

ABORIGINAL EDUCATORS' EXPERIENCES
AS LEARNERS AND AS TEACHERS
IN
SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

By

Barbara Jane Josette Harris
B.S.W. University of British Columbia 1999
MSW University of British Columbia 2000

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

In the
Faculty of Education

© Barbara Jane Josette Harris 2009

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Spring 2009

All rights reserved. This work may not be
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without permission of the author.

APPROVAL

Name: Barbara Jane Josette Harris
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy
Title of Thesis: **Aboriginal Educators' Experiences as Learners and as Teachers in Schools of Social Work**

Examining Committee:

Chair: Dr. Stuart Richmond, Professor

Dr. Kelleen Toohey, Professor
Senior Supervisor

Dr. Richard Vedan, Associate Professor, UBC
Committee Member

Dr. Lucy LeMare, Associate Professor
Internal/External Examiner

Dr. Kathleen Absolon, Assistant Professor,
Wilfrid Laurier University
External Examiner

Date Defended/Approved: March 27, 2009



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY

Declaration of Partial Copyright Licence

The author, whose copyright is declared on the title page of this work, has granted to Simon Fraser University the right to lend this thesis, project or extended essay to users of the Simon Fraser University Library, and to make partial or single copies only for such users or in response to a request from the library of any other university, or other educational institution, on its own behalf or for one of its users.

The author has further granted permission to Simon Fraser University to keep or make a digital copy for use in its circulating collection (currently available to the public at the "Institutional Repository" link of the SFU Library website <www.lib.sfu.ca> at: <<http://ir.lib.sfu.ca/handle/1892/112>>) and, without changing the content, to translate the thesis/project or extended essays, if technically possible, to any medium or format for the purpose of preservation of the digital work.

The author has further agreed that permission for multiple copying of this work for scholarly purposes may be granted by either the author or the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is understood that copying or publication of this work for financial gain shall not be allowed without the author's written permission.

Permission for public performance, or limited permission for private scholarly use, of any multimedia materials forming part of this work, may have been granted by the author. This information may be found on the separately catalogued multimedia material and in the signed Partial Copyright Licence.

While licensing SFU to permit the above uses, the author retains copyright in the thesis, project or extended essays, including the right to change the work for subsequent purposes, including editing and publishing the work in whole or in part, and licensing other parties, as the author may desire.

The original Partial Copyright Licence attesting to these terms, and signed by this author, may be found in the original bound copy of this work, retained in the Simon Fraser University Archive.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, BC, Canada

ABSTRACT

How can Canadian Schools of Social Work improve school climate in order to enhance outcomes and success among Aboriginal students and faculty? I interviewed 14 Aboriginal faculty members from seven Schools of Social Work about their experiences as students and as faculty, and, they gave recommendations regarding needed changes.

As learners, respondents were affected by individual, academic and relational factors, as well as teacher behaviours. The impact of negative experiences included: loneliness and isolation, and feelings of not belonging. Coping strategies included leaving, seeking safety, or simply being quiet. Positive relationships with teachers, advisors and peers were reported to be critical.

As faculty, the respondents' approaches to teaching are influenced by 'who the students are,' their beliefs about learning, and their perceptions of their responsibilities as educators. Use of the talking circle in the classroom was reported as popular, and congruent with their beliefs. Challenges relate to: curriculum resources; content which challenges the status quo; maintaining community connections; workload; marginalization; ignorance and closed-mindedness; triangulation; boundary issues; and authorship. The impact of these challenges includes: feelings of not belonging; being faced with peoples' complaints; extra work to accommodate colleagues' emotional needs; stress; and burnout.

Institutional challenges include racism, inconsistency, lack of commitment, not being heard or listened to, intrusion, paternalism, rigid implementation of policy and one-

way accountability. Internalized colonialism and decolonization are certainly relevant, and fighting for change, finding allies, and achieving self-determination are pertinent strategies.

Recommendations to educators include having knowledge, personal characteristics, and teaching strategies that would be helpful. Recommendations to SSW include strategies aimed at supporting Aboriginal students and educators. Institutional changes must include attention to overcoming the colonial dynamics which underscore academic life. In order to create healthy environments, respondents recommended providing: a welcoming and safe place; reflections of Aboriginal people; healthy boundaries and leadership; physical, cognitive, emotional space, as well as space for ceremony and for community; and, supporting self determination. Ultimately, I argue that attention to power, place, process and philosophy, can facilitate needed changes.

Keywords: Aboriginal educators and school climate; First Nations' perspectives on campus climate, school climate in Schools of Social Work; academic environment in professional schools; diversity on campus.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most importantly, I want to thank the Aboriginal faculty across Canada for sharing their experiences, and their wisdom and knowledge with me. I raise my hands up to each of you and I want to acknowledge your courage, and strength, as well as your integrity and the honourable way in which you each shared the realities of your lives as students and as faculty. Your commitment is powerful and inspiring and you represent hope for future generations.

I would like to thank my senior supervisor Kelleen Toohey. Kelleen, every time we met, I walked away feeling respected, valued and validated, but most of all, inspired. I thank you for that, and for your valuable insights. My ability to incorporate the feedback you gave was directly related to your ability to articulate your own insights in such a good way. Thanks also for your never-failing support.

I also want to thank Richard Vedan. Richard, I cannot tell you how much your wisdom, kindness and respect have meant to me. You provided wise council, and pragmatic suggestions. You also prevented me from giving up. I will be forever grateful to you for helping me navigate the terrain. Thanks for being such an excellent role model. Most of all, I thank you for believing in me.

To Kathleen Absolon, I say thank you for reminding me of the importance of the work, and for contributing to my understanding of my 'place' in this journey. Thank you also for coming from so far away to be a part of, and contribute to this journey.

To Lucy LeMare, thanks so much for supporting this work, and for participating in the final leg of the journey in a good way.

To the Chair of my Defence, Stuart Richmond; Stuart, you inspired me during my studies, mostly through your openness to other ideas, and ways of knowing and being. You also are a great role model.

June Beynon, I thank you for your support, and input. I appreciate the contributions you made. I especially enjoyed your feisty spirit.

Jean Barman, I also thank you for your contributions during my comprehensive exams, as well as your kindness and support.

Heather, and Rochelle, both of you were a blessing. Rochelle, your presence and support with proof reading these last few months were a gift; your spirit a pleasure to be around.

Uncle Alex, I thank you for your guidance and wise council during my studies. I also greatly appreciate the teachings you have shared with me. I always appreciate your time and the opportunities to visit you at your home and studio.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Approval	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures and Tables.....	x
Chapter 1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Location of the Researcher	2
1.2 Purpose / Need for the Study	6
1.3 Rationale	7
1.4 Terminology.....	9
1.5 Overview.....	10
Chapter 2.0 Scoping the Terrain	13
2.1 Climate for Diversity	14
2.2 Impact of Discrimination on Health	17
2.3 What About Retention?.....	18
2.3.1 Retention of students.....	19
2.3.2 Retention of faculty.....	23
2.4 The Colonial Context.....	26
2.4.1 Education for assimilation	27
2.4.2 Impact of colonization	28
2.4.3 But, that was then.....	29
2.5 Perspectives of Aboriginal Students and Faculty	30
2.5.1 Aboriginal students' perspectives	31
2.5.2 Perspectives of Aboriginal faculty.....	36
2.5.2.1 Perceptions related to identity.....	36
2.5.2.2 Perspectives on teaching	38
2.5.2.3 Supporting students.....	39
2.5.2.4 Racism and hostility.....	39
2.5.2.5 Recruitment and retention.....	40
2.5.2.6 Tenure and promotion (T&P):	41
2.5.2.7 Mentorship	43
2.5.3 Notes to other academics	43
2.6 Summary	44
Chapter 3.0 Social Work Education and First Nations	46
3.1 Evolution of Aboriginal Social Work Education in Canada.....	47

3.2	A Closer Look at the Challenges in Instituting Change	49
3.3	An Alternative Model	55
3.4	Summary	59
Chapter 4.0	Research Methodology	60
4.1	Theoretical Influences	60
4.2	Sampling Method	64
4.3	Profile of Sample	65
4.4	Data Collection	66
4.5	Data Analysis	67
4.6	Validity	69
4.7	Summary	71
Chapter 5.0	Experiences in the Academy	72
5.1	Experiences as Students	72
5.1.1	Factors Affecting Them as Learners	73
5.1.1.1	Individual factors	73
5.1.1.2	Academic	75
5.1.1.3	Relational factors	79
5.1.1.4	Teacher behaviours	81
5.1.2	Impact of Negative Experiences, of Curriculum, and Coping Strategies	83
5.1.3	The importance of relationships with faculty and peers	85
5.1.3.1	Relations with faculty	86
5.1.3.2	Peer support	87
5.2	Experiences as Educators	88
5.2.1	Perspectives on Teaching	88
5.2.2	Talking Circle Pedagogy	95
5.2.3	Challenges as Educators	98
5.2.3.1	Curriculum	98
5.2.3.2	Challenges of teaching critical and Aboriginal content	99
5.2.3.3	Other challenges related to their jobs	102
5.2.4	Impact of These Challenges	105
5.3	Institutional Challenges: Colonial Context Revisited	106
5.4	Summary of Experiences	112
Chapter 6.0	Interviewees' Recommendations	114
6.1	Recommendations to Educators	114
6.2	Recommendations to SSW	121
6.2.1	Supporting Aboriginal Students	121
6.2.2	Supporting Aboriginal Faculty	122
6.2.3	General Recommendations in Supporting Aboriginal Students and Faculty	124
6.3	Recommendations to the Institution at Large	127
6.3.1	Recommendations for Creating a Healthy Environment for Aboriginal Students and Faculty	129
6.4	Summary of Recommendations	135

Chapter 7.0	Analysis of Data.....	137
7.1	First Nations BSW Framework Revisited.....	137
7.1.1	Rethinking Community.....	141
7.1.2	Rethinking Context.....	143
7.1.3	Rethinking Care.....	146
7.1.4	Rethinking Culture.....	149
7.1.5	Transformation?.....	150
7.2	The Process.....	151
7.2.1	‘The Rules’.....	151
7.2.2	Entitlement.....	152
7.2.3	Getting Stuck.....	153
7.3	Discussion.....	154
Chapter 8.0	Summary and Recommendations for Research.....	156
8.1	What the Literature Said.....	157
8.2	What the Respondents Said.....	158
8.3	My Analysis of the Data.....	163
8.4	Recommendations for Future Research.....	165
Appendices.....		167
Appendix 1:	Information sheet for subjects.....	168
Appendix 2:	Request for Permission to Conduct Research.....	171
Appendix 3:	Consent Form.....	174
Appendix 4:	Results of Needs Assessment.....	177
References.....		186

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1:	FN BSW Framework	58
Figure 2:	Updated First Revision of FNBSW Framework	140
Figure 3:	2 nd revision of First Nations BSW Framework: a model for creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty in academic institutions.....	141
Table 1:	Interpretation of Hurtado's (1998) Framework	16

CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the last seven years, I have been teaching in a School of Social Work (SSW) in British Columbia (BC) where I participated in the development of an off-campus satellite First Nations Bachelor of Social Work (FNBSW) program to be delivered in an urban Reserve community. My current responsibilities include teaching, Aboriginal student advising, and coordinating the off-campus FNBSW. In addition, in the last fifteen years, I have spent thirteen years as a university student. The combination of experiences as a student and as a faculty member in a School of Social Work, as well as my involvement with the off-campus FNBSW program influence this research.

A prominent question derived from my experiences and observations concerns the overall environment in academia, and, the changes needed to increase the participation and success of Aboriginal people in post-secondary institutions, particularly in Canadian Schools of Social Work. Accordingly, the focus of this research is on what is required to create healthy environments in Schools of Social Work (SSW) for Aboriginal students and faculty. My conception of a healthy environment - in this context - is a climate in which they can and will thrive, and achieve, or even surpass their goals, within a supportive environment.

Before moving on, a few disclaimers are in order. First, given the heterogeneity of Aboriginal people, the views expressed here are not necessarily representative of all First Nations. As well, the ideas presented here are not meant to discredit the efforts of those individuals who are out there working for meaningful change.

1.1 LOCATION OF THE RESEARCHER

I mentioned above some superficial information about who I am – a teacher, a student, and the coordinator of an Aboriginal Social Work program being piloted in BC. Such information does little to inform the reader as to my ‘place’ in relation to the subject at hand. Thus, I will share a bit more of who I am, to facilitate an understanding of my own thoughts and ideas in relation to the topic.

I was born and spent my early years in Edmonton. My father, a Dene from Cold Lake First Nation, had already had two children with my mother when I was born, but during her pregnancy with me they separated. I never met my dad until I was around 42 years old. He died about 3 and ½ years later, but fortunately, I did get to know him before that.

Sometime after my dad left my mom, she got involved with another man who became my stepfather. In my early years, I was exposed to alcoholism, violence, and severe abuse. I began running away when I was four, and finally escaped at the ripe old age of 13. I somehow ended up being just another statistic....an urban Aboriginal kid on the street, in and out of foster homes, working illegally in bars – I was under age. I fumbled through life a lost soul, and attempted to drink my sorrows away for many years. I sobered up at 31, and managed to muster up the courage to go to school some seven years later. I suppose the biggest miracle is that I lived to tell this story.

Up to the point when I went back to school, I have to say that I knew nothing about ‘Indians.’ I think my only recollection was a sketch in a textbook from maybe Grade 3 that showed an Indian on a horse flailing a tomahawk. I also knew my dad was an Indian, but that’s all – my mother refused to talk about him and only had one very

small old black and white picture of him standing on the street. I could barely make out his facial features.

I used the term 'Indian' here as it reflects the language of the day. In Grade 3, there were cowboys and Indians. Terms such as 'First Nations' or 'First Peoples' were not used in everyday language.

When I started college, I honestly didn't know if I could do it - I only had grade 8, although I think I managed to get through a few upgrading courses in my late 20s. I also didn't know if the College would let me in; when they did, I thought it was just because they didn't know who I was. I was a bit naive, to say the least.

Starting at College seemed wise as it wasn't as intimidating as a university, although it was very challenging. I had no money, and I worked while going to school as much as I could. I ended up homeless one year, for almost two months, because I ran out of money and welfare wouldn't help me because I had received a student loan four months earlier. Thank god someone let me sleep on their couch during that time...it happened in the beginning of March and I was just finishing up another year of my Bachelor's degree.

After two years at college I moved on to UBC, again thinking they only let me in because they didn't know me. I managed to finish a bachelor's degree, and master's degree, and two years later I started my PhD. It was during my masters that I was able to eject that old tape playing in my head that 'they only let me in because they don't know who I am.' I'd been in University, in the same department, for almost four years and they certainly read about my life when I wrote papers, so they did know who I was. I was so amazed at college and at the university when they invited me to attend graduation – my

naiveté seems kind of funny now. I even remember reading that I made the Dean's list in college, and I thought I was in trouble.

In my undergraduate program, I took a course on First Nations and for the first time I began to learn about Indians, about the Indian Act, and, about residential schools and the child welfare system. I began to learn about colonization and its horrible impact on Aboriginal people. This was the beginning of learning about who I am as a woman of Aboriginal heritage.

It was also right around that time that I met my dad for the first time and began to learn about why he wasn't able to be a dad to me when I was growing up. He was a residential school survivor and he spent much of his life wandering from place to place – seemingly a lost soul. He was also an alcoholic, and when he drank all his anger came out and he would curse the nuns from residential school. When he ended up in hospital within the year after I met him, it seemed ironically lucky because he wasn't drinking in the hospital, where he spent those few years before he passed away, and I was able to get to know him before he died.

This period of my life was almost unbearable in that as I learned about the history of Aboriginal people, and got to know about my dad's history, I became very angry; it was very difficult to go around acting like everything was OK – I did not feel OK. It was overwhelming, and painful to discover the truth about what happened to my father, and to our people.

The reader might wonder what this all has to do with the topic. The story I present is certainly not the story of your average college or university student. It is a story

of one urban Aboriginal kid – a story of survival, and a story of miracles. It is also a story about healing and transformation.

Needless to say, this story – my story, obviously influences how I see the world, and how I view the topic at hand. I came to the research with lots of assumptions about what universities could do to improve the environment for Aboriginal people. I saw and experienced racism and discrimination, and I've struggled through a pretty lonely process for 13 of the last 15 years of my life – while I've been in school. I know I would have never made it through my bachelor's and masters' degrees if I didn't get into subsidized housing after that bout of homelessness. Having stable housing was a key factor in my ability to complete those two degrees. I also consider myself extremely fortunate to have found a few supporters (I call them angels), and to have managed to access financial support for graduate studies through grants and scholarships. As well, being able to see a few Aboriginal people on campus, and connect with some of them was like taking medication for what ails you. No matter how I felt, I always felt better just seeing them around – even if only from a distance. As I write this, it seems my life is like a bittersweet candy –surviving in the academic arena seems to have had a lot to do with surviving everything that happened before that, if that makes any sense.

Moving from being a student to being an educator, I became quite dedicated to improving the situation for all those Aboriginal students to come, and, to helping make these institutions better for everyone. So what influences me?

I reflect on how my identity has developed in these years since I first met my dad, and got to know my dad's family. I remember the first time I returned from Cold

Lake in 1996 – I was still an undergrad then, and I realized that I was finally a whole human being – that for the first time, all of me was in the car.

I also think about the extreme isolation I've experienced in the 13 years I've been in the post-secondary education system.

I think about making that shift from poverty, depression, and feelings of complete worthlessness to being an educated Aboriginal woman with privilege and status – this is another story that should be told. I remember feeling like I was standing on the road pulling my spirit out of the ditch, and still feeling unworthy – feeling like the ditch was where I belonged.

I think about the feelings of fear and the people who helped me with that and those who didn't.

More than anything else, I remember the kind souls who believed in me, and who stood behind me through thick and thin.

So what influences my research? Today, I have a chance to bring about change, and I hope to make the road a little bit friendlier, a little bit safer, and a little bit easier for the future generations – so they can maybe one day experience the same level of comfort, and benefits, and success as anyone else – and do that in a way that honours their own values, and goals and dreams.

1.2 PURPOSE / NEED FOR THE STUDY

Currently, there is a plethora of publications about the education of Aboriginal people in Canada, but few studies provide the perspectives of Aboriginal students and/or faculty in Canadian post-secondary settings. As well, while Aboriginal communities increasingly require access to Social Work education, there are very few publications on

the perspectives of Aboriginal students in Canadian SSW. I found no specific study of Canadian Aboriginal Social Work faculty in the literature.

Additionally, Aboriginal perspectives on school climate, are absent in academic literature. Furthermore, while there are studies linking discrimination with health concerns, studies focused on the impact of discrimination on Aboriginal peoples' health are also unavailable. One goal of this study is to address gaps such as these in existing research. However, my main purpose in this dissertation is to contribute to the ability of SSW to create a healthy climate for Aboriginal students and faculty and to provide Aboriginal faculty members' insights regarding how that can be done, given that their perspectives are not well represented in the literature.

1.3 RATIONALE

The need for qualified Aboriginal Social Workers cannot be understated. Unfortunately, statistics on Aboriginal Social Workers or Social Work students in Canada are unavailable, but there is evidence of the need to increase the number of Aboriginal graduates to work in both health and social service areas.

Canadian research on post-secondary students (Canada, July 12, 2008) show that within the population over the age of 15, 10.8% of non-Aboriginal people have a Bachelor's degree in any field, compared to 3.39% of Aboriginal people. Meanwhile, there is only a slight margin in the number of students in both groups seeking degrees in Social Sciences - 4.3 and 4.14, respectively (ibid). While the second percentage might mislead readers into thinking that there are enough Aboriginal students being trained in fields such as Social Work, the first percentage is a reminder that Aboriginal people are vastly underrepresented in post-secondary education overall.

In 2001, the Government of British Columbia (BC) compiled information on Aboriginal people in BC and noted that although Aboriginal people represented 4.4% of BC's total population, they were underrepresented in health-related fields. Furthermore, while the specific number of Aboriginal Social Workers needed in the province was not specified, it was pointed out that at least 1,515 more Aboriginal health professionals were needed in the province (B.C. Stats, 2001).

As well, First Nations communities are striving toward self-determination and control over their own human services. Many Aboriginal communities in BC, for example, are currently in treaty negotiations, striving for self-government, and/or are actively pursuing local control over social service functions. The Ministry of Children and Family Development indicated in 2008 that "to date, 156 of the approximately 198 First Nations Bands in BC are represented by agencies that either have, or are actively planning toward, delegation agreements to manage their own child and family services" (MCFD website, March 17, 2008). In other parts of Canada, where treaties already exist, devolution of authority and control over child welfare and human services is widespread. Developing capacity to assume control of these services is paramount, and Schools of Social Work are critical sites for doing so.

The desire for control over human services stems from the reality that in comparison to Canadians, Aboriginal people experience much higher rates of health - related concerns, poverty, suicide, incarceration, and child apprehensions. Meanwhile, they experience the lowest levels of success in education and employment compared to Canadians (Joseph, 1999; Frideres and Gadacz, 2005; Royal Commission on Aboriginal

Peoples, 1996). Furthermore, the disruption of Aboriginal people's lives through colonization led to what Monture-Angus (1995) referred to as

a vicious circle... indeed, the over-representation of First Nations people within institutions of confinement-either child welfare institutions, provincial jails or federal prisons-is part of a vicious cycle of abuse... The child welfare system feeds the youth and adult Correctional Systems." (p.191-194)

Monture-Angus also argued that "drastic reforms are necessary," (p.195) in areas such as justice and child welfare, but the same is true for all mainstream government institutions whose mandate is to address the human service needs of First Nations, whether referring to education, justice, health, or social services.

Schools of Social Work could have a critical role in altering the current status of First Nations; however, in order to fulfil this role, change is necessary. Pertinent is the need to consider "the climate, or atmosphere, or ethos, tone or ambience, the culture or personality of [these departments]" (Roff and Macleer, 2001, p. 333). These authors also noted the need to identify and address "racism, ageism and sexism" (ibid, p. 334), all of which affect the ability of SSW to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities.

1.4 TERMINOLOGY

In this study, I use the terms Native, Indian, Aboriginal, First Nations, and/or Indigenous according to how they are discussed in specific reference material, but I mean them to refer to the same people. I also use the terms American Indian or Native American, but only with reference to Indigenous people in the United States.

The terms 'environment' and 'climate' are used interchangeably, and refer specifically to the mood, ethos, tone or ambience of the institution, as noted above. My

interpretation of a healthy climate for First Nations students and faculty is one in which they can thrive, and successfully fulfil their own needs and desires.

1.5 OVERVIEW

The introduction in Chapter 1 includes a discussion of the purpose and rationale for the research, introduces terminology and gives an overview of the chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 provide insights on factors relevant to the climate in Schools of Social Work; Chapter 4 focuses on the research protocols; and Chapters 5-7 include the findings and analysis. Chapter 8 includes a summary and recommendations for future research.

In Chapter 2, I argue that environmental factors are relevant to the participation and success of Aboriginal students and faculty in post-secondary education (PSE). Literature on campus climate for diversity indicates the need for university-wide strategies to address climate; that such strategies are needed is validated by research in the US which attests to the negative impact of discrimination on health. Furthermore, the literature indicates that strategies aimed at retention of Aboriginal students and faculty are insufficient to overcome the challenges they face; pertinent is the context of European/First Nations relations. The colonial takeover and domination of this continent and of Aboriginal people and their lands, as well as a policy of ‘education for assimilation’ had drastically negative outcomes for First Nations people, and unfortunately, the colonial agenda still exists. I argue that the current milieu in academia is still problematic for both Aboriginal students and faculty.

In Chapter 3, I provide a closer look at the situation in SSW, including a brief history of Social Work education for First Nations in Canada and an overview of issues in providing a culturally relevant program. While the demand for such programs is

increasing, I argue that mainstream Social Work programs are insufficient to meet the needs of Aboriginal communities. Community-driven and community-based research conducted between 2000 and 2002 led to formulation of an evolving framework that could guide delivery of an Aboriginal Social Work program currently operating as a pilot project. The framework I developed is used to analyze the findings of this research. Specifically, community, context, care and culture are the dominant themes which provide a useful framework for analysis.

Chapter 4 describes the research methodology which is influenced by grounded theory methodology, and critical theory. As well, the method could be referred to as researching from the margins, as insider research. Furthermore, the research incorporates Indigenous research traditions. This qualitative study includes semi-structured interviews with nine Aboriginal faculty members and three lecturers from Canadian Schools of Social Work, as well as one administrator who teaches. Each of them was interviewed about their experiences both as students and as educators in Social Work and about their recommendations for creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty in Canadian SSW.

In Chapters 5 and 6, I present my findings. I identify factors that affected the respondents as learners; as well as their insights into coping, helpful relations with faculty and peers, and teaching strategies. The respondents also shared their beliefs about learning, and their roles as teachers, as well as their approaches to teaching. Also included in the interview data are recommendations on how to better meet the needs of First Nations students and faculty in SSW, as well as recommendations for improving the overall environment in academia.

In Chapter 7, I analyze the findings with respect to the framework initially presented in Chapter 3. In short, it became clear that community perspectives and participation are needed; attention to context includes the development of appropriate skills and knowledge to meet community needs through provision of a relevant curriculum; care involves providing a supportive environment; and in terms of culture, certainly incorporation of ceremony and inclusion of Aboriginal world views are needed. Although the present research is congruent with the initial framework, I identified a need for further revisions, and the previously dominant themes of community, context, care, and culture were subsumed under four new themes - power, place, process and philosophy.

Chapter 8 includes a summary of this research and recommendations for future research. Fundamentally, in order to create a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty in SSW, I argue there is a need for attention to issues of power, place, process and philosophy.

CHAPTER 2.0 SCOPING THE TERRAIN

In this chapter I review literature on ‘climate for diversity’ in post-secondary institutions, and research that links discrimination and health. As well, I discuss research that suggests that strategies aimed at retention are insufficient to improve campus climate, or to adequately address concerns expressed by Aboriginal students and faculty. In fact, the colonial relationship between Aboriginals and Canadian settlers must be considered because this relationship is still problematic.

I also review literature that outlines the ongoing challenges faced by Aboriginal students and faculty but I was unable to find any published research focused directly on: Aboriginal perspectives of campus climate; the impact of discrimination on the health of First Nations; the retention of Aboriginal faculty in Canada; or, the experiences of Aboriginal faculty in Canadian universities. Accordingly, in this chapter, literature on minority and/or Native American faculty is included as relevant to the discussion here.

Deal (1975) argued that links between outcomes and school climate need to be researched, and if outcomes are any indicator of school climate, Aboriginal student success suggests that the climate in Canadian education institutions leaves much to be desired. As noted in the introduction, Aboriginal students certainly do not experience the same level of success as Canadians. For example, Frideres and Gadacz (2005) noted that approximately 6% of Aboriginal people between the ages of 17-34 enrol in post-

secondary education compared to the national rate of 12% among Canadians, and, that only 28% of Aboriginal students in post-secondary programs graduate. As well,

[L]anguage and cultural differences, as well as the effects of discrimination have not been adequately addressed and continue to place Aboriginal students at a serious disadvantage in the university system. (p. 123)

Plant's (2007) *Campus 2020* recommended strategies aimed at reducing the gap between these groups, it was also noted that Aboriginal education is now a priority at the top levels of the BC government.

One of the challenges of preparing to engage in this research was the lack of specific literature on the topic of creating healthy climates for Aboriginal students or faculty, so part of the process involved reviewing what is known about the topic of school climate and what literature might facilitate discussion of the topic in the Canadian context. While a review of outcomes is useful, it can only be inferred that perhaps climate is a pertinent factor. In this chapter, I will at the very least make a strong case for exploring the topic in specific reference to Aboriginal students and educators.

2.1 CLIMATE FOR DIVERSITY

As already noted, research on Aboriginal students' perspectives of campus climate is unavailable, although some authors do refer to campus climate as problematic for Aboriginal students (Archibald, 1995; Hampton, 1995; Monture-Angus, 1995; Cajete, 1994; Graveline, 1998; Larimore and McClellan 2005). For example, Larimore and McClellan noted that Native American students have identified racism, harassment, hostility and isolation on "predominantly white campuses" (p. 21). Hampton also referred to the academic environment as hostile.

In reference to minority students in US post-secondary institutions, Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen and Allen (1998) noted that the topic of race and campus climate was receiving increased attention and that there was “no common framework” (p. 279) that could guide needed changes in policy and practice. Hurtado’s explanation for this was that:

First, higher education leaders... and institutions have taken the *laissez-faire* approach that people will work things out interactively and that it is wrong to intervene too closely...Second...[there is] ambiguity in the role that colleges and universities perform as agents of socialization...education has not decided whether it should merely reflect our society or whether it should consciously shape the society. Third... policy initiatives that address faculty attitudes and behaviours have been implemented only with great hesitation and caution. Until now only the most problematic discriminatory behaviours of faculty have been addressed. Finally... the situation has been exacerbated by neglect. (p. 280)

Hurtado et al. developed a framework for instituting change, given that “any effort to redesign campuses with the goal of improving the climate for racial and ethnic diversity must be comprehensive and long term” (p. 296). This framework included the proposed interventions at policy and practice levels, as well as at the faculty level. In order to better analyze the framework, charting it proved helpful (See Chart 1 below.) Unfortunately, while the authors mention the normative influence of faculty, and the tendency to hesitate in confronting faculty, they also resisted suggesting faculty make any significant changes. Yet, “faculty culture and faculty incompetence” (Hamilton, 2006, p. 33) can negatively affect students. The minimal expectations of faculty are a concern, since faculty have a powerful role within these institutions as gatekeepers, decision makers, policy makers, and so on; after all, most committees at departmental and institutional levels are comprised of faculty. Particularly surprising, was the authors’ recommendation that faculty be given incentives to interact with students.

Table 1: Interpretation of Hurtado’s (1998) Framework

Dimension	Issues	Policy	Practice	Faculty
Institutional context – historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion	History of and resistance to desegregation Policies for the privileged Hostility	Affirmative action Examine and restructure policies which maintain benefits to privileged groups over other groups	Make diversity a fundamental value and acknowledge the history of exclusion Provide needed funding for all programs that support diversity and ensure they are accessible	
Structural diversity and its impact on students	Under-representation of non-dominant groups = tokenism, ongoing stereotypes and alienation	Examine use of standardized tests for admission- restructure admission policies Increase financial aid.	Increase representation and increase supports to these students. Increase opportunities for cross-cultural interactions	Student-centred environment
Behavioural dimension of climate and its impact on students	Absence of interracial contact Conflict Competitive environment	Provide opportunities for faculty-student interactions and incentives to faculty to engage with students	Interracial dialogue and interaction Provide mechanisms for conflict resolution Multicultural centres	Inclusion of racial/ethnic diversity in coursework Cooperative learning versus competition
Psychological dimension of climate and its impact on students	Perceptions of climate vary by racial/ethnic background and by position Discrimination Alienation Influence of peers Normative influence of faculty	Systematic programs and methods for uprooting myths and stereotypes Clear policies and formal processes to address harassment and discrimination	Ongoing assessment of institution Include everyone’s perspectives in decision making Ensure supports properly funded/ resourced Deal with faculty indifference	Mentoring Informal interactions with students

The need for institutional change cannot be understated, and Hurtado’s analysis is important since it provides a more holistic view of the dimensions that need to be considered – institutional, structural, psychological and behavioural. What were not

included were physical and spiritual dimensions, although doing so would surely be a more appropriate representation of the lived experiences of Aboriginal students and faculty. I move now to examine research focused on the impact of discrimination on health.

2.2 IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION ON HEALTH

A number of studies provide a strong case for the link between discrimination and health (Banks, Kohn-Wood & Spencer, 2006; Barnes, & Lightsey, 2005; Gee, Spencer, Chen & Takeuchi, 2007; King, 2005; Pieterse, & Carter, 2007; Whitbeck, McMorris, Hoyt, Stubben, & LaFramboise, 2002). While research on discrimination and health is devoid of Aboriginal voices, the negative effect of discrimination on health across non-dominant populations shows the importance of creating healthy environments for these groups in academia. Barnes and Lightsey (2005) define racist discrimination as

the behavioural manifestations of racism: actions designed to maintain own-group characteristics and favoured position at the expense of members of the comparison group. (p. 48)

King (2005) argued that “discrimination is bad for your health” (p.202) and sought to understand how discrimination leads to “psychological and physical problems” (ibid, p. 203). Her study examined the impact of the mental perceptions of 115 African American females who were asked to listen to an audiotape, and to imagine themselves in the scenario on the tape, where white male classmates “evaluated them unfavourably” (ibid, p. 205) with comments that targeted ethnicity/race and gender. The discriminatory comments led to high stress reactions in the African American females.

In reviewing literature on racism-related experiences, research by Pieterse and Carter (2007) focused on the relationship between general life stress, racism-related

stress, and psychological health among 220 African American males; the research indicated a definite negative correlation between psychological health and racism-related stress (Pieterse and Carter, 2007).

Other studies include Banks, Kohn-Wood and Spencer's (2006) examination of discrimination and psychological distress among 570 African Americans; the authors concluded that "perceived discrimination is directly related to symptoms of both depression and anxiety" (p. 555). As well, Gee (2007) obtained data from 2095 Asian Americans (including 3 subgroups: Vietnamese, Filipinos, and Chinese) in a study on discrimination and chronic health conditions. In this study, Gee concluded that there was a definite association between discrimination and chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular conditions, chronic pain – including headaches, and respiratory conditions.

Thus, research has supported King's (2005) argument – that discrimination has a negative impact on health. While there are no studies directly focused on the impact of discrimination on Aboriginal students, or Minority or Aboriginal faculty, it is unlikely that discrimination has no impact on them and there is a need to evaluate the impact of campus climate for Aboriginal students and faculty. I now review institutional strategies aimed at retention of Aboriginal students and faculty on campus, although these strategies have proven insufficient in improving campus climate and in eliminating discrimination.

2.3 WHAT ABOUT RETENTION?

Current institutional strategies to address inequities in minority education include a focus on retention, which is certainly an ongoing issue; however, it is my

position that the tendency to focus on numbers as indicators of successful diversity strategies is superficial at best. In fact, focusing on the numbers can be misleading, and inadequate in addressing school climate.

Unfortunately, there is a complete absence of research on retention of Aboriginal faculty in Canada, so after reviewing literature on retention of Aboriginal students, I will review literature on retention of minority faculty.

2.3.1 Retention of students

Chrisjohn (1998) argued that retention of students and completion rates are two pertinent factors that taken alone are insufficient in addressing the educational needs of Aboriginal students. Astin (1997) also argued that evaluating educational institutions by merely focusing on numbers and retention rates is woefully inadequate, and, is misleading in determining “institutional performance or effectiveness” (p. 658). As previously mentioned, if outcomes alone are considered, then it is easy to assume that the environment is negative for Aboriginal students. Certainly, it is important to be aware of the numbers, and while post-secondary institutions focus on issues of recruitment and increasing the number of Aboriginal students applying to and entering academia, retaining these incoming students will require a concerted effort at all levels of academia. Tinto (1987) suggested that the solution to the issue of retention “lies in the very foundations of the higher educational enterprise... ” (p. 3). He argued that that the key is to include students in all aspects of the institutions’ “social and intellectual life” (ibid); and, that both academic and social factors affect student retention.

Additionally, Tinto highlighted two issues: incongruence and isolation. Incongruence arises from the inability to meet students’ needs, and the failure to spark

and maintain interest. In a system with little cultural relevance, a lack of enthusiasm makes sense. Tinto also mentioned the issue of not feeling ‘part of’ the institution. What is significant in Tinto’s work is the focus on the institution rather than student characteristics. Rousey and Longie (2001) noted the historical tendency to blame the student for the problems they have in school, rather than blaming the institution, the latter of which perpetuates alienation and stereotypes of the inadequacy of non-dominant populations.

Kruger (1995) tracked 462 Native American students in colleges in the State of Washington, seeking to determine factors affecting persistence. The findings showed that age, gender, enrolment status, GPA, financial support and educational goals were all relevant; however, Kruger did acknowledge the need for qualitative research that explores topics such as ‘ reasons for their decisions to stay or depart,...institutional satisfaction,... [and] the effectiveness of [student support programs]’ (p. 63).

Significant in many studies is the issue of identity. Specifically, “achieving mastery and maintaining a strong cultural identity while resisting assimilation” (Larimore and McClellan, 2005, p. 21) is a challenge for Native American students. Chrisjohn (1998) argued that the ongoing agenda of assimilation is one factor negatively affecting retention. He suggested that all the efforts to increase retention need to occur in conjunction with the incorporation of Aboriginal worldviews and ways of being.

Also relevant to ways of being, two other writers focused on the familial orientation of Aboriginal students. Heavyrunner and DeCelles (2002) suggested that “replicating the extended family structure within the college culture enhances the students’ sense of belonging” (p. 29). As well, Rousey and Longie (2001) noted that

“social services, especially child care; incorporation of cultural-familial values, knowledge and traditions throughout the institutions’ operations; and location on the reservation” (p. 1492) are positively correlated with retention, due in part to congruency with Aboriginal values.

While the volume of literature concerning retention of Aboriginal students in post secondary education has increased, it “does not define the experience of First Nations education well from either the perspective of the student or that of the institution” (Archibald, J. & Urion, C., 1995, p.161). As well, there are various ways to assess retention. For example, in their comprehensive review of retention literature, Archibald and Urion provided an “arbitrary classification” (p.189) of factors related to retention:

1. Intrinsic personal characteristics: family support and background; having a personal goal; career maturity; determination; intelligence; maintenance of cultural identity; closeness to tradition; anxiety and stress levels; self perceptions; gender. 2. Institutional factors (i.e., influenced or mediated in the tertiary institution itself): financial aid; developmental academic preparation; overt institutional commitment; role models and First Nations faculty; high school counselling and university recruitment information; alienation; institutional climate; bases for admission; instruction; institutional commitment to student support; racism. 3. Environmental factors that originated outside the institution: financial aid; community stresses; the nature of K - 12 schooling; high school counselling and university recruitment information; culture conflict; threat to loss of cultural identity. (ibid, p. 189)

Alternatively, the Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation (CMSF) (2004) elaborated on historical, social, geographic and demographic, cultural, and individual/personal barriers to success among Aboriginal students, while Ball and Swartz (2001) looked specifically at the formal and informal support provided to students attending an early childhood education program delivered in Aboriginal communities.

While racism, alienation, and identity are discussed in the literature, these issues tend to be peripheral to the topic of retention. The comprehensive works of Archibald and Urion (1995), Swartz and Ball (2001), and CMSF (2004) elaborated on the multitude of strategies designed to increase the retention and success of Aboriginal students, but retention strategies seem to take a minimalist approach to dealing with racism, alienation or identity (Chrisjohn, 1998).

Chrisjohn described the range of interventions which focus on academic counselling and support – including study skills and research workshops, transition to campus programs, vocational testing, and “personal deficiency workshops (e.g., self-esteem building, anger/stress management, interpersonal relationships, etc.” (p. 3). Non-academic supports included transportation; day care facilities; space for studying and social functions; emergency funding; and advocacy. Strategies in the institutional realm reflect the extent of efforts to deal with racism:

1. Sensitivity/race awareness training for institutional faculty, administration, and staff;
 2. Sensitivity/race awareness training (often during orientation) for incoming mainstream students;
 3. Affirmative action hiring of faculty, administration, and staff, so that Indigenous students will encounter other indigenous people in positions of authority and responsibility in the post secondary setting;
 4. For some campuses, replacements/elimination of stigmatizing Indian mascots and logos;
 5. (Very rarely) modification of existing course content and curriculum to reflect indigenous viewpoints, and knowledge, history, and/or contributions.
- (Chrisjohn, 1998, p. 4)

This last list of strategies represents a conservative effort to address issues related to campus climate; however, I believe that without challenging the dominant ideology upon which the institution rests, such activities have limited impact on the overall environment, and may not affect racism, alienation or identity issues among Aboriginal students.

Rather than hacking away at the leaves of a weed, we need to dig down into the earth...to get down to the roots.

Fundamentally, Chrisjohn argued against a head count mentality, emphatically pointing out that “these procedures are uniformly averse to the educational objective of creating a place where Aboriginal individuals can pursue their intellectual interests in an atmosphere constitutive of and not destructive to, Aboriginal ways of life”(ibid). Chrisjohn further postulated that the solution can be found by fostering self-determination in a realistic manner “that does not divorce financial planning from educational program planning” (ibid, p. 10).

2.3.2 Retention of faculty

Literature on retention of Aboriginal faculty appears non-existent, although there is a growing body of literature coming from the United States that focuses on the retention of minority faculty. Nonetheless, the literature resonates to some extent with Aboriginal faculties’ experiences within academia, as will be seen in the review of Aboriginal/Native American faculty at the end of this chapter.

First, Rosser (2004) sought to identify the impact of work life and satisfaction on leavers. In a review of 10 American campuses, Rosser noted that minority faculty were more likely to leave their career or institution than non-minority faculty, and that “departmental climate, role model responsibilities, and chosen line of inquiry continue to be barriers to the retention and recruitment of minority faculty” (p. 304).

As well, Brinson and Kottler (1993) noted the importance of mentoring. These authors explored the issues of mentoring across cultures and provided recommendations for both mentors and their protégées; the authors suggested that minority faculty may not

be aware of all the barriers to success, and that these barriers may be mitigated through support from senior faculty. The authors also elaborated on the mentorship role that minority faculty provide to both minority and non-minority students, as well as the expertise they bring in preparing students to live in an increasingly diverse world.

Furthermore, a study of 73 accredited counselling programs in the U.S. focused on recruitment and retention strategies (Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley, 2003). In this study, the facilities that had an actual strategy for either recruitment or retention relied on mentorship (37/73), opportunities to develop courses (29/73), graduate assistance support (28/73), leadership opportunities (27/73), salary incentives (16/73), and a reduced teaching load (12/73) (p. 238). It is important to note that some of these opportunities placed additional demands on minority faculty that may or may not have enhanced their success, unless there was a willingness to adjust workload to reflect these responsibilities. Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley also noted the need to interview minority faculty on their experiences and perspectives.

Another issue that is particularly relevant to both Aboriginal faculty and students has to do with diversity within the group – intra-group differences (Sims, 2006; Piercy et al, 2005). Sims noted the diversity among, for example, Asians, and argued that ignoring heterogeneity within groups is detrimental to the drive to increase diversity within academia. As noted earlier, Canada's Aboriginal population is also diverse; thus, we can surmise that it is important to avoid narrow characterizations of minority or Aboriginal faculty.

Ultimately, none of the articles I found specifically discussed retention of Aboriginal faculty, although pertinent issues in retention of minority faculty included:

- higher turnover (Rosser, 2004; Piercy et al., 2005)
- need to address campus climate (Piercy et al., 2005; Alire, 2001)
- need for mentoring and support (Sims, 2006, Brinson and Kottler, 1993; Piercy et al., 2005)
- high service involvement (Sims, 2006; Holcomb-McCoy, 2003; Piercy et al., 2005)
- isolation (Sims, 2006)
- need for specific strategies for recruitment and retention (Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley, 2003; Brinson and Kottler, 1993)
- under-representation in tenure track positions(Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley, 2003; Brinson and Kottler, 1993; Piercy et al., 2005)
- non-recognition of legitimacy as academics (Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley, 2003; Brinson and Kottler, 1993)
- need for an adequate complaints process (Piercy et al., 2005)
- community demands (Holcomb-McCoy and Bradley, 2003)

While there is a gap in studies of retention of Aboriginal faculty, literature on minority faculty retention is somewhat relevant. I say somewhat because although the authors noted here mention a number of pertinent factors, Aboriginal faculty living in Canada face a complex political environment that requires extensive knowledge and skills; land claims, treaties, self-government, legislation of Aboriginal identity and rights, and Aboriginal child welfare. This context places Aboriginal people in a unique political situation that is far more complex than the issues immigrants face as members of the settler population.

So far, a review of campus climate and the effects of discrimination on health, as well as literature on retention, demonstrate the need to look a little deeper at other possible confounding factors that still affect aboriginals and faculty in the academic arena

– this requires a look at the foundations of the current relationship between Aboriginal people and European settlers.

2.4 The Colonial Context

Contextually, it would be inappropriate to ignore the colonial relationship between Aboriginal people and European settlers on this continent, which has had an enormous impact on every aspect of Aboriginal peoples' lives. A serious problem is the fact that the colonial agenda of control and assimilation still exists within Canadian society and that education continues to be centred in Euro-centric world views and ideology. The purpose here is to provide insight into historical dynamics relevant to the overall setting that Aboriginal students and faculty currently face.

With the arrival of Europeans on this continent, disease and warfare decimated First Nations populations. Dickason (1997) pointed out that in the fifteenth century, there were over 18 million Aboriginal people in North America, with populations being decimated by 93% in a mere century, due mainly to imported diseases such as small pox and measles. Barman, Hebert and McCaskill (1989) described the increasing settlement by Europeans, and the legislation of a paternalistic relationship - through the British North America Act of 1867- that gave the federal government responsibility for Aboriginal people. Although they had survived for thousands of years, the First People of this land became wards of the settler population who stripped them of everything they knew: their home lands, their culture, their languages, and so on.

For those who survived the aforementioned disease and warfare, misery would still permeate every aspect of their lives for centuries to come, through a multitude of policies aimed at assimilation, including the residential school system. The blatant

intention to assimilate Aboriginal people is evident in the words of Duncan Campbell Scott, who, in 1920 stated in the House of Commons that “Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department” (Haig-Brown, 1988, p. 31).

2.4.1 Education for assimilation

As early as 1620, there were attempts to establish boarding schools in order to Christianize and civilize Native children. The Recollets, then Jesuits, and later, the Ursuline Order of Nuns all participated in attempts to convert the ‘savage’ children. As the fur trade dwindled, and warfare with the United States subsided, Aboriginal people became less valuable to the Europeans (Frideres, J. & Gadacz, R., 2005). Meanwhile, “by the 1820’s the new Government of Canada found itself pressured by a flood of British homesteaders who demanded the Indians be somehow neutralized or removed from the land” (Fournier and Crey, 1997, p. 53). Two significant factors during this period were the increasing government support for boarding schools, and the development of federal legislation aimed at controlling Indians and their lands. First, the church and state developed a symbiotic relationship whereby the

the churches could harvest souls at government funded schools while meeting the shared mandate to eradicate all that was Indian in the children. The “Indian problem” would cease to exist. (ibid, pp. 53-54)

The schools garnered more support in 1867, with legislated government responsibility for Indian education. Then, in 1876, the “Indian Act effectively rendered all Aboriginal people children before the law, legal wards of the crown” (ibid, p. 54). The government was assuming control of Indians and their lands, and wanted to eradicate all that was Indian from these wards and aimed to remove the children from their “evil surroundings”

(ibid, p. 53). In fact, many children were literally ripped from their mothers' arms and forcefully separated from their siblings, families and communities for many years (Fournier and Crey, 1997; Miller, 1996). Physical abuse, sexual abuse, hard labour, and the lack of adequate training for survival within the changing fabric of society were common in residential schools. No less devastating was the tremendous loss of children: in some areas, as many as 69% of children never returned home (Fournier and Crey, 1997).

2.4.2 Impact of colonization

Aboriginal families today have as many as five generations of children reared in residential schools and the negative impact of residential schools and other assimilation projects cannot be understated. As alluded to in Chapter 1, in addition to overrepresentation in child welfare cases, 17% of all Canadian inmates are Aboriginal, poverty is rampant in many aboriginal communities, and life expectancy and overall health and well-being are significantly affected. Aboriginal people also experience higher rates of suicide, HIV/AIDS, diabetes, addictions, and harms due to violence (Frideres and Gadacz, 2005).

This predicament is not exclusive to Canada. In Australia for example, O'Donoghue's (1995) plenary speech at a Global Cultural Diversity Conference noted that:

Unfortunately [the colonial] past has a continuing legacy into the present. On all social indicators, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people remain the most disadvantaged of Australians. The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey, released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics earlier this year, clearly shows this inequality. The survey provides us with a disturbing picture of the plight of many indigenous Australians. For instance:

- Aboriginal people still have a life expectancy of 15 to 20 years less than other Australians;
- unemployment is four times that of other Australians and income levels are about half;
- the indigenous imprisonment rate is 27 times higher;
- Aboriginal infant mortality is three times higher;
- Our people are imprisoned by poverty, poor education and appalling health conditions. (para. 13)

The point here is that the negative impact of colonization is not exclusive or unique to Canada.

2.4.3 But, that was then...

While one might think it's all in the past, the colonial agenda continues.

Social Workers in the modern era are the new agents of colonization as they continue to remove Aboriginal children from their families at alarming rates and place them in non-Aboriginal homes; Aboriginal children in care (CIC) rose from less than a mere 1% in the 1950's to almost 50% in the millennium (Walmsley, 2005). What that means is that formal efforts at assimilation in residential schools have been replaced with an informal inculcation into mainstream society through rearing in non-Aboriginal homes.

The colonial agenda is also still perpetuated within the education system. Although the last of the residential schools closed in the 1980's, the structural oppression of First Nations people continues in the education system. Alfred (1999) specifically referred to the ongoing political agenda - assimilation - of educational institutions, proclaiming that to deny this reality "is to be blind to the state's persistent intent to maintain the colonial oppression of the First Nations of this land" (p. 1) and Cajete (1994) argued that:

alienation from mainstream approaches to education have been one of the consistent criticisms levelled against modern education by Indigenous students.....Most attempts at addressing these issues have revolved around refitting the problematic Indian student to the system that caused their alienation. Too often, the new student is viewed as the problem, rather than the unquestioned approaches, attitudes, and curricula of the educational system (p.189).

Campus climate, and the negative impact of discrimination on health, cannot be adequately resolved using retention strategies; the colonial context of Aboriginal/European relations must be addressed.

2.5 PERSPECTIVES OF ABORIGINAL STUDENTS AND FACULTY

In July 2003, Devon Mihesuah, editor of the *American Indian Quarterly (AIQ)*, sent out an advertisement on list-serves which included hundreds of people from Native Studies programs. The ad was asking for submissions for an upcoming issue of the *AIQ*. The *AIQ* was planning an issue on perspectives of Aboriginal students and faculty, as well as their allies, “in the Ivory Tower” (p. 46). Mihesuah posed questions about: personal experiences, activism, racism, discrimination and harassment, strategies for coping, and advice for other Aboriginal students and faculty; Mihesuah also asked for submissions by those who felt their experience was stress free. As well, the ad expressed interest in situations both within and outside the classroom, in situations related to hiring, to promotion/tenure, and to issues related to publishing. Mihesuah was perplexed by the number of responses, noting that one of the list-serves used had over 900 subscribers, and this was only one of a number of list-serves that the invitation was sent out on. Mihesuah speculated that possible reasons for the “miniscule” (ibid, p. 48) response included a reluctance to respond because of a multitude of fears and/or the inability to write about a traumatic experience while trying to recover from it. As well, Mihesuah postulated that

the desire to survive possibly meant that students either will not rock the boat, or, in order to maintain support from “powerful professors,” will not get involved with “Natives who are in trouble” (p. 49).

My purpose here is to explore more directly, perspectives of First Nations students and faculty within the academy. Evident is that needed interventions cut across all aspects of academic life and that Hurtado’s recommendations – as reviewed in Chapter 2 – are relevant, but not comprehensive enough to meet the needs of Aboriginal people.

2.5.1 Aboriginal students’ perspectives

I was confronted in the lounge by another student who, in quite a hostile manner, explained that perhaps one of his friends was not present because of me, and this made him angry because the only reason I could have reached the hallowed halls of the law school was by virtue of a special access program.....I had attended no so-called special program....I never bothered to explain this...only his perception of me would change. I would become not really “Indian like” but the exception. It feels rather like a vicious circle. I am either negatively labelled as either lesser by virtue of my attendance at a so-called special program...or exceptional and somehow fundamentally different from all the rest of my people. (Monture-Angus, 1995, p.102)

While there is a plethora of literature about First Nations people’s experiences in educational institutions, there is limited research that has explicitly sought the perspectives of First Nations students. This section briefly covers three studies in Canada that focus specifically on First Nations students’ perspectives. Each of these studies revealed ways of positively influencing the environment for Aboriginal students.

First, Archibald’s (1995) research included graduates of the University of British Columbia (UBC) (n=67), and students attending the Native Education Centre (NEC) (n= 33) in Vancouver BC. The feedback from students at these two sites indicated

that NEC was viewed more favourably due to the nature of the institution as an Aboriginal organization.

The Native Education Centre is an Aboriginal organization in Vancouver, BC which offers Adult Basic Education, a business program, a college preparation program, and various other one to two year programs which lead to either a diploma or certificate. An important feature of NEC is the incorporation ceremony and traditional activities such as singing and drumming. New students participate in a Welcoming ceremony, and the facility also does Cleansing and Burning Ceremonies.

Students provided insight into the benefits of being in NEC as an Aboriginal organization, which included: both formal and informal supports within and outside NEC; a comfortable learning environment; inclusion of culture; rigorous and relevant programs and firm but helpful regulations; and, a nurturing environment for personal growth and identity development. The barriers mentioned by the students at NEC included financial concerns and familial responsibilities.

The University of British Columbia (UBC) does have a variety of initiatives in place for Aboriginal students; however, it is a mainstream institution. Some of UBC's initiatives include:

- a library that primarily collects materials written from First Nations perspectives, such as, materials produced by First Nations, First Nations organizations, tribal councils, schools, publishers, researchers, writers, and scholars.
- The First Nations House of Learning, which provides a safe comfortable setting for students to gather for a variety of cultural activities, and also provides supports for students such as a student advisor, a counsellor, and computer room.
- A Native Indian Teacher Education Program, and the Musqueam Language program

Certainly, some effort is being made to better serve Aboriginal students at UBC, but I always remember the words of a colleague who points out that there are still more Totem Poles on the grounds of UBC than there are Aboriginal people on campus.

Anyway, 2/3 of students at UBC felt their educational needs were met and most reported that personal growth fostered the ability to “act as role models and to serve their communities” (p.12). Aboriginal services and support were also viewed positively. Barriers included initial perceptions of the university – many experienced negative or neutral experiences in the first few months of study and, had negative perceptions of UBC as an institution, in that, “on the whole, UBC as an institution was somewhat more discouraging than encouraging” (p. 11).

Students identified racism as a huge issue. Racist acts included belittling, depersonalizing (treating people as objects), tokenism, and assumptions of inferiority. Recommendations arising from Archibald’s research included increasing Aboriginal support services and Aboriginal staff and faculty; fostering Aboriginal identity and culture; developing a more humane and welcoming climate; and “work[ing] systematically to eradicate racism at all levels” (p.158). The students came up with specific recommendations related to racism, which included:

- hiring more Aboriginal faculty and staff;
- “decolonizing the mentality, the mind set, of governments that make policies based on assimilation”
- address ignorance and negative assumptions about Aboriginal epistemology;
- make courses on systemic racism and anti-racist pedagogy compulsory;
- prepare students to deal with racism constructively and foster self-esteem; develop policies to deal with racism. (pp. 158-159)

The perceptions of racism, and how that is manifested in everyday life, as noted above, stands in stark contrast to the sentiments of students attending NEC, where nurturing the students throughout their education positively impacted identity, esteem, and culture.

Brown's (2006) study expanded on these ideas, demonstrating the importance of physical, mental, emotional and intellectual growth in the learning environment. His study involved interviews with individuals who had been involved with The Native Training Institute (NTI) which was located in BC's Interior in the late 1970's to early 1980's. Through a partnership with the University College of the Caribou, the Institute offered a Human Services program to Aboriginal people. Brown wanted to document the history of the Institute, and to explore the holistic approach to education that the NTI offered.

His study provided insights on factors that blocked learning, which included:

- Negative body awareness and shame (the physical realm)
- Negative self-concept, negative view of intelligence, and conflict about the validity of Aboriginal knowledge (the mental realm)
- Spiritual pain and confusion, and negative self-image (the spiritual realm) and
- Self-hatred, negative self-esteem, and pain (the emotional realm) (ibid, p. 106).

Brown argued that a holistic process of learning can in fact enhance learning by removing/healing the blocks that Aboriginal students may carry, and includes "strengthened learning identity, emotional healing, [and] Aboriginal knowledge... [as well as] self-determination, release of negative emotions about will and potential, [and] consciousness of will" (p.107).

As with Archibald's research, Brown provided a solid rationale for considering the environment Aboriginal students experience in education. The examples

of students at NEC and in the NTI program showed how the incorporation of Aboriginal culture and world-views provides an environment conducive to learning and achieving success.

Lastly, Fire's (2006) research with graduate students at the UBC School of Social Work led to recommendations for post-secondary institutions. Included was the need to participate in both reflection and action in reference to transforming the structure and power dynamics at play within academia. Fire indicated barriers related to access to resources and to cultural knowledge and epistemology, but also discussed social supports needed to ensure success for Aboriginal students. Additionally, Fire alluded to the need to incorporate holism within education, by allowing for inclusive and integrated curriculum and pedagogy, congruency between action and words, healing and wellness among faculty and students, collaborative rewarding relationships with elders, egalitarianism, and making room for spirituality and ceremony. Lastly, Fire supported the development of opportunities to increase capacity in research through mentorship, and to increase overall community capacity through professional development.

These studies indicated that in order to better serve Aboriginal students interventions must at least focus on infrastructure, human resources, core values, and formal and informal processes in education. In terms of infrastructure, student supports; 'inclusion of community; and, formal, accessible, and productive mechanisms to address racism,' are all pertinent. Human resource needs include attaining a faculty and staff complement reflective of communities being served. An examination of core values and of processes and policies that privilege students by race and/or class is required, in addition to the need to address Eurocentrism and incorporate Aboriginal epistemology.

Lastly, attention to formal and informal processes must include ways to support students' Aboriginal identity and cultures, and to enhance self-perceptions and self-determination, while maintaining academic rigor within a supportive environment.

2.5.2 Perspectives of Aboriginal faculty

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide an in depth discussion of the complex issues facing Aboriginal faculty, an overview of the issues identified in the literature is pertinent to a discussion of creating healthy environments for them to work in. Despite the dearth of research on Canadian Aboriginal faculty, American Indian (AI) faculty in the US have written about their own experiences in the Ivory Tower. Topics include: perceptions related to identity, teaching, supporting students, racism and hostility, recruitment and retention, tenure and promotion, and mentorship. They also provide recommendations to other Aboriginal academics.

2.5.2.1 Perceptions related to identity

That identity is relevant was noted in Stanley's (2006) research of 27 faculty of colour, which included American Indians. Stanley noted that "negotiation of one's identity in the academic setting is a continuous process" (p. 716). Gareau (2003) described being objectified and the imposition of an identity, versus the negotiation of identity:

I often ended up classified in a variety of ways that conformed with the dominant ideology's stereotypes of Native women.....as the Native woman with 'traditional' values, untainted by my academic experience, ...this ultimately left me not as academically qualified as my peers...I was an interesting 'token' to be observed but not taken too seriously...at other times....I did not fit into the presumed anthropological stereotypes of what constitutes a Native woman. I [apparently] did not 'act Indian' because I made them uncomfortable

when I opposed the colonization and oppression with the education system. 'Acting Indian' meant that I should know my place as a token and be subservient to my superiors and grateful for their benevolence. Consequently, if I disagreed with a colleague's imperialist position I would find myself relegated to the role of an imposter and academically dismissed. Either way, I became an object that colleagues or students who belonged to the dominant social structure had the power to classify...to use or dismiss me as they chose (p. 197-98).

Russell (2003) and Mihesuah (2002) also spoke of expectations to conform, and Russell noted that "The message is to assimilate quickly and quietly, at least until tenure time. Publish in the mainstream, and if you must publish Indian Studies, look...from the colonial position rather than the tribal position" (p. 411). Mihesuah stated that "some indigenous scholars have been told they must 'conform' by their department committees...those who do conform become the 'Indian experts' cited by white scholars because they write and behave like them" (p. 147-8). Both of these quotes indicated the rewards associated with denial of identity and/or beliefs, worldview, and so on.

Another issue related to recognition of authority was noted by Gercken-Hawkins (2003) who recalled being told "in all seriousness – to straighten my hair and work on a tan before any interviews. Thinking [this colleague] was joking I asked if I should put a feather in my hair, and she replied with a straight face that a feather might be a bit much, but I should at least wear traditional Native jewellery"(p. 200) . The inference was that her image – as the appropriately adorned 'other' - could somehow validate her authority. Gercken-Hawkins also described being confronted by students about the fact that

We just want you to know that you're going to have someone in your Native American literature class that will have a problem with you teaching it since you're white. But we told her maybe you only look white. (p.201)

Although her authority was questioned by students, she pondered: “ How outraged can I get at the students who look for that authority of experience when I know the universities that looked to hire me searched for the very same” (ibid, p. 202).

2.5.2.2 Perspectives on teaching

Another of the Aboriginal faculty’s articles discussed challenges related to teaching. Stein (1994) suggested that while teaching is the area where American Indian (AI) faculty receive the most reward and it is an area where they contribute significantly to diversity requirements, the down-side is the tendency to over-commit themselves, and to have heavier expectations placed on them – in terms of teaching and course development, as well as being the ‘experts’ on Aboriginal people, all of which cause added stress. Furthermore, the priority or value of teaching in promotion and tenure decisions is seen as minimal.

Another concern relates to the complexities of providing an Indigenous perspective. I (Harris, 2002) have previously noted that there a number of challenges in fulfilling these expectations because: the western world view is unquestioned and dominates approaches to teaching, and curriculum; use of the English language hinders transmission of Aboriginal knowledge; there are also difficulties related to what knowledge is viewed as valid.

As well, Mihesuah (2003b) discussed the challenges related to teaching Native Studies, and described the hostile attitudes of non-Native students, who often expect an education that does not disturb their sense of comfort and safety, as members of a privileged class of citizens. In bringing forward topics such as colonization and racism, Mihesuah argued that non-Native students think they are being “force-fed information

about Natives” (p. 459); and noted past evaluations which included accusations of “making things up” (ibid). Referring to these negative reactions from students, Hernandez-Avila (2003) noted that faculty do not have to put up with inappropriate behaviour, and recommended that faculty keep a paper trail.

2.5.2.3 Supporting students

Another important theme related to supporting AI students. Tippeconnic Fox (1995) elaborated on the time-consuming role of ‘Native American’ faculty as role models, mentors and advisors. Stein (1994) argued that although AI faculty want to help as much as they can, such activities add to the stresses they already face.

2.5.2.4 Racism and hostility

Racism and hostility were both discussed among Aboriginal academics (White and Sakiestewa, 2003; Hernandez-Avila, 2003; Monture-Angus, 1995; Bishop, 2005; Cajete, 194; Nunpa,2003: Gareau, 2003; and Mihesuah, 2002, 2003, and 2003b; Gardner, 2000; Hampton, 1995).

We see these institutions as founded upon and sustained by institutional racism... which occurs without the presence of conscious bigotry...Racism maintains a tenacious grip on our cultural imagination through the beliefs of society’s most enlightened and prestigious scholars. (White and Sakiestewa, 2003 , p434)

As well, Nunpa (2003) noted that there is a tendency to prefer to hear a non-Native “talk about Native or Dakota history or issues instead of a Dakota academic talk about Dakota people” (Nunpa, 2003, p. 357), while Hernandez-Avila (2003) noted that she has “been knocked down many a time by the academy, by arrogant racist faculty (p. 240). Monture-Angus (1995) described the impact of the racism she experienced:

At the same time that I was feeling intense anger at the university's ignorance of the poisoned environment I was working in, I was still busily trying to understand the hostility and racism that seeped off the pages of the examinations....I was already feeling bad enough about the class and the examinations, when the class evaluations arrived....I was told that I was not objective and that the course was about political opinions and propaganda, not law...In almost every other course in the law school, only the Euro-Canadian perspective is taught. It is never discussed as a perspective but as rational and reasoned truth..... When another worldview is introduced, it is written off as emotional and not objective ...comments also focused on the students' disgust because I had made them feel guilty. I cannot accept that it is my responsibility to carry the guilt of the oppressor (or to silence myself for the sole purpose that the oppressor will not feel badly)....The contradiction between the expression I found in some of the examinations and the standard I was held accountable to has me half-stunned still. (Monture-Angus, p. 62-63)

In terms of hostility, Mihesuah noted territoriality, jealousy, viciousness, fear of being labelled a troublemaker, fear of negative promotion and tenure decisions, and recognition that "complaining only leads to more prejudicial behaviour" from others (2003, p.48). Furthermore, Mihesuah (2002) noted that "oftentimes we are told not to take the attacks of colleagues personally, but how can we not take it personally when racist and direct harassments are made" (p. 148). Russell (2003) also spoke of the difficulty of remaining detached from such behaviour. "I tried to keep my head down but ... like Coyote I had to fight when cornered" (p. 401).

2.5.2.5 Recruitment and retention

Stein (1994) argued that retention of American Indian faculty is frustrated by the ongoing challenges in higher education settings and that more must be done to hire and retain them. While there are no studies on retention of Aboriginal faculty, as noted earlier, the articles reviewed did discuss the issue of hiring. For example, while the numbers of Aboriginal hires are increasing in the US, (Stein, 1994), American Indians are still under-represented as faculty or administrators (Tippeconnic Fox, 2005). Such

statistics in Canada were not found, although it is significant that in this study, 6 participants hold administrative positions in addition to their role as faculty members.

Stein (1994) also argued that there is a myth that Aboriginal people can pick and choose their desired positions. Rather, “the Chair an Indian ...gets depends not only on how well you have learned to play the game, but on how many compromises of spirit and authenticity you are willing to make to appease the political, bureaucratic, and industrial controllers of the game” (Cajete, 1994, p. 190). Stein listed justifications for not hiring as including: applicants are either not qualified, not available, want too much money, or “wouldn’t want to live here [and besides] we’re doing everything we can” (p102). As well, White and Sakeistewa (2003) argued that often there are no funds earmarked/committed for such hiring, and/or that there is a tendency to take a ‘business as usual approach’ which fails to appreciate the value of the experience these applicants bring. Lastly, Stein noted that institutional affirmative action offices often require that departments interview any qualified minority candidate, a mandate that places Indian candidates repeatedly into interview pools where they have little chance of being hired. Ultimately, Stein argued that many American Indian faculty end up teaching due to circumstances versus planning to go that route, and that prospective Aboriginal faculty viewed connections and ability to cultivate members of search committees as critical to success in hiring.

2.5.2.6 Tenure and promotion (T&P):

In terms of tenure and promotion, a number of issues are pertinent. Mihesuah (2002) argued that “it is common knowledge that biased and stacked merit and promotion committees will discriminate based on race and gender, but they will also punish those

with political ideologies that challenge the status quo. Therefore, it is commonplace for Natives to receive unfair merit, promotion, and tenure evaluations (p. 147). As well, Stein noted the difficulty in overcoming perceptions that these faculty are not qualified, or that their qualifications/credentials are inferior. Interestingly, 67% of non-minorities believe there is no barrier to T&P for minorities and that being a minority is an advantage – while 78% of minority faculty perceive barriers (Stein, 1994).

Calhoun (2003) went so far as to question whether she had to deny her identity to achieve tenure, but argued that “the heart of our identities lies within our alliances in a communal society. To remove ourselves from that is to destroy our identity as individuals and to attempt to destroy our communities” (p. 134).

A major issue relates to marginalization of research and the sense that AI faculty have to work harder than their colleagues in order to earn respect as scholars (Tippeconnic Fox, 2005, Stein, 1994). Russell (2003) elaborated on how his publications, the number of which far exceeded his peers, were discounted because: articles were not reviewed anonymously, a book chapter is not refereed, publication in a regional journal doesn't count, or “because ‘it was about pedagogy’ ... the crowning blow, however, was friendly advice to ‘lay off that Indian stuff’ because it is irrelevant to ‘criminal justice’” (p. 402).

Another issue in terms of T&P relates to community service and institutional expectations (Tippeconnic Fox, 2005). Stein noted the excessive demands placed on AI faculty, including administrative responsibilities, although such activities are often not rewarded and may affect progress in obtaining promotion and tenure since “it is still ‘publish or perish’ on most campuses (Stein, 1994). As well, AI faculty often have

extensive community commitments and/or expectations outside the institution which are not valued (Stein, 1994; Hernandez-Avila, 2003).

2.5.2.7 Mentorship

Bauser, Auletta, and Jones (1993), Brinson and Kottler (1993), Calhoun (2003), Piercy et al (2005), Stein (1994), and Stanley (2006) all discussed the importance of mentorship. As well, Alire (2001) proposed a formal 'support program' for minority faculty, which was comprised of strategies I interpreted as the kind of support often provided by mentors, such as advice related to various aspects of academic life, including teaching and research, as well as accessing funding, or interpreting policy. Stein noted that it's easier to get a mentor prior to being hired, that those without mentors are less likely to succeed, and that a lack of mentorship may increase stress.

2.5.3 Notes to other academics

As noted by White and Sakeistewa, "you cannot survive alone" (p. 439). Some of the authors provided recommendations to other Aboriginal faculty; for example, include laughter, and know the policies and how the system works(Hernandez-Avila). "Be clear about why you are choosing to work in a colonial institution, [and] set clear boundaries" (White and Sakiestewa, 2003, p. 438). Stein (1994) argued that overall, fostering success among AI faculty requires: institutional commitment, mentorship, equality in research, and realistic expectations regarding time.

I remain within the walls of the academy, I teach and write from within spaces that I acknowledge as deeply troubled politically, economically, ideologically, morally, and ethically (White and Sakiestewa, 2003, p.438).

2.6 SUMMARY

In this chapter a review of literature on campus climate and diversity indicated extensive issues for non-dominant populations, not the least of which includes the negative impact of discrimination on health. Importantly, Aboriginal perspectives are not represented in these areas of research which validates the need for this particular research project. Furthermore, retention strategies are not sufficient to improve participation and outcomes for Aboriginal students and faculty; in order to understand why retention is not enough it is useful to consider the colonial context of Aboriginal relations with the European settlers.

The desire to dominate Aboriginal people and their lands formed the crux of the colonial agenda, hence, the rationale for residential schools. Unfortunately, the colonial agenda continues. Of significance is that since control of education was usurped from Aboriginal people hundreds of years ago, they have been consistently exposed to the hegemony of Euro-centric worldviews and ideology.

A review of perspectives of Aboriginal students in post-secondary institutions further validates the argument regarding the negative impact of the academic milieu. I concluded that there is a need to deal with infrastructure, human resources, Euro-centric domination, and formal and informal processes in education.

While the perspectives of Canadian Aboriginal faculty are absent in the literature, Native American faculty face a multitude of barriers which are relevant to the challenges faced by Aboriginal faculty in Canadian SSW. The authors reviewed also provided helpful advice for their peers and for institutions interested in supporting Aboriginal faculty members.

This chapter provided insight into issues related to the overall environment in universities, and indicated the need for institutional change to facilitate success among Aboriginal students and faculty. A closer look at what's happening in Schools of Social Work is also needed. The next chapter includes a review of Aboriginal Social Work education in Canada, and a framework developed for a First Nations Bachelor of Social Work program.

CHAPTER 3.0 SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND FIRST NATIONS

First Nations people are striving towards control over human and social services to their communities, and towards self-determination. These goals require development of the capacity to do so, and as such, the demand for post secondary education is growing. The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, to understand efforts aimed at providing a Social Work education relevant to First Nations and, the challenges affecting progress; and second, to consider an alternative model which responds to community needs.

First, a review of the trajectory of Social Work education for First Nations, and of issues related to providing an appropriate program, indicates that the status quo is insufficient, and that efforts to institute meaningful change have been happening for the last 30 years (Alcoze, T. & Mawhiney, A.M., 1988; Castellano, M.B., Stalwick, H. & Wien F., 1986; Harris, B., 2003; McLaughlin, A., 1982; Pace, J.M. & Smith A.F.V., 1990; Stalwick, H., 1986). There are a multitude of factors affecting progress and efforts to overcome such challenges include application of an evolving model for a First Nations Bachelor of Social Work (FN BSW) program - a model which will be revisited in the analysis of the data in this research.

3.1 EVOLUTION OF ABORIGINAL SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION IN CANADA

Efforts to affect meaningful change in Canadian Social Work programs have been slow, as evidenced by the continuing call for change over the last 30 years.

Although not an exhaustive account, below are a few pertinent events which provide a useful background for discussion of current challenges in providing relevant programs for First Nations people. Importantly, Canadian Aboriginal people are not alone in their quest for changes in Social Work education.

One significant event occurred when the Donner Foundation funded a project at the University Of Victoria School Of Social Work. The focus of the project was to determine the needs of Aboriginal students interested in Social Work education and assess the feasibility of developing decentralized BSW programs. In relation to these efforts, the Donner Foundation also funded a project focused on Native content in Social Work curriculum, and two possible avenues for change were recommended - incorporation of First Nations content into all courses, or development of new courses (McLaughlin, 1982). New courses would incorporate: First Nations history and current trends/issues; cultural traditions and the social/political/economic forces relating to policies/practices for Native people; and, skills related to living in a multi-cultural environment.

As well, in a landmark event in 1986, the University of Regina hosted a curriculum review of Native Social Work education in Canada (Stalwick, 1986), which resulted in extensive recommendations for changes to curriculum and to teaching in an Aboriginal context. Among these recommendations were the need to challenge Euro-centrism in curriculum; to incorporate Aboriginal world views and realities; to support

self determination; to draw on kinship and community strengths; and, to move beyond the social control functions of Social Work.

Additionally, Christensen's (1994) comprehensive study of Aboriginal students in Social Work Programs noted that Euro-centric biases in theoretical frameworks and practice models are perceived when they "a) do not fit the realities of the lives of Aboriginal people, and b) fail to recognize specific Aboriginal Social Work policies, skills, practices, and experiences" (p.18). Acceptance of Aboriginal world views is beginning (Pace and Smith, 1990; Castellano, Stalwick, and Wein, 1986); however, the tendency to assume superiority of mainstream programs over innovative initiatives geared to meet community needs is problematic.

As well, a Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work Task Force (1991) identified institutional racism in course content; Westhues, LaFrance, & Schmidt (2001) conducted an analysis of Canadian Social Work education, and called for culturally relevant education; and, Sinclair (2004) noted the deficiencies of cross-cultural education in meeting First Nations community needs, and argued for a decolonizing approach which incorporates Aboriginal epistemology. Lastly, I (Harris, 2006) conducted a survey of the prominent textbooks used in the core curriculum of BSW programs in Canada and the US, and of peer-reviewed articles on Social Work practice with First Nations; my conclusion was that current social work curriculum does not promote social justice, and that, in this context, a social justice orientation in Social Work curriculum would require: privileging Aboriginal epistemology and world views; fostering self-determination; and engaging in a process of decolonization.

The failure to adequately address curriculum needs in Aboriginal Social Work education is not just a Canadian issue: such concerns are echoed by Indigenous groups in other parts of the world. In Australia, for example, the priority of addressing Euro-centrism in Social Work curriculum led to an action research project focused on indigenizing the curriculum (Gair, S., Miles, D., & Thomson, J., 2005). As well, Voss, White Hat, Bates, Lunderman, & Lunderman, (2005) discussed efforts to alter Social Work education in American Tribal colleges, and noted that China is also seeking to indigenize Social Work curriculum to better meet their own needs.

In Canada, Aboriginal peoples' persistence is creating change. First, the Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work (CASSW) instituted accreditation policies and standards related to Social Work education and Aboriginal people (Pace & Smith, 1990) (although I have admittedly not been able to determine any serious repercussions to Schools that do not meet those standards). Second, there are at least two Aboriginal people involved directly with CASSW – one on the CASSW Board and one on the accreditation committee. As well, some Schools of Social Work do include Aboriginal people on Advisory committees. Third, a review of curriculum from seven universities (Harris, 2002) indicated that many Schools of Social Work currently require at least one course on First Nations issues.

3.2 A CLOSER LOOK AT THE CHALLENGES IN INSTITUTING CHANGE

In spite of shortcomings, Schools of Social Work are being approached with requests to provide Aboriginal communities with Social Work education since “education is now thought to be the link between service delivery and control” (O’Brien and Pace, n.d., p.2). However, Castellano et al. (1986) noted the scepticism of Aboriginal leaders

who are “acutely aware of the dangers of turning over entirely to academics the training of personnel who will occupy sensitive and influential positions in the communities” (p. 176). Prominent is the desire to ensure that the new graduates are better equipped than their predecessors “whose interventions have ranged from ineffectual to destructive” (ibid. p. 176).

The impetus for change is widespread, and the trend among communities approaching SSW is to access training that is culturally appropriate (Albert, 1997) and culturally relevant (O’Brien and Pace, n.d.). Obviously, there are complex issues that impact on the development of an appropriate and relevant Aboriginal Social Work education. For example:

- There is no model is applicable to all indigenous communities (Castellano et al., 1986),
- The structure of existing programs and coursework is problematic (Dickerson and Neary, 1999); (Christensen, 1994; CASSW, 1991)
- Bridging mainstream and First Nations perspectives is difficult (Dickerson and Neary, 1999; Zapf, 1999)
- There is a failure to recognize and respectfully acknowledge the legitimacy of Aboriginal knowledge (Bruyere, 1988),
- There is a lack of awareness or knowledge about First Nations (Christensen, 1994),
- There is hostility within the general academic milieu (Monture-Angus, 1995)

First, a difficulty in developing a model applicable to any Indigenous community is affected by the fact that “There is no such thing as a single ‘Indian reality’” (Sparks, 2000, p. 260). Castellano et al. (1986) noted the diversity of Aboriginal cultures, “languages, and local customs, [as well as their] political priorities,” (p. 170). For example, in British Columbia, there are approximately two hundred different Bands, with

their own political structures, and in Canada, there are eleven different language groups, representing over 50 different cultural groups (Frideres and Gadazc, 2005).

Second, the structure of existing programs is problematic. For example, Western individualism, and “the Anglo-American view often focuses on compartmentalization of knowledge [and engages in] learning techniques as linear thought processes. [Both] cause difficult[ies] for both students and faculty” (Dickerson and Neary, 1999, p. 63). In fact, “the ‘fragmentary self-world view’ of the Western world is detrimental to Aboriginal epistemology” (Ermine, p.111).

Also pertinent is that the present structure perpetuates a Euro-centric approach to Social Work and that “cultural bias and Euro-centric text and practice models make culturally relevant learning difficult” (Christensen, 1994, p. 27). Christensen (1994), Green (1999) and Albert (1997) further noted the need to analyze and reshape Social Work practice models, and to critique existing ideology. Rossiter (1993) also alluded to the difficulty in teaching from a critical perspective within a structure that rejects any attempt to deconstruct the role of Social Work in maintaining “state regulation ... what critiques do exist are marginalized as radical” (p. 81) and are usually relegated to community development (meaning not *real* Social Work).

Furthermore, Castellano et al. (1986) alluded to the “adaptations in education required by the work situation for which students of Native Social Work are being prepared” (p. 167). Graduates who enter Aboriginal communities, and work in Aboriginal organizations generally find themselves with much higher levels of responsibility due to the lack of capacity within these communities. For example, in an off-campus program currently delivered in a local Aboriginal community, many of the students are already

program coordinators or directors. As well, the community needs assessment for the program indicated that the requirements of Social Workers in that community include mid-level and senior management skills, as well as the political savvy to deal with four levels of government: federal, provincial, municipal government and, internal Band administration and government (Harris , 2003) (see Appendix 4). Current BSW programs simply provide entry level skills, so they do not prepare students for these levels of responsibility.

Third is the challenge inherent in attempting to build a bridge between mainstream and First Nations perspectives. As there is no uniform model within which a program could be developed, it is difficult to integrate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal world views in curriculum (Zapf et al. 2003). This results in challenges for students; Dickerson and Neary (1999) stated that

[Native Americans] who enter the health professions have a great deal of conflict, because the traditional health care system that we are accustomed to is often in conflict with their health system...The challenge is to help that student to bridge that gap, while they are in the educational system, so that they are prepared when they go back to the reservation.” (p. 62)

Zapf (1999) described the impact on students of having to “‘flip’ between their Indian mind and their Western mind, [which leads to] a lack of confidence in gaining proficiency in either system” (p. 330).

Zapf (1999) also elaborated on an approach used to find a balance between the two cultures, through co-teaching by a Native and a non-Native instructor, and described the impact of allowing students to observe the instructors’ attempts to take responsibility for this aspect of learning: “[t]hey watched us sort out differences and similarities between our two approaches—a process which was sometimes painful, and sometimes

very funny” (p. 330). It is incumbent upon educators to think of ways to bridge the gap between mainstream and First Nations perspectives without leaving it to students to figure it out for themselves. Otherwise, students suffer a double curriculum, in order to adequately prepare themselves for work in their communities.

Certainly, alternative and relevant teaching methods and social work practice methods are out there. One powerful strategy for teaching and learning, as well as for social work practice with First Nations, is the talking circle (Hart, 1996, 1997 and 2002; Graveline, 2000). The talking circle approach – where everyone gets a chance to voice their thoughts/ideas - can positively contribute to processes of teaching/learning, and/or to issues arising within practice situations. Such approaches need to be incorporated more widely in Schools of Social Work, and in Social Work practice.

Fourth is the issue of acknowledging the legitimacy of Aboriginal epistemology (Alfred, 1999; Hampton, 2000; Ermine, 1995; Graveline, 1998; and Mullaly, 2002). Christensen (1994) for instance, noted that the socio-political expertise of Aboriginal communities is not recognized in SSW. Certainly, there has been some recognition of the legitimacy of Aboriginal epistemology. For example, Pace and Smith (1990) described how, in the Micmac BSW program at Dalhousie (during the 1980’s), inclusion of elders and community leaders were “an integral part of all courses... [although traditional Aboriginal knowledge] has not yet been recognized as equivalent to University qualifications” (p. 116). Castellano et al. (1986) acknowledged this dilemma and suggested that “part of the tension derives from the conservation of academic institutions which tend to equate ‘different’ with ‘inferior’Native people voice similar

concerns; that the designation ‘Native’ may imply lower standards in a program” (p. 174).

Regardless of these negative attitudes, Graveline (1998) argued that “using materials that support and validate knowledge and experiences outside of ‘school knowledge’ can work to diffuse the power of hidden curriculum” (p. 121) and Monture-Angus (1995) discussed the unacceptability of not providing Aboriginal content in coursework. Bruyere (1988) adamantly expressed the “need for schools to make room for different ways of knowing and according those ways the equal respect they deserve” (p. 169).

Recognition of the validity of Aboriginal epistemology is crucial, and not to be confused with validating Aboriginal world views - this is not just an issue of semantics. Aboriginal people do not need to have their views validated by non-Aboriginals, but instead, require acknowledgement of the validity of their worldviews and epistemology. In Schools of Social Work, acknowledging the legitimacy of Aboriginal epistemology and worldviews means including Aboriginal knowledge in curriculum.

An apparent lack of awareness, or lack of knowledge about First Nations, is the fifth challenge. Christensen (1994) pointed out that this lack of awareness “perpetuate[s] ignorance and racism [and] creates an environment that is perceived as alienating” (p. 27). It is important to note that this lack of awareness and knowledge does not extend only to educators; Green (1999) mentioned “the strong desire [of First Nations] to relearn traditional methods of governing their own nations, [and to relearn] their language, ceremony and stories” (p. 21).

Christensen argued that “everyone must learn about the historical and contemporary situations of First Nations people” (p. 18), while Green (1999) argued that each individual must be responsible for their own learning. Audre Lorde (1983) also rejected educating mainstream, suggesting that taking on the responsibility to educate the dominant society is a diversion, and “a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought” (p. 100).

Lastly, Hampton (1995) argued that “the structure of North American education is hostile in its institutional racism” (p. 38). Monture-Angus also described the racist hostility she experienced as a faculty member. My own experience is that this hostility, which often goes undressed, is a source of major discomfort and stress.

This brief review of issues/challenges that affect the ability of Schools of Social Work to better meet community needs indicates the complexity of realizing culturally relevant education for First Nations. Nonetheless change is possible, and alternatives are being implemented.

3.3 AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

It is useful to consider a community response to what constitutes appropriate Aboriginal Social Work education. Between 2000, and 2002, I participated in and reported on extensive community consultations that led to the development of a framework which would guide the provision of a satellite program delivered off-campus in an urban Reserve community (Harris, 2002). The four guiding themes of that framework - community, context, care and culture will be used in Chapter 7, to analyze the findings of this study. Below, a statement of ‘Philosophy and cardinal values’ inherent in the model precedes a visual representation of the framework (Harris, 2003).

PHILOSOPHY / CARDINAL VALUES

In the east is a time of new beginnings, of the dawn, and of spring time. It is the physical realm, but is also the place of the eagle. The program will be physically located in the community, and must have the physical presence of the community, through the elders. The eagle has powerful vision, and, from great heights, can see fish beneath the ice in a stream. The program must have a vision that is created by the community; a long range vision indicative of the eventual direction of the community: empowerment, self-government and self-determination.

Another important recommendation is that an advisory board of community members be established to assist in ensuring that the program is/will meet the community's needs. Concrete mechanisms for addressing concerns must also be in place, through the development of a protocol agreement or contract. This will allow the program to be dynamic and to evolve, and will include both formative and substantive / summative evaluation mechanisms.

As we head towards the south, we move into the realm of summer, and of learning. The south is the place of the mouse, a very inquisitive creature. We must think about context. We are required to think about the past, the present and the future as these relate to history, culture and traditions. As well, the appropriate knowledge and skills required to fulfil the community's own vision must be taught. There must be a balance between the big picture and the practical attainment of knowledge and skills.

We also need to think about learning as healing, about process and content. The distinction between process and content relate to the fact that process learning provides context. Significantly, cultural disconnection and historical trauma are triggered by new knowledge.

In fact, the program must be integrated, and "be an exemplar of contextualized learning... [in which] skills [taught are] appropriate to Squamish Nation community, clients, culture, class and background," without invalidating or ignoring process.

Thus we are lead to the west, to the fall and the evening time; the place of the bear. This is the place of emotions and of the need for care. Here we are faced with the need to nurture the elders, the students and the faculty. Students need mentoring, and a supportive and cooperative

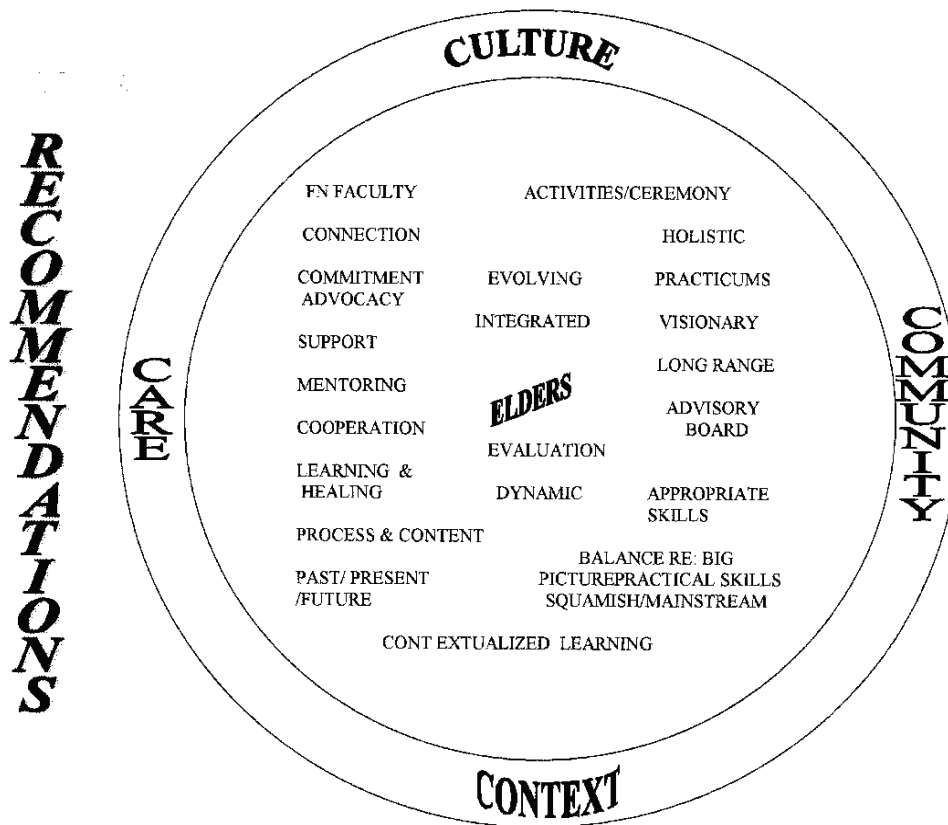
(versus competitive) environment. Importantly, very strong culturally based student support services are required, with instructors actively involved. Relationships between students and faculty need to be genuine and non-adversarial, with faculty being willing to participate in community activities. Faculty must have curriculum and instructional support, and have mechanisms for facilitating the integration of curriculum.

Commitment and advocacy provide a supportive milieu within which the program can thrive. Thus, a strong commitment from [the U] is critical.

As we move to the north, we find the raven, the darkness of night and the place of spirituality. This is also the time of winter. The winter snow reflects the light of gleaming stars as culture begins to shine among the original peoples of Turtle Island. Thus, a strong connection to First Nations agencies and associations is desirable, as is the goal of attaining First Nations faculty. Practicums in the First Nations community will be important. Additionally, the program must be holistic, and rooted in Squamish Nation culture and activities.

Central to these recommendations is the place of elders, in the centre of the Medicine Wheel. The elders will play a critical role in many aspects of this program, be it as advisors, teachers, mentors, or support people. The elders represent the community, and can provide context, as well as providing support and a cultural foundation. Importantly, the elders, too, will require support as they provide that foundation. Certainly, their involvement must be real and meaningful (p. 81-82).

Figure 1: FN BSW Framework (ibid, p. 83)



This framework could influence multiple layers of the climate in SSW, although one disadvantage (or not) is that the model exists outside the SSW where it was developed - in an off-campus satellite program. Nonetheless, the reason it is particularly relevant is that it requires structural changes beyond mere curriculum modifications. For example, inclusion of the Aboriginal community and their voices at decision making tables within SSW could facilitate shared responsibility for meeting community needs, as well as shared understandings of the context needed in Social Work education for First Nations, and, of the curriculum required to adequately prepare students to work with First Nations people. This understanding is necessary, given the prominence/over-

representation of First Nations people within populations requiring services. Additionally a caring environment inclusive of processes which are cooperative and reciprocal, and which foster healing for all concerned can enhance the overall milieu for all participants. It's not to say that these things are not happening, but that such processes must at the very least adequately benefit *all* students including First Nations. From a cultural perspective, respect for and inclusion of different ways of knowing and being could lead to new developments in Social Work practice, and a different overall climate in SSW. In fact, all of these principles are relevant, and application within SSW, not just in satellite programs, could do much to reduce stereotypes, and biases that currently influence the overall milieu within which Aboriginal students and faculty find themselves. While these ideas might seem radical, they reflect the changes Aboriginal communities want to see.

3.4 SUMMARY

A review of the trajectory of Aboriginal Social Work education in Canada indicated ongoing efforts to better meet community needs, but a number of challenges hinder progress. Included are issues related to: program structure; bridging the two world views; the hesitation to acknowledge the legitimacy of Aboriginal knowledge; lack of awareness or knowledge about First Nations; and hostility within the general academic milieu. These seemingly formidable challenges are being mitigated by the use of alternative program models implemented outside SSW. One such model incorporates themes of community, context, care and culture as guiding principles. These guiding principles can and will be used to analyze the findings of this research.

CHAPTER 4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 THEORETICAL INFLUENCES

My research focused on creating healthy environments for Aboriginal students and faculty in SSW. This qualitative study is influenced by grounded theory, critical theory, researching from the margins, and Aboriginal research methods. The strength of a qualitative approach is that I am “not only interested in the physical events and behaviour that [are] taking place, but also in how the participants...make sense of this and how their understandings influence their behaviour” (Maxwell, 1996, p.17).

Grounded theory research involves a dynamic and evolving process which aims to generate theory through “multiple stages of data collection” (Cresswell, 2003, p.14). This particular research project constitutes the latest phase of research that began eight years ago and led to development of the framework for Aboriginal Social Work education presented in the previous chapter. The evolution of the theory is presented in Chapter 7, where the first revision and changes arising from this research are presented.

Critical theory is also pertinent, given the interest in addressing oppressive tactics which maintain the domination of one cultural group over other groups (Gall, Gall, and Borg, 2005). Cultural studies, which is included within this paradigm “is a growing field...in which criticalists...explore and deconstruct many aspects of capitalist culture that other researchers trivialize and ignore” (ibid, p. 389). This paradigm also influences the subfields of “critical pedagogy and the social foundations of education” (ibid). Gaining a First Nations perspective on what constitutes a ‘healthy environment’

for Aboriginal students and faculty in SSW will provide needed insight into the impact of pedagogy and the 'social foundations' of education from an Aboriginal viewpoint.

Researching from the margins is research "from the perspective of those who have traditionally been excluded as producers of research," (Kirby and McKenna, 1989, p. 64). It "is not research **on** people from the margins, but research **by, for and with** them" (ibid, p. 28). Similar to critical theory research, this perspective is rooted in assumptions that:

- Knowledge is socially constructed
- Social interactions form the basis of social knowledge
- Different people experience the world differently
- Because they have different experiences, people have different knowledge
- Knowledge changes over time
- Differences in power have resulted in the commodification of knowledge and a monopoly on knowledge production. (ibid, p.65)

These assumptions are a good reminder as to why this research is needed. Aboriginal voices are often absent in the literature, although they are necessary for making needed changes.

Aboriginal research methodology carries with it a number of implications. Smith (1999) describes ethical conduct as including respect and reciprocity. Respectful research requires recognition of the validity of indigenous perspectives. Reciprocity can include both the Aboriginal tradition of gift giving when one requests information or knowledge from community members, and the need to think about how the research will positively impact First Nations people. In my study, each participant was provided with a gift to acknowledge their willingness to share their knowledge and wisdom with me. In

terms of how the research will positively impact First Nations, the intention of the research is to bring forth their perspectives on what is needed to provide healthy environments in SSW - environments that will allow them to thrive, and to succeed in attaining their goals.

As well, adherence to Aboriginal methodology means centering Aboriginal knowledge and voices throughout the research process (Rigney, 1999). In this thesis, I focus on the voices of Aboriginal people, both in the literature review and in the actual research. Exceptions to this are found where Aboriginal voices are absent, such as in the literature on campus climate, but also in relation to research methodology which incorporates a variety of methodological influences.

Furthermore, as noted by Absolon (2008), Aboriginal methodology includes counteracting the objectivity of Western research paradigms by locating the researcher centrally, since “Indigenous methodologies are just as much about who is doing the searching as the how of the research” (p. 98). As an urban Aboriginal researcher, I locate myself as someone who is in the process of self-discovery as an Aboriginal woman – and of what it means to be an Aboriginal woman. Absolon argued that “indigenous researchers are also on a journey of learning who they are and what they know” (ibid).

Additionally, in terms of being on a journey, I am strongly influenced by Cajete (1994) who speaks about “Indigenous visioning” (p. 71) which resonates with my own feeling that I have been walking/journeying around a Medicine Wheel throughout my research over the last 8 years. The first trip around the Wheel occurred back in 2001, when I participated in research which led to my visioning of the original FNBSW

framework, and led to the revisions which are the culmination of my research for this thesis.

Lastly, I would say that my ultimate goal of attempting to look at and represent the voices of the participants in a holistic way is congruent with my own cultural heritage as a Dene woman. I sought to get the broadest perspectives on issues related to 'the environment' in Schools of Social Work, in order to attempt to get to the heart of the issues affecting Aboriginal students and faculty within these settings.

Overall, in spite of the combination of methods I am influenced by, my research is situated within the context of my sense of self as an Aboriginal academic. It is a reflection of my way of being in the world as an urban Aboriginal woman who did not have the benefit of growing up with my grandmother, or my father, and did not learn the Dene language (yet); rather it is as an Aboriginal woman who is and will ever be on a journey home. I will close this discussion on methodology with a story about something that happened to me a few years ago.

I was up on the rez, visiting my Uncle Alex. I told him about winning a drum with the Cold Lake Band logo on it the first time I ever went to the reserve, and he wanted me to go visit the guy who made the drum with him. Of course I was always happy to do anything he asked, just so I could have time with him, so off we went. We arrived at the drum maker's house, and we sat together for a long time drinking tea. All the while my uncle and the drum maker told me a story of how the drum maker almost died, but how one day, many months after he came back from the hospital in Edmonton, and eventually could get out of bed, my uncle took him to the bush. They were sitting on a log talking, and all of a sudden, a deer came out of the woods and stood staring at them for the longest time. My uncle knew then that the drum maker would live. As they were telling this story I had many mixed emotions, but I was inspired to also share a story with them. I told them I would like to share a song and how I got that song, and they seemed eager to hear it, and thus I began: well, being around the Aboriginal community, I found out people get songs and names given to them, and I thought, how will I ever get my song – I am an urban Indian...is that even what happens in the Dene culture? Anyway, one day a long time after that I was riding in my car and this song came to me. A few days later, I had a dream. In the dream I was at a feast in

the woods, and there were many elders cooking in an open cookhouse, and there were many children running around in the bushes. I asked them if I could sing my song and the elders all nodded and smiled saying yes, they wanted to hear the song. I opened my mouth to sing, but they all started singing my song, and when I woke up, I was confused at how they knew my song. I thought about it and I realized they were blessing my song in my dream. After I told my uncle and the drum maker about the song, I shared it with them. I had their total attention, and remember feeling a bit shy so I couldn't look at them looking at me, and I just closed my eyes and sang

Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey ya hey, a hey hey

Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey ya hey, a hey hey

Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey ya hey, a hey hey

Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey hey hey, a hey hey hey hey
Hey ya hey, a hey hey

Afterwards, my uncle said that there was an elder who prophesied that one day the lost children would come home, and they would bring back our culture. When he said that I felt a chill up my spine...he was talking about me!

4.2 SAMPLING METHOD

The sampling method coincides with purposive and snowball sampling.

Purposive selection (Maxwell, 1995) is relevant in reference to “achieving representativeness or typicality of the settings, individuals, or activities selected” (p. 71) although there is no assumption that this is a homogenous group since the respondents come from many different Aboriginal cultures, and may vary in level of acculturation to dominant society as well as a multitude of other defining factors. In this research I

purposely targeted institutions that have initiatives aimed at meeting the needs of Aboriginal communities.

With regards to snowball sampling, sixteen universities in six provinces across Canada were contacted regarding the study, and Letters of Invitation (Appendix 1) were sent to Deans and Directors of the various Social Work departments to forward to First Nations faculty members in their schools. The Directors were asked to provide written consent to conduct research with faculty in their departments (Appendix 2), but some merely forwarded the invitations to Aboriginal faculty, who contacted me themselves, which was interpreted as consent. Snowball sampling involves “cases that are recommended by individuals who know other individuals likely to yield relevant, information-rich data” (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2005, p. 311). Of the sixteen universities contacted, 6 had faculty who responded, while a faculty member from one university that was not initially contacted, also responded.

4.3 PROFILE OF SAMPLE

In this research, the criteria to participate included: being of Aboriginal, Metis or Inuit heritage, having at least one degree in Social Work, and having taught in, or, currently teaching in a School of Social Work.

Because there are only about thirty Aboriginal faculty members in Canadian Schools of Social Work, some of whom are the only Aboriginal faculty members in their Department, and who may be the only faculty member from a particular cultural group, the profile is very general. The reason I say there are only ‘about’ thirty, is because that’s all I am aware of – based on a list-serve of Aboriginal academics in SSW across Canada, although the list is likely inaccurate on any given day. As well, there is no way to

establish the number and a profile of Lecturers at every Canadian University, so I am unable to determine representativeness of the 4 interviewed here. Each of the respondents will be referred to by pseudonyms (non-European names), to protect their anonymity.

This study included 4 non-tenure stream Lecturers, and 9 tenure stream faculty members. There was also one administrator who teaches, but is not appointed as lecturer or a faculty member. That there were nine tenure stream faculty members provides good representation of Aboriginal Faculty in Canadian SSW. At the time of the interviews: all had a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW); 6 of the respondents were PhD candidates and 3 had Doctoral degrees; there were 9 females and 5 males; the average age was 50; the average years of teaching was 11, although the span is between over 25 and under 5; 6 held administrative duties/responsibilities as well; lastly, the respondents represent 8 different cultural groups, which reflect the diversity of Aboriginal people attending post-secondary programs.

4.4 DATA COLLECTION

The research involved one to one semi-structured interviews, with an instrument that was initially tested in an interview with one faculty member, to get feedback on the questions posed. It was determined that the questions were suitable for the topic at hand, and the remaining interviews were conducted at seven sites across Canada. In each instance, the interviews were conducted in a private setting acceptable to the respondent.

Each respondent had an opportunity to review the consent form (Appendix 3) prior to the interview. They were given the opportunity to ask questions about the form, and were informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Also, as noted earlier, each

respondent also received a gift for their willingness to share their wisdom and experience with the researcher. Then, they each participated in an interview that focused on the following questions:

1. As a student in Social Work, what helped or hindered your learning inside the classroom?
2. What teaching strategies were most or least helpful?
3. As an educator what informs your approach to teaching and what strategies do you rely on?
4. What specific recommendations do you have for educators teaching First Nations student cohorts?
5. Overall what do you think is required to provide a healthy learning environment for First Nations students?
6. What recommendations do you have for professional Schools and the larger institution in supporting First Nations students?
7. What are the biggest challenges you face as a First Nations educator and how do you manage these challenges?
8. What recommendations do you have for professional schools and the larger institution in supporting First Nations faculty?

Each interview was taped for transcription. Furthermore, once transcribed, each respondent was invited to review the transcriptions for accuracy, and add any further comments.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Primarily, the data analysis is influenced by Grounded Theory methodology. The analysis involved verbatim transcription of the interviews, followed by an “iterative process” (Ryan and Bernard.....p. 783) of thematic analysis in that the “coding is... grounded in the data” (Maxwell, 1996, p.79). Although it was not necessarily my intention, this research validated the initial FN BSW framework for Aboriginal education previously introduced. As well, the data indicated a need to revise the framework, in

order for it to adequately represent my question about how to create a healthy environment for Aboriginal faculty in SSW.

Initially, data was coded using Atlas ti, however, due to the complexity of the program, I eventually abandoned this approach to data analysis in favour of doing it all manually. Atlas ti is a software program used to “analyze interviews, field notes, textual sources, and other types of qualitative data” (Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Junior University, 2008). The program involves placing all the transcripts into one hermeneutic unit, and developing codes by reviewing the text line by line, creating complex multiple layers of coding within segments of text. For example, a single quote could be tagged with 5 different codes, including a general code and specific codes (a general code such as pedagogy, and codes specifically about actual teaching strategies). Using the Atlas ti software I ended up with well over 200 individual codes which had tremendous overlap, and seemed to require extensive and time consuming effort to unravel. After tremendous efforts to make sense of it all, I completely abandoned this method of data analysis in favour of what I would refer to as an old fashioned method – doing it all by hand.

So, what doing it all by hand meant is that I first placed the data in individual documents - or units - by question. For example, the text following Question 1 in each interview was all placed into a single document. Then I again conducted line by line coding – this time by hand. This method is referred to as open coding (I refer to it as micro-coding) - followed by axial coding in which “the investigator assembles the data in new ways after open coding” (Creswell, J., 1998, p. 57). The line by line open coding involved going through each document and sorting quotes into general topics, such as

pedagogy, community, identity, etc. Then, in the next level of coding, I sorted within these general topic areas, so pedagogy was sorted in terms of the respondents' approaches to teaching, versus the teaching strategies used by the professors who taught them. There was also another subtheme that covered their recommendations for pedagogical methods. Then, these sub-theme groupings were again evaluated for further coding. Much of this was done by hand, on the kitchen table, and the floor extending right out to my living room, so there would be piles of paper (or segments of paper) that were later typed up according to the way they were sorted. Overall, I probably went through the sorting process at least 20 times, until I reached the finely nuanced, but generally sensible (to me) separation of ideas.

Notably, as the process unfolded difficulties that presented themselves in the interviews were also problematic during analysis of the data. Many of the questions dealt with more than one issue, for example – in Question 1 the phrase 'what helped or hindered your learning' implies two questions; Question 3 asked 'what influences your approach to teaching and what strategies do you use' is again a two-in-one question. As a result, in the analysis, the questions and answers are integrated differentially from the questions.

4.6 VALIDITY

Maxwell (1996) describes two validity threats in qualitative research – researcher bias and reactivity. He also provides a number of solutions to affirm validity. Triangulation and member checks are both pertinent to establishing the validity of this research.

First, triangulation involves the use of various sources and processes to arrive at your conclusions, and to enhance validity. It is not necessarily a completely unquestionable solution, since there is still the possibility for researcher bias in terms of sources chosen, and for self-report bias among those participating in the research, but Maxwell suggested that it does facilitate “a better assessment of the ...explanations developed” (p. 94) from the research. In the development of the framework presented in this research, multiple sources of data and information were used, including:

- Literature on the evolution of Aboriginal Social Work education over the last 30 years,
- Interviews with Aboriginal educators across Canada on the implementation of Bachelor of Social Work programs aimed towards Aboriginal students and communities,
- 3 Focus groups: 2 one day focus groups with an urban Aboriginal Reserve community in BC, and one day focus group with an urban-based non-reserve Aboriginal community; and,
- A one day curriculum workshop with Aboriginal students and educators.

These activities occurred between 2000, and 2002, and, after these activities were completed, the initial framework presented in chapter 3 was presented to the Aboriginal community - as a member check - to determine if it adequately reflected their views. The model was approved as adequately representing their perspectives.

Then, during my doctoral studies, additional sources of information and data include:

- A broader review of literature on Aboriginal education in Canada (which culminated in the first revision of the framework), and
- The interviews with 14 Aboriginal faculty members which are presented here (and which led to the second revision of the framework).

All of these activities aid in achieving validity. Additionally, to facilitate accuracy of the current study, the transcripts were reviewed by participants, who had the opportunity to edit/correct as they saw fit.

Ultimately, this research, and my conclusions are the culmination of extensive research over the last eight years, from a wide range of sources which included participation of Aboriginal people locally, regionally, and nationally.

4.7 SUMMARY

This qualitative research is influenced by grounded theory, critical theory, researching from the margins and Aboriginal methods. Sampling included both purposive and snowball methods. Interviews were conducted with 14 Aboriginal educators in 6 different provinces; these participants shared their experiences as students and as educators, and provided recommendations for improving the climate in Schools of Social Work. The use of multiple sources of data and member checks with community members in regards to the initial FN BSW framework, as well as member checks for accuracy of the transcripts of this research all aid in achieving validity. Overall, this research led to revision of a FN BSW framework, and a visual model is presented to aid in the development of strategies for improving the climate in SSW for Aboriginal students and educators.

CHAPTER 5.0 EXPERIENCES IN THE ACADEMY

In this chapter, the respondents' descriptions of their experiences within the academic arena are explored. First, the participants provided insights into factors that affected them as learners. They also described their perspectives on teaching, their approaches to teaching, and the challenges they face as educators as well as institutional factors that underscore many of the challenges they face.

In presenting the findings, it is important to note that not all ideas were discussed by all respondents. Furthermore, not every idea expressed is presented here. As well, the ideas are not necessarily presented according to what was mentioned the most or least, although a few topics are highlighted given the extent to which they were expressed among participants. Thus, while I tried to be as true as possible to the respondents' voices, the data is obviously presented in an arbitrary fashion in accordance with my own understanding of the data. I hope my attempts at self-disclosure will make it clear to readers how I interpreted the data I gathered.

5.1 EXPERIENCES AS STUDENTS

The respondents described factors that affected them as learners; the impact of those factors; how they coped; and what helped. The importance of positive relationships with faculty and peers cannot be understated, as will be seen in the discussion below.

5.1.1 Factors Affecting Them as Learners

First, the respondents indicated individual, academic and relational factors, as well as teacher behaviour that affected them as students. Individual factors included family/community concerns, being away from home, and identity. Academic factors included language barriers; different orientations to learning; academic preparation, pedagogy and curriculum. Relational challenges included racism, and prejudice; ignorance; tokenism; competition, and non-acceptance of their 'voices.' Teacher behaviours that were seen as problematic included lack of modelling and lack of follow-through. As well respondents mentioned the tendency among professors to maintain objective distance from students and the problem of being singled out.

5.1.1.1 Individual factors

Individual factors mentioned by the respondents included family/community concerns; being away from home, and identifying as First Nations. First, family and community concerns cannot be underestimated given possible strong bonds with, or the sense of obligation to family and community, as well as the:

stressors of everyday life, either [as] a foster parent or because they got people in their nation that are dying and they got to go back [home]... First Nations people have a lot bigger struggles in life anyway so they're balancing all of that. (Chickoa)

Also, leaving home to go to university can also be a very lonely experience.

Students, especially who come from really small reserves - [and] who have never lived in the city, feel isolated, lonely, right... [They need] somebody that they can turn to. (Shadi)

In responding to the questions, some respondents felt the need to discuss whether they identified as First Nations, and why there can be hesitation in identifying. One student,

however, described an unexpected link between his own personal journey of identity formation and his graduate school experience.

First, in reference to their experiences as students, respondents wanted to qualify their answers with comments about whether they had self-identified as Aboriginal, which related to their expectations and ability to navigate the system.

When I did my first degree, I wasn't real strong or clear in my own identity... I wasn't really looking for anything in that regard, so in general my undergraduate experience was largely pretty good, supportive for what I needed at the time. (Cheveyo)

For me, [the] mainstream program was fairly easy because I grew up off reserve and not really knowing a lot about my culture. It was the norm for me. I'd gone through mainstream school. (Shadi)

They also noted that there may be hesitation at identifying.

Students are reluctant to identify [as First Nations, because of] how they might be related to – positive or negative - or just the stigma and the expectations that they are an additional burden. (Wicasa)

In one case, experiences in graduate school fostered identity formation - a sort of serendipity.

[In] my masters program, I was much stronger in my identity and like many Aboriginal students, my learning was intertwined with my discovery, rediscovery, reclamation, nurturing of my Aboriginal cultural identity so I guess what I was looking for and what I got, mostly accidentally really, was that I got a language for my experiences. I was able to connect my own experience and that of my family to historical colonization, but also more importantly, to an unbroken line of [Aboriginal] identity and culture and tradition... [but] my experience was mostly accidental on the part of most faculty in terms of how they nurtured it or played a role. (Cheveyo)

This student was influenced by learning about the history, but also by being exposed to Aboriginal culture in graduate school.

5.1.1.2 Academic

Academic factors mentioned by respondents included both their own experiences as learners, and their perceptions of the challenges their students face. These factors included being first generation academics; language barriers; different orientations to learning; academic preparation; pedagogy, and curriculum.

For many First Nations, they are the first in their families, and possibly even their communities, to get a post-secondary degree, so familiarity, role models, or needed support may not be available, which can lead to loneliness.

Most [of our] people are... the first generation of our family, [and] our extended family to graduate from high school, to get a master's degree, and certainly to do a PhD program, [and] if you have no points of reference, or people who you can relate to... like 'ok my great grandfather he must have had the same trouble with Plato's Republic as I did and got through it as did my father,'... then it gets very lonely. (Wicasa)

Furthermore, for some Aboriginal students, English may be their second language so they may need resources to assist them in that area.

[They may need] extra support in terms of the writing, the critiquing and [regarding] where they can go to [like] the writing centre. (Kaya)

It was also noted that a different orientation to learning and being forced to learn in unfamiliar ways causes students to struggle to get through school, while trying to accommodate the expectations of the institution.

Within the classroom, it's mostly been hindrances because of how they expect you to learn. I was forced to go out of what I was used to, being able to relate things to myself, to be experiential, [so] in my first years in university, I really struggled...The change in format – where Social Work became more papers than testing was hopeful. But still it was me trying to accommodate the way the university expected things. (Dakotah)

In addition to the challenge of accommodating the expectations of the institution is the issue of being adequately prepared to meet those expectations, and some respondents said that as students they needed extra support.

The challenge was that I wasn't prepared to learn. I got into university because of an access program, and they added supports for me to get through. If I would have went in university without that I don't think I would have made it. (Dakotah)

Some students simply could not come up with any positive stories or comments about teaching strategies used when they were students.

Honestly, it's been a struggle all the way through. (Dakotah)

There weren't any particular strategies that were helpful. I wish I could be more positive. (Namid)

A number of them talked about disliking the 'tabula rasa' mentality - the banking method, rote learning and lecturing, although these were the dominant strategies of teachers they had.

What doesn't work is having that sense that someone has the knowledge and they're going to fill you up and they don't ever know you. (Kachine)

It was mostly lecturing [and] that was not very useful. You zone out after a while. (Ayita)

Nonetheless, some respondents expanded on helpful teaching strategies. Students appreciated a variety of strategies, as well as experiential, reciprocal, and holistic approaches. Incorporation of ceremony and talking circles certainly created a more holistic learning experience. Some students also appreciated not having exams.

First, a number of students spoke favourably about a variety of teaching strategies and about student-centred approaches.

Having professors who had taken some training on how to teach... used various methods that addressed different learning styles. That was really helpful. (Amitola)

Experiential learning was also popular:

The ones that I probably learned most from and connected more with were the ones that were more experientially oriented. They weren't so theoretical, abstract, book stuff... they were the ones that excited me most and I got the most out of them. (Honovi)

Learning from each other – reciprocity - was also highly valued and increased capacity and confidence.

[In] one course, [we] were co-creating the curriculum and teaching within the class as well as teaching other classes, so it was really building on our skills and our confidence. For me that really helped to prepare me for going on and teaching. (Amitola)

Respondents indicated they appreciated a holistic approach in that it allowed them to participate in learning as physical, emotional intellectual and spiritual beings. Inclusion of ceremony and working in circle are both manifestations of a holistic approach to learning, through incorporation of spirituality and emotional support:

[One professor] started with a smudge¹ which is sacred, it's about grounding and using not only our intelligence but ... everything from medicine wheel...the physical, intellectual, mental and emotional. That's the key for me... is that it allowed us to use all aspects of the medicine wheel to balance ourselves in that classroom. (Shadi)

Finally, some students discussed the issue of expectations and assignments

One of the things that helped actually in my student experience was not having a lot of exams because I don't tend to find them that helpful for my learning. (Amitola)

¹ A smudge is a spiritual tradition of burning sage, or other natural herbs, and is used to remove negative energy, and to create harmony and balance.

Overall, in terms of teaching strategies, one could summarize the respondents' remarks by noting that a more relational pedagogy was preferred. What I mean is that respondents seemed to like processes that are not just individual or individualistic; rather, the respondents described a preference for shared participatory learning experiences.

Also pertinent is curriculum. Euro-centric domination, the relevance of content, and lack of knowledge among faculty were all discussed. First, Euro-centric dominance of text and talk were/are of concern; I say were/are because many of the respondents were in graduate school at the time the research was conducted, and the comments below were from current students and one who had just completed a graduate degree.

The curriculum is essentially dead white guys - smart rich white guys. (Chickoa)

One of the difficulties for First Nations students that are in with mainstream students is that the discussions are so Euro-centric. (Kaya)

Some of the challenges were just reconciling the colonial history... the Greek philosophers being the basis. (Wicasa)

The dominance of the research component, which is a colonial perspective and colonial values, a [colonial] agenda – was uncomfortable. (Amitola)

Generally, respondents felt relevant curriculum was/is often lacking and affects learning, although relevant content was appreciated and had a positive impact.

[The] curriculum was completely foreign... I think if it was more relevant, I think I would have felt like I was learning. (Chilali)

[One] course was really exciting because it fit [in] with my [research]. (Kaya)

These quotes highlight how very different the learning experience can be when the curriculum has some relevance.

5.1.1.3 Relational factors

Prominent though out the interviews is the focus on interactions both inside and outside the classroom. Relational challenges included racism and discrimination; ignorance; tokenism, competition, and non-acceptance of their 'voices.'

Racism is a belief system, while discrimination is the behaviour arising from such beliefs. In these quotes the attitudes and the behaviour are evident:

The First Nations students have to deal with fundamental racist kinds of things. (Chilali)

You're automatically assumed you got in because of the extra support...you're always facing this other challenge from your peers, and sometimes from the professors. And then you are put down because of that... (Dakotah)

The professor bent over and whispered to me, "Did you write this?"
I said "Yes I did."
He said "It's very good."
He obviously [did not] expect a paper [of] the quality that I handed in, so that speaks really loudly about the atmosphere and the way that professors and the faculty view students... especially Aboriginal women. (Ayita)

Racism, assumptions of inadequacy and low expectations are negative for Aboriginal students, as is the behaviour flowing from these beliefs and expectations.

Ignorance is simply the lack of knowledge about a subject, and, the lack of knowledge about First Nations history - for example - is problematic.

There's doubt. Students are saying, "Oh, it couldn't have been that bad," so, the whole denial thing - that's another message that the Aboriginal students get. Here we have these people who have faced racism all their life and then they're sitting in a room with these academics, their colleagues and they're hearing those kinds of things from them. (Ayita)

The grace with which the respondents acknowledged many of these issues cannot be overstated. They are truly aware of the underlying dilemmas associated with some of the issues, and it is with equanimity that they acknowledge these conundrums.

I think other students may not know how to relate to us. They don't know how to respond. If they speak up, there's a good chance they're going to put their foot in their mouth and if they don't speak up, then they look like they are not being supportive so they are damned if they do, damned if they don't. (Dakotah)

These comments particularly provide a strong rationale for increasing knowledge about the historical and contemporary realities for Aboriginal people in order to overcome this level of ignorance. Problematic is that often, professors have no knowledge of First Nations, and may not be doing anything about that.

Comments I would get back on my papers were that "I've learned from this paper." [but Profs] weren't seeking it out actively for themselves, so there's the whole lack of knowledge around Aboriginal issues. (Ayita)

Another issue is tokenism, which is defined as "making only a symbolic effort" (Webster, 1994, p. 1240), and being admitted or hired as a token can be a confusing position to be in.

It really is true about being a 'token Indian.' There is that dynamic and it can't be underemphasized - you never know if you're getting attention based on your abilities or if you're a token. (Dakotah)

Notable also is that competition in the classroom was not highly favoured among Aboriginal students.

There was the occasional [time] where the competitiveness came that 'I'm a doctoral student and I'm really special'... I think everyone is special whether you are in kindergarten or grade 1; it was unnecessary and it became onerous. If you get into the program it should be a given that you have certain skills. (Wicasa)

One last point has to do with non-acceptance, which can be sensed, and can affect participation.

Students don't really want to have a look at the other side of things. They are quite comfortable in the world that they know... (Namid)

No one did anything really bad... except the faculty never did like what I had to say. (Kaya)

Sometimes, I felt that if I said anything the other students would be going "Oh there he goes again!" So, there were times when I wouldn't want to say much at all. (Peta)

The negative impact of these types of issues is discussed below, after consideration of problematic teacher behaviours.

5.1.1.4 Teacher behaviours

Respondents articulated behaviours among professors that were a hindrance to their learning. It was noted that professors were often unaware of their own oppressive behaviours.

Many [professors] think they practice anti-oppressively, but when you actually look at how they treat their students, they actually are very oppressive, so there is... a large difference between the ways that faculty think that they deal with things, and actually do deal with things. (Namid)

Problematic teacher behaviours included lack of modelling and lack of follow-through; as well as the tendency among professors to maintain objective distance from students.

Being singled out was particularly annoying. First, students did not appreciate professors who were not positive role models.

One teacher had too few boundaries; she didn't control the classroom... I needed better modelling from her – she was [not] in charge of this learning experience. (Kachine)

When my instructors were more interested in propping up their ego or playing mind games (for lack of a better way to put it)... that certainly felt like a waste of time for me. (Amitola)

Inconsistency as demonstrated by lack of follow through was also a negative experience.

[One professor said]she would be happy to [provide a] reference... I went up to her and reminded her of that promise and she just looked at me and said "Did I say that?" and then walked away. That didn't feel very good. (Peta)

A number of students disliked the tendency of professors to maintain an objective distance from students.

I never had a sense that they wanted to get to know me...The field instructor, he was good, but you kind of feel 'supervisor from the university.' (Honovi)

Lastly, being singled out can place Aboriginal students in a very uncomfortable position.

What happens is that something Aboriginal comes up and the teacher looks over and says 'You know all about that. You want to tell us about that.' So then you mortify some poor student, who doesn't have a clue what they're talking about. (Honovi)

I don't think any student really feels comfortable... coming to class thinking that they are going to be giving more than they are receiving. (Namid)

One respondent noted that non-Aboriginal students would not be expected to know everything about non-Aboriginal people.

It's always difficult to be centred out, to [have to] be the expert on everything in their culture. In reverse, we don't expect white students or non-Aboriginal students to know everything about their culture, and if we were to expect them to do so, we would very quickly be told how inappropriate we would be to have that expectation. (Namid)

Another respondent described how a student reacted to being singled out - again.

One [student] was tired of hearing stuff like 'oh, how many nations are there in Canada?' And she just said, 'well how the fuck should I

know?' Then she felt really bad about it, but realized that she was just tired of being singled out. (Chickoa)

One participant felt that the root of this issue is racism, while another student viewed being singled out as something that did help prepare them to teach.

Sometimes its fear that they can't talk about anything Aboriginal; it is a deep, deep, deep kind of racism. Not one where somebody says I don't like Indians but it's a deep, deep, deep them and us thing, which is racism basically - that's the way to put it in a good way. (Honovi)

The lack of knowledge of most of my professors about First Nations people [meant that] I was always looked at. The benefit [was] that I didn't care for that so I forced myself to learn again additional material so I would at least have something to say. I guess the positive thing I've taken out of it, is it's helped to prepare me to teach in some ways, to be able to speak in front of a group...my learning experience is much broader than the average student. (Dakotah)

Regardless of whether students were able to turn a negative into a positive, as did Dakotah – above, none of these behaviours were viewed favourably by students, and often, such behaviours and attitudes did have negative effects.

5.1.2 Impact of Negative Experiences, of Curriculum, and Coping Strategies

Many respondents as students experienced feelings of isolation and of not belonging. First, some participants described feeling lonely, and although there was support, it may not have been the support they needed.

I learned a lot but it was a very lonely space. (Peta)

I had a lot of support from people but [they] didn't have a clue what I was doing (ha ha); its like 'oh you're getting a degree,' but it felt doubly lonely. There weren't too many people I could talk to in the Indian community about what I was going through in school and there weren't people in the school that I could go to. (Peta)

Feeling alienated meant that some students just did not want to stick around their department.

You never felt you really belonged. I never stuck around the faculty except for classes. (Ayita)

These feelings would/could certainly affect retention as well as the students' success of students. It is likely that those who are not able to get support through these types of struggles are the ones who simply leave.

Curriculum is also problematic, and as noted by one respondent, the lack of First Nations content is 'stifling.' Two important ways that curriculum affects students are a) being faced with a 'double curriculum' and b) triggering personal issues. Double curriculum means that students had to deal with the existing curriculum, and do extra work on the side to meet their own needs, which amounts to what might refer to as a double curriculum.

All the way, through from my bachelor program up to and including my candidacy exam the curriculum was more of a hindrance than a help; I'm forced to do extra work to learn the things I needed to learn.(Dakotah)

Another important issue is that curriculum can trigger personal unresolved issues, and the need to do some counselling or healing work.

The courses on suicide, sexual abuse, domestic violence ... what [that] really did was to push me on to my healing journey because I couldn't deny that so much of that had been my own experience. That was my final year and then I just took a year [off] because I wasn't ready for Social Work and I knew that... I knew I had to do some healing... I think I cried for a whole year. There has to be space to do that healing. (Ayita)

In terms of coping with many of the challenges mentioned, strategies include leaving, seeking comfort, or just being quiet.

My class was gone; I was gone because it wasn't a comfortable place. I'd go over to the access program and just hang out there because you could sit and feel comfortable. At the access program

there was a lot of Aboriginal people - you had something in common and you could just drop in. (Ayita)

I was very quiet during class; I never wanted to be singled out. (Kachine)

Not hanging around the department, or being quiet are behaviours that could be easily misconstrued/labelled negatively, but they make sense when understood as coping strategies. Learning to negotiate between the two worlds was also helpful.

One of the things that was really helpful was learning the language of translation between the two worlds and so I know how to use their talk to explain what I'm saying and to still have credibility in their eyes. (Amitola)

Another way of coping involved self-discipline, and indicated real determination.

It was stressful, sure. Sometimes I didn't want to go to class but I just made myself go. (Peta)

It's either do it the way they do it or don't get by and so... I forced myself to learn the way they intended us to learn. (Dakotah)

I developed three rules for myself; "Go to every class where you want to or not," "Hand in your assignments on time even if it's your hand in one page of something written at the last minute – hand it in," and "Study for exams even if it's just for two hours – do some studying for exams." And when I did that, I went from being a C student to a straight A student and when I became an A student... profs then got to know me... they were more interested... they were so much more positive so it was really a success-breeds-success kind of thing; they're happy and so then they're more personable with you and then you feel better about the class and about what you're learning. So what I put into it really had a huge impact. (Shappa)

Self discipline paid off, but it is particularly unfortunate that some respondents felt they had to force themselves to comply with expectations.

5.1.3 The importance of relationships with faculty and peers

Respondents also described the dynamics of relationships with faculty and peers that positively influenced their experience as learners.

5.1.3.1 Relations with faculty

My supervisor for my graduating project, he offered quite a bit of, not just nurturing and guidance - he also offered me protection and support in my desire to work, and to conduct my research in a culturally appropriate way, ways that the institution as a whole wasn't familiar with and wasn't all that supportive of mainly because of ignorance I think and because of a long history of conducting research in a particular way and from a particular paradigm. That support and protection was really crucial for me to complete my program but it also... set me down the road to [being an] educator. (Cheveyo)

While a distinction was made between First Nations and non-First Nations faculty, helpful relations with faculty primarily included supportive, sincere and meaningful relationships; protection; and reciprocity.

First, non-Aboriginal professors were generally indifferent, whereas Aboriginal faculty fostered comfort, and a sense of belonging.

The Aboriginal instructors were much more in line with my own interests. They were much more open to working in ways that I felt comfortable with, because they were their ways of working... how they conducted the course left me free to express myself and to feel comfortable and feel included and that's the difference. Non-Aboriginal teachers - mostly they were indifferent; they stayed out of my way, and I was fine with that... I was self directed, so I didn't seek inclusion. I didn't expect it. I wanted to get it elsewhere, really. Intuitively I just didn't have that expectation. I got that sense of belonging and nurturing from the Aboriginal faculty members. (Cheveyo)

Supportive, sincere, and meaningful relationships were also helpful.

The key factor was the relationship with the advisor and meeting on a regular basis, the establishment of good rapport [and] not being challenged, but being supported - that was very helpful. (Wicasa)

There was a real difference between teachers who seem to be generally genuinely interested in me as a student and ones [for] whom I was just a number or a face or... maybe a brown face... maybe the wrong colour for them. (Shappa)

[My] instructor asked what is it that I could have done to help your learning and I remember saying... "I wish I would know more about

you.” She was just too professional and just didn’t tell us anything about her life. You’re supposed to be objective... but I just find I like learning from people who are just more personable and want to build some kind of relationship. (Shadi)

Being protected by advisors was tremendously important.

What helped me the most was an advisor that could shield me from the other Profs. I was very fortunate... She wouldn’t let anyone mess with me so I really lucked out. (Peta)

The other part... I had some very good instructors who didn’t see themselves as gate keepers but saw themselves as helping people to facilitate or elicit ideas. They were challenging but not in a confrontational way and so... the role modelling. (Wicasa)

Students also appreciated reciprocity with their professors.

One of my most favourite classes - I enjoyed it cause the professor and I were friends and we got along well; she supported my learning and I supported her teaching. (Shappa)

5.1.3.2 Peer support

Connecting with peers was critical in various ways. For example, these relationships provided a much needed sense of belonging.

There was about half a dozen Aboriginal students and it was enjoyable just sitting around and talking, feeling like you belong. (Ayita)

They also provided the ability to normalize what they were experiencing.

I talked to my fellow student who was in the program with me and I said, “Are you feeling strange around here like that you can’t be natural?” He said ‘yeah.’ Luckily [we] talked with each other so then we’d normalize it, it’s not us – it’s them. (Honovi)

Sometimes, these relationships provided a buffer against conflict.

There were actually enough of us to challenge things we didn’t agree with and in some classes there would be some conflict around those kinds of comments but it certainly wasn’t devastating in any... personal way because there was enough support. (Kachine)

Some students indicated that other students affected their own retention as students.

If it hadn't been for the other First Nations student in that class, I would have quit. I would have given up; we were able to do our projects together. We were able to support each other. (Kaya)

Throughout this review of the respondents' experiences as students, the issue of relationships stands out as fundamental to having positive experiences in academia.

5.2 EXPERIENCES AS EDUCATORS

In this section, there is a shift towards the participants' perspectives on and approaches to teaching, as well as the challenges they face and the impact of these challenges.

5.2.1 Perspectives on Teaching

In discussing perspectives on teaching, respondents generally stated that their approach to teaching was influenced by their experiences, although they described a) the significance of 'who the students are,' b) their own beliefs about learning, and c) their perspectives of their responsibilities.

My philosophy is very much what was demonstrated and is being demonstrated to me by my mentor. I think [our] role is to be mentors, coaches - to encourage people along their journey. (Chilali)

A. *Who the students are*

In terms of 'who the students are,' respondents noted the need to get to know students and mentioned a few specific differences between First Nations and non-First Nations students. First, while getting to know students is important, it isn't just about being student centered. Implied in the second quote is the need for reflective learning.

What informs my approach is getting to know who my students are, how they learn, what they want out of the course, as well as the

institutional needs, and bringing those together in a way that is relevant and capacity building – those things are important. (Amitola)

I feel responsible to get to know who the students are, so my strategy early on is to give them the opportunity to say what they think, what they feel...If they're going to build knowledge, they've got to build it on understanding of who they are, because that's where their internal knowledge is. And that's new ... 'What do you mean internal knowledge? I don't know about any internal knowledge.' (Honovi)

Respondents also described how non-Aboriginal students' lack of knowledge about First Nations affects the learning experience of Aboriginal students, and how body language may be received differently between these two groups; they also expressed the belief that all-Aboriginal cohorts are beneficial, and humour is helpful with these cohorts.

The lack of knowledge among non-Aboriginal students may mean having to cover material that Aboriginal students are already familiar with.

I see so many students struggle in the mainstream programme - not necessarily academically but with the fact that - at such a basic level the First Nations students are held back by mainstream programmes because the level of awareness and understanding aren't there for some of the mainstream students, so you [have to] talk about oppression and marginalization to get the mainstream students caught up. In the mean time the Aboriginal students are going "oh god what'd I get myself into." (Chilali)

As well, one respondent observed that body language may affect students differently.

Aboriginal students find my sitting down boring and I didn't realize that they want some more activity...animation; [but] if I walk around a lot with non-Aboriginal students and I'm gesturing, they find that aggressive so what I do is more like truth telling - my strategy is to sit down with a non-Aboriginal class when I'm presenting the material and I try to get in my very best place I can be emotionally and I do the truth telling from that perspective. (Kachine)

Respondents also noted that Aboriginal students tend to be more mature, and have more work experience than mainstream students. As well, mainstream students simply may not

have a frame of reference, and may lack the maturity, or sense of urgency that First Nations feel about their communities.

The First Nations cohort, these were experienced people; they were older; they were working in the community so they didn't have to try to imagine [that]. Mainstream students didn't...really have anything to relate it to - it wasn't their life; it wasn't affecting their children, their families... the people that they care about. Some of them are trying to imagine what it is like to be Social Workers, so the whole urgency and understanding of why this is so important [wasn't there] I have students that sit in the back and giggle... their heads really weren't there. (Kaya)

The respondents also discussed teaching Aboriginal cohorts in community based programs, which can be positive, and often means involvement with students who have a shared history.

With all Aboriginal students in the classes, they really relax at some fundamental level and then they can learn. (Kachine)

Any other class is really disparate; they might know each other from having had a class the year before, but it's not the same. I mean these folks - they've got history... (Chickoa)

Lastly, one respondent noted that humour could be used more with these cohorts.

It's alright to be animated and use humour...when I'm teaching a total Aboriginal class, I can use humour a lot more. (Kachine)

'Beliefs about learning' also influence the respondents' approaches to teaching.

B. Beliefs about 'learning'

In discussing their beliefs, important points include: the need for relevant curriculum; the importance of balance in curriculum and in the learning process; the multiple learning styles of students; and the developmental nature of learning. First, the issue of relevance is fundamental.

It's important [to] provide content that's relevant. (Kachine)

I hope to God I don't put students through the experience that I had in which they're learning all this stuff and it has absolutely no relevance and therefore is not real learning. (Chilali)

The need for balance includes balancing text with experiential learning, but also means paying attention to the whole experience of students as learners.

I think if it was more holistic, it would be far less based on books and it would be more based on practical relevant experiential kinds of learning. I think books have an important place but I think if the whole emphasis is on the book, then it's imbalanced. (Amitola)

I always think of balance and how do they balance themselves and I always go back to the teachings of the medicine wheel... what are you learning... how are you taking care of yourself, how are you getting support, what are you doing for fun cause you should have a little bit of fun, and what are you doing for laughter because going to school is a lot of hard work. (Shadi)

Respondents commonly discussed multiple ways of learning and seek to ensure all students' needs are met in this regard.

I look at what are the basic requirements from an institutional level and where are the places that I can be creative and where are the places that I have to stay in line with the learning objectives and then from there I bring as much creativity as I can into meeting those objectives in a way that meets the students' needs. (Amitola)

They also described learning as a developmental process.

Sometimes what we're doing is we're educating people before they have all the pieces. And eventually it begins to fall in place. (Kaya)

We're planting a seed and I always have to do that in a good way. (Shadi)

C. Responsibilities

Respondents also spoke at length about their responsibilities, which include maintenance of professional standards, creating a positive learning environment, providing critical perspectives, and ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to Social Work practice.

First, in terms of maintaining standards, Social Workers work with vulnerable populations, and this is not to be taken lightly.

What are our multiple responsibilities? We have ethical responsibilities to the clients...when they graduate, they become intimately involved [in peoples'] lives and that's huge, so in terms of individual integrity, roles, boundaries, standards, I look at how people conduct themselves in an academic setting [which] is pretty much going to be the same way that they will [behave] in life. (Wicasa)

Secondly, creating a positive learning environment was/is a priority. They recognize, for example, the importance of creating safety and comfort, although it was acknowledged that this isn't always possible.

I think it's about building relationships, making sure that everybody is comfortable. What really helps the students learn is an environment that's really safe. (Shadi)

I don't think that we could ever promise anybody absolute safety - that would just be a very unrealistic situation because not all people are safe. From my own experiences in the classroom where some students have reacted to me and racism was involved, that challenged any promise that I might be making about promising safety. (Kachine)

That trust is also an issue makes sense given the history of residential schools. A key point among respondents was the importance of creating a community of belonging.

Trust is crucial because you need trust in order to take risks and it's that mutuality piece where you also need to take risks to create trust. You can also selectively and deftly take risks to move the learning experience forward to create that trust, to create that sense it's ok to take some risk and to build that community of belonging. (Cheveyo)

There's a responsibility to help people to feel that they belong there. If you have no belonging, then your feet never touch the ground, then you never touch yourself. Somebody is always doing something to you. (Honovi)

Furthermore, modelling is important – below, Chickoa’s quote refers to making sure there is congruence between what we say and what we do, which is pertinent to being able to establish trusting relationships.

I really, really, try to walk that walk even in the teaching. (Chickoa)

Respect is paramount, and many of the factors mentioned by respondents are partially aimed at maintaining an environment of respect.

It’s about how respectful you are ... when I went in there I felt like a child, like an adolescent again because of the way I was being treated ...part of the circle teaching is that we are all equal and your voice is important... it’s about making students feel like they’re valued. (Ayita)

One way of demonstrating respect is to be open to Aboriginal voices, and perspectives.

Included in that would be the voices of Aboriginal people which means the teachings of Aboriginal people – where they tell their stories. Where they share their understandings. (Honovi)

As noted earlier, reciprocity is also valued and many Aboriginal professors incorporate this principle into their teaching.

I knew that sitting in front of a group of Aboriginal people and then making a lecture, made no sense. I also knew that I didn’t know their world and I had a lot of learning to do so I went into it as teacher-learner. (Honovi)

The need for flexibility was expressed by all of the respondents.

Another piece is simply that content isn’t the only learning - that process is part of it, that there’s times where it’s appropriate to slow down that learning - to just avoid the kind of mindless, rapid, conveying of information as if that’s all that learning constitutes and be willing to meander a little bit or to slow it down or pause and include silence in that reflection in that learning. (Cheveyo)

I am very flexible with assignments and I don’t take off marks if you’ve been up for four nights because your baby’s sick, guess what

- I don't want the paper that you produce in the end (laughing).
(Chilali)

The willingness to go beyond simple flexibility with assignments and to challenge the status quo in terms of policies was also mentioned.

I'll advocate - some of the administration want to take action against students, and again these are often either indigenous or marginalized students and I will often challenge that and they find that problematic (Ha, ha, ha) - because to me the student hasn't failed yet, they haven't finished...they haven't been in a space or a place where they could continue their learning. If a student's still there, still wanting to learn, still trying to figure out a path, I'm going to be right there with them. (Chilali)

As well, the respondents highlighted the importance of locating the self politically, socially, and so on.

The responsibilities of the teacher [are] to ensure that they're situated themselves - both individually but also with regard to Aboriginal issues - land claims, culture. (Wicasa)

I talked about this ongoing holistic autobiography on the part of instructors, particularly non-Native - they [need to] situate themselves so that they can have a full and complete relationship as one human being to another. (Wicasa)

So, in these respondents' views, creating a positive learning environment requires safety and comfort, trust, modelling, respect and including community, reciprocity, flexibility, advocacy, and locating oneself.

The third area of responsibility is to ensure they are providing needed critical perspectives, since education is needed to create change and to carve new directions.

I'll take issues of whiteness and address it in terms of oppression - they have to know how they're contributing to it. I'll reach maybe one or two out of 20 really well. Another 10 will listen well and a whole bunch will roll their eyes, but somebody has to be doing that. (Dakotah)

It's also my job to facilitate discussion of what we can do now to make it better for everybody. (Shadi)

One final responsibility discussed at length among many of the participants involved the issue of making sure the curriculum relates to Social Work practice in the real world. Pertinent strategies include role plays, presentations, interactive and experiential learning, group work and case studies.

Part of what I tried to draw from them was ‘What’s going to work in your community - look at your community. Analyze your community. What’s going to be useful?’ (Kaya)

Ultimately, Aboriginal professors take seriously their ‘roles’ in the institution – what it is they are there to do, and they do want to improve the environment for everyone. In terms of pedagogy, these professors tend to teach in the ways that helped them as learners, and that are congruent with their beliefs about their responsibilities. Their approaches to teaching were integrated with the discussion above except for one particular strategy that these professors use to fulfil many of the ideals they have in relation to teaching - the talking circle.

5.2.2 Talking Circle Pedagogy

While one respondent questioned whether talking circle is a traditional pedagogy, and another respondent discussed receiving negative feedback for using the talking circle in her teaching, others viewed the talking circle as a valuable approach to teaching.

I don’t know a whole lot about traditional pedagogies. Everyone says the circle is one, but I have my doubts about that. (Shappa)

I really like the talking circle but students have responded in my evaluations that ‘I don’t know why I have to learn from the talking circle, I don’t like it.’ Period! Other ones say ‘Oh she teaches from Aboriginal perspective.’ I don’t ever remember critiquing people who taught me. ‘She teaches from a Euro-centric perspective,’ however, that is a constant with my evaluations. So I decided this year, I am not going to teach from an Aboriginal perspective – I am

going to go in with structured lessons. I do not have much interaction with class and I tell you the students seem to appreciate it more. (Namid)

As well, a respondent noted that some students had difficulty adjusting to this modality.

I know [circle] didn't work so well for non-Aboriginal people - it wasn't what they were used to. It counteracted to their tendency to be competitive, it counteracted their tendency to begin speaking before somebody else was done, it counteracted their tendencies to invest power [and authority] in the instructor, it counteracted tendencies to be passive in their learning and it counteracted their tendency to avoid responsibility for their own learning. It was challenging as a pedagogical process mainly for non-Aboriginal learners. (Cheveyo)

Nonetheless many of the respondents like to use this modality, and spoke at length about the advantages of this approach.

I've never lost that sense that working in circle is my preferred way to go. (Cheveyo)

Respondents noted that the sharing circle can be valuable in many different ways. They appreciated its holism:

In terms of holistic teaching, it's about how you relate to the information, to the circumstances – not just cognitively, but at an emotional, spiritual, physical level, and providing the students an opportunity to reflect upon that. For example -what is their visceral reaction - what does it do to their stomach? What does it do to their sinuses? What does it do to their backbone? And being aware of that - how would that impact your clinical practice. What things would you have to do in order to make sure you didn't get involved in a transference situation or to be able to provide the best professional service to that individual and that's the analysis. (Wicasa)

One respondent found working in circle to be liberatory and validating.

Working in circle was liberatory in the sense I had never thought that I would be able to bring all of who I am to a classroom, in the sense that ok there is a way here that I can be myself and that I have something to share other than the facts and figures of the Aboriginal experience in Canada. (Cheveyo)

Kachine also noted:

It helps to break down barriers...to share and not feel that we're here with a bunch of strangers. (Kachine)

Cheveyo felt it also fosters personal responsibility in learners:

What working in circle does is it counteracts mainstream educational processes that in some ways dehumanize or devalue the learner – the learner's knowledge, and also more importantly devalues the learner's responsibility for his or her own learning. So much of working in circle is an internal process. To maximize it you really have to work hard at listening and making your own connections and no one else does that for you. (Cheveyo)

Reciprocity was also mentioned:

With the circle, you're acknowledging who they are - that they are a learner [and] a teacher, acknowledging that their stories are who they are. (Honovi)

Respondents also felt that talking circle provides a safe environment, as well as a forum for the quieter students to contribute.

White people have a real sense of entitlement that they can just walk into the room and say whatever they want, but a lot of these kids, all their lives have been in programs where they've been shunted around and not had their opinions taken seriously but you get them in a talking circle and they'll talk because the structure is there and it creates safety for them. (Chickoa)

I also find it's a good technique if some people dominate the conversation and the quieter students haven't had a chance to share. Also, some students don't like jumping in, they haven't been trained that way, and their families aren't like that. So that gives everyone a chance to share. (Kachine)

Talking circle is also good for debriefing, but also helps to monitor where the students are at.

It offers a good place to talk about emotional stuff - a safe place. We always open class with a talking circle. A lot of times we are watching some pretty powerful videos, so, I use the circle again for debriefing - making sure that everyone is feeling okay before they leave. (Chickoa)

It was really helpful to have that discussion circle because we can debrief all of our difficulties from the other courses and that really helped. It was really important for me. (Amitola)

Our class is usually a circle format. I usually will have check-ins to see where students are at personally. (Dakotah)

5.2.3 Challenges as Educators

The focus here is on issues related to curriculum, and to their positions as faculty members.

5.2.3.1 Curriculum

As noted previously, relevant content is required to meet the needs of Aboriginal students, but there are difficulties associated with incorporating Aboriginal content, as well as challenges in teaching such content. Lack of texts and non-acceptance of Aboriginal knowledge is problematic, while teaching such content can be risky at best. Certainly, there is a lack of appropriate texts or literature; what exists is insufficient. Respondents noted they did not have the luxury of having suitable textbooks and described how they compiled readings for their students. They also noted the stereotypical representation of 'Indians' in many written materials. As well, Aboriginal courses and content exist on the margins of curriculum, which is problematic in adequately preparing students to work with First Nations. In reference to SSW, a respondent noted that:

They're in the habit of how can we change a bit, to make it more Aboriginal. They may do an Aboriginal course, or allow more Aboriginal content here and there, but that's it. (Honovi)

Where are the margins of the curriculum? The Aboriginal perspective is not throughout the curriculum; it's at the margins as are the faculty [but] when you look at the areas of where SW graduates get involved, whether its health, mental health, drug and alcohol, child protection, economic development, income assistance, corrections ... a significant portion of their caseloads will be First

Nations, Inuit and Metis people. And, are they prepared? I would suggest not. (Wicasa)

As well, there is little room for spirituality in curriculum outside theological or religious studies.

In terms of trying to teach about Aboriginal issues, [about] spirituality, the vision quest and those kinds of things, they're not considered valid by scientists so...You're afraid to mention them because some people are going to think there's something wrong or different about you and that you're not academic enough. (Ayita)

For Aboriginal people – culture and spirituality go together and a lot of the time culture and spirituality don't enter into education. (Honovi)

However spirituality is an important component of Aboriginal helping strategies.

Spirituality is part of the medicine wheel and we see in SW how far people can go when they get in touch with their spirituality and their culture. How much healing can be brought and that's what we're in the business for is to heal families. So why would we leave out that one crucial piece that is so important to our work. (Chickoa)

These challenges lead to serious gaps in meeting the needs of Aboriginal students, but also impede the ability of non-Aboriginal students to be able to work in culturally relevant ways with First Nations people. Also challenging are the dynamics related to teaching such content in coursework.

5.2.3.2 Challenges of teaching critical and Aboriginal content

I need to be touching on critical race perspective. I bring that in. I know that it's difficult for them and I can see it because some of the students won't look at me. (Kachine)

In spite of various challenges, and as noted earlier, Aboriginal faculty feel an obligation to ensure curriculum has critical perspectives and Aboriginal content. However, fulfilling such obligations brings additional challenges, as noted in the above quote. Among the

challenges are that learning about the issues may lead students to face conflicts in their regular life.

Every year right around the 4th or 5th class the students are getting really angry and upset and anxious and frustrated because they're learning about the history of Aboriginal people in Canada and they can't believe that this has happened and they're starting to talk to their friends and their family members and they're having arguments and fights with them. So we talk about it. (Shadi)

As well, the content is often emotionally heavy and teachers need to be prepared to deal with student reactions.

It's also about acknowledging things. When we're talking about colonization and, they're viewing some of the videos where - especially in the states - people were slaughtered, it's really, really heavy information that we are covering; [so] we really need to be sensitive to the [need for] healing because some of our students - even the Aboriginal students have never been exposed to it... it's very emotional for them. (Ayita)

I need to be ready for those reactions... (Kachine)

One reaction is guilt.

It's important also to acknowledge the feelings that non-Aboriginal students are having because a lot of times it's like guilt for what their ancestors did. They can't believe that they treated and mistreated Aboriginal people to that extent, but I basically say there's no point in feeling guilty. You just need to take it in and realize that this is what happened and think about how we can prevent things like that from happening... [including] the invisible processes... (Ayita)

Furthermore, students sometimes have difficulty accepting the history.

A lot of the things that we talk about in class are so new to so many people when you talk about the annihilation of Aboriginal people, and you talk about how around early 1900s they really thought they were going to be extinct as a race you talk about all the things that they went through, and after a while some people just shut down; it's like it's too unbelievable - that can't have happened in our country. (Ayita)

In some cases there is outright resistance.

I tried to present post-colonial theory and got a lot of resistance from students. (Kaya)

Thus, these professors find themselves in seemingly precarious positions that require a high level of sensitivity and skill to manage. There is a strong sentiment that it is important, in this context, to pay attention to process.

I give the students from the dominant group time to talk about things and wrap their head around this new perspective in as non-threatening a way as possible but they still got to be experiencing it. (Kachine)

One respondent demonstrated how critical it is to attend to process.

I remember there was one non Aboriginal student talking and an Aboriginal student took offence and she just started to blast her in the class and so I just listened and then the other one got mad and started yelling at her and I said 'Ok, you both have your points, so lets just talk about this - you don t need to take it personally,' I had to diffuse it right away because boy, I tell you, they were mad. [But] what would happen if I had let that go on or not intervene... I think they would have been at each other's throats. (Shadi)

Strategies for coping with the challenges related to teaching critical and Aboriginal content/perspectives include the need to be in a solid emotional place, to be in top form – cognitively.

My strategy for getting ready for class, which is probably more important than my grasp of the material, is what emotional state I'm in; I usually meditate before class and try to get myself in an open place. I feel I'm most aware of the dynamics in the classroom when I feel in an open place. That's very, very, important especially when we're presenting material that's non dominant, [especially with] a dominant group of students with very few Aboriginal students in the class. I feel like I really have to be in top form to respond to what people are saying and not get defensive. I'm modeling that 'Ok, you can bring these things up' and I can respond to them. (Kachine)

Certainly, Aboriginal professors must take great care in how they respond to students' reactions. Awareness and sensitivity requires personal wellness, and maturity. The challenges related to both creating and delivering a culturally relevant curriculum are compounded by challenges related to their jobs.

5.2.3.3 Other challenges related to their jobs

In terms of their jobs, respondents described issues related to connections with community, workload, being marginalized, ignorance, triangulation, boundaries and authorship. First, in terms of community connections,

Aboriginal faculty need to be able to maintain connections with people in the community who are supportive enough of what they are doing that they will come and share their own knowledge and skills. (Amitola)

If I am just fulfilling the role as an instructor the way the university describes it, I will be ostracized; I will be cut out of the community. I will not be living the things I teach about. (Dakotah)

Access to community knowledge, not having that connection, what validity do we have in the classroom? (Peta)

While connections with community are necessary, respondents noted there is no allowance in the academy for the time spent with community, or to do research in community.

I have elders come to my classes fairly often. But the reason they do is I am providing transportation, I'm feeding them, I am doing a lot of the things the institution will not do. I have one elder - it's a two hour trip but I will bring him every other week to my classes just to have him hang out and talk to people because he has such tremendous knowledge to share and when you're driving a couple of hours, you got gas, you got time, you also got some stops for food. I can't bring in an elder without feeding him but the institution isn't supporting me to do that. (Peta)

The work that you're doing in the research of Aboriginal peoples - it takes a lot longer to develop those relationships and keep them maintained with various communities. (Namid)

As well, these professors often have extra responsibilities imposed upon them. For example, they are often expected to support other faculty, as the apparent 'expert' on Aboriginal issues. These expectations translate into workload issues.

I find as a visible minority I have to take things apart ...deconstruct things and then bring them back to the classroom and translate it to my colleagues and to students - and it's that extra duty. (Kachine)

We know more about the dominant cultural world than they know about the Native world, so...we end up being bridges, and it's important to realize the stress that's put on Native faculty. For example, I've got four speaking engagements coming up that I am not getting any more credit for. But I am sort of the designated expert on First Nations stuff so [I get asked] when people need somebody to come into the class. (Peta)

Respondents also discussed being marginalized.

You've got the non-Native faculty members wondering 'what are they really doing?' And then you've got the students themselves who are wondering oh 'What are the faculty members really doing?' And there is a very easy chance of you being marginalized...where people think it's okay to go late to class - those kinds of things... (Peta)

Students come, they see all white faculty and they see one non-white faculty, so you can't help but be marginalized just because of the way you look. That's just an unconscious thing that it's modelled. (Kachine)

Marginalization includes having their credibility questioned when they choose to do things differently.

As Native faculty if we try to do things different of getting the accusation well we we're not really credible faculty because we're not doing it the way they recognize education to be so it's a real catch 22. (Peta)

As well, just as when they were students, these professors still face ignorance, as well as plain close-mindedness.

I've even had perfectly intelligent students that would say to me, "I don't have culture, other people have a culture I don't have a

culture,” and starting at ground 0 - trying to help people even recognize that they have a culture. (Kaya)

I wanted the words anti-colonialism included [in the course outline] and out of all the potential discussion it was that point that was focused on and, as I was leaving the university I ran into one of the people attending the meeting and this person sees herself as one of the experts on First Nations people....her comment was ‘well of course colonialism is over’ so then and there I knew we came from very different perspectives of reality. (Dakotah)

Mainstream faculty and chairs and deans... don’t have a clue... and where do you start when there is not even the willingness to dialogue... (Kaya)

Another issue that comes up is triangulation.

I see over and over again in institutions where intergenerational issues play out and triangulation happens left right and centre... you’ve got a student who is pissed off at a professor, then they go running to the director and the director actually listens to them. Triangulation is rampant and it’s just so destructive. (Shappa)

What happens in so many institutions in Canada is that the faculty, the Aboriginal faculty member that’s being bullied is one that gets blamed. You know they get targeted as some how they’re deficient as a professor because they’re being bullied. (Shappa)

Another important point concerns the need for clear and healthy boundaries, given the possibility that an Aboriginal faculty member may be faced with students they know personally, or are related to.

It’s tough because we rely on the relational elements of the teaching process and so how do you have that relationship? On the one hand you’re a role model; you’re a mentor, but at the same time you may be related to a student and if you are not really clear about who you are, your place in the world and your place as a professor, then you may buy into some of those strategies ... well we’re relatives so how can you not pass me... I like to say to people ‘sometimes love looks like a big no.’ (Shappa)

These types of issues can be particularly stressful for Aboriginal professors. Another issue has to do with the value of authorship.

It's interesting that in the sciences, you have 20 different authors on something like DNA, but we're expected to be single or maybe double authors at most, so how do we do community authorship? I've said that to people and they think it's a great idea, but that isn't [going to lead to] tenure. (Peta)

All of these issues are directly relevant to the ability of Aboriginal faculty to fulfil their roles and succeed in their careers, and can be sources of discomfort.

5.2.4 Impact of These Challenges

Not surprisingly, a number of the respondents discussed feelings of isolation, and a sense of not belonging. They also noted that supporting students and colleagues can be very tiresome adding to workload and stress. Dealing with racism can also be difficult.

First, isolation is exacerbated by an inability to connect with peers.

I feel very isolated. I am the only person in my department who looks like me. (Kachine)

When you're trying to talk to somebody about [things] if they're not an Aboriginal person, they don't understand, so you talk about whatever is common to them, because they don't understand what you're going through or what you've gone through....because they're from a different planet. (Ayita)

A number of respondents talked about not having a sense of belonging.

One of the other challenges is the reality that most of the institutions are colonial in nature and history and practice and ideology ... policy. It's always sort of like how do I fit with this and where do I find my support? (Amitola)

Got ways to go...(laughs)...to feel like you really belong. I've been there ten years but I'm still a visitor, so that whole comfort zone again. (Ayita)

Respondents also talked about being faced with complaints and other issues that are tiresome, and add to their workload and stress.

I feel like I'm the complaints department...You become the cultural conscience and that gets stale...and tiresome. But then the issues aren't really dealt with completely so they're bound to recur...or they are dealt with at a superficial level... (Wicasa)

When I come up against these crappy situations, it ends up just being a lot more work. It's like another whole job over here about educating people and processing their stuff for them so that they can get out of your way. It's challenging. (Amitola)

Interactions with students were also a source of stress.

I do experience thinking things over like not sleeping, wondering about that dynamic, wondering how I am going to address it the next time and maybe all professors go through that but I do think that when we have a certain label, we're going to have certain experiences and challenges that are different. (Kachine)

Dealing with racism in papers is particularly disturbing, and causes some professors to question why they're even there.

I know that there's students that really appreciate the course, but every once in a while you [get] journal(s) or something [that are] bloody racist, and its like, 'Why am I doing this?' Its like, 'When will you ever be legitimate?' (Ayita)

Supporting students and colleagues can be very draining, overall.

5.3 INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES: COLONIAL CONTEXT REVISITED

Lastly, institutional challenges which affect both students and faculty underscore many of the issues already presented, and reflect the ongoing colonial relationship between Aboriginal people and academic institutions.

To begin, although it was mentioned previously, the topic of racism warrants further discussion. First, racism affects Aboriginal people regardless of skin colour, and it

is difficult to deal with, given its less blatant manifestation in today's society. First, some of the respondents noted that light or white skin does not protect against racism.

There is some very covert racism... I have very fair skin, but when I talk to non Aboriginal people, depending on who it is, if I tell them I am Aboriginal, they don't want to talk to me anymore. They get really uncomfortable. (Shadi)

Racism is a kind of violence and it's something I experience even as a personal privilege of white skin, I was experiencing it there. How do you focus on learning and being open when you're feeling that someone's been violent towards you in a verbal way or otherwise? (Amitola)

They also noted the difficulties of dealing with racism.

When I talk about racism, it's not the blatant type of racism anymore. It's not Klu Klux Klan, and running around in jammies; it's subtle ... it's the gaze..... Bannerji talks about the "gaze" and that's the most blatant element of racism these days. Now if you say 'well I am not racist' that's supposed to be good enough and that's what we're dealing with. It's crazy making stuff. (Shappa)

You can't legislate attitude; you can have rules and policies about what is acceptable behavior, and it exists, but in terms of dealing with it - particularly in Canada - there's a very long term but subtle undercurrent that - it is so innocuous - it's polite racism so you can't deal with it. (Wicasa)

One professor also described the tendency towards triangulation and deflecting the issues.

People either are really ignorant of racism and its subtleties or they just don't want to go there and so the Aboriginal faculty member is blamed for whatever disharmony is going on because it's easier to blame that one person than it is to say yeah there is a problem with racism in our student body and a culture of silence in our faculty and I am responsible to do something about it so what am I going to do about it? How am I going to deal with it? It's like 'hmm, do I want to challenge these 150 students or shall I just tell this person that they need to be quiet and close their door. Yeah, I'll do that.' (Shappa)

Inconsistency is also a problem.

I came in to the SSW thinking this is an opportunity to develop Aboriginal courses; however, I've been recently told that I have to

get away from teaching Aboriginal courses... but why [should] I? I don't understand why the director is trying to change it now. (Namid)

They hire someone for an evaluation, and months after a proposal has been accepted and we're hiring, somebody else says 'Why are we doing that? I don't think we should do it that way. Can't we rethink it?' So those are serious dilemmas in doing this with the mainstream institution. (Honovi)

Also noted is the lack of commitment, and the piecemeal approach to providing support.

[There's] a lot of rhetoric. (Dakotah)

Time and money is a big thing and when it is finally granted, it's granted partially and it's not done willingly and there's some resentment there; some holding back. (Ayita)

There were numerous references to not being heard, or listened to.

The dilemma for me is when they don't hear you...and when you get treated in the colonial way - as lesser than - [it] really is disrespectful and undermining. (Honovi)

When I was at one meeting, they asked 'Do you want an elder's advisory committee or not?' I said 'Yes. Of course we need an elder's advisory committee. We're in First Nations territory.' And then they voted it out. (Kaya)

Another issue has to do with intrusion.

I think to take time to see what is being experienced as an intrusion...that [facility] is established to provide resources for Aboriginal students in recognition of the historical and contemporary disparate involvement of Aboriginal students in higher learning. How do we provide safe access to resources without having other students say how come this is taking place? This happens to the point of students coming in and using the resources which are identified for a specific population. (Wicasa)

One thing that comes to mind for me is the sense of entitlement that non-Aboriginal people may have - it seems like the same entitlement that was exercised when Europeans first came to this continent and their feeling that they were fully entitled to populate and seize the land.

The colonial context leads to an education system that exemplifies Eurocentric ideals.

The problem is a huge percentage of the world has been colonized and when you get into higher education even in other countries, the model that everybody copies is the European top-down classist autocratic oppressive model. (Peta)

Paternalism is the tendency to want to control or “regulate conduct” (Webster, 1994, p. 851), and is certainly a colonial dynamic that still exists within academic institutions.

It’s still that old mentality that we have the answers. (Dakotah)

What I found in the end was that they had to do everything their way. They were really into control. (Honovi)

You’ve got three white people basically as the top of the hierarchy...they’re the ones making the decisions, so it’s a very colonial approach. (Namid)

Some respondents also noted the tendency towards rigid implementation of policy, and a few examples were given previously, such as wanting to fail students who don’t meet deadlines; however these dynamics exist at different levels within the institution.

Dealing with bureaucracy particularly - a lot of it has been around power and control where the person in charge of the program on campus needs to control everything. They won’t give you too much license. They have to know everything and bureaucratic rules and regulations can become really problematic. (Honovi)

Furthermore, it is still about being ‘in charge’ for perhaps paternalistic reasons. A last note in this regard concerns the mechanisms for maintaining or perpetuating relations of power, such as policies related to a) funding for institutional development, b) affirmative action, and c) research funding.

Prevailing funding arrangements tend to privilege those institutions that already have the capacity and [that] have a higher profile...CIHR, IAPH, or SSHRC perpetuate the existing structures

of power and don't necessarily build the capacity of Aboriginal peoples except as marginal in relation to those mainstream institutions - it upsets the applecart so to speak. It's just another example of that whole 'power over' that Friere and Fanon talk about where the settler doesn't have to think about these things. They just continue to unconsciously or consciously perpetuate their own world view because it benefits them. (Cheveyo)

Affirmative action was created basically to address issues of racial discrimination in work and educational settings, [but] it really doesn't. It gets us in the door, doesn't keep us in the door, and it doesn't accommodate or look at the structural issues that are experienced by Aboriginal faculty and students in these schools...in fact, it's just a way of maintaining the status quo in keeping them in power so you know it's been a difficult learning. (Namid)

Yet another issue is one-way accountability which also hinders meaningful change.

Part of what I argued right from the beginning and [the administrators] all agreed to it, is that we should be evaluating the partnership, not just the students. It's partnership that's most problematic right now. They're examining us but they are not examining themselves....there's no need in examining themselves because they're top drawer, but they just don't get it. They don't see it. And that's really hard. I don't think [academic institutions are] too much in the habit of examining their own practice.... it's always the other way around. (Honovi)

Also significant is the issue of internalized colonialism, and the need for decolonization, the latter of which is not reflected in policy.

One of the biggest challenges is the way that we've internalized colonialism as students and as educators in the sense that we tend to expect, often times unconsciously, expect a little bit less of our students or expect a little bit less of ourselves - that we have learned to inhibit our dreams. We have learned to inhibit our sense of responsibility to grow and develop and challenge ourselves [and] we don't take responsibility to really get out and develop Aboriginal centred programs and to include and centre Aboriginal ways of knowing into our classrooms. We just worry what we offer or what we do is somehow less than and that's a real challenge. (Cheveyo)

The other kind of challenges too when we talk about internalized colonization are the relationships that we strike with Aboriginal communities. We walk a fine line in perpetuating inequities with Aboriginal communities in the sense that if we just strike up whatever partnership we can with the Aboriginal community, drop in

our instructors, drop in our programs and then bugger off with all the kudos that are attached to that, we're not doing all that we can – we're just perpetuating those same old kind of relationships. (Cheveyo)

Another piece is the policies that CASSW [Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work] does have - paltry. They don't enforce them and yes, [in] most schools it's fluff but they don't say what really needs to be done... these are not de-colonized policies and that was Goodwater's point. (Kaya)

Alternatively, respondents talked about the need to fight for change.

I was raised in a Euro-centric environment where Indians were all dead and so I've have had to fight all my life for all of that. I can't do non-interference because if I do non-interference, nothing will happen. It's tough. (Kaya)

We have to fight for things. They [academic institutions] don't need to.... cause the fight is on their side already. All they got to do is say no, but it is problematic. (Honovi)

The need for allies was also noted as pertinent to facilitating change.

[Aboriginal people] need support at the upper echelons of the university as well... not just within the school of SW. They need somebody near the top that's Aboriginal. You need somebody at the top that's going to have some sway over what it is that's needed. It's got to come from the top down, because otherwise you're trying to squeeze up through that ceiling. (Honovi)

Achieving self determination is also necessary.

I also needed to go through my own process of saying or understanding that I don't need to write in the way that this particular author writes. My version of academia doesn't need to be the old white guy in the tweed jacket version. What I am hoping is that other Aboriginal SW faculty will understand that we can make it whatever we want to make it. It's part of self determination to say this is who we are, this is how we are and we have a right and a responsibility to be here in the way that fits with us and it doesn't necessarily have to fit [within their structure]. (Cheveyo)

One respondent argued that we need to focus on moving our own agenda forward, rather than spending our time educating non-Aboriginal people. As already noted, this point was

also made by Audre Lorde (1984), who argued that educating oppressors is just a “diversion of energies” (p. 113).

We can't always [spend time] trying to educate non Aboriginal people -to be blunt - fuck that! I am more concerned about renewing our ways of knowing and being and let's get on with that. Let's stop talking about colonization and its impact, let's stop theorizing on colonization; let's move away from that because I don't really know what good that does us anymore. (Cheveyo)

Ultimately, at the institutional level, there are a multitude of barriers which need to be addressed.

5.4 SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCES

In this chapter, I have presented the respondents' descriptions of their experiences as students and as teachers, as well as institutional factors that affect them. As learners they were affected by: individual factors such as family-community concerns, being away from home and identity; academic concerns such as language barriers, different orientations to learning, academic preparation, pedagogy and curriculum; relational factors included racism, discrimination, ignorance, tokenism, competition, and non-acceptance of their voices; teacher behaviours included lack of modelling, and lack of follow-through, as well as maintaining distance; and being singled out. The impact of negative experiences included: loneliness and isolation, and a lack of belonging. Coping strategies included leaving, seeking safety, or simply being quiet. Evident was the need for supportive relationships with teachers, advisors and peers.

As faculty, these respondents' approach to teaching is influenced by their own experience, although 'who the students are,' their beliefs about learning, and their perceptions of their responsibilities as educators are prominent influences. For many,

talking circle pedagogy is congruent with these ideas. Challenges relate to: curriculum resources; content which challenges the status quo; maintaining community connections; workload; marginalization; ignorance and closed-mindedness; triangulation; boundary issues; and authorship. The impact of these challenges includes: a lack of belonging; being faced with complaints and issues which add to work load, and stress.

Institutional challenges include racism, inconsistency, lack of commitment, not being heard or listened to, intrusion, paternalism, rigid implementation of policy and one-way accountability. Internalized colonialism and decolonization are certainly relevant, and fighting for change, finding allies, and achieving self-determination are pertinent strategies.

CHAPTER 6.0 INTERVIEWEES' RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, I report on the respondents' recommendations for educators, Schools of Social Work (SSW) and the larger institution. These recommendations are generally about ways to support Aboriginal students and faculty, and precede articulation of specific ideas about what can enhance the environment overall.

The respondents' recommendations to educators cover topics concerning knowledge, personal characteristics, and strategies that can foster a positive learning environment. Their recommendations to SSW include both specific and general strategies aimed at supporting Aboriginal students and educators. Recommendations at the institutional level include: wider participation in change; commitment and resources; and, altruism. Some interviewees were pessimistic while others were optimistic about the possibility of creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and educators in Schools of Social Work. However, recommendations for creating an overall healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty included: providing a welcoming and safe place; having reflections of Aboriginal people; having healthy boundaries and leadership; providing physical, cognitive, emotional space, space for ceremony and for community; and, supporting self determination.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EDUCATORS

Recommendations to educators made by the interviewees included: having relevant experience; knowing who they are and who the students are; and knowing what

services are available to students. Additionally, interviewees stressed the importance of faculty being open, clear, and congruent, and “doing their own healing.” Respondents also discussed a number of strategies such as honouring history; territory, and protocols; providing relevant curriculum; not compromising standards; and being sensitive to classroom dynamics. In terms of pedagogy, recommendations mirrored the respondents’ own approaches to teaching, so their only additional comments were that flexibility and humour are also helpful strategies. Overall, these recommendations can positively enhance the environment for Aboriginal students. I examine each in more detail below.

First, relevant experience was highly recommended.

You’ve absolutely got to have a background and grounding in indigenous culture and the more experience with indigenous people the better. Experience working with communities and working with Aboriginal students would be good. (Shappa)

Also recommended was the need to understand one’s own social and political location.

For example, respondents stressed that Non-Aboriginal educators need to understand how their own values influence interactions with Aboriginal students.

Enlightenment has its own set of values and beliefs that are very different so ideally someone teaching First Nations students has to have an understanding of those differences because without it you’re going to continue to oppress and maybe unknowingly judge First Nations peoples. (Dakotah)

It’s been my experience that non-Aboriginal educators are largely unconscious of the extent of their power and the ways in which they can perpetuate the marginalization of First Nations students or other people from marginalized groups. (Cheveyo)

Pertinent also to respondents was the need to understand political location in relation to the exploitation of the lands and resources of Aboriginal people on this continent.

Non-First Nations teachers need to know how they have in the past contributed to our oppression. This may involve [acknowledging] that they benefited –even if it’s just the land where their house sits. That’s part of who they are. They need to be honest and acknowledge that reality, and do that holistically, not just [cognitively] but emotionally, spiritually, physically. (Dakotah)

Part of the challenge is people who say ‘well, the British North America Act or the Indian Act have nothing to do with me’ but if I sell you a car, whether or not I know it’s stolen property because I’m the 3rd party and you’re the 4th party, when the police come along, you’re receiving stolen goods – there isn’t a cut-off – there isn’t a statute of limitations which says if you’re the 4th or 5th person to have custody of stolen goods, they’re no longer stolen goods...but when you look at the basis of land claims, there is a statute of limitations that seems to kick in and ok well it’s no longer stolen property. (Wicasa)

Respondents said that Aboriginal educators also need to understand who they are as Aboriginal people.

For Aboriginal teachers teaching other Aboriginal students, that I would say that they have the same responsibility as every student in there does which is they are responsible to figure out who they are as an Aboriginal person and what their own personal story’s all about, because once you have your feet on the ground that way - however lightly they’re on it - at least you’re working on that. Then you have a platform and a base to operate from. So that’s part of it. (Honovi)

Respondents also felt it is important to understand the positions of the students in terms of identity, and the struggles they faced to get into university, as well as knowing what services are available for them:

They need to understand where First Nations students are at, not only on a personal level but in terms of community level and in terms of identity, trying to re-establish that identity. (Dakotah)

Know the struggles that First Nations students make just to get there - just to walk through the door. (Kaya)

It’s also important to know what supports are out there like the sweats, the counsellors and advisors for the students to talk to... I think that’s very important because they definitely use the services. (Ayita)

Furthermore, they thought it important to recognize the diversity of Aboriginal students; we can't assume that students are traditional—there should be options:

Aboriginal students might want to go and talk to their Aboriginal support worker if they're lucky enough to have such a person, or they can go to an Aboriginal professor or maybe they want to go to a mainstream counsel or maybe they want to go to an elder. There should be that range of choice without it being any big deal. (Kachine)

They need those supports in place - counselling, access to sweat lodges, or even a church, a ceremony, access to elders, and possibly even access to food, and housing. (Shadi)

Another issue involved understanding the impact of differing world views on learners.

With non-Aboriginal teachers, their responsibility is to learn the consequences of different world views, because you don't see the same experience the same way; you can show a video about a relationship between a parent and a child, [but] the two world views are going to see that differently. (Honovi)

In addition to knowledge of self, of students, of supports available to students and of the impact of world views, respondents felt that there are a number of other things educators can do to positively influence the experience of Aboriginal learners. Being open, clear and congruent (“walking the talk”), as well as “doing your own healing” were recommended.

The biggest thing is like being opening to the learning yourself. (Chickoa)

I think students need clarity in [terms of] expectations, without being too restrictive, but they do want some structure around how to proceed and what's expected of them. (Chilali)

You have to walk that talk. (Chickoa)

The first thing I'd say is well you'd better have done your healing work because Aboriginal students are guaranteed to be going through inter-generational issues and if you are not ready to deal with that, don't teach them. (Shappa)

Respondents felt this recommendations applies to all educators.

The Aboriginal faculty - it would be the same thing. It's about modelling ...it's even more important... for Aboriginal faculty to have done their own work because if you don't you're going to get caught up in those intergenerational issues. (Shappa)

For respondents, it is also important to learn about and to honour the history. As well, sensitivity to the current influence of European policies and practices is critical.

Do your homework - know the history of the people are that you are working with because if you don't the history, you have no idea how to really speak with them in a knowledgeable way - in a way that they're going to be able to respect. (Kaya)

We've got to remember that a lot of Aboriginal people are really scared of Child Welfare because of that history and to keep honouring that history, to fully understand what that history was like for them and to not just skim over any of that. For people who have been children in care and are now coming to be Social Workers, [it's important to] just really honour that. (Chickoa)

Furthermore, respondents placed emphasis on the need to show respect, which means honouring territory and culture.

I think there should be more honouring of First Nations culture within the SSW. This doesn't get quoted with my name on it or anything does it? (Chickoa)

You definitely have to be coming from a value base of respect and understanding of indigenous world views, how important culture is. (Chickoa)

Also highlighted by respondents is the need to be knowledgeable about protocols as these pertain to research with First Nations.

You need an understanding of how Aboriginal research is done in Canada now, with set guidelines such as the CIHR guidelines on working with Aboriginal peoples. (Namid)

Recommendations related to curriculum included the need to a) make sure it's relevant, and b) to ensure standards are maintained.

Don't start from a whole different place that they can't understand. (Chilali)

You need absolutely relevant material for students and don't say that you have Aboriginal content because you have one guest speaker per term; it needs to be meaningful. (Ayita)

In fact, failing to provide relevant content actually sends a negative message.

Any time there's this add on material, you're just giving the message that hey you're tacked on, you're not central. (Kachine)

It was also noted that there need to be resources in place to develop curriculum.

Additionally, educators must not compromise standards.

You need to be careful for that tendency to just push Aboriginal students through the system because...then we have students coming out of degree programs and they don't have the skills. They can't write. They can't analyze. They can't critique. And then the consequence is more racism. (Shappa)

You've got to navigate that fine line between knowing that most Aboriginal students come into the postsecondary system with learning deficits, and be able to find ways to navigate those deficits and yet help them fulfill the requirements of the degree program ... [without] compromising standards. (Shappa)

In terms of pedagogy, the recommendations generally match the respondents' approaches to teaching. Rather than the banking method, a number of respondents suggested that teachers should: a) use a variety of strategies, b) ensure content relates to actual Social Work practice, and c) add the talking circles. Flexibility was also mentioned, and important points related to that included recognizing that nothing is written in stone, and that it doesn't mean lowering expectations.

We need to recognize that we can think outside the box. We can fiddle with those structures a lot more than we think we can. (Kachine)

There has to be some reasonable flexibility - not lowering expectations. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about just realistic responses to people's circumstances, fair responses. (Kachine)

As well, in terms of teaching Aboriginal students, incorporating humour was also suggested.

Encourage humour where you can because humour is healing...Aboriginal students love to laugh, they love to joke and when that comes out I think it's healthy. It's a healthy environment as long as the humour is healthy. (Ayita)

Most importantly, in terms of classroom dynamics, educators need to be very conscious of what is being covered in class, and how that is handled, given the possible impact on students. As well, based on their own experiences as students (see Chapter 5) respondents said it is important to avoid singling students out:

Don't make assumptions that bringing issues out in the classrooms is healthy for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students, that it's ok to [discuss] these issues unless you have an awareness to even deal with this. This is likely going to harm the Aboriginal student. It's going to put them in a position of having to defend, and explain themselves and that action alone is a [form of] discrimination. Be very clear about that. (Namid)

[There has to be] a willingness to deal with conflict because people will avoid conflict and in our contemporary learning environment, conflict is just part of it. (Shappa)

If you're not Aboriginal, you do have to make contact with Aboriginal communities who are outside of the environment. Extend yourself. Go out and connect with Aboriginal people, communities, find out what the issues are, read literature, do your homework. Take the onus off of the Aboriginal students. That's what your job is. (Namid)

[Don't] expect First Nations students to speak for their people. They're one voice among many and it really puts First Nations students on the spot. (Namid)

In addition to recommendations to educators, there were recommendations aimed at SSW, specifically.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO SSW

A few of the respondents' recommendations were directed more towards Schools of Social Work. These include both specific and general recommendations for supporting students and faculty. I discuss recommendations to SSW in more detail below.

6.2.1 Supporting Aboriginal Students

In supporting Aboriginal students, discussion focused on academic and non-academic supports, mechanisms to address their concerns, policies related to admissions and prior learning, and attendance at cultural events. First, students may require academic and/or non-academic supports.

[We need to] be really supportive around the academic piece in a non-frightening [way]. (Chickoa)

It's really crucial to provide other supports – not for all First Nations students, but for many First Nations students – what you might call non-educational supports. (Cheveyo)

As well, students need mechanisms for dealing with any concerns they may have.

There should supports [for] Aboriginal students to come together to talk about their own concerns, how they will support each other, what issues they would like to address, like more Aboriginal [content] in course[work]. Right now there is no mechanism for the Aboriginal students to come together and even address [issues] collectively to the school, so the system sets them up to ensure that the status quo is maintained. (Namid)

Policies related to admissions, prior learning assessment, and involvement in spiritual ceremonies, were also mentioned. First, flexibility in admissions policies is needed.

As far as making it more welcoming, one thing would be to perhaps have a little bit more flexibility with grade point average. So if

someone has had a lot of crisis in their life and maybe they haven't been able to concentrate because they've been more emotionally upset, flexibility with grade point average is important. (Kachine)

Prior learning experience is also an important factor that should be addressed.

Aboriginal student applicants should get credit for volunteering in their own community... (Kachine)

We're still very weak on giving people credit for training. All this federal money is going to non Aboriginal people - they're getting hefty consultant fees to do this training and then Aboriginal people can't even get credit for it when they go to dominant institutions. That is a big issue that still needs to be fought and challenged... perpetuating the invisible stuff. (Kachine)

From a cultural perspective, participation in ceremonies and access to First Nations advisors, were also mentioned as important.

Allow them to take that time and to encourage it, so that they're not feeling like that whole sense of guilt. Other people with different belief systems have days that they observe and no one makes them feel guilty about it...so you need to go and do a ceremony and that's what you need to do. (Ayita)

Their advisor should be First Nations. Their [field liaison] should be First Nations and their placement should be First Nations because in a more mainstream Euro-centric [program] no matter how many times you try, it's just...How do you connect? (Kaya)

The respondents' recommendations indicated micro and mezzo level strategies that could enhance participation and success of Aboriginal students in SSW. The importance of flexibility and accountability were stressed throughout interviews, and are also evident in the recommendations for supporting Aboriginal faculty.

6.2.2 Supporting Aboriginal Faculty

In terms of supporting Aboriginal educators, respondents suggested the need for SSW to: remember why Aboriginal faculty are there; be aware of the challenges they

face, and what they need to do to support Aboriginal students; provide mentorship; and, revisit hiring policies to better accommodate Aboriginal faculty members.

Remembering why Aboriginal faculty were hired and why they are essential in SSW is especially important to a respondent who was told to stop teaching Aboriginal material.

Acknowledge who we are, why we're there. I'm not there as an individual. I'm there to teach people who are going to be working with Aboriginal people and to teach other Aboriginal people. Let's not get confused. I'm not a white person. (Namid)

Obvious is the sense of obligation of Aboriginal educators, which has been previously noted.

Another respondent referred to the negative attitudes and behaviours Aboriginal faculty have to deal with, and recommended increased awareness of these issues.

The only thing that comes into my head right now is just awareness of what we're going through...there's got to be heightened awareness about what's going on, what dynamics are happening. (Shadi)

This is important, because a lack of awareness can lead to inadequate responses.

Also noted was the need to accommodate Aboriginal educators so they *can* provide support to students.

You can definitely make a huge difference if [Aboriginal] faculty are supported. If faculty are being stressed in terms of 'No you can't do this, you can't do that' then you're constrained in terms of the environment that you can create for the students.

Administration have to give the faculty the time and space to be supportive of students, to have relationships, to have conversations. (Chilali)

One of the programmes I was involved in, several of the students were associated with a couple of communities that were in crisis

during the time they were in school... so I was involved in critical incident debriefing the same time I was trying to teach and had absolutely no real understanding and support from the school. I was on my own in trying to deal with this....so there's got to be support and recognition that things may have to be done differently. (Chilali)

Mentorship is also appreciated.

Certainly it's really helpful for any junior colleague to have a senior colleague help them to get published ...to have mentorship. (Kachine)

The respondents also discussed the importance of increasing the number of Aboriginal faculty members, and, of having flexible hiring policies.

Our numbers need to be increased - it's the only way that we are going to start changing things. (Ayita)

There's a role in having flexible criteria for hiring faculty if they are First Nations, [to] be more inclusive of people who don't necessarily fit within the colonial academic world because I think their teachings are just as valuable. (Amitola)

Every time we come up against policy, central administration comes back with, "We don't do that, that's not possible." Why? It's because there's a policy in place. So, change the policy so that you can accommodate people who want to do their PhD. (Ayita)

Certainly these academics have much to offer in helping to create a better environment in the academic arena, however, they need more resources – and there is need for more Aboriginal faculty members if universities are interested in really changing the current milieu.

6.2.3 General Recommendations in Supporting Aboriginal Students and Faculty

Recommendations included the need to go beyond simple 'cultural awareness,' to asking for input, and to including community in providing feedback on curriculum. As well, resources are needed to bring community into the classroom.

Furthermore, SSW also need to establish an agenda that reflects their commitment to

Aboriginal education, to support diversity in programming, and to support the validity of programs they are offering to Aboriginal communities. I examine these recommendations in more detail below.

First, respondents argued that it is important to go beyond just cultural awareness and made specific recommendations on other faculty and administrators can improve their own understanding of the issues.

This idea of just having culture sensitivity or cultural awareness - it just won't cut it. It has to be something more than that. (Aboriginal people are) not looking for you to just become culturally aware. (Dakotah)

It's important to have some training in anti-racist ideology and practice and in particular around white privilege. It's really important to have a clear understanding of that. (Amitola)

(Faculty and administrators) don't have to beat themselves up for being stupid. They just have no exposure - meet people, face to face, and talk with them. It's a start. It's a small thing but it's big at the same time. (Honovi)

Respondents noted that there are a number of ways to become more aware. For example, it is important to ask for input from Aboriginal students, faculty, as well as community.

Seek out the First Nations students and talk to them - ask them what they [think]. (Kaya)

Ask the First Nations faculty what would support them, what would help. (Shadi)

First Nations need to be able to come in and critique the curriculum and they need to be able to see some kind of accountability, just like when we go to talk with the ministry to see if our students are prepared well enough. What are the gaps? What do we need to fill? What do we need to do more in the child welfare classes? (Kaya)

As well, interviewees stated that resources need to be available to bring the community into the classroom. One respondent noted that the community has to be there, and that

their involvement is particularly important because they can provide an important bridge between the two worlds – Aboriginal and mainstream.

If they're Aboriginal trying to learn in an Aboriginal way, and [the whole academic environment] is in a non-Aboriginal world, it just won't work so that connection is crucial. It's a necessity. (Honovi)

Native faculty need a budget for things like food, transportation of elders, gift giving to elders, honorariums... that needs to be part of the budget. (Peta)

Such resources are required to honour the contributions of the community in meaningful ways.

Furthermore, an agenda which reflects goals such as meeting the actual needs of the Aboriginal community can possibly facilitate the ability to hold people to those commitments.

The School of Social Work agenda should be demonstrated in things like advisory committees, in the policies - in the strategic planning. Then I know where I fit, I know I'm just playing out what the school has committed to, and that *I fit there* and then I can call on other people to fulfill their obligation to that. I can go to the administration and say "Hey, come on we made a commitment here and I need you to do A, B, C and D." (Chilali)(italics added)

The phrase about knowing where Aboriginal faculty fit, is also important, given the comments about not feeling a sense of belonging.

Overall, in terms of programs for Aboriginal communities, it was noted that there needs to be a variety of program options, that the validity of such programs needs to be acknowledged, and that fundamentally, Indigenous programs are needed.

You need more than one model of Aboriginal education. (Peta)

This makes sense given the diversity of each community. There is also the issue of credibility, and SSW need to stand behind the programs they are providing.

Basically, there is almost a pathological need to be able to prove to the university that all the off campus students are getting the same thing that the ones on campus are getting. But why do an Aboriginal program, if it's not going to respond to Aboriginal people and to adult learning? When it comes back to the shop, they're always worried about whether the upper administration will think this program is a good one...if accreditation will think it's a good one and I keep saying well if you think it's a good one, then you should tell them that it's a good one...why are you bound by that insecurity? (Honovi)

The need for indigenous programs was seen by most respondents as unquestioned.

Indigenous students need indigenous programmes. It is not the same with indigenous students being integrated into main stream. Ideally there will be programmes which have points of cross over, but Indigenous students need programmes grounded in Indigenous knowledge and realities. Even social policy realities and social welfare realities are so different. (Chilali)

Reflected here is the need to decentre western epistemology, and to make room for Aboriginal knowledge and world views.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE INSTITUTION AT LARGE

The respondents provided general recommendations to post-secondary institutions and were clear in their conviction that everyone needs to be involved in creating change and that needed changes require commitment and adequate resources.

They also provided recommendations specific to the issue of improving the environment for Aboriginal students and faculty.

First, the responsibility for needed changes rests on everyone's shoulders.

There has to be recognition that the marginalized people shouldn't have to do all the work to be bridging realities. (Kachine)

Participants recognized that bridging realities is no easy task, but that does not mean people should just continue to ignore the issues. It was their opinion that all educators need to be involved, and that such efforts will be of benefit to everyone.

I think that it takes maybe more than a two year SW program to change the culture and climate of education so I don't think that these things have easy answers but I think what it would take is a lot of non-Native faculty also adopting very different way of teaching so it's not just on the Native faculty to do things differently because Native faculty are under a lot of pressure. (Peta)

Mainstream institutions [should] systemically really step up because even though they may feel they have something to lose, the real situation is that they could have a real influence in what Aboriginal institutions, Aboriginal communities, and Aboriginal learners have to gain. And when Aboriginal learners, Aboriginal communities and Aboriginal institutions gain, we all gain. (Cheveyo)

However, commitment is needed, and resources need to be available.

There has to be commitment, an articulated commitment, a commitment which isn't at all begrudging and it has to be consistent. Now as a First Nations Aboriginal faculty member, I was the champion at that but unless you are included in the discussion, is there someone else who will be the champion, making sure that that is being followed? (Wicasa)

For Aboriginal learners in cohorts, community based cohorts in particular I think sometimes institutions including our own are little bit too quick move right into the delivery of a program. ... and it's our responsibility as educators to understand how difficult that transition can be and to get a real clear sense of where students are at because without that foundation, we increase the challenge or burden that's already been created with students... I think it's also our responsibility as educators to get a real clear sense of what need to be put in place first before we move into the delivery. (Cheveyo)

One way to demonstrate that commitment is to be altruistic

And realizing that if [a Western university] supports an Aboriginal scholar through undergraduate, master's and doctoral studies, they may go off and work at [an Eastern University], teaching Aboriginal content but then there's an exchange... a collegiality. (Wicasa)

These ideas suggest a need to recognize that change must occur at all levels of academic institutions.

6.3.1 Recommendations for Creating a Healthy Environment for Aboriginal Students and Faculty

Overall, interviewees were both pessimistic and optimistic in terms of the progress being made in Canadian Schools of Social Work. While they recognized there is progress, there was also recognition that there is ‘a long way to go,’ and certainly, ‘there are many things that the university could do.’ Importantly, along with many of the recommendations already presented, the respondents presented ideas about how to create a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and educators; relevant topics include: a supportive environment that is welcoming and safe; dealing with racism; stopping tokenism; reflections; healthy leadership, and boundaries; providing space; and, supporting self-determination.

In terms of progress, the hostility within the institution was mentioned, and some respondents described their views that any interest revolves more around getting the funding than really helping Aboriginal people.

The institutions are very slow to change and it's a very hostile environment for Aboriginal people to either come there and teach or come there and learn. It's still a very hostile environment. (Kachine)

My sense is that they want the bucks coming from First Nations but they don't want to give a lot to contribute to us developing the way we want to develop. (Dakotah)

Alternatively, it was noted that there are more Aboriginal faculty, and more Aboriginal content than 20 years ago, and that there are important processes emerging that are promising.

20 years ago, there were very few Aboriginal SW faculty members and basically no courses related to Aboriginal peoples. That part has changed. Just as we are moving to this phase of incorporating Aboriginal people and Aboriginal content into SW education programs, I think we also are in the process of transitioning to or

reinventing other aspects of academia....I mean decolonizing methodologies and other approaches that fit for indigenous peoples; this is another aspect that is still really nascent - still really emerging. I am hopeful about it. I am the kind of person that likes to look to the horizon. (Cheveyo)

Importantly, the respondents provide recommendations that could truly further the progress being made at every level of the institution.

As noted by one respondent, a healthy environment is a 'supportive environment,' while other respondents mentioned that it would be a welcoming and safe place. Being welcoming refers to an openness to Aboriginal culture and traditions, including ceremony.

It would be a place that would welcome those things that are particular to Aboriginal people, including medicines, ceremonies. You don't have to go overboard on it but... there may be smudging or medicines brought into the environment...not all Aboriginal people want (but) it doesn't mean that you don't still do those things and acknowledge all the differences. (Honovi)

Respondents spoke to the need for 'zero tolerance for gossip; zero tolerance for triangulation,' (Shappa) and to the need to recognize the importance of both formal and informal interactions.

The environment is really a big question. I think that sense of safety has to be at all different levels, so that means how people interact - how faculty interact with students from the classroom right through into the hallway or wherever you meet a student. (Ayita)

In fact, it's important that the significance of those interactions is not underestimated.

There's no such thing as a casual encounter, good or bad... the dean talked about how on the last day of school, kids in grade 4 were finishing up and the teachers were asking them well what do you want to be when you grow up and one Aboriginal young boy said well I want to be a medical doctor and the teacher said well you better set your sights a little lower because you don't have that ability...just the arrogance to make that statement, the damage - but that wasn't just a throw away comment. That was very directed - to

humiliate and destroy, and to make a presumption, to label and this is the expectation –it becomes a cycle - a self-fulfilling prophecy - if the teacher has expectations they will be fulfilled because of how the slightest phrase or comment is interpreted - it can change the direction of the person's life. What happens in here – you hear feedback from the students at the university level that their ability to participate, the expectations their instructors have with them are within very stereotypical confines. That was one of the challenges; what kind of Aboriginal person could you be, or, were you were permitted to be? And some instructor's had fairly full and complete notions of what role descriptions should be available and if you didn't fit then [what?] (Wicasa)

In addition to the issue of stereotyping is the issue of racism, which has been previously noted, but is of great importance and which must be addressed if the institution wants to provide a supportive environment, and again, the onus should not just be on Aboriginal people in the institution.

Institutions need to deal with the racism because it can't be a supportive environment unless there is a real willingness to go straight to those issues...that would have a huge impact. (Shappa)

You need to deal with the racism...The faculty with knowledge about anti-racist work; they're the ones that need to take the leadership role on that; we don't ask women who have been abused by men for them to start teaching men about abuse. You know we don't go to the people who are the recipients of that abusive behaviour and hold them responsible for it... making the changes ... when it's the abusers who need to make the changes. (Shappa)

[Workshops on racism] should be university wide. Have that in policy where everybody does some learning....Diversity workshops, and that's not just for Aboriginal people. (Shadi)

As well, mechanisms for addressing issues such as racism were noted:

There needs to be some safe method within the faculties [to deal with racism]...(Namid)

Another respondent argued for the need to stop tokenism, but also hesitated in making that recommendation.

Well cutting out the tokenism would be the very first thing that I have to say...I mean if you're not serious about Aboriginal content and Aboriginal people; it is very hard when people are not honest about it. It's almost easier if they would just simply admit that they are not really interested in Aboriginal content, but we need to hire a token so we will look good for our accreditation or something like that. At least that's honest. It's almost, it's dangerous to say this because [there are] those of us that get jobs, even token jobs, and sometimes we're just happy to have the job. (Peta)

Ideally, we simply need to hire more Aboriginal faculty members. Minimally, increasing numbers of both students and faculty would certainly enhance the ability to support each other, to share workload, to provide role models, and thus, would enhance the overall environment.

Another issue concerns the use of Aboriginal logos, and alternatively the issue of reflections.

Every time I see UBC catering drive by, I am reminded that this is really not a... safe, respectful place because people have had attention drawn to that and that this is not acceptable and they've been ignored, and [yet] it's really the responsibility of everyone in the community to draw attention to these things. (Wicasa)

The appropriation of Aboriginal art – as noted above – for commercial purposes is exploitation. Such behaviour is a manifestation of the colonial relationship between Westerners, and First Nations people, and while such acts have many implications for First Nations people (Cuthbert, 1998), the alteration or loss of meaning of cultural symbols, artefacts, etc is just one negative effect.

Seemingly contrary to the issue of using Aboriginal art for commercial purposes, a number of respondents described the need to have something that mirrored recognition of Aboriginal people - their existence, and their presence.

It would have to be an environment that acknowledges Aboriginal people - visually there would be some sign in the institution or in the

environment where education is taking place. Be it pictures, images, colours – they would acknowledge the existence of Aboriginal people because most places don't. [It's as if] they don't exist. It's part of just acknowledging the reality - the existence of Aboriginal people. (Honovi)

The imagery that's on the walls and in the halls is very important and what is it reflecting. I know that was an issue at the U for people particularly doing their thesis defence to be surrounded by images of all European faces looking down at them and not have themselves reflected in anyway. I think things like that can create a healthier environment. (Amitola)

They need to feel represented on their campus. They need to see symbols...and where are the symbols of the First Nations people...not there. (Kaya)

However, it was also noted that such symbols are not enough.

You can't just hang 45 pictures on the wall and have a totally non Aboriginal institution in terms of people. (Honovi)

Reflecting on comments about belonging, it is completely understandable that being able to see reflections of our culture and identity is important. Otherwise, how could we identify as being at all part of, or relevant to what's going on around us.

Also noted previously, two other pertinent factors concern healthy leadership and healthy boundaries. In the case of the former,

The healthy environment for Aboriginal students is that there's got to be health faculty – strong leadership, because our students are in desperate need of leadership. (Shappa)

As well,

Healthy – that's such a good word and it means so many things. I think one of the things that would create more health institutionally is to have clear boundaries between faculty and students particularly regarding sexuality and sexual expression. I would love to see that cleaned up myself. (Amitola)

I would argue that healthy leadership includes having healthy boundaries.

A huge factor mentioned by all respondents is the issue of space. Importantly, space was not just referred to as a physical necessity. It has a cognitive element, too.

A big one is space. And space is represented in many ways; sometimes, its physical space; sometimes it's in terms of ideas – [cognitive space]. (Dakotah)

It's also about providing emotional space

It's really important that the Aboriginal students have a venue for getting together and being able to debrief. (Ayita)

There has to be space to do that healing. (Ayita)

Space for ceremony was also discussed - having space to engage in cultural activities on campus was described as a great investment. Implicit is the need to make space for spirituality.

You've got to have a place where you can smudge. How are you going to create an atmosphere that will help students feel comfortable if you can't smudge and you can't drum because people are next door and they're complaining about the noise? (Kaya)

I think it's great that U has space and has monthly sweats and ceremonies and a place where you can just go and escape to and be surrounded by reflections of who you are. I think that's really powerful and really important and that was a good institutional investment. (Amitola)

So, physical, mental, emotional and spiritual space implies a holistic conceptualization of to 'being' in the academic environment. Also, it was noted that there needs to be space for the community to participate, so that they feel like they do belong and that they can establish trust and confidence.

The institution needs to make space so the community has a sense that they belong there, that they're part of this and that they can trust the institution at least to some degree, [and trust] that the people who are going to come out of that institution are going to be able to support the community. (Dakotah)

Finally, in terms of creating an environment that will meet the needs of Aboriginal people, the institution must foster self determination.

At this point I think that would be a place where Aboriginal people are in charge and are the ones making the critical decisions and are the ones teaching. I think it would feel the most welcoming and healthy. (Kachine)

The best way to do that is to be willing to relinquish control.

Be willing to give up that power in that role when Aboriginal people say they're ready to do that. Step aside. Get out of the way at some point. (Cheveyo)

Ultimately, there's a need to value what both worlds have to offer, which has been already mentioned, but which is a definite reality.

There is no healthy learning environment unless people can go in there and recognize (or) see their own reflection in course content, and, until we get to a day where Aboriginal SW will be parallel to western SW it won't be a healthy environment. Bottom line! We can put in some supports, but they are only interim supports until we can get the parallel recognition that we need. (Namid)

Overall, these are factors that can enhance the environment for Aboriginal students and faculty.

6.4 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Included in this chapter were recommendations to educators, to SSW and to Academic Institutions at large, and there are specific recommendations for creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty within these institutions.

Recommendations to educators teaching Aboriginal students focus on the knowledge and personal characteristics they should have: knowledge of who they are, who the students are, and what services are available to students, as well as being open, clear, congruent and doing your own healing. Also necessary is to know about and honour history,

territory and protocols. Curriculum must be relevant and standards must be maintained. In terms of teaching, educators should: employ a variety of strategies, keep it real, add talking circles, be flexible, and add humour. Educators must also be willing to deal with classroom dynamics.

Recommendations to SSW include strategies aimed at supporting Aboriginal students and educators specifically, but there are also general recommendations for supporting both. To support students, SSW need to provide both academic and non-academic supports, mechanisms to address concerns, and flexible policies regarding admissions, prior learning and attendance at cultural or spiritual events. As well Aboriginal advisors and Aboriginal placements need to be in place. For faculty, it is important to: remember why they`re there, be aware of the challenges they face and what they need to support students, provide mentorship, and be flexible with hiring. Additional recommendations to SSW include: going beyond ‘cultural awareness,’ asking for input, including community, establishing an agenda that reflects a commitment to Social Work Education for First Nations, supporting diversity in program options, and acknowledging the validity of Aboriginal Social Work programs.

Recommendations at the institutional level include: participation in change; commitment and resources; and, altruism. In terms of progress in creating a healthy environment, some people were pessimistic while others were optimistic; however recommendations included providing: a welcoming and safe place; dealing with racism, reflections of Aboriginal people; healthy boundaries and leadership; physical, cognitive, emotional space, and space for ceremony and for community; and, supporting self determination.

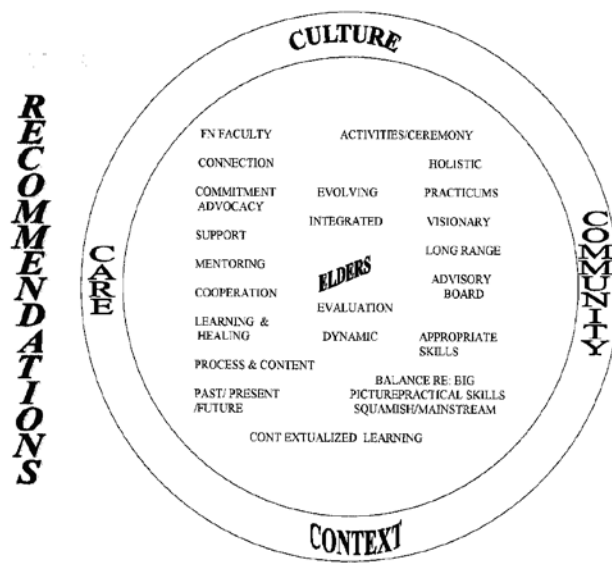
CHAPTER 7.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter I will first present the FN BSW framework, as well as the two revisions arising through the process of my literature review, and the research for this thesis. Then I will provide an analysis of the data based on an integration of the three frameworks presented. Personal reflections on the process of conducting this research are also included.

The predominant themes of community, context, care and culture – which reflected the guiding principles for the FN BSW framework I developed in 2002 – are certainly congruent with the findings of this research, but I believe that the framework required further revisions to capture the elements pertinent to the provision of a healthy climate for Aboriginal students and faculty in SSW.

7.1 FIRST NATIONS BSW FRAMEWORK REVISITED

While the initial First Nations BSW framework provided a useful lens for analyzing the findings of this research, I think that the dominant themes of that framework do not fully reflect what is needed in order to create a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and educators and that academic institutions must be prepared to address issues related to power, place, process and philosophy. As readers may recall, the first iteration of the FN BSW Framework looked like this:



Before I describe the evolution of the framework, there are four points I want to make. First, many of the ideas included in the visual representation of the First Nations BSW framework presented in Chapter 3 (and shown above) were expressed by the respondents of this research, although these will not necessarily be reiterated point by point.

Second, a Medicine Wheel framework often has both a horizontal and a vertical line that cross in the middle, delineating four separate quadrants. The frameworks presented here – both the original and the revised versions - do not. This was a premeditated choice intended to reflect the fact that all of the recommendations were/are closely intertwined, and were/are not mutually exclusive.

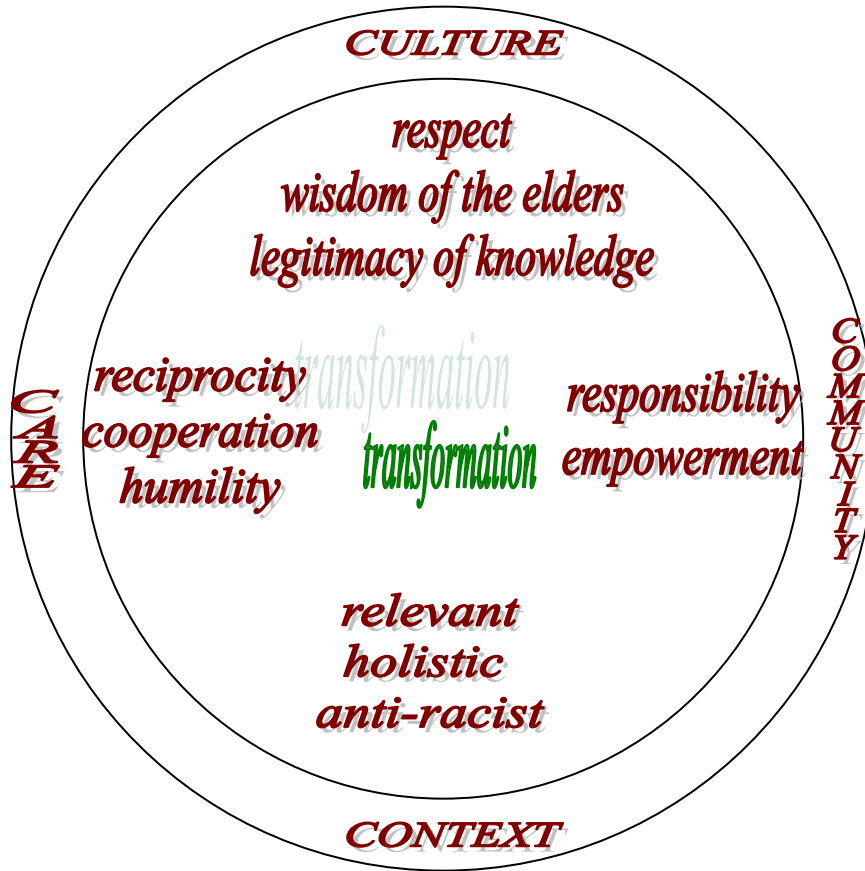
Another point I want to make is that the FNSBW model is now in its second revision and I realized that I needed to describe the first revision of the framework because it represents a phase of development of my own understanding of its philosophical basis. I now see that the framework will always be a “work in progress”

and it will be subject to revision as I and others come to understand it more fully. Below I will briefly discuss the first revision.

When the FN BSW framework was initially developed, I always felt that there was something I missed, but I was never sure why I felt that way until I conducted this research. I would look at the recommended strategies and think the framework was quite pragmatic, suggesting what needed to happen (such as advocacy, mentorship, and the like), but I also felt that the framework did not reflect the essence of what the multiple sources of data were really saying in making these suggestions – the underlying reasons as to why the strategies were important. Certainly, the dominant themes of community, context, care and culture hinted at what I felt was missing, but this research helped me to progress towards a philosophical perspective of Aboriginal education, and to articulate how to create a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty in SSW.

When I started the PhD program, I explored literature and research on Aboriginal education more broadly than I did in 2001; while the 2001 research focused on Aboriginal Social Work education, a broader scan of literature on Aboriginal post-secondary education during my coursework in the PhD program caused me to revise the framework. While there are a variety of shifts in ideas throughout the process, the main thing I want to highlight here is that my first revision incorporated themes identified by Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991). In reference to Aboriginal students, these authors point to the “need for a higher education system that *respects* them for who they are, that is *relevant* to their views of the world, that offers *reciprocity* in their relationships with others, and that helps them exercise *responsibility* over their own lives” (online: April 17, 2004, p. 1 of 9). These ideas fit well within the existing framework.

Figure 2: Updated First Revision of FNBSW Framework (revised November 2008).

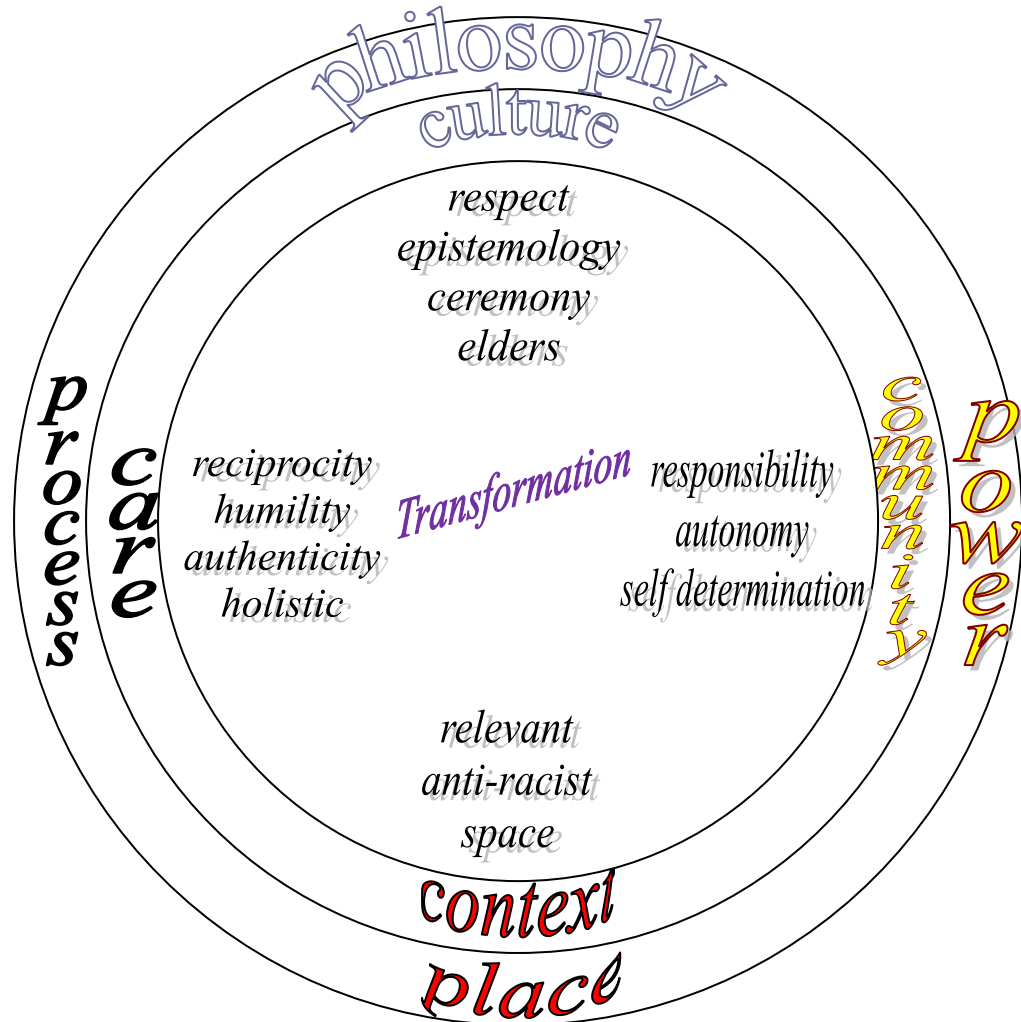


The current research has provided me with a deeper understanding of the framework, and led to further revisions. Ultimately, this project reflects the essence of grounded theory research. While the initial framework was validated by the current research being presented here, the first revision (above) was a second step in the development of the FNBSW framework.

One last point is that this framework is based on my own interpretation of the Medicine Wheel, as alluded to in the discussion of the original framework presented in Chapter 3. Why this is important, for me, is because the evolution of this framework has been a series of journeys around the Medicine Wheel. This is a journey that you, the

reader, get to participate in, if only as an observer. Below is the final revision, and, as in the initial presentation of the framework (p. 56-58), I will start in the Eastern quadrant.

Figure 3: 2nd revision of First Nations BSW Framework: a model for creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty in academic institutions.



7.1.1 Rethinking Community

In the original framework, community is the dominant theme in the eastern quadrant, and the words ‘visionary’ and ‘long range’ reflected the need to take into account the visions and long term goals of the community, which include self-determination and the power to educate their own communities to achieve their own

goals. The revised framework incorporated themes of responsibility and empowerment. Communities recognize their responsibility to ensure that students are adequately prepared to work in the community. Students, in turn, have a sense of responsibility to their community, and accordingly, they need to be able to fulfill their own learning needs.

In the current research, the respondents described their sense of responsibility as students and as educators. As students, they also felt responsible to ensure they were adequately prepared to serve their communities, and they appreciated having the power and autonomy to actually fulfill their own educational needs. As educators, they demonstrated their sense of responsibility to Aboriginal students and communities, and described the difficulties associated with being denied the supports needed to meet these responsibilities. Importantly, respondents stressed the necessity of inviting Aboriginal communities into the School to participate in ensuring their communities' needs are met within these programs. Respondents also talked at length about the colonial dynamics of domination which characterize academic institutions, and hinder the efforts of community to realize their visions and goals – fundamentally, the goal of self determination is undermined by the colonial relationship between Aboriginal people and the Academy.

Nonetheless, respondents stressed that Aboriginal communities have the right to self determination, and certainly, they need to develop the capacity to achieve that. One step towards accomplishing such goals is through the inclusion of Aboriginal people on advisory boards and decision making bodies, although as one respondent noted, these institutions must be prepared to give up control when the time comes to do so.

My own conclusion is that the prominent issue here is power, since the respondents expressed, at length, all the ways in which the power to realize their own desires and goals is affected by the multitude of barriers they face. Inclusion of community in decision making and the desire to increase the actual numbers of Aboriginal students and educators, as well as the need for Aboriginal people at the higher levels of administration, are strongly related to the need to alter the power dynamics currently at play, within and outside the institution – in the community. A number of respondents certainly expressed the idea of Aboriginal control of Aboriginal education. So, the theme of power became for me the fundamental principle in the eastern quadrant.

7.1.2 Rethinking Context

In the south, context was originally the dominant theme and required attention to learning as a process. This issue will be addressed later when we move to the west. As well, the context required attention to past, present and future - recognition of the historical and contemporary realities, as well as where communities are headed (the big picture). An appropriate context also required a balance between the big picture and practical skills.

The first revision indicated that an appropriate context requires a relevant program – as described above - which includes a holistic approach to education and an anti-racist foundation; however, the discussion here will focus on relevance and an anti-racist foundation, while a holistic approach will be also discussed in the next section on care.

First, the respondents indicated the positive impact of a curriculum that reflects their actual circumstances by having relevant content; such a curriculum can be

inspiring and validating, giving students a language for their experiences. A relevant curriculum is one that incorporates the above-noted historical, social, political, and cultural context of Aboriginal peoples' lives, which is why educators need to get to know the students - who they are and where they come from. This is also why it is important to bring the community into the classroom – community members can provide the needed context, and they can also assist in ensuring that students are acquiring the appropriate and necessary skills and knowledge needed to work in Aboriginal communities.

In terms of an anti-racist foundation, the first revision of the framework indicated that a relevant program would be founded on an anti-racist approach to Social Work practice. Certainly, the FN BSW community needs assessment indicated the need for attention to the issue of racism and the need to develop skills to deal with racism both within and outside Aboriginal communities, while the respondents in the current research highlighted the need to develop effective mechanisms to deal with racism within academic institutions.

For example, the hegemonic dominance of Eurocentric world views and knowledge constitutes institutional racism and must be addressed. The respondents described the negative impact of a Eurocentric curriculum which forces them to do twice as much work as other students in order to fulfill their learning needs.

Also relevant to this quadrant are the topics of location and a sense of place, as well as making space for Aboriginal people within the academic environment. Respondents argued that educators must understand how their location - in terms of beliefs, ideals, and values, and even history - pertains to their ability to provide relevant education. In fact, they need to locate themselves politically, socially, and so on, in order

to establish their relationships to learners. They also need to be aware of the territory upon which the institution rests. What is the relationship between the institution and the land – or the people of that land? How do they - the educators - locate themselves within that context? For example, I acknowledge myself as a visitor here in Coast Salish territory.

The discussion of location is related to what I interpret as ‘*sense of place.*’ The respondents in the research describe: feeling like they don’t belong; trying to find ways to connect to the people, and to the curriculum; wanting to see reflections of who they are; and wanting to connect with other First Nations people.

Aboriginal people come from a tradition of ‘place based’ knowledge – knowledge that is intimately connected to their traditional lands (Kawagley and Barnhardt, 1999). Aboriginal identity is built upon that foundation, so for Aboriginal students, going to school within a foreign system – Western Academia, located within a possibly foreign territory – outside their own traditional land base, the ability to make meaningful connections is critical.

Having a sense of place is also related to space. Aboriginal people need space to develop or feel a sense of place within the institution. Sense of place - or belonging - is strongly influenced by whether or not Aboriginal people have space to express their ideas and feelings, to engage in ceremony, and to bring in community. Sense of place can also be reinforced by actually addressing the factors which undermine wellbeing and cause emotional harm – prominent here too is the issue of racism. By providing an anti-racist environment, the message is that *you are important to us, so we will ensure that you do not have to face racism in our institution.* That would definitely be validating!

Thus, provision of relevant programs requires getting to know who the students are, which can help to better prepare them for the work they will do. Providing relevant programs also requires provision of formal and effective mechanisms for addressing racism, as well as addressing institutional racism as exemplified by the dominance of Eurocentric curriculum. Furthermore, educators need to locate themselves politically, socially, historically, etc. as this provides the context of their relations with the students and community. Knowing the students, and locating the self are related to sense of place, and, sense of place also comes from a) having the space to participate within the institution as Aboriginal people – cognitively, emotionally, spiritually, etc.; and, b) being able to enjoy an anti-racist environment.

Place is more than just a physical reality. It is historical; political, social, cultural, spiritual, emotional, mental and physical, it concerns our relationship to the land, and the people of the land, both in the past and the present. Thus, in this revision of the framework, the theme of context was subsumed under the theme of place.

7.1.3 Rethinking Care

As we move to the west, the initial framework highlighted the importance of care, and highlighted the need to pay attention to learning as a process, and to provide advocacy, support, and mentoring within a cooperative environment. In this quadrant, the focus was on the need to provide a supportive environment for students and faculty, as well as providing support to elders who participate in educational programs.

The first revision highlighted reciprocity, cooperation and humility. These refer to reciprocal relationships as learners and teachers (such as pedagogies which draw on everyone's knowledge and skills), which require the humility of recognizing that we

‘don’t know it all,’ and we can all learn from each other. This approach to teaching reflects/encourages mutual respect, and support through cooperation.

In the current research, the respondents expressed appreciation of reciprocal relationships in the classroom – through processes that built upon their strengths and the knowledge and wisdom they had to offer; they also appreciated reciprocal relationships with faculty. As teachers, they demonstrated humility in their willingness to be open to learning, and to sharing the roles of teachers/learners. They also recommended bringing Aboriginal communities into the institution – essentially, this would also create an opportunity to engage in reciprocal relationships, since the community would then be able to contribute to institutional life in many ways, and the institution would be better able to meet community needs.

A related issue, noted already in the section on context, is that educators must be prepared to learn about and acknowledge the historical, social, political and cultural realities of Aboriginal people, and even more so, they must be prepared to bring those realities into the program and curriculum. For example, they need to acknowledge and be prepared to teach about the historical legacy of colonization and its impact on Aboriginal people – it may seem redundant to mention this here, but in reality it is relevant to the educational process since it is absolutely necessary in order to foster authentic meaningful relationships, rather than continuing to perpetuate the mythical ‘John Wayne’ version (Harris, 2003) of history, which also perpetuates bad feelings, or a negative environment.

While the respondents discussed the difficulties associated with the task of bringing in the ‘real’ history, it does not mean it should not happen; it just means that it

must happen in ways that are respectful – not exploiting faculty or singling students out just because they are there. That means taking responsibility to do the job, rather than getting others to do it for you. It also means taking time to develop the skills to handle such material in ways that help students process what they are learning in productive and healing ways.

Respondents did note the impact of a Eurocentric curriculum and of a variety of negative interactions which indicate the importance of paying attention to what is happening for them emotionally. For students, recognition that education is not just a cognitive activity is important; the process of learning is just as important as the content of learning. For example, many students need to engage in healing as they learn about the history of colonization.

As well, as one respondent discussed, seemingly trivial interactions can be anything but harmless – rather, they can be devastating, and life changing events; even the smallest thing can have a huge impact, and with First Nations people, especially those who have been in the system – be it foster care, or residential school, for example, the acute sensitivity to what is going on around you is so much a part of lived experience, and (in some cases) survival, that it is often second nature. What that means is that you don't have the luxury of being oblivious to the dynamics such as those mentioned by the respondents – racism, ignorance, etc. Mechanisms or space/places to address the impact of those dynamics are crucial.

Ideally, paying attention to process means recognizing that education is not just a cognitive exercise, and involves allowing people to participate in the process as whole human beings. In fact, what is being implied here is a holistic approach to

participating in the academic arena – that we can bring our whole self to our life and time in the institution, and that we have space to process our experiences in a healthy and supportive environment.

The data really shows how both formal and informal processes, both within and outside the classroom are all important in creating a healthy environment for these groups, whether it means acknowledging the ‘real’ history, dealing with racism (however subtle), or confronting non-acceptance of their voices. Therefore, efforts aimed at improving campus climate must include finding ways to address even the most innocuous processes – however challenging, it is necessary.

While the theme of care is certainly a leading aspect of this quadrant, it did not seem to adequately encapsulate the ideas discussed here. Care implies having something done to you, but in this research, the respondents clearly expressed the need for everyone to participate in creating change, that change should not just be on the shoulders of the oppressed or disadvantaged groups – in this case First Nations people. Thus, to adequately reflect all of the concerns and recommendations of the respondents, process became the fundamental feature of this quadrant.

7.1.4 Rethinking Culture

In the north, the original framework highlighted culture and the need for Aboriginal faculty advisors and mentors, practicum placements in Aboriginal agencies, community connections, and cultural activities. The first revision took these ideas further and argued for recognition of the validity of Aboriginal knowledge, and respect for the wisdom of the elders. This research led to a shift towards *philosophy* as the prominent theme.

Demonstrating respect requires incorporation of Aboriginal culture, epistemology, and ceremony, and recognition of the validity of those ways of living/being in the world; fundamentally, respect means sharing intellectual space, and embracing Aboriginal world views, rather than perpetuating colonial hegemony. As long as Western philosophy serves as the central and unilateral foundation upon which modern education rests, these institutions will not be able to adequately meet the needs of First Nations communities.

In the first part of this discussion – in the eastern quadrant – it was noted that community visions and goals need to be fostered, and that these visions and goals include the need to maintain and/or reclaim the cultural foundations of these communities. Obviously this requires self-determination, and the expertise of the elders who still retain the cultural knowledge and philosophy of their communities. This research highlighted the need to focus on the goals of reviving, and fostering Aboriginal cultures rather than focusing on accommodating mainstream institutions. I believe this is why there is a renewed interest in reviving and maintaining Aboriginal languages - it is about cultural survival. Anyway, the philosophical foundation of mainstream academic institutions must be addressed, thus philosophy became the primary theme for this quadrant.

7.1.5 Transformation

Initially, Elders were situated in the centre of the original framework, and represented the foundation of the program. Everything else sprung up from that. Here they are situated in the North as the carriers of Aboriginal knowledge and wisdom. In this revision, my thinking has shifted to thinking about the four areas - power, place, process, and philosophy – as the foundation for providing a transformational environment.

Ultimately, all of these factors must be addressed in any initiative aimed at creating an environment that will foster well being and success among Aboriginal students and faculty entering into mainstream programs. For me, the last revision (presented on page 141) represents the philosophical foundations of the initial framework developed in 2001, but also literally widens the circle of knowledge on how to enhance the environment in academic settings to benefit these groups by embracing the ideas presented in the initial framework, and the first revision, within a larger circle which highlights power, place, process and philosophy as dominant themes.

7.2 THE PROCESS

When I reflect upon this journey, a few things that really jumped out at me throughout this process are: the rules, entitlement, and getting stuck. These issues further validate the need to continue to do research in these areas.

7.2.1 'The Rules'

The challenge of fitting in began when I submitted my proposal to ethics, and the powers that be attempted to 'follow the rules.' It's the old story of an administrator 'just doing their job,' although there was no knowledge of what that meant in this case. The institution has developed research protocols for working with First Nations people, which is great and of course, necessary. However, the inability of one administrator to recognize the applicability of the rules meant that I basically had to do a little self-advocacy – I went to the program director, who fortunately for me, understood my dilemma, and was able to provide approval so I could get on with my research.

Basically, my understanding of the problem is that there is a rule at SFU that doing research in an Aboriginal community requires approval from the leaders of that community. The administrator who blocked my application was asking me to go to the community and get approval, but I am not doing research in an Aboriginal community, per se. My research was conducted within academic institutions - with Aboriginal faculty working in those institutions. Trying to convey the inapplicability of the rule in regards to my research proved difficult, as I just kept getting a demand to get approval from an undefined Aboriginal community, until I went to the head of the division, who assisted me in the matter.

7.2.2 Entitlement

Every time I rode up the hill to the Ivory Tower I had this odd feeling - I knew it was a privilege and it seemed especially weird that it was me going up that mountain. I just didn't have any sense of entitlement, so I was conscious of it every single time I went up there. (Me)

Throughout the time that I have been engaged in this project, I have often been faced with feelings of discomfort that I have come to attribute to the issue of entitlement. One of the ways that plays out is in terms of the expectations related to doing research.

After completing the interviews, and beginning the data analysis, I struggled over the issue of voice. My reasons for doing this research are largely to bring forth the Aboriginal voices – to speak for themselves – about what is needed to enhance the environment in academia. The difficulty relates to how I think about the data – it is not just an object for me to manipulate. Western science looks upon the objects of its interest, as something to be manipulated/ used as it pleases. But such an act seems contradictory to

honouring and revealing the voices of those I interviewed – I mean, sure, I rearrange ideas so that they can be presented in an organized fashion, but imposing my own interpretation feels like some sort of betrayal. Where’s the line between their voice and my own? Anyway, I think that it is really about entitlement, which I view as that relationship I have to any object in my environment, and I suppose that there is a definite need to tread lightly in trying to be true to the voices of the 14 people I interviewed.

7.2.3 Getting Stuck

Another thing that came up for me in this project is that after I interviewed everyone, I felt very inspired by their commitment, courage, and wisdom, but as I began coding, I got stuck after about the 5th interview. Basically, in January that year, I was feeling isolated after the holidays – vulnerable, I mean. I began to micro-code the data, but with each transcript, I began to feel very heavy, and that feeling became more intense with each transcript. By the time I got to the 5th transcript, I had to stop. I was stuck. Reading about the negativity that these individuals face on a daily basis was depressing, such that I just had to stop for awhile - I couldn’t even look at a transcript for about four months – it seemed to take that long for that heaviness to lift. I honestly don’t even know what helped me to be able to finally continue, instead of quitting.

I think what made it worse was that I was not in a position to really spend any time with anyone to work through what I was feeling. There were things going on for Aboriginal graduate students at the time, but I was simply too overwhelmed to even go to these events.

7.3 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, analysis of the data was preceded by discussion of the first revision of the First Nations BSW framework. The purpose of presenting the first revision was to provide the reader with an understanding of the developmental context of the framework being used to analyze the data, and how the framework shifted from a pragmatic set of recommendations to a philosophical framework for creating healthy environments for Aboriginal students and faculty in SSW. Notable in each rendition is that the principles are not mutually exclusive. Also, the framework infers a holistic approach to meeting the needs of these groups.

In terms of how the framework was applied, the themes of community, context, care and culture are all pertinent; however, in my view, they can be subsumed under the themes of power, place, process, and philosophy. The importance of community participation cannot be understated, but in this analysis, I recognized that the primary issue with respect to communities has to do with power – the power to realize community visions and goals – such as self-determination, the power of students to achieve their learning goals, and the need to honour the right of communities to fulfil their responsibility for the education of their people.

Context arises out of the political, social, historical, cultural, philosophical and physical location of everyone involved, as well as the space upon which these institutions rest. This is about sense of place, and Aboriginal people need cognitive, emotional, and physical space, as well as space for ceremony, to facilitate their sense of place within the institution. Thus, the concept of place encapsulates the theme of context and insinuates the need to make space for Aboriginal thought, feelings, bodies, and spirituality.

As for care, I realized an overriding need to pay attention to process. Reciprocity, humility, authenticity, and a holistic approach to education are all accentuated as important, and indicate that in this quadrant, the process is not a one-sided thing that Aboriginal people experience apart from the rest of the institution; in fact, we are all involved in the process, and what we are doing (or not) counts.

I chose the theme of philosophy for the fourth quadrant because the dominance of Western philosophy is problematic, and these institutions must be prepared to make room for and acknowledge the validity of Aboriginal epistemology and world views. In fact, incorporation of Aboriginal worldviews and epistemology within mainstream institutions is necessary for creating a healthy environment in which Aboriginal students and faculty can thrive and succeed in meeting their own goals.

While the initial dominant themes of community, context, care and culture are important aspects of creating relevant programs for Aboriginal community-based initiatives, power, place, process and philosophy are issues that, if addressed, will facilitate the goal of enhancing the academic environment for Aboriginal students and faculty in SSW. In fact, such efforts will be transformative, not just for Aboriginal learners and teachers, but for everyone within academic institutions.

I briefly discussed the issues of rules, entitlement, and getting stuck. These issues do not seem odd to me – they seem kind of normal – which also indicates the need for change. Certainly, such factors at least point to the need for further exploration of issues related to improving the academic environment for Aboriginal students and faculty.

CHAPTER 8.0 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

In this chapter I briefly revisit the literature review as well as my research on creating healthy environments in SSW for Aboriginal students and faculty. After that summary, I provide recommendations for future research in this area.

My motives for engaging in this research stem from my own experience as a student in Social Work, and as an educator in a SSW. My own history as an urban Aboriginal woman, who rose from poverty and other challenges to a position of privilege as an educated academic, is pertinent in that my commitment to facilitating change stems partially from my own struggles to make that shift.

In 2000, I was hired to engage in research aimed at developing a culturally relevant FNBSW program for delivery in an urban Aboriginal community, and since its inception in 2003, I became the coordinator of that program. During the years I have been involved, a multitude of questions have been floating around in my mind, although the topic of campus climate, or academic environment, was an area that I intuitively felt needed urgent attention.

My rationale for conducting this research is that there is a need to enhance Aboriginal students' access to and success in Social Work programs. Currently, for example, over 156 Aboriginal Bands in BC are striving towards self-determination and control over services to their communities. What that means is that there is a tremendous

demand for increased capacity among Aboriginal people living within these communities, and post-secondary institutions must look at how to fulfill those needs.

8.1 WHAT THE LITERATURE SAID

As I began to explore literature on campus climate in SSW, I was unable to find any research that provided Aboriginal perspectives on the topic; however, research conducted in the United States indicated the need for campus-wide strategies to improve the environment for minority students and faculty. In fact, research showed that discrimination negatively affects health.

Importantly, literature on retention indicated that such strategies for retaining Aboriginal students are insufficient to alter campus climate, because such strategies do little to alter the colonial dynamics that dominate the educational milieu within which these students are situated. The historical relationship between Aboriginal people and Europeans is one characterized by attempts to assimilate First Nations into Western society, and unfortunately, this agenda still exists.

In the case of retaining Aboriginal faculty, I reviewed literature on minority faculty, as I couldn't find any research that focused on Aboriginal faculty, specifically. What I found was that there is a need to develop strategies for retaining faculty from non-dominant populations, and that what has been published about minority faculty does not fully reflect the issues faced by Aboriginal faculty, given the political context.

Literature on the experiences of Aboriginal students and faculty indicates that there are a multitude of issues that need to be addressed. For students, the areas of concern include, but are not limited to, infrastructure, human resources, core values, and formal and informal processes. Issues identified in literature published by American

Indian faculty include: perceptions related to identity; teaching; supporting students; racism and hostility; recruitment and retention; tenure and promotion, and mentorship.

Having considered the topics mentioned above in relation to campus climate, I then discussed Social Work education for Aboriginal people. After briefly considering Social Work education for First Nations during the last 30 years, I identified pertinent factors that still affect progress. These include: appropriate models; current program structures; bridging world views; acknowledging the validity of Aboriginal epistemology; and finally, hostility in the academic milieu. I then presented a framework I had previously developed (after participating in extensive consultations) to guide an off-campus First Nations BSW program. The framework highlighted the importance of community, context, care and culture, and was adopted by the community and the SSW as an appropriate framework for an Aboriginal Social Work program.

8.2 WHAT THE RESPONDENTS SAID

My research involved qualitative interviews with 14 Aboriginal educators across Canada about their experiences as students and as faculty in 7 Schools of Social Work. They shared their perspectives on factors that influenced them as learners, and their perspectives on - and approaches to - teaching as well as the challenges they face as academics. They also mentioned institutional factors that underscore many of the challenges they faced throughout their time in academia. Lastly, they provided extensive recommendations to educators, to Schools of Social Work, and to the wider academic institutions - recommendations that could lead to creation of healthy environments for Aboriginal students and faculty.

First, factors that affected the respondents as learners related to individual, academic and relational issues. Individual factors included family/community concerns, being away from home, and identity. Academic factors included language barriers; different orientations to learning; academic preparation, pedagogy and curriculum. Relational challenges included racism, and prejudice; ignorance; tokenism; competition, and non-acceptance of their 'voices.' They also mentioned problematic teacher behaviours such as: lack of modelling and lack of follow-through. As well they mentioned the tendency among professors to maintain objective distance from students and problems of being singled out.

Loneliness, isolation, and not having a sense of belonging are outcomes of the challenges the respondents experienced as students. Methods for coping included staying away, seeking comfort elsewhere, or simply being quiet. Importantly, however, positive relationships with peers and faculty were also mentioned; these relationships facilitated feelings of comfort, belonging, and helped students cope with the negative aspects of campus life, as well as fostering retention of some students.

As educators, the respondents elaborated on perspectives of, and approaches to teaching, as well as the challenges they face(d) and the impact of those challenges. Their approaches to teaching are influenced by who the students are; by their beliefs about learning; and, their responsibilities as educators. Respondents noted that Aboriginal students tend to be older, and have much more experience than the average non-Aboriginal students, and that they tend to be more invested in their education. The respondents discussed the need for a relevant curriculum; a holistic learning process that accommodates multiple learning styles; and the developmental nature of learning. In

reference to their responsibilities, they described the importance of maintaining standards, of creating a positive learning environment, and of ensuring that curriculum addresses practical needs.

Talking circle pedagogy is a popular approach among 7 of the 14 respondents, and a multitude of benefits were mentioned. For example, the talking circle provides an opportunity for holistic education; and helps to

- a) break down barriers;
- b) counteract passive learning;
- c) develop reciprocal learning;
- d) develop a safe environment;
- e) monitor the mood and debrief emotional curriculum

The approach reflects many respondents' beliefs about what the learning process should involve.

The challenges faced by these educators include issues related to curriculum and to their roles as faculty. Developing relevant curriculum is challenging due to lack of adequate resources, and delivering Aboriginal content causes additional stresses that require particularly high level skills to negotiate successfully. For example, overcoming student resistance, denial, or guilt regarding content requires a high level of sensitivity. In their roles as faculty, issues include maintaining connections with community, workload, being marginalized, ignorance, triangulation, boundaries, and authorship. These types of challenges also lead to isolation, and not feeling a sense of belonging, as well as added workload and stress due to the support role they provide.

The respondents also described institutional factors that underscore many of the challenges mentioned above. Included are: racism, inconsistency, lack of commitment, not being heard, intrusion, paternalism, rigid policy implementation, and

one-way accountability. These factors hint at the colonial relationship that still predominates in relations between Aboriginal people and Europeans. Relevant to these issues are the topics of internalized colonialism and the need for decolonization. Strategies include fighting for change, finding allies, and supporting self-determination.

The respondents had extensive recommendations. First, recommendations to educators teaching Aboriginal students relate to knowledge, personal characteristics, and strategies that can foster a positive learning environment. Knowledge of self and of students is needed, as is knowledge of resources for students. Helpful characteristics include being open and congruent, as well as doing your own healing. Helpful strategies include honouring history and protocols; providing relevant curriculum; not compromising standards; and addressing negative classroom dynamics. Flexibility and humour were also mentioned in relation to pedagogy; otherwise, the respondents suggested teaching strategies similar to their own, including use of the talking circle. Generally, their own approaches were more relational - that is, group work and other interactive approaches were highly recommended.

Their recommendations to SSW include strategies aimed at supporting both Aboriginal students and educators, but also include general recommendations not specific to either. Students require both academic and non-academic supports, mechanisms for dealing with any concerns they have, and flexible policies related to admission, and attendance at ceremonies, as well as better recognition of previous training and experience (prior learning).

In reference to faculty, the respondents mentioned the need for SSW to remember why they were hired and to be aware of the challenges they face and what they

need to support Aboriginal students. As well, mentorship, and flexible hiring policies are desirable, and there is a need to increase the numbers of faculty, as well as the resources in place to facilitate their ability to fulfil their responsibilities, and to facilitate needed changes.

General recommendations to SSW include the need to move beyond mere cultural awareness and to ask for input and support from Aboriginal students, faculty and communities. As well, SSW need to: establish agendas which reflect a commitment to Aboriginal Social Work education; support diversity in curriculum; and support the validity of programs being delivered in Aboriginal communities.

On a larger scale, the respondents argued for wider participation in strategies geared towards making needed changes. They also argued for commitment at the institutional level as well as for altruistic support of Aboriginal faculty – that supporting their progress is necessary and good, even if these faculty move on to other institutions.

Last but not least, some interviewees were pessimistic while others were optimistic about the possibility of creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and educators in Schools of Social Work. However, recommendations for creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal students and faculty included: providing a welcoming and safe place; having reflections of Aboriginal people; having healthy boundaries and leadership; providing physical, cognitive, and emotional space, as well as space for ceremony and for community. Furthermore, they argued for the need to support self-determination.

8.3 MY ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

In reflecting on the data from the interviews, it occurred to me that the respondents further validated the FNBSW framework I had developed through community consultations: that framework was used to guide the implementation of an off-campus program being piloted in a local urban reserve community. As such, the framework was used to analyze the data and, through that process, I also recognized that the framework needed further revisions. Briefly, I will reiterate the revised framework.

First, while respondents spoke about the importance of community – the guiding factor in the initial framework, I came to understand that all the issues discussed within this area related to issues of power. Included are: the power of communities to realize their own visions and goals, which include self-determination; the power to influence the institution and how it addresses their needs; and the power and autonomy of students to fulfil their learning needs.

Secondly, the respondents also spoke at length about the context. For example, they discussed the need (for everyone involved) to understand the social, political, historical context of Aboriginal-Europeans relations. I came to understand that context is also about sense of place – for educators, for academic institutions, for First Nations people. Sense of place is about the relationship to the land and to local communities, and about the educator's, and institution's place in relation to the political realities of Aboriginal life.

Space is also significant. Having space to be – as physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual beings - is directly relevant to sense of place. If there is no space, there is no sense of place. What is required is to make room for the intellectual, social, emotional

spiritual aspects of Aboriginal life, in curriculum, as well as in university life. As well, the University must be a space where racism is adequately addressed.

Third, that care is important is evidenced by the respondents' discussion of relational factors that helped or hindered their experiences both as students and as faculty in Schools of Social Work. Yet, I also realized that caring is not all that is required. In fact, the respondents argued that educators and academic institutions must be engaged in making needed changes, take responsibility for their own learning, and be prepared to participate with humility and authenticity. Additionally, educators must recognize that learning is not just a cognitive exercise, and that the institution must be prepared to deal with issues holistically. I use the word process to address these concerns

Fourth, the philosophical foundations upon which the current academic milieu rests must be dislodged from positions of privilege over other ways of being and knowing, other epistemologies; specifically, these institutions must incorporate/embrace Aboriginal culture, knowledge and wisdom, and bring in elders to participate in all aspects of academic life, as well as ensuring there is space for ceremony and spirituality. I summarize these ideas in the term philosophy.

All of these factors: power, place, process and philosophy are pertinent to creating a healthy environment for Aboriginal people within the academic environment, and in professional programs such as Social Work. In fact, implementing strategies that reflect attention to these issues can transform these institutions in ways that benefit everyone, not just Aboriginal people.

8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There are many areas that would be useful to further explore, but I will discuss those I see as most glaringly obvious. First, one area that needs further exploration is the impact of the academic environment, and/or discrimination on the health of Aboriginal people. As was noted in Chapter 2, extensive research in the United States has demonstrated that among minorities, discrimination negatively affects health but no studies focused on the impact of discrimination on the health of Aboriginal students or faculty in academic settings.

This study indicated that negative environmental factors had an impact on emotional wellbeing, leading to isolation, and loneliness, as well as preventing the respondents from feeling a sense of belonging. Whether or not there are health implications associated with these factors among this population is unknown, and further research could address this question.

Another area for further research would be to explore coping strategies and/or resiliency factors that mediate the impact of negativity in the academic milieu. In this study, a few coping strategies were identified – students seek comfort outside of the department, or try to stay what I refer to as ‘under the radar.’ In their roles as faculty, the respondents described fighting for change, seeking allies, and supporting self-determination.

A third area for future research relates to looking at situations where strategies *have* been implemented to address the factors mentioned here, as well as those that work and those that don’t work. In this research the need for university wide initiatives was discussed, but it is unknown if this has been done, or where, and whether the impact of such strategies has been identified. While there are programs geared towards Aboriginal

people that are providing comfortable environments for students, instituting similar strategies in mainstream institutions needs to be considered, explored, and evaluated.

Further research is also needed to explore, in depth, ways to address the challenges associated with providing a non-dominant curriculum, and how that influences attitudes, and the general campus climate. For example, it would be helpful to consider the topic from the perspective of pedagogy, and development of skills for negotiating in-class dynamics associated with the sensitivity of these issues and how people respond or react.

As well, it is likely that increasing diversity in curriculum could have a positive impact of school climate, by normalizing these issues as relevant to curriculum goals, and to the lives of students as they enter the work force. At the very least, students will be better informed of the issues the people they work with may be facing.

Yet another area for further research would be to actually find out more about Aboriginal educators within academic institutions. This should include rank, length of time in each institution, numbers in departments or faculties, movement between institutions, reasons for leaving or staying, as well as reasons why they chose particular institutions. Factors such as specific challenges they face, and how the institutions attempt to address these, as well as successes, and what affected their success should also be considered.

*This morning, when I got up
The sun was shining.
The sun is a good friend.
It helps us grow.
School?
Well, school must be our friend, too.
It must help us grow.*

(Me)

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION SHEET FOR SUBJECTS

Simon Fraser University Form #5

Title of research: Aboriginal Social Work educators' experiences as learners and as teachers in professional programs: implications for professional schools.

**Barbara Harris
Faculty of Education**

Description of the procedures to be followed and a statement of the risks to the subjects and benefits of the research

Requirements to participate:

Participants must

- be of Aboriginal heritage
- have experience teaching First Nations students
- have at least one degree in a professional program

Sampling: Participants will be contacted through email, or through snowball sampling whereby contacts may pass on the information to others they know who might be interested. Prior to contacting possible respondents, directors/deans of academic departments will be contacted, for their permission to conduct this research in their department.

Goals: The overall goals are to a) determine the factors that help or hinder learning among Aboriginal post-secondary students in professional programs b) to elicit strategies, recommendations for creating healthy learning environments for Aboriginal post-secondary students in professional programs

Protocol: Participants will be asked to attend a 1 ½ hour interview which will include the following questions:

- As a student in a postsecondary professional program, what factors helped or hindered your learning inside the classroom?
- What teaching strategies were most or least helpful?
- As an educator, what informs and/or influences your approach to teaching, and what strategies do you tend to rely on?
- What specific recommendations would you have to educators teaching First Nations students?
- Overall, what do you think is required to provide a healthy learning environment for First Nations students?

- What recommendations do you have for professional schools and the larger institution in supporting First Nations students?
- What are the biggest challenges you face as a First Nations educator and how do you manage these challenges?
- What recommendations do you have for professional schools and the larger institution in supporting First Nations faculty

Risks: In light of the possibility that discussing educational experiences may involve some discomfort, counselling support will be made available if needed. As a faculty member at the UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies for 6 years, and a Social Worker registered for private practice with the BC Board of Registration for Social Workers with 7 years of clinical counselling experience, I am aware of and have access to appropriate professional counselling services, should they be necessary, including a list of licensed practitioners, which will be available to respondents. I will also ensure I schedule adequate time with each respondent to debrief after the interview if they so choose.

Benefits: Benefits to Participants include learning from each other, through sharing of the findings. Additionally, this research will provide validation of the importance of their insights and experiences. Benefits to the community include a) Articulation of how to create healthy learning environments for First Nations students in professional programs, b) filling a gap in literature through contributions to curriculum on education of First Nations students, and c) Articulation of how to better support First Nations faculty.

Participation is voluntary, and a consent form will be provided at the beginning of the interview.

Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained through the secure storage of data under lock and key, and the removal of any possible indicators in the transcripts. Participants will be able to review their own transcripts to ensure that they have the opportunity to make any changes related to maintaining confidentiality.

Participants will be informed of their ability to withdraw at any time, and/or to review/edit their transcripts for accuracy.

The University and those conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of Participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research Participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Note: If you are interested in participating in this research, please contact me at (604) 736-9002, or by email at bharris@sfu.ca to arrange an interview.

Also, if you know anyone else who might be interested, please feel free to forward this information on.

APPENDIX 2: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

From: Barbara Harris
PhD Candidate
Curriculum Theory and Implementation
SFU DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dear Dean or Director,

I am writing to request your permission to conduct research with Aboriginal faculty at your institution regarding their experiences as learners and teachers in professional programs.

Title of research: Aboriginal Social Work educators' experiences as learners and as teachers in professional programs: implications for professional programs.

Purpose: The intentions of this research are to a) gain insight on how to create healthy learning environments for First Nations student cohorts in professional postsecondary programs, b) to contribute to curriculum on education of First Nations, and c) to provide insight and recommendations on how to support First Nations faculty.

Requirements to participate: Participants must

- be of Aboriginal heritage
- have experience teaching First Nations students
- have at least one post-secondary degree in a professional program

Protocols: Participants will be asked to attend a 1 ½ hour semi-structured taped interview which will include the following questions:

- As a student in a postsecondary professional program, what factors helped or hindered your learning inside the classroom?
- What teaching strategies were most or least helpful?
- As an educator, what informs and/or influences your approach to teaching, and what strategies do you tend to rely on?
- What specific recommendations would you have to educators teaching First Nations students?
- Overall, what do you think is required to provide a healthy learning environment for First Nations students?
- What recommendations do you have for professional schools and the larger institution in supporting First Nations students?

- What are the biggest challenges you face as a First Nations educator and how do you manage these challenges?
- What recommendations do you have for professional schools and the larger institution in supporting First Nations faculty?

Participation is voluntary, and a consent form will be provided at the beginning of the interview. Participants will also have the opportunity to withdraw at any time, and/or to review/edit their transcripts for accuracy.

Confidentiality will be maintained through the secure storage of data, and the removal of any possible indicators in the transcripts. Also, Participants will be able to review their own transcripts to ensure that they have the opportunity to make any changes related to maintaining confidentiality.

Risks: In light of the possibility that discussing educational experiences may involve some discomfort, counselling support will be made available if needed. As a faculty member at the UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies for 6 years, and a Social Worker registered for private practice with the BC Board of Registration for Social Workers with 7 years of clinical counselling experience, I am aware of and have access to appropriate professional services, should the be necessary, including a list of counselling practitioners throughout BC, which will be available to respondents. I will also ensure I schedule adequate time with each respondent to debrief after the interview if they so choose.

Benefits: Benefits to Participants include learning from each other, through sharing of the findings. Additionally, this research will provide validation of the importance of their insights and experiences. Benefits to the community include a) Articulation of how to create healthy learning environments for First Nations students in professional programs, b) filling a gap in literature through contributions to curriculum on education of First Nations students, and c) Articulation of how to better support First Nations faculty.

Requirements to participate include the following; Participants must

- be of Aboriginal heritage
- have experience teaching First Nations students
- have at least one degree in a professional program

Should you wish to obtain information, or if you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about this study, please contact the Director of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received documentation which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you have given permission to conduct this research in your program/department.

I hereby approve the conduct of this research at: _____
(name of institution)

Name:

Position:

Signature

Date:

APPENDIX 3: CONSENT FORM

Simon Fraser University Form 2- Informed Consent by Participants in a Research Study

The University and those conducting this research study subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of Participants. This research is being conducted under permission of the Simon Fraser Research Ethics Board. The chief concern of the Board is for the health, safety and psychological well-being of research Participants.

Should you wish to obtain information about your rights as a participant in research, or about the responsibilities of researchers, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about the manner in which you were treated in this study, please contact the Director, Office of Research Ethics by email at hweinber@sfu.ca or phone at 604-268-6593.

Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, whether there are possible risks, and benefits of this research study, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the documents describing the study, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Any information that is obtained during this study will be kept confidential to the full extent permitted by the law. Knowledge of your identity is not required. You will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on research materials. Materials will be maintained in a secure location.

Title: Aboriginal educators' experiences as learners and as teachers in professional programs: implications for professional schools

Investigator Name: Barbara Harris

Investigator Department: Education

Having been asked to participate in the research study named above, I certify that I have read the procedures specified in the Study Information Document describing the study. I understand the procedures to be used in this study and the personal risks to me in taking part in the study as described below:

Risks to the participant, third parties or society:

In light of the possibility that discussing educational experiences may involve some discomfort, counselling support will be made available if needed. As a faculty member at the UBC School of Social Work and Family Studies for 6 years, and a Social Worker

registered for private practice with the BC Board of Registration for Social Workers with 7 years of clinical counselling experience, I am aware of and have access to appropriate professional counselling services, should they be necessary, including a list of licensed practitioners throughout BC, which will be available to respondents. I will also ensure I schedule adequate time with each respondent to debrief after the interview if they so choose.

Procedures:

Respondents will be asked to participate in one semi-structured interview (see attached instrument) I am aware that if I am currently employed in an academic unit/department, the director/dean of my academic department has been contacted, and has given permission to conduct this research in our department.

Benefits of study to the development of new knowledge:

Benefits to Participants include learning from each other, through sharing of the findings. Additionally, this research will provide validation of the importance of their insights and experiences. Benefits to the community include a) Articulation of how to create healthy learning environments for First Nations students in professional programs, b) filling a gap in literature through contributions to curriculum on education of First Nations students, and c) Articulation of how to better support First Nations faculty.

I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time. I understand that my supervisor or employer has agreed to permit my participation in a study of this kind

I may obtain copies of the results of this study, upon its completion by contacting:
Barbara Harris 604-736-9002

I have been informed that the research will be confidential. I understand the risks and contributions of my participation in this study and agree to participate:

The participant and witness shall fill in this area. Please print legibly

Participant Last Name:

Participant First Name:

Participant Contact Information:

Participant Signature:

Witness (if required by the Office of Research Ethics):

Date (use format MM/DD/YYYY)

APPENDIX 4: RESULTS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT

RESULTS OF SQUAMISH NATION FOCUS GROUPS

1. HISTORY AND RECONCILIATION

- Pre and post contact- from a First Nations and not a John Wayne perspective
- Connecting history with the now - Recognizing historical changes to family unit and the relation to policy e.g. History and impact of residential schools and multigenerational trauma. Example 2, multigenerational welfare families and dependency and impact of being in care.
- Introduction of alcohol to Native people
- History of service delivery – how fragmentation of services still impacts community
- Acknowledge the impact of religion

2. RESOURCES

a) General concerns regarding availability and barriers

- Advocacy
- Assessment
- Counselling
- Family therapy
- Art therapy
- Outreach
- Cultural workers

b) Child and Family Services

- Family meetings, facilitation and intervention
- Daycares, after school programs, breakfast and lunch programs
- Child welfare, child care workers, access supervision and the court systems
- Crisis intervention and emergency response teams.
- Part of resource team in schools and agencies – teaching awareness in schools
- Family respite

- Women's shelters and transition houses
- Youth programs
- Elder's programs – transportation to appointments
- Women, babies, youth and men's clinics
- CMHC and social housing and renovations of homes

c) Education and Support for Family and Community

- Parenting, pre/post natal, infant development, healthy babies and childhood development, and speech and language
- Education re: mental illness
- Sex education – Gay and lesbian sexuality/ STDs, AIDS awareness, family planning and teen pregnancy
- Nutrition
- Victimization - Identifying stages of abuses/ kinds of abuse e.g. spousal/overt/covert/physical/systems/spiritual and intergenerational physical, emotional and sexual abuse

d) Developing Healthy Lifestyles

- Experience mastery – a sense of belonging and a sense of pride
- Self care- finding balance, being able to prioritize
- Healing - regaining integrity, overcoming the effects of residential school shame, developing self-esteem, help with anger management and addictions
- Communication and relationship building

3. SOCIAL SERVICES

A) GENERAL CONCERNS, SKILLS, CHARACTERISTICS AND KNOWLEDGE, AND SOCIAL WORKERS AS EDUCATORS

i) Concerns for First Nations social service workers

- Organizational structure and knowing where one fits in
- Dealing with burn out, stress, criticism
- Adequate supervision and support - emotional non-judgementalism, EAP, mentorship and role models
- Physical safety
- Personal development – ongoing and follow-up
- Dealing with inter – agency and multi disciplinary agencies
- Knowing protocol

ii) General skill set

- Time management
- Conflict resolution, mediation, negotiation
- Counselling, advocacy, family therapy
- Assessment
- Practical intervention strategies
- Able to connect knowledge and skills, and can address history
- Ability to critique and understand underlying ideologies and values
- Able to conduct needs assessment, group facilitation and workshops
- Able to find resources – funding, space and time
- Organizational skills – being well prepared

iii) Personal qualities

- Respect for other cultures
- Being non-judgemental
- Self care – walk your talk
- Reliability
- Flexibility
- Healthy boundaries
- Role modeling
- Establishing trust
- Empathy
- Leadership
- Being committed
- Cooperative, team player

iv) General knowledge

- Knowing the history impact of policies/ politics; Indian Act, MCF, MHR, DIA, Income assistance and Federal, provincial and municipal governments.
- Knowledge of resources
- Addictions training
- Knowledge of philosophy and theories eg. developmental psychology, family dynamics
- Residential schools affect
- Knowledge of legal system and jurisdiction
- Knowledge of cultural ways

v) **Policy issues**

- **Knowledge and understanding of policies** – implementation, development, flexibility, benefits of policy, inter-ministerial policy (eg. different levels of policy making in Bands, Governments and Agencies)
- **How to be pro-active** (advocate) re: policy – may mean going against policy or working within legislation while still meeting the needs of the community
- **Dealing with repercussion** of policy implementation
- **Challenges of working in two systems** – foreign government system
- re: policies
- **Accessibility** of policy for all – with attention to language use

vi) **Social workers as educators**

- Balance between First Nation's material and mainstream material
- Acknowledging skills, experience and wisdom in community. Eg. Elder involvement
- Reciprocal learning, information sharing - cross cultural and other aboriginal groups

B) ORGANIZATIONAL AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS

i) **Human resources**

- Supervision, coordination, and giving good direction
- Staff recruitment - suitability – qualifications – criminal records checks
- staff retention – support and training
- Staff grievances and labour standards
- Team work – team building – development

ii) **Programming - Standards and expectations**

- Program development from a First Nations perspective; implementation; evaluation

iii) **Administration**

- Management structures and organizational charts
- Infrastructure
- Governance
- Knowledge of legalities
- Funding management - developing and implementing budgets, proposal writing
- Computer technology, communications and data management

v) **Politics as they relate to Native people**

- **Band politics and control** - code of silence and secrecy, nepotism, role of Band council, influencing Band council
- **Conflict of interest**
- **Power struggles** - political interference
- **Land claims, treaties and self-government**
- **Repatriation**

C) **QUALITY OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

- **Accessibility, continuity**
- **Accountability** – insuring mandate carried out, appraisal/ evaluation of staff and programs, having qualified staff
- **Overlap of programs**
- **Ethics and code of conduct** re: confidentiality, due process
- **Understanding liability**
- **Geographic boundaries and barriers**

4. CULTURE

A) **Issues**

- **Cultural healing**
- **Knowledge of cultural history**
- **Cultural and language teachers** - culture is changing, derive strength from culture, language – hub of culture, fundamental to culture, need for mentors
- **Respect for various roles** Roles and responsibilities re: cooks, story tellers, dancers and singers Respect for and inclusion of Elders as advisors and educators
- **Environmental concerns** -energy use (determining priorities), land use (diversity), use of water and land in traditional ways re: healing
- **Spirituality and religion**
- **Importance of cultural identity**

B) **Objectives**

- Developing association to culture, respect and non-judgmental attitude
- How to keep culture in the urban environment
- Protocol and culture at all levels- remaining firm in the promotion of tradition values and observing cultural ways and activities
- Pride in cultural identity -taking ownership and responsibility of language and culture

- Vision of own culture
- Information sharing
- Education – understanding role of ceremonies, family songs and long house
- Culturally aware teachers and trainers - Knowledge of the medicine wheel

C) Activities to meet objectives

- Sweats
- Drumming
- Singing
- Smudge
- Traditional teachings
- Long house
- Story telling
- Oral tradition
- Protocol
- Honouring babies 2000
- Teaching in a circle
- Healing circles

5. HEALTH

A) Accessibility and knowledge

- Medical services knowledge re: uninsured health, hospitalization and other treatment
- Understanding diagnosis
- Wheel chair accessibility
- Alternative traditional medicine
- Home and community care and follow up
- Discharge planning – early discharge and community care
- Palliative care
- Rehabilitation – physical and A&D

B) General health concerns

- Substance abuse
- AID/HIV
- Diabetes
- Eating disorders
- Obesity

- Developmentally disadvantaged
- Suicide
- Pre/post natal health
- FAS/FAE/NAE
- Youth and Elder healing and dealing with the alienation of youth

C) Health- intervention/ prevention/ promotion/

- STD , HIV and tobacco reduction
- Family intervention
- Education
- Housing
- Recovery beyond sobriety

D) Mental health

- Addictions – substance, solvent, and gambling
- Depression
- ADHD
- PDST
- Stress management
- Loss and grief
- Impotent toxic rage

6. FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ISSUES

- Training/employment/ housing
- Victimization and safety, bullying, drug dealing, gangs and youth violence, sex trade recruitment, elder and child abuse
- Children’ education re: impact of history and language
- Racism and discrimination and discrimination in family groups
- Addictions
- Importance of families/ family history – need to deal with family violence, breakdown, separation anxiety, blended families, latch key families, foster parents
- Community development from an aboriginal perspective
- Relationship building on all levels
- Multicultural recognition and importance
- Impact of community resources – schools, transition houses, safe houses, and professionals (medical)

7. RACISM AND PREJUDICE

A) Beliefs and attitudes

- Church ignorant of traditional ways
- Acceptance lacking
- Being non-judgemental lacking
- Prejudice against cultural activities
- Labelling categories eg. Status and non-status
- Lack of tolerance and acceptance eg. You are C-31

B) Concerns

- ASSIMILATION
- Alienation
- Internalized oppression
- Internalized racism
- Laws and traditions are missing
- Shame associated with cultural ways
- Lack of trust and respect

C) Need for anti racist education and more inclusive environment/activities

- How to deal with discrimination
- How to deal with overt, covert, systemic institutionalized racism
- How to deal with criticisms, barriers, stereotypes and superstition
- Protocol and culture at all levels

PROGRAM DELIVERY

In summary, the focus groups at Squamish Nation Recreation Center felt that the program should be equal to any accredited BSW program, that there should be a balance between First Nations and mainstream literature, that mentoring is important and that

a) the program should be available

- through distance education, correspondence, internet, or a satellite program
- on Squamish Reserve or on the North Shore
- full-time, part-time, and have classes each week, bi-weekly, or one week per month (block training) or on weeknights, and weekends
- in a format that includes cultural activities such as smudges, classes taught in a circle, having opening and closing prayer

- b) **admission** should be based on
- accountability
 - motivation
 - experience and training
 - cultural practices
 - criminal records check – offenders may be considered depending on how they have reconciled the offense
- c) **practicums** options should include both mainstream and Aboriginal agencies/services and paid practicums
- d) **faculty** should be First Nations
- e) **prior learning assessment** (challenging courses for credit) should be a part of the program
- f) **concerns** and possible **barriers** regarding attending the program include childcare; accomodation; financial support and support from employers, band council, community

REFERENCES

- Absolon, K. E. (2008) *Kaandosswin, this is how we come to know! Indigenous Graduate Research in the Academy: World Views and Methodologies*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. University of Toronto, Toronto, Ontario.
- Albert, J. (1997). *Bachelor of Social Work program: Presented off-campus to First Nations communities*. Ottawa, Ontario: Carleton University.
- Alcoze, T. & Mawhiney, A.M. (1988). *Returning home: A report on a community-based Native human services project*. Sudbury, Ontario: Laurentian University Press.
- Alfred, T. (1999). *Peace, power, righteousness: An indigenous manifesto*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Alire, C.A. (2001). The new beginnings program: A retention program for junior faculty of color. *Journal of Library Administration* 33 (1 & 2), 21 – 30.
- Alvan, S.L., Belgrave, F.Z., & Zea, M.C. (1996). Stress, social support, and college adjustment among Latino students. *Cultural Diversity & Mental Health* 2 (3), 193-203.
- Apple, M. (2002). *Power, meaning and identity: Essays in critical educational studies*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Archibald, J. & Urion, C. (Eds.). (1995). Honouring what they say: Post-secondary experiences of First Nations graduates. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 21 (1), 9-221.
- Astin, A.W. (1997). How “good” is your institution’s retention rate? *Research in Higher Education* 38 (6), 647 – 658.
- Avis, M. (2003). Do we need methodological theory to do qualitative research? *Qualitative Health Research* 13 (7), 995-1004.
- Baker, K. (Ed.). *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (2nd ed.). Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

- Ball, J. & Swartz, C. (2001, April 10-14). Evaluation of an effective postsecondary program in Canadian Aboriginal communities. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Seattle, Washington.
- Ballard-Kent, J. & Cromwell, C. (1985). Challenges for Social Work education north of sixty degrees. *Canadian Social Work Review* '85, 249-265.
- Banks, K.H., Kohn-Wood, L.P, & Spencer, M. (2006). An examination of the African American experience of everyday discrimination and symptoms of psychological distress. *Community Health Journal* 42 (6), 555-570.
- Barman, J., Hebert, Y., & McCaskill, D. (Eds.). (1987). The legacy of the past: an overview. In *Indian Education in Canada: Volume 1: The Legacy*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Barnes, P., & Lightsey, O.R. (2005). Perceived racist discrimination, coping, stress and life satisfaction. *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development*, 33, 48-61.
- Bishop, A. (2005). *Beyond Token Change*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.
- Bowser, B., Auletta, G., & Jones, T. (1993) *Confronting diversity issues on campus*. Newberry Park: Sage Publications Inc.
- Brinson, J. & Kottler, J. (1993). Cross-cultural mentoring in counsellor education: A strategy for retaining minority faculty. *Counsellor Education and Supervision* 32 (4), 241-253.
- British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. (2008). *Aboriginal report: Charting our path: Public post-secondary system*. Retrieved from http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/Aboriginal/documents/Aboriginal_Indicator_Report-Oct2008.pdf
- British Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development. *Delegated Child and Family Service Agencies*. Retrieved March 17th, 2008 from www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/about_us/Aboriginal/delegated/index.htm.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education. (2004). *2003/04 How are we doing? Demographics and performance of Aboriginal students in BC public schools*. Retrieved September 11th, 2008, from http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/perf2004_hilites.htm

- Brown, L. (2006). The Native training institute: A place of holistic learning and health. *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 20 (1), 102-116.
- Bruyere, G. (1988). Living in another man's house: Supporting Aboriginal learners in Social Work education. *Canadian Social Work Review* 15 (2), 169-177.
- Cajete, G. (1994). *Look to the mountain: An ecology of Indigenous education*. Skyland, NC: Kivaki Press.
- Calhoun, A. (2003). It's just a social obligation. You could say "no!" *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1&2), 132-154.
- Canadian Association of Schools of Social Work. (1991). *Social Work education at the crossroads: The challenge of diversity*. Winnipeg, Manitoba: Winnipeg Free Press.
- Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation. (2004). *Aboriginal peoples and post-secondary education: what educators have learned*. Montreal, Quebec: RA Malatest and Associates Ltd.
- Castellano, M.B., Stalwick, H. & Wien, F. (1986). Native Social Work education in Canada: Issues and adaptations. *Canadian Social Work Review* (pp. 166-84).
- Chrisjohn, R. D. (1998). *Retaining Indigenous students and post secondary programs: what means for whose ends?* Challenge paper prepared for Council of Ministers of Education, Canada post secondary education project learner pathways and transitions. Retrieved November 17th, 2004, from <http://www.gcmeec.ca/postsec/transitions/en/461.chrisjohn.pdf>
- Christensen, C.P. (1994). *Linking schools of Social Work to Aboriginal students and communities: Exploring the issues*. Vancouver, BC: B & B Printing.
- Cresswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Cresswell, J.W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*, (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Crim, E.J., Jr. (1998). *Aversive racism on campus: explaining mechanisms of isolation for students and staff of colour on campus*. Miami, FL: The Association for the Study of Higher Education.
- Cuthbert, D. (1998). Beg, borrow or steal: The politics of cultural appropriation. *Postcolonial Studies* 1 (2), 257-262.

- Deal, T. (1975). Sources and impact of school climates. *PsycCRITIQUES* 20 (2), 131-133.
- Dickason, O.P. (1997). *Canada's First Nations: A history of founding peoples from earliest times* (2nd ed.). Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Dickerson, S.S. & Neary, M.A. (1999). Faculty experiences teaching Native Americans in a university setting. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 10 (1), 56-64.
- Ermine, W. (1995). Aboriginal epistemology. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds* (pp. 101-112). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Fire, A. (2006). Recommendations to enhance the educational experience of Aboriginal Social Work students. *Critical Social Work* 7 (2), 1-11.
- Fournier, S. & Crey, E. (1997). *Stolen from our embrace: The abduction of First Nations children and the restoration of Aboriginal communities*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.
- Freire, P. (2003). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (30th ed.). New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc.
- Frideres, J. & Gadacz, R. (2004). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada* (7th ed.). Toronto: Pearson Education Canada Inc.
- Frideres, J.S. & Gadacz, R. (2005). *Aboriginal peoples of Canada: Contemporary conflicts* (6th ed.). Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice, Hall, Allyn, & Bacon.
- Gair, S., Miles, D., & Thomson, J. (2005). Reconciling Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges in Social Work education: action and legitimacy. *Journal of Social Work Education* 41 (2), 179-189.
- Gall, J.P., Gall, M.D., & Borg, W.R. (2005). *Applying educational research: A practical guide* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Gareau, M. (2003). Colonization within the university system. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 & 2), 196-199.
- Gee, C., Spencer, M.S., Chen, J. & Takeuchi, D. (2007). A nationwide study of discrimination and chronic health conditions among Asian-Americans. *American Journal of Public Health* 97 (7), 1275-1282.

- Gercken-Hawkins, B. (2003). Maybe you only look white. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 & 2).
- Government of British Columbia. (2001). *Statistical Profile of Aboriginal Peoples 2001*. Retrieved December 2008 from <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/cen01/abor/HS33.PDF>
- Government of British Columbia. (2007). *Aboriginal report 2002/03 – 2006/07. How are we doing?* Retrieved from <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reporting/achieve/ab-perf.php>
- Government of British Columbia. (2008). *Aboriginal post-secondary education strategy and action plan*. Retrieved November 8th, 2008 from www.aved.gov.bc.ca/Aboriginal/documents/strategy.pdf
- Graveline, F.J. (1998). *Circle works: transforming Euro-centric consciousness*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.
- Graveline, F.J. (2000). Circle as methodology: enacting an Aboriginal paradigm. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13(4), 361-370.
- Green, J. (1999). *First Nations program strategy*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria.
- Haig-Brown, C. (1998). *Resistance and renewal: Surviving the Indian residential school*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.
- Hamilton, K. (2006). Toxic campus climates. *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* 23 (8), 32-35.
- Hampton, E. (1995). Towards a redefinition of Indian education. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.), *First Nations Education in Canada: The Circle Unfolds* (pp. 5-46). Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Harris, B. (2002). *Curriculum workshop manual* (unpublished paper). Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia.
- Harris, B. (2003). A community based approach to the development of a First Nations BSW program: community needs assessment and proposed model. *Native Social Work Journal*, 5, 64-86.
- Harris, B. (2006). A First Nations' perspective on social justice in Social Work education: are we there yet? A post-colonial debate. *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 26 (2), 229-263.

- Hart, M.A. (1996). Sharing Circles: Utilizing traditional practice methods for teaching, helping and supporting. In S. O'Meara & D. West, A (Eds.), *From our eyes: Learning from Indigenous peoples* (pp. 59-72). Toronto: Garamond Press.
- Hart, M.A. (1997) *An ethnographic study of sharing circles as a culturally appropriate practice approach with Aboriginal people*. Unpublished Masters of Social Work, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- Hart, M. (2002) *Seeking Mino-Pimatisiwin: An Aboriginal Approach to Helping*. Black Post N.S.: Fernwood Publishing.
- HeavyRunner, I. & DeCelles, R. (2002). Family education model: Meeting the student retention challenge. *Journal of American Indian Education* 41 (2), 29 – 37.
- Hernandez-Avila, I. (2003). Thoughts on surviving as Native scholars in the academy. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 &2), 240-248.
- Holcomb-McCoy, C. & Bradley, C. (2003). Recruitment and retention of ethnic minority counselor educators: An exploratory study of CACREP-accredited counselling programs. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 42, 231 – 243.
- Hurtado, S., Milem, J.F., Clayton-Pederson, A.R., & Allen, W.R. (1998). Enhancing campus climates for racial/ethnic diversity: Educational policy and practice. *The Review of Higher Education* 21 (3), 279-302.
- Joseph, R. (1999). *Healing ways: Aboriginal health and service review*. Vancouver, B.C.: Vancouver Richmond Health Board.
- Kawagley, O., & Barnhardt, R. (1999). Education Indigenous to place: Western science meets Native reality. In Smith, G.A., & Williams, D.R. (Eds.), *Ecological education in action* (pp. 117-140). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- King, K. (2005). Why is discrimination stressful? The mediating role of cognitive appraisal. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 11 (3), 202-212.
- Kirby, S., & McKenna, K. (1989). *Experience research social change: Methods from the margins*. Toronto, Ontario: Garamond Press.
- Kruger, M.L. (1995). *A longitudinal study of Native American persistence in community colleges*. Retrieved in 2008 from eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED426722

- Larimore, J.A., & McClellan, G.S. (2005). Native American student retention in U.S post-secondary education. *New Directions for Student Services*, 109, 17-32.
- Board of Trustees, Leland Stanford Junior University. (2008). *Using Atlas.ti for Qualitative Data Analysis*. Social Science and Data Software. Stanford, California: 2-11. <http://ssds.stanford.edu/>
- Lourde, A. (1984). *Sister outsider*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.
- Maxwell, J.A. (1996). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- McLaughlin, A. (1982). *Native content in the Social Work curriculum*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria School of Social Work and Donner Foundation.
- Mihesuah, D. (2002). Indigenous scholars versus the status quo. *American Indian Quarterly* 26 (1), 145-148.
- Mihesuah, D. (2003a). Native student, faculty and staff experiences in the ivory tower. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 & 2), 46-49.
- Mihesuah, D. (2003b). Activism and apathy: The prices we pay for both. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 & 2), 325-332.
- Mihesuah, D. (2003c). Basic empowering strategies for the classroom. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 & 2), 459-478.
- Miller, J.R. (2000). *Skyscrapers hide the heavens: A history of Indian-White relations in Canada* (3rd ed.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Monture-Angus, P. (1995). *Thunder in my soul: A Mohawk woman speaks*. Halifax, Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing.
- Mullaly, B. (2002). *Challenging oppression: A critical Social Work approach*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Nunpa, C.M. Native faculty, higher education, racism, and survival. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 & 2), 349-364.
- O'Brien, D. & Pace, J. (no date). *The role of empowerment in Social Work degree programs for indigenous Native people: A critique of one school's experience*. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia: St. Thomas and Dalhousie University. Retrieved January 20, 2007 from <http://www.brandonu.ca/Library/CJNS/10.1/o'brien.pdf>

- O'Donoghue, L. (1995). 1995 Global Cultural Diversity Conference Proceedings, Sydney. *The Australian Indigenous Experience*. Retrieved July 16th, 2008, from <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/publications/multicultural/confer/08/speech34a.htm>
- Pace, J.M. & Smith A.F.V. (1990). Native Social Work education: Struggling to meet the need. *Canadian Social Work Review* 7 (1), 109-119.
- Piercy, F., Giddings, V., Allen, K., Dixon, B., Meszaros, P., & Joest, K. (2005). Improving campus climate to support faculty diversity and retention: A pilot program for new faculty. *Innovative Higher Education* 30 (1), 53 – 66.
- Pieterse, A.L. & Carter, R.T. (2007). An examination of the relationship between general life stress, racism-related stress, and psychological health among black men. *Journal of Counselling Psychology* 54 (1), 101-109.
- Plant, P.G. (2007). *Campus2020: Thinking ahead: The report*. Victoria, BC: Government of British Columbia.
- Rigney, Lester-Irabinna (1999) Internationalization of an indigenous anticolonial cultural critique of research methodologies. *Wicazo Sa Review*, Vol. 14 Issue 2.
- Roff, S., & McAleer, S. (2001). What is educational climate? *Medical Teacher*, 23 (4), 333-334.
- Rosser, V.J. (2004). Faculty members' intentions to leave: A national study on their work life and satisfaction. *Research in Higher Education* 4 (3), 285 – 309.
- Rossiter, A.B. (1993). Teaching from a critical perspective: Towards empowerment in Social Work education. *Canadian Social Work Review* 10 (1), 98.
- Rousey, A. & Longie, E. (2001). The tribal college as family support system. *American Behavioral Scientist* 44 (9), 1492-1504.
- Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *For seven generations: An information legacy of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa: Libraxis, Inc.
- Russell, S. (2003). In search of meritocracy. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1&2), 400-411.
- Sims, C. (2006). *Broadening the scope of diversity: Implications for the recruitment and retention of diverse faculty*. Southern Illinois University Research, 1199 – 1205.

- Sinclair, R. (2004). Aboriginal Social Work education in Canada: Decolonizing pedagogy for the seventh generation. *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, 49-61.
- Skulsky, D. (2004, April 21st). Martin must deliver on his good intentions. *Vancouver Sun*, pp. A18.
- Smith, L.T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous people*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Sparks, S. (May 2000). Classroom and curriculum accommodations for Native American students. *Intervention in School and Clinic* 35 (5), 259-263.
- Stalwick, H. (1986). *Demonstration of strategies for change: A review of Indian and Native Social Work education in Canada; what was said?* Regina, Saskatchewan: University of Regina.
- Stanley, C. (2006). Colouring the academic landscape: Faculty of colour breaking the silence in predominantly white colleges and universities. *American Educational Research Journal* 43 (4), 701-736.
- Statistics Canada. *Selected educational characteristics, Aboriginal identity, age groups and sex for population 15 years and over, 2001 census*. Retrieved July 12th, 2008, from:
<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/products/standard/themes/RetrieveProductTable.cfm?Temporal=2001&characterPID=73631&APATH=3&GID=517770&METH=1&PTYPE=55496&THEME=45&FOCUS=0&AID=0&PLACENAME=0&PROVINCE=0&SEARCH=0&GC=0&VID=0&VNAMEE=&V NAMES=&FL=0&RL=0&FREE=0>
- Stein, W.J. (1994). The survival of the American Indian faculty. *Thought and Action* 10 (1), 101-113.
- Till, H. (2005). Climate studies: Can students' perceptions of the ideal educational environment be of use for institutional planning and resource utilization? *Medical Teacher* 27 (4), 332-337.
- Tinto, V. (1987). *The principles of effective retention*. Paper presented at the Fall Conference of the Marland College Personnel Association. Largo, Maryland.
- Tippeconnic Fox, M.J. (2005). Voices from within: Native American faculty and staff on campus. *New Directions for Student Services*, 109, 49-59.

- Voss, R., White Hat, A., Bates, J., Lunderman, M., & Lunderman, A, Jr. (2005). Social Work education in the homeland: Wo'lakota unglu'su'tapi.l Epas or impasse? Operationalizing accreditation standard 6.0. *Journal of Social Work Education* 41 (2), 209-227.
- Walmsley, C. (2005). *Protecting Aboriginal children*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Webster, M. (1994). *Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (10th ed.). Springfield: Merriam Webster, Inc.
- Westhues, A., LaFrance, J. & Schmidt, G. (2001). A SWOT analysis of Social Work education in Canada. *Social Work Education* 20 (1), 36-56.
- Whitbeck, L.B., McMorris, B.J., Hoyt, D.R, Stubben, J.D., & Lafromboise, T. (2002). Percieved discrimination, traditional practices, and depressive symptoms among American Indians in the upper Midwest. *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*, 55, 400-418.
- White, C.J., & Sakiestewa, N. Talking back to colonial institutions. *American Indian Quarterly* 27 (1 &2), 433-440.
- Yegidis, B.L., Weinbach, R.W, & Morrison-Rodriguez, B. (1999). *Research methods for Social Workers* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Zapf, M. (1999). Bicultural teaching of helping approaches: integrating Native Indian and Western perspectives in a Social Work classroom. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 3 (4), 327-337.
- Zapf, M.K., Pelecb, W., Basiien, B., Bodor, R., Carriere, J., & Zuk, G. (2003). The learning circle. *Tribal College* 15 (2). Retrieved January 20, 2004, from EBSCOhost database.