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JOURNAL OF PERSEVERANCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR FIRST PEOPLES

NIKANUTETAU TSHETSHI MUSHUE NUKUSHIAK ᐅ

In collaboration with :
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JOURNAL OF PERSEVERANCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR FIRST PEOPLES

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INTRODUCTION

In March 2014, the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite (CPNN) of Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC), in collaboration the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEES), launched the first edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, designed to report on the advancement of knowledge and research in the field. More than 200 people attended the Convention in which several researchers, teachers, workers and managers presented special projects, research results and reflections resting on a rich and varied experience. Forty of them were subsequently published an article about the outline of their communication and these articles were gathered to form the core of the first volume of the Journal of Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, published in January 2015.

The successful participation in this first edition of the conference reflected the great need for exchange and sharing of the various stakeholders in education in Aboriginal communities or working with students and Aboriginal students in urban areas. It was an opportunity for everyone to better target and better understand the issues affecting these young people, to learn about winning educational practices and evidence of research results, but also to share the amplitude of the challenges and questions that remain. With the publication of Volume 1 of the Journal, the Scientific Committee therefore wished to reflect the richness, diversity and magnitude of the research and of the work accomplished daily in the various Quebec schools welcoming Aboriginal pupils and students concerned about their perseverance and academic success. The Journal is therefore addressed to anyone interested closely or at distance in Aboriginal education.

Motivated by this initial success, the CPNN team, in collaboration with its valued partners, including the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEES) and Rio Tinto, organized a second edition, which was held from October 14 to 16, 2015 at a convention centre in Saguenay. After outlining in a broad and comprehensive way the current state of research and practices in the field in the first edition of the Convention, the organizers this time are interested in innovations in our schools, especially teaching practices, support and collaborative practices. All educational issues could be addressed, but preference was given to what was field-tested, initiatives, research, and practices concretely developed in schools. More than 300 people attended one or many presentations at the Convention, after which the presenters were once again invited to submit an article summarizing their presentation.

Roberto Gauthier,
Director, Centre d'études universitaires de l'est de la Côte-Nord

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In this second volume of the Journal, the Scientific Committee was substantially pursuing the same purpose as in the publication of Volume 1, namely the dissemination, in a style accessible for the benefit of practicioners, stakeholders, researchers and university students, of research results and practice narratives shared at the event as well as the progress of knowledge and experiences concerning school success and perseverance among First Peoples of Quebec.

As you will see in the texts, the subject selection is broad! They range from literacy camps to cultural security at the post-secondary level, from the talking circle in the formal education system to consultation in urban areas, from second language approach and native culture to the development of an asynchronous university course .

You will also find interesting novelties in Volume 2 of the Journal. It particularly includes extracts from texts of young persevering Secondary 4e and Secondary 5e students from the First Peoples who, in spring 2016, submitted their names for a school perseverance scholarship. These are true stories that illustrate the many challenges these young people face, inspiring stories deserving a prominent place in this Journal.

You will also find some very interesting interviews by Patricia-Anne Blanchet with teachers, managers or stakeholders working with Aboriginal communities. This was a way for the Committee to recognize their contribution to the advancement of knowledge and to ensure that their work, research or initiatives can benefit the many rather than the few.

Finally, on the third edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples to be held on October 10 - 12, 2017, the CPNN team, supported by its partners, including the MEES, has chosen to innovate and hold the Convention in Québec City, in an ideal place for events of this scale, the Hilton Quebec, to make it more accessible and accommodate more teachers, researchers, managers, professionals, practitioners, and students. It is the perspective of a meeting between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that this third edition will take place, so that all feel concerned by perseverance and academic success of young First Peoples. This nationwide event will once again provide an opportunity for various stakeholders in the education working with students and Aboriginal students to share, exchange, and learn.

We hope that reading this Journal will inspire you and will help to support young First Peoples in their academic career!

PART 1

CULTURE

Denis Bellemare and Carl Morasse
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AGENT OF ONE'S OWN CULTURE: CONTRIBUTION OF BOITE ROUGE VIF IN THE CONSTRUCTION AND TRANSMISSION OF AUTOCHTHONOUS CULTURES

In numerous meetings organized by Boite Rouge vif (BRv) in Aboriginal communities, teachers, as well as cultural agents and educators, raised the complex issue of young people's mobilization about their culture. They also stressed the urgency of finding innovative approaches to bridge the gap between generations while fostering curiosity, interest, and engagement among students. For several years, BRv has been working to allow the encounter, under creation modes and inventive practices, of art and of education as of Aboriginal culture and of methods of transmission that make its promotion possible. The organization is in active collaboration with the bearers of such knowledge, the development levers for individuals and communities.

WITHIN ART AND EDUCATION: MEDIATION

Boite Rouge vif is a non-profit Aboriginal cultural organization dedicated to the creation and design of cultural transmission devices for the dissemination and valuation of autochthonous cultures. Its mission is *individual and community* empowerment via training and development. With members of different Aboriginal communities, researchers, research assistants, professionals with practices in various artistic fields (visual and digital arts, design, video, cinema, etc.), and teaching experts developed resources through collaborative methods.

BRv is at the crossroads of education, mediation, and cultural transmission. Its team has developed expertise in training for Aboriginal communities. These customized courses cover subjects such as the creation of design objects, graphic design, museography, photography, videographic creation, and video documentary. All these activities are based on a participatory methodology in which creation and concertation foster co-operation. The work is executed in the field for and with community members. Over the years and projects, BRv has woven a dense network of collaborators with the vast majority of autochthonous cultural, educational and museum institutions.

SHASHISH ANUTSHISH/JADIS MAINTENANT: AN INTERACTIVE DATABASE OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL VOCATION

This website[1] well represents BRv's cultural transmission expertise in design and education and its collaborative methods with its partners, the Conseil des Innus of Pessamit, the Shaputuan of Uashat mak Mani Utenam, and Commission scolaire De La Jonquière. This virtual museum presents three collections of objects illustrating Aboriginal Nations culture: The first collection, *Reconnaitre,* displays 105 Aboriginal design masterpieces and a detailed backgrounder informs visitors on techniques that led to their realization; *Valoriser,* consists of 321 items of Uashat mak Mani Utenam's community heritage; the third, *Transmettre,* highlights the creative actualization of traditional knowledge of 23 contemporary Aboriginal designers. In the *Education* section, several lear-

ning situations around tangible and intangible heritage are developed for different school levels and for extracurricular activities. These situations can range from the collective creation of a vast puzzle at the elementary to the production of a short documentary for advanced high-school students. A digital scrapbooking tool, a website in which one can create and disseminate one's personal collection, as well as a search engine are also added. We note that objects that are near or distant from us prove to be true knowledge, history, and therefore learning venues.

AN EXTENSIVE DATABASE ARISING FROM MEETINGS WITH 18 ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES

The need to create a comprehensive website containing Aboriginal cultural data arose from a meeting in Wendake, in June 2014. More than sixty representatives of 11 Aboriginal Nations from Quebec participated. The purpose of the meeting held, in conjunction with BRv, was to take stock of the visits of 18 Aboriginal communities, conducted between 2010 and 2013; it enabled a thematic work establishing the major axes of the exhibition *C'est notre histoire : Premières Nations et Inuits du XXIe siècle* of *Musée de la civilisation du Québec*.

The great question asked by everyone was: How to return to communities their word, their knowledge, and their queries expressed during this great concertation?

A forum was given to hundreds of people of different genders, ages, and areas of interest. Their expressions are diverse and result in an extremely rich body of information, portraying the perception they have of themselves, their culture, and the great challenges they face. A portrait of the nations' living heritage lies dormant inside this corpus; a citizen speech rooted in currentness and focused on the future. It is a unique moment in this 21st century, a moment engraved in living history.

From this concertation originated a bank of information whose impressive Aboriginal community members are the real authors: 250 hours of video, 5,000 pages of written data, thousands of photographs, and more. MAMO[2] members gathered at this June 2014 meeting asked the members of the BRv to find a way to make this vast database accessible, which we are in the process of doing.

BRv carries a special attention to the transmission of this knowledge with teachers, students, and with autochthonous youth. The site, still under construction, will indeed be a constellation of several sites. It will contain the raw database resulting from consultation, ten thematic capsules, and 11 portraits of Aboriginal Porteurs d'espoir consisting of ten educational capsules on ten Aboriginal artists from various artistic disciplines and accompanying learning situations. Almost all these documents come from the great concertation and are presented as part of the Musée de la civilisation exhibition previously mentioned. (...) But how can we render the quantity and quality of this material to communities? How can this data be specialized for educational purposes? How to think and create a site sensitive to the reality of young people?

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But how can we render the quantity and quality of this material to communities? How can this data be specialized for educational purposes? How to think and create a site sensitive to the reality of young people?

COMPLETING THE 2016–2017 CIRCLE

To disseminate these initiatives with and for Aboriginal communities, the Boite Rouge vif will begin an extensive tour of 14 communities in the fall 2016. A strategic plan designed with our partners is under way. Educational activities, training, and transmission tools are at the heart of this future action plan. Autochthonous cultural, educational, and museum institutions have expressed their flagrant lack of transmission tools. Educational communities often lack the expertise, resources, and project contexts to animate cultural activities with respect to cultural objects while having as a concern the renewal of dynamics with students. Thus, each community visited select members participating in their education sectoral table. The development of these new cultural and educational products emerges from these tables, in co-creation and co-production with Aboriginal participants. This represents a real concertation and not a mere consultation.

BEING BEARER OF KNOWLEDGE OR BEING AGENT OF ONE'S OWN CULTURE

During the second edition of Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, our presentation took the form of an initial consultation with participants, since we were and still are in the process of concertation and preproduction. Several reflections came out of this presentation. Young people generally show great ignorance of their environment, they do not know the system that governs them. Autochthonous and educational sites are numerous; however, none of them recount currentness in communities. There is no framework, no way for students and young adults to transform content into an awareness opening to knowledge and desire to learn. A website dedicated to youth should create diversity reflecting nations and transversality allowing several teachers to navigate back to the cultural elements highlighted in the courses. But beyond this intention of transmission, how can schools help develop a culture of integration?

L'ART DE SE RACONTER: A PILOT PROJECT IN EKUANITSHIT

The pilot project *L'art de se raconter* wishes to engage young people as producers and agents of their own culture. Learning is foremost a living space arousing curiosity of a look at oneself and at others, as sort of an invitation to travel. How can we design a site open to students and Aboriginal youth's current models of communication for cultural promotion purposes? *L'art de se raconter* is a project from the Ekuanitshit Innu community and Boite Rouge vif mobilizing eight students from Teueikan High School, the school management, the Band Council cultural agents, and an Aboriginal filmmaker. It is a real participatory partnership. Current video creation workshops bring the participants to discover and present knowledge and specific realities of their community. The project is risky and requires great flexibility. Where some experiments succeed in a commendable manner, it is in informal exercises exposing young peoples' lives together and their encounters

The pilot project *L'art de se raconter* wishes to engage young people as producers and agents of their own culture. Learning is foremost a living space arousing curiosity of a look at oneself and at others, as sort of an invitation to travel.

with Elders in places that are important to them. The production will be finalized in June 2016. Will this take the form of short video capsules, of an installation for the house of culture or again, of portraits of these young people? That remains to be determined. However, two big questions remain. How will this pilot project initiate projects in other Aboriginal communities? How will these productions

become the youths' satellite site, a site acting as a shifter and knowledge gateway to our vast database we previously talked about? But the great question concerns the relevance of video and its ability not only in capture, but also in sensitive knowledge.

VIDEO AS A COMMUNICATION AND EXPRESSION TOOL: REFLECTIONS

Small video cameras are very reasonably priced simple tools incorporating excellent digital technology; intended for personal utilities, they can again serve for semi-professional and professional uses. These cameras capture sounds and images in their immediacy, but also in their obvious transparency; they reveal, on account of their acute observations, a greater scope than a mere recording technique. In *Leçons de cinéma pour notre époque. Politique du sensible*, François Laplantine immediately evokes his faith in cinematic specificity as a sensitive mode of knowledge of reality. In these words, he addresses the rapprochement between cinema and ethnography: "Ethnography and cinema are modes of knowledge through listening and sight. For both, social phenomena are visual and sound phenomena" (Laplantine, 2007). The challenge of a cultural transmission research project with community involvement induces a whole social scenario of which cinematic issues are the potential source. Laplantine's reading paves a practical way for our creative activities where deploying the full cinematic device arsenal is not the matter, but rather sharpening the participants' sense of observation for them to gradually structure their point of view and from the plan, get a unique perspective.

This view, we wish it to be initially relational. In 2009, Christian Lallier, Anthropologist and Filmmaker, develops in his book *Pour une anthropologie filmée des interactions sociales* the major methodological phases of such a realization. Our main objective is to return to autochthonous participants the tools of their own expression, and ideally, the realization of their own productions. From eternally filmed, they will become "filmmakers" of their own community, their own culture, and their own lives: they will be their own amateur anthropologists. For Lallier, as for Aboriginal participants, it is important to understand the real as the production of an effort, individual and collective, as the act of filming does not only include the expression of an individual, it involves building a relationship with others and their community.

Educational activities, training, and transmission tools are at the heart of this future action plan. Autochthonous cultural, educational, and museum institutions have expressed their flagrant lack of transmission tools. Educational communities often lack the expertise, resources, and project contexts to animate cultural activities with respect to cultural objects while having as a concern the renewal of dynamics with students. Thus, each community visited select members participating in their education sectoral table. The development of these new cultural and educational products emerges from these tables, in co-creation and co-production with Aboriginal participants.

NOTES

[1] URL : www.anutshish.com

[2] MAMO, which means "together" in several Aboriginal languages, gathered a representative from each Nation of Quebec and representatives of Aboriginal organizations.

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Françoise Lathoud
Université d'Ottawa

THE ROLE OF THE TALKING CIRCLE WITHIN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The talking circle, which I have often experienced during my life with an Atikamekw Elder, Roger Echaquan, quickly appeared to me as essential in my teaching practice, whether in an Aboriginal environment or elsewhere. After a brief description of the talking circle, as experienced by Mr. Echaquan, I will present some themes to guide its application within the classroom or in other spheres of school. I will also outline some of the benefits in relation to teaching-learning and to group management. To conclude, I will stress some of the practical limitations of the circle within a school context.

PRACTICE OF TALKING CIRCLE

The talking circle is an ancestral autochthonous communication technique rooted in a philosophy of unity, *Kice Manito*[1]. The ecosociety associated therewith is inclusive and comprehends differences as complementary.

Traditionally, people form a circle, in a place they choose. The person who acts as a guide begins with a purification ceremony[2], a song, before introducing himself by talking about his origins, relationships as an integral part of one's identity. The guide then gives the floor to the host of the activity who, in turn, presents the theme of the gathering and passes on a feather (or a talking stick or any other object) to his left-hand neighbour. Each speaks in turn (or chooses to remain silent) when given the feather, talking stick or any other object. Participants listen without judging, according to the ethic of non-interference. It is then more comfortable to express oneself without fear of being interrupted or contradicted, which promotes freedom to BE of each person. Individual experiences are shared in the form of life stories, which allow understanding the complexity of reality and of human beings as well as the interdependence between emotional, physical, spiritual or mental dimensions. We talk using the "I" criterion of truth in Aboriginal epistemology which involves taking responsibility for one's actions, thoughts, emotions, and learning. Indeed, as in the humanist paradigm (Bertrand and Valois, 1999), it is considered that learning is an experience that takes place in the inner life of the "self-learner". For Roger Echaquan, education, *kiskinomaso*[3], is "awakening what is in us, with what surrounds us". The human being, *nehirowisiw*, is a reincarnated being, talented and complete, who possesses all the necessary resources for its own development, external factors having a secondary function.

According to Roger Echaquan, it is all about "speaking from the heart. We should not have doubts, for doubts chase away the spirit." Authenticity manifested as such encourages others to recognize their own emotions and beliefs, inspires confidence and gives the feeling of being welcomed for oneself, respected throughout one's personality, values, opinions and silences. The person leading the circle must also have developed the ability to listen, to make meaningful connections, and use his multiple intelligences including his intuitions and sensations. Roger Echaquan refers to "being fully present", "creating a vacuum", a technique to tune in to "be as one"

with the circle, to "capture beyond words". For him, "all thoughts conveyed in the circle allow raising the level of consciousness", what Foy (2009) describes as the construction of collective consciousness.

We can end the circle with a song and a legend, which include lessons on sharing and promote learning in a "non-confrontational" manner. A second turn to speak is sometimes allowed to give free rein to resonance following the first shares. Then, participants "close the circle" by embracing each other or by thanking one another individually, following again the pattern circle to the left.

APPLICATIONS AND BENEFITS OF THE TALKING CIRCLE

Rarely used after kindergarten, the talking circle nonetheless has great potential in various spheres of the school's mandate.

The conceptual map (Figure 1) shows, in yellow, examples of talking circle themes that can be used in schools. The question of origins is the one I address in every new circle, indicating that participants are free to talk about their geographic, family, or symbolic origins on an emotional level. It is easily accessible for people not accustomed to speaking in public, it gives confidence by connecting participants to their identity and respects Aboriginal presentation mode.

Anticipated benefits in a traditional Aboriginal perspective appear on the outskirts in purple; these are mentioned in the first part of the article, the development of self and one's relationships being at the heart of the Aboriginal education process.

The green bubbles indicate possible academic expectations, particularly in the areas of identity construction and cultural *leadership*, inspired from the educational model proposed by Payment (2003)

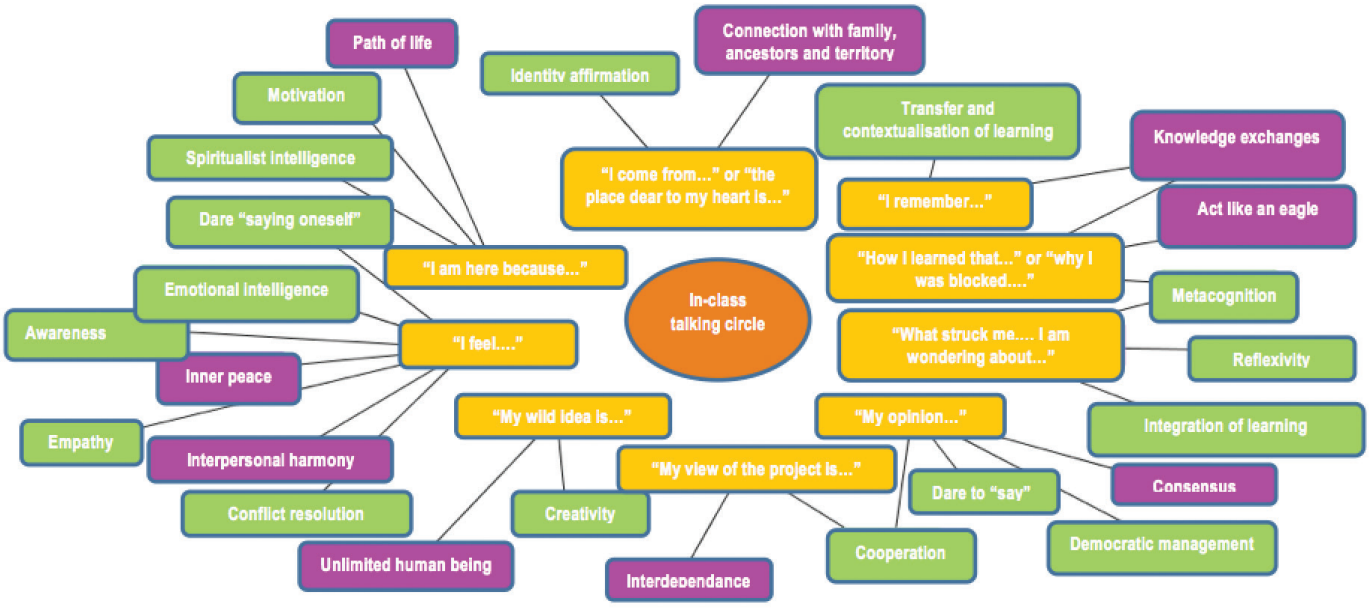

Figure 1

for minority groups. On learning of oral communication for instance, the circle achieves several goals that the author considers essential for the construction of identity in minority communities: "TO SAY" means to articulate thoughts using appropriate words; "SAYING ONESELF" is the ability to express one's values and feelings authentically, and" DARE TO SAY" implies "to show courage and boldness to say aloud what everyone thinks to themselves". Language becomes an articulation tool for the person, which promotes learning and establishes it as a key element of identity. (Paiement, 2003, p. 234).

Students and adults' enthusiasm for the circle confirms the pleasure that it gives them, another factor facilitating learning. This pleasure can be attributed to the individual and collective dynamics that come from self-expression and from listening to oneself as to the other. Classroom atmosphere and management are largely facilitated by practising the circle in terms of hospitality, inclusion, sense of belonging, and group cohesion.

The circle is particularly effective to rapidly establish genuine communication with students and, according to Bohm (1996), a coherent group dialogue, since making explicit certain unconscious assumptions. Hence, the practice of circle contributes to the personal development of individuals; it also sharpens critical thinking, to the extent that the act of listening without judgment helps to "seriously"[4] consider other perspectives and thus, open to real change of points of view. Foy (2009) has also recorded several contributions of the circle: it allows to link experience and theory, in a holistic and collective manner, as well as having access to student preconceptions.

Beyond the classroom context, teachers' professional development, either in faculties of education or in professional learning communities, would benefit greatly from the "circle" approach; it particularly promotes exchange of experiential and theoretical knowledge, while giving meaning to the lives of individuals and the group. It is, for example, a key pedagogical practice in the Masters in Psychosocial Practices Studies at Université du Québec à Rimouski (Galvani 2008).

Moreover, in management, the circle has already been adopted by contemporary leaders and is commonly taught in management schools. If leaders in education were to reclaim this ancient concept, they could avoid the bias of a hierarchical system, including abuse of power, to move toward a consensus decision-making. As for Bohm, he encourages circles without themes to allow a real transformation; themes, objectives or predetermined programs limit eco-social inventiveness. He draws from rallies of hunter-gatherer groups: "they talked, talked and talked, with no apparent aim. They did not make decisions… The meeting continued until finally it stops for no reason, and the group dispersed. After that, everyone seemed to know what to do because they understood each other so well. They then gathered in smaller groups to do something or make decisions" (1996, p. 6). This type of social organization still prevails in non-formal Atikamekw communities, especially in the territory, and can be adapted in the classroom for democratic management learning.

With regard to the circle, the ecosociety associated therewith is inclusive.

PRACTICE OF SCHOOL-CIRCLE LIMITATIONS

On a spatio-temporal angle, following a schedule can prevent from enjoying the fullness of the present moment, affecting the free expression of each and therefore, articulation of all human dimensions (physical, mental, spiritual and emotional). Storytelling is also compromised by time constraint. Thus, with classroom rarely counting fewer than 20 students, the number of people is one of the limiting factor, since, above 15 participants, young people often lack the necessary patience to listen to everyone. Space is another critical element: the shape and size of the rooms can indeed be an impediment to arrangement of seats in a circle, especially in science classrooms where the tables are fixed to the ground. On a psychosocial aspect, the classroom context also implies the obligation for students to attend, while in Aboriginal culture, participation in a circle is not compulsary, nor is learning. Foy (2009) noted that young

people consulted the Elders when they felt ready to listen, and that Elders passed on their knowledge when they felt young people were mature enough to receive information.

Culture and personality of the person leading the circle, as well as those of the participants and the host organization are key elements of the success of this educational practice. By compromising too much on traditional practice to adjust it to the school system, or to appropriate it without the necessary experience, there is always a risk of falling into the traps of Aboriginal culture reduction. For example, by simply adding the circle to the array of tools available to teachers, to engineers designing and implementing educational intervention models decontextualizes and depersonalizes ancestral knowledge, while in the Aboriginal theory of knowledge, expertise is based on individual experience in a particular socio-ecological environment (Keewatin, 2002). Moreover, some typical behaviours of Western culture, such as asking questions or sharing opinion at inopportune times, can undermine the smooth functioning of the circle. To fully benefit from the talking circle's strength in terms of management and teaching/learning, certain precautions are therefore needed to transcend the differences between educational paradigms. Foy (2009) suggests considering preparation and metacognition exercises for students and teachers alike, to overcome these sociocultural limitations.

CONCLUSION

The numerous benefits of the talking circle exposed here demonstrate the versatility of this ancestral communication technique and its relevance in the contemporary school environment in group management matters, teaching/learning and decolonization, as a form of inclusion of Aboriginal epistemology and pedagogy. The circle deserves to be tried with regard to parent-teacher-student relations, in cases of bullying for instance, and allows all to be aware of the consequences of actions taken on the people and their environment, while strengthening the social fabric, like traditional harmonization circles that were part of "living within the circle", *waskamatisiwin*.

NOTES

[1] Creative energy, often translated as Great Manitou or Great Spirit.

[2] Each person directs sage smoke toward himself. In an institutional context, to avoid triggering fire alarms, it is enough to smell the sage or cedar essential, for example. The essences activate certain memories, help release emotions, and promote mindfulness.

[3] The quoted phrases and italic Atikamekw words are those of Roger Echaquan.

[4] For Bohm, every attitude consisting in wanting to be right is not "serious".

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INNU CULTURE RECOGNITION IN AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The passage from yesterday to tomorrow /
becomes today /
the unique word / of my sister/ the Earth.
Only thunder absolves / a life lived.
"The North Calls Me"
Joséphine Bacon, Innu Poet

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Youth from Aboriginal communities are experiencing a loss of identity (Poirier, 2009), since all too often, their schools are copies of Quebec public schools with values and ways of doing things not reflecting theirs. According to Canck (2008), this results in low perseverance and completion rates. It then becomes difficult for a child to feel integrated in both his home community and in the mainstream Western society. For Poirier (2009), young Aboriginals on reserves are subject to a double stigma: the loss of traditional transfer of knowledge modes and the high rate of school failure hampering their integration into the labour market. However, this observation on failure rates can partly be related to educational or pedagogical approaches used. If academic success is defined as "the way students develop their "being in the world" while learning, socializing, and by obtaining qualifications" (Boyer & Guillemette, 2015, p. 37), it also results from the linkage between social expectations and practices, and this, holistically to live and participate actively within their community (Picard, 2012).

Battiste (2002) and Kanu (2007) emphasize the importance of the relation between autochthonous cultural educational traditions and contemporary educational practices. Kanu (2007) adds that school results are better when the program and the teaching-learning process become compatible with the students' own culture and socialization concepts. According to Castellano (2014), it seems that linkage of cultural and educational practices becomes an important issue to foster Aboriginal youth success. Then, thought must be given to the contribution of Aboriginal cultural dimensions within our schools.

Johnny-Pilot Elementary School is located in the Innu community of Uashat mak Mani Utenam. The clientele is steadily increasing and we find 258 students and a team of 30 staff members of which 50% are Innu and are teachers (42%): four at the preschool level, one who teaches the Innu language, and three at the elementary level.

Considering each Innu's footprint within his community, we find it important for us to take ownership of the words below sometimes using "I", sometimes "we".

As principal of an Innu school, I wonder specifically about the place of the cultural component in the school that I manage. How to support success and perseverance of young Innus from my school to offer them the means to master the skills valued by the majority society in a contemporary context while providing the means to participate in the maintenance, enhan-

cement, and transformation of their Elders' expertise and soft skills? And if this second criterion, that of culture enhancement, was simply and directly connected to the first, that of success and perseverance?

As a master's student, I have been considering this cultural issue with the in-school team members by making connections with theoretical dimensions on the importance of Aboriginal cultural dimensions.

CONTEXT

Johnny-Pilot Elementary School is located in the Innu community of Uashat mak Mani Utenam. The clientele is steadily increasing and we find 258 students and a team of 30 staff members of which 50% are Innu and are teachers (42%): four at the preschool level, one who teaches the Innu language, and three at the elementary level.

Until recently, the school-team members were organizing on average two or three cultural activities each year. Innu is the language used at the preschool level and it is taught as part of the program from first to sixth grade. These courses are part of the curriculum developed by the Tshakapesh Institute (2011) in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEES) training program which contains development of the skills *communicate orally*, *read various texts,* and *write various texts*.

Although some efforts are already invested in cultural terms, we consider it important, if not essential to question ourselves on ways to better support and assist students for them to structure their identity and contribute to the development of their pride of being Innu in this modern world. With the in-school team members, we decided to enhance the place of cultural, traditional, and contemporary Innu dimensions in our school.

SOME THEORETICAL ELEMENTS GUIDING OUR REFLECTION

The text from Poirier (2009), entitled "Les dynamiques relationnelles des jeunes autochtones" fed the reflection on the plural and multiple realities of Aboriginal youth. Poirier conveys understanding between 2000 and 2009 as to the meaning of the concept of meshing of ancestral and contemporary cultures. If ancestral culture appealed to the ways of living when Innus were nomadic, contemporary culture requires us to place ourselves in the *here and now*. Furthermore, Poirier states that by taking into account "tradition and modernity, we take into account the social, cultural and identity universes in constant evolution" (2000, cited in Poirier, 2009, p. 30). She later reflects on "the concept of modernity [whether it] is also a *tradition* among others" (2004, cited in Poirier, 2009, p. 30). Again according to her, "it is not uncommon to hear young Aboriginals say they know nothing about their *culture* [here understood in the sense of traditions]. As if culture belonged the past, culture as an inherited reality rather than a lived, interpretive experience" (2009, p. 30).

In the light of these words, we recognize that young Aboriginals evolve in two worlds, or at least they must prove themselves within a coexistence that is not always simple. More specifically, it is about ways to live within the Innu culture, between the past and the present, as in Western culture way of life of the allochthonous majority. This makes us aware that in a context of loss of identity, it becomes crucial to increase visibility through autochthonous values while increasing the success rate.

Recognizing this dilemma, we retain two goals corresponding to Poirier's proposed guidelines (2009): adapting school contents to the realities, expectations and Aboriginal knowledge (Aboriginal cultural contents, including languages); recognizing, within educational structures, contents and teaching formulas that are better suited to the learning reality of young Aboriginals.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The process implementation requires a close collaboration with the entire staff from the Johnny-Pilot School. A school participatory council (SPC), consisting of representatives of each preschool and elementary cycle and the direction, already existed within the school. The PSC mandate is to reflect on the school's educational and teaching practices[1], it became a privileged venue for sharing and thinking. From a consultation process and with SPC members' openness on this project, we thought about the place of Innu culture in our school. To do this, we questioned the way to meet the learning profiles of students attending our environment. We made an inventory of our current cultural practices while identifying those that we would like to see emerge. Finally, we characterized the desired practices as whether they are Innu educational practices, *Innu Aitun*, or pedagogical practices in response to student profiles. Table 1 shows some examples of the benefits of this approach for each cycle.

The inventory *of Innu Aitun* practices and of pedagogical practices was formulated and integrated into the institution's success plan according to three axes and converted into objectives:

Axis 1: Clientele knowledge and pedagogical interventions

Objective: Adapting pedagogical interventions of teaching staff based on specific clientele characteristics.

Axis 5: School retention

Objective: To develop and implement specific ways to promote Innu identity.

Axis 6: Interdependence

Objective: Realize and accept that we all need each other.

CHART 1 : Inventory of our current cultural practices and those that are plausible

EXAMPLES OF WHAT WE ARE ALREADY DOING

Cultural Week, *Shipit* outings, Innu themes during discussions or various work, Innu music, alphabet with cultural images, etc.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT WE COULD DO

Cycles	Pedagogical Practices	Educational Practices *Innu Aitun*
Preschool	Pre-reading and pre-writing in Innu language in preschool / exchanges with CAA *(Innu Aimun)*	Meetings with Elders and artists for knowledge transmission, Programming schedule of cultural activities, Activities promoting the sense of belonging at school and in the community (traditional meals, Innu music streaming), Transmission of Innu values (respect, sharing, interdependence, etc.), Cultural activities with staff for transmission to students
1st cycle	Daily usage of simple Innu words (keyword posters)	
	Reading and writing situations dealing with Innu culture (keywords, vocabulary word association, etc.)	
2nd cycle	Activities on the history of Uashat (for example, visit to the old post)	
	Use of second language teaching approach	
3rd cycle	Communication in Innu language as soon as possible	
	Activities and sports competitions imbued with Innu culture	

Without our school falling into folklore, we considered the cultural dimensions to define the success plan benchmarks engendering pride and the sense of belonging to Innu culture. Since then, several cultural activities integrated into the curriculum took place, whether at school, in nature or in a traditional winter camp at the heart of our community. In this sense, the school is taken beyond its walls and responds to the development of the Innu identity (Axis 5). Furthermore, in an interdependence development perspective, educational activities such as school brigade during recess or tutoring (4th graders accompanying 2nd graders) give meaning to our Innu values (Axis 6). Finally, we question the pedagogical approaches most likely to meet the learning styles of our students (Axis 1).

CONCLUSION *Who dares wins!*

The ultimate goal of this project is to further adapt our school, as we have known it for a long time, towards a school that better meets the needs and context of Innu people. As part of our approach, the school-team members were mobilized to think and act accordingly while the success plan became the anchor point of this reflection. In this project, as the principal, I play the role of leader, which brings me to exert leadership on the basis of a shared vision, mobilizing people to achieve the institution's mission and thus, ensure educational and pedagogical development with a prospect of success for all.

This project inspires the pride in being Innu while the collaboration of all becomes a winning condition. If interdependence was previously a matter of survival in the forest, it is now a way to save our identity as Innu people in this modern world. In the light of Joséphine Bacon's poem, "Le Nord m'interpelle", isn't the present moment becoming a pillar of contemporary evolution of Innu culture?

NOTE

[1] **Educational practices** observed through actions combined and initiated by all actors in the school, to promote the optimal development of all students attending it (Guillemette 2014 p. 31). **Pedagogical practices** refer to knowledge acquired from teachers' practices and validated by research to which are grafted teaching, learning, educational and evaluation practices (Legendre, 2005, p. 1066).

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INTERVIEW

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LES *SORTIES EN TERRITOIRE* : A PROGRAM BESTOWING UNIQUENESS UPON KASSIMU MAMU SCHOOL IN MASHTEUIATSH

The following article, written from the testimonies of two members of management, presents the peculiarities of the training program *Sorties en territoire,* well established in Kassimu Mamu High School, Mashteuiatsh.

Ms. Melissa Launière, School Principal, and Ms. Christine Tremblay, Director of Education and Labour have been working for two decades on the development of a project for adolescents to explore in depth the Pekuakamiulnuatsh Territory (Innu) lifestyle. They granted us an interview on the wealth of experience encountered in their educational environment. They first explain the various steps taken to establish a comprehensive training program resulting in a possible certification. Through concrete examples, they present the components of the *Sorties en territoire* program. The positive impact on the youths of secondary Kassimu Mamu High School is finally identified, which leads to future prospects related to this innovative approach and anchored in the traditions of the Mashteuiatsh community.

Initially, how did the idea of offering this field experience to students emerge?

In 1997, we noticed that in our small school many of them were struggling with significant learning difficulties and behavioural disorders. Under the ISPJ program (Social and professional integration for young people) in effect at the time, a group of teachers had the idea to organize in-territory excursions. The main goals were to stimulate the students' interest, develop their autonomy and responsibility, and rekindle their relationship with their traditions. During the first years of implementation, the outings were only available to young people from social and professional integration groups. There, they acquired numerous practical skills when in nature. However initially, the activity was not structured and lessons were planned according to the group's day-to-day experience. Year after year, more and more youths wanted to participate. To satisfy the high demand, the program was gradually organized in line with specific objectives and training content to work in nature with youths.

Over time, how was today's comprehensive training program developed?

The territory outings were soon beneficial in our students. We observed a direct impact on their academic motivation and an appreciation of their cultural identity. Feeling more concerned; they wanted to be the pride of their community and even fostered a desire for community involvement, which depended on school success. Thus, from a simple informal field trip, the project has become the emblem, the uniqueness of our institution.

How many students participate in these outings?

Before the 2000s, about twenty youths took part in the in-territory excursions. A few volunteer teachers and resource people from the community accompa-

nied the group. This year, in 2015–2016, among 81 students in our school, 53 participated in the territory outings, representing a rate of 65%. We even have had, in recent years, an 80% participation of our students.

What are the main features of the *Sorties en territoire* program?

One-week-long excursions take place three times a year in the fall, winter, and spring. Resulting from the school's decision to use its financial resources to this end, the outings are free of charge for students who enroll voluntarily and evolve in a progressive approach via a three-phase empowerment course: the initiation for new students, the experiment where students are placed in teams, and the "Young Transmitters" phase in which the most skillful students become transmitters. For instance, "transmitter" students organized a transmitter workshop on the territory for daycare children. As a hockey team, they enjoy a high reputation within the school. Many aim at achieving this goal, which is a school perseverance engine. For each phase and according to the student profile, a track sheet identifies key objectives to develop during the outing in the territory, in line with an integrative teaching approach.

What are the objectives of this program?

The content covered during the excursion always focuses on the knowledge and experience of the school and the community. The choices are by consensus and, for the sake of respect for local traditions, Elders and heritage and culture specialists are consulted. The lessons targeted are grouped into general themes divided in activities adapted depending on the season, available resources, and identified needs. Beyond skills acquired in the territory, the excursions allow transmission of values and traditional lifestyles. For instance, autochthonous history concepts or roles of men and women of another time can be shared during outings in the territory. To maintain students' interest, the themes are varied from one year to the next. Science and social studies are addressed through, for example, workshops on identification of medicinal plants, soil geology, edible mushroom picking, the visit of a specialist of sacred parks, etc. Numerous transversal links can be made. However, the question of spirituality is little discussed during the outings. Teachers in ethics and culture will be responsible for teaching spiritual traditions adapted to our cultural context.

Do teachers relate to excursion experiences during class time?

Of course! Sorties en territoire *involve the entire school staff and students who do not participate can still learn lessons. Some teachers include outing-related activities in their planning and we expect evaluation activities and feedback once back in class. Excursions are experienced in three stages, before, during and after, and lead to the development of a rich and contextualized social study material in nehlueun.*

Several partners support you in planning activities. Can you introduce them?

We now have a reflection and coordination committee composed of school staff, community transmitters, experts from the heritage and culture sector, and public works employees. Since it is important for us to reach decisions by consensus, we discuss the mode of operation and choice of workshops. We are concerned that the workshops offered in the territory correlate with the experience of Elders. We wish to train young people to enable them to relay the teachings, to perpetuate their culture, and in this regard, they must take responsibility. Above all we want to keep alive the reality of our predecessors. At school, a team of coordination experts is in charge for planning the excursions to the last details.

The *Sorties en territoire* program requires complex logistics. Can you describe some steps necessary to organize each outing?

Such a program calls for a great deal of preparation and planning. We are talking about two to three weeks of full-time work to organize every outing. There is considerable mobilization of human and material resources and we must make sure that nothing is overlooked. To do this, we have developed detailed planning documents outlining the steps for each excursion.

On-site research also involves a lengthy process. In recent years, we selected the Laurentides Wildlife Reserve as the sector privileged in the fall, more specifically Rivière aux Écorces where a cultural community gathering is held annually. Most popular, this outing overlaps the community hunt. Youth join in their community gathering, reinforcing their sense of identity and cultural belonging. During winter and depending on the year, families choose the date and place of expeditions and they are glad to welcome us in their territory.

According to the tradition and our values of respect, we always request permission and acknowledge hospitality. There are sometimes restrictions determined by location accessibility, in order to ensure students safety. The spring excursion, always held at Pointe-Racine where the annual community geese hunt takes place, does not last as long as the other two. On that occasion also, the students take part in community hunts and contribute to the preparation of food.

One thing is certain: a whole process of roots and memories awakening occurs during these outings.

These strategic choices provide an opportunity for intergenerational bond creation and ancestral knowledge transmission. Often, the transmitters accompanying us are Elders of the community. Some transmissions are spontaneous, depending on nature's contribution. There are many activities planned to avoid wasted learning time. To render the richness of these experiences into words is complex and tedious. One thing is certain: a whole process of roots and memories awakening occurs during these outings. Our program thus contributes to the long-term survival of our community's intangible cultural heritage.

Can you talk about the challenges you faced in developing the project?

In such of project, one certainly has to adapt and cope with the unexpected. For example, one year the camp had been set up in advance. However, due to the changing climate, the snow had melted; the return on snowmobiles from the camp ten kilometres from the road became perilous. For security reasons, we now choose places located near roads. On another occasion, the wood prepared had not been covered and it rained for a few days prior to being shipped. So, we ended up with wet wood to try to light fires in the cold winter. The lack of fir branches also proved problematic during an excursion in temperatures reaching -41° Celsius. These situations are certainly part of the learning, but, as much as possible, we work to prevent and avoid them and guaranty the safety of students for whom we are responsible. Again, in order not to find ourselves on a territory empty of prey, which has already happened, we select territories covered by their owners to ensure the presence of animals. Subgroups are formed based on the number of transmitters available. Hunters usually get up at 4:30 am and it is always impressive to note how diligent teenagers can be. Night guardians now students' security and by waking them up if they fail to feed their fire. Measures are still being taken to overcome the problems.

Hunting, trapping, fishing, finding one's bearings, and tracking are traditional activities in which students participate during the excursions. The nature of the activities offered varies according to season and transmitters that available. The central notion is still the respect, of the self, of others, Elders, environment, etc.

In terms of meal planning, our method has also been refined. Previously, the participants were responsible for shopping and food. We realized there was substantial waste and that young people were not always making wise food choices. Now, concerned with healthy eating, money and energy saving, a tent becomes the assigned camp kitchen where a cook that supervises students in various cooking tasks.

Is your program established on theoretical support?

Actually, no. We developed this program from square one and it reflects our community. It is a one-of-a-kind project mainly based on experience built gradually over twenty years. We are proud of its uniqueness and we are not aware of similar programs elsewhere.

Do you tap into traditions?

Of course! We respect the transmission mode of Elders who share with us their knowledge and wisdom. Some of them model the lessons as they wish, while others are more vocal and explain things. There are no preferred teaching approaches. Because not all students experience life on the territory with their families, the program provides an introduction to those who would otherwise not have had the chance to access it.

What are the main skills developed by the students following this training program?

Hunting, trapping, fishing, finding one's bearings and tracking are traditional activities in which students participate during the excursions. The nature of the activities offered varies according to season and transmitters that available. The central notion is still the respect, of the self, of others, Elders, environment, etc. Youths hold their own alongside their peers, learn to work in teams, solve conflicts, all of which develop their social skills. Another feature of this experience is that the nature of relationship between young people and teachers is very different than in school. Bonds appear. It is obvious that students have more freedom to express and reveal themselves. However, we insist on applying the school code of life based on Aboriginal traditional lifestyles. Also, an interesting phenomenon: the roles are reversed; it is now our young people who teach new educators about outings in the territory operations.

Have you developed ways to assess students' learning during excursions?

As it is more of an extracurricular experience; we want to ensure that the excursions in territory emancipate from the school framework. So there is no formal evaluation as such. Nonetheless, each participant receives a grid of desired learning and a personalized record sheet on specific objectives to attain. Moreover, resource teachers assess the student's achievement of these objectives. A grade for participation is attributed on every report card. The challenges facing every student are also recorded. In addition, the organizing committee prepares a detailed summary on each excursion. Finally, in a perspective of improvement, youth and interveners provide an evaluation of the outing.

Can you describe the positive effects of the training program on the students' school perseverance?

The Sorties en territoire *is a great success for our school. The sustainability of this project has fostered the establishment of meaningful pedagogical practices better aligned with the learners' needs. Indeed, the territory outings have a tangible impact on student retention as well as on the strengthening of cultural identity. Also, some students, who stand out less in school, thrive in nature and have the opportunity to demonstrate their skills. It is an identity enhancement engine for these young people who finally take their place among their peers. In general, it proves rewarding for youths to be part of this experience in mutual-aid. Each outing establishes powerful links and a growing sense of belonging and influences the quality of their involvement in school. Proud of their culture and wanting to become ambassadors of their community, they willingly invest more in further learning. Thus, life in the school increasingly reflects life in the territory.*

In conclusion, could you tell us what the future prospects are for the *Sorties en territoire* program of Kassimu Mamu High School? Given its benefits, is it transferrable to other communities or social and educational settings and thus become a school retention key element for more young people in search of "roots"?

Several communities that have an interest in our program and who see its potential for their schools have approached us. Official documents are under preparation to facilitate the implementation process of this project in other communities. Exclusivity: a video on the experiences of three seasons

will soon be released. Ultimately, we dream of the day when the gains made in territory enable young people to take up duties in their community officially recognizing their expertise.

Kassimu Mamu High School certainly holds a key for school retention for First Peoples. On its territory, the Mashteuiatsh community wishes to at least maintain the specificity of its school, in order to preserve its distinctiveness in the competition between high schools. The various actors involved are even considering the possibility of making the program mandatory. Despite some preserve regarding the immediate environment, the desire to share with other communities the benefits of their project is palpable in the comments of the two women involved within their communities and with whom we have been privileged to discuss.

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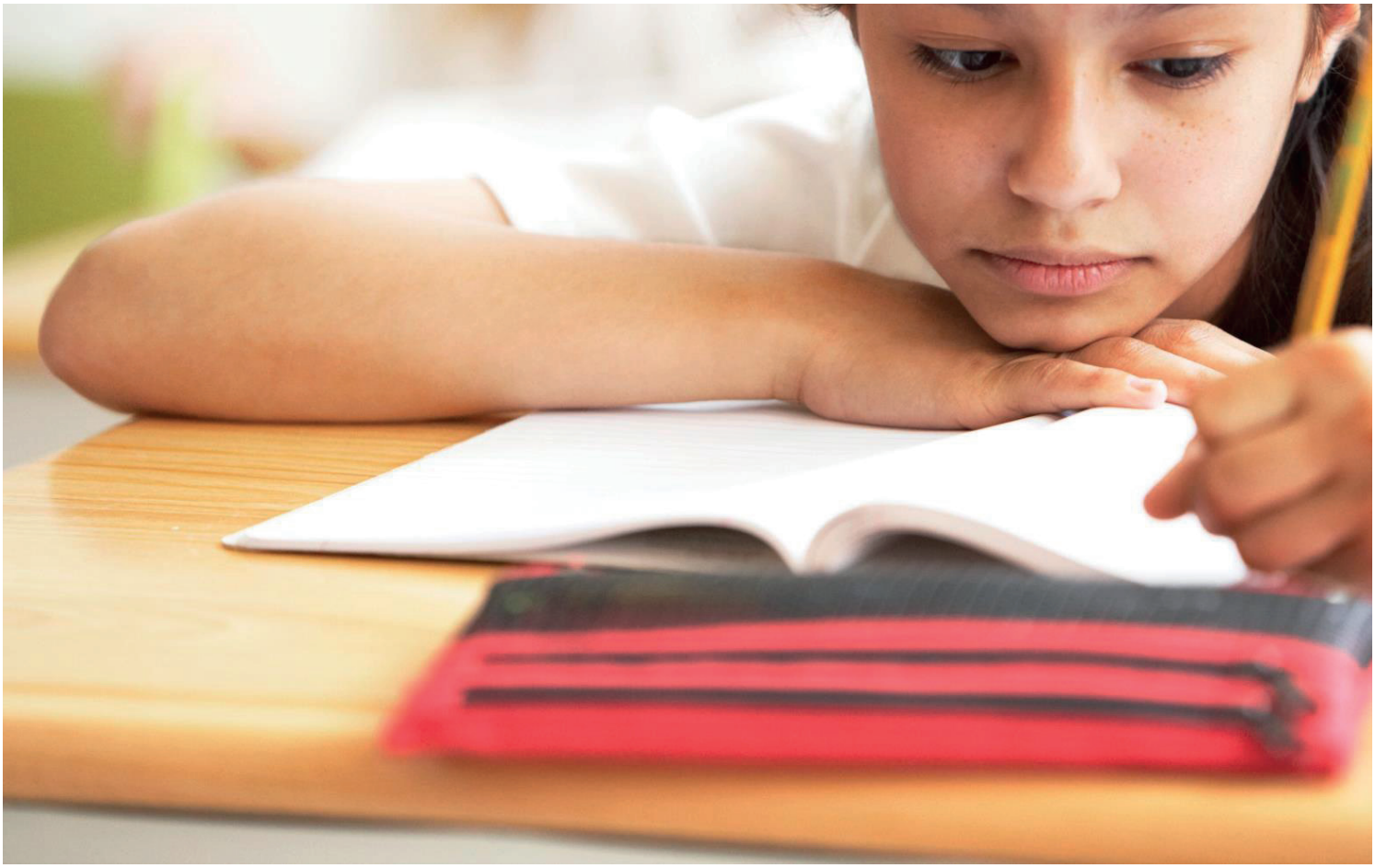

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PART 2

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND WRITING

INTERVIEW

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IDENTITY AFFIRMATION THROUGH LITERARY CIRCLES AMONG ABORIGINAL STUDENTS AT THE CEGEP DE CHICOUTIMI

This report describes the narrative practice of two interveners whom, in collaboration with the CEGEP de Chicoutimi and the Native friendship Centre of Saguenay, have worked on holding literary circles addressed to Aboriginal post-secondary students. Conducive to the emergence of cultural exchange, reading circles prove to be, within the framework of this project, a powerful vector of identity affirmation. Michele Martin, Adapted Services Consultant at the CEGEP de Chicoutimi, is the initiator of this project; Marie-Danielle Riverin, a secondary and post-secondary teacher of French, was hired as a trainer for its implementation. Here, they outline the literary circles and the positive effects they have on participants.

First, can you tell us a little about you and about the other actors in this project?

The Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'enseignement supérieur (MEES) created the adapted service consultant position only a few years ago to meet the growing needs of special populations at the post-secondary levels. I [Michèle Martin] have held this position at the CEGEP de Chicoutimi since. Historically in our institution, a student of French teaching is recruited each year for a few hours a week to support Aboriginal students and immigrants in their difficulties in French. Already involved with these clienteles, Marie-Danielle Riverin was recruited for the literary circles project because of her cultural sensitivity, her awareness of oral peoples' peculiarities, and her skills relating to oral learning. The CEGEP has used her services for the development and the delivery of each workshop. The Native Friendship Centre of Saguenay joined us by providing us with its friendly environment where meetings could be held. Located nearby the CEGEP, the Centre is a community gathering place for Aboriginal peoples living in the region. Therefore, it was from the beginning, a team project in which everyone assumed different mandates.

In your environment, what problems were justifying the need to implement literary circles for Aboriginal students?

Several historical factors justify the implementation of such educational measures for Aboriginal students in our institution. Since 2003, the CEGEP de Chicoutimi has implemented a welcome and integration program for Aboriginal students. The annual statistics measuring success and participation in the program allow us to determine the needs and identify the obstacles. After ten years, in 2013, the results showed that the lack of cultural venues where students could express their traditions was a barrier to their success. Aboriginal students also showed a lot of cultural insecurity and a feeling of exclusion, especially in general education courses (French, Philosophy, and English), where contents had little resonance with their cultural heritage.

Raised in the oral tradition, they are often confronted to unusual reading and writing transmission modes upon their arrival at CEGEP. We noted that they

showed extreme difficulties in terms of comprehension abilities and in literary analysis, which are part of the college program (MELS, 1998). The scientific term to express these difficulties with reading and writing at post-secondary levels is "alphacollegism". Thus, for reasons of culture and language, the students faced great integration issues and, therefore, found themselves often isolated.

On a positive note, the pride of belonging to Aboriginal culture proved very strong among students. They were inclined to cultural sharing and showed a lot of motivation to learn in a context such as the literary circle.

From these findings, it seemed crucial to support Aboriginal students in the increase of their cultural security. We also wanted to establish means for the development of their literacy, that is to say their ability to understand and use written information. To do this, it was relevant to anchor our intentions within the traditions. Therefore, we introduced an approach echoing with Aboriginal cultural references, in accordance with their learning styles, in a holistic manner, always in a circle.

And this is how the idea of literary circles emerged?

At the first Convention on School Retention for First Nations (Winnipeg, 2015), I (Michèle Martin) attended a workshop on reading comprehension by actively listening to audio texts. As an adapted service consultant, I also use support programs for reading comprehension using software (Médialectique, WordQ) for students with learning issues. The results of this approach are very positive: many students show success in language. Steeped in Aboriginal culture, orality appeared to us as a learning tool for comprehension of written language. Literary circles are thus presented as a learning strategy conducive to the development of targeted skills.

What are the "literary circles" main educational objectives?

At first, "literary circles" main goal was to give Aboriginal students an appetite for reading and an enjoyment of literary texts. In their family, learning occurs mainly orally. Young people are relatively unfamiliar with literary resources. They read and write little at home, hence the problem of "alphacollegism" encountered in CEGEPs and colleges. All activities developed in the project of literary circles fostered the sharing concept, which is rooted in the system of Aboriginal values. The development of oral learning situations centred on sharing was essential to promote openness, to stimulate exchanges, and to allow these students to achieve real learning. Literary circles were designed to equip participants pertaining to literature and reading through texts of Aboriginal writers from Quebec and North America.

The pride of belonging to Aboriginal culture proved very strong among students.

The primary objective of these meetings was to prioritize identity development among post-secondary Aboriginals, through discovery activities of Quebec and North American Autochthonous literature. Learning effective reading strategies, the introduction to literary concepts, and preparation for text analysis was also among the objectives of the project. The circles also ensure bridging between literature and other Aboriginal arts and cultural events.

In practice, can you tell us more on the conducting of workshops?

Every week for two semesters, the participants were invited to a literary circle lasting about two hours. The workshops were held in the evening at the Friendship Centre available to us. We also had access to the kitchen to prepare snacks. The participants enrolled in the activity voluntarily; therefore we did not always have the same group. At each meeting, participants were asked to read out loud texts selected for this purpose in a book and to discuss them together. This collection included a variety of literary genres, all drawn from the Autochthonous repertoire. It could be novels, essays, poems, songs, newspaper articles or journals, stories and legends collected in the oral tradition, collective texts or even books on the history and autochthonous art. Still emerging, Native literature compared to the Quebec literature repertoire of the sixties. The circles were thus an opportunity for us to introduce the main writers of Aboriginal literature to the participants.

Following each reading circle, exchanges and impressions on selected texts were discussed. A talking circle oriented on themes addressed in the texts was then proposed to the participants. This often led to sharing anecdotes mentioned in the texts. It was a great opportunity to review some literary concepts such as figures of style. In addition, they made associations with other works to deepen the interpretation of texts (pictures, films, songs, etc.). Inter-literary comparisons were also proposed as enrichment. Thus, the workshops enabled learning applied directly into an awareness revealed by the discussion circle. Educational contents were always brought implicitly.

Following the meetings, the texts visited were added to the circle's blog, which allowed participants to return or to say more about the texts after the literary experience. Reinvestment workshops finally allowed them to question the contents related to identity development found in the works.

Furthermore, the complexity of workshops followed a logical progression over the weeks. For example, the first week, we addressed the Aboriginal proverbs as the culmination of the project was the reading of Yves Thériault's novel Agaguk. Reading an entire book was a daunting challenge for the participants, but most of them succeeded.

Who are the main authors addressed in these literary circles?

Aboriginal writers such as Joséphine Bacon, Michel Noël, Naomi Fontaine, Louis-Karl Picard-Sioui, Geneviève McKenzie-Sioui, Maya Cousineau-Mollen, Virginia Pésémapéo-Bordeleau, Charles Coocoo,

Andre Dudemaine, George Sioui, and author-songwriter Samian were addressed in the literary circles.

Who were the participants in this project?

The following statistics describe the characteristics of participants in the literary circles, which varied from one week to the next, since the project was offered on a voluntary basis. On average, eight to ten participants took part in the reading groups every week. Based on the participation number, 67% were students at CEGEP de Chicoutimi and had courses in literature or in philosophy on their schedules; 20% were students attending adult school who wanted to attend CEGEP later; while 13% were members of the Saguenay Native Friendship Centre.

Was instructional material developed for the workshops?

The literary circles resulted in the development of an animator's handbook in which the whole procedure is detailed, and a participant workbook including texts and related exercises. Following my teaching experience with students with difficulties, I had [Marie-Danielle Riverin] developed a toolbox for teaching reading strategies. But for this project, first I myself had to do a review of works from Quebec and North American Aboriginal literature. Then, I was able to select relevant texts. I created a collection of selected texts, all accompanied by contextualized reinvestment activities. The activities were organized according to themes addressed at each meeting.

What were the main outcomes for participants?

The meetings were held in a warm atmosphere conducive to exchanges and expression of participants' pride in their identity. Rich in textual analysis, literary circles have explored topics as diverse as politics, history, art, intercultural relations, and the environment. Texts were often so thought-provoking that discussions took place without our intervention.

The meetings were held in a warm atmosphere conducive to exchanges and expression of participants' pride in their identity. Rich in textual analysis, literary circles have explored topics as diverse as politics, history, art, intercultural relations, and the environment. Texts were often so thought-provoking that discussions took place without our intervention.

From facilitators, we became observers of this process that was taking place naturally. The educational content became an identity affirmation engine. The circle is a fabulous tool in that it allows power-sharing among participants.

From facilitators, we became observers of this process that was taking place naturally. The educational content became an identity affirmation engine. The circle is a fabulous tool in that it allows power-sharing among participants.

Within the circle, the brain and the heart connect and everybody is equidistant from the centre. The right to speak, the notions of fairness and respect were therefore at the heart of our meetings. Rooted in their traditions, participants were more inclined to genuine exchanges. Relationships with ancestors and Native spirituality were also widely discussed.

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The circles also helped intergenerational transfers. For example, a text on residential schools triggered heavy emotions causing catharsis in participants. Following this meeting, a student was able to question his Elders on their experience during the residential school period. As facilitators, we had to demonstrate flexibility, as some texts deeply challenged participants and gave rise to lively discussions where emotions were on edge. From joy to sadness, through anger, we

accompanied the participants in a whole reconciliation process with the past and re-appropriation of their own culture. The intensity of participation in literary circles exceeded our expectations. Candlelight, soft music, sharing herbal teas and afternoon snacks were the means used to achieve this closeness between the participants and gain their trust. It worked. Toward the end, we even integrated other Aboriginal traditions such as purification with sacred sage and opening directions of the circle. The meetings sometimes lasted over two hours and we had to "blow off the candle" on certain occasions.

"When a word is offered, it never dies. Those who come will hear." (Joséphine Bacon)

From a literary point of view, the entertaining side of the circle leaves space for meaningful interpretations with respect to a text's essential nature. For example, many allegories between the animal or plant kingdoms and humans could be determined. Metaphors associated with natural phenomena have also helped explain certain individual and social behaviour. The participants were even able to bring out complex lexical fields from the works read orally in a circle.

In addition, among several participants who dreaded oral presentations, we noted a marked improvement in the ease to speak publicly. The safe and informal environment context in which the circles took place seems to have helped many participants to overcome their shyness. The learning potential through orality was then revealed to us.

Moreover, the reading circles' positive effects on Aboriginal students' educational attainment is demonstrated in the following statistics: 100% of CEGEP students passed the literature or philosophy course on their schedule; 100% of the adult-school students passed their French courses (reading comprehension); 70% were able to read the book Agaguk in its entirety (for more than half, it was their first book, containing a considerable number of pages).

These results are encouraging given the difficulties in French of Aboriginal post-secondary students. Real progress has been made in terms of the participants' literacy skills. We attribute this to the fact that the texts find echo in their cultural heritage and that students have the opportunity to discuss them with peers.

It therefore appears that the cultural reference of a text is a prerequisite for understanding. In other words, to analyze a text, we must first understand its historical context and its cultural foundations.

The learning potential through orality was then revealed to us.

In conclusion, given their benefits on the participants, will literary circles be repeated in the near future?

As supporters of an inclusive approach to education where differences coexist, we believe in an education more in line with the Universal Design for Learning. At the end of this positive experience, we wish to renew if we obtain the necessary means; we believe important that Aboriginal students have access to a place to share, where they can gather according to their traditions, to share in this safe space that is the circle.

We also believe that this kind of place should be offered in all post-secondary institutions. Therefore, instead of striving to adapt to social mores and styles of learning which are often foreign to them, Aboriginal students could, through these literary circles, see their rich traditions diffused and have access to transmission of ancestral know-how of which any society could benefit.

In light of this discussion, the benefits of literary circles on identity development and, by extension, on the educational success of Aboriginal post-secondary students are numerous. In that it allows the transmission of integrated knowledge and meaningful to the participants, this holistic learning model deserves to be reinvested in a wider spectrum of education. In the spirit of literary circles, it is on this evocative quote that the two speakers, with whom we had the honour to talk, ended the interview: "When a word is offered, it never dies. Those who come will hear" (Joséphine Bacon).

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LITERACY CAMPS: SUMMER SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM TO COUNTER LEARNING LOSS IN READING

Over 30 years of research confirm that young students experience learning loss in reading during the summer period. For some, this loss will have significant impact on the next school year. This phenomenon is even more pronounced among students who have limited access to books and other learning resources outside the school and who come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Allington and McGill-Franzen, 2013). However, during the summer months, Aboriginal children living in communities often have little access to books (Stone Path Research Group, 2015) and to daily supervised activities; this causes a significant loss of reading skills, sometimes equivalent to three or four months of academic progress (Allington and McGill-Franzen, 2013).

Learning programs offered during the summer period have been identified as an effective way to counter this loss of learning and to promote academic success (Canadian Council on Learning, 2008). Frontier College, a national literacy organization, coordinates literacy camps for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children to reduce the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in terms of school success. These literacy camps, in the form of day camps, take place within the participating communities. They are free for children and provide fun and structured activities focusing on reading development and writing skills, in the Native language as in the second language. In addition, children enrolled in the camps have access to a wide selection of books throughout the summer, which is also one of the keys to maintaining reading achievement between two academic years (Paul Murphy, 2013).

This project was initiated in northern Ontario in 2005 in collaboration with five communities of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. Ten years later, 99 communities across the country that hosted a camp. In Quebec, 22 literacy camps were established in 2015 through partnerships with the Cree School Board, the Kativik School Board, and the First Nations Education Council. These camps had a significant impact on children who participated, both in terms of academic achievement and of their confidence and self-esteem.

100% of surveyed teachers said that literacy camps had improved school readiness and transition for back-to-school in September.

THE GOAL OF THE LITERACY CAMPS: TO COUNTER LEARNING LOSS IN READING

The goals of literacy camps are many. However, they primarily aim at reducing learning loss in reading that occurs in children during summer time. According to the study, this loss can be countered simply by reading a minimum of five books during the summer or by at least 30 minutes of reading a day and providing an easy access to a variety of books (Kim, 2004).

Community and parental involvement is also one of the literacy camp objectives. Parents, Elders and

other community members are invited to take part in literacy camp activities as participants, as facilitators of activities or as special guests. This adult participation sends a positive message to the campers in relation to the importance of education and learning, while raising awareness of community members on the importance of continued development of reading skills during the summer period.

Literacy camps also aim at strengthening the capacity of participating communities through the hiring, training and supervising of facilitators within the host communities as well as the collaboration with other agencies offering services to the community.

In short, literacy camps focus on developing reading skills of children aged five to twelve years and offer local facilitators work experience in the areas of education and community development. The involvement of parents and other community members, local hiring and collaborations with other local resources allow animators to develop a rich and diverse program. Together, all these elements enable the improvement of skills and self-confidence of children's learning, determining factors for decreased learning loss in reading and, by extension, for future academic success.

PRACTICE NARRATIVE

In the summer of 2015, more than 6645 children took part in a literacy camp across Canada, including 1,080 in Quebec. The model is very simple: Frontier College works in partnership with First Nations, Métis or Inuit communities and established literacy camps for three to six weeks, depending on the needs of host communities.

The model adapts to each of the partner communities. However, Frontier College usually hires teams of animators, many of which are from the host community. The animators are typically aged 20 to 35 years old and many are post-secondary students and local school employees.

Frontier College offers a paid training period of one week to all animators. The training covers a variety of topics that enable animators to establish a rich and balanced program. The main topics discussed during the training tackle reading and writing strategies, culture and traditions, parents' commitment, the development of the program and the daily planning, without forgetting security and behaviour management as well as assessment of results.

Programming includes structured dayly reading periods and fun activities that integrate literacy, which according to research, helps reduce the learning loss and success in the coming school year (Dianis, 2013). A typical day at camp includes periods of individual and group reading, sports and physical activities, arts and crafts, journal writing and producing a group project to work on throughout the summer: for example, writing and producing a play, the production of a music video, the weekly correspondence with campers from another community, literary carnival, etc.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

To assess the impact of the literacy camps, several tools have been developed, including an array of dayly activities on a daily basis (developed in partnership with Ryerson University). In addition, the number of books read by every child and the number of minutes reading is recorded. Questionnaires intended for campers, parents and teachers are distributed and collected at the end of the camps. Testimonials and letters of support also complete the evaluation of the impact in a more qualitative approach.

In the summer of 2015, 530 children had the opportunity to take part in the camps.

BRIEF CASE STUDY: LITERACY CAMPS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CREE SCHOOL BOARD

Frontier College and the Cree School Board have partnered in 2013 to organize a camp in each of the nine Cree communities of Quebec. The four-week camps, located in the elementary schools, are free of charge for all participants. Each camp reached between 30 and 70 children, according to community size.

SOME RESULTS

In the summer of 2015, 530 children had the opportunity to take part in the camps. The number of participants increased steadily for three years, from 411 children in 2013 to 530 three years later. The number of facilitators hired locally is also growing: 18 local facilitators were hired and trained in 2015 in addition to the 22 instructors from the South and 4 local assistant-facilitators, compared with 12 local employees in 2014.

The results regarding the maintenance of reading skills are convincing. Indeed, the children read approximately 50 minutes a day and an average of 8 books each, which is almost double the number of reading recommended in research to prevent learning loss in reading during the summer. The children had access to 400 books in the camps, many of which were of culturally relevant content. Thus, a total of 3600 high-quality children books remained in the community upon camp completion.

Parents, Elders and other community members were invited to take part in activities on a weekly basis. A total of 184 parents, for an average of 20 per community, took part in the activities at least once during the four weeks. In addition, 44 community members, including young Chiefs, Elders, the police and athletes came to host an activity for the young campers.

The results collected through questionnaires for parents also confirm the positive impact of camps on children. Of the 67 parents who completed the questionnaire, 95% said that their child had a bet-

ter attitude towards learning and reading; 85% said than their child read at home because of their participation in the camp; 100%, confirmed that they will enroll their child in the literacy camp the following summer.

> "Our kids have not stopped talking about the literacy camp, about the facilitators and learning they have made. They spoke of experiences, reading and games… We have noticed that our children now read a few paragraphs independently and it changed their perception of reading. We hope you come back next year!"

Regarding the results noted by teachers in 2014, 100% of surveyed teachers said that literacy camps had improved school readiness and transition for back-to-school in September. They also claimed to have seen a great improvement in literacy skills from children who participated in one of the camps. As one teacher said, "there is a significant and measurable difference in [sic] the reading skills of children who participated in the camp. The children returned to school ready to learn and skills have been sharpened by their summer camp experiences. "

CONCLUSION

Finally, literacy camps are an effective means to reduce the impact of the learning loss in reading of students. They enable children to return to school in September with all the enthusiasm and all the skills they need to succeed.

Overall, the key to the success of this project lies in the fact that each camp is based on the specific strengths of the host communities and is anchored at the heart of local culture and traditions. The model is based on a well-structured training of facilitators that incorporates best practices developed over the years, but remains very flexible and leverages the expertise and resources of communities, schools and school boards throughout the summer. Moreover, the participation of community members, including parents and Elders, the hiring and training of local facilitators, and collaborations with various local agencies strengthen the capacity of host communities regarding the programming offer in community literacy.

As regards the practice, the next steps of this project lie in the development of an offer to literacy activities for the whole community and taking place throughout the year in communities where the need was identified. Finally, with respect to the evaluation of the practice, a longitudinal evaluation of the impact of the literacy camps, in areas where the project has existed for several years, will target the real impacts on academic and social for a long period of time.

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FOSTERING THE EMERGENCE OF WRITING IN A SYMBOLIC PLAY CONTEXT: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS OF A COLLABORATIVE STUDY IN ATIKAMEKW COMMUNITIES

Education for Aboriginal children has undergone several changes in recent years. The residential school period has had numerous consequences for families and children, including the loss of their identity and of their mother tongue. Today, education is the responsibility of communities and many have chosen to educate kindergarten children in an Aboriginal language, among others in the Atikamekw community involved in this study. The discovery of writing, that is to say, reading and writing, begins in family environments and continues in preschool. Atikamekw teachers must continue to engage children in writing in the Native language despite the lack of books and teaching materials in Atikamekw available to them. Educational interventions based on oral language, including symbolic play, help foster children's development in the emergence of writing. This research therefore focuses on the documentation of Atikamekw teachers' role in preschool to promote introduction to writing of children through symbolic play.

CONTEXT

The Atikamekw community concerned uses the Ministry of Education of Quebec preschool education program. Teachers adapt it to their needs and culture. This program focuses on the development of six skills, including the ability to communicate using the language resources. For children to develop this skill, teachers are implementing educational interventions to support them in learning situations (MEQ, 2001). The program suggests that they make connections between oral and written, to recognize the usefulness of writing, to explore concepts, written language conventions and symbols, explore different forms of spontaneous writing, and to get children to imitate the reader and the writer's behaviour. These strategies are part of the current emergence of writing. This term refers to the early childhood period (0–6 years). It is during this period that children develop skills in reading and writing before a more formal learning, before entering school, interacting with adults about writing within their family and community environment and in early childhood organizations, including preschool (Giasson, 2011).

The preschool education program emphasizes the importance of playing, including symbolic play, to get children to develop skills. In the symbolic play, children create an imaginary situation, play a character and invent rules according to their needs: for instance, a child plays the role of a doctor and proposes to operate on a patient who has been in the waiting room for a few minutes. Symbolic play closely connects with the emergence of writing (Jacob, Charron & da Silveira, 2015 a). In this form of play, children use spoken language, a component of the emergence of writing, to signify to their partners their intentions or mental representations: for example, they will mention to another child that a block becomes a hospital bed within their play context. By practising this form of language, children shape their mental representations, which would help their symbols of writing representa-

tions (Roskos and Neuman 1998). Indeed, the process of using forms of mental representations in symbolic play, by changing the function of objects, playing a role or make-believe, for example, is the same used to understand the meaning of the written code. Thus, the emergence of writing and symbolic play both require the ability to use words, gestures or images to represent objects.

Again, symbolic play scenarios allow children to develop their narrative skills: they learn the beginning, middle, and end of a story, similar to writing a book. The children invent a story according to the theme of the game and thus enrich their vocabulary, which is an asset for the emergence of writing development. When teachers support children in their pretend play scenarios, they lead them to the highest, or mature, level of symbolic play; this complex level of play, including rich vocabulary, contributes to the emergence of writing development (Bodovra and Leong, 2009, 2012).

The need to document the role of teachers in early childhood education, to promote the emergence of writing in a symbolic play context in different cultures, is a need felt in Anglo-Saxon, scientific literature (Roskos and Neuman, 1993; Saracho, 2002). Furthermore, a misconception of symbolic play and emergence of writing, a lack of training in this regard in initial or continuing education, and a lack of time to enrich the play corners also warrant a need for training among teachers (Boudreau and Charron, 2014).

Aboriginal teachers face the same concerns. Some teachers participating in this study could not have access to a university education, which reinforces the need to support them in their practice (Jacob, Charron & da Silveira, 2015b). Moreover, in the community concerned, teachers would like to receive training with regard to the Training Program for Quebec Schools and carry out interventions to stimulate oral and written language in Atikamekw children. The themes of symbolic play and the emergence of writing thus joined the concerns of these Atikamekw teachers. The purpose of this study, based on the need for training of the latter, is to better understand the role of teachers to promote the emergence of writing in a symbolic play context.

STUDY DESCRIPTION

A collaborative research was conducted with three Atikamekw teachers[1]. All three of them have diverse backgrounds: the first earned a Bachelor in Preschool and Elementary Education and has six years of experience in early childhood education; the second holds an Attestation of Collegial Studies in Early Childhood Education and has six years of experience in early childhood education; and the third does not have a post-secondary diploma has no experience as a preschool teacher. Collaborative research combines the expertise of a researcher and practitioners to promote the professional development of the latter (Desgagnés, 2001). The project was achieved in three stages. In the first step, that of *cosituation*, I negotiated the project theme with participants and conducted semi-structured interviews with them to better understand the initial situation of their classroom. The second stage, that of *cooperation*, was the implementation of the project. This one took place in four iterative planning loops, put into practice in the classroom and of reflective analysis. The meeting allowed the teachers to plan the play corner and think about their role in facilitating the emergence of writing. During the practice, the teachers were playing with the children in their classroom in the new play corner area. Then, a group discussion was held with them to reflect and explain their practice. In total, four play corners enriched with writing material were organized: the restaurant, the hospital, construction, and hunting. For example, the hunting corner was equipped with magazines, books and written words such as "tent", "name of animals", "tools" and "hunt". Paper and pencils were also made available to children. For each of the corners, the preferred spoken and written language was Atikamekw. The third stage, that of *coproduction* corresponded to the development of symbolic play corners, but also to the collaborative research results and professional development of teachers, especially about the emergence of writing and symbolic play.

RESULTS

The results showed that Atikamekw preschool teachers, with a play corner equipped with writing material, adopt several roles to promote the development of oral and written languages. Remember that spoken language is a component of the emergence

of writing. This is a description of three roles and a few examples below.

1) Guide: As a guide, teachers plan interesting activities, adjust the game environment, and organize the materials needed for the children to play. Several strategies, including the following five, are used by teachers.

a) *Plan the game:* Teachers support children in the planning of their game and to embody the characters in order to bring them to mature symbolic play. For instance, Teacher A helps children from the beginning of the game in the construction area, to adopt roles, that of an electrician, plumber or architect: "At first, I was building. Then, I also proposed to children to be such and such. That's what I did, […] so they know what [*sic*] roles are in there" (Teacher A, 24/03/15).

b) *Associate words to images:* In the restaurant corner, teachers help children associate words with images from the menu; in the hospital corner, they show the parts of the body on a poster; in the hunting corner, they point at animal names with their corresponding image. Teacher B stresses the children's satisfaction for reading: "They were happy to read. Because of [*sic*] pictures of animals" (Teacher B, 4/22/15).

c) *Being a model writer:* In this strategy, the teachers write and are writer models. This strategy is used mainly for writing numbers and letters. The researcher supports teachers in their practice for writing words or sentences. For example, in the construction corner, Teacher C emphasizes: "What I did, I wrote, say, cheques […], and the children chose the numbers and me, I wrote them [*sic*]' (Teacher C, 15/04/15). When teachers write words, as the researcher suggested, they are in French. The exception remains the hunting corner where teachers write, in a notebook, the names of animals in Atikamekw.

d) *Reading words:* This strategy is less used by teachers when the words displayed in the play corner appear without images. Reading words is sometimes done to the detriment of symbolic play. Teacher B explains her difficulties using this strategy: 'Do I play the teacher's role? I had trouble to tell myself, "OK, you now play the teacher's role," on my own. Do I stop playing?' (Teacher B, 1/29/15).

e) *Encouraging children to write:* This strategy is often used and is spread mainly through writing numbers or names. Teacher A explains how it encourages a child to write, in his role as a doctor: 'One of the children took the temperature of another child. I said, "Write the number that appears" and I said to the child, "you will take note of the next appointment." And [*sic*] then, he pretended to write.' (Teacher A , 17/0215)

2) Storyteller: In this role, the teacher reads or tells a story to children with a book as support, asks questions, and helps them to predict events (Saracho, 2002). Teachers read books to children, especially in the hunting corner. Three reasons explain this situation. First, the tent is a gathering place; Teacher B confirms: "Getting attention is easier in the tent" (teacher B, 4/22/15). Then, the books are written in Atikamekw. When written in French, Teacher A "finds it difficult. The story, I have read it before; I translate after" (Teacher A, 10/12/14). Finally, teachers have probably accumulated experience. For instance, in the third play corner, Teacher A does not read the story to children during the play period and wonders how to introduce the book: "I looked it over on my own. It was to see what I could do with it" (reflexive, Teacher A, 3/24/15). In the fourth game theme, this same teacher reads passages from books to children. Teacher B also notes this conclusion: 'I also had more experience' (teacher B, 13/05/15).

3) Mediator: In the role of mediator, teachers ensure to mediate between children and activities, equipment and instructions, to maximize children's learning. To keep the interest of the latter in symbolic play, teachers use a strategy: they model the way the game themes can be linked. For example, Teacher B establishes the link between the restaurant and hospital theme. During the exercise, she sits in the restaurant holding two dolls in her arms. They fall to the ground. She suggested the children to go to the hospital '' But my babies, they fell. I had the idea of proposing to call the ambulance […]. I suggested; they complied" (Teacher B, 1/29/15).

This teacher's spontaneous strategy encourages children to develop their scenario in symbolic play; it helps them reach a level of mature and complex symbolic play and also supports their spoken language, a component of the emergence of writing.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This research has made it possible to add relevant information about the roles of the three Atikamekw preschool teachers to promote the emergence of writing using symbolic play. It shows that these roles are similar to previous studies (Bodovra and Leong, 2012; Saracho, 2002), even with the little training experience that teachers have on themes of symbolic play and the emergence of writing. However, some peculiarities regarding language use are justified by the cultural context: for example, teachers sometimes use French for certain words in oral and writing, especially when the play theme is slightly similar to their culture, which was the case with the construction theme.

To promote the emergence of writing in context of symbolic play, the dilemma between "play" and "teach" concepts related to writing is also a matter raised by the teachers.

Moreover, the role of the storyteller is sometimes missing depending on the play theme. Reading books in French seems more difficult to achieve for teachers because of the simultaneous translation they need to do during reading. To promote the emergence of writing in context of symbolic play, the dilemma between "play" and "teach" concepts related to writing is also a matter raised by the teachers. Previous research confirms the importance of remaining in the play character to allow children to further improve their spoken and written languages (Meacham, Vukelich, Han and Buell, 2013). For instance, a teacher talks about writing to children by remaining in her character as a waitress in a restaurant, by reading what is on the menu or by pointing the words on the placemat. Using this form of language, she makes sure to keep the children's interest in the symbolic play and in the emergence of writing activity. Finally, note that one of the strengths of this research is the use of collaborative research in Aboriginal communities, which has enabled professional development of teachers in the area of the emergence of writing and symbolic play as well the development of symbolic play corners enriched writing material for three preschool classrooms. Further research would be relevant to know the benefits of the symbolic play approach on the development and knowledge on emergence of writing of Aboriginal children attending preschool.

NOTE

[1] To respect the participants' privacy, the name of the community will not be released.

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TEACHING WRITING FOR PLEASURE IN AN ANICINAPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Our report provides an account on a part of an action-research project on the development of writing skills in Anicinapek and Innu elementary students, in collaboration with elementary schools in two communities, one in Abitibi-Temiscamingue and the other of the North Shore[1] (Da Silveira & al, 2015a;. Da Silveira & al, 2015b). The general approach on this project was to find solutions to the problems in teaching of writing raised by teachers. Teams were formed, in dyad and in triads, involving a researcher and one or two teachers. A support system was established from the discussion between the researcher specialized in writing didactics and the partners, two fifth-grade and sixth-grade teachers; it was then tested in a school in Abitibi-Temiscamingue. In this article, we briefly describe the context in which emerged this support system as well as the school and the actors involved in the process. We then present the features of the system, changes in the practices of teachers, and benefits for pupils. Finally, we identify three factors conducive to the success of the support system.

CONTEXTUALIZATION ELEMENTS OF THE PARTICIPATORY ACTION-RESEARCH APPROACH[2]

Conducted in collaboration with staff from each school of the communities concerned, our study aimed, among others, to support teachers in developing and testing new writing practices taking in account the relationship to writing of students[3]. In teaching French, notions of relationship to writing (écriture) (Barré-De Miniac, 2000, 2002) and relationship to writing (écrit) (Chartrand & Blaser, 2008; Blaser, Saussez, Bouhon, 2014) provide a conceptual framework allowing to consider the teaching of writing based on various dimensions that influence the learning of it: the feelings and values of the writers on writing, their beliefs about the role of writing, their scholastic and writing practices (Da Silveira & al., 2015b). The concept of relationship to writing, presented to teachers at the beginning of the action-research and more specifically its affective dimension, has particularly caught the attention of two teachers working in the third cycle of the Anicinape elementary school in Abitibi–Temiscamingue. Aware that writing activities were generally perceived as a burden by many of their students in fifth and sixth grades, these teachers have expressed their intention to take up the challenge to do activities that rhyme with "pleasure" for most students. The concerned teachers also had the intuition that if the students' interest in writing grew, their skill in this area would be even better. The researchers' response consisted of an offer to support the teachers in their process; they then agreed to engage in a reflection on their teaching-of-writing practices in collaboration with one of the team's researchers. Thus, during the 2013–2014 school year, a series of five triad meetings occurred from October to May. Given the distance separating the teachers and the researcher, four meetings were held in videoconferencing while the last was held in the school in spring 2014.

The institution where activities took place is a band school with a hundred students and nine classroom

teachers. The two teachers involved in the action-research were, respectively, in 2013–2014, homeroom teachers in grade 5 with 13 students, and grade 6 with nine students. Both from the community where the school is located, these teachers were accustomed to working together. Both had used several strategies to regulate the activities in each phase of the writing process. For example, at the planning stage, they would willingly use brainstorming to stimulate the students' imagination. They also provided cards with questions to encourage students to gather information before starting to write. At the editing-correcting stage, one of the teachers proposed to students to leave the class—alone or with another student—to revise their texts by reading it aloud. In other words, teachers were well equipped to teach writing; however, certain situations or attitudes of students towards writing seemed problematic to them. Their participation in the action-research appeared to them as a good opportunity to initiate a reflection on their practices.

Based on dialogue and joint problem-solving, support took the form of a spiral process. A discussion on the current practices started from the questions asked by teachers—for example, how to enrich the students' vocabulary? How to better stimulate their imagination when writing a text?—and gave rise to a search for solutions based on current teaching-of-writing knowledge taking into account the teaching context and tools available in the school. Between meetings, the teachers proceeded in their respective classrooms to adjustments of their usual teaching-of-writing practices, even experimented new ones. All agreed that they would document their teaching of writing activities in a logbook. Thus, at the next meeting with the researcher, teachers gave an account of the writing activities done with students based, among others, on their logbook, describing through their interactions the positive aspects of the experiments as well as their limits. Then began a search-for-new-solution process aimed at deepening the same problematic issue enriched from the recent experiments, to formulate a new problematic from the teachers' concerns or comments. The establishment of this particular research context fostered the advent of changes in teachers' teaching-of-writing practices.

CHANGES IN TEACHING-OF-WRITING PRACTICES

Among the changes made by teachers throughout the action-research process, the most significant relates to the frequency and variety of student writing activities proposed. While teachers were accustomed to perform four or five large writing projects in a school year, they seized the opportunity to experience a different approach: have pupils write more often by asking them shorter texts, in various genres. Thus, during the 2013–2014 school year, in the fifth-grade class, pupils participated in 22 writing activities within six text genres; in the sixth grade class, 16 activities within four genres were performed. The teachers rapidly observed that students appreciated this way of working that is to produce short texts in various genres more frequently. They were less reluctant to this approach than towards the previous

CHART 1 : Writing activities produced in the fifth-grade class of elementary

TEXTUAL GENRES	TITLES OF WRITING ACTIVITIES
Fictional narrative (8*)	La rivière aux Castors, L'Halloween, Le récit, Jour de tempête, Les étoiles du match, La reine et le garde (La fourmi), Dans la mine, Without title
Personal story (6)	Mes vacances d'été, Mon congé culturel (automne), Mon congé des fêtes, Ma semaine de relâche, Mon congé de Pâques, Mon congé culturel (printemps)
Letter (3)	Saint-Nicolas (1 letter to Santa Claus), Correspondence with Swiss students (2 letters per student)
Advertising message (1)	Advertising for Sochi Olympics
Documentary (3)	Spring, Bustards, The Barn Owl
Poster (1)	Bustards

*** Number of texts of this genre produced**

where teachers proposed their long-term projects. During the 2014–2015 school year, the school management implemented a reorganization of teaching duties in the third cycle. This led the fifth-grade class and sixth-grade class homeroom teachers involved in the research to teach, for one, French for all students and for the other, to teach mathematics. This has allowed the fifth-grade teacher to continue exercising writing skills with students she had had in her class in 2013–2014 during the year of action-research experimentation.

The following table shows the kinds of texts, their number and titles of writing activities performed by students of the fifth-grade class during the 2013–2014 year. Note that the teacher, who had observed a clear difference in the students' involvement according to their interest in a subject, chose the themes that she knew would reach youths of her community's curiosity, for instance: seasons, forest, bustards, and important common holidays for these pupils, like Christmas or Halloween.

It is interesting to note that during the 2014–2015 school year, although the teacher was not systematically accompanied by the researcher specialized in writing didactics, she continued to teach writing using the same approach as the previous year, in other words by having students write in various genres frequently. During that year, the pupils produced 20 texts in eight different genres (fictional account, personal narrative, biography, abstract, poem, letter of opinion, documentary article, recipes). The teacher enjoyed following the same students for a second year and was able to observe how her new teaching-of-writing practices produced results: first, she actually succeeded in making writing rhyme with pleasure, as much for herself as for the students; then, she realized that with the training, the pupils set about their work more easily, were less hesitant before the blank page and produced even longer texts: "[The students] felt inspired. I had never seen that. So, I too had fun with it, and that was just for pleasure. You see, there were some who were proud. Some wrote: 'It was my most creative work!' (Excerpt from the final interview with the teacher).

To document the impact of this writing training, we compared the lengths of the texts of two students monitored by the teacher for two consecutive years. For the purposes of this comparison, she selected two students she considered respectively average (Student A) and high level (Student B) from their results in French during the school year. The comparison between the students was to highlight the remarkable progress of Student A, whom in less than two years, has caught up with Student B in terms of average of written words per text. In fact, she went from a 130-word production in average per text in fifth grade to a 180-word production in average per text in sixth grade, an increase of 40%. Furthermore, while in the fifth grade, Student A's longest text had 210 words; in sixth grade, her

CHART 2 : Comparing the length and number of the writings of two students during two years

	Student A (average)		Student B (high level)	
	2013-2014	2014-2015	2013-2014	2014-2015
	5th grade	6th grade	5th grade	6th grade
Number of texts produced	21/22	19/20	21/22	18/20
Word average (per text)	130	**180**	169	**180**
Longest text	210	470	309	456
Number of texts of over 200 words	2	5	7	6

longest text reached 470 words and she produced five texts of more than 200 words that year, compared to only two the previous year. Note that, for the most part, the teacher did not provide instruction on the maximum length of the texts, giving students freedom in this regard.

Although we are comparing two pupils only, we establish a possible link between the teacher's new teaching-of-writing practices and improvement in writing of student A. Note that, in the action-research context, we have not observed and analyzed systematically student progress in terms of performance in spelling, grammar and syntax, because it was not a target of the research. It is interesting to note that the count of lexical or grammatical spelling errors in two texts of similar genres produced by Student A one year apart—the stories about spring break 2013 and 2014—reveal a marked improvement since the number of errors made by the pupil dropped by 50%.

FACTORS EXPLAINING THE SUCCESS OF THE SUPPORT PROCESS

The system proved profitable for teachers and students as for researchers. Three factors seem decisive in the success of the support established between teachers and the research team. The first relates to the teachers' commitment at the beginning of the action-research; they were available to participate in activities offered by the researchers. They demonstrated an open mind by agreeing to question their usual teaching-of-writing practices and experiment with new ones.

The fact that pupils responded quickly and well to these new practices is a second success factor because their positive attitude stimulated and encouraged teachers who, in turn, invested further in the research process. Finally, the research team was supported by two collaborators from the school.

The first was an Elder from the community who had a long career in teaching. The second was an education consultant, who played a decisive role: firstly, by facilitating contacts between the researchers, the school management, and teachers; secondly, ensuring that the research team never lost sight of the reality of the Aboriginal educational context. This article provides us with an opportunity to reiterate our gratitude to them.

NOTES

[1] Research: *Exploration de nouvelles pratiques d'enseignement pour favoriser le développement de la compétence à écrire d'élèves anicinapek et innus du primaire*, financée par le FRQSC (2012-2015)

[2] The reader should refer to our article in Volume 1 of the *Journal of Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples* for more information about the methodology.

[3] Our study included six teachers, three educational consultants, and five researchers. The results presented here relate only to the accompaniment done in the community of Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

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REPORT ON SCHOOL PERSEVERANCE

Thank you !

The School Perseverance Scholarships were created to recognize efforts, enthusiasm, perseverance and involvement of First Peoples students.

In this first year, we have received numerous applications from youths whose paths are all more than inspiring. We are proud to be able to witness the perseverance and involvement of these students, and to see the support afforded by the different actors of the education community surrounding them, teachers and professionals, as well as parents.

We want to acknowledge and support these young First Peoples who continue to progress and evolve despite the hardships, and we wish to emphasize their exemplary tenacity.

To all of you, thank you for your great participation! Please know that we are behind you and we encourage you to continue on the path of perseverance.

Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite's team
and members of scientific committee

MODEL

Lucasi Iyaituk, , Inuit Nation, Iguarsivik School
"Lucasi wants to help his community, the younger ones and peers … and that's what makes him so unique. He is a positive role model for other students in the school. He is an extremely inspiring young man!"
Audrey Morin, Coordinator for Fusion Jeunesse

Julia Chachai, Atikamekw Nation, Nikanik School
"These barriers demonstrate my school perseverance and determination. I learned to be stronger in school and continue till the end. That makes me a role model for younger students in my school, that's what pushed me to go further."

Cindy Petiquay Richer, Atikamekw Nation, *centre de formation générale des adultes des Rives-du-Saguenay*
"I want to be a role model for my children. I want to show my determination and that one should never give up. Every day I try to get better and to challenge myself. I'm close to getting my high school diploma and I have the motivation to keep going till the end."

Rebecca Tukalak, Inuit Nation, Iguarsivik School
"Rebecca asks for help, verbalizes her difficulties, comes to school, and is committed within its environment. She certainly is an inspiration. Her maturity, her, sensitivity and her sense of responsibility make Rebecca a crucial part of the school."

Audrey Morin, Coordinator
for Fusion Jeunesse

Liliane Fournier, Inuit Nation, Iguarsivik School
"Liliane is a force of nature. When facing challenges, she gets into a solution mode and moves into action. Liliane is a positive role model at all times, with a bright future!"
Audrey Morin, Coordinator
for Fusion Jeunesse

AUDREY MORIN
Coordinator
for Fusion Jeunesse

LUCASI IYAITUK
Inuit Nation
Iguarsivik School

Karen Pien, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"I would say that what motivated me most is that I will be a role model for my little sisters. Today I look how far I've come and I feel proud, proud of myself. Knowing that my family supports me gives me even more courage to move forward and finish high school!"

Kayla Poucachiche, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"It is my self-pride and desire to make it that helps a lot. My greatest wish is to see my community to increase its graduation rate, so I will contribute hoping to become a model for future generations, and I will work hard for it. We are all capable."

Allisson Cheezo, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"I am very motivated to finish high school. I'd like to be a model for those behind me; I would like to show them that anything is possible. Even when there are difficulties, it is possible to go for what we want to be in the future and to have a good life."

Romana Poucachiche, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"For me, school was never easy. I want to get a school diploma to be a model for my little sister, but the most important reason is that I want to get it from the school where my grandmother was director."

Norman Junior Papatie, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"I realized that despite the ups and downs, I have to move forward. We cannot stand still, it leads nowhere. I want to be an idol for the youth in my community; I also want to show them the outside world."

RESILIENCE

Daphné Rock, Innu Nation,
Centre d'éducation des Adultes Chemin du Roy
"Everything was destroyed around me, nothing tempted me. Two years after [my diagnosis of pancreatic cancer], I decided to pull myself together and return to school."

Michel Byron, Innu Nation,
Manikanetish School
"Very few people were aware of my condition (epilepsy). I had to open up to my friends and my teachers to explain my absences. The support I have received moved me. I was able to catch up and it allowed me to strengthen bonds of friendship."

Alain Wabanonik,
Algonquin Nation,
Amik-Wiche School
"When I face difficulties, I continue to move forward and I do not intend to give up so easily. I manage with the support of my family, my friends, and my teachers."

KEANNA GOODLEAF
Mohawk Nation
Howard S. Billings School

PATRICIA DANN
Teacher and
Coordinator (IB)

Katherine Ottawa-Néquado,
Atikamekw Nation, Chavigny School
"For sure my motivation had decreased significantly, but the feeling of wanting to succeed was still present. So, I continued to make efforts. Even today, I see that perseverance is worth the while. I have improved a lot and I'm proud."

Keanna Goodleaf, Mohawk Nation,
Howard S. Billings School
"However, I still accomplished my goal all these years without knowing I had this problem [reading comprehension disability] by working hard and going to every tutorial session offered."

Daphnée Petiquay-Wabamoose, Atikamekw Nation,
école forestière de La Tuque
"I give my all until the end, without letting go. Despite the difficulties, I always knew how to overcome them and stay motivated. No matter what happens, I understood that we should let go. It takes sustained effort and do what it takes to get ahead in life. Perseverance is worth it."

WILL

Jérémy Gill Verreault, Innu Nation, Kassinu Mamu School
"I decided to get myself together. I stopped playing video games to focus on my time in school and sports, which was very beneficial. I stand out in the cinema by my imagination, while being able to stay serious when necessary."

Maïna Vassillou-Allard, Innu Nation, *polyvalente de l'Érablière*
"I really wanted to success in this area; therefore during several afternoons at school, I took remedial classes and I had a private tutor on weekends."

William Branconnier, Innu Nation, Kassinu Mamu School
"Today, I'm proud of myself, I'm graduating and I am aware that many challenges await me in college, but I'm confident, persevering, and above all, I know I can ask for help if needed. I have come a long way since the first secondary year. I have come a long way since the first year in high school."

Andrew Manisishish, Innu Nation, Teueikan School
"My mother is my inspiration. She always encouraged me to finish high school, although I was not motivated. She would always say to me: 'You'll be proud of yourself after! "My motivation made me do lots of nice things."

JÉRÔME LACHANCE
Teacher of mathematics and sciences

WILLIAM BRANCONNIER
Innu Nation
Kassinu Mamu School

Mélodie Bernard, Mohawk Nation, *école Liberté-Jeunesse*
"I work hard and educators help me to put resources in place to help me to persevere, to motivate me and calm me down when I get angry."

Marie-Soleil Mapachee, Algonquin Nation, *polyvalente la Forêt*
"During examination sessions, I motivate myself with my friends and I try to take it one day at a time."

Brian Audla-Tooktoo, Cree Nation, Golden Valley School
"I'm determined. I first do any work by myself. If I face a problem, I ask a peer and if he doesn't know either, I ask a teacher for help."

Vicky Penosway, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"I often tell myself that it is not the time to fail when I'm so close to the goal. I believe I am able to succeed because my motivation is there."

DREAMS AND OBJECTIVES

Alyssa Jérôme, Innu Nation, Manikoutai School
"I know what can happen to me if I drop out of school and it gives me good reason to stay in school and achieve my goals and dreams."

Damiana Mestokosho-Napess, Innu Nation, Teueikan School
"My motivation was to prove to myself that I could succeed and, above all, finish high school. This is a goal that I gave myself. My family was there to encourage me in times when I wanted to drop everything."

Coralie Robertson, Innu Nation, *cité étudiante de Roberval*
"I am a person determined to get my degree to be able to realize my dreams. I tell myself that if I want them to come true, I have to put the necessary efforts in achieve them and that's what motivates me to persevere."

Daren Germain, Innu Nation, Kassinu Mamu School
"I participate in territory outings to learn about the culture and practise the culture of my ancestors."

JULIA CHACHAI
Attikamekw Nation
Nikanik School

Gabrielle Beauchamp, Mohawk Nation, *école secondaire d'Oka*
"What motivates me the most is my future laboratory technician job. For this work, I give my 110% to school, what I did not do before because I did not have this magnificent project."

CAMILLE ROBIDOUX-DAIGNEAULT
Teacher of French

Benoît Beauchamp, Mohawk Nation, *école secondaire d'Oka*
"I am proud of the efforts that I have made. My motivation started when I found what I wanted to do later. This allowed me to believe in myself and to have better results."

Mélina-Jane Anichinapéo, Algonquin Nation, *polyvalente le Carrefour*
"I am proud of the efforts that I have made. My motivation started when I found out what I wanted to do later. This allowed me to believe in myself and to have better results."

Kosis Petiquay-Quoquochi, Atikamekw Nation, *école forestière de La Tuque*
"I am not discouraged; I want to achieve my goal, so I move forward."

Dominique Papatie, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"I am now in Secondary 4 and I still don't want to quit school. I want a good future for myself, I won't let go. My motivation comes to mind when thinking about school."

Nikki Wabanonik Pénosway, Algonquin Nation, Amik-Wiche School
"Yes, at times I did have the urge to quit everything, but I often find solutions. There are many reasons why I am still sitting at a desk, it is because I have dreams and goals in life that I am pursuing and I think that's what motivates me the most!"

INVOLVEMENT

Sabrina Aylestock,
Innu Nation, Manikoutai School
"My academic success rhymes with the word commitment. I stand out at meetings, express my ideas freely, and do show determination and leadership. This is my last year in high school, you have to enjoy it!"

Shanon Germain, Innu Nation,
polyvalente des Quatre-Vents
"My motivation was evident when I decided to enroll in a program not knowing who was going to this school, and being the only Aboriginal in my cohort. I found it important to be part of a committee, because it allows me to be behind the scenes, to be aware and participate in many activities."

Noah Kilupa Eliyassialuk,
Inuit Nation, Iguarsivik School
"Noah made a strong comeback in school by demonstrating his constant desire to make a difference in the community. His involvement is growing and he wants more and more committed, which is extremely inspiring!"
Audrey Morin,
Coordinator
for Fusion Jeunesse

KAREN PIEN
Algonquin Nation
Amik-Wiche School

HÉLÈNE CARON
Teacher

Debbie Mapachee,
Algonquin Nation,
polyvalente Ia Forêt
"I'm in my final year of high school. This was an important and remarkable step for me. I am motivated more than ever to continue my studies. I stand out by my leadership and my involvement."

Britney Commonda, Algonquin Nation,
D'Arcy McGee High School
"I am sure that she will play an important role in her community in the near future. She is not a quitter and she is very determined and motivated to succeed academically. Britney is very involved in creating awareness of indigenous issues at school and in her community."
Jennifer Piercey, Aboriginal Success Coordinator

June Moar, Atikamekw Nation,
Institut secondaire Keranna
"This student stands out, among others, by his openness and intellectual curiosity. All other teachers also testify to his involvement, autonomy, and respect for other students." Mélissa Paré, Professor in social sciences at *Institut secondaire Keranna*

LIST OF WINNERS AND PARTICIPANTS

PATH TO PERSEVERANCE
Nelly-Kate Courtois

LIST OF THE 6 WINNERS (ALPHABETICAL ORDER, BY FIRST NAME) AND OF THE 7 FINALISTS FOR THE SCHOOL PERSEVERANCE FOR FIRST PEOPLES SCHOLARSHIPS

JULIA CHACHAI (ATIKAMEKW NATION)
FINALISTS: CINDY PETIQUAY RICHER AND ANNIE MIKIS DUBÉ DUBORD

KAREN PIEN (ALGONQUIN NATION)
FINALISTS: CAMERON RANKIN AND GREGORY WAWATIE

KAYLA OTTER-MOWATT (CREE NATION)

KEANNA GOODLEAF (MOHAWK NATION)
FINALIST GABRIELLE BEAUCHAMP

LUCASI IYAITUK (INUIT NATION)
FINALIST LILIANE FOURNIER

WILLIAM BRANCONNIER (INNU NATION)
FINALIST CORALIE ROBERTSON

LIST OF THE 46 PARTICIPANTS (ALPHABETICAL ORDER, BY FIRST NAME) SCHOOL PERSEVERANCE FOR FIRST PEOPLES SCHOLARSHIPS

Alain Wabanonik (Algonquin Nation)
Allison Cheezo (Algonquin Nation)
Alyssa Jérôme (Innu Nation)
Andrew Manisishish (Innu Nation)
Annie Mikis Dubé-Dubord (Atikamekw Nation)
Benoit Beauchamp (Mohawk Nation)
Brian Audla-Tooktoo (Cree Nation)
Britney Commonda (Algonquin Nation)
Byron Michel (Innu Nation)
Cameron Rankin (Algonquin Nation)
Cindy Petiquay Richer (Atikamekw Nation)
Coralie Robertson (Innu Nation)
Damiana Mestokosho-Napess (Innu Nation)
Daphné Rock (Innu Nation)
Daphnée Petiquay-Wabamoose (Atikamekw Nation)
Daren Germain (Innu Nation)
Debbie Mapachee (Algonquin Nation)
Dominique Papatie (Algonquin Nation)
Gabrielle Beauchamp (Mohawk Nation)
Gregory Wawatie (Algonquin Nation)
Jean-Pierre Jonally-Rhanda (Atikamekw Nation)
Jérémy Gill Verreault (Innu Nation)
Julia Chachai (Atikamekw Nation)
June Moar (Atikamekw Nation)
Karen Pien (Algonquin Nation)
Katherine Ottawa-Néquado (Atikamekw Nation)
Kayla Otter-Mowatt (Cree Nation)
Kayla Poucachiche (Algonquin Nation)
Keanna Goodleaf (Mohawk Nation)
Kosis Petiquay-Quoquochi (Atikamekw Nation)
Liliane Fournier (Inuit Nation)
Lucasi Iyaituk (Inuit Nation)
Maïna Vassiliou-Allard (Innu Nation)
Marie-Soleil Mapachee (Algonquin Nation)
Mélina-Jane Anichinapéo (Algonquin Nation)
Mélodie Bernard (Mohawk Nation)
Nikki Wabanonik Pénosway (Algonquin Nation)
Noah Kilupa Eliyassialuk (Inuit Nation)
Norman Junior Papatie (Algonquin Nation)
Rebecca Tukalak (Inuit Nation)
Romana Poucachiche (Algonquin Nation)
Sabrina Aylestock (Innu Nation)
Shanon Germain (Innu Nation)
Shawerim Coocoo Weizineau (Atikamekw Nation)
Vicky Penosway (Algonquin Nation)
William Branconnier (Innu Nation)

PART 3

HEALTH AND SERVICES

INTERVIEW

Patricia-Anne Blanchet
Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite, UQAC

THE BENEFITS OF THE *ÉCOLE EN SANTÉ* APPROACH OF LAC-SIMON ON EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND STUDENT RETENTION

In the context of this report, we have had the privilege to speak with the instigators of an educational project implemented for over ten years in Lac-Simon's Amik-Wiche High School. Born from the meeting between the school and the community, the École en santé program shines both from the socio-educational and the scientific perspective by the recognized expertise of stakeholders involved, by its transferable model and, above all, by its benefits on students. In the form of an interview, this article is the testimony of two major actors in the implementation of this approach, M. Jasmin Cossette, Educational Success Coordinator, and Alexandre Brunet Brault, Teacher of Social Studies and Member of École en santé committee at Amik-Wiche High School. Background information and a presentation of the main goals of the project are given; then, a "story of practice" from the interveners consulted will follow. Finally, the conclusion provides a glimpse of the perspectives linked to the educational approach implemented in Amik-Wiche high school, in partnership with the community of Lac-Simon.

To begin, can you tell us about the reasons behind this project? Who were the people involved initially?

10 years ago, I was [Jasmin Cossette] was coordinator of complementary educational services and of the Guidance Approach. During a provincial meeting, I discovered the École en santé approach and I immediately saw the applicability of such an approach within our educational community. From there, the teacher of physical education and health as well as two other teachers concerned by overall health were solicited, which, with myself, formed the first École en santé committee of our school.

At that time, what were the problems in your social and educational environment?

In our school, we had already observed a need for action, and this in the interest of the students, for their physical and mental health. Indeed, for over

The École en santé approach's prime objectives are prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Indeed, we believe that we should not wait until problems arise to act; we need to work upstream and long term to achieve sustainable results. Inserted in a three-year strategic planning, an annual success plan is developed by the École en santé Committee, in consultation with the school team and community. This strategy encourages reflective practices and allows yearly adjustments overcoming the weaknesses identified and aligned with problems encountered.

It is a collective project uniting everyone in the common goal to support young people to develop life skills and expertise aimed at their overall health.

ten years, we noticed passivity amongst young people, few physical activities were offered. The majority of them also had poor nutrition. These two observations have been our thinking prompts. According to the logic, we believe that if we work with young people in a right state of mind and body; if we are able to project them into the future, to give meaning to their education, we have a winning formula to support perseverance and academic success in daily life.

Aware that the problem was beyond physical activity and food, we knew we had to first act to equip students with respect to them. Thus, in the second year, we benefited from the collaboration of the Community Health Centre through the expertise of a nutritionist who joined the Committee. Soon, the project resulted in a holistic approach to a multitude of student development factors.

By which means is the project entrenched in the teachers' practices and school life in general?

It should be mentioned that without claiming to reinvent the wheel, it proved essential for us to build on the positive actions already implemented in the school. We first identified and reinvested them in order to incorporate them into a more comprehensive approach which, in a vision of integration, seeks the collaboration of the whole school, in synergy with the community.

From the start, the approach was duly explained to the school team to favour adhesion of its staff, all of whom were and still are consulted cyclically for the development and evaluation of the program. To do this, several work projects are proposed and targeted continued development is offered. Thus all are familiar with the École en santé approach and its main axes.

It is a collective project uniting everyone in the common goal to support young people to develop life skills and expertise aimed at their overall health.

What characterized the educational École en santé approach?

The École en santé approach's prime objectives are prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles. Indeed, we believe that we should not wait until problems arise to act; we need to work upstream and long term to achieve sustainable results. Inserted in a three-year strategic planning, an annual success plan is developed by the École en santé Committee, in consultation with the school team and community. This strategy encourages reflective practices and allows yearly adjustments overcoming the weaknesses identified and aligned with problems encountered. Obviously, all actions taken aim at academic success and student retention. For instance, the promotion of habits such as restful sleep, daily exercise, and a balanced diet are effective practices present in our school.

What strategies promote the École en santé approach's sustainability?

To be able to re-evaluate the actions implemented in the Amik-Wiche School, to improve them and, above all, to align them with the students' needs, we operate under an annual audit plan. At the beginning of each school year, an action plan is presented to the school team to ensure that all concerned actors are informed of the changes and preferred orientations. These strategies allow an economy of energy, while we avoid breaking down the interventions.

Do you notice some changes in the students' lifestyles?

As the curriculum progresses, we notice a clear increase in student participation in activities offered as part of the École en santé program. Their involvement appears as progressive and influenced by a collective passion. We note in this regard that older students inspire younger ones to participate. Certainly, without them being necessarily familiar with the workings of the program, they recognize and appreciate the activities arising from the École en santé approach.

You mentioned upstream prevention, are measures established at the elementary to initiate education of healthy lifestyles?

Exactly, my work mandate [Jasmin Cossette] also extends to Amikobi Elementary School where the program is currently developed to educate and inform pupils beginning at the elementary. At this level of education, the approach focuses primarily on nutrition and physical activity. For the last four years, the Healthy Lifestyle Committee (VHS) has been established at the elementary in the Lac-Simon community. Our hypothesis is that if students are already equipped at the elementary, they will be more encouraged to participate in activities proposed as part of the École en santé approach when enter the secondary school. We therefore expect a positive change in the coming years.

What benefits have been observed since the introduction of École en santé program at Amik-Wiche high school?

The consequences of our actions are tangible within the school. However, when students complete their courses, it appears that they yet transfer very little their knowledge. Nonetheless, although the results in this regard are still insufficient, we are assured that when they leave high school, students are duly informed.

We can consider that the coming years will allow an improvement and prevention at a young age is our path to success. Yet, environmental influence remains very strong. After the youth transition to secondary school, we lose sight of them and no longer have control over them. At the very least, we anticipate long-term exponential advances. Indeed, these students will become parents and in turn will transmit these healthy habits in their children. Do not expect any change in the short term, because it is impossible. We believe in a better future. The École en santé program is a long-term project whose benefits will last for a long time.

What are the key factors of the École en santé approach implemented in your school?

The current École en santé program in our school is preventive and promotional priority referring to six key factors operationalized through four levels of action. This typology stemmed from observations in the educational environment as well as the consultation of official documents (see references), on which we are building theoretically. Through key factors addressed and the designated interveners, some autochthonous traditions are also visited to record the activities within the cultural characteristics of students in our community.

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The identified six key factors are self-esteem, social skills, living habits (diet, physical activity, sleep, etc.), safe and healthy behaviours, favourable environments, and prevention services. In a search for balance, the six key factors are invested in four levels of action: the student, the school, the family, and the community. The objective is primarily to prevent and educate students in a positive way, not to intervene when the problem is already there.

In short, in our annual success plan, which is inserted into a three-year strategic planning, every prevention or promotion procedure identifies one or more key factors affecting one or more levels of action.

To ensure balance, we operate with a table showing, for each act, the factors and target levels. Thus, beyond the student and the school, some activities are primarily addressed to the family and the community. We always work on what is tangible.

Are these activities proposed within the courses or are they rather extracurricular?

We increasingly tend to integrate the École en santé approach within classes, through learning and evaluation situations (LES). We ask for active participation and collaboration from teachers in all disciplines. To do this, we suggest themes or aspects to work according to target directions that they can incorporate into their teaching content. We also invite them to find or even develop educational materials and SAEs about discussed key factors. Numerous original teaching materials have been developed. Through this, we have what we call specific "mass activities" bringing the whole school together: for example, running or athletic activities within the community are offered to all students. These activities are unifying and promote a healthier lifestyle. The effects of the École en santé program therefore thrive inside and outside the classroom. Extracurricular activities are also available outside of school hours.

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Following the annual review of our success plan, we currently tend to offer something other than sports to meet the needs of students. Indeed, we notice now that boys are less involved than girls. We are eagerly seeking to develop activities which do not necessarily involve physical effort to mobilize the greatest possible number of boys: for example, culture, science or art- related activities are under development to expand our spectrum of actions.

Within the École en santé program, what means were set up to support the academic success and perseverance of the students?

In ten years, the number of hours of physical activity per week available to students increased from 0 to 20 hours. This gives a good example of the efforts made to catch young people's interest. Not being able to provide empirical data on dropouts, we know that inside as outside of school, a great number of actions are put in place to motivate young people and encourage them to complete their secondary-level education. To do this, we offer targeted activities based on the students' interests to create cohesion, a sense of belonging in small groups: for example, the Amik-Wiche en forme project provides indoor training sessions for them on weekdays after school.

We anticipate long-term exponential advances.

In 2008, we surveyed the students in relation to their socio-educational environment. The results showed that they did not nurture their sense of belonging toward the school and they were demotivated. These findings allowed us to offer, along with students, practical ways to remedy the situation. In the 2012 re-evaluation, we noticed an improvement in student responses who felt more involved in their school. The choice of actions depends on their needs and interests. To do this, key actors are always consulted.

To conclude, would you tell us about the transferability and future prospects of the École en santé approach?

We had the initiative to inform the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), which groups 22 communities, of the educational advances made in our

school. We know that this approach has a positive impact on our students and we are confident that its export would be beneficial to other communities. In this sense, we have already presented the project elsewhere. We are also willing to support them in the implementation of the approach, hence the development of a transferable model. Finally, we continue to question our practices in order to refine our approach.

Thank you very much, gentlemen, for your eloquent testimonies. The rigour and passion with which the École en santé approach is implemented in Lac-Simon's Amik-Wiche High School comes through strongly in what you say. We also feel the conviviality, the caring values, and openness that are the hallmark of your school and your community. Above all, your desire to be attentive to students in the real concern to support their retention and to help them achieve educational success is well understood, which is very much to your credit.

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José-Tomás Arriola
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INTEGRATION OF PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES TO EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AS RETENTION TOOL FOR FIRST NATIONS: THE PRACTICE IN KIUNA INSTITUTE

CONTEXT

Inaugurated in 2011 and located in the Abenaki community of Odanak, the Kiuna Institute is a new college created by First Nations. Although it is intended for Aboriginal learners, it is open to all. The Aboriginal approach is favoured in all its areas of intervention. Recognized by the MÉESR, the college is under the responsibility of the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), working closely with Dawson College and the Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

The Kiuna Institute has several objectives including the following:

1) to provide quality education in an environment that showcases the culture and traditions of First Nations;

2) increase access to post-secondary education as well as success and rate of graduation among youth and adults who enroll;

3) make a step toward autonomy of First Nations educational institutions (FNEC 2010).

The Kiuna Institute offers quality college education that highlights Aboriginal culture and traditions in a bilingual home environment and completely adapted to its clientele. Its flagship Human Sciences–First Nations Stream program (300.B0) introduces students to different disciplines through culturally appropriate perspectives and contentS, preparing them adequately to undertake university studies.

In addition, the Kiuna Institute's educational project rests on three main directions:

1) to form leaders that will contribute to social and economic development of their community;

2) to enhance culture, identity and First Nations values;

3) to improve access, retention and success of Aboriginal students in the context of post-secondary education (FNEC 2010).

In 2015, nearly 70 Aboriginal students from several First Nations communities of Quebec attended the Kiuna Institute. Some of them were parents currently conciliating family and studies. These students usually arrive with the desire to acquire the necessary tools to build a better future and with great determination to succeed despite the pitfalls.

In 2015, nearly 70 Aboriginal students attended the Kiuna Institute.

The prevalence of psychosocial problems among First Nations people is well established (FNIGC, 2012), although more recent statistics are lacking. For years, field workers have attested to the presence of significant vulnerabilities in individuals of First Nations. The Kiuna Institute students are not immune to this reality. Many of them begin their college career with psychosocial challenges that, without specialized and appropriate support, would become a major obstacle to their academic and personal development.

To guide its students towards their academic success, the Kiuna Institute has developed a variety of student services, including psychosocial counselling service working closely with the academic support services. This article is an overview of the Kiuna Institute practice regarding the development of integrated psychosocial services as a lever to student retention.

We will concentrate on its specificity concerning integration of psychosocial counselling to educational dimension to promote perseverance among students.

It regularly happens that several different problematic issues affect one single student, such as: learning difficulties, absenteeism or presenteeism, anxiety symptoms, depression symptoms, interpersonal difficulties, domestic violence, substance dependence, suicide, isolation, etc. The diversity of these factors reflects the complexity of the challenges faced by being a First Nations student.

The development of the Kiuna Institute psychosocial counselling sector had to take account of this complex reality. In this sense, the need for a psychosocial service integrated to school considerations was rapidly established as was the importance of ensuring timely and accessible concerted interventions through the integration of psychosocial services to educational services.

PRACTICE NARRATIVE

Kiuna Institute's current psychosocial consultation service was developed three years ago. Hence, this recent service is in constant development to offer a professional framework adapted to students. Given the problematic situations that these students face, the need for an effective psychosocial intervention sector was felt early on.

The main objective is to facilitate the students' graduation rate by offering them the psychosocial support they need. To do this, all of the interventions related to the sector's services aim to simplify their availability to learning by addressing what hinders it. Indeed, when a student is concerned about personal issues, this availability drops dramatically. These matters monopolized cognitive and affective spaces needed to acquire new knowledge. In this sense, the psychosocial worker plays a crucial role in the retention of students who consult: the possibility of a follow-up, during which these concerns are welcomed and cared for, liberates cognitive and emotional spaces; these spaces can then be redirected to learning.

Thus, students who feel a need for it have the opportunity to consult a psychosocial worker, a doctoral student in Psychology authorized to offer psychotherapy with supervision. This support usually takes the form of a weekly monitoring, but may also be adjusted to needs identified. Most are tracked individually; others consult as a couple or parent-child dyad.

These flexible arrangements are consistent with the idea that any problematic situation distracting students from their school projects, regardless of its nature, can be worked out. As a matter of fact, reasons for consulting the service do not only concern purely academic problem situations, although they are usually part of the many motives for consultation. Most of the time, school issues are addressed as part of a more complex circumstance. They can be addressed together if necessary; but often, therapy implies, indirectly, an effect on school issues.

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The development of the Kiuna Institute psychosocial counselling sector had to take account of this complex reality. In this sense, the need for a psychosocial service integrated to school considerations was rapidly established as was the importance of ensuring timely and accessible concerted interventions through the integration of psychosocial services to educational services.

In this integration of services perspective, the intervener's task definition represented a central element; from this derive the many opportunities for the intervener to be in contact with all members of staff on the front line. The role of psychosocial workers becomes critical in the coordination and provision of psychosocial interventions. This role requires availability and versatility on the intervener's part. The objective of this pivotal role is to facilitate the reference to psychosocial counselling service and, thereby, encourage greater accessibility to it. Ultimately, this system ensures that any student in need will have the chance to be adequately assisted.

One of the Kiuna Institute features is its tight school supervision. Indeed, educational consultants are not only in frequent contact with students; they also monitor the evolution of the current session and the overall schooling, allowing to target students who might benefit from psychosocial support in addition to educational monitoring.

Therefore, this organization enables customized student monitoring with an integrated understanding of both academic and psychosocial challenges.

The intervener is thus the therapist who offers psychotherapy essentially, but also acts in different situations involving psychosocial problems. First, he or she is the first responder in case of psychosocial crises, crises for which he or she has developed protocols in collaboration with the associate director. These relate to all crises possibly happening within the college as in the college residences. Meanwhile, bridges have also been created with surrounding resources (e.g.: hospitals, CSSS, the Abenaki police services, community organizations), since psychosocial crises with a more or less severe disorganization degree may have an impact on the overall college operations.

Indeed, given the close links between students, a psychosocial event at the college, as a community, can affect numerous students simultaneously to different degrees. Thus, protocols provide established and clear procedures in a case of a crisis and being able to contain it and respond appropriately and rapidly.

Another component of a psychosocial worker's task involves the role of consultant for teachers who request it. When they are concerned about a student, they can consult the intervener for courses of action to take to manage the situation, or for easy reference. Finally, the intervener's task definition implies participating in regular educational intervention meetings.

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CONCLUSION

Through the collaborative approach of the Kiuna team, the supervision available to students gives very positive results. If the psychosocial sector's high attendance rate can testify to the magnitude of the challenges confronting them (50% of students

Monitored students' attendance is impressive, as is their evolution in therapy. In addition to their young age, which is a facilitating factor in the therapeutic development, the main feature of those who do consult is undoubtedly the fact that they have a study project that allows them to have a glimpse at a better future. This seems to stimulate them to invest in a therapeutic approach that combines personal development and psychological well-being to perseverance and academic success.

have already consulted the sector in 2014–2015), it also indicates the success of the sector's interventions. Of all those who consulted, none have left the college, although this option is real in most of the students who consult, particularly in the most difficult times.

It is important here to mention the personal resources that students have access to. Monitored students' attendance is impressive, as is their evolution in therapy. In addition to their young age, which is a facilitating factor in the therapeutic development, the main feature of those who do consult is undoubtedly the fact that they have a study project that allows them to have a glimpse at a better future. This seems to stimulate them to invest in a therapeutic approach that combines personal development and psychological well-being to perseverance and academic success.

Furthermore, the curriculum structure, as well as the whole of cultural activities offered at the college, provides them a fertile ground to work on identity development. Indeed, ownership of their First Nations identity in school and extracurricular contexts converges, for many consulting students, to an in-depth therapeutic work.

Finally, despite encouraging successes, challenges remain. The need to acquire more human resources remains acute. In this sense, the lack of adequate recurrent funding is the main obstacle to complete and customized services. In fact, justification of services to obtain funding must be done over again every year, despite the obvious needs. Each year, the sector is gaining visibility and, through word-of-mouth process, requests are increasing, which is a positive sign. Yet, it is currently impossible to meet all the requests (a waiting list has been created).

However, since this year, we benefit from the presence of a street worker, presence made possible through a partnership with a community organization. The street worker intervenes through modalities that the psychosocial consultation sector could not offer. This constitutes an important step in our ability to meet the demand and to propose an alternative solution to the students waiting for services.

Despite encouraging successes, challenges remain.

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CULTURAL SECURITY IN POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION: THE CASE OF THE KIUNA INSTITUTION

Can cultural adaptation of a curriculum and post-secondary services contribute to the anchoring of identity of First Nations students? If so, can this anchoring bolster post-secondary perseverance and academic success?

Research conducted as part of my Master's project[1] tends to show that the development of culturally appropriate educational spaces promotes retention and post-secondary achievement of First Nations students in Quebec. The thesis resulting therefrom examines two existing formulas: 1) hospitality and support services adapted within provincial post-secondary institutions; 2) customized post-secondary programs and services offered by an institution affiliated with and for First Nations. The analysis of the first formula was accomplished following a field research conducted between 2013 and 2015[2] from various specialized educational bodies[3]. The second formula, this article's main object of research, was examined through the testimonies of eight students or graduates and six members of the Kiuna Institution staff. Qualitative data from individual interviews and sharing circles met the quantitative results gathered through a written questionnaire, developed in collaboration with Université de Montreal's Jeunes autochtones du Projet SEUR team[4]. 25 of the 33 students of the Institute's Human Sciences, First Nation Stream program's French Cohort and nearly sixty adult Aboriginal students from the Huron-Wendat *Centre de développement de la formation et de la main-d'œuvre* (CDFM) or participants in the Project SEUR university studies familiarization visit participated (n=83). The purpose of this article is to draw a portrait of the impact of introducing *cultural security* at the heart of the curriculum and post-secondary services, based specifically on the Kiuna Institution model.

CONTEXTUALIZATION

What do we mean by cultural security in academia? In the late 1980s, a nurse and Maori educator from New Zealand, Irihapeti Ramsden, developed the concept in response to marginalization and discrimination experienced by the indigenous people in the non-indigenous health systems (Blanchet, Garneau & Pepin, 2012). While some criticize the concept's ambiguity and the interpretative nature, we define it here as the result of a potential offer of services and programs developed in respect and recognition of historical, cultural, socioeconomic, political, and epistemological determinants of target populations (Dufour, 2015). The establishment of a certain cultural security within post-secondary institutions not only requires the creation and implementation of culturally sensitive measures in the framework of concerted action; we must also consider the experience and response of students in order to evaluate its effectiveness (Colomb, 2012).

The vast majority (71%) of students who answered our survey shows considerable interest in post-secondary education (Dufour, 2015). This data echoes the ratio obtained by the Survey of First Nations Peoples Living On-Reserve (EKOS, 2006) which estimated, over 10 years ago, that 70% of First Nations communities' youth aspired to post-graduation. Yet, less than 19% of the Aboriginal population aged from 25 to 34 years-old in Quebec will get at least a col-

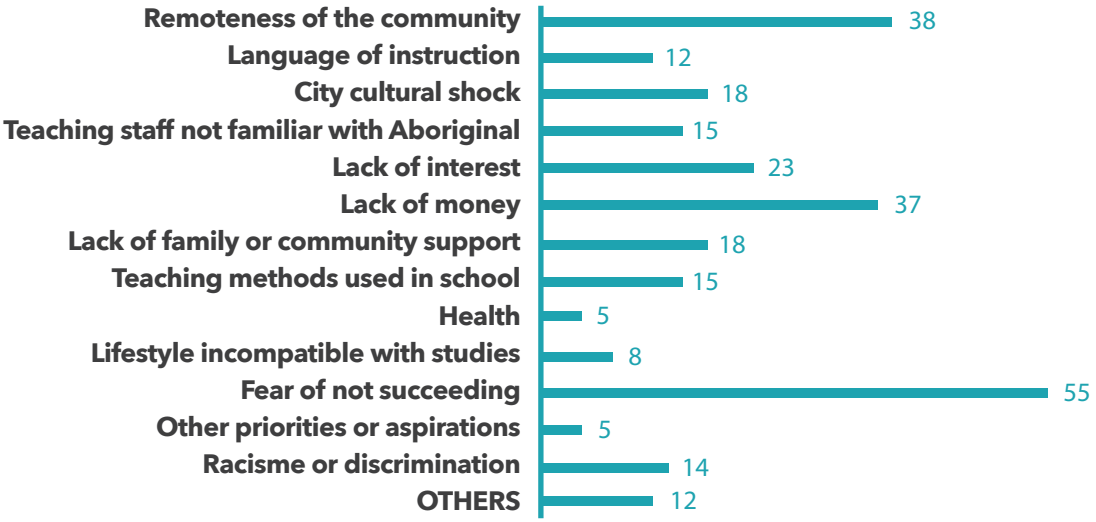
lege degree (Canada, 2008). Numerous obstacles to Aboriginal graduation are documented in the literature. However, the fear of not succeeding is the main obstacle mentioned by over half of respondents (see table below, data derived from Dufour, 2015)[5].

This finding comes as no surprise. Many participants stressed that post-secondary education, more specifically university studies, project an image of inaccessibility. Those from the Kiuna Institution, for their part, seem to have a confidence level twofold higher than that of their counterparts in terms of their academic and professional success. This analysis, which is not solely founded on quantitative basis, nevertheless appears reinforced by the testimonies collected. Thus, if we subtract the answers provided by the 25 Kiuna students, we find that the proportion of Aboriginal students who identified fear of failing as a potential obstacle to success reaches a comfortable majority of 68%. However, students surveyed selected components that can contribute to their post-secondary success, such as personal motivation, financial assistance, the idea of being part of the betterment of their community, etc. A certain number of them correspond to particular cultural security criteria within the post-secondary project. Participants generally aspire to a school environment that recognizes their special needs and schooling that takes greater account of the role and contributions of autochthonous peoples from yesterday to today. These results agree with those published by Joncas (2013) whereby a substantial proportion of persevering academics participating in his study at the *Université du Québec à Chicoutimi* (UQAC) were in favour of: 1) attending a post-secondary institution created by and for native people; 2) benefiting from more opportunities and networking spaces with other Aboriginal students of the university (2013, p. 153). In recent years, Hospitality and support services, as well as autochthonous curriculum or customized to the needs of communities, have been growing in demand in CEGEPs and Quebec universities. Now, the Kiuna Institution remains to this day the only Quebec post-secondary[6] institution designed by and for First Nations.

KIUNA INSTITUTION: "A SCHOOL MADE FOR US"[7]

Kiuna Institution presents curricula and teaching approaches adapted to the cultures and realities of First Nations. The bilingual Human Sciences-First Nation Stream program in which were registered, in 2014, 51 Atikamekw, Innu and Mohawk students, but also Huron-Wendats, Abenakis, Anicinabes, Crees, Maliseets and others, leads to a college diploma issued by the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur* (MEES). It fosters a secure attachment through the exploration of three key themes: identity, community, and society. Cultural security therefore irrigates all aspects of the post-secondary education project.

ANTICIPATED OBSTACLES (%)



By studying History, cultures, and policies characterizing the First Nations' socio-economic development, students are able to better contextualize the issues facing their families and communities, to then be invited to position themselves in relation to the latter. Through educational activities and outings, students also have access to heritage and Aboriginal cultural practices, of which some were deprived of because of the colonial context.

> *I was cut off from my culture all my life until recently […]. Motivation in school also stems from identity affirmation we found in Kiuna […], that's what allows dropouts like me to focus on our true values!* (Jaimee, Attikamek and Quebecer, 21)

Thus, by comings and goings between so-called traditional and contemporary practices, the Kiuna educational project endeavours to maintain its own transversal objective of cultural continuity ensuring the integration of sociocultural realities and experiences of student populations in school curricula and teaching methods. This objective is consistent with the indigenous Mastery spirit of autochthonous education which, in 1972, recommended that be instilled in Aboriginal peoples the values and "the knowledge necessary for self-pride and understanding of themselves and the world that surrounds them", in a context of cultural transmission, but also survival in modernity (IFAC, 1972, p. 1). The Institute's limited dimensions, which promotes a certain proximity in a given linguistic cohort and personalization of relations with administrative, support and teaching staff, helps strengthen cultural security within the school project. The community thus created, just as the Pan-Indian type identification, acts as an additional protective factor linking people with a sense of shared solidarity. In all 25 participants, this institutional anchoring is achieved through a strong interest in post-secondary education and more specifically for the current college tuition as well as a retention rate of over 86% (Kiuna College, 2014). Along the same lines, the fact that they have been proportionately more numerous than other participants to determine the importance of learning in their conception of education suggests that cultural relevance can lead to a better appreciation of the value of training (Dufour, 2015). Post-secondary education within a program that is culturally compatible with students is not perceived as a mere obstacle course against which one must exercise a great deal of resilience, but as an opportunity for personal and collective enrichment, even an identitarian adjustment, whose benefits may be conjugated in the present. Secure attachment to the culture and the community will act in turn as a launching ramp for various levels of individual and collective successes. We then anticipate that Kiuna Institution students and graduates can in turn guaranty the success of a new autochthonous leadership, both in communities in cities, as have done before them several students of the late Manitou College in La Macaza. Note that the answers to the written questionnaire of Human Sciences–First Nations program students reveal that they have great interest in professions requiring some leadership such as teachers (56%), lawyers or judges (40%), politicians, leaders or advisors (32%) (Dufour, 2015).

CONCLUSION

In the fall of 2015, the majority of graduates of Kiuna Institution First Nations program were registered in a provincial or national university. Some took a pause to return to their communities, while others progressed to university in the next academic term. Some students chose transitional courses in the hope of improving their academic record and be admitted to limited-enrolment programs, while others have turned to new universities and new post-secondary programs more suited to their priorities and individual interests. Overall, the surveyed graduates attest to have successfully integrated and acknowledge that their passage in Kiuna prepared them well for their university career, on both the academic and identity aspects:

> *I do not know what happened, but back in a large Quebec academic institution [University of Trois-Rivières] is very different today than in 2007 […]. It must be because well… Kiuna gave me back my pride: my pride in being Aboriginal. I have more faith in myself, in what I am.* (Annick, Attikamek, 28)

Finally, it should be noted that several participants have claimed to focus or even redirect their academic exploration based on the presence of Aboriginal student community or on the availability of culturally appropriate services. This data allows to particularly emphasize the importance of promoting and financing structures to ensure cultural security of Aboriginal students in all Quebec post-secondary institutions.

NOTES

[1] Over a hundred high school, college, and university Aboriginal students participated in the research. They are from the 10 First Nations of Quebec, in addition to Inuit, Ojibway and Saulteaux nations, and come from 26 Aboriginal communities.

[2] Part of this survey was conducted with Leah Lefevre-Radelli, Ph.D. candidate in Cotutelle with Université du Québec à Montréal and Université de Nantes. Some results will be integrated in the *Être étudiant, étudiante autochtone à l'UQAM : expériences, politiques et pratiques d'accueil et d'intégration à l'université*.

[3] These include the section *Jeunes autochtones du Projet SEUR* of l'Université de Montréal, Kiuna Institute, *the Centre de développement de la formation et de la main-d'œuvre* (CDFM) huron-wendat, the First Peoples House (FPH), and McGill University's l'Indigenous Student Alliance (ISA), Concordia University's Aboriginal Student Resource Center (ASRC), and John-Abbott's College's Aboriginal Resource Center (ARC).

[4] The SEUR Project (awareness on education, university and research) was established in 2001 to encourage retention among high school students by allowing them to explore different opportunities for study and careers (found in http://seur.qc.ca/).

[5] Only responses of students with some interest for post-secondary studies (n = 65) were considered for this question. For the purposes of this article, the data were converted to percentages and rounded to the closest unit.

[6] The Kiuna Institution is a collegiate institute affiliated with the Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Dawson College.

[7] Jimmy, Cree and Innu, 19 years old.

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PART 4

TOOLS AND INTERVENTION MODELS

INTERVIEW

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WEMOTACI: POSITIVE TRANSFER EXPERIENCE OF THE EDUCATIONAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP MODEL IN ABORIGINAL COMMUNITIES DEVELOPED IN LAC-SIMON

As part of this report, Ms. Céline Auclair, Executive Director of the First Peoples Innovation Center (FPIC), discussed with us the successful experience of academic entrepreneurship model developed in Amik-Wiche High School, in Lac-Simon. Winner of numerous awards, this project called Ateliers P+C=R (Persévérance + Compétence = Réussite–Perseverance + Skills = Success) emerges as a successful model which might be of benefit to many communities. Wemotaci's Nikanik High School is the first school to import this educational entrepreneurship model promoting school perseverance of Aboriginal students. This model was presented during the first Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples at Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC). In this interview, the original project outlines are first exposed; they then lead to the terms surrounding its transfer to Nikanik School and the results observed in the community of Wemotaci. An insight on the future prospects of the model concludes the interview.

Initially, how did the idea of transferring this educational model emerge?

To answer this question, we must analyze and understand the educational entrepreneurship project implemented in Amik-Wiche School in Lac-Simon; a project amply rewarded on local, provincial and national scenes. We must also acknowledge the genius of the P+C=R model initiators who combined efforts in school perseverance and practical needs of the community because it is primarily this feat that caught the CPIC's attention.

Educational entrepreneurship within Aboriginal communities evolves with them and responds tangible needs.

First, it is important to emphasize the difficulty in school perseverance among Aboriginal youth, for whom the Western system of education does not conform to the transmission modes of Aboriginal traditions: one teacher for 30 students, it does not reflect First Peoples' practices over the millennia. The educational model was in fact reversed: 30 teachers were available for one child; the whole community contributed to his learning, in everyday life with its evolving realities rather than a closed class with prescribed modules that often escape the reality of autochthonous lifestyles. Consequently, high school dropout rates increased among First Nations. The path that leads to the end of high school

is difficult, often interrupted and then resumed again. In the vast majority of cases, it is still precarious. Numerous are the educators and institutions that try new approaches to enable Aboriginal students to consider career paths allowing them to escape the cycle of poverty in which they often live.

In Amik-Wiche High School, located in the Anishinabeg community of Lac Simon, a model, "Ateliers P+C=R" is highly successful. The First Peoples Innovation Center has considered this approach.

On what theoretical support is based the educational entrepreneurship model?

PAmong several models developed in the field of educational science, one of the solutions to counter early school leaving is the educational entrepreneurship model, which is not unique to the Aboriginal context. It was developed long ago in pedagogy and has been effective in many school environments, and this, throughout the world. However, the difference with the educational entrepreneurship in Aboriginal communities is that the goals go beyond a small business project where one simulates a market and where one "artificializes" products and customers, for educational purposes.

In addition to offering a different educational path through which each discovers his powers, educational entrepreneurship within Aboriginal communities evolves with them and responds to real and tangible needs.

Can you describe for us the Ateliers P+C=R project in Lac-Simon?

Initially, in 2005–2006, the team hired in Amik-Wiche High School, led by teacher Patrick Binette, had the ingenious idea to start a small business in school, in order to counter early school leaving and promote student retention among fifth grade high-school students (Project: the three laws of success). From a simple canteen offering commercial snacks to students, the school business quickly evolved into a service catering most of the school, cultural, sports, political and community organizations. After this flamboyant success, the school management agreed to offer a similar project for students in special education. They established a carpentry workshop, then another in mechanics, allowing students-workers to offer many services to all community members, from manufacturing commercial products to repairing doors and windows, to tire changing or engine oil changing. In

this real market where the Native community has many unmet needs particularly due to its isolation, the students get contracts from the school, band council, members of the community and even from regional businesses. These students learn to multiply, to measure, to extrapolate, to write and to present, and do so through their business and for real clients. The report to school has become quite different. The program which initially targeted second-cycle secondary is now available to special education programs.

More than 57% of graduates of Amik-Wiche School started post-secondary studies.

What are the educational intentions surrounding the educational entrepreneurship model?

As a source of motivation for students, the program primarily aims to increase the graduation rate. Experiencing success also has the effect of increasing their self-esteem. Conducive project-based learning, this program also allows to combine the realities of school with those of work. Moreover, the educational entrepreneurship model opens a window on the avenues offered by post-secondary education, such as finance, management, cooking, carpentry, and mechanics. It thus enables the student to grow and to plan for the future.

What are the admission requirements for the program?

To be considered for this program, students must commit to the two rules of success in FPT:

1) Have less than 5% of absences and unmotivated delays during the school year;

2) Actively participate in all the financing activities of the Entrepreneurship Committee.

At the end of the school year, FPT students who met the two rules of success are entitled to travel abroad from the profits generated by the project. And it is the students themselves who choose the destination!

What positive effects have been seen in Lac-Simon as a result of the implementation of the educational entrepreneurship model?

The statistics are proving very encouraging in this regard. While barely five years ago, only 10% of students were pursuing post-secondary education in 2015, it is more than 57% of graduates of Amik-Wiche School who started post-secondary studies, driven by confidence they have developed through this experience. Motivation, commitment and desire to succeed of students are greatly stimulated through this project which has a global impact on school, family and community life.

How was the FPIC collaboration with Amik-Wiche School initiated?

With its media outreach and the many awards won, the Amik-Wiche educational entrepreneurship model attracted a lot of attention and other communities are interested in it. The First Nations Education Council (FNEC) even accompanied several representatives from various schools in the Lac-Simon community to meet the Program representatives. The committee quickly found itself overwhelmed by the demand and that is when we provided assistance.

A few years ago, the FPIC was participating in a conference in Quebec during which I was introduced to the model, which corresponded exactly to the role that our organization hopes to play in communities. Indeed, one of our mandates is to highlight successful models coming from different Aboriginal communities and to support their transfer to the communities interested. Given its strong conclusive results, the P+C=R project became very interesting to us. Pragmatic and contextualized, this approach holds, according to us, a real potential to propel school perseverance of Aboriginal youth which, as we know, remains below their actual potential. We contacted the Amik-Wiche School interveners to offer them our support and express our willingness to accompany them in propagation of

the model. At this pivotal moment, the requests for the model's transfer were beginning to be numerous, which had become demanding for the P+C=R team that go into communities to present the project and welcomed the group in its school. The FPIC then offered to support the P+C=R team by writing a guide and accompanying tools that enable school principals and teachers to understand the nature of the project and to plan its adaptation to their environment. Observation visits at Amik-Wiche School would then be more profitable; follow-up would then be less demanding for the P+C=R team.

Do you use educational tools or other to transfer the model?

Considering the high demand for the model and to facilitate its implementation, the position of FPIC was immediately not to get involved in piece-by-piece accompaniment. Instead, we explored with experts in transfer of knowledge, how we can build an accompanying guide and a toolkit making possible the development of a portability framework that would apply to each of the communities interested in the model.

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Thus, we work at the development of a knowledge transfer guide for educational entrepreneurship in Aboriginal communities. In producing this guide and application tools that will soon be made public, we also consult experts in Aboriginal education and academic entrepreneurship. Then, from a dense scientific material, we are popularizing the project to extract its essence, to make it accessible to stakeholders. The CTREQ (Centre de transfert pour la réussite éducative du Québec– Quebec Transfer Centre for Educational Success) is working with us to coordinate the scientific part; Diane Marie Campeau, an expert in Aboriginal education, ensures that the project complies with the spirit and scope of this pedagogy.

In respect of Aboriginal modes of acquisition and transfer of knowledge, the guide and its tools will be accompanied by visuals and video capsules describing all components of the P+C=R model. By way of integration and in a spirit of continuous improvement, we intend to conduct a follow-up of implementations of Amik-Wiche model within the various communities to document processes and integrate lessons learned. The Amik-Wiche model guide and implementation tools cover the commitment and involvement of the following actors: the school's teaching staff (the main courses involved are French, Mathematics, English and Entrepreneurship), the school administrators, the band council and its educational services, and the parents' committee. This guide will be facilitating in that it will give more autonomy to importing schools in the implementation of the model. Nevertheless, support remains in our opinion the key to the success of the model's import, as it allows you to truly ease the task of interveners who find themselves overloaded.

Did the will to implement the project come from Wemotaci's Nikanik School or was the idea proposed by the FPIC?

Over time, different communities have shown interest in this model. The first community to engage in educational entrepreneurship project is Nikanik High School, in Wemotaci. Note, however, that the transfer of knowledge does not correspond to copies of the original model. It is rather to be inspired by it and to take ownership of it. While writing the guide, we realized that ownership by another community is a key factor to success. In Wemotaci for example, acknowledging the paternity of the model of Lac-Simon, Nikanik School was able to take into account the particularities of its community to develop a new model, the Wemotaci model, which guarantees its uniqueness and, by extension, its success!

Which actors were initially involved in the export initiative of the model?

At Lac-Simon, the whole school team and several European institutions contribute to this unifying project. Among the leading actors, M. Patrick Binette, a high-school teacher, M. Dave Lefebvre, Director of Amik-Wiche School, were the resource persons to guide us in our efforts. At Nikanik school, the principal, Mr. Pascal Sasseville-Quoquochi, and the Deputy Director, Mr. Guy Bourassa, form the team that carries this initiative within the Wemotaci community. Apart from these, all school staff and several community members are also involved in this major project.

In this real market where the Native community has many unmet needs particularly due to its isolation, the students get contracts from the school, band council, members of the community and even from regional businesses. These students learn to multiply, to measure, to extrapolate, to write and to present, and do so through their business and for real clients. The report to school has become quite different. The program which initially targeted second-cycle secondary is now available to special education programs.

Who did the implementation and adaptation of the P+C=R model go in Wemotaci? Were the needs different from those of Lac-Simon

The reality is different, certainly, or rather the community has prioritized differently needs in Wemotaci. For this community, the landscaping proved to be a priority. The shared desire to beautify the environment has become one of the main orientations of the project which rallied everyone into action. Moreover, as this is a real market rooted in the needs of the community and that it is not artificial, students become true entrepreneurs and the fruit of their efforts is palpable and rewarding. The catering service and carpentry workshop are, with landscaping, the orientations of the Wemotaci model.

What were the main results of the first export experience of the model in another community?

One of the priorities is to recognize the important contribution of Amik-Wiche School of Lac-Simon, which was very successful with respect to increasing the graduation rate after implementation of the educational entrepreneurship project. This success is the backbone of school perseverance for our youth and motivation for the school team, which devotes considerable time to this approach. For the Wemotaci community, it is certain that, although still fragmented, the results are also positive. We note, among others, that to participate in such a concrete and significant project significantly increases the sense of responsibility and autonomy of the students involved. This has an impact on their sense of competence, their self-esteem and, consequently, their school perseverance. With the landscaping project, the environment literally flourished under the community's eyes who is very pleased to have taken part in this adventure and who wishes to continue to develop educational entrepreneurship in its image.

In conclusion, how do you see the future prospects of the model fostering school perseverance of Lac-Simon in Aboriginal communities?

Certainly, such an initiative requires the mobilization of many human and material resources which may bring their share of complications. The guide and the tools that are being developed by the FPIC and its collaborators, with the help of ambassadors of the educational entrepreneurship model in Aboriginal communities, aim to release Amik-Wiche School and to facilitate the implementation process in other Aboriginal schools. We are confident that the many benefits of this model outweigh the efforts that are sometimes imposed by the integration of a new pedagogical orientation.

With the successes achieved in Amik-Wiche School, we believe that schools elsewhere will have no trouble

getting support from their band council so that everyone can rally around a common goal: to increase and support the motivation of Aboriginal youth in school so they can plan and aspire to a better future.

Through Ms. Auclair's enthusiastic comments, it appears clear that many stakeholders knowingly working to develop a framework for the transferability of the educational entrepreneurship model in Aboriginal communities as a hallmark of simplicity and rigour. So many efforts deserve to be heard. To do this, we join our voice to that of FPIC to ask for the co-operation of public and private bodies whose contribution could make a difference for Aboriginal communities in Quebec who reach out to enhance, through such projects, perseverance and educational success of their youth.

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CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF A SCREENING INSTRUMENT TO DETECT DEVELOPMENTAL DELAYS IN ATIKAMEKW CHILDREN

Clinicians and researchers interested in screening for developmental delays among First Nations children face the lack of measuring instruments designed and validated for them. The use of measuring instruments not taking account of linguistic, cultural and social aspects characterizing a particular cultural group is an issue as to the validity of the results.

A study from Findlay and al., published in 2014, indicates the need to establish specific standards for children of Canadian First Nations rather than resorting to those developed for the Canadian children population in general. This study highlights the probability that the age of acquisition of certain developmental skills differs among First Nations children. Longitudinal studies and surveys of Canadian and Quebec children have excluded those of First Nations because of the lack of culturally appropriate instruments. What is known then about the development of these children? On a developmental aspect, what vulnerabilities do they have? With which measuring instruments can they be evaluated?

This article reports the translation and adaptation of *Ages, Stages Questionnaires-3* (Squires and Bricker, 2009) with children aged 48 and 54 months (4 years and 4 years and 6 months) living in an Atikamekw community. The first part provides a general definition on developmental delays and screening. A description of the tool used is then proposed. The second part outlines the linguistic and cultural aspects to consider in a cross-cultural adaptation process of a measuring instrument. Finally, we will expose the method used to achieve cross-cultural adaptation and key adjustments that were made to the initial versions.

DEFINITIONS AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL USED

Developmental delay and screening

Developmental delays are defined as a delay or slow acquisition of developmental skills and adaptive behaviours that appear within one or in many spheres of development. Development spheres concern communication (language), gross and fine motor skills, problem solving (cognitive development), and individual or social skills (autonomy and socio-emotional development). Delay are usually reversible

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and their causes are often related to a lack of stimulation or organic disease disrupting children's learning (Shevell, 2010).

Screening for developmental delays is achieved using an instrument designed for this particular purpose. This is a first step leading to early identification of children whose development is delayed or are at risk. The second step is to refer the children identified to professionals who will conduct further evaluation of their difficulties. The goal of screening is to identify vulnerable children as early as possible in their development. This early identification should lead to the establishment of an intervention fostering recovery or preventing the worsening of the problems (Pool Hourcade, 2011).

Ages, Stages Questionnaires-3 (ASQ-3)

A French version of *Ages, Stages Questionnaires, Third Edition* (Squires and Bricker, 2009) was used to perform the Atikamekw translation and adaptation. *ASQ-3* is a screening instrument for developmental delays for children aged 1 to 66 months (from 1 month to 5 years and 6 months). Various cultural groups advocate its use provided that the necessary changes are made. Moreover, the Child and Family Center Step by Step (2015) recommends it to First Nations communities in the wake of its 2007 experiment. *ASQ* is the most used instrument by Aboriginal communities of Western Canada. It was also recommended as part of a study by The Maternal and Child Health Program for First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (Stout and Jodoin, 2006). The instrument is intended for parents and practitioners working with early childhood.

Each questionnaire consists of 30 items that focus on the children's skills. The items are grouped into five areas. These areas or spheres of development are a) communication (language), b) gross motor skills, c) fine motor skills, d) problem solving (cognitive development), and e) individual and social skills (autonomy and socio-emotional development).

Linguistic and cultural aspects

The cross-cultural adaptation of measuring instruments is a complex process aiming to address language and cultural aspects distinguishing the two cultural groups given so that the adapted version of test is equivalent to the original version of the test. To achieve this equivalence, it is important to control, in the adaptation process, the items called "bias", which are sources of interference. Van de Vijver and Tanzer (1997) distinguish three types of bias: construct bias, method bias, and item bias (differential item functioning). The first type of bias refers to the phenomenon or concept studied. The concept under consideration must have the same meaning for both cultures. The second type of bias concerns methodological items pertaining to the test. These include differences between the samples and the degree of familiarity of cultural groups with the test content, apparatus or type of administration. The third type of bias is related to items (questions). For example, it can be introduced because of the poor translation quality or the lack of cultural match.

Peña (2007) suggests paying attention to four types of equivalence when it comes to conducting cross-cultural adaptation of instruments for measuring child development. These types of equivalence are of linguistic, cultural, functional, and metric orders. The linguistic equivalence focuses on the consistency of words, sentences, meaning and language level used between the source language and the target language (Hambleton, 2001). Cultural equivalence is defined in terms of understanding and interpreting similar elements or concepts in both languages and both cultures. Functional equivalence refers to the ability of the instrument to offer the same opportunity to observe and measure a skill, behaviour or concept in both versions of the test. Finally, the metric equivalence refers to the degree of difficulty of items which must be comparable in both versions.

Developmental delays are usually revesible.

THE CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION METHOD APPLIED

The method used for the purpose of this study was largely inspired by the one proposed by Vallerand (1989). This method involves seven steps of which the first three concern the translation and adaptation of the test.

Phase 1: Preparation of the Preliminary Version

The first step in cross-cultural adaptation was to translate and adapt the questionnaires from the source language (French) to the target language (Atikamekw). A committee composed of eleven people, consisting of ten educators from a childcare centre and the lead researcher, was organized to do the work. Guidelines were given to the committee. It was the adaptation of a guide developed by Hambleton and Zenisky (2011) which aims at supporting the adjustment process of tests. The elements contained in this guide focus on grammar and sentences, items' format, the equipment used and other aspects of culture. The second stage of Phase 1 was to perform reverse translation (or back translation) of questionnaires (from Atikamekw to French). The four people involved were members of the educational services staff in the community. Their work was individual.

Phase 2: Assessing the preliminary version and preparing the experimental version

This step was to review the translated versions (French-Atikamekw) and reverse translations (Atikamekw-French) in order to compare the translated items and assess divergences. This work was achieved to create the experimental version. This step was completed through a committee-oriented approach. This committee was composed of four members. An adaptation of Hambleton and Zenisky's guide (2011) cited earlier was also proposed to them.

Phase 3: Pre-testing the experimental version

This phase was to verify comprehension of the experimental version's items (questions). This audit was conducted among parents, educators, and children. In total, three parents, two teachers, and three children participated in the validation of the 48 months and 54 months experimental version questionnaires.

The main adaptations to the 48 months and 54 months (4 years and 4 years and 6 months) questionnaires

The questionnaires are bilingual (French-Atikamekw). The questions for the children are in Atikamekw. The guidelines for users (parents, teachers) are in French. Children have the opportunity to respond in both languages. Some guidelines of the French version were revised because of second language context. Some items were withdrawn for their lack of cultural match. This is the case of an item in the "individual and social skills" domain in the 48-month questionnaire. The original item is to verify the child's ability to answer a number of questions concerning his first and last name, age, gender, the name of the village where he lives and his telephone number. Issues related to the family name and the name of the village were removed, since it is not common for children of this age to know such information; the question about the phone number was rejected, since many households do not have access to telephone service. Another adaptation is the addition of apparatus to certain items in the Atikamekw versions. For example, for one of the items in the "Communication" area of 48 and 54-month questionnaires, photos are used to verify the use of plural words. One item in the "Troubleshooting" domain was modified to better match the Atikamekw educational context. Thus, it is expected that children count to ten instead of fifteen. Another adaptation is made on the preparation of a package containing the necessary administration apparatus for the parents. The designers of the test do not offer such a package.

CONCLUSION

This article described the methodology used for the translation and adaptation of *Ages, Stages Questionnaires-3* for Atikamekw children aged 48 and 54 months. The linguistic and cultural aspects to be taken into account to promote equivalence between source and target versions were exposed. Items in the fields of communication, problem solving, and individual and social skills were adapted to be compatible with the Atikamekw culture. The adjustments made have also contributed to increase the equivalence between the two versions.

The work undertaken in the framework of the author's doctoral study in partnership with community stakeholders has allowed the adaptation of a screening instrument to detect developmental delays in Atikamekw children. The adapted version of the instrument enables a more sensitive and specific identification of children difficulties. The availability of a suitable tool improves knowledge about the overall development of children.

Work is continuing to conduct psychometric validation of the screening tool's adapted version. This validation will help establishing standards considering the specific characteristics of Atikamekw children living in a rural community.

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INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION DIRECTIONS WELCOMING ABORIGINAL LEARNERS

The aims of this qualitative exploratory study is to describe, in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills, intercultural competence as perceived by seven directorates of public educational institutions in Abitibi-Temiscamingue to better determine their relation to learners and autochthonous cultures. A description of the study will follow a brief overview of the context and research objective definitions. Development prospects will then be proposed.

CONTEXT

Training for development of intercultural competence and knowledge of Aboriginal cultures is limited in school administration programs in Quebec. In 1998, the Quebec Ministry of Education published *École d'avenir: Policy of School Integration and Intercultural Education* (1998a) and the *Plan of Action for Educational Integration and intercultural Education* (1998b) to support school actors in the development of intercultural competence during educational activities. It targeted the training of all staff in educational institutions to ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity and socialization of learners. In 2001, this ministry published the *Training Program for Quebec Schools* and proposed to incorporate a cultural dimension into the teaching/learning by exploiting significant cultural references drawn from societies of yesterday and today, here and elsewhere (2001). It is a fact that Aboriginal cultures are part of the cultural references drawn from societies here. Yet according to our analysis, it seems that intercultural education and Aboriginal cultural dimension is not clearly identified in the repository of the ten professional skills *he Training in the Administration of an Educational Institution. Orientations and Professional Competencies ten professional skills repository*, published 2008 for the school administration training offered in Quebec universities (Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2008).

Furthermore, since the 1970s, the National Indian Brotherhood claims an educational system for the transmission of Aboriginal languages and cultures to the new generation to promote the inclusion and academic success of the latter (1972).

In 2010–2011, 1114 Aboriginal students were attending elementary and secondary schools in the Abitibi-Temiscamingue region (Action Réussite, 2013). Of these, 801 were attending community schools. The region has six schools located in the Pikogan, Winneway, Kitcisakik, Timiskaming, and Lac-Simon communities; there are two in Lac-Simon (Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Temiscamingue, 2012). The 313 other students were enrolled in elementary and secondary schools of the Quebec school network and integrated into regular clientele statistics (Action Réussite, 2013). These educational institutions of the Quebec school system are managed by non-Native administrators. Among these, many leave office because of a lack of knowledge on Aboriginal cultures and difficulties experienced (Secrétariat des commissions de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec, 2007). However, Sioui (2012) showed that Aboriginal students

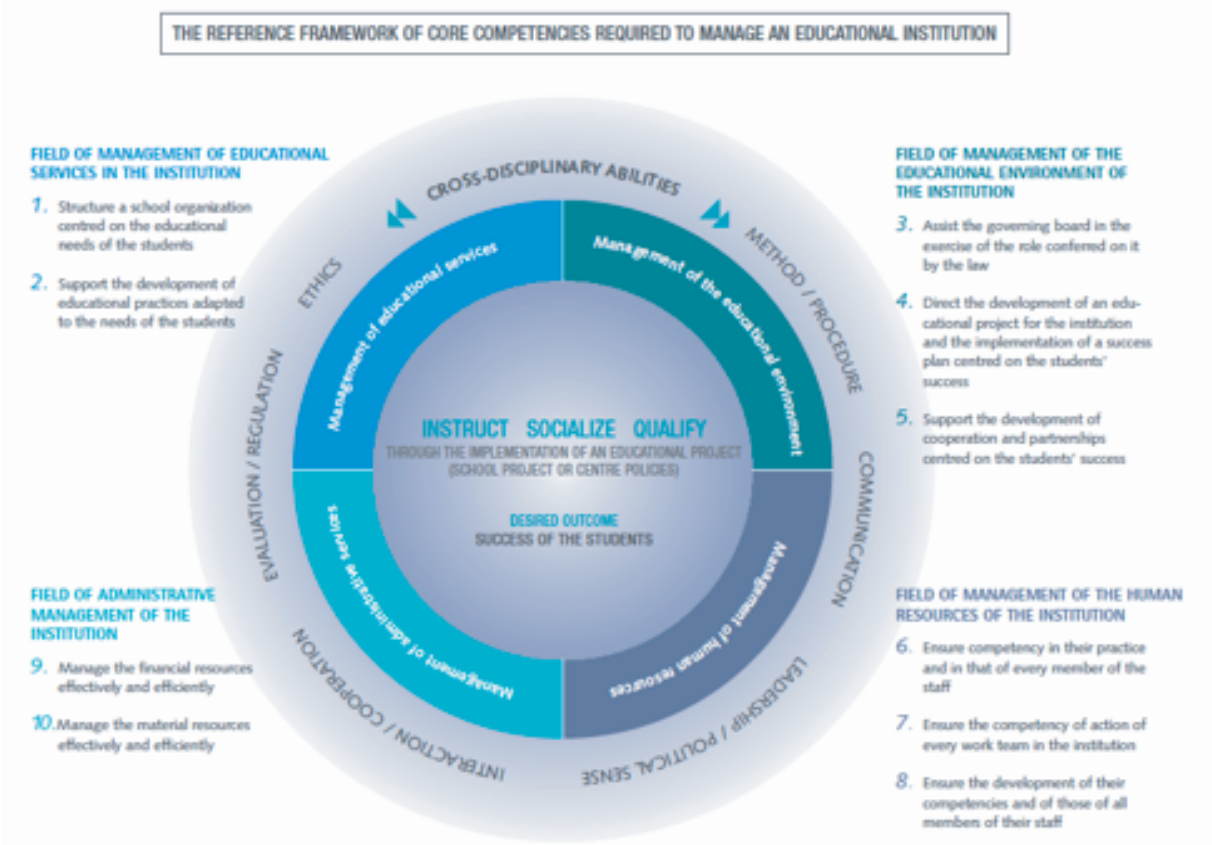


Figure 1 : Core competencies required for educational institution administration
(Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, 2008, p. 32)

succeed in school when their culture reflects in educational activities. Ghosh (2002) explains that abandonment was largely due to a lack of training in intercultural competence of educational institution administrators and, Gollnick and Chinn (2013), to a historical and cultural misconception on the learners' part.

OBJECTIVE

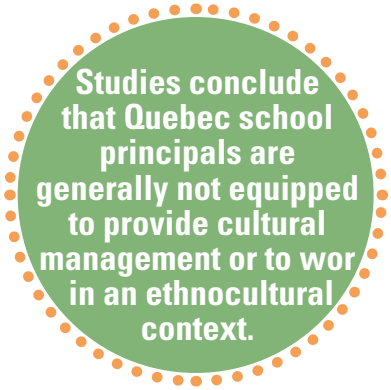
This exploratory qualitative research has an objective: to describe, in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills, intercultural competence as perceived by seven public school administrations (elementary, secondary, adult, and vocational) in Abitibi–Temiscamingue to better determine their relation to learners and Aboriginal cultures.

For the *Conseil de l'Europe*, the main organization defending human rights on the European continent, universities need to strengthen intercultural dialogue and define their universality through the formation of "intercultural intellectuals" (2011). From this study will result two new courses to the DESS (diplôme d'études supérieures et spécialisées) program in educational administration at the Université du Québec in Abitibi-Temiscamingue (UQAT): one course in intercultural management and inclusion of diversity in an educational institution, and another on managing schools in an Aboriginal context. As a matter of fact, as mentioned previously, intercultural competence and knowledge of Aboriginal cultures development is limited with regard to training and in the field of research in educational administration in Quebec. The scientific relevance of this research lies in the production of knowledge to fill, in part, these weaknesses.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL SUPPORT

Theoretically, this research rests on the inclusive approach. This approach, used in the field of social and special education for years, now includes ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. According to it, school actors must understand the power relationships between majority and minority groups, which interact to generate discriminatory situations within the schools; then, they can take into account environmental, historical, familial, cultural and emotional factors affecting learning, identity, or the educational success of learners from minority groups (Potvin, 2013).

Contextually, intercultural competence is defined as "the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on cultural knowledge, attitudes, and skills" (Deardorff, 2006). It basically refers to interaction with people from different cultures in order to achieve mutual positive results. The development of intercultural competence facilitates relations between people of various backgrounds and cultures within heterogeneous groups, which must all learn to live together in peace (UNESCO, 2009).



Given the increasing diversity of the Quebec population and the province's Aboriginal context, school administrators can benefit greatly from a course in intercultural competence (Gélinas-Proulx, 2014) and Aboriginal cultures. For this reason, Potvin (2013) defines intercultural competence as knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for school actors to work in a context of ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. According to the author, it is also these actors' ability to acknowledge learners and educational community members as bearers of cultures and make the latter work for the benefit of these learners' academic success. Intercultural competence encompasses government policies and school practices as it does values and behaviours of school actors.

As part of this research, multiple components are identified: conceptual knowledge (definition of intercultural, knowledge of politics and government documents on this) and cultural (definition of Aboriginal cultures, knowledge of politics, and government documents on this); openness attitudes towards learners and towards Aboriginal cultures, and openness to training in intercultural competence and Aboriginal cultures; skills definition of intercultural competence, self-assessment of one's own sense of efficacy to develop intercultural competence and intercultural educational *leadership* practice (listening to Aboriginal learners, interaction with Aboriginal communities parents).

In 2009, to address the growing dropout rate of Aboriginal learners, the Canadian Council on Learning (2009) introduced the Holistic Model to Lifelong Learning for First Nations including several areas of knowledge: the human world, territory, language, traditions and cultures, and spirituality.

It recommends inclusion practices and the development of cultural competence in educational environments to meet individual and collective needs of Aboriginal learners. Despite these arguments, Lefevre-Radelli (2014) note that autochthonous organizations are still accusing government authorities in Quebec of promoting an educational system with an assimilationist agenda.

Moreover, in their 2010 study from eight school administrations outside Montreal on ethnocultural and intercultural school management practices, Bouchamma and Tardif (2012) conclude that these practices remain scattered and individual without pursuing an overall policy, although they tend to promote learner success.

However, no studies on these practices for Aboriginal learners exist in Quebec. In addition, studies conclude that Quebec school principals are generally not equipped to provide cultural management or to work in an ethnocultural context (Fall 2010).

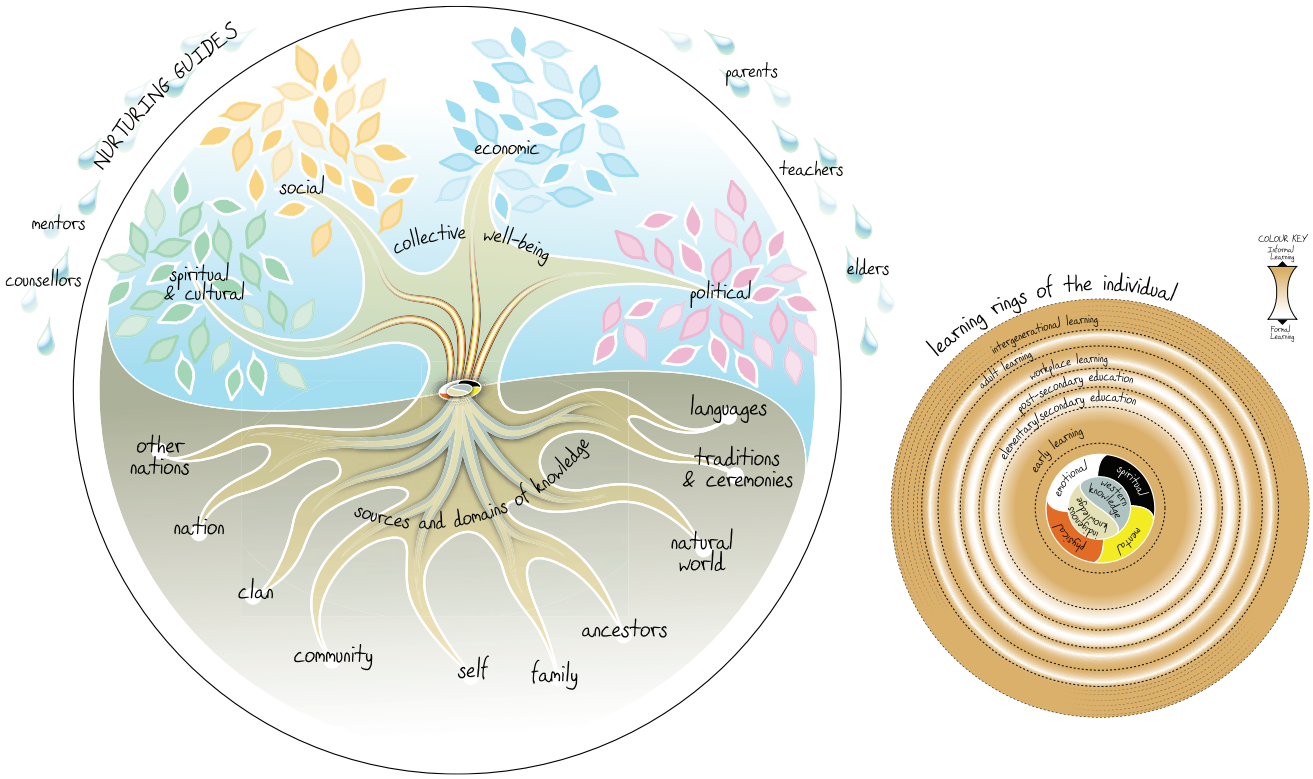


Figure 2 : Holistic model to lifelong learning for First Nations
(Canadian Council on Learning, 2009, p. 12).

STUDY DESCRIPTION

This type of interpretative qualitative research aims at understanding the meaning given by school administrations to intercultural competence based on their past management experience in institutions welcoming Aboriginal learners. It is also descriptive, since we want to explain the phenomenon under study, exploratory and pilot, since intercultural competence of public educational institution directions pertaining to Aboriginal cultures is not documented for learning purposes and in the field of research in educational administration in Quebec.

A semi-structured interview of one hour and thirty minutes was performed with each of the seven administrations previously mentioned: two from an elementary school, three from a secondary school, one from adult education, and one from vocational training, all from a school board in Abitibi-Temiscamingue. Regarding the construction of parts of the interview guide, intercultural competence components defined in the theoretical and conceptual support already mentioned have been operationalized. The participants (four women and three men) were chosen for their capacity to review intercultural competence through their field experience in managing institutions for Aboriginal learners. It is therefore a convenience sampling. The interviews were conducted from February 15 to April 30, 2016. They were recorded and transcribed in full, in order to facilitate a systematic and reliable analysis. The researcher used the thematic content analysis methods to bring out the respondents' perceptions (Boutin, 2007). Using NVivo software has simplified the consolidation and analysis of some data.

According to preliminary data, which are limited to knowledge, there seems to be a variety of definitions of intercultural provided by the respondents: the

knowledge of others, communication with others, respect for the values and beliefs of others, people's and foreign cultures' approval, the ability to practise one's profession in a cultural diversity. There was consensus on the importance of intercultural competence in education; however, respondents gave a clear answer about their low awareness of politics and government documents on interculture in Quebec. In Quebec and elsewhere in Canada and around the world, educational institutions face the need to take into account ethnocultural, linguistic and religious diversity in their objectives and in their educational practices. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Québec intends, through its policy, to promote this consideration by highlighting the principles and guidelines for the successful integration of students from other cultures in Quebec schools and Quebec society, and for the appropriate education of all learners to intercultural relations. In their definition of Aboriginal cultures, the seven respondents refer to land, ancestral knowledge, oral tradition, spirituality, Elders, animals, communities, history, Aboriginal values and identity.

Given the increasing diversity of the Quebec population and the province's Aboriginal context, school administrators can benefit greatly from a course in intercultural competence (Gélinas-Proulx, 2014) and Aboriginal cultures. For this reason, Potvin (2013) defines intercultural competence as knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary for school actors to work in a context of ethnocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity. According to the author, it is also these actors' ability to acknowledge learners and educational community members as bearers of cultures and make the latter work for the benefit of these learners' academic success. Intercultural competence encompasses government policies and school practices as it does values and behaviours of school actors.

CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The objectives of this article were to present the progress of an interpretative qualitative research on the perception of intercultural competence of seven administrations of public educational institutions welcoming Aboriginal learners in Abitibi-Temiscamingue. Preliminary results inspire a broader reflection and a call to action. Training in school administration could further draw a substantial and broad corpus of knowledge highlighting cultural aspects of management in Aboriginal contexts. Although the field of this research confines to one single school board, it does not permit a generalization of the outcomes of the study, early results suggest the importance of raising awareness and train actors on the issue, since they remain those responsible to ensure the success and well-being of all students, whether they are Natives or non-Natives. Intercultural competence development is therefore, in our view, an important issue in any school administration training.

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Andrée-Yanne Parent

PERSEVERANCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR FIRST PEOPLES: YOUTH FUSION AS AN INNOVATIVE MODEL

CONTEXT

Early school-leaving is a major social problem in Quebec. Indeed, 25% of young people still abandon school before the age of 20 with no diploma or qualifications. In addition, 90% of young people from Inuit and Cree communities get their high school diploma in five years (37% in the rest of Quebec) and the absentee rate is especially important: it rates at 27, 6% in the secondary and at 18.7% in the elementary, according to the Cree school Board's 2014–2015 *Annual Report*.

OBJECTIVE

Youth Fusion wishes to foster the perseverance and academic success of young people, including those of the First Peoples, through a comprehensive intervention model culturally appropriate and rooted in communities.

DESCRIPTION

Youth Fusion is a charitable organization created in 2009 by Gabriel Bran Lopez, a young social entrepreneur, who has chosen to develop a new effective response formula for perseverance throughout Quebec.

The formula is both simple in concept and innovative in its application. Youth Fusion hires university students (or recent graduates) as project coordinators to implement and support projects that motivate at-risk youths to excel creatively, stimulating them to become more involved in their academic success, and instill a sense of belonging at school.

It is the only organization to be present every day of the week throughout the school year, in eight northern villages of Nunavik and nine First Nations communities (Cree, Innu, Mohawk), in addition to having a unique partnership with the Aboriginal Student Resource Centre from John Abbott College. In the seventeen communities where the organization is present, 31 university students work (30 hours per week from September to June) as project coordinators, in elementary and secondary schools, to implement 30 suitable projects adapted to local contexts (Arts

It is the only organization to be present every day of the week throughout the school year.

and Media, School Engagement, *Leadership* and Healthy Lifestyles, Science and Robotics or Science and Outdoors). These projects cover nearly 1,800 at-risk youths on a weekly basis, representing 29,000 hours per year directly in schools, classrooms or after school. The unique and innovative Youth Fusion model clearly favours student retention and academic success in communities. The presence and constant commitment of project coordinators therefore create a continuum of activities that are intense, frequent, and similar in both classroom and in extracurricular activities.

Youth Fusion wishes to act as a bridge between communities and schools: it offers the opportunity for schools to transcend their own walls by proposing activities in various community organizations, outdoors or on the territory. The idea is not only to reach young people most at risk, especially those suspended or who have already dropped out, but also to work with community members' expertise so that these young people develop a positive relationship with learning and school. Enhancement of autochthonous languages, traditional knowledge and local culture through the adoption of an educational model based on experiential learning can mobilize the whole community for youth, to reach young people and encourage them to engage in their lives and their education.

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In Kuujjuarapik, participants in the Sciences and Outdoors project developed extensive knowledge of their territory (biology, geology, meteorology) and made a special cross-country skiing trip to the next village, Tasiujaq. At John Abbott College, the Youth Fusion project participants created traditional therapeutic herbal teas, sewed okpiks with the Inuk host; they discover Montreal during cultural outings every two weeks and are also mentoring young people in their home community. Youth Fusion developed video conference meetings between youths from its projects in high school and a John Abbott College student from their community to answer their questions about the college, share their experience, but also keep a strong bond with his home community. In Puvirnituq, the *Leadership* and Healthy Lifestyle project participants decided to use the cooking classes offered to them to regularly prepare dinners for Elders in their village. These shared meals are a valuable opportunity for intergenerational exchanges and systematically become a favourite of the participants. In Salluit, the *Leadership* and Healthy Lifestyle project led to the creation of a student council who shared the lack of space and of meeting opportunities in their village. They developed a community market that takes place once a month; all the villagers can come and sell the products they make. In Inukjuak, the Arts and Media project participants designed a fanzine which recounts tales and legends that their Inuit Elders have passed on to them.

These activities are always executed in collaboration with the school team to ensure the establishment of effective links with the Training Program for Quebec Schools along with a dynamic and welcoming atmosphere in the school. This complementarity facilitates efficient work of university students and teachers. Moreover, the collective approach (in small groups composed of a majority of at-risk youths and a minority of young people who are not at risk) is prioritized rather than an approach focused solely on the individual in order to avoid ostracism.

Youth Fusion also values the importance of creating positive relationships with peers. This is why mentors from the community, high school students, are involved with elementary and high school students or with both, in the same community. This win-win relationship is a rewarding work for mentors and allows young people to have genuine exchanges and a positive outlook on the future. Young people participating in activities are also placed in mentoring and *leadership* situations by conducting activities for younger people in the community. In Waswanipi for instance, the School Engagement project Coordinator proposes a literacy activity in which sixth-grade students read for kindergarten or first grade pupils. In Salluit and Aupaluk, motivated secondary four and five students were also hired as local trainers, to support the work of the project coordinators. This position provides them with a first employment opportunity (an average of five hours per week), in addition to helping them develop many project management skills as in specialized fields (music, video production, etc.). They are inspiring models for youths of their community.

One of university students' objectives is to organize success and academic achievement experiences through various activities and create opportunities to celebrate local talent with extraordinary events, such as: the Salluit Art and Music Festival, the *Leadership* camp and conference, the Robotics Festival, the CLIP short film Festival or local concerts. The whole community can attend young people's performances and parents meet with teachers in a context other than the parent-teacher meetings. Youth Fusion also seeks to bring the school team and community members to know each other better to improve their relationship and perception of the educational institution within the communities.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF YOUTH FUSION

The following data refer to two anonymous surveys in spring 2015 using *Survey Monkey* in which respondents participated voluntarily. The first survey

In Waswanipi for instance, the School Engagement project Coordinator proposes a literacy activity in which sixth-grade students read for kindergarten or first grade pupils. In Salluit and Aupaluk, motivated secondary four and five students were also hired as local trainers, to support the work of the project coordinators. This position provides them with a first employment opportunity (an average of five hours per week), in addition to helping them develop many project management skills as in specialized fields (music, video production, etc.). They are inspiring models for youths of their community.

was made with students among some 1800 participants in Youth Fusion activities[1] during the 2014–2015 school year, more specifically 218 responding students; the second was administered to the school staff, community members, and other organizations stakeholders, including teachers, principals, behaviour specialists and advisors, namely 64 responding members. The surveys were developed in collaboration with the *Centre de recherche et d'intervention sur la réussite scolaire* (CRIRES—Research and academic achievement Centre), based at Laval University and specializing in the evaluation of educational programs.

Factors promoting school retention used herein are those determined by the *Centre de transfert pour la réussite éducative au Québec* (CTREQ—Transfer

Centre for Educational Success in Quebec) and statistics are set forth in relation to 218 students as well as 64 staff members who participated in the surveys.

At-risk youths

Youth Fusion programs directly involve at-risk youths and tackle the issue of absenteeism in school.

- Over 57% of students surveyed had missed at least one day of school in the week preceding the survey: 25% had missed a day or less, 11% had missed two days, and 21%, three days and more.
- During the past year, 18% of students surveyed seriously considered dropping out of school.
- 71% of students surveyed have participated in Youth Fusion activities each week: 45% attended once or twice per week and 34%, three to five times a week.

Motivation : 85% of participating students and 98% of staff claim that Youth Fusion activities have been a motivating factor and improved school attendance. 80% of them have also found that Youth Fusion activities have contributed to youth engagement in their school and their community.

Social skills: 99% of members of school teams said that Youth Fusion activities have helped to improve social skills, such as: expression of personality, communication, teamwork and *leadership*.

School results: 80% of surveyed school staff said the Youth Fusion activities support academic goals. 99% of students surveyed felt respected and encouraged by their coordinator.

Healthy lifestyles: 84% of students surveyed said that Youth Fusion activities made them more active and healthier.

Self-esteem: 100% of the school staff surveyed said that Youth Fusion activities promoted the development of self-esteem and confidence in students. 96% of students surveyed said they were proud of what they had done during Youth Fusion activities.

CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Experiential learning is a model that has proved its worth in the communities where Youth Fusion worked. The organization hopes to support more communities who would like to address absenteeism and early school leaving issues with its innovative approach.

NOTE

[1] Youth Fusion annually offers nearly 6000 events in the participating indigenous communities.

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Julie-Anne Bérubé
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SUPPORT FOR COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY EDUCATION: SHARING OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS REALITIES AND OF WINNING PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

CONTEXT

The presence of Aboriginal students at the Val-d'Or campus, both in CEGEP de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue and at the Université du Québec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT), has been increasing since 2000 (Corneiller 2015). At UQAT, the majority of students are admitted on the basis of relevant experience and the institution wishes to assure their retention and success. Indeed, the 2009–2014 and 2015–2020 development plans describe clearly the will to strengthen partnerships with First Peoples.

The intention is to "contribute to skill development and the well-being of First Peoples" and "improve community relations" as well as "establish an academic structure [sic] for the training and research development for and with First Peoples" (Université du Québec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 2015).

For its part, the CEGEP "reaffirms its commitment to support First Peoples in their efforts to increase the level of post-secondary education in the communities" by establishing "appropriate training and using pedagogy sensitive to First Peoples culture and traditions" (Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 2011, p. 12).

This commitment and involvement of both institutions in Aboriginal students' education brings about a definite need for development and dissemination of awareness tools and of appropriate and culturally reassuring educational strategies.

OBJECTIVE

The *Synergie Cégep-Université* project's objective was to disseminate, among the CEGEP and UQAT faculty members and student services, winning strategies for teaching students from First Peoples. The data collected from 36 professors, teachers and lecturers have identified strategies implemented by them and obtaining success with Aboriginal students. The 32 Aboriginal students, in turn, shared their realities and challenges, and transmitted their success strategies and needs. In this gathering of information, the participating faculty members also mentioned wanting to create more exchanges between experienced teachers and new ones, and thus, share experiences, strategies and successes of each (Cornellier, 2015). The *Synergie* project research officer and Service First Peoples (SPP, UQAT) and First Nations Services (SPN CEGEP) advisers have therefore collaborated to develop a tool that would allow the dissemination of such information.

PRACTICE NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Data collection

During data collection, professors, lecturers and teachers of CEGEP and UQAT expressed educational challenges about instructional pacing (more frequent stops and lack of time to cover the material) of evaluation and trust relationship to develop with students. According to one of the teachers interviewed, the first language of the majority of them

being Cree or Algonquin, a challenge arises conceptually, since the languages of instruction in schools are French and English (Cornellier, 2015). In CEGEP, attendance raised a concern, in addition to the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in mixed classes. With regard to the difficulties observed among them, they summarize in multiple challenges arising from the language barrier as well as adopting study habits. As a matter of fact, as more Aboriginal students met were going back to school, strategies concerning study habits dating back several years were poorly developed or had to be consolidated during their academic career. Other features of Aboriginal students were also mentioned, notably their listening, their great capacity for observation, their sense of humour, on the one hand, and the impact of external factors on their perseverance and progression, on the other. Also add the fact that they are first-generation students; therefore, they have few models with post-secondary education around them. However, students talk about their pride and motivation to become themselves role models for their families and communities. Other challenges of academic nature related to study habits or of personal nature were appointed by the participating students. They then use their personal strength and will seek the support of their families, other students, faculty, and academic achievement support (Cornellier, 2015).

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First People's Services (UQAT)

Aside from intervening with the students, First Peoples Services Team (FPS) of UQAT welcomes teachers and lecturers teaching these students by introducing them to the services in place, in addition to offering tools, and bringing them to reflect on their teaching practices. The FPS team and teachers also work to better equip students in the writing of school work, the development of reading and study strategies, teamwork, and more. The development of offer and sharing of educational and awareness tools among teachers of both institutions is thus an essential avenue for the FPS to continue its mission. This becomes a unique training lever to support teachers.

Web tool development

To address the need referred by teachers to create more exchange and sharing, videos were made and webcast, only internally for the time being, in order to reach the largest number of teachers. These videos and the complementary Moodle site target four major objectives: first, these educational briefs provide educational and awareness tools for teachers and future teachers of Aboriginal students at college and university levels; secondly, they are dissemination tools for pedagogical practices and winning teaching strategies, thus promoting a transfer for Aboriginal students and supporting their academic success; thirdly, they are tools for raising awareness about interculturalism and the reality of Aboriginal post-secondary students; and fourth, they present the services offered by the CEGEP and UQAT.

The contents of the educational videos consist of three main components: Aboriginal students and their realities (their history, their challenges, their adaptation to a new environment, the pace and post-secondary requirements); teaching practices (winning strategies, the approach and availability, learning and challenges—particularly regarding language—, concept maps); and interculturalism (the perception of education of Aboriginal students, the importance of family and community, of belonging, the grieving process).

Some are short on specific topics such as community education and funding for Aboriginal students by their band council. The video briefs

come with several fact sheets to clarify certain notions mentioned by the interveners, namely *Indian Time* and in *cultural safety* concepts, to begin. The Moodle site, on which the videos are available, also hosts additional documents on education and autochthonous communities as well as reflexive and additional information tools.

Interviews were so rich that the project expanded rapidly.

THE CREATION OF THE VIDEOS

To create the videos, the research officer and two consultants have identified students and faculty members, who participated or not in the collection of initial data, as well as students' service representatives wishing to take part in the video briefs project. These people were chosen based on their experience, on their diverse profiles, and also on themes that we wanted to present. Interviews were so rich that the project expanded rapidly; the number of video briefs has doubled since its beginning. The project managers first analyzed all interviews to determine the quotes that were relevant for addressing previously identified themes and other themes have also emerged. Editing was done on paper and then completed with a technician from the audiovisual services. The English comments were translated, keywords were targeted to give impetus to the presentation, and the Moodle site was created. The remarkable professional end result is authentic and rather documentary where observations, perceptions, impressions and analysis, alternating from students of different profiles and CEGEP teachers and stakeholders and UQAT, overlap. Some video briefs are practical; others are more informative, while others lead to reflection through presentation of ideas, perspectives, and various cultural aspects.

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CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The in-house launch of these educational briefs (college and UQAT) was performed during the 2016 winter semester. Following the launch, the project managers want it to progress in collaboration with teachers, professors, lecturers and interveners to be invited to share their discoveries, their practices, their thoughts, tools, etc. We are convinced that this distribution tool, in complementarity with ongoing exchange between teachers and services, will be beneficial not only for teachers consulting it, but also for their Aboriginal students on their way to success. The team is currently thinking and planning for wider dissemination so that teachers and actors everywhere can benefit from this instructive tool and thus, better understand, support and guide their Aboriginal students.

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PART 5

REFLECTIONS

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SHORT ESSAY ON CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY OF RECONCILIATION IN COLLEGE

During the past year, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) reminded us of higher education institutions' responsibility in the ongoing reconciliation process in Canada, stating in its principles their essential role in the "support for cultural development, the inclusion of autochthonous epistemology, oral history, laws, protocols and links to the territories" (2015, p. 4). The presentation of the Commission's work is then part of the continuity of a historical trend, claiming for more than forty years Aboriginal rights in the management of education. Thus, the current context, in which a desire for mutual recognition appears to be emerging, also requires to be on the lookout for a predominant emphasis on solidarity, at the expense of autochthonous institutions' recognition and autochthonous decisions pertaining to education (Lévesque, 2015).

This tension between the principles of reciprocity and governance is present in the calls to action 45, 46 and 47 of the TRC, dealing specifically on reconciliation. It stresses the need to "establish relationships that are related to treaties that are based on the principles of mutual recognition, mutual respect and of shared responsibility so that they are sustainable, or [to] renew relationships of this type that are already established." Provincial, territorial and municipal governments are also asked "to reject the concepts used to justify European sovereignty on peoples and autochthonous territories, as the Doctrine of Discovery and the terra nullius, and to reform laws, government policies and instance strategies that continue to rely on such concepts" (2015, p. 6). We address this tension further in another publication (Butler, Ng-A-Fook, Vaudrin-Charette and McFaden, 2015).

For now, I consider the elements linking citizenship education and inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in college education from the perspective of interculturalism. As emphasized by Gauthier, Santerre, Blackburn, Joncas and Gobeille (2015), the "indisputable movement of intercultural encounter" and the views of the actors involved remain poorly documented. Thus, we try to respond to calls for action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, involving social responsibility of all Canadians for Reconciliation (TRC, 2015). In that sense, the college seems a breeding ground to study relational ethics around the emergence of a pedagogy of reconciliation.

OBJECTIVES

From my experience as an educational consultant, I examine various representations of interculturalism (Hall, 1999 Saul, 2015) at work about reconciliation in my working environment, a college-level institution. Hence, I mention here four possible representations of Reconciliation from a non-Aboriginal perspective, namely idealization, empathy, denial, and commitment (Saul, 2015). Since this is my preliminary observations for my doctoral research project, I cast an eye over these representations with respect to Aboriginalization of higher

education, to reconciliation, and to education for citizenship. In my analysis, I mention the potential impact of these representations on the development of a pedagogy of reconciliation focusing on First Peoples-colleges collaborations.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Consideration of Aboriginal peoples' original languages remains central in the ongoing reconciliation process. Whether from the perspective of equity in access to education in the original languages (Egea-Khune, 2012; Morris and Mackenzie, 2013), or of a better understanding of linguistic and cultural contexts of Aboriginal learners (Lévesque and Polese, 2015; Gauthier, Santerre, Blackburn, Joncas and Gobeille, 2015; Hannis, 2014 Pidgeon, 2008), the issue of the preservation of Aboriginal languages is directly related to the epistemological issues and the implementation of a relational ethic (Blood, Chambers, Donald, Hasebe and Ludt-Head, 2012; Haig-Brown, 2008; Galley, 2008) serving as basis for redefinition of internation collaborations.

In Quebec, Emongo and White also caution us against the various historical oversights pertaining to the Aboriginal issue. Historically, modern Quebec is generally positioned against English Canada. The persistence of this face-to-face between what formerly designated as "two solitudes" has resulted in what we now call "the national question". On the one hand, the Amerindian reality on Turtle Island (indigenous name of the North American continent) is systematically swept aside; on the other hand, the debate on the national question is exhausted in considerations about the survival of the French reality in North America (2015, p. 11).

Despite recent advances of college and university networks to equitable access to education for all Canadians, support for Aboriginal language education remains incomplete, although it is an educational right recognized by UNESCO (Egea-Khune, 2012) and a priority to enhance access to education for First Nations. Yet the links between intercultural skills, language and citizenship are little mentioned in Quebec. Is this an oversight?

METHODOLOGY

In order to illustrate the empowerment of teachers towards reconciliation, I will now take as a starting point the various cross-cultural representations within a literary work, an excerpt from the book Un thé dans la Toundra by Josephine Bacon, Innu Author from Pessamit, Quebec: "Apu nitau-nikamuian / Nipeten nikamunanitak / Nitshissituten uapitsheushkamiku eshi-shipekut / Nitashpatshikapaunaua / I cannot sing / But in my head / A song reminds me of / The green tundra."

Through four pedagogical moments, I illustrate some points of tension in the implementation of the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Idealization: the green tundra and the other distant

In a first pedagogical object initially built around poetry of Joséphine Bacon, I invite students to discuss the possible relationship to the territory maintained by the poem's author: Where is she from? Where does she live? How are her links with her origins mentioned in her poetry?

Denial: urbanity and cognitive dissonance

Secondly, a video[1] is presented to students where we see Josephine Bacon, tundra nomad and living in the city of Montreal, read her poem in a park. Students are invited to discuss their representations in respect of autochthony and on their own origins.

Empathy: language and resilience

Thirdly, Joséphine Bacon is presented as surviving episode of residential schools. Through the Innuaimun spoken today by 11,335 people in the province, the link to territory becomes resiliency. In this sense, the bilingual poetry of Joséphine Bacon is in a historical and linguistic context in order to understand the actual circumstances of reconciliation.

Commitment: territory

Returning to the artifact, the link to the homeland is rooted in language and physical memories and in the presence: "We share a tea. In the Tundra. Comfort. Faced with the infinite. "

ANALYSIS

In this first idealized representation of the territory, several elements take us into the Tundra. The teacher and his students explore the exotic, autochthony as distant "other", but fascinating. Are Aboriginal literary works presented in the context of Quebec literature course? Are they presented as a major or marginal works? What is the place of the First Nations, Métis[2] and Inuit authors in Quebec literature courses?

This second representation leads students in another territory: that of taking account of their own cultural constructs compared to others. The constructed image of autochthony as exoticism conciliates, remaining, moreover, just as constructed. These factors of reconciliation, but also of separation, are considered by director Carole Poliquin in the film l'Empreinte (2013). It presents a view of the possible links between Quebec identity quests and cultural representations in respect of autochthony, including the perspectives of anthropologists Nicole O'Bomsawin and Serge Bouchard and those of poets, psychologists, etc. The film addresses in particular what Quebec cultures owe to the cultural heritage of the First Peoples and what has been lost in the breaking of relations. Here, the notion of empathy prevails as the engine of reconciliation.

The third representation, about resilience proves a third educational lead, not only in the context of French courses, but in the program elements of citizenship, history, philosophy, sociology, politics, etc. This time, students are encouraged to better know History, allowing the implementation of recommendations such as making the history of residential schools known. Moreover, this moment could help address the epistemological questions about languages, including tensions between Quebec identity representations and those of First Peoples in relation to them. In the film l'Empreinte, actor Roy Dupuis asks Josephine Bacon: "If I spoke Innu, what kind of question would I ask you?" She replies laughing: "Maybe if you spoke my language, you would not have so many questions for me because you would see a part of the world as I see it."

In this last pedagogical object around Joséphine Bacon's poetry, the teacher, the educator and the institution examine mechanisms for intercultural ethics of co-construction of a pedagogy of reconciliation in Quebec.

PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

How can the absence of translations be avoided? How to co-construct the pedagogy of reconciliation?

Each performance mentioned here can influence the quality of the implementation of the calls to action of the TRC in college. For learners, the development of intercultural and citizen skills related to the development of a relational ethic indicates a relational dynamic. For teachers and educators, the development of interdisciplinary projects, taking account of multilingual contexts in language teaching and the development of collective skills in an educational institution are not to be overlooked.

However, following Lévesque's initial caution, education to citizenship reveals a promising anchoring: education is undoubtedly a privileged way in this regard, both across countries and within Aboriginal world. There are other equally fundamental ways: equitable participation in the economy, renewal of policies for Aboriginal peoples, promotion of community involvement, determination to end violence perpetrated against Aboriginal women and children. Here are some pillars of decolonization and citizen encounters that are currently at work and on which rests the challenge of living together (2015, p. 239).

Here, anchoring in a specific place allows students and teachers to leave the framework of competence, of a course or of an institution to engage with nations ancestrally present in the territory. As with educators and researchers who have worked on these issues (Chambers, Blood, Donald, Ng-A-Fook, Gauthier), we see in this anchoring a way to explore the full potential of the renewal of our relations.

CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

In short, as repeatedly demonstrated across Canada, a paradigm shift in internation relations, especially regarding the perspectives and knowledge

of First Peoples, has a significant influence not only on academic success and student retention, but also on the services offered, pedagogy, institutional governance and intercultural relations within institutions engaged in it. The world of education is at the heart of the implementation of a paradigm shift in the internation relationships around reconciliation, providing the opportunity to break the cycle of systemic violence, respect historic agreements of reciprocity in relationships, and develop civic competence of the emerging generation. We hope that Quebec continues on this path.

NOTES

[1] Video found on www.youtube.com/watch?v=l45nnRUcBeY.

[2] The Métis population is not recognized in Quebec, but some literary works of French Canada could be considered.

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A DREAM SCHOOL OR A SCHOOL THAT INSPIRES TO DREAM?

CONTEXT

This text, presented during the second edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples held in October 2015, is a reflection on the theme of dream schools made by five students from the Autochthonous Education Management Training Program of Université de Sherbrooke.

These students, living in several Aboriginal communities in Quebec, have contributed diversified ideas and thoughts on how to support learning of Aboriginal students in order to lead them to educational success. Indeed, the autochthonous school context in Quebec is characterized by the coexistence of multiple identities, statuses, languages, and cultural backgrounds (Lévesque & al., 2015). The goal of this reflection by school actors already working in community schools was therefore to initiate a discussion

How can one reflect on school beyond its walls for Aboriginal communities?

on the existing variable gap between the dream of a school adapted to Aboriginal students' culture and the reality experienced daily. From a reflexive approach on school, they took a critical look at the physical and organizational structure of the latter in relation to its role *for and within its community*.

This reflection also focused on legitimate questions about the role of school in autochthonous communities, and this, as an educational institution within a political, historical, and social context. More specifically, it was about contemplating the means needed to foster linkage between Aboriginal education and Western education in order to propose a dream school, more apt to sustain educational success of all students. Therefore, the thinking process covered the program to offer and on the types of pedagogy to advocate.

A PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION ON THE WORLD VIEW AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCHOOL

According to certain authors, any school system or any discussion about school and education takes place in a social and historical context. Two major educational traditions emerge: 1) formal education based on cognitive learning focusing on theoretical aspects of pre-knowledge; 2) informal education implying a tradition based on experiential learning (Livingstone, 2006).

Giroux (2000) explains that Western education is based on a formal learning difficult to dissociate from the intensification of market globalization. It is therefore a component in a paradigm designated as industrial in a so-called formal education. According

to Battiste (2002), formal education enhances the transmitted knowledge intended to be universal and based on mass information. This is the most common form of education in the industrialized Western world in which Quebec belongs. However, other educational paradigms are worth exploring so that we can better respond to reality and specificities of Aboriginal communities.

For Grande (2004), the foundations of Aboriginal pedagogy heavily rest on more informal, traditional Aboriginal education. It lies in an educational tradition in which knowledge is not standardized, but linked to the reality of a given environment, a territory. Aboriginal education is a continuum of different educational thoughts defined as biocentric. Therefore, it also takes into account the biophysical world in the educational relationship, as opposed to Western concepts, more anthropocentric and solely focused on human beings (Knapp, 1996). It can also be first identified in its entirety as holistic rather than linear, more particularly regarding how a problem is addressed, and then subjectively rather than objectively. In this sense, emotions are part of reading the world in the educational relationship (Battiste, 2002; Biermann and Townsend-Cross, 2008). Indigenous pedagogy closely links to a specific ecological context which, according to Aikenhead (2006), includes language classes, rules, and distinctive relationships unique to local knowledge. Local knowledge is intimately related to a given territory and to a given community.

A SCHOOL ANCHORING WITHIN ITS COMMUNITY: A PLACE IN THE TERRITORY

In Aboriginal culture, the place of the territory is well established: many authors, including Herman (2005) and Little Bear (2009), indicate that this territory is at the heart of the community's identity or that of individuals living there. Thus, how can one reflect on school beyond its walls for Aboriginal communities?

The overall reading of an environment aims at the appropriation of school features within a community. It seeks to take in account the physical and territorial characteristics of the school, including flora, fauna, and waterways. It is the same for its social and cultural characteristics, particularly with regard to ancestral and current ways of living. Thus, reading the environment aims indirectly at familiarization with community resources. A recent research report precisely highlights the importance to engage various bodies and individuals, of which families and the community, to enable young Aboriginals to "learn in a fluid and harmonious environment, ensuring continuity between the diverse components of the universe" (Montpetit and Lévesque, cited in Lévesque & al., 2015, p. 144).

Part of the dream school project is to imagine its realization on the basis of all territorial and cultural parameters of respective environments. The invitation made to students of the Management Program proposed going beyond existing frameworks, not to call them into question, but to transcend the limits and thus, provide a school tinged of its culture, of its territory, and of people who live there.

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Imagining a dream school within the Aboriginal community consists of naming the preferred values, identifying pedagogical approaches to advocate, and this, in accordance with organizational structures that require rethinking the place of humans and material resources, while conceptualizing the most optimal way to integrate the community's cultural dimensions.

For example, the dream school for some becomes a physical organization inspired by traditional elements of the Inuit way of life and reconfigures the school and classroom spaces. It suggests a specific place devoted to culture as illustrated in Figure 1.

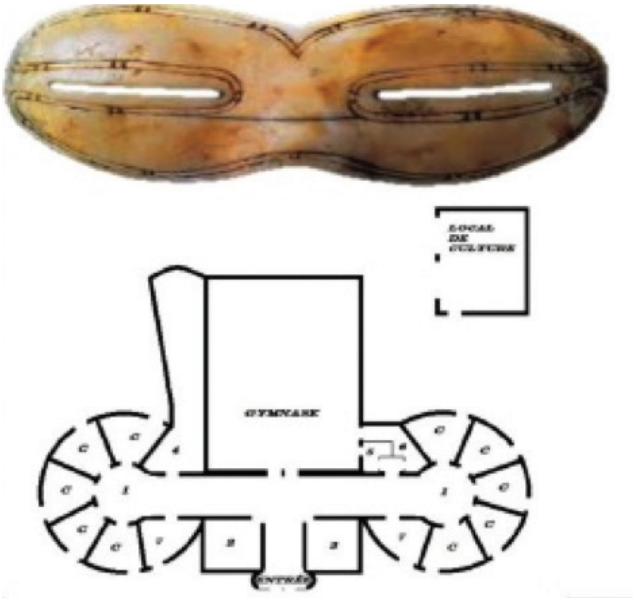

Figure 1 : The physical organization of an Inuit dream school

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For others, it is to rethink the school organization in a way that the school calendar reflects the realities of the environment. In this case, the school calendar is adaptable and flexible. It takes into account seasons, namely hunting seasons, as it does weather or sunshine conditions, especially for Northern populations. Concerning their dream school, the majority of students also propose educational activities related to the local culture; these would eventually lead to a curriculum open on the peculiarities of an environment and would require teaching materials representative of the local culture, taking into account the language of the community. The students' proposals lead them to rethink school beyond its current structure and to enrich the resource directory for this openness *for and within the community*.

CONCLUSION AND PROSPECTS

In order to overcome the present limitations of the various structures, hindsight and a reflection process lead us to revise school based on actual needs, including the characteristics specific autochthonous students in their respective milieus.

The exchanges generated became an invitation to escape the current framework to identify preferred values, pedagogical approaches to advocate, organizational structures both human and material to establish, always faithful to the cultural dimensions, possibly allowing members of the community and of school staff to be involved as full partners.

Therefore, rethinking the current school in Aboriginal communities while questioning the gap that can exist between customary practices and those to develop confirms the Management's role as educational leader and cultural mediator.

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Providing a school tinged of its culture, of its territory, and of people who live there.

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NOTES

[1] They are Noémi Lagacé Lefebvre, Vincent Pilotto, Jean-Luc Rose, Gilles Jr Sauvageau, and Josée Thibault.

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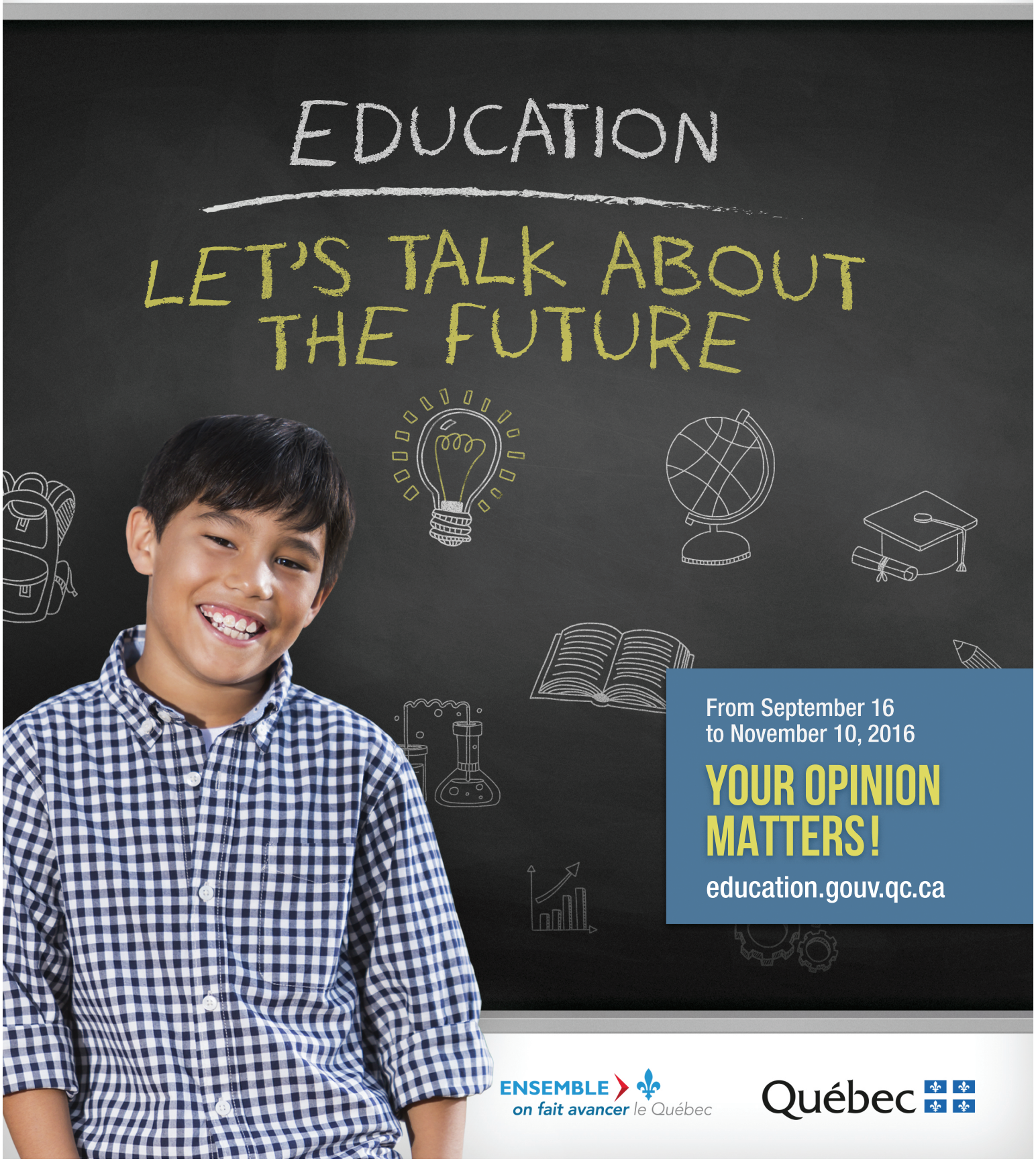

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