Powwow framework. Aunties were provided an opportunity to review this research along with their transcribed interview via email to provide any feedback. Aunties provided feedback via email and in conversation. The feedback was discussed, investigated and incorporated. Once feedback

was provided, participants were gifted a medicine bundle of tobacco, sage, sweetgrass and cedar along with a copper mug. Aunties were also provided a final copy of the research. I compiled the research findings along with my own experience and stories to demonstrate the connections between Kinoo'amaadawaad and the settler-colonial world of academic education. Common themes found during the research and the Auntie's stories were used to form the data in the following sections.

Conclusion

This research was conducted by interviewing nine adult Anishinaabekwe (women) using an audio recording device during interviews. The following chapters will discuss the findings through sharing participant stories, highlighting themes and providing recommendations for the interweaving of Kinoo'amaadawaad and the settler-colonial education systems.

Chapter 4: The Stories

All that we are is story. From the moment we are born to the time we continue on our spirit journey, we are involved in the creation of the story of our time here. It is what we arrive with. It is all we leave behind. We are not the things we accumulate. We are not the things we deem important. We are story. All of us. What comes to matter then is the creation of the best possible story we can while we're here; you, me, us, together. When we can do that and we take the time to share those stories with each other, we get bigger inside, we see each other, we recognize our kinship – we change the world, one story at a time. (Wagamese, R., 2014)

Introduction

In this section I present stories from the Aunties. As discussed in the literature (Absolon 2011; Archibald 2014; Bernard 202; King 2015; Kerr & Parent 2002) and in my own experience, storytelling plays a major role in Indigenous worldview, knowledge transfer and Kinoo'amaadawaad. Through these stories, readers can learn more about the history through to modern day experiences of learners in both the settler-colonial education systems and Kinoo'amaadawaad.

Settler-colonial schooling has long emphasized banking models of education (Freire, 1970) that emphasize standardized tests of one correct answer or one version of reality or one dominant version of the truth. In asking these interview questions to my auntie-participants, I found many different teachings while listening to their stories. In Kinoo'amaadawaad, learners listen to Knowledge Keepers' stories and experiences and take away their own learning. As someone who has had success in the settler-stream school in identifying one correct answer, it was tempting for me to hyper-analyze the stories and provide the readers with a concrete answer to my research questions. One truth. The satisfying green checkmark, gold star answer can be so tempting, so validating to me – yet so elusive. As I was working through deciding how these stories were to be told, one of my colleagues in the school I work at asked me about how to offer tobacco. She, like me, excels in learning in methods imposed by the settler-stream education

system. She took the time to research before approaching me with her questions. As I explained different scenarios and situations and the many ways we offer (or don't offer) tobacco, her eyes widened and I could see the confusion in her face as she too came to the realization that there was no single truth, concrete answer, no green check mark or gold star. Through sharing my stories, paired with her research and experiences, she came up with her own conclusion about how she should offer tobacco. We learned, together. Twance (2017) comments on Kinoo'amaadawaad sharing her insights:

> Indigenous knowledge entails experiential learning, which demands the ability to construct meaning through direct experience. In Western [Eurocentric] epistemology, a theory is created and tested empirically. Instead of empirically testing hypotheses, Indigenous peoples reflect on their own lived experiences to determine truths (Battiste & Henderson, 2000; Burkhart, 2004; Deloria Jr., 2004). Deloria Jr. (2004) acknowledges that for Indigenous peoples, truth is a matter of perception and is arrived at through lived experience. Therefore, Indigenous knowledge allows room for different perspectives built on each person's subjective experience. When considered collectively, these experiences form Indigenous knowledge. (p.10)

McGuire (2010) explains "the basis for truth within Anishinaabe communities is often very personal. You have to form part of your story. You are an active agent within the story" (p.118) highlighting that the learner is an active participant in learning. There is something significant that happens when we can connect other stories with our own experiences and come up with our own learning. It's empowering.

I was humbled when I asked my grandma what she thought about how I should include the Aunties' stories. She posed a question to me emphasizing the importance of relationships:

What would happen if you went to a Knowledge Keeper and asked a question then got up and walked out halfway through their story when you felt like you got your answer? What would you miss? What would your relationship look like afterward?

Often at Powwow we have different Elders speak and share their teachings. One of the Aunties, Karen, explains the importance in listening when Knowledge Keepers are sharing as she describes:

> There should be teachings taught at the Powwow. When you go to the Powwow the Elders are talking, they're sharing. A lot of people don't know that when an Elder speaks they need to listen. They don't. You see when an Elders talking, there's noise in the background right? Because they weren't taught you need to listen. That's one thing that needs to be done.

It is important for us to remember to listen. I think about Grand Entry and how we stand in the circle and listen to our Elders before we really get into jamming at Powwow. We might be tired or impatient, sweltering in the hot sun or enduring a cool rain, still, it is protocol to stand and listen to these stories and teachings. This is how we show respect for Knowledge Keepers sharing their stories. Sharing these stories in their fullness is how I respect the Aunties who shared these stories.

This chapter provides readers the opportunity to read the stories and to reflect on their own connections to Kinoo'amaadawaad and the settler-colonial world of academic education. Chapter 5 will group, analyze and discuss the themes I found through the interviews and stories and connect themes to the literature review in chapter 2. In this chapter, the stories are presented in a way that follows the Powwow circle, first introducing stories that highlight the dancers as they make their first Grand Entry or visit a Powwow, moving on to stories about family and

community, through to stories about sharing and empowerment and finishing with an invitation to the next ceremony. This chapter allows readers to experience the stories in their fullness and come up with their own connections to their education journey; empowering the reader to take away more than just one correct answer, but a multitude of opportunities or paths to explore further and learn more.

Cheryl's First Powwow in Whitefish Bay

I think I was living in Dryden or Red Lake but my Aunt took me to this Powwow in Whitefish Bay. We were staying in Kenora and then I think I was in grade 5, no wait, 7 or 8. We drove up, we were driving outside of Kenora. I was like where are we going? She's like were going to a Powwow. I was like oh I always wanted to go. When we got there it was a different atmosphere. It was all First Nations people. They were all dressed in regalia. All the men, all the kids, all the women, and I was like I want to dance too! I think we stayed for two days, overnight and I never seen anything like that before. It was just like such a great experience, and I just loved it so much. I went home and I started dancing in the hallway. I was like I want to dance too! Then after that, I started going to Eagle Lake Powwow and those smaller Powwows. I think there was one at the high school in Dryden too, it was really small, maybe 5 or 6 dancers there.

After I started dancing, when we moved to Thunder Bay, my grandpa told me that… he just shared this with me not too long ago. They had ceremonies in the North that were like 7 day long. They would dance for 7 days, and they would have it in the bush so that the Indian Agents wouldn't see them. In between where the reserves are they would just go. There're lands there we don't talk about. The drums were like really, really big drums. So, he just started sharing that with me and I asked him why don't we have Powwows? He said back then it was illegal and then residential school stuff happened. I was like okay. I guess he was a singer too and I didn't even

know that. He was just sharing all this stuff with me; I was like wow! Like holy crap! My mind was blown after that. I didn't know that. I thought he was just like, he was a good community member like he was a police officer, he was on council, and he was also a preacher but he never shared that with me. He also shared with me like his grandpa was like a medicine man. They would have like all these wild stories about bad spirits and how they overcame them. He had a feather, an Eagle feather, I guess that was part of his bundle. My grandpa has that. He just has it tucked away. He hasn't shown anyone yet, but he tells me about it. …It's this itty-bitty tiny connection but it's there. He said when he seen me starting to dance, he was kind of proud, kind of like reviving it. He would say, it's in your blood! I would always be like why does he keep saying that? We don't have Powwows at home. He would keep saying that to me it's in your blood and he would watch me.

One time we were in Eagle Lake and all of a sudden, I saw him standing in the stadium. I'm not sure if you were there but I know Diana and Linda were there. Nathan was there. Todd was there. And I see my grandpa standing there! I thought what the hell is he doing here! He came to watch us dance. He was at a gospel Jamboree, but he ducked out and came to the Powwow. I was like wow!

Mary's First Powwow

I actually didn't have like Powwow in my life when I was young. I was more like my parents didn't really take us to a lot of Powwows. It was mainly just local Powwows that I ever went to. My very first Powwow experience I remember is going with my mom one time to LakeheadU Powwow. I was like 14 maybe. Maybe younger, maybe like 13. In my preteen era. I just remember like feeling really welcome there like I was like, like I was meant to be there kind of feeling. I was really shy though but then just having that experience with my mom for the first

time, it was like, I fell in love with Powwows. This is it. This is what I want to be involved in. … Yeah, around that time when my mom took me, that's when I seen Dianne Hupfield, she was dancing fancy shawl there. When I seen her, I thought, that's how I wanna be… She's amazing, even still to this day.... Then she ended up being the person who taught me how to dance. She was doing her own classes, paying for it herself out of pocket and renting the space at Ogden public school, just classes after school every Tuesday or something we would meet up in the Ogden gym for like 2 hours, on Thursdays. We'd dance around the gym for like 2 hours and she taught me all her moves there. I was about the same age, 14, 15.

My favorite was when, I started out fancy shawl. Deanne taught me how to dance. As I got older I kind of like graduated I guess into jingle dress and when I changed to jingle dress it was really awesome because I got to have a really cool experience at the mountain Powwow, Mount Mckay Powwow. Josephine Mandamin[bun] was the Elder at the time and she led me in as a new jingle dress dancer. That was just like, I was like just shaking the whole time. I was like this is so amazing! She ended up being a big role model in my life as a youth. I followed her around to some youth gatherings as a youth helper and I learned so much, a lot from her, just about spirituality, culture. Not just, it was never just focused on just Powwow so I learned a lot about like ceremony from her too. She was amazing. She is amazing.

Morning Star: Powwow Saved Me

I honestly don't remember my first Powwow because we grew up on the Powwow trail. In my community although there has been a First Nation school in the community, my mom and dad chose that we would be home schooled, so my mom taught me up until high school. So that allowed freedom in what she taught, how she taught, when she taught. Powwows, we just kind of grew up on the trail. I stopped dancing when I was in high school. I always loved Powwow, I

didn't sew or any of that. I had my oldest when I was 17, moved here when I was 18 and went to Lakehead. I didn't dance again until I was 25, it was about a decade I didn't dance. I was 25 when I started again. I think that first Powwow when I danced again, different people came together to make sure I had what I needed. Someone was willing to make me a dress, someone else was willing to make sure I had a belt and hair ties. That sense of people coming together to include me to dance was huge.

Powwow saved me. When I graduated Lakehead, I was with my ex-fiancé, we were just starting to see each other at that time. I was with him for almost a decade from 21ish until I was about 29 and he was extremely abusive. When I started dancing again, that's like, that's what saved me. It was like, that was one of the spots I could go and just lose myself with the beat. There were still consequences when I would go home. He would try to make this an ugly thing, just very narcissistic behaviour [he would say] "you just want attention, you're just dancing for attention" or "you're probably just trying to get the drummers to notice you" just stupid stuff to try to take the experience ugly. I think because when I went back into the circle and I felt so confident doing it, it was just like, it didn't matter what he said, it didn't affect me. Even though other areas of my life he could still make it ugly and use guilt or whatever, Powwow was something he couldn't take away. That was like the one thing that was like say what you want I'm not giving it up. That was where, I have a lot of childhood memories but that was just like when I knew it was a big part of my life.

Cheryl Dances at AlgomaU

I guess when I was in college, I moved to Sault Ste. Marie. They have Powwows everywhere. The IFC would put one on, the college, the Algoma U. It was a norm. Rankin, Batchewana First Nation had their Powwows, Garden River had their Powwows. There was like

5 or 6 Powwows a year. I was like do you always do this? It was norm. I started hanging around in there. I wanted to make my own jingle dress so I was thinking about it, thinking about it and I approached some people, the local people. I was going to school at Algoma University and then Josephine Mandamin[bun] was like our Elder there. I also was sitting on the council Shingwauk Student Association. I was president at that time. I told the students like I wanted us as the students to dance at our own Powwow because a lot of them didn't have their own regalia either. We were hosting it so I was like why not? So, we approached some Elders and we started sewing like, in the fall to prepare for the Algoma University Powwow so that was, it was stressful but it was a good experience.

I got to know other ladies from all over Southern Ontario and I got to know the local Elders there. I really got to know Josephine Mandamin[bun] and were sharing, they were sharing their stories and teachings of the jingle dress. For me I didn't know any of that. I thought it was just straight up sewing an then you're done, and you put your regalia on. They shared with me like when you're making your jingle dress you have to put good thoughts into it and you should be smudging, you should be wearing your skirt. It was such a learning process for me. I never knew those little steps until then. And like learning about feasting your jingle dresses and kind of like activating them, so we hung our jingle dresses. When we were done, we did a teaching with one of the other Elders. She came in, she was really old, they had to bring her in on the wheelchair. They told her story about Maggie White and how they met on the Powwow trail so that was good to hear. They also taught us that word Saasaakwe and I never knew what it meant and how you should do a little shout out when you're dancing. They explained it throughout that it was very important when you're dancing. They gave me a little handout to read, and they said that's like calling your ancestors and letting them know you're here and stuff like that. That

you're dancing for them and for the people. I was like holy crap. I was overwhelmed but I was excited at the same time.

So, after we did the teachings and all that, we did a feast. We ate and then we hung our jingle dresses up outside for 4 days. We had a fire keeper, they blessed it. We had to get up at the crack of dawn. It was like 4 in the morning. The Elders were sitting there already ready to go. I'm like oh my god! I was so crabby. One of the girls were missing then I had to go drive across town. She was walking with her jingle dress at 4 am! I was like "you shouldn't be walking!" "I have no ride," she said. We all made it though and it was a good ceremony. That evening we had our feast and then we put our regalia's on for the first time. They did a little dance thing, like welcoming into the dance circle. I think that was Joel Syrettes drum. Then he spoke about how the drum is important and connected to the jingle dress so that was really good. So, then we did that part.

The next day, this took like 4 days like a whole week – I was so tired. The next day was the Powwow! So, after Grand Entry they did a welcoming for us. I think there were 6 or 8 of us in front of the actual public. It was pretty intense. Josephine led us into the circle it was so nice. I was so happy she was a part of that. I think that was my first actual Powwow I danced at, and I was fortunate enough to share that with the Elders in the Sault Ste Marie area, and Josephine, and even those other ladies. They also told me you gotta share your knowledge with other people. Share your gifts. Share these teachings, not hoard them and be secretive about it. And then when I moved here, that's what I did at DFC I wanted to do the same thing with them.

Cheryl and River of Hope

Yeah, like as a jingle dress dancer I know that's like the healing dress and then um I guess they always say be careful what you wish for. When I was in the Sault [Ste. Marie] I

always wanted to move home and get closer with my family again. When I came here, I got to know my dad and my brother. My first year back here my brother passed away in the McIntyre River. I was in Pic Mobert when I found out. I had to drive to Marathon and talk to my family, so I had to zip back to Thunder Bay. I felt guilty for being at the Powwow and dancing than being with my brother at that time. It was a homicide and that was such a rough summer for me. I think after that, that's when that stuff was going on with Josiah Begg and Tammy Keash. It was like oh my god, this was just getting too intense. Then I constantly had to ground myself and I'd just get mixed up. I could so easily go find a party and get drunk but then I had to really find a way to find a flip side to that so that's when I did that thing with DFC and the River of Tears thing was such a good healing. It's all good for education but I was thinking like 7 generations from now we don't want to be known as this sad town all the time. So, I thought we should make jingle dresses with the youth so they can carry those teachings, then we'll do some pictures by the river and do the sidestep, the healing dance and invite Whitefish Bay singers. At the time I was like oh my god can I do this? Sure, enough after a year of putting it together, finally, we did it. That was like my own healing as well in trying to bring some positivity and some culture to Thunder Bay and the area. All the deaths that were happening, I don't know, I think you still gotta remind people that there's positive stuff happening, and we can get through it. I believe that.

Cheryl Brings Her Students to Powwow

My [boarding] student is from Sandy Lake. It's his first time to Thunder Bay. When we took him to the Sault [Ste. Marie] his whole mind was like whoa! He didn't know what the term two spirit meant so that was big learning for him. His first Powwow was the family day 2023 Powwow. We took them there. One of them got so overwhelmed he ended up going home. he was very antisocial; he was in care before he came to us because his mom died, and he didn't

know who his dad was. I was like yeah, if you're overwhelmed you can just go home, we just live down the street. He's like there's so much people here! He was closing up on the spot…. Even just crossing the street. I was telling them about jay walking, to use the lights. I was telling them to use the lights. They were like "what lights?" I was like "the walking lights," I said "use those. You don't want to get hit by a vehicle." Even little terms like Grand Entry, or spot dance or intertribal I had to break it down for them that way. They were just learning on the spot. The one he was into it; he was out there dancing intertribal. It was so cute. He's like I never danced at a Powwow before, now I need a regalia!

Karen & Her Dad

My first Powwow, I must have been maybe around 4 or 3. I was just a little girl. My dad grew up in that way, I grew up that way. My dad quit drinking when me and my sister were born. He went to treatment and university in Duluth. He graduated Duluth university. As soon as he was done at the university, he got us kids back because he lost us, I guess. For the first couple years of our life, we grew up in a foster home because my mom was still drinking and my dad was bettering his life. I was about 3 maybe when my dad got us back and so my dad raised us. I grew up in a single father home, my dad was a dependency counsellor for our tribe. He worked at the Friendship Centre in International Falls so that's how we grew up. I didn't know about alcohol and drugs until we came to Thunder Bay. My dad went back to the culture. He knew a lot except the language. Both my parents were residential school survivors. They just had different experiences growing up. I was maybe about 4 or 5. I have a picture of me in a jingle dress – or no. My sister is in a jingle dress, I was a tom boy, so my dad dressed me up in a little bustle like a traditional dancer. I have that picture to this day and when people talk about the jingle dress was just around in the late 70's or early 80s I was like the jingle dress was around

longer than that because I was born in ‘73 and I must have been in ‘74 or ‘75 when that picture was taken, and I was just a little girl so the jingle dress has been around since around the…. about the early 70’s they were around. My dad had a Powwow at the friendship center and people would come and watch us dance. We were part of a little dance group my dad had. We would travel from Powwow to Powwow. We went to contest Powwows all my siblings danced. At that time my mom was in and out of our lives. She left and then she’d come back. Shed leave and shed come back. One time when shed come back shed come with us to Powwows.

My mom she had an addiction, and her addiction was alcohol. She was a runner; she was always a runner from the residential school. Her whole life she was known to run so there was 6 of us kids in such a short time. I have 6 siblings and we were all close together and with me and my sister, were twins, then my brother – there’s 4 of us kids together with a year apart. Then my brother is 2 years older than my older sister. I think with having that many children at such a young age, it might have been overwhelming for her and she couldn’t beat her addiction and that’s what killed her. Her and her boyfriend had an argument and he murdered her so, yeah. I was just young. I was only 19 when that happened so yeah, but she just couldn’t fight that addiction and that’s what she knew, right? She couldn’t do that. But my dad on the other hand wanted to be a better man, a better person for himself and for us and I think the reason why he went that way was because it was more life… it’s the good life. You’re living a good life; your alcohol-free home and you’re taking your kids to ceremony and teaching them stuff.

We grew up at rice camp and we grew up at the sugar bush and just doing things out on the land. We would go to summer camp; he would take us canoeing and all that stuff. We grew up that way with him. I think that was, his residential school, his parents died when he was really young so in summertime, he would go down to pipestone Minnesota. He grew up with this

grandmother, we call her Maabi, that's all I know her by is Maabi. She had that lifestyle, so I think that's where he got it from was from her and spending the summers with her. Residential school in the states was different than Canada. It was harsh but the kids got to go home in the summer. I don't know if they did here in Canada, my mom never shared too many stories. My dad used to be off in the summertime then he would go back when school started, I don't know about my mom. That's where he saw some of the stuff that he did, and it must have been in his heart because we lived that way our whole lives.

We'd go to Powwows out west because that's where we're from. We would travel around the Dakotas, that's how we grew up, sleeping in the tents and we grew up that way. I don't remember my first Powwow, but I remember that only because of that photograph that we still have. It's a black and white photograph because it was taken in the paper. I was just little when that happened. Ever since then, we just walk that way of life, that journey in life and there was a time where we didn't go, my dad was going through his own thing… busy working and stuff. We were just kids being kids so there was 3 or 4 years we didn't go to Powwows then we got back into it later on as we got older.

Karen & Dad Present at School

There was no Indigenous culture in the schools, even us growing up we brought it to the schools, like my dad and the other people. We brought it, we danced, we would do performances and things like that at the schools because if you don't bring it that no one's going to see it, right? My dad also did Powwows growing up. There was always some really good Powwows where we came from. In the town we lived in we had our own little Powwow area and people would want to learn. People would like our culture and they would learn it and we would help. I remember my dad had a Powwow and we had a food stand and all of us kids would help, and the

other, older people would be cooking bannock and all that stuff, traditional food. We helped with that. We also helped get the Powwow ready. We used to dance on saw dust instead of grass, so we used to help my dad get the Powwow ready. We also got to go play across the street at the playground. It was my dad who brought that Powwow to the community, if it wasn't for him, they wouldn't know about that. My dad was really big on helping, he was a helper.

Nicole Cheers on Munzee at Lake Helen

Yeah, so Munzee is this dancer, he maybe has some special needs, he's definitely an exceptional person. He's funny, awkward, really smart, really quirky, tries hard, loves Powwows. He's also been raised in Powwows just like me, he's been there the whole time. Shannon and Ryan Gustafson were doing a grass dance special, and they made this beautiful grass dance outfit and Munzee always danced really hard but he kind of had like, he didn't have the greatest regalia, but he tried hard. So, what happens was we had this dance competition and Munzee was awarded first place, and everyone went crazy. It was the best, it was the single best moment of my local Powwow – and everyone remembers. You can talk to Dustin; you can talk to Bess and they all remember the time Munzee won first place. What's important about that is I think about that in terms of what does that mean, and everyone has a place in our Powwow circle, it doesn't mean that you're the best or that you're the highest or whatever it just means that you belong. It's our whole truth idea like debwe – your truth makes sense to you. The way that you participate is valuable in the way you participate. It doesn't have to be that you have the beautifulest regalia or you're the highest and best dancer or you carry the most teachings, it's like everyone belongs and we recognize there are multiple entrance points in belonging. Munzee taught me that. Everyone remembers that.

Tesa & Family

I've been raised in [Powwow], I've been fortunate and honored to grow up with this being a normal part of my life. Being from Onigaming and the Treaty 3 area, they were very lucky to be able to preserve their ceremonies. They would hide their ceremonies on the islands on Lake of the Woods during the time when it was outlawed so they have a lot of ceremonies they were able to bring back very easily. I remember travelling around to different communities in Treaty 3 in Fort Frances area. That's what I remember about Powwowing. I remember the camping. I remember just the joy in it. For me that is, I think about the Powwow experience as a little girl, and I used to dance when I was a little girl. Just you know the freedom that went along with that. It was just a very free and joyful place…They've always had Powwows. In the Treaty 3 area, they actually coordinated like other regions would as well so you would just go from weekend to weekend of different Powwows. My dad has been very involved in Powwows, in the Powwow trail. He was an arena director, and he was a drummer as well. He was a traditional dancer.

It is for me, like the idea of Powwow, is about family. And you know one of the few times that I travel home and get some really good quality time with my Aunties, my father is passed on, but he had two sisters and multiple cousins that were like siblings. Its during Powwow weekend and its July first weekend. The first weekend of July so yeah, it's always been a big part of my family, to gather during the Powwow weekend. My Aunties are Ogichidaakwe, they've gone back to their traditional ways of looking after the community traditional drum. The women are you know, they dance for the drum. They're women who carry the staffs that go with the drum. So, I think that is my experience in learning is learning from other women, learning from my parents but learning from other women particularly what my responsibilities are in the circle.

Being mentored by them, you know and now when some of the traditional women aren't there, my Auntie will ask me to come up and dance with the staff as an Ogichidaakwe. I think my goodness, what have I done to even earn a place walking around the circle with these other women. Just having that amazing learning opportunity. Just watching. Just being in awe of how beautiful everything is.

Tesa's Favorite Dancers

I think over the years it's hard to pull just a couple Powwow stories but I think the dancers that have stood out to me when they dance their style and you know, you recognize the healing that's happening and the power of their dance. The resurgence of our people. There's an Elder from Whitefish Bay and she dances old style and she's a jingle dress dancer and she shuffles her feet, you know, just lightly the way she shuffles her feet it's like she heals. She dances on her heels rather than on her toes. She has the arm bend and she just kind of you know jigs her arms a little bit, gently and I watch her and just think about how fortunate we are to still have people that know that dance. That dance that way. She has a solid color jingle dress, there's no sparkles, there's no, you know... It's very old style and I really deep down know that… I know everyone's out there healing, but I know for her she's definitely there for the healing. She's just there, for the people, you know. I really admire that.

I think of… there's another lady, a couple of years ago I watched dancing, again a jingle dress dancer, an old-style jingle. I remember, that is in my home community of Onigaming, she's from the states and she was visiting my community that weekend. When she was doing the sidestep, I just about cried with how she was dancing and just not … you could tell that she was just really grounded in the moment and with the drum. It … was like effortless for her. The way she was moving her arms back and forth, it was the old way that people used to dance. Again, a

very old-style jingle dress. There wasn't all fancy elaborate stuff, I remember it was just a pink jingle dress. It was just so beautiful like she radiated beauty and so I went, it was interesting. She ended up being recognized for her dancing and she was just having so much fun, and it turns out I didn't know who she was but I looked her up. She's a well renowned fashion designer. So, I found that even more interesting that she was just dancing in a pair of simple moccasins and a basic pink jingle dress without all of the print and pattern that go along with some dresses or regalia now.

This last year going home, it was my first Powwow in my home community since I've been in recovery and actively healing. There was a young boy the whole weekend, he must have been about 6 years old and boy that little guy was incredible. Every possible dance that he could get up and dance for, he danced. He was trying every style of dance. He was a little traditional dancer, but he was doing chicken dance. He was doing grass dance; he was just rocking it. On the last night a horse dancer came. I had never seen a horse dancer before. Just the speed and strength of the horse dancer, they have this big birch bark cone head. They had the horse hail for a tail off his back and he was kind of anonymous. You never saw his face. Somebody was telling me that he was just a 22-year-old man from Rat Portage. To see you know the old and the young over the years is just so profound for me.

I think of how, how lucky am I? You know to be from this life. For me, I wish for everybody to have that. To be at Powwow, to be at that celebration at that gathering, at the praying. To really recognize that it is beyond the pomp and circumstance, right? It's beyond the look, the beauty of it. Yes, it is beautiful, right. That at all is not pretentious but that there is a depth and a knowledge and an ability and a strength that I wish everybody could have. I can see why non-Indigenous people want it so desperately.

Janine's Thunder Bird

It was basically people were coming to the community of Biigtigong and they were doing like a, pretty much a workshop and they were making regalia for the kids. My first regalia was the cloth regalia with a little red shawl that I carry. I'm not a shawl dancer today. I do not have the fancy moves or footwork, but I do carry one as a woman's traditional dancer. I also have made jingle dresses for myself for healing and different things. Different communities – the children, addictions, but most profound I think was getting offered my first regalia. I went back home to Pic River, and I was just starting out like just going to Powwows again in my older or my younger adult years I guess, my 20's. It was after I had been hanging around some women who wanted to dance as well. I never thought I would ever dance, I'm not really uh, I mean I kind of go for the bannock burgers and I kinda just go to lay my semaa down and I don't stay for the whole thing. I just go do my prayers.

Before then, before I was a dancer, my Auntie gave me her women's traditional regalia. It had a thunder bird on it. Thunder bird women's her name. It had a thunder bird on it. It had a long fringe and I learned to dance that way. I learned about the women's traditional regalia and what it really represented and meant. It was really profound because I dreamt about that regalia before I got it. Not like seeing it, but dreamt about the thunderbirds and so it was kind of nice that it was already gifted and already passed down that way so that's probably one of my favorites… and then my regalia I wear now, again women's traditional regalia but its Ojibwe inspired just cloth dress, no big long fringe but I did have a thunder bird on it because I walk with the thunder birds. My regalia is really special to me and part of my own identity as well. In the colors that were chosen on there but also there were thunder birds out the two days I was making it at my camp. So that's why I wear that, I wear it really proud. I wear it for my

grandmothers and the matriarchs that came before me. I try to walk with patience. The way I move and my footing, I try to carry those things around Powwow. It was really profound because I dreamt about that regalia before I got it. Not like seeing it, but dreamt about the thunderbirds and so it was kind of nice that it was already gifted and already passed down that way so that's probably one of my- and then my regalia I wear now, again women's traditional regalia but its Ojibwe inspired just cloth dress, no big long fringe but I did have a thunder bird on it because I walk with the thunder birds…. but I didn't know *that* was coming. I knew something was coming. But I didn't know *that* was coming. Even that dream about it, I didn't know where in the hell that dream came from. I didn't really understand it until four years later. Things are still coming from that one dream. Making sense now.

One-half Nicole

My first regalia was actually made by Dave Moonias. He taught me how to sew. He sat me down and he showed me, like I watched him. He didn't teach me, but he let me watch him, while he was sewing. Now that I see that now, I think geez he's so nice because I don't have time to like let people watch me sew so he did me a big favor. I remember always … I wore a red shawl with white fringe and like variations on red and white for years. Those were my colors because I represented red, my mom's side and white my dad's side so I like to honor those two colors. When I was a kid, I don't remember this my grandfather died when I was 2. So, I was too young to remember. He used to stand me up on tables and he would look at me and my sister Chantel because she was little also. He would draw a line down the middle and say you are one half Nishnaabeg and one half zhaagnashak, you are one-half white and one-half Ojibwe, and I knew it was important to honor that and I feel like that even shows up in my work now because I'm a translator between systems. I'm the one who has the legal, the high fancy legal education

that can talk about anything that needs to be said but I'm giving voice to our own principles. So, I always used to dance in the red and white outfit and I would dance shawl, I was an amazing athlete all of those years, I was a runner so I could just dance and dance and dance and dance. I used to dance between the red and white flags in the corners in the north and east or whatever, wherever those flags were.

Nicole's Visions in Leech Lake

We went to Leech Lake, and I remember this, dancing all day long just being so overwhelmed and this is the first time this happened. I went to lay in my bed and the Powwow was still on. Maybe I'm like 8, maybe I'm like 8. 7 or 8, kinda like Leightons age. I'm little, I'm still little. I went to lay down because it was time for me to sleep and the Powwow was still going on, I could hear the Powwow outside of our tent trailer. As I was going to sleep this was the first time this ever happened, all of these visions of dancers started popping in my head. Not visions of dancers that I had seen but new visions of dancers. It opened up my crown chakra and I was connected to the universe, and I was then able to visualize regalia. I subsequently became a seamstress and a designer, and I was able to have the power to draw down creations but that's where it opened up. Isn't that fascinating? I remember that and being like what is going on because it just happened, it happened until I fell asleep. It was like vision, vision, vision, vision, dancer, dancer, dancer, style, idea, color, pattern. It was amazing!

Nicole Learns to Sew

It was interesting because I learned how to sew just by buying a sewing machine and sitting down and sewing. I had no idea how to sew. I used to take apart shirts to like to look at what the pattern of sleeves might be for example. My actual first dresses that I started to make were baby girls, jingle dresses and just like tiny tot outfits because they were small and easy to

finish. So that's when I got my start. I remember when I was first learning how to sew, say this is 2008 and I'm about 28, I'm a lawyer maybe in my second year of practice, I was living in Orillia at the time, and I used to sit at my little sewing desk and I wouldn't know what to do next because I didn't know how to sew. No one taught me how to sew, I didn't know what to do next. I would sort of just look at pictures and things and think maybe, maybe this is what I do next. I remember my very first jingle dress that I made all the jingles fell off because I put them on with ribbon rather than bias tape and the ribbon frayed, I didn't know that. So, I learned. I learned by trying.

I remember when I was practicing sewing, I would have to sit there and be quiet and I would pray to all of the women that I knew from my First Nation to come and help me. So I would say their names, like say who was passed away at the time, say it was like Mary, Theresa, Adeline – all of this lineage of Anishinaabe women that I thought might help me from the other side and it was interesting because my lights would start to flicker or things would happen and I would just have the strong sense of the presence of these women and they were happy with what I was doing. I was just a newbie, a spiritual newbie at that point so receiving that validation through the physical manifestations, the lights flickering, was really important.

Nicole and the Toronto Law School Native Law Student Association

So, once I got regalia, (after my long break from dancing) I totally radicalized things at the University of Toronto Law School where I went to law school, they had never seen this before right? But I was hot off the Powwow trail in Thunder Bay and I had friends like Nita Quequish and Kanina Quequish and I was on the Powwow trail. Everyone knew me from when I was little so I was welcomed back in. We just brought that into the university of Toronto, I made friends with the Native Canadian Centre. We brought drums, we had drum socials at the

university, we brought people over to the Native Canadian Centre. I made this thing called, I didn't make it, but I participated in the Native Law Student's Association. I was on the lookout all the time for the Native students because I wanted to find them, so I kind of outed people. I was like okay; you used the discretionary category. But they had never been welcomed in because they were also racist against themselves, or they didn't come from a community the way I did. So, I was like come on, we're going to do this … everyone was engaged. I found like, I think there were 6 of us in the first year, I found them all. People will say to me since, they'll say that was the only time I really ever had an Indigenous community and thank you Nicole for doing that. People want to be included.

Bess Gain's Champion Status

I think one moment that was super…. like made me feel amazing and like it was an accomplishment was… I danced jingle for probably 16 years now but like before I got sick, I went to compete in Northwest Bay. I was competing against like 50 jingle dress dancers and a lot of them were like champion dancers and I remember like I won first place and I literally danced 8 songs straight and I remember just being so like, I don't even know what was going through me, but I felt so like, high on like the vibe! It was just insane, it just kept going through each round. People were getting eliminated around me. I know that's not really related to the jingle dress itself, it was more prominent to me because I've never done that before. That was the first time I ever did that, and I was like oh my gosh like a lot of people that I look up to I actually danced with and took first place and I was just like…. it felt like I achieved something dancing 8 songs straight. It felt like my body achieved something. It was like a whole other level compared to like, it wasn't about winning but it was more or less like holy man, like I just danced 8 songs straight! Hard. On beat. Accomplished. And like I remember on my last song I was literally like

getting dizzy because I was so done. I did 4 side steps and 4 straights and obviously they went back-to-back, not back-to-back but like straight, side-step, straight, side-step and it was just wild… I know and when I felt that. like it was just wild and then that whole weekend, I got second overall in the women. It was something I had never experienced. There were just so many Powwow experiences in my mind, I can't say that one was the most but that was one that was an achievement to me. I gained champion status!

Clara's Healing in the Zone for 16 Push Ups

I do have a deadly one about this time, when I was in your community actually. I was in a healing dress that was gifted to me by my sister. As you know my sister doesn't dance too much anymore. She's going through things she needs to go through. For a long time, I wore that dress. It's bear colors actually. Mukwa dodem niin. I'm from the bear clan. Bear clan colors are maroon and black so for a long time I wore maroon and black jingle dress. I remember us dancing and it was an intertribal and all of a sudden someone fanned the drum. So, as you know, that's when all the jingle dress women come in to support the drummers, support the healing of the nation so I came in at that time and then Auntie Rose came in with her whistle. Then she blew the whistle on the drum, and she asked for us to support her, so it was my first time actually dancing at the drum. … it was wild because I was there dancing and when I'm dancing sometimes, I go into this zone, I feel like when I'm dancing it's like when you're in the sweat, sometimes you can travel. That was my first time ever travelling while dancing. That's when I connect with the prayers and my spirit and deal with the travel while I'm dancing. All of a sudden, I was flying above the arbor, all the way, I made a complete circle and when I came to, all of a sudden, I was back at the drum again. It was pretty profound that connection with your body and your spirit and being able to travel through dance. It's like last year when they did

that, almost 16 push-ups in that women's special. At that time, I didn't think I would make it, I was like whoa! It was pretty, yeah… exactly…. You know what I mean. Also, when you're dancing sometimes you can hear that, chh chh chh but real extra echoey and you know you're in that zone that prayerful zone.

Karen's Invitation: Come to Ceremony

One thing I like is empowering the women. Women that are going through separation and their raising their children on their own and their struggling and dealing with their own emotions. I say bring them to ceremony. I offer them all the time, come to ceremony, come to ceremony. The more they come the more healing they get and their children. Some of the mothers went back to school, some of them went to college and university, they moved on. I see them come full circle, not only them but their children's fathers have done the same and you see that family come back whole. That's one of my main goals is family unity, family healing, family reconciliation and bringing those families back together. One of my Kokum's, she's passed on. She's the one, I carry her pipe. She says to me, when I was younger, she said now a days you don't see families walking, you see the man and the woman, and the woman is with the kids and where is the man? The man is walking behind the woman, where as the man should be walking side by side. I always remembered that, when she said that. When I was in university, they used to have Elders conferences in the university here in the spring. They would call in Elders from all over from Treaty 3 and Robinson Superior and up north. They would have the Elders and spend the weekend doing teachings, sharing circles and everything. And some of the Elders from Treaty 3 that I grew up with, they acknowledged me. The teachings they taught us were so powerful and strong and it stays to me to this day.

I tell my parents [I work with], it's okay that you guys have misunderstandings. It's about communication. When you learn to communicate its where you will start to find out who each other is and who each other are, because you don't know who each other is yet… I tell my families that are young, you can come back together. In the parenting course I teach, I tell them you can come back together but it's a willing. Their children chose you as your mom and dad and that's why Creator put you guys together. The Creator knows our life before we do, and he knew you guys were going to have those children.

When we come to this earth there are obstacles and struggles that we're going to face but it's how we look at those struggles and if we look at the struggle together, it's the struggle against us, not just us against the struggle. You see families reconciling, young families reconciling and becoming a mom and a dad again, getting married and living a good life and changing like you see that, the dad coming back to education and the mom going into university and it's such a good feeling to see. To see our families healthy and thriving, they deserve it right? …Yeah, and that's what some of them, that's what residential school took away from us right. People in our generation, we don't know how to parent because our parents didn't know how to parent. So were learning and our children are learning with us. Our great grandchildren are going to be phenomenal with all the healing we've done!

Conclusion

On the Powwow trail in Northwestern Ontario there is usually a Powwow every weekend. In between these Powwows we continue to live a good life, walking in minobimaadziwin. The Powwow and other ceremonies remind us that every day we continue to use the teachings learned in ceremony. When I am in between Powwows, I need time to let the learning integrate or let the murky Waters settle. After hearing the stories, I needed time for

myself to process what I had learned. I practiced meditation, biking, walking, praying, dancing, smudging and drumming to help me integrate my learning. In Kimmerer*'s Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013), the Chapter titled *A Mother's Work* discusses how the author is sifting through the pond, pulling out different plants to try to create a swimming hole for her family. I connect as swimming or time near Water is good medicine for me. I reflect on my time as a kid playing in the pond behind my grandma's house. We would catch tadpoles and frogs, plants and rocks. We were learning. When we spent too much time in the pond, our buckets overflowing with species we would investigate, the Water would become too murky to see clearly. We would have to take a break to let the silt settle again to be able to see the treasures the pond had to offer. One of the Aunties popped by my office at school, and I explained my frustrations. She reminded me I was doing great research but maybe I had been in the pond, splashing around with the Aunties for too long, harvesting all this good medicine! I needed to let the silt settle to see more clearly. To decompress, I love to dance. My brother spends time hunting or fishing on the Land. My thesis supervisor likes to go for long bike rides in the bush. Absolon (2008) explains she is "a runner and [she] allows the ideas and thoughts to be processed and embodied and while [she] travels over the land [she] churn[s] over [her] thoughts in [her] head, heart and spirit" (p.152). After reading these stories, take a break. Go for a walk. Make a cup of tea. Run, walk, fish, hunt, bike – whatever your gift is. Let the stories integrate with your own experience and let the silt start to settle. What medicines are you taking away? After the silt settles, what do you see? How does this connect to you, your story, your gifts and your work?

Chapter 5: Themes

Introduction

As I began my interviews, I reflected on how the Powwow circle brought me to a space to create relationships with these strong, powerful Aunties. Clara said it best when she said, "it's amazing how the circle brings us together, people come together and build community together." In these next few chapters, we will discuss the learning that occurred through this research by exploring common themes that surfaced through the interviews. The first part of the chapter will highlight the themes found during the interviews when discussing the settler-colonial world of academic education; the second part of the chapter will highlight themes found when discussing Kinoo'amaadawaad. The final section of the chapter highlights themes around the healing experiences of the Aunties in both the settler-colonial world of academic education and Kinoo'amaadawaad. Once again, the themes that have emerged will be examined through, yes you might have guessed it, the Powwow circle. I wonder if the reader is going to find me *just real buggy* going around and around and around this Powwow circle again and again. I wonder to myself, have I ever felt bugged by going to the Powwow and dancing this circle, again and again, weekend after weekend? Never. I am always learning and growing at each Powwow and through the spaces in between. There are teachings that contribute to the ongoing ceremony of life, walking in minobimaadziwin, the interconnectedness of all things. So, grab your tobacco in your left hand and hold it tight, double knot your moccasins and hair ties, we're ready to dance again, but this time, we're dancing in the circle with the Aunties!

Semaa (tobacco) First

In starting my interviews, I presented the Aunties with tobacco. As discussed, this research is also ceremony. As Janine said, "being in ceremony, putting your semaa down,

everything starts with tobacco." Many of the Aunties agreed that presenting this tobacco is a good starting point for anything. Bess explains it is important to approach valid Knowledge Keepers as she recommends educators to:

> ask people who actually Powwow and bringing them in and offering tobacco to ask them if they want to [share], not necessarily that they're going to say yes but tobacco is just to ask the question and people have to respond, that's what tobacco is. It's not like you *have* to do this. It's like we offer tobacco when we're receiving things like knowledge… you can give tobacco just to [ask] what is this? You know?

Many of the suggestions posed by the Aunties include building relationships and connections with local Indigenous community. Tobacco can be used to begin this connection, but readers should also be weary that not all Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and communities are accustomed to using tobacco offerings. Like my colleague seeking insights on tobacco teachings, those seeking to find knowledge must approach each circumstance with an open heart and mind to accommodate that connection and relationship.

Eurocentric World of Settler-Colonial Academic Education

Limited Indigenous Views & Content in Eurocentric Education

Many of the Aunties agreed that there was extremely limited content shared in the settler-colonial world of education pertaining to Kinoo'amaadawaad, Indigenous worldviews or ways of life. Mary explains that there was little to no Indigenous content in her education experience, she shares:

> In school it was very brief. It felt like, it was kept very brief. About like, Indigenous people and history, Indigenous history. All of it was very, very brief. Almost like I don't barely remember even learning anything about Indigenous culture, history – anything.

My mom always put me in Catholic school board, so I think that had something to do with it maybe. I don't know. I don't remember anything really cultural ever happening.

Cheryl agreed that there wasn't much content shared pertaining to Kinoo'amaadawaad, especially in elementary school. Like many other Aunties, Cheryl connected more to culture through adulthood. She explains an Indigenous perspective was not shared "not until I was in high school, maybe a little here and there. Not too much though. College and university, that's when I moved to the Sault [Ste. Marie] and that's when I learned ... I didn't know it could be part of the school." Many other Aunties commented on the lack of understanding of Indigenous worldview or culture shock for students. Cheryl shares in her own experience of culture shock during the first day of school, "I remember in my first day of school I seen this red head and she had freckles. I was like oh my god she has red hair! I kept staring at her like oh my god her hair is really red! It was so crazy; my perception was just blown." Bess discussed the difference in worldview through sharing about her experience in coming to learn the true history of Canada and the relationship her community had to this history. She shares:

> I am very street smart and I'm very well versed because I grew up in the politics around Chief and Council and stuff, right? So, I had an understanding of like what Chief and Council – what it is, but I didn't know the Indian Act. I knew there was a Chief and Council and that my community was Fort William, and we were on a Reserve. That was all I basically knew. Then I never, like all my life, growing up were just the Rez Kids. I didn't know what that actually meant, how we came to be on this land, like forced into this one area or like why is there a chief and council system? Until later when I became older.

Though many of the Aunties shared that in modern times there has been an increase in opportunities for Indigenous content in the settler-colonial education system, there is still work to be done as much of the content only touches the surface of what Kinoo'amaadawaad is about. Janine explained that like Bess, much of her learning was done in adulthood. She explained her experience with Indigenous content particularly language in school:

> You learn the same thing over and over and over again. Same batch of animals, same numbers, same dates. You don't learn conversational Ojibwe unfortunately, it doesn't like really progress. I know that's something that's changing with the curriculum now. I didn't relearn that until I went back to Native and Child and Family Services for college. Just some other things, especially when it came to language, but I didn't really embrace my culture until way after school. So, yeah school was not really where I learned spirituality, which I think is a lot of our culture. … Like, [you could] make a dream catcher or a beaded flower bracelet, but you wouldn't learn about offerings or connection to the Land that way. You would just learn bezhig, niish, niswi, niiwin, naanan … you learn the basics over and over and over again, but you never really learned too much about [culture] unless you or your family was a part of that, or you had a ceremony family or something like that. I never had that until way later in life, adulthood.

Bess agreed in sharing that there is some progress in that schools now can provide opportunities for exploring spirituality through sharing spaces for smudging. She shares in her experience:

> It wasn't like now a days where like, like yeah there was Native language… but it wasn't like as prominent as now. I wasn't allowed to just leave my class and go have a smudge if I was feeling overwhelmed or something right? There're no Indigenous people teaching these things in school. Even learning in history classes, we weren't taught about

> residential school, I think the only thing I remember about Indigenous people in school is the fact that the like… not really the cowboys and Indians thing, it was super tiny, like a tiny context of Indigenous people when, we're like everything to this land. Everything to this country that like, you know, we're part of the picture. We're supposed to be like half the picture.

The Aunties highlighted that there was limited content pertaining to Indigenous worldview in their settler-stream education experience but acknowledged change is happening. Duran & Duran (2002) recognizes that "our communities' Indigenous forms of knowledge were and continue to be relevant as we face the task of overcoming the colonial mind-set that so many of us have internalized" (p.88) highlighting the importance of incorporating other world views and perspectives. The report *Still Waiting for Truth and Reconciliation* (2023) provides statistical data on the increase of cultural support programs in Ontario Schools, reporting "the proportion of elementary schools reporting that they offer cultural support programs rose from 9% in 2012 to 36% in 2022; for secondary schools, the proportion of schools offering cultural support programs increased from 22% in 2012 to 51% in 2022 (Hodgson Bautista & Hopson, 2023). Many of the participants indicated the education system has started to include more perspectives but there is still work to be done. Including and privileging Kinoo'amaadawaad views allows us to "address the colonial attitudes... We cannot continue to reward knowledge that reifies the thought process of Western Europeans above all others" (Duran & Duran 2002, p.88).

Racism & Loss of Identity

Like my story of experiencing racism in the Eurocentric settler-colonial education system, many of the Aunties experienced racism as well as loss of identity through the settler-stream education system. Nicole shared a story about her high school teacher, who

acknowledged her Indigenous identity by tokenizing her and she was expected Nicole to be an expert on all things Indigenous:

> I remember being in this is one of my worst memories. Being in grade 10 and it came to the history side of things and my history teacher was teaching about Indigenous stuff then said to me, what do you think about it Nicole? I was only 15. I didn't have the vocabulary, I didn't have the self-confidence, I was internally racist against my own people because that was the conditioning that came on me. There were no, well very few Native kids in the advanced program other than my sister who was a few years ahead. We were in two worlds. We were in the white world and then we were in the native world, and we always wore different hats in different places. Now that shows up for me in knowing how to navigate, I can fit in wherever. When I was younger, I didn't know how to advocate and be an Indigenous person and stand my ground.

Janine comments on her high school era, also reflecting on racism and navigating different worlds or spaces:

> There was racism, all the time, every day. Indigenous kids, even Indigenous kids against other Indigenous kids. Just a whole lot of discrimination. Like I said, I didn't really know where I fit in or where – I was too urban to be back home and when I came back from spending a little bit of time in my community, I talked funny, and I was too Indian to be here. So, there was … always like an imbalance or disconnect or like where, how people long, in that.

Karen explains that she came from a small community in the United States with a unique experience with ideas around race and racism. Karen shares:

> My education, I went to PACI. As a kid where we went to school there were only a handful of Indigenous kids in the school. There was only like five families in the school where we grew up. Coming from the states we never saw racism, at least I never did. Some of my friends who grew up there said they dealt with racism and being called names, but I never did … I felt like we were included like we were never discluded or anything like that. Everybody was our friend. I didn't know about racism either until I came to Thunder Bay. I noticed, I didn't know what an Italian was, or a French person was all I knew was that we were just people, you know? I didn't experience that until I came here, and I went to PACI and that's when I learned there's Italians and even the communities where we lived. I grew up around Ontario Street area. There was the French community, there was Italian, there was the Finnish. I saw a lot of that, when I came here and that's when I realized that we weren't all the same, we were different.

Morning Star commented on her experience in being home schooled. She shared how it came to be that her mom would be her teacher to ensure their spirituality and identity were respected:

> There was a high school teacher that my dad had and the teacher, Mr. Macdonald, his wife home-schooled so that was how we knew it was a possibility. What happened was my second older sister, Tausha, she was actually in kindergarten, and it was something about like my dad went to go check up on her and he saw that she was being made to pray and recite Christian prayers. He didn't approve of that, and he let them know that's not our belief system. She doesn't have to do that; I don't want her doing that. The school agreed, they said okay. How he said it, he was given the impression they weren't going to be forced to do that but when he went back for a second time it was the same thing so that day, he pulled her out and we did home school.

The settler-colonial education system has a long history with the Catholic church, a history that continued to celebrate Christianity and systemically oppress Indigenous spirituality.

Through experiencing racism and a lack of representation of Indigenous worldview in the education system, some of the Aunties felt like they had lost some of their identity through the settler-stream education system. Janine shares:

> Personally, I can't say that [the settler-stream education system] taught me a whole lot about identity, even though I took Native and Child Family Services years ago, I know a lot has changed since then in the education system… I think I learned more about trauma than identity. Identity is different because everyone's identity is different. Even if you identify as a First Nations person, it's still different. I don't think personally I've learned a whole lot [about identity in school]. I learned more since, I guess… but not through when I went to school. It was almost like self-guided learning through probably friends and family.

Though incorporating Powwow and Kinoo'amaadawaad contribute to "a positive cultural identity and engage in cultural revitalization," St. Denis argues that this is not sufficient to counter education inequality and that their study "concludes that a cultural difference discourse encourages the minimizing of the problem of racial discrimination, and the need for anti-racist education to compliment culturally relevant education." (St. Denis, 2002, summary). I reflect on my own experience with racism in high school and how, as previously described, I had the worst times of my life when I had lost my identity, when I had lost my dance. How can we ensure all our students are celebrated in learning more about their identity in a good way and that we are practicing authentic anti-racism?

Eurocentric Academic Education System Gaps

The Aunties agreed that in their experience the settler-colonial academic education system is limited and identified many gaps within the Eurocentric academic institutions. Many found they had little to no opportunities in being flexible to accommodate the different learning styles of students. Bess comments:

> I definitely feel like the education system is definitely outdated. I'm a hands-on learner, I remember struggling in school so much because I had to literally do it in order to learn it. The only way I could do it was like making sure, like doing it step by step. There's no like, I found it was so black and white in the school system where there is nothing geared for hands on learners, there's nothing geared for visual learners, there's nothing geared for [other ways of learning] there's only one way of learning. One way of learning and that's it.

Janine explains the gaps in celebrating uniqueness and diversity. She explains "I think with the [settler-colonial] education [system] I think it really has to really see that everybody has different strengths and abilities there and our education system is failing a lot of Indigenous people at this time." Janine continues, explaining the need for more Indigenous voices in creating the education journey, "even though there are more space being open, it's still not understood by the mainstream and the people who are making curriculum or even admission to that curriculum; a lot of Indigenous people don't have that option to even attend or participate." Clara shared the need for the education system to meet students where they are at, stating:

> I feel like the educational system has a lot of work to do when it comes to like nourishing young people wholistically because they're always trying to fulfil their quotas, their agenda and if you think about marginalized people like in this area, Indigenous people

> and they go to school, the first thing they're thinking about isn't good grades. They're thinking about food, food security, safety, racism, violence and in the school system it's not nourishing… their nourishing their brains to an extent but also over exhausting them because they can't concentrate. If you think about the hierarchy of needs, you know, education isn't at the top. Other things are, like safety, things like that first. Acceptance, purpose, family, identity, connection, community. So, like what differentiates it is in Powwow, you're building community. You're being mentored by people who love you. You're being supported in community.

Cheryl explains how the school may have tried to provide more supports but lacked the insight to be able to provide the kinds of supports that were truly needed to help her succeed. Cheryl describes her experience in learning a new language while simultaneously trying to learn content and her excitement in her children now having opportunities to learn Ojibwe. Cheryl shares:

> I remember taking French. I remember that really messed me up. I was right off the Rez, and I only spoke Ojibwe first. When I went to the urban school, I had to learn English real quick and French. So, I was like whoa! What the heck. Even when they were writing English words on the chalkboard, I couldn't comprehend it. I failed the 3rd grade. My grandma was talking to me in Ojibwe, she asked me how come you fail? They're teaching me two languages I told her, it's not Ojibwe either! I had no choice but to take it so, it was pretty crazy. They put me in special ed. They put me in speech therapy, I got glasses, I got braces, it was just crazy. It wasn't until after, I realized because my first language was Ojibwe that I couldn't really like, mesh well with the other people… I remember signing forms with my girls, when they were in elementary. [The forms asked]

should they or can we enroll them in native studies, or French I was like oh my god this is an option now!

Battiste (2002) argues "being required to learn French or English as a third language, without a good handle on [students'] first or second language, imposes yet another major hurdle that impedes Aboriginal students from achieving educational equity" (p.200). This is one example of current gaps in the settler-stream education system. The settler-colonial world of education has many gaps. Through sharing in the Aunties' experiences and our learner experiences, educators can learn to better identify and address these gaps with new tools and insights. We must be willing to listen to learners in accommodating needs to ensure needs are being met.

Limited Resources Available, but Important and Impactful

Though many of the Aunties agreed that there were little to no resources available to them pertaining to Indigenous worldview, perspectives or content; the few and far between resources that were available were of value, meaningful and impactful. These resources came in the forms of Indigenous educators. The Aunties agreed that the connection to even just one person in an unfamiliar institution made a big difference in their journey. Clara shared her memories of an educator, Vern:

> Indigenous culture was not part of our education. I went to St. Patrick's high school I've been in the Catholic school board the whole time from St. Andrews to St. Bernard's just all the way through. I think Vern Kimble, in high school approximately grade 10 around 1996, holy just aging myself right here (laughter) first started bringing in the culture room or Indigenous social worker and he created a council at the time and that's when I think they started doing smudging. There was so much red tape, we didn't even do it too much but yeah it was cool. Vern started getting people to come in and talking to us youth

at the time. Vern Kimble. Catholic board. He's amazing, I think he does such amazing work with the youth. I think he was there maybe 10-12 years later even. From all the youth I heard from after, coming out of the schools he's always been impactful. You see him, he's a grass dancer as well. He's simplistic, he wears a bustle and broad cloth and a head piece. He's an Elder.

Tesa shared her memories of the importance of her experience with Indigenous Counsellors in her high school as she reflected on the field trip they went on and how the Counsellors were like surrogate parents to many of their students. Tesa shares:

> When I was in high school, I struggled in high school because I chose to move around to different places because I was just kind of unsettled. I was living in different boarding homes. I ended up in Fort Frances my third year of high school. It was the Native Student Counsellors, they called them at the time. They saved my life. They were the ones who got me through school, and they really encouraged us to attend school. They advocated for us. I don't recall anything like cultural per say but just their presence. They were definitely First Nations people… we would all pack into their little office any chance we got. If we were missing school they came and got us. They got us through. I'm really grateful for that and I tell them that all the time when I run into them in the community. They did plan outings. I remember one big event we had, we took a field trip down to the Denver Powwow. We had a big bus, this was a school trip we went on to the Denver Powwow. Our Native Student Counsellors were brave enough to take a bus of us down there. Talk about that for a field trip! I know, there was a whole bus load of us kids. I mean it was so long ago I don't remember but we had to have a certain number of credits and get certain marks. Stuff like that. But I remember that and how they brought us along

> and it was my first time ever being that far away. They got us through. There was a big group of us and I know there were many other students that came before and after me and just having those Anishinaabe care givers in the school was critical. Just being there to advocate for us. To be there for us to go and lean on when we needed to give us guidance. They were our surrogate parents for a lot of us.

These kinds of connections, relationships and resources within the school system were significant to participants. In my role as an Indigenous Counsellor in the settler-colonial education system, I reflect on what my path may have been like had I had an Indigenous voice at that initial high school visit. I reflect on the significance of the work my colleagues and I do in our own system. The role is just as important and healing to me as it is my families and students. The *People for Education* report (2023) recommends the Ontario Ministry of education to "provide dedicated funding for positions in schools, boards, and government that are focused on promoting and supporting effective programs on Indigenous languages and ways of knowing more holistically from kindergarten to grade 12" (Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson, 2023, p.19) acknowledging the impact of Indigenous champions in the settler-stream academic institutions. Settler-stream education institutions have the opportunity to ensure Indigenous educators and Knowledge Keepers voices are available. The voices are not unnoticed and have a positive impact on educators and learners' experiences (Madden et al., 2013).

Post-Secondary: Some Indigenous Connection, but Limited

Of the participants who responded that Indigenous culture was part of their formal education, many agreed that the content was limited in class. Most participants spoke to additional services available through post-secondary institutions in College or University. Nicole shares in her reflection on her upbringing, stating:

> When I reflect on the way I was brought up, yeah - I was brought up off reserve, but it gave me a lot of benefits because in some ways I was not dealing with the same challenges that maybe people in the 80's were still dealing with in my community. I think it's different now, but there were still some fragilities back then. I realize now looking back how strongly connected I really actually was and didn't know it at the time. I have a hard time understanding my own experience because I forget not everyone has had the same experience as me. It's been very lucky.

The literature review speaks to low Indigenous high school graduation rates due to the effects of centuries of the harmful effects of the colonial system. Statistically many Indigenous learners do not participate in post-secondary institutions at the same rate as Canadians. The *Keeping Up The Momentum* report on Ontario's publicly funded schools (2018) found "in 2018, the province-wide graduation rate is 87% after five years of secondary school. For First Nations students, this rate is only 60%." (paragraph 2). Of the participants who attended post-secondary, many did find connections to Knowledge Keepers but readers should be mindful that many Indigenous students struggle to graduate high school and there is a lack of resources for Indigenous students to attend post-secondary. Like McPherson and Rabb (1993) mention about research *on* and the (limited) research *with* Indigenous people in the literature review, Nicole shares that there was an abundance of knowledge *about* Indigenous people but limited in Indigenous worldview. Nicole shares, "[in University] there was knowledge, there was information that was available. So, the content of the knowledge was available at the university level but the process of learning from an Indigenous perspective I learned through ceremony and Powwow." Nicole highlights the gaps in the settler-colonial education and the opportunity for Kinoo'amaadawaad to assist in filling those gaps.

All participants recognize the sacrifices and struggles of attending a post-secondary settler-colonial education system. Though this is true, many participants also recognized the benefit of an education leading to success but through their own Anishinaabekwe lens. Clara explains how she plans to utilize her education to promote minobimaadziwin, the good life, sharing:

> I know it's a ticket to navigate the system with education, I know it's a ticket and I know it's something, like I'll be the first graduate in my family as well. I never even thought I'd be able to get to this point to education. You have to heal a certain amount to even get here. I'm grateful to Creator I made it this far through addiction and things like that too so that I'm able to help other people. That's my whole purpose to help other people and I definitely need that ticket at the end to be able to do it.

The quote at the beginning of chapter 2 from the National Indian Brotherhood (1972) identifies that settler-stream education can be utilized as a tool or as Clara describes "ticket" for Indigenous learners to be able to make the necessary changes in our modern-day systems in order to do the work that needs to be done in a good way.

As I write this MEd thesis, I reflect on my own reasoning for completing this degree. I want to advocate for change. As Clara describes, this could be used as a ticket to be able to make change. I understand the significance of having a MEd degree and the preconceived notions attached to obtaining a M.Ed. I acknowledge the differences in how I am perceived in both settler-colonial world of academic education and how I am perceived in the Powwow circle when I introduce myself as a MEd student compared to when I introduce myself as a jingle dress dancer in these environments. As I work through this journey, still, I wonder, are these sacrifices of time with family, on the Land, in ceremony worth the benefits associated with a MEd? I think

of all the laughter shared with my Aunties, the dances, the stories and the learning found in this paper and the learning that wasn't written. This learning journey was more than a MEd degree. In staying true to my own learning journey this too, was ceremony.

Creating Spaces

Many of the Aunties shared about how they had to create their own spaces and opportunities to explore Kinoo'amaadawaad in the settler-colonial models of education. I was able to find space in the university through the Lakehead Indigenous Student Centre. Nicole shares her story of creating space at her university with the University of Toronto and the importance of that connection as she continues to meet with her peers through to present times and reflect on the importance of the sense of community and belonging this space provided. Karen shared in her experience with her family bringing culture into the schools and creating space for others to learn alongside her and her family. In Mary's story of her first Powwow experience and being taught by shawl dancer Deanne Hupfield who created space in a local school gym. Indigenous students, families, communities, allies and institutions all have the ability to create spaces for Kinoo'amaadawaad in the settler-colonial models of education. This work hopes to inspire others to continue to create these spaces to celebrate Kinoo'amaadawaad; to Saasaakwe, to shout with joy.

Powwow World

Learning Differences

The Aunties compared learning in the settler-colonial world of education with the learning in the Powwow circle and Kinoo'amaadawaad sharing in their experiences of how the two systems of learning are similar and different. Bess reflected on the harshness in the settler-colonial model compared to the openness of the circle "you have to have the highest grades, or

you won't be accepted in [school]. Whereas you don't have to be anything to anybody but yourself in the circle." Though learning in the Powwow circle may be open, accepting and flexible, there is still hard work that needs to be done when the learner is ready. Mary comments on the yearning for cultural knowledge and the self-discipline required to learn in the circle. Mary shares about her experience in connection to the two different styles, connecting more with Kinoo'amaadawaad as she explains the learning of self through Powwow:

> Compared to it being in school, it was more like, like you're going to learn but you have to like put yourself out there to receive teachings that are meant for you. Nobody's going to teach you how to be a fancy shawl dancer unless you put yourself out there. With like schooling I have to like, sit down and learn you know, all these things that aren't really going to help me in my future life… It was really easy to learn about culture because I was really eager to learn about it and I wanted to learn about that. I understand that some subjects are important to learn but like when you have to you know. [In Powwow I was] feeling involved, like I want to learn this, it's a different story…I feel like [Powwow] totally helps us to learn. Just about like self-confidence, you know, like, it teaches you, you know respect for your body, how to take care of your body properly. I think it teaches you a lot of life skills, possibly more than you would learn in like school, I feel like, definitely.

Clara expands on the idea of a clash in worldview between the two learning systems, a need for compassion or more resources as she shares her experiences:

> In the educational system, I don't want to say things in a negative way but when I'm sending my children to the educational system, they're learning things that aren't meant for them. They're not being nourished, there's like one teacher, one mentor for how many

> children. For example, if a child is oppositional, most of the time they're greeted with the same opposition and as we know many times that further perpetuates that behavior. I feel like the teachers could meet the students in a different way or figure out what the cause or what is the real issue. Once those issues are dealt with, they'll be able to concentrate on education. They only have one mentor and they're only focusing on education but if they want to truly educate the children, they have to think about basic needs first. I think that's the difference between Powwow and education.

Cheryl commented on the feeling of safety when learning in the Powwow circle compared to the difficulties in navigating the settler-colonial world of academic education when she shares:

> The Powwow circle was a different maybe safe atmosphere for me. I got to be myself. I wasn't scared to talk to anyone. In the school it was very, I don't know, I was always scared to approach teachers because I seen them as an authority figure more or less. It wasn't like that in the Powwow circle. You're still learning I think in the Powwow circle. You get different variations of stories about the drum and even about which treaty you're on. Fort William versus Eagle Lake versus Sault [Ste. Marie] versus the state side, it's all different. School was very hard to navigate through, but it was just an everyday thing.

The Aunties described some of the gaps in the settler-colonial education system and the opportunity for Powwow or ceremony to address these gaps. Including Kinoo'amaadawaad would enhance learning, healing and growth in educators, learners and the community.

Ongoing Learning

In the Powwow and in Indigenous culture, the circle is often utilized. The circle represents the continuation of all things, including learning. In Kinoo'amaadawaad, we learn

with each other as we are doing, we are in a continuous journey, together. Janine explains how learning in the Powwow circle is accommodating, hands on and forever ongoing:

> You're always in a continual space for learning because the Elders come up and they say different things or they speak in Anishinaabemowin, they tell you in the language what is going on and what is taking place or about the dances or different styles. You are continually having an opportunity to learn and at your own pace and while learning, well I'm kind of a learner where I need to do it. I need to see it being done and I don't do well with just listening ... but there's something there for every kind of style of learning as well. You get the opportunity to do it, if you want. Young men can go sit by the drum or even the young women can stand by the drum and sing. Everybody's pretty inviting to that space to learn and to encourage people in.

Bess also reflected on the ongoing learning journey in Powwow as she shared:

> Learning in Powwow circle is like, well obviously it was you continue to learn even to this day, our culture is so complex that it's like, I was always learning something. Or if I didn't, if I wanted to know something or say like, you know, I had questions because obviously I brought myself to Powwows and travelled myself around with other families, so I didn't know anybody.

Tesa reflects on the learning that occurs at Powwow through the lens of an Anishinaabekwe educator. She reflects on how Powwow and culture can contribute to not only learning outlined within the settler-stream education curriculum but much more:

> There are so many aspects of Powwow. We think even just about the basic concept of music and harmony. Think about the protocols, you know, that's like a form of governance when we think about protocols in Powwow. We learn about roles and

> responsibilities and that's learning about community and what different members of community are responsible for. I think about if we were really to get into like the logistics of having Powwow, like the planning that's involved; the creation of the drums; the creation of the regalia; all the ceremonial items that are involved in Powwow. It's just, it's so complex. If we were to compare it to western [settler-colonial] curriculum, everything that western [settler-colonial] curriculum describes as an expectation, we could absolutely connect it to the experience of Powwow. There's mathematics in making a drum. We don't want people making drums, but we can explain the mathematics in that. The concept of circles and the way we think about science; were talking about the different types of regalia that we have and the hide preparation, the food preparation. You go and you know you're always going to get a wild rice dish. We could incorporate wild rice harvesting into world studies, social studies, science… there's just so many ways to connect the two.

Including Kinoo'amaadawaad in our learning journey can facilitate so much more learning than outlined in the curriculum. The stories, teachings and lessons found in Kinoo'amaadawaad are ongoing, these teachings are lifelong teachings that learners can grapple with in a lifelong way, lessons changing and evolving as the learner too changes and evolves.

Wholistic

Where many of the participants commented on the gaps within the setter-colonial model of education pertaining to wholistic education, many of the Aunties agreed that Kinoo'amaadawaad and Powwow provide a very wholistic learning experience. Tesa explains the Powwow and learning in a wholistic way:

> It's very spiritual. When we think about wholistic education, that's the wholistic education piece. It is spiritual. It is mental. It is emotional. It is physical. In a western [settler-colonial] model of education, you don't get that. It's very linear, there's very little intersecting that happens where with traditional education, traditional Indigenous ways of learning, say through Powwow it gets really murky. Not because there's not enough to talk about but because there's too much to talk about.

Learning in the settler-colonial world of academia is rarely identified as ceremony. Research, learning, Kinoo'amaadawaad though, has been identified by many Indigenous scholars as ceremony. Janine comments on the idea of Powwow as ceremony and also as a learning opportunity,

> That's where the values and the traditional pieces of that around the Powwow circle, they're really sacred. It's like ceremony starts in the beginning then it's like a celebration that we're here all together. You begin and close in ceremony and there's ceremony throughout, so you have that opportunity to learn if you're there, but you take what you need as well from those places. Like I said, I only came for the Bannock burger before until I realized how spiritually grounded those places were and how sacred they were, for the people.

Janine also touches on the idea that we take what we need in ceremony and learning in Kinoo'amaadawaad, where the settler-colonial world of academic education is prescriptive in what students learning looks like and what students need to be taking away from the class. As the settler-stream education strives to include wholistic learning, Kinoo'amaadawaad provides a unique opportunity for a positive impact on the learners' overall wellbeing.

Building Your Own Journey

When reflecting on the learning journey in the settler-colonial world of academic education and Kinoo'amaadawaad, the prior is a well-worn, specifically mapped path (Ontario curriculum) while the latter is more of an individualized, choose your own path along the journey experience. Mary explains that in the Powwow trail we have our own curiosity and self-initiative to follow our heart in establishing *what* we want to learn about in the circle as she shares:

> I feel like in school you're like forced to learn and like the Indigenous way to learn is like you have to seek out those things that you want to learn about. That involves like giving back or you know offering tobacco, stuff like that. So, I feel like it's more like, individualized, depending on what gifts you bring to this place. So, like if you want to learn something new within Powwow or ceremony, you have to go after it, you have to actively seek out those teachings; compared to schooling where you are forced to just learn about that. There's a curriculum set up for you. [You learn about] what speaks to your heart, I guess.

Bess explains when we begin searching for knowledge in Powwow compared to learning in the settler-colonial world of academic education, our learning is focused on relationships, connection, and respect. She shares in our approach for gaining knowledge using tobacco:

> I just kind of knew the general law of offer[ing] tobacco, ask a question or ask for knowledge or something. Usually if I wanted to know something, obviously I would present tobacco and ask a question. If they didn't know, that's okay, but I found it was just like, I connected more with it…. Once I started attending Powwows, I started learning things. I would sit at a fire and just talk to Elders at night. Being a young kid, you stay up all night then you get up and Powwow and whatever you're just up all day. I

found just dancing in the circle like you meet so many people and then from there you're learning new things just hanging with people. Really, by the fire, is where I learned the most, I think. That's where I learned a lot about our people and our culture. Maybe, because its more one on one and it's like you're by the fire, it's like the Water where it makes you feel like you can share.

Nicole explains, in the circle we have different opportunities in *how* we learn. She shares:

> In the Powwow circle I talk a lot about Indigenous knowledge and how we transmit that. It is lateral. No one is going to tell you the right answer. They are going to let you experiment and figure out what makes sense to you... we don't have a culture of like force, we have a culture or of welcoming, of coming but if you're there its good but no one's going to hunt you down and say where were you? It's very passive transmission of knowledge. The Knowledge Keepers are there if you want to access them… It's not hierarchal. Some aspects of ceremony are hierarchal like there's very strict protocol that needs to be followed for example in spiritual practices but in terms of knowledge transmission its around, sideways, around the edges; it's around like if you happen to end up somewhere the knowledge is being shared, but you're lucky; no one is going to make a big announcement and say today were having a lecture on sovereignty.

Bess comments on the flexibility in Kinoo'amaadawaad compared to the settler-colonial world of academic education. Bess reflects on the learning in Powwow circle:

> Its super laid back and it's not like forced on us, right? Whereas, it's like it's something you're choosing and you're learning all these different teachings and you're taking whatever resonates with you as opposed to school where it's like this is it, this is what you gotta do bla bla bla this is the *right* way.

Tesa outlines a gap in the settler-colonial world of education commenting on evaluation and assessment tools, commenting "it's like maybe they [Ontario assessments] measure the wrong thing or they're measuring with the wrong measurement tool." Janine agrees that we build our own journeys and further explains, not only do you build your own journey but also your own self-evaluation, individual pace or markers of success. Janine explains learners determine *when* they feel ready to learn they can enter the circle as she shares:

> It's not like this like pressure, you kind of sit on the outskirts until you're ready. Nobody is forcing you to learn and that's the thing with formal education. You have a strict regimen of what you should be learning and the curriculum of what you should be learning and everything that falls in between. This way [Powwow] is very gentle in nature.

Learners are responsible for their own journey in Kinoo'amaadawaad in providing tobacco, following their intuition and doing what is right for them. Individuals can assess their own goals, pace and level of participation that is successful to them. By including Kinoo'amaadawaad, educators provide learners an opportunity to navigate who, what, where, when, why and how in their own journey, empowering learners to take ownership and responsibility for their own path while simultaneously encouraging students in utilizing their unique gifts and skills.

Sense of Self & Identity

The Aunties discussed how the Powwow circle contributed to their sense of self and identity compared to many of the stifling experiences pertaining to identity from the settler-colonial world of academic education. Clara shares that "Powwow helps us learn so much. I think this is where everybody finds themselves, in circle. Janine explains her journey in finding her identity in sharing:

> I think that I'm still slowly learning a lot about my identity over the last few years. I think Powwow, being a part of those circles and ceremony circles has really opened that space up as opposed to a curriculum or school because you don't delve into that in school. You don't really feel feelings, you just have to kind of stick to your papers and write and learn and regurgitate what you learn, and it has to be regurgitated in a way that is good for your instructor, not good for you. It's different.

Mary explained how the Powwow circle helps us to learn more about ourselves, "especially with identity and having a sense of pride and that sense of self." Mary shares "yeah, it definitely helped me with that self-identity and having that pride." Karen commented on how using her traditional name plays a role in maintaining her identity and walking in a good way in minobimaadziwin. Karen shared:

> My identity... My name actually Nenookaasi that comes from my grandpa here in Grand Portage. He's my adopted grandpa and he gave me my name. I acknowledge my name every single day, I use my name when I can. When people ask me my name, I say Nenookaasi and that means hummingbird. It represents me. It represents me in so many ways. I'm small and strong, just like a hummingbird. I'm a helper just like a hummingbird. There's a lot of medicine in my name. It keeps me balanced. It keeps me on track. Living in a community where you don't have any family, there's really no connection other than the Powwow community, ceremony community. It keeps me balanced when I go to a Powwow because I can easily slip and go into that party life, that bar life. It saved me so many times, I could have been addicted, I could have been 6 ft under, but the Powwow is what keeps me balanced. When I need healing on my own self and with my family, I go to the Powwow, and I pray. I'm a pipe carrier and a prayer

> warrior. When I go to the Powwow I pray, I get lost in my own thoughts and things like that, so it does help with my identity or who I am as a person.

Karen continues, explaining the significance of her identity as a mother, role modeling Kinoo'amaadawaad with her children as they continue the cycle of learning and sharing in traditional ways. Karen, Nenookaasi, explains:

> It also identifies me as who I am as a mother. You can see my children; my children are into [Indigenous culture and Powwow]. I'm very thankful, as a single parent I'm grateful I raised my children that same way. Now my two oldest are very successful. My daughter graduated from college; she works in the community. She helps women and children just like I do she does her beadwork and her sewing, and it's taught her patience and understanding as well. My son, he graduated from college and goes to the university here as well. He is very respectful young man. He hasn't danced since he was about 10 but he sees me learning. I'm learning my language now and he wants to learn the language, he wants to learn the culture because as he's studying there are courses that he's taking that have the Indigenous culture in it and he asks me questions and I'm able to share that with him. Same with my older daughter when she was in school. Even now, we all have a close connection, a bond. Now you see me and Tanika together. A lot of people think she's an only child, but she does have an older brother and sister. Even my connection with her, and the way she's growing up attending ceremonies and stuff.

As discussed in the literature review, Residential schools were a place where Indigenous identity was systemically oppressed. In modern times settler-stream education systems have a responsibility to ensure all learners identities are not only acknowledged and accepted but

celebrated. Kinoo'amaadawaad provides opportunities to celebrate all identities, the four colours of the medicine wheel are a common example used to illustrate this.

Regalia

Many of the Aunties touched on how their regalia connects to their identity as well. Our teachings explain that these items are sacred, that they have spirit and that we do not own them, but we are responsible to care for them. Throughout this work I was able to share how my jingle dresses, my regalia through my life has connected me to my identity. Nicole shares in her story how her regalia connects to her identity and history as she describes her red and white colors and dancing between the red and white flags. Janine shared in her story about being gifted a women's traditional regalia with a thunder bird on it and how this helps her to connect to her sense of self and connection to her ancestors. Janine described in her story how her regalia also helps in reminding her to walk with patience, as the women's traditional dance step requires slow, steady movement. I also shared about my brother, Hunter, in his first regalia and how this connects to his identity as a provider. There are a variety of parts and pieces to our regalia and often parts and pieces are added or removed as we continue our journey. Our regalia alone provides an opportunity for lifelong learning and relationship building. The settler-colonial education system could provide space for learners to explore their own identity, including regalia with the guidance from Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, further discussed in chapter 6.

Role Models, Observation and Participation

Many of the Aunties commented that though they were inspired and had role models to observe, much of the time they were self-taught, many of them providing the example of sewing or creating regalia. Tesa comments on the idea of observing and giving new teachings a try after

observing role models demonstrate the concept. Tesa articulates this idea as she describes how her family taught her on the Powwow trail:

> Learning in the Powwow circle, a lot of it was just observing. You know you're just observing, then following. It was watching the way that other people did things. It was asking questions, so if there's you know certain dances that might be happening, spending time with my Aunties or my father and asking them to explain to me what was happening. There was a lot of listening. I did a lot of listening and just being a part of it. You observe then you do. You just, you go dance or you would you know at feast time you serve people. You just, you do your part in that circle.

Bess echoes the idea of self-initiative and teaching herself in her own experience learning to sew:

> When I was about 12-13 just like a teenager, I was like this is what I want to do and like, obviously my family wasn't into this and nobody in the community really, so I didn't know anybody to make me an outfit. I literally taught myself. My mom is a seamstress, like she sewed up all my Halloween costumes, so I think it was kind of embedded in me that like it's kind of in my genes that I'm a sewer. I ended up being pretty good at sewing and just made all my regalia.

Much of the learning in Kinoo'amaadawaad is done through observing and trying, Many of the Aunties highlighted different role models or inspirations they found along the Powwow trail. Nicole also shared about her journey in observing sewing and then giving it a try herself. Prayer and connection to ancestors were also a part of Nicole's self-directed learning in sewing. Nicole describes observing visitors to her community that inspired and motivated her, highlighting the importance of the influence in seeing positive role models. Nicole describes:

> I remember the Pele family would come and hang out with us and they had like, Arnold Pele had all of these daughters. I think he had like 5 or 7 daughters, and they had all of these beautiful dresses. We would watch them and be like how do they do those moves and how do they have such beautiful regalia? But other than the people that were coming to our area… I remember Anno Buswa too, was another power dancer. Like oh my god she's so beautiful! Meladina Hardy she was also… I remember Meladina had a half purple, half turquois dress. Meladina was probably about 10 years older than me, and she used to do aerobics and she was in great shape too so she could just like dance. We just thought she was amazing!

Clara shared in her journey and experiences with addiction, she explained the significance of the teaching of the feather in maintaining walking in a good way in minobimaadziwin. Clara shares the significance of having others role model and share in Kinoo'amaadawaad stating "that's why I'm doing what I'm doing, it's because of that introducing to the good life. The teaching of the feather, it's always stuck with me." The settler-colonial models of education provide limited opportunities for students to be self-taught as the curriculum outlines specific criteria and concepts to be delivered through an authoritative teacher figure. Kinoo'amaadawaad allows students to observe and participate in their own way, on their own time. The settler-colonial institutions of education have an opportunity to include strong Indigenous voices and role models to continue to inspire and promote further learning for educators, learners, and the community. The *People for Education* report (2023) identifies that "prioritizing opportunities for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis guest speakers, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers to visit and develop relationships with Ontario schools is vital to build this capacity in students as it provides

students with access to Indigenous perspectives and cultures" (p.10) echoing the Aunties call to include role models and Knowledge Keepers.

Family & Community

As the Aunties shared their stories, it became apparent that families and communities played a vital role in providing opportunities for Kinoo'amaadawaad and may have been the first source of role models walking in minobimaadziwin. The importance of role models in establishing inspiration or connection within the Powwow circle was an overarching theme. The Aunties had varying experiences and backgrounds pertaining to their connection to family, community, and culture as they had varying experiences providing opportunities to make these connections. Some families had strong connections to Powwow, like Nicole as she shared:

> So my father and mother were married in Toronto in 1972, so when we moved to Marathon in 1980 just when I was a little girl, it was illegal for my mother to live on reserve because of the Indian Act provisions so I grew up off reserve in a small town called Marathon and um I was really lucky to be closely connected with my family and my reserve…Pic River brought in a lot of healers and we made connections with people. We built a lodge in our community called the turtle lodge so that's a physical building where we do ceremony. Obviously sweat lodges, we had this thing called the Rainbow lodge, which was a youth lodge around 1998 when I was just a teenager so those were all my influential experiences. So, I grew up this way. I am very securely supported by foundations that were laid for me intentionally by community leadership by bringing these people in.

Karen shares how Powwow shaped her worldview at a young age as her family had always had and shared a strong connection to Powwow and culture as she shares**:**

> Even growing up like I knew the difference between the Indigenous culture and the non-Indigenous culture just by going to ceremony, just by going to Powwows. I've been sewing since I was 9. All my Kokums and Aunties and uncles have all grown up and they're all Knowledge Keepers. A lot of them have passed on now but they looked after me, they helped my dad look after me when I was young. My Aunties were the ones who taught me to bead and make regalia when I was younger. I got the skills that I have today, I teach them to my children and my children are learning how to bead and dance and make their own regalia and things like that.

Tesa shared a similar experience in an early influence of Indigenous perspectives at an early age as she explained her connection to family through Kinoo'amaadawaad in her stories about growing up with her family on the Powwow trail and her responsibilities now as an adult. In Cheryl's story in the previous chapter, we learn about her visiting the Powwow with her Aunt in Whitefish Bay where she was inspired by other dancers to dance as well, even if it was just in the hallway of the house. These early experiences with Kinoo'amaadawaad have contributed to a sense of self, a sense of identity and a sense of belonging within the family unit. The settler-colonial education system can connect to family and community in a good way to provide opportunities for learning, discussed further in chapter 6.

Community

Other Aunties had to look beyond the family unit to find connection to culture, ceremony, and Powwow. Janine explains her family's experience:

> My family didn't grow up with [Powwow] being like the backbone or culture being the backbone of anything. My mom and dad were 60s scoop, they, my mom thought oh, it didn't affect [her]. Like what do you mean? I don't have my language. I don't have my

> culture or traditions because of this. How didn't it affect you? It affected me! My mom just played it off like I didn't get beaten up or anything like that, I don't remember. But it did have a lot of effect on who I am.

When I asked Bess if her family was part of Powwows growing up, she responded "no, no. They still aren't. I feel like pretty alone in that sense, like it's just kind of… me." Mary's comment resonates as she shared her story and that she didn't have Powwow in her life at a young age, though her mom brought her to her first Powwow at Lakehead. Clara commented on the community of Thunder Bay and the connections made through organizations in the city. She explains a program for young adults, the New Experiences Program connected her to role models, culture, and ceremony.

> The New Experiences Program… I definitely think like, I didn't know anything, and my first introduction was to like the naming ceremony then shortly after that was Powwow. We started sewing and we learned those big skills and then being in the circle, it was just kind of like okay here you go, and we learned how to make money at the booths and about helping; just about life basically. We didn't know anything other than what we knew. We knew about good life after.

Bess had to extend herself as well to seek out the few community members who were a part of the Powwow community as she explains:

> I don't really remember my first Powwow experience. I used to dance like as a little girl, but I remember being like basically when I was 12, I started dancing like with regalia. People in my community were not very cultural. I think there was only a handful of us that actually went Powwowing and followed that way of life. I remember tagging along with a family out here that did travel the trail and that kind of got me into Powwow….

> and I think that's kind of like what I remember as my first experience because it was like a summer where I travelled with my friends, my two close friends at the time and like made connections to like all the Powwow people I know today as like a young girl…

Bess continues as she reflects on her experiences in the Powwow trail and the significance of those connections to community as she shares:

> I've met all these people; I know and have that connection. I feel like it's a lot easier for me compared to someone who doesn't know who they are or where they come from or even have that connection to the culture. I think that's majorly important to like knowing your identity. Connection to the land, the Landis like number one.

Educators have the opportunity to connect with community in a good way to provide learning opportunities. Relationships with Indigenous community is key to incorporating Kinoo'amaadawaad in a good way.

Everyone Plays a Role

Nicole's story about Munzee the grass dancer winning first place encapsules the idea that everyone plays a role in the Powwow circle. This includes *everyone.* Tesa explained the idea of interconnectedness in sharing that at Powwow **"**you give it a try, and everyone has a part in that circle. Some people are dancers, some people are drummers, singers. Some people are helpers. Everybody has part. The people who are just observers are helping." Janine further explains the idea of interconnectedness and roles as she shares:

> [At Powwow] you're actually just fully immersed in it and you get a better understanding of interconnection and how every person plays a role in that circle from the dancers to the spectators to our Elders to even just like our stick man and the MC and like the children and where the sacred fire and the fire keepers are and you get to see the women and the

> helpers who are organizing the feast or give away, everybody has a part to play and everyone comes with their own spirit. And comes with their own helpers as well and everyone plays a different role in that Powwow circle. It shows you, even when a feather falls on the Powwow grounds there are things that have to take place. [Powwow] shows you how to be a helper, essentially because everybody has something to do. Then you know, has a role, so it shows you different roles. It shows you that you have a place in the circle and a lot of our curriculum and education doesn't give you that option. You're either in it doing it their way, by the guidelines or you fail. You're told you're a failure. Then you don't want to come back in. That's why it's important when we learn about our Powwow, learning Powwow etiquette and that connection piece, that we do that gently and we always make that space open for the children and they run freely and learn freely and the more and more you attend, the more you learn.

Powwow is a space for all learners and educators to learn more about themselves and others in a variety of ways, providing different learning opportunities to suit different needs and including and celebrating all journeys. This must be done in a respectful way.

All My Relations

The Aunties agreed Powwow helps us to learn about our roles and responsibilities and also about our connections and relationships. Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson (2023) identify experiences like Powwow, ceremony or Land-based activities "support Indigenous students by connecting the school community to Indigenous students' families and communities outside the school and help to incorporate Indigenous cultures and ways of knowing more holistically in the school community through experiential learning for *all* students, Indigenous and non-

Indigenous" (p.15) highlighting the opportunities for celebration of unity of *all* learners. Battiste (2002) emphasizes:

> "the real justification for including Aboriginal knowledge in the modern curriculum is not so that Aboriginal students can compete with non-Aboriginal students in an imagined world. It is, rather that immigrant society is sorely in need of what Aboriginal knowledge has to offer. We are witnessing throughout the world the weaknesses in knowledge based on science and technology. It is costing us our air, our water, our earth; our very lives are at stake." (p.202)

Janine explains how Powwow helps us to learn about our place in relation to one another:

> Definitely [Powwow] helps us to learn. It helps us learn about our relationship to the Land and our relationship to each other. And the part we play in the bigger picture of things. It allows us to not only learn the songs and like our traditional roles and things like that, but it also allows us to just be grounded as well and learn like even meditation, learn wellness, learn balance. A lot of people come to the circle for wellness and healing and then we also learn that we have like that profound love for one another. We stop what we're doing to support each other. It teaches us that, it's a very big way of our culture. We stop what we're doing to help.

As we continued to discuss the importance of sharing Powwow with students, the idea of relationship building and sharing emerged. Many of the Aunties expressed the importance of all students celebrating their background, culture, heritage, identity, and ancestry. Janine describes how non-Indigenous learners and educators might be inspired through Powwow to explore their identity and connection to self as she shares:

> I think even if you're non-Indigenous [Powwow] will help you look at the beauty of something and go wow I really wanna look at where I come from. And everybody and

> every culture has so many beautiful aspects to it, and it allows you to delve deeper, to reaffirm your connection with your ancestors and to really be there and present in that moment. In Powwow I'm really in self-reflection most of the time and appreciation for the connection because it teaches me a lot about connection as well like how important it is. Because without anybody there you can't have a Powwow.

Clara also reflected on the idea of multiculturalism and the importance of respectful dialogue as she shares when "we think about people coming from other countries and it's important to cross information as well because they need to know our ways of living and our culture the same way that they have to respect theirs." Tesa works to have youth in the education system explore their identity. She shares in reflecting on her appreciation for the human experience and acknowledging the Anishinaabe worldview of coming from spirit and returning to spirit and acknowledging this connection in sharing:

> It's the human experience, right? You're like in this human vessel, spirit in a human vessel and this is part of the journey and I think yeah, I wish that for everybody. That's part of my work right now in classrooms when I do go in is having kids really explore what their identity is and who their ancestors are. What is the beauty in that? I think that's perfect. If everybody would get better and would be able to connect with their community of who they come from, maybe not physically but emotionally and spiritually, then our world would just be a much better place.

Tesa shares in the Anishinaabe worldview of spirit or *aadisookaan*. Many of the Aunties discussed other ways we come to know through spirit or aadisookaan. Nicole explained her visions of sewing, Janine explained her experience in dreaming of her regalia, Clara talked about being in a spiritual zone and I shared my experience in being called back to the circle.

Kinoo'amaadawaad includes all, even our ancestors, an element of spirit, aadisookaan, when considering how we learn. Like the idea of spirit or aadisookaan, connecting us all in that we are here as spirit experiencing the human form, the big drum echoes the teachings of interconnectedness. The big drum at the center of the Powwow represents the heartbeat. All humans share that connection in that we all have a heartbeat. Janine expands on this connection sharing "a lot of people who don't hear that sound of the drum all the time hear it and they're moved, it's because you're one with that heartbeat of mother earth and you learn that, to stay still long enough to listen." Powwow provides an opportunity for educators and learners to learn more about us, each other, to learn more about all our relations.

Healing

Healing Self

The Aunties agreed that Powwow goes beyond learning just mentally but also emotionally, spiritually, and physically as well. Karen touches on how Powwow can contribute to not only learning but also healing as she explains:

> Powwow helps us learn a lot. You're not only learning about yourself you're learning about the people around you. You're learning music, dance, creativity. You're learning to sew. You're learning who you are, you're learning your Anishinaabe name. For some people, they're becoming themselves again, they're healing when people come to the circle that's where healing begins. An example would be if somebody has an addiction. This is what I like about having Powwows at the marina and stuff because the people down there, people down there may be involved in addictions. When they hear that drum, that drum is very sacred. When they hear that drum, they're drawn to it and that's where just by hearing that sound of that heartbeat that's where healing begins and some of them

> turn to their culture because some of them don't know their culture. They want to learn so what happens? That's their first step where they go into treatment to get the help they need. Next thing you know you're seeing them dance in the circle in their own regalia. Some of them are becoming helpers as time goes on, right? There's so much more, there's connection, there's family, there's so much you can add to it.

Bess explains how culture, Powwow and Kinoo'amaadawaad helped her to maintain sobriety through her youth as she shares:

> Well, as I told you I got into this at the age of 12, as a teenager. All I basically knew like I played competitive hockey my whole life and all I knew was like all my friends around the reserve were like drinking and people I went to school with were drinking and using drugs. I think that Powwow kept me straight and kept me like sober. I was so into ceremony, so into it because it was just like, I loved it so much that I was literally I remember doing years of sobriety when I was a teenager through to early 20's. So, like it did help me healing that part and keeping me like sober but it also did help me find my identity because I know who I am.

Karen echoes the idea of culture as a push factor for sobriety but also shared the limitations of access to ceremony when in active addiction. Karen shared:

> In PACI there was no culture. When I grew up in high school here there was no culture but there was Powwows starting when I was in college and university here, there was Powwows at the university when I was at the university. Not much Indigenous culture, but then I was just on my own journey, and I was finding myself then. That's when I was experimenting with alcohol, and I knew that you're not supposed to practice or do anything with that while you're under the influence or using so I stayed away from that

> until I decided to go back and then I stopped using alcohol. I've been off and on throughout my years, I guess you could say sober, then I would go back to that partying life, then I'd go back to the culture – I was back and forth throughout my life.

In the Powwow circle it is standard practice to refrain from using drugs or alcohol when at the Powwow. Tesa explains the idea behind this teaching and the balance we can find in respecting ceremony but also accessing ceremony for healing. Tesa shared:

> I think that's why there's that expectation that people don't bring alcohol or drugs into that space because everybody's that there needs to have clarity and that positive energy, that healing energy. Some people come there that are really sick and they need healing. There are sometimes, my dad had told me this, that sometimes people who are under the influence will come. They'll come to the Powwow and sometimes those are the people that need the healing, and they need to be allowed there. You make space for them.

Bess resonated with the idea of creating space for those who need ceremony as she shares:

> I'm always telling people who are struggling with addiction to like to come into the circle. I'm constantly, that's why I teach too, I teach a lot of youth because I want them to have that sense of identity, I want them to have something that is theirs.

Stories of healing self from past trauma, addictions and the like can be heard through Powwow trail. Powwow and ceremony can provide a space for self-reflection and self-healing. One of the themes the Aunties shared and I'm sure many educators will agree in the necessity to be able to heal or to be in a good place ourselves before we are able to learn.

Healing Community

The Aunties shared that not only does Powwow help us learn and heal on an individual level, but it helps us to also connect and heal at a community level. Bess explains how Powwow can help communities to reconnect:

> [Powwow] brings us all together for like a happy time and it's something that's spiritual and it makes you remember that like because of all the trauma our communities have endured and how our Chief and Council are set up and how much jealousy and abuse and lateral violence – how much all this stuff from trauma is really heavily instilled in us. Powwow is something that's good, happy, makes us feel whole, it feeds our spirit, right? I think doing that it's like, it's a good time to like talk. It helps us learn because we're kind of more open as opposed to when we're on guard and like fighting each other. I think that Powwow helps you learn on top of that it helps because it brings people together. You're meeting Elders, you're meeting people or like you're seeing something for the first time you know, you're starting to ask questions about the drum and dancers. If you're dancing, you're learning the protocols of like what cedar does or like, just things you learn throughout the years.

Karen reiterates the idea of Powwow as helping communities to heal. She explains her observation of community healing through seeing the development of cultural spaces in community. Karen reflects and shares:

> One of the things I know because I remember, and I loved to see and I still like to see it to this day is how communities evolved. The years growing up and seeing how their arbors and everything moved… originally some of them were inside the community but now they've moved them closer to the Water, the Water edge. Now you see the Powwow

> ground and their round houses closer to the Water now whereas before it was inwards in the community and just how they expanded it, it used to be just one little circle with benches or just homemade fences out of wood. Now they're more elaborate, they're beautiful now with the money they put into their community and Powwow ground.

Through physical spaces or creating connections and relationship building within community members, Powwow creates a space for communities to gather to continue to heal and to work towards reconciliation and minobimaadziwin.

Intergenerational Healing

The Aunties shared in how Powwow and Kinoo'amaadawaad helps to heal our intergenerational trauma. Many of the Aunties shared about their families' experiences within the residential school system and their journey in intergenerational healing. Bess shares in her experience with her family's openness about residential schools:

> I knew what residential school was because my grandpa had always talked to me about it. He was in residential school at the age of four and was separated from his family. He told me all the horrible stories about him. Realizing why my mom is the way she is, how she's loving me and not loving me you know, she doesn't know how. She's leaving me with all that stuff and I'm the person who has to change the wheel. It sucks!

Karen explains her experience in learning about residential schools and better understanding intergenerational trauma later on in adulthood. Karen explains:

> I never knew about residential school growing up. I didn't know it either until people started talking about it and that was just a few years ago. I didn't know about it, but I knew about it because as my dad got older and I sat with my dad and asked him questions, why did this happen? Why did that happen? My dad would tell me. As I got

> older and started to look around and notice things, I started to realize this is why. When my mom passed away, I had anger for her. I had anger for the longest time. I realized after talking to my dad and in my own healing journey, I forgave my mom. My mom came to me in my dream as I was fasting, and I forgave her. I forgave her and I woke up crying because now I understand why she was the mom that she was. But when I was younger say 20 – 30, I still had anger, I never forgave my mom until I was maybe 35, you know. It's not that long ago. Then when my dad was talking with me, I remembered and then I was like that's the reason why. I didn't know about residential school; I didn't even know about day school until they started talking about day school a couple years ago when they were saying okay people who attended day school apply for a payment. Someone asked me did you go to day school? I said what is day school. I didn't know what it was. But residential school I just started finding out as well because our parents never talked about it. I grew up with my aunts and uncles sitting around the fire at the Powwow and nobody talked about it. Everyone was sitting around the fire, having fun and raising us and didn't know. We didn't know until just as recently as everyone else knows. If it wasn't taught to us or talked about, I don't think any of us would have known.

Cheryl reflects on her experience with her parents participating in her school community compared to how Cheryl and her partner Jan play an active role in their children's education. Cheryl shares:

> Their school has Powwows too and we participate, Jan participates. I think it's so different than Jan and I grew up. We were more present in their school. We know the principle and he knows us. Jan goes and helps with archery so we're pretty active within

their school and with all of that. I try to take my girls with me to the Powwows here and there like to the wake the giant and stuff. I think it's very different now than compared to what I had. I remember when I was in school even the book fair, I never had money. All my non-Indigenous friends had money. My non-Indigenous friends would have money like 20 bucks to spend. Or when parents would come in for school like my mom never showed up. She never engaged at the school. So, I think it's getting better, like so much better. I was telling my girls we never had these kinds of opportunities when I was in school. There was no Powwows. There was no programming. Even [Anishinaabe] Mushkiki goes there now once in a while doing their programing. I think it's so much better these days to keep them grounded in all that… I see with my girls its very different now because they have all these after school programs with Ester Maude and Richard... They're starting to recognize other people in the Powwow circle as were out and about.

Though many are just beginning in their journeys in exploring intergenerational effects of residential schools, Powwow provides a space to work through the true history of Canada and its effects on our families, communities, and generations. Through role model parenting, Indigenous parents are using Kinoo'amaadawaad and Powwow to heal intergenerational traumas and provide a positive experience for their children. Powwow can help us learn, but Powwow can also be utilized as a tool to break cycles of intergenerational trauma.

Healing Through Sharing

Many of the Aunties agreed that learning and sharing about Powwow is hard work but that there was healing through learning and sharing in Kinoo'amaadawaad. I shared my experience in how learning and sharing culture has been healing for me. Mary describes her healing through sharing as a youth worker:

> I was a youth worker, so, I was able to bring the culture into the school as a youth worker. That was our main focus. I worked with Biwaase'aa. We ran the afterschool program. Before I left there, we were just starting to get more time like during school to spend with the students to go through [class time] to go through cultural stuff and like to nurture that self-identity. I feel like that for me was like healing because it was for me as a kid like something that I really needed, as a student. For me to be able to see that being provided and being part of it that was really healing for me. I've never really had that done like that kind of healing in any other way, no. Pretty much just that way, like having my experience with the youth. That was like, yeah, that was full circle. In that time, I was the one in the parking lot crying. It was overwhelming. We were doing good things, but afterward it was overwhelming I think because yeah, I really needed that as a kid. It was so beautiful to see kids that age and have that person in the school system that they can be comfortable and feel safe, even if it's just for the day… they had a moment where they can just be safe. It just felt really empowering to share teachings, like in the school and in the classroom to have that time with the youth.

Karen shares about her experience and growth working with families in sharing culture in a reciprocal way:

> When I share with [others], I also learn because we share back and forth, we communicate. That's one of the things our parents didn't have, that communication. I've learned over the years, communication and learning who you are as a person, you need to communicate with not only your partner and children but everyone around you. When you communicate, that's how you find things out, that's how you search things out, that's how you gain the knowledge that you do. A lot of people are timid, they're shy, even I

> was timid and shy when I was younger. I had to find my voice and who I was. As I became older, I found my voice and I started working with families and I became confident. Not only healing me, healing them. They are showing me things that I need to heal. Things that I need to work on myself because every day is a new lesson. Every time we take a step it's a new, it's something new, right? Every thought is new. No one has lived this life before, were all living it together, were all learning together. If we share and communicate with each other, there's so much more we can learn and teach, not only ourselves but our children as well.

Tesa reflects on her experience in healing as she shares about teaching adult learners in the settler-colonial academic education system:

> When I look at the adults that I [teach] … that's the primary role I have right now is working with adults. They're my students. It is coming from a place of healing for myself and for them I hope as well. I teach, I think about my Aunties when I teach and how would they carry themselves in that conversation? They aren't easy conversations to have but my Aunties are not angry people. Regardless of all the horrible things that we've experienced in our lives it's about doing our part to heal our families and to support the healing of the families of our Anishinaabe children. We have to do that by helping educators learn as well as the children so we can create safe space for everybody... It is healing. Then I get to talk about my own journey, and I get to talk about where I've been and what has happened. People don't realize it as a microaggression, but they ask me how did you do it? You have this story like how did you do it? How did you make it? Not realizing that's like an ignorant thing to say. But it is … I'm very fortunate that I've had educators, a couple of educators along the way who have really grounded me in the

> understanding in that I want to go back and do different in the schools. That it's inexcusable that children have the experiences like we do, and the curriculum is like it is that I can come back and do my little part in trying to shift that discourse.

Like my experience, the Aunties identified healing through sharing our stories. Including Indigenous voices can be healing if safe spaces are created for these stories to be shared though we must be mindful of exhausting Knowledge Keepers as well. Recommendations on facilitating these connections are discussed further in chapter 6.

Sharing in Schools

The Aunties agreed that Powwow should be in schools, Nicole mentioned "Powwows are already in schools." Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson reported on the increase of cultural support systems, as mentioned above, as well as data around schools offering ceremonies and Land-based activities. In Ontario "in 2022-23, 44% of elementary schools and 56% of secondary schools reported that they offer [these types of] activities" (2023, p.15). Ceremonies, Land-based activities and Powwows are in schools though there are regional differences with Northern Ontario leading the way.

Clara explains how the connection to Powwow through the settler-colonial education institution can help students live in minobimaadziwin. Clara explains:

> My purpose is seed planter. Seed planter of a good life. I feel like that's how you see it as well, for our youth because you work with youth and you're amazing with youth. You see that it helped so many of us, it helped you in healing and finding our own identity, that could be a good way to introduce young people to good life because maybe they just don't have it or just aren't able to find it anywhere else. They're forced to be at school every day so let's bring it to them. Amazing intervention!

Upon investigating, Clara is right in her idea about Indigenous student numbers in provincially funded schools as "according to the Ministry of Education, more than 80% of Indigenous students attend provincially funded schools" (Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson, 2023, p.1) suggesting schools as a key place to reach Indigenous students. Battiste (2002) comments that "education is not only the arena in which academic and vocational skills are developed but also the arena in which culture, mores and social values are transmitted to the student. The educational system, fostered by government and society, is the basis of Canadian cultural transmission" (p.194). I reflect on what kind of seeds we are planting or what values are we currently transmitting through the current education system?

Janine extends the idea further in establishing the importance of not only Indigenous learners but all learners to connect with their cultures and traditions and the unique opportunity for schools to provide that space as she shares:

> I think that anyone, because spirit is so fluid, I think that anyone practicing any culture or tradition should have the ability to practice wherever they want. In education especially because like that's what's supposed to be woven into us from a very young age, all the way through, is doing those things and following protocols and traditions. Something that I didn't know a lot about, but I think that it definitely does have a place and especially when [we're] people of the Land and we're teaching people of reconciliation, were teaching other community members to kind of shed light on Indigenous people as a whole nation that was here a long time. We shouldn't have to hide our bundles no more.

Janine's comment is echoed across Turtle Island by educators (St. Denis 2010; Canadian Teachers' Federation 2023; Battiste 2002; Assembly of First Nations 1992) in agreeing that for

too long the settler-colonial model of education has oppressed Indigenous worldview, culture, and knowledge. Dei et al. (2002) agree that:

> critical voices both in the academy and in local communities are drawing attention to the situation that subordinated peoples' knowledges, histories and experiences have been left out of academic texts, discourses and classroom pedagogies, or have been erased from the. These hitherto silent and silenced voices are no longer willing to accept the status quo and are urging that he problems associated with the systemization and commodification of knowledge be addressed." (p.3)

It is time for Indigenous bundles to be picked up and put to use for the benefit of all learners and educators.

Conclusion

The Aunties discussed their experience in the settler-colonial world of academic education and their experiences learning in Kinoo'amaadawaad. Their experiences identified gaps and needs within the current education system that must be addressed to improve the experience for all learners. Stories shared depicted a grim picture of Eurocentric settler-colonial academic institutions. Some Aunties may argue that schools have not proven themselves to be culturally safe, anti-racist, decolonizing or worthy of receiving the generosity of Indigenous community in sharing Powwow. A common theme discussed was that progress is being made in that Kinoo'amaadawaad is being acknowledged and utilized in academic institutions, but there is much work still to be done. Though there is still much work to be done, much learning to be done, Aunties acknowledged that Powwow is already in schools. Discussions about Kinoo'amaadawaad as a learning tool, a way to gain a sense of self and a sense of space in relationships, a sense of community and even as a tool for healing provided an opportunity to

identify the positive influence of Kinoo'amaadawaad in learners' education journeys. Cheryl echoes Nicole's comment in that Powwows are "already in the schools" but adds "we can help shape it." This work does not intend to promote settler teachers and educators to host a Powwow themselves, but instead to build relationships with Indigenous community. The next chapter will discuss how the Aunties recommend bringing Kinoo'amaadawaad, specifically Powwow, to our learners in a good way.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

I Found My Dance
By Auntie Ash, Ogichidaakwe

I found my dance
The dance you took away
When they were little children
Those little Anishinaabekwe.

I called my spirit back:
I speak like an Anishinaabekwe
I think like an Anishinaabekwe
I create like an Anishinaabekwe
Dancing straight, on the good path in our world.

Two ways I talk
Both ways I say
Ours is more powerful.

So gently, I offer my tobacco filled hand and ask,
Let me Saasaakwe
Let me shout with joy, with my Anishinaabekwe.

…

But you can still come chum around though eee. Laughter.

Introduction

The last chapter outlines some of the themes the Aunties identified through exploring their experiences in the settler-colonial world of education and Kinoo'amaadawaad. All Aunties were in agreement that Powwows should be shared with all learners. Clara explains the importance of sharing information, "when we have information, I think that's why we learn it, to share. It's not ours to withhold from anybody, especially our young people. I can't think of anything that I wouldn't share with young people. Whatever I know I would share it with them." As we move forward in reconciliation, Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson (2023) report, "Ontario schools are working to support Indigenous students through offering activities such as

ceremonies and Land-based activities like drumming, dancing, medicine walks, and storytelling (p.15). A secondary school principal from the GTA is quoted about some apprehensions of educators, sharing that "people are interested in doing the work but are fearful at times about offending members of the Indigenous community. We need to continue to build partnerships and have representation in the work that we do" (p.7). This chapter will outline some of the recommendations for educators to incorporate Kinoo'amaadawaad through the Powwow circle.

Indigenous Led

When incorporating aspects of culture, the Aunties agreed that knowledge sharing within Kinoo'amaadawaad should be Indigenous led. It must be acknowledged that even if sharing is Indigenous led, there are still complex and intertwined risks, problems and issues as academic institutions are still fundamentally settler-focused. Currently, "elementary schools that offer consultation with Indigenous community organizations about education priorities rose from 12% in 2012 to 36% in 2022, while secondary schools saw an increase from 28% in 2012 to 59% in 2022" (Hodgson-Bautista & Hopson, 2023, p. 12) depicting an increase in engagement and room for improvement. Bess explains the importance of acknowledging local knowledge as she recommends including Indigenous community:

> If [educators] want to do something Indigenous, it has to be Indigenous led. Plain and simple. Number one [educators] have to stop trying to do it themselves. If you're not Indigenous, you shouldn't be doing it. If you're not Indigenous you should be coordinating, but not the teacher… Whose Land are you on? You're in the city of Thunder Bay, you're on Fort William First Nations Land, the Ojibwe people here. You should be asking those people, you know? You should be hiring Indigenous people, that's just what I like to believe. It's like respect too. Respecting the people that are here, the

community that's here. Also respecting the people who are here, willing and able to teach. Letting them do it instead.

Janine agrees that it is important to get direction from an Indigenous perspective and the importance of utilizing local Knowledge Keepers:

> Asking that direction and guidance from local Knowledge Keepers and Elders, I think that's important too, that it's local. Depending on each school, each schools different, each territory is different. You're going to have a different set of traditions to follow prior to even setting up the Powwow. Prior to making it a good place. You need to first be informed and have that understanding from like a traditional Knowledge Keeper first and make sure that the protocols are adhered to.

Nicole explains how local First Nations and the settler-colonial education system could collaborate and build in relationships to benefit all learners as she shared:

> I don't know if schools should connect students to ceremony necessarily. I think what you could do, for example in the First Nations context, like in the Marathon high school they have an Indigenous person that they hire. The First Nation sends a person that does the cultural support and brings in people and does programming. I think the First Nation should assert their own jurisdiction and just send in a person if they can find funding to do that. That way they aren't relying on the board to do hiring with their union principles or whatever or to have certain criteria or to wait for the friggin' Ontario government to fund it. I think that's the way that it should be done. The First Nations should play a role, but you know that model works in our region where we have a high First Nation population and lots of First Nation communities… You have to put community people in the decision-making roles. White teachers don't know who to ask. A Native person from

> the community has the proper connections. There's this implicit tacit knowledge that they have… They have the connections. That's why you need to bring them in. Once you have a critical mass of like hired Indigenous people or Anishinaabe people that's when the difference is going to be made.

Karen shares in the importance of bringing Elders and Knowledge Keepers into learning environments and extending the learning to include the entire community as she shared:

> Bring an Elder in that has those teachings. It could be around, let's say there's a cultural day or a month. You bring an Elder in to do a teaching not only with the students but with the parents as well. Even the teachers. The teachers are learning, even on a PD day. On a PD day do one of those Cultural teachings with the teachers … From the teachers go to the students and from the students bring in the parents.

Tesa explained that Powwow does belong in school but emphasized the importance of including Knowledge Keepers and the resources required to host a Powwow:

> I think Powwow does belong in school as long as the teachings are being looked after by someone who understands the honor and responsibility that entails. Not every school should be hosting Powwows because the people that need to be part of that planning and facilitating aren't there. I know we've discouraged it system level. I know I've discouraged it because I don't want it to be perceived as oh, we've done our cultural awareness for this school year by having a Powwow. We don't want it to be just a show or a performance for the students and the teachers. I believe there absolutely is a need for it to be in schools especially schools with higher Indigenous student populations. It's about making sure that the Knowledge Keepers and the Elders that are an integral part of Powwow are looked after properly in the schools. There are some schools that just don't

> have that, they aren't ready to do that. Some schools are. There's also a monetary obligation that people need to be compensated for time for food for whatever, like the cost for honorarium because some of these people, most of these people are doing it outside of their work or their school themselves if their students. It's about making sure people are looked after and then it's the logistics of the planning of the day.

Indigenous educators recommended Canadian schools and educators "seek to establish more partnerships with the local Aboriginal community and leadership to better meet the needs of Aboriginal students and teachers" (St. Denis, 2010, p.9). School boards need to authentically and genuinely reach out to build relationships with families and communities and develop partnerships to benefit all students. When educators are looking to incorporate Kinoo'amaadawaad or Powwow into their learning journey, respect must be given to the Indigenous community and to Indigenous voice through building meaningful relationships with the local First Nations and creating space for Indigenous voices (Absolon, 2014; Wilson, 2018). Tobacco – connection and relationship building is always a good place to start.

Respect for Ceremony

Many Indigenous scholars agree research is ceremony. Learning and Kinoo'amaadawaad can be ceremony. Powwow is definitely ceremony. All Aunties agreed that if Powwow is to be included in ones learning journey, respect must be paid to the idea of ceremony. Tesa reflects on Powwow "that's ceremony. You're in ceremony. You're in conversation with Creator and our ancestors." All aspects should be done respectfully and in the best way possible. Cheryl provides insight into how Powwows can be incorporated in a good way by honouring the protocols around sacred fire and including this as part of the learning:

> If [educators] really want to do this, if their intentions are good, I think some of them should have like a fire arbor. There's no fire at some of these places. A fire keeper with a little fire going. I know some do but not a lot of them, I notice. Whoever is coordinating is always trying to get every category, get a dancer of every category to come out. That's good.

Bess describes her ideas of respecting ceremony in balancing what we share and things that we experience but don't necessarily share as she explains:

> The one rule is that what I've always been taught in ceremony, we don't repeat what we do in ceremony. We don't write these things down. We don't document teachings or things that have happened to us. Sure, we can share like there is tobacco and what that means to us as like a sign of respect or request of tobacco or acknowledging those basic protocols.

Janine explains her ideas of how to engage in learning in Powwow in a good way as she advises:

> Don't just throw [a Powwow] for the sake of throwing it... Powwow etiquette should be practiced in schools. Stand when Grand Entry is going on. Following the etiquette should be taught in schools. I've been to Powwows that are just run and not nothing, nobody gets tobacco or the different ceremonial pieces aren't set up. You take that ceremony away and it's just a demo. Just acknowledging that you are in ceremony, you are starting in ceremony, you close in ceremony. There are a lot of things to take into consideration.

There are different ways to show respect to the Powwow and Kinoo'amaadawaad. These are just some examples of how to acknowledge ceremony in a respectful way. Local Knowledge Keepers can share with educators on local traditions and protocols.

Honouring Indigenous Knowledge & Knowledge Keepers

Along with respect for ceremony is respect and acknowledgement for Kinoo'amaadawaad and honouring Indigenous Knowledge. Tesa comments on the idea of prioritizing Indigenous knowledge. She explains the need for educators to connect the valuable learning in Kinoo'amaadawaad and Powwow to learners' journeys.

> We need people to be willing to give the time, to give it the understanding that this is valuable learning time. That it isn't taking away from classroom learning. Sometimes that is the perception from some teachers that this is like extra. That it doesn't connect to what they're leaning in the classroom. So, the mindset has to change around what a Powwow is. The understanding needs to change about what a Powwow is.

Little Bear (2000) comments that anthropologists have described in detail customs and have "done a fairly decent job of describing the customs themselves, but they have failed miserably in finding and interpreting the meanings behind the customs" (p.81). Battiste (2002) comments that "ironically, although the value of Indigenous culture is devalued by cognitive imperialism, the dominant society has a tendency to take elements of traditional Aboriginal knowledge out of context and claim them for itself" (p.194). As an extractive approach of settler-colonialism, the dominant society takes what will benefit its reproduction. In my own experience as an educator in the settler-colonial education system, I have often had requests for ceremony without educators truly understanding what they are asking for, sometimes asking for pieces and parts of ceremony. In Powwow, the Powwow weekend may be over but the teachings are carried on in our daily lives. Often settler-colonial institutions and systems include Indigenous ways of knowing and doing or parts of culture without understanding that culture is everything and continues to play a role throughout out in our journey.

St. Denis (2010) interviewed several Indigenous educators who recommended schools to "honour and respect the unique nature, value and contributions of Aboriginal knowledge [and recommended schools] actively seek to train, hire and retain more Aboriginal teachers" (p.9) as ways to continue to move towards Indigenizing the Eurocentric education system in Canada. Bess comments on the idea of expanding honouring Indigenous Knowledge in the settler-colonial world. She describes the key differences in worldview when it comes to acknowledging and respecting Kinoo'amaadawaad:

> Like how a medicine man, his status and his knowledge doesn't compare to a doctor, and it should. It's like the highest level, not like medicine but like Mide or anything, we have our own system. We have Knowledge Keepers. We have people that like carry this stuff and it should be like equalized to like a doctor and you know, someone that's doing healing the same way.

Battiste (2002) comments "it seems obvious that elders and others who can pass on Aboriginal identity, languages, and culture should be directly involved in the modern educational system" (p.205). Indigenous Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous Knowledge must be respected, honored, prioritized and compensated in a fair way when asked to share stories or knowledge.

Indigenous Community Role Models

The Aunties reflected on the importance of role models through their journeys. Educators have a unique opportunity to provide space for Indigenous Knowledge Keepers to share their teachings and be role models for all learners. Janine explains knowledge can come from different types of knowledge holders as she suggests:

> Just making some of the resources available to the students would help [learners], it would aid in that connection piece. I know a lot of schools are doing that now, like

> having access to Knowledge Keepers and Elders but also having the opportunity to bring in your own like kind of family helpers. I know there's different Elders that aren't utilized or overutilized. You might have an aunt or uncle that has beautiful gifts that they would like to offer, and you just don't have the opportunity available to sit with them. Just making the spaces available to have those opportunities to learn and offer your tobacco or just the teachings involved to offer a gift, offer semaa, you know? Then the spaces be available to learn and learn or make your regalia. A lot of people don't have an opportunity especially in school, you're doing school all day to like to do that on your own time or just pick up a sewing machine. Just having a place where that's all set up for you and you just bring your own materials and you can just work as you want, on your own. Just a space. So, you know just having those spaces created or …just your sharing throughout the community, then you don't have that judgement either. A lot of people are like, I'm not an Elder yet, but no … you have a lot of beautiful things to share!

Clara echoed the idea of providing space for role models in the continuity of sharing knowledge through generations when she shares in the "importance of having people come in I guess, like you, what you're doing I'm sure there's going to be a lot of young people following your footsteps to make it better as well. With time you know I think it will get better." Though the importance of engaging in Indigenous community was highlighted, Nicole also pointed out the need for balance in utilizing Elders as she reflects:

> I also want to make this point. I think there's an over reliance on teachers delegating this to Elders or Knowledge Keepers or inviting people in. I don't think teachers take on enough due diligence themselves to do it. There's this like I gotta invite someone in to talk about residential schools. Okay hold on, you can teach the history, if you need

> cultural knowledge yep, you can ask in a good way. The reason I say this is because our cultural knowledge people or even our Knowledge Keepers, they're tired. They can't always be relied on. We have to create resources to make this easy for our schools to do, so I think yeah there's definitely a role for Powwows.

Tesa also shares in her experience of the current limited connections to local Knowledge Keepers as she cautions educators in straining the limited resources available:

> We have to be aware as well as educators that we put so much responsibility on Knowledge Keepers to come in and provide. So, we have to be gentle as well. Be kind and gracious and patient and not expect too much. And that's hard. That's hard right? Because it's really hard right now to get a Knowledge Keeper to come in and work with our schools because they're in demand everywhere.

Absolon (2021) explains "as [Indigenous Knowledge Keepers] attempt to restore Indigenous identity and knowledge within Eurocentric university contexts, the challenges and demands of carrying dual knowledge bundles continue to contribute the stress and burnout" (p. 82). Indigenous people should not bear the weight and responsibility of settlers learning journey. Educators should be mindful to include the Indigenous Community and build in a variety of relationships and capacities to share Kinoo'amaadawaad to ensure human resources are not over extended or burnt out. Educators must do their fair share of the work.

Teacher's Roles

When discussing the settler-colonial world of academic education, the Aunties shared that though it is important to invite Knowledge Keepers into the learning space or to connect students to Knowledge Keepers, there were topics non-Indigenous teachers could take on to share with learners. Nicole shares her experience working with educators:

> When I teach teachers about [teaching Indigenous history and culture I tell them], you can maybe feel awkward about teaching the culture and that's not your role, but you can definitely learn the facts and you can teach the history. The facts of the history are totally available in books, they are available on the internet. Learn it, teach it. You would teach about Ancient Egypt. There's no reason you can't teach about Ojibwe people and the history of the settlement of Lake Superior. You can teach that…Powwows are already in schools. I think when I was the Indigenous Education lead for the school board, I used to give my teachers the resource *Powwow Sweat* on YouTube. In a school like Our Lady of Charity in Geraldton or in Longlac … Nishnaabe kids are 90% of the population so even if our teachers don't feel comfortable themselves teaching Powwow, there are resources they can use to enable them to do that. Do you know what I mean? So, it doesn't have to be I'm culturally appropriating and teaching these kids how to dance jingle but they can use resources in their classroom that will enable them to do that.

Tesa shared the idea that educators can provide space to learn protocol or basic expectations before engaging with Knowledge Keepers explaining her reflections on a story I shared with her about a recent PD session with teachers where my drum was accidentally stepped over and kicked. The experience helped me to learn, in a difficult way, that it is a complex and fraught encounter to bring Indigenous ceremony with sacred items into academic institutions and expect that settler-colonial institutions are safe, welcoming and healing. Tesa reflects:

> I was just thinking about you know with what happened with your drum at your PD session, right? We want to make sure that people understand, there needs to be more pre-teaching that happens with the adults to give them a better understanding of protocols

around ceremonial items. It's not to instill fear and that it's not accessible but that that these are items that are sacred.

There is much capacity needed to arrive at some form of cultural safety in schools. Schaefli et. al (2018) explain their findings that many university students lack knowledge about Indigenous culture, history and modern contributions to Canadian society due to the inadequate information in the Ontario K-12 curriculum. The researchers emphasize the need to build future-teacher capacity and that "teacher education programs must play a central role in enacting the promise of new curricular emphases" (p. 689). Teachers need space, time and resources to explore further. There are challenges in encouraging white settler educators to explore anti-racist teaching, when they are colour-blind, "perfect strangers" (Susan Dion, 2007), and upheld by a racial discrimination that benefits them (Higgins et al., 2015). It must be acknowledged that it is ambitious and risky to address the lack of cultural safety and cultural capacity by holding Indigenous ceremony or Powwows in schools. It is not recommended that settler educators in academic institutions hold a Powwow to address this need for capacity building. All educators must acknowledge and respect their own place in their journey in Kinoo'amaadawaad and commit to continuously learn more. Though non-Indigenous educators are encouraged to learn more about Indigenous culture and share with students, Bess cautions teachers in taking their time with sharing new learnings and teachings:

> If you're going to sit in on those sessions, you need to respect the boundary of like you can't… um just because you learned something from an Indigenous person that day who was teaching to other Indigenous students, doesn't give you that right to carry that knowledge and say that now I learned this I can teach it. It doesn't give you the right to teach it either.

Battiste (2002) recognizes that teachers face challenges in the modern Eurocentric education system and that "all First Nations and provincial schools require new teaching materials that depict, accurately and adequately, the culture, history, heritage, worldviews, and philosophies of Aboriginal peoples" (p.200). Non-Indigenous educators and allies have an opportunity to share in basic history, explaining basic respect protocols and creating space for learners to be connected to Kinoo'amaadawaad through human resources as well as utilizing different technologies.

Allyship

The Aunties had suggestions for educators to practice engaging in allyship and capacity building. Tesa recommends non-Indigenous educators and learners provide support to the Indigenous community:

> I think schools should play a role, again it's about building capacity with the staff first. Staff need to understand you know what a Powwow is and what the responsibilities are in Powwow and what their role is in Powwow. That if they are settlers that you have a responsibility there as well as kind of a bystander and a helper and a supporter. You know they can ask questions and give them a safe space to ask questions. I think they do need to encourage students and be open about how they situate themselves in it to help model for students who are non-Indigenous that this is First Nations practice, First Nations ceremony, First Nations celebration and we can be part of it, but this doesn't belong to us.

Cheryl echoed the idea of the educators engaging in allyship by setting up opportunities in connecting students to Powwow or learn in Kinoo'amaadawaad. Cheryl suggests:

> I would just let the school support whoever's coordinating with whatever their needs are for a Powwow. Like if they need a sound system or feast, they can be allies that way. Then even, I would always remind them of the teachings like tobacco and different regalia and the drum, stuff like that.

Indigenous educators "encourage the functioning of non-Aboriginal allies to support and mentor Aboriginal teachers" (St. Denis, 2010, p.9) and for a reciprocal, equitable relationship among educators (Duran & Duran 2002; Dei et al 2002; St. Denis 2010). Non-Indigenous community, educators and learners can play an important role in establishing opportunities for Kinoo'amaadawaad in a variety of environments. As discussed, in the Powwow circle, we all play important roles by embracing our unique skills and gifts.

To Indigenous Teachers

The Aunties held different ideas for Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers, acknowledging that everyone is at a different point in their reconciliation and learning journey. The Aunties shared that educators acknowledge and honour the gifts they share, whatever those gifts may be. Janine suggests Indigenous educators practice honoring their teachings by also "just acknowledging there are different protocols or traditions. You kind of have to go there to learn that and then not take it into your own knowledge and start sharing it" highlighting the importance of understanding the uniqueness of each communities' practices and cautioning others not to appropriate other community teachings. Bess also comments on the idea of Indigenous Knowledge Keepers honoring the sharing of teachings when she describes her experience:

> When I teach jingle dress, even to Indigenous people, before you can teach something you have to know this fully. You can't just go like once you make a ribbon skirt go and

> teach a class about ribbon skirt making. I've seen it happen. I've seen people learn something then like not even dance in their jingle dress for a year then they're out teaching jingle dress, going to schools and teaching jingle dress. So, I also put Indigenous people into check. This is how we do things, making sure that you're respecting, not respecting but like walk a mile in those shoes first. Live that life first, then teach it.
>
> I'm all for like you know if you want to get into 100 things but specifically for teaching things, I think you should walk that life for a while, you know? Before you know it fully. I sure know I didn't, I made sure I learnt it as much as I can before I felt even comfortable teaching anything right? Just out of respect to that item or those teachings or respect to the people that introduced this way of life. Like the jingle dress, honouring that family, that's my way of honouring them is knowing it.

Tesa describes her practice as she describes her comfort level in sharing in her teachings:

> Every circumstance is going to be different. I never talk about, I hope I don't anyways, I try not to talk about things I don't know much about. I only talk about my own lived experiences. I wouldn't be able to go and offer mide teachings because I'm not midewin. And that's okay. There are some ceremonies that probably do not belong in school but I'm not one to say to that Knowledge Keeper that you can't bring that to the school as well. It varies right. And we always have to be cautious.

Indigenous teachers and Knowledge Keepers continue to practice caution in sharing in settler-stream institutions as many settler teachers continue microaggressions in institutions. For example, in interviewing Indigenous educators, St. Denis (2010) reported:

> Aboriginal teachers in the study still encountered attitudes and behaviors that suggested. they do not belong in the profession, such as a questioning of their teacher education,

> qualifications or capabilities. This questioning occurred even as these teachers performed a number of services, such as developing Aboriginal curriculum and supporting their colleagues to teach Aboriginal content and perspectives; services that they often did willingly, and usually without compensation." (p.8)

Indigenous educators in settler-stream education face unique barriers and challenges and are meeting those challenges with diverse solutions. The Aunties recommend following your heart and honoring and being true to your own teachings, being humble and honoring where you are at in your own learning journey. Keep going!

Celebrating Cultures

As the Aunties discussed Powwow and Kinoo'amaadawaad, the question of sharing knowledge with Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners was of discussion. The importance of sharing Powwow with all learners was highlighted. Janine shares in her idea of celebrating all cultures:

> That's what our medicine wheel is about. Its everybody and everything in between. So have that and celebrate it, but if you want to see more Powwows at schools and things … especially with our almost majority of our population being identified as Indigenous, its important but also to bring light to those other things as well. Their nationalities. I did world religions there and I kind of see that connection piece beyond all religions. Different practices that are so close to our practices as well and our beliefs. So that's why it's important to have everybody gifts brought to those spaces or to have that space available because you'll learn more about each other but were supposed to gather in that capacity. Everybody's supposed to be doing and looking after something. It would be cool to see more of those type of gathering as well. My personal thoughts, just straight

> out there… I think Powwow like I said is really everybody could benefit from but also, I'd like to explore anybody else's multicultural faiths as well and to have an opportunity to do so. Everybody has different gifts and having everybody encompassed in that medicine wheel is something that is missing. We need more people bringing their bundles and their sacred ways, incorporated together. Wholly together, solely for the way of learning but also a way of truly accepting one another and really empowering different spaces and each other's gifts. I see a lot of non-Indigenous people grasping on Indigenous culture when I know that they have beautiful cultural backgrounds as well that I really want them to explore or have the opportunity. This isn't the one all be all. I think that having Powwow at school like I say, highlight it as a celebration or a time to gather when things are hard, the way we celebrate and gather around Powwow season, is something that could definitely be incorporated especially being right on the territory of Fort William First Nation and right in the sacred Land. Especially being Canada, I think definitely but I also want to see other people's multicultural faiths and celebrations be known as well. I know Thunder Bay is doing the best they can, but we have so many cultures here.

Mary echoes the idea that Powwow is for everyone as she explains her perspective on how Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners could benefit from participating in the gathering:

> I think [Powwow in schools] would totally be appropriate because it's for everyone really. Powwow includes everybody. It's a gathering, everybody's involved in no matter what your nationality even, you can participate still and be involved. I think it's really good to have that exposure even for like non-native kids it's good to be exposed to Powwow because they know what to expect. There will be more of understanding I feel.

Bess extends the concept of Powwow to include connection to the Land. Bess comments on the idea of igniting the curiosity for exploration for learners asking "whether born here or not, they come here from somewhere, your family is a descendent of somewhere, some Land. What is their Land based practices?" The idea of connection and identity resonated through celebrating multicultural differences and practices with *all* our relations. Though the celebration of differences can be beautiful, Schick & St. Denis (2005) caution:

> the celebration of 'cultural difference' and the narrative of the nation as raceless, benevolent, and innocent has implications for the reproduction of racial privilege… Promoting racial equality and anti-oppressive curriculum in schools, discourses that do not take into account the effects of racial discrimination, such as multicultural discourses, are not only insufficient but even counter-productive. Without acknowledging racism and race privilege in curricular practices, the effects of colonization continue. (p.296)

St. Denis (2011) expands on this research in *Silencing Aboriginal Curricular Content and Perspectives Through Multiculturalism: There Are Other Children Here'* as the author "explores how multicultural discourses impact the reception of Aboriginal teachers, and the Aboriginal knowledge, history, and experience they bring into Canadian public schools" (p.306). Ahenakew (2016) highlights "recent scholarship has problematized how strategies of inclusion and integration of Indigenous knowledges have created a form of inclusion where dominant norms and populations still determine what can be said and how" (p.324). It is important for us to celebrate learners and educators, but we must remember to keep balance in an equitable way.

Educators are encouraged to explore anti-racist teachings and pedagogies in incorporating Kinoo'amaadawaad. This concept that culture is more than superficial, that Kinoo'amaadawaad is more than Powwow alone, is explored further in the next section.

Limits

Though the Aunties had many recommendations for educators, learners, and communities in supporting Kinoo'amaadawaad in a variety of ways, the Aunties also had some suggestions of limits or cautions.

Cultural Appropriation

The Aunties recommended bringing in different Knowledge Keepers while balancing this knowledge with educator resources and gifts. Teachers can teach basic ideas, history and facts but must be careful of cultural appropriation. Bess explains:

> You can teach and teach about what is a Powwow, but it all comes down to cultural appropriation. You don't want to be teaching non-Indigenous kids to dance with a regalia. You can teach them to dance in the circle but also teaching them that, like, you know, wearing regalia is meant for Indigenous people. Unless they've been honoured into that community, spent some significant time in the circle learning the way or adopted into the community, contributing to the community in some way on a long-term basis.

Cheryl shares a story about making ribbon skirts for a local school and cautions teachers in cultural appropriation. Cheryl shares:

> I made 3 skirts for 3 teachers in my community. The school colors kind of thing. A fourth teacher messaged me, and she was East Indian and she demanded I make her that same skirt. She wanted the same style. I didn't respond. She kept messaging me like asking how much? She just demanded it. I asked those teachers, who is this lady, do you know

her? She's demanding the same skirt because she's a teacher. They said she's East Indian and our Band Counsellors had to approach her because she tends to overstep her boundaries a lot. They try to remind her you don't need to do this, or you shouldn't do this but just help out. She's always imposing.

Tesa speaks to barriers faced by Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators as all on Turtle Island are at different points in our learning journey. Tesa calls for more learning in Kinoo'amaadawaad as she explains:

> We don't want to give students permission to appropriate our culture. I think all of that learning has to be done and all of those guidelines have to be developed for the teachers. I think if teachers were able to explain and also not, teachers also need to understand that we can't make the assumption that every First Nations student in the class identifies with Powwow as part of their ceremony. So, there's quite a bit of learning that needs to happen for schools, but I think absolutely it should be happening. It should be happening more often.

Cheryl shares that this is an important topic of conversation as more opportunities arise for sharing culture so do opportunities for cultural appropriation or pretendians. Cheryl shares about a post made by a Powwow dance instructor and one of my favorite dancers Deane Hupfield. Cheryl explains about sharing Powwow knowledge:

> I think it's starting to trend. It was just yesterday; I don't know if you're friends with Deanne Hupfield. She posted about non-Indigenous people wanting regalia and wanting to dance at the Powwows and non-Indigenous students wanting to dance. There was a big comments section about how maybe they shouldn't be doing that just yet because we're still trying to reclaim our culture. We're still learning about it and there's so much work

> to be done with reconciliation. Then even like non-Indigenous people asking for ribbon skirts and stuff like that. It was such a big comment thread. Someone else said well what if a non-Indigenous drum group showed up and what would we do if they just started drumming? Or what if an 8-year-old non-Indigenous student wanted to dance? How do we navigate that? Were still trying to reclaim our own culture, right?

Though educators have some resources to teach parts of Powwow or incorporate parts of Kinoo'amaadawaad, each educator and student will have a different experience depending on where they are at in their own decolonization journey. Nxumalo & Cedillo (2017) encourage educators to engage in knowledges "in in-depth and non-appropriative ways, beyond consumptive relations with Indigenous knowledges, beyond static representations of Indigenous knowledges and beyond 'understandings of Indigenous peoples as repositories of static forms of cultural knowledge" (p.102). Educators and students are encouraged to connect with Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, embrace their own gifts and discover how they fit in exploring Indigenous knowledge but also everyone must be cautioned of cultural appropriation.

Pretendians

The Aunties talked about the idea of identity, self-identifying as Indigenous and identifying knowledge as Indigenous knowledge as a complex issue. In recent times there have been people dubbed as *Pretendians* (pretend Indian's), people who are claiming and self-identifying as Indigenous, Knowledge Keepers or Elders who have no actual ties to Indigenous family or connections to community. This is not acceptable to Indigenous community (Duran & Duran, 2002, p.90) and has been a topic of discussion among settler-colonial institutions, the art world and in Indigenous communities for example. Nicole showed some compassion towards those who were caught up in the pretendian problem as she reflects on how we all want to be

included and this is something Kinoo'amaadawaad provides space for. Nicole reflects, "you know, on an unrelated note, that's the pretendian problem, right? They want that. That feels good. I want to feel safe and secure in community. Like, I want people to give a shit about me, so I can understand it. I can understand it." Cheryl explains where she is at in her learning alongside her family about pretendians as she shares her learning at Powwow:

> Every year I'm learning different things. Just the past few years I've been learning about pretend Indians and cultural appropriation and stuff. You hear that a lot in the Powwow circle and different variations of the regalia. How there's this whole thing with the two spirit dancers and I don't know I think it's cute. I still think its learning. My girls always ask questions when we're leaving a Powwow.

This idea of pretendian can be seen in First Nations communities as well in lateral violence and some even fearing that kind of judgement. One of the Aunties explain some apprehensions when re-joining the circle as she explains "you don't want people to judge you or becoming like a pretendian and feeling that from other people" highlighting that this issue is cross sectional and can be problematic for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Karen comments on the complexity of identifying who an Elder, Knowledge Keeper or positive community role model is as she explains we should bring in Elders:

> Bring in other Elders as well, not just one Elder. You're going to need more than one Elder. One thing we have to realize is that not every Elder is an Elder. You have to put your tobacco out and pray because some Elders can say they're Elders but they're learning just as we are. That's why I say not every Elder is an Elder. But even a 9-year-old can be an Elder. A 7-year-old could be an Elder because they're showing their gifts they've been given and they're sharing it.

Acknowledging that cultural appropriation and the pretendian problem are complex and cross-sectional issues, it is recommended that local Knowledge Keepers and community collaborate to build strong relationships to ensure authentic role models and positive Knowledge Keepers are connected to learners through their journeys.

Ceremony & Spiritual Practices

When the Aunties were discussing limits pertaining to what is shared in Powwow within the realm of the settler-colonial world of academic education there were varied answers, but many felt following your heart and moving with good intentions was a good start but also to acknowledge and staying humble in learning pertaining to ceremony and spiritual practices. All agreed they would approach sharing ceremony with the utmost respect and that different times and situations would call for different answers when asked about what should not be included in sharing. Nicole explains her ideas in sharing knowledge but protecting ceremonial practices. Nicole explains:

> I don't think our ceremonial practices need to be published or our spiritual practices need to be published. And the reason for that is our spiritual protocols and our connections to the beings and the ways that we express higher level interdimensional knowledge is powerful. We can't just let anybody know that. Number two, not anybody can do that because you have to achieve a level of personal healing before any of those channels will even open up. I think the spiritual protocols should be left to us. I think there are multiple levels to enjoy a Powwow. On one primal level its colors, dancing, sounds good, feels good and there's food. People can experience on that level; do we need to explain at a PhD spiritual level to people what's actually going on? The answer is no. Not everyone is ever going to be able to understand at a PhD spiritual level. I feel the information and

knowledge is there for people if they're prepared to do the work and hang around a little bit more, but we don't have to give away the whole picture ASAP.

Janine agrees that different ceremonies don't need to be in school as she explains her ideas in balancing sharing and protecting sacred ceremonies:

> Different ceremonies, things like that that don't need to be in schools. Pretty much that's it, like ceremonial based things. You kind of go there to learn those things over time. Not everybody's a teacher that's why we have cultural advisors and Elders who are appointed in those roles. Those ceremonies that take place. The cultural advisors that are there, the Elders, they know what to do and they go into ceremony to do that. There are different songs for ceremony and different songs played during different times so not putting all of those out into the schools. Because a lot of the ceremonial songs, a lot of people don't know that they are actually ceremony.

Bess explains her reasoning for her stance on keeping Indigenous knowledge sacred and protected due to the increase in cultural appropriation. She shares some teachings are for Indigenous community only:

> There are specific things that shouldn't be shared with everybody, other than dancers or like Indigenous people. I'm super protective of like, I just like, its mind boggling me about the cultural appropriation that's happening everywhere.

Karen mentions that it is important when we are in question about what ceremonies to share that we ask our Elders and Knowledge Keepers for guidance as she shares:

> Maybe [limit] certain ceremonies. Always ask your Elder. I'm not an Elder yet. Well, I'm an Elder but I'm not a Knowledge Keeper, well, I don't know. Ask the Elder. Give tobacco and ask the Elder. The Elder you're asking to come in, that's the person you

should ask when they come to the school. What do you want me to teach? What do you want me to share and then you'll get your answer, you know? Even go do a sweat lodge. It'll tell you in the sweat lodge what needs to be done.

Tesa shares that each community or individual circumstance might have a different context and different result when inquiring about incorporating ceremony into learning as she shares:

> I think that there are traditional drums that many communities have at their Powwows, and I think that there's a place for those traditional drums and it would be up to each individual community and drum on how they want to engage with the school. So, it is about extending the invitation to people and then letting people determine what they feel is appropriate to share in the school. There are pipe ceremonies that go along with the Powwows. I'm not sure if those ceremonies should be in a general classroom. I think if it were just a group of Indigenous students, absolutely…absolutely I think they should be a part of that ceremony. There are some ceremonies that are very personal and very sacred, and they shouldn't be right open, just as I feel anyway with the teachings I received, it's not for show. That's ceremony. You're in ceremony. You're in conversation with Creator and our ancestors and I think that those ceremonies or those parts of ceremony don't belong in a school, in a classroom. Those are all pieces that could be done outside before or after and sometimes I bring my pipe and I don't smoke my pipe, but I bring my bundle. People know that's my bundle and that's what I pray with, there are lots of things I pray with. I think just talking about it is sufficient.
>
> We never know what will happen in the future and so it's being open to it, and I think that's why it's so important to walk in a good way, in a humble way and walk in prayer. And a belief that Creator brings us here for reasons. I never imagined I'd be doing

> this work for the Catholic school board right? I was going to be at Dennis Franklin forever. And that was my goal in life at the time. And I'm sort of like, now, wherever I need to be, I'll be. That's the thing with my bundle as well. My father had made that pipe for me to carry and to look after. He gifted it to me when I got my master's degree. So, I see it as part of my teaching bundle. It's not to say that I wouldn't bring it to ceremony, I'm very personal and private about it, anyways that's off topic but um, you know to not do it but to have the expectation on other people to do it as well right? So, everybody's teachings are so different and that's the important thing for us to remember is that the way that one Knowledge Keeper conducts ceremony might be very different from another Knowledge Keeper. That might be tricky for some educators and principals to understands.

Though much of Kinoo'amaadawaad and Powwow are to be shared, there are some protocols and ceremonies that are not appropriate to share at certain times or at all. Aunties agreed to ask the local Indigenous community when in doubt about including specific ceremonies.

Limit Trauma

Many of the Aunties discussed the idea of limiting the re-traumatization of Indigenous students. Some of the effects of residential school have led to intergenerational trauma and gaps in knowledge around parenting as traditional and cultural practices were systemically oppressed by the government. Mary reflects on some of the harshness and suggests persevering through tough conversations as she shares:

> There are still harsh teachings in the Powwow circle, some Elders can come off as harsh because their intergenerational trauma comes through. It has for me even personally even.

> Don't give up though you know, you gotta keep going… That's what we need, we want people to feel welcome. We want to be inviting.

Cheryl reflects on Kinoo'amaadawaad as it is beneficial in that it is healing but that sometimes those who are new to these spaces overshare in traumatic experiences and cautions in the traumatization or shaming of Indigenous learners as she shares how she is gentle with her own daughters in comparison to some other harsher experiences she's seen:

> I'm not sure [what to limit] at this point. I think maybe those more intense ceremonies. I know some people tend to share their trauma a lot. When there speaking on the mic, some people tend to overshare in their trauma and how they got to where they are. I think it has to be subtle especially to elementary… I think it's going good the way it is but like oversharing that trauma is, can be… can just be like putting your trauma onto somebody else and that's not good. I think some of the older people, I know they carry that Christianity stuff and the older ways where some of them doing like shaming people out. They just don't know right. Saying you're supposed to wear your skirt all the way to your ankles kind of thing, like I'd be careful of that. There are good people, I think there's more good people than those that just kind of shame you out kind of thing. I guess for the women another thing would be like the moontime. Especially if you're a preteen right? My daughter Chayla she was on her moontime at the family day Powwow. She wanted to dance because we just finished her regalia. She was on her moon. She couldn't. She knew better than to just go dance around intertribal even in her clothes kind of thing. Just taking that delicate approach and not shaming people out like that. I tell her your moontime is a very powerful thing. It's very ceremonial purposes. You have good gifts, great gifts. You just gotta learn with it as you go.

Bess comments on her emotions working through learning about residential schools through organizations in a less gentle way as she shares of her experience:

> As someone who's actually reclaiming their culture at 12, there was a lot of confusion, but like not really, I don't think. I didn't learn it from the school system. Although, I think the school system should implement something and I think it would be beneficial for non-Indigenous people. Exposing everyone, exposing to Indigenous people to an extent because it could be harmful too, right? Retriggering. Just like how Dilico retriggered me with this legit, I don't know if you ever seen *We Were Children*? And they forced me into training in order to get a job. I didn't realize this until all this stuff came out…Indigenous people shouldn't be forced to learn the bad stuff. Non-Indigenous people though should so that it wakes them up and they realize the actual racism within like their culture and how their being raised too. Everything and why we are the way we are. Opening that scope up. … It wasn't until just like recently when I went to school and then learned more about residential school. During that youth council I actually went to [visit] residential schools to learn about it and it didn't affect me until I had kids. It didn't hurt me so much until I knew kind of like what if that was my kid? It woke me up. Realized what happened. When I worked at [the local organization], they like forced me to watch a video about Residential school and it like traumatized me. Also, like knowing my grandpa went there but not hearing those stories until he passed on, I think I was 16, 17 you know, like my teenage years is when that all started to come to light.

Cheryl also shared a story about the film *We Were Children* and how her students developed harmful ideas about leaving their community to go to school:

> Do you know that movie, that documentary *We Were Children*? I guess my student was telling me this: when he was in grade 6 or 7 his teachers made him watch it and he was traumatized after that! He said it just really messed him up. When he applied for school here in DFC, he thought that boarding schools, the boarding homes were going to be like that. I was like what the hell? Why would they let you watch that! I remember when they landed, their flight was delayed by like 3 hours, so they didn't get to my house until 1 am. They didn't sleep. I remember he said this is a really big, big city. It's really big and it's our first time here. I told them just go get some sleep. There's blankets there, there's two beds there. I could hear them walking around at night. 2 am, 4 am, 6 am. 7 am they were knocking on my bedroom door and said were going to Tim Hortons. I was like did you guys' sleep? They just laughed and went for a walk. I was like I don't think they slept. Jan was like yeah, I heard them walking around all night! They're probably nervous, excited, scared. But they shared that one of their teachers played that movie in their classroom, what the hell. Geez, I couldn't believe it when they told me, I was like why did they let you watch that? That was there perception then of coming out to school here. they thought that was how it was going to be. When they saw me and Jan they were like you guys are natives? I was like yeah! They thought we were going to be white or something I don't know! *Laughter.*

It is important to balance the learning of the true history of Turtle Island in sharing the good, the bad and the ugly but educators must be aware of potential harm and triggers and should provide adequate supports for learners to work through strong emotions in this learning.

Kinoo'amaadawaad is More than Powwow

One of the themes highlighted by the Aunties was that though Powwow is an amazing ceremony and celebration, Powwow is not all that Indigenous culture is. Karen explains this idea:

> I really admire [local organizations] for bringing the Powwows into the school and doing learning but one thing is they have to realize there's more to the culture than just Powwow. The reason I say this is because my daughter used to work for [a local organization] and one of the workers there that was working there told her that she wasn't Native enough because he doesn't see her attending Powwows. I said "what?" She told me "he said I wasn't Native enough because he doesn't see me at the Powwows." And I'm like wow and this gentleman is well known in the Powwow circle. He's well known in the community. I ended up reporting him to the ED over there because I was like, there's more to being Native, Anishinaabe, Indigenous, than Powwows. I asked [my daughter] "does he know that you go to ceremony? Does he know that you do all these things?" She's like "no" so I think that he didn't know. I do share this story, I don't share his name, but I share that story because there's more to being Anishinaabe than Powwows. I do like it in school, bringing a Powwow to the school is good. People are seeing our culture, they're seeing our dance but there should be more teachings to come with it as well, not just singing and dancing… More teachings need to be done when you bring the Powwow to the school not just drumming and dancing and showcasing because there's more to that.

Battiste (2002) comments on the problematic ideas that "perpetuate the belief that different cultures have nothing to offer but exotic food and dance" (p.202). Though incorporating

Powwow into learning is beneficial, it must be recognized that Kinoo'amaadawaad extends further than one single song, dance, ceremony or practice, that it is a way of life that continues even after the travelling song has ended. Kinoo'amaadawaad is more than a simple or superficial concept; it is multi-faceted and a complex way of knowing, being and doing that requires individuals to explore how they relate to Kinoo'amaadawaad within their journey through different levels of understanding.

Follow Your Heart

The Aunties shared different experiences, ideas and suggestions. An overarching theme was for educators, students, and communities to follow intuitions, to follow the heart. More than likely that will align with walking in a good way, minobimaadziwin. Janine explains:

> If you do everything with an open and kind heart, you get those things, your helpers will come in to play. If you follow that first piece of knowledge, semaa first, you get what you need from that. Everything falls into place as it should. Every Powwow is different but it's because it's for the people that come and the people that have yet to come. So, to carry on the Powwow circle and to carry on those things and do them in a good way, you allow those spaces to be made for the people that are coming way after. So, just know that its purposeful.

To educators, communities, families, and learners: we are at a unique time and space here on Turtle Island where we face many different challenges in walking together in a good way. Know that though this work is difficult, like Janine comments, this work is important and purposeful. Follow your heart.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

What settlers need to understand about how knowledge is created, that knowledge is not just simply in their heads. That it comes out of all different kinds of relationships, including relationships with Creation and that if you actually open yourself up to a sustained relationship with a being, you will actually have a transformed perspective of what your responsibilities are and what the scope of knowledge can be. - Tim (Armstrong, 2020, p.70)

Introduction

This chapter will focus on the learning that occurred for me, the researcher and a reflection on findings during my process in looking to answer my research questions. As Wilson states, "if research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (p. 135). This research changed me.

Privileging Kinoo'amaadawaad

I had completed my 8 interviews, analyzed responses, and chunked the Aunties responses into themes. It seemed like those final 3 beats were played on the drum, indicating the song was about to end. Thank Creator too because my mind power and overall energy were starting to dwindle, just like I would feel had I danced 8 rounds. Then, I heard the drum start back up again. Maybe it was an eagle whistle, or maybe it was an eagle fan... it was clear, I had to do one more, for the people. Just like I would on the trail when I hear that eagle whistle or fan, I answer the call. Exhausted, I took a deep breath, smiled, and kept on dancing. Interview 9 was with none other than my academic inspiration, the one who had reignited my spark through her work *No Longer Your Token Indian*. In this final interview, I asked: how do we bring Powwows to the schools in a good way? Morningstar responded:

> This is where I think I might be a little different in terms of Powwows in the school. I'm in a place where I think we should be doing our own thing. It's not to say Powwows don't belong in school, but it's like, how do we get the school to the Powwow? Flipping

> it. And how do we get school boards to build partnerships with communities and have the kids in their communities? We're constantly having to fit into their [Eurocentric] box and meet their standards and I really feel like I'm in a place where we need to be able to do what we need to do and they need to get on board with it, not the other way around. We keep having to stifle ourselves to fit into that world. I think I would flip it in how do we get more schools to the Powwow? How do we build more partnership with community so that way we're telling the school that they're more than welcome to be at the Powwow but they're not the ones organizing the Powwow. I think they need to come; I see it more of like, yeah, we have a day like a social afternoon social Powwow, I don't see anything wrong with that. It's like, why don't we build more partnerships so that we can even ask a community like we want to have a school district Powwow, how do we make this happen? I would like to see more focus on that partnership because I think it needs to happen for sure, but kind of almost like flipping it like how do we get the school to the Powwow?

I missed it the first time around, hearing the Aunties' stories, but after finally listening with my heart with Morning Star, I had made the connection. The Aunties had been guiding me all along, but perhaps that teaching wasn't for me then, when Tesa commented "… there's just so many ways to connect the two. To fit the western [settler-colonial] curriculum *into our* traditional knowledge." I had been so set on looking for ways to bring culture into the settler world of academic education through formalized schools. What if we flipped it and asked, how do we bring schools to the Powwow? How do we bring the settler-colonial world of education to Kinoo'amaadawaad? How can schools be reformed and transformed to be culturally safe spaces

where Aunties and families would naturally feel included and welcomed, to a point that they would want to share in Powwow?

The *People for Education: Still waiting for Truth and Reconciliation* report (2023) describes that there have been significant increases in the number of schools reporting that they offer cultural support programs but that these programs "were still one of the least reported Indigenous education opportunities compared to all other opportunities" (p.14) and I reflect on how I hope this work helps to improve access to cultural support programs.

When I began this learning journey, I focused on the questions outlined in the introductory section: Does including Indigenous worldview, culture and ceremony contribute to learner success in the settler-colonial world of academia and or in living in minobimaadiziwin? Does the Powwow circle fit into learning in the settler-colonial world of academia and or in living in minobimaadiziwin? I will always appreciate my learning in the settler-colonial world of academia, I will always remember the lessons along this journey. I have a special place in my heart for the way I once coveted gold star stickers, but I have come to realize that in Kinoo'amaadawaad and in the Powwow circle, there is learning that goes above and beyond any settler-stream education curriculum. Through Kinoo'amaadawaad I've learned I come from the stars and there is a gold, glittering spirit star, aadisookaan, that lives inside of me. I am now able to confidently share Indigenous ways of learning, being and doing, Kinoo'amaadawaad, is more fruitful than the settler-stream model of settler-colonial education. My own immeasurable learning journey is more significant than any grade, gold star or diploma.

The *People for Education* report (2023) outlines that "strong relationship building between First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and non-Indigenous communities, consultation with Indigenous communities about educational priorities, and partnerships with

Indigenous community organizations are all key to responding to the TRC's Calls to Action for education" (p.12) to which I agree but I think this relationship facilitates so much more than answering a call to action. In answering these calls and building relationships, we are living in minobimaadziwin, together.

Tesa reflects on the gratitude she has for living in minobimaadziwin and the vast knowledge that can be found within Kinoo'amaadawaad as she shares:

> I think of how, how lucky am I? You know to be from this life. For me, I wish for everybody to have that. To be at Powwow, to be at that celebration at that gathering, praying. To really recognize that it is beyond the pomp and circumstance, right? It's beyond the look, the beauty of it. Yes, it is beautiful, right. It's not to be pretentious but that there is a depth and a knowledge and an ability and a strength that I wish everybody could have. … It's very humbling, to know that [Powwow] has survived. That it is thriving. It's not just surviving but it's made it through all of that and really thinking that we're just small, a small part of this really big, wonderful experience. There's so much and you could actually not really finish the learning in one area and that's why we need to keep going back. It's not like level 1, level 2, level 3… it's not organized like that. This is a way of life. That's why, you know, were always learning. Even someone old like me, I'm just a baby in all of this. I still, I look to other people to tell me what I need to know because I just don't think I'll get to a place that I know enough and that's okay because that keeps me humble and keeps me going back.
>
> I think just wrapping it up, summing up what we've been talking about is that it can't be a one off. This is about building relationship with community, with Powwow community, with Knowledge Keepers, with dancers. It's about holding space and

creating space for that knowledge and recognizing it as very valid and equivalent if not more than our settler-stream education system outlines as academic. The understanding for settler folks, settler people that it's not just performative. That a Powwow demonstrates really our very sophisticated knowledge systems. I was talking earlier about there being governance, science, math, language, spirituality… a very complex, sophisticated knowledge that you know that has the strength that is beyond anything that settler colonial system has.

When I think of the name of your paper… Saasaakwe… Saasaakwe. It's like to yell out. It's like we're rejoicing… you're just joyful. It is sacred. It absolutely has to be done in or out of schools and every situation is going to be very different. The work has to be done in partnerships. There has to be monetary support from the school boards. There has to be the commitment to build relationship with Indigenous community or First Nations community and then there has to be the learning that is done by the teachers. Those are kind of the big things, right? Then the planning and follow through. It's a lot of work. We have a lot of good work to do!

I began my journey asking if Kinoo'amaadawaad contributed to learner success. I am now confident in sharing that yes, Kinoo'amaadawaad is not only beneficial to all educators and learners, but essential in the ongoing journey in navigating reconciliation and peace here on Turtle Island. There are gaps in the education system that can be filled by pieces found in Kinoo'amaadawaad that bring balance to self, educators, learners, communities, and the world.

Suggestions and Further Research

Though I am confident in sharing that Kinoo'amaadawaad is beneficial to all educators and learners, I am left with further questions. Are schools a safe space for Kinoo'amaadawaad?

Have educators done the work required to build capacity for Kinoo'amaadawaad? Have academic institutions demonstrated cultural safety to the point that Kinoo'amaadawaad is respected and authentic? Does Powwow fit in academic institutions or does Powwow belong more in the community – for, by and with members of the Indigenous community?

This paper interviewed only adult Anishinaabekwe women. Further research should be completed with all who are part of the Powwow circle: women, men, two-spirit, youth, adult, Elder, the ancestors, the Water, the Land. As the Aunties suggested, it is up to the local educators to connect with local Knowledge Keepers to facilitate their own search for knowledge of how to move forward in a good way.

Minawaa giga-waabamin

Like this research, my own learning continues. I think about the end of the Powwow here. The giveaway song, the final Saasaakwe; followed by the travelling song, sung in prayer that all will travel home safely and that each of us will return to the circle once again in a good way. The staff carriers, flag carriers and dancers dance out of the arbour together, shaking hands on the way out, wishing each other well until we see each other again. We all know this is not the end of our journey together. "Minawaa giga-waabamin" can be heard as the dancers exit the arbour, shaking hands. From what I know, there is no word for goodbye in our language. Minawaa giga-waabamin emphasizes well wishes, walk in a good way in minobimaadziwin until we see each other again.

I carefully pack up my regalia. As we close the trunk of the car, I can hear someone's rowdy young nephew shout out, "one more!" followed by a pause… then an eruption of loud, bubbling over, belly laughter from a group of Aunties. The laughter spreads from car to car, travelling through the parking lot. The laughter lingers in the air and too in our hearts, carrying

us lovingly until we meet again. We move forward in our daily life knowing that laughter, that good medicine, that aadisookaan, that sprit from the stars, continue to flow through us, connecting us all, helping us to learn and walk in a good way…Minawaa giga-waabamin.

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Appendix A: Opwaaganasining: Pipe Stone Band
An Excerpt from Laframboise (2011) Storytelling in a First Nations Community

Here is one that was passed on from generation to generation. One of them is, they used to have wars here with the Iroquois. The Iroquois Indians from down south used to come up through Lake Superior. They would come to all the communities around Lake Superior and steal the women and children so they could have more Iroquois people. It wasn't over dominance; it was just to make sure they survived as a people. One day, the creator, the Great Spirit, made himself present. He said I come to you with a broken heart. A broken spirit. All these people are Anishinaabe over here. That red rock that you see, that's you. And I look at you and you are that red rock. You are the Opwaaganasining, the pipestone band. Out of that red rock, which is a part of you, I am going to stop these wars. Enough people have died and been killed. It is not well for the people of Turtle Island. To commemorate me stopping this, you are going to pray to me and thank me for saving lives. That red rock, there are certain parts of that red rock under the Water that you can use to carve it and make pipes out of it. That pipe, you are going to burn the sweet grass and tobacco so that it smokes. The smoke will rise to the air and come to me, which tells me that you are praying and saying thanks for stopping these wars. So. Now you are called the Opwaaganasining band, the pipestone band. Today they find parts of those pipes in Mexico.

So now they have instead of wars, they come up and have gatherings and competitions of warriors. They have canoe races and battles; tomahawk throwing, bow and quiver games, tug of war and pole throwing games. All sorts of games they had. The kids would make dream catchers, and the significance of that is, there are feathers on the left and right. There are two in the middle. The one would represent that guy [the Ojibwe] and the other one represents that other guy, say the Iroquois. In the middle, we are all Indians; we're all part of the same world. With

the dream catcher we know that we will be friends from now on. We don't have to worry about all the war stories we hear about from generation to generation because we are all part of the same world.

Before this, when there were wars, just before the Iroquois were coming up, they would put the women and children in the caves, they would dig out caves and cover them up and cover them up with branches and tress in front. The Chief said here is a bag of artefacts. There was gold, silver, copper, pottery, pipes, all kinds of stuff in there. He gave a mission to one Indian to go north of here and to hide that. He said put it away some place it will be sacred. One day, maybe that day may not come in our life time, but one day someone will find it and it will tell the story of the Opwaaganasining band. We wonder today, I wonder where he went from here? Driving down Highway 11, just before Orian bay, that mountain on that long stretch passed Polly Lake, there is a mountain. If you are coming from Beardmore, Rocky Bay, you can look and see an outline, a picture of the Indian head. We figure that's where it's buried, that Indian head is guarding those things. Anyway, I can share with you that part of the story, it's a beautiful story.[5]

[5] Interview 4, interview by Ashlie Laframboise, Lake Helen Reserve, Ontario Canada. March 11th 2011.

Appendix B: Chart of Research Models and Frameworks

Research Theme	Kaandossiwin Flower Model	RRIB Policy	Powwow Circle Model	Jingle Dress	Ash's Research
Foundational elements	Roots	Promotion awareness	The Land	Green dress	Tobacco first Fall 2021: approach school board with potential project within the realm of Indigenous education through interviewing Indigenous counsellors and graduation coaches; redirected Winter 2021: inquire with educators in various settings to better understand issues within education in region through educators eyes Winter 2022: approach Chief and Council of home community to understand issues within education in home community; redirected Summer 2022: discussion of thesis project around sharing parts of the Powwow circle as I travelled to various Powwows through the region.
Self as central to the search	Flower centre	Pre-consultation	Drum beat & heart beat	Purple dress	Ask about issues that are important to the local community What information will be valuable to the community? Community involved in research design
The journey, process, transformation	Leaves	Consultation process design	Getting into regalia, getting prepared to go to the Powwow; getting to the Powwow	Water dress	BBQ and Picnic – September 2022 with participants Work with the participants to find information that would be valuable to the community. Identify where the final product might be shared and with who – who is the research for? Identify possible triggers and solutions to mitigate or provide for healing Look at past research completed in the community. Could anything have been done differently? Information dispersed about the current education system and statistics through history and information about culture in learning

Research Theme	**Kaandossiwin Flower Model**	**RRIB Policy**	**Powwow Circle Model**	**Jingle Dress**	**Ash's Research**
Methodological backbone and supports	Stem	Consultation process	MC's, Elders, head dancers, OG Uncles guiding you and helping you , Ancestors The Aunties	Ogichidaakwe warrior woman dress	Interviews 1 on 1 sessions Group sharing sessions Sharing circles Community events Photos, videos, songs
Diverse ways of searching for knowledge	Petals	Accommodation	Other dancers in the circle	Bess dress	
Academic context	Environment	Evaluation and feedback	Community context – what does this mean for the healing of self? Family? Community?	Unicorn dress? Star Dress	Provide opportunities for participants and community to give feedback and make changes
		Follow-up			Check in to see if and how the resources or knowledge are being used in the community. Do any changes need to be made? Are there any further questions that need to be answered?

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Semaa (tobacco) First, Always – Establishing Connection

- Tell me about your connection to community, about you and where you are from…

Grand Entry

- Can you describe for me your first Powwow experience?

Dance Your Style

- Tell me about a significant Powwow experience.

Waabam Aki (see the land) – Paradigms and Worldviews

- What was your education experience in a formal school like? Was Indigenous culture part of your formal education?

Kinoo'amaadawaad – Learning and teaching with each other

- What was your learning like in the Powwow circle? How was it similar or different from your experience learning in a formal school?
- Do you think Powwow helps us to learn? If yes, how?

Powwow/Research/Education as Healing and Ceremony

- Powwow has helped me in healing and finding my own identity. Has this been similar for you?
- The education system has helped me in healing and finding my own identity as I share with students in my journey. Has this been similar for you?

Miawaa giga-waabamin (I'll see you again, until next time) Minobimaadiziwin (live a good life)

- How might we bring the Powwow into the school? Do you think this would be appropriate? Why or why not?
- How might we encourage students to participate in Powwows? How might the school play a role in connecting students to the ceremony? Should the school play a role in facilitating this connection? why or why not?
- Is there anything within Powwow we should not share?
- How would we bring Powwow into the schools in a good way?

Appendix D: Letter of Introduction & Informed Consent Form

Saasaakwe
Masters of Education, Lakehead University

Letter of Introduction & Informed Consent Form

Dear Potential Participant:

My name is Ashlie Laframboise from Red Rock Indian Band, Lake Helen Reserve. I am a Master of Education student at Lakehead University. You are invited to participate in a research study that will help to fulfil the research requirements for obtaining my Master of Education degree. This research involves taking part in an in-person interview. This interview will take approximately 60-90 minutes and the location will be safe space we mutually agree upon.

Purpose of Research: Indigenous ways of knowing, seeing, being and doing have been historically suppressed within the western education system. Today, Indigenous voices are being included in the modern world of western education. This research hopes to explore if/how Indigenous traditional ways of sharing knowledge and the current western education world interweave in contributing to learners' success.

Description of Research: The researcher would like to invite you to participate in a study that investigates the role of Indigenous ways of knowing, seeing, being and doing in the world of western education. If you agree to participate, I will be conducting in-person interviews. I will provide you the questions at least a week before the interview takes places. The interview will be video and audio-recorded. You may ask for me to stop at any time.

I will transcribe the interview once our meeting is complete. You will have an opportunity to review the transcription and the final product to ensure information is communicated in a good way. The data from the interview will be categorized into themes and discussed alongside other research data to form suggestions as to how we can move forward in learning in a good way together. The research from this study will be used for this thesis, articles in academic journals, presentations, conferences and workshops. You will receive a copy of the final research for use with your use with your healing, to share with your family and community again in hopes of suggesting ways to move forward in our shared learning in a good way.

Risks and Benefits: Through exploring and sharing in experiences within the western education system, you may feel discomfort; some may find sharing these experiences liberating or healing. Through sharing in your experience, you may not benefit directly from participating in this study, but the study will produce a body of knowledge on the role of Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing within traditional and modern education systems, contributing to amplifying our Indigenous voices.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time up to the point of submission of data. Your decision not

to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer any particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researcher (Ashlie Laframboise).

Confidentiality: All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence. You will have the option of including your name in the completed project or remaining anonymous. Your data will be safely stored using physical and digital locking systems with the researcher for 7 years. Only you, my thesis supervisor and I will have access to this information. If you discontinue, any information collected from you will not be used in anyway, including for this research. If you choose not to participate, the data will be destroyed, and no copies of the data will be preserved. Confidentiality will be provided and respected to the fullest extent possible by law. Should you choose to remain anonymous, no information that discloses the identity of you as a participant will be released or published without consent unless required by law. You have the opportunity to choose if/how you would like to be identified.

Questions: If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact: **Ashlie Laframboise** either by telephone at **(807) 629-5861** or by e-mail **alaframb@lakeheadu.ca** My thesis supervisor is Dr. Paul Cormier, and he can be reached at pcormier@lakeheadu.ca

SIGNATURES:
By signing below you state that:

- the study has been explained to you and all questions were answered;
- you have read and understand the letter of introduction;
- you have read and understand the consent form;
- you understand personal information will be kept confidential.

By signing below you state that it is understood that you, as the participant:

- have the right not to participate and the right to stop at any time;
- may refuse to participate without consequence;
- have a choice of not answering any specific questions;
- are free now, and in the future, to ask any questions about the study;

By signing below, you consent to (please check yes or no to each statement below)

- authorize the video taping of an interview Yes __ No __
- authorize the audio taping of an interview Yes __ No __
- have your name used in the study Yes __ No __
- would like to use a pseudonym (fictitious name) Yes __ No __

I (print name) _____, consent to participate in the study conducted by Ashlie Laframboise. Ashlie Laframboise and I have discussed the research project and I have understood the nature of the project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent. I have read and agree to the above information and consent to proceed in this research:

_____	_____	_____
Full Name (please print)	Signature	Date