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Out of respect for Indigenous languages, we have made every effort to use spellings preferred by Indigenous Peoples themselves. Thus, the designations used for First Peoples communities as well as the names of Nations are those in use in Indigenous languages.



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THE PERSEVERANCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF FIRST PEOPLES STUDENTS ARE A MAJOR PRIORITY AT THE CENTRE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS NIKANITE (CPNN) AT UQAC.

In recent years, the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples and the corresponding Journals have launched and entrenched innovative ideas and projects in First Nations and Inuit education. The CPNN has drawn from several studies and practices included in all four volumes of the Journal to offer Indigenous students a welcoming, safe and culturally adapted educational setting with a view to improving graduation rates. We hope that the initiatives described in this journal will help raise awareness among the various education stakeholders concerning the issues and realities of First Peoples, and that they will inspire other educational institutions and settings.

We would like to underscore the invaluable support of all of the collaborators who contributed directly or indirectly to the publication of this Journal. Our sincerest thanks go out to the scientific committee for its involvement, thoroughness, openness and active participation in the publication process. The CPNN would also like to thank the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES), Rio Tinto and Canadian National, which provided the financial support for the publication of the fourth volume of the Journal of Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples.

We would also like to offer our sincere thanks to all the authors for their invaluable work outlining the inclusive and innovative approaches in this Journal, which we hope will be used as a reference for both researchers and people on the ground. With such involved and passionate partners, it is with great hope that we turn to the future of the First Peoples.

Francis Verreault-Paul
Chief of First Nations Relations,
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CENTRE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS NIKANITE

Supporting the success of Indigenous students

Mission

Research, education, culture

Mandates

- Promote university education for Indigenous students in Quebec
- Develop adapted programs
- Provide students with educational support
- Create cultural awareness and safety
- Conduct research on Indigenous culture and share findings
- Provide French language learning support
- The Pavillon de la culture des peuples autochtones Rio Tinto: A welcoming space for meeting, gathering and sharing

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FURTHER TOGETHER: RECOGNIZING THE FUNDAMENTAL IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE



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On October 16th, the fourth edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples took place at the Palais des congrès in Montreal. Out of respect for the First Nation territory on which the event was being held, the Convention was chaired by Grand Chief Joseph Tokwiwo Norton of the Kahnawá:ke Mohawk Nation of Kanien'Kehá:ka. In the spirit of the opening speech given by Ghislain Picard, Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador (AFNQL), Grand Chief Norton emphasized the importance of education for Indigenous youth in Quebec and Canada, referring to it as the one true lever for emancipation, and one which inevitably has a national reach.

While both men made reference to First Peoples' difficult historical past with Euro-Canadians, their messages turned toward building a future; a future imbued with hope contingent upon moving forward within a framework of respect and partnership between Indigenous education leaders and stakeholders from the majority society. We could not have found a better introduction for the main theme of our Convention, "Further Together." It really set the tone for our event, which over the years has become a major happening in the Indigenous education sector. It is important to mention that creating partnerships has always been the leitmotif of Marco Bacon, initiator of the Journal and the Convention (at the helm of the first four editions), and former director of the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite at UQAC. We would like to express our deep appreciation and esteem for his visionary thinking, which has, without a doubt, fuelled positive change in the area of education for First Peoples youth in Quebec and elsewhere.

As in past years, in order to record the presentations for posterity and share other, related articles, the Convention organizers will publish a new issue of the Journal of Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples. The Journal will be structured much like the Convention, featuring the presentations submitted in response to the invitation to publish on the topic of practices in four areas: teaching and education, support, collaboration and cultural safety.

TEACHING AND EDUCATION PRACTICES

Student perseverance and academic achievement—the components of educational success—play out in a young person's personal experience at school. First Peoples children, like all other young people, begin their schooling as a means of continuing to learn and grow. However, the challenges Indigenous students face in regard to continuing the socialization process in a school setting are different from those of students from the mainstream population. They experience a certain discontinuity: the learning content and approaches are vastly different from their experience of socialization in their homes and communities. In other words, First Peoples children entering school experience a cultural disruption, and for most the experience is brutal. We know that teaching and education practices, which are not immune to cultural influences, are at the heart of the overall educational experience. The presentations in this category provide accounts of concerted efforts, and aim to understand children's and young people's experiences, and to define and implement actions to improve their school experience.

School is the meeting point of two cultures: the students' first culture, and the constitutive culture of the learning and educational content. Since this diversity can affect student achievement, teachers and educators are encouraged to consider it in their overall educational practices and more specifically in their teaching activities. Creating cultural inclusion for learners—now a recognized prerequisite for success among Indigenous youth—requires consideration for the numerous challenges they face, including the language of instruction, classroom activities involving logical/abstract actions/operations, and the common and generalized absence of culturally appropriate references. Incorporating appropriate references, which are more visible in history and geography curricula, poses complex and fundamental challenges for teachers and educators in the areas of learning and educational models, orality and spirituality. Initiatives such as the Matakan project (Jérôme, Ottawa and Petiquay) and the Steiner-Waldorf pedagogy (Lathoud and Gauthier) address the core problem of educational content and learning methods for Indigenous students; these initiatives, loosely modelled on Paolo Freire's pedagogy of conscientization, could help young people reappropriate the sociocultural aspects of their history.

An effective response to the complex challenges faced by students at school, in particular those training to be teachers, lies primarily with educational institutions. Getting families, Indigenous organizations and university researchers involved and working together is key to analyzing and understanding educational situations. Ensuring collaboration between the various partners, First Peoples and universities is also essential to optimizing educational and teaching initiatives. We would like to commend the collaborative efforts of Jacob, Riverin and Pinette, university professor, professional researcher and director of educational services at the Institut Tshakapesh, respectively, who developed an education program adapted for Indigenous preschool students.

An adequate response from establishments also requires the development of a professional culture of continuing education anchored in research – a concept Bérubé addressed in the project she spearheaded at her affiliated university. When teachers and educators adopt a research position with a view to improving the learning and educational experience of youth and adults, they do not focus their attention and efforts on existing teaching methods

and formulas, but are forced to familiarize themselves with new knowledge in the constantly changing field of education. The paramount concern is to gain an accurate understanding of the daily reality of practice through observation and reflection. Ouellet's case study provides a meaningful description. Observation and reflection pave the way to adapting to students' progress, selecting the most appropriate methods and activities, and doing so in a manner tailored to the context and the human and material resources on hand.

Front-line actors cannot assume this responsibility and professional stance alone; they need the appropriate material, support and administrative conditions, in other words, an innovative and proactive organizational framework. It is a very encouraging sign that awareness on the part of institutions is now expanding to new educational contexts involving Indigenous youth. The Petapan project (Couture) is a good example. The initiative was designed for Indigenous students in urban environments in the Saguenay region, which is a rapidly growing reality. More than half of the Indigenous population in Canada now lives in urban environments.

SUPPORT PRACTICES

The need to provide youth and adults in school with support and assistance is inherent in the complexity and specificity of their conditions and situations, whether they live in an urban or rural environment. Once needs have been identified, responses generally require collaboration between practitioners or individuals within educational institutions, as well as people from various organizations or communities outside of the institution. For young people, collaboration with families is generally indispensable. In this regard, we see programs being launched that, in a sense, offer the support of almost the entire community (Baron et al.). A spirit of collaboration and solidarity is at the heart of supporting perseverance and academic achievement, as well as social inclusion; this is clear for any education stakeholder. These collaborative practices facilitate the development of relevant teaching materials and activities, since they take into account people's needs and availability, as well as the limitations of the conditions and resources available, at all levels of education. As Lessard and Larose so eloquently put it in their article, "Indigenous student success in adult general education is everybody's business!"

Educational support and guidance practices are initiatives that target the environment, learning methods and activities designed for and made available to learners. The organizing principle of an effective and efficient support or guidance response, i.e., one that gets results, is grounded in the recognition of diversity and the need for cultural safety, identified and conceptualized from the learner's point of view. In other words, actions must be tailored to the context, and include culturally appropriate and authentic references to the learner's identity. The math and literature tutoring program for Inuit youth presented by Slawewski is a good example of this concept in action.

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

Perseverance and academic achievement among young people require authentic and effective collaboration on the part of adults and institutional, school and socio-community stakeholders involved in educating children, adolescents and young adults. Proteau, Petiquay and Soucy underscore the importance of working together to promote the educational success of a community. Naturally, the first level of action is preschool education, where parents and educators must work together closely. Together, they strive to harmonize and deliver their respective support initiatives to the children, with the aim of addressing all dimensions of the self.

Helping children to adapt to school life and maintain interest and motivation is key to a fulfilling and successful educational experience, at both the elementary and secondary levels. Students need recognition specifically highlighting their school experience from their families, schools, communities and local social environments. Tanya Sirois aptly presented the role Native Friendship Centres play in facilitating consultation and dialogue between schools and children's and adolescents' home and social environments. This collaboration between schools, parents and communities becomes even more crucial when a young person's education is disrupted for various reasons, such as a change of living environments, personal problems or social isolation. It is important to ensure the continuity of experience from the student's perspective; this caring approach is essential to bolstering the perseverance it takes to succeed at school. Effective collaboration between staff and teachers at educational institutions and members of various community organizations is based on a mutually open and respectful relationship and honest, results-oriented dialogue. Lesage and Ouellet were right when they said, "continuing education for school staff in Indigenous communities is a cultural exchange." A relationship of trust is built on knowledge of the other and an awareness of one's own position in the relationship. Despite certain cultural differences, these collaborative efforts are driven by common goals. This is an important component of educational/teaching practices, since it has an impact on teaching and educational materials; pedagogical approaches and initiatives; how the need for cultural safety in the classroom is met; and the cultural and linguistic conditions and specificities that conceptualize the students' educational experience. All actors in the relationship are bearers of their own culture, their own unique and personal experience of schooling and post-secondary education, and their own vision of education. Therefore, they must articulate and share their respective views of the objects of study and production objectives, as seen in the collaborative work practices presented by Pellerin et al. Their team developed and adopted an intercultural approach that coloured their manner of thinking, acting and being. Cultural safety and inclusion for all students with a view to ensuring social justice and success is their shared concern. Finally, a number of articles, including those by Pinsonneault et al., and Desgagné and Soucy, address an issue that signals a new trend—the realities of urban Indigenous students. The authors emphasize the critical impact of collaboration between various stakeholders as a means of promoting the academic achievement of our young people. They unanimously agree that collaborative practices are quite simply essential, regardless of the context in which Indigenous youth live, or the schools they attend.

CULTURAL SAFETY PRACTICES

A regular Convention attendee noticed that, this year, we chose to dedicate a section to cultural safety practices. It seemed only natural to the Convention organizers, who consider this institutional perspective as fundamental to the perseverance and academic achievement of First Peoples students attending non-Indigenous educational institutions or who are enrolled in programs designed for Western students. The recent demands for better education for Indigenous peoples, underpinned by the deplorable instances of cultural insensitivity playing out in institutions and widely covered in the media, have brought the principle of cultural safety to the forefront. This may give the impression that the concept of cultural safety is just now emerging within education research circles. In fact, the diverse measures established mutually to build an educational reality respectful of Indigenous concepts of education were part of a process referred to as the “indianization” of Indigenous schools, and an open-mindedness on the part of Western schools welcoming Indigenous youth. These measures echo the “Indian Control of Indian Education policy” (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972) issued close to half a century ago, which laid the groundwork for the educational recommendations formulated by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples in 1996.

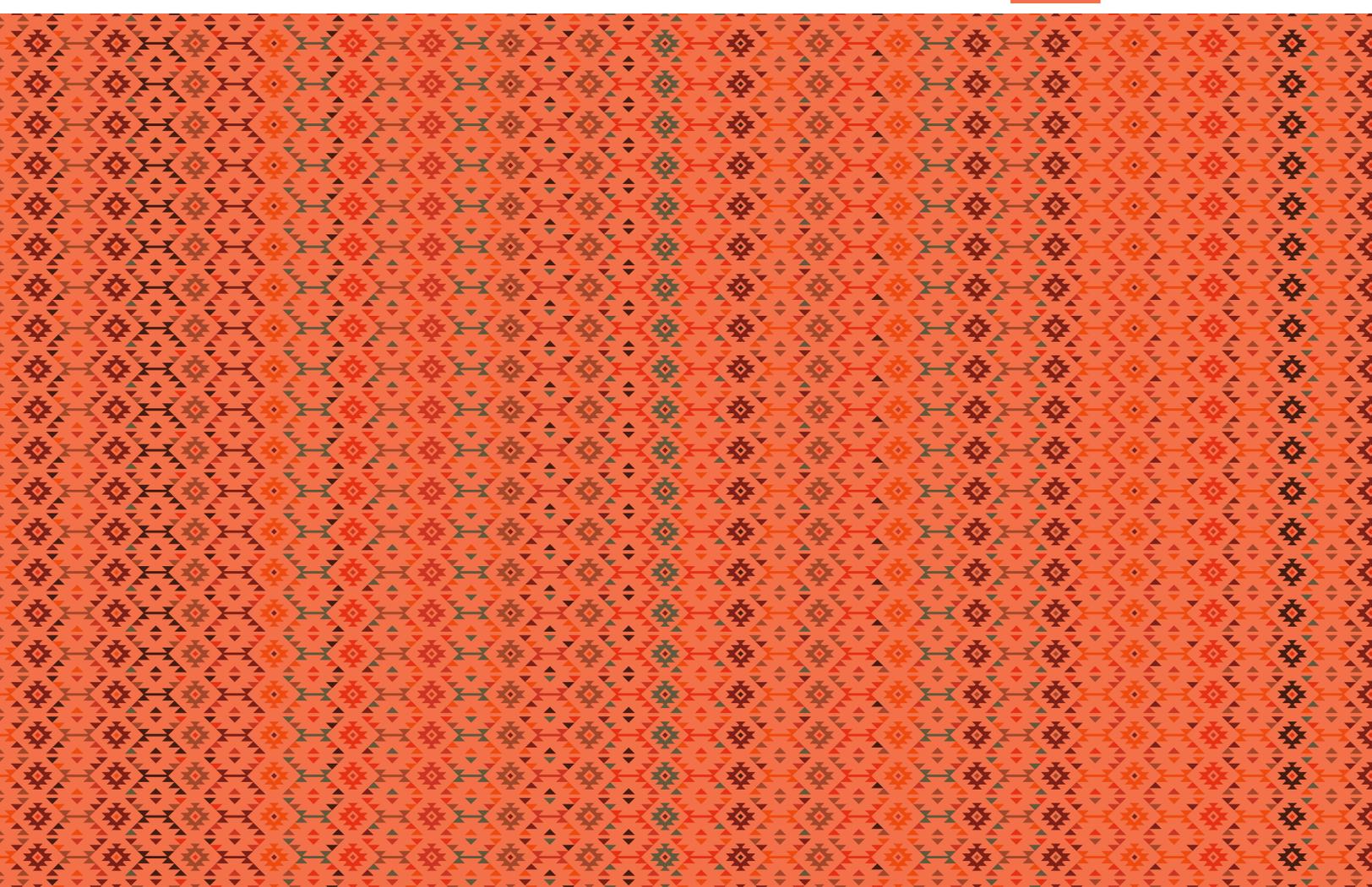
Gauthier (1995) pointed out that the principle of cultural safety is based on the cultural discontinuity hypothesis, in which First Peoples’ negative educational outcomes can be attributed to the culture shock they experience at schools run according to Western standards and measures of success. Studies in this area generally follow one of two branches: some focus on the specific cultural and educational needs of Indigenous peoples, and develop appropriate approaches to teaching, learning and support; others attempt to pull back the curtain on the cultural insensitivity embedded in Western educational institutions, and its consequences. Some researchers and analysts in the latter group take a more militant stand, associating this cultural insensitivity with systemic discrimination. Cultural discontinuity is a recurring concept in this section of the Journal: Lefevre-Radelli and St-Pierre highlight the importance of institutions acknowledging the effects of racism in order to establish appropriate cultural safety measures in educational institutions; Talbot and Pinette describe a welcome kit for non-Indigenous educators designed to share the unique culture of the Innu Nation with teachers in their communities; Veilleux and Blanchette examine the importance of helping Indigenous students develop a positive self-identity as opposed to withdrawing at school.

CONCLUSION

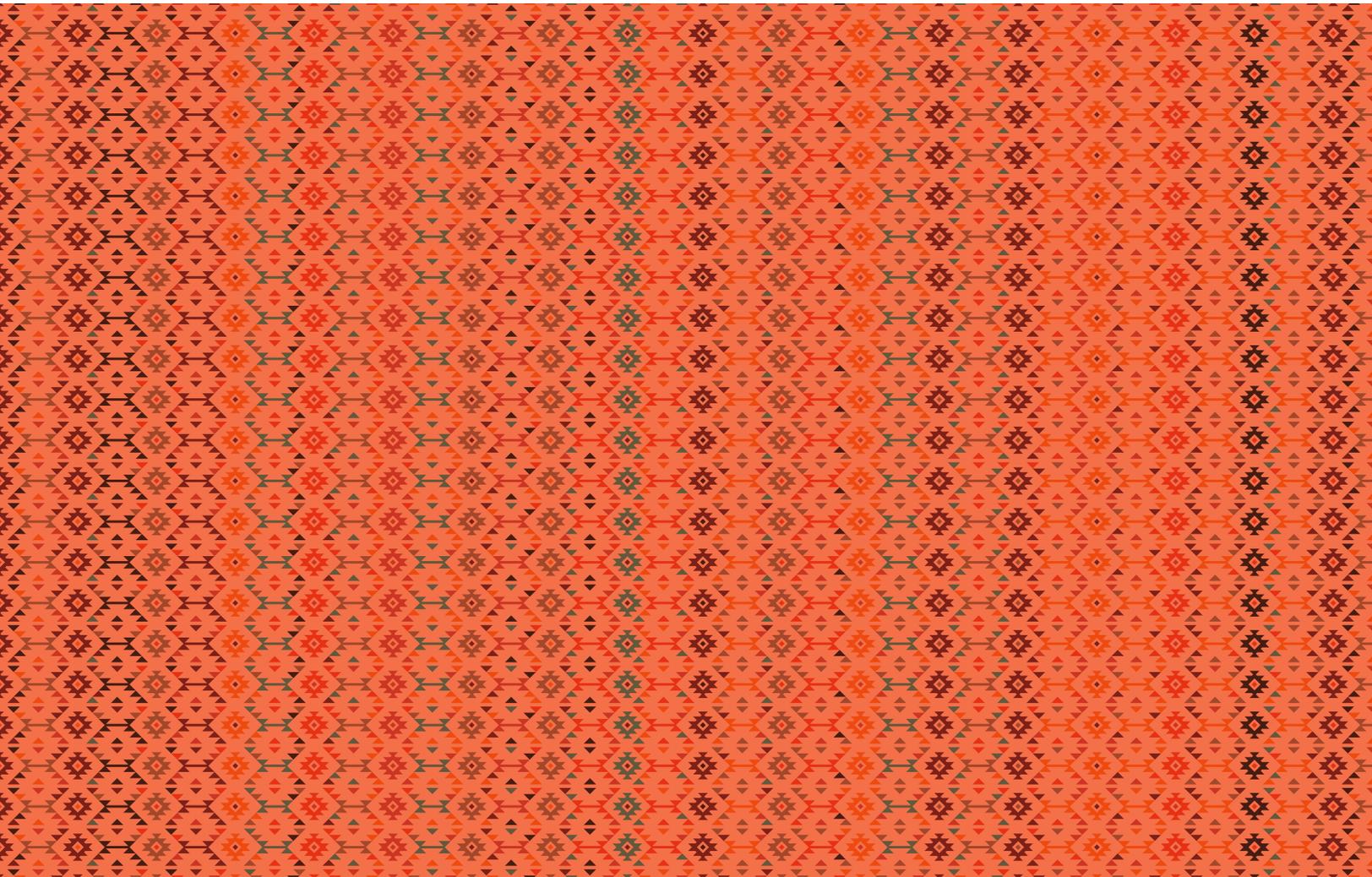
Further together. More than just a theme, these words convey the spirit of the Convention.

For optimal collaboration, Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants worked together to present initiatives, ideas and practices aimed at supporting the perseverance and academic success of First Peoples youth. Perspectives have changed and content has evolved since we held our first Convention. Researchers have strengthened their ties with actors in the field or have moved closer to concrete reality, and community practitioners, often Indigenous, have shared their real-life knowledge with others through significant public presentations. Our overall impression of the Convention is one of a happy gathering of people who were once separated by distinct professional and sociocultural backgrounds, but who have always shared a concern for the well-being of First Peoples. Comments from participants bear witness to this collaborative spirit. The “Thank you for sharing” report is teeming with comments from people concerned for the future of Indigenous youth, and messages of hope from people of all cultures. The article “Portrait of practices in support of First Peoples student success in CEGEP and university” shines the light on myriad initiatives implemented in institutions of higher education in collaboration with Indigenous educational and cultural representatives. The fact that these practices were presented to the public by the president of the Université du Québec network was significant for us. While there is, without a doubt, still a long way to go before Indigenous youth truly have equal opportunities in education, and actions and measures that reflect understanding, respect and knowledge of Indigenous culture and history are still needed, it would be in bad faith or ignorant of history to claim that progress has not been made. Practitioners and organizations from different social and cultural backgrounds are increasingly involved and dedicated to improving the formal education of First Peoples children and students. The Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples is undeniably part of this movement.

Happy reading!



TEACHING AND EDUCATION PRACTICES



THE PETAPAN PROJECT: NEW PRACTICES FOR SUCCESS AMONG INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN AN URBAN ENVIRONMENT

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Research team: Marco Bacon, Loïc Pulido, Elisabeth Jacob, Constance Lavoie, Catherine Duquette, Dominic Bizot, Emmanuelle Arousseau, Lauriane Blouin, Danysa Régis-Labbé, Shannon Blacksmith-Charlish, Pascaline Pacmogda, Lorraine Tremblay. **Partners:**¹ Johanne Allard, Claudette Awashish, Isabelle Boivin, Catherine Gagné, Marc Girard, Josie-Ann Bonneau, Centre de services scolaires des Rives-du-Saguenay, Saguenay Native Friendship Center (CAAS) and the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi



BACKGROUND

The Petapan project grew from an initiative launched by Indigenous parents in the Saguenay region to make their children feel safe and keep their language and culture alive at school. It operates in a local school attended by Innu and Atikamekw students from various districts in the region. In the Innu and Atikamekw languages, Petapan means “dawn,” the name chosen by the parents as a symbol of hope.

The project highlights the traditions, languages and cultures of First Nations peoples, and aims to provide Indigenous students with a healthy, safe, stimulating and welcoming environment. The school board supplements its educational services with language and cultural workshops, language camps and homework assistance offered by the Saguenay Native Friendship Centre (CAAS). A number of services are available at school, including parental support provided by a social worker, teaching strategies tailored to Indigenous students, francization, specialized education, remediation services, school staff with knowledge of Indigenous culture and realities, a daycare service and free school transportation.

One of the project goals is to develop innovative, culturally appropriate educational practices in line with parents’ concerns while supporting the success of Indigenous students in an urban environment. UQAC researchers associated with the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite joined the project to bolster the development and documentation of these practices. Collaborating with the researchers will provide an opportunity to share the Petapan experience with others.

This article presents the research objectives and a description of the project. It also outlines structural factors, practices, impacts as perceived by Indigenous parents, and an overview of student progress gleaned from interviews conducted with teachers and practitioners.

OBJECTIVES

A determining factor for promoting success among Indigenous students is the integration of culture into education practices (Brant Castellano et al., 2014; Kanu, 2007). Considering that around 45% of Indigenous populations live outside their communities in urban centres (Lévesque and Polèse, 2015), blending culture and education practices is a significant challenge (Direction des services aux autochtones et du développement nordique, 2015). Schools face multiple difficulties, including integrating learning models that are culturally responsive to Indigenous learners (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007), traditional knowledge, culture and teaching practices (Beckford and Russel, 2012; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), learning the language of instruction (Lavoie, Mark and Jenniss, 2014), and other matters related to child development (Fortune and Tedick, 2008; Jacob, 2017). Such a complex issue requires a collaborative effort from multiple practitioners, each a specialist in his or her field. In addition to supporting educational success, the project’s research component will produce an analysis of the practices developed within the Petapan framework. Three of these objectives aim to:

1. Document the practices established by the school, in the classroom and by educational services to promote success among Indigenous students

2. Analyze the structural factors and limitations of the practices developed jointly to promote success among Indigenous students
3. Analyze the impacts of the practices developed jointly for students, parents and the entire school population

DESCRIPTION

The Petapan project advocates for a culturally safe approach (Blanchet Garneau and Pepin, 2012; Brascoupé and Waters, 2009) as a means of supporting successful outcomes for Indigenous students in urban environments. The approach highlights the importance of helping students develop a sense of pride and cultural identity through special efforts to recognize their language and culture, such as language and culture workshops, school and classroom facilities, and cultural activities organized in collaboration with the Friendship Centre. Currently running at a local urban school, the project falls within the framework of intercultural education, which targets mutual enrichment and values diversity and cultural sharing.

The project also aims to help Indigenous students develop a more positive self-identity by recognizing their rich cultural heritage (Banks and McGee Banks, 2010). Group interaction is at the heart of the project, since cultural safety relies on educating others and raising awareness (Koptie, 2009) about Indigenous realities and the need for indigenization (Battiste, 2013). This interaction is made possible through shared activities with the entire student population and parental involvement. Providing a framework of inclusive education ensures cultural safety in urban schools. Rather than erasing differences, it highlights them as a means of promoting successful outcomes for all students and developing the full potential of every child (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 2017). Inclusive education is part of a systemic and holistic approach (Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 2017; Potvin, 2014) that echoes Indigenous learning models (Archambault, 2010; Dragon, 2007).

A collaborative research approach (Desgagné, Bednarz, Couture, Poirier and Lebuis, 2001) was adopted to include the important perspectives of specialists in the area of tailored educational practices (development and analysis), as well as to embrace the principles of recognition and reciprocity of Indigenous research (Jacob, 2017; Wilson, 2008).

Practices developed within the Petapan framework were assessed through information gathered during interviews conducted in May and June 2019 with a group of 41 respondents made up of school principals, teachers, language

and cultural facilitators, educational support workers, school staff and parents. Researchers used the interview data to identify structural components and related practices. The table below presents the structural components and practices reported by the respondents.

Overall, we observed that developing practices to support success among Indigenous students requires the commitment of multiple actors who work together to expand their knowledge and showcase Indigenous languages and cultures.

A good example of the collective engagement found in schools is the *Building Better Together project*, which allows participants to progress and contribute at their own pace—another step toward reconciliation.

The information gleaned from interviews conducted in spring 2019 shows that, for parents, the Petapan project represents:

- A bridge between cultures
- The establishment of a safe school environment for their children
- Recognition of their language and culture
- An opportunity to affirm their cultural identity with pride
- Peace of mind that post-secondary studies will be possible for their children

A number of respondents reported witnessing student progress such as:

- Confidence, pride, cultural and linguistic identity
- Openness to others
- Interaction with peers and adults, community life
- Progress learning the language of instruction
- Easier transition from one cycle to the next for students participating in the project since preschool
- Strong sense of belonging to the school, which is a source of motivation

CONCLUSION

The structural factors and information presented in this article point to the significant impacts of a culturally safe approach, a concept taken from the health care sector that underlies the protection of cultural identity and wellness (Blanchet Garneau and Pepin, 2012; Brascoupé and Waters, 2009). In education, these principles are used to lay the groundwork for student success. In this regard, Potvin (2010) states that school success targets “the global or overall development of youth, including the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and moral (spiritual) spheres” (1-2, free translation). Indeed, these dimensions were mentioned in the interviews.

Along the same lines, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation (2017) notes that “school success is a notion much broader than the simple act of obtaining a diploma. A diploma represents but a single dimension of a student’s academic experience. Successful outcomes at the elementary and secondary levels involve students’ engagement in their education, a sense of belonging at school and personal and vocational development” (6, free translation). In this perspective, the information gathered during the interviews indicates that the Petapan project is supporting success among Indigenous students in an urban environment by valuing and promoting Indigenous languages and

TABLE 1
Petapan project: structural factors and practices

| Structural factors | Practices |
|---|--|
| A unifying educational project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement of the entire school staff Education and awareness-raising for the entire school community Indigenous language and culture showcased throughout the school (facilities, activities) Group cultural exchanges and sharing activities Group cultural exchanges and sharing activities at the daycare service Cultural and intercultural weeks |
| Collaboration with the Native Friendship Centre | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language and cultural workshops at the Friendship Centre Pedagogical days hosted by the Friendship Centre Language camps Homework assistance program at the Friendship Centre led by Indigenous students enrolled in the UQAC education program |
| Full-time social worker | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular communication and follow-up with parents Organization of and participation in group cultural exchanges and sharing activities Participation in parent involvement group |
| A relationship of trust established with parents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings organized by the school principal A parent on the school governing board Parent-teacher meetings Collaboration and support from Friendship Centre workers |
| Language and cultural workshops during school hours | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshops given in students’ first language (Innu or Atikamekw) at the Friendship Centre The use of cultural references that are meaningful to the students Workshops for the entire student population Christmas songs taught to the entire student population |
| Homeroom teachers committed to student success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning Indigenous words and cultural references with the students Reflecting on learning the language of instruction Attending seminars Finding teaching materials that integrate cultural content Introducing Indigenous literature for young people Providing classroom facilities conducive to active teaching methods and integrating cultural references Promoting the value of Indigenous languages and cultures |

cultures, welcoming and supporting students and their families, providing a dedicated school team and creating a sense of safety and belonging at school. With a fully committed team behind it, this inspiring project continues to grow. ♦

Notes

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WALDORF EDUCATION AND ITS RELEVANCE IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES



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In the past 50 years, demands and efforts to integrate Indigenous languages, pedagogies, epistemologies and visions into the school system have led to ad hoc projects, including forest immersion, language courses and the inclusion of certain cultural elements in teaching. The introduction of alternative pedagogies could also foster distancing from the dominant assimilating system. Having proven its academic worth for over a century in different regions across the globe, the Waldorf approach uses many of the same pedagogical methods found in traditional Indigenous education: stories and legends, languages, art, ceremonies, manual work involving natural materials, our relationship with the socio-ecological environment and free play.

After a brief introduction to the history of Waldorf education, we will attempt to demonstrate how the principles that this alternative strategy shares with traditional Indigenous education, such as the importance of spirituality, orality, art, our relationship with the environment and free play, apply.

HISTORY

The first Waldorf school opened in Stuttgart, Germany, in 1919. It was the first to apply the educational principles developed by Rudolf Steiner. More than 1,000 schools and 2,000 preschools around the world have adopted the model, including some Indigenous schools, such as the one in Pine Ridge, South Dakota.

In Canada, Everlasting Tree School in Six Nations of the Grand River, Ontario, and six Nêhiyawak (Cree) communities in Alberta have adopted the Waldorf approach. In Quebec, some courses have been offered by the Cree School Board,

Institut Tshakapesh and the Akwesasne Freedom School. The Douglas Cardinal Foundation, founded in 2015, finances Indigenous teacher training in Waldorf education in English and French.

THE SPIRITUAL COMPONENT OF DEVELOPMENT

For Indigenous peoples, spirituality is an integral part of learning, and is as important as its mental, physical and emotional components. The three developmental objectives in Waldorf education are thinking (head), feeling (heart) and willing (hands), and the spiritual component runs through all of them. Deemed esoteric by academics, Steiner's vision of human beings, like the Indigenous vision, includes reincarnation (Heiner 1994) (Photo 2).

According to Steiner, body-soul integration is achieved in three steps. From age 0 to 7, children imitate to develop their external senses, willing and doing: the teacher's attitude must reflect his or her goodness. From age 7 to 14, they develop feeling and "wanting to do" through beauty and creative imagination, hence the importance of art under the benevolent authority of educators. Some practices are also intended to nourish interiority, like the Buddha's Eightfold Path, which represents noble attitudes. For example, every day of a week dedicated to ancient history, an Elementary 5 student may be encouraged to practice right opinion, right judgment, right speech, right action, right view, right effort, right memory and right observation. From age 14 to 21, young people develop their intellectual powers by freely seeking truth. They seek to "understand what they like to do." At this stage, teachers are specialists, who can come from



This painting by Marie Chatrand, created at Chief Napewaw Comprehensive School in Frog Lake First Nation, Alberta, represents the incarnation of souls. Grandmother Moon sends souls to Earth under an inverted rainbow. The souls are greeted by the seven sacred animals (only two, Turtle and Beaver, are depicted here). The Cree syllabics read "Every soul brings something to Earth that helps us learn."

outside the school, which promotes community and family involvement.

THE PREPONDERANCE OF ORALITY

In Waldorf education, songs, nursery rhymes, sketches and poems are part of the daily routine: the acquisition of first and foreign languages relies on observation, imitation and repetition. Pedagogical methods are adapted to the different stages of development. From age 0 to 7, when children are "doing," nursery rhymes and songs are learned simply by repeating the teacher's words and gestures. This imitative approach is gradually replaced by learning through the senses of the heart, followed by intellectual learning to integrate all of the academic content.

The practice of orality is usually accompanied by gestures, such as mime, hand games, rhythm exercises using sandbags, drama and eurythmy, an art specific to Waldorf education that integrates coordinated group movement, music and spoken texts. Songs are also sung when rocking children, walking in ranks in the halls and stairwells, baking bread, working wood, embroidering, doing the laundry and celebrating the cycles of nature.

Stories, fables and legends learned (not read) from teachers to make them more "lively," are also important in Waldorf education: they give meaning to concepts by introducing lessons in social and natural science, knitting, the alphabet or the four mathematical operations (+, -, /, x). In Elementary 1 for example, before children learn arithmetic, they learn their numbers as they relate to their basic life experience through the following poem:

*« [...] En mon cœur vit le monde entier,
Et tous les nombres bien rangés :
1 est tout l'univers, 1 est aussi la terre,
1 bien sûr est l'enfant,
Et 2 sont ses parents,
2 sont aussi lune et soleil,
La lumière et l'obscurité,
Mes yeux, mes bras, mes mains,
mes pieds [...] »*

Instruction in reading, which is spread out over the first three years of elementary school, is another characteristic of Waldorf education. It is shaped by the preponderance of orality, which makes it radically different from instruction in reading in the dominant education system. Writing is introduced before reading, based on the principle of externalization, which encourages children to express their interiority before absorbing "foreign" information. While the initial "lag" in reading is a source of concern for parents, especially in cases where their child changes schools, it has no permanent impact. As Sarrazin (2019) points out, oral competencies predetermine writing proficiency in both first and second languages.

Moreover, in Waldorf schools, two foreign languages are taught starting in Elementary 1, first the oral component, then the writing component starting in Elementary 4. The objective is to foster cognitive development, but also to promote sociocultural openness and to provide access to other world views.



How to liven up a story: puppet shows, traditionally put on by teachers at semi-annual fairs. The characters used to give life to the stories or decorate the seasonal tables, tiny shrines to nature found in almost every classroom, are made free of charge by the families.

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

In terms of representation, visual narrative forms (songs, fables, stories, nursery rhymes, plays, etc.) are used to maintain a fundamental sympathy for nature's manifestations, in particular among children ages 6 to 9, who still possess a magical-animistic relationship with the environment, regardless of their culture. Like First Nations prayers, these narrative forms often express gratitude, like this one recited daily for a few weeks in Elementary 1 or 2:

*« Merci Soleil pour ta lumière,
Qui chaque jour encore m'éclaire.
Merci la Terre pour ta force,
Qui chaque jour me nourrit.
Merci la Vie pour tes bontés,
C'est à mon tour avec confiance,
Bien travaillant, plein de vaillance,
J'offre mon cœur au monde entier. »*

In addition to the environmental knowledge and values conveyed by orality, children build their relationship with the land through genuine, direct sensory experience during weekly nature walks, gardening, free play and manual work involving natural materials: woodwork, beeswax and clay modelling and yarn work.



Sheep's wool productions by Sipi Echaquan. Left to right: pom-pom rabbit, frame and straw weaving (preschool), square knitting and finger weaving (Elementary 1), knitted sheep (Elementary 2), crochet pencil case (Elementary 3).

Regardless of age group, all pencils, toys and furniture in the classroom are made of wax, wood, silk or plant fibre; even the water colour paints are made of natural pigments. What differs by age group is the pedagogical approach. For example, during a free play period in pre-school, the teacher can inspire the children by repairing a broken chair or darning an apron. In Elementary 5, the woodworking teacher may explain to students who are repairing a chair what tools to use and how to go about it, referring to angles and geometry as needed.



Felting a carded wool blanket with the colours of the rainbow to celebrate the birth of a baby brother.

ART

Drawing geometric shapes, eurythmy, painting with water colours and music are an integral part of Waldorf education throughout elementary school, and one period a week is devoted to each of them.



Water colour painting created by Wacikamak Echaquan in Elementary 3 during a lesson on creation according to Genesis: on the fifth day, God said: "Fish, swim!"



Drawing geometric shapes with beeswax in Elementary 4



Two budding architects after setting the stage for the tale of the Grumpy King.

Blackboards are permanently decorated with chalk drawings representing the topics studied. They are drawn by teachers and copied by students in their notebooks containing only blank pages. Students draw their own lines before practising their writing skills. Each writing lesson is illustrated by a drawing. No colouring pages are provided.

FREE PLAY

While Waldorf education is extremely well structured and leaves little room for children to make their own choices, two precious hours of free time a day in preschool are devoted to various forms of educational games, either indoors or outdoors. Activities include symbolic, dramatic, exploratory, sociodramatic, fantasy, social, imaginative, communication and creative play. They also include locomotor play (active play), mastery play (taking control of the environment), recapitulative play (addressing aspects of human evolutionary history) and rough and tumble play (testing physical limits) (Forest and Nature School in Canada, 2014). In addition to the therapeutic value of these activities, children are required to mobilize a number of skills. For example, when students replay the scenes in tales, they incorporate a higher level of vocabulary and grammatical structures.

CONCLUSION

In an effort to give a detailed description of the educational principles shared by Waldorf education and traditional Indigenous education, we deliberately left out certain differences between the two schools of thought, such as the evolutionist perspective underlying the sequence of topics addressed in social studies, gender equality, the “animateness” of certain elements of the environment and children’s freedom. The large number of shared pedagogical elements, however, illustrates the value of Waldorf education as an inspiration for the indigenization of schools.

While adopting the approach at the school level may appear to be too ambitious an undertaking, in particular because of teachers’ and families’ resistance to change and access to training, many of the educational strategies mentioned in this article could be introduced on an ad hoc, partial or gradual basis in First Nations schools, based on the competencies and initial interest of staff and the community and the local cultural and organizational context. ♦

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SHORT-TERM UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM IN INDIGENOUS PRESCHOOL EDUCATION: CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TO COMMUNITY NEEDS



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BACKGROUND

The education sector is currently facing challenges in the area of initial and continuing training for preschool teachers (Boudreau et al., 2019). A growing body of research highlights the positive impacts of quality education during early childhood and at the preschool level, including short-, mid- and long-term effects on learning and development, (Bigras et al., 2010; Sabol et al., 2013). Providing education students and practising teachers with courses on preschool education during their initial and continuing teacher training is a means of improving the quality of education in preschool classrooms (Bouchard et al., 2017). Finding Indigenous teachers who meet the qualification requirements is also a major issue. Indigenous teachers working in Indigenous preschool classrooms have not necessarily received initial training in preschool education or teaching methods; consequently, they simply do their best to foster student development. Knowledge about child development, preschool teaching practices and education programs, and how to make them culturally responsive to Indigenous students are topics usually learned in initial teacher training (CVR, 2015; Friendly et al., 2018).

Concerns about the qualifications of Innu teachers in Innu schools on the North Shore and the Lower North Shore and the need to train them in preschool education were also voiced by the Institut Tshakapesh, an organization that provides Innu communities with quality services in the areas of language, culture and education, with a view to promoting success for all (Institut Tshakapesh, 2017). In response, the organization decided it would like to offer a training program that would:



- Give Innu teachers training in pedagogical approaches for Indigenous preschool students
- Give local teachers the opportunity to become qualified at the preschool level
- Give new teachers training opportunities as a means of preparing the next generation of educators

The Institut Tshakapesh, the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite and the Department of Education at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC) came together to discuss the concerns expressed by the Institut Tshakapesh, which led to a greater understanding of the needs of the practice settings, with the aim of designing a culturally responsive training program for practising and future Innu teachers. In this regard, the Council of Ministers of Education (2016) suggested that university teaching programs, including those linked to early childhood

development, be indigenized. From a perspective of decolonization, cultural safety must be embedded in these programs so that First Nations students feel comfortable pursuing university studies in early childhood and preschool education (Jacob, Lehrer, Lajoie-Jempson, 2020).

This article presents the Short-term undergraduate program in Indigenous preschool education, co-designed by the Department of Education, the Institut Tshakapesh and the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite to meet the needs of practice settings. Some of the students gave examples of what they learned in the program.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Short-term undergraduate program in Indigenous preschool education is composed of five mandatory courses¹ that focus on different aspects of child development and the foundations of preschool education.

The Short-term graduate program in Indigenous preschool education is given part-time, with students taking one or two courses per semester in a combination of in-person and distance learning. The program is adapted to meet the needs of communities and student cohorts, and in accordance with available teaching resources. Students who wish to continue studying in other education programs at UQAC (e.g., Indigenous teaching assistant certificate, Indigenous substitute teaching certificate, Early childhood and elementary education bachelor's degree, etc.) are eligible to receive credit for certain courses.

TABLE 1
Overview of the courses in
the *Short-term undergraduate program in Indigenous preschool education*

| Course title | Progression | Course content |
|--|-------------|--|
| 3PRS212- Preschool pedagogy | Course 1 | The foundations of preschool pedagogy (e.g., the history of preschool education, overall child development and the learning-through-play approach). Preschool education (kindergarten for 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds). How to set up a symbolic play corner. Reflective practices to support Indigenous children's play activities. |
| 3PPG140- Cognitive development | Course 2 | A study of constructivist and social constructivist theories to better understand children's cognitive development, including the main stages and how they relate to childhood learning. |
| 3PRS314- Children's emotional, social and moral development: educational practices in the Indigenous kindergarten classroom | Cours 3 | A study of the emotional, social and moral development of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and its components (e.g., self-concept, self-esteem, emotions, resilience, attachment, temperament, gender and relationship with parents). The emotional needs of young children from First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities are examined to develop appropriate practices in preschool education. |
| 3PRS313- The educational environment in preschool | Course 4 | Classroom layout for preschoolers. Areas of learning in preschool education (e.g., introduction to languages, mathematics, science and the arts: dance, music, art and drama). Workshop planning. Observation of children. |
| 3PRS211- Preschool intervention strategies | Course 5 | A study of the quality of preschool education and classroom interactions, teaching practices in preschool environments in Canada and abroad (e.g., New Zealand). Planning activities to enhance the quality of education in the classroom. |

STUDENT TESTIMONIALS

The first cohort of Innu students will complete the program in winter 2020. In this section, three students speak about what they have learned in the university program.²

In the Preschool pedagogy course, students gained an understanding of the learning-through-play approach and how to plan activities for children. Student 4 explained what she learned about planning, and how it differs from what she was doing in her own practice.

“The first course really helped me in terms of planning. Before, I was planning . . . I’ll give you an example. . . I wrote everything on a large piece of white cardboard, just large words, with nothing specific about the exercise or activity, the date or time of day. Now that I’ve taken the course, it’s going much better.”

”

For this student, planning preschool activities targeting a specific learning intention and taking into account the overall development of children and the importance of play was new.

As the students completed their assignments, they were able to bring Indigenous culture into their teaching practices, as confirmed by student 2, who described how she planned a symbolic play corner decorated with written materials:

“We said to ourselves, why not design a symbolic play corner with a carnival theme? I can’t say we applied it. Because I haven’t actually put it into action yet, but I hope to introduce it in my classroom. . . . I just have to set it up, and then I think it’s something we’ll be proud of.”

”

Student 5 told about discovering how preschoolers learn through play. Some of the aspects she spoke of included being spontaneous, making materials available to children, planning play-based learning activities and simply playing with the children.

“I had to create a project that would spark learning. But three quarters of the time, they learn more while playing than when I give them an assignment. I give them the materials and let them play. I had trouble with that, but, . . . with the course, now I understand . . . that I can leave room for spontaneity during my workshops. As an example, at the beginning of the year during my first activity with the five-year-old group, I asked the teacher to give them time for unstructured activities. When I entered the room I was going to play with them instead, and, in the end, I spent about 40 minutes playing with them.”

”

This student realized that the children were developing and learning through play. She also mentioned that, when an adult participates in the play activities, she can guide their actions and accomplishments, in particular through imitation, which is part of their culture.

“Imitation is a very important concept in Indigenous culture. It’s generational. The grandmother, the “kokom,” shows small children how to make bannock bread, so really, it’s cultural.”

”

CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

The Short-term graduate program in Indigenous preschool education fits with UQAC’s mission to be actively involved in both training and research, and to work in partnership with the various First Nations communities it serves (UQAC, 2019).

As shown in Figure 1, the program was made possible through the support and collaboration of all partners: the Institut Tshakapesh, which played an advisory role in practice settings; Nikanite, which supported the students; and the Department of Education, which provided the teacher training. Partnerships built on trust, sharing, teamwork and the pooling of expertise were at the heart of the collaborative work, and were key to the program’s success and implementation. The students’ comments shine a light on the program’s curriculum. By working with them, we will be able to further indigenize the program. ♦

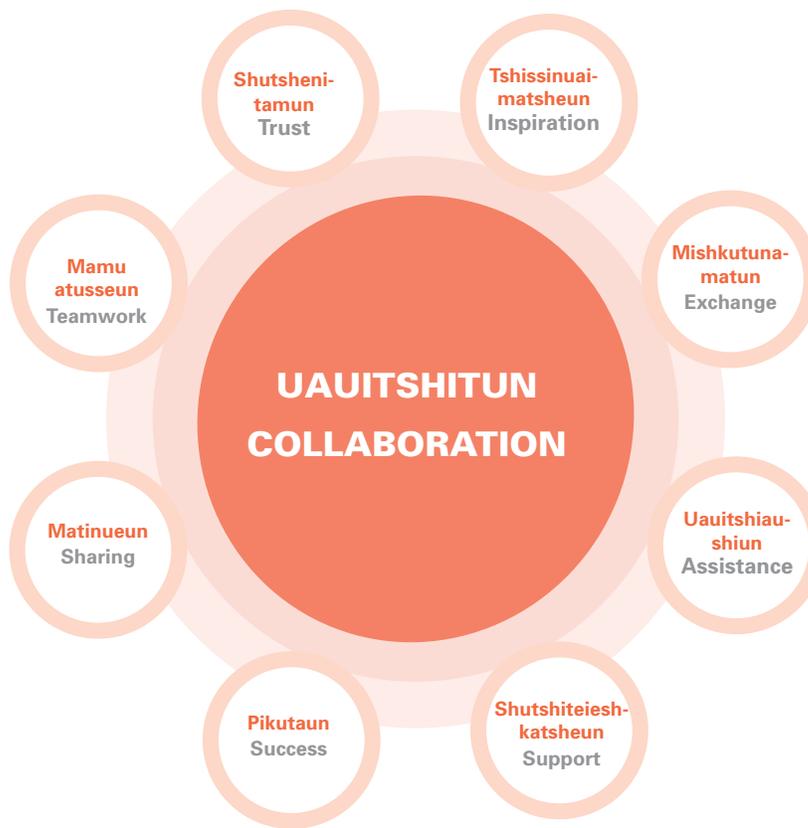


FIGURE 1
Collaborative partnerships

Source: JACOB, E., PINETTE, S., BACON, M. and RIVERIN, S. (2019). "Teaching practices co-developed by Innu students enrolled in a short-term undergraduate program in Indigenous preschool education." Presentation given at the Fourth Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, in Montreal.



Notes

¹ A description of the Short-term graduate program in Indigenous preschool education is available at: <https://www.uqac.ca/programme/0929-programme-court-en-education-prescolaire-contexte-autochtone> (French only).

² Six students from the program were interviewed in September 2019 as part of a research project funded by the Fondation de l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. At the time, they had completed three courses.

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SUPPORTING THE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE OF NON-INDIGENOUS TEACHERS IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES: SPECIAL SUPPORT IN AN INDIGENOUS CONTEXT



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In an effort to find ways of helping students achieve educational and academic success, leaders are constantly looking for ways to support school teams and other school stakeholders in First Nations communities. In 2015, the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), in collaboration with the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR), began offering continuing education for school stakeholders in its member communities (Lesage and Ouellet, in this journal). We set up a project combining the FNEC and UQTR's continuing education for school stakeholders with special support in the field for a teacher who wanted to reflect on his teaching and educational practices with a view to fostering his students' educational success.

This article describes the project, including the reasons for its creation, its objectives, a case study and our ultimate findings. We follow up with avenues for reflection on the importance of providing special support for school stakeholders who work with First Nations youth and of implementing strategies for the success of all students.

BACKGROUND

The project's approach was based on an action-research model (Guay, Prud'homme and Dolbec, 2016). It relied on professional support as a means of improving reflective practice in action (Gareau, 2018). Although most teachers in Indigenous communities are well trained in their subject area, few non-Indigenous teachers have a teaching licence from the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur, since schools in Indigenous communities are under federal jurisdiction. Consequently, it is important to promote continuing education among

teachers and, especially, to offer special professional support. This helps teachers mobilize their knowledge to improve their teaching practices.

OBJECTIVES

Our special support program is designed to meet two inextricably linked objectives: 1) encourage knowledge transfer and continuing education among school stakeholders in Indigenous communities, and 2) support the reflective practice of a teacher attempting to improve his classroom practices. Ultimately, these two objectives have to be consistent with other initiatives in the secondary school in question, in other words, they have to foster the implementation of practices to support secondary school students' educational and academic success and improve the graduation rate.

CASE STUDY

In 2017, a teacher requested special support for one school year. He wanted to learn how to improve his teaching and educational practices. He had taken the courses offered by the FNEC and the UQTR for three consecutive years (2016-2018). After each course, he committed to the proposed process, synthesizing his learning in an effort to continue questioning his practices, mobilize his new knowledge and take a critical look at possible improvements. Several times, he submitted difficult situations in order to implement a problem-solving strategy and initiate change. After a number of discussions, a problem came to light specifically involving the difficulty he and his students had establishing a positive and meaningful educational relationship. He wanted to take advantage of the project to obtain educational support in order to develop reflective practice skills. The special support

offered on an annual basis is based on an action-research approach that culminates in a presentation by the teacher at a professional development seminar or the publication of an article. In this presentation or article, the teacher presents his or her experience, journey and findings.

Four steps were proposed. The first involved observing classroom practices a few times during the year. We agreed on five observation sessions followed by discussions with a view to providing professional educational support. The second step involved keeping a semi-structured logbook to record four elements: a description of the activity (planning), an analysis of the management of the activity (teaching), the difficulties encountered (analysis and modifications) and a critical look at the teaching or educational practice (reflexivity). The third step was an email exchange throughout the year between the teacher and his guide to support reflection, suggest reading materials and discuss exercises and strategies to improve classroom materials. Lastly, the fourth step was the use of an observation checklist (based on Hébert-Houle's checklist, 2017), which allowed the teacher to observe his own practices and the effects of his teaching on students' behaviour since the beginning of the project. The results were presented at an international congress in Quebec City (Hammoud, Ouellet and Flamand, 2018) and published in a special edition of the professional journal *La Foucade* (Ouellet, Hammoud and Flamand, 2018).

THEORETICAL ASPECTS

The theory behind the special support approach is for the most part based on the Holistic Lifelong Learning Models for First Nations (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007). Kolb's model, combined with the experiential approach cited by Moldoveanu and Campeau (2016), shed light on Indigenous pedagogy (Campeau, 2017) and how young people learn. Reflections on changes to teaching practices, based on a work on effective class management (Gaudreau, 2017), sparked discussion on the effects of a positive relationship between teachers and students. These discussions, along with the principles of visible learning (Hattie, 2017), were accompanied by several texts on teaching practices.

The special support strategies allowed the various stakeholders to journey together into the workings of teaching and educational practices (Ouellet, 2015), in order to identify the teacher's strengths and limitations and to explore new cognitive strategies with students, including preparation for concentration. The teacher also reflected on confidence and self-esteem as they relate to teaching. He realized the importance of clearly expressing his faith in his students' potential.

FINDINGS

The findings concerning teaching and educational practices highlight three elements: the importance of (1) implementing teaching strategies, (2) using the observation checklist to record changes, and (3) questioning one's teaching practices in order to enhance classroom management.

Thanks to a variety of teaching strategies, such as strategies to facilitate concentration, students experience something different from their usual teaching-learning periods. They take the time to read, draw, colour or do other activities of their choosing. This transition period before the start of class provides a structure for engagement in the learning process and a certain motivation to perform the assigned task.

Using an observation checklist to identify students' behaviours and the changes associated with the assigned tasks allows teachers to critically evaluate their classroom practices, which fosters small changes in students' behaviour. The checklist provides teachers with useful indicators about changes and the need for improvement to help them analyze their practices.

The logbook is used to improve classroom management and the learning climate. It addresses the development of emotional safety and more positive relationships between students, the teacher and the class. The results concerning reflective practice also highlight the impact of teachers' knowledge of Indigenous culture and history on their relationship with students. The First Nations learning model and reflection on evaluation and certification and their incidence on academic motivation are frequently mentioned in discussions. Teachers can also adapt their practices once they realize the impact they have on students: rather than adopting a culture of mistakes (failure), imitation (modelling) and evaluation (judgment), they can adopt a culture of understanding and value students' potential and their academic achievement. Lastly, teachers' awareness of the impact of their teaching and educational practices can have a positive impact on Indigenous students' learning and educational success. Given the duration of the project, it is difficult to measure its impact in the long term. However, the teacher did change his teaching practices.

CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

So far, we don't know whether the teacher consolidated his learning and realizations, since the project lasted only a year. Obviously, it is impossible to generalize the results, since only one teacher received special support. As a result,

the conclusion will focus on our reflections on the importance of continuing education for all teachers, whether or not they are members of an Indigenous school team. We will also propose two avenues for reflection to enhance special support and reflection on teaching practices and educational support in Indigenous schools.

The first avenue for reflection involves the perceived importance of educational support for school stakeholders. More specifically, this support would help non-Indigenous teachers express their views on learning among First Nations students. It would also allow them to reflect on their practices and see their effect on learning from the beginning of the school year. They might then be able to adapt their teaching practices throughout the year in order to support student success.

The second avenue for reflection involves evaluation. How do we define the concept of failure in Indigenous schools? How can we adapt our actions to improve student success without taking the educational relationship into account? How can we make promoting educational and academic success consistent with our society's quantitative evaluation model, which only accepts one way of preparing for examinations? These questions demand in-depth and courageous discussions in order to be able to provide adequate support for all school stakeholders intent on improving student success among all First Nations youth. ♦

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MATINAMAGEWIN: CONTINUING EDUCATION AT THE UQAT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL COMPETENCY IN TEACHERS



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Since 2010, UQAT's Continuing Education Department, in partnership with the Algonquin Nations Programs and Services Secretariat (ANPSS), has been offering a one-day training session entitled "Piwaseha – First Light of Day." The aim of the course is to improve teachers' understanding of Indigenous cultures and realities so that they can develop partnerships based on mutual respect and understanding. The course was met with keen interest in several organizations, and 4,000 people have taken it so far. Given the success of the program since 2010, UQAT's Continuing Education Department wanted to continue developing training that makes a difference but, this time, in the education sector.

The course "Matinamagewin – Sharing" is aimed at improving school staff's cultural competency in order to create an environment conducive to Indigenous students' learning and educational success. It is also aimed at equipping school staff to integrate Indigenous values, knowledge, culture and languages into programs for the benefit of all students.

Focusing on the development of know-how and soft skills, the Matinamagewin course aims more specifically to raise awareness among school staff of the importance of cultural safety and humility in their practices; foster the incorporation of elements from different Indigenous cultures (history, know-how, soft skills, ways of doing things, activities, workshops, etc.) in order to improve knowledge, reduce prejudice and promote relevant practices with Indigenous students in Indigenous contexts; and encourage communication and collaboration between the school, families and the various Indigenous stakeholders (communities, Elders, friendship centres, band

councils, etc.). In order to achieve these objectives, the course also encourages participants to think about their approaches and practices, and to learn how to incorporate content that promotes Indigenous identity and cultures.

By offering this course, we hope to respond to the needs and calls for action identified in several papers, reference frameworks and reports, from the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the 2019 Inquiry Commission on Relations Between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress, to name but a few. These reports emphasize the importance of training, and several of them recommend incorporating Indigenous values, cultures, languages, know-how and soft skills into education programs in order to fight persistent prejudice, improve community life and contribute to Indigenous people's self-esteem and pride in their identity. These recommendations are solutions that can be implemented in schools through the development of cultural competency and humility in education and through the decolonization of education.

According to the Health Council of Canada, cultural competency is about creating an environment that is free of racism, contempt and stereotypes, where Indigenous people are treated with empathy, dignity and respect. There are a number of examples and stories told by Indigenous people who "have had experiences like being treated with contempt, judged, ignored, stereotyped, racialized, and minimized" (Health Council of Canada, 2012, 8). Cultural competency relies on practitioners' skills, knowledge and attitudes to change how they welcome, support and interact

with people (Lévesque, 2017). Cultural humility goes a step further. Humility requires constant reflection, self-evaluation and self-criticism in an effort to understand our personal prejudices, develop and maintain partnerships and respectful relationships based on mutual trust, and bridge the power divide (FNHMA and CFHI, 2020). Developing cultural humility consists in being open to learning about cultures that are different from our own. It presupposes ongoing learning and the continuous renewal of knowledge.

The objective of cultural competency and humility is to create cultural safety. The Consortium d'animation sur la persévérance et la réussite en enseignement supérieur (CAPRES, 2018) eloquently describes the concept of cultural safety as it applies to First Nations students in the education system: At the very heart of First Nations-Non-Indigenous relations, the creation of cultural safety implies:¹

- considering the impact of colonization and the resulting trauma;
- recognizing and respecting cultural and social differences;
- understanding the issues First Nations people face today, whether they live in a remote area or in an urban environment;
- being willing to collaborate with First Peoples in the development, delivery and evaluation of services and initiatives intended for them;
- adopting service models and practices that take First Peoples' values, cultures and realities into account;
- adopting a collective or institutional willingness to change our ways of doing things in order to ensure social justice and innovation.

Whether or not an environment is culturally safe is up to the Indigenous community. Cultural safety implies the creation of relationships of trust with Indigenous parents and students and the recognition of the impact of socioeconomic conditions, history and policies on education. Once cultural safety has been created, Indigenous students and parents feel recognized, respected and safe at school. The entire school is involved in achieving cultural safety: on a daily basis, in the classroom, in the school yard, in policies, in service offerings, etc. It is a lengthy process that must be headed by the principal and the entire school team, and that must respect each student's learning curve. The

Matinamagewin course allows participants to begin or continue this reflection process that is so important to the development of cultural safety.

The second solution proposed by several researchers and described in a number of reports is the decolonization of education. In her work *Decolonizing Education: Nourishing the Learning Spirit*, Battiste (2013) says that the rejection of racism inherent in colonial education systems and the repositioning of Indigenous humanities, sciences and languages as vital fields of knowledge are central to this process. She believes in the need for a revitalized knowledge system which incorporates both Indigenous and Eurocentric thinking.

The Matinamagewin course proposes sharing Indigenous content and perspectives in the classroom in order to promote Indigenous identity, cultures, know-how and soft skills; enhancing the general culture and fighting "widespread misconceptions" and the "distorted public image" of Indigenous peoples as noted by Commissioner Viens in the CERP's report.

According to Viens, "Print and digital media are the primary sources of information about Indigenous peoples for most Quebecers. . . . As a result of this approach, there is very little representation of Indigenous realities in the media outside of crisis times . . . although it is important to note that things are improving" (Gouvernement du Québec, 2019, 210-211). Viens emphasizes the importance of dealing with these issues in the classroom (Call for Action no. 22) by recommending that educators "introduce concepts related to Indigenous history and culture as early as possible in the school curriculum" (Gouvernement du Québec, 2019, 250).

For all of these reasons, it is important for us to share authentic resources with participants during the course so that they can use them in the classroom. First, we recommend that participants encourage a contemporary perspective rather than stereotypes that have little to do with today's reality. It is also important to give priority to history, languages and cultures, and to invite guest speakers and First Nations or Inuit people living in urban and surrounding communities. In addition, presenting Indigenous models in various areas such as literature, song, cinema, politics, education and the environment in the classroom helps students understand their value and helps break down prejudice.

We encourage you to explore different ideas and resources available online:

- Wapikoni Mobile (<http://www.wapikoni.ca>): Short films giving Indigenous youth in Quebec and elsewhere a voice. You can search by nation or community, or download a teaching guide for secondary schools.
- FNEC (<https://ge.cepn-fnec.com/literature>): First Nations Youth Literature Inventory
- Espaces autochtones de Radio-Canada (ici.radio-canada.ca/espaces-autochtones): news, informative vignettes, special files, etc.
- National Film Board (<https://www.nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema>): All NFB films directed by Indigenous film makers, such as Alanis Obomsawin
- Gabriel-Commanda Educational Kit by the Val-d'Or Native Friendship Centre (<http://en.caavd.ca/educationalkit>): An educational activity for each year, from kindergarten to Secondary V
- Legacy of Hope Foundation (http://legacyofhope.ca/en_ca/portfolio-items/wherearethekids): Workshop activity guide on the residential school system
- Pierre LePage. *Mythes et réalités sur les peuples autochtones*. 3rd ed.: A wealth of information
- "Hanging Out" virtual exhibition (<http://lieuxderencontres.ca/en>): Indigenous youth open the doors of their community and share their contemporary reality. The Indigenous organization La boîte rouge vif has several authentic projects like this.

IMPORTANT DAYS AND MONTHS



National Indigenous Peoples Day



Orange Shirt Day:
Every Child Matters (day to recognize the harm the residential school system caused to the self-esteem and well-being of Indigenous children²)



National Day Honouring Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls



National Indigenous History Month
(to honour the history, heritage and diversity of Indigenous Peoples in Canada)

At the end of the course, we present various scenarios and invite participants to think about and discuss the issues at hand. The following are two scenarios presented at the 2019 Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, along with participants' answers (good practices):

Q: Explain why the development of a meaningful relationship with students and parents is so important for Indigenous cultural safety?

Answer: Meaningful relationships contribute to a sense of belonging, trust, openness and an understanding of Indigenous culture. It is also important for educators to act differently and adapt their teaching so that students feel safe and don't have to fear being discriminated against.

Q: You tell students that there will be a pow-wow this weekend in a neighbouring community. A student asks you about the meaning of some of the dances. Should you ask an Indigenous student if she knows the answer? Why or why not?

Answer: No, you should ask the group because, if the Indigenous student doesn't know the answer, she could feel inadequate. The Indigenous student is not necessarily an expert in her culture. You need to know your students and ask them questions beforehand. Then you'll know if they are comfortable speaking to the class and sharing their experiences

In conclusion, UQAT's Continuing Education Department is proud to have developed the *Matinamagewin*³ course, which allows teachers to take the time to reflect on the importance of the development of cultural competency and humility, as well as on the incorporation of Indigenous content and perspectives into their practices. With this course, UQAT's Continuing Education Department hopes that teachers will be better equipped to promote Indigenous identity and combat ignorance and prejudice. ♦

Notes

¹ According to CAPRES (2018), this is a responsibility rather than an adaptation.

² For more information about Orange Shirt Day: <http://orangeshirtday.org>.

³ For more information or to take the course, contact UQAT's Continuing Education Department at fc@uqat.ca, or visit our website: <http://uqat.ca/formation-continue>.

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MATAKAN PROJECT: INDIGENIZING EDUCATION AND AFFIRMING TERRITORIAL IDENTITY THROUGH LAND-BASED LEARNING WITH ATIKAMEKW SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS



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BACKGROUND

Like many Indigenous groups in Quebec, across Canada and around the world, the Atikamekw Nehirowisiwok Nation is particularly concerned with the protection, transmission and development of its territory, traditional knowledge and cultural heritage. Manawan, located 85 km from Saint-Michel-des-Saints in one of three Atikamekw communities in the Lanaudière region, is no exception. A number of initiatives have been launched to address these concerns, including cultural activities for elementary and secondary school students, an Atikamekw language and cultural program, land-based activities based on the six Atikamekw seasons, and local tourism that aims to mobilize community resources and enhance the Atikamekw territory.

The Matakan project is the result of a partnership between the Atikamekw Council of Manawan, Manawan Tourism, Otapi Secondary School and UQAM,¹ created to promote Atikamekw traditional knowledge and territory. Every summer for the past three years, two-week cultural transmission camps for secondary school students have been held on the land to promote Atikamekw knowledge and stories transmitted by Elders and other members of the Manawan community. Traditionally reserved for tourists and outside visitors, the Matakan² site, located on Kempt Lake (Opockoteiak sakihikanik) 45 minutes by

motorboat from the community, became a gathering place for the community in 2009, and has since been a site for teaching and transmitting Atikamekw territorial knowledge.

OBJECTIVES

The project aims to support tourism, with the idea that it can be a unifying and mobilizing force within the community. Tourism can support local initiatives to affirm Atikamekw concepts of teaching (Poirier, 2009), education and relationship with the land. Designed in three parts (Part 1: 2017-2020), Matakan brings together organizations, researchers and practitioners from Indigenous cultural and educational settings to develop culturally appropriate strategies for youth and other members of the Manawan community in the areas of teaching, learning and territorial development. The ultimate goal is to indigenize teaching practices by bringing a cultural component into the recognized curriculum at Manawan's Otapi Secondary School (Canada, 2007; Deer and Falkenberg, 2016; Kim, 2015; Toulouse, 2008).

The project's larger social impact lies in launching a process of knowledge mobilization to establish Atikamekw mechanisms for building awareness of traditional knowledge and learning at the secondary level. Another goal is to explore

avenues for fostering the decolonization of Indigenous research and education methodologies in Indigenous communities with, by and for the Atikamekw Nation (Battiste, 2013; Wilson, 2008). Matakan also supports initiatives to promote and affirm Atikamekw identification to the land by developing cultural and pedagogical activities around Kempt Lake.

The project also aims to reaffirm the widely accepted concept that defines Indigenous tourism as “an activity in which Indigenous peoples are directly involved either through control and/or by having their culture serve as the essence of the attraction” (Butler and Hinch, 1996, p. 9).

However, within the framework of this project, we consider tourism to be a tool for fostering learning and cultural transmission within the community. Since 2017, Matakan has complemented existing documentation already rich in knowledge related to the Atikamekw cultural heritage and territory.

THE PROJECT COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED FOUR OBJECTIVES:

Objective 1

Document and highlight: Promote activities carried out on the territory, connection to the land, Atikamekw knowledge, language and culture.

Objective 2

Transmit teachings on the land: Support cultural transmission through land-based learning: school in the forest.

Objective 3

Transmit and teach at school: Strengthen the cultural content of school programs: forest in the school.

Objective 4

Provide training: Encourage student perseverance and train research assistants by and for the Atikamekw Nehirowisiwok Nation.

DESCRIPTION

More precisely, the aforementioned activities aim to:

- Encourage reflection on two Atikamekw concepts that are key to the indigenization of education and the transmission of knowledge and relationships with the land: Kiskinohamakewin (education) and Kiskinohamatasowin (teaching).
- Integrate the project into current reconciliation policies formulated in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report (TRC, 2015).
- Develop new media for cultural transmission, such as digital art, visual art and new technologies, with a view to protecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions, language, etc.).
- Organize various activities to raise awareness among secondary students and members of the community about the environment and strategies to protect the territory, including water, rivers, plants and animals.
- Offer topic-based workshops on contemporary issues, such as leadership, empowerment, women and governance, and international Indigenous policies.
- Strengthen the sense of belonging and self-esteem of young people and others involved in the project.
- Encourage researchers, Elders, experts and conveyors of culture in Manawan to get involved in the process of transmitting culture and passing down traditional teachings.

With these perspectives in mind, a number of activities were held at the Matakan site, including workshops on digital creation (UHU labos nomades), traditional cooking (bannock on a stick, moose, walleye, blueberry paste, blueberry donuts, etc.) and arts and crafts (bark baskets, making miniature canoes, beading, embroidery); history told from the Atikamekw point of view; Atikamekw language and leadership workshops; traditional activities and rituals; storytelling hours highlighting the Atikamekw oral tradition; participatory work on territory maps and reflection on Atikamekw toponymy; drumming songs performed by the local group Black Bear to raise awareness; discussions with Manawan Tourism’s coordinator and guides about the importance for the Atikamekw Nehirowisiwok people of developing tourism; presentations on tangible and intangible cultural heritage; and a workshop

on filmmaking techniques (Wapikoni Mobile). The activities were systematically documented through photographs, videos and audio recordings. A play based on a story told by Elder Jos Ottawa was produced.

The story of Atikamekw cultural hero Wisiketcak was told to youth at the Matakan site, and was the subject of an Atikamekw language class taught by Cécile Niquay-Ottawa to help secondary students understand certain references to the territory now rarely used in the community.

A play was then produced with the help of two young Atikamekw Nehirowisiwok women, Mikon Ottawa and Véronique Hébert, who threw their passion for theatre into creating scenery at the school and giving two performances in June 2019. After three summers of land-based workshops, the project committee will focus on developing activities for the school year (2020-2021 pilot project) in the areas of math, computer science, physical education, history, language and culture, English, French, science and art.

While it is still too early to measure the effects of the summer transmission camps on student perseverance, the project will continue to hold activities during the school year and document indicators of a connection between culturally appropriate activities and student perseverance and success. Comments from the young people attending the camps highlight the relevance of this inclusive approach to educational activities:

“I really liked listening to the Elders, to hear them tell stories. And also hearing about history from our point of view. This is the second year I’ve come. Two weeks each time. I always learn something. It’s also fun to be with friends, on the land. Fishing, canoe races, arts and crafts... I even liked embroidery. It’s a great school. I’m less tempted to drop out” (N., 2019).

”

“I want to go back. It was nice there. I really liked the canoe race, it was fun. I really liked that we were all together, that we slept outdoors. I also really liked seeing Black Bear, here, on the land. Also, here at the Matakan site, there’s no fighting. In the beginning, I only wanted to come for one week. But in the end, I wanted to come back for the second week” (S. H., 2019).

”

“I wish I had learned that at school, to see history from both sides, like we did. History from our point of view. ... What I liked most were the arts and crafts workshops, because they were with my great-grandmother, and some day I would also like to pass down our culture. If only we could continue doing this during the year, at school. . . . I came here to spend time in the forest. Because I haven’t had the chance to do that for a few years. Also, because I wanted to talk to the Elders, and listen to them. And to make new friends” (S., 2018).

”

“Some people came here to concentrate. I came to fish. I never have the chance to fish. To talk. To be in the woods. To learn how to use a net, I’ve never done that before” (Y. M., 2018).

”

CONCLUSION

The Matakan project began in 2016 and was guided throughout by reflections and observations gathered from various actors in the education sector and experts on Atikamekw culture from Manawan, including the head of educational services and principal of the secondary school, who wishes to strengthen and further the inclusion of Atikamekw content at school; the coordinator of Manawan Tourism, whose goal is to develop cultural and pedagogical activities on the territory; Elders, who prefer to hand down their knowledge and stories on the land rather than in the classroom; secondary school teachers, who are on the lookout for teaching tools that will help their students feel culturally safe; and, finally, the 40 or so secondary school students who participated in the project, around 15 students per year, including 3 who came back two years in a row. Several students showed an interest in uniting “forest and school” in a single, school and social project. ♦

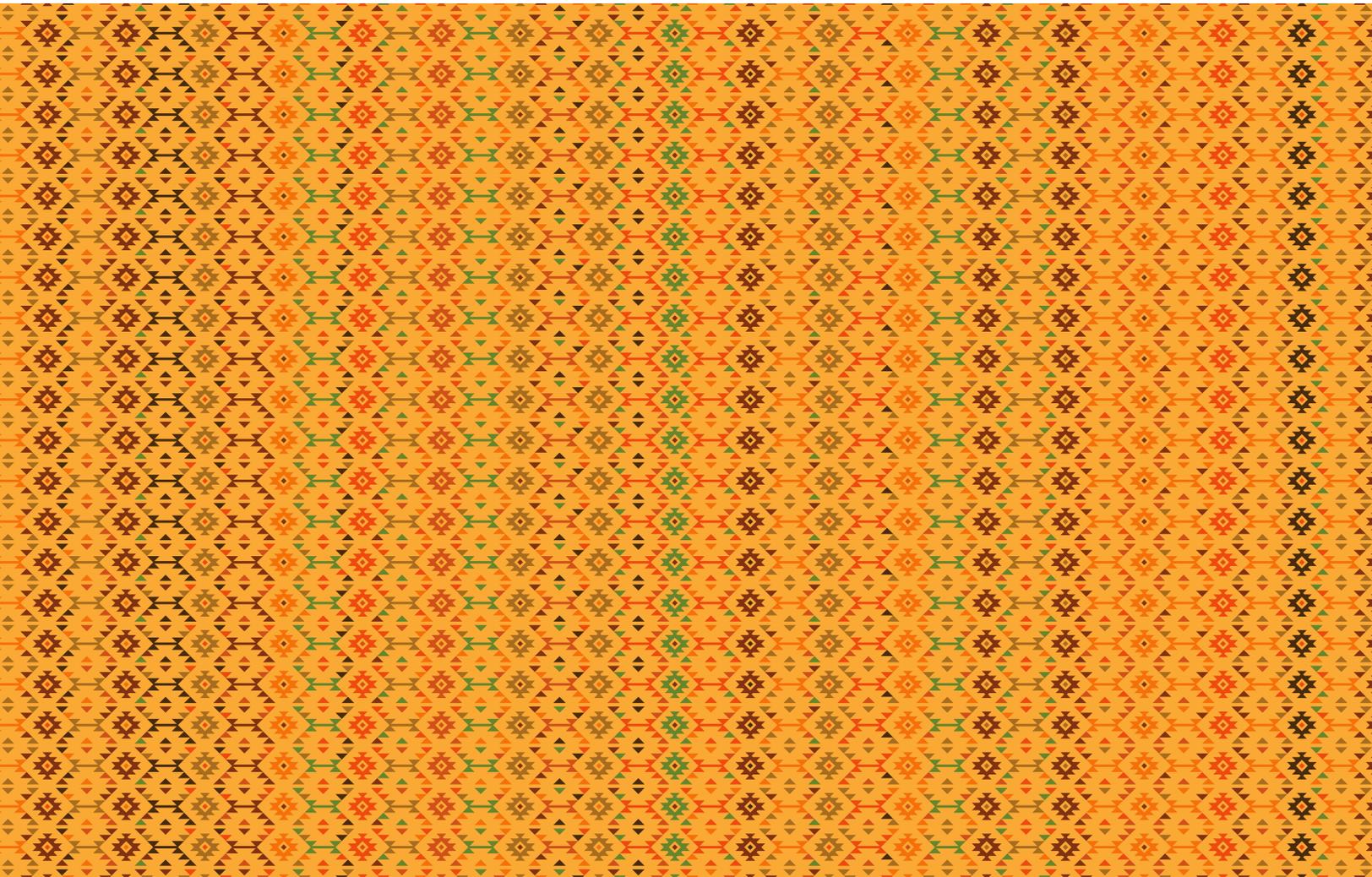
Notes

¹ With funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada.

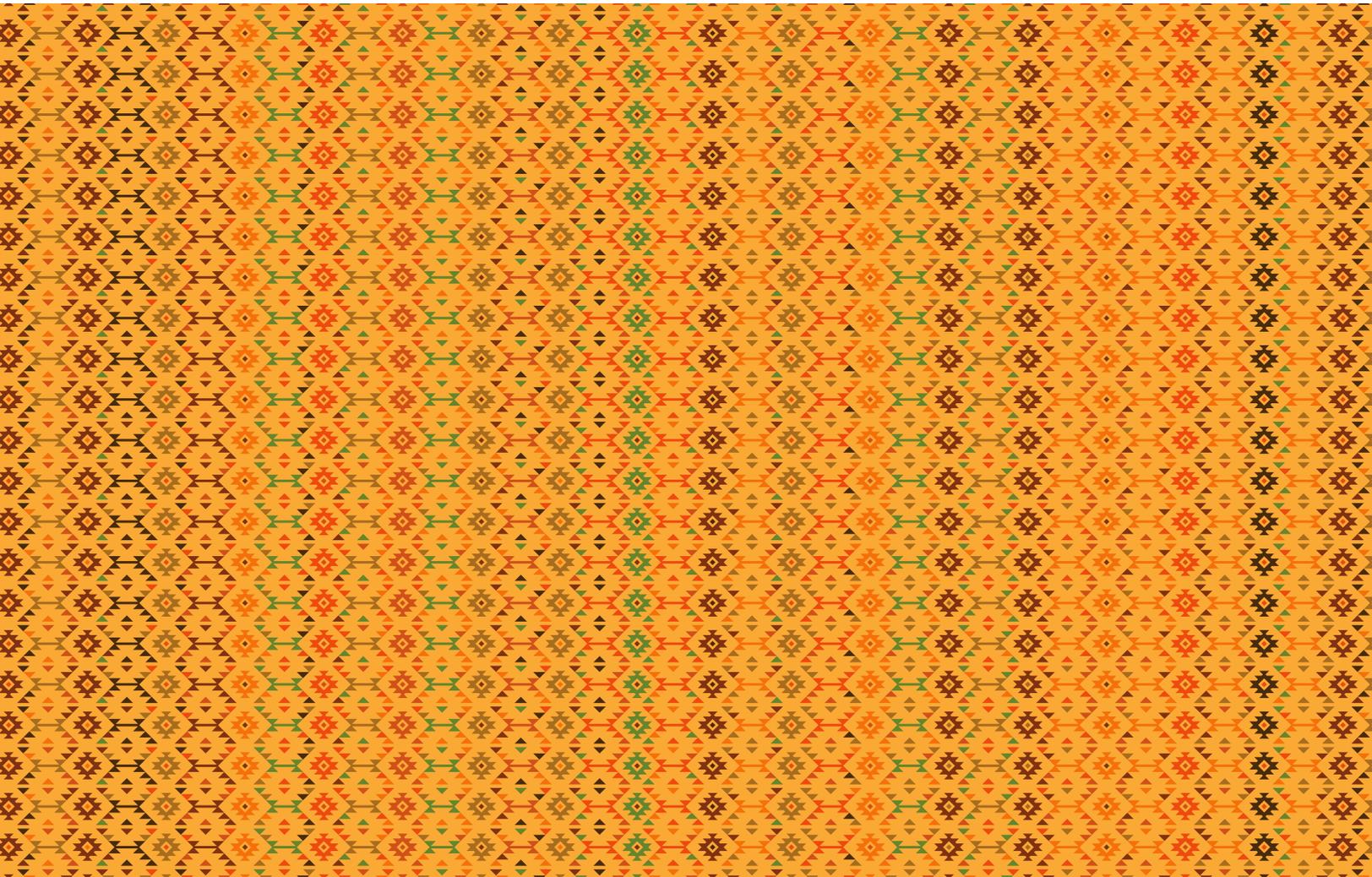
² In Atikamekw, “Mataka” means “place of passage, or transition.”

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SUPPORT PRACTICES



THE EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAM (PASS): COLLABORATING TO SUPPORT PERSEVERANCE AMONG MASHTEUIATSH STUDENTS



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BACKGROUND

Student success is an important issue for everyone. However, the educational experience of Indigenous youth is different and often more complex than that of non-Indigenous students. These differences can be the result of personal problems, such as substance abuse; social problems, such as being involved with people engaged in criminal activity; or environmental reasons, such as living in a remote community. Common risk factors found in Indigenous communities are high drop-out rates, fragile support networks, language barriers in the classroom, living in a low-income community and geographical isolation (Bergevin, 2008; Goyette et al., 2012). The Educational and Social Support Program (Programme d'accompagnement scolaire et social) (PASS) was created to reduce the impact of risk factors associated with Pekukamiulnuatsh students in Mashteuiatsh dropping out of school at the Elementary Cycle Three and secondary school levels, and to increase student perseverance and empowerment.

As part of the Pathways to Education program, PASS aims to provide people from low-income communities with the resources they need to graduate from secondary school. A stakeholder in the Pathways to Education program, PASS raises awareness of the importance of education and fosters student perseverance, encouraging students to stay in school. Members of the community or region act as mentors/tutors and resource consultants for parents and students, working together with families, schools and community organizations to support youth in the community both academically and socially. PASS offers a variety of services, including tutoring, financial support for education,

cultural outings, sporting events, mentoring and social support for youth and their families. In January 2019, the remedial education clinic and the social work clinic at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC) joined PASS to help it fulfill its dual mission: providing academic and social support.

The team of professionals from the remedial education and social work clinics is composed of five people. Two research professors work with the mentors/tutors and resource consultants, providing supervision, ongoing training and support in regard to organizational structure. The research professors act as a bridge between theory and practitioner expertise, and make sure that responses are implemented. A remedial education teacher and two social workers are dedicated to counselling practitioners on how to set up and monitor their activities.

This interdisciplinary team was already in action, having been recruited several years earlier by the UQAC remedial education and social work programs to give the students/future professionals a common knowledge base and the necessary skills to deliver quality services (Baron, Sasseville and Vachon, 2018; Baron, Sasseville, Doucet and Bizot, 2019). Their interdisciplinary collaboration follows the guidelines outlined in the National Interprofessional Competency Framework (CIHC, 2010), which encourages practitioners in the fields of social work and education to share and recognize each other's experience and expertise (Baron et al., 2019).

OBJECTIVES

PASS incorporated an interdisciplinary component as a means of developing responses tailored to youth and creating resources and tools that would ensure ongoing training for practitioners. This article presents the collaborative work carried out by PASS team members and the group from the UQAC clinics. We will describe how the partnership between various professionals built a path to success for Pekuakamiulnuatsh youth, how they brought clarity to the identified issues, and the resulting impacts.

THE PROJECT

Indigenous elementary- and secondary-school students are often affected by a particular set of personal and social problems that can have a major impact on their academic progress and success. Working together, the team from PASS and UQAC's remedial education and social work clinics identified three major issues and various support practices.

THE PARTNERSHIP ISSUE

The first challenge involved building a partnership with the community. First, the research professors helped establish a clear organizational structure. This first step consisted of clarifying roles based on each person's expertise and how it connected to the organization's mission. The team was then able to present a clearly structured program to the community and establish partnerships. Once the roles of mentors/tutors and resource consultants were defined, assessment methods and support plans for youth were created, and partnerships with external partners were formed. Defining the role of mentor/tutors led to the development and enrichment of tutoring strategies (homework assistance) and mentoring activities.

PASS established partnerships with community organizations and businesses to ensure the continuity of child and youth services and to support community outreach. In addition to establishing an effective communication strategy, the team performed a careful assessment of existing community services, identifying their missions and meeting with key actors; the program's range of services gained visibility, and partnerships were formed. For example, the organization reached out to the Caisse Desjardins du Pekuakami with a view to empowering Pekuakamiulnuatsh youth and preparing them for adult life.

THE CONTINUING EDUCATION ISSUE

The second issue was continuing education. The goal of partnering with UQAC was to provide resource consultants with competency-building opportunities in the form of coaching,

supervision and training. Continuing education is key to keeping practitioners informed of the latest advances in the fields of education and social work and helping them combine theory and practice for optimal responses.

The UQAC professor researchers chose to use professional codevelopment as a support method. The approach uses theory and conclusive data, and acknowledges practitioners' experiential knowledge. Professional codevelopment groups provide a framework for discussion, paving the way for professional development (Payette, 2000; Payette and Champagne, 2000), the acquisition of skills and knowledge (Aita et al., 2015) and decision making. The framework has five major stages and was designed to help individuals find solutions to barriers. The professional codevelopment groups gave practitioners the opportunity to share their challenges, receive coaching during supervised activities, and gain access to the tools and expertise necessary for problem solving.

THE YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORT ISSUE

Clearly, the most important issue addressed by PASS is support for youth and their families. The mentors/tutors and resource consultants are active in a variety of environments. While they are mainly involved with the youth themselves, they are also in contact with families and schools across the territory, and participate in community events such as activities on the land. Therefore, it was important to provide a framework for their activities. The project's interdisciplinary component was vital to meeting their needs. In this case, practitioners received support from specialists in education, remedial education and social work. The professional support, provided on a one-time or daily basis, consisted of coaching practitioners in the area of possible interventions and helping them create materials and responses to academic and social issues.

In addition, the impact of PASS on perseverance among Pekuakamiulnuatsh students had been noted, and competencies to target with the learners had been previously identified (Fortin, 2018). The competencies were selected based on a need to help Indigenous youth juggle two different cultures: Euro-Canadian and Pekuakamiulnuatsh. The team established new goals pertaining to student perseverance. Other skills targeted included developing a sense of organization (time management, note-taking, study techniques), using learning strategies (developing critical thinking, applying problem-solving strategies) and developing respectful and harmonious relations (e.g. by relying on cooperation and communication). With a view to operationalizing and developing these competencies as well as cognitive bridges that would help students

move more easily between the two cultures, and to integrate them into PASS, the team from the UQAC clinics helped the practitioners gain a better understanding of the issues and come up with concrete examples. This resulted in the creation of observation and information-gathering charts. Pairing these tools with the risk and protective factors for student success, it was then possible to create a support plan that could be tailored to each student in the program. Sharing materials led to the creation of a sharing platform where a collection of tools were made available for consultation, giving practitioners access to quality resources.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

In conclusion, the interdisciplinary collaboration that served to promote perseverance among Pekuakamiulnuatsh youth resulted in structured services and an increase in the program's popularity in Mashteuiatsh, mainly because of increased participation. While the dual mission of PASS, both educational and social, is a challenging one, this collaborative project served as a stepping stone to the creation of a significant collection of tools that supports student success. In addition, practitioners on the receiving end of the program reported gaining a better understanding of their roles and improving their skills as youth support workers. With the aim of fine-tuning the services offered by PASS and to promote post-secondary studies among young Pekuakamiulnuatsh adults, we are currently implementing a second project designed to empower youth. The new initiative will focus on determining how to support young Indigenous adults who must move to an urban environment for post-secondary studies. The resulting mission will be a sizeable challenge for which interdisciplinary collaboration will likely prove a vital tool. ♦

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INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS IN ADULT GENERAL EDUCATION: IT'S EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS



Ingrid Lessard, Teacher, remedial and regular classes, École forestière de La Tuque
Vicky Larose, Educational Success Consultant, École forestière de La Tuque



BACKGROUND

Although the graduation rate among Indigenous youth from communities across the province is lower than the Quebec average (Lévesque et al., 2015), First Nations student success is on the rise at all levels of education (Joncas, 2013), along with an upward trend in level of schooling (Lévesque et al., 2015). This is currently the case at the École forestière de La Tuque (ÉFLT), where half of the student population is made up of Indigenous learners. The ÉFLT training centre offers adult general education and a forestry vocational training program, and is located near the Wemotaci community on Atikamekw territory.

Some time ago, school staff were struggling to meet student needs and decided to tackle some of the more challenging areas, such as French language learning (Presseau et al., 2006), academic delay, multiple drop-outs (Presseau et al., 2006) and vulnerability factors (Côté, 2009). With the aim of meeting the specific needs and unique realities of Indigenous students, the staff decided to establish new practices to improve community life, increase feelings of inclusion and help adult learners stay in school.

PROJECT ORIENTATIONS

Along with the recommendations identified in the scientific literature, the project focused on three goals.

The first was to create a culturally safe environment for Indigenous students. Educational activities and practices promoting cultural development are known to increase school perseverance among Indigenous youth (Blanchet-Cohen, 2015). Thus, establishing a safe learning environment facilitates student perseverance and academic achievement (Blanchet, 2019).

The second was to provide students with personalized and appropriate support based on needs. According to the research report by Presseau and collaborators (2006), a meaningful relationship between Indigenous students and their teachers is vital for student perseverance. With these orientations in place, it was then possible to move forward with the final goal, shifting focus to academic expectations in the area of French language acquisition.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A safe environment conducive to sharing

The first objective was met by creating a culturally safe classroom.

This new space for mutual help, named *witcihitowin*, is imbued with Indigenous culture, including a number of crafts projects created by students, as well as visual aids (photos, maps of Nations and vocabulary). This semi-flexible classroom facilitates sharing, teamwork and respect for different learning styles.

All students are welcome to use this community space during the first period to start the day in a safe environment, discuss difficulties with a support worker, or get help from a teacher. The teacher can help in a number of different areas, such as tutoring and educational planning.

Along the same lines, regular cultural activities play a key role in keeping students motivated. Every month, the entire student population is invited to take part in a cultural activity. Through our partnership with the La Tuque Native Friendship Centre and with the ÉFLT teaching forest at our door, we are able to organize workshops on crafts, spirituality, ancestral knowledge, meetings with Elders, traditional cuisine and activities in the forest.

Sometimes, students take on a leadership role in cultural activities. This provides them with a chance to show off and share their knowledge with others. Building cultural awareness helps students strengthen their self-identity and, in turn, their sense of belonging in the school environment.

The activities are also an occasion for students and teachers to forge ties. Creating this atmosphere of trust and caring serves as a gateway to educational content.



Student-focused educational and teaching approaches

Adult education typically provides students with an individualized education plan. The team applied this teaching practice, making changes to the education plans of Indigenous students whose first language was not French. Language workshops were integrated into the schedule to help students improve their skills. Once a week, students could attend interactive grammar workshops addressing spelling rules and syntax. Oral workshops focused on a variety of language skills (linguistics, discourse and communication), which were taught explicitly using materials by Dumais and Lafontaine (2014). Oral skills are known to facilitate the development of reading and writing skills (Dumais, 2015). Using an oral approach is a practice that helps students with knowledge transfer, all the more so considering that the oral tradition is an integral part of Indigenous cultures.

CONCLUSION AND PERSPECTIVES

The project was not carried out according to scientific procedures. Although the orientations were established through research, it is difficult to draw conclusions about impacts, considering that data was not collected for this purpose. However, based on feedback from students and increased participation in activities, students feel safe and have a sense of well-being in school and in the community space. As one student said:

“We feel comfortable here, it’s friendly. We have the chance to socialize and get the day off to a good start.”

”

We also observed a better understanding of others through the presence of non-Indigenous students in the community space and at cultural activities. In addition, school staff agree that the Indigenous students are now more involved in school activities and on the school council.

Although we still face many challenges in regard to efficiently meeting the needs of our Indigenous students, ÉFLT is proud to offer an inclusive and culturally sensitive educational environment. ♦



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THE MATH AND LITERACY TUTOR PROGRAM: A KATIVIK ILISARNILIRINIQ AND FRONTIER COLLEGE INITIATIVE COMMITTED TO STUDENT SUCCESS



Krystyna Slaweki, Program Manager, Frontier College

It has long been recognized that Northern communities are forced to grapple with an array of complex realities and challenges with regard to delivering educational services to students (Sisco et al., 2012, p. 23-24).

The situation in Nunavik is a case in point: 17 schools in 14 remote fly-in communities, 614 secondary school students and 28 teachers all working hard to absorb—and deliver—a hefty math secondary school curriculum in multi-level classes, and in two languages of instruction (French and English). Such are the hurdles that Kativik Ilisarniliriniq (KI) and its staff and clients have to overcome to reach the math levels required by the Quebec Ministère de l'Éducation. The onus thus falls on the school boards to develop innovative ways to respond to the very specific needs of their students. This is no easy feat and yet, through perseverance and the foresight of a new support program, KI has managed to rise above these challenges and improve education outcomes for Nunavik students by creating opportunities for success.

This vision takes shape via the enthusiastic partnership of Kativik Ilisarniliriniq with Frontier College, who have together embarked on a 3-year project to provide math and literacy tutors to secondary school students in 11 Nunavik communities. These tutors work year round with local school principals, centre directors and staff to identify secondary students in need of individual tutoring support to maintain their grade level in math and achieve greater school success.

The tutors' primary purpose is to help Secondary III, IV, and V students who need to progress one to three levels in math to meet the graduation requirements.

Tutors are mandated to:

- provide support to secondary students in math classes
- provide targeted one-to-one or small-group tutoring sessions outside of class hours
- expand the aforementioned services to Secondary I and II students
- offer literacy programming to students and the wider community, especially if literacy is the obstacle to progressing in math

From the outset of the program, significant results have been noted, largely due to a tailored program fashioned by Frontier College and KI.

The success of this program stems from a three-pronged approach: a flexible model, which emphasizes individualized support, involving a significant mentorship component.

To date, 29 tutors over 3 years have been hired to deliver this program. They offer a flexible service adapted to the needs of the students and the context of each school. Not only do they tutor outside of the class—they are also an integral part of classroom dynamics. This dual advantage allows them to sway between working within the confines of the classroom and its structured time frame, and offering their services in spaces where learning would not ordinarily take place. They can also adapt to their students' schedules, comfort levels and environment. Indeed, "collaboration with the classroom teacher is often cited as vital to a tutoring program's success or failure"

(Rothman and Henderson, 2011, p. 4). Along those lines, the dialogue between tutors and teachers also leads to a reciprocal benefit of providing continuity and reinforcement of materials seen in class, as well as enhancing the classroom experience for learners requiring individualized support. The tutors spent an average of 15 hours/week in math classes, offering one-to-one support to students as teachers focused on delivering the curriculum.

A number of positive impacts were cited by teachers regarding the presence of tutors in their classrooms:¹ 83% of teachers said that students had gotten better at completing their schoolwork, and 75% agreed or strongly agreed that the tutor had a positive effect on classroom dynamics.

Being able to complete assignments at school and being engaged in the learning experience are strong predictors of which students will complete school and continue on to post-secondary education and training (Rothman and Henderson, 2011). For students who are struggling to keep up with math and numeracy grade requirements, student-centred, individualized tutoring may be the answer to increasing their level of engagement and ability to succeed. People learn in different ways; it follows that they should be taught in different ways. Student-Centred Individualized Learning (SCIL) is Frontier College's teaching philosophy (Frontier College Press, 2011). SCIL is founded on the premise that everyone has unique interests, strengths, and learning needs. To be effective, a tutor needs to select the strategies and techniques that work best for a particular student.

A Student-Centred Individualized Learning approach is based on the following adult education principles (Frontier College Press, 2011):

- Work from the student's strengths rather than deficits
- Use the student's life experiences
- Develop the curriculum with the student based on what he/she wants to learn
- Learning is voluntary

Recognizing that learning happens alongside a strong belief in each student's capabilities, increasing the student's confidence and motivation is also key. Consequently, tutors have sought out their students by thinking outside the box, and using creative and novel ways to motivate them, capture their interest, and bond with them. In general, using fun and educational games to approach a subject that continues to intimidate many students has been valuable in engaging students in the material. For example, using dice, chess, cards, and math bingo for terminology has enticed learners to join after-school and lunchtime programming.

"I never used to even try these questions, but now I actually like doing it. Math is fun when you know how to do it!" said a student in Kuujuaq.

”

Indeed, tutors have observed that students are more willing to try complex, multi-step questions, are showing a sustained effort for longer periods, and are asking for exercises and help from the tutors.

Whereas previously, some students would see a challenging question, shut their book and refuse to work, some of these same students are now willing to try, and are eager to improve their math skills.

Out of 55 students surveyed, 44% claim that they would like to learn more math, rather than simply get a passing grade.

As one tutor stated, “When I arrived in March, students across the board were struggling to complete their work as they lacked focus and motivation. They were given ample time in class to complete their assignments; however, even students with strong attendance records frequently failed to finish (or start) assignments and quizzes. Classrooms are often very distracting environments [for students who have difficulty concentrating]. Having the opportunity to complete their work with me in a supportive, quiet and one-on-one environment dramatically increased some student’s grades immediately. When I sit next to a student, I am able to keep them on task, coaching them through the assignment. Two very bright students have been able to boost their marks significantly as they are now completing their work, both during class time and after hours with me.”



In addition, and perhaps most importantly, SCIL dictates that tutees and tutors are equal partners in the learning process, much like a mentoring relationship whereby mentors “provide guidance, pass on knowledge, share experience, provide a background for more sound judgment, and establish friendship” (Lampley and Johnson, 2010, p. 4).

This holistic approach to working with students has been proven to encourage youth in establishing obtainable goals and enhancing their self-esteem (Lampley and Johnson, 2010). The experience of the tutors in this context has demonstrated overwhelmingly that students’ attitudes have changed as a result of the tutoring and/or mentoring provided by the tutors. Trust is often cited as the essential ingredient to building relationships with teenagers (Lampley and Johnson, 2010; Rothman and Henderson, 2011).

This is especially true in a learning environment where students exhibit low self-esteem with regard to their skills. Gauging when the trust and relationships are sufficient for tutors to transition toward the after-school tutoring programming successfully is critical. This delicate transition, when done at the right time, ensures that the student will wholeheartedly

engage in the tutoring sessions. It follows that “this positive interaction in the tutoring sessions could transfer to the classroom environment. These factors may foster greater engagement in both the tutoring session and in school. This increase in confidence and engagement is ultimately connected to increased test scores” (Rothman and Henderson, 2011, p. 8).

Finally, impacts of this program are not merely limited to changes in attitudes and behaviours. In just its first year, program results demonstrated an astonishing 20% (average) increase in grades for tutored students versus non-tutored students. Further results from 2018-2019 are indicative of the growing success of this partnership:

- **275 secondary school students** received one-to-one intensive tutoring, an increase of 64 from the previous year.
- **91 students** attended out-of-class tutoring sessions this year (an increase from 57 in 2017-2018), of whom 15 came on a regular basis.
- **80% of parents** agree that their child is more confident in his/her abilities, as well as more motivated to learn math, and has a better attitude toward school since the tutor program started.
- **91% of parents** strongly agree that the tutoring program is a valuable program for the community.

In conclusion, continuing to acknowledge general changes in students’ behavior and attitudes as well as measurable progress toward academic goals will be critical to understanding the project’s impact. In the long term, we anticipate a direct correlation between students’ motivation, confidence and attitudes toward learning and his or her relative progression in skills. This 3-year program is part of Frontier College and KI’s shared commitment to improving education outcomes for Nunavik students and creating post-secondary opportunities for success. ♦

Note

¹ This, and all subsequent data regarding stakeholder feedback, is drawn from surveys conducted with 20 teachers, 50 parents and 80 students over 2 years.

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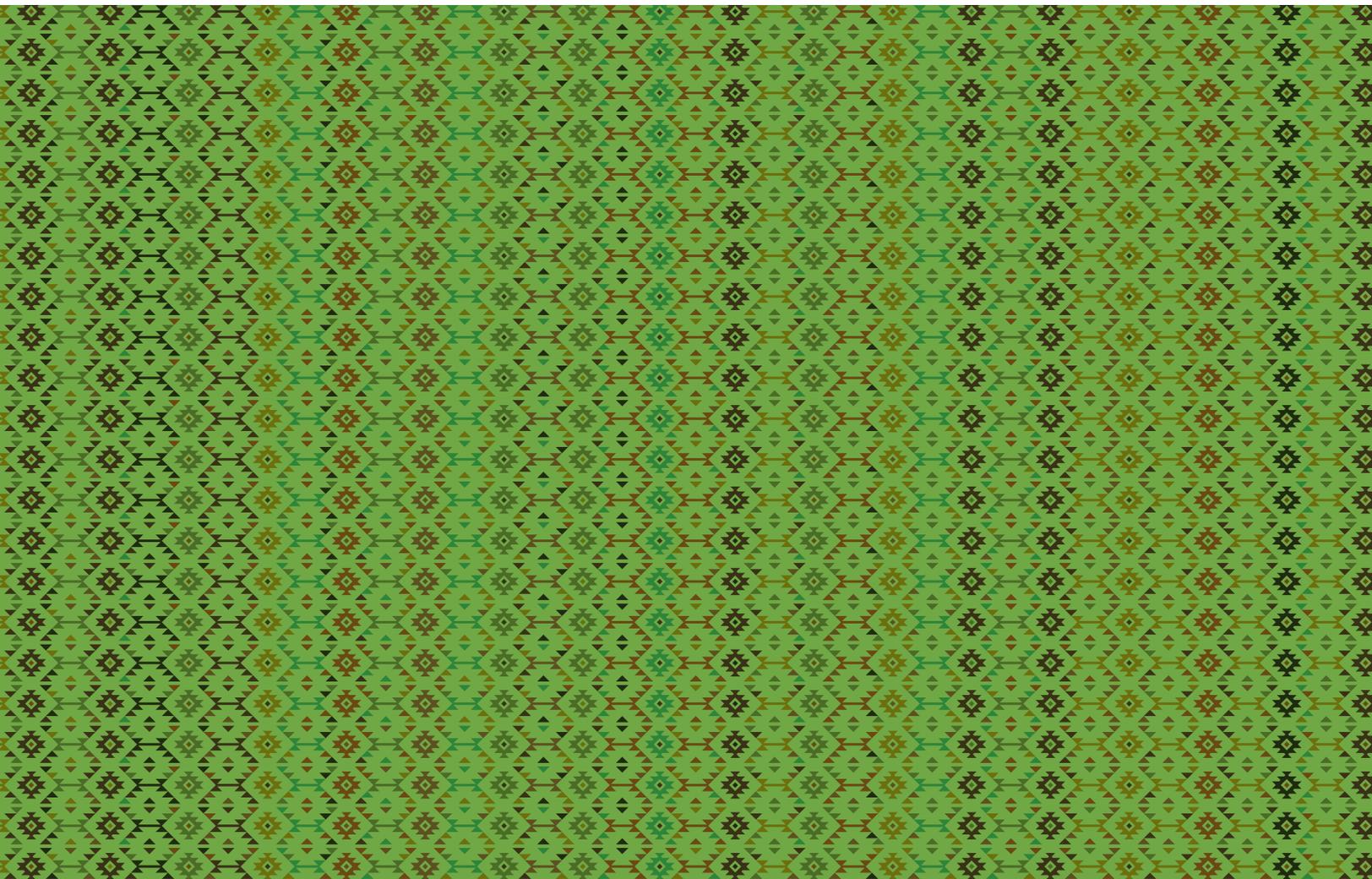
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STUDENT PERSEVERANCE



3rd
EDITION



SCHOOL PERSEVERANCE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FIRST PEOPLES STUDENTS

The School Perseverance Scholarships were created to acknowledge the efforts, enthusiasm and perseverance of First Peoples students. They reward the efforts of Secondary IV and V general education students in the youth and adult sectors.

By creating the School Perseverance Scholarship Fund for First Peoples Students, the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite (CPNN) at UQAC and its partners wish to support First Peoples students as they take the final step to obtain their Secondary School Diploma. These students who persevere and who meet every challenge head on are a fine example of success, not only for First Peoples students but for all young people.

The main objectives of the scholarship program are to reward First Peoples students for their perseverance, to highlight their determination, excellence and ability to face challenges (in school and in their personal lives), to support their sustained efforts in the pursuit of their studies and to encourage them to obtain a Secondary School Diploma.

The CPNN and the scholarship evaluation committee do not see obtaining a Secondary School Diploma as an ultimate goal, but rather as a springboard toward the achievement of greater things. The entire team is proud to encourage students to follow their dreams and to not be afraid of becoming actively involved in their achievement.

This year, the third edition of the scholarship program coincides with the launch of the Journal.

The perseverance scholarships are for First Peoples students who:

- are making an effort to successfully complete their studies;
- persevere in their undertakings despite the obstacles in their path;
- meet challenges head on;
- are motivated to pursue their studies.

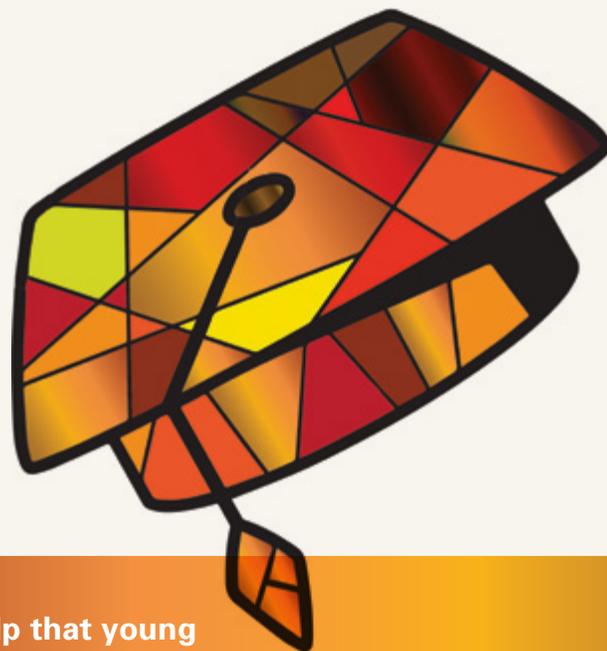
We invite all First Peoples students who are determined to complete their studies to apply.

APPLICATIONS

2020-2021 EDITION

Do you know a young person who:

- is perseverant;
- dreams of playing an active role in the community and becoming an agent of change;
- dreams of becoming a police officer, practitioner, wildlife officer, electrician, teacher, etc.?



You can help that young person's dreams come true!

Encourage the young people around you to apply, and help them by filling out the teacher's form. Participating students could win one of ten \$600 scholarships!

Eligibility criteria

- The student must be a member of a First Peoples community.
- The student must be registered full-time in Secondary IV or V general education in the youth or adult sector in a secondary school in the community or in an urban setting.
- The application form must be filled out by the student and endorsed by a teacher or school staff member, who must fill out the teacher's form.

Submission

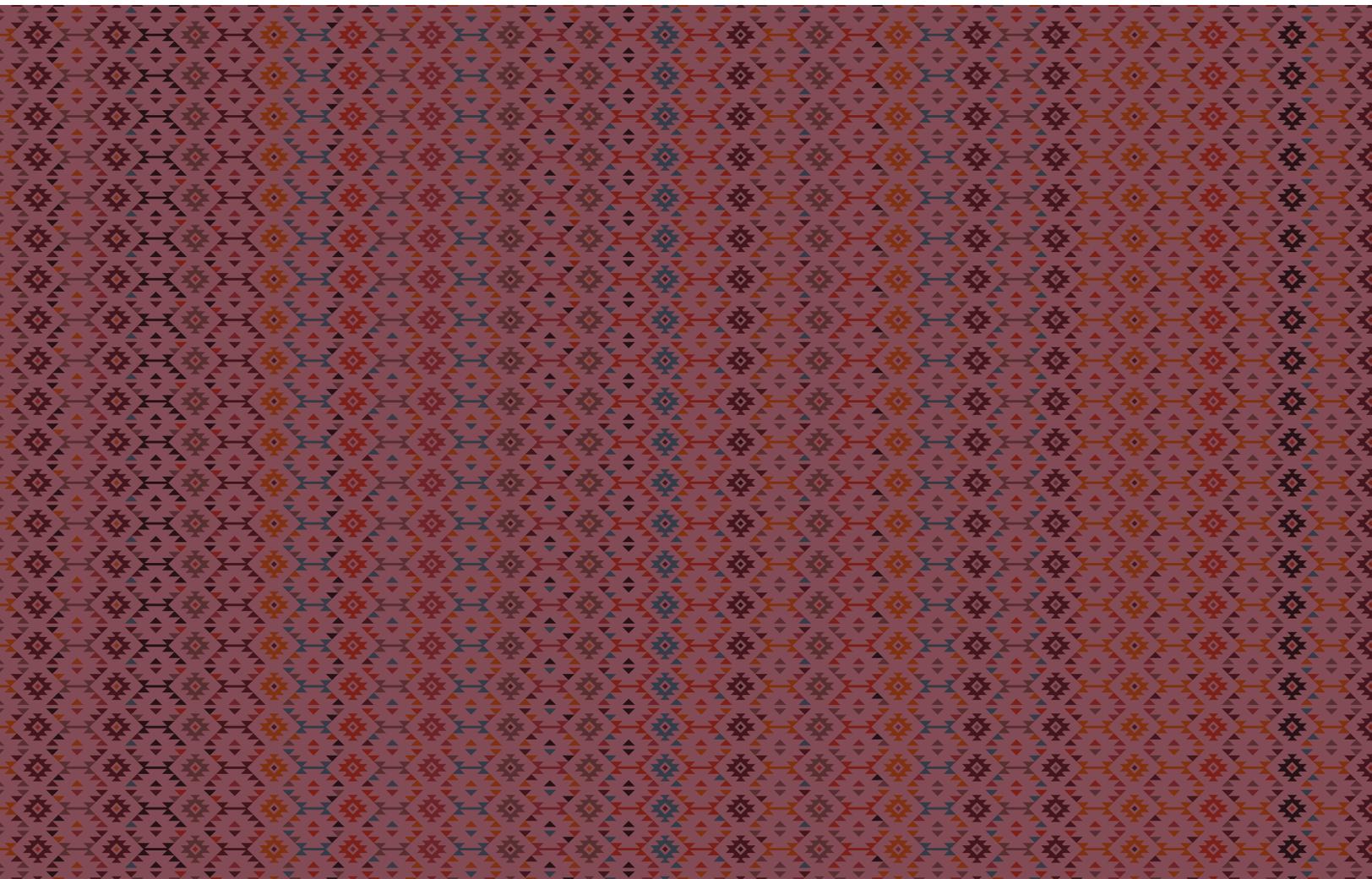
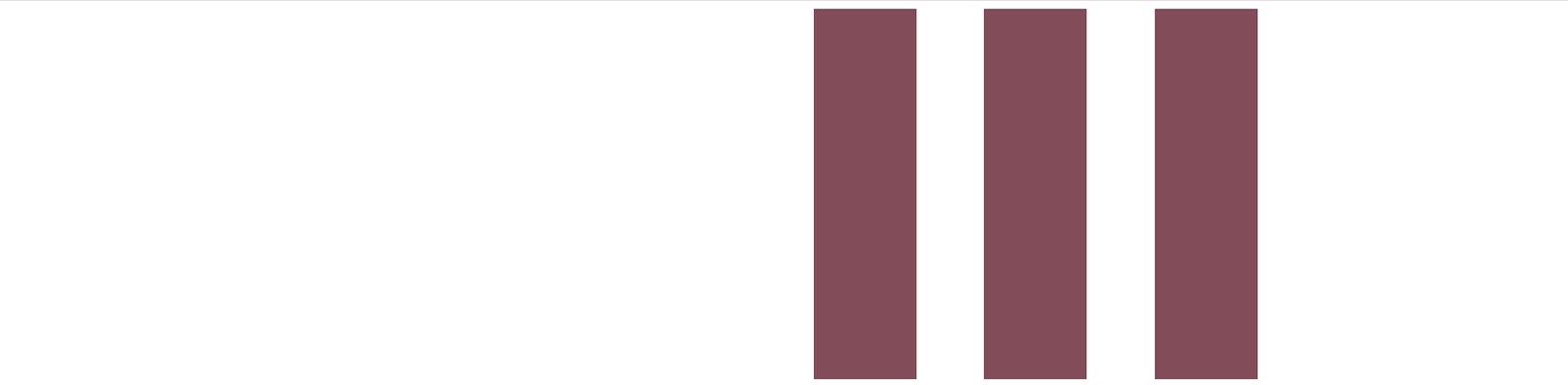
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<http://colloques.uqac.ca/prscpp/boursesperseverancescolaire/>

The student's and teacher's forms must be emailed to the following address:
colloque_education2019@uqac.ca

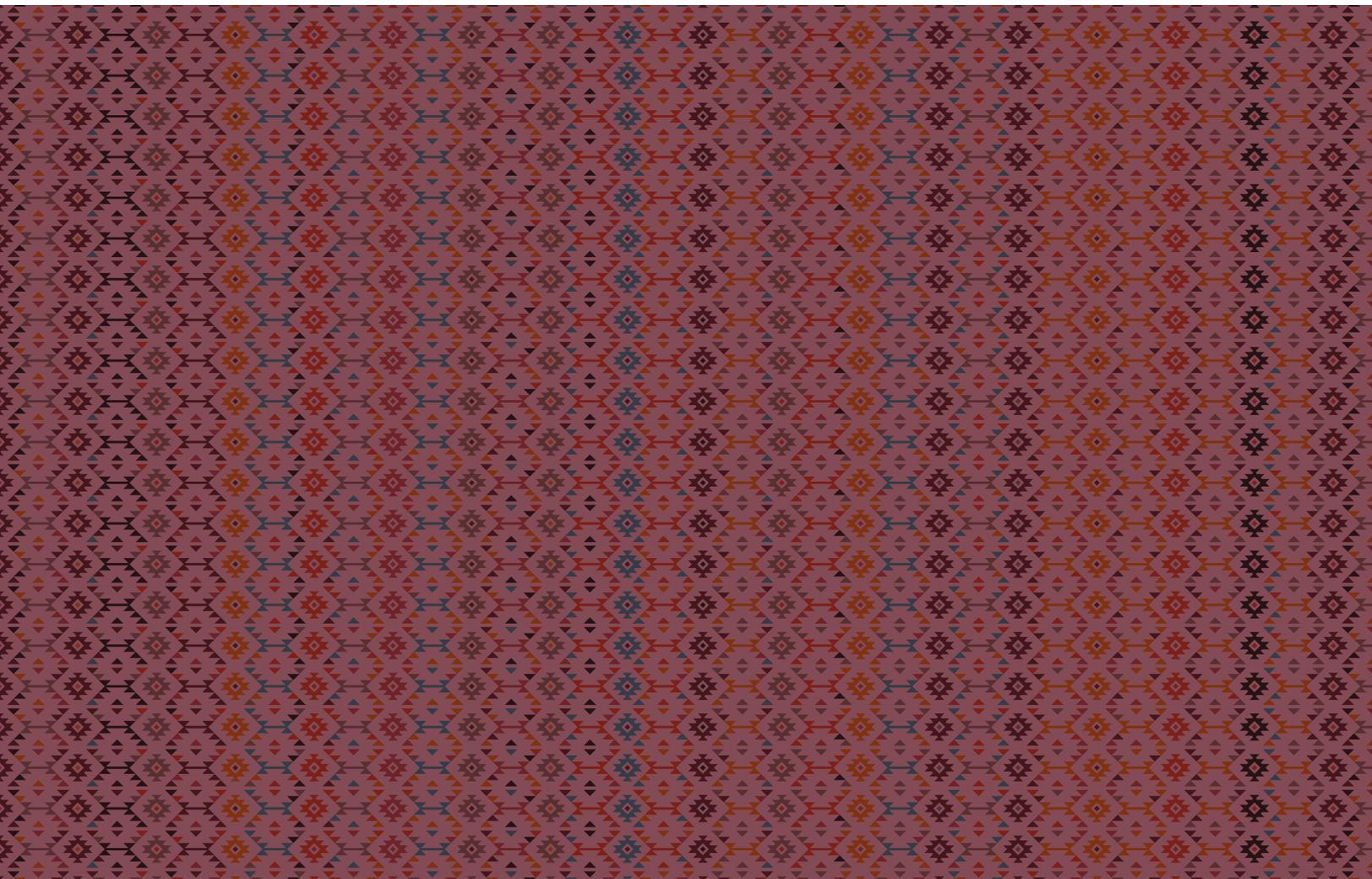
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COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES



TOWARD A BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT OF SMOOTH SCHOOL TRANSITIONS FOR INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN URBAN AREAS: FINDINGS OF A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH STUDY



Audrey Pinsonneault, Research and Continuous Improvement Coordinator, RCAAQ
Natasha Blanchet-Cohen, Co-Chair, Youth Network Chair, Concordia University
Flavie Robert-Careau, Concordia University

In an overall context of urbanization, population growth and increased mobility among First Nations and Inuit people, more and more Indigenous students are attending schools in Quebec's education system during some or all of their academic career (FNQLHSSC 2018, Lévesque 2019, RCAAQ 2020). In this context, Indigenous youth are subjected to school transitions that are more complex than mere promotion to a higher cycle. Very little information is available about the academic careers of Indigenous students in Quebec elementary and secondary schools, in particular concerning the number and quality of school transitions and their impact on students' educational success. Many of these young people and their families frequent and use the services of Native Friendship Centres, which can be found in numerous cities. A collaborative research project was launched in 2018 to meet Native Friendship Centres' need to gain a better understanding of the realities and needs of Indigenous students in order to be able to take action and find innovative approaches to ensure smoother school transitions in urban areas.

This article presents the findings of a study based on participatory research methods developed in co-construction with a view to aligning with the ethical principles and values espoused by Quebec's Native Friendship Centre Movement. First, questionnaires were filled out by parents or guardians of some 120 young people aged 6 to 17 who used the educational services of a Native Friendship Centre during the 2018-2019 school year. In addition, qualitative data was collected from October 2018 to February 2019 in order to gather the experiences and views of about a hundred participants: Indigenous elementary- and secondary-school students and their families; Native Friendship

Centre employees involved in educational services; and representatives of the school system (principals, teachers and practitioners).

Native Friendship Centres in Sept-Îles, Montreal, Roberval, Joliette, Val-d'Or, Trois-Rivières, Senneterre, Maniwaki and Quebec City participated in the research study, which yielded a number of notable findings. First, elementary- and secondary-school students who use the educational services of Quebec's Native Friendship Centres differ from non-Indigenous students in many respects. Almost half of them speak an Indigenous language at home; about one third of them have attended school in an Indigenous community; approximately one quarter attend English school, and many have academic delays, meaning that they are not at the expected grade level for their age.

Moreover, the study led to a general observation of the hypermobility of Indigenous youth and their families, which leads to especially frequent and sometimes repetitive school transitions for certain students. Almost half of all Indigenous youth who were seen in Friendship Centres had experienced more than three school transitions since kindergarten, and some had changed schools more than five times by the time they were 17 years old. In this respect, the data confirms the existence of strong ties between Indigenous communities and cities, which means that many families often travel between the two.

This results in particularly difficult and complex school transitions, since, in addition to moving to the city, they involve moving between different education programs and curricula. Many Indigenous youth also transition between schools located in different cities as well as

between different schools located in the same city. The school transitions experienced by Indigenous youth in urban areas are therefore extremely varied despite the many similarities between them.

This research study sheds light on what causes Indigenous youth to experience such frequent and complex school transitions. First, it is important to point out that many of them don't have a choice and must move to the city to complete their education. This is the case, for example, when there is no secondary school in their community. Some Indigenous families move to the city because they do not have access to specialized services and resources in their community. For example, some families move to the city temporarily while awaiting housing in their community or to allow their child to play higher level sports. Lastly, many young people change schools for family reasons, after their parents separate, for example, or when one of their parents goes back to school. These school transitions are considerably more complex than merely changing schools.

The quality of a young person's school transition is directly related to his/her family's integration into the new environment, hence the importance of effectively addressing certain issues that directly affect Indigenous families in urban areas, including racism, the risk of social isolation, culture shock and the language barrier.

The following excerpts illustrate the multiple facets of the challenges that Indigenous youth and their families encounter when they arrive in a new urban environment.

"It's really hard to adapt to the city."

”

"I didn't know anyone. I had never been here before."

”

"Yes, it's hard. You're far from your mother, you're far from your father, you're far from everything."

”

"The administrative aspects are hard for a family."

”

Language is also a major issue, because Indigenous students sometimes find themselves in immersion in a language they are not fluent in, which adds to the complexity of their school transition. Given the precarity of Indigenous languages and cultures, many Indigenous parents said they were concerned about the increased risk of language and identity loss for their children in urban areas.

"I'm noticing more and more that they're speaking English. I'm concerned because my language is important to me."

”

"I want him to know that he's part of a community. I want him to have a sense of belonging. And I want him to be able to speak his own language. I don't want him to lose it."

”

Often, the city and the school are not places where Indigenous families feel welcome and comfortable, which makes school transitions particularly difficult. Also, many young people said that they were bullied at school, as witnessed by these excerpts.

“You don’t have a lot of friends in the city. You withdraw. You have lunch alone.”

”

“Normally, outside of school, I’m always talking. Now, at school, I’m . . . I just sit in my corner. I don’t talk at all. I can not talk at all for an entire day.”

”

The study also highlighted the disproportionate number of Indigenous students who end up in individualized paths for learning or special education in Quebec’s schools. The lack of specific services for Indigenous students in schools is also an important issue. For example, there are no specific mechanisms in schools for identifying, classifying and evaluating Indigenous students.

Other issues specific to the school system were also highlighted: the fact that there is little room for the recognition of Indigenous culture and language in Quebec’s schools, the serious lack of understanding of the realities and history of Indigenous peoples and the presence of prejudices against Indigenous students and their parents on the part of school staff. This raises serious concerns regarding how the provincial education system welcomes and integrates Indigenous students.

“In terms of evaluation, there’s the cultural issue, but there is also the issue of language, which is surprisingly not taken into account in interpreting the evaluations of young people arriving from Indigenous communities.”

”

“I find that the schools aren’t adapted to them. Half of them drop out every year. . . . I’d like to know why they’re all in special education.”

”

The study’s findings suggest that Indigenous youth who attend a Quebec public school often drop out or lose their identity and culture. Changes at several levels are needed to allow Indigenous students to experience smooth and culturally safe school transitions.

For example, schools can adopt more flexible and differentiated pedagogical approaches, including Indigenous pedagogy (Campeau 2015) and make the necessary changes to the curriculum to ensure its cultural relevance. The methods of evaluating and classifying Indigenous students could also be reviewed in an effort to prevent discrimination.

In addition, it is essential to support the acquisition of the language of instruction while promoting the retention of students’ first, Indigenous language. Such an approach would, on the one hand, offer Indigenous students an optimal learning context and, on the other, prevent Quebec schools from becoming places of linguistic and cultural assimilation (Ball 2012, Thordardottir 2010).

Lastly, schools can strengthen and formalize their collaboration with Indigenous community organizations such as Friendship Centres, which are often strong allies in supporting Indigenous youth and their families in every aspect of their transition to a new city.

In short, Indigenous youth transitioning to urban schools often experience racism, social isolation, the loss of their first language, identity-related challenges and specific academic difficulties. Although these issues are not limited to the school environment, they are an integral part of the educational and school experience. School transitions can be a determining factor in student perseverance (MELS 2012). It is therefore essential to ensure the overall well-being of Indigenous youth and their families, and to take all measures necessary to support smoother transitions to urban schools. Concerted efforts in this respect could give Indigenous students an equal chance of educational success and personal development. Lastly, it is important to recognize that the often rocky and patchy academic paths of Indigenous youth in the school system point to larger issues related to the recognition of Indigenous people in urban areas and the ability to live together in harmony in Quebec society. ♦

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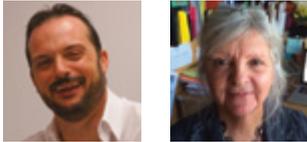
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CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR SCHOOL STAFF IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES: A CULTURAL EXCHANGE



Gino Lesage, Special Education Program Counsellor, First Nations Education Council
Sylvie Ouellet, Professor, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

Five years ago, after decades at the forefront of the education sector, the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) and the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR) formed a partnership. Their collaborative efforts led to a unique and authentic relationship. The purpose of this cultural exchange was to design a continuing education program for school staff in FNEC member communities.¹ This article presents the background of the program, including its implementation and objectives. We also describe the intensive training sessions and the teaching and educational approaches presented, for a glimpse of the learning experience. We present the main course topics and how they changed over time, and give a profile of the student cohorts. To conclude, we present a reflection on the cultural exchange.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OBJECTIVES

FNEC,² founded 35 years ago, supports First Peoples communities in developing and regaining control of their education systems. FNEC brings together 22 member communities located across Quebec, and works directly with schools and educational organizations with the aim of sharing effective education practices with the various school staff members working with Indigenous students.³ The council also works to integrate practices deemed culturally and socially appropriate for the communities. FNEC professionals respond to requests from the central office and counsellors; however, requests most often come from member communities. FNEC provides training and support tailored to the communities' needs.

At the end of the 2014 school year, an FNEC member community requested professional development for teachers in the area of remedial education and inclusive classrooms in order to enhance the capacity of teachers and schools to adapt their services to meet the needs of all students.

The community school wanted their teachers to develop skills in the area of identifying student needs and difficulties. Their goal was to implement responses that would help students reach their full potential. Together, the FNEC and UQTR designed a continuing education program that provides teachers with the basic skills and knowledge needed to implement more effective strategies inspired by the remedial education approach. Course participants learn how to provide Indigenous students with more adequate support in the classroom without taking a re-education approach or seeking a diagnosis. The program also aims to promote perseverance and academic achievement among First Peoples youth. Adopting a more inclusive teaching approach that reflects Indigenous values and gaining a better understanding of the needs of Indigenous students are factors that contribute to student motivation and the development of their full potential.

Following FNEC requests and recommendations, a team from UQTR developed a continuing education program based on an undergraduate microprogram in special education.

In spring 2015, the first student cohort completed the program. The training activities were deemed relevant, and the FNEC decided to expand access to all member communities whose language of instruction was French, taking into account the

unique situation of certain communities offering Elementary Cycle One education in an Indigenous language. With this in mind, we supplemented the curriculum with bilingualism (and multilingualism), as well as second-language acquisition content. We also acknowledged the importance of adapting our teaching methods to include experiential approaches based on observation and imitation, creating a learning environment tailored to the needs of students whose first language is not French. We made teachers aware of the importance of ensuring and verifying student comprehension. Finally, we focused on children's capacity to learn and the notion that competency and fluency in one's first language facilitates second-language acquisition. With the aim of providing school staff with professional development opportunities, the FNEC educational services team, in collaboration with UQTR, offered a continuing education program on pedagogical and teaching responses from 2015 to 2019. Over five years, approximately 20 students per year, or close to a hundred participants in all, mainly from the Atikamekw and Anicinabe communities, took the 30-hour training course given over two weekends. Students completing the course obtained Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from UQTR.

INTENSIVE TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The training workshops gave the instructors an opportunity to work together. The team was made up of several instructors, all specialists in their own area. The FNEC's Special Education Program Counsellor⁴ provided the team with the cultural, social and organizational contexts of the community schools, and was responsible for certain aspects of various FNEC initiatives (*Building Better Schools Together*, collaborative approaches, the RAI model, and more).

The following are the program titles for each year:

- 2015: *Supporting remedial education responses in inclusive classrooms*
- 2016: *Class management for ALL students*
- 2017: *Conditions to foster learning in an inclusive school: collaboration, needs assessment and classroom environment*
- 2018: *Conditions to foster learning in an inclusive school: collaboration, needs assessment and classroom environment*
- 2019: *Conditions to foster learning from a collaborative perspective: linguistic diversity, inclusion, differentiation and classroom environment*

For the first three years, the program was given at Kiuna, a post-secondary college located in Odanak. In 2018, the workshops were held in Val-d'Or, and, in 2019, at the UQTR campus in Trois-Rivières. Each venue was different, and lent its particular colours to the manner in which the weekend courses unfolded.

The first years at Kiuna, students experienced total immersion in an Indigenous environment, which shed light on future perspectives for Indigenous students. Participants got a concrete and visual idea of how they help prepare students for the future, as well as possible learning paths. Kiuna is indeed the institution of choice for reflecting on pedagogical and teaching practices to be used with Indigenous students. In 2018, the course was held in Val-d'Or, on Anicinabe territory.

The Algonquian culture was featured, which attracted teachers and staff from schools in those communities. The last edition, in 2019, was held on the UQTR campus, which provided an exciting academic environment as well as access to a variety of educational tools. For example, students could use the specialized documentation centre, the "didacthèque," which has useful tools for creating culturally responsive practices for First Peoples.

In the spirit of inclusion and to meet community needs, the FNEC and UQTR agreed to expand access to the program to include school staff other than teachers. The resulting cohorts were very heterogeneous. Diversity among participants was noticeable, in terms of both professional and sociocultural backgrounds. In addition to elementary and secondary school teachers, the course was open to teaching assistants, special educators, psychoeducators and managerial staff (principals and special education program coordinators). Participants came from various sociocultural backgrounds, including First Nations, Quebecers and other non-Indigenous people, mainly from Maghreb countries and Europe. With such a wide variety of personal, professional, academic and cultural viewpoints, the discussions were very rich, with participants sharing their unique experiences and perspectives.

For example, participants had very different expectations of students and families (in terms of parental, family and community involvement), depending on a variety of factors, including their professional environments, communities, cities and countries of origin.

TRAINING THEMES AND PRINCIPAL PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES

The training themes ranged from how to assess student needs and difficulties (2015), the concept of inclusive education (2017-2019) and multilingualism (2017-2019) to school-family-community partnerships (2017-2019). It's important to mention that, in response to recurrent requests from various schools, classroom management and positive learning environments were an integral part of the program from 2015 to 2019. Course content addressed French reading and writing strategies with Francesca Sinotte; math strategies with Evelyn Morin; classroom management and positive learning environments with Francesca Sinotte and Lise-Anne St-Vincent; and multilingualism, inclusive education and school-family-community relationships with Corina Borri-Anadon.

The experiential approach and Kolb's learning cycle (Kolb, 1984; Moldoveanu and Campeau, 2016) provided a framework for the participants' learning process. The experiential approach recognizes students' initial views on education and emphasizes meaningful learning. The chosen model—Kolb's learning cycle—includes four stages arranged in a circular process that includes reflection and integration within the learning process. In addition, the First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007) provided guidelines throughout for highlighting Indigenous educators' experiences and Indigenous teaching practices (Campeau, 2017). Synthesis activities took place after each learning block (or theme) throughout the program. During these activities, students reflected on their new knowledge, took ownership of the material and contextualized the new concepts as a means of promoting their implementation in the classroom or school.

A CULTURAL EXCHANGE

As previously mentioned, the participants were from diverse professional and cultural backgrounds. This diversity resulted in very interesting discussions, from both a cultural and pedagogical point of view. For our purposes, we refer to this as a cultural exchange. In reality, there were "multiple exchanges": between members of different First Nations, an example of diversity within the Indigenous communities; and between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, an illustration of different cultures and how they are expressed in educational approaches. The participants had different educational practices, perspectives, histories and traditions, which paved the way for sharing a variety of ways of fulfilling, understanding and grasping the educational "mission" in specific environments, and sparked meaningful

discussion. In addition, bringing cultural awareness to the program content and educational practice examples opened the door to rich and in-depth discussion. The often lively and intense discussions led to a unique understanding of the role of school staff as significant actors, often instrumental in assisting First Nations students in developing their full potential.

CONCLUSION

Taking the time to look back on the past five years has allowed us to identify limitations, to begin to formulate ideas for upcoming training sessions and, most importantly, to take stock of how this opportunity to share and discuss impacted participant learning and transformation. The program's main limitations are in the areas of supporting staff in their schools and helping them with knowledge mobilization and the transfer of learning into the classroom or school. In light of this, in the past two years, we have added several hours of individual follow-up training for each participant.

The training is scheduled to continue in 2020.⁶ In the next course, we will explore a different method, alternating between content and planning workshops. This extra component should provide students with more concrete support during their training.

To conclude, we invite you to enjoy some poetry written by participants at an end-of-session ritual. During the final stage of the course, participants are invited to take a moment of introspection with the aim of helping them integrate the course material and facilitate its transfer to the classroom environment. Various creative strategies were employed over the five-year period, including singing, drawing, concept mapping and writing poetry. In one case, the session concluded with three people spontaneously writing a short Japanese poem called a haiku, which is an activity that can be used in the classroom. The haiku tells of the learning experience from different cultural perspectives. The short poems were then read aloud, so that participants could have the last word. ♦

Reflection brings new awareness.
Respect brings growth without suffering.
Collaboration leads to educational progress fostering success and achievement.
(participants, 2019) [free translation]

”

Knowing who you are personally and professionally... Means you can be at your best and provide quality service... The path is often more important than the final goal.
(participants, 2019) [free translation]

”

Notes

¹ Resources: Gino Lesage, FNEC Special Education Program Counsellor; and Sylvie Ouellet, Professor at the Faculty of Education, UQTR.

² <https://cepn-fnec.com/>

³ Directly or indirectly, within or outside the FNEC network.

⁴ The team of instructors was composed of Francesca Sinotte, Evelyn Morin, Corina Borri-Anadon and Lise-Anne St-Vincent and was led by Sylvie Ouellet. Names are listed in chronological order from 2015 to 2019. The FNEC counsellor was Gino Lesage.

⁵ Kiuna is the only institution for higher learning for Indigenous students recognized by the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (<https://kiuna-college.com>).

⁶ NB: Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 edition has been postponed until 2021.

⁷ For more information about haiku workshops, visit www.association-francophone-de-haiku.com/ecrire-un-haiku/enfants/

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A COLLABORATIVE PILOT PROJECT BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND AN INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATION FOR THE CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF INDIGENOUS STUDENTS IN URBAN ENVIRONMENTS



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Marilyne Soucy, Project Manager, Educational Development and Knowledge Transmission, *Boite Rouge VIF*

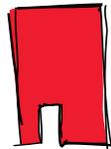
BOITE ROUGE VIF¹

Boite Rouge VIF (BRV) is a nonprofit Indigenous organization founded in 1999, with a mission to promote cultural transmission through collaborative research and co-creation. For more than 20 years, its research activities have led to collaborative methodologies and the creation and production of culturally meaningful materials that foster cultural development by and with Indigenous communities.

BACKGROUND

BRV creates, produces and broadcasts materials, such as exhibitions, short and feature films, publications, websites and interactive media, intended for a wide audience. Recent requests from the education sector provided a new opportunity for sharing tools that promote cultural transmission. The materials produced over the years have a clear potential to support educational and pedagogical goals. BRV is much sought after by regional schools at all levels, which points to glaring needs: schools would like to have access to culturally appropriate materials and, in addition, help and support integrating the materials into their programs, thereby promoting the inclusion of Indigenous students and the adaptation of educational services. In response to the growing number of Indigenous students in urban environments in the Saguenay–Lac-St-Jean region and elsewhere in Quebec, schools are keen to adequately meet these students' needs (CTREQ report, March 2019); unfortunately, they have few resources at their disposal. The Indigenous population living off-reserve, i.e., in non-Indigenous urban environments, is the fastest-growing segment of

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Quebec society, with a 60% increase recorded in 2016 (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2016). This is a significant concern for teachers working with Indigenous students in non-Indigenous urban environments, who have noticed a growing number of Indigenous students affected by diglossia.² Students impacted by this phenomenon face numerous difficulties at school. In addition to suitable course content, questions about how to approach these students and which teaching practices to use are of vital importance, since these matters affect absenteeism and drop-out rates, which have reached worrisome levels (Lainey, 2015). In response to a call for help from the education sector, BRV agreed to make its culturally meaningful productions available to schools across Quebec.

BRV's involvement with schools in Alma aims to provide Indigenous students with a welcoming environment respectful of their needs and culture, while at the same time raising awareness among the residents of Alma about the realities of First Peoples.

To this end, BRV designed a pilot project to support teachers and school staff working with students at Pavillon Wilbrod-Dufour Secondary School and Saint-Joseph Elementary School. The goal of the pilot project is to integrate Indigenous perspectives, cultures and traditions into teaching practices (Talbot and Arrieu-Mutel, 2012). Support will be offered in the form

of awareness-raising workshops and will give teachers and staff access to reference materials through the creation of a *Toolbox*. These strategies are complementary and necessary to adapt teaching methods and practices to the realities of Indigenous students.

Teachers are currently expressing an interest in learning more about First Peoples cultures in order to build bridges between the students in their classrooms.

Keen to integrate subject-related Indigenous content, teachers would like to have access to tools that authentically reflect the current realities of First Peoples in Quebec. BRV looks forward to partnering with the education network and contributing to student success through concrete action consistent with the CSLSJ³ and the mission it embraced when it created the committee on educational success for Indigenous students in 2018.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND APPROACH

The pilot project will unfold in three stages, each lasting one year, and will culminate with the production of the *Toolbox*: an educational tool for the youth and adult sectors designed for Quebec school staff and teachers.

Teachers, education consultants and support staff will be able to improve their knowledge and skills in regard to First Peoples cultures, and access the educational tools they need to bring them into their practices. For example, BRV produced immersive (360°) videos for the *Hanging out* virtual exhibition. The videos take viewers on a cultural tour of meaningful sites chosen and presented by some 30 Indigenous youth from five regions across Quebec, and will be used in particular to spark and encourage discussions about topics being explored in the classroom.

Topics fall into a variety of subject areas, including social sciences, personal development, languages and the arts. The videos will also be used to enrich school-wide initiatives (e.g., extracurricular cultural noon hour activities that teach students about First Peoples).

One of the project activities, which ties into the social sciences subject area, involves documenting the concept of food sovereignty as a means of reflecting on food consumption, how cultural

and regional differences affect diet, how the food system works, and how seasons and geographical locations impact eating habits. Excerpts from the book *Voix, visages, paysages*, the film *Indian Time* and video clips from the *Hanging out* website will be used for the activity. Without addressing food sovereignty directly, these materials clearly illustrate the difficulty some isolated Indigenous communities have accessing varied food on a regular basis and at a reasonable cost. They shed light on a different reality, where getting supplies is affected by the seasons and relies on a costly delivery system that has significant consequences. The activity is anchored in current issues, and the universality of the topic will reach and touch all students as they listen to the opening testimonial of a young Inuk.

In fall 2020, BRV will launch the first stage by contacting school teams to establish a basis for collaboration that will allow it to experiment with the materials and assess how they can be integrated into school settings. It will also produce a report on needs, benefits, limitations and the feasibility of integrating the materials. An analysis committee will design the initial *Toolbox* so that school staff can begin using it in the field. At this stage, the BRV team will remain in close contact with school teams and, together, they will assess the impacts and limitations of the project in the field. If funding is sufficient, stages two and three of the pilot project will take place in the following school years. These stages will be used to develop teaching guides and materials (the enhanced *Toolbox*) suitable for all students in the CSLSJ's territory. It goes without saying that the *Toolbox* will be designed to evolve and adapt to various settings.

Students will benefit from a carefully drafted pedagogical approach developed collaboratively by the group of specialists involved with the project. The BRV team specializes in collaborative approaches and recognizes the importance of forming extended relationships. The project will solicit participation from a number of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, CSLSJ members, education consultants and community members.

It is important to remember that the project is consistent with a holistic approach to education and the concept of the whole person. Educational research for First Nations strongly advocates for a holistic approach to education, since it is connected to life experience, constructed through observation and imitation, rooted in the community, language and culture, and combines the best of Indigenous and Western cultures (Capon, 2008). Wendat historian Médéric Sioui (2019) stated that

“the holistic approach accepts the multiple dimensions of learners, values experiential learning and contributions from community members . . . to a participative culture of learning, all of which is consistent with a pedagogy inspired by Indigenous perspectives” (free translation).

The Toolbox will also factor in the sociocultural approach to education. According to Lévesque (2017), educational projects that recognize the distinctive pedagogical, cultural and social realities of Indigenous learners have greater positive impacts, in particular in regard to students’ academic motivation and relationship with school and the French language.

There is a need to look at the whole picture when it comes to the issue of students’ sense of culture and identity, enriching current teaching practices (Talbot and Arrieu-Mutel, 2012) to include components of traditional teaching (Demers and Simard, 2015) and Indigenous educational practices (Campeau, 2015).

This will allow students to build bridges between their cultural identity and the identity they must construct for their new heterogeneous school setting. Cultural identity comes to light when the bearers of a culture, who share a vision of the world and their place in it and who communicate their ideas and act on them in a similar manner, interact with people of a different culture (Deshaies and Vincent, 2004).

Building self-identity requires giving consideration to the other culture and recognizing its values (Lévesque, 2017). While the need to integrate Indigenous cultures, perspectives and traditions into our teaching practices has long been recognized (Talbot and Arrieu-Mutel, 2012), this should be made a priority for all students in the Quebec education system. The desired impacts of the project are consistent with the process of restoring cultural identity (Lévesque, 2017), and will allow young Franco-Quebecers and Indigenous students to build positive relationships in the spirit of mutual respect and recognition (Lévesque, 2017). In this way,

education becomes a vehicle for improving relationships between peoples while meeting the expectations of the Québec Education Program (QEP). ♦

Notes

¹ For more information, visit www.laboiterougevif.com.

² “A situation in which the first language and the official language of instruction as well as the cultures associated with these languages are used for different purposes and have different status” (da Silveira et al., 2015, p. 58. free translation).

³ Lac-Saint-Jean school board.

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WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS OF A COMMUNITY



Mélissa Proteau, Liaison Officer, Champagnat Secondary School

Marie-Ève Soucy, Liaison Officer, Jacques-Buteux and Centrale elementary schools

Louis-Charles Petiquay, Liaison Officer, La Tuque Native Friendship Centre

Ingrid Lessard: Teacher, remedial and regular classes, École forestière de La Tuque

Collaborators: Julie Bronsard, Principal, Champagnat Secondary School; Laurianne Petiquay, Director, La Tuque Native Friendship Centre; Ingrid Lessard, Liaison Officer, École forestière de La Tuque



BACKGROUND

La Tuque's Indigenous population comes from three communities, including Wemotaci. Research conducted by the Quebec association of native friendship centres, the Regroupement des centres d'amitiés autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ), indicates that Indigenous peoples make up 11.2% of the population in La Tuque, and present the following statistical portrait: 95% of the Indigenous population are members of the Atikamekw Nation, 52% are unemployed, 61% never graduated from secondary school, 58% have been involved with the legal system as victims, witnesses or defendants, 78% have children, 72% have an annual household income below \$20,000, 55% have been living in La Tuque for more than 5 years, and the average age is 37. The city's elementary and secondary schools have an Indigenous population of 15% to 18%. At École forestière, an adult education centre, Indigenous students make up around 50% of the student population. Given this situation, principals from the different schools wondered how best to meet their Indigenous students' needs. La Tuque was chosen for the Niska project as part of the policy directions outlined in the Government Action Plan for the Social and Cultural Development of the First Nations and Inuit (2017-2022). The name "Niska" was chosen to honour the importance of animals and their meanings for Indigenous cultures. In Atikamekw, "Niska" means "Canada goose." Because of their flight formation, Canada geese are a sign of mutual aid, solidarity and collaboration.

OBJECTIVES

The project was developed to support Indigenous students in an urban setting by promoting access to integrated services, thereby fostering perseverance and educational success. The project has three main objectives: (1) create collaboration and partnerships between the La Tuque Native Friendship Centre (CAALT), the schools, the school board and the community, (2) work with and support students and their families, and (3) build cultural awareness of Indigenous peoples.

DESCRIPTION

Liaison officers were hired to ensure close collaboration between the various stakeholders. The La Tuque Native Friendship Centre already had a liaison officer working to promote success among Indigenous students. In addition, each school hired a liaison officer to ensure the continuity of services. Champagnat Secondary School and École forestière reassigned teachers from their organizations to participate in the Niska project. A new full-time resource person was hired to work in the elementary schools to get the project running and create a continuum between the two elementary schools.

Niska's first goal was to create collaboration and partnerships between the Friendship Centre, the schools, the school board and the community. We got the First Nations liaison officers involved in supporting students, recognizing the importance of transitions (preschool to elementary, elementary to secondary, secondary to adult education,

community schools to schools outside the community) and ensuring that Indigenous cultures and knowledge were shared with institutions and communities. Concretely, the liaison officer from the Friendship Centre is notified when a new student arrives at school. This officer, along with the school officers, ensures that new students receive relevant information in order to foster and facilitate their integration. Collaboration between the schools, the Atikamekw Nation Council (ANC) and the La Tuque Native Friendship Centre drives better support and greater understanding of Indigenous realities. The partnership with the ANC goes well beyond sharing materials. The ANC, in collaboration with the Friendship Centre and the schools, created a support group for Indigenous parents to assist them with everyday activities (back-to-school, routine, sleep, diet, homework, etc.). In addition, school staff have the opportunity to take Atikamekw language classes with a language technician from the ANC.

Niska's second objective was to support students and their families. This involves supporting perseverance and success among Indigenous students, educating parents and students about healthy lifestyle habits and supporting and encouraging the involvement of families, teachers and other educators. With help from the liaison officer from the Friendship Centre, a family tree was created to help students learn about their own history. Project Niska got its own Facebook page, and a binder containing information on Indigenous cultures is now available for consultation in school staff rooms. In 2018, public speaker Pierre Picard addressed staff from all of the schools, raising awareness about Indigenous realities with his presentation *Understanding cultural differences for better teaching practices*. In 2019, educators working with Indigenous students took the *Matinamagewin* training workshop on improving knowledge, reducing prejudices and enhancing community life.

Niska's third objective was to build awareness of Indigenous cultures in schools. We encouraged schools and partners to take part in cultural sharing, and we took concrete action by promoting National Aboriginal Languages Day, which has been celebrated on March 31 since 1989. Each school organized activities, including messages broadcast on the télévoix system by students in the Atikamekw language, legends and stories told by Elders, arts and crafts (mini drum making, beading, embroidery), traditional cooking, discussions with inspiring role models (Constant Awashish and Marcel Petiquay) and extracurricular Atikamekw language classes for secondary students.

CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVES

This vast project led to some wonderful success stories and uncovered a number of challenges. The Niska team was very skillful at building trust between schools and families, organizing intergenerational activities with parents and children, connecting with families through the partnership with the Friendship Centre, and promoting Indigenous cultures in schools. The team faced a number of challenges, including finding resource people for cultural transmission, dealing with staff turnover, in particular liaison officers, and finding suitable times in the teaching schedule to hold shared cultural activities for elementary and secondary students.

Niska was launched in 2018-2019, and has already sparked change in the way schools are organized for the 2019-2020 school year. We did indeed find that the educational paths of Indigenous students were marked by poor academic performance, repeating grades, attending special classes and, finally, dropping out. In response, a welcome class was created in 2019 for elementary students from Indigenous communities. The class helps students adapt and improve their French and math skills so that they can join a regular classroom. In the near future, we would like to create a welcome class at the secondary level, and begin offering extracurricular Atikamekw language classes to elementary school students. We would also like to increase participation among school staff in the many cultural activities taking place, and enhance their knowledge of Indigenous cultures and the issues that affect First Nations. ♦

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COMANAGEMENT NURTURES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN INUIT EDUCATION: A LOOK AT A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT



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School education is a recent phenomenon in Nunavik. It was introduced in the 1950s as part of an assimilation policy that was met with resistance. In the 1960s and 1970s, schools incorporated the teaching of Inuit language and culture into their curriculum. These changes generated new concerns and provoked a good deal of reflection. Now, the Northern schools responsible for the region's academic and educational success are bicultural, trilingual settings. They are working to integrate languages, cultures, knowledge and individuals from both epistemes: Inuit and Qallunaat.¹ The challenges of educational research, development and training are substantial.

Since 1984, Inuit leaders at the schools in both Nunavik communities, Ivujivik and Puvirnituaq, along with teachers and researchers from the Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT), have been collaborating in a comanagement group. The communities approached the group with a request: define educational development and the schools' orientations based on identified needs in order to help them develop their community educational project. The members of the Puvirnituaq-Ivujivik-UQAT comanagement group cultivate work practices aimed at developing (1) Inuit teacher training, (2) a curriculum and teaching materials in Inuktitut, and (3) ties between the school and the community, all with a view to fostering student perseverance and success.

Composed of two or three representatives of each community and the university, the group is made up of teachers, education consultants, Inuit school principals, Puvirnituaq and Ivujivik community members and UQAT professors and researchers. All partners participate actively in activities relating to the above-mentioned focuses, thereby developing their professional competencies. This article explains the guiding principles adopted by the comanagement group and the context in which their partnership is evolving, then identifies the impacts on group members' professional development, through their eyes.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE PUVIRNITUQ-IVUJIVIK-UQAT COMANAGEMENT GROUP

After more than 35 years, the partners in this group are still driven by the desire to acquire work experience.

The working relationship between the members of the Puvirnituaq-Ivujivik-UQAT comanagement group is still based on the fundamental principle of collaboration. This collaboration in turn is based on recognition of the equality and interdependence of both groups of partners.

Each member is recognized as having his or her own cultural identity, this identity being necessary for development and the establishment of the intercultural dialogue so essential to the success of any activity (Amittu et al., 1988).

ENHANCEMENT OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS IN THE CONTEXT OF COMANAGEMENT

The approach adopted by the comanagement group depends on the various elements of the specific context of the partnership and is developed based on these same elements, namely geographical, linguistic, communication-related, social and cultural (Pellerin et al., 2020). In this case, the geographical location of the partners is a determining factor in the choice of work methods during team meetings. The members meet in person from time to time, but, for the most part, they connect remotely. The meetings took place by telephone until the beginning of the 2010s; now the members meet by videoconference. Since the partners are separated by vast distances, the method of communication is key in ensuring ongoing communication. The need to communicate remotely is also a source of professional development in the area of digital skills.

The linguistic context is characterized by discussions that regularly take place in three languages. The language of communication is English, the second language shared by all members. The Inuit partners' language of conceptualization is Inuktitut, while that of the UQAT partners is French. Respectful and aware of the importance of ensuring the coexistence of all three languages, the comanagement group makes timely use of each in order to optimize the participation and comprehension of all members. In addition, at the very beginning of the partnership, the group tasked a committee with the development of an Inuktitut-English-French expandable education lexicon, which fosters the conceptualization and adaptation of vocabulary specific to Inuit teacher training. The lexicon is now available in digital format.²

Lastly, the intercultural component is ever present. It forces members to constantly examine ideas from the point of view of both cultures. Of course, the Inuit members are in a better position to explain the realities faced by students. In this respect, the group's discussions and decisions inevitably take the students' unique context into account.

METHODOLOGY: WORKING PRACTICES THROUGH THE EYES OF COMANAGEMENT GROUP MEMBERS

In 1996, a research and development project carried out by Maheux et al. identified the constituent components of the comanagement approach applied from 1986 to 1994, as well as the conditions conducive to the approach and the difficulties inherent in it. More recently, a study conducted by Pellerin (CRSH, 2011-2016), which aimed to implement an approach involving the use of videoconferencing to support Inuit teacher training, revealed the elements of continuity and discontinuity in the comanagement approach over time. The study also brought to light formative elements and impacts in terms of the professional development of the members of the comanagement group. The purpose of this article is to identify these contributions, in particular through the eyes of one of the text's coauthors, who has been a member of the comanagement group for more than 10 years and who is currently mayor of Puvirnituq.

IMPACTS OF THE COLLABORATIVE AND COMANAGEMENT APPROACH ON MEMBERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The collaborative work helps support the professional development of education stakeholders (Garcia and Marcel, 2011), thereby transforming practices. The term "collaborate," which comes from the Latin *collaborare*, means to "work together." The work, made possible by the sharing of knowledge and dialogue among the participants, is influenced by the satisfaction the collaborators feel, in particular as regards their sense of competence (Lessard et al., 2009).

An analysis of the data collected for the 1996 and 2016 studies showed that the group's continuity and success are attributable to the strength of the relationships between its members. After hearing the arguments of each member and seeking collaborative solutions, the group makes decisions only once they are unanimous. Group members sometimes see things in different ways, and subjects are approached from different angles; there is no time limit on discussions. If the group fails to arrive at a shared understanding and a unanimous decision, the projects are revised or the decision-making process is deferred. Regardless of the outcome of the meeting, all discussions are approached with openness:

“About our co-management practice in group, what I got is that we have to come to a point of agreement. We have to listen other opinion. We find solution for everybody to agree. It’s important to have rules for a group. To be mature, to show respect even if we don’t agree and also to try to be empathetic.”

”

This in-depth approach to the subjects discussed by the comanagement group also contributes to the development of members’ communication and ethical skills and leadership strategies, as well as their sense of responsibility. The analysis underlying all of the group’s actions is a source of inspiration for its members, and the learning acquired is sometimes transferred to other areas of their lives.

“On a personal level, I can say that I gain knowledge a lot from my comanagement experience. People are impressed at my way of working as a Mayoress. My experience in education helped me categorizing, analyzing. I don’t want to sound pretentious, it’s just how I feel confident about what I am doing and people telling me.”

”

This passage illustrates the influence that working in the comanagement group has had on this Inuit partner. Her experience allowed her to develop competencies that she then applied in her role as community leader.

It is also apparent that the continuity of membership helps maintain a relationship of trust among the members. When a new person joins the group, he or she is mentored by a senior member who explains the spirit in which discussions take place.

“Something that is important is that we have to work with the same group. The stability must remain in the group to develop trust. When introducing new member, we have to make sure that this person is passionate about education and is constant.”

”

This mentorship approach helps new members develop a sense of belonging, which is important to all members. It also help establish a sense of mutual trust.

The group’s efforts to reconnect with Inuit ways help maintain a healthy and productive collaboration and achieve the ultimate goal, i.e., fostering student success.

“It’s important to respect Inuit way. Education is new in the North. Our way of thinking was pushed aside. Qallunaat way was imposed to us. Our knowledge needs to be pass. We have to reuse our knowledge again, and to have our way back. We live in a generation oppressed. Inuit need to be recognized; they need to cope with issued coming from the past.”

”

The Inuit partners want to see youth in their communities benefit from past experience and develop a sense of individual and cultural pride. This is key to supporting student perseverance and requires the development of a new collective purpose with regard to young people’s experience at school. Consequently, efforts to support the emergence of a positive relationship between the community and the school fuel the group’s discussions and inspire their actions.

The comanagement group is a space where these concerns can be heard. Members’ openness to diversity and needs fosters teamwork, contributes to personal, community and professional development and favours the development and implementation of learning projects.

CONCLUSION

Members develop a variety of professional competencies as they collaborate in the work of the Puvirnituuq-luvjivik-UQAT comanagement group.

Based on the professional competencies established by the Ministère de l’Éducation du Québec (2001), they are: acting ethically and responsibly, being proficient in a language in order to communicate, developing and implementing learning projects, recognizing diversity in a group and working in a team.

Given the working context, the organization of Inuit teacher training activities and the development of Northern education requires considerable flexibility on the part of this

bicultural, trilingual group, as well as great rigour with respect to activities. Members meet regularly to attempt to find common ground between the school system's expectations and the community's culture.

This partnership requires the development of competencies that are then transferred to other professional responsibilities and in members' personal lives. In short, being a member of this comanagement group is a learning experience for all members from both cultures. ♦

Notes

¹ In Inuktitut, the term Qallunaat means "stranger," and is used to refer to non-Inuit people.

² <https://lexique.uqat.ca>

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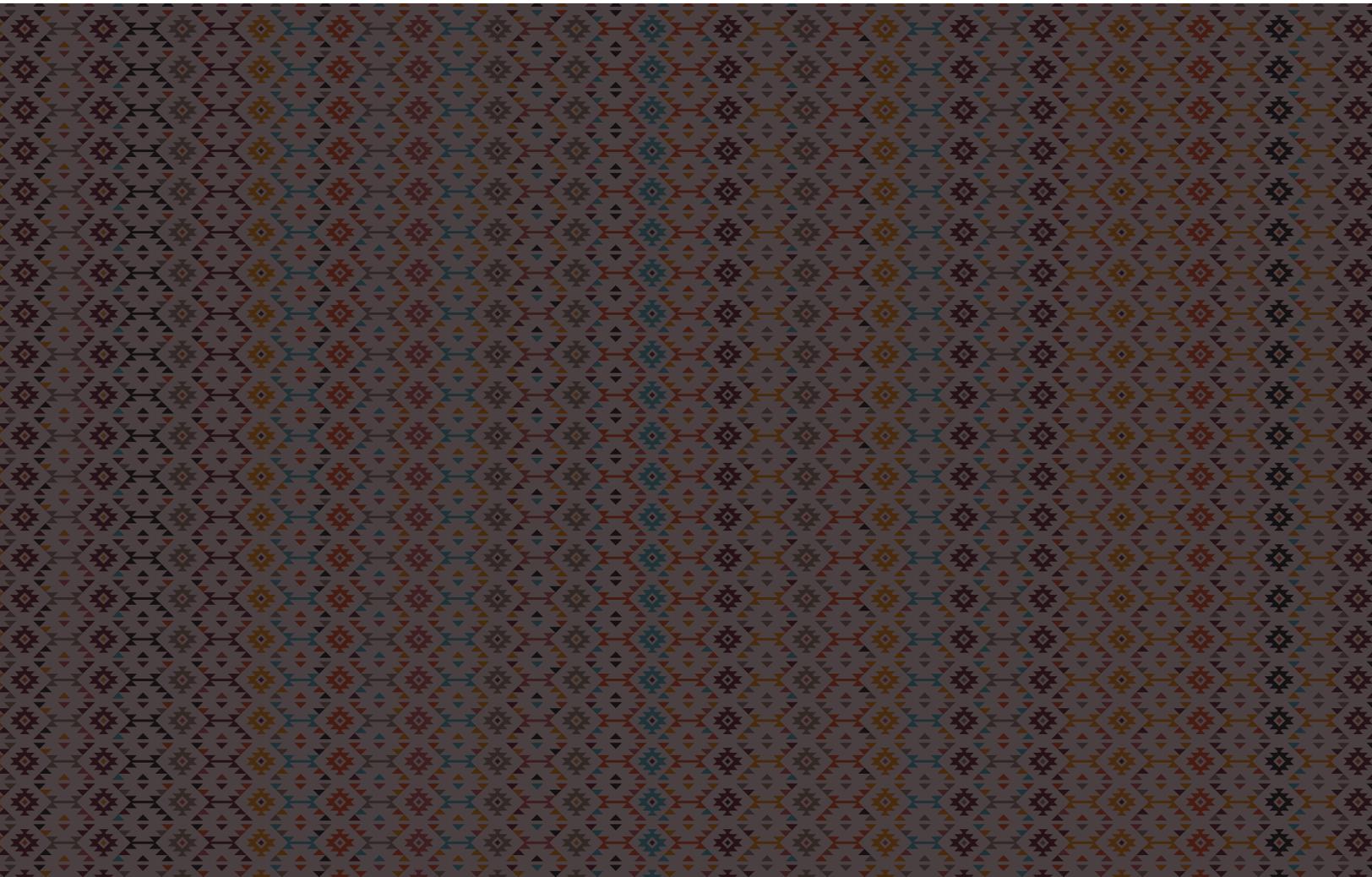
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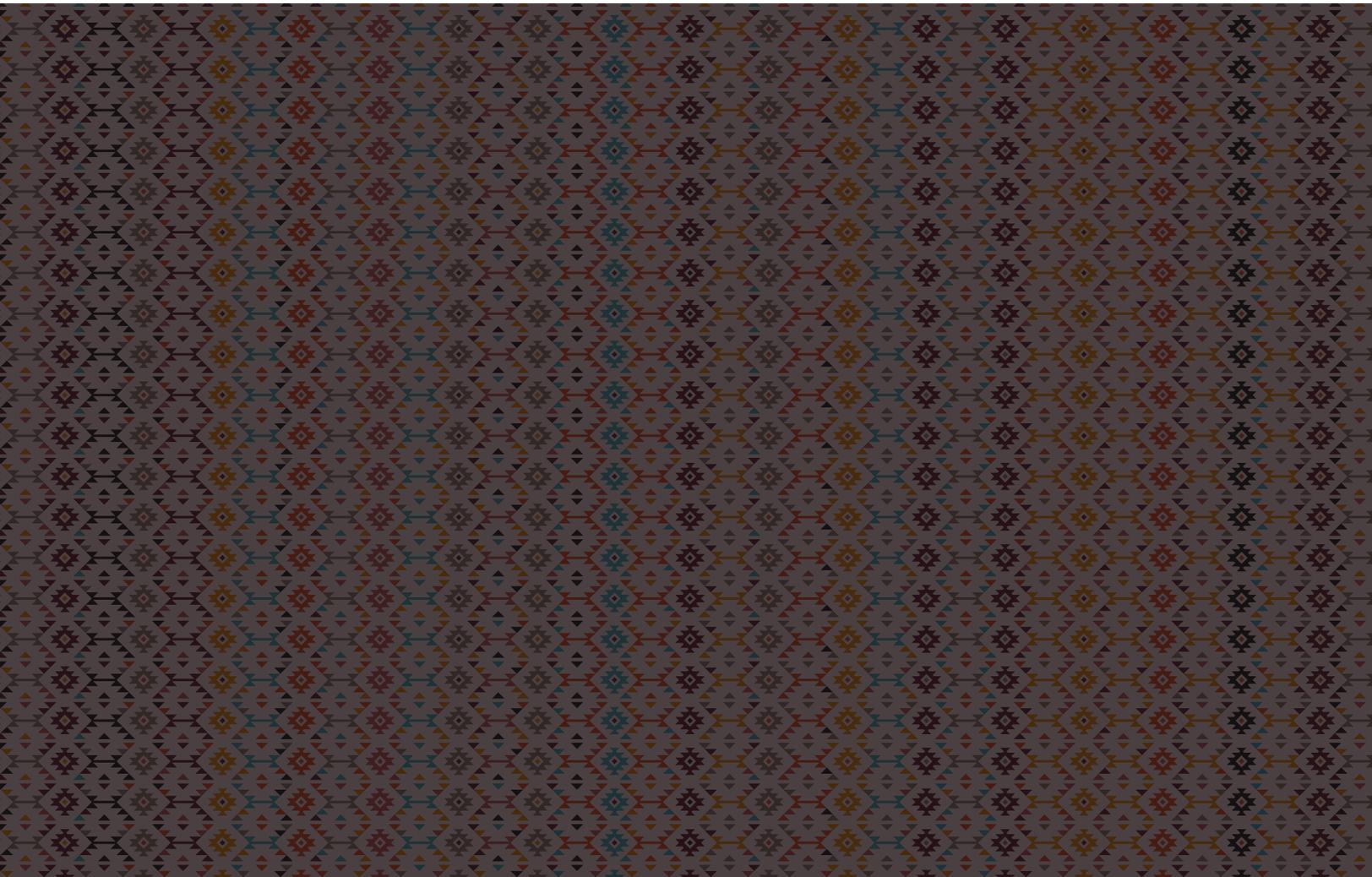
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IV



CULTURAL SAFETY PRACTICES



VISIBLE OR INVISIBLE: SEPARATE REALITIES AMONG INNU AND WENDAT STUDENTS AT CÉGEP LIMOILOU - AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE



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BACKGROUND

Cégep Limoilou enrolls on average about 60 Indigenous students a year. In 2016, it began offering intercultural training for teachers and other staff members.¹ In 2018, a new institutional guideline led to the hiring of a social worker with experience working with the Indigenous population and a student life animator for Indigenous students, as well as participation in an intercollegiate research project. Although we only began offering these services recently, we have been addressing contemporary Indigenous realities in our courses for far longer. Over the years, we have invited Indigenous students to get involved by raising awareness in class. We found similarities and differences in college integration strategies, especially between Innu and Wendat students.

OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

Our objectives were to use the literature and interviews to validate the observations made in the classroom, to think about our role as teachers and allies of our Indigenous students, to fine-tune our understanding of these students' experiences and needs, and to raise awareness in the college with a view to offering services that better reflect the diversity of challenges experienced by Indigenous students. Our approach was to record our observations and discussions, to meet with Indigenous students and practitioners (at the college and elsewhere), to write a literature review and to disseminate our observations so that Eurocentric institutions can work toward achieving greater cultural safety.

IDENTITY, CULTURE AND FIRST LANGUAGE VS. COLLEGE LIFE

We observed that Innu youth live in two worlds: their Indigenous community and the Quebec City region. Their transition to CEGEP often involves a deep sense of uprootedness and a loss of identity. They come from a variety of school environments (instruction in Innu or French), and arrive at another institution oriented toward assimilation (De Crank 2008).²

Many of them don't fit in with either traditional Innu life (Audet 2012) or non-Indigenous life.

”

In addition, they have their personal baggage, which colours their culture shock, their perception of the similarities and differences between them and non-Indigenous Quebecers, and their social and academic adjustment, at a time when identity renewal is becoming a watchword in Indigenous communities (Poirier 2009) and when college institutions neither know or value Innu culture. Thus, students' cultural identity is profoundly affected by uprooting, and Innu students have multiple identities.

More specifically, intercultural exchange is marked by a Eurocentric vision of academic learning, based largely on cognitive knowledge (Battiste 2013). In contrast, the Innu vision is based largely on “non-formal” learning acquired outside school, as well as on “non-structured” learning, which does not exist, and is therefore not recognized, in Eurocentric learning and evaluation (Colomb 2012). Moreover, the

Quebec school system focuses on reading and writing as a means of transmitting knowledge, whereas Indigenous cultures traditionally favour the oral transmission of culture (Labrecque 2019).

For example, an Innu student may experience severe stress at the thought of having to hand in homework or write an exam at a specific time, sometimes within a very short deadline. This method is incompatible with a world view in which learning is ongoing, both in and outside of the classroom and long after the term has ended, and in which oral transmission is the preferred means of teaching. This difficult intercultural situation, combined with failure to recognize “other” knowledge, can easily lead to failure (Colomb 2012) and even to students dropping out of school. Yet, despite everything, school education is a priority for Indigenous communities.

Mastery of the language of instruction also has a major impact on adaptation in school. Although French is a second language for most Innu, the college system operates as if it were their first. Thus, although they may meet admission requirements, the Innu who come to our CEGEP for whom French is a second language sometimes have difficulty understanding their teachers, the texts they are assigned to read and the instructions given for homework and exams. Some even told us that they are reticent to speak to each other in their first language at school, on the street or on the bus, for fear of being laughed at.

Wendat students’ identity is similar to that of most students in Quebec. French is their first language, and they aren’t uprooted because they don’t have to leave their community to pursue their studies. In fact, school education has been a Wendat identity marker since the 19th century (Sioui 2011). According to statistics, the Wendat differ from the rest of Quebec’s First Nations in that they have a higher post-secondary graduation rate. For example, there is a 15-point difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who hold a college diploma or university degree (2016 Canadian census; CAPRES 2018), but only a 2-point difference between the Wendat (44.8%) and non-Indigenous Quebec students (46.9%) (2001 Canadian census, in Sioui 2011).

Despite having a student identity comparable to that of most students, some Wendat maintain a very strong cultural identity, which varies based on family education and personality. While some are interested in traditional practices, others are more attracted by hunting and fishing or involved in Indigenous social justice issues (Picard 2019).

Living one’s culture is a personal matter, but transmitting culture is an important issue for this community, which stopped handing down its language in 1830-1850 (Dorais 2015). Not knowing their traditional language is described as a deficiency, a sense that there is something missing. “The quality of language is crucial to personal identity” (Audet 2012, free translation).

There is a need to symbolically assert their identity to differentiate themselves from non-Indigenous Quebecers, as well as from other Indigenous nations (Dorais 2015). This assertion is important for some Wendat, who feel that their right to an identity is denied by both non-Indigenous Quebecers and other Indigenous nations (C.-A. Lesage, personal correspondence, September 25, 2019). Sometimes this denial is internalized, as in the case of a Wendat student interested in activities organized for the college’s Indigenous students: she wondered if she was entitled to participate because she did not speak her traditional language.

INTEGRATION STRATEGIES: LIVE AS A VISIBLE MINORITY OR CHOOSE TO REMAIN INVISIBLE

Because of their phenotype, Innu students are often “visible.” This visibility has an impact on their power relationships and on the social and school integration strategies they apply. The interpersonal relationships between non-Indigenous and Innu students vary considerably but, unfortunately, they are often tainted by ignorance, indifference, discrimination, and even hostility and racism. It goes without saying that most non-Indigenous people are unaware of the enormous challenges that Innu students face in attempting to adapt to college. Few have any idea that most of them often face heavier responsibilities than most students their age (Indspire 2018), that they are under extreme pressure to pass their courses in order to keep their funding from the Band Council, or that they are financially insecure.

They also have to deal on a regular basis with discrimination and rejection when it comes to working in teams, a common learning method in college. Combined with all too common derogatory remarks and isolation, these situations are another reason why Innu students drop out of school. Yet the Innu students who arrive at CEGEP are more determined than anyone. It takes courage to enroll in a “White” college far from home.

For their part, Wendat students do not experience special difficulties when it comes to adapting to college. The financial support provided by their Band Council and the resources available in the community make it far easier for them. The Huron-Wendat development and workforce training centre (CDFM) is one of the main stakeholders in the community that encourage education while promoting the Wendat identity and, in a larger sense, Indigenous identity.

However, even people with a very strong Wendat identity need considerable self-confidence to assert that identity in college. With a phenotype that is usually similar to that of non-Indigenous Quebecers, most Wendat strategically choose not to assert their cultural identity, preferring the protection of “invisibility.”

Generally speaking, Indigenous students feel comfortable telling their close friends that they are Wendat, but only on rare occasions will they assert it openly because of the irreversible consequences in their power relationships with the majority. The classroom should be a safe space for the assertion of cultural identity, since a major concern about “becoming visible” is facing prejudice or being rejected when it comes to working in a team, as is often the case for Innu.

THE VARIABLE GEOMETRY OF IDENTITY ASSERTION

So what does all this mean?

Innu students experience a more profound uprooting than expected because of their phenotype, their first language, culture and academic shock and marginalization.

Wendat students are faced with a more complex intercultural experience than expected: even if they are “invisible,” they share an innate sense of distrust when they arrive in a new setting.

In all cases, “students need to be recognized for their culture and for their individuality, since the issue of Indigenous identity is fundamental”

(Labrecque 2019, free translation).

CONCLUSION: WE NEED TO ADAPT OUR ACTIONS TO ENSURE GREATER CULTURAL SAFETY

In conclusion, we firmly believe that we can take measures at various levels to make CEGEP a safer place for Indigenous students from all nations.

The intercultural exchange between Indigenous students and the college community is a path that starts with integration, a one-way process, and ends with cultural recognition, which implies institutional change (Indspire 2018). Consequently, we need to understand the diversity of the historical and cultural realities of the Indigenous nations and the wealth of their forms of learning. This could lead to a better-informed college community that questions its view of teaching, integrates Indigenous knowledge and its holistic approach, and facilitates direct experimentation and learning outside the classroom.

Then, we need to develop a cultural safety protocol that incorporates these new guidelines and offers Indigenous students the opportunity to willingly disclose their identity when they enroll. Also, as many Indigenous students currently enrolled in the CEGEP have mentioned, a room devoted exclusively to Indigenous activities would help provide cultural safety and ensure student perseverance.

There is also a need for a special French course adapted to Indigenous realities, as well as accommodation measures for evaluations and a service offering based on a desire to understand Indigenous realities.

Indigenous nations are beginning to break the silence in vast numbers, making demands and explaining their needs, which has led to a widespread awareness of the historical injustices they have faced. Indigenous students are part of this movement. We need to allow them to take their rightful place in reconciliation efforts.

Notes

¹ Training is provided by Christine Veilleux and Josée Blanchette, both anthropology teachers at Cégep Limoilou.

² Recently, we have been lifting the veil of secrecy surrounding the residential schools. The broken silence, extensive media coverage and recognition of a need for reconciliation have an impact on identity, but this tragic period in history shattered Indigenous communities' confidence in Eurocentric institutions and teaching methods. "White" people's ignorance and perceived lack of respect for traditional culture and their devaluing of traditional knowledge contribute to this distrust.

³ Adapted Services at Cégep Limoilou has been offering accommodation measures in this regard since fall 2019. Although this is a step in the right direction, we need to do more and extend such initiatives throughout the network.

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FROM KNOWLEDGE TO RECOGNITION CULTURAL SAFETY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCE PROGRAM AT CÉGEP DE BAIE-COMEAU



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BACKGROUND

In her most recent work, *Shuni. Ce que tu dois savoir, Julie*, Naomi Fontaine tells about her grandfather's choice to register his daughters in school:

“My grandfather decided that his daughters would go to school and speak French at home. At the expense of the distance he was creating between them and him. At the expense of his own language. And the knowledge handed down by his parents. Of his pride. You see, that's what being colonized means. You doubt your culture's worth. You doubt yourself” (Fontaine 2019, free translation).

”

This excerpt is a good illustration of the purpose behind the cultural safety in social science project at Cégep de Baie-Comeau. As social science teachers, we don't claim to understand the reality, history and culture of our Indigenous students better than they do. Our goal is to create safe spaces that give them the confidence they need to learn, express themselves, discuss and share. We want to promote their culture so that they no longer doubt their worth.

Since the 1990s, various practitioners at Cégep de Baie-Comeau have been looking at how Indigenous students are welcomed and included. The number of self-declared Indigenous students in our school varies between 20 and 30 out of approximately 650 students. They are majoritarily Innu.

At first, the cultural safety program had a counsellor hired by the Pessamit¹ Innu Council to follow up with Indigenous students; now they receive individual pedagogical support. The program grew with the creation of the Innuat'z study and gathering room and of an Indigenous sociocultural and pedagogical committee in the early 2000s. In 2015, in partnership with the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite and the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC), and with the support of the local Employment and Training Centre in Betsiamites, the CEGEP created an institutional response guide to help teachers foster the educational success of Indigenous students at Cégep de Baie-Comeau. Two years later, the CEGEP developed another guide, this one intended to help Indigenous students at the CEGEP persevere in their college studies.

Based on these institutional initiatives, Marcel Marsolais, a political science teacher² and I, a history and political science teacher, created the From knowledge to recognition program aimed at promoting Indigenous cultures in every social science subject. This article tells the story of this cultural safety project. We describe our approach and our methodology, as well as the tools we developed and their possible applications.

OBJECTIVES AND DATA COLLECTION

Our aim was to do as much as we could to meet Indigenous students' real needs. It was therefore essential that we consult them from the outset. In fall 2018, we started the project by collecting data. We wanted to know what these students expected to gain from going to CEGEP, what they were concerned about, what they hoped for in terms of social and academic inclusion.

We wanted to get an overview of Indigenous students' needs and expectations, but also to gather information about the current social science program in Baie-Comeau and students' perception of it. To do so, we met with graduates from Uashkaikan secondary school in Pessamit (focus group), Innu students enrolled in the social science program (semi-structured interviews) and Innu graduates of the social science program (online questionnaire).

In an effort to gather the opinions of stakeholders who work with students, we distributed questionnaires to teachers on the social science program committee and conducted interviews with the principal and guidance counsellor at Uashkaikan secondary school, Louise Canapé and Ariane Paquet, as well as with Justine Bacon, the person at the Pessamit Innu Council responsible for students enrolled in post-secondary education. The generosity of students and stakeholders allowed us to establish as accurate a picture as possible of the current situation and to define our objectives with respect to their needs.

The students adopted different stances toward their culture during the interviews: some expressed a clear desire for increased contact with their traditional culture, others were satisfied with their level of familiarity with their culture and wanted to see something new, but still recognized the importance of initiating non-Indigenous people to Indigenous cultures.

With respect to their inclusion in the CEGEP and their classes, they expressed concerns about their Indigenous origin (openness of teachers and students, awkwardness about their accent, fear of prejudice).

They wanted teachers to initiate non-Indigenous students to Indigenous cultures in order to reduce and even eliminate prejudice. We concluded that we needed to focus on cultural safety.

By presenting this concept as “the potential resulting from a service offering based on respect and the recognition of historical, cultural, socioeconomic, political and epistemological determinants,” Emmanuelle Dufour provided us with guidelines for the development of our pedagogical tools (Dufour 2019, free translation).

In this process, it was important that our Indigenous students not be further stigmatized and that the spotlight not shine more on them than on other students. That's what gave us the idea to adopt the cultural approach presented by Caroline Moffet in an article published in *Pédagogie collégiale*. The cultural approach involves “being sensitive to our students' origins . . . and being a temporary channel, a teacher who makes students want to understand, to learn about the Other and to share relationships with subject matter through these different viewpoints” (Moffet 2019, free translation). We came to understand that all students would benefit from this approach if the teacher became a “bridge . . . between students' culture and the subject being taught” (Moffet 2019, free translation).

ACTIONS TAKEN AND TOOLS DEVELOPED

Once we had collected the data, we started the second phase of the project

To ensure maximum cultural safety for Indigenous students enrolled in the social science program, we decided to work with them before they arrived at the CEGEP.

We won't necessarily be able to do this with all Indigenous students who enroll in our CEGEP but, since most of them come from the Pessamit Innu community, we built bridges with the Innu Council and Uashkaikan secondary school to facilitate the transition of most Indigenous students from secondary school to CEGEP.

To lessen the shock of the transition, key college resources (guidance counsellor, individual pedagogical support worker, student life advisor) meet with students finishing secondary school. These students also visit the CEGEP on open house days.

We would like to multiply these opportunities to meet with students and create them earlier in students' academic career by organizing "student for a day" days where Indigenous and non-Indigenous students at the CEGEP could act as mentors and guides in the younger students' exploration of post-secondary education.

Social science teachers also participated in activities organized by the Pessamit community to strengthen bonds of trust with students outside the school. The annual Pow Wow, the 2019 archaeological digs and the release of the book *Nutshimit* by Raphaël Picard during Pessamit cultural week were excellent opportunities for meeting with students and engaging in dialogue. We will certainly continue to pursue this avenue in the future.

To create a culturally safe space throughout students' time in the social science program, the teacher responsible for the project developed a number of tools. First, she produced educational activity sheets in collaboration with teachers from every social science subject. The following are a few examples of the topics addressed in the activity sheets:

- Indigenous economic development from the Bay James Agreement to the Plan Nord
- Gender and two-spirit identity
- Referendums on Quebec sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples
- The colonization of the Americas
- Protest movements (Red Power, Idle No More, etc.)

Teachers also have access to an information sheet on First Nations and Inuit in Canada, the United States and New Zealand.

The aim of each activity is to move away from the Western Eurocentric point of view and to see things from the points of view of other peoples.

Each of the sheets provides information about the steps in the activity, the applicable elements of the competency and performance criteria, the concepts and notions addressed, the available

pedagogical materials, the required resources, the suggested educational methods and the complementary resources needed to go yet further. The aim of this measure is to create opportunities to promote Indigenous cultures, but that is not enough. The sheets should be a springboard for making the cultural approach more and more intuitive.

Another key measure is partnering with the Manicouagan Uapishka World Biosphere Reserve (MUWBR) for the program's comprehensive examination. The social science department and the MUWBR offer students the opportunity to do research in a different way.

Accompanied by a department teacher and the MUWBR, students who want to can venture outside the walls of the CEGEP and do part of their research at Uapishka Station in the Groulx mountains. An example of co-management of the territory, the station is owned by the Pessamit Innu Band Council (51%) and the MUWBR (49%). The vast study site allows students to work on a number of issues such as the traditional and contemporary occupation of the territory by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, northern governance, social acceptability, adaptation to climate change, and sustainable development in a resource-based region.

The first cohort of social science students will participate in the project in winter 2020. They all chose to work directly or indirectly on issues affecting North Shore Indigenous Communities (e.g. the impact of diet on wellness and identity development, initiatives aimed at promoting Innu culture in schools, the impact of humans on the survival of woodland caribou).

Lastly, in an effort to increase the scope of this sensitization to Indigenous cultures, a complementary course was developed in collaboration with the Pessamit Innu Council's Education and Culture sector. The course Innu Aitun and First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures in Canada will be offered for the first time in fall 2020. The focus is on Innu culture so that non-Indigenous students can develop a better understanding of the communities with which they share the North Shore. In this course, students will develop their competencies with traditional Indigenous forms of learning such as observation, application and the oral transmission of memory. Their points of view will be at the heart of knowledge building.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

It is difficult to see the actual impact of these measures right now, because most of them were implemented in 2019-2020 or will be in 2020-2021. Nevertheless, we can already see that non-Indigenous students are open to learning about Indigenous cultures.

We also feel that stronger bonds of trust are beginning to form between non-Indigenous students and their Indigenous counterparts throughout their time at school.

The tools developed for the project can be used in other colleges, but we suggest adapting them to the specific characteristics of students' communities.³

We are now adopting a step-by-step approach. By providing teachers with training and educational tools, we hope to continue to raise awareness and eliminate inertia, discomfort and fear of awkwardness, thereby multiplying opportunities for discussion among all members of the college community. ♦

Notes

¹ Innu community located approximately 40 km from Baie-Comeau.

² Marcel Marsolais retired from teaching in the early days of the official implementation of the project.

³ Teachers and education consultants who are interested in learning more can contact Lysandre St-Pierre, the teacher responsible for the project at Cégep de Baie-Comeau.

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***TSHETSHI TSHISSENITAKANIT:* WELCOME KIT FOR NON-INDIGENOUS EDUCATORS**



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Although there is no literal translation for the Innu expression "*Tshetshi Tshissenitakanit*," it can be roughly translated as "getting to know each other," or "this is who we are."

In this case, the title refers to the broader meaning, and is first and foremost an invitation to discover other cultures. The *Tshetshi Tshissenitakanit* | Welcome Kit for Non-Indigenous Educators was designed in this spirit. The project was launched in Quebec schools in February 2020¹ and will continue to be rolled out during the 2020-2021 school year as a tool for raising awareness. Here, the reference to "raising awareness" is important. We are not offering training or magic solutions, and the tool has yet to prove its worth. Rather, the welcome kit gives voice to First Nations in general, and the Innu Nation in particular.

OBJECTIVES

Innu learners face multiple challenges related to the cultural context of schools. For example, when students start school, they transition from speaking their first language to learning a second language. This sudden change in the language of instruction can in itself be the cause of learning difficulties. A curriculum that presents cultural content that is different and foreign to what is being taught at home is another major issue, and is associated with identity-building problems. Students and their families experience additional hardship when they are forced to move between different

education systems that are often poorly adapted to the realities of Innu students, or move from their community to an urban environment. Innu learners also face prejudice, as well as a general lack of knowledge of their culture, history, learning methods, strengths, daily realities and challenges. Innu students must constantly adapt. It is not surprising that they sometimes run out of steam and need to take a break. They often come back to school and pick up where they left off, this time stronger and more determined than before. Innu learners are fighters. The statistics point to alarming dropout rates, and failure rates that are higher than among other students in the province. However, Western culture has its own criteria for measuring success, and the overall statistical portrait does not take into account the number of students who return to school.

Specialists from Institut Tshakapesh's educational services department designed a welcome kit for non-Indigenous educators in Innu communities, giving careful consideration to the above-mentioned issues and insight gained from myriad discussions with stakeholders from diverse settings over the years.

The tool is intended for all educators, regardless of whether students are studying in their first or second language, in their home community or in an urban environment.



The Tshetshi Tshissenitakanit | Welcome Kit for Non-Indigenous Educators has multiple goals. First, it is vital that Indigenous organizations give schools and, in particular, non-Indigenous educators, the tools they need. The Welcome Kit for Non-Indigenous Educators gives voice to First Nations, and seeks initially to raise awareness among staff. The second goal is to inform them by providing pedagogical materials recognized and validated by First Nations, rooted in and reflective of the vision of First Nations. The third goal is to help non-Indigenous educators learn how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and values into their teaching practices. In fact, this was one of the calls to action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC), a substantial report published in 2015 aimed at, among other things, rebuilding relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Several recommendations were made in the area of education, and a commitment on the part of governments and schools, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, is vital to building capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect.

BUILDING AWARENESS

Many educators are now aware of the educational issues of First Nations students.

In recent years, we have seen innovative educational experiments that, although not systemic, have gotten positive results in a number of communities. The Journal of Perseverance and

Academic Achievement for First Peoples (2015, 2016 and 2019) has published myriad articles on projects implemented to better understand and address challenges in our schools and in the area of educator training. However, it is important to recognize that post-secondary training programs and elementary and secondary schools rarely adequately prepare educators to work with Indigenous students, so educators are afraid of making mistakes.

Although a lack of knowledge certainly contributes to this phenomenon, there is more to it than that. In the words of An Antane Kapesh, “When the white man decided Indians should live like the white man, he did not ask their opinion” (2019, p. 15, free translation).

We now know that non-Indigenous people are not in a position to decide what is good for Indigenous people without consulting with them. We also have to consider the debate surrounding cultural appropriation: non-Indigenous educators are fearful, sometimes without realizing it, of behaving in ways that could be perceived as inappropriate. And so, instead of risking making mistakes, they refrain from all action and ignore the matter at hand..

Thus, educators still sometimes find themselves in unknown territory. What can we do to move forward without repeating past mistakes? It can be difficult to know how to act without being familiar with the realities of First Nations communities or even having basic training. Indeed, many people have been discouraged by the pitfalls of colonialism, and even paternalism. For example, schools do everything they can to help students learn the language of instruction as a means of helping them succeed, which is a laudable goal.

However, this is often done without giving consideration to the precarious situation of the students’ first language, or recognizing its value. Students lose confidence in their language learning capacities while, in reality, bilingualism should be recognized as a strength.

Even more so in this case, since there are few similarities between French and Algonquian languages: learning to communicate in both Innu and French is a great accomplishment.⁴ This is something that schools rarely recognize, and the consequences are not to be taken lightly.

In the name of success, students, and often their families, find themselves in a dilemma: either they speak more French for academic success, or they speak more Innu to help safeguard their first language.

The content of the secondary level history program is another example of the inherent discomfort caused by the discrepancy between the curriculum and the reality of First Nations. Adolescence is a time when young people usually question who they are and develop their social identity; however, Indigenous students rarely hear about issues affecting their Nations, their history or First Nations' claims. This makes it very difficult for them to build self-identity and define who they are. For many, this is an obvious source of demotivation and, in most schools, an unconscious form of assimilation. The welcome kit, one of several projects and initiatives implemented across the territory, aims to build awareness and fill in the gaps of training programs for non-Indigenous educators working with Indigenous students.

DESCRIPTION

The *Tshetshi Tshissenitakanit* | Welcome Kit for Non-Indigenous Educators is a collection of training activities designed to help educators gain new insight into Indigenous realities in the classroom. The activities aim not only to educate on how to adapt to Indigenous learners, but also to change the perceptions of young non-Indigenous Quebecers.

The kit includes 10 activities that introduce different types of knowledge inherent to Innu culture. Some of the activities address intangible aspects such as values, openness and cultural safety. Others focus on tangible components such as educational materials, teaching practices and culturally appropriate content. Yet others examine Nations, culture, history and language.

Each activity takes approximately 90 minutes to complete, and is divided into three parts. Part one is dedicated to raising awareness, giving voice to First Nations. This may be done through reading, watching or listening to various materials.⁵

Part two is a semi-structured discussion activity in which participants answer questions. Suggested questions provide a framework that can be adapted to different settings.

In part three, participants get to put into practice what they have learned or further developed through the materials, discussions and interactions. During this final step, schools and/or classes are solicited to take concrete action. For example, the activity on pedagogical practices gives teachers the opportunity to reflect as a group on their teaching activities, identify training needs and share their observations with school principals.⁶

FIGURE 1
Steps in a process to ensure cultural safety⁷



CONCLUSION

The issue of intercultural relationships between Indigenous peoples and mainstream societies prompted us to develop tools that reflect the vision of First Nations and promote the transmission of their values.

Initiatives such as the *Tshetshi Tshissenitakanit* | Welcome Kit for Non-Indigenous Educators provide those who wish to familiarize themselves with Indigenous cultures with tools designed and validated by First Nations.

The activities were designed to be easily adaptable to different school settings. Regardless of the school setting or teaching environment, the objectives remain the same: to have schools and educators recognize the realities of First Nations communities and help Innu students succeed, while fostering development and a sense of cultural pride. ♦

Notes

¹ The *Tshetshi Tshissenitakanit* | Welcome Kit for Non-Indigenous Educators was funded jointly by the Education Partnerships Program (EPP), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec (MEES). The MEES provides financial support for training and awareness-building initiatives for school board staff (see measure 15061, component 2, of the 2018-2021 Operating budget rules).

² The kit is free for schools partnering with the Institut Tshakapesh, and is available to non-partnering schools for a one-year loan.

³ The welcome kit contains the Indigenous Perspectives Education Guide produced by Historica Canada in collaboration with members of First Nations; *Tracer un chemin* | Meshkanatsheu – Écrits des Premiers Peuples; *Mythes et Réalités sur les peuples autochtones* and other works by First Nations authors such as Naomi Fontaine, Natasha Kanapé Fontaine and Jenny Kay Dupuis.

⁴ The welcome kit also includes *Structures comparées de l'Innu et du français* produced by Marie-Odile Junker, Marguerite MacKenzie and Yvette Mollen.

⁵ For example, the documentary *Nuash ute* | *Jusqu'ici*, produced by the Institut Tshakapesh and presented for the first time at the Fourth Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples, is on the list of viewing materials. Other activities include watching videos produced by Wapikoni Mobile.

⁶ The content and instructions for leading the activities and targeted actions are explained in the user guide for the *Tshetshi Tshissenitakanit* | Welcome Kit for Non-Indigenous Educators, available from Institut Tshakapesh.

⁷ Diagram: Lévesque, C. (2017). *La sécurisation culturelle : moteur de changement social*. Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and certain public services in Québec: listening, reconciliation and progress https://www.cerp.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Fichiers_clients/Documents_deposes_a_la_Commission/P-038.pdf.

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RECOGNIZING THE EFFECTS OF SYSTEMIC RACISM TO ENSURE GREATER CULTURAL SAFETY FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS



Léa Lefevre-Radelli, Université du Québec à Montréal and Université de Nantes

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In recent years, Quebec universities and CEGEPs have implemented a growing number of initiatives to provide Indigenous students with adapted services and an environment more respectful of their realities. These initiatives involve recognizing the cultural, linguistic and geographical realities of Indigenous students. However, Indigenous students are affected by institutionalized discrimination, an aspect of the education system rarely documented in Quebec. This article aims to provide avenues for understanding how systemic racism impacts Indigenous peoples in the university system—a key component for reflection on support measures for Indigenous students.

A STUDY OF INDIGENOUS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN MONTREAL

This article presents the findings of my doctoral research conducted to gain a better understanding of Indigenous students' experience at university (Lefevre-Radelli, 2019). From 2013 to 2018, I conducted interviews with 24 First Nations students who were studying, or who had studied, at French language universities in Montreal. When I began my research, special education needs associated with cultural differences and geographically remote communities were well documented. However, contrary to what I expected, culture shock was not the biggest obstacle students faced during their studies. Most of the students I interviewed had grown up in a city or had completed most of their schooling in a city, their first language was French, and they confirmed that they did not have academic difficulties related to the geographical remoteness of their community.

However, the entire group faced a problem that rarely appears in the French language literature: racism within and outside the university institution.

SYSTEMIC RACISM: WHAT IS IT?

What do we mean by “racism”? In everyday language, racism usually refers to acts committed by “deviant” individuals who intentionally target people based on their ethnic or national background. However, as a sociological term, systemic racism has a broader meaning, designating all of the processes that maintain particular groups in a position of exclusion or social, economic, political or cultural inferiority. Racism occurs at several levels, in particular individual and institutional.

- Individual racism refers to an individual's prejudices (i.e., thoughts and beliefs) and behaviour targeting people based on racial or ethnic background. Although some people openly admit to being racist, individual racism is more often unconscious and unintentional, and is connected to prejudices firmly anchored in society that influence perceptions and decisions.
- Institutional racism occurs when “institutions or actors within institutions adopt practices that result in the exclusion or inferiorization” of certain ethnic or national groups (Pala, 2007, p. 28, free translation).

Systemic racism involves an unequal power relationship in which one ethnic or racial group holds legal, political and economic power, and imposes it on one or more other groups. Although Quebec is in a minority position

within English Canada, there is indeed a power imbalance between Quebecers and Indigenous peoples, who are widely exposed to demeaning portrayals and social and economic discrimination (Posca, 2018; Québec, 2019).

CONSEQUENCES OF RACISM FOR INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

All of the Indigenous students I met with for doctoral research experienced racism in one form or another. The table below summarizes the main points identified in my research, which have also been documented in English universities elsewhere in Canada.

INDIVIDUAL

Some participants came face to face with prejudices and ignorance. According to the students I met, certain professors who did not specialize in Indigenous issues approached the topic with racial bias or in a superficial manner, without being properly informed or questioning collective prejudices. When such a situation plays out in the classroom, the professor’s position of authority makes denunciation a dangerous choice.

One participant reported:

“We had a lecturer who said, “You know, for example the Indians . . .” And then he gave us a huge cliché. I was in the back, and my friends were holding me back with both hands, saying, “Don’t put your hand up; you’ll have problems with him; he’ll give you trouble” (Mathilde, 2017, free translation).”

Several interviewees said they experienced being perceived as the “expert” Indigenous student in the class. When professors knew that a student was Indigenous, they would sometimes ask them to give their opinion on Indigenous issues, thereby placing them in an uncomfortable position, especially with the whole class staring at them. In a similar situation, one participant said that she sometimes felt like a “guinea pig,” while another said that she did not like being “the Indigenous student who always has to explain everything.”

**TABLE 1
Manifestations of racism at different levels**

| Level of racism | Description |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Systemic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism and structural colonialism in North American societies • Effacement/ignorance of Indigenous realities • Inequitable access to resources (including education) |
| 2. Institutional practices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under-representation of Indigenous professors and students • Teaching in the colonial language (English or French) • Physical environment that renders Indigenous peoples invisible • Absence of institutional mechanisms that effectively protect Indigenous peoples against racism |
| Programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs that efface Indigenous perspectives or reproduce stereotypes • Marginalization/inferiorization of Indigenous courses or programs |
| 3. Individual | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence of stereotypical portrayals: the drunk, exotic or vulnerable Indigenous person • The burden of stigmatization: being seen as the “expert” Indigenous student • The task of raising awareness is placed on Indigenous students and professors • Indigenous students feel isolated every day |

In addition to a context in which ignorance and prejudice against Indigenous peoples is widespread, the students themselves were often tasked with raising awareness. During the interviews, I often heard participants say, “We always have to explain,” and “We are always educating people.”

PROGRAMS

Even when programs do not directly promote racist attitudes, Indigenous students face the effacement of their realities in most of their courses. This manifests through Indigenous issues being “overlooked, only superficially addressed, or grossly distorted in the curricula... across disciplines” (Clark et al., 2014, p. 119). It is much easier to access a course in sign language or Portuguese than to take an Indigenous language class, just as it is easier to study 19th century French literature than works by contemporary Indigenous authors. Courses examining Indigenous realities are few and far between, receive little publicity and are limited to students in specific programs, in particular anthropology.

In this context, knowledge produced by Western authors is often considered indispensable, while Indigenous knowledge is considered optional or of little importance. Thus, to succeed, students of European heritage are under no obligation to learn the languages, values or history of Indigenous peoples. Remaining completely ignorant of Indigenous traditional knowledge has absolutely no bearing on their academic career. Conversely, in order to graduate, Indigenous students must agree to prioritize the authors and concepts identified as underpinning Western civilization (European or North American) and presented as symbolically superior, if they are given any options at all.

INSTITUTIONAL

Finally, let’s not forget that students are in an environment in which Indigenous voices struggle to be heard, with Indigenous professors and students a minority, or simply absent. Only one participant reported having taken a course given by an Indigenous teacher (tenured professor or lecturer). The under-representation of Indigenous professors is the result of institutional and systemic barriers, such as discriminatory hiring criteria (in some departments), and the fact that few Indigenous people hold a graduate degree.

Most of the participants were the only Indigenous students in their program, which increased their minorization within the institution. The students interviewed often said that they were unsure who the other Indigenous students at the university were. While white Quebecers studying at the institution would have no trouble finding friends with similar backgrounds and skin colour who share a language and common references, many of the Indigenous participants reported feeling isolated every day, and these feelings were amplified by the fact that the representation of Indigenous peoples was often imbued with prejudice.

CONCLUSION: IMPACT ON CULTURAL SAFETY

The findings documented in this doctoral research allow us to rethink and gain new insight into perseverance and academic achievement among Indigenous students. In order to implement effective measures at the institutional level, it is vital that we recognize the institutional mechanisms that result in the exclusion and inferiorization of Indigenous peoples.

There are no simple solutions to systemic mechanisms, which are embedded in the colonial relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. However, recognizing systemic racism gives us a better understanding of the political scope of cultural safety. The concept of cultural safety was developed in New Zealand and introduced in Canada to ensure better services for Indigenous peoples in the areas of health care and education (HCC, 2012; Dufour, 2019). However, the fundamental reflection underlying the concept is political: establishing measures for cultural safety involves going beyond the cultural dimension to analyze “power imbalances, institutional discrimination, colonization and colonial relationships” (NAHO, 2008, p. 3). Thus, guaranteeing cultural safety could rely on measures that drive structural change, for example:

- having a clear institutional commitment to Indigenous initiatives and standing against discrimination and racism
- increasing Indigenous staff, in particular professors, which may require revising hiring policies
- ensuring better representation of Indigenous realities in programs
- raising awareness among all staff and students

- making at least one course on the realities of Indigenous peoples mandatory for all students

These examples serve as an invitation for a global assessment of the impacts of institutions, our perceptions and our individual practices, in order to ensure a truly safe environment, free of racism, for Indigenous students.♦

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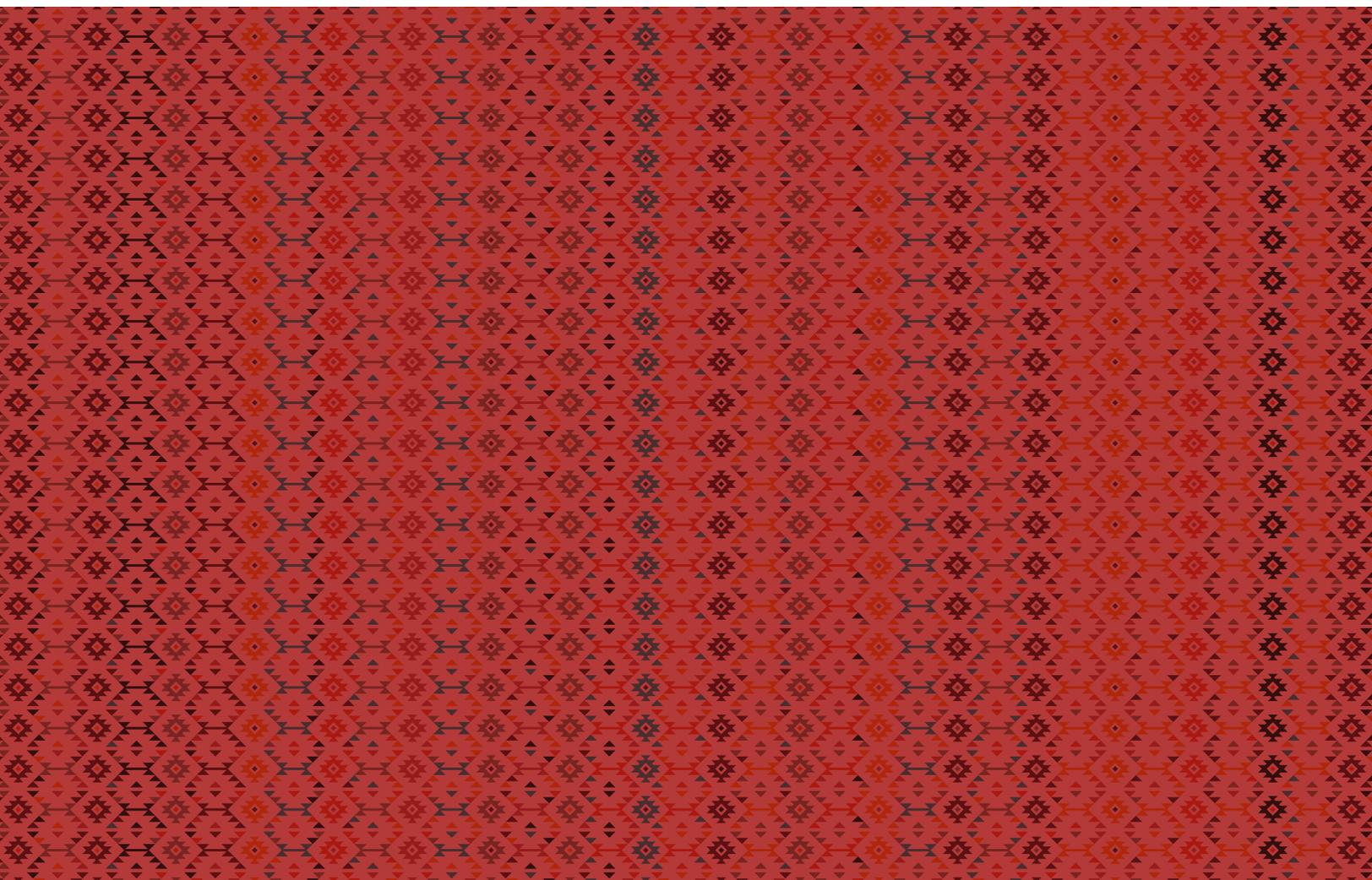
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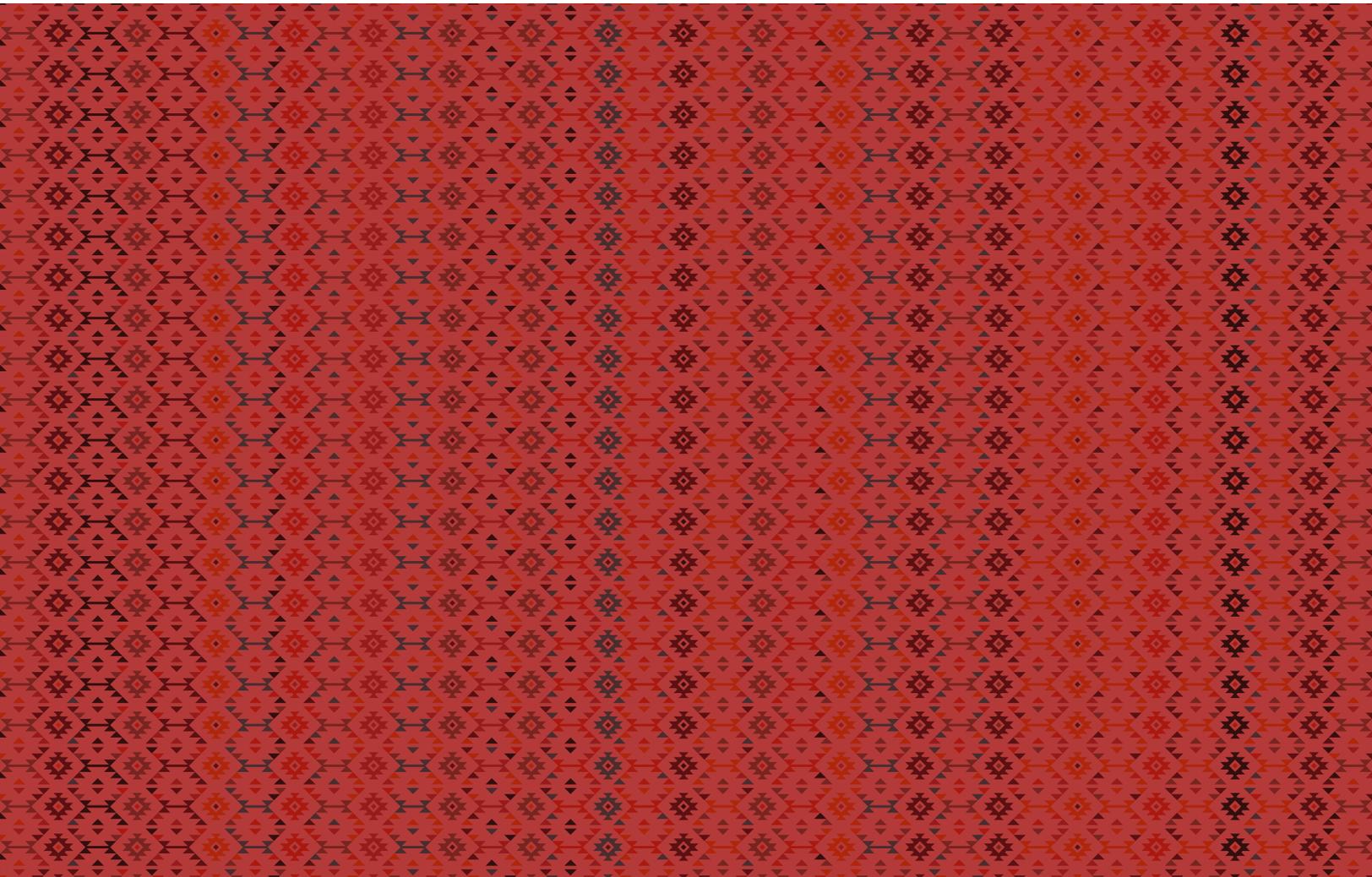
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REPORTS



THANK YOU FOR SHARING



Marc Corolleur, Reporter
Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

The fourth edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples was held from October 16 to 18, 2019, at the Palais des congrès in Montreal. During the three-day conference, participants shared their thoughts and discussed the issue of Indigenous education.

At this year's forum, participants shared their experiences concerning perseverance and academic achievement among First Nations students. Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants were given equal time, and everyone recognized the importance of collaboration in making progress together.

The following pages contain the opinions, observations and hopes expressed by the various stakeholders in attendance at the conference (teachers, researchers, school board members, social workers, principals and students). These stakeholders are working to build a future that promotes perseverance and academic achievement among First Nations students. Their words illustrate their vision of the collaborative work that remains to be done.

STUDYING IN ANOTHER CULTURE

"Leaving our community is a major challenge. Sometimes we experience culture shock because life in our community and life in the city are not at all the same. I moved to the city when I was in secondary school. Of course, my parents encouraged me and I adapted to city life to finish my studies."

– Atikamekw school principal

”

"They're two different cultures. Students get to class and it's a shock. We don't have the same ways of thinking or organizing subjects. When they get to class, many young Atikamekw don't speak English or French. It's a huge challenge keeping them in school because they find it very difficult to succeed in a second language."

– Non-Indigenous project manager in an Indigenous organization

”

CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF FIRST NATIONS

“We think about them as being all the same, but that’s not true. Each nation has its own reality and its own challenges, and each individual and each community has its limits. We need to listen to them [Indigenous people] and find out what they are looking for.”
– Non-Indigenous teacher

”

“There is a difference between rural communities and urban communities. [In urban communities], people are disconnected from the land. I think that it’s different for Indigenous youth who have access to their community, their territory, than for Indigenous youth [who don’t].” – Indigenous social worker

”

IMPORTANCE OF PROMOTING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY

“It helps people succeed when they feel that their culture is inside them in everyday life. It helps them learn. When you lose all that by going to CEGEP or university, when you don’t have your culture with you, you feel lost in a world where you don’t belong.”
– Indigenous participant

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“I dropped out of school in Secondary IV because I didn’t fit in. I had trouble finding my Indigenous identity. I spent two months in the woods. I went to rebuild everything, reappropriate my cultural identity in terms of cooking, hunting and fishing, with the help of the Elders. I was aware of myself and more self-confident once I rebuilt my identity.”
– Indigenous support worker and former student

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APPLICATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF CULTURAL SAFETY IN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND AMONG TEACHERS

“There are two aspects: one for Indigenous people and the other for non-Indigenous people. When you’re talking to non-Indigenous people, [it’s important] to teach them about Indigenous reality. When they understand it better, they respect it more. For Indigenous youth, cultural safety means being proud of being Indigenous.”
– Non-Indigenous teacher and researcher

”

“We began recognizing traditional art in our visual arts classes. We are also working on a project to teach our own history, because that’s how young people will feel more respected and more motivated to learn. History reminds us that we were told, and were made to believe, that we didn’t have a culture.”
– Atikamekw school principal

”

CONCRETE ACTIONS TO FOSTER EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

“Keeping teachers in the community is a major issue, because you can’t build trust if there are new teachers every year. In an ideal world, we would have teachers from within the community.”

– Non-Indigenous doctoral student in Indigenous Studies

”

“It would be great to have a university for Indigenous people and for all Quebecers and Canadians that teaches everything about Indigenous life. That way, they would learn Indigenous history at the same time. It would help with reconciliation.”

– Atikamekw student

”

POSITION OF NON-INDIGENOUS PEOPLE ON EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AMONG FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS

“Respect and humility is a position. It means trying to help the other person by asking what he wants and what we can do for him. It means offering something. It doesn’t mean: *I know what’s good for you, and that’s what I’m going to give you.* It means: *I have tools, time and resources.*”

– Non-Indigenous school board member

”

“Not being a First Nations person, it would be pretentious of me to say that I teach students Cree values. I learn from them.”

– Non-Indigenous resource teacher in an Indigenous community

”

COLLABORATION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS

“Knowledge, rapprochement and reconciliation will help improve access to services and help us identify issues and resolve them.”

– Innu director of a First Peoples centre

”

“Sometimes, at the end of the year, the principal and teachers go to an Indigenous community gala to recognize perseverance and to congratulate and reward students for their efforts. We try to build relationships, but they’re fragile. We try to show them [Indigenous people] that we want to work with them and not against them.”

– Non-Indigenous principal of an educational organization

”

ENCOURAGING PERSEVERANCE

“Educational perseverance among First Nations students is closely related to pride in and reappropriation of their culture. I don’t see it as statistical perseverance. I think it’s more qualitative than quantitative.”
 – Non-Indigenous teacher



“The main thing is to have a dream, goals. Personally, that’s what made me want to persevere and complete my studies. I would encourage [young people] to find their dream, then to believe in themselves and work hard.”
 – Atikamekw secondary school principal



“We need to talk to our young people. We need to tell them that we need them, that we need teachers, psychologists, neurologists, that we need them whatever they decide to do. Go to school. The door is open and we will hire you.”
 – Atikamekw teacher



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AS A TOOL TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

“There is a strong sense of belonging. When I went on to higher education, my goal was to return to my community. I wanted to help. We’re very attached to our culture, our land. That’s why we want to go back.”
 – Atikamekw secondary school principal



“I’d like to work in my community, because I know that there are needs. I have a certificate in psychosocial intervention and another in substance abuse. These are subjects, things that can help in the community, and they motivate me to go back and work one day.”
 – Atikamekw student



PERCEPTION OF THE PURPOSE OF THE CONVENTION

“The convention is a way to share [new practices] but, at the same time, it doesn’t help everyone yet. We need to roll these practices out on a larger scale because, instead of working in a vacuum, why not share our successes? We need to see an impact on schools and the Ministère’s programs.”
 – Non-Indigenous principal of an educational institution



“Since the first year, the convention has grown, and we are at a stage where there’s no going back. We can only move forward. Indigenous people do a lot, and non-Indigenous people who are aware of what is going on do a lot too. Now we’re at the stage where we need to explain things to everyone around us.”
 – Non-Indigenous former university education professor



CONCLUSION

All of these discussions drive home the fact that the situation is particularly complex. We now understand that several major issues related to the education and academic paths of Indigenous students are closely tied to the promotion of culture and cultural safety. On the one hand, the promotion of culture is key and, on the other, non-Indigenous people must gain a better understanding of the cultural reality of First Nations people.

Thanks to the efforts of educational institutions and teachers, and to collaboration with Indigenous communities, we are beginning to see a shared desire to understand each other and move forward together. Through this conference, and through the academic achievement of Indigenous students and of initiatives implemented by Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous people and organizations, we are building a future based on collective perseverance.

We would like to thank all the participants for sharing their experiences for this article, which shines a light on the key role of every person in paving the way for educational success among First Peoples. ♦



PORTRAIT OF PRACTICES IN SUPPORT OF FIRST PEOPLES STUDENT SUCCESS IN CEGEP AND UNIVERSITY: MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



Patricia-Anne Blanchet, Reporter,
Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

In response to the calls for action formulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), an increasing number of initiatives are being implemented in institutions of higher education to support First Peoples student success and facilitate their access to education. This requires forums for the stakeholders involved in the indigenization process to nurture dialogue and ensure consistency. With this in mind, the Consortium d'animation sur la persévérance et la réussite en enseignement supérieur (CAPRES) joined forces with the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite, the Fédération des cégeps and Dawson College to organize an activity addressing these issues in order to develop the Portrait des pratiques, a portrait of practices in support of First Peoples student success in CEGEP and university.¹

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

On October 17, 2019, the round-table discussion held as part of the fourth edition of the Convention on Perseverance and Academic Achievement for First Peoples provided an opportunity for numerous stakeholders to meet with a view to developing a portrait of practices in support of First Peoples student success and identifying ways for CEGEPs and universities to work together. Then, the round table organizers consulted the audience in an effort to garner opinions on priorities for the future. Panellists Lucie Charbonneau (Coordinator, CAPRES), Hélène Jean-Venturoli (Coordinator, Commission of Academic Deans of Colleges, Fédération des cégeps), Wolfgang Krotter (Assistant Dean, Creative and Applied Arts, Dawson College), Michelle Smith (Journeys Coordinator, Dawson College) and Johanne Jean (Chair, Réseau de l'Université du Québec) addressed the question of how we can move forward together. The round table was hosted by Marco Bacon, Director of the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite at UQAC.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT CAPRES

Created in 2002, CAPRES is committed to developing a culture of access to higher education in Quebec. In an inter-level perspective, and through joint reflection on the implementation of policies, programs and measures to support students, CAPRES "offers practitioners a place to come together and to work together on research and practice" (Lucie Charbonneau, free translation). On the topic of the indigenization of higher education, CAPRES published *Accessibilité des Premiers Peuples au cégep et à l'université* in 2018. Nineteen practitioners from different schools collaborated on the project. To open the round-table discussion, Lucie Charbonneau shared four strategies implemented by CAPRES to support the indigenization of higher education: 1) a review of the knowledge gleaned from research, practice and public policy; 2) the development of dossiers on topics and issues as they relate to needs targeted in schools; 3) the sharing of knowledge using a variety of means of communication; and 4) the

facilitation of meetings and the mobilization of stakeholders affected by the issues in question.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE FÉDÉRATION DES CÉGÉPS TO THE INDIGENIZATION PROCESS

The Fédération des cégeps is a voluntary association of the 48 CEGEPs in Quebec, 5 of which are English-language colleges. With a view to networking around activities to raise awareness of Indigenous realities that were taking place independently in the schools, the Fédération created the Committee on Indigenous Student Success in College (CRÉAC) in 2016. Bringing together experts from different CEGEPs, it is made up of representatives from the educational affairs, student affairs and continuing education departments at various colleges and relies on the expertise of Indigenous partners. CRÉAC actively helps support Indigenous students, and organized two study days² in collaboration with CAPRES, at which they compiled a variety of points of view in order to gain a better understanding of the obstacles encountered by First Peoples students during their time at college.

Another initiative involves the study conducted by CRÉAC throughout the college network, which gave a clear picture of the types of support offered to Indigenous students. Of the 34 colleges surveyed, 19 responded, making it possible to collect information from 974 Indigenous students (40% in continuing education and 60% in general education) and to develop a realistic portrait of practices. In order to ensure a broad scope, CRÉAC presents its work before commissions put together by the Fédération des cégeps, which are made up of college administrators. During the round-table discussion, Hélène Jean-Venturoli, coordinator of the Fédération des cégeps, presented the mapping of practices aimed at improving First Peoples' access to colleges in Quebec. A summary of the mapping results is presented in Table 1.

DAWSON COLLEGE: MOBILIZATION OF THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITY AROUND INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

Founded in 1968 and located in downtown Montreal, Dawson College is the largest English-language CEGEP in Quebec, welcoming more than 8,000 students annually, 2,000 of them in continuing education. Wolfgang Krotter points out the proximity of the Kahnawà:ke Community College and Kanehsatà:ke,

as well as various urban Indigenous organizations (Nunavik Sivanutsivut, Avatak, Native Montreal, Cree School Board, etc.). First implemented in 2014, Dawson College's indigenization process is based on four strategic steps.

Brainstorming sessions revealed a lack of knowledge about Indigenous culture and customs and the issues Indigenous students currently face. The absence of academic and psychosocial support services for Indigenous students was also observed, as was the under-representation of Indigenous staff members and a lack of Indigenous content in programs.

The First Peoples' Initiative was created in 2015 as a result of these findings, and is still ongoing today. It led to the implementation of numerous indigenization measures thanks to the creation of the Indigenous Education Council, which brings together most of Montreal's stakeholders in Indigenous post-secondary education.³

In January 2019, Dawson College organized a round-table discussion on Indigenous education that led to the development of a three-year strategic plan (2019-2022). The plan is aimed at devising strategies to raise practitioners' awareness of Indigenous realities. The various initiatives associated with these strategic steps are presented in Table 1.

THE REGROUPEMENT DES UNIVERSITÉS DU QUÉBEC: MAPPING TEACHING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITY

Johanne Jean presented the results of a mapping exercise, a portrait of teaching and research activities for, by and with Indigenous people in 19 Quebec universities. The methodological approach used for the study, which is still under way, follows a protocol described by Jean. Prior to the study, the parameters to be documented were submitted for approval to the Bureau de la Coopération Interuniversitaire (BCI) task force and an Indigenous oversight committee. One respondent per university was tasked with the transmission of information, which was compiled then submitted for approval to

the university's administration. The 19 universities participating in the study were also invited to share their initiatives and inspirational practices in the form of fact sheets. The data collected in September 2019 allowed Jean to present a detailed, although preliminary, report at the round-table discussion. The results are presented in Table 1.

A PORTRAIT IN FOUR DIMENSIONS

The panellists structured their presentation around four components providing access to various initiatives and practices in their universities: organization, academic affairs, student experience and partnerships. For the purposes of this article, and in an attempt to be as succinct as possible, the initiatives and practices associated with each component are presented in a cross-disciplinary table.

The table is followed by a description of the actions proposed by workshop participants. For the organizational component, panellists addressed issues related to governance, strategic planning and administrative structures, as well as the responses to the calls for action. The academic affairs component included approaches, programs, continuing education and teacher training relating to Indigenous realities.

The student experience component involved reception and support services, while the fourth component reviewed partnerships with the schools and organizations and inter-institutional initiatives. Table 1 gives a summary of the practices and initiatives shared by the panellists for each component.

TABLE 1
Summary of initiatives presented
by the panellists for each component

| ORGANIZATION | | |
|---|--|---|
| Fédération des cégeps | Dawson College | Réseau UQ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness raising in the college network • Promising actions (study days) • Concentration on student needs • Promotion of Indigenous cultures • Discussions on the concept of success • Adaptation of structures • Sensitivity to pace and realities • Deconstruction of bias • Realism and sustainability of CRÉAC's projects and initiatives • Awareness raising among 500 people over 3 years | <p>2015 First Peoples' Initiative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to funding/grants • Creation of the Centre for First People • Creation of the Indigenous Education Council <p>2019: Strategic plan (2019-2022)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation at every level of college administration • Indigenous visibility • Pressure on the government to reform funding policies • Awareness raising, information and innovation | <p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of directors • Indigenous advisory committee <p>Strategic planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action plan on Indigenous realities • Mention of Indigenous realities in future action plans • Indigenous representatives <p>Administrative structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of administrative positions and positions assigned to Indigenous issues • Team of indigenization experts |

TABLE 1 (CONT.)
**Summary of initiatives presented
 by the panellists for each component**

| ACADEMIC AFFAIRS | | |
|---|--|--|
| Fédération des cégeps | Dawson College | Réseau UQ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff awareness • Adaptation of content and approaches • 30 First Nations- and Inuit-related ACSs • Indigenous liaison officers • Differentiated educational support • Support lexicon • Accommodation measures for tests, activities and the ministerial examination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of specialized certificates • Teacher training • Inter-level transition measures | <p>For the three levels of university programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized program offering (summer school, language retention, socioeconomic needs, Indigenous studies) • Incorporation of Indigenous content (systematic process or targeted initiatives) • Languages, places and methods of instruction • University education services • Adaptation of academic paths and administrative rules • Participation of Indigenous practitioners • Pooling of support expertise for student services • Master's and doctoral programs • Scholarships for Indigenous students • Consideration of Indigenous knowledge • Indigenous professional researchers • Research topics and professors • Dissemination of research results |

| STUDENT EXPERIENCE | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fédération des cégeps | Dawson College | Réseau UQ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personalized follow-up • Workshops on student perseverance and success • Mutual help groups • TRC communities of practice • Cultural visits and internships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancement of student spaces • Personalized support for students • Personal growth programs and visits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception and integration • Cultural and social activities • Indigenous staff • Cultural competencies of staff • Indigenous enrollments • Dedicated infrastructures • Support for student success, psychosocial support, financial support, external services • Access to Elder support • Activities to celebrate successes |

TABLE 1 (CONT.)
**Summary of initiatives presented
 by the panellists for each component**

| PARTNERSHIPS | | |
|--|--|---|
| Fédération des cégeps | Dawson College | Réseau UQ |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministerial reflection (2017-2018) Cooperation (FNEC, CPNN, Kiuna) Indigenous partners and resources Inter-level transition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration and coordination of efforts with colleges in Montreal Participation in the university community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research chairs and networks Infrastructures and associations Community services (participation in community development, continuing education and popular awareness) |

COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

In all, some 30 participants in six work teams participated in the workshop following the round-table discussion. During this time, the event coordinators and guest speakers visited the tables to spark discussion. The participants all recognized the merits of the indigenization of higher education. Several of them were from institutions where Indigenous students are enrolled: Commission scolaire des Rives-du-Saguenay (CSRS), several CEGEPs (Jonquière, Alma, St-Félicien, Chicoutimi, Trois-Rivières and Ahuntsic) and several universities (UQAC, UQAT, UdeM, ULaval and McGill).

Representatives of organizations that provide services for Indigenous students also participated: LOJIQ, the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite (CPNN) and the Centre du savoir sur mesure (CESAM). The one-hour workshop in the form of a round-table discussion included an ice breaker during which participants were asked to think about the following questions: What inspires you? What did you learn that surprised you? How might you become involved?

Then, the group was invited to select an action they all deemed important, define its general objective, determine what body should be in charge of the dossier, name other stakeholders who could become involved in the action, and develop a sequential action plan based on rallying points. The working documents containing the participants' proposals were posted on CAPRES's website in December 2019. Table 2 presents an overview of these proposals.

The workshop discussions were animated, and each team was able to target priority actions to support Indigenous student success in higher education. A number of participants mentioned the need to develop an accessible and effective

communication platform to allow all of the stakeholders involved in the indigenization process to share their initiatives. One of the partners, Guy Niquay, expressed it this way:

“Let’s share our knowledge. Let’s share our expertise. Let’s share our experience.”

Some participants mentioned that, in order to connect with the realities of Indigenous people, we need to respect “Indian time,” adopt an attitude of openness and “think outside the box.”

The need to start with students’ needs was also expressed several times during the workshop. The comments of one college student recounted by Héléne Jean-Venturoli emphasized the importance of sharing resources and efforts in order to support the shift toward greater consideration for the realities of Indigenous students in higher education:

“If you want to be proud of your identity, you need to know your history. It has to change, even for the non-Indigenous people who don’t know us.”

TABLE 2
**Actions proposed by participants
 in the *Further together* workshop**

| | Individual actions | Objectives | Body responsible for the dossier and other stakeholders involved | Rallying points |
|---------------|--|---|---|--|
| Team 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous update of portrait of practices • Development of staff's cultural competencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of inter-level advisory committees (students, vocational training, CEGEPs and universities) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur (MEES) | |
| Team 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of Indigenous members in academic governance bodies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats reserved in all organizations' decision-making bodies • Peer mentorship for students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management of bodies • Teachers, professors, students, socioeconomic members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategic plan • Implement the plan • Report to the board of directors |
| Team 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarship ceremony • Celebration of successes • Indigenous week • Partners – Indigenous Elders • Indigenous studies incorporated into programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that students are at the heart of the process • Discussion on the issue of self-identification • Support for parents • Intergenerational bridges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-level committee dedicated to Indigenous students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult students directly about their needs, their challenges and their reality |
| Team 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of inclusive learning content and evaluation processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official implementation of inclusive educational initiatives with respect to learning content and evaluation processes • Respect for and representation of Indigenous and non-Indigenous realities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of studies (Jonquière, Alma, St-Félicien and Chicoutimi CEGEPs) • Academic council • Innu and Atikamekw representatives • MEES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish concerted strategic plans in line with the First Nations' education protocol |
| Team 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the basis for all decision-making processes: agree on the principle that all cultures are equal and on the need to respect their differences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of joint institutional programs whose key objective is to use the needs identified by the Indigenous population as a starting point | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ENAP-UQAC-UQAT programs • Contact person at MEES to receive requests from the Indigenous communities (Loïc Di Marcantonio) • Indigenous organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be more supportive of the Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire (BCI) • Reduce competition • Create spaces for collaboration • Create official positions dedicated to supporting Indigenous students (teachers, professors, reception staff and professionals) |
| Team 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversification and revitalization of educational approaches • Differentiation of evaluation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility and openness to an adaptable process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MEES • Representatives of each level of education • Educational institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give choices • Vary approaches • Increase the amount of funding per student |

CONCLUSION

The two summary tables in this report give an overview of the initiatives already in place in the indigenization of higher education. This meeting between cultures proposed by CAPRES in collaboration with the Fédération des Cégeps, the BCI, Dawson College and the Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite fostered cooperation between strategic stakeholders and identified priority actions that will be closely monitored.

Participants were asked the question “How can we have a positive effect in the long term?” and discussions will surely continue at future activities organized by CAPRES and its collaborators.

Maintaining collaborative ties is crucial in supporting the implementation of the priority actions identified during the round-table discussion and in making sure that these actions have a tangible impact in educational institutions for those directly concerned: Indigenous students. In this respect, many believe that a discussion of the very concept of success needs to be had and documented. At the very least, a step forward was taken by all parties toward the recognition of the realities of Indigenous students in higher education, and a wide range of strategic stakeholders committed to this joint project expressed their desire to contribute to their success. ♦

Notes

¹ Organizing committee: Marco Bacon (Director, Centre des Premières Nations Nikanite, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi), Lucie Charbonneau (Coordinator, CAPRES), Marie-José Fortin (Director, Office of the President, Université du Québec), Hélène Jean-Venturoli (Coordinator, Commission of Academic Deans of Colleges, Fédération des cégeps), Wolfgang Krotter (Assistant Dean, Creative and Applied Arts, Dawson College) and Eve-Lyne Rondeau (Professional, Université du Québec)

² Indigenous Student Success in College Day - June 2017, Wendake; Cultural Safety Day - May 2019, Collège Ahuntsic.

³ Kahnawà:ke Survival School, Cree School Board's Post-Secondary Student Services, Kativik School Board, First Nations Regional Adult Education Centre, McGill University's First Peoples House, Concordia's Aboriginal Student Resource Centre, Kahnawake Education Centre



Round-table panellists. From left to right: Marco Bacon, Wolfgang Krotter, Hélène Jean-Venturoli, Michelle Smith and Joanne Jean.

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1

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1

m³ of water



110

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driven



3

GJ

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burning for 1 hour



1

kg CO₂ eq
528 km driven



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