

Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway Thompson Community Circle



Research Conducted through the Vital Outcome Indicators for
Community Engagement Project

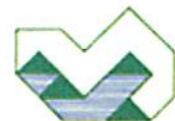
ninikopiwi pisim (November) 2015

“To see the beauty in another culture, see the beauty in your own first.”

Elder Ron Cook

This report is part of the VOICE Research Project – A Community-University Research Alliance Project.

The VOICE Research Project is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by Vale. Brandon University and the University College of the North are institutional partners for the VOICE Research Project. The School District of Mystery Lake also made significant in-kind contributions to this project.



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway:

Thompson Community Circle



Gathering at the Medicine Wheel

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The authors and the Thompson Community Circle acknowledge that this research was done on Treaty 5 territory within the community of Thompson, which is located in the traditional lands of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation.

The authors of this report also acknowledge the contributions of the Thompson Community Circle and in particular, Charlene Lafreniere, Thompson Community Circle Chairperson.

Special thanks to Christiane Ramsey, Brandon University, for her editing skills in the production of this final report.

Acronyms

ACDE	Accord on Indigenous Education
CBE	Land-Based Education
CBPAR	Community Based Participatory Action Research
CBPR	Community Based Participatory Research
CP	Cultural Proficiency
CRE	Culturally Responsive Education
CURA	Community-University Research Alliance
MASS	Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
MTS	Manitoba Teachers' Society
MWF	Mini Winter Fest
OCAP	Ownership, Control, Access, Possession
PBIS	Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports
RDPC	R. D. Parker Collegiate
SDML	School District of Mystery Lake
SSHRC	Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
TAEAC	Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee
TCC	Thompson Community Circle
TTFM	Tell Them From Me
TUAS	Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy
UCN	University College of the North
VOICE	Vital Outcome Indicators of Community Engagement

Foreword

Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway: Thompson Community Circle is an excellent illustration of the value of conducting and disseminating community-based participant research. The antecedents for this project are historical and, as such, run deep in the history of Northern Manitoba. In respecting and valuing the history of the region, project participants illustrate and demonstrate the essence of all of us being connected and being able to learn from each other. This project's focus on educational research and transformative change is successful because everyone is a learner—students, educators, parents, and community members. Everyone's culture is embraced as an asset on which to build successful learning experiences and, thereby, successful communities. This report will stand the test of time in how seemingly disparate communities and agencies can work together in continuous and on-going learning relationships that benefit all involved.

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Executive Summary

In 2012, Thompson became involved in a SSHRC-CURA community-based participatory research project with Brandon University and University College of the North. Through this collaboration, the Thompson Community Circle, made up of representatives from various stakeholder groups and members of the community at large, identified Cultural Proficiency as a Success Pathway because of its importance to youth in and around Thompson. Cultural Proficiency may be understood to be a means of educating people to enhance their beliefs, values and assumptions about other groups of people, which enable them to be more helpful and supportive of people in a cross-cultural context. The purpose of the Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway was to build capacity to teach in culturally proficient ways, develop and implement workshops on Cultural Proficiency in the school District and community, engage students in land-based education, and support knowledge mobilization of research findings.

The Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee, a School District of Mystery Lake advisory group promoting Aboriginal education and representative of the community, assumed the responsibilities of the Thompson Community Circle. In order to be consistent with First Nations' self-determination, the research practices of the Thompson Community Circle, and others affiliated with this SSHRC-CURA project, have been consistent with the principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP). Because of its connection to First Nation communities and the large Aboriginal population in the city of Thompson, the School District of Mystery Lake had been working to provide culturally responsive learning in their schools to foster greater success for their learners. In 2011, the School District of Mystery Lake formally started on their journey toward Cultural Proficiency. The purpose of this research report is to share research findings about the School District of Mystery Lake's work on Cultural Proficiency, as well as to communicate the culturally proficient programmatic changes at the University College of the North in their Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program. The authors also provide conclusions about this journey, as well as recommendations for going forward. Throughout the document, in blue text, are excerpts the Thompson Community Circle wanted to emphasize as significant concepts emblazoned in the report.

Background

The School District of Mystery Lake, located in Thompson, Manitoba is involved in a Social Science and Humanities Research Council-Community University Research Alliance (SSHRC-CURA) community-based participatory research project with Brandon University and the University College of the North called the Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE). The Thompson Community Circle (TCC) is made up of representatives from local stakeholder groups and community members and identified Cultural Proficiency as a Success Pathway. Cultural Proficiency was identified because of its importance to youth and community members in and around Thompson, due to the population demographics of the area.

Thompson has a high population of Aboriginal families as well as a recent influx of immigrant families. In an earlier step towards Cultural Proficiency, before this project began, the city signed a Thompson Aboriginal Accord which opened the way for a new depth of understanding between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members. The Thompson Aboriginal Accord (2013) “is a ground-breaking document that recognizes the role of Aboriginal people and affirms [a] commitment to strengthening relationships with Aboriginal governments and people.” It

is a living document that establishes the ongoing responsibility of signatories and partners to publicly report their successes and commitments to the goals in the accord. Because of their connection to First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities, and the large Aboriginal population in the city of Thompson, the School District of Mystery Lake had been working to provide culturally responsive learning in their schools to foster greater success for their learners (Appendix C). In 2011, the School District of Mystery Lake formally started on their journey toward Cultural Proficiency. The purpose of this research report is to share research findings about the School District of Mystery Lake’s work on Cultural Proficiency, and to explain how that work has been impacted

“...The Thompson Aboriginal Accord has been drafted to provide the overall framework upon which the City will build agreements and action plans in partnership with Aboriginal government and peoples.”

Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy, 2009, p.1

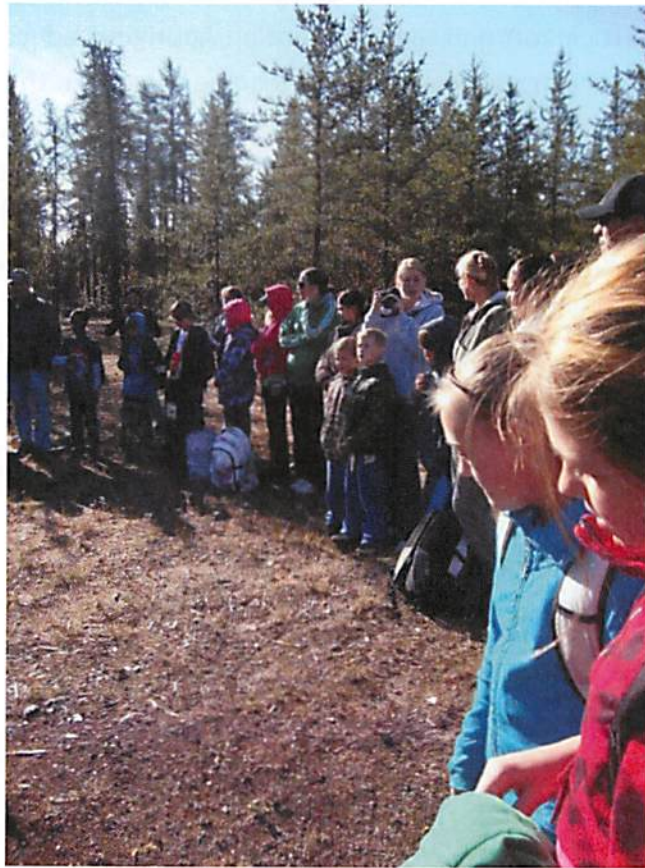
by the work done at UCN through the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program.

The Research Overview section begins by very briefly situating the research, providing the research context by explaining the research project, and a summary of Cultural Proficiency. Then, information about why it is important for the community of Thompson to engage in Cultural Proficiency work and research is given. Next, and most comprehensively, connections between Thompson, University College of the North, and the School District of Mystery Lake are made, while also providing information about how each of these institutions was involved in Cultural Proficiency prior to the VOICE research project. This is followed by a brief review of the Research Methodology for this Community-Based Participatory Action Research project (CBPAR). Cultural Proficiency guides educators, researchers, and community members regarding the creation and implementation of relationally proficient educational practices. Based on the reflections of the lived experiences of the participants and the literature on Aboriginal education, Cultural Proficiency is developing a meaning specific to the Northern Manitoba context. The Research Results section provides information about the various research pieces that have been collected to date. The Research Summary section includes an analysis of these findings and provides future direction for Cultural Proficiency in the School District of Mystery Lake and community.

Research Overview

Situating the Research

In 2011, the School District of Mystery Lake embarked on a journey to create a more culturally proficient learning environment. The purpose of this research report is to capture some of this good work so that it can serve as a positive example of how to increase engagement and academic achievement of students through addressing systemic issues in Northern Canada. In order to provide the context for this work, the authors will first provide information about where this research was conducted. Then, they provide the rationale on why they engaged in Cultural Proficiency work within Thompson, the School District of Mystery Lake, and within the University College of the North, especially the Kenanow Faculty of Education program.



Grade 5 Students Welcomed at Mile 20

School District of Mystery Lake

The School District of Mystery Lake has seven schools and an enrollment of approximately 3,000 students. The school District is located in Thompson, but significant numbers of students transfer into its schools from the surrounding communities. The mission of the District is to “maximize each student’s learning potential and to produce lifelong learners with a sense of self-worth and social responsibility by providing, in co-operation with the community, a diversity of educational experiences in a learning environment that recognizes the uniqueness of the individual” (School District of Mystery Lake website, n.d.). Each school in the District has its own mission statement that is aligned with the perspective articulated in the District’s website.

Schools in the School District of Mystery Lake offer a range of curricular and extra-curricular learning opportunities in order to fulfill its mission: “Success for All” (School District of Mystery Lake, 2015).

Voice Research Project

In 2011, *Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE)*, a community-university research alliance project, was funded by the social sciences and humanities research Council of Canada. This research project brought community partners, organizations, and university researchers together for the purpose of helping children and youth from first Nations, Métis, and Inuit in Northern Manitoba to achieve educational and career success. See appendix A for more detailed information.

What is Cultural Proficiency?

Cultural Proficiency is an equity-based approach to changing institutions and those who work within them, so that they are more supportive of diversity (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p. 20)¹. Cultural Proficiency is the approach adopted by the School District of Mystery Lake to make the schools and community more inclusive. It should be noted that the concept of Cultural Proficiency has been extended to include multiple intersections of difference that exist in society, including race, cultural expression, gender, sexual preference, able-bodiedness, and any other way that people are advantaged or disadvantaged by the beliefs, values, and assumptions in society about their group affiliation (Lindsey, Diaz, Nuri Robbins, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2013).

Cultural Proficiency is a personal journey in that it is about learning to value our role in making things better for all of our citizens (Terrell & Lindsey, 2009). Cultural Proficiency is also about institutional change that “acknowledges and incorporates—at all levels—the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally-unique needs” (Cross et al, 1989, p. 28). This means becoming aware of our own thoughts and reactions towards those who are different, and working to change ourselves. Giving people the skills to think differently, if done in a nonjudgmental way, can lead to a changed mindset that is more supportive of diverse perspectives and different cultures. This inside-out approach, where people focus on their own personal growth, which then fosters institutional change, is the cornerstone of Cultural Proficiency (Lindsey, Roberts, & Campbelljones, 2005, p. 88-89; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p. 20; Nuri-Robbins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2012).

¹ The concept of Cultural Proficiency was originally developed by Terry Cross to ensure culturally appropriate service delivery through agencies for children and adolescents who were emotionally disturbed (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, & Isaacs, 1989), and now serves as an inspiration for much of what now under the banner of Cultural Proficiency (Lindsey, Nuri Robbins, & Terrell, 2009). The concept of Cultural Proficiency has been broadened from its original context of child welfare to include the broader social context.

The authors of the Cultural Proficiency model have devised an interrelated set of four tools that provide a framework for analyzing personal values and behaviours, as well as school policies and practices. These four tools include the guiding principles of Cultural Proficiency, the Cultural Proficiency continuum, the five essential elements of Cultural Proficiency, and the identification of barriers to Cultural Proficiency. (See Appendix B for more information on Cultural Proficiency.)

Aboriginal Education and Cultural Proficiency

In Thompson, an Aboriginal and northern community, culturally proficient education is focused on the well-being of community members. Culturally proficient education in Thompson seeks to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged groups of students and more successful students. In attempting to close the achievement gap, educational practices that transform the lives of community members and promote healthy communities are not discussed in isolation, but the conversation about transformative change is collaborative, including as many community members as possible.

The principles of Cultural Proficiency and accompanying framework by Lindsey and Terrell at a workshop held in 2011. These principles were shared with the Community Circle in Thompson provided a starting point for the evolving conversation regarding transformative change in the schools of the School District of Mystery Lake and the community in Thompson, Manitoba. The introduction of Lindsey's and Terrell's notion of Cultural Proficiency in 2011 provided a catalyst for ongoing dialogue among educators and community members in Thompson regarding the form that culturally proficient relationships should take in local schools and the community. A review of the literature on Aboriginal education has continued to provide guidance for educators and community members regarding the creation and implementation of culturally proficient educational practices. The following section will highlight some of the literature on Aboriginal education that has informed the practice of educators and community members in Thompson.

The Cultural Competency Report (Assembly of First Nations, 2012) articulates the link between schools and community that is foundational to transformative education in Aboriginal and northern communities. The

report describes culturally responsive education (CRE) as, “a way of bringing students, school and community relationships into a learning community of shared values and educational goals for more equitable outcomes for all students. (Assembly of First Nations, 2012, p. 67). The relationships in schools reflect the integration for students of community life with school life. The curriculum and pedagogy are reflective of culture and community (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). The framework for CRE in the Cultural Competency Report (2012) contains the following five components:

- **Cultural Literacy**—The culture of the child, family, and community is the foundation for education.
- **Self-Reflective Analysis**—Teachers are aware of their experiences and how they have shaped their perspectives. Teachers are engaged in ongoing learning about culture and community.
- **Caring, Trusting, and Inclusive Classrooms**—Teachers demonstrate warmth and effective communication skills in a collaborative environment in the classroom.
- **Respect for Diversity**—The classroom and school mirror the cultures of the students in the school. Cultural knowledge, place-based education and other forms of experiential and co-operative practices support learning about culture and community.
- **Transformative Curriculum**—The curriculum in the classroom is not only meaningful to students but creates new possibilities and hope for students (Assembly of First Nations, 2012, pp. 108-109).

As the school and community become integrated, students are provided with the opportunity to develop positive identities based on an education that is [w]holistic in terms of their development and which celebrates their past and future. In keeping with the traditional approach to community living, this view of education for children centres on relationship building at all levels.

The *Accord on Indigenous Education* (ACDE), which was developed by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education in Montreal in 2010, also provides a framework for preparing culturally proficient teachers through Canadian faculties of education and, in doing so, also provides direction for culturally proficient education in schools. The *Accord on Indigenous Education* envisions “that Indigenous identities, cultures, languages, values, ways of knowing, and knowledge systems will flourish in all

Canadian learning settings” (Archibald, Lundy, Reynolds & Williams, 2010, p. 4). This accord identifies the fulfillment of the following goals as consistent with its vision:

- Respectful and Welcoming Learning Environments
- Respectful and Inclusive Curricula
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogies
- Mechanisms for Valuing and Promoting Indigeneity in Education
- Culturally Responsive Assessment
- Affirming and Revitalizing Indigenous Languages
- Indigenous Educational Leadership
- Non-Indigenous Learners and Indigeneity
- Culturally Respectful Indigenous Research.

The Goals of the Accord and the Cultural Proficiency Program Report are consistent with the efforts of the Thompson Community Circle and reflect the approach to Cultural Proficiency evident in the Success Pathway. There is a concerted effort to both prepare teachers and create learning environments inclusive for all students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal. In Thompson schools, a curriculum continues to be introduced that is reflective culturally of the students in the schools. With a focus on land-based and other experientially based learning opportunities for students, the curriculum is available to students in a culturally appropriate manner. In keeping with a culture-based and place-based approach to Cultural Proficiency, the emphasis in curriculum material focuses on Aboriginal perspective while respecting the diversity of ethnic backgrounds of other students in Thompson. The involvement of Elders and northern land experts is consistent with the goal of engaging students in culturally appropriate pedagogy. The *Accord on Indigenous Education* provides direction for the transformation of education in order to promote healthy schools and their communities.



Tipi at Night, Mile 20

The goal of involving community members in a shared decision-making process with educators within schools is resulting in students seeing the value of Aboriginal knowledge and is supporting more authentic assessment practices in schools. Significant efforts are being made through District support for Aboriginal languages and developing teacher education opportunities for teaching Aboriginal languages to affirm and promote Aboriginal languages in the schools. Educators and community members promote culturally responsive leadership practices by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members in school communities. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of school communities and teacher education students are encouraged to value Aboriginal language, culture and history. The Cultural Proficiency Program Report provides numerous concrete examples of activities and initiatives to achieve these goals. The approach of The Thompson Community Circle with its attention to culture-based, place-based and Aboriginal education has contextualized the meaning of Cultural Proficiency in order to contribute to the co-creation of inclusive schools and promoting healthy communities. The continuing collaboration among educators and community members to support students through improving educational practices and engaging in relevant, local research is strengthening the schools and their communities.

The researchers were focused on ethical issues being dealt with correctly, while ensuring that the research enhanced the relational processes for the participants in the research and also for the researchers. In *Research is Ceremony*, Shawn Wilson (2008, p. 137) reminds us that, "Research is a ceremony.... The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships or bridge the distance between our cosmos and us. The research that we do as Indigenous people is a ceremony that allows us a raised level of consciousness and insight into the world". The insight gained through the research process can be effectively shared through storytelling. Stories enable the researchers and the participants to connect in *whole-istic* and concrete ways meaningful to both the participants and the researchers (Wilson, 2008). It is the shared stories that will enable participants and researchers alike in the research process to contribute in a significant manner through the continual co-creation of mutual understandings and regard for each other. The participants and researchers in this process appreciate both the shared understandings emerging from the research process and their responsibility to themselves and each other.

An understanding that the research process is a form of collaborative inquiry has strengthened the relationships among the researchers and participants. Participants and researchers alike have important roles in the research process. These roles are often overlapping and at times indistinguishable. It is indeed the intertwining of roles and shared activities that enable the participants and researchers as a whole to co-create new understandings as a result of the inquiry. It is through collaboration for shared purposes that each individual becomes integral to the group and co-creates a collective understanding of their shared activities. With respect to the communal undertaking, the researchers and participants are transformed from 'I' to 'we' (London, St. George, & Wulff, 2009) and are prepared to demonstrate the caring and trust foundational to being responsible in the relational processes (Wilson, 2008).

As researchers, educational practitioners and community members involved with the Thompson Community Circle, we identify with the perspective of Linda Smith when she shares her experiences as a community researcher: "I saw their continuing belief in themselves, their positive outlook and optimism and their hope that maybe, one day, life would get better (Smith, 2010, p. 198). Furthermore, Marie Battiste, a

noted Aboriginal scholar and educator, keeps us mindful of the purpose of Aboriginal and northern education when she writes:

EDUCATION IS THE BELIEF IN POSSIBILITIES. It is a belief about knowledge systems. It is a belief in the capacities of ordinary humans. We as educators must refuse to believe that anything in human nature and in various situations condemns humans to poverty, dependency, weakness, and ignorance. We must reject the idea that youth are confined to situations of fate, as such being born in a particular class, gender or race. We must believe that teachers and students can confront and defeat the forces that prevent students living more fully and freely (2013, p. 175).

The Thompson Community Circle embraces Linda Smith’s strength-based perspective and Marie Battiste’s sentiments. Through connecting the lives of students to culture and community and building relationships, members of the Thompson Community Circle are committed to applying these principles, reflective of traditional pedagogy, in their collaborative efforts to foster the development of positive identities and more opportunities for Aboriginal and northern students in Thompson schools.

Interconnection between Cultural Proficiency and Land-based Education

Cultural Proficiency is a focus for professional development in local schools and instruction in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program. In *Equity*, Lindsey (2012) argues that respectful relationships inclusive of all educators and school partners organized in professional learning communities facilitate the needed dialogue, reflection and continuous learning to transform schools. Cultural Proficiency provides reference points for initiating inclusive processes that permit members of the school community to see themselves as not only belonging in the school, but connecting school life to their current and future lives. Furthermore, the processes associated with Cultural Proficiency enhance the opportunities for student learning and addressing the achievement gap of minorities relative to more socio-economically advantaged groups. Finally, the commitment to implementing these frameworks provides a means of implementing a core value—an inclusiveness—that serves as a guide for school community members as the school seeks to stay focused

on education for all. By employing the framework offered by Terrell and Lindsey (2009), Cultural Proficiency and the infusion of Aboriginal and northern perspectives is becoming an integral part of District practice.

Schools are creating inclusive learning communities in order to ensure the establishment and maintenance of essential elements of relational processes for learning and teaching in a culturally proficient manner. Learning communities are inclusive settings where school leaders, teachers and community partners come together to work towards making school professional communities committed to honest dialogue and reflective practices (Lindsey, Jungwirth, Pahl, & Lindsey, 2009). In an inclusive educational environment, all members of the school community demonstrate high levels of cultural Proficiency. Cultural Proficiency can be the lens for encouraging all members of the school community to embrace differences and recognize commonalities. Cultural Proficiency can be an important tool for those in school communities committed to the success of all learners through the co-creation and maintenance of culturally inclusive schools. School communities would welcome prospective teachers into their learning communities in order for school community members and teacher education students to share in their learning about culturally proficient education. In Northern Manitoba, Cultural Proficiency incorporates a variety of educational practices including land-based education in order to establish the relational processes required for us to live together in community and on this earth.



Mile 20

Land-based education

The Kenanow Learning Model, the foundation of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, has Aboriginal perspectives embedded in the courses and identifies the roles of prospective teachers and current teachers in living in balance with all living things and supporting community sustainability. Land-based education provides participants an opportunity to learn about relational accountability. Land-based education formed another of the success pathways and is discussed in another report.

Research Methodology

The Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) research project developed a research protocol in consultation with the Thompson Community Circle. This protocol (see Appendix J) contains information and operating guidelines for the VOICE research project in this community circle.

The research methodology used in this project is based upon Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) with an emphasis on the principles of action research (Sagor, 2011). The principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) were foundational to this project as they provide a means to maintain trust, ensure research quality, provide relevant and meaningful research, develop community capacity, and empower community change (Research Project Community Protocol, Appendix J). Ownership refers to the collective ownership by the community of data, knowledge, and information. Control affirms that First Nations and their representatives have control over the research process at all stages of the research project. The principles of access and possession are about ensuring that the dataset is available to First Nation communities and organizations, and ensures that whoever has physical control of the data being created is clearly defined from the beginning (Research Project Community Protocol, Appendix J).

Community-based participatory research is a powerful means to engage in social justice work because it values the role of community-based researchers and shifts the focus away from academic and hegemonic approaches towards decolonizing research design, implementation, and

analysis. As well, this research embraced decolonizing pedagogy and research design in its creation (Wilson, 2008; Smith, 1999, 2008).

The research method used in the Cultural Proficiency pathway is qualitative, although some survey information has also been collected and analyzed. The interviews were transcribed and coded thematically. The thematic analysis was conducted using Merriam's (2009) inductive and deductive comparative method. Themes are often presented in storied form, usually in the voice of participants, in order to provide a rich description that honours the protocols grounded in OCAP. To provide triangulation, data has been collected and analyzed from a number of areas:

- Interviews conducted with SDML staff and administration. These interviews shed light on the journey of the school District, staff, and a school as each work toward becoming culturally proficient;
- Events focused on Cultural Proficiency and land-based education within Mystery Lake School District (9 datasets);
- Events focused on Cultural Proficiency with community partners;
- Interviews with pre-service teachers—both primary and secondary interviews; and
- Anecdotal information from elementary students.

Reason to Engage in Cultural Proficiency

Overview

The SDML has been working with partners to build community, to break down barriers that exist among members of the Thompson community, and support ongoing efforts to facilitate individual, social and institutional transformation using a Cultural Proficiency lens (with a Northern and Aboriginal perspective) to ultimately promote student success.

Thompson, known as the "Hub of the North," serves as the regional trade and service centre of northern Manitoba, Canada. Thompson has a diverse population, which includes a large First Nations and Metis population, as well as other minority groups. The purpose of this section is to discuss the journey that the School District of Mystery

Lake (in partnership with UCN and the City of Thompson) is engaged in working towards becoming more culturally proficient.

The SDML is committed to using innovative approaches to engage students in education, including the delivery of culturally responsive programming for students. This has resulted in several partnerships with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations, Elders and traditional teachers, other school divisions, and federal and provincial government departments. In accordance with the recommendation of the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (TAEAC), the School District of Mystery Lake over the past five years has committed to infusing culturally proficient education and Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training throughout the school District. This is done to promote healthy and meaningful cross cultural relationships among staff, parents, students, and in the community.

In September of 2011, the School District of Mystery Lake contracted Raymond Terrell and Randall Lindsay from the Cultural Proficiency Group in Los Angeles to deliver a District-wide professional development workshop on Culturally Proficient education. The training was provided for 500 plus staff including non-teaching staff and members from partnering organizations including University College of the North (UCN), Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Council (TAEAC) and Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy (TUAS).



Cultural Proficiency Professional Development Workshop, September, 2011.

Prior to this District-wide Professional Development work, the presenters, Raymond Terrell and Randall Lindsey, had an opportunity to meet with the Board of Trustees and TAEAC committee members. As well, they toured the schools and the community so that they could get to know Thompson a little better before their presentation.

Due to the success and positive response to the presentation, these highly regarded and well known trainers offered to work with the School District of Mystery Lake (SDML), University College of the North (UCN), and Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy (TUAS) to develop a team to continue cultural proficiency training throughout the community. Both Raymond Terrell and Randall Lindsey saw the potential to create positive change, and they agreed to provide the facilitator training and mentor the newly formed Cultural Proficiency team in Thompson.

Since 2012, a team from SDML, UCN, and TUAS has been trained to deliver the Cultural Proficiency education for educational institutions and other organizations wanting to create systemic change and a more positive/effective working environment within the region. This is timely, considering the growing urban First Nations and Metis population in Thompson (just above 50%) and the ever increasing number of immigrant families residing in Thompson. Also, the communities around Thompson are primarily First Nations and Metis and it is imperative that the corrective history of this territory be acknowledged. In order for the city to grow and thrive, there is a need to ensure that there is mutual respect and understanding among Aboriginal people, newcomers, and the non-Aboriginal populations.

SDML worked with the UCN and TUAS to develop local training for teachers and staff within our organizations, and eventually, we designed training for these community partners. We have worked to create a local team of Cultural Proficiency (CP) trainers within Thompson using the train the trainer model and had the opportunity to pilot our model of training with local organizations on three separate occasions during 2013-14.

Each of the sessions has been very successful and created positive changes with regard to respecting and embracing diversity as well as seeing cultural awareness and Aboriginal cultural learnings in a more

meaningful way. Leaders in the organizations that received the training have requested further training that would include all of their staff members.

The CP team has recognized that this is a long-term plan that needs to be well organized and executed in order to be successful. To enable participants change from the inside out and begin to see the world through a more respectful lens in our ever changing world, the cultural proficiency working group held planning sessions, collaborated with Elders and a range of partners, and has engaged in research through the VOICE project.

At the recommendations of Terrell and Lindsey, the CP mentors, TAEAC, and the Aboriginal Accord Partners, the SDML and UCN are in the process of developing a plan to begin the training process for community organizations, who work with Aboriginal people, northern people, and newcomers in Thompson and the surrounding area. While the SDML supports this training plan and will continue to partner with CP training for community organizations, there is a need to focus on continuing the CP journey including professional development with administrators, teachers, staff, and students within the District.

SDML has focused on three areas that are supporting people embarking on the CP journey. The three areas of focus were: (1) targeted professional development for teachers and administrators, (2) specific student activities to promote CP experience, and (3) community CP training to make connections beyond the schools. The SDML's journey along with our UCN partner has been a rewarding one, that we believe is in the process of creating transformative change within our organizations. Although we still have a long way to go, we do see signs of significant change.

The SDML did not mandate cultural proficiency but modeled, encouraged, and provided learning opportunities for staff to experience and engage in CP in a variety of ways to demonstrate the difference this could make in our classrooms, schools, and our personal lives. Using the CP model, more people were engaged in having hard, yet safe conversations about culture, equity vs. equality, privilege and entitlement, graduation rates of students, and marginalized populations in our community. Those involved in CP

education shared from the inside out first, using their personal experiences and values and beliefs before talking about the 'other'. The following captures the focus on Cultural Proficiency learning experiences:

1. A District-Wide Professional Development two year plan was carefully developed immediately following the CP workshop delivered by Tyrell and Lindsay. The workshop was a catalyst for discussion and showed that CP had many facets and that it is, "not only about Aboriginal people and perspectives" (even though this is the underlying vehicle for moving the CP agenda forward within our school division) but an inclusive model for everyone. Community partnerships and UCN pre-service teachers were invited to attend these sessions alongside District staff.

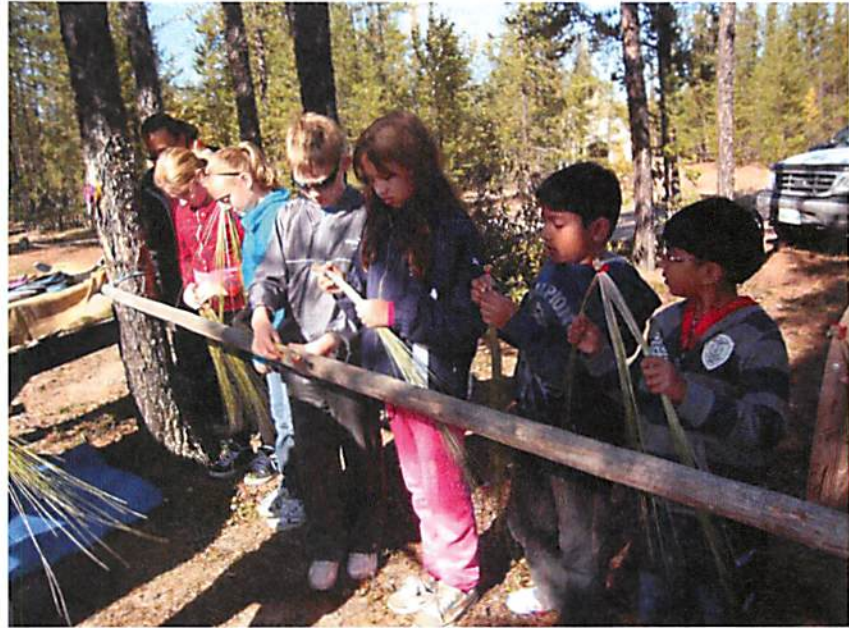
District-wide professional development sessions included:

- September 2011: Cultural Proficiency in Education (Tyrell/Lindsay)
- May 2012: We Are All Treaty People (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba)
- September 2012: Building Healthy Relationships (Burntwood Regional Health Authority)
- May 2013: LGBTQ and Cyber Bullying (Rainbow Resource Centre)
- September 2013: Mental Health (CMHA)—New Report Cards

Other CP education and Aboriginal Perspectives PD sessions involved the following:

- UCN Kenanow Students
- SDML Leadership Cohort
- Thompson Teachers' Association
- TUAS Committee
- Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
- SDML Leadership Team (District Administrators)
- New Teachers to the SDML

2. Student Activities and events were planned to promote CP learning both in the classroom and on the Land. There were both District-wide initiatives as well as specific activities planned at Juniper Elementary School. These were planned intentionally to engage students in healthy and meaningful ways in order to help them feel empowered, connected, and valued so that they might experience success.



Grade 5 Students Braiding Sweet Grass at Mile 20.

District initiatives included:

- Mini-Winter Festivals at Elementary Schools;
- Grade Fall Camp Partnership with UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program;
- Grade 8 Spring Transition Camps; and
- sikwan mamawewin (Spring Gathering) Partnership and activities with High School Youth, Elders, Community, and New Teachers in SDML.

Juniper School staff and students planned and delivered numerous events and activities that focused on Cultural Proficiency model (Please see the appendices, particularly Juniper story).

3. The Cultural Proficiency team planned and delivered three two-day Cultural Proficiency Training Sessions for Community Partnerships as a pilot to determine whether or not this training model was useful for organizations. The training was 2 days long. The first day was held in a classroom environment and the learning focused on the meaning of Cultural Proficiency and going through the stages and parts of Cultural Proficiency on a very personal and individual level. The focus of this day was about the way we each see and interpret the world around us from our own lens based on our personal lived experiences. It was very much seeing and realizing that the Cultural Proficiency journey is an inside-out approach to learning about others. We must first know ourselves and how we relate to others around us who are not the same as us. The message for this day was that we can learn about others only after we know ourselves.

“Definitely an excellent workshop. It’s nice to see the cultural proficiency values are perfectly aligned with our own. It’s great to have the culturally sensitive issues out in the open, rather than tippy-toeing around them. Incorporating these values in our workplace (and community) will definitely make a smoother transition for the northern employment strategies. Applying these principles to some of our own training will undoubtedly make for a more welcoming environment for the present workforce as well future employees. Long overdue!”

Land, R., 2015, p. 2

The second day of training was on the Land at a traditional Cree site called Mile 20. This portion of the training provided the participants with a full day of hands-on learning experiences and opportunities to discuss honestly the northern Cree cultural and corrective history of this region. This discussion was about treaties, residential schools, and the Indian Act as well as the implications for relationships between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal people in today’s world. The presenters on this day were both traditional and academic Elders from various backgrounds, Treaty Relations

Commission of Manitoba, UCN Council of Elders, and local land experts sharing their knowledge and expertise in respectful ways in order to develop a better understanding for participants of Aboriginal and Northern Cultures that exist in this region. This day provided a safe environment that enabled participants to have honest and respectful conversations and ask questions to clarify perceptions that people may have.

The Cultural Proficiency community training took place in:

2013

- Sept. 5 and Sept. 18: City of Thompson administrative staff, Human Resources, supervisors, Vale supervisors, TNRC staff, UCN, Manitoba Hydro Aboriginal Relations Supervisors. (37 participants in total)
- “The two day session as a whole was very positive and educational providing an appreciation for the importance of Aboriginal relations in Manitoba, particularly in the north” (Sweeney, 2015, p. 1).
- We see there being great value for employers in Northern Manitoba to participate in these types of training sessions, as there is a specific training and knowledge component regarding Cultural Proficiency in our region, which is unique to us. Continuing to grow and develop this program to be delivered in the North would be crucial to continuing these types of partnerships, discussions and learning experiences.

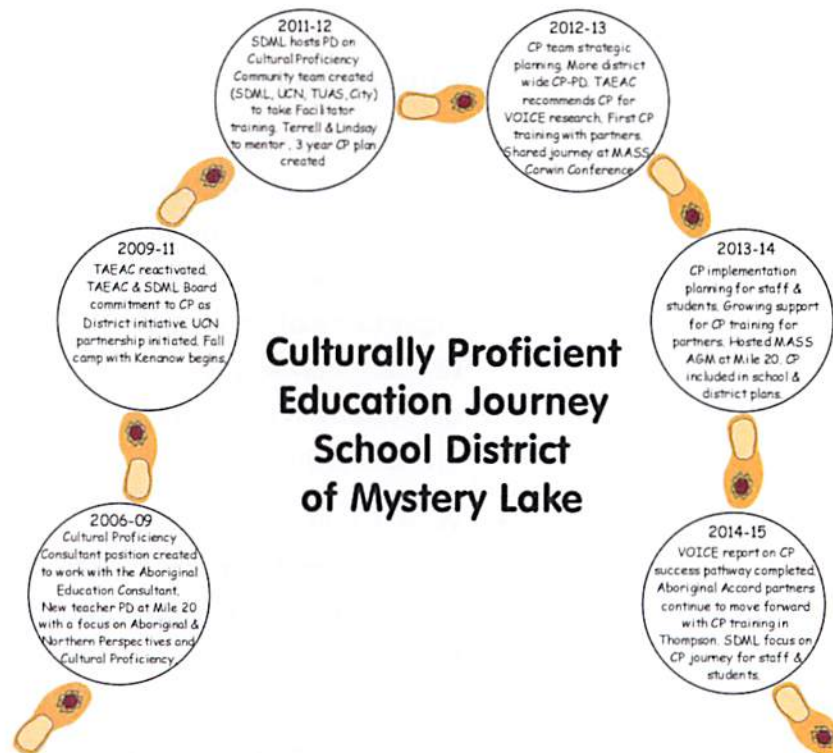
“We see there being great value for employers in Northern Manitoba to participate in these types of training sessions, as there is a specific training and knowledge component regarding Cultural Proficiency in our region, which is unique to us. Continuing to grow and develop this program to be delivered in the North would be crucial to continuing these types of partnerships, discussions and learning experiences”

Kondakor, D., 2015, p. 1

2014

- April 16 and June 3: Aboriginal Accord Partners including President of UCN, UCN Elders, UCN Governing Council Chair, Vale senior administration including Human Resources Department, City of Thompson Mayor, City Councilor, City Manager, Manitoba Hydro Aboriginal Relations Division Manager and Senior Supervisors, United Steel Worker President, and staff.
- May 29: Hosted Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (Annual General Meeting) at Mile 20 (all had prior Cultural Proficiency training)
- May 30: New teachers to SDML and some District administrative staff (had prior Cultural Proficiency training)

Figure 2: *Culturally Proficient Education Journey of School District of Mystery Lake.*



Source: Ron Cook, Cree Language/ Aboriginal Perspectives Consultant, School District of Mystery Lake, Thompson, MB, 2015.

School District of Mystery Lake

The school District has attempted to improve student achievement, engagement, and graduation rates. As well, an achievement gap existed for a number of learners within the school District, of which a disproportionate number were Aboriginal learners. There was also a need for a clearer strategic direction to address student success. A disconnect was identified between elementary school entry rates and high school graduation rates.

The District has faced a number of challenges over the years that include attendance, transition, transiency, school to home connections, students being underserved, transportation access, dollars, sustainability of programs, low academic levels, accurate data, and equity amongst the schools. As a proactive response to the challenges, the District recognized the importance of engaging, not only the schools, but the community at large, in the Cultural Proficiency journey. These relationships have had a positive influence on creating systemic change.

Involvement in Cultural Proficiency prior to VOICE

The School District of Mystery Lake has had a number of past initiatives that connect to the need for Cultural Proficiency. One initiative was a mandatory Aboriginal Awareness Training (1999-2001) for staff to ensure that those who teach Aboriginal students understand how to make learning relevant and meaningful. Although the intention was good, the outcome was not as successful as hoped. As well, specific initiatives have also been developed that continue on today. Some of these initiatives include Aboriginal focused courses, the introduction of a community school with a Cree bilingual program, and a land-based education high school course. As well, there was also a new teacher workshop on the Land at Mile 20. This workshop emphasized the strong inter-connection between Aboriginal ways of knowing, embedded in the Cree language and the Land.

Certain challenges to providing culturally relevant learning for Aboriginal and other marginalized students were evidenced by SDML introducing mandatory Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training. What was intended to bring teachers together in an opportunity to learn

about Aboriginal culture to support learning in classrooms, had resulted in creating a divide because the approach was seen as prescriptive and assumed that teachers were deficient in this area. The leadership in SDML recognized the need to change the way business was being done. While administration and staff were successful working with one another at the inter-school and other levels, Aboriginal students' achievement and graduation rates were low. The leadership team recognized the need to find a different approach that would continue to work in collaboration with the community. They also recognized the need to engage students in more meaningful ways, and to support teachers with local resources that promote Aboriginal and northern perspectives. In other words, there was the need for systemic change (policy, professional development, administration team, and board), corrective history, and for teachers and staff to reflect on how they could be a part of the change. In 2010, the District's formal connection and commitment to Cultural Proficiency began. SDML believed that the Cultural Proficiency approach could lead their staff and community to positive personal and systemic change, which would result in "Success for All." The attached Cultural Proficiency Timeline provides a visual means to understand the work that has been conducted in the School District of Mystery Lake.

Reason to engage in Cultural Proficiency work at UCN

At UCN, students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education program receive a unique type of teacher education. Since the inception of this faculty, all aspects of instruction, including the program curricula, the instructional practices, text materials, and methods of teaching have centered on what is identified as the Kenanow learning model. In short, this model exemplifies an education system that served Aboriginal people well for generations throughout time and history. In its purest form, the model is about identity, a place of belonging, community history, roles and responsibilities of generations of families and the process of handing down knowledge in a larger context, the community that supports and nourishes the heart, mind, body and spirit.

In 2003, when members of UCN's Council of Elders gathered to develop and design the emerging Faculty of Education program, they had many ideas as to what that program might look like. What they knew was that for years, the public school system had failed to meet Aboriginal student educational needs in many areas, including the preparation of prospective teacher candidates in various teacher education programs. They knew that it was not enough to adopt the framework of existing faculties of education; something new had to be created that would meet the needs of Aboriginal students. After considering many designs, the idea of Kenanow was presented. It is a word drawn from the Cree language. Translated literally, it usually reads "all of us, all of us who are here", which includes all our relations.

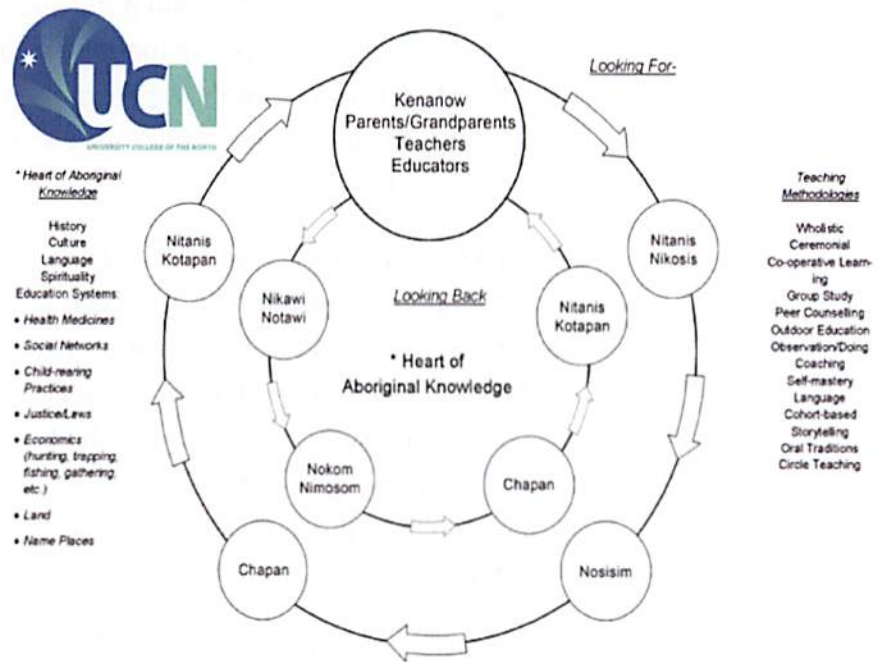
Through the Elders' vision of the Kenanow learning model, a new foundation of teacher education was created, one that looked to the past, present and future for the education of northern and Aboriginal students. The notion of 'all of us together' continues to be the link between Western education perspectives and Aboriginal perspectives in the transmission of knowledge. In this model, the kinship system is envisioned as an organically functioning system into which education is naturally and harmoniously integrated and transmitted.

The focus on developing Cultural Proficiency within school systems fits flawlessly into this traditional model. The notion that good pedagogy involves 'all of us together' is based upon the understanding that everyone has something to contribute: that we are all in the circle together and we learn from each other. Indeed, the initial proposal for the development of the UCN Faculty of Education based upon the Kenanow model states that "All courses within the program will reflect the commitment to instruct prospective teachers in a culture-based and place-based approach for curriculum development and implementation" (UCN, 2008).

In its simplest terms, the Kenanow approach is the essence of Cultural Proficiency: the belief that we are all connected and that we can learn from each other; that diversity is to be embraced and celebrated—just as the various colours of the rainbow make something beautiful and strong. One of the guiding principles of Cultural Proficiency, according to Lindsey

et al. (2009) is that “The best of both worlds enhances the capacity of all (p.98)”. This enhanced capacity is what UCN’s Faculty of Education is working towards. However, the adoption of a Kenanow culturally proficient approach in all UCN faculties is still a work in progress.

Figure 3. Kenanow Learning Model.



Acknowledgements for the Kenanow Learning Model:

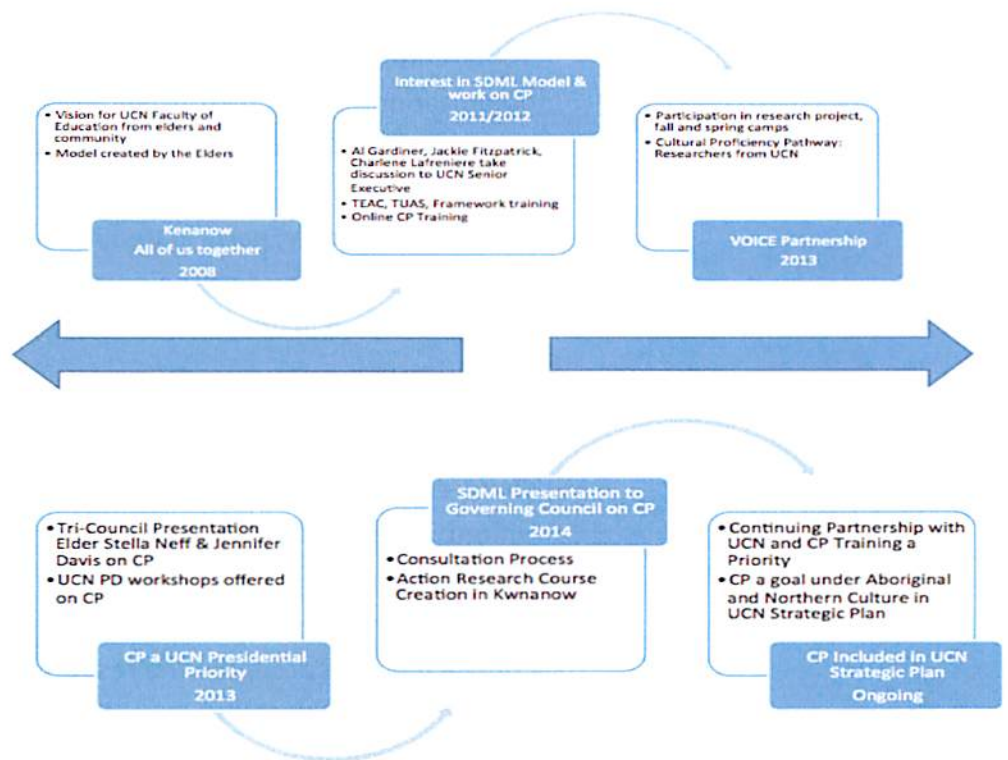
David Lathlin, Pat Lathlin, Doris Young, Mabel Bignell, Ester Sanderson, & Stella Neff

UCN prior involvement in CP prior to VOICE

The involvement of staff and faculty members in Cultural Proficiency at University College of the North (UCN) was the product of the partnership with the School District of Mystery Lake (SDML) and eventually, their shared research project, Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) that also included Brandon University (The diagram below outlines this journey). With both seeking to expand educational opportunities for children and youth in Northern Manitoba, this shared perspective provided the basis for

ongoing dialogue and collaboration regarding teaching and learning between the SDML and UCN. With representation from the community and UCN, SDML's Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Council (TAEAC) provided a forum for ongoing discussions regarding education in the city of Thompson and surrounding communities. TAEAC would eventually be expanded to include the VOICE project proposed by Brandon University. The evolving partnership between SDML and UCN provided a foundation for the ongoing dialogue and the co-creation of initiatives in order to transform education in Northern Manitoba.

Figure 4. *University College of the North Cultural Proficiency Journey.*



Source: Cultural Proficiency Working Group, 2014.

Cultural Proficiency emerged from the ongoing discussions as the guiding set of principles and shared perspective for transforming education in Northern Manitoba. As members of TAEAC, staff from SDML and UCN proposed joint training for themselves in order to provide Cultural Proficiency training for their organizations. It was

proposed that the University College of the North commit to plan and implement Cultural Proficiency activities for its staff. The Cultural Proficiency plan would include 'train the trainer' opportunities for UCN staff and for collaboration with the School District of Mystery Lake. Further, a partnership with Mystery Lake School District would reduce the cost of the initial and ongoing costs associated with the training and implementation of Cultural Proficiency approaches at University College of the North. With funding support from the VOICE project, the UCN faculty and staff members were able to create a partnership with SDML for Cultural Proficiency training.

Since 2010, the staff and faculty members from SDML and UCN have participated together in training and professional development experiences with a Cultural Proficiency focus. Reference materials about Cultural Proficiency were purchased and shared within the organizations. Cultural Proficiency is a component of a number of courses in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program at UCN including the teaching practicum. Teams from each organization, and Brandon University, participated in training with Drs. Randy Lindsey and Ray Terrell regarding the Cultural Proficiency framework and its implementation in educational settings.

Teams from the three organizations presented the planning and implementation of Cultural Proficiency at SDML and UCN at conferences throughout Manitoba and in other venues including the United States. UCN's Governing Council and Senior Executive have each been provided with information regarding the culturally proficient activities shared by SDML and UCN. In 2013, the UCN Council of Elders accepted the responsibility to build on the achievements of the existing partnership and provide leadership to guide the institution along a more culturally proficient path.

Research Results

An Elder's Perspective: Story from Elder Martha Jonasson

We were at Mile 20 and I was telling stories about the past in a tent. The children were all around me sitting on the floor. I was telling them that

when you see people on the street you never know what circumstances and turmoil they have faced in their lives.

I started telling them about Residential Schools. I told them that strangers would come into communities and take the children to schools away from their homes. One day the children would be laughing and playing in the bush and on the roads, and the next day the planes would come and take those kids away. On those days you would not hear children playing anymore, you would just hear the parents and grandparents crying because all the kids were gone. I told them how those children would only come home for the summers, and maybe Christmas, but no long weekends or other days.

I noticed that one young girl had her head down on the tarp and her hoodie pulled up over her head. I thought that she was either bored or tired. And then, the little girl sitting next to her motioned to me that she was crying.

I took her outside the tent and asked her what was wrong. She said, "Why did the parents allow that to happen to their children? Why didn't they stop them from being taken away?"

I told her that the parents had no choice. That if they didn't allow their children to go to those schools they could be sent to jail.

She replied, "Will that ever happen again?"

I told her, "No. That will never happen again because now Aboriginal people know more and they will never let it happen again."

When I tell my stories I try to get across understanding as well as history. I tell them how mothers could not learn to be mothers because their kids were taken away. And the kids who went to the Residential Schools did not learn to be parents because there was no one there to show them.

It is important that the children understand these things.

Journeys toward Cultural Proficiency

School District of Mystery Lake administration experience

In the spring of 2014, the Superintendent of Educational Services and

Programming, the Cultural Proficiency Consultant, and the Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspectives Coordinator were interviewed to gain their perspectives about what Cultural Proficiency is, and how to promote and engage the community and school District in this work. One of the goals of the

“As a District observation, it was recognized that there was a will to create change; what we needed to do was to have conversations and provide opportunities.”
SDML Superintendent

school District was to ‘model a commitment to, and promote a professional learning community founded in Cultural Proficiency, social justice and excellence in education” (School District of Mystery Lake, 2015). Within this framework there is also a commitment to infuse Aboriginal and northern perspectives into all curriculum areas.

The Superintendent of SDML provided her perspective on how to communicate the value of diversity to the staff and community. She said, “As a District observation, it was recognized that there was a will to create change; what we needed to do was to have conversations and provide opportunities.” She also discussed the intersectionality of difference, and included a number of ways that difference may be expressed. She mentioned age, sexual orientation, and gender identification, as examples. In our conversation, culturally proficient education was defined to be inclusive, encompassing, and of benefit to all students. As well, she said it goes beyond cultural teachings; it is corrective history. Culturally proficient education recognizes diversity, is meaningful, is not taught in isolation, and is respectful. She said that Cultural Proficiency is “not just ethnicity, it’s not just about race.” Cultural Proficiency in the School District of Mystery Lake extends beyond just race, but race and overcoming racism was a substantive aspect of the work-taking place due to the context in Thompson.

She took note of the inside-out approach to Cultural Proficiency work when she indicated “everyone has prejudice.” She used a story from the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles to explain her thinking. When participants had to move through the museum to look at tolerance, they were invited to choose a door to enter. One of the doors had a sign on it that read, “Prejudiced” and the other door sign said “Unprejudiced.” The prejudiced door was locked to remind us all that we all have biases that need to be recognized as barriers to compassion and that we are always on a journey toward Cultural Proficiency. The Superintendent said: “This is what culturally proficient people ask: What have we done or not done to cause the patterns that persist? How can we recognize what is going on and effectively intervene? How can we recognize and change our behaviours to get the results we want? What is it about my thinking and beliefs that

“I think Cultural Proficiency would open doors where the dominant group would see that there was some beauty in other cultures.”

Cree Language
Coordinator

allow the problems to persist?” The Cree Language Coordinator said, “I just think about our youth that don’t know who they are because we are so dominated by one culture. I think Cultural Proficiency would open doors where the dominant group would see that there was some beauty in other cultures.... And I would just like to be a Cree person and have people be all right with that. Because there is still the feeling that you’re lower class if you speak Cree.” Understanding the value of Cultural Proficiency was important to him. The

Cree Language Coordinator summed up by saying that in the end, all this work is about moving forward the notion of “being more accepting.”

A key aspect of making the case for Cultural Proficiency in SDML is not focusing on assigning blame or finding fault. Assigning blame and finding fault was a barrier to systemic change. Instead, the focus was on “what do we need to do to make a better impact” (Cultural Proficiency Consultant). Doing Cultural Proficiency work is also recognized as a long-term process by the Cultural Proficiency consultant, the Cree Language Coordinator and the Superintendent in the School District of Mystery Lake. The Superintendent recognized that “we just need to be patient and keep working. One of the Elders told me, ‘It doesn’t matter how fast you work or how quickly things

get done. As long as you don't quit, things will get done." This philosophy of moving the agenda forward over time, and without stopping, is critical to the long-term sustainability of the Cultural Proficiency initiative and ensures the long-term commitment to social change in the community.

"Invite, require and value multiple perspectives; Focus on success in the workplace and develop a critical mass of culturally proficient leaders."

SDML Superintendent

Cultural Humility

Cultural Humility is an important concept in equity work. This concept is akin to the inside-out approach, where we are always doing our own work first. When asked about the District's level of knowledge in Cultural Proficiency, the Superintendent said, "I don't think we

see ourselves as experts at all." The Superintendent and the Cultural Proficiency Consultant agreed that the key to equity work is to "say no to status quo." The Cultural Proficiency Consultant said that it is important to be

"60% of our population is Aboriginal, so this is the community we choose to live in."

SDML Superintendent

"comfortable having uncomfortable conversations. "To operationalize

Cultural Proficiency work in the school District, the Superintendent listed a number of ways to become culturally proficient community leaders. She said there was a need to "Invite, require and value multiple perspectives; focus on success in the workplace and develop a critical mass of culturally proficient leaders." There was also the recognition that there needs to be support and commitment to the community so that everyone is moving in the same direction and the school District is not isolating itself from the community.

Decision-making

One of the important aspects that has been included in conversations about change and Cultural Proficiency has been the providing of evidence of inequity. The Superintendent indicated, "We've done a lot of work with our administrators around equity,

which has been huge." In order to make the case for doing Cultural Proficiency work, evidence was provided to administrators and staff to address the achievement gap. Evidence based approaches have been

"[Cultural proficiency] becomes an inside-out approach in how you think"

Cultural Proficiency
Consultant

used to introduce focused literacy programs, greater support for kindergarten programs and transition programming to high school.

Regarding the provision of equity based interventions, the Superintendent said, "It's not enabling, it's 'abling,' and it's not lowering the bar, it's closing the gap". For example, administration discussed attendance, academic achievement, and graduation rates by particular groups in leadership team meetings to make it clear that some groups were succeeding, while others were not as successful. Being underserved is an underlying cause for lack

of school success. One of the ways to overcome that has been to provide additional resources to schools that need them. Being underserved also seems to be connected to certain groups in the north, primarily Aboriginal people. The Cultural Proficiency Consultant said there was a

need to "talk about the elephant in the room: often it is about race." Once you can demonstrate to the teachers that an opportunity gap exists, the rest of the work becomes easier. "It becomes an inside-out approach in how you think" (Cultural Proficiency Consultant).

"Talk about the elephant in the room: often it is about race"

Cultural Proficiency
Consultant

"It's not lowering the bar, it's closing the gap!"

SDML Superintendent

Aboriginal emphasis

One of the areas of Cultural Proficiency work in SDML is providing an Aboriginal focus to this initiative. “60% of our population is Aboriginal, so this is the community we choose to live in” (Superintendent). This work is also about re-examining and “actually learning about the history of this area. People need to know how they view themselves before they can understand others. That’s why we do Cultural Proficiency first ” (Superintendent). A major goal of this work is to “take responsibility for playing a part in eliminating racism and empowering people to work together” (Superintendent).

Land-based education

The School District of Mystery Lake has moved to making a stronger connection to land-based education, which is supported within the framework of Cultural Proficiency. The Superintendent said, “The emphasis now is linking curriculum to the land-based education piece.” The Cree Language Coordinator explained that “[youth] are losing their connection to the Land. That’s why they don’t know who they are.” He said “[Youth] need to be reconnected to the Land so they know who they are. Because our identity is rooted in our connection to the Land”. One of the things that Land-based education provides is a way to know and feel comfortable with the land and one’s place with it. He said, “I think that’s what you have to do is you have to let the Land look after you. Almost like letting go instead of trying to control the Land you have to let go”.

“[Youth] need to be reconnected to the Land so they know who they are. Because our identity is our connection to the Land.”

Cree Language
Coordinator

Cree language

Cree and other indigenous languages are connected to learning from the Land. The Cree Language Coordinator said, “I would like to see Cree on an equal footing with other languages”. Teaching students who see themselves as Cree to speak the language is important within

the Cultural Proficiency lens in Thompson. The Cree Language Coordinator discussed how “Elders told us that we can’t just translate our language into English because we have to understand what our language is saying to us.” It was important for the students to understand what the words actually really mean instead of just using the English version of them. Because Cree is an oral language, it has mnemonic devices that help in remembering the oral history and traditions. “Therefore, Cree words are put together in such a way that they help us to remember our teachings, our responsibilities, our way of life, and the way we see the world” (Cree Language Coordinator). This is best done on the Land. This belief in the primacy of the language to create an affirming Cree identity also led the Cree Language Coordinator to move towards learning for himself how to write using Cree syllabics and then teaching the students how to do the same.

The Cree Language Coordinator said “one of the problems that we have at our schools is that our teachers have a hard time thinking in Cree [because taking away the language] was the main weapon used in the destruction of a culture and a language and those effects are still there.” When some of the adults of the residential school walk into the school today, it reminds them of their lived experience: “You were punished for speaking Cree when you were in school.” He said, “I really had to work at speaking Cree in the school when I first started. It’s so hard and a lot of our teachers say the same thing ‘It’s hard’ because it’s still a Western institution. There are also signs of internalized oppression within the Cree community. For example, he said, “there are a lot of these challenges with my own Cree people [when it comes to traditional culture], like getting over that brainwashing. Because a lot of the resistance we have now is from our own people when doing our own cultural activities, like smudging or drumming.”

With the wisdom of an Elder, the Cree Language Coordinator reminded the writer: “The definition of culture is what seems normal to you. That is what culture is.” The School District of Mystery Lake is still a Western institution. However, there are still opportunities and reasons to go on the Land. This not only helps students feel more at home in this rural setting, but it affords an opportunity to speak Cree

and use Cree concepts. However, this is difficult work as even some of the community members and students push against the idea. However, as the Cree Language Coordinator said, “When students start becoming adults, they start wishing they had language because it’s their identity, [it’s] the key to their identity.”

Administrative leadership

Culturally proficient leadership involves examining the current practices and policies to see how they might negatively impact certain marginalized groups. It also means building the capacity to make

“We needed to engage Elders in Cultural Proficiency so that Elder support for the promotion of Cultural Proficiency was endorsed.” - Cultural Proficiency Consultant

change. To this end, SDML administration is reviewing the policies and procedures to ensure they support a culturally proficient framework. So far, they have ‘gone through our procedure binder’ and changed a number of things including the transportation of special needs students and processes for the transition of students to senior years. As well, topics like smudging are being reviewed. One of the ways that has been helpful is to ensure that all of the policies and procedures are accessible. The

Superintendent indicated: “Everything is online now for the public.” This drive for transparency is critical in Cultural Proficiency.

Community support

Having community support is also important in culturally proficient work. Support from Elders has been critical to working toward Cultural Proficiency within SDML. The Cultural Proficiency Consultant said: “We needed to engage Elders in Cultural Proficiency so that Elder support for the promotion of Cultural Proficiency was endorsed.” Listening to the Elders is vital to

“When students start becoming adults, they start wishing they had language because it’s their identity, [it’s] the key to their identity.”
Cree Language Coordinator

promoting greater compassion and tolerance. The Cree Language Coordinator said: "I think [their wisdom] is relevant today." In addition, SDML stays connected to Drs. Lindsey and Randall who first came and discussed Cultural Proficiency with the community. They also provide mentorship and strength for this challenging work.

The importance of the community circle assisting in supporting Cultural Proficiency is also worth noting. The Thompson Community circle brings together a number of agencies and groups within Thompson under a common banner. The Superintendent said that the point of the "Thompson community circle [is to] be a representative place for people's voices." There has also been a strong relationship developed between UCN and SDML. The University College of the North pre-service teachers were able to 'work with us altering the program' in order to make it more culturally appropriate (Superintendent). Compared to other universities in Manitoba, UCN is more aware of the environment where their teachers will be employed; they are better able through their training to be more culturally proficient. Since the introduction of the Kenanow Education program, there has been an inter-connectedness that can only come from community-based learning. This strong connection means that many education faculty members go beyond the work of the university campus. The Cultural Proficiency Consultant said: "It's the connecting with the school division and helping see how the school division and the universities can work together, so that pre-service teachers get a rich experience." As well, the Kenanow model provided a means to "change the mindset and how you deliver pre-service education" (Cultural Proficient Educational Consultant).

Perseverance

When asked, "Would you say that the Cultural Proficiency work has reached a point where it is sustaining itself?", there was a quick 'not yet' response". However, the Superintendent indicated that Cultural Proficiency is sustainable "in pockets, for sure." As well, there was confidence that this work would, over time, become self-sustaining because, as the Superintendent correctly pointed out, "everybody's got skin in the game."



Students at Mile 20

Juniper School administrators' experience

In the spring of 2014, the administrators at Juniper School discussed how they understood Cultural Proficiency and how they had operationalized it in their building. The following is a summary of their story.

Juniper school would like to be recognized as a “culturally proficient school by demonstrating growth in understanding and applying Cultural Proficiency and social justice in school in order to build a strong school community and learning environment.” (School District of Mystery Lake, 2015). Over the past five years Juniper School has initiated a number of initiatives that support the things that they have been learning in terms of Cultural Proficiency in order to move them towards this goal.

The Principal acknowledged, “Change is hard, but it can be done. It just takes time and process.” As well, she said that some of this change “may be tied in accidentally just because of some of the

“There are so many positive things here and it’s making more people feel proud of the community that they live in and that they should be proud of their heritage.”

Juniper School Principal

professional development that was happening through the division at the time.” The principal also affirmed that moving toward Cultural Proficiency “has been centered around kids.” From the perspective of the administrator of Juniper School, some of the challenges that necessitated such a move were around the need to support the very academically and culturally diverse students in the building. Juniper School approached systemic change using an evidence-based approach to deal with varying degrees of negative behaviour, poor academic performance, and high student absenteeism.

Operationalizing Cultural Proficiency in the school was about finding a way to incorporate culturally proficient ideas into the good work that was already happening in the school.

Defining Cultural Proficiency

The principal indicated that she was still on the journey toward becoming culturally proficient. She said, “I’m still way in that path of learning along the way and every time you get an opportunity to read or pull something out of the books that we’ve been looking at or reading.... So I think that this is going to be probably a lifelong journey as an educator and as a person.” She could identify with what it must be like to be marginalized through her parents’ stories of coming as immigrants from Portugal. She could also identify with having English as an additional language. “I know what some of these kids go through. I didn’t learn to speak English until I was seven years old,” she said. For her, Cultural Proficiency is a way to be more open-minded and to recognize our inherited beliefs, values and assumptions about others. Cultural Proficiency was about learning to “be more accepting of other people’s opinions and ideas. At the end of the day we all have values. We all have been brought up with different beliefs,” she said.

“I’m still way in that path of learning along the way and every time you get an opportunity to read or pull something out of the books that we’ve been looking at or reading.... So I think that this is going to be probably a lifelong journey as an educator and as a person.”

Juniper School Principal

The Vice-Principal indicated that he had grown up in an Aboriginal community where his family had struggled to survive economic hardship. He remembers wondering, “Why certain things were happening to me.” He recalls that this insight gave him a desire “to always look to the bigger issues.” The Vice-Principal explained that Cultural Proficiency was “how all people treat all people no matter their race, gender or religion; and that falls in line with equality.” He said “no one has any more say over any other group” and that Cultural Proficiency is meant to be an all-encompassing approach that includes Aboriginal, as well as all other perspectives.

Cultural Proficiency works when the community supports it. The administrators felt that because Thompson is a small community where there are interconnected interests and relations. The principal said, “It’s hard not to go somewhere where somebody doesn’t know somebody from Thompson. There are so many positive things here and it’s making more people feel proud of the community that they live in and that they should be proud of their heritage.”

“There are so many positive things here and it’s making more people feel proud of the community that they live in and that they should be proud of their heritage.”

Juniper School Principal

Facilitating Cultural Proficiency

Work in Cultural Proficiency was one of a number of initiatives taking place in the school. However, because Cultural Proficiency is an inside-out approach that leads to a perspective change in both thinking and ideology, this new perspective was infused into decision-making around how to transform the school to be a truly inclusive building. In order to validate teachers’ experiences and to make the case for change, the administrative team documented where the needs were in the building. The principal said, “[We] showed it in graphs, showed it with data and so it just triggered some really good conversations, which led to the matrix is in some of the decisions that were made in terms of some of the programming that went into the school.” This evidence-based approach was critical for staff to see what was happening and to support school initiatives.

The administrators at Juniper School were a part of using the Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) approach to managing school behaviour. They used this evidence-based approach to create a behavioural matrix that supported staff-led decision-making. Behavioural matrixes were created for areas where behavioural difficulties had been identified. The last and most important common matrix created was for the classrooms. The classroom matrix has led to positive change, because the staff wanted behavioural expectations to be similar for all of them. The administrators also used assessment practices to demonstrate an achievement gap that needed remedying. This District approach works to identify individual students, classrooms, and schools that require greater support. The principal said, that in this equity-based approach, “you can fund the school differently based upon the demonstrated needs of the school compared to the other schools.”

"[Culturally proficient provides a way to] be consistent throughout the building so that we are all speaking the same language and those with the terms in the things how we built showing respect for self, others, community and for learning."

Juniper School Principal

Programs

In addition to the programs that are discussed in more detail later in this document, (winter fest, Spring Camp, Fall Camp) there are school-based initiatives at Juniper School that foster Cultural Proficiency.

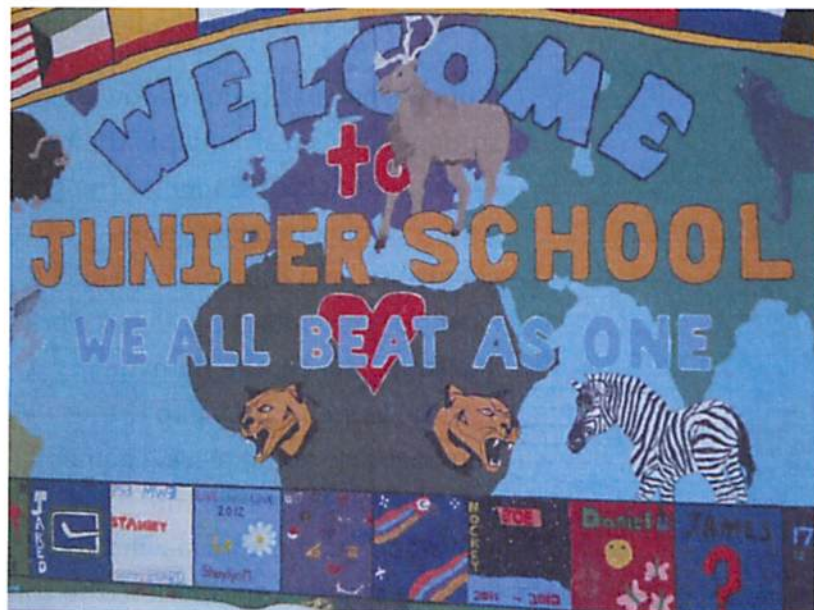
- At Juniper School, a great example of acting on a school need comes from identifying that some students are coming to school not having eaten well. The Vice-Principal said that this led to a decision to “make food available for all students...if the kids don’t want them they just say no and things go back.” This equity approach supports the needs of the school, but does not stigmatize (and further marginalize) those who may be identified as low-income students.
- Based on assessment results, an early literacy program was implemented and “has been phenomenally received,” the

principal said. The early literacy program supports growing capacity for students who may only be emerging as readers. As well, a full day kindergarten program was realized. For students who may be perceived to have less ability due to environmental and social factors (poverty, etc.), full-day kindergarten and an early literacy program work to narrow the opportunity gap.

- Juniper School also hosts a Heritage Day. The Vice-Principal said, “It was a fantastic day.... We had pancakes in the morning and every class was responsible for doing a cultural event of some sort.” The idea, similar to how other schools host culture days is to encourage and promote an exposure of various cultures. At this event, students also discussed what made family a family. They examined what made family important, looking at what made them, as individuals, important. This was a concerted effort “to become a culturally proficient multicultural school, community, and country,” the Vice-Principal said. To be culturally proficient means to “understand one another,” he also said, and gave an example of parents of a Chinese student who were teaching students how to write out their names using Chinese characters.
- Another positive initiative identified by the Principal, was the Virtues Project that was about “teaching kids to be more caring, accepting of one another, and doing things for one another.” This project started prior to Cultural Proficiency work, but dovetailed nicely into Cultural Proficiency because it is about students learning to think deeply about what it means to live a good and compassionate life. The Vice-Principal indicated that the “Virtues Project falls directly in with Cultural Proficiency in the Seven [Aboriginal] Teachings. So that’s holistic and inclusive.” The Virtues Project provided a vehicle to discuss positive behaviour, build relationships with students, and involve teachers working “with other kids across the school so that we are not just responsible for our one class of kids, we are educators of all the kids in our school,” the Principal said. The Vice-Principal said that this approach is about “trying to build a community piece so that

we build relationships with all our kids.” Sending teddy bears to underprivileged children in Africa on three separate occasions is evidence of the generosity of the children and staff within the Virtues Project.

- Student Council also has become a positive and well-attended activity at Juniper School. Finding ways for students to have voice supports a culturally proficient school experience. Several of the activities for school council have been to design a school logo and mascot.
- Another initiative at Juniper School is a School Leaving Project, where grade eight students are encouraged “to leave their positive mark on the school as a remembrance of them,” the Principal said. One example is the School Leaving Project mural. These projects involve creating and completing large school murals that become examples of student inclusion, fun, creativity and camaraderie. In the ‘We All Beat As One’ mural, the Vice Principal said that students came up with the “slogan... and the little squares [at the bottom of the mural] are each kid’s individual little piece to it.” The murals have always been about tolerance and being accepting of others.



Juniper School Leaving Project Mural

Critical conversations

Another change that took place was to create multiple ways for staff to have group-led conversations about student needs. As well as having staff meetings, the staff members at Juniper school meet by Early and Middle Years groups to talk about how to address challenges. The principal said, “by the time we get to the main meeting, everybody’s in the know so everybody can take part in the conversations that are going around the table at the time.” As well, teachers met monthly to discuss and identify a virtue activity for the next month. By creating places and spaces for teachers to have important conversations around education issues, the administrative team makes it very inclusive so that teachers have an opportunity to have voice.

Cultural Proficiency also includes gender and sexual preference as aspects of culture. In keeping with the tradition of supporting difference, Juniper School invited the Rainbow Society to provide information about how to support all students.

The Dream Conference was another piece towards Cultural Proficiency. Here, youth participated in a human rights conference in Winnipeg. The principal said, “That was actually in part funded by the Voice project because, “we’re trying to provide that safe environment for them so that they do share with the belief in standing up for others.”

Students have also moved towards student activism around the theme of Random Acts of Kindness. The goal here is to build relationships, generosity, and compassion. For example, students are going to work in a soup kitchen, the Humane Society, as well as going to the personal care home playing games with the folks there for the

afternoon. As the principal indicated, “these ideas come from the kids who are trying to give back to the community, and we’re supporting them in terms of some of those justice activities.” The school also does

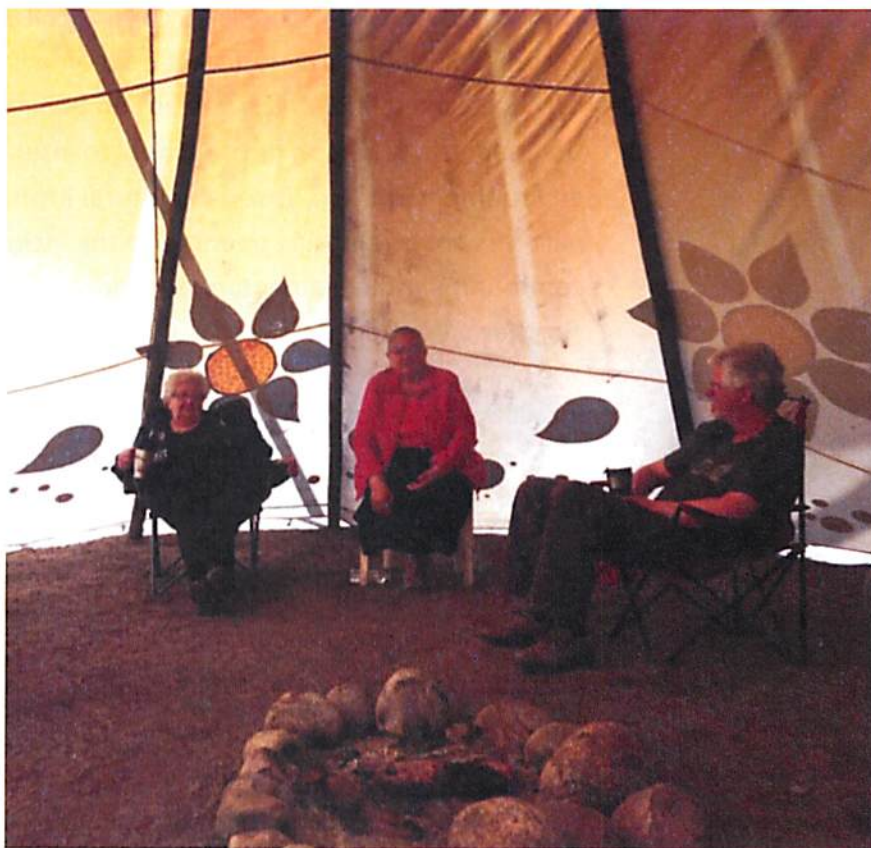
“By the time we get to the main meeting, everybody’s in the know so everybody can take part in the conversations that are going around the table at the time.”

Juniper School Principal

the yearly pink shirt day, and the anti-bullying campaigns that are typically run out of the school.

Given that Cultural Proficiency is an inside-out approach, having opportunities for important conversations with other colleagues is critical for perspective transformations. As well, dovetailing Cultural Proficiency into existing programs proved vital because it provided for staff a way to reconceive their school, as well as an opportunity to think differently about their own beliefs, values, and assumptions (episteme[s]).

University College of the North



Elders Jonasson and Neff

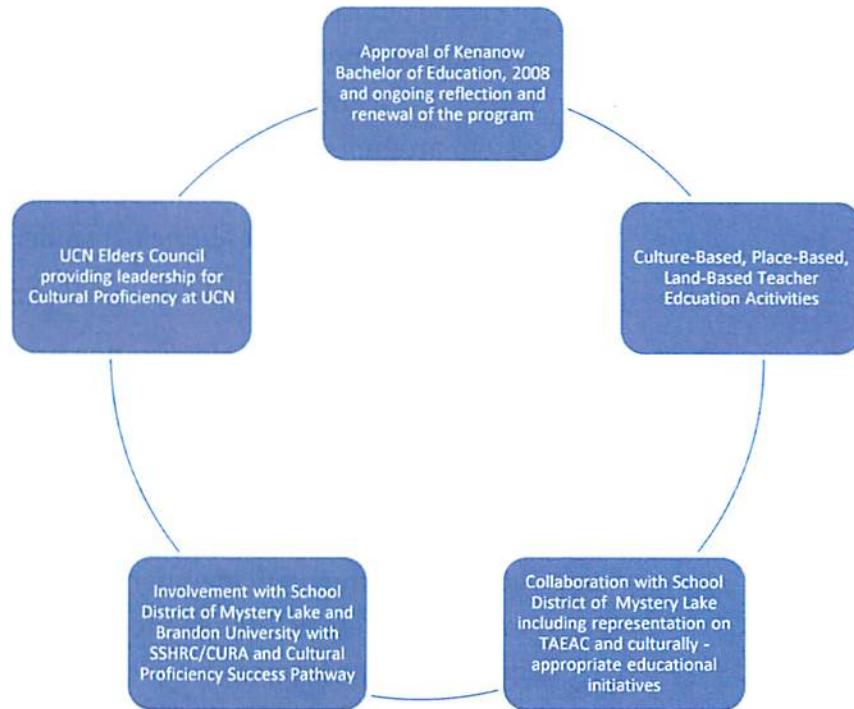
The University College of the North (UCN) Elders Council is providing leadership for the development of culturally proficient practices, procedures and policies at University College of the North. As the UCN Elders Council plots the direction for implementing Cultural Proficiency at UCN, UCN staff members, including Kenanow Bachelor

of Education program faculty members in co-operation with the Elders, continue to provide culture-based and place-based learning for prospective teachers and collaborate with the school District to co-create culturally proficient learning opportunities students, teachers, prospective teachers, administrators, and community members. As a result of this educational partnership, it is envisioned that students from kindergarten through college or university will receive a culturally proficient education.

In partnership with the School District of Mystery Lake and Brandon University, UCN seeks to address both the recruitment and retention issues that have arisen at UCN and the achievement gap for many students in northern schools. According to Lindsey, Nuri Robins, & Terrell (2003), Cultural proficiency encompasses "the policies and practices of a school or the values and behaviours at the individual level, that enable the person or the school to interact in a culturally diverse environment" (p. xix). Through Cultural Proficiency, the educational partners are attempting to enhance the inclusivity of each school community at the elementary, secondary and postsecondary levels in Northern Manitoba.

In 2008, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program was approved by Manitoba Education. With its commitment to culture-based and place-based education, this Bachelor of Education program provides opportunities for prospective teachers to integrate materials with an Aboriginal focus into Manitoba curricula, have land-based experiences and engage in service learning. Reflecting its commitment to culturally proficient education, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education faculty members have adopted Cultural Proficiency as a component of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Framework. Cultural Proficiency also is evident in the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) action plan created by the UCN Faculty of Education. The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program has been developing in a manner consistent with culturally proficient educational practices.

Figure 5. *Cultural Proficiency—UCN’s Journey.*



Source: Cultural Proficiency Working Group, 2014.

The University College of the North can also ensure our university college is focused on student needs and achievement through committing to Cultural Proficiency training for staff. University College of the North could be a partner with the School District of Mystery Lake by creating a plan for the implementation of Cultural Proficiency activities for its staff. The School District of Mystery Lake and University College of the North would be a resource for each other’s organizations. Further, a partnership with the School District of Mystery Lake has facilitated the training and implementation of Cultural Proficiency methods at University College of the North. With the leadership of the Elders’ Council to guide the implementation of Cultural Proficiency at UCN, it is anticipated that training in culturally proficient practices for faculty members and other staff will become more prevalent.

UCN faculty and staff members are participating in Cultural Proficiency activities co-ordinated by the School District of Mystery Lake. The

Cultural Proficiency activities utilize the Cultural Proficiency framework developed by Raymond D. Terrell and Randall B. Lindsey. Through culturally proficient training for all staff and the development of a multi-year plan to implement culturally proficient approaches, School District of Mystery Lake is trying to ensure that the school system attempts to meet the needs of all students. It is anticipated that Cultural Proficiency training in the District will support the focus on cultural learning for Aboriginal students and will result in higher levels of academic achievement along with improved graduation rates.

The Kenanow Bachelor of Education program, University College of the North, is involved in many joint educational and research initiatives with the School District of Mystery Lake. The work on Cultural Proficiency in the School District of Mystery Lake is a result of an ongoing collaboration among School District of Mystery Lake, Thompson community members, University College of the North, and Brandon University through the Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) research project, Social Science, and Humanities Research Council project (SSHRC). As a community circle in the VOICE project, Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Council (TAEAC) has identified youth programming, land-based activities and Cultural Proficiency as the focus for educational research and transformational change.

The co-creation of culturally proficient educational initiatives for northern Manitoba has been a collaborative process involving the school District, Thompson community, UCN, and Brandon University. Within this partnership, members have been engaged in training for the delivery of culturally proficient education. With its educational and community partners, the School District of Mystery Lake created a strategic plan to the school board for the implementation of Cultural Proficiency in its schools. Students and faculty members in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program have collaborated with District staff to provide land-based education at Mile 20 Fall Camp and Mini Winter Fest with students and teachers in the District and also for service learning opportunities in the District's schools. Additionally, teachers from the School District of Mystery Lake provide instruction in Kenanow Bachelor of Education program courses. It has also become clear that the integration of the programming based on

principles consistent with Cultural Proficiency between the School District of Mystery Lake and UCN will lead to the co-creation of more inclusive schools in northern Manitoba.

Research Summaries

School-based activities

Spring Camp

The Spring Camp happens in conjunction with the sikwan mamawewin (Spring Gathering). This camp takes place in conjunction with the time of year where summer is welcomed through various traditional Cree ceremonies hosted by Northern and Aboriginal Elders Council. This camp takes place and signifies the New Year when the tree buds come out. This is a week of various activities that meet the needs for many facets of the community. The Land-Based Education (LBE) students are involved in the setup and prep for camp. The week involves adult Cultural Awareness hands-on training, elementary and High school students learning about traditional teachings and ceremonies of the territory at this time of year from Elders, and community camps throughout the weekend with many ceremonies and traditional events hosted by local Elders. Everyone in the region is welcome to join in these events.

2012 Fall Culture Camp

This week long camp is cohosted by the SDML and UCN Kenanow Education Program. As a part of UCN Kenanow teaching program, the pre-service teachers go through the process of learning how to set up and plan a traditional experiential learning camp for kids and at the same time camp themselves and experience hands-on learning and teachings from various Elders in an effort to help them become more effective and well-rounded teachers. The day camp activities are targeted for grade 5 students within the District to support the social studies curriculum learning outcomes.

SDML Teachers from Grade 5 attending Fall Camp

In the fall of 2012, Grade 5 classes travelled out to Mile 20 to spend the day learning from Elders and other teachers. Through a questionnaire, we asked teachers to reflect on their experience seven months later in order to understand how they connected the Fall Camp experience to curriculum outcomes, and to find out what they were thinking and doing differently as a result of their learning.

The first question was: "What learning did you see happening for your students during that day?" Teachers provided a number of significant insights that focused around the themes of character building, appreciating Aboriginal perspectives and developing new skills. Teachers mentioned how students were connecting to their culture and connecting to new people. Because the teaching was not done in school, students saw what they were learning as providing real life lessons. Students were able to practice virtues they were learning in school and take home lessons acquired at camp that were new and interesting. Because the learning was "Hands-on! Tangible! Physical! Engaging! Fun! [it was] A hit for visual learners, auditory learners, naturalist intelligence, kinesthetic learners. One teacher wrote of the Fall Camp experience:

I observed [students] listening. They paid attention to the presenters and gave the respect expected by the presenters. There was one that comes to mind; where the students respecting what a presenter said about a rock choosing you, and your choosing it. The rock that I have sits on my desk undisturbed. The students learned positive experiences; they spoke about the survival techniques that could possibly be used during different seasons, or what type of Land you were on. Relates exactly with the [Social Studies] curriculum on the researching of other cultures and

*"Hands-on! Tangible!
Physical! Engaging!
Fun! [it was] A hit for:
Visual learners
Auditory learners
Naturalist intelligence
Kinesthetic learners."*

Grade 5 teacher

where they are. Even though we teachers thought about not having control of our students and had fears about how they would behave, we had nothing to worry about. There was a strong feeling of commitment and respect.

Teachers cited that one of the benefits of the experience was learning about Aboriginal culture. The students learned about “ceremonies, teepee teachings, history (story telling), medicine, outdoors survival, sweet grass, and making bannock on a stick.” As well, there was a focus on skills needed to survive in the North, such as fire building, survival strategies and medicines for healing that are available in the bush. What was equally important was the time spent valuing the contributions of Aboriginal people and their culture. Elders were great role models and passed down quite a bit of knowledge through their stories.

Learning about Aboriginal culture and history was a part of the camp and “students were so interested in hearing the stories from the past—residential schools, etc. Fire building—students who often struggle in school were able to shine—many of them had prior knowledge.” One teacher spoke about the value for all students that occurs from connecting to one’s identity, encouraging all students to take pride in who they are.

“I observed [students] listening. They paid attention to the presenters and gave the respect expected by the presenters.

Grade 5 teacher

The second question was: “Where has that learning reappeared throughout the past months in their classroom assignments or discussions?” Teachers were clearly able to connect the Fall Camp to classroom instruction. They found ways to make both types of learning relevant, meaningful, and respectful. Because the power of the statements made by the teachers and to provide evidence on how inclusive these approaches are, an abbreviated version of their responses follow for this question:

- Helped me have ‘resources’ to draw on in engaging students in a positive way.

- The kids all want to go back. Health = medicine/to be healthy with plants. Social Studies: When we talked about residential schools, they bring up the storytellers experience at Mile 20.
- Students reflect on Mile 20 very often. I have my screen saver (which students see every day) as a picture of Mile 20, our whole class standing, soaked to the bone! They love this picture and somehow always seem to talk about it. I feel most of the learning that we've brought back to the classroom is mostly the bond/relationship that was built. Students with each other and myself with students. It was FUN, kids learn when they have fun. The memories are cherished.
- Some of the ideas or points from the workshops have been discussed by the students during the many lessons that we have had in class. Nutrition comes to mind when we discussed eating balanced meals to stay healthy. They wondered how people living off the Land would achieve this. Brainstorming for ideas and what knowledge they have which was a good time for them to do research of foods availability. Researching what foods they could gather to achieve the nutrition required. Also able to share the first Nations Food Guide, and trade comparisons to the Canada Food Guide and discovered that it wasn't that different after all.
- Did novel *Spirit of the White Bison* in Canadian History as it pertains to Aboriginal Culture.
- Often recall plants and medicines info—"wihkes" has appeared in more than one story/discussion throughout the year. When studying First Peoples this year, we often referred to our Mile 20 experiences. We had a morning recap where we divided the day into categories and posted chart paper throughout the room. Students had a marker and walked around writing comments about each experience. It was dead silent in my room for over an hour as we did this activity.
- The shared experience of Mile 20 between students and teachers has helped stimulate discussion on the topics and related materials.

- The learning has reappeared in our social studies learning on the fur trade, residential schools, and treaty relations. I also tied it into an art project.
- Students are still, all these months later, able to make connections with something that they learned or that happened at Mile 20. Many connections were made between experiences during Winter Fest and Mile 20.

When asked about “What aspects from the Fall Camp would teachers be able to bring back with them to class?”, they responded with a desire to do so and indicated that there were many areas that could be developed. Of most significance is that teachers believed that they would be able to connect what they were learning to the curriculum (with support) and that they would be able to bring back a very positive experience. One teacher stated that the experience “has been a trampoline; ideas, feelings, memories, are often brought up.” As well as learning “respect for each other and respect for everything around us,” another teacher mentioned the value of the bonding experiences we had with each other helped to build a community feel in my classroom. We used our experiences to do several language arts activities – we wrote books detailing the day. These also serve as a memory for students. Personally, I have learned so much about the history and culture in this area, which has given me more confidence when teaching my students about Aboriginal culture.

Teachers also provided insight into how the experience could be strengthened. One teacher wrote about the group working on this project that “you’re all tremendous advocates and you’re doing fantastic things for our kids and community!” Another teacher indicated that more time with the memory bags beforehand and there could also be time set aside for teachers to spend at Mile 20 without students. Another teacher mentioned that it would be of value “for a presenter to come in and explain what land-based education is.” Teachers also thought that there would be value in brainstorming curricular connections as a group and providing activities to extend the student learning. A teacher mentioned the value in continuing learning about tobacco etiquette beforehand, and positive recognition for pre-teaching for students about Aboriginal perspectives, and about

what the day would look like. Teachers also felt that it would be beneficial to make more connections back to the curriculum, as well as further clarification on the memory bags. Teachers also felt that more history about Mile 20 would be helpful.

Mini-Winter Festival

In March of each year, elementary schools host 2 days of school-wide planned events in an effort to promote and learn about traditional Cree/Northern activities that take place during the winter season. During this time students have an opportunity to learn traditional skills from local Elders and land experts, such as animal skinning, pemmican making, trapping techniques, jigging, moccasin making, and dog sledding. They also get to compete with one another at some of these traditional skills like snowshoeing, log hauling, moose calling, trap setting, snow snake toss, and beading to try to be King and Queen trappers of their school. All of these activities are hands on and involve local experts from the community and surrounding region to promote Northern and Aboriginal culture.

"It's a really fun day.... The kids love it..."
Middle Years teacher

School District of Mystery Lake Teachers attending Mini-Winter Festival (2014)

What follows are the results of 49 Questionnaires given to practicing SDML teachers following Mini Winter Fests at schools in 2014. SDML elementary school principals were each given sufficient copies of this survey for each member of their staff and asked to hand them out during the staff meetings following Mini Winter Fest activities at their schools. Forty-seven anonymous surveys and two signed surveys were returned and were read for particular reference to assessment of increased cultural learning on the part of both students and teachers.

Question 1: Which of the MWF activities related directly to curriculum covered in your classroom? Please be specific when describing the relationship and list as many as may apply.

While 48/49 respondents indicated that Mini Winter Fest was a positive experience for their students, many did not specifically identify the requested connections in Question 1 between the MWF activities and curriculum taught. This was a disappointing result of the survey as it had been hoped that once those specific connections had been suggested further resources could be developed for classroom delivery. Those that did respond fully to this question identified the following:

- Aboriginal activities such as sports : Grade 2 Social Studies; Grade 8 Health
- Plants & Medicines : Grade 3 Science Unit on Plants
- Measurement of pelts and estimation in trapping: Grade 3 Math
- Igloo Building: Grade 2 Social Studies
- All activities could be incorporated into all levels of ELA
- Structures and materials: Grade 3/4 Math and Social Studies
- Drumming: K-6 Music curriculum
- Elements of culture: Grade 4 Social Studies; Grade 6 Citizenship
- Elders and story-telling: Grade 4 Social Studies and ELA
- Bannock making: All level Healthy Eating
- Winter survival: All level Science
- Carving: All level Art



Making Bannock

When answering this question several respondents commented on the importance of Aboriginal and/or Northern students being able to demonstrate their prior knowledge or skills in the events at MWF, stressing that this often contributed to student enjoyment of the day and to pride in their abilities and/or knowledge of culture.

Question 2: How did you prepare your students for the activities in which they would engage during MWF?

While some teachers responded to this question by saying that they directed their students to dress warmly, treat people respectfully, and generally behave themselves, 19 surveys showed that formal discussion of culture and tradition had taken place prior to the event. The length of time spent in this discussion period varied from two units already taught that focused on MWF material to 10 minutes on the day before the event was held. Three respondents cited time constraints as limiting the amount of discussion possible. Interestingly, three respondents reported that their students had initiated discussion about MWF events prior to the event date and in these cases anticipation and enthusiasm were reportedly higher than average within the class.

Question 3: How will you follow-up on MWF activities in your classroom? Again, please be specific.

Journaling as a method of remembering what was done during MWF, was reported by several teachers, as well as follow-up discussions in the classroom. Questions such as, "What was your favourite activity?" were asked by some, while others asked younger students to draw pictures of what they had seen and learned.

Twenty-two of the respondents answered this question by saying that they had created specific lessons around the activities and materials provided during MWF. The majority of these lessons were in the Science and Math curriculum areas, but there were also lessons created in Phys.Ed, Social Studies, Art and ELA.

Only 2 people reported that they had done no follow-up activities after MWF.

Question 4: What would help you incorporate more of what students learn during MWF activities into your classroom teaching?

Answers to this question fell into three defined categories: (1) more information to teachers prior to MWF event regarding workshops available; (2) more time during the school year to develop resources for curriculum integration; and (3) ongoing sharing of lessons developed by other teachers. One respondent also suggested MWF team meetings to share material and resources between schools.

These suggestions regarding further resources mirror those of the preceding interviewees. When reading the comments and questionnaire answers it is apparent that there is a general desire to incorporate more cultural material into classroom curriculum delivery, but a reticence on the part of many teachers to proceed without further guidance and/or collaboration.

Grade 8-9 Transition Camp

Many students tend to fall through the cracks and drop out when they move from their elementary schools to the high school and the District has attempted to address this challenge in many different ways. One such effort is to take grade 8 students from all six elementary schools

and as well as some grade 9 students (mentors) out on the Land (in the Spring close to year end) where they will have an opportunity to learn about traditional Cree and Northern culture, meet students from other schools in a natural setting where they have to interact in respectful ways and learn how to work together in a camp setting. This camp is set up as a two day event. The first day is for learning from the Elders and traditional teachers as well as activities targeted to help get to know one another in a variety of ways on the Land. The second day focuses on what students need and want to know when they get to the high school in order to be successful. Small mini sessions with the high school principal, councillors, grade 9 teachers, and the mentor students do this. At this time there is a plan made for students to connect with their mentors the following September so that they can stay connected and help one another.

Transition Camp from Grade 8 to Grade 9 in 2013

One challenge faced by students in SDML was the transition between Grade 8 and Grade 9. As a result of conversations about narrowing the achievement gap was to implement a transition camp. This camp was developed in response to thinking about what could be done differently to ensure more academic success for all learners. Four grade 8 classes from different elementary schools, and eight Grade 9 students from the high school were included in the Transition Camp that would take place at Mile 20. Mile 20 was chosen because it was felt that 'the Land grounds you,' particularly if you are an at-risk learner. A number of activities take place during the two days to build relationships between students who will be attending Grade 9, the administration and staff, and between other students who have already successfully transitioned to Grade 9. As well, there are also structured times during the two days to talk about what it takes to be successful in high school and where to go for academic and emotional support. Elders were in attendance. On the first day students are mixed into seven different groups. Together they participate in learning activities hosted by Elders and local experts about connections to the Land and on Cree culture.

Parents were invited to attend since their children would be attending R. D. Parker Collegiate in the fall. In 2013, five students from Teulon, a

teacher and parent attended the Transition camp. At the end of the two days there was a circle where the students could share their experiences. Students indicated that they were glad that they got to meet other students and learn lots about Aboriginal culture. In the fall, arrangements are made for this transition group to come together at RD Parker High School.

Students provided statements about the camp and their experience attending it. One student said “I thought camping was really fun, and it was a great experience. The camp took place at Mile 20, I’ve never been there before. Before going on the trip, I thought it was going to be boring and a waste of time. I ended up having fun and meeting new people.” The idea of having fun at the camp was a very common sentiment. For example,

another student said, “I went camping at Mile 20, I thought it was going to be boring, but I had loads of fun there. I met some new friends there.

[Camping at Mile 20 was] Really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really fun.”

The students enjoyed the activities like rock painting, teepee teaching, making

bannock, and the meals. There were mixed reviews about staying overnight, but in general, the students appreciated the opportunity to be together and learn together, so that they could be successful in Grade 9. One student observed, “The teachers thought we would act up out there but all the students weren’t acting up at all. The best part was when we all sat around the campfire drumming and singing. (Why?) Because I come from a family who is really traditional, and I’ve been drumming and singing since I was just a young boy.”

“I thought camping was really fun, and it was a great experience. The camp took place at Mile 20, I’ve never been there before. Before going on the trip, I thought it was going to be boring and a waste of time. I ended up having fun and meeting new people.”

Grade 8 Student

Teulon Teacher and Parent Attending Transition Camp 2013

During the Spring Camp, several teachers from a different school division attended, as did parents of students who were participating. They were interviewed to learn about what they thought about the Spring Camp and have been analyzed to provide insight into their perspectives on the value of such a camp. One of the most important features that they recognized about the camp was “the impact it had on some of the kids that are not going to be the big success stories in the traditional school system.” A teacher said that those kids “just blossomed out here.” The sharing circle that was a part of the Spring Camp was a place where they shone, since it was a powerful place to tell their story. One person said that this would help the student successfully transition to Grade 9. Several people commented on how well the students took care of the space; picking up the garbage and making sure they left Mile 20 as they found the space. The students were very respectful and cooperative at Mile 20.

It was clear that the participants felt that “the teachings really impacted [the students attending the camp] as the importance of having Elders at the camp was mentioned by all of the participants. One participant said, “I noticed there were Elders sitting around the campfire. That was something I didn’t expect. It kind of touched me.” One participant indicated that seeing the Elders working with all of the students at the camp proved to be a transformative experience. He said:

I wanted to cry walking...having to see the Elders all sitting together, and they know it. They know it...they know they’re being watched, they know that. And it’s a good feeling, it would be a good feeling because I felt it...I don’t know if other people have that same experience? It’s not the same feeling when you go back in my community. You only see a few [Elders], maybe three, four at the most, but having all the Elders in one area... and having them in one place, they...there is no need to say anything, because it’s all there. You just experience it. And that’s...that’s what I felt today. I wanted to cry, but I have to be strong, I wanted to go back and shake everybody’s hand, all the Elders, and that’s what I had as a feeling.

One theme that emerged was how there was deep learning taking place at the Fall Camp. Students were really looking past cultural differences to see individuals. One participant said, "That this was one of the first times when I've just felt the humanness. That everyone was a human there, and there wasn't that line that said, 'no you don't know anything because you're not, you're not Aboriginal'." All of the participants spoke that the human experience was the bigger part of this whole thing than anything else." Things were different at this camp as a participant says:

I know where my limits are as a non-Aboriginal person, but so many times you go to events, and if you don't know the proper protocol or someone, something, and somebody's on you right away...and I've always felt well that's part of the learning journey for me. To be on the other side, and feel... to walk in somebody else's shoes for a while and not be the majority, to be the minority...but it was different this time. It was so different. I don't know it was just a completely different feeling for me.

There was a strong sense of inclusion at the Spring Camp: "You come in, you walk in... as soon as you walk in everybody is smiling at each other, and which is a good feeling." The events and teachings flowed naturally. As one participant said, "everything kind of gradually takes its place, and everybody was accepted."

One of the participants, a teacher from Teulon indicated, "there's not a word that describes how deep it went with things. It's not just I feel better; I feel happy; I feel guided." She wants to recreate the same feeling that was present at this camp. When we go back with another group of kids the same thing that these kids felt: "That same sense of being who they are, and that it's fine, it's perfect, and it's part of their journey." She felt the students "changed in front of our eyes. I said to one of them walking up the path, 'you grew into your skin today. Like you just grew into who you were supposed to be'." She was so taken with what was going on that they wanted to know "how do we duplicate that?" The participant wanted to replicate what they saw going on to support the kids and the community at Mile 20. Another participant said "I feel...empowered going back, I feel recharged and able to say yeah...we can make this happen."

Community Member Interview

Felix Spence, Apprenticeship Branch Advisor with the Government of Manitoba, was interviewed in May 2014 as to his views regarding what Aboriginal students needed from an educational setting. His first comments centered on the need for teachers to develop relationships with students before trying to teach them. Throughout the interview he consistently refers to those teachers he had when he was young who made an effort to get to know him and his friends. He cites examples of teachers who shared their knowledge of gardening outside of school hours, and those who spent their weekends prepping the students for exams.

From a cultural point of view Felix speaks about the difficulty he faced when transitioning from his smaller home community to a larger center to attend school. Once again, relationship features heavily in his responses as he remembers meeting teachers at his new school who encouraged him and who invested energy and time in getting to know his background and his strengths.

Now, as an advisor to Aboriginal youth, he stresses that relationship forming is again the key ingredient to their success. Seeing both teaching and advising as mentoring roles, he states that when young people come from their communities, they need someone who understands their circumstances, but who will also hold them accountable and instill in them a sense of pride in accomplishment.

Felix believes that one way to improve teacher-student relationships would be to ensure that every teacher coming to teach in the North has an orientation before they are expected to commit to a job. He says, "I found they were not orientated at all. They were not prepared. They applied for a position ... and so they show up and they get this rude awakening. They don't even get a tour of the school. So orientation would probably be big for selecting the teachers and/or teachers deciding to stay. They should be prepared ahead of time". If an orientation program was begun, perhaps Cultural Proficiency training could be a part of that preparation?

University College of the North (UCN) Pre-service Teacher Interviews

Video and audio recorded interviews were conducted with practicing School District of Mystery Lake teachers and Kenanow Pre-Service teachers, who had experienced Cultural Proficiency training through several venues: all those interviewed from both groups had attended Fall Camp at Mile 20 at least once, although several had attended multiple times in various roles (as pre-service teacher, practicing teacher, and/or community member). Four of those interviewed had also attended Spring Transition Camp. Each interviewee had also experienced at least one Mini-Winter Fest, with the majority having experienced two or more of these events. It was decided to treat interviews from both

practicing teachers and pre-service teachers as one data set as training experiences and roles played were very similar. A differentiation was made when practicing teachers spoke about resources needed and this will be noted further on.

All interviewees agreed to be identified by name.

From these 22 interviews, two major and three minor themes emerged (major and minor determined by frequency of mention during interview). The two major themes deal with transformational experiences:

1. Recognition of student engagement in cultural activities and pride in culture, including improved behavior.

I was tied to one student who has had a lot of issues in the classroom, and it was really neat to know how much of her culture she knew. She knew what all the medicines were, she knew how they were used, she knew $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Elders out there, and she talked about making bannock with her Kokum. Those were all things that blew me away because I had never seen that side of her in the classroom. She is usually very closed off and so it was really, really neat to have that interaction with her outside of the classroom.

Jaynie Burnell, Resource Teacher,
after Mile 20 Fall Camp

2. Personal and professional growth and change in perspective, including development of relationship with Elders and younger students.

The next three themes identify the practical aspects of incorporating Cultural Proficiency into classroom practice on a regular basis:

1. opportunities for increased community involvement in student learning;
2. opportunities for incorporating culturally proficient material into classroom curriculum delivery; and
3. need for further resources (practicing teachers).

Recognition of student engagement in cultural activities and pride in culture, including improved behaviour:

Throughout the interviews, both practicing teachers and pre-service teachers frequently commented on the heightened level of engagement evidenced by students in culturally proficient activities and the difference in behaviour that was seen. Due to the nature of these activities, and the fact that most have been conducted while students and teachers are together on the Land, there has been an extended time period in which to observe student behaviour, a chance to have a more 'rounded' idea of student interest and personality. One of the most moving examples of this came from a pre-service teacher who had prior experience as an EA with a behaviour class student. Amanda Stillie told this story:

The most profound experience I had at Mile 20 was when I was working as an EA with a student from (a community) who was living in a foster home in Thompson. He was a runner, wouldn't speak, very traumatized by his experience and disconnected, didn't want to relate to anyone, and in class it was a real struggle ... when we went to Mile 20 (as Kenanow students), his class ended up being one of the classes that came out ... he was a behaviour student, but you would never have been able to tell. At the end of the day ... Ron (Cook) asked if any one of the students wanted to say anything and this kid ... who wouldn't speak, wouldn't stand up in front of the class, stepped out from the circle and thanked the Elder. That was huge. To see how at home he

felt. He felt like he belonged. Not shy. Connected to his culture. It was pretty amazing”.

The observation that students became more animated, more engaged, and more willing to become involved in learning was repeated in many anecdotes. Teacher Melissa Fay reported that in a situation with which she was unfamiliar (Mile 20), her students were thrilled to be able to teach her about their traditions and that they did so with an element of detailed explanation that surprised her. Charity Cooper, a Kenanow student, when commenting on students listening to Elder teachings, says, “And they were really into it. I couldn’t identify and child or student at the time to be a behaviour problem. Everybody was participating”.

Several interviewees acknowledged their surprise that the traditional activities demonstrated to elementary school students during the cultural activities held their attention despite not having electronic or digital ‘aids’. According to teacher Jaynie Burnell:

One of our little (behaviour identified) boys had the best questions for the story-teller, and he shook his head the whole time. There were times when I thought ‘OK, she is going to lose them’ because she was taking about Residential Schools, and those kind of things. These are Grade 5 students and I wondered how involved in it they could be. But all of them took it in. You could have heard a pin fall in the tent. It was really good.

In another section of the interview, she captures the essence of what was reported by so many other when she states, “It gave the children who are kind of labelled at our school an opportunity to have a fresh start”. This opportunity for a fresh start apparently applied not only to those students who had been seen to be disruptive or have difficulty learning, but also to those who had recently arrived in Thompson from other cultures. Kenanow student Athlene Ashton, herself a new Canadian, remembers a Spanish family who told her after being at Mile 20 that for the first time since coming to Canada they had “found their thing” in the way culture was honoured. There appeared for them to be an inclusiveness about the way Cree culture was explained that honoured all traditional teachings and beliefs. Athene’s sense was

that through their Mile 20 experience the children in this family felt empowered to share their own culture and ethnic background.

These examples given of increased student engagement, willingness to participate, and improved behavior, are some of the most obvious that were reported during the interviews. All but one of those interviewed commented to some extent on these issues. (The one interview which did not specifically identify student growth or development was not negative towards those areas, but rather focused more definitively on personal growth.)

Personal and professional growth and change in perspective, including development of relationship with Elders and younger students:

Not only did those practicing teachers and Kenanow students that were interviewed identify a change in the level of engagement and attitude of the elementary students who attended culturally proficient teachings and events, everyone interviewed commented on the degree of personal change they had experienced through their own participation.

Interestingly, this change and growth was reported across three distinct sub-groups that emerged of interviewees: (1) those who had been brought up within Aboriginal culture, or who had previously had wide exposure to it; (2)

"I've grown a lot from these experiences as well as an Aboriginal woman. I'm Dene, but I think that learning about the Cree still fills a part of my soul for me and I am sure that others who are not of Cree ancestry feel the same. Just being there and hearing the language and feeling that [w]holistic vibe is great."

Ursula Ellis, Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program.



those to whom Aboriginal culture was new; and (3) new Canadians who had recently arrived in Thompson.

Jennifer Williams, a Kenanow student at the time of the interview says:

[As Aboriginal students] we found a sense of belonging because I know for myself that I grew up on the Land when I was small and it took me back to those times and especially times with Elders. It was just like sitting amongst my relatives and remembering that time so fondly ... I just kind of sit there and I take all the information that [the Elders] have and it's just like the old days. That's how we used to learn ... so we tell [Aboriginal students] that this is part of who we are as Aboriginal people.

She goes on to say how this will affect her teaching, stating many of the same things as Jamie Throop when he says, "I think knowing more about my own culture will help me build those relationships with my students when I do get a job in (community), because then I will know where they are coming from and I'm not getting in there and faking it". Terry Mowat, from the same community says, "I found talking to the Elders very supportive for my own self ... it gave me a better perspective on how I can help myself teach my students in practicum". And Charity Cooper, who grew up in the Cree community of Cross Lake, describes the experience as "reliving my Cree culture". She took her newborn fourth child out to Mile 20 in order that the little one could sense the goodness and wholeness out there. Heather Saskowski, a non-Aboriginal Kenanow student who was born and raised in Northern Manitoba, looks forward to being able to use her experience in the classroom. "It will give a background to everything that we (Northerners) do and explain to kids why we do it and where we come from".

For other interviewees the experience of being exposed to Aboriginal cultural teachings was brand new. Katy Jarvis, teacher in Thompson from Ontario, acknowledged that the whole experience was new to her, but says "It was wonderful" and enabled her to see her Northern and Aboriginal students in a whole different way.

Amanda Stillie spoke of profound personal change:

I had no idea what I was getting into and when we first arrived (at Mile 20) it was kind of overwhelming because I have kids and it's hard to imagine going away. I was kind of hesitant to take part, but learned very quickly that I belonged and felt very welcome on the Land and with the Elders and the other students. Sadly, growing up in Ontario (I don't know if it was just my education or in general) I had never heard of the existence of residential schools until I moved here and my first really in depth conversation happened in the sharing circle in the teepees. The first day of camp ended with me bawling my eyes out in front of all the Elders and the Elders who had just shared their horrific experiences of being in residential schools were comforting me.

It gave me a chance to learn a lot more about our history in regards to our connection with Aboriginal people, First Nations people. In my practicum I had a chance to teach about residential schools and have come a long way from having known nothing about them to being able to talk for two full periods at the high school, nonstop, trying to cram it all into two periods and I was able to share with the students that yes, I didn't know anything about it and that was okay because I learned and that it was such a well-kept secret I guess from the government or society. We're so ashamed. I had one forty five minutes away, in Sault St. Marie that I'd known nothing about and ... there's one in Spanish, Ontario, so forty five minutes the other way. I learned about what a wonderful resource the Elders are through Mile Twenty and other things that we've done at UCN.

After detailing his experience and his delight with seeing elementary school students become proud of their culture, Kenanow student Brodie Martin summed up his feelings towards Cultural Proficiency training on the Land by saying, "It was an amazing experience I am so grateful that I had".

Three of those interviewed were recent immigrants to Canada and their reactions to learning Cultural Proficiency through these experiences was very interesting. Maria Regero, from the Philippines, says:

I am also grateful for having talked with Elders because I learned a lot of culture and tradition, especially in this area ... I have to learn this, even though we have our own (in the Philippines), and some are very similar... I was able to experience this and then, doing it as a teacher now, some students are already asking what I know ... I was grateful to do it”.

Maria reported in a separate conversation that she has since felt much more at home in a classroom with many Aboriginal students as she can tailor teaching material to their history and culture.



Bannock Girl

Unnati Patel, from India, echoes the sense of acceptance when she says:

I was called ‘Bannock Girl’ by some Elders and it was so good to be with them all the time and to listen to their stories... they are the people who belong to Canada and I would rather say that learning about this culture is very respectful. I really respect this culture.

Unnati said she brings the teachings she learned into her classroom, as does Athlene Ashton, from Jamaica, who summed up her experience by saying, “Mile 20 somehow made me feel at home...”. She stressed the fact that both in her homeland and at Mile 20 the forming of

community relationships were what made learning happen. This relational aspect of teaching is consistent with traditional teaching methodology and models a culturally proficient pedagogy. Dana Mader, SDML administrator, has the last word in this section on personal and professional transformation, "... (you) need to get into (the children's) hearts, and then connect with them, THEN you can start true teaching".

Bonnie Rempel, another SDML administrator, addresses the fear that some teachers might have about taking part in Cultural Proficiency training at events such as camps:

When I decided to go I cried and I laughed, and I felt such a peaceful feeling. It's so beautiful. What I loved out there, is that they don't force a certain belief, or a certain Aboriginal culture. What they decided is to take all cultures and embrace them all, which I thought was beautiful ...I think everyone should have this experience.

And you know, with community involvement (in the teaching of students) it leads to other things in the community, right? It builds that circle.

Alex White, SDML Teacher

Opportunities for increased community involvement in student learning:

A recurring insight from many of those interviewed, was the importance of including community members in the teaching of young students ... another example reflective of traditional pedagogy. Melissa Fay talks about inviting guest speakers into her classroom, while Sherri Porth recounts how good it was for her students to recognize from Mile 20 a woman who came to teach about medicines in the school. In both cases students in the class were respectful and engaged as they learned.

Katy Jarvis and Alex White both have parents of children in their classrooms who are ready and willing to come in and teach from a cultural background. Naming several community members who are

also available to come in and teach, Katy and Alex speak about how quiet and genuinely interested students become in such a situation. They report that students are proud to have someone they know come into the classroom, or come to a cultural activity such as Mini Winter Fest, and demonstrate traditional knowledge.

For Science teacher Bonny Sousa, the whole notion of networking and having her students exposed to as many community members as possible, was a goal towards which she was working. Building networks with community experts and Aboriginal and Northern cultural teachers in order to facilitate a community approach to learning is a vital component in creating a more diverse learning experience for all her students, she thinks. As well, Bonny cites examples of better attendance and a great leap forward in problem solving skills when her high school students are challenged with real life situations. In her opinion this will create lifelong learners and inspire her students to ask questions and approach community members as resource people in their lives. This is another way of expressing the widening of the circle, to which Maria Regero referred.

Several of those interviewed spoke of the need to involve community members in the celebration of learning within a classroom. They mentioned both sports and academic events which could be turned into community feasts and parties, both of which would further the ties between school and community and highlight student achievement community wide.

Opportunities for incorporating culturally proficient material into classroom curriculum delivery

When curriculum delivery was mentioned during all the interviews, it was agreed that there were many opportunities to change content, examples, diagrams, and material choices to reflect culturally appropriate material. Several of those interviewed said that before their own exposure they had not considered the need to go through this process carefully. Katy Jarvis, who had a Kenanow student in her classroom on a practicum placement, was surprised and pleased when that student teacher revised Math problems to reflect a Northern and Aboriginal environment and perspective.

To be teaching (students) about traditional ways of being and knowing, especially Aboriginal students who need that sense of identity. We can somehow as educators instill that sense of pride that they so desperately need because there are so many factors turning them away from their culture.

Jennifer Williams, Kenanow Pre-Service Teacher

The overall consensus was that having had various training experiences in Cultural Proficiency, both practicing teachers and Kenanow pre-service teachers would be more aware of the material used within their classrooms and would strive to incorporate culturally appropriate material both in their own teaching and by bringing in community members to share their knowledge and expertise.

Note: During the time period in which these interviews were conducted, the Thompson Community Circle had also employed a graduate student in The Pas to revise elementary school curriculum shared by the Yukon Education Authority. This curriculum is culturally appropriate and several of those interviewed were looking forward to having that document available in order to build on the content and further incorporate culturally relevant material into their own teaching.

Need for further resources (practicing teachers)

The final practical theme to emerge from this set of interviews was that of a need for further training and classroom resources that would promote Cultural Proficiency. Practicing teachers expressed the desire for further training in order to eliminate the fear that they would teach students either inappropriate or inaccurate material. Several expressed a sense of growing confidence that would increase with more professional development. It was suggested that time set aside for learning and networking was needed if classrooms were to truly become diverse and teachers were to become able to reflect the cultural diversity of students within their classrooms in their lesson planning.

Community outreach also takes time, as does sustained parent communication and planning. In order to accomplish these changes in classroom routine and program development there was a suggestion of a Cultural Proficiency team being formed whose focus it would be to initiate and co-ordinate more events, as well as bringing together resources and facilitating network of community members. It was recognized by two of those interviewed that many of these jobs are now done by the office of the Cultural Co-coordinator at the School District of Mystery Lake. It was considered that this might be too big a task for one person, especially if the goal of every child seeing themselves reflected somewhere in the curriculum was to be attained.

Community workshop

Aboriginal Accord partners training responses

On September 5th, 2013, partners in the Aboriginal Accord participated in a workshop about Cultural Proficiency. A summary of the participant comments provides evidence of the value of the workshop included what they learned, what they wanted to learn more about, and suggestions for future workshops.

One of the items that a participant indicated, was that the workshop supported their personal growth to becoming more open-minded and positive towards different cultures. Participants learned to identify with sameness and to appreciate cultural differences. There was also the recognition that the City of Thompson was working hard to embrace diversity. Individuals also claimed their place in rethinking difference through the inside-out approach.

Participants indicated that they would like to know more about how organizations are changing in order to embrace the reality of what Thompson is becoming. In addition to wanting to know about future directions, a number of participants indicated that they wanted to understand more about the diverse histories and cultures around the region and what they could do on a daily basis to address racism and discrimination. Several participants wanted a more focused approach on supporting those in the workplace and to address workplace issues. As well, participants indicated that they wanted to understand the mechanisms that maintain oppression in general.

A common suggestion was to provide more workshops. Participants indicated that the training was helpful and that the facilitation was positive. As well, a suggestion was to provide more education about how the dominant culture 'got to be that way' and more local examples, so that everyone could have a better appreciation of one another. Those who commented all enjoyed the workshop and found it beneficial.

Research Summary

The School District of Mystery Lake, along with UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program, was the focus of this Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway. The perspectives of the community and the University College provide context and support for the success pathway. Although this research summary does not examine work done prior to the research, it is important to note that there was a coming together of the City of Thompson, University College of the North, and the School District of Mystery Lake in the Cultural Proficiency journey, prior to when the success pathway began that was conducive to community change. Therefore, part of the success of Cultural Proficiency in SDML comes through the work done by the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy (TUAS) through the creation of the Thompson Aboriginal Accord. The Thompson Aboriginal Accord is a landmark agreement that was helpful in moving culturally proficiency forward, in that it created the impetus to think in new ways that supported diversity. The Thompson Aboriginal Accord and those who created it have been a part of creating a supportive environment for Cultural Proficiency work in Thompson. Another part of the initial and ongoing success of this pathway has been the strong and collaborative partnership between the University College of the North and the School District of Mystery Lake. This research is congruent with the Association of Canadian Deans' of Education Accord on Indigenous Education. The community-based research component was facilitated through the Vital Outcomes Indicators of Community Engagement (VOICE), a University College of the North-Brandon University SSHRC research alliance.

The Cultural Proficiency initiatives that are taking place in the School District of Mystery Lake largely reflect the social and economic realities of the community. To this end, there is an emphasis on working towards

creating greater equity for Aboriginal community members and students. As well, at the school level, there are some initiatives that support the intersectionalities of difference, and include provincial and other school initiatives with minoritized student groups.

Administrative Perspective

Cultural Proficiency has provided a shared perspective within the District and the schools for the co-creation of a positive path toward greater equity. At the District and school levels, the practices, procedures, and policies are linked to developing and implementing initiatives that enhance the educational opportunities for all students. Rather than viewing diversity as a barrier to academic success, diversity is celebrated and is becoming the foundation for higher levels of academic achievement and engagement of school and District community members.

The senior administrator involved in this success pathway has a keen awareness of what Cultural Proficiency is and the obstacles that can obstruct implementation. As well, the senior administrator focused on some organizational change opportunities—including institutional and pedagogical change. All of these changes examined the achievement gap and worked to lessen it. Part of the work of Cultural Proficiency is to demonstrate the achievement gap and advocate for positive change to those who have influence. These changes emphasized making learning opportunities more relevant and meaningful for the community members served by the school District.

Administrative leadership was critical for this work to move forward. The idea of ‘stick-to-it-ness,’ and quiet determination was a part of the leadership style that moved this social justice initiative forward. One of the foundational concepts in Cultural Proficiency work is that it is an inside-out journey. This means, that the focus always has to stay on personally reflecting on one’s beliefs, values, and assumptions. In all of the interviews conducted at the District level and with school administrators, this foundational concept appeared to be operationalized and was expressed with cultural humility.

School Perspective

District and school activities with an Aboriginal and northern focus contribute to the creation of positive student identities as well as positive identities for other school community members. Students, teachers, and community members create school environments that enable everyone to see themselves reflected in the schools and communities.

The leadership at Juniper school is focused on a number of activities that have already begun, or that are connected to provincial initiatives. This affirms the ease at which one may make connections to Cultural Proficiency theory and to what is currently happening in schools. School leaders and community members plan school activities in order to achieve common goals, including success for all learners.

The leadership team at Juniper school is committed to providing safe places and spaces for students to grow as learners. They have invested in pedagogy that has been proven successful, and in creating strong interpersonal relationships with students to enhance learning. The administrative team at Juniper School used some provincial strategies to 'diagnose' school problems, and have been able to apply the theory of Cultural Proficiency to introducing remedies to the problems. This praxis (connection between theory and practice) provides a means of moving the school forward in such a way that the leadership team is able to anticipate the likely success of the interventions applied to identified problems.

Land-Based Learning

The University College of the North Elder and the School District of Mystery Lake Cree Language Coordinator, who were interviewed for this report, reflected on the importance of 'place' for learning. From the context of being able to situate oneself in learning the traditions, values, and languages of Aboriginal people, this is best provided in situ, that is, in place through Land-based approaches. If the goal is to nurture the Aboriginal identity of students who identify as Aboriginal, then situated learning, using Land-based approaches provides an excellent means to accomplish this. As well, all students benefited from experience on the Land, our first teacher. Land-based learning was generally well received by all students and most teachers. Work, with the support of faculty and students connected to the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program, is

being done to provide for the infusion of Land-based learning into the curriculum. However, moving forward, more work needs to be done to infuse culturally proficient practices into 'regular' education, as encouraged by the Assembly of First Nations in their Cultural Competency Report (2012).

University College of the North

One of the most profound changes in building capacity to provide culturally proficient instruction for the School District of Mystery Lake and broader community has been the strong support of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program, and faculty members at the University College of the North. Over the time that this research was being conducted, the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program was forging ahead with a strong commitment to Cultural Proficiency at the University College of the North. Cultural Proficiency is part of the five-year strategic plan for the University College of the North. This meant that there was a firm connection to a shared vision for what Cultural Proficiency could look like for the community partners in Thompson.

Future Directions

Creating systemic change is extremely difficult work and, according to all of those involved in the change process that were interviewed, the work in Cultural Proficiency in the School District of Mystery Lake and the University College of the North is still in its infancy. This work needs to be protected to ensure that it does not become 'undone'. A most important observation worth noting is the good work that has been occurring in the School District of Mystery Lake and University College of the North by extremely passionate and invested educators. This initiative needs to be protected by creating governance structures, enacting processes, and investing in sustainable resources that support Cultural Proficiency. With this in mind, what follows is a list of future directions that are necessary to move the Cultural Proficiency agenda forward for the School District of Mystery Lake and University College of the North:

1. The School District of Mystery Lake, University College of the North, and community partners would benefit from continuing support and collaboration with Drs. Ray Terrell and Randall

Lindsey. The specific goals of Cultural Proficiency will continue to be defined by school, District, UCN and Thompson communities through ongoing dialogue and collaboration, but those with experience with Cultural Proficiency in other locales likely would enrich the conversations about culturally proficient education.

2. Given the community needs and the composition of the learners in Mystery Lake School District, it is critical to emphasize Aboriginal and Northern perspectives and Land-based education, until greater equity is achieved in the school District. That being said, while a great deal of emphasis needs to continue for the inclusion and validation of culturally proficient outcomes for Aboriginal learners at the District level, the time may be appropriate to extend the model through strategic planning to support all of the intersections of difference.
3. Cultural Proficiency enhances the capacity within the community and its educational organizations to understand and relate to people from different backgrounds. Cultural Proficiency creates the opportunity for dialogue about difference that enables District and community members, along with UCN personnel and students, to continue to find ways to better understand and relate to each other while celebrating difference.
4. One aspect that would be very supportive for future work in this area would be to explicitly measure and make public the change in the achievement gap through the following indicators of student engagement: increased attendance, academic success, and sense of belonging. That being said, in systems theory, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to attribute a causal relation between indicators of success and interventions. But, keeping the focus on improved academic success, and showing the disparity between particular groups achieving or not achieving that success, will always keep liberatory educators and community members working towards alleviating the relative inequity that is currently entrenched in our current educational system.
5. Moving forward, it is recommended that Cultural Proficiency be linked to District, school and strategic planning between the

School District of Mystery Lake and University College of the North. The planning related to Cultural Proficiency should include:

- a. terms of reference;
 - b. specific goals, steps including staff and professional development, indicators of success, as well as partners for collaboration, and celebrations of success;
 - c. identification of roles, responsibilities and resources; and
 - d. systemic planning, which would promote the creation of relationships that are respectful and inclusive of the history, culture and language of Aboriginal and northern people.
6. Leadership should be a catalyst for the continuing creation and implementation of initiatives and approaches consistent with the broad goals of Cultural Proficiency. District and school leaders could support the evolving understanding of Cultural Proficiency by school community members. Expanding the understanding of possibilities and creating the opportunities for cultural proficient education in Thompson becomes possible when school leaders facilitate ongoing dialogue among school community members.
 7. SDML District administrators and UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education faculty should meet to create a plan for the storing, cataloguing and distribution of Cultural Proficiency materials. The plan should ensure shared access of School District of Mystery Lake and University College of the North personnel and students along with Thompson community members.
 8. The inclusion and expansion of culturally proficient material in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education program at UCN should continue to be a priority for faculty members and administrators. As a component of the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Framework approved by faculty members in 2012, Cultural Proficiency should be one of the continuing themes in course work. The UCN Council of Elders giving leadership for Cultural Proficiency provides another opportunity for the Elders to play a pivotal role in shaping the direction of the University College of the North. The collaboration among Elders, faculty members, administrators and

its educational partners through the Kenanow Bachelor of Education Program Advisory Council is critical for ensuring the inclusion and expansion of culturally proficient material in the Kenanow Bachelor of Education curriculum.

9. The School District of Mystery Lake and University College of the North need to continue their focus on Aboriginal and northern perspectives. The Aboriginal population that represents the majority of residents in northern Manitoba is growing rapidly, while the non-Aboriginal population is increasingly diverse with more newcomers calling Thompson home. Both organizations should recognize, and reflect in their practices, the changing demographics of northern Manitoba.

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Appendix A: VOICE Research Project Background

The VOICE Research Project is a five-year (2011-2016) community-university research alliance funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The project also receives financial contributions from Vale, Manitoba Hydro, Brandon University and the University College of the North. Brandon University and University College of the North represent the university partners on the project. This project has received provincial, regional, and national interest because of the unique partnerships and the intention for all of the projects to be community initiated and governed. Community circles create success pathways and drive the research process by identifying, reviewing, and suggesting research plans. University personnel provide support, guidance, and conduct research, which makes communities and researchers true partners in the co-creation and dissemination of knowledge. One of the most important aspects of this research is to create sustainable change at both the community level and at the universities.

The VOICE Research Project follows a model of community-based participatory action research. The goal of this type of research is to empower the communities and individuals involved in the VOICE Research Project to take action and promote success for children and youth. The empowerment of communities comes in six areas of activities:

1. Capacity building:
 - Develop 'capacity' in the community through community circles; develop research protocols based on the principles of OCAP; and promote community-based research practitioners through teachers, community people who are BU grad students or UCN students.
2. Development of community-based indicators of success:
 - Develop success indicators with the community (Key involvement of Community Circle).
3. Support for and development of success pathways:
 - Support and/or implement pathways or activities based on the needs of the community.

4. Evaluation of success pathways:
 - Develop community capacity to evaluate of pathways.
5. Knowledge mobilization:
 - Co-create and share knowledge using technology, meetings, community events.
6. Sustainability of activities:
 - Find ways to sustain success pathways.

These six areas of activities help move partners towards an action research model. Action research involves iterative cycles of identification of the challenge, proposing solutions, undertaking actions and evaluation research to determine if the actions are working to help children and youth achieve success.

Cultural Proficiency Pathway

Cultural Proficiency is one of the three success pathways that the Thompson Community Circle developed. The other two success pathways included the CEPS youth leadership program and Land-based education. All three pathways included evaluation research to determine the effectiveness of the success pathways.

The Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway in Thompson is explicitly aligned to pedagogy that reflects First Nations, Metis, and Inuit epistemologies. As a result, Land-based education and the delivery of Manitoba curricula are deeply embedded within the Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway. A metaphor for understanding this deep connection that Cultural Proficiency has with Land-based education is to conceive the two to be like 'spruce gum'. Although you can try to pull them apart to see how one or the other operates, they are inextricably linked to one another. Ultimately, members of the Thompson Community Circle who were invested in the Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway began work through three stages of the project.

Cultural Proficiency Planning Committee (2012-2013)

As stated earlier, the School District of Mystery Lake (SDML) began formal work toward Cultural Proficiency in 2011, a year before becoming a member of the Thompson Community Circle and

participating in the VOICE Research Project. The SDML's efforts on Cultural Proficiency began when the District invited Drs. Ray Terrell and Randy Lindsey, two of the primary authors behind the Cultural Proficiency model, to speak at an in-service on Cultural Proficiency in Thompson.

Around the same time, SDML re-instituted the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (TAEAC) to further support Aboriginal learners in SDML. This committee became the Thompson Community Circle for the VOICE Research Project. The strategic plan for SDML included Cultural Proficiency as a major theme and viewed as important for the District moving forward.

The VOICE researchers became involved in this project in April 2012. In the fall of 2012 to the spring of 2013 the success pathway was developed with the Thompson Community Circle through an appreciative inquiry process. Four themes emerged in this process:

1. Engaging in activities that build healthy relationships;
2. providing professional development opportunities and support;
3. creating leadership capacity and a supportive climate for systemic change; and
4. nurturing community partnerships.

These themes and the results of the appreciative inquiry were merged into the Cultural Proficiency Strategic Plan for the District. Building capacity to teach in culturally proficient ways was divided into three items to be acted on:

1. Develop and implement workshops on Cultural Proficiency within Mystery Lake School District and with community partners, which may also include other programs (such as doing virtues work and infusing different cultural perspectives into curricula).
2. Engage students in land-based education and enhance our understanding of the impact of land-based education through the lens of Mystery Lake School District.
3. Support the knowledge mobilization of research findings.

In addition to the Cultural Proficiency Strategic Plan for SDML, the Thompson Community Circle approved Cultural Proficiency as a VOICE Research Project success pathway. The Thompson Community Circle's participation evolved from the work of planning to implementing and then evaluating Cultural Proficiency in SDML and UCN. It should be noted that during this time there were several other related activities centered around Cultural Proficiency in the District.

Cultural Proficiency Implementation Committee (2013-2014)

The Cultural Proficiency implementation committee began in the fall of 2013 and is constituted by the same members as the planning committee, but they worked to implement and evaluate the initiatives. These initiatives are discussed in the results section of this document. It should also be mentioned that much of the work that is being done is ongoing and will continue long after the voice research project has ended. The implementation committee worked on the following items:

- Established representation and roles for its members;
- established a timeline to work on building capacity to teach in culturally proficient ways, and increase understanding of Land-based education through the lens of the School District of Mystery Lake. Specifically, the committee developed short, medium, and long-term goals, activities, and indicators of success;
- coordinated and planned for the development and implementation of building capacity to teach in culturally proficiency ways, and increased the understanding of land-based education through the lens of Mystery Lake School District; and
- coordinated research efforts on the aforementioned areas.

Cultural Proficiency Evaluation Committee (2014-2015)

The final stage in the Cultural Proficiency Pathway is to evaluate the success of the initiatives. The evaluation of the pathway is occurring during the 2014-15 school year through the Cultural Proficiency Evaluation Committee. This committee is composed of the same members as the planning, and implementation committee, but the

focus is now on providing evidence that this pathway works (or doesn't work) and has reached the point of being self-sustaining, once the VOICE research project is complete.

Cultural Proficiency Institute continuing connection to the Thompson Community Circle

It is important to note that Drs. Raymond Terrell and Randy Lindsey, two influential authors in Cultural Proficiency research, continue to be connected to this pathway. Since they arrived to do their first workshop in Thompson in 2011, they have continued to mentor those involved in leadership roles through Skype, book studies, facilitator training, and professional feedback. Manitoba Education partnered with Corwin Publishers, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, Council of School Leaders, Manitoba Teachers' Society, Manitoba School Improvement, and Manitoba School Board Association hosted a Cultural Proficiency Institute in Winnipeg in 2013 that was extremely well attended. At this institute, SDML and BU-UCN were invited to present in the Voices from the Field component of the Institute at the recommendation of Terrell and Lindsey. The Honourable James Allum, Minister of Education and Advanced Learning at the time, spoke at the institute about the need for the province to embrace Cultural Proficiency as a way for educators and industry in Manitoba to be progressive in the global economy.

Appendix B: Cultural Proficiency Theory

Cultural Proficiency is not about becoming proficient in one's own culture or about appropriating another's culture. Cultural Proficiency provides tools to learn about, understand, and value diverse perspectives with the aim of creating a more socially just society (Nuri-Robbins, Lindsey, D., Lindsey, R., & Terrell, 2012).

The four tools of Cultural Proficiency are based on the writings of key members of the Cultural Proficiency Institute. The tools of Cultural Proficiency include: Guiding Principles, Cultural Proficiency Continuum, Essential Elements, and the Barriers to Cultural Proficiency. They are provided to ensure the reader has an understanding of the theory that underlies the practice associated with the Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway (Lindsey et al., 2013, p. 19-34; Lindsey et al., 2005, p. 88-89; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p. 17-124; Nuri-Robbins et al., 2012, p. 2-168; Terrell & Lindsey, 2009, p. 22-29).

Culturally proficient work often involves supporting youth so that they can become more active citizens in democracy (Nuri-Robbins, Lindsey, D., Lindsey, R., & Terrell, 2012, p. iv). From a school perspective, Cultural Proficiency is about addressing the achievement gap that exists between the dominant cultural group and non-dominant cultural groups. The achievement gap may be understood to be "a discrepancy of access and academic success that exists among certain socioeconomic groups and ethnic castes in Canadian and U.S. schools" (Nuri-Robbins, Lindsey, D., Lindsey, R., & Terrell, 2012, p. 16). While there are many approaches to achieving this goal, the cultural proficient approach encourages educators to recognize how we have historically and socially valued some groups,, and their knowledge base, more than other groups, and that we must now work to redress this inequity. The authors emphasize measuring the change in the achievement gap as a way of determining whether the activities that have been instituted are impacting learners (Nuri-Robbins, Lindsey, D., Lindsey, R., & Terrell, 2012).

Guiding Principles

There are five guiding principles in Cultural Proficiency that reflect how this approach relates to culture and diversity. The principles help us understand and work through the tension that exists between our individual and cultural identity.

1 Culture is a predominant force in people's and organization's lives

Seeing culture as most important, challenges the concept of individualism and moves us toward seeing ourselves as socially constructed and belonging to groups that help us make sense and belong in our social world. A move away from individualism helps us value the cultural world. This is not to say that we are not individuals, but that we derive meaning and value in our lives from our group affiliations. This moves us toward knowing that we do not really have thoughts or actions that are independent of our social construction.

2 People are served in varying degrees by the dominant culture

Once we understand the important role that culture plays in our lives, there needs to be an understanding that some groups, because of historical and social forces, are better served in our society. People may struggle with this realization, but once they see themselves as socially constructed, it is not difficult to understand that some social groups are advantaged and others are disadvantaged by the status quo.

3 People have group identities and individual identities

Cultural Proficiency posits that group and individual identities are important. Just as there is self-concept and self-esteem, there is also cultural-concept and cultural-esteem. Cultural-concept is about understanding the value we have for our group affiliations and cultural-esteem is about the feelings we have toward our group affiliations. This explains why having a positive belief about one's own culture (or other group identities) is important to the overall mental health of individuals.

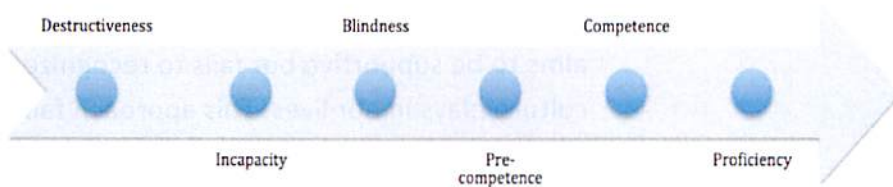
4 Diversity within cultures is vast and significant

Cultural Proficiency is not about stereotyping people into certain cultural groups because of the way they look or where they are from. There is a great deal of diversity within cultures and it is always important to understand that we need to see a person as a person, first. We run the risk of doing harm when we make assumptions about people or have expectations about how a person will think or act, especially when they belong to a group that is disadvantaged. We always need to take people as they are and understand the huge expanse that is culture and how people have a number of group affiliations at one time that gives them their identity.

5 Each cultural group has unique cultural needs

Culture is the common ways of living that a group of people share because of their similar history, socialization, and environment. It is important to recognize and value cultural needs and to see them as gifts worth sharing. As well, because we are socialized through a particular cultural lens, students learn best when the way they see the world is reflected in how they are taught. Valuing and providing opportunities to reflect cultural groups in our teaching makes learning relevant and meaningful, and provides ways to grow the cultural-concept and cultural-esteem of learners.

Cultural Proficiency Continuum



The Cultural Proficiency continuum provides a means to understand how far along people and organizations are in understanding themselves as culturally proficient. The continuum goes from negative to positive approaches to supporting cultural differences with cultural destructiveness, incapacity, and blindness being negative approaches and cultural pre-competence, competence, and proficiency being

positive approaches. While people and organizations may be able to place themselves somewhere on the continuum, the goal, for all of us, is to work to become culturally proficient. Because Cultural Proficiency is an inside-out approach, we need to focus on our own journey, while simultaneously pushing for systemic change. Humility is integral to the model, leading us to pay attention to our own cultural blind spots and to be supportive of others who are on their journey to becoming culturally proficient.

Cultural Destructiveness is about seeing difference and working towards eliminating how the other is different by devaluing their culture and forcing them to change. This often happens when people from the dominant culture believe in their own cultural superiority. People who have the best intentions can believe that they are doing others a service by helping them become a part of the dominant culture through cultural domination. Organizations that enact cultural destructiveness have programs/agencies/institutions that enact cultural genocide.

Cultural Incapacity occurs when people do not see the value in other cultural perspectives. They believe that their cultural lens provides the correct way to see the world. People who are at this point on the continuum believe that other cultural perspectives are, deficient, wrong or bad. Organizations that enact cultural incapacity maintain policies that support segregation and oppression.

Cultural Blindness occurs when people believe that they only see individuals, not the way someone looks or their culture. This approach aims to be supportive but fails to recognize the important role that culture plays in our lives. This approach fails to recognize how we always have a cultural lens through which we see the world and frame our beliefs, values and assumptions about ourselves and others. Organizations at this stage provide services and enact systems with the intention of being unbiased, but do not take into account the extent that hegemonic meaning-making and socialization processes continue to benefit the dominant group. At this stage, there is a subtle and well-intentioned push to have everyone 'be the same,' a belief which serves the dominant group.

Cultural Pre-competence is the beginning of the positive approaches and is about being aware of the difference but not knowing how to respond appropriately. This is what happens when people move to a place where they are paying attention to difference but there lack of knowledge about how to interact in a culturally appropriate way because they don't want to alienate, minimize, or offend someone based upon their difference. Organizations at this stage recognize their weakness in responding to diversity and seek to hire, assess, and train in order to be culturally responsive; they seek to meet the needs of all learners and strive for equity for all. Organizational pitfalls in this area include the potential for tokenism, fear of making a mistake, or false-confidence when there is some positive movement within the system.

Cultural Competence happens when people become cognizant of how we ascribe value to different groups and to those who belong to them. In a positive sense, they affirm the belief that we need to tolerate difference. People at this stage understand the social construction of difference and see themselves as positioned according to their membership of different and diverse cultural perspectives. People who are culturally competent become aware of how there is a historical aspect to what groups are valued or not valued and how society takes this for granted. In particular, people become aware of how membership is usually determined, not by volition, but by the way someone looks, acts, or believes. Organizations at this stage "are characterized by acceptance and respect for difference, continuing self-assessment regarding culture, careful attention to the dynamics of difference, continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, and a variety of adaptations to service models in order to better meet the needs of minority populations" (Cross et al, 1988, p. 32).

Cultural Proficiency is about the need for people to seek to move beyond competence. People at this stage are culturally competent. They understand the social construction of identity, and they have learned how to respond positively and affirm difference. Those who are culturally proficient recognize the inequity of the dominant groups hegemonic meaning-making and socialization processes and work to challenge and change it. They make a humble life-long commitment to understanding difference and to embracing inequity through

challenging the status quo. They also keep vigilant of their own cultural bias and work to assess and remedy them. As well, they learn to focus on the uniqueness of individuals and foster others cultural differences as necessary expressions of the human condition. Organizations at this stage hold culture in high-esteem and value difference as instrumental to personal and organizational growth.

Essential Elements of Cultural Proficiency

There are five essential elements to consider within culturally proficient work.

The first element is **Assessing Cultural Knowledge**. Assessing cultural knowledge is about understanding that we see the world through our own cultural lens, and expecting others to have their own lens through which to see the world, too. Assessing your own cultural knowledge occurs through learning about how your beliefs, values and assumptions about others are culturally derived. Assessing also means to understand what you do not know about another perspective and seeking to acquire that knowledge. Understanding one's propensity for bias and seeking to learn about other cultural perspectives leads to more effective cross-cultural interactions.

Valuing Diversity is about learning to appreciate other perspectives and being aware of your unconscious desire to judge them based upon our own cultural upbringing. Challenging oneself to seek different perspectives in a non-judgmental way is also important and is supportive in learning how to be effective in diverse settings. By consciously seeking different viewpoints and perspectives, we seek the richness of other cultural perspectives, which enhances the quality of our own worldview.

Managing the Dynamics of Difference is the element that has us understand that it is normal and natural to be critical of perspectives that are different from our own, especially when we are looking at these attributes through hegemonic blinders. The key to learning to manage the dynamics of difference is to foster awareness that we are always filtering the world through what we know, and that this knowing is cultural in origination. The dynamics of difference creates conflict, but this can easily be overcome by seeking first to

understand. If we can un-privilege our knowing, then we are more likely to understand difference. As well, if we look at the 'tensions' that exist in these interstitial spaces as places where new learning and perspectives can be born, then we will be drawn to work through the discomfort and conflict to find something new.

Adapting to Diversity is about changing what we are doing to meet the different perspectives we encounter to ensure that learning is relevant and meaningful. This aspect of Cultural Proficiency is well documented as supporting a positive learning and working environment. However, without a desire to understand and value diversity, and to 'give-up' cultural domination, adaptations will fail or be seen as lowering standards.

Institutionalizing Cultural Knowledge recognizes the importance that institutions play in keeping cultural practices alive. Changing cultural knowledge means examining how institutions perpetuate certain practices that are biased against certain groups, and challenging them. It also means to find ways to infuse other cultural practices into institutional approaches. Changing how we do what we do to ensure that practices are as unbiased as possible is done through examining institutional practices.

Identifying the barriers to Cultural Proficiency

There are barriers to Cultural Proficiency, as well. One can move a Cultural Proficiency agenda forward without recognizing the obstacles that may need to be overcome in order to do so. Probably, the most significant barrier is 'the presumption of entitlement and unearned privilege' by those who currently benefit from the status quo. Part of the work of Cultural Proficiency is illuminating that some are better served by the status quo than others, and getting them to believe it. What this means is that certain groups benefit from the status quo, and it can be difficult to get people to trust that their interests will not be served by this approach. Part of the work of Cultural Proficiency is redefining and extending who belongs in the group.

There can also be a lack of awareness about the nature and magnitude of the problem that affect certain groups leading to a lack of awareness about the need to change the way things are. People who

benefit from the status quo often believe things are currently 'fair'. Much of the work of Cultural Proficiency is providing evidence to support the claim that there truly is inequity that is leading to different outcomes for students based upon their cultural background.

Another barrier is that over time institutions may become 'systems of oppression and privilege' through institutional practices that, maintain 'the domination/victimization of individuals and groups'. Therefore, Cultural Proficiency emphasizes the need to examine and make changes to the organizational policies and practices, since policies and practices tend to better serve groups who have historically had privilege better than those who haven't.

One of the most prevalent barriers to a cultural proficient environment stems from our natural resistance to change. Sometimes people do not recognize or want to change; they believe that others around them need to change instead. Expecting those around us to change is often based upon a belief in cultural superiority, which is very difficult to address without kind and compassionate interventions. To some degree, ambivalence to change is a universal trait. Cultural Proficiency works to address this by having a positive future focus. This model does not labour on past inequity. Instead, it embraces a future through helping people imagine a community that serves everyone well and by clearly demonstrating how equity creates more engaged, successful and prosperous citizens, which is better for everyone. One of the most powerful tools of Cultural Proficiency is to demonstrate an achievement gap based on one's cultural (or group) affiliation and then apply interventions to remedy this gap.

Appendix C: School District Mystery Lake Timeline to Cultural Proficiency

- Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Mandatory Training—SDML → created more divide than bringing teachers together.
- Recognized we need to change the way we did business → we were successful with working with one another but not with all of our students, which was evident in our graduation rates.
- Needed to work in collaboration with the community.
- Needed to engage students more meaningfully and help teachers with resources to use local resources and support with Aboriginal and northern perspectives.
- Need for systemic change (policy, PD, Admin team, and Board).

The journey begins

2010

- TAEAC—Back on SDML Agenda

2011

- District-wide Cultural Proficiency PD and community partners invited as well
- Created a district-wide 3 year CP plan
- Purchase of CP resources to support District PD
- Support for CP initiatives “Funding Allocated specifically for this”
- May—New Teachers PD on CP & Aboriginal perspectives

2012

- TUAS funds community member to attend the Corwin Institute for 2012 July trip along with funding the CP Initiative of \$20K to support the development and growth of this strategy in Thompson

- FEB—“We are all Treaty People”—District PD (support from community partners-endorsement)
- MAY—New Teachers PD on CP & Aboriginal perspectives
- JULY—Team CP to LA Corwin Inst.
- SEP—Building Healthy Relationships—District PD
- CP Working Team created UCN, SDML
- TAEAC recommends CP to be on the VOICE Project as a success pathway and research project

2013

- FEB—TTA PD Sessions on “We are all Treaty People” and “CP for Teachers Presentation”
- FEB—Team CP to do more training in LA—Presentation at Corwin—UCN, BU, SDML
- MAY—PD Session on CP and Aboriginal perspective with UCN Students (Merv’s Class)
- MAY—New Teachers PD on CP & Aboriginal perspectives
- JULY—CP Presentations in LA at LA Corwin Institute with CP Team
- SEP—Two day Training with Community Partners (City/Vale/TNRC)
- OCT—One day workshop with Leadership Cohort at SDML
- APR & JUNE—CP & Aboriginal perspectives two day training with community partners (Vale, MB Hydro, Thompson Accord Partners, City of Thompson)
- JUNE—Three hour presentation to Premier’s Advisory Council on Education, Poverty Reduction Committee
- Admin team—CP is a standing item on the agenda (Book Study)

Looking at policies, administration, and procedures: What needs to be changed/adjusted?

- CP conversations being discussed at different tables within SDML and community committees
- Admin tables (equity vs. equality and book study)
- Mass tables (2013)
- Education Services Meetings
- Aboriginal Accord Committee Meetings
- PD Committees
- Individual Schools—depending on school
- City Liaison Meetings—Training to org’s
- Oct 2011: CP Team created (Community, SDML, UCN)
- CP is included in the SDML
- Strategic Planning documents both District and in some school plans (2011 →)
- Online CP Facilitator Training/Consultations with Tyrell and Lindsay (Oct 11-Nov 12)—Train the Trainer

Activities

1. Aboriginal Perspectives Fall Camp Initiative—September 2010-2013
2. Mini Winter Festivals—All elementary schools “Incorporates northern Aboriginal perspectives in curriculum and bringing community in the schools. Access to Elders and traditional experts and make classroom connections to the classroom.”
3. Spring Gathering Week—MAY/JUNE
 - Teacher PD
 - Community PD

- Grade 8 Students and RDPC Transition
 - Elders & Community Gathering
4. Senior Admin (Board Retreat)—CP on the agenda
 5. Principles Retreat—2012—CP and Residential School impacts on the agenda
 6. Treaty Relations PD Session—2012—Grade 5-6 Teachers and Grade 1-4 in Nov 2013

Activities

- May 27-June 3, 2014—Workshops for students/Grade 8 students/UCN/Elders Council
- May 29—CP & Aboriginal perspectives PD at Mile 20 for all MASS MEMBERS as the AGM is in Thompson. The event is organized by Northern Sups
- May 30—Workshops for High School students as well as others interested
- May 31-June 1—Spring Ceremonies organized by Community Committee
- June 2—Cree Gathering at Mile 20—Teacher PD—all done in Cree
- June 3—Part 2—Community training of CP
- SDML has representation on AVASC (MTS) and CP is on the agenda Appendix A: Professional Development (Thompson, UCN, SDML) (Loretta, Jenn)

Appendix D: TAEAC Advisory Committee Purpose, Goals and Representation

The School District of Mystery Lake is engaged through the Thompson Aboriginal Educational Advisory Committee (TAEAC) in developing a research and action plan for transforming schools within the District. TAEAC, a creation of the Mystery Lake School District, advises the administration and school trustees on issues regarding the enhancement of education for all students in the District especially Aboriginal students. TAEAC is comprised of representatives from a number of education and community groups in Thompson. The six goals of the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee are:

1. To promote the restoration of Aboriginal cultures, histories, language and values with the School District of Mystery Lake.
2. To make recommendations to the Board of Trustees respecting the implementation of Aboriginal curriculum and programming initiatives.
3. To act as a resource to trustees, administrators, teachers and staff to support Aboriginal curriculum development and implementation, encourage the accurate and meaningful integration of Aboriginal perspectives into teaching and learning, and assist with the creation and delivery of Cultural Proficiency training.
4. To proactively and authentically address issues that negatively affect graduation, engagement, and success rates among Aboriginal students.
5. To proactively develop strategies and partnerships that result in the meaningful engagement of Aboriginal parents and community-based organizations and agencies in our school system.
6. To support the development of a representative workforce strategy and a comprehensive strategic plan for Aboriginal and Culturally Proficient Education. (School District of Mystery Lake, Committee Minutes, June 20, 2011).

The following is a list of community-based organizations/educational institutions and their representatives that make up the Thompson

**Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee for the School District of
Mystery Lake (TAEAC):**

University College of the North Faculty

University College of the North Administration

City of Thompson Representative

Keewatin Tribal Council Representative

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Representative

Northern Health Authority Representative

Ma-Mo-We-Tak Friendship Center Representative

Manitoba Metis Federation Representative

Thompson Neighborhood Renewal Corporation Representative

Manitoba Hydro Representative

Addictions Foundation Manitoba Representative

Frontier School Division Representative

Youth at Risk Network Leader

School District of Mystery Lake Superintendent

School District of Mystery Lake Trustee

School District of Mystery Lake Cree Lang. Coordinator

School District of Mystery Lake Cultural Proficiency Consultant

School District of Mystery Lake Principal

School District of Mystery Lake Vice Principal

VALE Canada Ltd. Representative

Appendix E: Professional Development and Speaking out

Conference Presentations

2010—SDML presentation with UCN Kenanow students and UCN Elders Council

2012—SDML Cultural Proficiency presentations to TUAS

2012—SDML education for Action in November—MASS Conference: Presented on CP; presentations delivering cultural camps and building sustainability

2012-13

VOICE Community-based Participatory Action Research:

Thompson's Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway

At MERN Winter Forum, Dauphin, MB, January 25, 2013

Presenters: Chris Brown, Al Gardiner, Jennifer Davis

Audience: **Researchers, Scholars**

Thompson's Cultural Proficiency Success Pathway as

Community-Based Participatory Action Research (CBPAR)

At Strengthening First Nations: Empowerment, Community, Culture, Thompson, MB March 13, 2013

Presenters: Chris Brown, Al Gardiner, Jennifer Davis, Lorie Henderson, Loretta Dykun, Brandee Albert

Audience: **Researchers, scholars and decision-makers**

A Strong University-Community Alliance: Working Together for Cultural Proficiency

At 18th National Congress on Rural Education, Saskatoon, SK, March 18, 2013

Presenters: Chris Brown, Jennifer Davis, Lorie Henderson, Loretta Dykun, Al Gardiner

Audience: **Researchers, scholars, community**

Working Together to Improve Cultural Proficiency in Manitoba Classrooms

At SHAWANE DAGOSIWIN, Aboriginal Education Research Forum, Winnipeg, MB, April 3, 2013

Presenters: Jennifer Davis, Chris Brown

Audience: **Researchers, Scholars, Community, and Decision-makers**

*Enacting Cultural Proficiency in UCN & Brandon University
Teacher Education*

At 15th Annual Lighting the Fire Conference, Winnipeg, MB.

April 19, 2013

Presenters: Elder Stella Neff and Jennifer Davis

Audience: **Researchers, scholars and decision-makers**

*Cultural Proficiency Doesn't Happen in Isolation: A Northern
Canadian Perspective*

At Cultural Proficiency Institute, Camarillo, California, June 27,
2013

Presenters: Lorie Henderson, Loretta Dykun, Charlene
Lafreniere, Chris Brown

Audience: **Researchers, scholars, community**

MAY 2013 – SDML MASS AGM – Lorie, Loretta presented on CP



Manitoba Association of School Superintendents – Members at Mile 20

“...beyond the head and the heart there is yet another deeper level of knowing that was reflected in the words of those who spoke of ‘coming home’ to Mile 20, to the land, to their language, to their culture and to indigenous ways of being. This is the journey that many young Aboriginal students are currently travelling and one that we as educators and educational leaders need to understand

more fully if we are serious about and truly committed to ensuring the success of Aboriginal students in schools and school systems across the country". (Duhamel, 2014, p. 3).

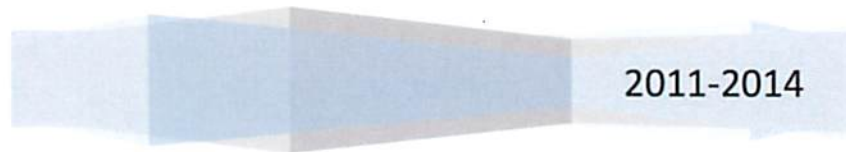
NOV 2013—Corwin Institute in Winnipeg: SDML's Story—Lorie, Lucy & Loretta; UCN Kenanow's Story—Stella, Students, Chris, Al, and Jen. (SDML sent a team to partake in the conference which was 15 members from all school plus UCN sent others as well).

Appendix F: School District of Mystery Lake Cultural Proficiency Strategic Plan

School District of Mystery Lake

Cultural Proficiency

Three Year Strategic Plan



2011-2014

School District of Mystery Lake
Cultural Proficiency
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Introduction

For many the years the School District has attempted to confront issues of underachievement, student engagement and low graduation rates. Several innovative and traditional programs and projects designed to improve the educational picture for our students have been developed and implemented to:

- Support the use of a model based on collective responsibility for student achievement and engagement;
- Build cross-cultural understanding among our student and teacher populations;
- Give Aboriginal students a representative voice in the curriculum and in the classroom. It has been estimated that Aboriginal students make up at least 50% and as high as 65% of the student population in the SDML.

Some of these initiatives include:

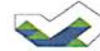
- First provincially recognized School District to have a Cree Bilingual program. Three Cree language curriculum framework documents were developed in partnership with the province.
- Piloted the community school model in Manitoba.
- Land based education courses at the high school and Wapanohk Community School based on a curriculum developed by the School District in partnership with Manitoba Hydro.
- Recognition of the holistic approach to incorporating Aboriginal perspectives throughout the curriculum and in all subject areas.
- Partnerships with government and non-government organizations to support our work in the area of cultural proficiency at both the teacher, community and systemic level.
- A part practice of mandatory Aboriginal Awareness Training.
- Cultural proficiency training in small groups and as a District wide session.

Many of our programs and initiatives, although not well documented, have resulted in improved student engagement and achievement. However progress has been slow as a result of several factors including:

- Transitions in leadership, both at the District and school level, have led to changes in direction and the inability to develop short and long term District plans and effectively engage in the community.
- Lack of consistency in program implementation and documentation. Programs are often started without a plan for evaluation or a process to support continuous improvement.

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Regardless of the speed of progress, it is important to stress that the focus has always been on the best interest of our students, rather than meeting political agendas. Further, it is this commitment to students and student success that has resulted in a shift in the planning, documenting and evaluating processes at the District and school level. Indicative of this change is the development of longer-term plans with identified strategies/activities, clarified responsibilities and ways to document progress.

This three year plan focuses on the implementation of a longer term strategy to incorporate culturally proficiency into classroom, school and District practice and is consistent with the goals identified by the Board of Trustees as well as those of the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee. As cultural proficiency is a learning journey that occurs over time, the plan focuses on professional development and building the capacity of local teachers and community members to deliver training that is relevant and reflective of the Thompson context. In addition, the student piece of the plan is based on our belief that student success is a collective responsibility and that programs and activities should result in improved cross-cultural relationships, student engagement and academic achievement.

Support Documents: A number of different sources were referenced to ensure that the plan was consistent with educational trends and directions within Manitoba including: MASS documents on Aboriginal Education, MASBO resolutions, MTS AVASC, Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, School District of Mystery Lake Board Priorities, School District of Mystery Lake Holistic Plan for Aboriginal Education, Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee Goals, City of Thompson Aboriginal Accord, various books on Cultural Proficiency books by Randall Lindsey et al.

**School District of Mystery Lake
Cultural Proficiency
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Area: Professional Development and Planning				
Long Term Goal: The School District of Mystery Lake will develop ways to promote cultural proficiency, social justice and excellence in education.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Initiatives	Build the capacity of teachers to think and act in culturally proficient ways through professional development, planning and partnership.	Build the capacity of teachers to think and act in culturally proficient ways through professional development, planning and partnership.	Build the capacity of teachers to think and act in culturally proficient ways through professional development, planning and partnership.	Build the capacity of teachers to think and act in culturally proficient ways through professional development, planning and partnership.
Strategic Activities	<p>New Teacher Workshops at Mile 20 focused on Aboriginal Perspectives and Cultural Proficiency (2008-2011)</p> <p>In-service training provided at District wide PD sessions on Aboriginal perspectives.</p> <p>District session to create Aboriginal Education Planning Template (2009)</p> <p>Mandatory Aboriginal Awareness Training (1999-2001)</p> <p>Re-engaged TAEAC committee (2010)</p> <p>Developed partnership with Frontier School Division and UCN to promote Cree Language Resource Development and teacher training.</p> <p>Access to MFNERC resource library resulting from partnership.</p>	<p>Provide representation on the Manitoba Teacher Society/ Aboriginal Voice Action Standing Committee (AVASC)</p> <p>District wide professional development Cultural Proficiency with Randall Lindsey and Ray Terrell. Participants in training included: all school staff, TAEAC members and UCN pre-service teachers. (September 14)</p> <p>Pre-post planning sessions on cultural proficiency with Randall Lindsey and Ray Terrell. Participants in sessions included: Board of Trustees and Senior Administration (September 13 and 14)</p> <p>Evening session with TAEAC with Randall Lindsey and Ray Terrell.</p> <p>Send team to Tools for Tolerance training in Los Angeles hosted by Randall Lindsey to support development of District planning and training team. Partners included: UCN and</p>	<p>Provide representation on the Manitoba Teacher Society/ Aboriginal Voice Action Standing Committee (AVASC)</p> <p>Extend Principals book study and goal setting to focus discussion on culturally proficient practices and policies in schools.</p> <p>District wide professional development session focused on cultural proficiency using a small group breakout session format.</p> <p>Three Phase Training of District and Community Team in partnership with UCN:</p> <p>Phase 1: Five Team Members to attend two day Cultural Proficiency for Educators facilitation skill development training in Los Angeles.</p> <p>Phase 2: 3- 90 minute online Book Study sessions with Randall Lindsey</p> <p>Phase 3: 1- 90 minute review and strategic</p>	<p>Provide representation on the Manitoba Teacher Society/ Aboriginal Voice Action Standing Committee (AVASC)</p> <p>Extend Principals book study and goal setting to focus discussion and examine change as a means to engage in culturally proficient practices and policies in schools.</p> <p>District wide professional development sessions to be determined based on feedback from 2012-2013.</p> <p>Implement Cultural Proficiency Development Plan as developed in 2012-2013.</p> <p>Implement Pilot School Plan as developed in 2012-2013.</p> <p>Review Cultural Proficiency Development Plan and create new and/or extend activities as required for school based initiatives throughout the District.</p>

Area	Professional Development and Planning	Long Term Goal: The School District of Mystery Lake will develop ways to promote cultural proficiency, social justice and excellence in education.
Person Responsible	Culturally Proficient Education Coordinator Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum Coordinator	
Resources Needed	Financial resource previously allocated include: District Budget, AAA grant, TLAS, Manitoba Hydro, Frontier School Division, MNPERC Partnership resources previously accessed include: LCN, Ma-Now-We-Tak Friendship Center, MNEL, Frontier School Division, MNPERC, Manitoba Education, MEO, TWBC	
Timeline	District Wide Professional Development Professional Development budget allocation for District wide professional development and training of District team Culturally Proficient School and Community Journey, Culturally Proficient Instruction, The materials to include: The Cultural Proficiency Purchase of professional library resource materials Purchase of professional library resource materials District Wide Professional Development Review and revisions to Cultural Proficiency the Plan for Pilot School as developed in 2012-2013 Budget allocations to support implementation of Pilot School Plan Professional Development, District and AAA budget allocations to support training as per Cultural Proficiency Development Plan and Pilot School Plan Purchase of professional library resource materials Review and revisions to Cultural Proficiency the Plan for Pilot School as developed in 2012-2013 Budget allocations to support implementation of Pilot School Plan	



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Area	Professional Development and Planning	Long Term Goal: The School District of Mystery Lake will develop ways to promote cultural proficiency, social justice and excellence in education.
Person Responsible	TLAS Administrators using Culturally Proficient Leadership: The Personal Journey Begins Within (Monthly) Promote to identify personal cultural proficiency goals, reflecting an inside out approach to change Teacher professional development based by the Young Reflection Commission (May 10) Apply for grants to foundations, community based organizations and funders to support professional development initiatives. Grants received under approval for TLAS, VOICES Identify Cultural Proficiency as a priority to TAELC for approval for the VOICES project Have bi-monthly meetings with TAELC to improve programs and services to Aboriginal children and families in keeping with the mandate and goals of TAELC Establish and maintain partnerships with LCN, the City of Thompson and other organizations/agencies to support a community based approach to funding and planning for cultural proficiency.	
Resources Needed	TLAS Administrators using Culturally Proficient Leadership: The Personal Journey Begins Within (Monthly) Promote to identify personal cultural proficiency goals, reflecting an inside out approach to change Teacher professional development based by the Young Reflection Commission (May 10) Apply for grants to foundations, community based organizations and funders to support professional development initiatives. Grants received under approval for TLAS, VOICES Identify Cultural Proficiency as a priority to TAELC for approval for the VOICES project Have bi-monthly meetings with TAELC to improve programs and services to Aboriginal children and families in keeping with the mandate and goals of TAELC Establish and maintain partnerships with LCN, the City of Thompson and other organizations/agencies to support a community based approach to funding and planning for cultural proficiency.	
Timeline	2011-2012 2012-2013 2013-2014	



School District of Mystery Lake
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Area: Professional Development and Planning				
Long Term Goal: The School District of Mystery Lake will develop ways to promote cultural proficiency, social justice and excellence in education.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
		<p>session held September 13, 2011</p> <p>Pre-post planning sessions held September 12 & 13, 2011</p> <p>Team sent to Tools for Tolerance training – January, 2012</p> <p>Book study began in March, 2012</p>	<p>delivered by September 5, 2012</p> <p>2012-2014 Cultural Proficiency Training Plan completed by December, 2012</p> <p>2012-2014 plan for Pilot School completed by December, 2012.</p>	<p>Training Plan and Pilot School Plan completed by June 30, 2014</p>
Data Sources		<p>Limited feedback from professional development sessions using continuum.</p> <p>Notes from Randall Lindsey-Ray Terrell about planning sessions and PD day.</p> <p>Presentation by team about Tools for Tolerance training to TAEAC and principals.</p> <p>Principals meeting minutes.</p> <p>Senior Administration reports to the Board.</p> <p>TAEAC meeting minutes.</p> <p>Partner meeting minutes (if outside TAEAC)</p> <p>Reports to funders</p> <p>Three year strategic planning document</p>	<p>Feedback from professional development sessions.</p> <p>Presentation by team about Cultural Proficiency facilitator training and Sustainability Conference to TAEAC and Board of Trustees.</p> <p>Cultural Proficiency Development Plan Pilot School Plan.</p> <p>Principals meeting minutes.</p> <p>Senior Administration reports to the Board.</p> <p>TAEAC meeting minutes.</p> <p>Partner meeting minutes (if outside TAEAC)</p> <p>Reports to funders</p> <p>Three year strategic planning document</p>	<p>Feedback from professional development sessions.</p> <p>Cultural Proficiency Development Plan review Pilot School Plan review.</p> <p>Principals meeting minutes.</p> <p>Senior Administration reports to the Board.</p> <p>TAEAC meeting minutes.</p> <p>Partner meeting minutes (if outside TAEAC)</p> <p>Reports to funders</p> <p>Cultural Proficiency Development Plan Pilot School Plan</p> <p>Three year strategic planning document</p>
Outcomes	<p>Mandatory Aboriginal Awareness Training, although well intentioned, resulted in increased resistance by teachers to Aboriginal Education initiatives.</p> <p>Holistic Plan for Aboriginal Education</p>	<p>Improved shared understanding of cultural proficiency and the impact on teaching and student learning.</p> <p>Increased capacity of school principals to support teachers and schools to think and act in</p>	<p>Training Plan for Cultural Proficiency clearly defined with specific timelines, activities and outcomes.</p> <p>Plan for Pilot School clearly defined with</p>	<p>Best practices to support cultural proficiency training and program development implemented as a result of planning and review process.</p> <p>Increased accountability through planning and</p>

School District of Mystery Lake
Cultural Proficiency
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Area: Professional Development and Planning				
Long Term Goal: The School District of Mystery Lake will develop ways to promote cultural proficiency, social justice and excellence in education.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
	<p>Template created</p> <p>Increased understanding of Cree worldview and Aboriginal perspectives through training.</p> <p>Improved, non-political, student focused relationship with community based organization and agencies.</p>	<p>culturally proficient ways.</p> <p>Enhanced relationship between the community and the School District through a shared commitment to training in cultural proficiency.</p> <p>Improved relationship between parents, the community and the School District through the commitment to action that places the interests of students first.</p>	<p>specific timelines, activities and outcomes.</p> <p>Increased accountability through planning and documentation.</p> <p>Capacity to develop and deliver training locally, using local people.</p> <p>Enhanced relationship between the community and the School District through a shared commitment to training.</p> <p>Improved relationship between parents, the community and the School District through the commitment to action that places the interests of students first.</p> <p>Increased use of culturally proficient practices in lessons, units, classrooms and schools as a result of the targeted investment in the pilot school.</p> <p>Commitment to expand best practices from the pilot school into other schools throughout the District.</p>	<p>documentation</p> <p>Increased awareness among teachers and community based organizations/agencies about culturally proficient practices.</p> <p>Increased use of culturally proficient practices in the classroom (lessons, units and relationships)</p> <p>Enhanced relationship between the community and the School District through a shared commitment to training.</p> <p>Improved relationship between parents, the community and the School District through the commitment to action that places the interests of students first.</p> <p>Commitment to expand best practices from the pilot school into other schools throughout the District.</p>

School District of Mystery Lake
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Area: Students and School Based Development				
Long Term Goal: To proactively and authentically address issues that negatively affect graduation, engagement and success rates among Aboriginal students.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
	<p>Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum.</p> <p>Developed Cree Language Curriculum in partnership with Manitoba Education</p> <p>Culturally Proficient Education Consultant and Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum Coordinator have provided direct in classroom.</p> <p>Land Based Programming developed and delivered as a credit program at RD Parker Collegiate and at one elementary school.</p> <p>Students participated at annual Spring Gathering at Mile 20.</p>	<p>relationship between the student, family, community and school. Activities and programs including but not limited to: Mini-Winter Festivals, National Aboriginal Day, Drumming Clubs, Afterschool clubs, Language clubs, Aboriginal Awareness Week (RD Parker), Cree Language Festival and Elders in the Schools.</p> <p>Consultants to provide in classroom support to teachers to promote the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum.</p> <p>Deliver Land Based Education credit course at RD Parker</p> <p>Organize Fall Aboriginal Perspectives Camp for grade 5& 6 students from at least two schools in partnership with UCN Keenanow Bachelor of Education program and pre-service teachers</p> <p>Organize day for grade 7&8 students from at least two schools at the Annual Spring Gathering at Mile 20 in partnership with the Northern and Aboriginal Elders Council</p> <p>Secure location within or close to Thompson to deliver District wide/whole school land based</p>	<p>to promote the use of culturally proficient practices in lessons, units, classroom based and whole school activities as per plan.</p> <p>Deliver Land Based Education credit course at RD Parker</p> <p>Organize Fall Aboriginal Perspectives Camp for grade 5& 6 students from at least two schools in partnership with UCN Keenanow Bachelor of Education program and pre-service teachers</p> <p>Organize day for grade 7&8 students from at least two schools at the Annual Spring Gathering at Mile 20 in partnership with the Northern and Aboriginal Elders Council</p> <p>Organize a land based student transition program for grade 8 students entering RD Parker in 2013-2014 at site secured in 2011-2012. Key activities include: hosting students from different schools together to build relationships, partnering students with grade nine mentors, including Aboriginal perspectives and RD Parker information sessions.</p> <p>Deliver a whole school (K-8) land based education program on a rotating basis (one</p>	<p>to promote the use of culturally proficient practices in lessons, units, classroom based and whole school activities as per plan</p> <p>Deliver Land Based Education credit course at RD Parker</p> <p>Organize Fall Aboriginal Perspectives Camp for grade 5& 6 students from at least two schools in partnership with UCN Keenanow Bachelor of Education program and pre-service teachers</p> <p>Organize day for grade 7&8 students from at least two schools at the Annual Spring Gathering at Mile 20 in partnership with the Northern and Aboriginal Elders Council</p> <p>Organize a land based student transition program for grade 8 students entering RD Parker in 2014-2015 at site secured in 2011-2012. Key activities include: hosting students from different schools together to build relationships, partnering students with grade nine mentors, including Aboriginal perspectives and RD Parker information sessions.</p> <p>Deliver a whole school (K-8) land based education program on a rotating basis (one</p>

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Area: Students and School Based Development				
Long Term Goal: To proactively and authentically address issues that negatively affect graduation, engagement and success rates among Aboriginal students.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Initiatives	<p>Improve student engagement through culturally proficient programs, practices and activities.</p>	<p>Improve student engagement through culturally proficient programs, practices and activities.</p>	<p>Improve student engagement through culturally proficient programs, practices and activities.</p>	<p>Improve engagement through culturally proficient programs, practices and activities.</p>
Strategic Activities	<p>Pilot site for the Community Schools Initiative</p> <p>First Cree bilingual program in the provincial school system.</p> <p>Attended Manitoba Education reviews of AAA funding and programming. The collective responsibility and whole classroom/school approach adopted by the District is increasingly being recognized as a best practice model.</p> <p>Implement classroom, whole school and District Wide activities and programs that promote cross-cultural understanding and enhance the relationship between the student, family, community and school. Activities and programs including but not limited to: Mini-Winter Festivals, National Aboriginal Day, Drumming Clubs, Afterschool clubs, Aboriginal Awareness Week (RD Parker), Cree Language Festival and Elders in the Schools.</p> <p>Consultants to provide in classroom support to teachers to promote the incorporation of</p>	<p>Participate in Treaty Relations Commission training to support the use of Treaty Kits in Grade 5 & 6 classrooms.</p> <p>Participate in the provincial pilot of the Tell Them From Me Survey. The student survey focuses on engagement and will generate data including whether students feel excluded by peers or treated unfairly by school staff resulting from: appearance, grades, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, ethnicity/cultural background, religion, disability, Aboriginal background and First language.</p> <p>Use results from the Tell Them From Me to guide District and school based planning and service delivery.</p> <p>Consultants to provide in classroom support to teachers to promote the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum.</p> <p>Implement classroom, whole school and District Wide activities and programs that promote cross-cultural understanding and enhance the</p>	<p>Provide classroom support to teachers in grade 5 & 6 to promote the use of the Treaty Relations Commission Treaty Kits.</p> <p>Participate in the provincial pilot of Tell Them From Me if available or contract with Learning Bar to conduct surveys if information from pilot is useful for student and school planning</p> <p>Implement classroom, whole school and District Wide activities and programs that promote cross-cultural understanding and enhance the relationship between the student, family, community and school. Activities and programs including but not limited to: Mini-Winter Festivals, National Aboriginal Day, Drumming Clubs, Afterschool clubs, Aboriginal Awareness Week (RD Parker), Cree Language Festival and Elders in the Schools.</p> <p>Consultants to provide in classroom support to teachers to promote the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum.</p> <p>Work with teachers and students in Pilot School</p>	<p>Provide classroom support to teachers in grade 5 & 6 to promote the use of the Treaty Relations Commission Treaty Kits.</p> <p>Participate in the provincial pilot of Tell Them From Me if available or contract with Learning Bar to conduct surveys if information from pilot is useful for student and school planning</p> <p>Implement classroom, whole school and District Wide activities and programs that promote cross-cultural understanding and enhance the relationship between the student, family, community and school. Activities and programs including but not limited to: Mini-Winter Festivals, National Aboriginal Day, Drumming Clubs, Afterschool clubs, Aboriginal Awareness Week (RD Parker), Cree Language Festival and Elders in the Schools.</p> <p>Consultants to provide in classroom support to teachers to promote the incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum.</p> <p>Work with teachers and students in Pilot School</p>

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Cultural Proficiency
Three Year Strategic Plan
2011-2014**



Area: Students and School Based Development Long Term Goal: To proactively and authentically address issues that negatively affect graduation, engagement and success rates among Aboriginal students.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Timeline		Treaty Relations Training completed in October, 2011 with two teachers. Classroom, Whole School and District activities and programs are ongoing throughout the year. In classroom support to teachers provided on a request for service basis. Fall Aboriginal Perspectives Camp delivered September, 2011. Spring Camp delivered June, 2012. Tell Them From Me survey to be completed by June 2012 with report to follow. School reports to be completed by June 30, 2012. Community report to be completed by October 2012.	Classroom, Whole School and District activities and programs are ongoing throughout the year. In classroom support to teachers provided on a request for service basis. Fall Aboriginal Perspectives Camp delivered September, 2012. Spring Camp delivered May, 2013. Grade 8 transition camp to be delivered in June 2013. Whole School/District Land based program completed by June, 2013. Tell Them From Me survey to be completed by June 2013 with report to follow if continued. School reports to be completed by June 30, 2013. Community report to be completed by October, 2013.	Classroom, Whole School and District activities and programs are ongoing throughout the year. In classroom support to teachers provided on a request for service basis. Fall Aboriginal Perspectives Camp delivered September, 2012. Spring Camp delivered May, 2014. Grade 8 transition camp to be delivered in June 2014. Whole School/District Land based program completed by June, 2014. Tell Them From Me survey to be completed by June 2014 with report to follow if continued. School reports to be completed by June 30, 2014. Community report to be completed by October 2014.
Data Sources		Tell Them From Me data reports Anecdotal reporting from staff and students Informal feedback from Principals Monthly reports by Culturally Proficient Education Consultant, Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspective in the Curriculum Coordinator School reports Community reports Year end Aboriginal Education Report and Presentation Student and Team presentation at MERN forum	Tell Them From Me data reports if available Anecdotal reporting from staff and students Student and Teacher Exit slips Informal feedback from Principals Monthly reports by Culturally Proficient Education Consultant, Cree Language / Aboriginal Perspective in the Curriculum Coordinator School reports Community reports Year end Aboriginal Education Report and Presentation	Tell Them From Me data reports if available Anecdotal reporting from staff and students Student and Teacher Exit slips Informal feedback from Principals Monthly reports by Culturally Proficient Education Consultant, Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspective in the Curriculum Coordinator School reports Community reports Year end Aboriginal Education Report and Presentation

**School District of Mystery Lake
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Area: Students and School Based Development Long Term Goal: To proactively and authentically address issues that negatively affect graduation, engagement and success rates among Aboriginal students.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
		education programming (K-8 all 6 schools) Prepare grant application to support the purchase of supplies and materials for District wide/Whole school land based education programming. Highlight school based social justice and character building activities in school and community reports.	school/year) at the site previously secured by the School District. Highlight school based social justice and character building activities in school and community reports	school/year) at the site previously secured by the School District. Highlight school based social justice and character building activities in school and community reports. Students in grade 7 & 8 to access programs and services at the Human Rights Museum in Winnipeg engage in thinking about social justice, locally and globally.
Person Responsible	Culturally Proficient Education Consultant Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum Coordinator.	Culturally Proficient Education Consultant Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum Coordinator	Culturally Proficient Education Consultant Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum Coordinator Data and Research Consultant	Culturally Proficient Education Consultant Cree Language/Aboriginal Perspectives in the Curriculum Coordinator Data and Research Consultant
Resources Needed	Financial resources previously allocated include: AAA grant, District budget, Manitoba Hydro, TUAS, TNRC Partnership resources previously accessed include UCN, Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre, MMF, AFM, MKO, Natural Resources, Elders, Traditional teachers, Thompson Community Economic Development.	Financial resources allocated include: AAA grant, District budget, TUAS, TNRC Partnership resources accessed include: UCN, Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre, MMF, AFM, MKO, Natural Resources, Elders, Thompson Community Economic Development, Manitoba Education Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Branch	Proposed financial resources include: AAA grant, District budget, TUAS, TNRC, Manitoba Hydro Partnership resources accessed include: UCN, Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre, MMF, MKO, AFM, Natural Resources, Elders, Thompson Community Economic Development, Manitoba Education Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Branch	Proposed financial resources include: AAA grant, District budget, TUAS, TNRC, Manitoba Hydro Partnership resources accessed include: UCN, Ma-Mow-We-Tak Friendship Centre, MMF, MKO, AFM, Natural Resources, Elders, Thompson Community Economic Development, Manitoba Education Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Branch

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Area: Students and School Based Development				
Long Term Goal: To proactively and authentically address issues that negatively affect graduation, engagement and success rates among Aboriginal students.				
	Previous Work	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Outcomes	<p>Increased awareness of and capacity to implement Aboriginal perspectives in lessons and activities in the classroom.</p> <p>Cree Bilingual programming offered K-4. Wepanohk has been designated as a Community School.</p> <p>Cree Language Scope and Sequence and curriculum developed.</p> <p>Increased access to Aboriginal focused activities and programs that promotes community, enhances cross-cultural relationships and improves teacher and student understanding of the Northern context.</p> <p>Increased capacity to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of and capacity to implement Aboriginal perspectives in lessons and activities in the classroom.</p> <p>all Them From Me data reports to guide school planning.</p> <p>Increased use of TRC kits in the classrooms</p> <p>Increased access to Aboriginal focused activities and programs that promotes community, enhances cross-cultural relationships and improves teacher and student understanding of the Northern context.</p> <p>Increased capacity to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into teaching and learning.</p> <p>Improved access to hands on, land based cultural learning opportunities.</p> <p>Improved cross-cultural awareness and a consequent decrease in racism and/or cross cultural misunderstandings.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of and capacity to implement Aboriginal perspectives in lessons and activities in the classroom.</p> <p>Tell Them From Me data reports to guide school planning if available</p> <p>Increased use of TRC kits in the classroom</p> <p>Increased access to Aboriginal focused activities and programs that promotes community, enhances cross-cultural relationships and improves teacher and student understanding of the Northern context.</p> <p>Increased capacity to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into teaching and learning.</p> <p>Improved access to hands on, land based cultural learning opportunities.</p> <p>Improved transition from grade 8 to RD Parker Collegiate</p> <p>Improved cross-cultural awareness and a consequent decrease in racism and/or cross cultural misunderstandings</p>	<p>Increased awareness of and capacity to implement Aboriginal perspectives in lessons and activities in the classroom.</p> <p>Tell Them From Me data reports to guide school planning if available</p> <p>Increased use of TRC kits in the classroom</p> <p>Increased access to Aboriginal focused activities and programs that promotes community, enhances cross-cultural relationships and improves teacher and student understanding of the Northern context.</p> <p>Increased capacity to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives into teaching and learning.</p> <p>Improved access to hands on, land based cultural learning opportunities.</p> <p>Improved transition from grade 8 to RD Parker Collegiate</p> <p>Improved cross-cultural awareness and a consequent decrease in racism and/or cross cultural misunderstandings</p>

Appendix G: List of Juniper School Activities

- Virtues project in entire School (Sept 2010)
- Data Collection—behaviours/CIMS records
- Annual Mini Winter Festivals (March)
- Cultural Proficiency growth through trips to institute in Los Angeles
- Continued to have PD—1 Teacher + More
- Grade 8 Mile 20 trips—LBE
- Staff Discussions/Brainstorming
- Grant applications for \$
- Snack Programme
- Student Involvement—Student Mtgs., Student Council Re-structured, Increase student voice, Surveys
- VIKS (Very Important Kids)—Recess Mentors Trained (Grade 6)
- New School Logo
- Aboriginal Education Embedded Gr. 3/5/6/7/8
- Staff PD: Book Studies/District PD's
- Grade Group Projects
- Strong Beginnings Assessment
- Cultural Day Feb 2013
- Grade 7 Pilot Project—September 2013
- Relationship Building Activities
- Mural Projects—Grade 8 Leaving Project
- Grade 8 Transition Camp
- TTFM Survey (Tell Them from Me) Grade 7 & 8
- Increase in extra-curricular activities
- Teacher PD (New Teacher) at Mile 20
- Recess Changes/Detention Sheet (?)
- Cree Programme Grade 7 & 8—Language/The Arts

- **Building Healthy Relationships Activities: Random Acts of Kindness/Social Justice Activities/Pink Shirt Day**
- **Health Fair Presentations**
- **UCN Teachers—sessions/student teachers**
- **PBIS (Positive Behaviour Intervention Strategies)—revisited/school wide matrices (consistency across school & grade levels)**
- **Student led Data Participation**
- **Full Day Kindergarten (2012) Assessment in September & June**
- **Attendance Records—focus to improve/increase**
- **Leadership Partnerships?**
- **Communication increased? Career focus—early exposure**
- **Bullying Awareness**
- **Social Skills Programming**
- **Awards Assemblies/Recognition**
- **Partnerships—Sharing Expertise & Knowledge in School**
- **Policy Manual**
- **Corwin CP Institute Presentation & Building of School Team**

Appendix H: UCN Institutional Change List

2008

- Kenanow Model formalized by the UCN Elder Group
- Kenanow Bachelor of Education program started Thompson & The Pas
- Land-Based Education: Ski Chalet

2009

- Into the Wild
- Service Learning for Pre-Service Teachers
- Integration of Programming with SDML & UCN

2010

- Mile 20 Fall Camp with UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education students
- LBE: Sea Falls Camp with UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education students
- Mini Winter Fest involving UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education students
- Cree Methods Courses under discussion for development
- Kenanow Bachelor of Education courses offering a culture-based and place-based approach to learning
- Kenanow Bachelor of Education program offered in 5 communities on a cohort basis

2011

- UCN Kenanow 1st year students introduced to Cultural Proficiency
- UCN CP Working Group members engaged in online learning with Ray Terrell and Randally Lindsey
- Inter-Universities Services Presentation: Blackberries to Traplines: Elders, Kenanow Bachelor of Education students, UCN faculty members
- Formation of UCN Working Group for Cultural Proficiency involving UCN faculty members and staff members
- SDML CP Conference: UCN faculty members and staff involved in joint planning and in attendance

2012

- CP Proposal to UCN Senior Executive: UCN faculty member and staff member
- February: UCN staff member to Los Angeles
- UCN staff member presented on CP to Thompson Teacher' Association
- May 10th: Staff member emceed "We Are All Treaty People"/ UCN President gave Opening Remarks on CP
- July: Faculty members and staff members
- September: Faculty member and staff member engaged in CP Training on line
- CP books in Thompson & The Pas UCN Libraries
- Fall: Faculty member presented on CP at MERN

2013

- UCN Elders to provide leadership for CP at UCN
- February: Faculty member and Elder travel to Los Angeles to visit Museum of Tolerance
- July: Staff member and faculty member present at Cultural Proficiency Institute
- Mini Winter Fest involving UCN Kenanow Bachelor of Education students and faculty members
- UCN Kenanow faculty sent letter of support for maintaining Tradition and Change course
- AERF Presentation: UCN faculty member
- March Rural Education Congress in Saskatoon Presentation: Faculty member
- April: IUS CP Presentation Faculty members
- May: MFNERC: Kenanow Bachelor of Education students on CP
- November: Corwin Institute Presentation: Elder, Kenanow Bachelor of Education student and a faculty member
- October: Tri-Council Presentations on CP Elder and faculty member
- Elders purchase CP books
- Sport and Wellness Course focus on CP
- Interviews recorded from pre-service teachers and Mile 20 teachers & students: Faculty member
- Kenanow Orientation changes to Ceremony in Thompson

- Beginning of Professional Seminars focus on CP- for Kenanow Bachelor of Education students
- CP on Practicum Observation forms as part of Kenanow Bachelor of Education student evaluation process
- Joint Programming with Opaskwayak Education Authority
- Action Plan for Education for Sustainable Development (Manitoba Education priority)
- 2013 Presentation at Kenanow Faculty Council

2014

- CP Training Kit in Thompson UCN Library
- Action Research Course Thompson/Oxford House for Kenanow Bachelor of Education students
- Strategic Plan Consultations: CP input (Success for all Learners)- UCN staff members and faculty members
- Develop programming to enhance student retention and achievement
- Possibility of focus on CP in Strategic Plan
- Professional Development through conferences and Certificate in Adult Education courses for other faculties and departments Cultural Proficiency activities and learning for Kenanow Bachelor of Education students continues

Appendix I: Success Pathway—Cultural Proficiency: Voice it!

1. Background Information

Name of the Success Pathway	Cultural Proficiency: Voice it!
Anticipated starting date	January 2012
Anticipated ending date	December 2016
Team members	<p>Brandee Albert Loretta Dykun Ron Cook Lorie Henderson Charlene Jolene Brown Charlene Lafreniere Chris Brown Al Gardiner Jennifer Davis</p>

2. Description of success pathway

Description of the success pathway	<p>What is it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This Success Pathway follows the work of a series of planning sessions with the <i>ad hoc</i> Cultural Proficiency Planning Committee. We developed a strategic plan that is included as Appendix A. The newly created Cultural Proficiency Implementation Committee will continue to elaborate and foster the inclusion of strategies identified in the strategic plan. In addition to this work, the committee commits to developing and implementing a dynamic Cultural Proficiency model throughout the District in partnership with community stakeholders. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building capacity to teach in culturally proficient ways. Specifically, to develop and implement workshops on Cultural
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	<p>Proficiency within Mystery Lake School District and with community partners, which may also include fostering other programs (such as doing virtues work and infusing different cultural perspectives into curricula).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engaging students in land-based education and enhancing our understanding of the impact of Land-based education through the lens of Mystery Lake School District. ▪ Supporting the knowledge mobilization of research findings. This will include providing information about the process of community-based participatory action research and the aforementioned projects. <p>Who is involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAEAC, Mystery Lake School District, University College of the North and Brandon University Researcher team. <p>Why are we doing this?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to create a culturally proficiency education model to support a transformational shift in how we perceive difference and build relationships. Involving stakeholders will allow the District to become part of a cycle of personal and organizational growth, holding a vision that is complete and lived by the whole organization, and establishing a planned process for improvement in which the organization and its members continuously assess their progress towards proficiency. <p>When is it going to happen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January 2013- December 2016 <p>How will it happen?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While Mystery Lake School District had begun to work on Cultural Proficiency in
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	<p>2011, the VOICE project began their support in developing a research plan in September 2012. Since then, we have established a working group, have established outcomes through a mapping process, and are at the stage where we are developing a plan and preparing to implement Cultural Proficiency in conjunction with the Voice Project.</p>
<p>What are the anticipated benefits of this success pathway?</p>	<p>What are the indicators of success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers have experienced a perspective transformation, which is demonstrated in different thinking and doing in their classrooms. • We will have a better understanding of if, and how, Land-based education leads to Cultural Proficiency • Students are more engaged in schools as will be evidenced by increased attendance, academic success, and sense of belonging. There will also be a decrease in disciplinary action. • There will also be an increase in the use of local experts to advance community knowledge and resources. • Cultural Proficiency is supported in the District and in the Thompson community as is evidenced by changes to policy, programs, finances, and professional development. <p>What are the community's indicators of success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students raised self-esteem, self-efficacy, Cultural Proficiency, and a positive outlook. • Better relationships amongst community members including students, parents, and stakeholders. • People are more committed to working together. • Parents are more invested in collaborating with the school District. • SEE APPENDIX A FOR MORE DETAILS

<p>Does this success pathway have potential to become a core activity in the community?</p>	<p>Is this pathway sustainable? Could it be used as a core activity on an on-going basis?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes
<p>Community-based research capacity</p>	<p>Will this activity help to develop community-based research capacity?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • Is there a research plan connected to this pathway? If so, what is the name of this research activity? • Cultural Proficiency: Voice it!
<p>Role of Elders and other knowledge holders</p>	<p>How have the roles of Elders and other knowledge holders been recognized? (Recognition includes honoraria, acknowledging contribution by name or as directed, or withholding an Elder's identity if requested.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not currently, but definitely in the future as this project unfolds.
<p>Partners</p>	<p>List other partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAEAC, Mystery Lake School District, University College of the North, Brandon University.

VOICE Research Project
Community Protocol for the
Thompson Community Circle



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

This community protocol has been developed for the specific purpose of the VOICE Research Project activities under the direction of the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (TAEAC) acting as the Thompson Community Circle.

Individuals are welcome to use this protocol in whole or in part; however, we ask that acknowledgement be given to its author, Dr. Karen Rempel, and to the VOICE Research Project, a community-university research alliance, between Brandon University and the University College of the North.

The VOICE Research Project is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.



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sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Acknowledgements

The Voice Project would like to acknowledge the following people for their contributions to this Research Protocol.

Brandee Albert

Chris Brown

Jennifer Davis

Brenda Firman

Al Gardiner

Diane Schulz Novak

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Overview

This booklet is the *Vital Outcome Indicators for Community Engagement (VOICE) Community Protocol for Thompson Community Circle (TCC)*. In Thompson, the Thompson Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee (TAEAC) acts as the Thompson Community Circle. This booklet is aimed at the TAEAC. It contains basic information about the VOICE Research Project as well as a set of operating guidelines for the VOICE Research Project activities located in and around the City of Thompson, Manitoba.

Part 1 of this document presents information on cultural codes that should be observed by all VOICE team members.

Part 2 of this Protocol presents an overview of the VOICE Research Project including the six major areas of activities.

Part 3 consists of recommended guidelines and checklists that the TAEAC VOICE community circle (operating as the Thompson Community Circle) should use to ensure that the essential elements of the VOICE Research Project are sustained throughout the life of the project.

Appendix A presents a Research Collaboration Agreement and Appendix B sets out a research plan to be used in for all VOICE Research Activities. Appendix C includes a form for submitting requests for funding for success pathways activities.

The TAEAC and the VOICE research team members are encouraged to continually review and modify these guidelines throughout the project. Specifically, on an annual basis, the VOICE Project Research Team will review and update the protocol to ensure that the guidelines are current and functioning well in Thompson.

Appendix K: Selected Datasets from Research Summaries

Dataset- SDML Teachers attending Mini-Winter Festival in 2012

In the fall of 2012, classes travelled out to Mile 20 to spend the day learning from Elders and other teachers as a part of the Mini-Winter Festival. We asked teachers to answer a questionnaire about how they prepared their students for the day and how what they experienced connected to the Manitoba curriculum.

1. Which of the MWF activities related directly to curriculum covered in your classroom? Please be specific when describing the relationship and list as many as apply.
 - a. Strong Connection to Curriculum
 - Math: measurement & estimation. Physical activity: participation in activities. Cooperation: working on igloos as a group.
 - Oh goodness, I suppose the whole event could loosely fall under the Health curriculum section of healthy eating and lifestyle. More importantly, MWF helps promote character education.
 - Social Studies Communities in Canada Communities around the word Aboriginal culture in Canada directly related to all workshops. Science Structures and materials – fish workshops, igloo making, skinning (natural structure) Plants – living on the Land Health Nutrition – living on the Land Body systems - skinning
 - Citizenship, the physical activities foster team building and provide good opportunities for the students to practice positive communication. Aboriginal perspectives, traditional teachings encourage tolerance appreciation of other culture's ideas and practices, as well as promoting conservation of natural resources – and minimizing one's carbon footprint.
 - Daily life – fishing/bannock making/trapping/cleaning animals Interaction Relationships between groups Cultural Beliefs (Trapline stories)

- Bannock making | All are related to the First peoples and the Igloo making, fur trade in Social Studies. How people lived, growing up on Land, what they ate, how they made their home.
- Language Arts: communicating Math: talking about costs of supplies and the return they make after.
- Fur trade counting—students were able to use standard and non-standard ways to measure the furs.
- Goose calling – Cree class Moose calling – Cree class Jigging – Nimi (dance) Snowshoe race – culture/survival
- All activities relate to their gym curriculum. Furs station related to Math. Igloo building related to problem solving strategies.
- All of the games (organized) and activities promoted strength enhancement and coordination while running (through play). My students liked the dog-sled game especially! Activity also promoted building social skills sharing: turn taking, etc.
- The extra-curricular boys Grade 3-8 Cree drum group offered cultural learning and experiences to students. In the K-6 Music curriculum, there is an SLO that (?) that learners should experience music of local/provincial regions.
- 4-KC-003 I don't import days to Mb/Can. Plan a celebration or observe a prov./city import day (cultures) 4-K1005, 4K1007, 4K1007A, 4K1008 Brainstorm elements of culture List cultural gips in Mb 4KL025 Research or visit places of cultural sign in Mb 4K1010, 4K1011, 4K1012 Brainstorm (?) in daily lives of ethnic/cultural (?) (?) Mb (celebration)
- The math workshop related to everyday math that we do in our classroom. The students liked the challenge of this workshop. They saw the connection of math and how it related to the consumer world.
- Shelley Cook's measuring furs related to Grade 3 Math outcome on measurement. All activities we participated in related to Grade 3 Social Studies outcome, VP-011A respect the teachings of Elders, leaders, parents, and community members. Trapping and fishing presentations aligned with social outcomes K-007

Aspects of Aboriginal Community & K-1009A Protocols within their Aboriginal Culture

- **Movement/cooperation/listening People in our community (trappers, animal skinning) Fine motor skills (beading) Science – different animals/roles in the environment**
- **The traditional events related or tied in very closely to curriculum I cover that has to do with cultures and history (French/Metis). They help in having students understand what types of skills were being taught to the young people in preparation for their futures.**
- **Several P.E. & MWF is related in several ways P.E./Health/MWF all related (more outdoor activities) They are the lifelong activities**
- **Most of the MWF activities are directly related to L.A. curriculum where students acquire information and knowledge by: Listening to the different presenters of specific topic. Improve their speaking skills through asking questions, and participation in the discussion. Enhance their writing skills by writing their reflection toward the activities they participated in. Requesting/applying what they learn through the hands-on activities they did. S.S. – citizenship/cultural appreciation. P.E. – physical fitness/work-out.**
- **Bannock making Beading Slooshing Log carrying Goose calling Moose calling Jigging Soapstone carving Dog musher And more....**
- **Activity – Aboriginal Wood Carving Cultural influences and expressions 7-VI-007 Appreciate the Importance of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity in the World Activity – Bannock making Cultural influences**
- **Unfortunately, I did not go around to each session. However, many of the activities pertained to the fur trade. Some of the activities also allowed students to see the connection to Aboriginal students and their teachings/traditions.**
- **Cultural awareness Can pretty much fit many, and the ELA outcome, and P.E. outcomes into this list.**
- **Winter survival Dog sled Traditional games – knock the trapper, snow snake, dogsled race Bannock Wiener roasting – excellent**

time for students to socialize with other students Moose/goose calling jigging.

- Aboriginal ways and culture are a large part of our Social Studies curriculum, so the Aboriginal games, bannock making, soapstone carver, and outdoor survival all directly related to the curriculum I cover.

b. Moderate Connection to Curriculum

- I was helping at a station. I do not remember the other stations or even how they relate to the curriculum. The station I did help at was not tied in to the curriculum I teach; perhaps it fits with physical education.
- Bannock eating – Foods Musher – Mode of transportation Tipi teachings – Shelter and virtues taught.
- The session on plants and usage from an Aboriginal perspective is part of the science topics at this level. This year's presentation was very informative and the students enjoyed it very much.
- Traditional food – bannock making Beading – stringing the beads Games – a couple of the fruit games Value of their heritage and identity.
- Teamwork, cooperation, and independent work. Historical analysis. Strategy, Water systems.
- Aboriginal games – example: back push, snow snake. Relate culture groups and recreation/social skills.
- The plant presentation Grade 3 Science unit on plants How we use plants.
- Traditional Games – Excellent! Soap stone carver – Excellent! Bannock Beading Weiner Roast Winter survival and Rescue with dog – Excellent! Dog sled race Snow snake Leg wrestling Inuit back push Knock off the trapper Beading craft Jigging Good and moose calling.
- Aboriginal activities (Grade 2 curriculum) Arm wrestling Knock off the trapper Beading.
- Les Voyageurs, the songs.

- Workshops were very informative. Directly relates to many of curriculum outcomes. Indoor/Outdoor events: many are traditional to culture but there are some events that have no connection. Workshops: touched on Science curriculum – diversity of life.
- Animals – measurement with Shelley Cook.
- Cultural diversity, traditions, festivals, dance, food – various races, food (bannock). We cover “our town/community/world, in Social Studies”.
- Animals Dog sled Not enough room (didn’t get into this) Environment Why “people” skin animals.
- From the activities that we experienced the only connections that I can make would be through culture, living experiences in different parts of North America.

c. Weak or no connection to Curriculum

- I will do any activities that are relevant to the grade curriculum – let us know.
- This information can be found at www.gov.mb.ca
- This information can be found at www.gov.mb.ca
- I don’t teach L.A. or Social Studies, so I don’t link any of the activities relate to the curriculum. My students go for the enjoyment, exercise, socializing, etc... But in saying this... I will coordinate some to Science more in the future, with topics such as medicines, medicine wheel, etc... how using plants for medicines are used, etc.
- N/A – 4-6 Resource
- None of the activities really related. Check out the curriculum guide at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/index.html
- Listening skills. No real “direct” relations to Grade 8 curriculum.
- Leadership – collaborative learning. Otherwise not much in Grade 8.
- None

2. How did you prepare your students for the activities in which they would engage during MWF?

- I discussed with my group what sportsmanship was, and having fun and being responsible individuals. The kids would explain to new students at the school how MWF ran for the day.
- Social studies curriculum has: Aboriginal inventions, old people stories.
- Encouraged them to dress for the weather and also to try and participate in each event with their age group. Another thought: Is there a "history" or purpose behind events like cracker eating that would give it more meaning? FYI I have no problem with the beads, however I always give my class and my group a baggy to store their items in for safer keeping.
- Students just went out and did the activities.
- Sent notes to dress for the weather.
- Sent notes home to have them dress appropriately for the weather.
- Talk about how we treat presenters, be good sports, how to participate with a smile, etc... Follow rules, listen, and behave. Enjoy all events.
- I told them the activities we would be doing.
- R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Follow along and have fun.
- More like, how did they help prepare me. MWF. Is a great motivator in the classroom for sure. We just got enthusiastic about it!
- Tell them to be respectful.
- There was no preparation but a lot of enthusiasm when they saw the type of games that were going to be tried.
- Behavior How it's a privilege to do these activities How to behave properly
- We have done several team-building lessons in our room where we, for instance, divide the class into 2 teams, give them each

the same amount of supplies and tell them it's a race to make the tallest freestanding tower.

- Discussed expected behavior, introduced and discussed the topics that were going to be presented, encouraged questions and enthusiasm.
- Class discussion Curriculum
- We had a discussion and a review of what we talked and learned about in Social Studies.
- Conversations/discussions Practices Language Encourage others/teamwork
- I gave them a guide overview of the different things they were going to see that day.
- I would take the students out for practice on the activities to prepare them. Such as an obstacle course.
- Told them to dress warm. Talked about how to act for the presentations.
- I spoke to students about the rules of engagement when a guest in is our school, and how we are to behave.
- Reminded them of expectations for behavior and guest speakers, as well as transitioning from activity to activity.
- Told them in advance. Sent memo home to parents.
- The extra-curricular drum group has been presenting once a week since October.
- Ensured curriculum outcomes we taught prior to MWF. Revisited expressed/discussed some of Act and the origination of such.
- Group work, listening skills.
- Discussed appropriate behavior Discussed cultural traditions/activities in our community.
- Time is a factor Dogs/puppies – books Maybe more than 2 slots More activities directed towards primary area Saved (?) from previous years, we revived a booklet and wrote about activities
- N/A

- We've completed the first two clusters by the time Mini Winter Fest is here.
- We talked about different cultures and how we can better learn from others. The students asked a lot of questions before going to the sessions. They seemed very engaged in all the sessions that we attended.
- I only went over behavioral expectations, not content preparation.
- We talked a lot about our own families, and activities students participated in with family members (i.e. Grandmother/father).
- The fact that this event has been a part of the student's school culture. They expected it to take place; they talked or referred to events of the past that they remember enjoying. They also wondered what types of workshop we may have.
- Talk to each class regarding events Remember clothing, boots, etc. The older students got more excited about MWF because they enjoy it as they have participated before.
- Students were given instruction/directions on how to do such activities and given a total responsibility to do the activities to the best of their ability.
- Discussion.
- Social Studies – Manitoba, Canada and the North. We did a unity on Nunavut.
- Just told them what they would be doing.
- Explained what the days would look like. My students helped with the organization. They helped organize folders, ribbons, etc. They ran a couple of events. We talked about the Aboriginal fows of the MWF. We have a dog sled runner in our room who dressed dog sled with the class.
- Dress warm.
- Discuss the importance of recognizing differences in the culture and customs of people all around us every day.

- Participation (work together in groups) Respect – listen, cooperate, learn Share – take turns.
 - Other than telling students what presentations they were going to, I didn't really prepare them at all.
 - I did not prepare them as I did not know what many of them were. The students did prepare me though (Grades 5/6).
 - Nothing much Dress for the weather Picked and allowed them to have input into the choices for the indoor activities. (?)
Encourage the students to take responsibility for themselves and show virtuous behaviors.
 - They had done it last year, so when I said we were doing it again, they were excited
3. How did you follow-up on MWF activities in your classroom? Again, please be specific.
- a. Follow-up
- Journal writing next day – my favorite Winter Fest activity.
 - Each year, regardless of my grade my students do a journal or reflection on their MMF experience. They have the option to write about any part of the day, or all of the day. The plant information will be reviewed in May/June for our Science. Might even ask the school to hire her again for a workshop.
 - We blogged about Winter Fest.
 - We discussed the info-sessions on the specific material they delivered. That was our follow-up.
 - When they study the Canada's novel unit and have to give examples of games played by Aboriginal people from different cultures. They will learn more.
 - Reflections on what we learned about References during class
 - Discussed fishing, overfishing, and sustainable farms. We watched TED talks videos about this topic. Discussed hunting and trapping and how we can benefit from living off the local Land.

- Using the knowledge shared in reference during lessons, I would like to organize a nature walk to look for the medicine plants in June.
- Social Studies curriculum
- As we continue to study the fur trade, we talk about how traders and explorers survived in the wilderness from plant to homes.
- Further discussions on how laws have changed and sometimes make it difficult for trappers/fishermen.
- We summarized about the different things we saw that day. Had a classroom discussion about which one was their favorite. Did a tally chart to see which one was the most popular.
- We would talk about our workshops as a class. Furs station had a follow up Math activity so we completed them. Would journal about our favorite activity.
- We did a follow-up discussion on the presentations that went on in the afternoon. We went to skinning and fishing. We talked about how important these tasks are to our cultural background. A lot of students have experience in these activities. It made for great discussion.
- We shared pictures and reflected on the learning experience(s) through journal entries and class discussion(s).
- Combine with music activities/learning.
- Journal activity/writing activity of favorite activity. Group discussion after activity reflecting on cultural element and comparison to other alb. Comm. /Act.
- Graphing – favorite activity measurement
- Continue to explore the traditions and teachings of various cultures and backgrounds (tied to our Social Studies curriculum).
- Discussion, we will discuss the importance of cultural traditions and ways of life in the north.

- Analyze events and which culture group would use it – must be able to prove the answer and use examples from units.
- I had students draw, write, and reflect on their experiences of Mini Winter Fest as a whole.
- Vocabulary Talked about them (much smaller group setting)
Wrote about them Drew pictures to aid in the extension of the writing Spelled names of the sessions Rhymed names (and did nonsense words far) Chopped syllables – vowel combinations 2 groups wrote stories about a boy/girl who went to Winter Fest, 1 group wrote a group poem. Other groups drew 1 picture and wrote a sentence(s)
- We journal'd our experiences. We will discuss what the student's want to be when they are older.
- We always do a reflection writing piece immediately after and is used during student labs, so the students have a chance or opportunity to explain to parents some of the fun events that take place there.
- Use many of the activities as P.E. activities when the weather permits.
- Students will continue to apply what they learn from the presentations; the hands-on about jewelry making; the learning of sign language; appreciation of the totem rocks; fur making; the practise of sportsmanship; and have fun to any kind of competitive activities in class.
- Refer back to info from session.
- 4.5.1 – Physical Features and Nature Resources Displayed: Penny, jewelry, fur mittens Asked: What natural resources are they made from and why would they be found in the north?
Discussed: Changed in the north – Elders and their stories of their history. (Included Changes in Manitoba, example: Thompson history.) 4.5.3 – People of the North Aboriginal language/cultural groups. 4.5.4 – Ways of Life in the North 4.5.4 – Northern Contributions – Art (soap stone, painting, story tellers).

- Review what Aboriginal activities took place.
 - Compared leisure/game activities to Ancient Greek/Rome games/leisure. In Science we are working on cells and systems. We referred to the dogs and food that was fed to them. Wrote paragraphs about their presentations.
 - Make own bannock Soap stone carving
 - We looked at the cultural make-up of our class and acknowledged the similarities and differences in the foods we choose to cook and consume. Bannock was one of those foods. We as a class cooked a batch and enjoyed it. We also became aware of how much Aboriginal ancestry there was in the classroom, which was over 50%. The carver also discussed addictions, which we also expanded on.
 - Pictures are displayed on bulletin boards Assembly – King/Queen Trapper for Grades 1-3, 4-6, 7-8.
 - Students were very excited to share what they learned, so discussion was the main follow-up that we had.
 - Students compared some of the activities to what we learned in the fur trade. I requested Irvin (sp.3) Head to teach soapstone carvings to my students. I thought it will enhance their experience with Aboriginal perspectives.
 - Discussion about behaviors, and the great job they did. Discussion about the outdoor survival art and fur skinning – many students talked about what their parents said, and how many of the activities were things they remember from their childhoods.
 - Explain the route of voyageurs
- b. No Follow-up
- The assembly in the gym. Congratulating winners and participants.
 - I will do any follow-up activities that are suggested to me that are in the curriculum – please let us know.

- None.
 - None.
 - If I taught Social Studies I might use some activities to reflect on during particular topics. I might bring up activities within a cultural discussion in L.A., Social Studies, or any subject in a teachable moment. For example; now that I have new science textbooks, there is a lot of Aboriginal perspective included in the readings and many references to the topics.
 - Because our MWF was the last days before spring break there was not much time to review lessons. Over spring break most students forgot what they learned during presentations. I did no follow-up activities.
 - I don't.
 - There was no follow-up.
4. What would help you incorporate more of what students learn during MWF activities into your classroom teaching?
- a. Organizational changes
- Rather than signing up for workshops, have them grade and subject specific.
 - Having MWF sooner rather than just before spring break.
 - Bring in more that are relevant to the early years. Parents talk over their kids!
 - Technology Home support
 - I would like to see Teepee making as well because it's another type of home that the First Nations people lived in.
 - Events need to be more traditional (try to match what they see in their home communities at their winter carnivals). Workshops: for older students – maybe a day long workshop to make traditional craft or participate in actual “hands on”!

- I would teach the culture (Aboriginal) for Social Studies unit, and take students out for the practices/preparation/survival outdoors.
 - Not having it right before spring break when it's extremely cold and kids are hyper.
 - It would benefit me to know how each activity could correspond to each station at MWF. Then I would be able to do an activating and applying session about the station as well as incorporate the information about the station into the curriculum.
 - I am not sure. Maybe our Grade 6 students could make the bannock (or some of it), and instead of participating in the activities, they can run the activities. Possibly even running or assisting with the presenters for the younger children. Give them some more of a leadership role.
 - More info prior to presentations (bios of the Elders) Mini-grade group meetings to discuss/share ideas and suggestions. What can each classroom do prior to the MWF. Perhaps share info with another classroom.
 - Having some of the equipment available for the student to use not only during P.E. but during recess also.
 - I put the Seven Sacred Teachings Mural on my wall with four furs. We use these to learn virtues we can use every day. Others are physical and mental well-being, cooking, and the arts. If you would like to further discuss MWF activities and planning, please give us your name and we will contact you.
 - Traditional medicines. We could incorporate the Metis – Festival du Voyageur – which is part of our French and Social Studies Manitoba unit. If you would like to further discuss MWF activities and planning, please give us your name and we will contact you.
- c. Curricular Connections
- Rather than signing up for random workshops, pick workshops that fit our curriculum and have them assigned to each grade.

- More information on traditions and rituals. Lesson ideas or examples of how to integrate traditional lessons into the curriculum
- More curriculum related activities? It would be nice to know what is going to be available ahead of time (example – maybe a month), so I can prepare to connect with curriculum.
- Activity sheets to reinforce learning that occurs.
- If more of the MWF activities aligned directly with K-4 content in a fun way. I.e., Shelley's fur measurement could be partnered with a skinning demonstration/trapping demonstration. Mixing Aboriginal perspectives from a community member with teaching of content applicable to grade level. J
- More information of classroom activities – ideas – that are similar to what is learned on MWF so teachers can transfer and incorporate into lessons. I.e., main points/messages, hands-on activities.
- More curriculum based. Multicultural events. Cultural Fest.

d. Background Information

- At stations: brief introduction of the game and why it is significant, or how it tied in to curriculum/MWF.
- Videos or DVD's showing the former way of life of Aboriginal people. Make the link for us between then and now.
- If we have the information of events and topics in detail. For example; I have to ask or observe how certain events are taught to kids without fully comprehending the history (such as the snake).
- Where each of the games originated. Foods as well.
- Connecting with the workshops leaders to see if they would visit the class. Have a better understanding of what the activities involved prior to the event.

- If there is more hand on and background information given to us to prepare lesson plans around activities it would be an easier transition.
- Specific info pertaining to recipes and/or other info used to prepare bannock recipe (possibly have the class make the bannock prior to MWF).
- More resources, (?) and otherwise, to help learner learn more about the music of Cree cultures (resources (?) as lesson plans, etc.)
- Knowing background/traditions in more detail – having speakers explain activities and their significance prior to MWF.
- Some actual facts about the events that took place in the past (or history of nature culture) and compare then to what we do now. Point out to the students the skills Aboriginal people were teaching their youth in performing these activities.
- The MWF activities that you provided every year in the school would really help us into our classroom teaching.

e. Provide pre/post activities

- For my age group, are there any games (Aboriginal) that could be made up as “extra” activities within the classroom to be played all year? (Thinking file folder type things, dice games, etc.) Also, could we have a chance to do snowflakes to connect with Math measurement?
- A list of pre- and post-activities that are relevant would be lovely.
- If there was a list of possible topics that would be presented to classes.
- I suppose a mini-unit on the teachings to help them get a firm grasp on the material. That would be helpful.
- Would be nice to see a school wide reflection. Poster/favorite part. Reflection wall/mural of everyone’s picture to celebrate the success.

very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very, very delicious. We played volleyball and Manhunt with almost all the students that were there.

- My dream place to camp is at the end of the rainbow because it is always nice and clean. The reason it is so nice and clean is because no one comes there or visits there. I would sleep on a big tree with soft leaves and rubber branches.
- I had an amazing time at Mile 20. I didn't want to leave because I was having too much fun! I made new friends and met new teachers. I really bonded with the girls in my tent and in the other tents. I really enjoyed myself while I was there. I really liked when we all ate supper together and sat around the camp fire. I didn't really like the tents and sleeping arrangements. My tent was cold at night but other than that I loved it. When I'm in high school and they invite me back I am definitely gonna go!
- Going to Mile 20 was pretty fun, with all the activities like rock painting, bending, teepee teachings. There were lots of kids there so it was pretty fun making new friends. Making bannock was really fun, I have never made bannock on a stick before, so it was something new. We played volleyball which was fun because the boys were being goofy. I didn't sleep there but it was still fun while I was there, lots of being able to talk and lots of conversations, so it wasn't boring. People were sitting around the fire eating hot dogs and some veggies. So over all it was really fun and I was grateful to be a part of that.
- When I went camping, I didn't like it, I did not like the weather, no electronics, and too much people, sleeping, or waking up early. The weather was too bright, sunny, and hot, which made my skin burn, with being all hot. It was hard to enjoy myself. And I almost didn't go, I was forced to go, because there was no electronics allowed, which I go on every day to listen to music, play games, and go on the internet, so I really hated the rule. However, I did enjoy some things we did, but there was TOO MUCH people there. I really don't like being around with other people I don't know, which is VERY ANNOYING. With it being so crowded, sleeping in a tent was impossible, because each direction you would sleep, there would be a person sleeping beside you, in front of you, or behind you, not more than one foot away, so I didn't get any sleep that night. While I tried to force myself to sleep with all the snoring and moving, it was

already dawn at seven o'clock in the morning. I was more of a night owl than a morning bird, so my head hurt the rest of the day. And the drinks were terrible, the tea felt as if it was made with a coffee pot unwashed, and I didn't even get one apple juice box, there was only orange juice, which I was allergic to. The food was...okay, I guess. I did enjoy the soup and stew. And I also liked the weather that morning, cold and cloudy, and most likely to rain. I tried to wonder how this camp would look like with wet trees and sunlight making it sparkle, sadly it did not rain. And the bus ride back got me concerned about myself, there was a lot of weight, no seatbelts, and bumps each second. Luckily, we did not get into a car accident, but I think my good memory from camp was being outdoors, and how dark it was at night in the woods. I daydreamed how it would be if you can listen to music and take a walk in the deep woods, and take pictures...

- The camping trip was actually pretty fun, I went in a sweat lodge and lasted all five rounds. We all played volleyball and I had one dirty face. I had slept in a teepee. It was fun to be there because everyone was funny. I met a couple of dudes who were actually pretty cool. We had eggs for breakfast.
- The camping trip was alright. I had a bad sleep, it was very cold. I went in the sweat lodge and it sucked. I slept in a teepee. I played volleyball with everyone. I met some new people. The food was alright. I had oatmeal for breakfast.
- I went camping at Mile 20. I really like camping. I liked meeting new people and new friends. I disliked how cold it got at night. I also liked the surroundings and how beautiful it was. It smelled like wood smoke and morning dew. It was an amazing experience and I am going to go in grade 9.
- My dream place to go camping is on the moon. It would be fun, but if I run out of oxygen or take off my helmet I'll die. I'll go exploring for cool rocks and Aliens. I will ride a dirt bike on the moon and take jumps and ramps.
- My dream camping trip would be in British Columbia, because it would be a good place to go camping. You can do all sorts of stuff in the mountains. Go hiking, nature walks, fishing, swimming, and also

for the view of the mountains and a tent. And I would bring a RV and stuff I would need for camping.

- It was a great experience camping out at Mile 20. I met a lot of other students from Toullon, Juniper School, and RDPC. Everybody was really nice. Plus the teachers thought we would act up out there but all the students weren't acting up at all. The best part was when we all sat around the campfire drumming and singing. (Why?) Because I come from a family who is really traditional, and I've been drumming and singing since I was just a young boy.
- When we got to Mile 20 I knew that it was going to be a fun day, and it was. When went to our first workshop, we were talking about the teepee teachings and it was really fun to learn, and very interesting. I've learned a lot on our second workshop.
- My camping trip at Mile 20 was really fun. I had a great time, painting on a rock and making earrings.

Dataset—Aboriginal Accord Partners Training Responses

Thursday, September 5th, 2013

What I Learned

- Be more open minded to different cultures
- Cultural Proficiency negative and positive replies to all Northern Ethnic Culture
- Cultural Deficiency
- Equity versus Equality
- That we are all the same
- What is happening in Thompson to make positive things happen
- To think about other cultures and to be more understanding before jumping to conclusions
- Look broader at all cultures
- Enjoyed/scared to look within mirror approach, this will help me as a co-worker, parent and friend. Awareness can only help with my personal growth

- The Single Story was a big eye opener
- Thompson is diverse and many organizations are working on ways to embrace this diversity
- Better understanding of Cultural Proficiency
- Diversity is broad, not just about your ethnic background
- It is okay to talk and ask questions about each other
- Everyone has different circumstances, we should take the time to learn about each individual in order to understand them better
- Be compassionate
- Cultural Proficiency is about being open minded, accepting and adaptable
- How to listen better to different cultures to make this a better country
- That there is a much broader definition to Cultural Proficiency. It has given me a much broader perspective on how to look at/address issues
- Become more aware of people's point of view, perspectives and beliefs
- Cultural Proficiency definition and parameters
- Equity versus Equality and the difference between
- What Cultural Proficiency is and how I can be a part of the change
- There is a broader perspective on how to look at different people
- What Cultural Proficiency is. Loved the video
- The importance of being able to discuss and be open to all cultures
- That it takes an entire community to change people's minds
- More than 1 perspective in a story
- How perception affects relation
- What my own perception of things looked like
- Changing my biases and where did they come from

What I Would Like to Learn More About

- Is this taught in the surrounding communities? I don't believe that prejudice is only the "dominant culture" against the minority.
- I would like to know how organizations are changing in order to embrace the reality of what our city is becoming
- Information/learning on all non-Aboriginal cultures in addition to the Cree Culture
- More on employer perspective/workplace. How we can bring Cultural Proficiency
- Practices on approaches that can be used daily
- More about the history
- Learn more about our region
- Problems with how to spread the message. What next?
- Learn more about the information provided in the handout and video provided
- Other best practices that may be available
- Tools/materials that can be utilized in the workplace
- History of Aboriginal people in the north and how culture impacted where they are today
- How we as a community will keep things moving forward at work
- Adopting these teachings in our workplace
- More Cultural Proficiency training
- Learn more about all cultures

Suggestions

- Provide teaching seminar and workshop to all ages
- Keep training, it was helpful
- Exercises are good, need more of them
- Should have yoga
- More video, similar theme

- **Strong emphasis on the teachings in our schools, great personal examples, good material; not a lot of theory, simple terms, really enjoyed it**
- **Video was great. It summed up the issue perfectly**
- **More videos to get this across, videos available to participants**
- **Interaction with everyone was great, broke the ice, need more activities, stories were great**
- **Exercises were great. This was only a taste of Cultural Proficiency. This could be expanded into a longer course**
- **Great facilitation**
- **That the course focuses on both sides of the coin. Teach minorities to understand why the “dominant culture” got to be the way. Everybody has had many struggles in their life and has been shaped by their pasts. We all need to do our best to understand each other.**