INTEGRATING ABORIGINAL VALUES IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES:

By

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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

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Dedication

"Luctor et Emergo"

Abstract

Integrating Aboriginal Values in Adult Basic Education in the Northwest Territories

This phenomenological study examines how Aboriginal values conflict and coincide with Euro Canadian values in ABE programmes in the NWT. Nine Inuvialuit, Gwich'in and Slavey ABE students and three Aboriginal elders participated in the study.

The results of this study can be best generalized as the effects of colonization and the residential schools on Aboriginal people and the present education system.

The study is written from a student's perspective and identifies how conflicts are created in ABE programs by unmet needs of recognition for the participants' distinct identity. The study identifies Aboriginal values and how the exclusion of these values create contradictions in ABE programs. The participants offer recommendations for change in order to create a better balance between Euro Canadian and Aboriginal values in Adult Basic Education programs.

Acknowledgments

I owe many thanks to all the people that supported me throughout the writing of this project. First and foremost my son Sacha, who endured a mother in front of a computer for many months. And my good friend Barb, who always had time to listen and encouraged me all the way through.

I thank the participants of this project, who gave so freely of their time and shared with me what is dear to them. And my sincere appreciation goes to my sponsor the NWT Training Center Committee. Without their support I would not have made it to the finish line.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Origins of a Question

The idea for this research paper has been a subconscious part of me for a very long time. However, this is the first time I have created an opportunity to verbalize my thoughts and feelings and to subsequently shape and structure this core knowledge into a research project. I am glad the requirement of a final research project for the Peace and Conflict division of Royal Roads encouraged me to do so.

As a woman who immigrated to Canada from the Netherlands in the early seventies, I understand the feelings of fear, awkwardness, displacement and confusion in adapting to a new country and culture. When I moved to the small community of Inuvik in the Northwest Territories (NWT) four years after arriving in Canada, I was confronted for a second time with the struggles of not comprehending the values, beliefs and a way of life of the predominantly Aboriginal[1] community I was to become a part of.

As an outsider to the community, and especially Aboriginal cultures, I consider myself very fortunate to have met people like Terese and Pierre Benoit and Jimmy and Lucy Adams. They have helped shaped my life and I am forever grateful to them for this.

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[1] Throughout this paper, I will use the terms Aboriginal, First Nations and Native interchangeably. Aboriginal refers to Indian, Inuit and Metis people of Canada. (RCAP, 1996)

One summer in the late seventies, I had the notion of starting a fish camp in the Mackenzie Delta for a small group of young adults with special needs with whom I was working. An Aboriginal friend of mine and the sister of one of the people I worked with encouraged me to do so. She showed me the place where her mother had traditionally fished in the summer, approximately fifteen kilometers from Inuvik, up the East Branch of the Mackenzie River. My friend explained the proper protocol for gaining access. I needed to meet and ask permission from the registered trap line owner of that particular piece of land. In Macfarlane (1999), Kruger states, " Ritual is a fascinating element of culture that we may rarely consider, but which involves many aspects of our lives" (p.605). As rituals are often unspoken rules not easily understood by outsiders to a culture, I was thankful to my friend for the lesson.

I remember the day that she introduced me to Jimmy and Lucy Adams. They were the owners of the trap line on which the fish camp was to be located. With a twinkle in his eyes, Mr. Adams told me not to set any traps and gave permission to rebuild the fish camp and take the young adults out for the summer. They introduced me to Pierre Benoit who helped me to build the tent frames and gave advice on the equipment needed. As a total greenhorn, I had no idea what I was getting into. I had never before experienced such a vast, spiritual and imposing 'classroom'. Over a period of two summers, Pierre, his sister Terese and the Adams taught me to learn from the land and to love and respect it and showed me the beginnings of the bush skills I know today.

1.2 Northwest Territories Native Women's Association

Following a nation-wide trend of Aboriginal women organizing themselves, the NWT Native Women's Association was founded in 1977. The Association's main interests and activities initially revolved around traditional arts and crafts, foster care and home management concerns. In Mackenzie (1984), Allen states, " There is little recognition for the traditional values of the native culture and we want more control over the things that affect us" (p.16).

In the early eighties, the Association's membership identified a need for training programs to assist Aboriginal women in the NWT with the transition from traditional lifestyles to a wage economy. The Association founded a Training Center in Yellowknife and in Inuvik to develop and deliver these programs. I became the Executive Director of the Training Center in Inuvik and have remained with the Center ever since. In order to ensure more local control in Inuvik, accountability for the Inuvik Training Center shifted from the NWT Native Women's Association located in Yellowknife to the Inuvik Aboriginal Women's Group and later to the Training Center Committee.

The NWT Training Center has offered a variety of educational programs to Aboriginal adults. As the membership and students have provided input into the direction of the Center and its programming, the promotion and inclusion of cultural values and traditional activities have become important components in all courses offered through the Center. However, a lack of

core funding and compliance with the ever changing criteria and demands of Territorial and Federal funding bodies have been major challenges.

> I think we are caught between reacting to government funding requirements – for example this whole question of attendance and placement rates and stuff like that – and also the courses we offer are market driven in terms of what the government is prepared to fund and not necessarily what is useful to the native community. (Haig Brown, 1995, p. 239)

The content, admission criteria and the length of programs at the Center had to be compromised and adapted to the demands of funding bodies to qualify for funding. The guidelines were often too inflexible to adequately address the inclusion of Aboriginal values.

1.3 The Women and Men

Participants at the Center have been Aboriginal students, initially from twelve communities in the Inuvik Region. Later, the Center could accept Inuvik residents only due to changes in funding regulations. If students from other communities wished to access the programs, they had to do so on their own and without financial support to assist with a move to, and accommodation in, another community. Very few have been in a position to do so.

The students at the Center have been mostly women ranging in age from eighteen to sixty. In general, the students have had a low literacy rate and they have often been single parents

struggling to obtain adequate food and shelter for themselves and their children. Many of the women have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse throughout their lives.

1.4 The Place and the Program

In the early nineties, the Inuvik Aboriginal Women's Group obtained a building from the Territorial Government. The building had been used for cold storage for a number of years and needed major repairs. It was through the commitment and continued fundraising efforts by the students and staff of the Training Center that the building was renovated into a comfortable learning environment with a real sense of ownership, pride and belonging.

The courses at the Center evolved into a nine month literacy program including academic upgrading, computer skills, life skills, arts and crafts, work experience and cultural enhancement activities. The community named the program *Visions and Dreams.* In my role as life skills facilitator, I began to understand the magnitude of unresolved trauma experienced by many of the participants, the learning blocks resulting from trauma, the importance of providing healing opportunities, and the significance of including Aboriginal values throughout the programming.

1.5 Significance of the Question

In the late nineties, I participated in several planning meetings with the membership of the Inuvik Aboriginal Women's Group and the Training Center Committee to discuss the future of the Training Center and its programs. Insufficient funding for the *Visions and Dreams* literacy program was a key factor in these discussions. It became obvious that the direction the membership wanted the Center to take had a clear focus on cultural activities. Especially the older women involved with the Center, (as former students, board members or community members) felt strongly that Aboriginal values and beliefs were not integrated well in adult basic education (ABE) programs. According to McLean (1997), the focus had been more on Euro-Canadian values like individualism, academic achievement, attendance, competition, and academic progression in English, mathematics, science and social studies.

This research project will investigate which Aboriginal values and beliefs are important to the participants and how they can be integrated effectively into ABE programming. In addition, this paper will attempt to identify how Aboriginal values conflict and coincide with Euro-Canadian values in ABE programming.

1.6 Limitations

In the community of Inuvik, the Aboriginal populations are comprised of the Gwich'in, Metis and Slavey peoples, which for the purpose of this paper I will refer to as Dene and the Inuvialuit. Therefore, the selected group of Aboriginal people who have participated in the study are not to be considered representative of a specific group of Aboriginal people. "The term Aboriginal people is broad, embracing a variety of cultural traditions and social experiences. There are differences not only [among] First Nations, Inuit and Metis people, but also between First nations." (RCAP, 1996c, p.1)

The participants in this study were selected based on their extensive experience as students in Adult Basic Education Programs in Inuvik. The study will provide a venue for the participants to share their knowledge and provide their opinions relating to how their Aboriginal values are constrained within and conflict with ABE systems. Elders were asked to participate because of their life experiences and wisdom.

1.7 Overview of the Study

In chapter I, I describe the origins of the research questions by reflecting on my own experiences in the North as a member of the community, my involvement with the NWT Native Women's Association, and my involvement with the NWT Training Center and its students, funding restrictions and programs. I also comment on the significance of the research questions.

Chapter II contains a literature review covering seven main sections: colonialism, internalized oppression, the residential school era, trauma and learning, Aboriginal values and education, traditional knowledge and conflict theory.

Chapter III includes an introduction, a review of possible research methods, research methodology, a section on research design, the method of data collection and a summary.

Chapter IV contains the research data and an analysis of the findings.

Chapter V includes the conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

It is important to understand the implications of history and how this has influenced the lives of Aboriginal people and education today. The latest statistics on educational achievements compiled by the government of the Northwest Territories in 1999 show that in the NWT the percentage of Aboriginal people over the age of fifteen with less than a high school diploma is 55%. (NWT bureau of statistics, 1999). As Canadian culture places great value on education, the need for continuing culturally appropriate ABE[2] programming in the NWT is clear.

2.2 Colonialism

Often it is said by white people in the North that they cannot understand why history has to be dragged up over and over again. It certainly is true that much has been written on colonialism and the impact this has had on Aboriginal people, not only in Canada but also throughout the world. Nevertheless, it is also said that it is not possible to understand the

[2]ABE refers to all of the educational activities provided as a prerequisite to post –secondary training or employment. ABE can include literacy activities, general upgrading in all subject areas, lifeskills, career planning and work experience. (Auchterlonie, S., Little, L. & Stephen, B., 2000 p.2).

impacts of colonialism without knowledge of the past. An Australian Aboriginal view that has been asserted by Watson (1989) states, "Past is a white man's idea. We know that we cannot lose anything that has happened to us. What has happened to our people is our people" (p.12).

The following is an overview of colonization history and the impact on Aboriginal people and their education in the NWT. In the Royal Proclamation of 1763, Indian and Inuit land was considered virtually empty based on the assumption of European superiority embedded in legal doctrine of *'a terra nullius'* which literally translates as 'land belonging to nobody'. This implies that no sovereign society existed before the arrival of Europeans in what is now Canada. The land could then be settled by a 'superior civilization' without any other legal requirements, coinciding with the desire of British and colonial officials to obtain lands for settlement (Ogelby, 1993). The poem below reflects the ethnocentric mentality of a colonizing nation of that time.

> Blessed be the English and all that they profess.
> Cursed be the savages that prance in nakedness.
> Blessed be the English and everything they own
> Cursed be the Infidels that bow to wood and stone.
> (Kipling as cited by Adams, 1995, p. 25).

The Royal Proclamation laid the philosophical groundwork for the Indian Act passed in 1876, in which Indians were declared to be the responsibility of the federal government. The act, an oppressive document in itself, consolidated and revised all previous legislation dealing with Indians in all existing provinces and Territories (Frideres, 1988). It was amended several times over the years to accommodate the needs of the federal government. One of

these amendments made school attendance mandatory. For noncompliance, the federal government had the authority to fine or jail people and to withhold family allowance moneys (Haig-Brown 1988, Irlbacher 1996, RCAP 1996a).

Aboriginal people in the north were "discovered" and made subjects of the Crown with the implementation of the Indian Act. The Dene made it clear that they did not wish to have reserves to restrict their movements. The land commissioner made oral promises to guarantee full protection of lands, resources, education, medical care, protection of wildlife and hunting and trapping economies. Since the wording of the treaties did not reflect these promises, lands and resources were taken, treaties 8 and 11 were signed and the Dene people of the NWT were made dependents of the state. (RCAP 1996a).

The federal government, not wanting to make the same mistakes with the Inuit as they did with the Indian peoples, showed an unwillingness to accept responsibility for Inuit until after the Second World War. Then the government, with the help of the Hudson Bay Company, implemented relocation projects to assert Canadian sovereignty and gain workers for the fur trades' labor pool.

What were the implications of this world view for education and Aboriginal values in the NWT? The primary goal of the Canadian government was to assimilate Aboriginal people into the mainstream of Canadian society. What would be a better way to accomplish this

than through compulsory education from a colonialist perspective? As Perly (1993) states, "Colonial education suppresses, transforms or destroys the values of the colonized. Education was a way of assimilation. Therefore culture, traditions, values and beliefs had to be discouraged" (p. 122).

In his book Dreams and Visions: a history of education in the NWT, Macpherson (1991) asserts that the history of education and educational institutions in the NWT can be divided into eras. He discusses the mission era, the federal era and the territorial years. The mission era corresponds with the era of the Indian Act, when the Roman Catholic and the Anglican churches and the Grey nuns controlled educational institutions in the North. The earliest mission school on record was in Fort Providence in 1860, preceding other schools in Tulita, Hay River, Herschel Island, Fort Resolution, Smith and Simpson, Aklavik and Shingle Point. In an annual report for the Department of Indian Affairs 1906, Reverend March, the principal of the Hay River school reports,

> The pupils continue to make good progress in their English studies, and as I have pointed out in former reports, they are disposed to be more teachable and less difficult to manage than an equal number of white children when they are entirely removed from all intercourse with relatives. (March as cited by Macpherson p.29)

Typically, the children received instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, composition dictation, literature and religion for half of the day. The other half of the day was spent on manual labor. Some of the children did not see their parents for years at a time and lost their language, cultural values, traditional lifestyle skills and native spirituality.

The federal era began in 1947 with the Indian Affairs branch of Northern Affairs in Ottawa assuming responsibility for education in the NWT. All teachers became federal employees in 1949 and were called 'welfare teachers.' McLean (1997) reports that they were also called upon to provide the first informal adult basic education. The responsibility of managing student residential housing on behalf of Indian Affairs remained in the hands of the churches. The school curricula virtually stayed unchanged.

In response to the dismal state of education among Aboriginal people in Canada, the federal government relinquished the control of Aboriginal education in 1970. The document *Indian control over Indian education,* published by the Indian Brotherhood in 1972 also precipitated the end of residential schools and the long-standing federal policies of assimilation, segregation and acculturation.

The territorial era began in 1970, when the territorial government took on total control of education in the NWT and continues into the present.

The importance of including Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge in schools and curricula was recognized as far back as about thirty years ago, as is expressed by McPherson (1972) at a teachers orientation.

> The culture, customs, traditions, skills and way of life of the Indian and Eskimo[3] must be given their rightful place in the schools and in the course of study. There are many things non-professionals can

[3] As a general rule, the term Inuit replaces the term Eskimo. (RCAP 1996)

> teach better that you (teachers) can, and we must avail ourselves of all the resources of the community. (Mcpherson, N., as cited by Mcpherson, N.J., p. 278)

According to Perly (1993), the term internal colonialism has its roots in a framework seeking to explain the situation of colonized countries like Africa, Asia and Latin America. He identifies four basic components of internal colonialism and as shown in the history of colonization, these four components can be applied to education in the NWT.

1. Forced, involuntary entry of the colonized group into dominant society.
2. Suppression, transformation, or destruction of native values, orientations and ways of life by the colonizing power.
3. Manipulation and management of the colonized by agents of the colonizing group.
4. Domination, exploitation, and oppression justified by an ideology of racism, which defines the colonized group as inferior.

2.3 Internalized oppression

Watson (1989) reported,

> As Aboriginal people, we now find ourselves, for the first time, in a position to describe and define ourselves to the colonizing society. This new task is made difficult by persisting colonial relationships and perceptions. This is most evident in the education institutions, which, from our perspective, are alien colonial importations, and still largely agents of colonialism. (p.90).

From a historical perspective, the land claims of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in have been settled only recently. The Inuvialuit Final Agreement was signed in 1984 and the Gwich'in signed theirs in 1992. Beaufort Delta joint self-government negotiations for both Aboriginal groups in Inuvik have been in process for the last five years and an agreement in principle is in place. Upon implementation, the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in will have much more power and control over lands and resources, language and culture, justice, education, health and social and economic development.

In his timeless work "Pedagogy of the oppressed", Freire (1970) explained internalized oppression by saying, "The oppressed having internalized the image of the oppressors and adopted his guidelines" (p. 31). His views are reiterated by Adams (1995) when he states, " Many of the oppressed elites want to be like the colonizer, or even worse, they wish to be the colonizer. In some cases, this desperate desire leads Aboriginal people to become more passionate eurocentrics that the average white supremacist who takes his or her privileged position for granted" (pp. 33-34). The liberation of the education system from internal colonialism and oppression is an extremely difficult and challenging task for both the Aboriginal and territorial governments.

Similarly, Freire (1970) asserts, "The oppressed must not, in seeking to regain their humanity, become in turn oppressors, but rather restorers of the humanity of both. This then is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and the oppressors as well. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong

to free them both" (p.28).

In her book, Distant relations: how my ancestors colonized North America, Victoria Freeman takes a different stand: "My hope is that as Canadians, we will work to change our relationship with Native people, to de-colonize the colonizers as well as the colonized" (p. 457).

2.4 The impact of Residential Schools

Before starting my research, my understanding about the impacts of the residential schools came from primary information through my work experience and friendships with Aboriginal people during the past twenty-five years. The community of Inuvik did have two large residential schools, Stringer and Grolier Hall. built in the late fifties and torn down completely merely two years ago. To date I personally know three generations of people in my community that have gone to residential schools in the NWT from Hay River to Aklavik and in Inuvik. The effects of these schools have now been felt for over a century.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the purpose of residential schools was the assimilation and religious indoctrination of Aboriginal people through partnerships between the government of Canada and the churches. Acculturation is then as noted by Garett (1996), "a cultural change that occurs when two or more cultures are in persistent contact. For an individual person, this may mean a process of giving up ones traditional cultural values and

behaviors while taking on the values and behaviors of the dominant culture" (p.3).

According to Haig-Brown (1988), the implementation of residential schools was a form of intentional cultural genocide, with the elimination of Aboriginal language as one of its first objectives. This certainly is applicable to the Inuvik area as per the next two quotes.

> After a lifetime of beatings, going hungry, standing in a corridor on one leg, and walking in the snow with no shoes for speaking Inuvialuktun, and having a heavy stinging paste rubbed on my face, which they did to stop us from expressing our Eskimo custom of raising our eyebrows for 'yes' and wrinkling our noses for 'no', I soon lost the ability to speak my mother tongue. When a language dies, the world it was generated from is broken down too. (Lions as cited in RCAP, 1996 a, p.372).

> I will not speak or teach my children or grandchildren to speak Gwich'in as I was punished for translating for one of my younger brothers when he did not understand or speak the language (Jerome as cited by Chrisjohn & Young, 1997).

As the quote above intimates, many adults who attended residential schools did not teach their children to speak the language to avoid potential punishment and many Aboriginal people never had the opportunity to learn their language. To combat this, communities in the Inuvik region are working hard to in promote and preserve their Aboriginal languages.

The wounding experiences of residential schools and their impacts on emotional, physical, spiritual and mental health are well documented (Chrisjohn & Young 1997, Haig-Brown 1988, RCAP 1996). As expressed by one of the research participants, "The effects of

residential school are like a cancer. Sometimes it is in remission, sometimes people get better and sometimes people die." (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

There were other impacts of residential schools on traditional values and education. According to one of the research participants, who attended a residential school for eight years, the school tried to assimilate Aboriginal children into a Catholic and European value system and Aboriginal culture was devalued and forbidden. He was expected to forget about his own values, beliefs and Aboriginal identity. Family ties were severed by not being allowed to speak to his sisters and not going home for months at a time, competition and individualism enforced by being taught to get good grades and to be the best, spirituality denounced by having to go to church and native culture devalued by excluding first nations history in history lessons. Moreover, when it was included it was derogatory. "Sir John A MacDonald used to be my hero, until I found out later on in my life, that his troops were responsible for the slaughter of native people to retain possession of their homes and lands." (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

According to Batisse and Barman (1995), the outcome of residential schools for Aboriginal people were a gradual loss of worldview, languages and cultures, and the creation of widespread social and psychological upheaval in Aboriginal communities.

During my work experience in the ABE field, the impacts of previous traumatic school experiences, either directly or indirectly related to residential schools, were evident. Many of

the adult students were afraid of not being safe, afraid of being put down and feared failure.

2.5 Trauma and Learning

In addition to the traumatic effects of colonialism and the residential schools, I cannot ignore the traumatic impacts of violence experienced by a great number of the students with whom I worked over the years. The role this has on learning is significant. Horsman (1999) echoes that the numbers are staggering when she reports on statistics on violence experienced by women in literacy and ABE programs throughout Canada as being close to 100%.

According to Herman (1997), trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning.

Horsman (1999) states that literacy learners who experienced violence at home or in school during childhood, find these horrors brought back to them when they return to school at a later age. The task of learning how to read is linked with memories of the time when they first approached this task in childhood. "Learners who have experienced violence as adults, may have difficulties concentrating on learning." (p.19).

Perry, Pollard, Blakely, Baker, & Vigilante, (1995) note that children and adults use a variety of adaptive response patterns in the face of threat. These responses include hyper arousal

responses of fight or flight, and disassociation responses of freezing or surrendering. Aspects of these responses are internalized and in the case of children, organize the developing brain. For students with previous traumatic learning experiences, first entering ABE programs is a challenge: internalized learning responses cause these students to be in a constant state of hyper arousal.

It is thus crucial for adult educators to acknowledge and understand the impacts of traumatic events on students and their capabilities to learn. Without this understanding, many students will fail to learn and be revictimized by another failure. It is not my intention to suggest that adult educators must also provide a counseling role; in most cases, they are too busy with teaching. However, it is important that instructors understand the impacts of violence and trauma and provide pathways for students to access healing and counseling opportunities.

Horsman (1999) also discusses a holistic way to learn by recognizing and creating a balance between spiritual, emotional, mental and physical needs. Although not mentioned by her directly, she may have borrowed this pedagogical model from First Nations people, as this is one of the many teachings of the Medicine Wheel. She notes "Traditionally, much education, including literacy learning, invites only the 'severed head' to participate in the process. Exploring how possible it is to include all aspects of the person in all types of literacy programming enhances learning possibilities" (p.170).

2.6 Aboriginal Values and Education

The inclusion of Aboriginal culture, values, language and knowledge in educational programs has been discussed extensively in texts and journal articles. (Batiste and Barman 1995, Haig-Brown 1995, Makokis 2000, RCAP 1996.) The focus for the most part has been on primary, high school and post-secondary education for first nation students. I found far less literature on ABE. The approaches in the literature have included much research on the connections between the low retention rates of both high school and post-secondary students and culturally inappropriate curricula influenced by colonialism, residential schools and the lack of local Aboriginal control. Thus, the challenge will be to balance offering quality academic curricula and incorporating relevant cultural values.

There are differences not only among First Nations, Inuit and Metis people, but also among First Nations themselves. In the NWT, this certainly is true for the Dene and Inuvialuit, although there are similarities. According to Charter (1996), relevant cultural components that should be integrated into post-secondary settings include Aboriginal languages, respect for the land, respect for elders, customs, culture, politics and spirituality.

Haig-Brown (1995) notes that local Aboriginal control over adult education is less important than having educational programs at all levels take place within a context that reflect traditional values. Values most often mentioned in ethnographic research of the Native

Education Center in Vancouver include respect, "Respect is a lot of it, respect for the land, for elders, for community, for First Nations languages, and for spirituality..."(p. 199). Other values include sharing "the ability to share things, sort of like the potlatch system, the ability to distribute things..."(p. 199), heritage, patience, telling the truth, not judging others and the acknowledgment of more than one way of learning. "How nature teaches us. Like how we relate the natural to the spiritual, how we learn lessons from it ..." (p. 202).

According to the Inuuqatigiit draft curriculum (1995) covering kindergarten through grade twelve, Inuit values include respect, sharing, family ties, land, taking care of property, respect for all life, perseverance, living in harmony, elders, and language. The Dene Kede curriculum (1993) divides cultural values into four worlds including the spiritual world, the land, the people and the self and is written for kindergarten through grade six.

Kodiak Alutiit, Athabascan, Cup'ik, Inupiaq, and Tlingit elders have discussed native values within their respective elders councils and the importance of inclusion of these values in education systems and processes as outlined in the *Alaska Rural Systematic Initiative* Commonalities include Aboriginal languages, sharing, respect for elder's knowledge and wisdom, respect for the land, nature and animals, family and kinship, ancestors, sense of humor, spirituality and practice of native traditions, learning by doing, observing and listening, trust, ties to homeland, love for children, traditional arts and skills and taking care of others. (Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 2000)

Haig-Brown (1995) describes the contradictions between traditional values and Euro-Canadian values in Adult Education programs in depth, and states that funding bodies, employers and educators may understand little about native values. She also recognizes conflicts in worldviews between Aboriginal people and western educational institutions that have a sole focus on preparing students for participation in mainstream employment and education.

The Inuuqatigiit draft curriculum, the Dene Kede curriculum and the Alaska Native values for the curriculum speak and focus more on balance and harmony between Aboriginal values and Euro-Canadian values in education, rather than emphasizing conflicts and contradictions between the two.

Freire (1995) discusses the relationship between cultural identity, the subjects of education and educational practices and the cultural identity of the student and fundamental issues of the curriculum. He states that identity is much more than cultural identity alone, but the sum of what we inherit and what we acquire in our lives. This emphasizes the importance of reflecting on one's own identity as an educator, learner or educational administrator.

2.7 Traditional Knowledge

The Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment's (1996) traditional knowledge working group (1996) has defined traditional knowledge as follows:

> Knowledge that derives from, or is rooted in, the traditional way of life of Aboriginal people. ...It is the accumulated knowledge and understanding of the human place in relation to the universe. This encompasses spiritual relationships, relationships with the natural environment and the use of natural resources, relationships between people and is reflected in the language, social organizations, values, institutions and laws. (p.1)

The implementation of traditional knowledge is now a GNWT policy, and applies to all departments, agencies and employees of the Government of the Northwest Territories. As the College is the main delivery agent for ABE programs, I researched the implementation plan of the Traditional Knowledge Policy (TKP) for Aurora College (1996). The implementation plan makes a connection between traditional knowledge and Aboriginal identity when it states that traditional knowledge has shaped and defined the identity of First Nations individuals and communities through generations and lays a foundation for the future with cultural, social and spiritual values of the past.

According to A *Bridge to my Future, a report on adult basic education in the NWT* (ECE, 1997), a combination of factors are necessary to ensure students' success. They include quality programs, family stability and support, community support, daycare, financial support, counseling and information and assessment. Thirty-two strategies to provide these factors are identified. Only one strategy outlines the requirement of service providers to incorporate Aboriginal languages, traditional knowledge and culturally relevant material in ABE programs.

Making a case for literacy (Auchterlonie, Little, & Stephen, 2000) focuses on describing the state of literacy in the NWT; the legislation, policies and agreements supporting literacy; and the roles, responsibilities and resources available for literacy efforts. It does not address curriculum content. In *Towards literacy: a strategy framework* (GNWT, 2001), merely two of the thirty objectives in the report relate to the inclusion of traditional values and Aboriginal languages.

Watson (1989) notes that in Australia, value is now placed on Aboriginal standards of intellectual excellence and that universities recognize this. Classes concerned with Aboriginal knowledge and worldviews are now offered in educational institutions to provide a maturity of knowledge deeply rooted in the land and concerned for its well being. The expected outcome of offering Aboriginal knowledge includes contributions towards a healthy society and a healthy land.

2.8 Conflict Theorists

Azar (1990) observes that conflicts are generally perceived as such only when they are overt and violent. Students of conflict seldom regard covert or non violent conflicts as appropriate subjects of study. By providing an analytical framework to examine and understand conflict

situations that may or may not be violent, Azar introduces the concept of protracted social conflict. He postulates that several unique properties must be present.

> The focus of these conflicts is religious, cultural or ethnic communal identity, which in turn is dependent upon the satisfaction of basic needs such as those for security, communal recognition and distributive justice. More fundamentally, most contemporary conflicts are about developmental needs expressed in terms of cultural values, human rights and security. (p.2)

Protracted social conflicts are dynamic and do not have clear starting and termination points. Their origins and dynamics include communal content, human needs, the governance and state role and international linkages. Communities in the NWT certainly do share ethnic, religious, linguistic and other cultural identity characteristics. Azar postulates that the legacy of colonialism plays a significant role in conflict analysis of Aboriginal peoples.

The second factor in a protracted social conflict is the lack of fulfillment of human needs. Azar (1990) focuses on deprivation of human needs for security, access to social and political institutions and communal identity needs. These factors provide a useful analytical framework for examining contradictions between Aboriginal identity values and Euro-Canadian ABE systems.

In protracted social conflicts, the state's role is to add to the deprivation of the subordinate group's human need and to be monopolized by a dominant identity group. This role has been shown to have been represented by the federal government, the churches, the Indian agents, Indian and Northern Affairs and the Hudson Bay Company.

Dependency on international linkages and its economic impacts on the Aboriginal people in the NWT was imperative with the collapse of the fur trade, when fur became a less desirable commodity in other parts of the world. This left many people in the North without means to support themselves and their families and promoted a dependency on 'welfare systems'.

In Conflict Resolution: its languages and processes John Burton (1996) asserts, like Azar (1990), the importance of considering human needs of identity and recognition in conflict resolution processes. Identity provides the means for personal recognition and self-esteem. Personal identity leads to group identity for groups in which individuals share racial, ideological, national or other characteristics. He states that "at all social levels from the family to the international, there are problems in social relationships that involve emotional and deep seated needs in respect of which there can be no compromise" (p. 8). Conflicts that are based on unmet inherent human needs cannot be settled through known power politics, but need to be resolved through conflict resolution processes.

In Resolving identity based conflict in nations, organizations and communities, Rothman (1997) notes that the root causes of identity based protracted conflicts acknowledges group identity issues of the disputants. The stakes for people protecting their identity needs are high; they are struggling for basic physical and moral survival. "Identity based conflicts come from -and hits us- in our gut" (p.xii). He agrees with Burton and notes that it is out of

the question to look for a compromise or settlement in disputes where peoples' existential needs and values like safety, dignity, control over destiny and identity are at stake.

Some conflict theorists have attempted to develop universally valid conflict resolution techniques without considering the importance of culture. In Conflict resolution in intercultural settings: problems and prospects, Avruch, Black and Scimecca (1993) suggest that considerations of culture are often ignored or pushed to the background as culture focuses on the differences between people and groups. Nevertheless, it is not possible to develop techniques that are universally applicable because of cultural differences. Various cultural groups understand conflict in different ways and to comprehend this is essential in conflict resolution processes. This cultural knowledge is called ethno praxis and underlays the techniques and processes for resolving conflict that are used indigenously. (Sandole and van der Merwe 1993)

In The tapestry of culture: a design for the assessment of intercultural disputes, Kruger (1999) agrees with Avruch et all. (1993) in disapproving of using universally applicable prescriptive models for resolving conflicts. She suggests that it is essential to carefully examine the role culture plays in conflict and proposes an assessment design that includes elements of culture to understand a conflict. The big picture describes all possible factors that determine and affect a conflict. Included in the 'first zoom' are elements of culture like race, age, language, communication styles, expression of emotions, ritual, education, values and beliefs. These were factors I have had to take into consideration in working with the participants of my

research. As an informal face-to-face interview format has been appropriate with most participants, the elders made contributions in story form because they are more accustomed to this style of communication. Kruger's 'second zoom' depicts the application of selected elements of culture to an actual conflict. (Macfarlane, 1999)

In Preparing for peace: conflict transformation across cultures, Lederach (1996) delineates that it is necessary to examine the relationships between conflict resolution processes and culture in depth. He also argues that a dominant North American society in the conflict resolution field is inclined to market and sell pre-packaged conflict resolution training and questions the universal applicability of this training. For analytical purposes, he offers an ilicitive approach to transform conflicts based on building from the cultural resources within a specific setting.

With regard to identity based protracted social conflicts, John Burton is generally recognized as the pioneer in utilizing problem-solving workshops as a method of conflict resolution. He makes a clear distinction between interest-based disputes and a conflict over basic needs and argues that dispute settlement is quite different from conflict resolution. (Burton as cited in Fisher 1997). In his book Interactive conflict resolution Fisher (1997) suggests it to be "essential that innovative, creative means of analysis and resolution be developed and integrated in a complementary way with existing methods of conflict management", building on Burton's notion of problem-solving workshops. He identifies interactive conflict resolution methods as a developing field in which "effective and constructive face-to-face

interaction among representatives of the parties themselves are required" (p.7) to understand and resolve deep-rooted conflicts.

In Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies, Lederach (1997) offers a framework to examine the process and leadership involved in peace building. He identifies three levels of leadership including top leadership, middle range leadership and grass root leadership and states that the three levels of leadership have different constituencies. Offering a pyramid graph visually suggests a top-down approach. This model can be applied to peace building and reconciliation within education in the NWT with leadership of Federal and Territorial governments at the top of the pyramid, Aboriginal and Territorial regional leadership in the middle range and grass-root educational non-government and government organizations, institutions, consumers and boards at the bottom.

The history of Aboriginal people and all of its outcomes can be compared with a post-conflict era and in his article *Beyond violence, building sustainable peace*, Lederach (1995) offers a time frame for peace building including action, preparation, design and outcome. The time span in reaching sustainable outcomes for structural and social change is a minimum of twenty years. He also states, that these four phases are not static, but dynamic and overlap. During the last twenty years, positive strides have been made by Aboriginal organizations and territorial governments to address identity needs in education and curricula and some positive outcomes at primary and high school levels have been noted in some schools in the NWT.

The four phases (Lederach 1995), do not follow a linear timeline, but overlap and recur as new conflicts and crises emerge. After the Royal Commission on Aboriginal people's report Gathering Strength was published in 1994, the federal government's response to the physical, emotional and sexual abuse inflicted on residential school survivors and their families was to provide Aboriginal people with three hundred and fifty million dollars to support community-based healing initiatives. Today, residential school survivors in Inuvik and the region are still awaiting the resolution of outstanding court cases and progressing on painful personal healing journeys.

Paulo Freire (1970) suggests that we promote both systemic and personal change to encourage social change. He specifically uses literacy as a method of accomplishing both systemic and social change. Jean Paul Lederach (1996) includes the pursuit of personal and systemic change as one example of transformative peacemaking.

Portrayed in a nested paradigm of conflict foci, Lederach (1995) suggests four distinct areas of post-conflict peace building including socio-political, socio-economic, socio-psychological and spiritual dimensions. The socio-psychological dimension is focused on transformation and reconciliation, including trauma, grief, loss, identity, and self-esteem, and is the most applicable to my research project. The spiritual dimension focuses on healing and forgiveness and involves a willingness to acknowledge the truth and pain of injustice.

Lederach (1995) postulates:

> The challenge posed by reconciliation is to open up social space that permits and encourages individuals and societies as a collective, to acknowledge the past, mourn the losses, validate the pain experienced, confess the wrongs, and reach toward the next steps of restoring broken relationship. This is not to forgive and forget. This is not remember, justify and repeat. True reconciliation is to remember and change. (p.18)

2.9 Literature Summary

It is important to understand the history of colonialism and residential schools and their impacts on Aboriginal people and education in the NWT. Internalized oppression and trauma have left their marks on educational institutions, curricula and the students accessing educational services. Yet Aboriginal people are entitled to education that balances Aboriginal values and knowledge with mainstream values and knowledge in culturally appropriate institutions that incorporate the holistic teachings of the four directions of the medicine wheel.

In examining conflict theories, hypotheses that examine conflict from a basic needs, identity, and cultural point of view, offer appropriate approaches for analysis of this research project. Conflict resolution, reconciliation and peace-building methods that include face-to-face dialogue and opportunities for healing and dealing with trauma, grief, loss and identity seem fitting to apply in this research project.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Like many others, I struggled with finding a credible and appropriate way to conduct my research. I considered the advantages and disadvantages of qualitative versus quantitative research. Historically, (Singleton and Straits, 1999) delineate that quantitative research is considered more accurate and reliable because the results can be measured and expressed in numbers. This project is a social research project and it is of less importance, that the methodology follows an inquiry that is measurable in numbers or allows for duplication. The use of a questionnaire as a quantitative tool is not useful or appropriate as it excludes cultural sensitivity and respect for the participants. Quantitative research methods typically do not empower participants, nor consider them as the experts.

As Biklen & Bogden (1998) state, qualitative research provides more 'soft' data, "rich in description of people, place and conversation" (p.2). My intent is to find a method of analyzing my results that is fitting for my objectives and research questions and fair to the participants. As a non-Aboriginal researcher, I want to be very careful not to speak on behalf of a people and culture that is not my own but, rather, to allow the participants to speak. It is important to ensure that the voices of the participants in my research to ring through clearly, and that I validate and honor their experiences and advice in a respectful manner. Therefore, I have opted for a qualitative research paradigm.

3.2 Qualitative Research Approaches

First, I considered using an ethnographic research approach. According to Hammersly and Atkinson (1997), "ethnographic work has frequently been employed in the investigation of essentially oral cultures" (p.155). Data consists of accounts that insiders provide through interviews and observation. Interviews are applicable, but my intent is neither to observe participants in a specific setting nor to study a specific place or setting. Therefore, I abandoned the ethnographic research approach.

I considered doing a cultural study because the term suggests the inclusion of culture and ethnicity. As Gall, Borg & Gall (1996) note, "educational researchers who work within the cultural studies tradition analyze the power relationships that are often ignored or taken for granted by most educators, but are central to the operation of educational institutions" (p.619). In considering the theoretical underpinnings of my research, it was not my intent to utilize power theory as part of my conflict analysis, so I discarded the cultural study approach.

I also considered action research as a methodology. Although my methodology can be perceived as a modified action research approach, Stringer (1999) notes, "one of the outcomes of action research includes some sort of practical outcome related to the lives and work of the participants" (p. xviii). The participants and the researcher have no guarantee from any stakeholders in education that the recommendations provided in the final document

will be implemented within ABE programs, so a pure action research approach is not appropriate. As well, action research customarily uses focus groups. In Inuvik, it is difficult to gather groups of people together at the same time and an individual approach is more practical and cultural appropriate. As literacy levels were a consideration, face-to-face interviews provide a better and safe environment to clarify English comprehension and other possible misunderstandings.

Stringer (1999) identifies four working principles of community-based action research. First, this method includes relationships that promote equality, harmony, sensitivity and acceptance of others. Second, it includes effective communication processes based on understanding, truth, sincerity and appropriateness. Third, it involves participation. Fourth, it stipulates the inclusion of all participants. These principles fit well with my own beliefs and values related to working with others. As the process of conducting my research is just as important as the finished product, I chose to adopt these working principles.

Then I thought of using a case study approach. Case study research is used extensively in educational research. A case study approach typically involves fieldwork in which the researcher interacts with study participants in their own natural settings. Although I do interact with all study participants at a community level in my everyday life, it was not my plan to interact with them in their educational setting for the purposes of this research project.

I then learned about and reflected on a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology uses many of the same principles as a case study approach. It involves the study of investigating reality as it appears to individuals, which was the intent of my research. To gain an understanding of the reality of the inclusion of Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge in ABE programming, who can better provide information than the students themselves? Therefore, I ultimately decided to use phenomenological research. Gall et al. (1997) define phenomenology as follows:

> Phenomenology is the study of the world as it appears to individuals when they place themselves in a state of consciousness that reflects an effort to be free of everyday biases and beliefs. In doing a phenomenological study, the researcher is intimately connected with the phenomena being studied and comes to know himself within his experiencing of the phenomena. (p. 600)

The advantages of using phenomenological research as an approach for this project are its usefulness in studying an educational phenomenon. The interviewing processes are wide-ranging and capable of collecting many aspects of the experiences of the participants that may prove to be useful for subsequent studies. The relatively straightforward procedures of phenomenological research (Gall et al.1997) were appealing to me. There are four steps used in planning a phenomenological investigation.

1. To identify a topic of personal and social significance.
2. To select appropriate participants.
3. To interview each participant.
4. To analyze the interview data.

The first is identifying a topic of personal and social significance. My work experience for the past two decades has been in the field of adult education with First Nations adult students and for First Nation employers. Promoting social change through the inclusion of Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge in ABE programs has been an endless struggle and a topic as close to my heart as it is to my sponsor's, the NWT Training Center Committee.

My research is sponsored by the NWT Training Center and according to Archibald and Urion (1995) it is imperative that research in First Nation education includes the stakeholders in the design and implementation phases. Upon completion of the research project, it must be the stakeholders that ultimately benefit from the research experience. This also means that the institutions themselves must be involved in the research, which in this case is the NWT Training Center.

The Training center committee was extremely helpful in assisting me in formulating the research questions, assisting in the design of the interviewing format, evaluating and editing my prospectus and providing me with general advice and emotional support when I faced difficulties.

The second planning procedure (Gall et al.1997), involves selecting appropriate participants. An essential criterion in selecting participants is that they share the researcher's interest in studying Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge in ABE programs. Both students and

elders have shared this interest.

I reviewed my options in choosing a sampling method suitable to the information I wanted to seek, and have chosen criterion sampling. (Gall et al.1997) This sampling strategy for my project includes choosing Aboriginal participants that meet several criteria. First, they must be either former or present students of ABE programs. Second, their educational experience must include ABE programming at both the NWT Training Center and Aurora Campus to allow for a broader base of experience. Third, the length of time spent in a program had to be a minimum of one year. Fourth, their experience had to be from within the past five years. In addition to these criteria, elders were chosen because of their life experiences and wisdom, as well as established relationships of trust with the researcher.

A researcher would normally have greater difficulty finding participants and gaining their trust than I did. As a member of this community, I have established relationships with many community members. In my working life in ABE, I have worked with over two hundred adult students from Inuvik region. Students still residing in Inuvik that matched the sampling criteria were invited to participate in person or by telephone. Time and date for the interviews were mutually agreed upon and took place in the afternoon or evening. They were held in my home, their home, places of employment, restaurants and at the Training Center. I conducted twelve such 'informal' interviews with nine students and three elders that took from half an hour to three hours each.

Participants were interviewed to "obtain a comprehensive description of their experience of the phenomenon being studied". (Gall et al.1997 p. 602). The interviewing format was a semi-structured face-to-face interview (Appendix A-1.) that involved asking a series of questions. To obtain additional information, open-ended probing questions were also used. Most of the participants gave me permission to use an audiotape recorder as a back-up to my note keeping.

A semi-structured interviewing format was a culturally inappropriate format to use with elders. Therefore, I opted to ask them to tell me stories about their school and learning experiences in traditional and non-traditional settings. As Aboriginal culture includes storytelling, I wished to remain respectful of traditional teaching methods and use some stories to report the findings of this study. By doing so, I attempted to close a gap between the way research findings are usually reported and the audience the study was done with and for.

During a practicum experience a year ago, I felt uncomfortable making notes during interviews with Elders. This time I requested and received permission to use the tape recorder, freeing me to pay closer attention to the participant. The Elders who participated

were offered gifts of aqpiks[4], cranberry bread and blueberries to show respect and appreciation for their time and wisdom.

With a few casual participants, informal conversational interviews were used. Field notes were typed immediately after.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

When participants were invited in person, they were fully informed of the project's objectives and process. Immediately before the interview started, letters of consent were presented, clarified and signed in which protection of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were ensured. (Appendix B-1)

Protection from emotional harm was an especially important issue. Some of the participants are survivors of the residential school system and the potential of trauma (re) surfacing as education issues are discussed was a concern. For additional support I obtained a commitment from the Family Counseling Center in Inuvik to provide counseling services to participants should the need arise.

As a researcher, I need to be reflective and aware of my own values, beliefs and cultural

[4] Inuvialuktun word for yellow berry or cloud berry

background when gathering data. I therefore invited each participant to review my typed notes to ensure accuracy and accountability.

3.4 Summary

In chapter III, I have outlined my reasons for choosing a qualitative research design and a phenomenological approach. Participant selection, interview formats and ethical considerations are also integrated into this section.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

All of the interviews were transcribed, printed out and taped to walls in my working space. Major themes were initially coded by highlighting them with a multitude of colored markers. Then, I re-organized the data by cutting and pasting the information under the initial themes, reprinted, and re-taped the data. I color-coded sub-themes in the same manner when the data appeared more than two times

When contemplating in which way I wanted to present the data in my paper, I chose to start with a composite description of the students and elders. Individual vignettes would have been more detailed, but the anonymity of participants in a small community had to be protected and the requirements for a sound academic research paper had to be met. The use of composites allowed me to portray a picture and present the voices of the actual participants of this research project.

4.2 Composite of Student Participants

Participants proudly described their social identity as Inuvialuit, Gwich'in or Slavey. In their late-thirties, they are parents of several children. Formal education was not completed for a

variety of reasons including reluctance to leave their families and communities to go to a residential school, wishing to pursue a traditional lifestyle on the land, responsibilities at home for other siblings, teenage pregnancy and conflicts with teachers in the school system.

Students in ABE programs at both the NWT Training Center and Aurora Campus for three years, they describe ABE as "getting higher grades in your English, math, science and social studies and to get a high school diploma". Some also speak about training in life skills, computer skills, work experience and on-the-land skills offered at the NWT Training Center. Although it is difficult to compare adult basic education levels with high school levels, their average academic level of education today is a level 130, which is equivalent to grade 8.

Participants applied for ABE programs to upgrade their academic levels in order to get a good job and provide for their families, to prepare themselves for further educational opportunities, and to be a role model for their children.

4.3 Composite of the Elders

The elders are Inuvialuit or Gwich'in. Their 'formal' education commenced at a young age in residential schools in the NWT, where they spent an average of six years. Due to space limitations they had to make room for other students. In general they felt that they did not

really learn a lot and speak with regret about lost opportunities to receive more education. "I used to pray and wanted to be a school teacher so bad. But my higher power had a different road for me in mind". Upon completion of the residential school program, they returned to their communities or spent some additional years working in the kitchen of the schools and in hospitals. All married, had a family and resumed living a traditional lifestyle for part of their lives.

4.4 Aboriginal Values

Every day of our lives we make choices that involve and reflect our values. As Adult Basic Education programs are largely products of a colonial worldview, Aboriginal students often experience significant differences between their values and the Euro Canadian values imbedded in the western education system.

In exploring the concept of values, Boulding suggests two types of values and describes 'outer core' values as universal values that most people share without attributes such as race, ethnicity and gender. He depicts 'inner core' values as: "unique epistemologies shaped by experiences of *who* we are, how we identify ourselves in the social universe, and how others have responded to us in that universe." (Boulding as cited by Warfield, 1983, p. 187). When participants in my research interviews were asked to talk about Aboriginal values that were important to them, some found this difficult to express. As Haig-Brown (1995) reports, "It is

you...you are just not used to putting it into words. But in my heart I know what they are" (p. 199). In my search of trying to find a written definition of Aboriginal values by an Aboriginal author, I could not find one. Participants describe Aboriginal values as components of a holistic worldview relating to all things. Perhaps that is why I could not locate one definition of Aboriginal values from a 'Western' descriptive framework.

In order to determine how Aboriginal values are included in ABE programs, these Aboriginal values must be identified first. Participants talk about placing value on beliefs, ways of knowing, people and things they love, activities, behaviors and skills. In analyzing what they shared with me during the interviews, I extracted the following underlying values:

4.4.1 Respect

Aboriginal people consider respect as a guiding principle of life. Crucial for the survival of a people, participants talked about respect for the land, respect for elders, respect for ancestors, respect for languages, respect for themselves, others and all living things. They articulated wanting to rear their children according to these principles. One participant described teachings from her father about respect as follows:

> Your parents teach you how to live with others. My dad told me how to go among other people, what to watch for, do not offend anybody. Do not say anything wrong to anybody. Be kind and nice to them...everything my dad taught me had value in my life. As a little girl, I had three dogs. My dad told me if I did not kneel down, give them a hug, and hold them around the neck, they would not be lively when they see you. Even animals you have to treat well, because they

> might save your life some day. (Anonymous research participant, 2001)

4.4.2 Wisdom

Within Aboriginal culture, elders have a unique and honored status in the social organization of a people. The elders are the keepers of the collective knowledge of thousands of years and their wisdom is grounded in a lifetime of experience and their understanding of culture, values, language and ceremonies. Their vast knowledge is taught to younger generations through storytelling, teachings and giving advice. The transmission of knowledge by the elders is not through written text, but passed on orally. Stories are passed on from generation to generation.

> My father told me many old stories at night about the crow, the fox and the bear. This was in the time when people and animals still talked with each other. I would be wrapped in my blanket just listening to him. Stories are handed down for generations. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

It is customary for Aboriginal people to seek advice from their elders. "I always feel good when an older person advises and directs me". Respect for elders manifests itself in many 'rules' of behavior. " Listening...do not talk back...when you eat, you never go behind an elder and they eat first...you do things for them...you obey them".

4.4.3 Harmony

Survival depended on harmony within the group and fulfilled basic needs for food, safety and belonging. Aboriginal societies are collective societies, in which group needs always prevail

over individual needs. Conflict is thus believed to threaten the well being of everyone, so decisions are made collectively through consensus and cooperation in order to sustain harmony.

Rituals like feasts and drum dances reinforce harmony and celebrate occasions such as the end of the trapping season and Christmas where everyone would meet and come together in a community. On a smaller scale, participants articulate the importance of spending time with their families and doing things together.

4.4.4 Distinct Identity

Knowledge and competence in traditional skills are reflections of the cultural identity of Aboriginal people in the Beaufort Delta and Sahtu. Living on 'the land' or in 'the bush' implies possessing traditional knowledge and skills Aboriginal people need to survive under conditions that are sometimes harsh. One participant expresses the fulfillment of basic needs and self esteem when she states: "To be able to go out in the bush and stay out there for a couple of weeks gives me so much pride. I can go out there and live, be independent and survive. There is water, food and everything else I need" (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

Other participants have spoken about hunting, trapping, fishing sewing, tanning hides, skinning, preparing meat and other food, making drums and traditional medicine. Teaching and learning of traditional skills takes place out on the land. Children learn by watching parents and grandparents. Communal survival has depended on mastering these skills according to high standards. As one participant told me:

> When I learned how to set traps, I watched for a long time. Still I caught my thumb one time. I thought I could do it any old way. I learned from my mistake though.... not to pull the pan up from the inside. You have to pull from underneath the spring. If the trap snaps then it does not catch you. But I stepped on the spring, opened it and pulled the pan up to set the little trigger and I was not supposed to do it like that. It shook a little and my thumb was caught in the trap. After my thumb was caught that day, I understood that I had to set a trap properly. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

People were responsible for looking after all their needs to survive and this included health matters as one elder tells the following story:

> We did use traditional medicine a long time ago. When I was young and stayed in the mission school, the sisters made us go out to pick spruce gum. They would boil what we picked and use the juice for cough medicine. I always wondered why it tasted so bitter. At the edge of the lake we had to pick the roots of dewberries. We ate the berries but had to wash and scrub the roots well. The roots were then boiled and the liquid was used to cure diarrhea. The sisters knew all that from the local old time people. The *niches*[5] we used for sore eyes. They were crushed, covered in gauze and put on the patients' eyes. Later, when more doctors came, they did not use traditional medicine anymore. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

Participants spoke about the connections between the rich history of their ancestors, family

names and their meanings, and strong family ties. One participant states: "My ancestors and grandparents are important to me. I never met them, but my parents told me about them through stories, so I can tell my kids".

Aboriginal identity is imbedded in Aboriginal culture, which is reflected in Aboriginal languages. I speak several languages myself and understand how different cultures are imbedded in language and express who we are and what is important to us. The participants that are fluent in their own language express pride and a strong sense of "knowing who I am and where I belong". Those who do not speak or understand their Aboriginal language talk about feelings of loss and sorrow.

4.4.5 Interdependence

Aboriginal people live in harmony with the land, the animals, fish and birds, the weather and seasons. There is a time and place for all activities and people value patience. The land sustains all life and people show their respect for what the land provides by not wasting anything and giving thanks. Connections to the land include a unique relationship with the land and are expressed through a strong sense of place.

> My land is in Aklavik and on the Peel and that is where my connections to the land are. I went back there with my son and grandson and it was so emotional. It is a very powerful feeling. That is my home. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

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[5]Gwich'in word for rosehips.

4.4.6 Spirituality

Spirituality permeates all aspects of life and participants spoke about the importance of prayer: "We pray for a safe journey, health, food, caribou and fish. Elders pray in my language and the young people pray in English". Prayer is also used to give thanks: "We feed the fire and pay the land".

Participants spoke about places that have significant spiritual value, where people gather for spiritual guidance and prayer. In addition, they talked about respect, "We have land where the elders always tell us not to play around and we are not to touch anything that the elders have left on the land, or move it". Participants talked about practicing both traditional spiritual beliefs and Christianity.

> Even before the missionaries came, my grandmother said they always prayed. They did not know about God, but knew there was something that helped them.... She prayed in her own way to the moon and the sun and the stars. Today we believe in God, too. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

4.4.7 Sharing

Participants often mentioned that they valued sharing what you have with others and state "...when someone gets caribou or fish, they will share it with others". Aboriginal culture is a communal culture and this includes a responsibility for the welfare of others. Years ago, when I still worked in small communities in the Inuvik region, I was frequently given meat or

fish. Other less tangible items such as information and knowledge must also be shared as it is not owned by one individual, but belongs to everyone.

Aboriginal values as identified by the participants are depicted in the first column of Table 1. The second column of Table 1 provides an overview of contradictions of Aboriginal values in ABE programs. These contradictions are discussed in the following section, and are presented here to highlight some of the most significant ways in which Aboriginal values have not been acknowledged or incorporated into current ABE programs.

Table 1: Contradictions of Aboriginal Values in ABE Programs

Aboriginal Values	Contradictions of Aboriginal Values in ABE programs
Respect	⇒ Lack of Funding for ABE students ⇒ ABE instructors without respect and commitment to students and culture
Wisdom	⇒ Exclusion of elders ⇒ No Aboriginal ABE instructors
Harmony	⇒ Lack of life skills and healing workshops ⇒ Individualistic approach ⇒ Strict attendance rules
Distinct identity	⇒ Lack of inclusion of local history ⇒ English language instruction ⇒ Exclusion of traditional skills and knowledge
Interdependence	⇒ Lack of alternative learning environments and teaching styles
Spirituality	⇒ Spirituality excluded in ABE classes
Sharing	⇒ Omission of sharing knowledge

4.5 Contradictions

Without exception all participants assert the importance of a Euro-Canadian education in today's world. The student's rationale for returning to school and their expectations of ABE programming, as stated in the student composite, implicitly acknowledges a changing culture

and value system. I asked the participants to describe conflict situations between traditional values and those presented in ABE programs, and most of the participants replied that there were none. They define conflicts as conflicts only when they are overt and violent, as Azar (1990) states is generally the case. Their understanding of the word conflict contradicts directly with Aboriginal values such as harmony, balance and cooperation.

Participants speak of contradictions when they talk about the inclusion of Aboriginal values in ABE programs and so I use the word 'contradictions' rather than 'conflicts' to reflect congruency with the perceptions of research participants, who understand 'conflict' as too forceful and violent. I evaluated what the participants shared and will present in which ways ABE programs are congruent or contradictory with Aboriginal values.

4.5.1 Contradictions regarding respect

Participants describe the rejection of funding requests for ABE students. Other Aboriginal adult students in post-secondary programs at colleges and universities receive funding through Student Financial Assistance (SFA). Eligible ABE students are sponsored through "Income Support", which they call 'welfare'. Participants speak of financial hardships.

> Sometimes I see my children go hungry because I have no food... I have to work part time to survive and to make ends meet and as a single parent that is very difficult. We do not get any funding. People on income support are hard done by. If I should drop out of

> ABE, they punish me by cutting off my income support and even my rent is cut (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

Personal motivation and perseverance are necessary qualities for ABE students. "Our parents struggled with old things and we struggle with new things". The department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) requires that income support clients make a *Productive Choice* in order to receive assistance. One of those choices includes participation in an ABE program. Forced participation by the *Productive Choices* program of ECE conflicts with the value of non-interference and causes a backlash against education with some income support clients.

A relationship with instructors is a crucial component for all participants. They express a disapproval of instructors with a lack of commitment to the North and an unwillingness or lack of interest to respect and learn about the cultures and local peoples and reiterate the importance of choosing 'good' instructors.

4.5.2 Contradictions regarding wisdom

Elders do not take part in the ABE educational systems and their input and advice is not included. Elders, as carriers of knowledge traditionally are the teachers of Aboriginal people. In a Euro-Canadian worldview, they are not recognized as qualified, because they do not hold academic degrees. This view does not take into account the importance accorded to wisdom,

and but instead disregards the respect, honor and recognition Aboriginal people hold for their elders. Elders transmit traditional knowledge through oral traditions. Participants of the study also noted the exclusion of storytelling in ABE classes.

Almost all students in ABE programs are of Aboriginal descent and participants note the apparent absence of Aboriginal ABE instructors to teach them.

4.5.3 Contradictions regarding harmony

Participants state that inner conflicts prevent inner harmony and peace and threaten personal well-being and the well being of a class as a whole. Life skills and healing opportunities to work through some of their issues are not made available to students in ABE programs. Participants state that these workshops are most crucial when they first return to school as adult students. Many expressed feelings of fear, lack of confidence and low self-esteem and as a result of inner conflict their ability to learn is impaired.

> All I knew was how to be a wife and mother, to do housecleaning and look after my kids. I felt like I did not know a thing and I was so scared and uptight and felt like crying. I did not want to get out of the truck. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

Lack of confidence and self worth as Aboriginal people related to intergenerational impacts as well as personal experiences in residential schools: "When my mom went to residential school she was so mad at white people, and I was not even born then, but I was mad along with her" (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001) and:

> I learned in residential school that white people were better and native people could not do anything. I do have a block because I am a native person and I was told that native people are not smart. It was hard for me and may be still a little bit hard today. Once they tell you that, it is hard to get that out of your head. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

Opportunities to deal with past abuse, trauma and emotions in group settings are noteworthy. The lack of these opportunities are linked with an inability to learn academically. One participant described the lack of healing or counseling opportunities in ABE programs:

> It is very hard to learn things when you have things bottled up inside of you. In your mind that is really all you think about. You are not consciously aware that all the past abuse is really bothering you, but deep down it is. You cannot learn a thing that way. I used to be so scared (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

Adult students are independent learners and work on individual programs in their course work. Education programs supporting individualism and competition challenge outer harmony. Participants described feeling alone, exacerbated by a lack of connection to other students. They stated that ABE programs are too oriented towards individual learning, and would prefer a stronger sense of community. "I enjoy doing things together like having meals. And I do not even know the people in my class or the people in other programs across the hallway. I am on my own" (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

Educational institutions providing ABE programs have attendance policies in place, which stipulate an attendance of 90 % for each course. Some participants perceive the attendance

rules as inflexible, insensitive to the lack of available, affordable and dependable childcare and unsympathetic towards allowing a balance between schoolwork and tending trap lines.

4.5.4 Contradictions regarding distinct identity

When taking subjects like language arts and social studies in ABE programs, students question the lack of inclusion of local history and knowledge. While they value exposure to other cultures in the world, they feel course work must be grounded in the history and culture of Aboriginal people in the Mackenzie Delta.

> I did not learn anything about the Inuvialuit and when you live in the North, it is important to learn about our own culture... all students are Aboriginal people from here and they do not include any local history or any of the aboriginal values in the curriculum (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

English is the language used for all instruction in ABE programs. Many participants do not speak their Aboriginal language and express a yearning to learn. They attribute the loss of their native tongues to their own or their parents' experiences in the residential school system: "My language is lost and I do not speak my language. My mom lost her language when she went to residential school. She was not allowed to speak her own language" (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

Participants who do speak their native language assert the right for recognition and value of aboriginal language skills in ABE classes. "I want to be allowed to believe in myself as an Aboriginal woman with my second language" (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001).

According to the research participants, traditional skills and knowledge are not included in ABE programs and emphasis is placed on academic skills:

> It seemed that I was going to learn like a white person. My reading, writing, math and vocabulary. It was a different world and these are the things I need to learn to get a good job. There were no native values or teachings included. I left my native skills and everything behind...just the book stuff seemed important.

Some participants have never had the opportunity to learn traditional skills as children: "There was no one to teach me". They express a need to learn as adults.

4.5.5 Contradictions regarding interdependence

ABE instruction occurs in small classrooms and the curriculum does not recognize the importance of including activities congruent with the seasons. "To get out of the classroom and learn and do things outside is important. Out on the land, you are in tune with the land and you tend to ask more questions of the instructors with hands-on learning." (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001) For some participants who are used to living on the land, "wide-open and big space" is crucial, as is learning in context.

4.5.6 Contradictions regarding spirituality

Participants do not agree on the inclusion of spirituality in ABE classes. Some consider spirituality as a private matter and suggest it not be included. Others speak with regret about the omission of prayer from the education system and want it included. Regardless of their opinion whether spirituality ought to be included, the fact is that it is not. This means that ABE programs are missing reference to an essential Aboriginal cultural value.

4.5.7 Contradictions regarding sharing

Participants identify a lack of opportunities to share traditional knowledge and skills with other students and ABE instructors. "We can all learn from each other and I want to share what I know and what others know and teach and learn when I can...there should be the opportunity for teachers to be students and students to be teachers." (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001) Contrary to the sharing of knowledge, the education system adopts an approach, where the instructor is the expert and the value of students' knowledge is not recognized.

4.6 Congruency with Aboriginal Values

Having discussed differences between Aboriginal values and ways in which ABE programs are delivered, I would now like to discuss ways in which ABE programs are congruent with

Aboriginal values. In keeping with the importance they place on the value of respect, participants spoke fondly about their relationships with most ABE instructors and feel respected and valued as instructors are patient and always make time for them. Students appreciate the opportunities to learn academic subjects and to acquire computer skills. Other Aboriginal students in their class make them feel comfortable. Participants express their appreciation of starting at their own level and working at their own pace.

4.7 Recommendations for Achieving Balance

In my research, I only intended to identify the causes of conflicts in ABE, but not to look for solutions. Rothman (1997) notes the importance of defining the problems in identity-based conflicts in depth to later find better solutions. However, the participants in the study have provided suggestions and solutions to balance the contradictions they observe between Aboriginal values and Euro-Canadian values in ABE programs, and I would like to present some of them here.

As Lederach (1997) suggests the inclusion of grass-root leadership in approaches to attain sustainable reconciliation, I consider my sponsor and the participants of the study as grass-root stakeholders. Therefore, I am including their insights and suggestions under the theme of 'Recommendations for achieving balance'.

Table 2: Achieving Balance

Biculturalism
Opportunities to learn traditional skills
Inclusion of local history
Inclusion of workshops
Inclusion of Aboriginal languages
Elders as resource people
Instructors as students and students as instructors
Aboriginal instructors and resource people
Cultural awareness for ABE instructors

4.7.1 Biculturalism

All participants in the research project accept the value of a Euro-Canadian education in today's world. They also indicate that Aboriginal values and culture are not stagnant, but change with the times. Garett (1996) notes that a process of acculturation happens when two or more cultures are in continual contact with each other. He identifies four basic levels of acculturation: traditional, marginal, bicultural and assimilated. As one of the participants (2001) notes, "I cannot follow the steps of my parents in the same way. I want to go my way and I want to live in both cultures. There are more opportunities nowadays and I want my kids to have more choices." This quote affirms Garrett's explanation of acculturation, which states that a person is bicultural, when he/she simultaneously is able to accept and practice both mainstream and traditional values.

However, it is just as important to include Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge in ABE programs as it is to include Euro-Canadian subjects like language, math, science and social studies.

> If I have to learn English and math like the Europeans, I also have to learn to go out in the bush and set a net, to go ice fishing, set snares, and learn my traditional way of life on the land. This should also be part of the curriculum. We need a balance of both. (Anonymous Research Participant, 2001)

4.7.2 Opportunities to learn traditional skills

Include traditional knowledge and skills in the curriculum. Many ABE students did not have the opportunity to learn their traditional skills and acknowledge that these skills should have been taught at home. They suggest the inclusion of fishing, hunting, picnics, sewing, crafts, skinning, preparing food, traditional medicine and drum making. Traditional skills must for the most part not be taught in classrooms, but in context out on the land and during the different seasons.

The elders assert that it is crucial for everyone to possess traditional skills, as there may come a time that the people will have to depend on the land for survival again. Student participants state that including traditional skills will give them an opportunity to learn what belongs to them, to make them feel happy and proud, and to undo some of the damage of residential schools.

Traditional skills and knowledge must take their rightful place in ABE programs. This means not only recognition for students who possess these skills, but also the inclusion of such courses in the curriculum. This coincides with the findings of Watson (1989) when she discusses Aboriginal standards of excellence and traditional knowledge included in university programs in Australia.

4.7.3 Inclusion of local history

Include local aboriginal history in language arts and social studies classes. When they were younger, many of the participants did not have the opportunity to learn about these topics, and so it is important that they learn about local heritage and the skills needed to survive in harsh conditions. Marker (2000) suggests that "without showing respect for the local history, language and traditions of the place where they are studying, Native students can internalize a generic image of what it means to be an aboriginal person and increase sense of alienation and marginalization" (p.42).

4.7.4 Workshops

The elders state that it is the responsibility of the education system to include life skills and healing workshops. Especially when 'older' students return to ABE, participants suggest that ABE programs must include workshops that allow students to work in a circle and learn from each other. Adult educators and resource people must deliver workshops that deal with grieving and emotions, residential school issues, self-esteem, parenting, identity issues and communication skills as part of ABE classes.

4.7.5 Aboriginal languages

Include Aboriginal languages in the curriculum as participants identified that they want to learn to speak and understand their own language. Languages are fundamental in the expression of the Aboriginal cultures. Young students now have Aboriginal languages included in their curriculum and adult students want to see the same in ABE programs.

4.7.6 Elders as resource people

Invite elders in the classroom to spend time with students, tell stories, teach traditional skills, and teach students about their ancestors and the history of the Aboriginal people in the Delta.

4.7.7 Instructors as students and students as instructors

Utilize adult students who have traditional skills to teach ABE instructors and students. This practice is empowering for students because it recognizes their unique heritage, affirms Aboriginal identity, allows the sharing of knowledge, provides instructors and other students with learning opportunities and acknowledges less of an 'expert' approach.

4.7.8 Aboriginal ABE instructors and resource people

Educate and support local people as ABE instructors. Almost all students in ABE programs are Aboriginal people. The inclusion of Aboriginal instructors and resource people would encourage and strengthen a strong Aboriginal identity and pride. Local Aboriginal resource

people are perceived as positive role models, and students would benefit from their instruction and leadership in ABE programs.

4.7.9 Cultural awareness for ABE instructors

Because most instructors are non-Aboriginal it is important for educators to learn about, and hold a high respect for the culture of the students they are teaching. This means more than a one-day workshop on cultural awareness. Instructors must be motivated to teach, prepared to become involved with the community, include local Aboriginal culture and values in ABE programs and spend time visiting with elders.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

5.1 Introduction

When I began my research, I wanted to find out which Aboriginal values are important to people in my community. In addition, I wanted to investigate how Aboriginal values conflict with Euro-Canadian values in ABE programs. The study's participants understand biculturalism and recognize the importance of combining their traditional knowledge and skills with a Euro-Canadian education. They have described Aboriginal values, identified the contradictions in ABE programs and offered suggestions for attaining a better balance between Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal values and approaches in education.

5.2 Conclusions

Azar (1990) describes the colonial legacy as an important factor in the analysis of a protracted social conflict. In spite of assimilation efforts by colonial Canadian governments through oppressive measures like the Indian Act and the establishment of residential schools, Aboriginal peoples have shown resistance and resilience against these attempts at cultural genocide. Aboriginal values have remained prevalent and strong.

These Aboriginal values are the Aboriginal people's 'inner core' values: values linked to ethnicity which describe how we identify ourselves in the social universe and how others respond to us (Boulding in Warfield, 1993). Participants described themselves as Aboriginal peoples and then further defined themselves as Inuvialuit, Gwich'in or Slavey, indicating membership in a specific and unique group of aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal values (Table A-1) are directly connected to their social identity. To use Tajfel (1982)'s description of social identity, this "will be understood as that part of the individuals' self-concept which derives from their knowledge of their membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p. 2). Participants clearly stated the Aboriginal values that are important and identify them as First Nations people.

Participants stated that Aboriginal values are not included effectively in ABE programs and their needs regarding identity and recognition as Aboriginal people are not met. Burton (1996) notes the importance of considering human needs of identity and recognition as vital components in conflict-resolution processes. This applies to education as participants of this study identify Aboriginal values as expressions of 'who they are' as First Nations peoples. The exclusion of these values leads to a lack of acknowledgement and respect for the identity of Aboriginal people in Adult Basic Education systems.

The GNWT has made some effort to include Aboriginal values in the objectives of various educational reports. According to the research participants of this project, traditional knowledge and Aboriginal values are not integral parts in ABE programs, but 'add ons' lacking in substance, at best. The exclusion of Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge contradicts the objectives and policies pertaining to Aboriginal values and traditional knowledge stated in government reports. (Northwest Territories Education, Culture and Employment 1997, 2000, 2001).

With the emphasis placed on Euro-Canadian values of academic progression and preparation for employment or further education, ABE programs can be perceived as products of a colonial education system. Few attempts are made to include aboriginal values, methods of teaching, place of instruction and the inclusion of elders, Aboriginal ABE instructors and local resource people in the curriculum content and delivery. To arrest duplication of colonial education systems it is vital that all stakeholders involved in education learn more about neo-colonialism and internalized oppression so that this approach can help shape future educational initiatives.

Freire (1995) discusses the relationship of cultural identity, curricula choices and educational practices with the cultural identity of the student. The lack of inclusion of local history, opportunities on the land, Aboriginal languages and traditional skills and knowledge in ABE curricula are examples of not understanding this relationship.

Freire (1995) also states that identity is much more than cultural identity alone, but the sum of what we inherit and what we acquire in our lives. The identity of ABE participants includes the impacts and traumatic effects of colonialism, residential schools and violence. Participants indicated the importance of providing life skills, healing and counseling opportunities, and educational institutions and ABE instructors must recognize this and facilitate the inclusion of such components. Lederach (1996) identifies such actions as the pursuit of both systemic and personal conflict transformation.

Although I questioned whether I should include the data participants provided on funding issues for ABE students, I decided to include it because the participants view the government system currently in place as one that perpetuates a lack of respect and instills feelings of inferiority. Therefore, this system has become a source of internalized oppression (Adams, 1995; Freire, 1970) at odds with Aboriginal values concerning respect, even though the system has been designed to help people. The participants suggest funding for ABE students through Student Financial Assistance and not through income support.

The phenomological approach used in this study makes it difficult to generalize the findings to other situations (Gall et al.1997). Although no other study in the NWT has examined the inclusion of Aboriginal values in ABE programs through the eyes of students and elders from a conflict perspective, the patterns in this study collaborate the findings of other qualitative studies in other places in Canada. (Archibald & Urion, 1995; Batiste and Barman, 1995; Charter, 1996; Haig-Brown, 1995). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the results of this

study are applicable to other ABE and post-secondary educational institutions in the NWT.

5.3 Recommendations for Further Research.

This whole research process has been an incredible personal journey and I have learned and grown so much more than I ever imagined. The research data provides an overview of a very complex issue. It also raises more questions for me personally than were initially proposed.

I approached the study from the perspective of ABE students and elders in the community of Inuvik. This is a relatively small sample size and represents the perspectives of two groups of the Aboriginal community. To implement a balance between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian values in education, we must strive for change on two levels: personal and systemic. As Lederach (1997) suggests, further research must include top leadership, middle range leadership and grass root leadership.

The Aboriginal people who participated in this study are members of three Aboriginal groups of people. It was not my intent to focus on the differences between the three groups, but on commonalities when identifying aboriginal values. To prevent a pan-Indian approach, further research should identify aboriginal values and beliefs unique to each of the Gwich'in, Inuvialuit and Slavey peoples.

Internalized oppression and neo-colonialism manifests itself not only in educational institutions, but also in other GNWT departments and Aboriginal organizations. A coordinated and in-depth study of these phenomena within these departments and organizations would be helpful.

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Appendix A-1: Questions

1. For how long were you enrolled in an ABE program and where?
2. Where else have you gone to school?
3. If you had to invent a definition of ABE, what might that be?
4. What does being a native person mean to you?
5. When people talk about native values, what kinds of things do they talk about?
6. What native values are most important to you?
7. What kinds of things are important to you in ABE programs to reflect your identity and values as a native person?
8. How do the ABE programs reflect and include native values and traditional knowledge?
9. How are native values not reflected in ABE programs?
10. Can you think of ways of how your identity and values as a native person can be better included and valued in ABE programs?
11. What kinds of things made it comfortable or easy for you to attend ABE?
12. What kinds of things made it uncomfortable or difficult for you to attend ABE?
13. What kinds of things created conflict for you in ABE programs?
14. How old are you?
15. Are there any other suggestions or comments you would like to offer?

Appendix B-1: Consent Form

Marja van Nieuwenhuyzen, Masters candidate Royal Roads University
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Supervisor: Sylvia McMechan

Integrating Aboriginal values in Adult Basic Education in the Northwest Territories

Dear.....

As you now know, I am conducting a research study for my masters degree. I want to invite you to participate in this project. The research itself involves one-on-one interviews between myself and Training Center and Aurora Campus ABE Students. Your participation will take no more that two hours and probably less. Your name will not be used and identifying details will not be included or will be disguised. You have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time. I will ask your permission to use a tape recorder to help me to remember all the things you share. After the committee approves my thesis, the tapes will be destroyed. You have the right to ask me not to use a taperecorder if you so choose.

I would like to explore which Native values are important to you. How are these values included in, or excluded from, ABE programs at both the Training Center and the College? Do you see ways how ABE Programs can improve by providing a better balance between Native and non-Native values?

You may find that some of my questions may be sensitive to you. Again, you can stop the interview at any time. Should you wish, debriefing support is available after the interview.

The results of the research will be a part of my thesis project. A copy of the project will be shared with you. In addition, a copy will also be kept at the University Library. I would like to have a feast with all the participants when my project is done.

****

I agree to participate in the interview under the conditions outlined above:

Name: Date:

Appendix C-1: Research Questions

1. Which Aboriginal values are important to the participants of this research project and how can they be integrated effectively in ABE programs?
2. How do Aboriginal values conflict and coincide with Euro Canadian values in ABE programs?