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Building a culture of inquiry through the embodied knowledge of teachers and teacher educators in aboriginal and non-aboriginal contexts.

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Abstract

This paper is a self study in which a professional educator, teacher and superintendent, studies her practice in creating a culture of inquiry, an aboriginal context for a First Nation Masters group and a space for creative and performance arts representations for bringing non-Indigenous and Indigenous knowledges into the Academy. As she seeks to develop a way of thinking that is appropriate for getting closer to understanding aboriginal ways of knowing and for opening up a space in the academy for Indigenous ways of knowing, there is a transformation in her own understandings.

This study is a continuation of building a culture of inquiry in a school district over 13 years using the living theory methodology for bringing the embodied knowledge of practitioner-researchers for accreditation as academic knowledge. Through eight volumes of practitioner research and three Masters' cohort groups, the meanings of the embodied values that educational researchers use to explain their educational influences in their own learning and in the learning of others, is evident.

Introduction

My self study (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004) might well be explained in the words of the new Director of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Matthew Teitelbaum, as he is described in the Canadian national newspaper, Globe and Mail:

Behind it all has been Teitelbaum's commitment to learning. Looking back to his student days at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London, he says: "Herbert Read, the great critic, once said that he didn't want to educate himself in public-that by the time he went public with an idea, he would have to know exactly where he stood. When I started out as a museum professional, I thought that people wanted that kind of certainty. My evolution as a public thinker, though, has been exactly in the opposite direction. I think that I have an obligation to educate myself in public, so that people can be encouraged to ask questions of themselves as well." (Milroy, 2008, p.1&7).

My early education for leadership taught me that I must know all that I need to know to make good decisions and that I must not show any weaknesses. It was inculcated into me that a leader is all-knowing and always cool under pressure. I (in my tailored designer

suits), too, thought that people wanted that kind of certainty. It was only when I started to let people into my thinking and caring to know the real me under the cool exterior, that I began to truly know myself and how I might improve. This new logic enabled me to engage completely in creating my own living educational theory (DeLong, 2002) and to support others to do likewise.

A story to start the paper:

In 2007, one of my policy responsibilities as Superintendent of Education was Character Education. In order to formulate a set of system standards for this policy, I created a team that conducted focus group research to discover the common values amongst our communities. The outcome was a synthesis of the research to create a list and definitions of those commonly-held values. The team was reviewing and refining the list and definitions and discussion revolved around whether the list was missing any important attributes. Deneen Montour, Native Advisor for the district, suggested that ‘Humility’ was highly regarded in the Haudenosaunee world. The whole group seemed to exhale as they assented that this had been absent in the Character Attributes (DeLong, 2007).

Framing the paper

This paper is part of an ongoing inquiry where values are expressed in different contexts with an energetic and dynamic response to creating individual and system spaces for learning and growth. It begins with the transformatory nature of my learning as a superintendent and emerging scholar and the nature of my influence from 1995 to 2007. I have been concerned that teachers’ voices be heard loud and clear (DeLong, 2002, DeLong et al, 2001-2209) and to this mission has been added that aboriginal teachers’ voices be heard loud and clear. While I devote my energy to encouraging and supporting the voices of the practitioner researchers, I value the voices of the academics and their influence on my thinking.

This is followed with the focus of my learning over the last two years, 2007-2009, with its emphasis on the growth in my educational knowledge with respect to my understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and historical and current contexts. In this paper I use *First Nations*, *aboriginal* and *Indigenous* interchangeably. I’m unsure as to the accuracy of this, except that all three words appear in the literature and in dialogue with Six Nations’ people.

After I examine alternative ways of representing knowledge in the third part, in the final section, I consider how I might bring Indigenous ways of knowing into the Academy. Finally, I intend this paper to be a narrative of my own learning as my values of social justice push me to appropriate ways to support and recognize Indigenous ways of knowing, overcome colonization in developing inclusional open spaces and develop an Indigenous epistemology to be open to challenge and critique. Thus I finish with my findings concerning that learning, my conclusions from the study and what might be my next steps.

In the first part of this paper, I review my learning as a practitioner research studying my practice as a superintendent of schools and at the same time encouraging and supporting

other action researchers to describe, explain and share their knowledge of teaching and learning. This work is significant because of the systemic influence in a large school system (30,000 students) of building a culture of inquiry through reflective practice (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998).

Part One: Transformatory nature of my learning in building a culture of inquiry - 1995 to 2007.

This paper draws on a 13 year journey building a culture of inquiry in a large school district in Southwestern Ontario, Canada using Whitehead's living educational theory approach (Whitehead, 1989; McNiff, 2007). Living educational theories are the explanations that individuals produce for their educational influences in their learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which they live and work.

The evidence of my learning and building the culture of inquiry resides in eight volumes of *Passion In Professional Practice: action research in Grand Erie* (DeLong et al. 2001-2009) and in three Master of Education cohort programs, including the writings of the Masters students with whom I have worked (<http://www.actionresearch.ca>)

My research (DeLong, 2002) and support of other practitioner researchers has been stimulated by many academic writings, including Donald Schön's (1995) "The New Scholarship Requires a New Epistemology" which pointed to a new knowledge created by, criticized by and fostered by practitioners:

"The relationship between "higher and "lower" schools, academic and practice knowledge, needs to be turned on its head. We should think about practice as a setting not only for the application of knowledge but for its generation. We should ask not only how practitioners can better apply the results of academic research, but what kinds of knowing are already embedded in competent practice (p. 29). .. In order to legitimize the new scholarship, higher education institutions will have to learn organizationally to open up the prevailing epistemology so as to foster new forms of reflective action research. This, in turn, requires building up communities of inquiry capable of criticizing such research and fostering its development. (p. 34)."

He recognized, as do I, that change moves slowly in academic circles, in this case with reference to fostering new forms of reflective action research and also in my interest in the acceptance of performance and creative art as data in research projects.

He also says that the introduction of "the new scholarship into institutions of higher education means becoming involved in an epistemological battle. It is a battle of snails, proceeding so slowly that you have to look very carefully in order to see it is going on. But it is happening nonetheless" (p.32).

Academic writings have stimulated my thinking and often a response. I am thinking of David Clark (1997), Catherine Snow (2001), Susan Noffke (1997) Boyer (1990) and Donald Schön (1995). My passion and commitment for creating my own living educational theory (DeLong, 2002) of my educational practices as a Superintendent of Schools can be understood as a response to hearing David Clark's invited address to AERA in 1997 on 'The Search for Authentic Educational Leadership: In the Universities and in the Schools':

The honest fact is that the total contribution of Division A of AERA to the development of the empirical and theoretical knowledge base of administration and policy development is so miniscule that if all of us had devoted our professional careers to teaching and service, we would hardly have been missed (Clark, 1997).

Clark went on to advocate for the importance of practitioners being encouraged to research their own knowledge base in order to contribute to the knowledge base of educational administration in the Academy.

Catherine Snow's Presidential Address to AERA in 2001 on 'Knowing What We Know: Children, Teachers, Researchers', draws attention to the importance of developing procedures for systematizing practitioners' knowledge of education:

The knowledge resources of excellent teachers constitute a rich resource, but one that is largely untapped because we have no procedures for systematizing it. Systematizing would require procedures for accumulating such knowledge and making it public, for connecting it to bodies of knowledge established through other methods, and for vetting it for correctness and consistency. (Snow, 2001, p.9).

The evidential body of research produced over thirteen years addresses Catherine Snow's desire to systematize and provide "procedures for accumulating such knowledge and making it public, for connecting it to bodies of knowledge established through other methods, and for vetting it for correctness and consistency". It is a contribution to the necessary evidential base of research by practising educational researchers as I conducted my own research on my practice as a superintendent and supported others to do the same in an emerging culture of inquiry, reflection and scholarship (DeLong, 2002; DeLong et al., 2001-2009).

I disagree with Susan Noffke's (1997) position as she argues that action research processes, and in particular, the "living educational theory", (Whitehead, 1989, 1999) do not influence social justice, social theory and power relations. The results of my research and work go far beyond simply "personal transformation" and affect entire systems through policy and procedures implemented over long periods of time. Eight volumes of research and three Masters cohorts provide evidence to demonstrate that committed individuals and groups researching their practice with questions like "How can I improve?" (Whitehead, 1989) are indeed capable "of addressing social issues in terms of the interconnections between personal identity and the claim of experiential knowledge, as well as power and privilege in society"(Dolby, 1995; Noffke, 1991) (p. 327).

While Boyer (1990) saw that "Theory surely leads to practice. But practice also leads to theory. And teaching at its best shapes both research and practice", my work takes his thinking one step beyond his new vision of scholarship (p.16). Donald Schön (1995) felt that Boyer's new forms of scholarship would challenge epistemological, institutional and political issues in the university. He argued that the new scholarship "must imply a kind of action research with norms of its own which will conflict with the norms of technical rationality - the prevailing epistemology built into the research universities" (p.27). My *scholarship of inquiry* (Whitehead, 1999) takes Boyer's thinking one step further and, as Schön (1995) predicted, "challenges" technical rational views of scholarship.

The process of systematizing my knowledge is focused on the transformation of my embodied values into educational standards of judgement that can be used to test the validity of my knowledge-claims. Professional educational values are embodied in what educators do. The meanings of these embodied values are transformed into my standards of practice as they are clarified in the course of their emergence in the practice of my educative relations (Whitehead, 1999). I am using Stenhouse's (1967) definition of *standard* - "criteria which lie behind consistent patterns of judgment of the quality and value of the work" (Kushner, 2001, p.70). The meanings which constitute the standards are carried through my stories and include value-laden statements. I am thinking of my values of:

- i) valuing the other in my professional practice;
- ii) building a culture of inquiry, reflection and scholarship;
- iii) creating knowledge. (DeLong, 2002, p. 8)

My doctoral and post-doctoral research has been a self-study of my life as a Superintendent of Education from 1995 to 2007. For the last two years, my study concerns how I am trying to improve my practice as a teacher of Master of Education courses and how I might get better at teaching students. This current year, 2008-2009, is focused on my learning of aboriginal issues. Many years of my life have been devoted to supporting and encouraging a new epistemology of education (Whitehead, 1989; 2008d) and building a culture of inquiry.

Because I believe in the democratic, non-hierarchical nature of living, learning and knowing, I have committed myself to transforming our understandings of how individuals, groups and systems can bring about improvement in our world. In particular, I have encouraged and supported early childhood, elementary and secondary educators, and graduate students to conduct practitioner inquiry and create their own living educational theories. I have exhorted them not to allow others to speak for them but to speak with their own voices, loud and clear. The purposes of these inquiries are always the same: to improve student learning by improving ourselves and our social order and to contribute to the knowledgebase of teaching and learning.

With my own work and with that of the students, I draw on the criteria of social validity from Habermas (1976) in terms of comprehensibility, truth, rightness authenticity, and social validity in validation groups (p. 2-3). Validation groups are used to enhance the validity of interpretations and the rigour of data collection. Self study is a collaborative

process, “a commitment to checking data and interpretations with others” (Loughran & Northfield in Hamilton, 1998, p.12). With this in mind, I have asked my validation group to read and critique my paper with the following questions in mind:

Is it comprehensible? Do the quotations get in the way of the comprehensibility?
Is it true? Is there sufficient evidence to justify the claims I am making?
Is it right? Are the data and findings presented according to my values without harm to another? Is there awareness of cultural assumptions?
Is it authentic? Am I true to myself?

I am setting these standards of judgment upfront in the paper as these constitute a large measure of what it is I are trying to live up to. Creating the standards of judgment by which you want anything you do in education to be judged is an integral part of living theorists’ work (Laidlaw, 1996).

Even very recent articles on research in teachers’ lives have not connected with the need to remove the ‘other’ and support them to speak with their own voices:

A review of the international literature (Day et al., 2006) revealed that previous research in the area of teachers’ lives and work and that on school effectiveness and improvement, leadership, and teachers’ effectiveness had been carried out largely in parallel, but that there had been no tradition of dialogue among those who carried out the research. This continues the tradition of researching the ‘other’ with concerns only for the lives of the outsider researcher (Day et al., 2008, p. 331).

Once again the voices of the teachers are not heard, only the interpretations of Mixed Method researchers about teacher effectiveness using quantitative (test scores) and qualitative (interviews) methods to collect data. Interesting that dialogue amongst researchers and their synergy is valued above having teachers speak for themselves as professional with embodied knowledge.

It is the nature of the living educational theory method that dialogue is endemic to the process of learning to improve one’s practice and improve the world we live in. It is certainly one of my values in promoting and teaching students in communities such as cohort groups so that they have the moral and intellectual support of others as well as a validation group (Whitehead, 2008d) to encourage accountability and validity of claims to know.

I anticipate that dialogue is an essential means for aboriginal learner to express their knowing and ways of knowing. This is familiar territory for me since I believe that I am naturally dialogical and dialectical. I learn about myself as I relate the stories of my life and learn from the stories of others that stimulate my imagination (DeLong, 2002).

In his discussion of the implications of an integrated methodology for the social sciences, defining “paradigms” as “the consensual set of beliefs and practices that guide a field,”

Morgan (2007) asked what would happen if “quantitative researchers paid more attention to the incredible range of hypotheses that qualitative researchers have generated for them? And what if qualitative researchers spent more time exploring the range of phenomena that quantitative researchers have sought to define and test?”(p. 49). Integrated methodology, he suggests, is a “third way” for researchers, which “moves beyond technical questions about mixing or combining methods” and beyond combinations of quantitative and qualitative research techniques for pragmatic purposes (as outlined by Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004 in Day et al., 2008, p.330). I’d like to ask what would happen if “quantitative and qualitative researchers paid more attention to the incredible range of hypotheses that action researchers and aboriginal researchers have generated for them.

Evidence of an educational influence in encouraging and supporting informal action research communities as well as tutoring and supervising the Masters’ research programs of other practitioner-researchers resides in eight volumes of Passion In Professional Practice (Delong, J., Black, C., & Knill-Griesser, H. (2002-2006); Delong, J., 2001, 2007; Delong, J., Kennedy, L., Nikiforuk, L., Polodian, B., 2009) which I have edited in concert with my colleagues. It resides as well in a guidebook to action research, Action Research: For Teaching Excellence written with colleagues (Delong, J., Black, C., Wideman, R., 2005). In the eight volumes, the informal, that is, not-for-credit, action research varies in rigour from narratives and stories to Masters' level research. All of the embodied knowledge of the professional educators in the Grand Erie District School Board is valued for its contribution to improving the world. The meanings of the embodied values that educational researchers use to explain their educational influences in their own learning and in the learning of others, is evident in all of the writing (Delong et al., 2001-2009; also at <http://www.actionresearch.ca>).

Embodied knowing refers to the ways in which educators by virtue of their lived experiences and the "phenomenological nod", that recognizes the possibility of the situation, without really having the experience of the situation first hand. (Van Manen, 1990) Teachers hold myriad ways of knowing about teaching and relating and responding to students that are not usually found in academic texts. “By *embodiment* we mean the integration of the physical and biological body and the phenomenon or experiential body (Varela, Thompson, and Rosch 1991, xvi). For us, as for other contributors, embodiment suggests a seamless though often elusive matrix of bodymind-world, a web that integrates thinking, being, doing and interacting within worlds” (Hocking, Haskell & Hinds, p. xvii). In bodymind learning, we include learning from our bodies and spirits as well as our intellectual minds and learning more about relationships of body, mind and spirit. The first task with teachers is to enable them see the embodied knowledges that they already have which they do not see as remarkable. Then the process that I use is to encourage and support them to research their teaching practice systematically in order to theorize about their lives as professional educators and to share their knowledge (Delong, Black and Wideman, 2005). For most of us, the traditional research training has been to negate this subjective and “I” centred knowledge (Delong, 2002; Whitehead, 2008a, 2000c, 2008d).

Because I believe that the expression of our embodied knowledges as professional educators is highly significant in our educational influence with our students, I also want

to see this embodied knowledge legitimated in the Academy as contributions to educational knowledge in master of education and doctoral degrees. Whenever I am present with professional educators I am aware of feeling the significance of the knowledge embodied in each one of us. I am thinking particularly of the life-affirming and energy-flowing values that form explanatory principles in why we do what we do in our educational relationships.

By encouraging and supporting practitioners to research their lives as practitioners in pre-school, elementary and secondary classrooms, as school administrators and as system support staff, with their "I" at the centre of the investigation, a culture of inquiry has been built that recognizes the embodied knowledges of professional educators (Delong et al, 2001-2009). They have been recognized in the school district and legitimated in the Academy with new relationally dynamic standards of judgment, standards that are based on values lived everyday as professional educators with life-affirming energy and valuing the other. The explanation requires multi-media and alternative representations to show how the living standards of judgment flow with life-affirming energy (Pugh, 2007; Adler-Collins, 2007; Charles, 2007; Farren, 2005).

My understanding and use of a dialectical and dialogical epistemology developed between 1995-2001 as audio-tapes of my supporting role as Superintendent of Schools revealed my 'I' as a living contradiction (Whitehead, 1989) in my inquiry, 'How can I improve my practice as a superintendent of schools and create my own living educational theory (<http://www.actionresearch.ca>). The transcribed tapes of the meetings with school administrators revealed that while I believed that I had established the conditions to support communities of learners in my family of schools, I was actually talking far too much and not creating a climate for inquiry so that they might learn from each other (Delong, 2002).

The work in that study and much of my writing since has incorporated narrative inquiry with inspiration from Jean Clandinin and colleagues:

As we reflect on our conceptual cartography of narrative inquiry, we are struck by the energy generated by those interested in studying people's lives. This rush to narrative inquiry and the willingness to move into the borderlands with narrative inquiry suggests an eagerness to understand in more complex and nuanced ways the storied experiences of individuals as they compose storied lives on storied landscapes. (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, pp. 70-71).

As well I find the work of Judi Marshall (1999) on living life as inquiry resonates with me:

By living life as inquiry I mean a range of beliefs, strategies and ways of behaving which encourage me to treat little as fixed, finished, clear-cut. Rather I have an image of living continually in process, adjusting, seeing what emerges, bringing things into question. This involves, for example, attempting to open to continual question what I know, feel, do and want, and finding ways to engage actively in this questioning and process its stages. It involves seeking to monitor how what I

do relates to what I espouse, and to review this explicitly, possibly in collaboration with others, if there seems to be a mismatch. It involves seeking to maintain curiosity, through inner and outer arcs of attention, about what is happening and what part I am playing in creating and sustaining patterns of action, interaction and non-action (p.155).

In addition to this living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989) methodology resonating with my ontology and epistemology, so too I feel that it will be a useful way of expressing Indigenous ways of knowing and create a space in the academy for the oral tradition of the Indigenous peoples. I anticipate that it will not only be an “enthusiasm for narrative ways of understanding knowledge and identity that cuts across disciplines and professions”(Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, pp. 70-71) but also an enthusiasm that cuts across nations.

In this second part, I review the process of starting the Six Nations’ Master of Education cohort; I assess my starting point in my knowledge of aboriginal issues and track my growth in understanding of aboriginal issues through local connections and academic reading.

Part Two: Growth in my educational knowledge with respect to my understanding of aboriginal contexts and ways of knowing: 2007-2009.

Expanding the culture of inquiry

The Grand Erie District School board (and its predecessor, The Brant County Board of Education) is unique in Ontario because it surrounds two First Nations Reserves, one of which is the largest First Nation in Canada based on population. This translates into two important factors for the school board. The first factor is that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, on behalf of the larger First Nations, has signed a tuition agreement with the school board to provide secondary school education to approximately 550 Native students (Tuition Agreement, 2005). Secondly, due to a shortage of housing on the First Nations, many Native families must move into the surrounding towns and cities in order to secure adequate housing.

This translates into a large Native population in both elementary and secondary schools throughout the school board (Montour, 2008). The Six Nations resident population is now approximately 8,370. The total membership of the Six Nations is 17,645, making it the largest population of the 530 reserves within Canada. There are two governing bodies of the Six Nations People, the traditional hereditary government, also known as the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Six Nations Band Council.

<http://www.honorsixnations.com/history.htm>

Building on the experience in non-aboriginal contexts and with an enhanced understanding of aboriginal issues I hope to enable the extension of the culture of inquiry in the school district into this new domain-Six Nations. The two partnership Masters

cohort groups between the school district and the university has been extended to a First Nation group within the Six Nations context which commenced September, 2008.

The creation of the Six Nations Master of Education (M.Ed.) cohort

In April, 2008, I was encouraged by the Chair of Graduate Studies and the Director of the Tecumseh Centre for Aboriginal Research at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada and the Native advisor for the Grand Erie District school board to join in an invitation to educators on the Six Nations to engage in Master of Education studies. We met in a post secondary facility on the Six Nations reserve on two occasions and found that there appeared to be sufficient interest to start a new cohort of M.Ed. students.

In the discussions in the two sessions, the group was assured that the courses would include aboriginal contexts, issues and concerns. There were conversations about a culturally-inclusive curriculum with no detail as to what that actually meant. I am, of course, speaking only of my own ignorance. The program outline distributed to the students articulated the intent that curriculum be taught “with particular reference to the Aboriginal context and to Indigenous knowledge” (Brock University, 2008). My particular course was written:

Summer 2009 (4) EDUC 5P58 The Reflective Practitioner

Explores the notion of the reflective practitioner and what this means in professional practice. Participants will explore a wide range of views of thinking, the production of knowledge, the creation of meaning and being in the world set within an action research framework and pursuing a distinctive aboriginal perspective.

In addition, the exit project would be “co-supervised by a regular Brock faculty member and by a knowledgeable individual either from the Six Nations community or a person familiar with the aboriginal context and experience” (Brock University, 2008). That was an exciting direction for me: an opportunity to learn about Indigenous ways of knowing from the elders.

Awareness of my limited understanding of aboriginal issues

My mind began reflecting on what exactly I knew about ‘the Aboriginal context and Indigenous knowledge’ and “a distinctive aboriginal perspective” (Brock, 2008). A significant starting point for discussing these themes was the story of the elder’s box as told by Eber Hampton, a Chicksaw educator and the president of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, the national post-secondary educational institute on the First Nations of Canada...The elder then thrust forward what appeared to be an empty box, which puzzled him:

His question came from behind the box, “How many sides do you see?”
“One,” I said.

He pulled the box towards his chest and turned it so one corner faced me. “Now how many do you see?”

“Now I see three sides.”

He stepped back and extended the box, one corner towards him and one towards me. “You and I together can see six sides of this box,” he told me. (Hampton, 1995, 42 in Battiste, 2000, p. xvii)

In response to this AERA self-study paper, Moira Laidlaw, main editor of the Educational Journal of Living theories (EJOLTS: <http://ejolts.net>), said: “I know exactly that feeling and most of my post-doctoral work deals with how I deal with new perspectives. And again I think this is something that living theorists tend to do – see all of McNiff’s work, Jack’s work, Marie Huztable’s in Bath, JeKan’s in Japan” (Laidlaw, 2009).

Thus began my journey to knowing that there is more than one perspective required to view a box holistically. I was determined to examine my current situation, my knowledge and experience and to become more knowledgeable about issues of colonization as a system of oppression and the systemic nature of colonization that creates cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 200, p.xvii) in order to improve my capacity to instruct and support them in my ‘Reflective Practice’ course scheduled for 2009. I wanted to increase my “mindfulness practice” and be cognizant that “education is foremost an act of disciplining. While learning may take place naturally every moment, even without conscious thought, even without our conscious effort, education is an intentional act of disciplining the mind-body-heart to be in alignment with certain ideals we set up before us” (Bai, p. 91, 92).

In my “mindful practice”, I know that I am not on the inside (in fact, I am the ‘other’) but I am seeking to get closer to understanding Indigenous ways of knowing towards the development of thinking that is appropriate for opening up space in the Academy for Indigenous ways of knowing. I anticipate a transformation in my educational knowledge of overcoming colonization and developing an inclusional (Rayner, 2004) space for the development of an epistemology.

I have to remind myself frequently of the need to recount the good as well as the uncomfortable narrative. Maggie MacLure (1996) asks, ‘If he’s right, what must we have forgotten in order to tell these smooth stories of the self?’ (Lather, 1994 in MacLure, 1996). When I tell people that I am attempting to have a greater understanding of aboriginal issues, I get a mixture of responses. Some are fascinated that I am conducting this self study of a sensitive issue, others seem dismissive of a topic that they do not find comprehensible and others appear to convey a disregard or contempt for a group that should “move on and stop asking for money”. In order to see all sides of the box, I intend to engage with my friends, students, university colleagues to help with my perceptions and understandings.

Learning from and respecting local knowledge

Sken:o (‘hello’ in Cayuga language). I had the opportunity to work with one Six Nations’ student, Deneen Montour, in my ‘Data-based Decision-making’ course in May-

June of 2008 (I had known her before when I worked for the school district) and she helped me to increase my understanding with her writing (Montour, 08). “We understand the process of education to be ecological-not linear-in its openness to dynamic opportunities and disturbing tensions incited by the constant interplay of relations between learners and teachers, between educating and being educated” (Low, M. & McKay, M., 2001, p. 64). In Deneen’s paper, she describes the importance of the Two Row Wampum:



Two Row Wampum belt shown on the title page of this paper influences the belief system of the Haudenosaunee people by being a constant reminder of how we are to interact with those outside our culture. This includes how the students interact within an educational context. The belt symbolizes how the Haudenosaunee welcomed the Europeans to this land. It tells us how we will interact with non-Aboriginal people. This belt symbolizes the agreement and conditions under which the Iroquois welcomed the Europeans to this land. “You say that you are our father and I am your son”, “we say we will not be like father and son, but as brothers.... as equals.” The two rows on this belt will symbolize the paths of two boats on the same river, one path is for the white people, their laws, customs, and their ways, the other path will be for the Onkwehonweh, their laws, customs and way of life. We shall travel side by side but in our own boats, neither of us will try to steer the others’ vessels, or make laws or interfere in the internal affairs of the other. The Onkwehonweh have kept to this agreement..... (North American Indian Traveling College, 1989 in Montour, 2008, p. 12).

Because of my raised sensitivity in this new learning, I began seeing these Six Nations’ issues all around me and now had a much great interest in what was portrayed in the media and how it was presented. I am creating myself in a process of improvisatory self-realization (Winter, 1989) using the art of the dialectician, in which I hold together "in a process of question and answer, [my] capacities for analysis with [my] capacities for synthesis".

In dialogue with Deneen Montour on January 22, 2008 at her home on the Six Nations reserve in Ohsweken, Ontario, I learned more about her sometimes painful experiences, the role of storytelling (Montour, 2008) in the First Nations' experience and how the videotaping of stories might be a means to represent that way of knowing. I need to remind myself (and my students) that

Asking directly for consent to interview can also be interpreted as quite rude behaviour in some cultures. Consent is not so much given for a project or specific set of questions, but for a person, for their credibility. Consent indicates trust and the assumption is that the trust will not only be reciprocated but constantly negotiated – a dynamic relationship rather than a static decision (Smith, 1999, p. 136).

I became aware that some First Nations peoples do not permit videotaping at all and some do not allow taping of certain events. This first came to my attention at a Peace and Diversity Forum at Laurier University in Brantford in April, 2008 when one of the opening events was a prayer by Darren Thomas, Professor at Laurier University, who shared a blessing that he said Six Nations men were expected to recite each morning. He asked that it not be videotaped. Even though he recited it entirely in Mohawk (a foreign language for me) and it was quite long, I felt moved spiritually by it. He explained that it was a prayer of thanks for all of the blessing around us, like the earth and the trees and the crops. When I asked Deneen at the next session of the Data-based Decision-making course that she took with me, why he had asked that it not be taped and how she felt about it, she said that the blessing was spiritual event and taping was not appropriate and that she was very comfortable with videotaping our session.

In the dialogue with Deneen that we videotaped, I tried to keep in mind the questions that Dion (2009) and her brother, Michael, ask the reader to keep in mind when reading their mother's story:

What does Audrey's story mean to me?
What does it mean to my understanding of what it is to be Canadian?
What does it mean to my understanding of Aboriginal people today?
How does my experience of being Canadian differ from that of Aboriginal people?
What aspect of the past are all Canadians called upon to reckon with? (p. 22)

Dion's (2009) mother, Audrey who was Aboriginal and who married a non-aboriginal, became a Canadian citizen but lost Indian status and all treaty rights. Her narrative is powerful:

After my family was enfranchised, I believed that I was no longer Indian. But being Indian was not something I could put on and off like a pair of shoes. Even if the government of Canada no longer considered me Indian, the people I met in my day to day life would not let me forget that I was. In those days, I could look for a job at certain places but couldn't even consider applying in others. I could go

into some stores and restaurants, but would not even think of going into many others. Signs in storefront windows read “No Indians Allowed,” and in other places a look of disgust from the clerks was enough to send me back out onto the street (p. 28).

Most Canadians do not think of themselves as racist but this was clearly apartheid. As Stó:lō writer Lee Maracle (quoted in Grant 1990, 129) explains, “Racism is for us, no ideology in the abstract, but a very real and practical part of our lives – the pain, the effect, the shame are all real.” (Dion, 2009, p. 47). An Ontario publication by Diane Miller and colleagues explains a tension particular to aboriginals, ethnostress and anomie: “Ethnostress occurs when the cultural beliefs or joyful identity of a people are disrupted” (Antone, Miller & Myers, 1986, p. 6). Evidence of this stress affects self-concept and identity:

Under the weight of outside influence, we question our original forms of existence, and the entire civilization enters a state of “anomie”. The concept of “anomie” denotes a people’s loss of faith and belief in their own institutions, values, and existence. It is perhaps the one word that best describes the state of indigenous existence in the western world during times of real powerlessness and hopelessness (Antone, Miller & Myers, 1986, p. 13).

I felt as I listened to Deneen that “in every case the storyteller is a man [sic] who has counsel for his readers. The storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale.” (Benjamin, 1969, 87 in Dion, 2009, p. 18). I felt that I was experiencing her journey. Researchers who seek influence need to be storytellers: “Anecdotes tend to drive policy. A compelling tale moves people-that’s just the nature of business. This is politics.” (Budge, 2008, p.12). This issue of recognizing and accrediting the oral story is also part of the work in South Africa (Conolly, 2008).

When I place myself as an outsider, I have to keep in mind that I am also an insider and that my students who are conducting their research are insiders who are also seen as outsiders.

The major difference is that insiders have to live with the consequences of their processes on a day-to-day basis for ever more, and so do their families and communities. For this reason insider researchers need to build particular sorts of research-based support systems and relationships with their communities. They have to be skilled at defining clear research goals and ‘lines of relating’ which are specific to the project and somewhat different from their own family networks. Insider researchers also need to define closure and have the skills to say ‘no’ and the skills to say ‘continue’ (Smith, 1999, p. 137).

To continue accessing local knowledge, I made a trip to the Woodland Cultural Centre in Brantford. I have been there before but my experience was deeper this time. The centre

has a variety of exhibits, one being, “The Six Nations Hall of Fame” that framed in a visual way some of the reading I had been doing.

Two Row Understanding through Education (TRUE)

The roots of injustice lie in history and it is there where the key to the regeneration of Aboriginal society and a new and better relationship with the rest of Canada can be found.

- Georges Erasmus, *Address for the launch of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People* (Dion, 2009, p. 3)

In my pursuit of the perspectives in the box, I attended a local event sponsored by Two Row Understanding through Education (TRUE) on Dec 3, 2008. I recognize that “How one conceives of education, we have finally come to recognize, is a function of how one conceives of the culture and its aims, professed and otherwise” (Bruner, 1996, ix-x). I needed to hear the issues and to understand the language used to explain those issues. This was one of a series of meetings in Brantford, Ontario, Canada in an effort to provoke discussion and awareness of native land claims:

"The lack of education about the people of Six Nations is the root cause of tensions between our two communities," says TRUE co-founder Jim Windle. "It wasn't until I began working as a journalist at Six Nations that I became aware of how very little I knew. The information we want to bring to others through our meetings is not taught in our schools and goes largely ignored by the mainstream media." (Expositor, 2008).

Windle and his partner Marilyn Vegso decided almost a year ago to try and do something about this lack of understanding. The foundation of T.R.U.E. is built on one of the most important treaties made between the Haudenosaunee (People of the Longhouse) and four successive European governments who landed and settled on what was known to Six Nations as Turtle Island - North America. It is called the Two Row Wampum. An agreement that outlined how the Haudenosaunee and European newcomers could share the vast resources of Turtle Island in peace and mutual respect.” <http://www.honorsixnations.com>

Two lawyers, Andrew and Jessical Orkin, with experience in Human Rights and constitutional law addressed the conflict between the legal concepts of Rule of Law and Indigenous Rights. Confusion on that complex conflict is at the root of turmoil between Six Nations and the neighbouring communities of Brantford and Caledonia (Expositor, 2008):

As TRUE co-founder, Marilyn Vegso says: “I’m not sure I know it all either but I do know that the thing people seem to forget is that Rule of Law is based on the Canadian Constitution, which protects, recognizes and affirms the treaty rights of aboriginal people. It doesn’t extinguish them as some would believe.” (Tully, 2008).

I do not fully comprehend the issues associated with ‘Rule of Law’, either; the lawyer, Jessica Orkin, defined it as “a highly textured fabric, many-stranded and multi-dimensional”. The constitution of 1867 created the “Rule of Law” foundation and Section 35 of the 1982 amendments to the Charter of Human Rights recognizes aboriginal and treaty rights as part of constitutional law. No province or municipality can pass laws contrary to the constitution. If laws are passed contrary to constitution, governments have an obligation to consult. “Rule of Law” has to do with social compact.

It seems to me that the issue comes down to respecting, listening to and valuing the other. Smith (1999) takes issue with the concept of other as being the “Other” who is colonized. Alan Orkin, the second lawyer to address the group, had worked in South Africa where the “Rule of Law” was applied to serve only the rights of the white settler society: statistically speaking, they jailed the entire population every 3 years: 30 million people, the vast majority being black.

In Canada, there have been two high profile events that have drawn attention to oppressive acts by police and legislators. One was the spring 1990 conflict between the Mohawk community of Kanesatake and its non- aboriginal neighbours in Oka, Quebec:

A struggle concerning land located between the two communities had been intensifying for over a hundred years. When the residents of Oka announced plans to expand a golf course onto the disputed land, the Mohawk set up a blockade. On July 11, Quebec police attempted to storm it; they failed and one policeman was killed. For eleven weeks, the standoff grew steadily worse. The Canadian army was called in and applied increasing pressure. About sixty kilometers away, Kahnawake residents supported the Kanesatake Mohawk by blocking highways crossing their reserve as well as the Mercier Bridge that links non-Aboriginal residents on the south shore to their jobs in Montreal. The standoff at Kanesatake and the Kahnawake lasted for seventy-eight days (Dion, 2009, p. 9).

The other occurred at Ipperwash, Ontario where Dudley George was shot on Tuesday, 5 September 1995:

A burial ground is located within the park boundaries, and people from the Stoney Point band were protesting the government’s unwillingness to acknowledge the ground as sacred and to treat it accordingly.

Like other Aboriginal people across Canada, those from Stoney Point were taking action to the Canadian government’s limited action in addressing land claims, social issues, and self-determination for Aboriginal people. In the aftermath of the shooting, Mike Harris, then premier of Ontario, refused to involve the government in negotiations with people from Stoney Point, claiming that their “illegal activity” was a matter for the police. Positioning Aboriginal people who have taken up arms to protect their land and their rights as mere lawbreakers and dismissing their actions as illegal is based on a particular understanding of history. (Dion, 2009, p. 3-4)

In 1995, the Ipperwash clash occurred as police decided to move in on a pretext despite the judge's direction to give the situation 10 days so that he could hear from the Indians. So it happened again; we are slow at learning lessons on parallel societies; we have a national state of amnesia (Orking, A. in DeLong, J. Notes on TRUE meeting; Dec 4, 2008).

Between the two events when Six Nations clashed with police over land claims, an eight person Royal Commission on Aboriginal Rights (Canada, 1996) investigated for six years and submitted a 4500 page report. The report included the following:

Aboriginal peoples in Canada through 400 years have been ruled by foreign powers. In the early years a peaceful co-existence reigned through treaties; after confederation, the Six Nations were assigned to the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada and herded into reserves. The British North America Act (BNA) said that one of the laws was Two Row Wampum which called for peace, friendship and respect and early governors followed that rule because they didn't want war.

They (ibid., 27) also concluded that "most Canadians are simply unaware of the history of the Aboriginal presence in what is now Canada and that there is little understanding of the origins and evolution of the relationship between Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal people that have led us to the present moment." Like the authors, I believe that rendering non-Aboriginal people cognizant of our stories is a crucial first step in establishing fertile ground on which to cultivate an equitable relationship. Clearly, increased attention to post-contact histories is needed; we can embark on this task by including First Nations perspectives in educational forums, including schools, Canadian historical sites, cinema, and broadcast television. However, further to sharing our stories of five hundred years of resistance and replacing negative and stereotypical representations with positive diverse representations, the discourse that positions First Nations people as romantic, mythical Others needs to be altered in such a way that Canadians will be engaged in a rethinking of their understandings of Aboriginal people, their understanding of themselves, and of themselves in relationship with Aboriginal people (Dion, 2009, p.4-5).

Jessica Orking explained that although the report said that there was no conquest because there never were any wars of conquest waged, the term "conquest" under common law means rights are extinguished. Her position is that this does not mean that people weren't treated badly; even though the Rule of Law doesn't recognize a thousand cuts as a "conquest", it can be said that there has been a social conquest.

One of my significant learnings came during the question and answer part of the meeting: one man questioned the rights of the Supreme Court Judge to make decisions about "our inherent rights, resources and governance and did not recognize Canadian law". It hadn't occurred to me that if you felt that you were ruled by foreign powers then you wouldn't accept their justice system. The lawyers felt that Canadian law could encompass diversity

and that it might be a tactical error to see the other as a monolith, a single block and all evil. Alan felt that all societies are on a path to getting better including the Haudenosaunee. He gave an analogy: To say that Canada doesn't exist is like my having a heavy truck on my foot. I can say that it doesn't exist or on the other hand, I can say to the truck driver, 'Your truck is on my foot. What can we do about this?' (DeLong, J. Notes on TRUE meeting; Dec 4, 2008).

If this event was designed to educate 'others', I remarked to my neighbour beside me, the Native Trustee for the Grand Erie District School Board, that there were few 'others' like me in the group of about 100 people.

Learning from international writings on aboriginal issues

Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p.19) note that European ethnographers studied 'from the perspective of the conqueror, who saw the lifeworld of the primitive as a window to the prehistoric past.' (Hooley, 2008, p.26)

As I read Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) book, "Decolonizing Methodologies", I was discomforted in trying to see the world from a new perspective. As an example, I was taught and learned that Columbus was a hero who *discovered* the New World and opened up the world to new opportunities. I have never had any reason to question this. In my travels in Europe, I have often admired the massive statues to Columbus and other explorers. Then I read, "There is one particular figure whose name looms large, whose spectre lingers, in Indigenous discussions of encounters with the West: Christopher Columbus. It is not simply that Columbus is identified as the one who started it all, but rather that he has come to represent a huge legacy of suffering and destruction. ... In the imperial literature these are the 'heroes', the discoverers and adventurers, the 'fathers' of colonialism" (Smith, 1999, p. 20). As I said in an email to Jack Whitehead: I'm just reading Decolonizing Methodologies: it is an earth-shaker for me to try to see the world through completely different eyes (DeLong email, Dec 13, 2008).

While I found the book to be an angry treatise that succumbed to a Western way of presenting knowledge, I tried to walk in her shoes. She confronts their devalued centuries of knowledge:

Every issue has been approached by Indigenous peoples with a view to *rewriting* and *re-righting* our position in history. Indigenous peoples want to tell our own stories, write our own versions, in our own ways, for our own purposes. It is not simply about giving an oral account or a genealogical naming of the land and the events which raged over it, but a very powerful need to give testimony to and restore a spirit, to bring back into existence a world fragmented and dying (Smith, 1999, p. 28).

Smith has written a good critique of colonization and I learned a great deal from her; it is unfortunate that she uses the same form of representation as the colonizing methodology.

This education that I have described above, that has formed my view of the lives of Indigenous peoples, came from the racialised, white supremacist world in the textbooks that Ken Montgomery (Professor at University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada who teaches courses in Social Inequality and the Sociology of Education.) condemns:

White supremacy also empowers, bestows unfair advantage, and procures privilege and benefits and, thus, the truths of white supremacy exist simultaneously in the minds, bodies, cultures, occupations, homes, vacations and bank accounts of racialised whites and in the most ordinary spaces, places and peoples (eg school textbooks).

I am using Canadian history textbooks in this analysis as a cultural site to illustrate the embeddedness of racism within the banal structures and taken-for-granted experiences that organize life in a modern racial state. Specifically, this analysis considers how the ordering of conceptual knowledge about racism effectively flags the nation and reproduces an ‘imagined community’ of nationhood that, while perhaps not obvious or blatantly racist, is nonetheless white supremacist insofar as it supports the political and cultural empowerment of racialised whites (Anderson, 1991; Billig, 1995; Wetherell and Potter, 1992). (Montgomery, K., 2008, p. 85)

While I cannot be an ‘insider’, I do wish to be an empathic ‘other’ with insights into the Western Academy and its limitations, seeking to get closer to understanding Indigenous ways of knowing and opening a space for Indigenous knowledge. This “pedagogical chaos” (Simon, 1992 in Hocking, Haskell & Linds, 2001) is disturbing when preconceptions are challenged; however:

Too much comfort and safety and predictability are anaesthetizing: You cannot sleepwalk through the pedagogical experience. The pedagogical dance is a wild and chaotic process, a struggle that is sometimes joyful, sometimes, painful. Simon (1992) calls the agony of pedagogy “Disorganization.” ...When students step into this space of pedagogical chaos, they risk the ‘destruction of their ability to return to a safer, more certain place” (p. 71).

I am in agreement with Smith (1999) in her description of colonizing methodologies and, in fact, she expresses sentiment consistent with Whitehead’s work (2008b) and my choice of the living educational theory method of research:

Academic knowledges are organized around the idea of disciplines and fields of knowledge. These are deeply implicated in each other and share genealogical foundations in various classical and Enlightenment philosophies. Most of the ‘traditional’ disciplines are grounded in cultural world views which are antagonistic to other belief systems or have no methodology for dealing with other knowledge systems. Underpinning all of what is taught at universities is the belief in the concept of science as the all-embracing methods for gaining an understanding of the world (p. 65).

I move now to examining the continuing challenges to alternative ways of representing knowledge as well as a means of data representation that I have experienced and considered for my own work and that of my students.

Part Three: Alternative Ways of Representing Knowledges

Because of the limitations of the print form and certainly of my ability to describe and explain the significance of positive and meaningful relationships in being a professional educator responsive to the student, I have encouraged the use of the video to express the life-affirming energy that we bring to our educative relationships and the embodied knowledge that eludes explication in words alone. George Bataille (1962) describes the limitations of language:

Through language we can never grasp what matters to us, for it eludes us in the form of interdependent propositions, and no central whole to which each of these can be referred ever appears. Our attention remains fixed on this whole but we can never see it in the full light of day. A succession of propositions flickering off and on merely hides it from our gaze, and we are powerless to alter this (p.274 - 275).

Digital technologies are enabling educational researchers to produce visual narratives of explanations of educational influences in learning. The academic legitimation of these new forms of representation (Eisner, 1997, 2005) are increasingly being recognized in the Academy. University regulations are being changed to permit the submission of e-media and multi-media accounts of educational influences in learning and are now being legitimated in professional development learning (Pugh, 2007) and in the Academy (Adler-Collins, 2007; Charles, 2007; Farren, 2005).

When Boyer (1990) called for a new scholarship of teaching and Schön (1995) called for a new epistemology for the new scholarship, digital technologies such as multi-media web-based accounts of educational practices and performance arts were in their infancy. Recent developments in video-conferencing educational video-resources and alternative forms of representation are helping to extend the forms of representation open to educational researchers (Farren, 2008). This direction is further advanced with the inclusion of performance art.

Here are four video-clips to show the expression of such a loving life-affirming energy in the recognition of the other as a living standard of judgment in my understanding of an educational relationship. The first is of a response from Cheryl Black, currently a principal, taken in 2000 when she was a secondary school music teacher, to one of her pupils. The second is of Moira Laidlaw from 2004 while on Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) at Guyuan Teachers College in China. The third and fourth are clips with Deneen Montour and me in which we discuss Indigenous knowledge. All clips are between a minute and 4 minutes.



The student with Cheryl brushes some chalk from Cheryl's jacket. Cheryl turns round and expresses her recognition of the student with a flow of life-affirming energy and pleasure.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvLyxLU1o3U>

In this next clip, it is important to note that Moira Laidlaw was in a tiny minority in China, having been invited there by the central government. The clip below is of Moira and her students at the end of a lesson. Jack Whitehead had turned the camera off but as he saw Moira walk to the door to be with her students, he turned it on again. Her expression of a loving, life-affirming energy towards her students as they flow past her and as she communicates with one student at the end of the clip is evident.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1jEOhxDGno>

This clip becomes more meaningful as the teacher, Moira, explicates it herself:

As I try to say something to individuals as they stream out of the door, I catch one student's attention while still acknowledging others as they leave. Our gaze is held with smiles and words and there is an energy flowing between us, which I believe is easy to see. This holding the gaze of individuals is a fundamental part of what I do in education because it is my belief that such attention is itself educational (Laidlaw, 1996). It fulfils one of my values of respect for the other. It also accords with Whitehead's comment: As you see, I can write my description of the end of a lesson, but I feel very sure that it is not as powerful as watching the video itself! I believe that more information is carried in the video than can be conveyed in words. In representing more appropriately what happened between those students and myself during our year of working together I needed the aid of the video. In fact, it wasn't really until I saw the video that I realised some of what I was doing (Laidlaw, 2008, p.17).

The next two clips are my own and the first time I have used the technology independently (with some editing help from my friend, Tim Pugh). Deneen Montour and I talked and taped a two hour conversation and I pulled these two short clips to demonstrate the life affirming energy between us and in her desire to improve the lives of

Six Nations' students. In the first of the clips, Deneen describes and explains the symbols and stories within two First Nations' blankets.



http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VKSSuCWy2U0&feature=channel_page

In her description of the two blankets, Deneen says that they are pieces of artwork with a story. The tree of peace on the blanket represents the commitment of the First Nations to live in peace, love and righteousness. There is much that we can learn from the aboriginal peoples.

The second in sequence concerns our growing understanding of the nature of Indigenous knowledge.



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wS1OM8oC0Yo>

In the clip, I say to Deneen that I love to hear her stories and that I want her to share her knowledge, which she recognizes as Indigenous knowledge. She goes on to talk about the search for a definition of Indigenous knowledge and the political issues inherent in that process.

The video, I think, is essential to comprehending the flow of relationship within an educational space. The visual images help convey my meanings of a loving, life-affirming energy in “valuing the other” (DeLong, 2002). I use such meanings as standards of judgment in my own recognition of an educational relationship.

In 1996 when Bob Donmoyer was editor of *Educational Researcher* and wondering how he was to operate in the midst of the paradigm wars, there was a series of papers arguing one side or another.

First the practical problem: Today there is as much variation among qualitative researchers as there is between qualitative and quantitatively orientated scholars. Anyone doubting this claim need only compare Miles and Huberman's (1994) relatively traditional conception of validity. ‘The meanings emerging from the

data have to be tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their ‘confirmability’ – that is, their validity’ (p.11) with Lather’s discussion of ironic validity:

“Contrary to dominant validity practices where the rhetorical nature of scientific claims is masked with methodological assurances, a strategy of ironic validity proliferates forms, recognizing that they are rhetorical and without foundation, postepistemic, lacking in epistemological support. The text is resituated as a representation of its ‘failure to represent what it points toward but can never reach.... (Lather, 1994, p. 40-41)’.” (Donmoyer, 1996, p.21.)

Bob Donmoyer, Handel Wright, Patti Lather, and Cynthia Dillard revisited the paradigm wars in New Orleans AERA (Donmoyer, Dillard, Lather, 2000) in a session called “Paradigm Talk Revisited: How Else Might We Characterize The Proliferation of Research Perspect Within Our Field?” Amongst the four there was consensus that the prescription of the positivist approach and the quantitative paradigm were no longer the only means to acceptance but they still questioned the nature of 'other' that is not of the dominant paradigm. Patti was proposing “a thousand tiny paradigms and a decolonizing methodology” and Cynthia wondered “how we evaluate multiple truths”. Cynthia was “interested in thinking against yourself, in the shoe that does not quite fit and in research that is spiritually and intellectually moving”. Donmoyer felt that “knowledge is contaminated and inevitably political” (Donmoyer et al, 2000 in Delong, 2002).

In the midst of this were people like Eisner (1997) who encouraged alternative ways of representing data and research using the arts to more fully explain ways of knowing than the print alone could do. In Eisner’s three articles on alternative forms of representation (1997), he endorsed using a variety of forms.

If we wish as academics to be inclusionary (Rayner, 2004) and to gather in all of the knowledges in existence in the world, we need to open space for other ways of knowing:

From my Buddhist perspective I wish to mindfully share insights embedded in my lived understandings of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism and the embedded concepts of life flow. These processes include the evolution of my ontology and the creation of an inclusional pedagogy of the unique (Farren, 2005) with transitional certainty as a living epistemological standard of judgment. An energy flowing, living standard of inclusionality as a space creator for engaged listening and informed learning is offered as an original contribution to knowledge in my doctoral thesis (Adler-Collins, 2007).(Adler-Collins, 2008, p 17).

The usual forms of representation are incapable of showing the life-affirming energy that distinguishes what should count as educational knowledge, educational theory and educational research. The traditional forms of scholarly representation seem incapable of showing these flows of energy:

They are also masking or omitting the gazes of recognition between educators and students that distinguish a relationship as an educational relationship.

I am thinking of recognition in Fukuyama's terms:
Human beings seek recognition of their own worth, or of the people, things, or principles that they invest with worth. The desire for recognition, and the accompanying emotions of anger, shame and pride, are parts of the human personality critical to political life. According to Hegel, they are what drives the whole historical process. (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xvii)
(Whitehead, 2008b).

On the cover of Ben Okri's Birds of Heaven (1996) is the reminder:

We began before words
And we will end beyond them.

In the next section, I examine ways that Indigenous knowledge is being and might be represented in order to justly and accurately recognize different ways of knowing and positioning Indigenous knowledge and an Indigenous epistemology for accreditation.

Part Four: Representing Indigenous ways of knowing

Challenges surrounding representing and evaluation of new meanings out of artifacts, narratives and performance art confront many teachers around the world as we extend our understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing. Across the globe, aboriginal cultures have lost confidence in their way of life, in their way of knowing, in their spiritual grounding. Issues of social justice and domination by alien epistemologies have caused dysfunctional societies and loss of direction for Indigenous peoples (Smith, 1999; Antone, Miller & Myers, 1986; Battiste, 2000). "The whole process of colonization can be viewed as a stripping away of *mana* (our standing in our own eyes), and an undermining of *rangatiratanga* (our ability and right to determine our destinies)" (Smith, 1999, p. 173). It is perhaps a leap of faith to think that a small group in Brantford, Ontario, Canada, can create an open space of inclusionality (Rayner, 2004) to bring forth the Indigenous ways of knowing into the Academy in the development of an Indigenous epistemology. Nonetheless, we will try.

One part of this study is my own learning about aboriginal issues, history and context; another is embracing the challenge of accurately and fairly representing ways of knowing that may not be well served by current academic guidelines: "the struggle for the validity of Indigenous knowledges may no longer be over the recognition that Indigenous peoples have ways of viewing the world which are unique, but over proving the authenticity of, and control over, our own forms of knowledge" (Smith, 1999, p. 104). I have been reminded of my struggle with finding ways of representing my ways of knowing and the ways in which some of the feminist literature reframed my thinking in order to explain my life as a professional educator (DeLong, 2002). Catherine Bateson talks about "life as an improvisatory art, about the ways we combine familiar and unfamiliar components in

response to new situations, following an underlying grammar and an evolving aesthetic” (1990, p. 3).

The paradigm wars and battles over data representation have waged for many years (Eisner, 1997). To that battle is added Indigenous data representation in story-telling, performance and visual art and artifact:

Within an Indigenous framework, methodological debates are ones concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of Indigenous research. It is at this level that researchers have to clarify and justify their intentions. Methods become the means and procedures through which the central problems of the research are addressed. Indigenous methodologies are often an mix of existing methodological approaches and Indigenous practices (Smith, 1999, p. 143).

The Masters students and colleagues in my role as superintendent and as coach of action research communities tell me that my relational ontology as I “value the other” sends message of faith in their way of being (DeLong, 2002) and in their capacities to improve the world. “...an inspiring pooling-of-consciousness that seems to include and connect all within all in unifying dynamical communion... The concreteness of 'local object being'... allows us to understand the dynamics of the common living-space in which we are all ineluctably included participants” (Lumley, 2008, p.3). This seems to me to be an ontology similar to that of many First Nations peoples where relational ways of knowing seem to be at the heart of Indigenous ways. The relational dynamic in my way of relating communicates that I am totally present and intent on enjoying the other in a co-learning environment. I recognize that this is a claim that I am hoping can be validated from other voices (DeLong, 2002, pp.112, 230).

Inclusionality is an important epistemology in that it is based in a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries as connective, reflexive and co-creative (Rayner, 2004): “At the heart of inclusionality... is a simple shift in the way we frame reality, from absolutely fixed to relationally dynamic. This shift arises from perceiving space and boundaries as connective, reflective and co-creative, rather than severing, in their vital role of producing heterogeneous form and local identity”. As I read Rayner’s living logic of inclusionality with its living standards of judgment, I see it as a vehicle to bring reflective practitioners’ ways of knowing, non-aboriginal and especially aboriginal into the academy. I know that his writing resonated with Deneen Montour (Six Nations’ Student) when it was discussed in class: “Rayner’s (2008) way of relating to the natural world is very like our own.”(DeLong journal, May 10, 2008).

A recurrent theme in issues of representing the Indigenous way of knowing is the importance of recognizing the relationship between the story-teller and the listener. I found that my empathy was insufficient; I needed some direction “...because as Paula Gunn Allen (1989,1) of the Laguna, Pueblo, and Sioux nations write, ‘to hear our stories as we tell them, a non-Indian reader need to know where they come from, how we compose them, and something of their meaning for us.’” (Dion, 2009, p. 51) Through the dialogue with Deneen on January 22, 2009, I hear myself asking questions that help me

understand some of what Deneen is feeling and knowing (see videoclips earlier in this paper).

In a world that is less certain it is important to find new ways of describing and explaining what is known and how we know and to challenge accepted ways of knowing. By playing with these concepts, we open the space for Indigenous epistemologies because we are all “fallible knowers”:

In Relational “(e)pistemologies,” I seek to offer a feminist (e)pistemological theory that insists that knowers/subjects are fallible, that our criteria are corrigible (capable of being corrected), and that our standards are social constructed, and thus continually in need of critique and reconstruction. I offer a self-conscious and reflective (e)pistemological theory, one that attempts to be adjustable and adaptable as people gain further in understanding. This (e)pistemology must be inclusive and open to others, because of its assumption of fallible knowers. And this (e)pistemology must be capable of being corrected because of its assumption that our criteria and standards are of this world, ones we, as fallible knowers, socially construct. (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p.7).

If one accepts that we are fallible knowers (Thayer-Bacon, 2003), then there is an open space for methodological inventiveness:

If our aim is to create conditions that facilitate methodological inventiveness, we need to ensure as far as possible that our pedagogical approaches match the message that we seek to communicate. More important than adhering to any specific methodological approach, be it that of traditional social science or traditional action research may be the willingness and courage of practitioners – and those who support them – to create enquiry approaches that enable new, valid understandings to develop; understandings that empower practitioners to improve their work for the beneficiaries in their care. Practitioner research methodologies are with us to serve professional practices. So what genuinely matters are the purposes of practice which the research seeks to serve, and the integrity with which the practitioner researcher makes methodological choices about ways of achieving those purposes. No methodology is, or should be, cast in stone, if we accept that professional intention should be informing research processes, not pre-set ideas about methods or techniques (Dadds & Hart, 2001, p. 169).

Beyond the discussion of the use of video and still photography to represent, I am searching for data representation and its import in performance and visual art. The dialogue in Research Intelligence amongst Ferguson (2008), Whitehead (2008b), Laidlaw (2008) and Adler-Collins (2008) helps me to consider the challenges of alternative forms of representing Indigenous ways of knowing. Pip Bruce Ferguson (2008) says:

What was obvious to me through this exercise was the conversation that still occurs over ‘what counts as research’, with some people having difficulty with the notion of a carving as a piece of research. Many years ago I was privileged to be at an action research conference on the marae (Māori meeting house and

surrounding area) at Waiariki Polytechnic in Rotorua. A kaumatua (esteemed elder) came in to our group in the evening and spoke for two and a half hours about history and personalities, the tribal conflicts and colonization of the area, using only the carvings in the room as his 'notes'. That experience brought strikingly home to me how carvings can be research. The stories of his people – also their philosophies and spiritual beliefs – were all incorporated in the representations in wood that surround us. (p. 25).

I feel as she does and as she said to Jack Whitehead on the subject of Indigenous knowledge:

...I'm also pretty interested in the 'non-technological' forms of research presentation that Indigenous peoples use, and which, in my experience, tend to be undervalued because they're usually less accessible to the non-cognoscenti. In our case, research can be contained in carvings for instance, as I've discussed previously on this site, and did in the RI [Research Intelligence] paper. I need a skilled expert beside me to explain the research in a carving, but once it's explained, you can see how it is knowledge incorporated in wood. Perhaps we are working towards a 'holeyness' and permeability in what counts as research! (email Nov 25/08).

In that same publication, Research Intelligence, Neil Hooley (2008) shares the challenges and approaches that he has been using to address the needs of Indigenous students:

Narrative in the sense being used here for students is not merely a topic that is done on Wednesday afternoons for example, but is a personal and community life narrative that continues at school, in all subjects, every day. Narrative is the experience and description of living.

Arising from a participatory narrative curriculum is what we are calling 'exemplars of knowledge.' These are collections of artefacts compiled in a student portfolio and can include oral stories from Elders and other community members, newspaper articles, photographs, student artwork, written essays and assignments, computer work, songs, poems and the like. It is intended that such exemplars will be discussed and checked by community members for cultural accuracy and relevance and by so doing establish coherence and reliability across the school. Key features of exemplars can then be mapped onto the regular curriculum for the monitoring of progress. In this way, the regular curriculum and white knowledge is not being imposed on Indigenous children, but rather Indigenous knowledge is being respected as the starting point of learning. Of utmost significance for Indigenous peoples around the world is their relationship with the land (p. 67).

One of the crunch issues associated with alternative and aboriginal ways of representing is that of validating, assessing and ultimately evaluating Indigenous knowledge (Four Arrows, 2007; Jacobs, 2008):

I agree with Glenn's challenge for each of us to "boldly interpret where no one has interpreted before; to create not truth, but truthfulness, where none would otherwise exist; to be, for lack of a better word, an artist" (Fake Authenticity, para 7). I also generally (though not fully) concur with his idea that authenticity could be defined as something like "that mode of existence in which one becomes ironically and radically suspicious of all received forms and norms" (Ibid). But how do we translate this into research at the doctoral level? How do we express the concept that many of the traditional elders from the world's First Nations are now struggling to understand- that we are going to have to take care of the entire world spiritually. How can we do this unless we shake off our preconceptions, see through the hegemony and, like an artist/scientist/lover, experience the whole world in our quest for probabilities in our area of interest?
(http://www.academicleadership.org/emprical_research/Telling_Stories_and_Living_Art.shtml)

In response to my queries about assessing art as data representation, one of my validation group, Cheryl Black, a teacher of the arts as well as school principal, sent me the following email:

I do agree, that criteria for art as a vehicle for research, or as evidence of personal growth, is lacking and difficult to nail down. Is the piece to be 'judged' on normal artistic criteria, or is it to be 'judged' based in the values of the creator? If it is the latter, then would a preamble outlining the values of the creator be helpful, or would it guide the observer's interpretation and thereby make it difficult for an objective viewing? Or, if the artist wants a truly objective viewing to see if the values and/or growth are evident, then that's another issue?
(January 30, 2009)

When it comes to evaluation of post-graduate work, Lovitts (2005) found that there were many commonalities in expectations (she provides two tables of them) but that:

When we asked faculty members to characterize outstanding dissertations, they often said that such work defied explication, that there was no single feature or set of defining features: “You know it when you see it.” Even though outstanding dissertations are rare—they come along once or twice a decade, if that often, the focus group participants said—the faculty members liked talking about this quality level more than any other.

<http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2005/ND/Feat/lovi.htm>

It may be that the challenge of finding criteria by which visual forms can be judged will emerge from representing with story the evidence of the nature of the embodied knowledge of the practitioner researcher. Using the multi-media to capture the narrative may respect the aboriginal oral traditions.

And finally, I try to draw the pieces together from my growth in understanding of aboriginal issues, aboriginal ways of knowing, how to represent an Indigenous epistemology in a culture of inquiry in my conclusions, findings and next steps.

Endpiece: my conclusions from the study, findings concerning my learning, and next steps.

My conclusions from the study

This narrative of my own learning came about because my values of social justice push me to appropriate ways to support and recognize aboriginal ways of knowing, overcome colonization in developing inclusional open spaces and recognize an Indigenous epistemology that is open to challenge and critique. In this self study of my learning I have traveled through an analysis of my early education from textbooks and curriculum about ‘noble savages’ as if the Indigenous peoples were part of the past only and not here in the present. It has been such a jolt to think that I and my peer generation are part of white supremacy and racism.

I have attempted to deepen my understanding of aboriginal issues, context and challenges through reading, thought, dialogue and empathy. Like the elder, I have worked with others to see all six sides of the box (Hampton, 1995, 42 in Battiste, 2000, p. xvii) and as with the issues around bullying, it seems to me that a solely cognitive response to a serious societal issue may not bring about changes in behaviour. Walking in the other’s shoes and empathizing with the other’s experiences has helped me make sense of the reading and dialogue.

Then I looked directly at my education on the challenges of alternative ways of representing data and in particular Indigenous ways of knowing and epistemology. It seems that while we are making inroads into alternative ways of representing data in multi-media forms, many challenges still remain in representing Indigenous ways of knowing. An inclusional open space in a culture of inquiry may provide a catalyst for new creative forms of knowing that form evidence for claims to know. Like Gregory

Cajete (2000), “I am a facilitator of learning processes and a creator of contexts for learning” (p. 109) and I am open to The Lakota talk about “the abiding stone”:

Everything including the stone, can talk to you. Everything can teach you something. Everything is alive, related, and connected in the dynamic interactive, and reciprocal relationships of nature (p. 109).

My Findings

In our January 22, 2009 dialogue which we videotaped, when Deneen Montour discussed how she might bring more non-aboriginals to understand the historical and current issues that are affecting the school success of Six Nations students, she thought more teacher training was required. I agree with her but changing systems is difficult to effect and comes about as a result of changes in context which Gladwell (2000) identified as a key “tipping point: “The power of context says that what really matters is the little things” (p. 150). In my experience, large scale professional development sessions are only useful for raising levels of awareness, not for every day individual behavioural change. I said that I felt that senior leaders needed to be included in the early stages of training for there to be systemic change and she replied that a plan was underway to conduct a half day session with all school and system administrators. How might that session be translated in expectations of change at the school and system level? One of my findings is that change might occur if more non-aboriginals committed to a learning experience like my own to confront the misinformation of a Western education in a racist society.

When I wrote my report for the Ontario Trillium Foundation on Anti-Bullying programs (DeLong, 2007a) and presented my findings, I said that dealing with bullying is a matter of rethinking our assumptions. We take information from our environment that is consistent with our world view, are remarkably good at using self-serving biases, have a need to recognize that reality is socially constructed and need to rethink our stereotypes about bullies. With regard to aboriginal issues, Cajete (2000) says:

We must examine our habitual thought processes. We all are creatures of habit. Institutions and organizations get into habits of behaviour because the people who run them get into habits of thinking. We have to examine those habits because we have been through the Western educational system and have been conditioned to think in a certain way about education, life, ourselves, the environment, and Indigenous cultures (p. 189).

Like bullying, colonizing attitudes are about imbalance of power, repeated actions and intent to hurt; it’s about contempt. If we cannot empathize, we cannot walk in the others’ shoes. The same applies to rethinking our stereotypes about aboriginals. We cannot assume that everyone can empathize and we know that the time to teach values and positive behaviours is in the early years of life (McCain & Mustard, 1999; 2002; McCain, Mustard & Shanker, 2007). I would suggest that one of my findings is that we need a renewed emphasis on the teaching of empathy, especially in the young.

As a relative neophyte to university settings, it is naive on my part to think that I have 'new information'. It may be that I have fresh eyes on aboriginal ways of knowing because I want to be responsive to my students in the Reflective Practice course. In any case, my intentions are good. I want to see an improvement in the social order, in the lives of my students and in their capacity to improve the world.

When Moira Laidlaw, main editor of EJOLTS (<http://ejolts.net>) responded to my paper, she said:

One thing that living theorists seem to have in common is this demand for justice and fairness and equality. Finnegan (2000):

<http://www.actionresearch.net/fin.shtml> says: *it is love that enables justice to see rightly*. To me, what you're showing here is a capacity to love people. Just that. Not that wishy-washy sentimental emotion called love, but a series of difficult and sometimes painful actions in pursuit of fairness for the other. That's love. Scott Peck (1978)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M._Scott_Peck#The_Road_Less_Traveled writes extensively about exactly this: love not being an emotion, but a series of tough choices to do with helping the growth of one's own and others' spiritual development. I can see that meaning in your writing.

Next Steps

The (Pueblo) metaphor *pin peye obe*, which translated into English means "to look to the mountain," refers to striving to gain the highest perspective of a situation (Cajete, 2000, p. 181).

My education is an ongoing learning experience and in this arena of aboriginal issues and context, much is left to understand, much left to *gain the highest perspective*. I will continue to ask advice, to read, to think and to write about my learnings in Indigenous histories, experiences, ways of knowing, being and representing.

While I can see a significant role for the multi-media, many questions remain about how to assess visual and performance art.

The depth of my understanding will be tested during the Reflective Practice course for which I have tried to prepare. I will be journalling and writing my own reflective practice (Ghaye & Ghaye, 1998) during the period of the course. I will be asking the Masters' students in the Six Nations Cohort to help me with my learning journey. It may be that part two for this study can be shared at AERA in 2010.

In this paper I have intended to show the effect of inspiring practitioners to see the significance of their embodied knowledge by supporting their educational inquiries (Oihwi:yo Ehsrihwagwe:nih: It is certain you will accomplish it). In a culture of inquiry, practitioners research their practice, create their own living educational theories and

publish accounts of the educational influences of teachers and students in their own learning and in the learning of each other. This work contributes to the critical mass of s-step research within the theme of the AERA 2009 Conference on *Disciplined Inquiry: Education Research in the Circle of Knowledge*.

My hope is that my learning might “encourage others to ask questions of themselves as well” ((Milroy, 2008, p.1&7) and that more non-aboriginal people will endeavour to understand aboriginal contexts, issues and ways of knowing. I wish as well that First Nations’ peoples will share their Indigenous knowledge with their own voices, loud and clear.

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