A graphic featuring a grey tepee on the left and a circular inset showing three children. The background is white with an orange horizontal band at the bottom.

1st National Conference of the  
**Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ABLK)**  
March 7 - 9, 2007

CANADIAN COUNCIL ON LEARNING CCL CCA CONSEIL CANADIEN SUR L'APPRENTISSAGE

*Modern Knowledge, Ancient Wisdom*  
An Integration of Past and Present for a New Tomorrow

*A Report on the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre's First National Conference*

Modern Knowledge, Ancient Wisdom: An Integration of  
Past and Present for a New Tomorrow”  
Edmonton, Alberta  
March 7 and 9, 2007

Malreddy Pavan Kumar

## Disclaimer

This report has been prepared for the Canadian Council on Learning's Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ABLKC). It is issued by the ABLKC as a basis for further knowledge exchange. The opinions and conclusions expressed in the document, however, are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ABLKC staff, consortium, or membership.

All quotations and illustrations in the report without citations are transcribed versions of the Animation Themes Bundles' (ATB) PowerPoint notes, and participants' evaluations at the ABLKC's First National Conference.

The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre is one of five knowledge centres established in various learning domains by the Canadian Council on Learning. The ABLKC is co-led by the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC) and the Aboriginal Education Research Centre (AERC) College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.

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**i. List of Tables and Diagrams**

1. Learning from Place
2. Nourishing the Learning Spirit
3. Diversity of Aboriginal Educational Needs
4. Organizational Role and Expectations

## ii. Abbreviations

CTAs	Community Tripartite Agreements
CMEC	Council of Ministries of Education Canada
GM	General Motors
FN	First Nations
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
INAC/DIAND	Indian Northern Affairs Canada/Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development
ITEP	Indian Teacher Education Program
IIHL	Indigenous Institutes of Higher Education
NWT	North West Territories
U of M	University of Manitoba
K-12	Kindergarten to Grade 12
ATB	Animation Theme Bundle
ABLKC	Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre
CCL	Canadian Council on Learning

## Executive Summary

This report is based on the First National Conference of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ABLKC) entitled “Modern Knowledge, Ancient Wisdom: An Integration of Past and Present for a New Tomorrow” held in Edmonton from March 7th to March 9th, 2007. The report provides the conference proceedings, which included keynote speakers, a presentation by the Canadian Council on Learning on its joint project with the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre on Redefining Success in Aboriginal Learning and presentations on the emerging work of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre by the six Animation Theme Bundles (ATB) leads and their organizations who themselves are members of the ABLKC Consortium.

- Learning from Place
- Comprehending and Nourishing the Learning Spirit
- Aboriginal Language Learning
- Diverse Educational Systems and Learning
- Pedagogy of Professionals and Practitioners in Learning
- Technology and Learning

The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre is one of five national centres of the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL), whose mandate is to investigate the promising practises in Aboriginal learning, inclusive of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people

This report provides not only the summaries of the presentations of the six Animation Theme Bundles, including their priorities and processes for exploring promising practices in each of the thematic areas, but also includes summaries of the participant commentaries coming from evaluations after the conference in relation to the conference themes. Based on the preliminary research findings of the bundle themes, and the evaluations provided by the participants at the conference, this report then offers a detailed analysis of the problems, prospects, and the future direction of Aboriginal learning in Canada.

### 1. Introduction and Background

In an analytical essay on Aboriginal people's educational prospects in Canada, Richardson and Bnacet-Cohen (2001) state that "the old people taught you to look at the world in a holistic way... fields such as economics, politics, engineering and computer science train you to look at things in a segmented way." This statement is a glaring testimony to the contradictions between modern knowledge and ancient wisdom in the educational practices of Canada's Aboriginal people.

By suggesting that the current approaches to Aboriginal learning do not focus on lifelong learning, and that they simply focus on the competency aspects of graduates' performances through standardized tests, the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ABLK) aptly recognizes the validity of such contradictions. Moreover, as ABLKC maintains, scholarly and research trends unduly focus on the problems in Aboriginal education as opposed to identifying its promising practises (Battiste, 2005). These concerns are strongly reflective of the empirical and conceptual findings documented in the literature.

Specifically, scholars employ two variants of cultural discontinuity theory to explain the educational failures of Aboriginal people. The first refers to schools' failure to acknowledge and incorporate the different cultural standards and expectations that Aboriginal youth bring with them into a Eurocentric school system (Battiste & Henderson, 2000). The second deals with the way cultural differences are deployed as a rationale for Aboriginal students' failures in the classroom (Gue, 1974; Ogbu, 1987). It is, therefore, no surprise that the imposition of Eurocentric values has provoked Aboriginal people to protect the viability of their cultural education *by rejecting* the formal educational systems (Chrisjohn, 1998; Boldt, 1993). In this regard, Aboriginal students' failure in classrooms is largely attributed to the rich experiences they acquire in their own culture, which do not complement the boring routines and activities of school (Hawthorn, 1967). However, the critics assert that cultural discontinuity as a cause of educational failure undermines the economic and social factors that are not culturally specific to being Indian or Aboriginal (Ledlow, 1992).

Yet, it is only recently—particularly since the inception of the Indian Control of Indian Education policy in 1973—that these contradictions have received public attention. In recognition of these trends, the ABLKC's First National Conference—attended by a consortium of 80 organizations, scholars, Elders, educators, and community members—provided a space for intellectual reflection, participation, and discussion on the current status and future of the Aboriginal education and learning in Canada.

Such an inclusive approach to discussion and reflection can be regarded as a unique methodological strategy, not only because it is distinctly separate from the academic orientation to data collection, but also because it is complimentary to the "self-ethnological" models that are popularized by minority groups, Indigenous people, and

subaltern societies in other parts of the world (Alilaih, 1996; Monture, 1995). Furthermore, this is conducive to the deliberative democracy model that is gaining momentum in the politics of cultural minorities in the West (Mathews, 1994). In this model, political strategies for minority representation are configured through an open dialogue between the members of the community, civil society and social actors. Dubbed variedly as “minor” or “subaltern” methodologies, this dialogic process is devised to capture the language of marginalized voices (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986; Amin, 1995).

The frequent repetition of the “lay” person language used by the participants in the evaluations becomes all the more salient because it serves as a periodic reminder of their real needs.

By gathering perspectives from various theoretical, methodological and conceptual angles, this report concludes that there is a convergence of a complex past and an equally complex present that poses uncertain challenges to, but expectant promises for, the future of Aboriginal learning. This, however, does not imply a “bridging” discourse between the mainstream and Aboriginal educational practises, nor does it allude to an overt ideological encounter between the two. By articulating these issues, this report aims to provide a preliminary focus on the current state of Aboriginal learning in Canada to guide researchers, graduate students, and policy-makers in assessing and capitalizing on emergent successful practices.

The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre held its first National Conference at the Edmonton Marriott at River Cree Resort, Enoch Cree Nation on March 7 - 9, 2007. This report provides an overview of that conference, a summary of the conference speakers, and information about those who helped contribute to the knowledge exchange at that event.

Of the five national CCL Learning Knowledge Centres in Canada, the ABLKC was the latest addition with the launch on October 19, 2006, at Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. As a national centre, its Consortium of over 100 organizations, educators, and institutions is represented in the geographical areas of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and the Prairies, and its National Advisory Committee is represented in the other Canadian provinces, having three offices located in Ottawa, Ontario (Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami - ITK); Saskatoon, Saskatchewan (AERC); and Calgary, Alberta (FNAHEC). The four other Knowledge Centres collaborate with the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre in project activities and they are as follows: Work and Learning (Ontario), Early Childhood Learning (Quebec), Health and Learning (British Columbia and Yukon) and Adult Learning (Atlantic Canada).

The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ABLKC) has a mandate to promote and support evidence-based decision-making about learning throughout all stages of life—from early childhood through to the workplace and beyond. Our vision is to be a catalyst for lifelong learning across Canada.

\*\*Please see Section 8 for a more detailed description of the ABLKC mandate.

## 2. Keynote Speakers

### **Dr. Danny Musqua (Saulteaux First Nation), Elder**

In the opening address at the reception, Dr. Danny Musqua, Saulteaux, Elder who has given longstanding service to the University of Saskatchewan and the First Nations University of Canada and currently to Saskatchewan Native Theatre Company, provided insights into the sources and philosophy of Aboriginal learning and its relationship to the physical realm of knowledge.

The spirit of knowledge, according to Dr. Musqua, “came down into the physical universe to take on the vehicle of a body, so that we can understand the physical nature of God.” The purpose of the spirit’s journey into the physical realm of the world is to comprehend the nature of the Creator:

“When the spirit comes into this body, it loses all consciousness of that place over there because, now it is surrendering itself to the physical, which it has to learn. The spirit and the body together must go on a journey.”

Dr. Musqua further stated that, since the spirit is embedded within us, the knowledge that comes along with it is also internalized in our physical bodies. Like a mother who nurtures her child, the spirit provides the most formative aspects of knowledge of the world, while separating from us in the early stage of life. Hence the onus to acquire the knowledge of the physical universe shifts from the spirit to the individual, and in most cases, to the community. Drawing from a personal vignette, Dr. Musqua commemorated the way the knowledge formation is practiced in Aboriginal communities through dialogue. In the dialogic process, “there was no right or wrong”: people spoke their mind, and practiced what they thought. Yet the right knowledge, or the right direction in obtaining knowledge, is achieved through incessant experiments of trial and error, and finally generating a fact from such experiments.

Dr. Musqua regards the capacity of the physical mind to be as great as spirit. For instance, he marvels at the ability of a man who can read 300 pages in half an hour, which means that he has gone deeper than the physical mind. This becomes possible only when the physical mind and the spiritual mind interact with each other.

“And there, when the spiritual mind takes over the physical mind, it does mysterious powerful things. And it is eternal. That is the inner life.”

Earth is the source of all our physical knowledge, and if we don’t take care of it, our physical knowledge faces that threat of extinction. Earth inhabits all forms of life and its knowledge, “species of insects, one species of animals—everything is intertwined. And if we understand our spirits and the teachings of our fathers, we will care about that.” In fact, the basic knowledge of all life forms can be better understood by learning about the earth than by studying biology or sciences. Dr. Musqua states:

“You don’t know how many other little creatures rely on that flower and raise their little children on that flower; and you are going to cut off their source of food?” I never learned that in science/biology. I learned a lot of beautiful things in biology, but I never saw the reason why I should study biology.”

One of the greatest problems with modern scientific knowledge is that it constantly displaces the vital sources of our physical knowledge—the land—and therefore fails to understand the Aboriginal forms of knowledge. Dr. Musqua states that “people are taking all these knowledge systems and claiming things that are so absolutely, terribly hard to interpret.” Physical knowledge should be open and accessible to all, he noted, but modern sciences have turned it into an exclusive domain of education with publications and copyrights. The disciplining of public knowledge prevents people from freely coming to know it, interpret it, and apply it according to their real life needs. Against this, Dr. Musqua argues that Aboriginal people should reclaim the very idea of “knowledge” through their experiential ways of knowing:

“We need a collective of Elders to interpret what that one word means. Not one person by himself can teach the people. That’s a collective thing. That’s why we are having a hard time finding a word like ‘justice’, ‘society’, because they are an ‘experience’. The old languages are experience. And to make a word out of it, you can’t find words to explain it.”

Having said that however, Dr. Musqua relayed that Aboriginal people and modern knowledge should participate in “a dual engagement” in order to exchange knowledge, and to honor their own respective traditions. Although they may not agree with each other, establishing trust between the two can lead to a better understanding of the process of their knowledge production and its purpose.

Because people are dual in nature, with the possession of both spiritual and physical forms “they have to become one”. During the course of one’s life, in one’s pursuit of knowledge, the body is always testing the inner spirit. While the spiritual mind knows where it is leading, it certainly needs the physical mind to surrender to the latter in order to complete its journey.

### **John B. Zoe, (Tlicho First Nation) Tlicho Executive Officer**

The luncheon keynote address by John B. Zoe echoed many of Dr. Musqua’s concerns, especially his appeal to preserving the Aboriginal tradition against the forces of modernization. As a land claims negotiator, Zoe has traveled and lived closely with many Aboriginal communities across Canada. Based on his experiences, Zoe believes that “the land is like a book. You have to read it, turn the pages to understand it, because the land talks about your history.”

In many First Nations cultures the learning structure is traditional, and it begins at home. Zoe asserts that today’s Aboriginal youth is “in trouble” because they are conditioned by a learning structure at home and are switched into a “foreign” learning structure at school. Drawing from his experiences in New Zealand, Zoe contends that education

should be treated as a collective process, wherein learning arises from sharing the knowledge of the land from Elders, and other cultural traditions that are passed on to younger generations through practice.

Furthermore, Zoe considers that a co-existence of the traditional knowledge systems with modern education can be useful. For instance, in his experience as a mediator of land claims, Zoe came across corporate miners using the same system of names and models that explain environmental impact as the Aboriginal knowledge traditions. In the co-existence of the two knowledge systems, Zoe states:

“The place-names really came alive for us during that period. And when we got into the over-lapping discussions with our neighbors, these place-names also became very much alive, because they talked about the shared use of area. So we did not have a big major problem in coming to an agreement with that.”

In this regard, Zoe asserts that Aboriginal people have always shown an interest in the Western knowledge systems. Although Western knowledge systems are fine and “...good to make money...they should also invest into language, culture and way of life.”

**Dr. Marie Smallface-Marule, (Kainai-Blood Tribe) President of First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium and Red Crow Community College**

Dr. Marie Smallface-Marule provided an overview of the *History of First Nations Education*, detailing an analysis of the Government of Canada’s educational policies, including the Indian and Northern Affairs of Canada’s (INAC), the responses of the Assembly of First Nations and other Aboriginal governance bodies to these policies.

With its systematic funding and policy guidelines, Dr. Smallface-Marule asserted that INAC has been ignoring First Nations people’s educational needs. Her chief concern is that neither the Government of Canada nor INAC are allowing Aboriginal people “to have a say” in the designing of educational policies. Instead, they continue to force an assimilationist agenda based on the European educational model:

“They still have that mentality that they know better, and they still depend on non-First Nations experts. We have this room full of experts with the qualifications and the knowledge; and yet they do not consult with us, and they do not involve us in planning our future.”

Thus Dr. Smallface-Marule fears that the denial of self-determination is the greatest barrier to Aboriginal peoples’ future success in education. For the most part, Canadian government relies upon the data provided by non-Aboriginal experts, think tanks, and research centres, including Statistics Canada, which are often incomplete, and irrelevant to the contemporary Aboriginal educational needs. However, Dr. Smallface-Marule is optimistic that CCL is a good partnering institution, which has the potential for building educational resources in collaborating with Aboriginal people:

“What I like about this whole initiative by CCL is that they are willing to let us have a lead in the development of this Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. I would have been happier if they had called it the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning Knowledge Centre.”

**Dr. Sherry Farrell Racette (Métis) "Beyond Craft: Valuing Aesthetic Knowledge and Practice in Indigenous Knowledge Traditions," Banquet Address**

Like John B. Zoe, Dr. Sherry Farrell Racette, Professor in the Art History Department of Concordia University, in Montreal, Quebec, drew upon her personal experiences with Aboriginal communities to develop new learning strategies. In her career as a teacher, Racette observed a great deal of learning strategies from her students, including “special-needs boys” in custody, and graduate students. Racette has always used bead-work as a learning resource to build “learning communities.” She also used it to teach patients to build self confidence. In addition to this, Racette employed beading as a tool to teach respect for traditional artists. Her beading and artwork served as a powerful backdrop of images to her talk to illustrate her message.

Beading is a meticulous learning process due to its cognitive aspect. For instance, “granny’s designs” are remembered by the community for their numerical combinations and formulas. Because beading involves a lot of counting, measuring, and learning in the technical aspects of the materials, and involves problem-solving, it is embodied by many creative aspects of learning. In this sense, then “all traditional arts are functional and are an integral part of the network of knowledge that our ancestors accumulated over generations.”

Critically appraising the views of Greg Cajete, one of the most respected advocates of the Indigenous science, especially on the integration of art with science, Racette asserted that “native arts and science are born of a lived and storied participation with the natural landscape, open to the roles of sensation, perception, imagination, emotion and spirit.” Furthermore, elaborating on the importance of visual thinking in Indigenous pedagogy, Racette advocated that like scientific knowledge, aesthetic expression serves as a means of synthesizing, integrating and reinterpreting knowledge.

In all, Racette identifies childhood as the most important and most formative stage of learning: “the children know there is an artist in every one of us, and now they are going to be honored for it.”

In Racette’s view, aesthetic learning should be seen as part of the regular systematic learning:

“In the act of creation we connect with the divine and the sacred, however we understand them. The rhythm of beading, painting, carving, dancing and drumming connect us to our own inner rhythms and the greater rhythms around us. The breath of song, voice and movement release us and opens us to the world around us.”

Joining the ranks of Greg Cajete, Michael Dokstotor, and Marie Battiste, Racette said that she is not alone in “advocating Indigenous aesthetic traditions both traditional and contemporary, as powerful cognitive, emotional and spiritual strategies to provide us with alternate means to transfer knowledge, decolonize, heal and revitalize.” The challenge, however, seems to be the validation of aesthetic learning in today’s individual learning; moving it from the margin “into the heart” of what a learner wants to do.

### **3. Report on ABLKC and CCL Redefining Success Joint Initiative: Jarrett Laughlin, Senior Research Analyst, Canadian Council on Learning**

Jarrett Laughlin works as a Senior Research Analyst at the Canadian Council on Learning. Among other things, Laughlin is responsible for identifying innovative and holistic approaches to researching and reporting on lifelong learning for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

Jarrett Laughlin’s presentation began with relaying his work experience with the Assembly of First Nations’ Chiefs Committee on Education and the National Indian Education Council that conveyed emerging notions of success. The impetus to move forward with this success initiative came when Laughlin moved to the Canadian Council on Learning and partnered with ABLKC and its allied partnerships with the National Aboriginal Organizations. Since the mandate of CCL was to be a catalyst for lifelong learning and success in learning were paramount to the work of CCL, and ABLKC, the vision and mission for this initiative was born.

Laughlin provided a brief history of why this initiative was needed, referring to Dr. Marie Battiste’s comments from the previous day:

“Achievement, graduation rates, and performance on standardized tests are some of the bars that are being set for success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learning... so, is that need, to go beyond that idea of where this bar stands, and change where those bars are, and to have that discussion being led by you.”

This iterative approach began with these issues in mind when the workshop was held in Edmonton, February 8 and 9, 2007. The workshop participants included representatives from the First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. This first step in the process of redefining success has been the continued development of relationships, establishing working partnerships with Aboriginal educational institutions, communities, Elders, the members of ABLKC’s consortium members, and the National Aboriginal Organizations in Canada. All these groups came together to identify a new approach to measuring success for First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners. Tim Thomson, from the First Nations Technical Institute in Ontario was invited to deliver a keynote speech designed to begin this dialogue on redefining success. In Tim’s words, success should be redefined because “we should, because we can, and because someone else will, if we do not.”

Laughlin offered a brief summary of the proceedings of the workshop that led to the three holistic models:

Before the first workshop, CCL had developed tools based on their understandings of indigenous knowledge to consider as First Nations, Métis and Inuit were to begin to identify indicators of success. The participants “were encouraged to critique it, mark it up or throw it away, and to improve the model overall,” which was what the participants did and the holistic learning models provided as handouts at the ABLKC Conference were those models that have been revised by all the participants of the Redefining Success Workshops. CCL understood the “need to move forward with Aboriginal [First Nations, Métis and Inuit] people to redefine success in Aboriginal learning.” CCL and ABLKC consider this approach to defining success as being different because it employs broader measurements than those of the research and academic institutions in considering lifelong learning from a more holistic perspective.

The participants were divided into the three groups of First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The First Nations Workshop identified the elements of the draft model as important, such as being holistic, cyclical, and also adaptable at various levels: at the community level, at the national level and could also be adaptable at the regional level. The model was basically flipped upside down.

The Métis Nation workshop identified the proposed draft model as “a good starting point, a good working model; but just needed to be reframed.” However, the holistic, non-Western, and self-generating aspects of the models seemed to be favored by all the participants.

Due to an unanticipated blizzard in the northern part of the country, only a limited number of participants attended the Inuit workshop, especially from the Inuit region. In spite of that, the workshop generated a good deal of discussion. The participants were enthusiastic about identifying the Inuit learning needs, although CCL had not tabled a specific learning model for discussion. The discussion was centered on “what is being learned, how it is being learned, and who was involved in the learning process.”

Jarrett observed that:

“The First Nations learners seem to live in a world, not of disconnected events, but of constantly reforming and interacting cycles. And in this world, the First Nations person understands that nothing is simply a cause or effect, but the result of the interconnectedness of life.”

All the participants attending the workshop agreed that the holistic learning models depict the cycles of learning for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. “It explains some of the forces that impact on the processes of learning.” These learning models are examples of lifelong learning and the importance of this process for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners. The First Nations Holistic Learning Model discussed how this model can be “built on the experiences, both the Indigenous and Western knowledge and tradition” and recognizes that learning is derived from the natural world, languages, ceremonies, individual gifts of First Nation learners, self, family, ancestors, clans, and community.

“Learning opportunities are available in all stages of life, both informal and formal settings, such as early childhood, primary and secondary schools, post-secondary programs, higher learning, skills training and employment.”

Furthermore, ABLKC and CCL recognize that the various relationships contained in the Indigenous and Western knowledge traditions “are perceived by the First Nations learner on an emotional, mental, spiritual and physical level.” One can place indicators of learning in all the domains of knowledge identified in the Holistic Learning Model. This holistic learning model can also be used to “get a sense of how success can be measured over time,” to become an instrument which fosters harmony, including the cultural, social, political and economic well-being of the individual, and the collective (communities and nations).

Apart from the discussions and workshops, Laughlin said that CCL is trying to create an interactive website, a portal, which would use these learning models as a gateway to the portal. By clicking on any part of the holistic learning model, one would be drawn into the data and indicators of this particular area of knowledge.

The report will be posted on the website along with the names of the participants who attended the workshop. ABLKC and CCL have timelines and understand that this initiative will continue to collect broader and more inclusive feedback to improve these holistic learning models. The website with the interactive models will host the indicators, data and research that is ongoing in these areas of learning. An invitation was given to work with communities and organizations interested in incorporating these holistic approaches to measurement to help facilitate evidence-based decision-making about lifelong learning. The long-term goal is to develop a holistic national learning index for Aboriginal communities that can be used and adapted at the community, regional and national levels.

“You can click on any of these learning rings, or the leaves or the collective, and within that, we have information on the indicators, the data that is available on each of these in a particular area, as well as the research that is ongoing in this area. They show an area where knowledge is to be exchanged and disseminated within this holistic model.”

## 4. Unfolding the Animation Theme Bundles

### 4.1 Animation Theme Bundle # 1: Learning from Place

**Presenters: Narcisse Blood and Ryan Heavy Head from Red Crow Community College**

“Head knowledge is hollow knowledge.”

In the mainstream tradition, place is a relatively unexplored aspect of Aboriginal education, yet it is the key source of knowledge for Aboriginal people. In fact, scholars, Elders and community members regard place as significant as language in the learning process, if not more. Given the lack of a mainstream research tradition and literature, the ATB # 1 took a novel approach to exploring the northern Blackfoot prairies. In a short but powerful video: *Kahsinnoniks*, meticulous in detail, the bundle offered evidence of how metaphors, symbols, and memorials of the Blackfoot land constitute and reproduce a wealth of historical knowledge that is relevant to contemporary life.

Over the years, the students of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal backgrounds testified to “having encountered strong, personal, emotional responses, thrusts for self-determinism, and intense interests in the pursuit of further knowledge, as a result of their involvement with place-focused Blackfoot courses”. Instead of merely *looking* at the places during their visits, these students felt that they were *conversing* with the spirits of the land, an experience that transformed their entire perspective on the condition of being human. When students visited a site, they made tobacco and food offerings as part of the rituals that function to reproduce an awareness of place as being energy and alive. As part of their new awareness and experience with the spirits of the land, students often *fed* the places and were *being fed* by them with both physical and intellectual substance.

Depending on their history and function, places are believed to be “very, very healing”. And the objects embedded into these places be they stones, rivers, hills, or thunders have a language that can be understood by those connected to those places. These objects are the products of the Sun and the Moon which speak to the people of the land. However, for decades, Aboriginal people lacked access to their territory due to the federal government’s restriction on their mobility outside the reserves. This history has severely impaired their learning process on and with the land.

Unaware of its cultural bearings, Western science, particularly archeology, treats places as if they are puzzles or codes to be deciphered by the human intellect in their excavations and scientific analysis. By contrast, place for Aboriginal people is a relationship that needs to be constantly renewed and nourished. Archeological explorations have shown an utter disregard for this relationship and for the land that shares its history in artifacts, its memory, and the stories people tell.

On January 23, 1870, American military at Big Bend near the Marias River massacred about 200 Blackfoot residents; yet there is no trace or monument left of the tragic event

today. Similarly, the Red Crow Community College is housed in a building that was once an infamous residential school, a place of suffering that many would like to erase from their collective memory. Traveling in the prairies, Aboriginal people become conditioned to agriculture on their land, not the lived experiences of buffalo or the plants and other animals that once abounded in these places, as part of the normal environment. As presenter Ryan Heavy Head stated, “in each of these instances, trauma compels people toward efforts that would render the voices of significant places silent.”

The Lois Hole Campus Alberta Digital Library Initiative is one of this Bundle’s success stories. Here Aboriginal people are working towards revitalizing their familiarities with threatened places. Together with Red Crow Community College, ATB # 1 is working with the University of Lethbridge to create a Blackfoot Digital Library that will preserve archival resources and connects them with Elders’ narratives of the places. This is a good example of how technology can be used not only to revive and share the memories of places, but also to connect places with Indigenous knowledge. Walking in the library stacks is like visiting places. By the same token, “memorializing trauma like that which resonates from Big Bend, the residential school buildings, and the grasslands absent of bison also commemorating the success of survival and resilience” of Aboriginal peoples.

Memory, or remembrance, in this sense, is the mark of success for Aboriginal peoples’ learning from place. That said, “the greatest gauge of this learning process is not strictly intellectual, but performative.” It is not enough to only know *about* places—its history or narrative—but a learner must experience them both physically and emotionally, achieved through rituals, and visitations. Just as human beings develop relationships through collaborative activity, and just as they suffer from the disassociation or distance from such relationships, the emotional and physical exchanges that occur between places and Aboriginal people are social in nature. Since, for the most part, they perceive educational ‘success’ to be a respectful, cooperative and communication interaction with places, the revival of transformed or altered places is critical to the future of Aboriginal learning.

#### *Commentaries of Problems and Prospects*

“The buffalo helped us—the buffalo still helps us.”

In spite of the rapid social and economic transformations that continue to threaten their tradition and heritage, the symbolic significance of the buffalo seems to be an unfaltering source of hope for the Aboriginal people in Canada, especially in the prairies where the conference took place.

Whether it is the buffalo or a language, the participants seem to construe place as the heart of Aboriginal culture and tradition. The gaps and constraints in preserving the sacredness of place are manifold. An important one is the current generation of Aboriginal youth who “are detached from place”. This is deeply unsettling because other forms cannot replace the knowledge of places; places are imbued with the same sense of learning, sacred in their own right, as other intangible or cognitive forms of knowledge. As place is “something that is alive”, it is seen as an everlasting source of knowledge; it

defies all our conventional notions of past, present and future –a place is alive at all times.

Place, on the other hand, is not only a physical entity but an “experience”; it comprises of a language that connects with objects, things, and other physical beings: “Land is a teacher and a text book of the past”. It does not matter if “the land” is prairie, plateau, coast, or concrete, the language used to describe land or place does not alter its shape or form; instead, it describes the successes, failings, and individuals’ passion for knowledge by *experiencing* it. For Aboriginal people, bringing this sense of learning to formal educational systems has been a daunting task.

To truly appreciate place, “Language and spirit must be involved.” Accordingly, experiencing place or hearing its narratives is a holistic process that encompasses health survival and ecological sustenance (Adleson, 2000). One Elder scholar observed that an identity crisis takes place “when the land does not know you”, even if you know the land. The land recognizes individuals by inducing energy of thoughts, feelings, and experiences into their being.

At a time when Aboriginal people are developing strategies to incorporate places as part of the educational system, their gravest concern is *saving* them from the hazards of industrial destruction. By and large, persistent threats to the perseverance of places are often viewed by Aboriginal people as matter of ideological differences. The following table details the conceptual rift between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal perceptions of place.

Table/Diagram 1. Conceptions of Place

<b>Sacred/Cultural/Aboriginal</b>	<b>Secular/Oppportunistic/scientific</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Treats land for its spiritual symbolism Wants to preserve the artifacts which are inherent to the land</li> <li>2. Sees artifacts as sacred</li> <li>3. “Natural decay” is held in high esteem</li> <li>4. Identity is projected onto land and land is reflective of memories of the ancestors.</li> <li>5. Considers land as an object to be consumed.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Treats land as a “nourishing beast”</li> <li>2. Land seen as a resource to nourish the economic wheel</li> <li>3. Cares for of the consequence to the land as long as it creates affluence for people</li> <li>4. Land benefits accorded to elite majority in power</li> <li>5. The secularist wheel, although powerfully equipped by science, “cannot wear itself off the contaminating appetite created by one and all who use the automobile and other industrial age products.”</li> </ol>

However, listening to “each other” is seen as the best solution to this ideological rift. This means “bridges must be built based on the real needs of all humans.” Hence, the spirituality of place needs to be preserved while simultaneously appreciating an “agnostic” or “alternative” notion of place. Stories and narratives from different cultures ought to reinforce a dialogue about “the meanings of how they live, and how they learn.”

“Close the gap between a narrative and its value by opening it up for discussion, by allowing all responses to be acknowledged added to story.”

To explore shared interests, however, it is essential that the “Western archeological knowledge be applied to Indigenous knowledges.” Such collaboration, it is argued, may complement the Indigenous perceptions of solstice, the study of the skies, and their contribution to an alternative science. Like astronomy, anthropology could be used to fill the gaps between oral/written history as well as the gaps in the common history of both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal peoples.

If land is constructed as possessing an animate spirit and energy, as is in the Aboriginal tradition, it alludes to the notion of a common history wherein “all people have their sacred sites where they play/renew/connect/marked by usage...” This integrational point of view has been better expressed by one of the participants in a poetic:

“Whose heart is where?  
Whose head lives in which light?  
What’s the objective—you want revolution  
Or would you rather nurture evolution?”

Within the Aboriginal context, languages play a critical role in revitalizing metaphors, symbols, narratives and their references to places, thereby making it a complete human experience. While Aboriginal languages are endangered so is the land. Additional efforts are required to save Sundance memorials, stone circles, marked places that protect medicine wheels such as the Majorville from disappearance, and other sacred land sites. Presenters told how the traditional Blackfoot territory is being renewed through an exceptionally promising practice of a place that reanimates its stories, songs, and teachings as well as reconnects Aboriginal people with the medicine wheels, hills, and rivers.

At the policy level, participants stated that a protocol development between Elders and the governments is required. Ministry of Education and the INAC should work together as well as with Elders to reclaim the “land which is already theirs.” The Public education system should be obliged to include and fund outdoor education and change educational curriculum which places emphasis on place before “our knowledge holders ... pass away.”

They reiterated that it was essential that the knowledge of place be passed on to those who have not had the advantage of knowing place intimately, such as the youth and urban Aboriginal people who were displaced both culturally (family) and institutionally (reserve restrictions). Additionally, intern teachers of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal

background would benefit from that knowledge “so that they can be more aware of their students’ backgrounds and what they bring to school.”

It was further proposed that Aboriginal people begin or continue to explore what place means to them in the present day. In so doing, new places, old places, and foreign places become transformed according to the human needs of all, not just for a few.

#### **4.2 Animation Theme Bundle # 2 Comprehending and Nourishing the Learning Spirit**

##### **Presenter Dr. Marie Battiste University of Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal Education Research Centre**

The notion of lifelong learning in mainstream education is a relatively new phenomenon. In the Aboriginal culture, however, education and learning are inseparable from life and are certainly not considered as tenuous aspects of one’s life course. Elaborating on how Aboriginal people identify learning as a lifelong pursuit, ATB # 2 focuses on Indigenous perceptions of learning and their situatedness in the existing educational systems in Canada.

Assuming that the learning spirit cannot be reduced to a singular empirical category or a teaching method, Battiste noted that ATB # 2 drew on the resources of various members of their Advisory Committee, an online scan of programs and practices of Aboriginal educators and leaders, and literature and documents in the field of Aboriginal learning and education.

In Aboriginal cultures, learning is a lifelong process of self-actualization and development, growth in emotional stability, character, and resilience. Education is the primary source of acquiring analytical skills such as literacy and numeracy and knowledge that society deems essential for future employment and living within a modern context. The latter is achieved in formal schooling, while the former is achieved in non-formal settings.

The ATB #2 is concerned with the learning spirit, which is an involuntary, spontaneous attraction of human consciousness that is a boundless source of personal capacity and empowerment. The opening speaker of the conference, Elder Danny Musqua, began by acknowledging that knowledge is held by the spirit, shared by the spirit, and transmitted by the spirit; therefore, the body can be seen as a carrier of the learning spirit. Furthermore, learning and spirit are foundational to the ethos of Aboriginal culture and pedagogy (Ermine, 1998, 26).

The learning spirit and languages are mutually reciprocal. Central to the nourishment of this relationship are the teachings of the Elders, traditional parenting, recognition of self ‘in relation’ to others and to natural order (place), self-disciplining of the senses, fostering holistic awareness, understanding, insight, a heart/mind connection, and remembering.

Nourishing the spirit inspires learners to connect with their inner-selves or their learning spirit by means of visioning, dreaming, imagining, writing, meditation, prayer, ceremony, and rituals. The search for the inner-self enables the learner to realize his/her talents and diverse abilities, as well as aiding in building self-concept (gender, sexualities, body, mind, and spirit), self-esteem (pride, respect and responsibility); as well as provides early support for diverse learners and those who are traumatized (residential schools, formal schooling) and helps to build positive connections from youth to Elders, parents to children and the larger community. On a more cognitive level, it develops a critical awareness of their socio-political status (oppression or privilege from colonialism), recognizes the roles of wellness and ways to achieve it, identifies the skills and learning prospects, and unpacks the hidden forces in structured learning (writing, discourses, taking tests, study skills, and taking notes).

At present, the indicators of formal learning are focused narrowly on numbers and data that relate to parental health of mothers, access to early childhood education programs, reading and being read to, educational attainment, dropout rates, literacy skills, post-secondary attendance, adult literacy, levels of knowledge of Aboriginal languages, adult literacy levels, bilingual immersion in schools, parental engagement, and community health. These data lose sight of what drives or inspires the learners to engage and succeed in any area.

Unlike the formal educational systems that focus on individual competencies to identify levels of success, within Indigenous communities, success is related to the engagement of the community and the factors that will enable the collective to succeed. Mason Durie (2006) writes:

Two broad capacities underpin Indigenous success: a capacity to engage with Indigenous culture, networks and resources, and a capacity to engage with global societies and communities. The duality recognises the two worlds within which Indigenous peoples live and the skills needed to negotiate both. Successful engagement with the Indigenous world is facilitated by spiritual and cultural competence and acceptance by communities, while engagement with global societies is eased by the acquisition of technical skills, educational qualifications, and a capacity to deal with bias and prejudice. (p. 4)

Indicators of Indigenous peoples' success are associated with the autonomy of individuals, families and community (Durie, 2006). Durie notes "resilience is less likely if Indigenous futures are premised on the aspirations of others (5)." Rather, Indigenous communities need to build their own capacity drawn from their own Indigenous approaches and built on their governance and management of such institutions, programs and approaches. Today, the successes of an Aboriginal learning spirit can be seen in ceremonial and community teachings, a strong representation of Aboriginal people in structured learning, work force, adult education, and non-formal learning. Strongly influenced by Aboriginal cultural ethos, an increasing participation in trades and business is an exemplary case of their dual engagement with other cultures. Recent successes in the tourism industry, forestry and agriculture have paved the way for Aboriginal innovation and discovery. Without question, persistent lobbying from Aboriginal

governance organizations for an educational policy mandate, treaty rights, and land claims are outstanding examples of resilience, adaptability, communal strength, and leadership informed by the Aboriginal learning spirit.

Yet, for the ATB # 2, Battiste notes there are other challenges to be addressed:

- How can ‘learning’ as described and understood from within diverse holistic Aboriginal traditions and teachings be pursued within formal schooling and institutions to give full value and life to learning?
- How can holistic learning provide indicators for successful learning?

#### Commentaries of Problems and Prospects

“Learning has to be shared; Aboriginal learning about mainstream and mainstream learning about Aboriginal people is the only solution to remove the barriers in mutual learning.”

The above statement shatters the conventional myth that Aboriginal people advocate a segregational perspective to further learning. Just as mainstream learning was inspired by the ethos of the Enlightenment, Aboriginal peoples’ quest for a change in education is rooted in their reclamation of the distinct cosmic ideals shaped by their life choices and purposes.

Consequently, a learning spirit can be defined as “a desire to change always in ways that are more real, more valuable—a desire which inculcates good outcomes, one that reinforces, in turn, the desire to learn more.” This is arguably one of the most sophisticated definitions of learning by any cultural account. But specifically, a movement from desire for learning to the desire for more learning is a circular, if not holistic, process which reaffirms that learning is both self-contingent and constantly progressive. It goes beyond the segmented pursuits of the mainstream tradition in which knowledge is produced and consumed for material purposes.

Given that Aboriginal knowledge is not classified into hierarchical competencies or disciplinary specializations, a learning spirit is both holistic and eternal:

“Lifelong learning means that people consider not only intellectual knowledge or knowing how to actualize knowledge but to also be functional members of society by honoring diversity among all, understanding that there is no “bar” or “goal” [to reach], but that each of individuals feel some success based on personality.”

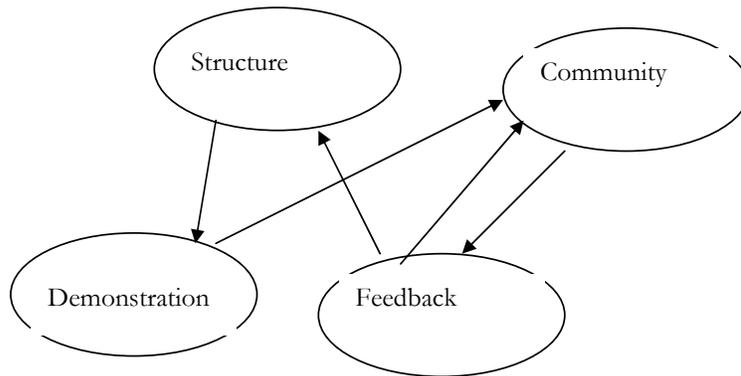
Expansive in scope, a learning spirit maintains a close relationship with all forms of life-understanding values and natural laws that embody holistic, mental, spiritual, physical and emotional strength.

Aboriginal cultures perceive that all learning is practicable, or practiced. The nature and scope of Aboriginal learning can be both “extrinsic and intrinsic” (mental, physical and spiritual). In other words, not only is Aboriginal knowledge rooted in its distinct cultural

system, but also is equally derived from external environments that are not specific to being Aboriginal. To appreciate this duality, “students should understand diversity of other cultures” and “democratically internalize other external forms of knowledge.”

In this sense, Aboriginal people recognize the importance of the “non-traditional Western ideologies or ways of knowing which are based on their own *belief system*, values, and tradition (emphasis added).” Some participants stated, the conceptual knowledge of Western academic tradition can be used to break down the “roadblocks” in Aboriginal learning. In spite of the fact that Aboriginal traditions place generally a greater emphasis on intrinsic learning, some participants insisted that “Aboriginal learning must be done in a structured environment.”

Table/Diagram 2. Nourishing Learning Spirit Model



This model presents a structure of concepts or descriptions for the nourishment of the learning spirit. It suggests that once feedback on intrinsic learning needs is received from the community, the structural environment that addresses their extrinsic needs should be altered accordingly. Before doing so, the altered structure must be demonstrated to the community to ensure that their feedback is represented accurately.

For decades, the negative impact of the residential school system has not permitted Aboriginal people to connect with the structural/institutional environments to nurture their intrinsic spirit. As a result, Aboriginal people “became cold and reserved and scared to show affection towards each other.” Implicitly or explicitly, it contributed to a historical gap between the repressed learning needs of the Aboriginal people and the rapidly changing knowledge systems at the external level (mainstream/science). Other salient factors nurtured this gap:

- Métis people have been caught in between two cultural identities and worldviews, which have not had equal power and value; however, reasserting a distinct self-identity can better prepare them for future challenges.

- Aboriginal youth is in crisis because they are being disconnected from traditional teachings and from shared community family values that are disintegrating at a steady pace within an individualistic modern society.
- State polices are posing restrictions on Aboriginal peoples movements from reserve to city and vice versa.

The ATB #2's plea for feedback on the "evidence of success" attracted responses that challenged notions of success. A few participants stated the concepts, such as "success" and "evidence" are part of the Western system of meritocracy. One participant questioned: "Is having one doctor in a community an indicator of success as compared to having everyone in the community participating in ceremonies –" both have different functions and utility "value for individuals from both ends." Another participant noted that success means, "giving one's life to the benefit of the community."

Perhaps the most encouraging sign of how the learning spirit is being nourished within communities is the survival of Indian communities in the North. Elaborating on this example, the following promising practices were offered:

- Revive learning that is soulful; reprint the spirit of memory; learn by mimicking Elders as children;
- Encourage observational and experiential learning from nature;
- Learn from travels/exchanges;
- Reproduce mental images reflecting back on symbols of significance; transfer stories; embrace the expectations of new forms of employments and teaching procedural/steps;
- Teach from simulated action models of hunting; use bows and arrows; carve out a route for Blackfoot sign language;
- Learn through role modeling and demonstration; teach children visual learning that involves all senses (watching, hearing, touching, hugging, etc.);
- Relate and learn from many traditional societies, learn to value cultures and know how knowledge among them is developed and stored;
- "Grouping up" in our community makes us very good listeners; patience and perseverance are virtues that can assist the community to overcome the legacy of the Residential Schools.
- Community itself must become the source of therapy, counseling, individual solace, and comfort.
- Avoid notions of "success" and "failure" that may induce jealousy and a hierarchical spirit of learning among Aboriginal people. Disputing this view, some maintain that learning must include teachers and formal learning methods.
- Bestow the idea of good living to others before ourselves; in the process, recognize the dire need for healing, and reconciliation.
- Reinvigorate all ceremonies across "this land."
- Return to sacred places; make learning a material exchange through gifts to the community.

- Preserve the practice of fasting, language, bodily knowledge; and the gift of dreaming;
- Practice competency in learning which is based on evidence
- Advocate interactive and team learning as reflected in the term of “nita” of the Cree Nations.
- Foster reserve living and its shared values; collective responsibilities for community and the habitat.
- Induce ethically sound teaching practices cross culturally.

#### **4.3 Animation Theme Bundle # 3 Aboriginal Languages and Learning.**

**Presenters Dr. Leona Makokis, Diana Steinhauer, Vince Steinhauer, James Lamouche, Lana Whiskeyjack, and others from Blue Quills Community College**

If spirituality is the heart of the Aboriginal people’s culture, language is its mind. Language is the source of connection between the spiritual and physical realms. “Cast within this reality, language embraces feelings and spirits and is integral to a holistic sense of being inherent in the lands occupied by generations of Aboriginal language speakers.” ATB #3 explores the role of Aboriginal languages in learning, and examines how the current capacities of language engender their own pedagogies, ecologies, cosmology of learning, and future potentialities.

Historically, language has been part and parcel of the Aboriginal learning systems. At present, careful attention to language-focussed education is required, not because it can revive the colossal loss of the Aboriginal heritage, but it can at least ensure cultural continuity—maintain gender roles, land based literacy, and personal and environmental wellbeing.

The researchers of the ATB # 3 view Elders as the mentors of language-based learning. It is only Elders who can bring Indigenous spiritualities “from the margins to the center.” The practise-based knowledge they provide simplifies and demystifies “research theory, praxis and method.”

The bundle maintained that a monolithic conception of Indigenous languages in the Western academia has constrained the process of identifying promising practises. By restricting their emphasis to Canada’s Aboriginal languages, they are aware of the fact that their study may overlook the vast majority of Indigenous languages around the world. Central to ATB # 3’s research agenda are to explore 1) the regeneration of language based knowledge, 2) the revival of traditional knowledge, language survival practises, and 3) the establishment of school-based language practises with Indigenous language and linguistic traditions.

Traditional knowledge views language as a shared heritage, not a commodity or intellectual property. Ironically, with the advent of modernity, language and community relationships became endangered cultural property. Traditionally, language survival practises are taught by the Elders. At present, home schooling, and immersion

programming in the style of language nests initiated by Maori, and duplicated by Hawaiians are the emerging survival practises.

Assimilationist policies have had the effect of creating a language crisis in Aboriginal communities. Cultural resources of language are viewed as deficit or inadequate to succeed in a formal educational setting (McCarty et al., 1997). This notion can be deconstructed only by reclaiming the Aboriginal autonomy for teaching and learning.

Colonization has led to the demise of the Indigenous languages at an alarming rate (McCarty et al., 1997). In Canada, of the 60 languages within 11 Indigenous language families, only three (Cree, Anishnabe, and Inuktitut) are expected to survive this century. Michif language seems to be the most endangered current language having no more than 1000 speakers today.

To save the rapidly deteriorating Aboriginal linguistic tradition, ATB # 3 recommended meaningful and contextualized practise of communicative language learning. Moreover, the bundle maintains that the following practises to be significant for the process of language-based learning:

- Maintain that language is the heart of the Indigenous identity.
- Support the view that language connects humans, Mother Earth, and all her life forms.
- Connect language diversity with biodiversity; promote multilingual policies and practises.
- Recognize the full circle nature and attitudes of languages.

Following the trends in literature, the bundle argues for a culturally-responsible evaluation-use of specific linguistic narrative dispositions. This should recognize both the centrality and interpersonal space between Aboriginal individuals and communities. Pre-service language teacher education is also recommended as an important aspect of educational change. From an academic point of view, trauma-based/grief and loss systems are presumed to be insightful in dealing with the emotional and intellectual aspects of lost heritage.

In future research, ATB # 3 aims to explore both the promising practises and the relevance of diverse Aboriginal languages in learning.

#### *Commentaries of Problems and Prospects*

“There is no culture without language”

“Without language, there is no spirit”

Intriguingly, not all participants agree with this cultural perspective that language is the most valid source of gathering and transmitting knowledge. Some argue that “learning and speaking the language is an intellectual process which must be valued and validated.” It is safe to assume that language is the medium of worldly perception and

communication: “Unique concepts are embedded in our language. Presuming that our perception about the world changes, the knowledge that is embedded in languages also changes: “Indigenous knowledge is not frozen in time.”

A mitigating factor in the disappearance of languages is the systematic denial of Aboriginal languages as first languages or the medium of instruction in formal educational systems.

The loss of first language is considered to be the loss of spirit “in translation.” It takes “a lifetime” to evoke the spirit and learn the same way as one would learn from one’s first language. Although recent attempts to instruct and research languages at the university level have been commendable, some speculate that such attempts are contrived by the “recolonization of the language”. In order to counter the externalization of languages as the subjects of research, it is proposed that Aboriginal people must “spearhead” the revival of languages as the subjects of social practice.

Yet these observations clearly go unheeded “because there are few speakers left, cultural teaching assistants have a hard job keeping up to the demands.” Of those who are available, “many are not respected in public school systems when they go into staffrooms.” Added to this, “there are not many Band-run schools that have room for more than one language teacher.” Demoralized by the institutional roadblocks—their intimidating nature in particular—some Elders, who bear the responsibility of retaining Aboriginal linguistic heritage “do not feel confident about what they feel since they don’t have the formal teaching skills”, and, “some don’t have the vocabulary to express the background or linguistic aspects of Hul’gumi’num vs. English.” This situation is made even more difficult by the lack of sufficient funding, and special provision for the Band-operated schools to provide education in Aboriginal languages.

Participants asserted that linguistic diversity should be understood in terms of biodiversity. The best way to “preserve language is to speak it at home, at community events.” Other promising practices were advocated:

- A forum on what schools are doing, their teaching materials, and “where they get or make them” must be established.
- Teaching language using modern technology (computers) would be helpful.
- Curriculum development with Elder’s guidance/approval is needed.
- An “independence” beyond the curriculum structure be granted to CTAs (Community Tripartite Agreements) in classrooms when teaching Aboriginal languages.
- Language nests across the country are required.
- Because the spirit expressed in Aboriginal languages does not translate into English, it is imperative that prayers, rituals, and singing be restored as part of performative learning.

Conversely, it is simply assumed that English and Aboriginal languages can work together. Cultivating this mutual learning requires an equal recognition of the Aboriginal

languages as accredited courses in schools, colleges, and universities. Planning for language restoration is a complex process, and it involves institutional efforts in restructuring education that allows teachers to acquire comparative knowledge in English and native languages. A solid introduction to the principles of linguistics “in a timely manner (i.e., six month duration)” would prepare language teachers to acquire skills cross culturally.

As opposed to their formal existence, Indigenous language immersion programs need to link “the ladder of Indigenous languages with instructors and certificate programs.” As well, it was commented, “community building is not about preserving inanimate things and places. It is about living up to vibrant ideals despite challenges (the former is only traditionalism; the latter can be real tradition).”

#### **4.4 Animation Theme Bundle # 4 Diverse Educational Systems and Learning**

##### **Presenters Darren McKee and Ted Amendt of Saskatchewan Learning’s First Nations and Métis Education Branch**

In the past five decades, making provisions for culture-specific learning in the mainstream educational systems has been a daunting challenge for educators in the area of policy, curriculum, and supporting materials. This challenge is aggravated by the fact that Canada’s Aboriginal peoples are not only culturally and geographically diverse, but also they have diverse jurisdictions that are serving First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations across Canada. Each of these jurisdictions has its own set of priorities, policies, and capacities that create many kinds of learning opportunities and successes. ATB # 4 undertook the task of identifying these models through a comprehensive review of the literature and policy frameworks across provincial and territorial ministries of education, including a cross-country judicial scan, the reports of INAC and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC).

In the educational policies for Aboriginal people, a four-fold model of educational structure consisting of Early Learning, Kindergarten to 12 (K-12), post-secondary, and Natural education can be found at various levels of governance—federal, provincial, territorial, First Nations, tribal colleges, Métis, and Inuit. The review focused primarily on policy aspects in areas of governance, curricula, and assessment.

The literature review revealed that the early learning (pre-kindergarten) policies were virtually non-existent in the 1960s and 70s. In 1995, Canada’s federal policy created a Canada/Ontario Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians, followed by the initiation of the Native Council of Canada and Child Care Initiative Fund.

At the K-12 level, a plethora of studies and policy analyses by DIAND (now INAC) and CMEC have been in effect since the 1960s. The most pronounced theme in these studies is the effect of cultural discontinuity among Aboriginal peoples within the educational system.

In regard to post-secondary education, the reports of INAC offer an incisive account of federal policies from the 1980s. In attempting to solve the cultural discontinuity in education, federal policy approaches have used the “add-on approach”, the “partnership approach” and the “First Nation control approach” as their most influential trends in the federal policy on Aboriginal post-secondary education. From 1990 onwards, the policy literature on adult/informal/non-formal education elicited some positive outcomes. The federal government-led institutions such as Human Resources Development Canada and National Literacy Secretariat are principally responsible for these developments. More recently, First Nations’ led organizations such as Saanich Adult Education Centre and Native Education Centre have played a vital role in designing federal policies for adult education.

Some of the promising practices noted at the K-12 level are found in effective leadership, welcoming school climate with high expectations, caring and dedicated staff, adequate resources, family and community engagement, and quality programs. In reference to early and natural education, parent involvement and programs of holistic nature that connect after-school educations to labour markets are strongly advised. At the post-secondary level, storytelling as modes of expression, experiential learning, a high degree of student participation, educational relevance to daily life, effective pedagogic strategies, and emerging political developments concerning residential school reconciliation and truth commissions are expected to produce effective learning strategies.

Corresponding to these prospects, the bundle expects to explore the following questions in future research:

- What are the missing themes in delivering a K-12 and post-secondary education to Aboriginal populations among the diverse Aboriginal educational systems?
- What policies, practices, and strategies are systems utilizing within various Aboriginal jurisdictions that are proving successful?

#### *Commentaries of Problems and Prospects*

“Aboriginal educators say curriculum doesn’t allow them to bring up Aboriginal issues—the essence of their history is ignored.”

Participants at the conference raised continuing concern about the lack of inclusion of Aboriginal content in the educational system and the ineffectiveness of the inclusive approaches of “add-ons” and “partnerships” forged by mainstream institutions. Since the educational jurisdictions are primarily focused on K-12 and university education, there is a growing gap in learning for adult learners: “Adult literacy programs and curriculum on Aboriginal learning perspectives rather than with Aboriginal “content added” are difficult to find.”

There are many fundamental differences, fissures and gaps to be addressed to rearticulate and reform the range of educational systems. Regrettably, “more Aboriginal children are in need of care today than there were during the times of residential schools.” In fact, it is

estimated that “50% of Canadian Aboriginal children are in care today in select Aboriginal communities.”

As well, each First Nations broach their educational prospects from their own cultural lens and capacities, yet recognize the need to expand: “Cree, Dene, and Dakota people need to ask what is unique about their respective educational system that is not commonly aboriginal.” Overall though, it is agreed that “the use of a variety of teaching strategies that have proven effective with Aboriginal students” and the “environment” [that demonstrates] are missing.

A major challenge to Aboriginal schools in Canada is attendance, which is considerably low at the secondary level. At least one participant indicated that attendance problems are attributed to a “lack of parent support and encouragement” and suggested that an “enforced attendance policy” would increase the educational participation of students. However, attendance is a complex issue related to the issue of relevance, community participation, economics and job possibilities. As well, the lack of protocols among schools in sharing and exchanging information has restricted the proper assessment of educational dependency. Of the few “educated people” available “in leadership roles, [few] are equipped with current discourse(s) and current research to envision Aboriginal learning.”

“I want to know more about how we define success? What are the outcomes we desire from transformed systems? How will we know when we’ve [achieved] those outcomes? What are the attributes of the graduate that are markers of success for Aboriginal people?”

The high representation Aboriginal youth in prisons continues to weaken community care and solidarity, let alone educational success. In this regard, participants noted the need to “reinstall the importance of extended family in raising children, revisiting their roots, and learning “from the land.” Adult education may be a site which would make direct contribution to the education of the community. It can induce a strong base for communities to build on their cultures as well as promote cultural activities such as the ‘round dance’ and ‘powwow’ in schools.

Although “structure and concepts are very different”, strategies are needed to encourage bi-cognitive identities as a means “to move back and forth between English and Ojibwe.” Changes in the public school model with a priority on addressing adolescent participation in high schools were encouraged. For example, consider changing school hours: “Studies show that 1–5 p.m. works very well for productivity, family time.”

It was also noted that tribal colleges are not given full status as a degree-granting institution, yet are equipped to do so. One participant noted they should be given degree granting authority in teacher training and language education. Additionally:

- Class barriers within the Aboriginal communities must be reduced: “those who work at Band office are “haves” those who are on welfare are “have-nots”. Introduce smudging and prayers in schools.

- Institute transition programs for elementary students going into middle school and other transition programming at other points: “high-school – university; “rural – urban.”
- Practice of spirituality in schools is independent of religion.
- “Some of the tools extend beyond the classroom; it is necessary to use all the teaching methods available” and encourage holistic learning.
- Make living contexts or environment valued as much as words and text.
- Infuse child care programs into the educational system;
- Encourage aesthetic learning as “another key to success and research proves its merit”.
- Provide easy transition between jurisdictions; they are becoming “important with people who are mobile”; facilitate community and family support for those who move to different locations.
- Replicate how families taught languages before residential schools.

Specific suggestions on the expectations of different Indian Nations state that:

- “Administrators in Onion Lake need to take mandatory workshop training with Elders on the land and learning”.
- Emphasize Cree language in schools;
- New teachers in Whitehorse should go through cultural training, including Waldorf-style training.

A few commentaries on educational systems have specifically offered integrational views: “systems can be revitalized in an authentic manner” by asking “How Western knowledge can be integrated into a holistic system.” Rather than “How can we put more culture into the mainstream” we must re-orientate ourselves so that our culture and languages are at the center.

Some promising practices can be found in Saskatchewan’s and Ontario’s educational systems. Oskayak High School (Saskatoon) students were noted as being critical thinkers—a success lesson that can be drawn from their tradition “preferring to write than talk”. At the moment, those involved in Ningwakwe’s literacy programs in Ontario are also considering how to incorporate culture, “i.e.; round dance, powwow.” Trust will be “established if teachers of Aboriginal background [foster] relationship-building” with other school systems.”

#### **4.5 Animation Theme Bundle # 5 Pedagogy of Professionals and Practitioners in Learning**

**Presenter Dr. Sákéj Youngblood Henderson from the Native Law Centre at the University of Saskatchewan**

ATB # 5 focussed on the role of pedagogies in Aboriginal professions. The central aim of the bundle has been to identify the learning processes that can sustain the professional expectations and practises of a knowledge-based economy. In the process, ATB # 5 examines how various professional colleges and organizations adapted to the diverse needs of Aboriginal people.

Several successful models are emerging, some of them having a thirty-year history of preparing Aboriginal people to enter professions such as education, law, nursing, and social work. These professions offer experiential knowledge and successful adaptations to engage Aboriginal learners and offer the professions that have not made those accommodations the necessary pedagogies and adaptations in professional colleges, and practises to improve Aboriginal participation in those professions.

Pedagogy refers to the educational and learning environment, its style, structure, and delivery that enhance Aboriginal people's participation in changing economic and employment trends. Historically poised, professional colleges and universities have not viewed Aboriginal pedagogies as significant and compatible to professional education or their organizational mandate. Based on a review of the professional colleges practices, it would seem that including pedagogies that accommodate Aboriginal learners is at best, depicted as incidental or tenuous. Most professional organizations see Aboriginal pedagogies as inconsequential. They do not consider that their existing curriculum, regulations, and organizational practises are in need of revision. Oblivious to cultural differences that exist, mainstream professionals look to Aboriginal people as collaborators, as if they are to be incorporated into the monocultural educational system in the future. It is, thus, no surprise that they view "equity" as merely an Aboriginal issue, and are categorically sensitive to retention of Aboriginal professionals. As a result, continuity, suitability, evaluation, and reporting are the issues that remain unresolved for decades. As usual, there is a lack of financial assistance for pedagogical restructuring; lack of prerequisite educational attainment; lack of career counselling and role modeling; and a lack of mentoring, and emotional and inspirational support systems.

According to Henderson, and the ATB # 5's research findings, less than 1% of the Aboriginal people are successful in professions; 38% of students funded by the INAC's (Indian and Northern Affairs) Post-secondary Education Program now feel that they have less opportunity in the mainstream professional systems, while 33% are confident that they have the same opportunity as others.

In the literature on Aboriginal professions, however, there is little evidence of promising practises. Nevertheless, the emergence of Aboriginal-based professional organizations and learned societies, and their efforts to advance a variety of professional and vocational

models have yielded some positive results in recent times. In health professions alone, there are now 150 Aboriginal physicians and over 10,000 medical technicians across Canada. Furthermore, the native law model has been responsible for producing approximately 1,000 trained Aboriginal lawyers. Between 1970 and 1991, the teacher education programs have prepared nearly 8,000 Aboriginal people for teaching-related occupations. Most recently, Aboriginal social work and nursing have emerged as the popular choices among young graduates. In ATB # 5's assessment, there are now more than 400 Aboriginal Ph.D. graduates across Canada.

In spite of that, many Aboriginal students are leaving universities, in some cases professions, due to the lack of learning background that would provide them with the professional temperament to succeed. In this light, ATB # 5 guided the discussion to develop effective pedagogic practises with the following questions:

1. How can success be defined by Aboriginal people as measured by the professions?
2. What learning conditions or what pedagogies foster professional success among Aboriginal people?
3. What has this generation of Eurocentric educated Aboriginal people achieved that can be handed to the next generation and why were the previous generations ineffective in achieving the same results?
4. How did the generation of the educated Aboriginal people overcome the intractable challenges of cultural transformation and what do the next generation need to do to complete the legal, political, cultural, and economic restoration that is underway?

#### *Commentaries of Problems and Prospects*

“Dream big. Step outside the box. Challenge assumptions.”  
“You can't move forward with confident, progressive, and constructive steps when you are looking backward to blame.”

These statements evoked a strong sense of resilience among the participants at the conference to the problems confronting Aboriginal professions and pedagogies of practice. A majority of participants expressed that they are affected by the rapid changes in the socio-economic structure in Canada and the notion of “change” seems to be the greatest concern to Aboriginal people in terms of having to adapt to new conditions. As one participant noted, “Changes are opportunities; we know that as Aboriginal people.”

From another standpoint, some participants argued that “success” in Aboriginal professions should be defined in terms of “learning and earning.” Perhaps, a proper definition of failure can be traced to the contradictions between the unchanging nature of the educational policies and the constantly changing nature of Aboriginal education. In fact, a proper search for successful pedagogies ought to begin with questioning current educational practices: “What is the difference between a norm and the normative?” Another perspective on the question of educational equity stated that:

“Equity is a social construction. There is no meaning for it except what people imagine it to be.”

In this statement, it is implied that Aboriginal people should not necessarily reformulate their pedagogic models based on the liberal notions of “equity.” Instead, as in the social construction of “equity”, they should set their professional goals in relation to their *own specific* needs.

The problem, however, is not simply pedagogical, but the institutional structures that are designed transform these pedagogies into professions. As one participant states, “Although grade 12 allowed me to get a job off the reserve, [I] could not advance to supervision/foreman positions even though I knew more.” Such a predicament goes to the core of the Aboriginal people’s self-confidence: “You go through the system and succeed, but do you feel qualified?” It also addresses systemic racism. There appears to be an optimum level for professional mobility among Aboriginal people beyond which young people cannot succeed. Conceding that these problems emanate from the Eurocentric measures of success, Aboriginal people must redefine the very notion of success that is being thrust upon them. It should address or contribute to personal well-being and maturity, setting limits to professionalism, and taking into account the intricate connections in, and consequences for, individual and collective achievements.

In general, the problems concerning early school leaving and professions discontinuity are closely associated with Aboriginal people’s relationship to family, community, and the way pedagogies of professions counteract these values. They are being “measured the wrong way”, although “community-based indicators have existed all through history”, the “statistics show how well we are not doing in most cases, which in fact is not an accurate representation of Aboriginal peoples educational success.” Thus, the statistical comparisons based on the neoclassical economic models routinely present a dismal picture of their professional successes. Influenced by these measures, educational policies often transform or normalize Aboriginal people in the way they are being imagined—as underachievers. As a result, Aboriginal people often encountered by problematic situations: “Every time I turn around there is more and more information and it is difficult to find pieces to hold onto and to be able to talk about” and “different interactive styles can be conflictive.” Some are wary of the fact that: “Standing up and challenging Eurocentric perspectives or racial attitudes isolate us.”

Nevertheless, some promising practices exist. At the pedagogical level, the Teacher Education Program in Yukon recorded an increase in the First Nations instructors. The Government of Canada’s Nunavut Student Financial Assistance (SFA) program is another successful case:

“These two territories (Yukon and Nunavut) have the most generous SFA. NWT should follow this model for private/public partnership from K-12 to post-secondary education.”

Some individuals who succeed in the Western academic have managed to find a balance:

“We learned to use the language, etc. We have made the ‘swing’ recognizing the value of academia but need to also remain grounded in our culture.”

However, not all First Nations have the same professional aspirations. There are marked differences between Cree, Dene, and Métis. Participants believed that Aboriginal governance and advocacy organizations should take these differences into account and investigate them. Additional considerations include:

- Desire for more education in the medical field;
- Believe there is a purpose to education, or at least the need for a purpose to engage in education;
- Develop aboriginal organizations, professional guilds, and associations;
- Increase the number of representatives in the national executive level of professional boards;
- Allow locally developed curriculum;
- Work towards keeping professionals in the communities and use them as role-models: “losing those professionals to major corporations or INAC is not helping the communities”;
- Educate communities about the protocols related to educational institutions and professional organizations to facilitate their involvement in exercising their rights and services;
- Recognize that “Indigenous institutes of higher learning have the benefit of ensuring their cultural identity (through programs customization that meets the expectations of the communities)”;
- Encourage work education;
- Compete in “cigarette trade, fishing, trades”;
- See professions not as a means to fulfill individual desires but to collective responsibility (clan, nation, family);
- Sacrifice oneself for the community and next generations so that children should not “go through the induced shame of being native”:

“Because I was centered, my grandparents, who raised me kept me protected and grounded. My grandparents had stability and a dream for me.”

- Press for an increase in Aboriginal adult educators (with B.Ed.s, etc.).
- Strive for adult education internship arrangements/partnerships with ITEP at Masters level;
- Encourage mobility, not stability, of professions that are conducive to the changing labour markets or “other professions/occupations which are equally valuable”;
- Increase the number of cohorts of professional training that “could reach people in their own communities so they could remain close”;
- Find sponsors outside of the government to train and fund professions and recruit them;
- “Integrate healing professions and practices into educational system, remove barriers (we had to fight to get a ‘healing’ room in our school)”;

**Comment [11]:** Should write in long format as it is the first time?

- Pay attention to “our urban children & their needs and defend our children who are in the system—you must know the system”;
- Develop strategies to avoid labeling Aboriginal children in schools and “streaming them into the non-academic domains (very early on).”
- Establish a strong Aboriginal teachers federation;
- “Replicate what has been done with the consortiums in the U.S.”;
- Teach children not specific but the relational histories of all Indigenous Nations, *Wahkohtowia*.

Because there can be “many ways to achieve success or a particular goal, remaining open “to many possibilities is important.” Equally important is the “combination of Aboriginal world views and Western practices.” The “bi-cognitive” consciousness of Aboriginal people could be used positively to make the best out of “both worlds.” Similar propositions were made along the following lines:

“When you want to move something forward, sometimes you need to do it in a special way...but we also miss something without the two coming together. We miss opportunities for learning by operating as special groups...we learn that we need to give each their space and time and then be there when each are prepared to work together.”

On a more radical level, a few participants questioned the bundle’s themes concerning the “successes” or the “failures of old generations” in the following manner:

“I do not believe parents/grandparents were ineffective in their roles. What is the measure of ineffective? Not becoming white! Why must we assimilate into existing Eurocentric professions? What is the definition of cultural transformation?”

It was further contended that Aboriginal people should resort to self-determination even at the cost of rejecting Eurocentric professions “do not become a white person or embody white man’s success.”

Conversely, others propound that there is a “White Systemic Guilt”, and asked that “What part did the Aboriginal people play in it and can they let go of that?” In any event, they concur that “When Aboriginals express anger, let that conversation occur, let it go.” “Coming together”, in this way, is crucial because without doing so “how can [the] other ‘side’ begin to open doors for each other?”

#### **4.6 Animation Theme Bundle # 6 Technology and Learning**

**Presenter Tom O’Connor researcher with Genesis Group, Northwest Territories lead by John Simpson**

In spite of their struggle for self-determination and traditional identity, Aboriginal people regard science and technology as the most critical and transformative areas of their

education and learning. Based on an extensive review of 100 articles, books, dissertations, academic posters and electronic documents, ATB #6 addressed the following questions: What does technology enhance or intensify? What does technology render obsolete or displace? How does technology retrieve what was lost? And what does technology produce when pushed to an extreme?

Although definite answers to these questions were not found, it was noted that the mainstream terminologies such as “knowledge”, “understanding”, and “learning” do not represent an Aboriginal point of view. Yet, it is true that the conventional Aboriginal wisdom and its quest for knowledge has been broad and rich; it has always recognized the potential for growth, change, and development that all human experiences can potentially provide, not simply the experiences in schools, institutions or formal programs at a particular time or place in one’s life. Elders’ perspectives on learning are both profound and transformational. Hence, it is crucial to develop learning technologies that can address the cognitive and subjective aspects of learning as opposed to the dissemination of data and information that privileges goal-orientated results. In the latter, the dominant metaphor moves from an “empty vessel” to the “stuffed duck” approach, Aboriginal people can be easily “miseducated” by technology if they are used as a consumable commodity. E-education, in particular, is more vulnerable to the possibilities of miseducation due to its intangible quality.

The fact that most Aboriginal peoples living on reserves are unemployed or underemployed leaves them with indefinite roles and idle time, which could be better used with distance education and e-learning that will build their capacity for their future in the rural context. However, educational technologies must be broad enough and widely accessible so that Aboriginal people are not confined to reserves or to only a few select professions.

Success models of informational e-education can be found in the creation of Aboriginal related media files, and sound bites. The Inuktitut Living Dictionary ([www.livingdictionary.com](http://www.livingdictionary.com)) and the Nipisihkopahk Education Authority’s Plains Cree Language Site ([www.snea.com](http://www.snea.com)) are only a few successful cases among many. While not Canadian, the Alaska Native Knowledge Network is another example of how Aboriginal knowledge can be preserved, used, and introduced into the educational systems by means of technology. The Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) telehealth program, which links patients in 24 isolated communities in the Sioux Lookout Zone with physicians and specialists in Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, and Southern Ontario, has been remarkably successful in making specialized medicine available more locally. Thus, the potential uses of technological learning encompass Aboriginal health (including tele-psychiatry and tele-radiology in the “Lookout” zones), Elders’ interviews built in databases, connecting rural and city lives, and improving the transmission of histories.

E-learning on the reserves has not lived up to its potential due to the shortage of media infrastructure available in remote and impoverished communities which require TVs, video conferencing facilities, Internet, adapting and maintaining high cost interactive

technologies, and applications with sophisticated graphics. To discuss these problems further, the questions posed by ATB # 6 are as follows:

- What are the successful examples of using technology and transmission and how do they represent the viewpoints of parents, educators, youth, and adult learners?
- What ways can technology and learning transcend the obstacles to Aboriginal learning, their geographical and social barriers, and how can they fulfill the holistic and lifelong learning needs of those populations?
- What are some directions in which Aboriginal people can develop skills, receive diplomas, degrees in trades, sciences and business development, and yet ensure the continuity and renewal of Indigenous heritage?

*Commentaries of Problems and Prospects*

“The emerging functionality on Web Z (blogs, pod casting, wikis) represents a unique space where Aboriginal children & communities can engage in “community” learning over distance.”  
“Technology is the new buffalo.”  
“Technologies provide a map, but the map is not the territory.”

These observations are a reminder of the long-standing ambiguous relationship between Aboriginal people and technology. Many Aboriginal communities regard technology as an area in which “young people could and should lead and work in close partnerships with Elders.” Much of Aboriginal learning, it is asserted, “is interactive or based on relationship, not just exchanging online posts.” As a way of complementing Aboriginal cultures, technology is perceived to be “useful in collective learning at a local level as well as “reconnecting urban native people with home communities or each other.” Considering that one of the primary uses of technology is to “record and report findings”, it could be used to restore and illustrate historical aspects of Aboriginal cultures and bring them into the present-times. According to some, the implications of technology are more sophisticated than they are popularly understood: “building a relationship around some theory that is learned then shared is technology.” Of course, technology may have its down side: as some claim “technology is a drug.” Likewise, “technology is simply a tool and will always be just a tool as it cannot replace an Elder telling stories or an experience of living on the land.”

Students may, nevertheless, mistake “technology for learning (the medium is the message).” Computer work (especially) may lead to “a passive stance/posture...so we need to be wary/careful of how much we encourage dependency on man-made technology.” We “need not let a machine become our children’s primary companion/relationship.” Against such cultural hazards, it is argued that, if Aboriginal people are “not willing to make mistakes, then we (they) aren’t willing to develop a relationship.”

Understandably, as the induction (or invasion) of science technology into their lives is a recent phenomenon; a sense of “technophobia” is highly prevalent among

Aboriginal people. In spite of many welcoming signs, they ask, “How will technology help enhance and give success to revitalize Native languages”, especially when there is a “lack of resources, education, or accessibility.” There are other questions raised about how to balance priorities of the Aboriginal learner, how important foundations of Aboriginal culture such as ceremony can be part of technology, and how to decide on personal needs and talents using technology.

Apart from these concerns, the following gaps and challenges are brought to bundle’s attention:

1. What are Aboriginal perceptions of technology and learning? How are they dealt with in the conceptual structures of Aboriginal languages?
2. How can technology be used and be accessible to create real-time interaction?
3. How can we protect Indigenous intellectual property in web-based applications?
4. Access and reliability of “service issues” still need to be addressed.
5. Technology is ever-changing and it is difficult to cope with the changes.
6. Aboriginal research has not used technology adequately.
7. First Nations learners require practical/hands-on experiences to grasp concepts; technology may not be compatible to this style of learning.

While addressing these challenges, participants shared the following concerns:

- In light of the growing divide between culture and technology, “teachers need to work through their technological fear”;
- First Nations should lobby for a strong support from Industry Canada;
- There is a need to develop an inventory of technological applications to learning with an Aboriginal focus.
- “Technology can assist education and training program delivery, but should not be used separate from face-to-face teaching/social experiences and support.”
- Not all Aboriginal knowledge was meant to be shared widely or accessed over the Internet.
- Educators need to ask and allow students to define how they want to use this “new” medium to enhance their cultural norms.
- “Modern technology use is one way of unpacking the bundle—communities will decide how.”

Of the few successful practices available, “the Atlantic Office has had particular success at both regional and local levels” in making use of technologies for economic development. Another good example is the Kenora High School in Northern Ontario. In today’s internet-dominated world, many Aboriginal students know how to use computers “and are adept at chats, and blogs and they use cultural names in e-mails and use cultural icons as their identity in their chats (tips, feathers, buffalo, etc.).”

## 5. Analysis

Across the bundles, some of themes emerged:

1. Ensuring a coherent policy framework that would meet the expectations of Aboriginal learning by providing skills and work-based education;
2. Establishing programs to guide and support under-represented Indigenous Nations in the educational system;
3. Developing transition programs to enhance participation in under-represented fields and professions;
4. Preserving Aboriginal languages through increased funding as well as by granting more autonomy to tribal colleges, and First Nations controlled schools and colleges;
5. Eliminating administrative barriers over arbitrary separation of literacy, adult basic education, and academic upgrading from Aboriginal vocations and traditional pursuits; and
6. Increasing the use of technology for community benefit, not the Canadian labour markets.

Combined with this, different Indigenous Nations have lobbied for different educational concerns. The following table offers an account of these differences identified by place and distinct Aboriginal heritage or identity:

Table/Diagram 3: Diversity of Aboriginal Educational Needs

<b>Community/Place</b>	<b>Needs/Expectations</b>
Blackfoot	Marking memorial and symbolic sites and use them as educational sites
Cree Anishnabe and Inuktitut	Language survival strategies
Cree Nations	Evidence-based learning (“nita”)
Cowichan	Prevent ecological destruction and the sacredness of place as a source of learning
Hul’gumi’num	Need cross-language training in relation to English
Michif	Language survival strategies
Ojibwe	Bi-cognitive and bilingual educational and identity crisis
Sioux Cree, Dene, and Métis	Language-focussed education Training on land-based learning by mandatory training with the help of Elders
Onion Lake Cree	Encourage critical thinking
Oskayak H. S. Saskatoon SK	Need cultural training in Waldorf-style
Whitehorse Cree, Dene, and Dakota	Balance and clarity between Aboriginal and Western educational systems

While some bundles stressed the need for a stronger Aboriginal perspective, others prioritized the need for a collaborative effort between Western education and Aboriginal learning.

ATB # 1's focus has been on the practices that transform place as an interactional and performative source of learning by invoking the memories of places that are historically associated with Aboriginal cultures. In the process, at least one centre is using technology to restore knowledge and stories about those places by developing digital libraries and databases as an alternative means to connect places and people.

Participant commentaries suggest that place should not be treated as a territory of traditional knowledge, but needs to be modernized as well and integrated into school curricula. The separation between ancient wisdom and modern knowledge can be misleading, however. Place and memory are timeless; they are rooted in the past as much as they exist in the present, and will continue into the future.

Participants pressed for policy reforms to ensure the preservation of the sites of cultural importance so that the memory and knowledge associated with them remain intact. Such learning from place may then include its connection to language and ecology.

ATB # 2 dealt with the learning spirit by examining how individuals learn and the optimal conditions under which such learning can evolve. It recognized that learning is holistic and includes spiritual, emotional, cognitive and physical aspects and that when learners are traumatized or challenged by poverty, disease, racism, and the effects of colonialism, their capacity to learn is challenged. The bundle seeks to find ways in which institutions recognize and accommodate learners within these challenging contexts and the ways they engage the learning spirit. Each person's learning journey is unique and purposeful, and educational systems need to find within their normative structures of learning the diversity and accommodations that can engage all learners throughout their lifetime. Presuming that every culture is inspired by its unique situatedness and an urge (spirit) to learn about the world, the learning spirit should be nourished in relation to other parallel cultures.

In some participants' opinion, the learning spirit is better nourished by extending it into structured systems of learning. It cannot be treated as an introverted or intangible body of knowledge but needs to be externalized and used for both individual wellness and the community well-being. While "secular" knowledge is potentially useful to such externalization, it has a marked tendency to reduce Aboriginal notions of success into a narrow category. In a somewhat earnest fashion, these threats have caused Aboriginal people to guard their knowledge traditions from further destruction. Still, given the ambiguous nature of technology, participants welcomed secular ideas and their conceptual skills to identify the roadblocks to the nourishment of the learning spirit. But they are also cautious of its colonizing power.

ATB # 3 focused on the Aboriginal language learning practices that provide cultural knowledge and capacities that bridge the gap among the youth and Elders. The deterioration of Aboriginal languages has created many crises in communities as the share communal values, knowledge, and traditions are being eroded creating discontinuities among the youth. The strength of Aboriginal languages are seen as indicators of stability and resilience among communities, and, thus, the need for their revival is emphasized.

At the same time, the separation of language in Western knowledge systems through research theories, praxis, and pedagogies has been criticized. The need to save Aboriginal languages from academic rendition is emphasized. Language is the most important component of the holistic system because it connects people with every object, every ritual, and every social and cultural engagement through metaphors and symbols specific to every language.

Cultural continuity of knowledge will depend on improving school-based knowledge and education, creation of Aboriginal language nests and immersion programming, and maintenance of the different linguistic traditions. On the other hand, some participants proposed that academic training in linguistics would provide Aboriginal teachers the skills needed to restore lost languages and connect them to other languages of importance.

ATB # 4 tackled the intricacies of diverse Aboriginal learning traditions and the need for systems that would nourish their diversity while enabling them to succeed in a formal educational context.

The literature review focus, however, appeared to be primarily on the mainstream institutional structures and the way they influenced Aboriginal learning traditions. The fact that most research and writers are focusing on the available mainstream systems has shed less information on First Nations controlled institutions, which the participants felt needed to be brought forward. Although mainstream educational policies have encouraged early childhood learning, natural learning, and post-secondary learning, the participants felt that there is more successes found in Aboriginal-controlled institutions. More research in this area seems warranted.

Participants felt that the complex history of Aboriginal cultures has been over-simplified in the educational systems. They feel that policies directed towards childhood learning, whether or not they are mainstream, are desirable because they can address a whole range of welfare concerns from childcare to family health. As for post-secondary education, a stronger collaboration between Aboriginal and mainstream educational systems is deemed beneficial for Aboriginal people.

ATB # 5 analyzed the systemic manner by which some professional colleges are including pedagogies involving Aboriginal people to improve their recruitment and maintenance of Aboriginal professionals in their field. Some professions are viewing Aboriginal pedagogies as being unnecessary or irrelevant within the Western context.

Their focus then shifted to the strategic deployment of Aboriginal pedagogies to prepare students for professional practices in a knowledge-based economy. Specifically, a strong Aboriginal representation is expected in professions such as health, law, and scientific professions where such deployments have shown success.

Many participants believe that professional development must be measured by the cultural standards unique to Aboriginal people, welfare, trades, health, and ecology as opposed to the Western indicators based on statistics. The dual engagement of the modern and traditional within Aboriginal communities that lead to a bi-cognitive consciousness is touted as an advantage to succeed in Western professions.

ATB # 6 dealt with the Western-centric use of technology and its implications for Aboriginal learning. A shortage of technological resources in remote Aboriginal communities is noted as barriers to success among them.

Technology can be used to foster distance education and health care in remote communities. However, many participants viewed technology to be incompatible with Aboriginal cultures, and therefore they are viewed from outside their communities as colonized cultures that need to be saved. Rejecting this view, however, other participants ascertained that Aboriginal people have a strong sense of “agency” and they can determine the uses and abuses of technology.

Assessing the merits and the limitations of each bundle, the following table offers participants’ views on the organizational importance, and future expectations of Aboriginal learning. The following table presents a list of organizations (left column) and the expectations (right column) of the participants from these organizations as the best practises in Aboriginal learning.

Table/Diagram 5: Organizational Role and Expectations

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Expectations/Practices</b>
<p style="text-align: center;">Alaska Native Knowledge Network</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CMEC</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CTAs</p> <p style="text-align: right;">DIAND</p>	<p>Offers examples of language nests. Must receive support by legislation from governments to ensure independent language curriculum.</p> <p>Should offer cross-country judicial scan on educational policies.</p> <p>Should grant “independence” beyond the curriculum structure in classrooms when teaching languages.</p> <p>Should recognize cultural discontinuity in policy framework.</p>

Human Resources Development Canada	Has facilitated work-based education.
Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning	Should provide data on Aboriginal people's labour market situations.
INAC	"Recognize that "IIHL's have the benefit of ensuring their cultural identity is maintained."
ITEP	Should consider land as part of education.
Ministry of Education	Strive for adult education internship arrangements/partnerships with ITEP and with masters-level students of Aboriginal ancestry.
National Literacy Secretariat	Should educate Aboriginal communities on land ownership and claims processes.
Nipishkopahk Education Authority	Set examples on adult education
Red Crow Community College	Offers examples on language preservation through Plains Cree Language Site.
Saanich Adult Education Centre and Native Education Centre	Initiated research on place and learning.
The Inuktitut Living Dictionary	Designed successful federal policies for adult education.
The KO telehealth	Exemplified language preservation practices
Alberta Digital Library Initiative	Set an example of Lookout Zone in areas of high suicide rates
University of Lethbridge	Provided alternative means of revitalizing memory and familiarities with such threatened places
	Established Blackfoot Digital Library

Perhaps the most elusive aspect of the ATBs' analyses has been the lack of attention to the burgeoning urban Aboriginal population and their educational resources. In 1951, the Census of Canada showed that 6.% of the Aboriginal population lived in cities. By 2001, that proportion had increased to 49% (INAC, 2007). Richards and Vining (2004) state that a determining factor to Aboriginal people's urban migration is their preference for education.

Not only meeting educational needs, but the cultural and social transformation of the urban Aboriginal population has far reaching implications for the prosperity of the Aboriginal community as a whole. Literature suggests that the urbanization of Aboriginal people does not necessarily lead to the displacement of their non-urban culture. Indeed, it is a cultural transformation informed by changing social and economic positions that foster a variety of life choices and orientations. Contrary to populist assumptions that urban Aboriginal people are "ghettoized" because they are "incompatible" with urban life, studies indicate that the new wave of urban Aboriginal people are effectively reformulating Western institutions and practices in order to maintain community ties as well as their distinct cultural identities (Peters, 2001). The potential for class formation and the emerging divide between rural and urban Aboriginal people indicates that Aboriginal educational expectations are becoming highly diverse and differentiated. In

the past two decades, Canada's attempt to foster a knowledge-based economy on a national scale has drastically altered the structure of the labour markets. According to the National Aboriginal Business Association these changes are contributing to growing disparities of class, gender, and employment amongst Aboriginal people. Research needs to pay greater attention to the disintegration of social and community structure in the urban context where half of the Canada's Aboriginal people now reside.

## 6. Conclusion

“As an Elder and having been raised with my culture, I believe these presentations are wonderful, but what did we learn here? Where do we go from here? Anyone who has been involved with Aboriginal people has known the problems for years. We have to work very hard to solve these problems. I'd like to hear how the people will solve these problems.”

“What you input into our minds determines the kind of person that will be made. We still have agency as to who we will become.”

The Elder's quandary and the ambiguities that arise from his reflection upon the past, their legacy in the present, and a combination of hope and despair over the prospects of future Aboriginal learning seems to be the most compelling theme offered by the ATB leaders and the participants.

In spite of the many uncertainties expressed, it is suggested that “growth has been made”, as far as Aboriginal learning is concerned. Arguably, Aboriginal people have “achieved twice the results with only half the resource available to the non-Aboriginal people.” Although evidence offered by the ATB's in this regard is rather inconclusive, especially since the presentations were offering the first step of their workplans involving literature reviews, the themes, suggestions, assessments; and critiques offered by the participants and researchers nevertheless reflect a gaining momentum in educational successes.

Still, a major concern of that runs through reflections is the cultural rift between holistic learning and the fragmented nature of the mainstream educational systems. As the participants state:

“Our hearts have as much as wisdom as our brains. Stop thinking brain-centric all the time. You don't fuse curriculum with a bit of culture. We need to rewrite it with our own.” “Our cosmology, epistemology, and ontology; knowledges are rooted in land, stars above, our ecology. It needs to be protected, and privileged before incorporated or assimilated.” “Learn the spiritual languages. Put Elders at the heart of the research. They will guide us.”

Challenging these perspectives, some participants considered that since the communal elements and collective spirit—place, spiritual practices, and dislocation—of the Aboriginal cultures have already been altered by the Western influences, the old binaries between holistic and Western learning are no longer relevant: “Both are hopelessly stuck

(obsessed almost) with the definition or what defines for themselves their identity. Both fail, it seems, to see the human in the other.... Each towing their party line.”

Therefore, as a consolidation, it is proposed that Aboriginal people should participate in strategic social positions and professions such as law, economics, medicine while maintaining a strong sense of Aboriginal identity and community attachment. Notably, Western technology is touted as an essential component of Aboriginal learning. Furthermore, Aboriginal learning must be broached from a multidimensional, albeit holistic, perspective that involves the knowledge of treaties, land claims, health, ecology, spirituality, and biodiversity. Even though the structural reforms to the mainstream professions and educational systems are important, they must be designed in such a way that they can accommodate Aboriginal people’s spiritual and communal fulfillment:

“We are the embodiment of the original dream of the treaty parties in their vision of an enlightened livelihood. They dreamed us up at treaty times; they dreamed us up this generation, but it took two generations being sacrificed to their social experiment to the replacement of consciousness, and we deal with the consequences everyday. Even though we were successful, we were never away from the Aboriginal consciousness. We need these [Eurocentric] skills to protect our own knowledge.”

But skepticisms over such views are prevalent: “Sometimes we try to fit in; it is not them who assimilate.” These statements remind us that not only are the current policies on education, learning and professional practice either assimilationist or segregationist, but they are indirectly responsible for the reproduction of differences between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal learning cultures.

Thus, all the ATB’s conclude that a mere restructuring of the existing policy structure cannot fulfill the promises of Aboriginal education and learning; instead, a sweeping reform is required. Even then, policy reforms that fail to recognize the changing face of the Aboriginal communities in terms of economy, social relations, and cultural transformations can have detrimental effects on their survival. These changes and transformations can be addressed only by granting institutional autonomy to Aboriginal communities to address their needs without recourse to, and comparison with, the mainstream society and its expectations. Otherwise, Aboriginal people will be depicted as continually static, unchanging, and be subjected to social engineering that is oblivious to their present condition or future prospects, let alone the vestiges of the past.

While this report cannot account for the specificities of their social, cultural and economic transformations, it provides more than ample evidence to the argument that Aboriginal people in Canada have gone a long way in discussing, questioning, debating, and above all recognizing the vitality of these transformations.

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## 8. Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre – Mandate, Roles and Responsibilities

The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (ABLKC) has a mandate to promote and support evidence-based decision-making about learning throughout all stages of life—from early childhood through to the workplace and beyond. Our vision is to be a catalyst for lifelong learning across Canada. The ABLKC is an independent, not-for-profit corporation funded through a partnership with the Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) and the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC) and the University of Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal Education Research Centre (AERC). ABLKC’s principal activities include knowledge exchange of Aboriginal learning promising practices, contributing to CCL’s research and knowledge mobilization on a wide range of learning issues, and monitoring and reporting on Aboriginal progress in learning.

### Mandate and Foundational Functions of CCL

- The mandate of CCL is to address information and knowledge gaps and provide evidence based research to support all stages of learning.
- CCL has three foundational functions:
  - Research and Knowledge Mobilization
  - Monitoring and Reporting
  - Knowledge Exchange and Information Sharing
- The Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre in the Prairies, NWT and Nunavut is one of five Centres of the Canadian Council on Learning. The lead organizations for the ABLKC are the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC) and the Aboriginal Education Research Centre (AERC), College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.
- The four other Centres include:
  - Adult Learning in Atlantic Canada
  - Early Learning in Quebec
  - Work and Learning in Ontario
  - Health and Learning in British Columbia, Yukon
- The lead organizations for the ABLKC are the First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC) and the Aboriginal Education Research Centre (AERC), College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.
- Purpose of the ABLKC is to provide a national focus for knowledge exchange of Aboriginal learning initiatives, exemplary practices, scholarly and community dialogue, discussion and collaboration to improve the lifelong learning of Aboriginal learners.
- ABLKC’s mission is to strive to understand learning processes, to identify effective and successful programs, processes, and outcomes that inform learning theory and practice, to identify barriers and gaps and to create a network and resource through collaboration with members on consortium (based in Nunavut, NWT and Prairies).

## Cross Cutting Themes

CCL identified cross cutting themes, as additional layers of complexity, to increase the relevance of the foundational functions. ABLKC has added its own dimensions to acknowledge Indigenous traditions of knowing.

- Gender—male and female, generational, how learning varies accordingly.
- Culturality—acknowledging the context that culture provides for learning.
- Literacy—acknowledging the capacity that literacy (Aboriginal Languages and English Language) provides for learning.
- E-learning—acknowledging the application and the appropriateness of e-learning for future capacity building among Indigenous people and communities
- French minorities—recognizing the French language influence among Aboriginal communities and understanding learning issues among them and what Canadians need to know about these groups

## Operational Principles of CCL -ABLKC

- Focus on Research Priorities - relevant, evidence based, interdisciplinary.
- Striving for Excellence – innovative, exploratory, accessible data, meet Canadian Tri Council ethical guidelines and those developed by local Aboriginal entities.
- Respectful of Diversity – dignity of individuals and communities, inclusive and participatory, in partnerships with communities which respect cultural protocols, ethics and ways of knowing.
- Strategic Partnerships and Capacity Building – collaborative, bridge gaps between research and practice, use existing resources, focus on strengthening Aboriginal learning.
- Relevance- to place (relational).
- Consultation services – responsive, leadership on impact indicators and research directions, informative to the public.

## Principles (Beliefs, Values and Commitments) on Aboriginal Learning

The following principles on Aboriginal Learning are a synthesis of commitments outlined in 06-07 ABLKC draft strategic work plan created from the approved business plan and the learning principles outlined in the foundational document entitled, CCL State of Aboriginal Learning Report 2005 (Battiste).

- Aboriginal peoples view education as a vital area for holistic and lifelong learning and for transformation of their economic livelihood.
- Learning is acknowledged as a lifelong process that requires both formal and informal opportunities for learning for all ages.

- Land, the knowledge and skills in and from place, language and culture are integral parts of the learning and education processes among Aboriginal people.
- Aboriginal learning is integrally linked to elders and community and opportunities must be realized to build upon these connections and their language, knowledge and culture.
- Learning development must focus on Aboriginal individuals in a holistic manner based on their spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical selves, which acknowledge and foster their gifts and abilities.
- The selection and legitimization of curricular knowledge is based on power, voice, and agency that require Aboriginal people to be participants in all aspects of curriculum development; deciding on the knowledge to be included in the curriculum, and in what languages the curriculum is to be delivered. This requires new skills and knowledge to bring Aboriginal people into these participatory realms as well as power changes to systems in policymaking.
- The participation and involvement of parents and community is essential to building a successful learning continuum and healthy resilient communities.
- The legitimate right of Aboriginal peoples across Canada to develop and control all aspects of their own education must be recognized, resourced, and realized.
- Inequalities in educational funding create uneven capacities for Aboriginal people and require immediate fiscal and applied solutions.
- The development of any learning and research activities with and for Aboriginal peoples must be developed within ethical principles of research involving Aboriginal communities and leadership. These are to ensure that Aboriginal peoples are participants and owners of research and/or researchers who are involved in all aspects of the research, the analysis and conclusions, and identifying the solutions and recommendations that will benefit their nations and communities.
- The work of the centre is inclusive of perspectives of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis regardless of where we live, work and raise our children.
- The work of the ABLKC is carried out with an awareness of the prevailing negative discourses of difference, which perpetuate notions of dependencies, deficiency, deviancy, with culture being seen as both a problem and a solution to most issues. These discourses deflect attention from Aboriginal peoples' gifts, contributions, relationships, sustainability, drawing strength from, and honoring, holism, balance and responsibility etc. versus discourses which commodify Indigenous knowledge and knowing, and views Aboriginal people only as workers for a job market or global market.
- Research and community engagement must respect local community and cultural protocols on Inuit, First Nations and Métis lands and the intellectual property rights of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people, as well as respect their diverse histories and contexts.
- Aboriginal communities must be the beneficiaries of the research conducted in their communities.

- Aboriginal people have their own definition and perspectives of what constitutes success and those considerations must be centred in any changes sought in learning and education.
- The goals of transformation and decolonization in Aboriginal learning must be balanced with any corporate goals for creating a skilled work force.

**Foundational Functions of CCL-ABLKC and Strategic Directions are as follows:**

- Research and Knowledge Mobilization
  - Promote and identify research that will nourish respectful and transformative learning environments for Aboriginal people.
  - Link current and future scholarship with the changing needs of Aboriginal learning.
- Monitoring and Reporting
  - Support national efforts of CCL to monitor forms and impact of learning, contributing to the Composite Learning Index and providing access to this knowledge and information to the Canadian public through dialogue, symposia, brochures, websites, newsletters, etc.
- Knowledge Exchange and Information Sharing
  - Work in partnership with existing organizations with expertise in lifelong learning to build on their work and supporting effective practices in all areas of lifelong learning analysis, studies, etc.
  - Animate through various forums research and evidence based ideas for action.

**Operational Functions and Strategic Directions & Goals of ABLKC are as follows:**

- Governance and Networks
  - Seek leadership and support through the Steering Committee to meet the foundational functions of CCL and purpose of ABLKC.
  - Promote strategic initiatives and partnerships with Consortium members and National Advisory Committee.
- Administration
  - Provide administrative leadership to support the foundational functions of CCL and purpose of ABLKC
  - Work collaboratively with CCL and Knowledge Centres
- Communication
  - Develop an internal communications plan for CCL-ABLKC
  - Develop and maintain an effective external communications plan with networks and the public to ensure a national scope.

## Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships

### CCL and Knowledge Centres

#### FNAHEC and AERC: Co-Directors and Coordinators

Representing the signatories of the contract of the ABLKC (University of Saskatchewan and First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium, the Co-Directors are responsible for oversight of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre at all of the centre locations (Saskatoon, Calgary and North). In this capacity, the Directors are responsible for the ABLKC's carrying out their obligations under the contract with the Canadian Council on Learning. These include the following:

- managing a governance structure,
- oversight for a workplan and the staff of each of the centre locations,
- financial oversight of the centre located in offices in Calgary, Saskatoon and the north,
- ensuring reporting processes to CCL are carried out in a timely and competent manner,
- advice is provided to CCL on research priorities and on indicators for monitoring and reporting, and
- ensuring that a productive working relationship with CCL staff is achieved.

The Co-Directors work collaboratively to achieve a coherent vision for the Centre, building upon principles of respect, good communications, equitable shared workload, and cooperation to ensure all the staff have a dependable and available source of support as they carry out their responsibilities. They will oversee the knowledge exchange activities of the Animation Leads, undertake various processes, and observe various protocols (collaborative and interdependent) as a way to achieve the mandate of CCL and purpose of the ABLKC.

#### Consortium:

Consortium members are those individuals, organizations, and institutions based in the Prairies/NWT/Nunavut Region that have expertise in Aboriginal learning who support the purpose of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre and that have been part of the original application of the ABLKC. The role of the Consortium is as follows:

- to ensure that their own members of their organization or institution are informed of ABLKC's plans, activities, news releases and reports,
- to disseminate requests and information within their institution and organizations, and
- to receive the input from their organization/institution, and coordinate or delegate members to provide advice and intellectual relevance of the Centre's activities.

The Consortium members have demonstrated a capacity to address learning issues for Métis, Inuit and First Nations Peoples, and as such, the Consortium represents the first go-to-group of the Centre.

#### Steering Committee:

The Steering Committee is representative of the Consortium that will ensure perspectives of First Nation, Inuit, Métis urban/rural/northern, government, policy-makers and cultural advisors. Meeting at least twice annually and by teleconference as needed, the Steering Committee acts individually and collectively as a vocal and visible champion of the ABLKC through their representative organizations and on a broader scale. The Committee:

- provides leadership and guidance to the ABLKC's strategic plan and specific work plans,
- provides support to the Directors and Coordinators,
- assists in the development of criteria for the selection of Coordinators,
- monitors ABLKC activity by assessing activities and processes of the Centre,
- assists with material oversight of public communications (PR, quality of info) and monitor synthesis of information and content of reports,
- assists with protocol management, and
- resolves challenges that may arise within the project, recommending project changes and providing direction and guidance to the co-leading organizations FNAHEC and AERC.

#### National Advisory Committee:

NAC committee members have expertise in Aboriginal Learning but are largely based outside of the geographic region (Prairies, Northwest Territories, Nunavut). A minimum of 50% of the membership are from outside Prairies/NWT/Nunavut with the balance of the membership coming from the Region, as Consortium members.

A National Advisory Committee is broadly representative of interests and expertise to give the co-leading organizations and Consortium counsel on direction.

#### National and International Associate Members:

National Associate Members are those with an interest in the activities, goals and outputs of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. They represent individuals and organizations who wish to develop an association with ABLKC, but whose roles and capacities lay outside the realm of the responsibilities of the Consortium, National Advisory Committee, or the Steering Committee. They receive information on the activities of the Animation Leads, the coordinated ABLKC and CCL events, and public reports and website information.

International Associate Members represent individuals, organizations, and institutions that wish to support the work of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, but are resident in other regions of the world. Like the National Associate Members, they may or may not have expertise in Aboriginal learning, and receive information on the activities of the Animation Leads, the coordinated ABLKC and CCL events, and public reports and website information.

## 9. Biographies

### ***Animation Theme Bundle 1: Learning from Place***

Explores learning of traditional knowledge, processes and practices from living in a particular place; language and culture are all integral parts of the learning and education process among First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

#### **Ryan Heavy Head**

Ryan Heavy Head, Akáyo'kaki, is an instructor of Kainai Studies and Cultural Anthropology at Red Crow College, on the Blood Indian Reserve, Alberta, Canada. He is presently serving as the acting Coordinator of the Kainai Studies program, and is an Ai'sopowahtsi'si (asking-questions, or "principal researcher") for their SSHRC-sponsored Itsinikssiistsi Project. Heavy Head came to Red Crow College with a decade-long background in repatriation negotiations for the Blackfoot Confederacy, and has also worked on repatriation contracts for the Hupa Tribe of California and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon. Heavy Head holds a Masters degree in anthropology from the University of Lethbridge, and principal transfer rights in the Niitsitapi knowledge discipline of Iiaohkiimiiksi.



#### **Narcisse Blood**

Narcisse Blood, Ki'naksaapo'p, Iitsitsko'pa, was a previous Coordinator of the Kainai Studies program at Red Crow College, and has been recognized as an Eminent Scholar (K.Ph.D.) by Red Crow College. He is also an Iitsitsko'pa (emplaced-for-a-reason, or elder) for their SSHRC-sponsored Itsinikssiistsi Project. Blood currently teaches for the Kainai Studies program, the Department of Education at Lethbridge University, and the International Indigenous Studies Department at the University of Calgary. Blood has served as Chair for the Mookaakin Cultural and Heritage Foundation of the Blood Tribe [2003] and served on the Blood Tribe Chief and Council. Last year, Blood served as Speaker for the State of the Nations Symposium; his lecture was entitled, "Defending Rights: An Indian World View on the Environment." He has principal transfer rights in the Niitsitapi knowledge disciplines of Iitskinaiksi and Ninnaimsskaiksi.

### ***Animation Theme Bundle 2: Comprehending and Nourishing the Learning Spirit***

Little is known about the learning journey that each person travels to arrive comfortably at their own awareness of their gifts, capacities, strengths, which broadly can be seen as their learning spirit. How that learning spirit evolves in a lifetime to create a learning journey is also less well known. What is better known is how many Aboriginal people venture off conventional learning paths of high schools and universities and colleges. This theme explores the nature of the Learning Spirit in Aboriginal learning, the literature, issues, and promising practices, and considers how learning can be enriched lifelong to nourish the learning spirit.

Lead

Dr. Marie Battiste is the Director of Aboriginal Education Research Centre, and Co-Director of the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. Her academic and scholarly work in First Nations education has been a practical front line activity as a Mi'kmaw First Nations administrator, teacher, consultant, and curriculum developer, advancing Aboriginal epistemology, languages, pedagogy, and research. An active speaker, writer, and researcher, Marie has theorized the Learning Spirit as part a National Science Foundation catalyst grant and is continuing to explore its praxis and promising practices.

***Animation Theme Bundle 3: Learning through Aboriginal Language***

Lodged in the heart of the first peoples of these lands, within their own world views and social systems, language fosters the source of connectivity between the spiritual and physical realms. Cast within this reality, language embraces feelings and spirit and is integral to a holistic sense of being distinctive and inherent in the lands occupied by generations of Aboriginal language speakers. This theme explores the role Aboriginal languages have on learning our own knowledge, culture and literacy; and considers how our current capacities engenders our own ecologies and future potentialities.

***Lead***

Dr. Leona Makokis is a member of Kehewin Cree Nation and has been President of the Blue Quills First Nations College since 1992. With her doctorate in Educational Leadership, Dr. Makokis has dedicated herself to supporting the growth of programs that balance traditional indigenous knowledge and language with contemporary experience. She has received several awards recognizing her contribution and commitment to advancing indigenous education, most recently being honoured by the University of Alberta Alumni Association and Athabasca University. Her present research interests in the transmission of the Cree language as part of a SSHRC grant is leading towards articulating indigenous grounded theory.

***Animation Theme Bundle 4: Diverse Educational Systems and Learning***

A variety of educational systems and settings exist in support of early learning, K-12, post-secondary, and non-formal education and learning. These systems directly affect First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners. The Diverse Educational Systems and Learning bundle will identify and communicate effective practices, particularly the areas of governance, policy, curricula, and assessment, which have proven successful in increasing outcomes for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit learners. This bundle will also identify partnerships or alternative systems and practices in place, which are proving promising in their effectiveness.

### ***Lead***

Saskatchewan Learning provides the lead for this bundle. Ted Amendt is a Superintendent of First Nations and Métis Education with Saskatchewan Learning and has worked with the Department for the past four years. His position has responsibilities for policy, programs, partnerships, and research to support school divisions in their efforts to address First Nations and Métis Education. Ted's work in the Department has also focused on policy direction and support to schools and divisions in the areas of authentic community engagement and, community education. Before joining Saskatchewan Learning, Ted spent six years at a Community School in Saskatoon as Community School Coordinator. In this role he devoted much time to community development and building relationships with marginalized families which resulted in improved outcomes for students. Ted has provided leadership and training on authentic community engagement within Saskatchewan and to communities stretching throughout Western and Northern Canadian provinces and territories, and has presented at a variety of educational conferences. Ted has completed the required coursework for his Master of Education degree through the University of Saskatchewan, and is currently completing his thesis. Ted is Métis from Saskatchewan.

### ***Animation Theme Bundle 5: Pedagogy of Professions and Practice and Aboriginal Learning.***

Since the 1970's the universities have encouraged Aboriginal professionals in teaching, law, health, social work, business, which have increased Aboriginal professionals in multiple fields. They are the vanguard generating the Aboriginal renaissance. This bundle is focused on comprehending their achievements, the role of pedagogy in their achievements, and their need of learning new information and knowledge in their professional practice and the knowledge society. It seeks to share knowledge on the learning environments in professional colleges and practices that improves Aboriginal participation in those professions.

### ***Lead***

JAMES [SÁKÉJ] YOUNGBLOOD HENDERSON, I.P.C., Research Director, Native Law Centre of Canada, College of Law, University of Saskatchewan is a member of the Bear Clan of the Chickasaw Nation and Cheyenne Tribe in Oklahoma in 1944. In 1974, he received a Juris doctorate in law from Harvard Law School and became a law professor who created litigation strategies to restore and protect Aboriginal culture, institutions and rights. He is a recognized author of many books and articles on Aboriginal law and human rights and has served widely on various boards and commissions. In 2005, the Indigenous Bar Association awarded him the honorary title of Indigenous People's Counsel (I.P.C.) and in 2006, he received an National Aboriginal Achievement Award for Law and Justice.

## ***Animation Theme Bundle 6: Technology and Learning***

Knowledge and learning are in a stage of transformation and upheavals so momentous that some people claim we are in the throes of a learning revolution, created by new information and communication technologies and associated with a change in knowledge systems and patterns. This theme explores the nature of technology in aboriginal learning, its issues and promising practices and how aboriginal learning can be enriched with technology.

### ***Lead***

The Genesis Group ([www.genesisgroup.ca](http://www.genesisgroup.ca)) is the lead organization responsible for the Technology & Learning Bundle. The Genesis Group has been incorporated in Yellowknife since 1996 and is a Division of the Northern Learning Institute NWT Inc., which is 100% Aboriginally owned by Nunasi Corporation ([www.nunasi.com](http://www.nunasi.com)). Genesis' main areas of expertise are development and delivery of training programs, research, evaluation and assessment, writing and curriculum development. A key corporate objective of Genesis' is to assist Aboriginal Northerners enhance their lives through education and training advancement.

Genesis' expertise provides a unique fit with the work plan and research questions proposed in Animation Theme Bundle Six: Technology & Learning as we have experience in both aboriginal education & training and technology development for the purpose of aboriginal education & training. Most recently, Genesis has completed an Interactive Apprenticeship Study Project – Aboriginal Theme that resulted in an innovative online interactive learning and support system that will improve the educational opportunities of Aboriginal Canadians and assist them into successful trade's careers.

Mr. John Simpson, as principal for this project has over twenty-five years of experience providing educational and training services throughout the Northwest Territories. His experience is supported by a Masters Degree in Community Leadership and a Bachelor's Degree in Native Studies. John has Northern community experience as a teacher, principal, school board member, adult educator and general manager. As the former Director of Policy and Programs for Aurora College, John has significant experience in research, policy and program development, evaluation and report development.

**Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre**  
**Animation Theme Bundle Leads**

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## **ABORIGINAL LEARNING KNOWLEDGE CENTRE Biographies**

The ABLKC Coordinators are Genevieve Fox, Rita Bouvier, and Maria Wilson

Staahtsistayaiki Genevieve A. Patty Fox, Kainai-Blood Tribe.  
ABLKC Coordinator First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium in Calgary, Alberta. Served as a teacher, administrator and volunteer for sixteen years in the Blood Tribe Education system with the Kainai Board of Education. She was actively involved in the community development of the Blood Reserve with the Kainai Alcohol Related Brain Injury Committee in the prevention and intervention of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, assisted other national organizations in the development of strategies to address some of the gaps found within First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. She served as the Treaty 7 Special Education Coordinator and represented Treaty 7 Special Education at the National level with the Assembly of First Nations and the National Special Education Working Group. As the T7 SE coordinator she was engaged in capacity development and training of Treaty 7 Educators with Red Crow Community College (RCCC) and Old Sun Community College (OSCC), assisted in negotiating a Master's Degree in Special Education and Reading with the Sinte Gleska University from South Dakota – 15 teachers in Treaty 7 will graduate in 2007 with a Master's degree. Most of the Teacher Assistants of Kainai, Siksika, Stoney, and Tsuu T'ina have received training in FASD and Special Needs Teacher Assistant Training in collaboration with RCCC, OSCC, Lethbridge Community College, and the University of Calgary. Also was a sessional instructor in the Niitsitapi Teacher Education Program at the University of Lethbridge. Genevieve received her education from the University of Lethbridge (B.Ed.), Gonzaga University (M.A.), and currently a candidate for a Doctorate in Education (Ed. D.) with the University of Calgary. She is married to retired Blood Tribe Chief Roy Fox, CEO and President of the Indian Resource Council of Canada, we share four children and eight grandchildren.

Rita Bouvier, of the Métis nation. ABLKC Coordinator Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. Recently retired from the administrative staff of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation served public education for thirty-three years

in varying capacities: as a classroom teacher, as Director of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program, a sessional lecturer in cross cultural studies at the University of Saskatchewan, a curriculum developer and educational administrator. Rita also a volunteer and consultant with the AWASIS Council, Royal University Hospital Board, Nutana High School Students and Kids (SAKs), Social Studies Task Force, Northern Governance Task Force, the Public Service Commission and more recently with Iskwewuk E-wichiwitochik – Woman Working Together (Formerly Missing Aboriginal Woman) and the Independent Oversight Committee on Métis Elections. Rita is the author of two books of poetry. Rita holds a B.Ed and an M.Ed degree in education from the University of Saskatchewan.

Maria Wilson, originally from Siberia works for the Inuit Tapirit Kanatami in Ottawa, Ontario

The ABLKC Co-Directors are Dr. Vivian Ayoungman and Dr. Marie Battiste.

Dr. Vivian Ayoungman, from the Siksika Nation is the director for the First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium with membership from First Nations' colleges from Alberta and Manitoba. Dr. Ayoungman represents Alberta First Nations at the National Level with the National Indian Education Council (NIEC), National Aboriginal Institution on Higher Learning (NAIHL), First Nations' Accreditation Board (FNAB); and advisor to Alberta Education, Post-secondary Education, Assembly of First Nations, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Alberta region and Ottawa headquarters. Dr. Ayoungman is also involved with other world indigenous organizations she has represented Canada's First People in Columbia, Peru, at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, and the United States. FNAHEC hosted the 2002 World Indigenous People's Conference on Education (WIPCE) in Treaty 7 First Nations' territory.

Dr. Marie Battiste from the Mi'kmaq Nation is a Professor in the College of Education, and Director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre (AERC) at the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Battiste is a technical expert for the United Nations, and advisor to Canadian Heritage, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Auditor General of Canada, a board member to Canadian Council on Learning, and an Executive Member of UNESCO Canada. She has co-authored several books, and is the recipient of two honorary doctorate degrees. Dr. Battiste is recognized by many for the work she has done initiating institutional change in the decolonization of education, language, and also the protection and advancement of Indigenous knowledge

### **Daryl Rock, Associate Director, Knowledge Exchange**

Daryl joined CCL in April 2005 with the responsibility to develop and lead the implementation of a Knowledge Exchange strategy for lifelong learning. He comes to CCL from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) where he spent three years as the Director of Strategic Programs. In this role he was responsible for managing the majority of SSHRC's applied research programs including the Community University Research Alliances, the Multicultural program, the Literacy program and the.

He was also responsible for developing and launching a series of new strategic research programs including one that addresses priority issues of northern Canada and another that addresses issues relevant to Canada's Aboriginal peoples. With each of these programs Daryl focused on supporting relevant research and bridging the divide between researchers, research results and decision makers. Prior to joining SSHRC Daryl worked with HRDC's Labour Market Information Services developing and implementing a pan-Canadian service delivery framework and the Human Resources Partnerships Directorate.

Daryl has spent most of his career designing and managing applied research and R&D funding programs. He brings with him skills in program design, evaluation, partnership development, peer adjudication, strategic planning and knowledge mobilization. Daryl has volunteered on many local, provincial and national Boards and is the past-Chairman of the Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation and President of Freedom at Depth Canada, a national scuba diving training organization. He has a BA in Political Science and an MA in Public Administration and lives with his wife in Vancouver.

### **Daryl Rock, directeur délégué, échange des connaissances**

M. Rock s'est joint au CCA en 2005 à titre de directeur délégué, échange des connaissances. Il a comme mandat de mettre en place une stratégie d'échanges de connaissances en matière d'apprentissage tout au long de la vie. Avant de se joindre au CCA, Daryl a occupé pendant trois ans le poste de directeur des programmes stratégiques au Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines (CRSH). À ce titre, il a géré la plupart programmes de recherche appliquée du CRSH, notamment les Alliances de recherche universités-communautés, le programme multiculturel, le programme d'alphabétisation et le projet Metropolis. Il a également piloté la mise au point et le lancement d'une série de nouveaux programmes stratégiques de recherche, dont un portant sur les questions prioritaires pour le Nord canadien et un autre s'intéressant aux problématiques des peuples Autochtones du Canada. Dans chacun de ces programmes, M. Rock s'est concentré sur la recherche pertinente et d'établir des liens étroits entre les chercheurs, les conclusions de recherches et les décideurs. Antérieurement, M. Rock a travaillé au sein des services d'information sur le marché du travail de DRHC, où il était chargé de créer et de mettre en œuvre un cadre pancanadien de prestation de services, et à la Direction des partenariats en ressources humaines.

M. Rock a consacré la plus grande partie de sa carrière à concevoir et à gérer des programmes de financement de la recherche appliquée et du développement. Il apporte au CCA ses compétences en conception et en évaluation de programmes, en développement de partenariats, en adjudication par les pairs, en planification stratégique et en mobilisation des connaissances. M. Rock a siégé à titre de bénévole sur plusieurs conseils régional, provincial et national. Il assume présentement le rôle de président sortant de la Fondation ontarienne de neurotraumatologie et président du conseil de Liberté en profondeur Canada, organisme national de formation en plongée autonome. Il est titulaire d'un baccalauréat en sciences politiques et d'une maîtrise en administration publique et vit avec son épouse à Vancouver.

## Guest Speakers:

### Dr. Marie Smallface-Marule



A woman who has spent her life building communities of cultural knowledge will be honoured at Athabasca University's 2006 Convocation. An honorary Doctor of Letters will be conferred on Marie Smallface-Marule of the Blood Reserve on Thursday, June 8.

Education has long been important to Smallface-Marule, a member of the Blood Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy. She sees it as an integral part of community development. "My father wanted me to fight for First Nations causes," she said. "He knew education was needed to do that effectively. I wanted to get a good education as a means to an end ... People have to inform and empower themselves to facilitate real community development."

Despite her success at school, Smallface-Marule recognized that education encouraging assimilation and indoctrination did not serve aboriginal students well. She now works on developing education that respects cultural heritage and includes indigenous identity.

As president of Red Crow Community College (RCCC), a tribal college on the Blood Reserve, Smallface-Marule has been developing an institution designed to meet the needs of aboriginal students. "It is important that our culture, traditions and knowledge as Kainai (Blackfoot people) be transferred to future generations through our own institutions," she said. "We need to make education more relevant to our community."

The first group of native teachers trained in Blackfoot curriculum development (a degree granted jointly by RCCC and the University of Lethbridge) will graduate this June. "We hope to link First Nations knowledge and culture to other programs such as nursing, agriculture, and science," Smallface-Marule said, "to make it part of people's lives in more conscious and academic ways."

In addition to teaching at institutions such as the University of Lethbridge, Smallface-Marule has served as a community and literacy officer in Zambia, Central Africa, as executive director for the National Indian Brotherhood and as chief administrator of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples. She was also founder and president of the First Nations Higher Education Consortium (FNHEC) and is vice-chair of the National Association of Indigenous Institutions of Higher Learning (NAIIHL).

For her work as an educator and advocate of human rights for aboriginal people around the world, Smallface-Marule was presented with the 1995 National Aboriginal Achievement Award for education. Most recently, she was honoured with the Queen's Medal for outstanding community and educational service.

**John B. Zoe** is a member of the Tlicho First Nation, born and raised and continues to reside in Behchok'o in the Northwest Territories. In the early years his community spoke only the traditional language, and stories were an every day natural routine.

John got involved with Elders and community resource persons to revive the trails of our ancestors annual canoe trip where elders and youth share their experiences. The annual canoe trip is now on the 16th year and the experiences also revived and gave deeper meaning to our stories.

John became the Chief Negotiator for the tribe in 1992 to help settle the Land Claim and Self Government for the Tribe through negotiations with the Governments of Canada and the Northwest Territories. With the help of a team of tribal members and Elder Advisors, The negotiations was completed, approved and given effect on August 4, 2005. The Agreement is built on the stories that he and the team has heard, and with the help of the Elders, we have now added to the story.

John is now the Tlicho Executive Officer for the recognized Tlicho Government, and the major part of his work is in managing the development of the governance and corporate structures.

John has shared his stories and knowledge as a guest artist for the last three years during The Centre for Indigenous Theatre's summer school North Program in Yellowknife. He was also the cultural consultant in the creation of the Tea Dance Sound Room, which preserved and re-mixed the only known recording of the traditional Tea Dance. He is fluent in the language and is also a translator for many projects.

**Sherry Farrell Racette**

Professor, Art History Department, Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec



Dr. Sherry Farrell Racette is an interdisciplinary scholar with an active arts practice. She has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Manitoba (Winnipeg), a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Regina (Saskatchewan), and an Interdisciplinary Doctorate (Native Studies, Anthropology, History) from the University of Manitoba (2004). Her dissertation, *Sewing Ourselves Together: Clothing, Decorative Arts and the Expression of Métis and Half Breed Identity*, received the Distinguished Dissertation Award from the University of Manitoba in 2005.

Dr. Farrell Racette began her career in education as a teacher of Art and Native Studies, and began to explore these disciplines as a way of engaging at-risk youth. From her time as a teacher at Neecheewam Project, teaching youth in custodial care, to her work as an outreach artist in First Nations and Métis communities, Farrell Racette has integrated her arts practice with community. Following twenty-five years in Aboriginal education in Saskatchewan working in teacher education and curriculum development, she is currently teaching Indigenous Art History at Concordia University in Montreal.

Her current research focus is Métis and First Nations women's history, particularly using art as a vehicle for reclaiming women's voices and lives. Her publications include: "Sewing for a Living: The Commodification of Métis Women's Artistic Production" in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past* (2005); "Métis Man or Canadian Icon: Who Owns Louis Riel" in *Rielisms* (2001); and "Beads, Silk and Quills: The Clothing and Decorative Arts of the Métis" in *Metis Legacy* (2001). In addition, she has illustrated children's books written by Maria Campbell, Freda Ahnenakew, and Ruby Slipperjack. Sherry's art works are in a number of public collections including the Saskatchewan Arts Board, MacKenzie Art Gallery, and the Canada Council's Art Bank. Recently she co-curated *Clearing a Path: An Exhibition of Traditional Indigenous Arts* showcasing contemporary artists working in traditional media for the 2005 Saskatchewan Centennial. Her latest children's book, *Fiddle Dancer*, co-authored by Wilfred Burton and Anne Patton, is in press at the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

**Jarrett Laughlin** works as a Senior Research Analyst at the Canadian Council on Learning - a national, independent and non-profit organization that promotes and supports lifelong learning. Among other things, Jarrett is responsible for identifying innovative and holistic approaches to researching and reporting on lifelong learning for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people.

Jarrett comes from a family of educators and has been formally working in the field for over 12 years. More recently he has served as a Senior Economist for the Education Secretariat of the Assembly of First Nations where he co-chaired a national working group on funding for First Nations education.

*Modern Knowledge, Ancient Wisdom*  
*An Integration of Past and Present for a New Tomorrow*  
*March 7, 8, & 9, 2007*

**SPECIAL THANKS TO**



**ASANI** – Mistresses of Ceremony – ABLKC Conference 2007 Banquet:  
A contemporary cappella Aboriginal women’s trio from Edmonton,  
Alberta, **Sherryll Sewepagaham, Sarah Pocklington and Debbie Houle**  
carry with them the traditional influences of First Nations, Métis  
and Inuit music.

For more information please visit their website:

[www.asani.org](http://www.asani.org)

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Thundering Spirit Drum Group  
Métis Dancers

**CONFERENCE PLANNERS: Richard Jenkins & Ryan Janvier**

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**VOLUNTEERS, MARRIOTT RIVER CREE RESORT, CANADIAN  
COUNCIL ON LEARNING, FNAHEC STAFF, AERC STAFF, U of S,  
ABLKC STAFF, FIRST NATIONS, Métis & INUIT ELDERS, GUEST  
SPEAKERS, ENTERTAINERS, and to all the PARTICIPANTS who  
helped to make our first National Conference a SUCCESS!!**

## 10. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	ORGANIZATION	CITY	PROV
Arcand	Laverne	Yellowhead Tribal College	Edmonton	AB
Aucoin	Robert	Health and Learning Knowledge Centre, Coordinator	Victoria	BC
Auger	Pauline	High Prairie School Division	Slave Lake	AB
Balanoff	Helen	North West Territories Literacy Council	Yellowknife	NT
Beebe	Clarice	Kainai Board of Education	Standoff	AB
Bell	Donna	Keyano College	Fort McMurray	AB
Bellegarde	Jean		Regina	SK
Black Water	Mr. Andy	Red Crow Community College - Elder	Cardston	AB
Blair	Heather	University of Alberta	Edmonton	AB
Blakesley	Simon	Health and Learning Knowledge Centre – Whitehorse Coordinator	Whitehorse	YK
Blood	Narcisse	Red Crow Community College	Cardston	AB
Booi	Larry	Canadian Council on Learning		
Bougie	Evelyne	Statistics Canada	Ottawa	ON
Bourque	R. Lisa	University of Alberta - Aboriginal Health Group	Edmonton	AB
Boyle	John	Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)	Edmonton	AB

Breaker	Kathy	Siksika Board of Education, High School Principal_	Siksika	AB
Brooks	Allison	New Brunswick Department of Education – Aboriginal Education	Fredericton	NB
Brule	Judy E.	Enoch Nation	Enoch	AB
Calf Robe	Wanda	Siksika BE - Principal_	Siksika	AB
Campiou	Martha	Canadian Native Friendship Centre	Edmonton	AB
Cann	Bonny	Métis Nation	Toronto	ON
Cardinal	Lewis	University of Alberta – Native Student Services	Edmonton	AB
Chalifoux	Hon. Dr. Thelma	Heritage Community Foundation – Patrons Council	St. Albert	AB
Charest	Robert	Canadian Defence Academy	Kingston	ON
Chartrand	Rebecca	Manitoba Teachers	Winnipeg	MB
Chief Moon	Monica	First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC)	Calgary	AB
Clark	Amelia	Old Sun Community College	Siksika	AB
Colburn	David	Edmonton Public Schools Board	Edmonton	AB
Coleman	Chris	Kainai Board of Education	Standoff	AB
Coote	Carol	Association of Yukon School Councils	Whitehorse	YK
Cressman	Elizabeth	Calgary Regional Consortium	Calgary	AB
Crowshoe	Janet	Nasta Images	Lethbridge	AB
Crozier	Colleen	Centre for Family Literacy	Edmonton	AB
Cunningham	Gwena	High Prairie School	Joussard	AB

		Division		
Daily	Brenda		Greenwood	BC
Daniels-Fiss	Belinda		Saskatoon	SK
Dececchi	Bernadette	Royal Military College of Canada	Kingston	ON
Durocher	Dora	Cree Spirit Crafts	Beauval	SK
Ebbers	Margaretha	Edmonton Public Schools Centre for Education	Edmonton	AB
Elanik	Sandra	Inuvialuit Regional Corporation	Inuvik	NT
Elliott	Frank	University of Alberta, Department of Secondary Education	Edmonton	AB
Ennis	Jake	Genesis Group	Yellowknife	NT
Ferguson	Elizabeth	Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT)	Merritt	BC
Fletcher	Fay	University of Alberta	Edmonton	AB
Fontaine	Shirley	Assembly of First Nations Education Sector	Ottawa	ON
Ford	Marti	Red River College	Winnipeg	MB
Fougere	Cheryl	Canadian Council on Learning	Ottawa	ON
Fox	Leo	Kainai Board of Education	Cardston	AB
Fox	Richard	Kainai Board of Education	Standoff	AB
Fox	Roy	Indian Resource Council of Canada	Calgary	AB
Friedel	Tracy		Stony Plain	AB
Gagne Vollant	Valerie	First Nations of Quebec and Labrador Health and Social Services Commission CSSTNQ4/FNQLHSSC	Wendake	QB

Garrow	Peter	Assembly of First Nations Education Sector	Ottawa	ON
George	Ningwakwe	National Indigenous Literacy Association (NILA)	Toronto	ON
Gold	Steven		St. Albert	AB
Good Striker	Evelyn	Alberta Education	Edmonton	AB
Goulet	Keith		Regina	SK
Hart	Sally		Duncan	BC
Healy	Esther	Siksika Board of Education	Siksika	AB
Heavy Head	Ryan	Red Crow Community College	Cardston	AB
Hill	Lu Ann	Assembly of First Nations Education Sector	Ottawa	ON
Illchuk	Robin	David Thompson Health Region	Calmar	AB
Jackknife-Ellingboe	Edith	University of Alberta – Dept. Educational Policy Studies	Edmonton	AB
Jerry	Andrea	First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC)	Calgary	AB
Jimmie	Liz	Yellow Cedar Learning Centre (YCLC)	Chilliwack	BC
Jobin	Yvonne	Moonstone Creations Comox Valley School	Calgary	AB
Joseph	Lynn	District No. 71	Courtenay	B.C.
Kassam	Alnoor	University of Alberta?	Edmonton	AB
Kennedy	Merle	Misericordia Children's Health Centre	Edmonton	AB
King	Anna-Leah	University of Alberta	Saskatoon	SK
King Krupnik	Kathy Linda	Bosco Homes Schools	Edmonton Edmonton	AB AB

Laderoute	Barb	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
Lamouche	James	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
Lapatak	Lena	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
Laughlin	Jarrett	Canadian Council on Learning	Ottawa	ON
Lavallee	Barbara	Extended Education Division, University of Manitoba	Winnipeg	MB
Lees	Ken	Comox Valley School District No. 71	Courtenay	B.C.
Leslie	Susan	Comox Valley School District No. 71	Courtenay	B.C.
Letendre	Liz	Alexis Board of Education	Glenevis	AB
Lewis	Trevor	National Association of Indigenous Institute of Higher Learning	Tyendinaga	ON
Lindsay	Mary	Faculty of Education Malaspina University-College	Nanaimo	BC
Lines	Eileen	Treaty 8 First Nations	Edmonton	AB
Linklater	Alfred	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada – Aboriginal Relations Office	Ottawa	ON
MacDonald	Brian	Onion Lake First Nation	Onion Lake	SK
MacKenzie	Karen	Mackintosh Consulting	Edmonton	AB
Majeran	Theresa	Métis Awards	Edmonton	AB
Makela	Kathleen	Aboriginal Students Centre, University of Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	SK
Makokis	Leona	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
Malreddy	Pavan		Saskatoon	SK

	Kumar	University of Saskatchewan		
Many Fingers	Kirby	Red Crow Community College	Cardston	AB
Many Fingers	Morris	Kainai Board of Education	Standoff	AB
Martin	Jane	Information and Strategic Services Division - Director of Aboriginal Policy	Edmonton	AB
Martin	Pamela	CTV?		
Mason	Wayne	Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre	Winnipeg	MB
McCallum	Larry	Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools	Saskatoon	SK
McDonald	Janet	First Nations Programs and Partnerships	Whitehorse	YK
McHugh	Daphne	Siksika Board of Education	Siksika	AB
Moe	Judith	Indian & Northern Affairs Canada – Evaluations Branch	Ottawa	ON
Moosepayo	Harriet	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
Morin	Ruth	Capital Health	Edmonton	AB
Morin	Michelle	Yellowhead Tribal College	Enoch	AB
Morton	Ben	Pasha Designs	Victoria	BC
Mount Pleasant-Jette	Corinne	Mount Pleasant Educational Servies Inc.	Kahnawake	QC
Murawsky	Orest	Indian Teacher Education Program, University of Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	SK
Myo	Dorothy	Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre	Saskatoon	SK

Norton	Ruth	Blue Quills First Nation College ATB #1 Working Group	St. Paul	AB
O'Connor	Thomas	Genesis Group – ATB #6_	Pemberton Ridge	NB
O'Haire	Noreen	Canadian Teachers' Federation	Ottawa	ON
Oldpan	Linda	Maskwachees Cultural College	Hobbema	AB
O'Rourke	Seauneen	Yellowhead Tribal College	Edmonton	AB
Pamer	Monica	Ministry of Education	Victoria	BC
Paynter	Florence	Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre	Winnipeg	MB
Penner	Rob	University College of the North – Keewatin Community College	The Pas	MB
Poitras	Terri	NECHI Institute	St. Albert	AB
Poitras	Heather	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Edmonton	AB
Potts	Sara	Samson Cree Nation	Wetaskiwin	AB
Powder	Leah	Capital Health Centre of Edmonton - Aboriginal Health Program - RAH	Edmonton	AB
Price	Michele	Assembly of First Nations Education Sector	Ottawa	ON
Price	Terry	Manitoba Teachers Society	Winnipeg	MB
Pruden	Greg	Education, Citizenship and Youth Programs School Division – Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment Branch	Winnipeg	MB
Quantick	Robin	Excalibur Learning	Kingston	ON

		Resource Centre		
Radchenko	Phyllis	Genesis Group	Yellowknife	NT
Rain	Patricia	Maskwachees Cultural College		AB
Ramsey	Charles	National Adult Literacy Database	Fredericton	NB
Red Gun	Geraldine	Siksika Board of Education	Siksika	AB
Rosboroug	Trish	Ministry of Education – Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch	Victoria	BC
Russell	Kasey	Red Crow Community College	Cardston	AB
Ruttan	Lia	University of Alberta	Edmonton	AB
Saddleback	Yvonne	Hobbema Nation	Hobbema	AB
Sawyer	Jason	University of Saskatchewan	Saskatoon	SK
Schramm, Ph.D.	Tanya	Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation	Spruce Grove	AB
Seinen	Bert	New Degree Proposals	Edmonton	AB
Sheldon	Cheryl	Slave Lake Indian Regional Council	Slave Lake	AB
Shick	Joel	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	Vancouver	BC
Simpson	John	Genesis Group	Yellowknife	NT
Simpson	Deb	Genesis Group	Yellowknife	NT
Sinclair	Jeannette	University of Alberta/High Prairie School Division 48	Edmonton	AB
Sinclair-Gullion	Donna	High Prairie School Division	Slave Lake	AB
Singer	Sandra	Kainai Board of Education	Standoff	AB
Smith	Reed	North Peace Tribal Council	High Level	AB
Sockbeson	Rebecca	University of Alberta –	Edmonton	AB

		Dept. Educational Policy Studies		
Steinhauer	Diana	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
Tenkate	Ingrid	Edmonton Public Schools Centre for Education	Edmonton	AB
Thompson	Tim	Assembly of First Nations Education Sector	Ottawa	ON
Tookenay	Brent	Rainy River District School Board	Fort Frances	ON
Tunison	Scott	Saskatoon Public School Division	Saskatoon	SK
Two Young Men	Greg	Stoney Nation Post Secondary Education	Morley	AB
Van Bibber	Kathy	Assembly of First Nations Education Sector	Ottawa	ON
Venne-Hyggen	Edie	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
Vermette	Lucy	Arts and Crafts	Biggar	SK
Weasel Fat	Carolyn	Kainai Board of Education	Standoff	AB
Weasel Head	Lionel	Red Crow Community College	Cardston	AB
Weasel Head	Linda	Kainai Board of Education	Standoff	AB
Weasel Head	Frank	Red Crow Community College – Elder	Cardston	AB
Whiskeyjack	Lana	Blue Quills First Nation College	St. Paul	AB
White	Allan	NECHI Institute	Edmonton	AB
Wiebe	Adrienne	Capital Health	Edmonton	AB
Wilson	Stan	University of Alberta	The Pas	MB
Wiseman	Dawn	Mount Pleasant Educational Services Inc.	Kahnawake	QC

Wissian	Ed	Royal Military College	Kingston	ON
Woods	Fritzi	Siksika Board of Education	Siksika	AB
Yantz	Susan	Excalibur	Saskatoon	SK

### **ABORIGINAL LEARNING KNOWLEDGE CENTRE STAFF**

Dr. Vivian Ayoungman, Director ABLKC, FNAHEC

Dr. Marie Battiste, Director ABLKC, AERC

Genevieve Fox, Coordinator ABLKC, FNAHEC

Lynette Bruised Head, Administrative Assistant ABLKC, FNAHEC

Rita Bouvier, Coordinator ABLKC, AERC

Angie den Brok, ABLKC, AERC Administrative Assistant

Maria Wilson, ABLKC Northern Coordinator

Martha Garbrah Gyepi, ABLKC Financial Coordinator

Richard Jenkins, Conference Planner

Ryan Janvier, Conference Planner

### **ANIMATION THEME BUNDLE LEADS & FACILITATORS**

ATB 1 – Learning from Place - Dr. Vivian Ayoungman – FNAHEC Lead,  
Mr. Narcisse Blood – Facilitator, and Mr. Ryan Heavy Head – Co-Facilitator

ATB 2 – Comprehending Learning Spirit – Dr. Marie Battiste – AERC Lead & Facilitator

ATB 3 – Aboriginal Language Learning - Blue Quills First Nations College Lead,  
Dr. Leona Makokis, Facilitator

ATB 4 – Diverse Educational Systems and Learning –  
Sask Learning First Nations and Métis Education Branch  
– Lead Darren McKee and Ted Amendt, Co-Facilitators

ATB 5 – Pedagogy of Professionals and Practitioners - Dr. Sakej Henderson – Lead

ATB 6 – Mr. John Simpson – Technology and Learning

### **ELDERS**

Mr. Andy Blackwater  
Mr. George Bretton  
Ms. Veronica Morin  
Mr. Danny Musqua  
Ms. Leah Sails  
Ms. Sandra Singer  
Mr. Frank Weasel Head

### **CCL Staff**

Mr. Daryl Rock  
Mr. Jarrett Laughlin  
Ms. Cheryl Fougere  
Mr. Larry Booi

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

Daphne McHugh  
Stan Wilson  
Darren McKee

### **FRENCH TRANSLATORS**

Andre Beauregard  
David Black

## **GUEST SPEAKERS**

Chief Ron Morin  
Dr. Marie Smallface-Marule  
Mr. John B. Zoe  
Dr. Sherry Farrell Racette

## **ENTERTAINERS**

Mistresses of Banquet Ceremony:  
ASANI: Sherryll Sewepagaham, Sarah Pocklington, Debbie Houle Drum Group  
\*Métis Performers:  
\*First Nations Drum Group:

## **EXHIBITORS/DISPLAYERS/VENDORS**

Martha Campiou  
Janet Crowshoe  
Dora Durocher  
Yvonne Jobin  
Lucy Vermette

## **VOLUNTEERS**

R. Lisa Bourque  
Monica Chief Moon  
Brenda Daily  
Frank Elliott  
Sally Hart  
Andrea Jerry  
Alnoor Kassam  
Merle Kennedy  
Barbara Lavallee  
Theresa Majeran  
Pavan Kumar Malreddy  
Yvonne Saddleback  
Jason Sawyer  
Adrienne Wiebe

