The Weaving of Indigenous Storywork through Methodology and Pedagogy
Annotated Bibliography

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This annotated bibliography presents a summary of the literature about and related to Jo-ann Archibald’s Indigenous storywork (2008). The purposes are to understand how this Indigenous storywork framework has travelled through the field of education both methodologically and pedagogically, and to present Indigenous storywork resources that can inform and guide teaching and research activities in this area. The annotated bibliography (up to 2017) is organized into the following sections:

- **The Beginnings of Indigenous Storywork** shares some of the influences on Jo-ann Archibald’s storywork and how it came to be
- **Indigenous Storywork as Methodology**
- **Indigenous Storywork in Graduate Research** includes the abstracts of dissertations that have significantly engaged with storywork
- **Indigenous Storywork as Pedagogy**
- **Indigenous Storywork as Both Methodology and Pedagogy**
- **Going Forward: Digital storytelling** discusses the use of digital storytelling as a research method
- **Resources** provides websites for digital storytelling and Indigenous storywork

Each of these sections has an introduction that summarizes the works it entails. The document was designed to be read in its entirety as well as by section as it pertains to the reader.

At this stage, we can see that Indigenous storywork has been widely woven into educational research, yet, has traversed into other disciplines such as Indigenous health and social work. This speaks to the important notion of interconnectedness within the social determinants of Indigenous health and wellbeing, and the relationships with the living and non-living worlds around us.

### The Beginnings of Indigenous Storywork

In her book, Jo-ann Archibald – Q’um Q’um Xiiem cites Canadian Aboriginal authors whose work is informed by their own oral traditions, including George Clutesi, Ellen White, Verna J. Kirkness, Maria Campbell, and Shirley Sterling. This section describes some of their research that has contributed to the conceptual framework of Indigenous storywork. Throughout the following articles, authors share information about education for Indigenous people, including traditional approaches to teaching, the importance of Indigenous control over education, and appropriate approaches for education with Indigenous populations. Education includes respect for Indigenous knowledge, traditions, and values. Relevance involves the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives. There is responsibility in learning because of the power that comes with knowledge. Reciprocity is in the perpetuation of knowledge, and is grounded in respect and responsibility. Responsibility and reciprocity are also discussed in the context of the teacher-learner relationship that is formed through storytelling. Storytelling is described as both method, and content for the transmission of knowledge, values, and customs.

In their seminal article, Verna J. Kirkness and Ray Barnhardt critically reflect on the persisting educational inequalities for First Nations people, and challenge universities to examine their policies and practices. They present the four R’s as an alternative framework to better meet First Nations students' needs:

- **Respect** of First Nations students’ cultural knowledge, traditions and values, as well as alternative ways of knowing, which includes valuing their Indigenous consciousness
- **Relevance** to First Nations students’ perspectives and experiences, and ensuring universities’ policies and practices are meaningful to them
- **Reciprocity** in relationships, where teaching and learning goes both ways – faculty members seek to learn from Indigenous students about their culture and perspectives, and students are able to learn about the institutional culture of the university
- **Responsibility** through participating in higher education, acknowledging that this is not neutral and instead gives students tools to navigate power, structural and social differences

Overall, Kirkness and Barnhardt posit that it is not enough for universities to focus efforts on improving ‘attrition’ and ‘retention’ as a means of cultural assimilation: rather, they ought to reconsider the foundation and purpose of higher education for First Nations people for the betterment of society as a whole. Rethinking policies and practices can lead to reshaping institutions in order to provide respectful, relevant and reciprocal learning experiences that enhance students’ responsibility over their lives. Most of these four R’s influenced the core principles of Indigenous storywork (Archibald, 2003).


Building on her doctoral research, Shirley Sterling uses an Nlakapamux narrative in this article – Yetko, Sophie, and the Fishtrap – to illustrate key concepts and successes in Nlakapamux education, whose teachings can be applied to modern contexts. In the story, Sophie (the author’s mother) is taught how to construct and use a fishtrap by Yetko, who is Sophie’s great-aunt. It highlights the processes of Nlakapamux education, where storytelling is both a method and the curriculum: as a method, stories are a mnemonic device that carry cultural knowledge and values through generations. In terms of content, stories include teachings from the environment, culture, history, as well as technical skills and information, that can be used in contemporary settings. As Sterling (2002) notes, “The land provided food and shelter, and Nature was the textbook, providing the content for Nlakapamux learning,” (p. 8).
Nlakapamux education was additionally done through learning with family and community, through lived experience, and from the land. The story also demonstrated the goals of Nlakapamux education: cultural knowledge (hunting-gathering protocols) and the values of family and sharing were transmitted, leading to self-sufficiency and community-sufficiency. In this way, Sterling describes the grandmothers as cultural professors, whose stories transmit cultural identity and pride, and continue to “nurture, inform, teach and guide us” (Sterling, 2002, p. 10).


Elder Ellen White collaborates with Jo-ann Archibald to share her remembrances, experiences, and traditional teachings through a teacher-learner cultural relationship. Elder Ellen White describes the importance of looking inward in order to learn deeply, as our subconscious carries important knowledge. Using metaphor to teach, as the old people did, she emphasizes the importance of learning the base, from the core, never from the outside in. She notes, if you study, “from the inside of the canoe out,” (p.155) you will be balanced. She discusses the importance of repeating stories, as they are like a teacher, and help us access our subconscious knowledge. She also shares characteristics of Elders, emphasizing the importance of self-love and self-care. Jo-ann then reflects on her responsibilities as a learner.

In order for cultural teachings and values to be perpetuated, power in the knowledge must be given back to the people. The influence of knowledge on individuals, families, community members, the environment, the nation, and the spirit realm, “is cultural reciprocity grounded in respect and responsibility,” (p.161). She invites the reader to see the power in the little sayings as they, “challenge the mind, the emotions, the physical body, and the spirit to work together. Now this is education,” (p.164).


In this editorial, Verna J. Kirkness briefly describes the articles chosen for the journal issue titled, “Struggles and Triumphs,” which describes the struggles and triumphs of Indigenous educators. Opal Charters-Voght documents a workshop designed to help a community achieve parental responsibility and more meaningful control over its education in alignment with the 1973 policy of, “Indian control of Indian education,” (p.109). Floy Pepper and Steven Henry discuss the struggle to feel good about yourself, and perspective for healing based on the Medicine Wheel, with implications for teachers and parents working with Indigenous children. Ray Barnhardt surveys Indigenous post-secondary programs to address the establishment and maintenance of programs appropriate for First Nations people. Wendy Wickwire discusses the struggle against distorted views of Indigenous people in academic press, and in consequence, the need for vigilance. This issue is about the need to, “strengthen both the inner and outer aspects of ourselves, and of our children, of our schools, and of our communities,” (p.109) against the challenges around us.
Indigenous Storywork as Methodology

Indigenous storywork/storytelling has been used as methodology to interpret oral traditions, Elder knowledge, and intergenerational stories that can be applied to contemporary issues. Indigenous knowledge, values, worldviews, practices, and learning theory were shared in order to inform current practices in educational, academic, and community settings. Through Indigenous storywork/storytelling, information was collected, participant experiences were analyzed, and meaning was made about their experiences. In addition, researcher self-knowledge and the relationships between researcher and participant were deepened. Importantly, Indigenous storywork/storytelling was used as a change agent, as resistance to western ideologies, methodologies, adoption practices, knowledge and practices in academia. Themes including metaphor, shared learning, and collective understanding are evidenced throughout the following articles.


This article contributes Indigenous learning theory to the body of literature around Indigenous peoples’ achievement and participation in schools, noting that these topics have been classically researched through a Eurocentric and deficit-based lens. Specifically, Marlene Atleo developed a conceptual framework that highlighted a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective of Indigenous learning in the context of Indigenous storywork. This framework drew upon the process and principles of Archibald’s (2008) storywork – reverence, respect, responsibility, reciprocity, wholism, interrelatedness, and synergy. It was used to guide a protocol for engaging Elders when they read a traditional story, Umeek the First Whaler, through which they were able to articulate Nuu-chah-nulth ideologies and cultural assumptions around learning. The article demonstrates that Indigenous storywork can be used as a robust methodology in which to de/reconstruct oral traditions, and interpret stories as wisdom around contemporary issues. Atleo concludes by stating that a better understanding of the gaps in theory, practice and policy from Indigenous perspectives can add to the decolonizing efforts of education in Canada.


Shelley Johnson uses a canoe as a metaphor for reconceptualising adoption narratives and emphasizes the idea of an adoption journey, or shared learning process. Her goal was to link family histories and adoption stories with emerging Indigenous adoption policy, practice, and research initiatives in British Columbia. Intergenerational stories told by family members about adoption experiences were shared, and the seven principles of Indigenous storywork (Archibald, 2008) were used as a healing guide to urban Indigenous custom adoption policy, practice, and research. As outlined by Johnson, the principles included are: respect for Indigenous knowledges; reverence toward research that is meaningful to the community;
reciprocity as the researcher ensured the community benefitted; responsibility of the researcher to the community; holism by considering how all realms of the person are mutually influenced by the family, community, and Nation; interrelatedness; and synergy by considering one’s own context in relation to stories. Through Indigenous storywork, Johnson explored how historical, cultural, and current contexts can be a force to advocate, influence, and teach for change. This approach was taken because wisdom remains alive in stories, and information about experiences, and knowledge of Indigenous practices can be shared through storytelling. Family stories shaped Johnson’s professional practice, teaching, writing, research, parenting decisions, and perception of her purpose.


In this article, Donna Lester-Smith and Roberta Price articulate their ethical concerns around the inclusion of Aboriginal peoples in non-Aboriginal-led research. They draw from their experiences of participating in roundtable discussions about Aboriginal health and wellbeing, and express their concerns with prevailing Eurocentric discourses and attitudes in academia. Recounting those experiences, the authors share the prevalence of racism and racist discourses, such as the misrepresentation of First Nations peoples’ spiritual connectedness. They explicitly state their use of narrative as a means of storytelling and meaning making as articulated by Archibald (2008). They further reference principles within Archibald’s (2008) Indigenous storywork and state the need for improving understandings of Aboriginal peoples’ traditions and worldviews in culturally safe, “reverent” ways. The authors conclude by offering a series of suggestions for non-Aboriginal health researchers to address racism and enhance Aboriginal health and healing: these include adhering to relational ethics (e.g., respect, reciprocity, responsibility), and ensuring Aboriginal worldviews inform the theories and methodologies of Aboriginal health research.


This article explores the challenges and successes experienced by Aboriginal learners with Aboriginal early university promotion and Aboriginal university transition programs, and focuses on the role of visioning for informing high school to university transitions. Amy Parent’s study employed an Indigenous research design, drawing on the notion of visioning and Indigenous storywork methodology (Archibald, 2008). More specifically, the study used the principles of Aboriginal storytelling in educational research contexts. A bentwood box research design framed Parent’s research as a whole, which was “the symbolic container that housed the knowledge and stories from participants that were gathered” through the research process (Parent, 2017, p. 158). Archibald’s (2008) Indigenous storywork was also used to analyze participants’ interviews (e.g., grouped according to themes) and to review transcripts for “experiences, elements, and concepts” that were related to visioning and Indigenous storywork (p. 159). The stories shared by the youth in this study illuminate the potential for
Aboriginal university transition programs to be promising if universities genuinely commit to Aboriginal learners, acknowledge their stories, experiences and ways of knowing, and implement real changes to be inclusive of Indigenous peoples.

### Indigenous Storywork in Graduate Research

Through this literature review, it was apparent that Indigenous storywork has been extensively used within graduate research. This section contains abstracts of dissertations that most pertinently incorporated Indigenous storywork in that it was a significant aspect of their methodologies or was the overarching approach. For example, Beatrice Anderson’s (2011) methodology chapter has a section that is dedicated to Indigenous storywork, with subchapters organized by the principles identified by Jo-ann Archibald. The framework of Indigenous storywork was also noted to form the foundation of Verna Billy Minnabarriet’s (2012) dissertation. Topics of the included research span from cultural identities, pedagogies and Indigenous knowledge systems, to transformational educational leadership and policy. While the dissertations included were all within education, it is important to acknowledge the extension of Indigenous storywork into nursing, forestry, sociology, and interdisciplinary research.


*Nchwa’squest.* My name is Beatrice Tiila Marie Anderson. I am *Nlakapmux,* a social worker, educator, mother, wife, Grandmother, and great Grandmother. Not all learning in Indigenous communities is attained through formal institutional settings. Much of our important learning comes from Indigenous Knowledge (IK) passed on through family and social contexts. This research examines, documents, and contributes to knowledge about how generations of Indigenous *Nlakapmux* Grandmothers from the Interior of British Columbia carried out their responsibilities to transmit *Nlakapmux* educational and socio-cultural knowledge to their family and community members. Grandmothers are a critical part of the family’s social learning environment. This knowledge is important to understand because traditional family pedagogies were and continue to be at the heart of how *Nlakapmux* children learn and how *Nlakapmux* knowledge and values are transmitted and sustained. The process of colonization lessened this important approach to Indigenous intergenerational learning.

A *Nlakapmux* Grandmother’s Methodology was developed that includes a *Spilahem* story of my life history; an analysis of historical and contemporary literature about the *Nlakapmux* people; and interviews and circle talks with 11 *Nlakapmux* Grandmothers. The *Nlakapmuxcin* Indigenous language, wholistic Plains Medicine Wheel, and metaphor of the *Nlakapmux* cedar root basket making were used to analyze and make meaning of the Grandmothers’ stories.
The findings highlight eight Nlakapmux principles for teaching and learning that form the basis of a Nlakapmux Developing Wisdom Theory. They include: (1) Takemshooknooqua, Knowing we are connected: land, animals, plants and people; (2) ChaaChawoooh, Celebrating people and land joyously; (3) Huckpestes, Developing lifelong learning and wisdom; (4) Huztowaahh, Giving lovingly to family and community; (5) Choownensh, Succeeding in endeavours; (6) Choowaachoots, Utilizing Nlakapmux vision-seeking methods; (7) Nmeenlth coynchoots, Incorporating Nlakapmux knowledge; and (8) Peteenushem, Reflecting on learning and relearning lifelong lessons.

These findings and the Nlakapmux Developing Wisdom Theory have implications for current and future child rearing practices, and family and community educational practices. This form of intergenerational family focused Indigenous knowledge is vital to the Nlakapmux people and needs to be consciously revitalized, transformed into current day pedagogy and practice, and transmitted to younger Nlakapmux generations.


This study uses First Nations storywork to investigate indigenous learning. If cultural strategies were persistent and fundamental to the survival of a people, it would seem that understanding Nuu-chah-nulth learning orientations would provide emancipatory insight for First Nations learning in contemporary educational settings. Understanding what was and what is allows an envisioning of what could be. Therefore narratives about Umeek, the “community provider”, the archetypal “go-getter”, were read as a conceptual framework in which to identify learning orientations of Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations.

The investigation had three foci. First, a protocol for First Nations cultural work was formulated and elaborated. This protocol was used as an overarching framework for the gathering of the stories, the interview process and the narrative analysis. Second, ethnographic and oral versions of Umeek narratives were gathered. Third, these narratives were read Nuu-chah-nulth elders cultural beliefs about learning for past and present success in a Nuu-chah-nulth life career (i.e. providing/achieving). Narrative deconstruction and metaphorical mapping served to identify and describe aspects of learning salient in the teachings of Umeek narratives.

A full complex of learning archetypes emerged balancing innovation and conservation in an economy of change. Eight archetypal learning models were identified: the innovative transformational learner, the collaborative transformational learner, the directed lineage learner, the developmental learner, the cooperative learner, the resistant observational learner, the collaborative resistant learner, and the opportunistic observational learner. Themes which emerged central to Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations learning ideology and
knowledge construction were: grandparents provided the foundation of learning, oosumch (ritual bathing) provided motivational management, partnerships permitted collaboration, ancestor names provided orientation and sacred sites provided frames for experiences. Nuu-chah-nulth learning theory was articulated in a storywork framework that provided insight into Nuu-chah-nulth pedagogy: hence, it needs to be understood in the context of Nuu-chah-nulth education. First Nations educational theory and learning models that are operating in communities need to be understood in the context of current education. Western schooling may not satisfy Nuu-chah-nulth learning needs for transformation and strategic knowledge. Storywork is important in de-colonizing First Nations sensibilities in the process of self-determination in education, counseling, life career development, and healing.


This dissertation addresses two questions that examine how localized cultural knowledge informs production practices in visual narratives produced for Fourth World Cinema and how Indigenous visual storytelling/filmmaking styles based in that knowledge determine the film elements, thus the cultural congruency of their selected aesthetics. Secwepemc-Syilx systems of knowledge in British Columbia are used as an exemplar for the development of a localized theory for creating visually sovereign narratives for Fourth World Cinema. This culturally specific ontology formulates a land/place-based identity, specific to Secwepemc-Syilx territories. Land, story and cultural protocols are central to this work and the seamless relational quality is illustrated by emphasizing how integral they are to Indigenous self-representation and identity.

In the film discourse, the researcher brings together Manuel (Secwepemc) and Poslun’s Fourth World (1974) and Barclay’s (Maori) (1990, 2003a, 2003b) assertion of a Fourth Cinema to further develop the notion of a Fourth World Cinema. The ways that Indigenous film aesthetics shape the meaning of visual sovereignty and the concept of cultural congruency in constructing film elements are fundamental for Fourth World Cinema. In the globalization and film discourses the researcher interrogates how the concepts of political identity (indigeneity) and geographical location (deterritorialization) affect the treatment of Indigenous representation.

An Indigenous Inquiry process is set in an Indigenous research paradigm that privileges Indigenous systems of knowledge. Indigenous and Euro-Western systems of knowledge(s) are juxtaposed to reveal the philosophical differences that affect land, story, and cultural protocols. Archibald’s (2008) seven Indigenous storywork principles of respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy set the framework for the shared conversations of 13 Indigenous knowledge keepers. The findings of the knowledge gathered
illustrate the commonalities in the cosmologies within the diverse expansive Indigenous worldviews. Another layer of investigation documents a peer-to-peer discussion between the researcher who is a visual storyteller and a diverse group of 17 Indigenous filmmakers who shared stories from their film production experiences. Their perspectives affirmed the role of culture in contemporary film production practices and led to the development of the concepts of story, land, cultural protocols, and Indigenous identity in Fourth World Cinema.


The purpose of this study was to explore how identity texts and narrative writing could strengthen adolescents’ writing and support adolescents’ identity explorations. The study took place in an English 10 First Peoples class in a small, remote community in northern British Columbia. The context was highly unique; therefore, the study also includes findings regarding the students’ and community’s response to a compulsory course with Indigenous content, the struggles for educators teaching the course, and the perceived strengths of the course.

This qualitative case study (Stake, 1995) was guided by the metaphor of the Haida dogfish mother. It drew upon Indigenous storywork principles (Archibald, 2008) to create an ethical framework that extended beyond institutional standards for ethical conduct in research. This merging of methodologies invited improvisation, dialogue, and inner reflection to explore the role of stories, ancestry, history, and lived experiences in this research.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, teachers, administrators, community members, and a parent were interviewed and observations were conducted in the English 10 First Peoples classroom, and the data were analyzed using the iterations of the k’aad ‘aww dance. The findings from this study indicated that adolescents generally engage more with writing that is based on topics of their choice and personal experiences. The adolescents shared ways that writing transformed their lives and strengthened their relationships. They also appreciated the inclusion of non-writing activities in their English language arts class.

In this study, the resistance to English 10 First Peoples as a required course resulted in racially discriminatory conversations. These suggest the need to further explore ways to ensure all students and educators have access to accurate and respectful Indigenous content and history and to ensure that educators are not engaging in a racism of low expectations (Auditor General of British Columbia, 2015). The educators offered suggestions for improved support for courses that are rich in Indigenous content and pedagogical practices; overall they expressed that the strengths of the course far outweighed the struggles. All of the participants in this study emphasized the importance of building strong relationships between students and educators.
In this era of Reconciliation in Canada, how can we ensure that our future generations continue to keep spaces open for Indigenous ways of knowing and worldviews, while disrupting and troubling the institutional norms that hide behind a guise of tolerance? How do we help write a new story for Canada based on shifting the way we relate to one another and how we educate our children, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal? How can we help educators and others to learn to listen with their three ears so they may hear the truths and wisdom embedded in Indigenous cultural realities?

I propose that through story making, story telling and story listening, children maintain their learning spirit, a necessity if they are to acknowledge and affirm and maintain their identities, their cultures and their ways of knowing and worldviews. Stories transform our understanding of each other and act as a means to form and build relationships.

Through an educational lens and voice, I intentionally interrupt the discourses of deficit propagated by historical and contemporary institutions, in order to explore ways narrative can pry open and dislodge the 500-year old myths lade on the backs of Aboriginal peoples. I suggest that by opening spaces of mutuality, respect, reverence, reciprocity and responsibility through intergenerational story making, story telling and story listening narratives, our Aboriginal learners will find parity and success with their non-Aboriginal peers in educational settings.

In order to delve into intergenerational understandings of story, I sat with and listened to members of four B.C First Nations families. Within relaxed and respectful discussions about how story figures in their lives, some salient themes occurred related to residential schooling, living with and away from one’s cultural communities, which revealed consequences linked to identity, language and educational connections and successes. All of the stories and teachings I was privileged to witness have transformed me in heart and mind and continue to bring me closer to understanding the sensitivity and protocols required to exemplify respectful “story work” (Archibald, 2008, p. 3).

The Indigenous teachings of my parents, grandparents, great grandparents, and the Elders of my community have inspired my passion for education. My professional educational journey has taken me to many Indigenous communities throughout Canada, the United States and abroad. Through these experiences, I realized that not all Indigenous post-secondary
institutions were in fact Indigenous. Many were named Indigenous but their systems and curricula mainly reflected those of mainstream society. Working at an Indigenous post-secondary institution that is based on Indigenous values and Indigenous Knowledge (IK), I knew there was a difference; it is that difference that this thesis addresses. This thesis examines the governance structure, educational policies, programs, and student services offered by the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT), which has become a leader in Aboriginal public post-secondary education in Canada. NVIT has two campuses in British Columbia, with its main campus located at Merritt and the other at Burnaby. Framed within an Eagle’s Perch metaphor, and an Indigenous Knowledge system, the NVIT story is told about how it achieves self-determination through its Indigenization processes, and how its leadership takes an anti-hegemonic stance to confront forms of hegemonic control.

A mixed methods case study is used to understand how the principle of self-determination is enacted within an Aboriginal public post-secondary institution. The study’s theoretical framework draws on Indigenous Knowledge and critical theory. Data from student and alumni surveys; interviews with Elders, Board of Governors and management; institutional documents; and reflections on my professional experience at NVIT indicate that community-based partnerships, IK educational approaches, the multi-faceted Elders’ roles, and the family cohort approach to learning contribute substantially to NVIT students’ post-secondary access, retention, and success.

The Eagle’s Perch at NVIT guides and challenges its leaders, students, faculty, Elders, and staff to create a learning and gathering place where the transformative power of the Eagle’s Indigenous teachings are sustained and shared with others. Drawing on the literature, research findings, and my reflections, I developed a Transformational Framework for Aboriginal Post-Secondary Education that includes seven principles of Indigenization, self-determination, anti-hegemony, good governance, educational values, program relevancy, and extended family.


The point of origin for my research is my birth: I was born in the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital. I was denied contact with my mother because she had tuberculosis and was deemed contagious. Indian Hospitals were established to house Indigenous peoples to control contamination. In my mind, I was born into legislated interference.

My research puzzle emerges from my encounters with what I call a lost “sense of belonging”. Through exploration, I educated myself, my community, and the public about what happens to an Indigenous person when they are removed from critical aspects of their cultural identities. As part of the journey, I weave together two methodologies that support and protect the intense emotional work that accompanies my inquiry. These are Indigenous Storywork and
Narrative Inquiry. Indigenous Storywork allows me to employ important protocols that align with community-based ethics while conducting research with Indigenous communities; Narrative Inquiry, particularly autobiographical Narrative Inquiry, allows me to engage safely and relationally in deep personal reflection.

I examine what it means to be Secwepemc from my and my community’s perspective as I engage with the lived-experience stories of a Secwepemc youth and Elder. I tell of my own lived experiences and share my participants’ narratives; this story-sharing highlights the importance of knowing oneself and will assist other Indigenous peoples to define their own identities. I ascertain that Indigenous Knowledge is anchored in our identities and connections to our cultural rootedness, often inspired by the cultural teachings of grandparents. My autobiographical narrative, along with the participants’ stories, identifies the importance of intergenerational knowledge transmission, familial relationships, and land-based / culture-based learnings in my Secwepemc identity study.

The Secwepemc hand drum theoretically and metaphorically epitomizes Indigenous Knowledge; it ensures that my research project remains balanced in terms of upholding community protocols while honouring the Elders’/grandparents’ teachings. Rather than allow the influx of external influences to hold Indigenous peoples in a subjugated position, I propose that narrative-based research increases our advancement in research, academia, and healing. This dissertation offers an alternative way to tell our truths and to remove Indigenous histories from the periphery of mainstream society.


The purpose of this study was to understand how the unique social, historical, cultural, and Indigenous knowledge contexts of Aboriginal communities in British Columbia shaped high school to university transitions for Aboriginal youth. To this end, the Northwest Coast bentwood box acted as a metaphor that framed the theoretical inquiry and methodology for this study, which examined four Aboriginal Early University Promotion Initiatives (AEUPI) and three Aboriginal University Transition Programs (AUTP) in British Columbia. In addition, I utilized Archibald’s (2008) storywork and Kirkness and Barnhardt’s (1991) 4Rs of Indigenous methodologies, with an additional 5th R (relationships). The study also drew upon Martin Nakata’s (2007) concept of the cultural interface, to analyze 32 interviews conducted with Aboriginal youth, and faculty and staff from the AEUPIs and AUTPs.

Key findings from the Aboriginal youth in this study suggest that learning about university through real-life experience offered by the initiatives/programs was meaningful. Second, both the AEUPIs and AUTPs provided youth with concrete opportunities to explore future academic and career pathways. Third, ensuring that the youth were provided with opportunities to
develop relationships with positive Aboriginal role models in the university was seen as a success factor. Fourth, the AEUPI youth shared stories about the important leadership skills they developed as role models and mentors to younger youth in the initiatives, which in turn assisted them with their visioning process for university. Fifth, the students’ sense of belonging at university was fostered by relationships with AEUPI and AUTP staff, Indigenous student support staff, Elders, and faculty. Sixth, the AEUPI youth overwhelmingly agreed that the experiences they had in these initiatives led them to feel wholistically successful. However, the AUTP youth had a conflicting experience. Ultimately, insights from the youths’ stories suggest that the future of AEUPIs and AUTPs is a promising one if universities take heed. To this end, all participants in the study critically detailed how Canadian universities can apply a wholistic conception of the 5 Rs to Indigenous high school to university transition programs.

**Indigenous Storywork as Pedagogy**

Indigenous storywork/storytelling has been used to share Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in many ways. Examples include guiding students in engaging with Elder stories, communicating expectations for community living, giving students insight into the time and patience required to share stories, and exploring the role of relationship-building between teller and listener. Traditional knowledge, literacies, and pedagogy were shared through Elder teachings and intergenerational stories to inform current practices in educational and community settings. In terms of the implications of this research, Indigenous storywork/storytelling has informed direction for change in educational and community settings, and served as resistance to western pedagogies, knowledge, interpretations of history, and external cultural and ecological influences to Indigenous communities. The following articles emphasize holistic learning centered on the learner, including the importance of place, and the interconnectedness of the learner with family, community, and the environment.


Rebecca Chartrand shares what she learned from four stories that illuminate Anishinaabe pedagogy, to illustrate the benefits for all learners, and provide possibilities for more widespread implementation in schools. Chartrand recognizes the need to distinguish between local pedagogy and dominant, institutionalized pedagogies, and the need to avoid pan-Aboriginal perspectives. This approach was taken because storytelling creates a window into experiences, builds on experiences, and allows both the storyteller and the listener to draw meaning through reflection. The four Anishinaabe stories were shared by Anishinaabe educators, a cultural teacher, and an Elder. These stories helped the author anchor in location, increase her understanding of interconnectedness, and bring teachings into the classroom that have been handed down through generations as pedagogical tools in her role as and
education consultant. The use of stories in the classroom allows educators to engage learners holistically, as stories place the learner at the center of their own being. Centering the learner is what Chartrand sees as the core of Anishinaabe pedagogy. She recommends educators adopt a place-conscious lens when developing and implementing Aboriginal education programming to ensure authenticity of initiatives.


Judy Iseke collaborated with Métis Elders to understand the stories and histories of Métis people and the role of storytelling in sharing Indigenous knowledge. The goal was to respond to the need for Indigenous interpretations of history and pedagogy, provide opportunities to share Elder knowledge, and generate better understanding of the relationships between Métis knowledge and mainstream education practices. This approach was used because storytelling sustains communities as it validates epistemologies of Indigenous people, expresses experiences of Indigenous people in Indigenous language, shares culture, nurtures relationships, and shares how to live and understand the world. Talking circles were used to facilitate sharing of Métis Elder knowledge and stories, followed by discussion of oral storytelling as a pedagogical tool for learning life lessons. Storytelling is explored as pedagogy, as witnessing and remembering, and as support for spirituality. As pedagogy, storytelling develops understanding in the life process, creates imaginative and ceremonial landscapes, connects the natural and spiritual worlds, and transforms the self. As witnessing and remembering, storytelling honors the memory of people in the story, passes on traditions, links the teller to the listener, and calls the listener to bear witness. As support to spirituality, storytelling helps the listener find meaning in connections made while listening to stories, and increase understanding of identity.


Judy Iseke and BMJK Brennus collaborated with Métis Elders to understand the stories and histories of Métis people and the role of storytelling in sharing Indigenous knowledge. The goal was to respond to the need for Indigenous interpretations of history and pedagogy, provide opportunities to share Elder knowledge, and generate better understanding of the relationships between Métis knowledge and mainstream education practices. This approach was taken as Elders are important in the process of recovery and resistance as they have gathered wisdom and expertise in cultural knowledge. Research that engages in resistance, recovery, and renewal is central to Indigenous people, and supports work in community and academic settings. Talking circles were used to facilitate Métis Elder sharing. Sharing of stories provided pedagogic spaces where draw meaning from the past in order to have clarity about our lives. Through story, they note that we create personal connections to the natural and spiritual worlds, where we learn lessons that shape our lives. New stories emerge from old, which then become woven into families and communities. Stories help us understand our
identity, including our place on the land and in the community, culture, and spirit world. Humorous stories teach us life lessons, connect communities, and reaffirm relationships.


This article discusses the need for culturally responsive teacher education and practice in the context of Alaska, where 24% of students are Alaska Native but the majority of teachers are identified as White and female. Beth Ginondidoy Leonard presents the current gap in understanding Alaska Native pedagogies and worldviews among teacher candidates, as well as the limited research available on Indigenous-centered pedagogies. She aims to address this and teach students about Indigenous education as *learning relationships in context*. To do this, Leonard draws on the principles of Indigenous storywork (Archibald, 2008) and Cajete’s (2000) ‘relationships in context’ framework when guiding students in analyzing stories from Belle Deacon, the late Deg Hit’an Elder. Leonard identifies successes of this approach, in that students dig deeper into examining their relationships and connections, and can improve their understandings of diverse ontologies. The author further reflects that engaging in pedagogies like Indigenous storywork can contribute to reviving Indigenous pedagogical theory and praxis in education.


Vince Lujan shares vignettes about caring for a horse in preparation for ceremonial hunt, to illustrate the intergenerational teaching of *ha-lém* used by his father to pass on knowledge that fosters well-being and shares teachings from his community. Ha-lém means respect, and it is both a worldview and a pedagogical practice that can be used to inform contemporary exercises of self-determination, including sustaining the cultural and ecological integrity of the community’s place. It comes from the epistemology that the maintenance of balance among interconnected relationships between individuals, community, and the environment is essential to the survival of the people. This approach was used because stories impart knowledge about community way of life, including how to participate in the specific ceremony of hunting. Through this approach, Lujan used stories shared by his father as pedagogy to communicate expectations for being including physical activity, leadership, and reciprocity with the community and environment.


In the context of language arts education in the United States, in classrooms with Indigenous students and non-Indigenous instructors, Christine Rogers Stanton and Karl Sutton suggest drawing upon traditional Indigenous forms of literacy (e.g., visual and oral) and place-based
literacy as culturally responsive pedagogies. They specifically state that engaging students in place-based literacy projects can encourage critical thinking about community and school literacy, and the differences between them, and provide two examples in the article. One example was a project about critical story-hearing through Elder interviews. The authors built on Archibald’s (2008) work about interviewing Elders and interpreting their responses - they note that this process can improve both Indigenous and non-Indigenous student engagement and culturally responsive literacy. Prior to the interviews, students had discussions about the Indigenous storywork principles of respect, reciprocity and interrelatedness to ground their listening and interactions with Elders. The authors shared successes of these discussions, in that students were more responsive listeners and were more prepared to “discuss stylistic structural choices as applied to writing and storytelling in both classroom and home communities” (Stanton & Sutton, 2012, p. 81). In addition to deeper understandings of how the Indigenous storywork principles are enacted, students gained insights such as the time and patience required to share stories, the role of building relationships between the storyteller/writer and listener/reader, and how written expression can be misused. Stanton and Sutton reflected that this Indigenous storywork project facilitated many connections between students and teachers to both classroom and tribal communities. They conclude that culturally responsive literacy education overall, particularly when taking place in community settings, can greatly enhance learning and teaching.


This chapter explores how post-secondary institutions can learn from grandmothers’ pedagogy to create a more loving, caring environment for Indigenous students. Amanda Tachine used Indigenous storywork as an Indigenous qualitative methodology (Archibald, 2008) and narrative inquiry to share research on Navajo students’ stories as they transitioned to college. She notes that these two approaches identify storytelling, “as an influential mode of inquiry by respecting the stories that are shared, valuing the knowledge gained through the analytical meaning-making process, and recognizing the interconnectedness between storyteller and listener,” (p. 157). She notes the seven principles that guide Indigenous storywork, ultimately centers Indigenous ways of knowing as a methodology. In her work, this approach complements narrative analysis - a method that creates opportunities for Indigenous peoples to reclaim space in research and reconstruct who we are. Indigenous storywork further guided her methodology to incorporate mutual thinking, memo-writing, and peer review into the analysis phase for validation of findings. In regards to pedagogical implications, Tachine (2017) recommends the use of sharing circles and listening sessions in colleges, while emphasizing the importance of training for these sessions in order to maintain respect and integrity around students’ stories. She also states that, “Furthermore, like a tender grandmother, we must hold our children (students) during times of distress by implementing ceremonial protocols and policies that allow for students to freely practice their traditional, spiritual teachings,” (Tachine, 2017, p. 164).
Indigenous Storywork as Both Methodology and Pedagogy

In the following articles, Indigenous storywork/storytelling was used as methodology to develop, inform, or better understand Indigenous pedagogy, as well as to share Elder knowledge, place-based knowledge, and Indigenous culture, values, pedagogies, and knowledge systems. Knowledge gained through Indigenous storywork/storytelling was used to examine Indigenous science knowledge and pedagogy, develop science pedagogies to engage youth with storytelling, and to explore storytelling as pedagogy, support for spirituality, and as witnessing and remembering. Through the examination and development of Indigenous pedagogies, there was a collective remembering of worldview in oral traditions, where stories were reclaimed as central to Indigenous science, and Indigenous storywork was identified as a critical component of culturally responsive math education. Indigenous storywork/storytelling has been used as both methodology and pedagogy to resist western interpretations of history, dominant western approaches to science, and western pedagogies in educational and community settings.


Judy Iseke and Leisa Desmoulins explore the stories of youth and Elders from two different studies to increase educator understanding of Indigenous epistemologies as knowledge systems to move away from the typical approach of having students integrate their Indigenous science knowledge in the western science curriculum. Youth from one study shared their perception of science on the land, based on their experiences growing up in their respective communities. In another study, Elders shared their understanding of Indigenous science knowledge and pedagogies. Stories were used as research to describe how stories are also pedagogy. This approach was taken because stories share knowledge and skills through spiritual practice of respect. An examination of Elder stories resulted in the identification of seven tenets of Indigenous science including: experiential learning, engagement of all aspects of being to transform learning through experience, cultural understanding through respect, interconnectedness and learning within relationships, apprenticeship with Elders, recognition of sacred teachings, and a relational approach in which students learn from Elders and other Knowledge Keepers.


Amanda Marin and Megan Bang explored how Indigenous teachers engage with community-based stories and ways of knowing as they made sense of science content and developed pedagogical strategies. This approach was taken because listening to and telling stories, and understanding all aspects of the self (intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical) in relation to relatives (human, plant, and animal), nature, and land are central to science. Teachers participated in ‘design meetings’ where they shared their own stories with the goal to
redesign learning environments, refine teaching strategies, and articulate learning theories. Design teams included Elders, parents, and content experts from the community. During design meetings, teachers used Indigenous storywork to build shared knowledge of science content and pedagogies that are culturally sustaining and revitalizing. Stories shared during design meetings prompted teachers to reflect on the complex relationship between western science and Indigenous stories, resulting in a collective remembering of worldview embedded on oral traditions. Stories were reclaimed as a central part of science, as they are representations of and explanations for science phenomena. Teachers collectively developed pedagogies to engage youth with community-based practice of storytelling.


This article begins by stating that education systems have failed Indigenous students, including how they have cultivated self-doubt around their gifts, capacities and experiences. It further describes how school mathematics have been particularly exclusionary to Indigenous students, generating under-representation in higher-level mathematics courses and careers involving mathematics. Cynthia Nicol, Jo-ann Archibald and Jeff Baker use Archibald’s (2008) Indigenous storywork methodologically and pedagogically to contribute culturally responsive pedagogical practice for Indigenous mathematics education. Their research strategy was based on the significance of collective relationship building, drawing upon the theoretical framework and principles of Indigenous storywork, as well as the methodologies of participatory action research. For example, the authors engaged community members in project meetings, where they collaboratively shared and listened to local Indigenous stories and identified parts that could relate to mathematics education. The article discussed the pedagogical example of a story called Raven Brings the Light, which encompasses teachings of local cultural meanings and values. In terms of successes, the authors note that this process allowed students who were struggling in mathematics to feel confident and participate in lessons that drew on familiar contexts to them – they created spaces for them to be experts. Overall the group reflected on the process and identified Indigenous storywork, and connection to cultural stories, as a critical component of culturally responsive mathematics education.

**Going Forward: Digital Storytelling**

Given the digital age we are in, there are opportunities for technology to play a progressive role in storytelling. This short section reviews articles that seek to understand digital storytelling and its role in the process and outcomes of research, particularly within Indigenous and educational contexts. It is important to note that while they do not draw directly on Indigenous storywork, they relate to the principles.

Heather Castleden and her research team explored the perspectives of non-Indigenous students concerning a field school experience and digital storytelling as transformative experiences in the context of a graduate level course called, “Indigenous Perspectives on Environmental Management.” Students completed a three-day workshop then create digital stories to share what they learned. Students incorporated a story script, images, video clips, and music to tell their stories. They participated in story circle, where they discussed their scripts, images, and music, then received feedback on their story development from their peers and professor. The field school and digital storytelling components of the course were found to effectively serve multiple roles. First, the field school enabled students to engage with Mi’kmaq community members emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually about key course concepts and to meaningfully engage in experiential learning. Second, digital storytelling results in a tangible product that meets academic requirements for evaluating student progress and provides an alternative to typical academic traditions. Finally, digital storytelling is reflective of Indigenous oral traditions.


Ashlee Cunsolo Willox and her team developed a narrative method that united digital media with storytelling, in order to engage Indigenous community members in a research project to explore the relationship between climate change and wellness of community members. Digital storytelling involves illustrating personal stories with pictures, art, music, audio, video, and text. Participants collectively co-created individual narrative by sharing their stories in workshop circles then received feedback. Completed stories were united, creating a tapestry of voices that provided context to collective experiences. Digital storytelling places the power of creation with the individual sharing their story. The researchers become the listeners, not collectors of information. Stories are shared in the first person, which means the voice, experience, and wisdom belong to the storyteller. Stories exist within a culture and epistemic values, and can be shared with individuals around the world.


In this article, de Jager et al. explored digital storytelling in research by completing a systematic review and thematic analysis of 25 articles. The literature discussed the application of digital storytelling in several settings including education, such as to promote digital literacy and skills in language, writing, reflexivity and telling stories. Their results showed that digital
storytelling was particularly appropriate for studies that involve marginalized groups. More specifically, findings around the use of digital storytelling as a research method within Indigenous research included that it can lead to:

- Meaningful research experiences (e.g., enhanced cultural identity and pride)
- Culturally appropriate methods (e.g., can sustain Indigenous knowledge) with decolonizing potential (e.g., increased community self-determination, resisting coloniality)
- Strengthened relationships among participants through witnessing stories

The authors note important considerations for the use of digital storytelling as a beneficial method, including: taking a genuine participatory approach that involves participants at every phase; open communication around ethics (e.g., the use and dissemination of stories) from the outset of the research; and ensure efforts are taken for cultivating a safe, respectful space for storytelling and sharing.

**Resources**

Several projects have been undertaken to record Indigenous stories for online sharing. The following resources have an affinity to the Indigenous storywork principles: they include hundreds of stories in video, audio, and written form, from Indigenous communities around the world. Stories are recorded in Indigenous languages, French, and English. The websites include biographies of storytellers and film-makers, and topics vary as greatly as the communities from which the stories originate. There is increasing interest for Indigenous communities to integrate storytelling and technology in order to share knowledge, reach people living away from the community, and help preserve stories, knowledge, and language. Contemporary multimedia projects and films are also prevalent modalities of expression.

**Storytelling**

[http://www.firstnationspedagogy.ca/storytelling.html](http://www.firstnationspedagogy.ca/storytelling.html)

This webpage is part of the larger *First Nations Pedagogy for Online Learning* project. The goal of the project is to support online course design, online instruction, and the creation of online learning communities. On the Storytelling page, there are videos of the Native Storytelling Festival, several videos sharing stories from different communities, a video about teaching storytelling in the classroom, and a video about cedar bark pulling and weaving. The videos vary in length from a few minutes to over an hour.
Circle of Stories
http://www.pbs.org/circleofstories/index.html

This website features several great storytelling resources. You can listen to the stories recorded for each of the four directions, told by storytellers from different communities. There is an extensive biography available for each storyteller, and their email addresses are provided. There is also a Storytelling Gallery, which is a collection of images, quotes, poems, and stories from a variety of storytellers. You can share a story on the website, participate in discussion about language and culture, and review their extensive list of online resources. Finally, there is an educators section with several lesson plans related to storytelling.

Voices in the Wind Productions – Films
http://www.ourelderstories.com/films/

This website features several videos of Métis storytellers sharing stories. Some are animated and some told with accompanying pictures. The films were created during an extensive research project conducted by Dr. Judy Iseke, where she collaborated with Métis Elders to help understand the role of Indigenous knowledge systems and Michif language in Indigenous education. There is a brief synopsis of each video, including information about each storyteller.

Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change

The IsumaTV website is a multimedia platform for Indigenous filmmakers and media organizations. There are currently thousands of videos, images, and audio files in more than 80 languages housed on the website. The Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change website contains dozens of articles and videos sharing Inuit knowledge, including many videos of Inuit Elders. Videos vary in length from several minutes to over an hour.

Walking Together
http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/

This website was designed to help educators deeper their understandings of Indigenous ways of knowing, to provide opportunity for Indigenous people to share their perspectives, and to demonstrate Indigenous perspectives in education. Once you enter the site, the Oral Tradition option leads to the Beginning Together option. If you move through the Beginning Together section, you will be brought to two stories: one is told in English and in French/Michif and the other is told in Cree and English. In the Respecting Wisdom section, there are several brief videos of storytellers from a variety of communities sharing stories.
Indigenous Cinema
https://www.nfb.ca/indigenous-cinema/?&film_lang=en&sort=year:desc,title&year=1917..2018

This website, created by the National Film Board, is an extensive collection of films made by Indigenous people, produced between 1968-2017. There are dozens of director biographies that can be searched by Nation or alphabetically by name. There are hundreds of videos in English and French. There are several broad subjects including: Indigenous governance, nature and ecological knowledge, community, and health and wellbeing to name a few.

Māori Myths, Legends, and Contemporary Stories

This webpage is part of the New Zealand Ministry of Education website and features Māori legends, and contemporary stories. All stories are written or retold, shared by a Māori storyteller who acknowledges two of his relatives that handed stories down from previous generations. The stories vary in length and can be navigated in both Māori and English.

Legends Project
http://www.cbc.ca/aboriginal/legends_project.html

The Legends Project is a collection of traditional oral stories gathered from Indigenous communities across Canada. The goal of the project was to honor rich Indigenous histories and to protect and promote Indigenous languages. The stories are audio recorded in Indigenous languages and English, and each is approximately an hour in length.