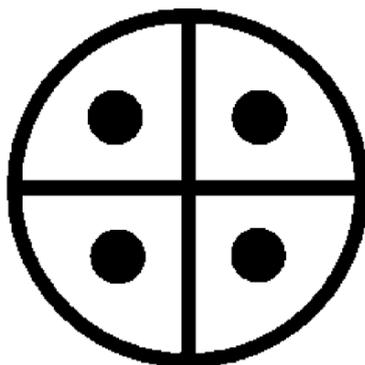


**A QUEST FOR CHARACTER: EXPLAINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
FIRST NATIONS TEACHINGS AND “CHARACTER EDUCATION”**



by

Yvonne Germaine Dufault

**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
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Abstract

Wholistic indigenous character education strategies can and should be integrated into the common curriculum. First Nations' perspectives on character education offer useful insights into positive character development, in relevant, (w)holistic ways that would enhance character education programs within our public school systems. A literature review explores both indigenous and non-indigenous dominant culture practices and resources from historical, cultural and pedagogical perspectives. Western cultural and traditional indigenous worldviews are compared and contrasted. Points of cultural contact and impact are also identified. The perspectives and experiences of four Aboriginal Elders and an Ojibwe playwright regarding character education issues are included as well as an inventory of Traditional First Nations Teaching Strategies. First Nations practices and philosophies are categorized in relation to Dr. John P. Miller's transformational, holistic education framework wherein six key areas of connections and teaching strategies are explored: (a) Analytic-Intuitive Thinking, (b) Body-Mind Connection, (c) Subject Connections, (d) Community Connections, (e) Earth Connections and (f) Self Connections.

Figure I. Harvey Anderson—Nimkie Benishie-Nini (The Thunderbird Man).

The beloved Ojibway Elder illustrated in this sketch and the humble, gentle, guiding force to whom this thesis is dedicated, went to the Spirit World on January 16, 1997. This drawing was “gifted” to his wife by Don Evans at his wake. This sketch is included with permission.

Dedication

*Dedicated in loving memory
to Harvey Anderson,
Nimkie-Benishie-Nini
(The Thunderbird Man)
Chippewa of Mnjikaning First Nation
(Rama Reserve)*

*Gentle, loving father and husband,
Involved community member,
Authentic role model
of the Seven Grandfather Teachings,
Beloved Traditional Elder,
You compassionately walked your talk,
Helping many of us on our own Earth Walk.*

*You live on in the Spirit World
And in our hearts.*

Figure II. Kicajik Kinomagewin—Getchi-pildizijig Ezhi-kinoomaagwiing.

(Elder's Teaching for All People—Learning from our Elders)

Nimkie Benishie-Nini (The Thunderbird Man) spoke soulfully and articulately in the Ojibway language at a traditional Pow Wow I attended in 1994. The sense of purpose, joyful connection between generations, meaningful sharing, and pride as **Anishnabek** were palpable combining two suitable titles for this caption from two 2001 Pow Wows. This photo has been reprinted with permission. Photographer: Yvonne Dufault

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A project of this magnitude could not become a reality without the counsel, assistance and encouragement of many individuals sharing a common purpose. Many people have been an integral part of this shared journey including those who have passed before us, like chief **Sitting Bull** (1831-1890), Hunkpapa Sioux Lakota Medicine Man who, according to oral tradition (Nerburn, 1999), said:

“Let us put our minds together and see what kind of
life we can make for our children.”

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Preamble: The Use of Topic-specific Vocabulary

Based on verbal feedback received from various indigenous sources, I have made a conscious effort to capitalize words designating indigenous people, just like we would capitalize the word Canadian. The research literature consulted shows inconsistencies between upper case and lower case use. Wherever terms such as Aboriginal, First Nations or Native are used, I capitalize them, emphasizing that indigenous persons should be capitalized and valued, rather than marginalized or minimized in lower case characters. *Elders* appears in the literature in both upper and lower case referring to Native Elders. I use the word *Elders* in upper case honouring their important community roles.

To North American Aboriginals, all of North America is Turtle Island. Quotes in this thesis sometimes distinguish between Native peoples, using the political boundaries of the United States and Canada. American Indians or Native American are expressions that refer to American Aboriginals from the United States of America. When I use the term First Nations, I am referring to all indigenous nations in North America. For stylistic purposes, I tend to use the words First Nation, Aboriginal and Native interchangeably. Aboriginal can also be used to mean indigenous peoples beyond North America. Aborigine is a term specific to the Aboriginals of Australia.

Native traditions are largely *oral traditions*. Semantic and ethnolinguistic differences can lead to misinterpretations by non-Native readers. I have carefully combed through Aboriginal-authored literature, in search of official, published definitions of terms, cognizant that Native traditions are largely oral traditions and that there are semantic and ethnolinguistic differences which lead to non-Native misinterpretations. I have also conferred with Elders to validate meanings of key terms from their perspectives. Appendix A, entitled “A Glossary of Terms” provides an alphabetized list of words or expressions used within the body of the present work and specific to First Nations peoples. I have included a glossary of key colonizing culture character education vocabulary words as well for purposes of clarification and comparison.

Note the difference between *holistic* and *wholistic*. The word *holistic* comes from the Greek word *holos* meaning *whole, complete, total*. The spelling of *holistic* with a *w* as *wholistic* was chosen by the Aboriginal Family Joint Steering Committee to emphasize

the *whole* rather than the *hole* (Dudziak, 2000, p. 245). The meaning is similar but not identical to the more frequently-used term spelled as *holistic* without the *w*.

Kaufman (2001) reinforces “the necessity of individual preparation, of improving one’s self wholistically—that is mind, body, spirit, and emotions” (p.2). According to Antone, Gamlin and Provost-Turchetti (2003):

“Wholistic” describes the Aboriginal philosophy in which “everything is related” by virtue of shared origins and in which, by extension, the human being is considered an entire whole; that is, mentally, physically, spiritually and emotionally as an individual, with one’s family and extended family, one’s people, and with the cosmos in sacred relationships. This is distinct from a “holistic” philosophy in which the term “related” is taken as meaning “all things are interconnected” by virtue of sharing an environment in which action leads to a type of “domino effect” in a secular world. (p. 9)

First Nations Elders interviewed expressed a preference for the use of the word *wholistic*. Why? Including the *w* emphasizes for them the roundness of the concept of being *whole* or complete like a circle, avoiding possible misunderstandings of having a *hole* missing in the middle of the circle. Both *holistic* and *wholistic* focus on wholeness and completeness. Both *holistic* and *wholistic* appear in body of the text of this thesis. I have used the spelling *wholistic* whenever it is the most suitable.

I have not succeeded in obtaining a single word that encapsulates the exact concept of *holistic* in Native languages in resources consulted or from the interviewees. What came the closest was the word *Onkwehonwehnéha* in Mohawk. *Onkwe* means *person, human being*. *Honw’* means *real* and *Neha* means *in the way or manner it is done*. The concept is thus of the Native way or the way that it is done among the real people (Anishnabe). Given that (a) much is done in a Circle, considered Sacred to First Nations peoples; (b) the concept of achieving wholeness / completeness is key to First Nations philosophies; (c) First Nations peoples were not influenced by Greek *holistic* thought, and (d) the spelling preference indicated by the Aboriginal Family Joint Steering Committee, *wholistic* is the spelling most in line with First Nations thinking.

Readers should acquaint themselves with unfamiliar vocabulary listed in Appendix A prior to delving into the thesis itself.

Chapter One: Introduction

Statement of the Research Problem

Aboriginal presence in the current official character education literature is limited. Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) state that “Indigenous knowledge and heritage and elders, though accessible to public schooling, have not been included in the curriculum of the public school at any significant level” (p. 84). *Learning About Walking in Beauty: Placing Aboriginal Perspectives in Canadian Classrooms*, a report jointly published by the The Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2002a, 2002b) also supports this position.

The present study, *A Quest for Character: Explaining the Relationship Between First Nations Teachings and Character Education*, began in 2001. I sought to investigate whether First Nations perspectives could offer useful insights into positive character development, in relevant, holistic ways that would enhance the delivery of character education programs for the benefit of students in our Canadian public school system.

My journey began with an individual reading and research course in April, 2001. I performed an extensive literature review in the areas of character education and First Nations teachings. Knowledge gleaned in the written tradition would serve later to complement information respectfully received in the Native oral tradition¹. I laid the groundwork for my thesis proposal, explored possible print resources and initiated a working bibliography. I also went to cultural centers at various reserves to accumulate Aboriginal materials. My literature review also took me abroad. Over a seven week period during the summer of 2001, I visited five major university libraries in Australia including the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and Auckland University in New Zealand, speaking with Aboriginal experts.

¹ **Oral Tradition:** Stories and teachings are spoken and committed to memory rather than written. In this tradition, a verbal commitment is as binding as a written one. The oral history, laws such as The Great Law and the speech of Chief Seattle and treaties as agreed upon orally were committed to memory by trained wisdom keepers who memorized the words, ensured that the words were learned by others and passed on through succeeding generations.

Upon my return to Canada, Dr. J. P. Miller presented me with an article entitled “The Red Road: Indigenous Worldview as a Prerequisite for Effective Character Education” written by Don Trent Four Arrows Jacobs (2001d) in response to President Bush’s pressure to institute dominant culture character education programs on Indian reservations. Jacobs, then professor at Oglala Lakota College, had also written “Colonizing Education: The American Indian Experience.” (2001a) Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer (2001) had just published a guidebook for teachers called *Teaching Virtues: Building Character Across the Curriculum*. To date, it is the only recognized First Nations character education teaching strategies guide available to the public.

By September, 2001, I had completed numerous title searches and copious readings of literature from across four countries: the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. I concluded that Aboriginal voices in the recognized field of text-based character education are as conspicuously absent from the literature here in Canada as they are in Australia and New Zealand. Aboriginal publications appeared to be woefully lacking in the field of character education.

I realized that text-based material dominates the North American academic world. I wondered why character education publications from the Eurocentric dominant culture seemed so numerous and why mainstream society experts seemed so prevalent whereas written Native references were difficult to locate. Published works are easily accessed both in hard print and on the Internet. Written documents dominate the academic world, whereas oral tradition appears to have little place in it. To me, there appeared to be differences, in written tradition versus oral tradition as well as basic worldviews.

Over the past decade, most teachings I have received from First Nations Elders, in various settings, have been transmitted orally, in a small group or one on one. Could apparent Aboriginal preference for oral teachings rather than the dominant culture’s recognized written tradition account for limited sharing of Aboriginal world views? Were Aboriginal views not as publicized as they could be? Is the expertise or credibility of Elders who lack paper qualifications questioned?

Could dominant culture preference for written tradition versus oral tradition have somehow prevented the widespread sharing of First Nations ideas and strategies to

educate for character? Did strategies on educating for character actually exist amongst Aboriginal peoples? If so, what were they? How were they shared? What kind of impact did they have? If they could help in forming character, how could they be shared with a wider audience? My questions simply led to more questions. My determination to discover more about First Nations character education teachings increased.

Character education is a relatively new term in Canada. Knowing this, I felt that it would be essential to define character education in ways the average layperson could easily understand. I also needed to clearly portray the evolution of dominant culture character education initiatives. These are taking place in a mainstream North American society whose members do not necessarily know, understand or share Aboriginal world views. Therefore, from a historical perspective, it would be important for me to examine possible interactions between Native and non-Native cultures in this area as well. This needed to be done of course, with the tacit understanding that a whole cultural kaleidoscope of Aboriginal communities exist in North America, each with its own distinctive qualities as is clearly evident from simply surfing the World Wide Web².

Aboriginal peoples share some common ground, but are varied. Beyond the fact that there are First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada, there are fifty-two First Nations groups in Canada and six hundred and ten native bands (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2000), the majority of Native peoples do not follow traditional teachings for a variety of reasons. This thesis is concerned with those who do. To effectively tackle this study, I needed to understand what general precontact First Nations philosophy/philosophies of character education were already in place prior to colonization, what kinds of impact(s) arose from cultural contact between Native and non-Native groups in educating for character and how post-contact First Nations character education evolved. I felt that personal face-to-face communication through direct oral interviews with Aboriginals actively involved in some form of character education would shed further

² To gain some appreciation of the variety, complexity and contributions of tribes, one only has to venture out onto the World Wide Web. See Appendix M. Then of course there is the book by Alvin M Josephy Jr. (1994) called *500 Nations: An Illustrated History of North American Indians*. This resource explores First Nations history from pre-Columbian times to present day from a First Nations perspective. There is also an eight part documentary called 500 Nations.

light on First Nations perspectives. I hoped that such interaction would lead to responses for my three key research questions.

Statement of the Research Questions

My inquiry was fuelled by three key questions:

1. What is the conception of *Character Education* from *First Nations* perspectives?
2. What is their common conception of educating for character and nurturing its development?
3. What are the relationships between *Native* conceptions of character and *non-Native* conceptions?

My responses were gleaned from three sources of data:

1. an analysis of character education research literature and resources
2. a survey of First Nations literature to determine the presence of a focus on positive character development
3. recorded interviews with four First Nations Elders and one Aboriginal author residing within Ontario

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to embark upon a voyage of discovery, a ***Quest for Character*** extending beyond the limits of mainstream dominant-culture European colonialist views of character education research to include long-neglected First Nations voices and vision. I sought to raise the level of awareness of First Nations contributions to character development. I believe effective character education requires a *holistic* balance that can be facilitated by including rather than excluding *Aboriginal worldviews*.

My ultimate goal was to obtain insights that would enable educators to make informed pedagogical decisions concerning the use of mindful, respectful, appropriate integration of wholistic First Nations perspectives and character education strategies into the school curriculum. It was my hope that this thesis would offer an introductory forum

for *First Nations voice* in the area of character education³ in Canada, opening new doors to reach out to wider audiences. I believe we must actively listen to and value voices of traditional tribal wisdom, acknowledging centuries-old ways of knowing and being. So long discounted, they have the potential power to do much good towards nurturing the development of desirable character traits amongst all our youths.

Stafford (1994) posits that mainstream North American society has moved away from moral education dealing with the concept of sin, losing a “sense of accountability to God” (p.4). The examination of the two extremes of the seven vices or deadly sins versus the seven virtues by Stalker (1998) and Savage (2002) supports Stafford’s stance. In catechism classes, I learned about the seven deadly sins: anger, greed, envy, gluttony, sloth, luxury and pride versus the seven virtues: courage, faith, hope, love, justice, temperance and wisdom. Native teachings received over the past decade helped me recognize a spirit-based focus on virtues, self-restraint and the concept of a benevolent Creator rather than a fear-based focus on vices, guilt and a God of retribution.

Seeking solutions to our North American character crisis.

Educational systems across North America are desperately searching for solutions to our growing character dilemma, to mend broken attitudes and actions and keep intact those not yet fragmented. The mandated forty hours of community service required for secondary school graduation by the Ontario Ministry of Education is part of this movement to foster empathy and altruism. Teachers as character role models are cautiously experimenting with non-sectarian forms of character education, consciously avoiding offending religious and cultural groups. Native spirituality which focuses on Earth-based teachings is not to be confused with organized religion.

Hunter (2000) discusses North America’s character crisis, examining moral education in an amoral age lacking a clear sense of good and evil. Somerville (2000)

³ **Character Education:** (noun/ concept) the effort to help students know the good, love the good and do the good. In short, it is about helping students mature into persons of integrity – persons of intelligence and moral character. It is necessary, therefore, to help students wrestle with and understand the *good* – that is, what is true and worthwhile in life as well as what is right. To do this, we need to help them develop knowledge of the good and intelligent judgement so that they learn to choose well among competing and attractive options in life (Ryan & Bohlin, 1999, p. 46).

raises difficult ethical questions involving the human spirit. Bennett (1998, 2001, 2002) talks about the death of outrage and the disintegration of ideals, the moral collapse of the American family and an urgent need for moral clarity (2002). The emerging character education movement has expanded over the last decade in the United States, moving northward into Canada. North Americans are experiencing a “mid-life character crisis” as witnessed by a plethora of writing on the subject by American experts. (See Conrad & Hedin, 1989; Covey, 1989; Curry & Johnson, 1990; Etzioni, 1994; Gauld, 1995; Hester, 1994, 1995; Hoffman & Lee, 1997; Huffman, 1993; Hutcheon, 1999; Josephson, 1992; Lickona, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1994; Ryan & McLean, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1992; Zucker, 2001; Zweig, 1991). The public education market has been flooded with “how-to” guidebooks for administrators, teachers and municipal politicians. The purpose of these publications is to develop character in the classroom, in the school and in the community. (Bennett, Finn, & Cribb, 1999; Kilpatrick, Wolfe, & Wolfe, 1994; Kohn, 1991; Kurtines & Gerwitz, 1991; LeGette, 1999; Lewis, 1998; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999; Sadlow, 1998). In North America, it appears that schools are picking up the fallen torches of faith, hope and charity dropped at home by too many busy parents.

I interpreted the September 11, 2001 disaster in New York as a warning to the world about large-scale disaster to which the *human tribe* is headed. On September 17, 2001, Dr. Don Trent (Four Arrows) Jacobs delivered a two-minute speech at Northern Arizona University. His urgent call to action to his fellow Americans drew their attention to a necessary return to critical thinking and connectedness. Jacobs urged Americans to take ownership for spirituality:

It is the time for a spirituality that connects rather than divides; that loves rather than hates. It is a time for authentic virtues like courage, humility, generosity, forgiveness, honesty and fortitude, not just in response to tragedy, but as a way of life. (Jacobs, 2001e, September)

Jacobs’ message applies to Canadians as well. His call to interconnectedness as a way of life is important not only to all the inhabitants of *Turtle Island* (North America), but worldwide. Jacobs asks that we choose to be more holistic and interconnected rather than angry and fragmented. I believe that character is in crisis in North America. Jacobs’ call to action to reclaim character echoes the pleas of Ghandi, pacific pursuer of peace and of Chief Seattle (1786-1866), Squamish, described as “a leader in times of crisis”

(Jefferson, 2001, p. 29). Canadians and Americans have demonstrated our ability to reactively pull together in the face of threat of physical safety. What is to stop us from uniting in a concerted effort that includes indigenous worldviews to address moral issues whose peaceful solutions could help increase physical, intellectual, spiritual and emotional balance, thus reducing threats to our very existence? I believe we must shift from a reactive to proactive stance. If this means that the dominant colonizing culture must include wisdoms of the Original Peoples of this continent that we as *Other* have historically sought to conquer, in order for us all to survive as peoples, so be it.

The colonizing culture has become a ready clientele of consumers eagerly seeking solutions, aspiring to produce more responsible, caring global citizens and stewards of the earth. The atmosphere is now ripe for change. Since April 2001, three Quest international character education conferences have been hosted in Richmond Hill, Ontario by York Region District School Board (2001, 2002a, 2002b), importing dominant culture experts. An Aboriginal character education expert has yet to be included on the presenters' roster from either side of the American / Canadian border.

In March 2003, under the direction of guest editors Avis Glaze, Bill Hogarth and Brian McLean, the second issue of Volume 33 of *Orbit Magazine* entitled *Character Education/ Citizenship Education* was published by the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. This issue primarily featured articles based on dominant culture American models, but also included, with some encouragement from me, one significant indigenous Native American model provided by Professor Don Trent Four Arrows Jacobs. At my urging, Dr. Jacobs (2003) successfully submitted an article entitled "Way of the Brave: An Indigenous Perspective on 'Character Education'" (pp. 26 – 28). Prior to this, no North American Aboriginal had ever been acknowledged by a Canadian publication as a character education expert. *Orbit Magazine* took the first step towards inclusiveness in this important area. Now Canada waits, listening attentively for future contributions of Canadian Aboriginal voices, as yet unheard, in the scholarly arena of character education.

In 2000 and 2001, Ontarians looked primarily to our southern neighbours for guidance to improve the cultural climate in our schools. In the literature and workshop

presentations, educators look to acclaimed American experts like teacher and sports coach Abourjilie (2000), Bennett (1984, 1993, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2002), Lickona (1992, 1993, 1994), Kagan (1992, 2001a, 2001b), Vincent (1994, 1996, 1998) and Urban (2000). We have sent delegations to visit American schools identified as character success stories. The November 2002 *Quest for Courage*, demonstrated readiness to begin to look inward, searching for our own Canadian dominant colonizing culture expertise at local, regional, provincial and national levels. Some speakers referred to Aboriginal wisdoms.

There is a powerful Native movement honouring Native knowings to which most of the colonizing culture is oblivious. From August 5 to 10, 2002, the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference 2002 was held in Calgary, Alberta (First Nations Adult and Higher Education Consortium, 2002). The website welcome message from the First Nations of Turtle Island was "*The answers are within us.*" I believe the next step here in Canada is to include expertise amongst Canadian Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Innu) to help us find some of the answers we seek and need. Most Canadians and Americans can be considered "newly-arrived" immigrants. We have only been on "Turtle Island" (North America) for the past four or five centuries. Great knowledge of the *Anishnabe* (the Original People) passed on through oral traditions over thousands of years long preceded our arrival as *Other*. When we discount Aboriginal expertise and experience, we do a disservice both to ourselves and to future generations. We must somehow collectively recover from what Taiaiake Alfred (1999) calls a "crisis of the mind: a lack of conscience and consciousness" (p. xv).

When so much goes awry in our hearts, homes and local communities to which we close our eyes and ears on a daily basis, how can we expect peace in the world at large? The point of this arrow of truth of mutual responsibility must sink deep into our hearts. I believe that we miss the mark when we do not understand our responsibility of being each other's keeper and helping one another to develop "a good mind." We become accessories to crimes when we know what is happening and are able to stop them but do nothing. When we fail to demonstrate the moral courage⁴ to stand up for what is

⁴ **Moral courage:** (noun) Moral courage is not about facing physical challenges that could harm the body. It's about facing mental challenges that could harm one's reputation, emotional well-being, self-esteem or

right, how can we hope to have peace in the world? Chief Seattle⁵ said: All things are interconnected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. (Nerburn, 1999, p. 3). Society's views on character education must expand to include cooperative, environmental citizenship and emotional intelligence that embrace a vision of long-term benefits for humankind. Our competitive pursuit of short-term profit is poisoning the earth and our children. The *Constitution of the Five Nations*⁶ draws attention to thinking of the welfare of all the people and the future generations. (Nerburn, 1999, p. 25)

Hopefully, rather than experiencing the demise of character in North America described by Hunter (2000), we are awakening to a more holistic rebirth of a collective soul. This need is evidenced by conferences such as the third international Soul in Education Conference *Celebrating the Spirit of Learning: Soul in Education and Learning for Life* to be held in Byron Bay, New South Wales, Australia from Sept. 27 to Oct.4, 2003. In the advance notice flyer, J. P. Miller, Professor of Holistic Education of the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education of the University of Toronto states: "Restoring the soul to education is not a new vision. It is a vision articulated by the Greeks and various indigenous peoples for centuries" (Miller, 2002a). Indigenous wisdoms offer possible answers to raising "whole" citizens of character.

Too many of us are not living by the *Golden Rule of Reciprocity* discussed later in this thesis. Few educated people of my acquaintance even know what the Golden Rule is! I believe that we must embrace character education rooted in wholism. As Miller and Drake (1992a) state "We as a human family are beginning to view the earth as sacred, as indigenous peoples have for centuries. This sense of the sacred is part of a new way of seeing and relating to children, to each other and to the planet" (p. 1). Can First Nations traditional teachings offer helpful tools toward achieving positive character education?

other characteristics. These challenges, as the term implies, are deeply connected with our moral sense – our core moral values (Kidder & Bracy, 2001, p. 4).

⁵ **Chief Seattle's speech**, the subject of much controversy over authenticity after tampering with it thirty years after the fact, still rings true. Much quoted in books and on the Internet, his words continue to be passed on through oral tradition as well. Websites of interest are: Seattle, 1854; Seattle, 1999, and Jennings, 1995.

⁶ **Six Nations**: This includes the Five Nations of the Iroquois – the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca who were united politically and socially in a Great League of Peace around 1653. The Five Nations were joined much later by the Tuscarora. (Dennis, 1993, pp 6 & 7, 199) There is a Six Nations reserve in Ohsweken near Brantford, Ontario.

Can First Nations teachings and strategies help us to ensure that we and our children both as individuals and members of a functioning society at large know, do and love what is good, walking our talk with *right thought, right word and right action* (Dhammapada, 2002) or *peace, power and righteousness* (Alfred, 1999)?

At the very onset of this journey, as a non-Native concerned with the pitfalls of decolonizing methodologies, guided by an Elder, I self-assessed to ensure that this project would respect indigenous integrity in research involving indigenous peoples. I asked myself five questions:

1. Will my speaking make a positive difference?
2. How will my words impact on others?
3. Am I helping rather than interfering?
4. How will others react towards me and towards the world in which they live if I do speak?
5. Do I have the courage to speak and to take a stand for that which my body, mind and Spirit know to be true, right and good?

From the very beginning, I constantly bore in mind my responsibility as a non-Native researcher to maintain an equitable, respectful balance between colonizing culture methodology, Aboriginal research methodology and their respective protocols.

The Structure of This Thesis

This thesis has been organized according to seven chapters instead of the four sections of the Medicine Wheel I had originally contemplated. I chose the number seven as the structural framework and numerical symbol to honor the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers and the concept of the Seven Generations. The number seven is sacred to the people I interviewed for this study. Fourteen photos symbolize tipi pole teachings.

In **Chapter One**, I state the research problem, list the research questions and indicate the purpose of this study.

In **Chapter Two** I explain the rationale for this study. In line with the traveler metaphor of Kvale (1996), I provide background information on Aboriginal perspectives

situating myself as a traveler in a personal context. I give an overview of the diversity of Aboriginal communities, and set the challenge to include Aboriginal perspectives in the dominant culture rhetoric of character education.

Chapter Three deals with the concept of character education, comparing concepts of character versus personality. Next I define character education, identify qualities of character, and provide insight into the Golden Rule of Reciprocity. Finally, I examine the importance of hope to character development and the concept of citizens as by-products of schools.

Chapter Four constitutes the literature review. Here I examine First Nations involvement in character education from a historical perspective. First, (4a) I provide an overview of educating for character from Eurocentric dominant culture colonialist viewpoints. Then (4b), I focus on educating for character from First Nations perspectives as expressed in the literature. Next (4c), I identify and explain two key points of contact with First Nations culture during the moral education phase at the turn of the century and the during the current growing holistic education phase. Finally (4d), I draw attention to a growing shift in character education thinking and strategies that incorporate environmental intelligence, holism and traditional First Nations teachings (4e), identifying common practices.

In **Chapter Five**, as a non-Native researcher doing research involving First Nations perspectives on positive character development, I describe methodologies used. I explain how I chose the samples and outline interview methods. Referring to the full-texts of primary data interviewees provided in Appendices D to H, I examine interviewees' perspectives with respect to the interview questions in Appendix B, referring to data from the full transcripts of interviews with them, contained with their permission, in Appendices D to H. Each one of the Appendices begins with an introduction to the interview participant. All interviewees chose to have their scripts (stories) included with this thesis along with photos as authentic first-hand examples of First Nations voice.

In **Chapter Six**, I provide a rationale for selecting a holistic framework for First Nations character education analysis. Information is organized into six areas of

connections: Analytic-Intuitive thinking, Body-Mind, Subject, Community, Earth and Self as conceived by Miller (1993, 1996). Finally, I perform a focused analysis, checking information received in this oral tradition format against what I have gleaned from the literature.

To conclude, in **Chapter Seven**, I restate the thesis challenge, answer the three key thesis questions, identify four important considerations on incorporating First Nations strategies, give a brief summary on the First Nations spirit of character education, state limitations of the current study and make suggestions for areas of further research inquiry.

Chapter Two: Rationale for the Study

Canadian First Nations voice on character education is conspicuously absent. At the time of my academic travels to Australia and New Zealand in July 2001, I had mainly located American-based writings. Having not yet discovered any North American Aboriginal experts at that time, I sought Aboriginal voices abroad. My intense search for Aborigine and Maori character education writings at Australian National University, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Queensland University of Technology, the University of Newcastle and the University of Auckland produced only mainstream American character education references, three Australian dominant culture ones by Gaita (1991, 2000), Hill (1991), Moore (1996) and Watt (1976), but no character education material by any Aborigine, except for a remotely related unpublished Masters of Education paper by White (1998). I found no official work on character education by any Maori either, despite the presence of authors like Ihimaera (1987) who reinforces character qualities like courage and perseverance, challenging us to find ways to connect the old and the new.

Canadians should have the option of hearing ancient wisdoms of the Original Peoples of this land that we as Other occupy. Diverse Aboriginal communities have rich, valuable stories to tell. Educators should be encouraged to consider Native worldviews, become better informed and explore possible benefits of diverse traditional First Nations character education teachings, for the good of our students.

Diversity of Aboriginal Communities

Josephy (1994) drew attention to the diversity of five hundred First Nations tribes across the United States, identifying changes wrought by cultural contact with colonizers, followed by First Nations struggles for survival, respect, identity, self-determination, self-government and sovereignty. North American Native communities in the United States and Canada vary greatly in geographic location, language, lore and customs, as emphasized in the literature. (See Del age, 1995; Delattre, 1992; Dickason, 1994; Fleet, 1997; Horton & Daigle, 1994, Hulan & Monture-Angus, 1999; Josephy, 1994; Literacy Ontario, 1009; Yenne, 1986; Young-Ing & Belmore, 1999; Statistics Canada, 2001).

Who are First Nations peoples of Canada and Ontario?

The Indian act: Past and present: A manual on registration and entitlement legislation (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1991) provided historical legislation from 1850 to 1970 defining the term *Indian*. 1850 marked the first attempt to broadly define *Indian* to include “any person deemed to be aboriginal by birth or blood; any person reported to belong to particular band or body of Indians; and any person who married an Indian or was adopted by Indians” (p. 7). Over two centuries it has changed.

The Canadian Census grouped Aboriginals into various categories. Table I of the *1996 Canadian Census of Population by Aboriginal Group* (Statistics Canada, 1996) shows, 799,010 or 2.8% of the population to be Native out of 28, 528,125 Canadians. Of this Native population 554,290 (66%) are North American Indian, 210,190 are Métis (mixed blood) (26%) and 41,080 (5%) are Inuit. Also, each province accounted for about 18% of the total Aboriginal population.⁷ People self-identified themselves as Métis, Inuit or Indian. To the chagrin of one of the Elders interviewed, no specific reference was made to the Innu people in Statistics Canada’s eighteen page profile on *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* released in 2001 or in Siggner, Hull, Vermaeten, Guimond, and Jantzen’s June 2001 presentation paper “Understanding Aboriginal Definitions: Implications for Counts and Socio-economic Characteristics” shared at Laval University. The multidimensional concept of Aboriginal is still unclear. For Census Canada purposes, First Nations peoples are defined by ancestry, self-identification, band membership and Registered Indian status. Since 1986, more people are self-identifying themselves as Aboriginals (Siggner, Hull, Vermaeten, Guimond and Jantzen, 2001, p. 1). I use the expression First Nations in the sense of an indigenous person of North America. I never use it in this document to refer to Aboriginals outside our continent. Often I use the terms First Nations, Native and Aboriginal interchangeably in the North American context to avoid repeating the same term. I usually don’t use the term Indian.

⁷ See the online version at <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/980113/d980113.htm>.

Table I***Aboriginal Identity, Canada, Provinces, & Territories, 1996 Census***

Area	Total population	Total Aboriginal Identity Population		North American	Métis	Inuit	Multiple	Other	Non-Aboriginal population
		#	%	Indian single response	single response	single response	Aboriginal responses *	Aboriginal response **	
Canada	28,528,125	799,010	2.8	529,035	204,115	40,225	6,415	19,215	27,729,115
Newfoundland	547,160	14,200	2.6	4,355	4,555	4,120	180	995	532,955
Prince Edward Island	132,855	950	0.7	780	10	10	10	35	131,905
Nova Scotia	899,970	12,380	1.4	10,910	825	210	30	395	887,590
New Brunswick	729,625	10,250	1.4	8,780	955	110	30	380	719,375
Quebec	7,045,085	71,415	1.0	45,015	15,560	8,235	545	2,055	6,973,670
Ontario	10,642,790	141,525	1.3	112,825	21,530	1,150	1,350	4,665	10,501,270
Manitoba	1,100,290	128,680	11.7	80,620	45,365	250	840	1,615	971,610
Saskatchewan	976,615	111,245	11.4	72,835	35,855	170	685	1,705	865,370
Alberta	2,669,195	122,835	4.6	69,145	49,490	615	1,325	2,260	2,546,360
British Columbia	3,689,755	139,655	3.8	107,370	25,575	740	1,205	4,765	3,550,105
Yukon Territory	30,650	6,175	20.1	5,330	550	100	30	170	24,480
Northwest Territories (incl. Nunavut)	64,125	39,690	61.9	11,070	3,745	24,505	190	185	24,435

*Note: Multiple Aboriginal responses include those who gave 2 or more Aboriginal responses such as North American Indian + Metis

**Note: Other Aboriginal responses include persons reporting legal Indian status or Band/First Nation membership, but no Aboriginal identity. These persons were included in the Aboriginal identity population.

The Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat and Ministry of Citizenship (1992) published an information binder called *Akwesasne to Wunnumin Lake: Profiles of Aboriginal Communities in Ontario*, which provides a detailed overview of Aboriginal peoples in Ontario, both on and off reserves, in Aboriginal communities and in urban centres. At that time, according to the 1986 Census of Canada information contained therein, out of 167,380 Aboriginals in Ontario, 88% were North American Indian, 1% were Inuit, 9% were Métis and 2% were other (p. 9). At a national level, once far more numerous prior to European contact, Aboriginal peoples in Canada now represent 2.8% (less than 3%) of our total population, as indicated by the 1996 Census just displayed.

Exposure to Aboriginal Perspectives

Tully, seconded by Alfred (1999), drew attention to the blatant exclusion of indigenous perspectives from dominant culture rhetoric in the June/July 2001 issue of *University Affairs/Affaires universitaires*, a newspaper published by the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada:

The influence of aboriginal scholars is starting to be felt, at least on the teaching side of the university, Dr. Tully says. Native studies programs now include local indigenous communities in the curriculum. “So we have elders coming in and talking about Native history, culture, ways of knowing, and Native views about appropriate means of negotiations,” he explains.... However, Native communities generally haven’t been included in developing and carrying out research about their people, says Taiaiake Alfred, a professor and director of the indigenous governance program at the University of Victoria. “Thousands of people have built a career on Native research, but very few have engaged Native people in the research exercise itself,” he says. “It’s not acceptable for someone to create a notion of what it is to be Mohawk without running it by the Mohawks themselves.” (U of Winnipeg hosts native rights conference, p. 31)

The position of these two university professors was echoed in the writings of Battiste (2000a, 2000b), Mi’kmaq of Canada and Smith (1999a, 1999b, 2000), Maori of New Zealand. Both specialize in indigenous research methods with a view to protecting indigenous knowledge from decolonizing epistemologies and misappropriation of intellectual property.

In 2001, Justin Trudeau, son of former Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, was acknowledged in the media as a prominent voice at the forefront of the Canadian character education movement (Griffin, 2001). In response to a question I posed to him

directly, Trudeau validated my challenge to explore relationships between traditional First Nations teachings and character education:

I think there is absolutely room for... influences, particularly from our Native teachings because, you know, this is the land, this is where we are, but to close ourselves off to anything... I mean there are incredible wisdoms that come from the East. There's tremendous strengths and storytelling traditions that come from Africa. There is... a world full of culture, a world full of traditions that work and that are effective. And the idea that we're following narrowly a European model with a grading and knowledge based that knowing fact, ...that knowing knowledge, understanding the numbers, that doing well on tests is what leads to happiness?... We can see that it is not working, so to look at other options, to look at Native teachings, to look at anything else that might put more into Education.... Allow the students to look at them, to examine them, you know, and make decisions for themselves..... There are different ways of thinking out there. They're not all wrong... They're not all necessarily wrong just because they are not what you believe in. Building up that difference, encouraging different points of view - that is what character education is all about and embracing the Native side is just one good element that we can build on and should build on. Thank you. (Trudeau, 2001a)

D. Paul Schafer (2001a, 2001b; 1998a) calls for inclusion of Aboriginal worldviews in character education. He encouraged pursuit of this topic:

It seems to me there is much to be learned from First Nations people about character education that is relevant to all Canadians, especially in terms of respect for elders, traditions and values, relationships with the land, preservation of cherished ways of life, and the search for human fulfillment and well-being. Your research should prove exceedingly valuable in broadening and deepening our awareness and understanding of this. While there are those who believe that culture and cultures evolve from lower to higher orders of development, I believe your research will show that there is a great deal to be learned from the cultures of First Nations that is relevant to life, living, environmental sustainability and spirituality at this stage in human affairs. It would be valuable to show what character education means to First Nations people in and of itself, as well as in the broader context of Canadian culture. (Personal written communication, Saturday, May 26, 2001).

Personal Context

I only ever had one face-to-face encounter with one real Indian⁸ during my childhood. We laughed and played together for an hour. Three decades went by without me meeting another Native person. I was ignorant of the historic contributions of a great Native American leader known as Tecumseh⁹ who had played a key role like the Iroquois (Benn, 1998) to keep Canada free from American control in the war of 1812. His small roadside statue on Highway 2, went unnoticed only a few kilometers from my parents' farm. At age twenty, I was as uninformed as first year university students polled in the study initiated by Ann Pohl (2000b) and discussed in the subsequent *Report Highlights: Learning About Walking In Beauty—Placing Aboriginal Perspectives in Canadian Classrooms* published by the Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (2002b). A decade ago, I was ignorant. Diebel (2002) and Yourk (2002) advise Canadian to seek knowledge of First Nations peoples.

Making connections through race relations.

An unexpected sequence of events awakened my interest in First Nations peoples. In the 1990s, I became involved in proactive race relations initiatives. By the end of 1992, I had spoken with a couple of Elders and a Chief at race relations conference in Vaughan and at the Ontario Educational Leadership Centre in Longford Mills, Ontario. I had also invited Native people into my grade eight classroom to tell stories, perform plays and drum. I met Nimkie Benishie-Nini (The Thunderbird Man) known in English as Harvey Anderson and his wife at a Race Relations conference. A couple of years later, they visited my classroom. Even though they had a funeral to attend that afternoon, they kept their promise to give teachings to my grade eight students. I listened carefully.

Opportunities to invite First Nations speakers as special guests into the school to talk about positive race relations and their belief systems increased. Over the last decade, I have had repeated, personal interaction with First Nations peoples, dancing and talking

⁸ **Indian** is a term that was widely to refer to First Nations peoples in my community when I was growing up. This term is often used in a pejorative manner and therefore not politically correct. As a young child, that was the term I heard and used. That is why it is used in this section of the text where I refer to my youth.

on the Pow Wow trail, participating in drumming and talking circles and listening to stories of Elders. First-hand exposure to First Nations teachings led to my understanding that living in balance with oneself, humankind and Mother Earth lies at the very core of the traditional Aboriginal way of life. I sought ways to make meaningful connections.

Opening up to the opportunity to learn.

A publishing company, learning of my award-winning work in race relations, asked me to develop a teacher's activity guidebook on the Canadian treaties. I began doing background research. My limited experiences with Aboriginal people led me to take a Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario Aboriginal Education Summer Course in July, 1994 at Lake Buckhorn, near Curve Lake First Nations.

That course introduced me to my first talking circle and to Ojibway playwright Drew Hayden Taylor. A course participant, Jan Beaver, of Alderville First Nation, invited me into her drumming circle. Her brother, Rick Beaver would later illustrate one of the stories of an Elder interviewed in this study. Drew Hayden Taylor, who would also become part of this study, told stories by a tipi outside.

In 1995, the Program Coordinator of the Independent Learning Centre and Native Education Policy unit for the Ministry of Education and Training Independent Learning Centre in Toronto asked me to join a writing team upgrade the existing 1981 Ontario Curriculum Guideline entitled *People of Native Ancestry*. We checked carefully for stereotyping: racial, religious and cultural bias in reference materials. I was one of two non-Native members in that group. Full of ideas, we talked more than we listened. We met in a room where a First Nations poster quietly bore the message "There is a time to talk and a time to listen." Both projects ended abruptly, but my interest in learning about Native peoples continued.

On August 19, 1996, disheartened, I hand-delivered my treaties manuscript along with a letter to the Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto, hoping my give-away would do someone some good somewhere. In the meantime, the wheels were in motion

⁹ **Tecumseh**, a fine orator and courageous warrior, fought in support of General Brock in the War of 1812, was considered to be one of the last great Indian leaders of his time who helped to keep Canada Canadian. Tecumseh is better known and studied in American history than in Canadian history.

for making meaningful connections with many traditional Aboriginal people who would teach me more about their world view. I would learn their value of *being in the moment*. My eyes opened to a whole world beyond stereotypical media images of American and Canadian Indians. Many writers urge society to discard harmful stereotypes (Bordewich, 1996; Cornelius, 1999; Davis & Castellano, 2001; Deloria, 1998a, 1998b; Dickason, 1997; Doxtator, 1992; Sealey & Kirkness, 1973; Waubegeshig, 1974; Weatherford, 1988). Stereotypes arise from and lead to prejudice. People fear the unknown.

Battling stereotypes.

I wondered how many non-Native people had witnessed the sad plight of the homeless Aboriginal on city streets, a reality to which society has usually turned a blind eye. I have often seen the same woman in a wheelchair, clutching her bottle in a wrinkled paper bag when I cross the tiny park just outside the hallowed doors of learning to our Ontario Institute of Studies in Education in downtown Toronto. When the snow is off the ground, often there is a small group of street people huddled together, some of whom are Native, dozing off in sleeping bags or clutching cardboard under the trees.

Once I brought along with me to a thesis committee meeting a traditional Native dancer and artist from whom I had purchased artwork at a Mother's Day Pow Wow up in Mnjikaning First Nation. I wanted him to meet my thesis supervisory team. He had begun dancing again to honour his late mother's memory. Although many Native youths do not follow the traditional ways, an increasing number are reclaiming their heritage, seeking teachings from the Elders. (Anderson, 2000; Barrie Area Native Advisory Council, 2001; Brant, 1984; Grassroots Women's Collective, 1999; Kilcup, 2000; Monture-Angus, 1995; Ywahoo, 1987). There are many *Anishnabe*¹⁰ who have always followed the traditional teachings, striving mindfully to live wholistically and in balance. There are also many survivors who have grown through suffering and pain, to embrace wholeness again, becoming mentors and strong role models for their people (Attwood & Markus, 1999; Battiste, 2000b). Others wander with lost Spirits, mirroring the reality of tormented youths and adults from many other cultures who are also lost and in need of real help and hope.

¹⁰ **Anishnabe** or **Anishinabek** means "the people" in Ojibway. There are varied spellings of the term.

Traditional First Nations people follow what is known in oral teachings as the *Good Red Road*, respecting their teachings and appreciating how we are interconnected in the Web of Life. They know and revere the basic teaching of Chief Seattle, whose exact words are disputed. Although it is alleged that the 1887 transcription of his 1854 public address was later altered, he is often quoted. His main message remains intact:

This we know: the earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. All things are connected, like blood which connects one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. Man [sic] did not weave the web of life—he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. (Smith, 1887)

Miller (2000) states:

I think it is important to link the need for soulful education with other changes that are taking place on this planet. I prefer the term “global awakening.” Ecology as well as the traditions of indigenous people has drawn the metaphor of the web to portray this interconnectedness. If we can see ourselves as part of the web of life there is less chance that we will tear this web apart. (p. 5)

Facing the challenge.

I had decided to face the challenge to seek Aboriginal perspectives on First Nations character education. My backpacking travels abroad in Australia and New Zealand during the summer of 2001 revealed the global prevalence of American character education references in dominant culture university literature. In those two countries, I also discovered that living in harmony with the Earth is a universal constant for all traditional Aboriginal societies and that their character education approaches embrace a more wholistic, nature-based worldview. This is as true for the traditional Australian Aborigines and the Maori of New Zealand as it is for our own North American “Indians.” Finally, in the Aboriginal school of life, character is often learned in a variety of non-traditional settings quite different from inside four walls of an official classroom in a recognized educational institution. For me, doing a study involving face-to-face, heart-to-heart interviews with Elders in the area of character education and First Nations teachings became the next logical step in my journey towards better understanding.

Chapter Three: The Concept of Character Education

“We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education.” Dr Martin Luther King (1929 – 1968)
(Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2001a).

To begin, what is character? Two definitions of character from the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Barber, 1998) refer to “the collective qualities or characteristics, especially mental and moral, that distinguish a person or thing” and to “moral strength” (p. 239). General Arthur G. Trudeau, quoted in Vincent (1998), gave this definition:

Character is something each one of us must build for himself out of the laws of God and nature, and examples of others, and—most of all—out of the trials and errors of daily life. Character is the total of thousands of small daily strivings to live up to the best that is in us. Character is the final decision to reject whatever is demeaning to oneself or to others with the confidence and honesty to choose the right (p. vii).

Lickona (1991) stated “Down through history, in countries all over the world, education has had two great goals: to help young people become smart and to help them become good” (p. 6), adding “Three components of good character are moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action.” (p. 53) and “The highest form of character includes genuinely being attracted to the good” (59). Ryan & Bohlin (1999) strike a parallel:

The goal of moral education for Plato is to bring one’s soul—one’s reason, spirit, and appetite—into intelligent harmony. These three seats of human motivation—reason’s desire to know, to understand and figure things out; the spirit’s ambition for achievement and honor; and the appetite’s longing for satisfaction—need to be ordered and guided by reason. Without this proper orientation, we allow ourselves to be ruled by our primitive impulses. Character education is about achieving this order in the soul.... it is about acquiring integrity. (p. 140)

Guiding youths to be better people and citizens is a fundamental societal obligation crucial to democratic countries like the United States and Canada where we embrace our freedoms, rights and responsibilities. Forming character, which fuels my own teaching practice, is no new concept.

Character education reaches back to pre-recorded history in oral traditions. First Nations societies were democracies. In First Nations societies, socialization of children was accomplished within the extended family. Kalman (2001) states:

The elders of the longhouse were grandparents or older uncles and aunts who were respected advisers in the village. They played a very important role in teaching the children the skills they needed in life. From the time children could walk, the elders taught them how to behave and do all the things they needed to do to become responsible and successful adults (p. 19).

Traditionally, in the dominant colonizing culture, raising good children was the main responsibility of parents in the home. Bennett, Finn, and Crib (1999) emphasize that developing good character in children must be reinforced at school:

A child's family is the first and most important incubator of morality. Molding character must begin in the home in the earliest years, but after that, schools must help. Parents rightfully expect their schools to be allies in the moral education of the young. (p. 523)

Bennett, Finn and Cribb (1999) also identified intellectual and moral development as critical complementary components in a well-rounded education: "Moral education—conditioning the heart and mind toward the good—starts at home, and you are probably the most important teacher of virtues that your child will ever have" (p. 67).

Defining Character versus Personality

Schafer (1991) stresses the dichotomy between the notions of personality and character; the former being viewed as more external, socially and environmentally oriented; the latter being viewed as internally, morally and spiritually oriented. Allport (1988) debated nature versus nurture and the impact of prejudice, on our lives. Allport (1963) also distinguished between human *personality* and *character*. Personality was outwardly projected and product-oriented, whereas character signified a more process oriented, inwardly projected, possibly inborn "etched," relatively fixed trait.

No less fascinating than the term personality is the term character. The two are often used interchangeably, although the first is of Latin derivation, the second [character] of Greek, meaning engraving. It is the mark of a man - his pattern of traits or his life-style. European psychologists, however, seem to have a preference for character, while American psychologists favour personality. There is an interesting reason for the difference. The former term (personality) suggests appearance, visible behaviour, surface quality; the latter (character) suggests deep (perhaps inborn), fixed, and basic structure. Now American psychology has a preference for environmentalism; its behaviouristic leaning leads it to stress outer movement, visible action. European psychology, on the other hand, tends to stress what is inborn in the nature of man, what is deeply etched and relatively unchanging. (1963, pp 30-32)

Saul (1997) argues for maintaining a Canadian idea of balance:

The Inuit quality of *isuma* summarizes the essential context. It has as much to do with positive nationalism as with the public good. *Isuma*—intelligence that consists of the knowledge of our responsibilities towards our society. It is a characteristic which grows with time. If you choose to look, you can find it at the core of events through the long line of the Canadian experience. It is an intelligence, the Inuit say, which grows because it is nurtured. (p. 508)

Saul (1993) urges us to continue to ask questions rather than to accept societal dictates like unthinking sheep. Saul (1995) warns us we are sacrificing our children to technological isolation, removing the crucial human social element. He identifies a primary purpose of education in a democratic society as showing “individuals how they can function *together* in society” (p. 139). He cautions us against producing “disequilibrium” (p. 182) counterproductive to a democratic society, urging our endurance of “psychic discomfort” (p. 190), considered by him as essential to “acceptance of consciousness” (p. 190).

The human heart is experiencing an increasing desire for interconnectedness. North American society must accept increased responsibility for thinking more globally and sustainably on this planet. The traditional teachings of Native Americans and First Nations peoples of Canada on educating for character can help us achieve this.

Defining Character Education

Given these perspectives on what constitutes character, what is character education? The YRDSB Character Education Committee provided this definition:

Character education is a deliberate effort to cultivate positive personal attributes and civility among students. It is a whole school effort to create a community in which positive attitudes, values and behaviours are fostered. These qualities are promoted explicitly, modeled, taught, expected, celebrated, and continuously practised in every day actions. In short, character education is the promotion of universally desirable qualities such as respect, responsibility, honesty and integrity. (York Region District School Board, 2001, p. 1)

Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer (2001), state that Native American character education deals with “an intrinsic relationship between moral development and civic responsibility that leads to democracy, and that our democratic ideals originated as a result of collaboration with early Indian tribes of the Iroquois confederacy” (p. ix). They envisage

“real” character education as reflecting “personal concern for the great questions about life, its wonders, and the potential of the human spirit” (p. xvi). They also state:

Inherent in most Indian philosophies is the realization that we are the authors of our own lives. Our experiences, reflections, and spiritual awareness are the only sources of authenticity. Others are honored for sharing wisdom and experience but have no authority to determine anyone’s path.... One should recognize that there is no absolute authority beyond that answered in your prayers and in your heart-mind-experience reflection perspective. (p. 8)

Jacobs (2003) clearly defines traditional First Nations character education:

The traditional Indian philosophies emphasize a *spiritual* approach to character as if everything in life were related in a sacred way. For example, courage is regarded by most American Indian and Alaskan Native peoples as one of the highest virtues, but the greatest manifestation of courage is generosity. Initiation rights designed to build character generally teach children to turn their fears into virtues rather than escaping them. (p. 26)

Jacobs cautions readers against character stereotyping in a footnote:

Of course there is a danger of romanticizing American Indian virtues. I can assure you that an Indian person can be as empty of character as any other person. And, not everyone agrees with me about the Indian world view being more virtuous. (p. 26)

Lickona (1991) acknowledges the spiritual void in character education:

Public school values education clearly won’t, by itself, fill the spiritual void that causes so many people to look for life enhancement in drugs or alcohol or to risk their health and futures in the process. But in this difficult area, as elsewhere, schools must contribute what they can. They can help young people develop a sense of responsibility to themselves and others and begin to think about what it truly means to live life well (p. 394).

Although parents are acknowledged as shouldering the primary responsibility in character education, schools are called upon by society to fill in the gaps in the cracks of character of our youths and to repair the fallout where family efforts have failed.

As a guideline for planning and an evaluation of suitability of resources, Lickona, Schaps and Lewis (2002) stress “Eleven Principles of Effective Character Education:”

- 1) Character education promotes core ethical values as the basis of good character.
- 2) “Character” must be comprehensively defined to include thinking, feeling and behavior.

- 3) Effective character education requires an intentional, proactive, and comprehensive approach that promotes the core values in all phases of school life.
- 4) The school must be a caring community.
- 5) To develop character, students need opportunities for moral action.
- 6) Effective character education includes a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners and helps them succeed.
- 7) Character education should strive to develop students' intrinsic motivation.
- 8) The school staff must become a learning and moral community in which all share responsibility for character education and attempt to adhere to the same core values that guide the education of students.
- 9) Character education requires moral leadership from both staff and students.
- 10) The school must recruit parents and community members as full partners in the character-building effort.
- 11) Evaluation of character education should assess the character of the school, the school staff's functioning as character educators, and the extent to which students manifest good character.

Values and virtues.

The character education movement spread from the States to Canada in 1999, just prior to the New Millennium. Character education literature by Canadians is still very limited. In 2000, I found an article referring to studies by Peel and Hamilton School Boards in Ontario. No information on their studies is posted on the website of either board. There was no reference to them in the March 2003 edition of *Orbit* magazine entitled "Can Schools Create Citizenship?" Despite inclusion of Canadian authors, this issue, the first publication ever in Canadian character education literature, reflects continued American dominance on the Canadian stage in character and citizenship education. This issue introduced the first Native American voice into Canada. So far, there is no data anywhere on recognized Aboriginal character education in Canada.

Himmelfarb (1995) explores society's demoralization, identifying virtues as a "constant" and values as a variable, ineffective substitute. American-based character education research heralds the resurgence of values education as welcomed response to a growing societal need to cultivate virtues. Jacobs (2003) clarifies:

It is useful to distinguish between values or individual/cultural preferences and core universal virtues like courage, generosity, honesty, humility, fortitude and patience that all cultures tend to honour. Western schools, in spite of rhetoric about character education, tend to focus on certain values like respecting authority or consumerism, even when attached to a virtue like honesty (p. 27).

Canadians share similar character disintegration concerns with Americans. Queen (2001) describes increased problems amongst York Region youths, in Ontario, Canada.

On one hand, youth are enjoying greater educational, technological, recreational, cultural and social opportunities than ever before. But there is a growing population of alienated youth who are faced with problems ranging from homelessness and street drugs to violence and loss of community. (p. 5)

Lickona (1994) identifies symptoms of widespread moral decline amongst our youth and a growing chasm between the old and the new morality. These symptoms include juvenile crime, disrespect for authority, school violence, vandalism, cruelty to peers, cheating, self-centeredness, alcohol and drug addiction and teenage sex. Educators hope to re-moralize society, bridging this chasm, through character education:

The old morality with roots in religion, speaks of respect, service to others, sacrifice, resistance to temptation, and moderation in the pursuit of pleasure. The new morality celebrates self-centeredness and self-indulgence. Grab what you can get, because you only go around once (Lickona, 1994, p. 5).

Cairnes (2001) stressed relationships between IQ, EQ and SQ. There seems to be an *elastic band correlation* between emotional quotients (EQ) and intellectual quotients (IQ), impacting on character. The band is becoming stretched to the breaking point. Across North America, we are witnessing a rapid decline in EQ coupled with increased IQ. (Lickona, 1991; Hoffman & Lee, 1997; Ryan & Bohlin, 1999).

Goleman (1998) states:

There is a dangerous paradox at work, however. As children grow smarter in IQ, their emotional intelligence is on the decline. On average, children are growing more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive... Dr. Thomas Achenbach, the University of Vermont psychologist who did these studies—and who has collaborated with colleagues on similar assessments in other nations—tells me that the decline in children's basic emotional competencies seems to be worldwide. The most telling signs of this are seen in rising rates among young people of problems such as despair, alienation, drug abuse, crime and violence, depression or eating disorders, unwanted pregnancies, bullying, and dropping out of school. (pp 11-12)

Zohar and Marshall (2000) provide input on the missing piece known as SQ or Spiritual Intelligence, explaining in depth a concept of the “lotus of the self” involving a journey of heightened self-awareness (p. 285). They emphasize that developing high SQ has no necessary connection with religion (p. 292). Indigenous character education includes SQ. Jacobs (2003) perceives spiritual awareness as crucial:

Character education will be another failed effort at school reform unless we replace ideas associated with authority and conformity with a more spiritual awareness about the authentic goals of a virtuous life. A successful model for this alternative exists within indigenous ways of knowing. (p. 26).

To improve our SQ, Zohar and Marshall (2000) identify preconditions, all of which are compatible with the philosophy of indigenous education expressed earlier by Jacobs:

High SQ requires us to be deeply honest with ourselves, deeply aware of ourselves. It requires us to face choices and to realize that sometimes the right choices are difficult ones. High SQ demands the most intense personal integrity. It demands that we become aware of and live out of that deep center of ourselves that transcends all fragments into which our lives have been shattered. It demands that we re-collect ourselves, including those parts of ourselves that it has been painful or difficult to own. But most of all, high SQ demands that we stand open to experience, that we recapture our ability to see life and others afresh as through the eyes of a child. It demands that we cease to seek refuge in what we know and constantly explore and learn from what we do not know. It demands that we live the questions rather than the answers (p. 296).

According to Heenan (2001, 2002), New Zealand shares our concern that children are headed for catastrophe. In 1993, the *New Zealand Foundation for Character Education* began supporting values education in the classroom, following the lead of the United States. On July 24, 2001, Heenan spoke at the National Conference of Rural Women New Zealand:

The predicament faced by communities throughout New Zealand and the rest of the Western World [... is that] deep down, we sense that something has gone wrong at the heart of New Zealand Society. Yet, despite our best endeavours and all our good intentions the indications are that things are not getting better.

Heenan (2002) used the term *values* instead of *virtues* referring to C. S. Lewis (2001) whom he lauded as one of the twentieth century’s greatest minds who:

undertook an exhaustive study of cultures and civilizations. He included the Ancient Egyptian, Old Norse, Ancient Jewish, Babylonian, North American Indian, Hindu, Ancient Chinese, Roman, Christian, Greek, Australian Aboriginal, Anglo-Saxon, Stoic and Ancient Indian—and identified eight objective “values”

[virtues] which they all held in common. . . . Lewis concluded that these objective “values”—such things as honesty, beneficence, duty, justice, mercy and magnanimity—are part of creation and that society ignored them at its peril. (Heenan, J., 2002, electronic version)

Not one Maori facilitator had been included as a workshop facilitator as *The New Zealand Foundation for Character Education* held its first National Character Education Conference in Christchurch, New Zealand 2002. The conference took a fundamentalist Christian approach to moral education, engaging more in moral values character education than in global virtues education.

Identifying Qualities of Character

In July, 2001, when visiting the Australian National War Museum in Canberra, Australia, in the room set aside as the space for the unknown soldier killed in the war of 1914-1918, I discovered stained glass full-length portraits of fifteen different people, both male and female, representing different roles. One desirable wartime human trait for Australians entering battle was listed at the bottom of each stained glass window. Esteemed traits for patriotic citizens in times of war were identified as coolness, control, audacity, decision, endurance, comradeship, ancestry, patriotism, chivalry, loyalty, curiosity, resource, candour, devotion and dependence. Kagan (1999a) identified ten desirable character qualities as being caring, citizenship, cooperation, courage, fairness, honesty, integrity, leadership, respect and responsibility in his teacher’s guide. The York Region District School Board identifies ten key character attributes: respect, responsibility, honesty, empathy, fairness, initiative, perseverance, integrity, courage and optimism. (See Appendix Q.) The Town of Markham, Ontario, Canada led Markham to join YRDSB’s character education initiative. Griffin (2002) reported:

Council’s vision statement reads: In York Region, people recognize and promote the importance of good character. They treat others as they would like to be treated, show respect, are accountable, fair, honest and courageous, have empathy, persevere, show initiative and act with integrity. (p. 3)

While such character education seems a recent undertaking, character education teachings have been passed on through oral traditions in North American First Nations societies like the Mohawk, Ojibway and Lakota for hundreds of years. (See Appendix Q.) Respect, courage and honesty are desirable common attributes threaded throughout each

of the “peacetime” character quality lists and stressed on Native and non-Native lists of desired character traits. Between peacetime and wartime attribute lists, two qualities overlap. *Candour* and *audacity* correspond to *respect* (honesty) and *courage*. If we live these qualities in our daily lives, other positive attributes naturally follow.

The Golden Rule

Birchall and O’Grady (1988) refer to The Golden Rule as an example of a Code of Conduct, defining it from a religious perspective: “A code or ethic teaches followers the moral values of the religion and how to conduct their lives.” (p. 99). *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Barber, 1998) offers this definition: **The Golden Rule ethic of reciprocity:** (noun) a basic principle of action, esp. “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (p. 601). This is a Christian maxim. Gensler (n. d.) highlights this in his Web page, writing “Treat others as you want to be treated.” The Star Trek ethic of the twentieth century is “Do no harm” (Henderson, 2001). Confucius stated, “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others” (Confucius, 1993, n.d., Beck, 2002). Etzioni’s **New Golden Rule of Reciprocity** is “Respect and uphold society’s moral order as you would have society respect and uphold your autonomy” (1998, p. xviii). Joas (2000) reinforces the reality that the Golden Rule exists in some form in all major religions and philosophies. To quote Ryan & Bohlin (1999):

The world’s greatest thinkers from the West, including Plato, Aristotle, Kant, and Dewey, and from the East, including Confucius, Laotzu, and Buddha, have all been strong advocates of giving conscious attention to character formation and focusing our human energies on living worthy lives. (p. 19)

Whether dealing with religion, spirituality or simply establishing an ethical code of conduct, the Golden Rule is global enough and generic enough to be acceptable to all peoples of all cultures who form part of our Canadian mosaic, allowing the possibility of aspiring to uphold certain virtues to be espoused by Canadian youths whereas a purely religious bent would be problematic. Peniel and D’Esprit (1999) wrote:

One of the beauties of the Golden Rule is its total universality.... The concept of the Golden Rule applies to all good, caring, giving people, regardless of religion, faith or lack of faith.... Thus it’s an ideal in which all kind hearted people can join together towards the common goal of manifesting Pure love and its virtues (kindness, compassion, tolerance, peace, sharing, giving, etc...) in tangible ways, for the mutual betterment of themselves, and all creation (p. 4).

Sorenson (2002) has posted Golden Rules of Reciprocity from major world religions at <http://www.fragrant.demon.co.uk/golden.html>. Therein, he quotes a traditional Nigerian Yoruba Proverb which is an Earth-based teaching: “One going to take a pointed stick to pinch a baby bird should first try it on himself to feel how it hurts.”

McKenna is working on a simple black and white chart in French, *La Règle d'or dans les religions du monde*. Of all the lists I have examined, the English *Golden Rules* (McKenna & Milan 2002a) poster produced by McKenna of Scarboro Missions and posted at <http://www.jcu.edu/philosophy/gensler/poster.gif> is the most inclusive collection of Golden Rules of Reciprocity. (See Figure III.) This poster, prominently displayed on the lecturn of the United Nations, includes Native spirituality along with major world religions. The large circle representing the Earth is a symbol sacred to Aboriginals. At the bottom of the circle, in the south, is Chief Dan George's Earth connection quote for Native Spirituality: “We are as much alive as we keep the Earth alive” (McKenna & Milan, 2002a), chosen over Chief Seattle's quote considered to have been tampered with by *Other*, a colonizing culture outsider *rewriting* it. (Buerge, 1983, 1993). According to Ojibway MedicineWheel teachings, the South is where the *Anishnabe* (Original People) sit when all four colours of the world come together. Red represents Native people, our emotions, Earth teachings and the Good Red Road. One animal totem of the South is Deer. One of the Elders interviewed in this study, Nokomis, is of the Deer Clan. Deer Clan medicine is very gentle, as true Elders are expected to be. All balanced approaches to life contain some form of Golden Rule of Reciprocity.



The Golden Rule

Across The World's Religions

Native Spirituality

We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive *Chief Dan George*



Baha'i Faith

Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself *Baha'u'llah, Gleanings*



Buddhism

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful
The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18



Christianity

In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets
Jesus, Matthew 7:12



Confucianism

One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct...*loving kindness*. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself
Confucius, Analects 15.23



Hinduism

This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you
Mahabharata 5:1517



Islam

Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself
The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith



Figure III.

Golden rules of reciprocity from around the globe.

Jainism

One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated
Mahavira, Suttrakritanga



Judaism

What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole *Torah*; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.
Hillel, Talmud, Shabbath 31a



Sikhism

I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all
Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299



Taoism

Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain and your neighbour's loss as your own loss
Lao Tzu, T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218



Unitarianism

We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part

Unitarian principle



Zoroastrianism

Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself *Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29*



Figure III (continued)

Golden rules of reciprocity from around the globe.

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Guidelines for a Golden Rule Workshop

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Hope

In the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Barber, 1998, p. 680), hope is defined as “expectation and desire combined, e.g., for a certain thing to occur.” The apparent importance of hope in character development literature and the high frequency with which this word is mentioned by First Nations people in discussion, led me to decide to include an interview question about hope. (See Appendix B.)

Mitchell-Hedges (1954), drawing from experiences in the Mayan culture, understood the Aboriginal concept of a personal journey. He linked hope to fulfillment:

When you are young and strong and full of hope, sit down one day and think about the world. Decide what you would like to do above all else—and then go and do it. Follow your star to the bitter end no matter what the hazards or the perils; no matter even if the star proves to be a false guide and you die in the attempt. You will have lived life to the full, you will have enjoyed yourself and even if you leave behind no material treasure, you will leave riches in the hearts of those who have drawn strength from your strength and who will cherish your memory until their day is done (pp. 254-255).

Wynne & Ryan (1997) describe the ethical ideal of hope:

Hope is the habit of desiring the good, but with, at least, a slight expectation of obtaining it, or the belief that it is indeed obtainable. It is confidence in the future. An old Irish proverb goes, “Hope is the physician of each misery.” Alexander Pope penned the famous lines, “Hope springs eternal in the human breast; Man ever is, but always to be blest.” (p. 148)

Hill (1960) affirms: “*Hope is a duty, not a luxury*. To hope is not to dream...but to turn dreams into reality.... You can achieve anything that doesn’t violate Universal Laws—the Laws of God and the rights of your fellow man” (pp. xxiii, xxvii). Covey (1998) stresses the paramount importance of keeping hope alive, stating “I wrote this book... *to give you hope!*” (p. 243). Whiteman (1993) refers to the work of Clark (1984), which identified ten characteristics of effective families. Three are high expectations, a focus on spiritual growth and shared family hope for future success. (p.54)

Dariel Jacobs’ study on hope.

In April, 2000, Jacobs, a graduate student of OISE/UT, presented a paper on her empirical, quantitative study “Understanding Hope: A Drama Exploration” at the 7th Annual International Conference on Teacher Research held in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Using the Herth Hope Scale (Herth, 1991) as a measuring tool, Jacobs had sought to answer the question: “Can making a Creative Collective alter the degree of hopefulness or reverse feelings of hopelessness in adolescents?” Jacobs shared her three main conclusions with us: (a) Hope could be taught; (b) Teachers could model and promote hope; (c) Students could discover how to gain hope through “learning by doing.”

According to Garnet and Ramsden (1997), drama builds character. Jacobs offered the *Collective Creation* as a tool to help teachers nurture hope in students and in their own work. Her empirical study emphasized the importance of win-win attitudes and faith. Active involvement in collective dramatic creations helped strengthen and maintain hope. Jacobs found hope grew from five sources: (a) drama creation; (b) class participation; (c) empathy between teachers and their students; (d) high expectations amongst teachers and students, and (e) the actual performance of work created. (Jacobs, D. A., 2000)

Stoner (1991) wrote a response to Herth’s instrument for measuring hope with respect to application in the field of nursing. Stoner commended Herth for attempting to capture in an evaluation tool the multidimensionality of hope in working with a diverse, multiethnic sample:

Hope has long been a concept of interest to nurses and a variable of importance to the human beings for whom nurses provide care. While other disciplines have tended to focus their research on hopelessness, nursing has maintained a commitment to hope and hopefulness. Nursing’s emphasis on a positive rather than a negative concept is indicative of the caring component of the profession. Hope probably enables more individuals to bear the burden of illness than any other factor. (p. 53)

Dossey (1996) identifies hope as the fertile opposite of debilitating despair and an essential prerequisite for successful healing.

Hope heals. Faith helps mobilize a person’s defenses and assists in getting well, and optimism leads generally to better outcomes. Hundreds of case histories and scientific studies affirm this observation.

Hopelessness kills. Numerous studies in humans show that we can die as a result of dire beliefs and a sense of overwhelming futility. (pp. 49, 50)

Hope is inextricably interconnected with character education. It lays the foundation for optimism, a recognized character quality. (See Appendix Q.) It is a prerequisite that provides fertile ground for potential growth. Kessler (2000) states “Many adults had judged this generation of adolescents as shallow, selfish and vacuous. The wisdom,

wonder, and search of young people today often goes unseen or misunderstood beneath all the defenses they have erected to express their despair” (p. 160).

Why nurture and develop hope in character education?

Jacobs (2000) advocates the use of drama as a tool for developing and voicing hope. Boal, an activist from São Paulo, Brazil, goes further to develop voice with vision. Boal (1990) uses prospective and introspective therapeutic theatrical techniques to heighten awareness, self-esteem and voice. Boal uses theatre as a transformational tool for building character offstage.

Boal facilitated a workshop at a *Dramatiks* conference I attended in 1990. He develops ground-breaking awareness of social situations, their limitations and attitudes. During one of his exercises called “Les vampires de Strasbourg,” I experienced first-hand how Boal transposes real life bully-victim tension onto the stage to be explored through a developmental drama process. Boal (1985) guides the oppressed (victims) to use their voices to stand up to their oppressors (bullies), to change the *power over/ power under* dynamic to one of *power with*. He goes to great lengths to investigate the character as subject and object on stage, stressing the importance of truthful, intelligible representations of life that can lead to affirmative action by the masses.

Jacobs (2000) and Boal (1985, 1990) both validate the promotion of hope through drama. Hearth (1991), Stoner (1991) and Wesorick & Shiparski (1997) emphasize that hope can be nurtured and developed in healthcare. I ask, “Where does hope fit into positive character education?” Just as hope is essential to human survival from a medical standpoint, I also embarked on this study with the premise that hope is crucial to successful intervention incorporating character education.

Hope and Earth connections.

Hope is attached to all peoples regardless of race, colour, or creed, at a primal level, deep-seated in the brain. Like air, hope is intangible, but essential to life. Robinson (2001), writer-in-residence at the University of Calgary links hope to Earth connections:

I admire the tenacity and strength of the First nations kids with whom I have had the privilege of skiing. They show incredible resilience and humour. For all the hand-wringing of non-native people, I don’t think we tell these kids enough that

they matter, or that we care. If we don't want children to believe in death, we must offer life hope, and something to dream about... When children like Lawrence Merasty have been swept away into a place of wonder—the same landscape their ancestors crossed with snowshoes and moccasins—they imagine anything is possible. This is called hope. I believe these children have hope. (p. A11)

In Native and non-Native cultures, hope appears to be a key condition for awakening hearts and minds to a sense of purpose and wonder, opening doors to development of positive human traits.

Consequences of a lack of hope.

A lack of hope manifests when we feel unheard, powerless instead of empowered and limited or deprived of a sense of ownership. Diebel (1996) describes extreme consequences. Kessler (2000) draws attention to a common feeling of disconnectedness from hope or purpose that leads to delinquent, self-destructive teenage behaviour. Kessler identifies students' loss of a sense of being an important part of a greater whole:

In a pluralistic society, educators can respect the separation of church and state and still give students a glimpse of the rich array of experiences that feed the soul. We can provide a forum that recognizes and celebrates the ways individual students nourish their spirits. We can offer activities that allow them to feel deeply connected—to themselves, to their family and community, and to the larger world... Perhaps most important, as teachers, we can honour our students' search for what *they* believe gives meaning and integrity to their lives, and how they can connect to what is most precious for them. In the search itself, in loving the questions, in the deep yearning they let themselves feel, young people can discover what is essential in their own lives and in life itself and what allows them to bring their own gifts to the world. (2000, p. 171)

Bloch (1986, 1955) and Walsh (2002) believe human souls need hope. A person with a "broken spirit" has lost hope. Johnson (2002) quotes Sheila Hogan, Eagle Clan:

Because the mind and body are connected, the key to healing is to heal the others. We work on all three: the mind, the body and the spirit. We bring the three into alignment, so that you have healing of the mind, healing of the spirit and healing of the body. In any treatment, you must discover the root cause of the problem. It often lies deep within the person, hidden in the past or in the spirit. (p. 13)

Is an underlying lack of hope what is spurring character education on or is it hindering it? Can character education successfully remedy a lack of hope, re-igniting it and helping it to expand exponentially? Sean Fine, education reporter for the *Globe and*

Mail, attempted to identify areas in our schools in which hope was lacking. He felt they were serving as an impetus for many current concerns in public education:

Sweeping changes to Ontario's high schools are causing some good schools to deteriorate badly, and appear doomed to failure, a study financed in part by the province's Education Ministry suggests. The study paints a damning picture of demoralized teachers, alienated students and parents, and schools growing ever more divided from within.... In three of the four schools studied, teachers reported being highly discouraged by reform pressures that "contradicted their values, undermined their purposes, set unrealistic expectations, lowered their sense of power and status and made them feel insecure." As a result, loss of heart occurred. Efforts to involve schools in community-wide discussions of their *raison d'être* were abandoned. "It was as if purposes now belonged to someone else—the ministry—and teachers [as well as parents and students in each school], had little or no investment in them." (Fine, 2001)

Somerville (2002), founding director of the McGill Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University, describes hope as providing a crucial sense of connection to the future and being essential to character development:

A loss of hope is an immense danger in our world because it generates cynicism and nihilism, which in turn corrode and destroy the human spirit, especially in young people.... Without hope for the common good, we are not able to form community. And hope is the oxygen of the human spirit; without it our spirit dies, whereas with it, it can survive even appalling suffering. (p. xiv)

Goleman (1998) seconds Somerville, stating "the near cousin of optimism is hope: knowing the steps needed to get a goal and having the energy to pursue those steps. It is a primal motivating force, and its absence is paralyzing" (p. 128). Martin Luther, German priest of the 15th/16th century who brought about the Protestant Reformation through the Lutheran church said, "Everything that is done in the world is done by hope." (Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2001c) Martin Luther King (2002a, 2002b) revealed during his lecture series in Canada in 1967, the impact of our country whose location was heralded at night by the North Star (a constant, unwavering focal point of inspiration) during the period of the *underground railroad*. "Canada symbolized hope" (Gates, 2000, p. 59) and was code word for Heaven in Negro spirituals:

One powerful cultivator of hope is Canadian Shannon Thunderbird, B.A., M.A. (2002a), Tsimshian First Nations of the Black/Fish Orca clan. She has performed many powerful presentations in Canada where she facilitates "Dialogue of Hope" workshops to honour and promote "soul speak," human effectiveness and social intelligence.

(Thunderbird, 2002b). Consulting responses to interview question six, in Appendices D to H, emphasizes that all five interviewees consulted in this study are harbingers of hope.

Fostering hope for the future.

Dreikurs and Stoltz (1964) stressed the importance of avoiding teaching “learned helplessness,” emphasizing the key role of “interdependence” (p. 261) in building healthy relationships. They preached truly living the concept of family council to find family solutions to family problems, stating “This approach develops mutual respect, mutual responsibility, and promotes equality. Democratic family living rests upon a foundation of equality” (p. 305). An expert in Canadian culture, Schafer (1998a, pp.71 – 92) asserts that schools are increasingly becoming more active in teaching students to be respectful, compassionate individuals. Alexander and Glaze (1996) wrote “Achieving freedom, justice, peace, and equality remains the cherished goal. There are positive signs across the country which suggest a brighter tomorrow” (p. 271). We owe it to ourselves and to our students to never surrender our personal hope. It is our shared responsibility as parents and as educators to infuse our youths with hope so that they will be motivated enough to make positive life changes for themselves, regardless of previous life experiences. Viewed in this context, fostering hope leads to optimism, a necessary change agent for bringing about the development of positive character traits. Thus, hope becomes a key integral link to successful student-based character education initiatives.

Character development is quickly becoming a standardized milestone in the American system of education. A number of web sites, guidebooks, workbooks, measurement and survey tools have flooded the market. (Hoffman & Lee, 1997; Lewis, 1998) In parallel to the Herth Hope Scale, measurement tools and guidelines also exist to assess character growth. At <http://www.character.org/schools>, Character Education Quality standards are downloaded for free. Is it wise and effective for educators to develop fragmented curriculum guidelines to scientifically chart progress of character? Would it not be wiser to seek a more wholistic response such as in traditional Aboriginal teachings honouring an individual’s character evolution on a personal spiritual path?

Chapter Four

Literature Review

Approaches to character development amongst Aboriginals evolved separately for thousands of years prior to cultural contact and the impact of explorers from European colonizing countries like Spain, Portugal, France and England. Aboriginal nations and bands are numerous. Non-Native researchers must beware of the temptation to categorize First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples into one homogenous pan-American-Indian group. (Josephy, 1994; Fleet, 1997). Researchers must be sensitive to bias in the literature and in research methodologies, recognizing pitfalls of imperialistic, colonizing research methods used by Other upon Aboriginal peoples (Battiste, 2000a, 2000b; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Hulan & Monture-Angus, 1999; Smith, 1999a & 1999b).

Relevance of Dominant Eurocentric Colonizing Culture Perspectives

Regardless of vocabulary used throughout the centuries, since pre-recorded history humans have explored ways of developing better character. Varying terms used amongst different groups to describe philosophies and strategies cause misunderstandings and misinterpretations of world views. For example, the word *smudge* has two different connotations from European and First Nations standpoints. To the former, it has a negative implication like dirtying oneself. To the latter, it involves Sacred Medicine used in the symbolic act of spiritually cleansing oneself and one's thoughts. To enhance critical understandings of concepts, I created a glossary of terms in Appendix A, noting later, with great delight, that a glossary of terms was also provided in Appendix H of the study *Learning About Walking In Beauty: Placing Aboriginal Perspectives in Canadian Classrooms* jointly produced by The Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, released in November 2002.

Five dominant culture philosophies of shaping character.

The dominant colonizing culture of North America, in an effort to improve the character of our students, has experimented with a variety of approaches, influenced primarily by philosophies from the Orient, Europe and the United States. McClellan (1992) provides an excellent overview of how dominant culture schools have shaped

character. Character education philosophies of the dominant culture can trace origins and development back to earlier influences from Europe and China. This is not the case for First Nations character education philosophies. Contextualizing post-contact influences in a series of *quests* helps guide general understanding of how both world views evolved. Over the centuries, dominant culture approaches such as moral character education have been somewhat cyclically rewoven into school curriculums (see Table II).

Canadian culture, mainly American based, is part of a generally dysfunctional North American sociopolitical model. Joas (2000) discussed ongoing societal controversy of rights versus values, emphasizing difficulties integrating both viewpoints from three perspectives: political, ethical and sociological-empirical. Chomsky (2000) examined our democratic crisis, urging the use of democratic power for the public good rather than miseducation through a “deep level of indoctrination” (p. 15) that takes away one’s power to think clearly. Problems described in the United States sound alarmingly similar to Canadian ones. Canadians share ownership in our continent’s character crisis.

Dominant Culture Impact on Native Peoples

Shortly after contact, dominant culture approaches to developing character came into conflict with Aboriginal ones, exposing vastly different philosophical bases and worldviews. According to Birchall and O’Grady (1988), results of cultural contact throughout history have led to cultural change. Clarke (1999) provides a poignant example with the Alderville First Nations community. Changes have included assimilation (integration), adaptation and isolation (segregation) (p. 110). Goodman (1992) gives an example of assimilation through education. Birchall and O’Grady neglected to mention genocide (extermination) of original Aboriginal cultures by dominant colonizing cultures, a fact to which history repeatedly bears testimony. (Barreiro, 1993; 2000; Bigelow & Peterson, 1998; Churchill, 1998, 2002; Fleet, 1997; Josephy, 1998; Peterson, 1991). The literature review will show primary objectives of First Nations character education to be wholistic healing, harmonization and adaptation. Many Elders I have met talk about “walking in beauty.” Jacobs (2003) identifies the First Nations character education priority as “surviving with beauty” (p. 28).

Table II

My Understanding of Character Education Philosophies and Contact Points

Philosophical Stance and Period	North American Colonizing Culture	Important Points of Contact	First Nations Culture
Moral Education 1. since cultural contact by Christopher Columbus in 1492 2. Indian boarding schools in the U.S. from 1880's to early 1900's 3. residential schools in Canada from 1890's to mid-century 1950's	Since recorded history: A Quest to Conquer A combination of: 1. religion based and/or involving a scientific approach 2. transmission learning and /or transaction 3. extrinsic focus	Impacts exerted by the dominant culture: 1. colonization, cultural contact, conflict, assimilation, segregation 2. Christianizing efforts to "educate the savage" 3. cultural genocide of Canadian and American Aboriginals through boarding school abuses	Personal Vision Quests since pre-history 1. Pre-contact: wholistic, intrinsic, transformational, nature-based, virtues education 2. Post-contact: negative repercussions of intergenerational impact caused by the residential schools
Values Education mainly in the 1970's as a dominant culture peace movement in the USA in reaction to the Vietnam war	A Quest for Freedom 1. individual values vary 2. judgement is withheld 3. transaction learning 4. values clarification 5. unclear focus & terms	There are no significant points of intersection according to resources consulted.	1. continued intrinsic traditional teachings vs 2. A Quest for Identity of "the lost generation" and those severed from their cultural roots
Character Education branching in different directions since mid 1980's: 1. new and "improved" [sic] version of moral education 2. virtues education with some confusion with values education	A Quest for Character: 1. need for values versus virtues clarification 2. spectrum of character education approaches 3. need for virtues clarification and search for universal virtues 4. predominantly extrinsic focus	1. beginning of impact by indigenous cultures on dominant culture where there is a focus on virtues education 2. positive impacts on dominant culture re environmental earth wisdoms 3. universal Golden Rule of reciprocity	A Quest for Healing 1. wholistic, intrinsic, transformational, nature-based approaches to virtues education 2. various aspects of healing incorporated into virtues education to heal impact of residential schools 3. interconnectedness
Holistic Education Virtues Education at its best is approached with the goal of achieving balanced harmony with Self, Other and the environment	A Quest for Soul 1 holistic approach to character education treating the whole person in harmonious, balanced context with the self, others and the environment 2. "discovery" of naturalist and spiritual intelligences	Positive wholistic indigenous influence on dominant culture 1. compatible intrinsic transformational philosophies / Impact of indigenous thinking on holistic education 2. rule of reciprocity 3. interconnectedness 4. transformational	A Quest for Spirit 1. wholistic, intrinsic, transformational, nature-based approaches to virtues education 2. enhanced focus on naturalist intelligence continued focus on human healing and healing of Mother Earth 3. interconnectedness
A Call to Moral Courage various approaches	A Quest for Action 1. transformational and transitional approaches 2. concept of earth stewardship	A Quest for Courage: Indigenous cultures share the Beauty Way: 1. respectfulness 2. responsibility 3. call to environmental awareness and respect	A Quest for Voice 1. traditional, wholistic, intrinsic, transformational 2. focus on healing for Mother Earth and humanity

Contact between two worldviews.

Most of what society-at-large knows about First Nations people is post-contact. Even today, traditional Aboriginals see themselves as belonging to the land, as children of Mother Earth. The pre-contact Native worldview that we all share Mother Earth made it less likely that Native people would spill blood over issues of land ownership (a concept foreign to them) and therefore, infinitely easier for “recently-arrived immigrant” newcomers to acquire lands, generally through means of extortion, extermination or manipulation of the truth in dishonoured treaties. (Price, 1991; Trigger, 2000)

A consistent philosophy throughout recorded and prerecorded history emphasizes Aboriginal spiritual ties with the land and its all inhabitants, encompassing not only the two leggeds, four leggeds, six-legged and eight-legged creatures but all life, including the standing people (trees) and the stone people. Everything, both animate and inanimate is considered to have a spirit. In spiritual teachings the most powerful metaphors and symbols come from Nature. The works of Twofeathers (1996) and Andrews (1998) lay testimony to naturalist intelligence combined with visualization techniques.

Explorers sailed from Europe, fleeing oppression and /or seeking good fortune, often taking great care to claim fame and profits for self and King or Queen of sponsoring European mother countries, gradually conquering the Americas. Dominant cultures sought to colonize, Christianize and convert the “noble savage” into a more “civilized” [sic] “good Indian” in line with dominant culture thinking while offering them very little for land (which Natives didn’t believe one could own anyways.) (Waubageshig, 1974).

Historically, First Nations voices have often gone unheard or undervalued. Whether we are discussing First Nations peoples of the Americas, the Aborigines of Australia or the Maoris of New Zealand, indigenous peoples have had to be strong to reclaim or maintain their language, culture, customs, spirituality and wisdom teachings. In Canada, many First Nations peoples have persisted and survived. Dickason (1994) states “The message is clear: Canada’s first nations, far from being interesting relics of the past, are a vital part of Canada’s persona, both present and future” (p. 420).

According to Jacobs (2003) First Nations character education stresses “surviving with beauty” (p. 28). This position, also voiced by Reyhner & Eder (1989) was included

in a group message to the Seventh Generation by “more than 1,700 elders from 108 tribes attending the National Indian Council on Aging Year 2000 Conference in Duluth, Minnesota” (quoted in Jacobs, 2003, p. 28).

The matriarchal clan system of the Iroquois was put in place to support the Great Law of Peace. (Porter, 1993). In the Great Law, Peacemaker reaffirmed the ancient clan system wherein women “would be the holders of the clan,” passing it down to their children. (Monture-Angus, 1995, p.7) Wise women held power, watched boys grow into men and chose the Chiefs based on evolving character and leadership qualities observed.

Today, an indigenous tribal matriarchy still continues in Iroquois cultures among others. Many clans trace geneological history through the mother’s clan. Matriarchal power of indigenous peoples gradually gave way to power through patriarchy and the European system of transmitting family names through the father’s lineage. Colonizing cultures held a patriarchal European world view that gave men power over women. On its own, this was a significant cultural clash that translated into a huge shift in power in favour of males of the dominant colonizing race. (Churchill, 1998, 2002; Deloria, 1999, Deloria & Wildcat, 2001; Grinde & Johansen, 1995, 1998; Laduke, 1999; Lyons, Mohawk, Deloria, Hauptman, Berman, Grinde et al, 1992, Mohawk, 1999). Goforth (2003) calls for clan systems to be identified, strengthened and renewed. (p. 19).

The writings of respected Greek philosopher Aristotle (Aristotle, 1968, Josephson Institute of Ethics, 2001a) are heavily quoted in character education literature. However, according to renowned Latin American historian Hanke (1959, 1974) Aristotle’s writing legitimized a descending evolutionary hierarchy and classification of races by dominant cultures, justifying the concept of slavery and treatment of indigenous peoples as inferior races. I have found no other authors to strengthen Hanke’s position. Whatever the reason, colonized Native cultures, treated as inferior, were not given the same equitable legal justice treatment that members from dominant colonizing cultures would accord one another. Mercredi & Turpel (1993) emphasize “the legacy of neglect and the belief in the inferior status of First Nations peoples, languages and cultures” (p. 236).

Even in Canadian history textbooks crafted from a dominant culture perspective, this *quest to conquer* by white immigrants and their government was apparent. Trigger

(1986) states “While all non-Christian societies were viewed as morally and technologically inferior to European ones, tribal societies were also viewed as politically inferior” (p.120). Copway (1847), Ojibway chief and Christian convert stated:

Among the Indian there have been no written laws. Customs handed down from generation to generation have been the only laws to guide them. Everyone might act different from what was considered right did he choose to do so, but such acts would bring upon him the censure of the Nation... This fear of the Nation’s censure acted as a mighty band, binding all in one social, honorable compact. (Stone Eagle Productions, Electronic quote,1996)

Written contracts of *Other* took precedence over oral agreements or wampum belt records. (Titley, 1995; Woodland Cultural Centre, 1989) In Native culture, a man’s word was his bond. Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea) Mohawk of Six Nations said, “We have no robbery under the pretext of the law” (Nerburn, 1999, p. 69). Two of the Seven Grandfather teachings, honesty and truth, were often dishonoured by the white man in treaty agreements. How could agreements made with inferior [sic] beings be binding?

Concepts of land and law differed greatly. Shortly after cultural contact, colonizers realized that philosophies on character correction and childrearing amongst First Nations people also differed greatly, notably with respect to corporal punishment. Tooker quoted in Trigger (2000) emphasizes widely opposed views on childrearing:

No aspect of Huron behaviour shocked the French more than their refusal to use physical punishment to discipline their children. On general principles, the Huron considered it wrong to coerce or humiliate an individual publicly. To their way of thinking, a child was an individual with his or her own needs and rights rather than something amorphous that must be moulded into shape (Tooker 1964: 124 n. 27) (p. 47).

Means and Wolf state (1995), “In our traditional way of discipline, children were not struck. Until whites took them away, our children were never spanked or beaten” (p. 21). Turner (2002) speaks against corporal punishment in Canada. Hewitt (1996) focuses on positive discipline. Corporal punishment used on Native children in Canadian Native Residential Schools like Shingwauk (Aquash, 2001; Jackson, 2002, n.d.; Miller, J.R., 1996) and Spanish (Johnson, 1988), was foreign to traditional Aboriginal childrearing practice. Traditional First Nations childrearing does not involve hitting. I have often witnessed First Nations children guided by patient example in traditional ways.

Two key points of intersection.

Between the dominant colonizing culture and First Nations culture approaches to character education, there are two key points of intersection. The first is where the negative impact of the dominant culture's moral character education initiatives damaged the Web or Hoop of Relationship for many Native peoples. Appendices D, E, F and H refer to this. A key turning point of cultural impact imposed on Aboriginals treated as "wards" of the State, in Church and State driven residential schools is examined.

The second point of exchange is where First Nations cultures share traditional teachings on character education with colonizing cultures. In North America, we are currently in that second time period. At this point in history, we are coming full circle with a growing global First Nations call to voice and to action. The challenge of First Nations leaders in character education is two-fold. Traditional First Nations character education strategies are used as an important tool in a healing process to help restore the Hoop of Relationship amongst Native peoples and to strengthen First Nations school curriculum. In addition, there is a deliberate reaching out to non-Natives of the dominant colonizing culture to share traditional wisdoms in the area of character education.

The residential school experience.

The sad truths about dominant culture controlled Indian boarding school and residential school experiments are difficult to acknowledge. They represent a pivotal point of intersection between Native and non-Native cultures wherein the dominant colonizing culture exerted a significant, predominantly negative influence on the traditional Native way of educating for character. (Jack, 1985; McGaa, 1998). This influence has caused intergenerational breaks in the Web or Hoop of Relationship. (The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2001b, 2001c, 2002b; Adams, 1995) First Nations Elders, educators, counsellors, various organizations and non-Native experts are engaged in processes to help mend these tears to restore a sense of wholeness to the circle.

Monture-Angus (1995), addresses Aboriginal people's experiences with education:

Aboriginal women have survived oppression, colonization and abuse. Now we seek recovery. Recovery and healing will only come when we learn to walk in balance again, with the men, with the leaders, with the children, with the Elders, and with the many nations that have come to this land. For me, seeking harmony is striving to reach a higher standard than mere justice. (p. 243).

Harpur (1994, 2002) has written books that focus on non-medical healing through the use of the Spirit and meditation techniques. Harpur (1996) stated his position on dominant culture character *mis*-education on Aboriginal children in Canada:

Nobody ever intended that things would go wrong. But in general, government, churches and society at large became thoroughly enmeshed in a project as evil in its own way as apartheid was in South Africa. We are reaping the results today—not just in the need for healing of those who were directly abused but also in the deep moral and spiritual malaise still affecting so many teenage and older youths on most reserves. The old attempt at forced assimilation of Indian children has left a terrible void for many. It's one that only a full recovery of their own identity and spirituality can fill. By a full confession of its complicity, Ottawa (and all of us) can hasten the process of reconciliation. (p. F5)

Treaties and historical documents attest to the fact that Native people in Canada have been regarded and treated by our Canadian government as wards of the state, considered incapable of properly caring for themselves. Residential schools were set up partly to fulfil the role of guardian. Indian Agents supervised First Nations wards living on Indian reservations. I discovered that in the early 1900's in North America and Australia, mainstream, predominantly white society took it upon itself to provide moral education to Aboriginal peoples, often with disastrous results. (Aquash, 2002; Bordewich, 1996; Broome, 1982; Dickason, 1997; Haig-Brown, 1998; Harris & Malin, 1997; Jackson, 2002; Jacobs, 2001a; Johansen, 2000; Josephy, 1994; Kidd, 1997; Knockwood, 1992; Lockwood, 1962; Macdonald, 1995; McCloy, 1995; Reynolds, 1988, 1989; Singe, 1979; Titley, 1995; Trevathan, Moore, MacDonald & Sinclair, 2001; United Church of Canada, 2001a, 2001b; Waubageshig, 1974)

Videos such as *Beyond the Shadows* (NFB, 1993) and *Where the Spirit Lives* (Atlanta Films, 1989) amongst others listed in Appendix N provide examples of character *miseducation* of First Nations wards by colonizing cultures. North American Native residential schools controlled by the Church and State in Canada under the guise of “educating the savage” (Dickason, 1997) violated the child's sanctity. Native children were overworked, abused and even died in educational systems developed specifically for the gentler [sic] purpose of assimilation versus annihilation. Knockwood (1992) shares the mandate of the Indian residential school serving Mi'kmaw children in Nova Scotia:

In the primary grades, instill the qualities of obedience, respect, order, neatness and cleanliness. Differentiate between right and wrong, cultivate truthful habits

and a spirit of fair play. As the pupils become advanced, inculcate as near as possible in the order mentioned, independence, self-respect, industry, honesty, thrift, self-maintenance, citizenship and patriotism. Discuss charity, pauperism, Indian and white life, the evils of Indian isolation, enfranchisement. Explain the relationship of the sexes to labour, home and public duties, and labour as the law of existence. (p. 48)

Although some people benefited from the education provided, in large part, residential schools processed people to the point where many would stop dreaming their own dreams and settle for being less than their Creator, the God of their understanding, had originally intended. A whole healing movement in which the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and various Churches have taken part, is still in process to correct the fallout.

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

Organizations like *The Aboriginal Healing Foundation* (AHF) (2002a, 2002b) engage in character rehabilitation and healing. AHF explains its mission:

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation was set up to help Aboriginal people deal with the Legacy of Physical and Sexual Abuse arising from the Canadian Residential School System. To date, we have funded many projects that address the Intergenerational Impacts of the Residential School System. These have allowed communities to begin the Process of addressing the Legacy. (AHF, Forward to the *Aboriginal Handbook*, 2002, Electronic version)

Further on, the AHF handbook refers to the organization's holistic, inclusive approach: "Our approach to healing is holistic. We support full participation of all Aboriginal peoples, including Métis, Inuit and First Nations regardless of where they live in Canada and regardless of whether they are 'registered' under the Indian Act" (2002, p. 8).

The AHF *Healing Words* newsletter, available electronically and in hard copy, includes dealing with topics involving choices, community, healing, family, study reports and treatment of Aboriginal men, women and children. Indigenous contributors from a variety of backgrounds and countries, bring to the newsletter a global perspective.

Dealing with the North American character crisis.

Values education evolved quite independently from First Nations approaches to character education. (See Jarrett, 1991; Murphy, 2002; Raths, Harmon & Simon, 1966; Stewart, 1975.) I quote only one reference to values, by Thomas Lickona:

The paralyzing concern of a few years ago that teaching values might violate pluralism and upset some people is giving way to what now seems like a self-evident truth: Not to equip the young with a moral sense is a grave ethical failure on the part of any society. (1991, p. 19)

Of all the recognized character education approaches, virtues character education is the most compatible with First Nations thinking. Lickona, a well-known voice in values/ virtues education provided an American-based historical overview of values education, facilitating a shift towards virtues education to better address troubling youth trends that are part of North America's character crisis. Viewing character development as founded upon respect and responsibility, Lickona consistently reinforces three moral pillars of good character: moral knowing, feeling and action (1991, p. 53; 2003, p. 18). He advocates effective moral education as laying groundwork crucial to the development of democratic citizenship, stating that "young people must come to know what the virtues are, appreciate their importance and want to possess them, and then practice them consistently in their day-to-day conduct" (2003, p. 18).

Kilpatrick (1992) believes our public school systems contain morally deficient students in need of an unclouded moral compass by which to navigate through life. Lickona (1994) is concerned with raising good children and keeping them that way. Lickona (2003) stresses the importance of deliberately cultivating virtue:

Virtues are objectively good human qualities, such as wisdom, respect, responsibility, honesty, perseverance and courage. These qualities define the content of character. Virtues serve the good of the individual person (helping us to lead a fulfilling life) and the good of society (helping us to live together harmoniously and productively). Character education is the proactive, intentional effort to foster such virtues.... Thus, in order to develop virtuous character, young people must come to know what the virtues are, appreciate their importance and want to possess them, and then practice them in their day-to-day conduct. (p. 18)

Jacobs (2003) refers to political and religious hegemony of the dominant culture with respect to character education in the public system, posing a question worth pondering: "Could it be that certain values relating to compliance to authority are more important than virtues that might challenge authority?" (p. 28). He identifies a basic clash in worldviews on character education regarding the production of autonomous thinkers.

The dilemma of extrinsic versus intrinsic motivation.

Kohn (1991, 1993, 1999, 2003) critically examines damage done to character education by ‘extrinsic’ inducements emphasizing rewards. Brandt (1995) interviewed retired Kohn who expressed his views on the dangers of extrinsic character education. In (Bafile, 2000) Kohn examines how not to destroy intrinsic motivation. Instead of the behaviourist punishment and rewards system, Kohn prefers the “three C’s” of motivation: *content*, *community* and *choice*, advocating these as promoting and developing intrinsic motivation far more effectively than bribes and praise. (Brandt, 1995).

First Nations Perspectives

Ethic of indigenous people passed on through oral traditions.

During the past century, dominant cultures have given little thought to Aboriginal perspectives on character education. Until 2001, First Nations philosophies, generally passed on from one generation to the next through oral tradition and face-to-face, heart-to-heart connection, have been literally absent from official character education literature. Nevertheless, Native wisdoms on educating for character abound, reaching back over a rich oral history that spans at least ten thousand years on our North American continent. It is estimated that Australian Aborigines’ oral history goes back at least forty thousand years, possibly one hundred thousand years, on their continent. (Attwood & Markus, 1999; Broome, 1982; Harris & Malin, 1997; Horton & Daigle, 1994; Jonas, Langton & AITSIS, 1988; McCloy, 1995; Reynolds, 1988; Singe, 1979, Vaarzon-Morel, 1995)

Over the last decade, the Golden Rule of reciprocity of Chief Seattle, a Native American Indian who lived from 1784 to 1866, with his Web of Life image, cited earlier on page 36 and in J. P. Miller, 1993, p. 160, has been widely quoted across America. His speech is the topic of contentious debate regarding authenticity. Despite documented suspicion of tampering with the wording of Seattle’s original speech for various purposes by dominant culture members, the message’s essence remains. (Buerge, 1983, 1993; Jefferson, 2003; Nerburn, 1999; O’Byrne, 2002; Seattle, 1854, 1996; Smith, 1887).

On September 19, 1989, when American President George Bush spoke at Riverfront Park in Spokane, Washington on the occasion of Washington’s Centennial Celebration, he called for a rebirth of the ethic of First Nations peoples. Bush’s words,

reminding us to honour the Soul of the Earth wafted like a breezy blessing, gently blowing a new breath of life into mid-eighteen hundreds message of Chief Seattle. From father to son, the American government has not yet walked that talk. Although Bush's vision has been contradicted by his environmental policies, there is still time to honour that vision with gestures supporting words. Bush (1989) said:

The ethic of Native Americans like Chief Seattle must also be reborn on this continent. His was a religious understanding: that the whole Earth has a soul that can be destroyed by man. He saw the world as a spiritual place of precious but fragile beauty. Over a century ago, he said: "Hold in your mind the memory of the land as it was when you found it. And with all your strength, with all your mind, with all your heart, preserve it for your children and love it as God loves us all."

Bush's speech foreshadowed the beginning of an indigenous character movement destined to increase in intensity in 2002. This movement would evolve from an almost hushed whisper to increasingly pressing winds of change as North Americans would muster the courage to look spiritually inward in an intensifying holistic *Quest for Soul*, recognizing that lesser, outward forms of the *Quest for Character* miss the mark.

Cultural Writing Leading in the Direction of Character Education

In Brisbane, I located a February 1998 Masters of Education study tangentially related to my topic, entitled "Dreams, Pathways and Journeys: Aboriginal Women in Postgraduate Study," written by Nereda Dawn White, a student in the School of Cultural and Policy Studies at the Faculty of Education of Queensland University of Technology in Queensland, Australia. The Aboriginal concept of *dreaming* is powerful, different from the French who *take* a decision—*prendre une decision* and the English who *make* a decision. The concept of the *Dream Time* and dreaming, wide open to a whole spectrum of possibilities rather than a finite choice, is an Aboriginal way of *receiving* solutions from the Great Mystery. (Voigt, Drury & Nevill, 1998). Like Australian Aborigines, the Nez Perce people in the United States, known as *The Dreaming People*, also have sacred stories that, according to the teachings of Shomolla cannot pass into the mainstream. Unlike their Aborigine brothers and sisters, *most* Canadian *First Nations* peoples have no *dream lines* or geographic boundaries past which *certain* sacred stories may not pass. In North America there is a growing movement to share certain teachings, with permission.

Buffy Sainte-Marie: Political activist connecting science, music and culture.

Sainte Marie (1996a), born on a Cree reservation in Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan, Canada, appeared on the *Earthsongs* show on October 13, 2001. In a flyer to the Chippewa of Mnjikaning First Nation and their guests, Sainte Marie stated:

Sometimes I am asked, where did all the brain and fire of the sixties American Indian activism go? In my observation, in Canada we went into every field; but in the United States, where things were far more dangerous, those of us who were not killed, imprisoned, put out of business or otherwise sacrificed to the uranium industry, went into **education**. (May 17, 2002)

Considered to be a multitalented teaching legend, Sainte-Marie is particularly well known for her *Cradleboard Teaching Project* (1999) which introduces young Native and non-Native children to positive realities of Native culture. Sainte-Marie has helped thousands of First Nations children across Canada through her *Cradleboard Teaching Project/Kids from Kanata* partnership and her interactive learning CD for grades five to adult entitled "Science: Through Native American Eyes". (Nihewan Foundation, 2002) Her Science program focuses on multisensory learning, stressing principles of sound and friction. It also teaches about Native American lodges, introducing participants to Native American instruments, music and recording artists. Last but not least, the project awakens positive awareness of the presence of today's Aboriginal, cultivating appreciation for First Nations contributions to the world and a more accurate understanding of their cultures. This helps undo harmful stereotypes. People must be freed from fear of the unknown, prejudice and stereotypes in order to be more open to ideas from other cultures.

Dr. Gregory Cajete advocates holistic, Earth-based experiential learning.

Non-Natives around the world now seek answers from Native leaders like Laduke (1999), acclaimed American environmental activist, to questions dealing with survival. Documents now appearing on the market indicate that there is a place for the wisdom of the Elders. (Bataille & Sands, 1984; Elston, 1991; Hungry Wolf, 1980; Johnson, 1994; Knudtson & Suzuki, 1992; McFadden, 2000, 2001b; Napaljarri and Cataldi, 1995; Neel, 1992; Vannote, 1999, Ywahoo, 1987). Suzuki & Knudston (1992) state:

Even in the wake of five centuries of monumental European "discovery" and expansion—mirrored, in Native memory, by five centuries of extraordinary

suffering and resistance—we might permit ourselves a measure of optimism. We might hope, for example, that in the years ahead a global science-compatible Native ecological consciousness might emerge and help inspire non-Natives to adopt similar environmental values. And we might hope that, in the process, a host of the calmer, more compassionate, and more far-sighted voices of society’s wisest elders—Native and scientific—might be heard clearly above the din.

Native voices are rooted in an ever-present Distant Time that binds together all forms of life in a “sacred ecology” that unabashedly embraces and sanctifies nature. Yet they remain informed by the most subtle and compelling truths of modern science. These voices can convey to ordinary people a vision of the natural world that has embedded within it an enduring environmental ethic and that is imbued with a visceral feeling for the horrific consequences of human folly, ignorance, and denial of the biosphere’s fate. (p. 232)

Reynolds (1988, 1989), an Australian Aborigine, contemplated earth connections of South Australian Aborigines whose land was sold off by the dominant European colonizing culture. Reynolds stated “With an understanding of Aboriginal society came an appreciation of the importance of land and the deep emotional and spiritual ties which bound people to soil” (1989, p 32). Indigenous character development, whether in the Americas or Australia, appears to be intimately linked to respect for the land. I also read the thoughts of Waipuldanya of the Alawa tribe of the Roper River in the Northern Territory as recorded by Douglas Lockwood, in Lockwood (1962). This story taught me about treatment of 15,211 Aborigines as wards of the government of that territory, reminding me of our Canadian government’s treatment of First Nations peoples as wards (Chrisjohn & Young, 1997; Daughterty, 1983; Haig-Brown, 1988; Miller, J.R. 1989, 1996; Price, 1991). I learned about skin names, kinship lines and taboos, mentally comparing and contrasting them with what I knew about North American Aboriginal clan systems. I encountered similar stumbling blocks to proper interpretation of word meanings in First Nations languages. (See Appendix Q.)

Little Bear (2000) discusses “Jagged Worldviews Colliding.” Aborigines and North American Aboriginals have struggled to integrate contrasting worldviews while maintaining a sense of identity and place. Lockwood (1962) quotes Waipuldanya who, still faithful to his Aborigine spirituality and heritage, also accepts imported Christianity:

Yes, I believe in God. But I also believe in the Earth Mother, the Rainbow Serpent, and my Kangaroo Totem. They gave us all we have: my tribal country, our food, my wife, our children, our culture. Nothing...nothing...will change that.

It is inherent in me, the heritage that has come down with each generation since the Time of Dream and was burnt into my mind and body with sharp steel during my initiation. (p. 239)

Gantchev (1996) emphasized the importance of “listening to the earth” and to the Elders (p. 95). Upon my return to North America, I sourced the ecological writings of Dr. Gregory Cajete, founding Director and Dean of the Centre for Research and Cultural Exchanges and Associate Professor at the College of Education of the University of New Mexico. Teaching that traditional indigenous education is earth-based well beyond the area of science, Cajete (1999a) states:

Nature has within it a spirit that is part of each of us. We cannot truly encounter it without changing ourselves, as we affect and are affected by all that we do in relationship to the natural world... *Learning is lifelong and holistic.*(p. 187)

To finish “in beauty,” Cajete insists that we must understand our earth connections, learn about more holistic Aboriginal concepts taught traditionally for centuries, and integrate traditional Aboriginal ways of learning into the curriculum in order to assist students in developing cognitive abilities that will help forthcoming generations face problems “of a nature and magnitude never before faced in the entire history of man on earth” (p. 188).

Cajete (1994, 1999a, 1999b, 2000, 2001) offers insights into the profound respect traditional American Indians hold for the Earth. According to oral tradition, this mindful attitude towards a maternal *Mother Earth* who sustains and nurtures us and whose heartbeat is reflected in the drum (a gift from the women to the men to help them be in rhythm with Her) appears to be universal amongst traditional Aboriginals. Experienced in bridging between Native and non-Native worldviews, Cajete consciously works to synthesize both, exploring various dimensions of shared pathways toward learning, like socialization. Cajete’s integrated approach embraces respectful, wholistic, Earth-based kinesthetic, experiential learning by doing and metaphorical environmental intelligence.

Traditional teachings and transformative learning.

The Transformative Learning Centre was established in 1993 at OISE/UT for:

study and practice of critical global and community issues, transformative education and positive social change. It provides a framework for deepening our understanding of the underlying forces which are transforming Canadian society and the world, and it seeks ways of creating a more peaceful, socially just,

economically viable, culturally diverse and environmentally responsible society. (Transformative Learning Centre, 2002)

Guest speaker at the November 1, 2001 Second International Conference on Transformative Learning, called *Multiple Currents: Expanding the Boundaries of Transformative Learning*, Cajete (2001) presented “Drawing from Indigenous Knowings for Curriculum/Program Development,” exploring art as a means of recording the internal process. According to my colleague, Eugene Nikolov, Cajete (2001) began his Native presentation with the greeting and multi-dimensional metaphor “To be with life.” This expression emphasizes interconnectedness and interdependence between all living things. Cajete emphasized transformational education’s role to use traditional knowledge to recreate and reconnect with traditions and the Soul and the importance of ritual, art, costumes and storytelling. In conclusion, he orally shared this ancient Navaho poem:

What is Wisdom?

First, one must find one’s face. (self-determination)

Next, one must find one’s heart. (motivation)

Then, one must find one’s foundation. (knowledge, understanding)

Then, one must find one’s relationship. (communication, application)

During his workshop, Cajete explained that for the Tihua people, the verb *to learn* also means *to breathe* or *to be with life*. He displayed visual Tihua art images of a corn dancer and a buffalo dancer in his pueblo. Cajete explained the meaning of corn as a sacred ecological societal symbol of Unity and Diversity, stating that every corn seed represents an individual needed to come together to create a society bonded in unity. During his oral presentation, Cajete (2001) emphasized the role of Native Education as being “to create complete, fully functional, harmonic human beings as we move through the cycle of life.” Cajete’s definition of Native Education’s purpose is in harmony with holistic character education approaches now surfacing.

Journeying around the Medicine Wheel towards centre completeness.

Cajete & Little Bear (2000) stress American society’s need to shift perspective:

The consciousness of the Earth is us.... We are totally significant and relevant to the future life of the Earth. The earth must think through us, you and I. But our Earth is, must be, primary and humans remain derivative. This is a difficult concept for most people to accept. The primary sacred community is the Earth, a community in which humans are but one dimension. It is this reality that must guide the behavior of every nation, culture, institution and community. We have to think first of the Earth and then ourselves. (p. 282).

Cajete (1994) uses the symbol of the Medicine Wheel as a frame of reference. He identifies four cardinal directions of indigenous creativity: East—artistic poet, South—philosopher teacher, West—shaman priest and North—hunter warrior (p. 161). He identifies and describes at length eight Aboriginal stages of developmental learning leading to center completeness. Evolving clockwise around the Medicine Wheel, the learner develops a sense of place, experiences relationships, gains an understanding of relativity and achieves profound learning of universal truths. The sequential stages are: (a) basic learning within the family unit; (b) social learning of survival skills within the Tribe in the context of the natural environment; (c) connecting to tradition through myth, ritual and ceremony; (d) drawing attention to the power of indigenous education to raise social consciousness through integration with Tribal culture; (e) achieving peacefulness and integration through *visioning* (perhaps even going on a sort of Vision Quest); (f) experiencing the woundedness and healing of individuation as one comes to grips with the subconscious self; (g) achieving enlightenment through a balance of mind, body and spirit, and (h) transformational understanding. With Nature acknowledged as the greatest teacher, one learns respect, tradition, empowerment and spirituality on an ascending spiral towards wholeness and transformation. (pp. 210 – 211).

Cajete (1994) stresses Elders' wisdoms that acknowledge intrinsic inner knowing:

Inherent in Indigenous education is the recognition that there is a knowing Center in all Human beings that reflects the knowing Center of the Earth and all other living things. Indian elders knew that contacting one's inner Center was not always a pleasant or easily attainable experience. This recognition led to ceremonies, rituals, songs, dances, works of art, stories, and traditions to assist individual access and use the healing and whole-making power in each person. (pp. 211-212)

He also emphasizes the process involved in considering wholistic Aboriginal knowledge:

Traditional American Indian forms of education must be considered conceptual wellsprings for the "new" kinds of educational thought that can address the

tremendous challenges of the twenty-first century. Tribal education presents models and universal foundations to transform American education and develop a “new” paradigm for curricula that will make a difference for Life’s sake.... To begin such a process, American education must move from a focus on specialization to holistic knowledge; from a focus on structures to understanding processes, from objective science, to systemic science, and from building to networking. (1994, p. 27)

Those who nurture personality and character development, understand that for lasting, meaningful, integrated learning to occur, what touches the head, must also touch heart and hand. Referring to Walt Whitman’s similar naturalistic view of learning, Miller (2002b) states: “In holistic learning, all that we study or encounter becomes part of our being and not some piece of information which is quickly forgotten after the test. Learning is deeply integrated” (p. 195). Cajete defines the term *educate*: “In its most natural dimension, all true education is transformative and Nature centered. Indeed, the Latin root *educare*, meaning *to draw out*, embodies the spirit of the transformative quality of education.” (1994, p. 209)

Cajete (1999a) explains a dynamic creative process instructional model that places the learner at the center of the Medicine Wheel (p. 171), reinforcing two truths: “Objectivity is a relative term” and “Learning is lifelong and holistic” (p. 187). Cajete also emphasizes philosophical aspects of cultural differences, comparing four ethnic groups regarding axiology, epistemology, logic and process. Diametrically opposed worldviews between Euro-American colonizing culture and indigenous peoples of the Americas are noted. According to Cajete, the axiology of the former is based on acquisition of material objects whereas the latter’s highest value resides in balancing relationships with all beings in the Web of Life, past, present and future. Traditional First Nations teachings involve an intuitive affective-active (feeling and doing) epistemology wherein knowledge is acquired through kinesthetic activity, imagery and rhythm. In contrast, prevalent instruction in the colonizing culture remains based on a cognitive (thinking) epistemology. (1999a, p. 141)

Traditional wisdoms are environmental, holistic and involve ritual.

Earth-based teachings like those of Cajete and Sainte-Marie have helped many dominant culture citizens develop greater appreciation of the “naturalist” (Gardner, 2001)

or “environmental” (Senge, 1999) intelligence. I stress in particular the eighth *naturalist* intelligence added to Gardner’s list in 1996. Gardner exerted major influence in opening non-Native minds and hearts to formerly discounted Native Earth Wisdoms. Senge (1999) describes *environmental intelligence* as being “often overlooked” (p. 550), and *spiritual intelligence* as often being the object of “conscious oversight” (p. 551).

Paradoxically, these types of intelligences are increasingly becoming topics of outside experts invited into business learning organizations to help balance “soul and ethics at work” (p. 551). Tingley (2003) states “Robert Cooper, Ph.D. and Ayman Sawaf, leadership experts and authors of *Executive IQ*, tell us to use the energy of our emotions (EQ) and the wisdom of intuition to better connect with ourselves and each other” (p. 19).

Spiritual and naturalist/environmental intelligences addressed in some dominant culture philosophies harmonize well with traditional First Nations Earth-based approaches to character education as they are uppermost considerations in traditional Aboriginal thought. The research literature and interviews in Appendices D to H indicate that wholistic, inclusive, traditional Aboriginal character education approaches could help enhance organizational systems learning. (Andrews, 1998; Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1985; Gossen, 1993; Lame Deer & Erdoes, 1994, 2000; Lame Deer, Josephy & Erdoes, 2001; Shiell, 1990).

Cajete and Sainte-Marie expose learners to Native earth-based rituals like drumming, dancing and chanting. These rituals were outlawed by the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs in 1921. (See Appendix R.) Cajete and Leroy Little Bear (2000) feel that traditional wisdoms offer a solid foundation for transformative learning:

The accumulated knowledge of the remaining Indigenous groups around the world represents an ancient body of thought, experience, and action that, if honored and preserved as a vital storehouse of environmental wisdom, can form the basis for evolving the kind of cosmological reorientation that is so desperately needed. (p. 281)

World Indigenous Peoples’ voices reach the United Nations.

On November 22, 1993, the first Aboriginal conference was held at the United Nations headquarters. Called *The Cry of the Earth, The Legacy of the First Nations*, this

gathering at the house of Mica had been foreseen in Hopi prophecies (Waters, 1963). According to McFadden (2001a) twenty-eight Native messengers spoke eloquently:

At UN headquarters, the elders delivered an explicit warning that the time of purification spoken of in their traditions is already in progress, and likely to intensify in the future unless people return to follow the instructions of the Creator: to live simply, in respect and harmony with all things. For hour after hour they presented their prophecies, handed down orally since antiquity, regarding the ecological, spiritual, and ethical crises confronting humanity today. (p. 99)

Battiste & Henderson (2000) write “On 21 December 1993, the UN General Assembly, in resolution 48/ 163, proclaimed 1995 to 2004 to be the Decade of the World’s Indigenous People” (p. 256). In the initial 1993 gathering at the UN building towards the end of the UN’s International Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, representing Aboriginal peoples from around the world united in a common purpose, Elders shared global wisdoms for healing hearts and spirits: “the Iroquois spoke of love for one another and respect for all of nature; the Algonquin spoke of forgiveness and sacrifice; the Mic Mac spoke of the importance of honesty, respect, caring and sharing” (McFadden, 2001a, p. 100). Despite limited media attention, participants expressed a sense of solidarity.

The works of Cajete and Sainte-Marie honouring Aboriginal environmental intelligence and Native worldviews of interconnectedness, have been further empowered by publications of two works associated with David Suzuki, world-renowned environmentalist: *The Wisdom of the Elders: Sacred Native Stories of Nature* by Suzuki and Knudtson (1992) and *The Sacred Balance: A Visual Celebration of Our Place in Nature* by Suzuki, McConnell & Decambra (1998). These works have raised society’s general awareness of the importance of respecting earth connections. The combined efforts of these Science-focussed authors paved the way for honouring the expertise of Don Trent Jacobs, the first Native American university professor and environmentalist to finally springboard, in 2001, into the official American character education literature with a flurry of published articles posted electronically on the World Wide Web (2001 a, b, c, d, e, & f, 2002a, n.d., Jacobs & Reyner, 2002), a teacher’s guidebook (2001), and numerous keynote presentations at national and international conferences

Figure IV. Dr. Don Trent Wahinkpe Topa (Four Arrows) Jacobs.

Former Dean of Education at Oglala Lakota College, Jacobs is an associate professor in the College of Education at Northern Arizona University. Of Cherokee, Creek and Scots-Irish descent, Jacobs has published numerous articles on First Nations character education since 2001. He has also written several books, the most recent of which is *Teaching Virtues: Building Character Across the Curriculum*, co-authored with Jessica Jacobs-Spencer. This photo is included with permission.

It was through back door of *Paths of Learning*, a holistic education magazine, that I first discovered Don Trent Jacobs, known also by the names of *Wahinkpe Topa* and, in English, *Four Arrows*. Jacobs is the only currently recognized First Nations author of official works in the field of character education in North America. “The Red Road: The Indigenous Worldview as a Prerequisite for Effective Character Education” was Jacobs’ initial article from Issue #9, July 2001 of *Paths of Learning*. Breaking new ground as a voice for character education from a First Nations perspective, Jacobs identified Native American role models of character like Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Red Cloud and Black Elk who embodied the universal virtues of “courage, patience, honesty, fortitude, and spiritual wisdom” (p. 20).

The Red Road—A wholistic road of virtues.

Brant (1994) defines the term *the Red Road*:

The Good Red Road is a way of life among Native peoples that is one of balance and continuity. Again, this seems to be the overwhelming message that Native women bring to writing. Creating a balance in their protagonists’ worlds, remembering what the Elders taught, recovering from the effects of colonialism.... In fact, to wrap things up in a tidy package is not following the Good Red Road—it’s a falsehood. (p. 11)

Brown (1989) offers this Sioux definition of the Red Road, speaking of its opposite also:

The “red road” is that which runs north and south and is the good or straight way, for to the Sioux the north is purity and the south is the source of life. This “red road” is thus similar to the Christian “straight and narrow way;” it is the vertical of the cross, or the *ec-cirata el-mustaqim* of the Islamic tradition.

On the other hand, there is the “blue” or “black road” of the Sioux, which runs east and west and which is the path of error and destruction. He who travels on this path is, Black Elk has said, “one who is distracted, who is ruled by his senses, and who lives for himself rather than for his people.” (p. 7)

Walking the *Good Red Road* in a general Native American or First Nations sense involves working consistently at living one’s life in a good, truthful, respectful, mindful, spiritual and harmonious manner displaying appropriate self-restraint. Walking its opposite, called the *Blue Road* in Sioux terminology, is more self-centred, self-gratifying and materialistic. American philosopher Allport (1955, 1963, 1988) perceived a clash between related European and American worldviews. He was convinced that Europeans placed greater emphasis on *character* with intrinsic reward, whereas Americans tended to

focus on *personality* with extrinsic reward. Allport (1988) felt that growing American interest in environmentalism led towards outward action of the personality.

In 2003, regardless of terminology labels used, are two different dominant culture branches of character development being explored: an inward, holistic, often more character-focused European “intrinsic process of educating for character” versus an outward more personality-focused American “extrinsic product of good character.” The character etched inside us exerts a direct impact on personalities we project on the outside into a shared world. Emerson (1990) whom Miller (2002a) identified as one of the “Prophets for Holistic Learning” sought unified, integrated approaches to teaching and learning that placed a greater focus on the inward than the outward state, encouraging learning institutions to set youths’ hearts “on flame” (p. 88).

The Red and Blue Road: A choice or a combination?

The traditional Native concept of journeying the Good Red Road reaches back thousands of years into prerecorded history, expanding into many First Nations communities. This *beauty way* encourages asking and addressing difficult questions. Over time, I have come to understand this: The Good Red Road has an inward, spiritual-based, community-oriented focus whereas the Blue Road is an outward, material-based, short-term profit highway that our colonizing cultures are largely traveling. (Bennett, 1998; Hunter, 2000; Saul, 1997; Savage, 2002). We are endangered like deer, eyes hypnotized by headlights. McGaa (1990) explains Black Elk’s *blue man* symbol:

The blue man, the great violator, symbolizes greed, corruption, dishonesty, and selfishness.... Mother Earth has natural self-healing powers, but without the help of knowledgeable humans, she cannot set herself right. A reversal of world values, a spiritual concept of the earth as God-created and sacred, is in order before we two-leggeds can be environmentally effective on a global basis. The blue man will meet his death when this comes about. (p. 16)

Predominant culture character education in North America tends to be more blue than red, more fragmented and more-top down authority-directed. Holistic grassroots learner-centered approaches emerging in the dominant culture are more compatible with the wholistic Red Road approach to life. Reyhner, Martin, Lockhard and Gilbert (2000) discuss this century’s indigenus focus on ‘learning in beauty’. Bielenberg (2000) wrote “Only in a world where all ways of knowing and teaching are respected and valued will

we see an end to the injustices such as those suffered by the original inhabitants of this country over the past 500 years” (p. 151).

Don Trent Jacobs Introduces The Red Road of Character Education

Discussing spirituality’s sustaining quality for achieving inner peace in times of adversity, Jacobs (2001d) emphasized what the Lakota cherish:

In spite of the tragic consequences of poverty, disease and oppression that surround them, they [many people on the reservation] still believe that children are sacred; that elders deserve respect; that air and water are meant to be clean; that all creatures should be honored; that there is joy in remembering the relatedness in life’s diversity; and that a balanced life, referred to in Lakota as “The Red Road” is not likely unless it is guided by such core, universal virtues as courage and generosity (Electronic version, p. 21).

Black Elk and Lyon (1991) link the Red Road to the Tree of Life. Hoffman (2000), quotes Black Elk comparing two worldviews: “If people follow the ‘Red Road,’ a spiritual-based life, the Tree of Life will bloom, and the people will prosper. If they follow the ‘Black [Blue] Road,’ a material-based life, the tree will wither” (p. 192).

The hoop and the tree image.

Caldecott (1993) examines thirty-seven *Myths of the Sacred Tree* from cultures around the world, including two American Indian myths, one of which is a North American Sioux myth about “The Sacred Cottonwood Tree and the Sundance.” The tree is a central symbol. The Sundance is performed around the cottonwood tree. At Pow Wows, dancers move in a circle around a tree or a cedar arbour that shelters the male drummers. Willows are bent into circles to craft dreamcatchers and symbols of Medicine Wheels. There are many forms of Native American sweat lodges, including round ones of skins stretched over dome-like frameworks made of bent tree limbs. (Bruchac, 1993).

Hoffman (2000) elaborates upon the holistic sacred tree and hoop image present in many world cultures and world religions, but particularly prevalent as a core metaphor in many Aboriginal cultures. The tree symbolizes male energy, roots, aspirations, self-actualization, and the intelligence quotient (IQ). The ecological and social hoop symbolizes female energy, emotional intelligence (EQ) and interconnectedness with all within the Web of Life. Hoop relationships with self, family and others remind us to relate to each other in ever increasing concentric circles and to move away from “self-

centeredness to other-centeredness” (p. 169). Hoffman (2000) states “The Tree grows within the Hoop, and the Hoops are the fruit of the Tree” (p. 95). The hoop and tree image combined represent the balance we need as human beings in our lives.

Ernest and Julia Seton (1991) contrast the essentially material focus of the White man’s culture with the essentially spiritual cultural focus of the traditional Red man. The former thinks in terms of property acquired, while the latter ponders quality of services rendered to the community. (p. 1). Native and non-Native peoples experienced an inevitable clash of worldviews from the onset. Dominant colonizing cultures of Spain, Portugal, England, France and Holland share ownership in transforming the Americas.

It is believed by many Aboriginals that the *rainbow tribe* of humanity identified by McFadden (2001) is now coming together as human family to bring peace and balance to the earth in fulfillment of prophecies. In McFadden (2001), Grandmother Twylah Nitsch, Seneca, Wolf Clan grandmother, speaks of Native prophecies of seven worlds, stating “We have now entered the time of the Fifth World, which began at Harmonic Convergence (August 16 – 17, 1987)” (p. 103). The White Buffalo is linked to this Rainbow prophecy. The birth of the first white buffalo calf out of seven born, took place on August 20, 1994, the birthday of Lakota Arvol Looking Horse, keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe. According to Looking Horse (2001), this birth marked the beginning of “a new era of reconciliation among races, and of respect for the Earth” (p. 116).

McGaa (1992) writes about regular people of many different nations seeking out the Native path during this lifetime. Hand (1998), an Oglala Sioux from Pine Ridge, South Dakota, examined ways in which those from different cultural backgrounds may live wholistically, in harmony with Natural Laws. Hand also explained the pilgrimage of thousands of people to see the white buffalo calf, now going into its fourth colour change according to the colours of the Medicine Wheel, as did White Buffalo Woman in the legend passed down through oral tradition as described by Medicine Eagle (1991).

Hand highlights the White Buffalo as a significant symbol of a worldwide wholistic spiritual awakening of unified heart, mind and spirit. Hand spoke for religious freedom in 1975 in Cooper Square, of New York city. According to Mc Gaa (1992), prior to Floyd Looks for Buffalo Hand, only Chief Red Cloud (1822-1909) (Parker, 1996) and

Abraham Lincoln had ever spoken in Cooper Square. Chief Leon Shenandoah, Tadadaho of Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy, quoted in McFadden (2001a) stated:

We must live in harmony with the natural world and recognize that excessive exploitation can only lead us to our own destruction. We cannot trade the welfare of our future generations for profit now.... We must stand together, the four sacred colours of man, as the one family that we are, in the interest of peace. We must abolish nuclear and conventional weapons of war... We must raise leaders of peace. We must unite the religions of the world as a spiritual force strong enough to prevail in peace. We (human beings) are a spiritual energy that is thousands of times stronger than nuclear energy. Our energy is the combined will of all people with the spirit of the natural world, to be of one body, one heart, and one mind for peace (p. 104).

In 2001, the soil was ripe for Professor Don Trent Jacobs to introduce traditional First Nations teachings of virtues to mainstream society. Jacobs found a receptive audience in the American holistic education movement through the *Paths of Learning* magazine (2001c, 2001d), at Aboriginal sites like *Indian Educational Research* (2002), *Native Culture.com* (2001b, 2002c), and *IndianEduResearch.Net* (Jacobs & Reyner, 2002) and at his own *Teaching Virtues* Website (2001a, 2001f, 2002a, n.d.).

Americans Ryan & Bohlin (1999) state “virtues are cultivated from within the individual and actually improve character and intelligence” (1999). Like them, Jacobs focuses on *virtues* rather than *values*, discussing how children learn virtues through real life experiences like sacred practices of name-giving ceremonies and give-aways. Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer (2001) state “Generosity is one of the most apparent virtues among the American Indians. Lakota people actually measure their worth by how much they give away. Those not influenced greatly by western culture’s emphasis on material wealth still do” (p. 38). This statement echoes the position of Shiell (1990) regarding potlatches.

Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer (2001) question the proscriptive wording of each of the Christian *Ten Commandments*. Half a century ago, Mitchell-Hedges (1954), who lived many years among the Maya of Belize, questioned whether civilized Man honoured the teachings of those *Ten Commandments* or even sought to develop his moral sense:

Our philosophers, our politicians, our humanitarians, our scientists, tell us that Man is daily progressing upwards in the scale of Evolution. Frankly, I see few signs of it. He has developed his inventive powers to such a degree that no technical problem now seems to be beyond his capabilities; yet in the hurrying, scurrying maelstrom of civilized existence his moral sense—the only sense which

can save him from himself—remains as low if not lower than those of most primitive peoples. The Ten Commandments are mouthed and mocked. In two thousand years since they were first enunciated Man has not renounced killing; he is riddled with covetousness and envy; adultery is flaunted openly across stage and screen, and he honors neither his parents nor his God (p. 254).

A generally proscriptive Christian worldview full of “shalt nots” contrasts with a prescriptive North American Aboriginal worldview of “thou shalt.” The *Christian Ten Commandments* that have guided my life well are very different from the *Ten Indian Commandments*, of unknown origin, mass produced on posters by Joe Vlesti (1989, 1993). Both blueprints inspire better moral living. The Ten Indian Commandments were displayed in three interviewees’ homes and at one worksite. Thus, I quote them here:

The ten Indian commandments.

1. Remain close to the Great Spirit.
2. Show great respect for your fellow beings.
3. Be truthful and honest at all times.
4. Do what you know to be right.
5. Look after the well being of mind and body.
6. Treat the Earth and all that dwells thereon with respect.
7. Take full responsibility for your actions.
8. Dedicate a share of your efforts to the greater good.
9. Work together for the benefit of all mankind.
10. Give assistance and kindness whenever needed.

(Anonymous Author, 2001)

Holistic/wholistic traditional Aboriginal teachings of interrelatedness.

Paths of Learning: Options for Families and Communities, is a quarterly journal published by the Paths of Learning Centre based in Eureka, California. Prystowsky (2002) describes this journal as devoted to democratic, holistic, student-centered education. In response to the question “Does your child’s education reflect your own core

values?”, the *Paths of Learning* mission statement reveals itself to be compatible with the Native American “Web of Life” image of Chief Seattle (1854). Prystowsky states:

We as a society have begun to recognize the value of the holistic perspective, which views life and all of its manifestations as an interconnected web rather than a series of disconnected, unrelated events. In the last few decades the holistic perspective has helped us develop more effective medical treatments, counseling programs, workplace routines, and even buildings.

Yet, most of American education still operates as if “facts” *actually* exist in a vacuum, that students are passive empty vessels into which these facts can be poured, that wisdom is little more than the accumulation of vast bundles of these facts, that multiple choice tests can indicate who is well-educated and who is not, and that the epitome of learning is the winner of “Who Wants to be a Millionaire.”

Of course we know better, but the gulf between the way we live the rest of our lives and the way we educate (or permit others to educate) our children does not seem to be getting much narrower. In the business world, for example, cooperation is a major key to success; in education, it is called cheating.... We could go on, but the point is that much of American education is profoundly out of step with the basic holistic, people-centered values we hold and the way we really live our lives. (Prystowsky, 2002, electronic version)

An online learning guide in *Paths of Learning* accompanies Jacobs’ Red Road article. This guide includes five key sections: an introduction to Don Trent Jacobs; a segment on his other writings; a section on exploring indigenous worldviews online; a section on character education with resource references uniquely from the dominant colonizing culture and ideas (three out of four of them indigenous) for bridging the distance between theory and action in concrete ways. (2001d).

One immediately encounters the powerful visual image of a hoop dancer holding the symbolic Hoop of Relationship, each hoop featuring a virtue, rather than a value as depicted on the cover of Jacobs’ website and guidebook. Hoop dancers go back centuries. They herald from a number of tribes. Living the virtues is being on the Good Red Road, on the path to peace. The word *Lakota* means *Peace*. Black Elk whose rainbow vision and teachings have influenced many tribes, was Lakota. (Black Elk & Lyson, 1991; Brown, 1989; Brown & Steltenkamp, 1993; Holler, 1995.)

Courage as the bear within.

“A Real Time for Education” by Jacobs (2001b) was written as a follow-up piece to shocking September 11, 2001 events. Martin (2001) comments that Jacobs’ real message, although not explicitly stated, is that courage comes from within. According to Martin, “real education” for the latter implies that teachers refind their courage or perhaps more accurately, reconnect with the courage already within them. The image of internal strength is akin to the concept of *bear medicine* where, in Ojibway tradition, one is taught to seek and find *the bear within*. Babcock (1998) speaks of the bear being recognized by the Zuñi, a Native American tribe, as being a totem of guidance and shamanic healing (p. 73). It is also held sacred by the Hopi (Waters, 1963). The bear is a symbol of courage and healing as well as a Clan name among many other Aboriginal groups, including the Inuit. Two of my Native friends, one Mohawk, another Ojibway, both of Bear Clan, are involved in various aspects of healing, helping both Natives and non-Natives. The word *bear* often is given as a Spirit name to people displaying bear qualities. For instance, Robert Tree Cody (2002), of Dakota heritage, listed in Appendix N, is called *Oou Kas Mah Kwet* meaning *Thunder Bear*. His music honours Elders’ traditional teachings.

The seventh generation.

The *seventh generation* concept in connection to The Great Peace, as expressed by the Council of Five Nations (Parker, 1991, 2000; Wallace, 1997) is illustrated by an ancient North American Indian proverb. “Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children” (Stone Eagle Productions, 1996). Ancient oral tribal teachings state that our actions affect seven generations.

In Johnson (1994), Thomas Banyaca, translator and interpreter for the Hopi Independent Nation, reaffirms the seventh generation teachings that are now appearing more frequently in First Nations literature: “We have to look at each other as one people; we have to work together and help each other to restore a balanced life on this earth for ourselves and the next generation and the generations coming” (p.44).

David Seals, Huron-Wendat living in South Dakota’s Black Hills, founder of the Bear Butte Council, authored *The Seven Council Fires of Sweet Medicine: Seven Acts in*

Five Volumes of Indigenous Mythology (1997). In *Seventh Generation: Images of the Lakota today* (1998), Seals speaks of the seventh generation prophecy by Lakota Black Elk who stated that strength would return to his people seven generations after the Wounded Knee massacre. That massacre took place on December 29, 1890. (Black Elk & Lyson, 1991; Brown, 1989; Brown & Steltenkamp, 1993; Holler, 1995)

Like many of his Aboriginal counterparts North and South of the Canada / U.S. border, Jacobs (2001b) refers to the seventh generation legacy. Jacobs makes a call to action to teachers as “guardians of peace and democracy” to engage in a common quest to create a society of thinkers who collaborate, working together mindfully and courageously for peace, social justice and equity in this world. Jacob’s united *Quest for Courage* mindfully links thought, action, voice and peace initiatives. Jacobs (2001c) emphasizes the focus of the 2001 Centennial Symposium of the Nobel Peace Prize on collaboration towards world peace, demilitarization, social justice and sustainability. Jacobs calls teachers to action to encourage young people to think, recognize and use their abilities, engage in service to their communities, and become informed seventh generation activists for equity and peace. Jacobs (2003) stresses surviving with beauty:

Foremost in the “character education” of American Indians is a sense of survival. (Reyhner and Eder 1989, p.9) Survival, however, is not separate from the realization of life’s beauty even amidst the struggles for survival. In essence, this idea of “surviving with beauty” is an ultimate spiritual priority for it recognizes that human beings, like all the other living creatures on this wonderful planet, share the mandate for survival. This view honors the wonderful connectedness and symbiosis in nature. It honors life. Moreover, it has lead to the famous priority often assigned to American Indian thinking about the survival of the seventh generation, perhaps the most spiritual, virtuous concern any of us could have in our lives. (p. 28).

Pohl (2000) spearheaded the initial proposal for the project *Learning About Walking in Beauty: Placing Aboriginal Perspectives in Canadian Classrooms*. The study report, released jointly by the Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (November, 2002), follows the CAAS Learning Circle framework in the form of the Medicine Wheel, incorporating the seven generation legacy and the rule of reciprocity. The report coincidentally begins with the same Sitting Bull quotation I had chosen one year earlier for my thesis acknowledgements. The journey begins in the *NORTH* honouring *Wisdom, Elders, and Aboriginal Worldview*:

We will travel the circle beginning in the North then move to the East, the South, the West, and then finally to the North. In this way, we honour our Ancestors, of the past seven generations, who came before us. It is the Ancestors who guide us as we relearn how to live respectfully on this land.... In Anishinaabe teaching, the North is where we find Wisdom and Strength.... The people have preserved the teachings of this land. We continue to establish a relationship with Mother Earth, in order to sustain all life. The story of Anishinaabe People and the story of this land are the same. Both have been oppressed, dispossessed, and exploited. The relationship between the Anishinaabe and Mother Earth is essential: they are created equal and what happens to one will happen to the other. (Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies & Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2002b, Section 1.1, p. 5)

Generosity as a high form of courage.

Jacobs (2001b) discussed the impact of fear (False Evidence Appearing Real) on creating “irrational anxieties” and “hypersuggestibility to the words of perceived trusted authority figures.” Jacobs emphasized interconnectedness as essential to developing courage. He described its cousin, generosity, as one of the highest forms of courage, cautioning us against extrinsic rewards that diminish both. (2001b, electronic version)

Virtues in the hoop of relationship.

For all Native peoples, *the circle* represents harmony and balance. Chief (1997) speaks in favour of equality and unity:

The circle has healing power. In a circle, we are all equal. When in a circle, no one is in front of you, no one is behind you, no one is above you, no one is below you. A prayer circle is designed to create unity.

The Hoop of Life is also a circle. On this hoop, there is a place for every species, for every race, for every tree, and for every plant. It is this completeness of life that must be respected in order to bring about health on this planet with our prayer (all my relations). (Chief, 1997)

In many Native cultures, from Inuit to Cherokee, this Hoop is the *Medicine Wheel*, a powerful symbol for many teachings that help to bring lives into harmony and balance (Ywahoo, 1987). Dudziak (2000) describes Medicine Wheel teachings as a “central paradigm in many aboriginal cultures” (p.242).

Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer quote Misty Brave of Oglala Lakota College, who identifies four key values (meaning virtues) used in scientific inquiry: “The IkceWicasa (common man) are taught the values of respect, wisdom, generosity and courage at young

ages. They determine the strength of the people. These four values provide a backbone for the Lakota Nation” (2001, p. 108). These are four of the Seven Teachings of the Grandfathers that I know in the Ojibway tradition as Wisdom, Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Humility and Truth (also called Trust).

Jacobs embraces First Nations spirituality as an effective means for educating beyond the walls of the classroom, expanding into the great outdoors. Jacobs makes wholistic, direct earth connections. Jacobs (1998) speaks of the heart and head connection, physical survival and personal transformation in an autobiographical account about a personal unexpected life-altering experience. Jacobs’ real, life-threatening rush through underwater tunnels runs parallel to a calm *Spiritual quest for inner peace and harmony*, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all Creation within the Web of Life.

Don Trent Jacobs’ CAT-FAWN connection.

While writing *Primal Awareness* Jacobs (1998) conceived the CAT-FAWN framework (p. 23) that he uses for character education. His epilogue calls for “right thinking and right relationships” (p. 243), beseeching us to “help in healing the damage done to the Earth and to recognize the spirit in all things” (p. 243). *Primal Awareness*, balancing Jacobs’ inward and outward journeys, came as a natural prelude to his official character education guidebook co-authored three years later. Jacobs’ paradigm-shift provoking CAT-FAWN connection offering the possibility of “harmonious living” (2001, p. 10) as a healthy lifestyle alternative is key to understanding the guidebook.

CAT represents “*Concentration Activated Transformation*” and “True learning is transforming” (2001, p. 7). Comprehension of transition versus transformation as explained by Miller (1993, 1996, 2000), helps one understand Jacobs’ approach as a transformational one as it involves holistic techniques requiring positive use of receptive awareness and concentration states. Such techniques include guided visualization, dramatic role-playing, ritual, spontaneous suggestibility and communion with nature.

FAWN refers to four “major forces” that can promote “deep learning.” These four forces are “Fear, Authority, Words, and Nature” (2001, p. 7). Nature includes music. From Jacobs’ and Jacobs-Spencer’s perspective, indigenous worldviews hold a completely different interpretation regarding these influences. These happily prevent

them from creating negative illusions about reality during concentration activated transformation (CAT). Facing our fears can lead to tremendous personal growth.

Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer (2001) stress that intrinsic relationships, not extrinsic ones, prepare youths to be balanced, positive, contributing members in a democratic North American society. Intrinsic relationships touch the heart, whereas extrinsic ones stop at the head. Over two decades of personal classroom experience have shown me that students make the best decisions when we allow them to make that great inward journey from the heart to the head, taking the time needed for proper contemplation of issues.

Primal awareness and primal leadership.

Interesting synchronicities involving use of vocabulary and expressions like *walk the talk* and *comes full circle* inspired by Aboriginal thought have begun to appear in dominant culture communication. Goleman (1995, 1998), specializing in emotional intelligence, coauthored a “primal” book four years after Jacobs published *Primal Awareness*. Goleman, McKee and Boyatzis (2002) wrote *Primal leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*, validating “resonant leadership” that involves an inward and outward equilibrium.

Two introspective areas of emotional intelligence known as *self-awareness* and *self-management* are balanced by two outward or *extraspective* ones known as *social awareness* and *relationship management*. Goleman, McKee and Boyatzis (2002) focus on the emotional nature of leadership, recognizing nurturing positive emotions as being at the very heart of leadership. The purpose is developing respectful relationships. Leaders are coached on making stakeholders feel good, inspired and empowered to strive for their personal best. Throughout their book, Goleman McKee and Boyatzis (2002) interweave a powerful storytelling technique based on true stories and testimonials of success from people who have increased their own emotional intelligence. They even use the drum, considered the heartbeat of Mother Earth and sacred to all Aboriginal peoples, as a metaphor for synergic resonance. Positive vibrations of one drum increasing in momentum set off vibrations in others, creating harmonic chain reactions. Having drummed in harmony with 165 other drums, I fully appreciate the emotional intensity, physical vibration and strength of this image. People can resonate too. Jacobs (1998)

prepares readers for the transition from the eighth *naturalist* intelligence discovered by Gardner (2001) to the ninth *spiritual* intelligence identified by Senge (1990).

Teaching virtues: Building character across the curriculum.

Don Trent Jacobs of Cherokee, Creek and Scots-Irish descent co-authored *Teaching Virtues: Building Character Across the Curriculum* with his daughter Jessica Jacobs-Spencer. This first recognized First Nations character education guidebook for teachers finally reached the mass market in 2001. Written in response to the American President's push for character education in American Indian schools, it is dedicated to the Sacred Medicine *sage*, a plant growing abundantly on Lakota land. *Sage* means *wise*.

Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer (2001) use two symbols shared amongst many First Nations: the Hoop of Relationship and the Medicine Wheel. There are hoop dancers from many different tribes. As discussed earlier, hoops became a Native American symbol for illustrating virtues. The Medicine Wheel, with its multilayered meanings, provided the structure for this teachers' guidebook. I have encountered many other First Nations publications organized in sections that move through its four directions.

Virtues, presented by Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer as intersecting hoops in Venn diagrams, are threaded throughout the book, reinforcing consistent themes of our interconnectedness as we work towards a higher purpose for the greater good: Fortitude, Courage, Patience, Honesty, Humility, Generosity and Spirituality. In Appendix Q, Jacobs adds Integrity and Peacefulness to these. Jacobs qualifies virtues in connection to spiritual awareness, emphasizing that they "are honoured in their true sense—not through the lens of respecting authority or consumerism" (2003, p. 27). Virtues are carefully defined at <http://www.teachingvirtues.net/virtues.html>. It is important to note that Jacobs' concept of virtues is not based completely on Lakota teachings. His approach combines Rarámuri, Lakota, Cherokee and Navajo teachings with his personal insight.

The Medicine Wheel.

The guidebook by Jacobs and Trent-Jacobs (2001) is organized into four parts, following the Medicine Wheel, beginning in the North and ending in the West. The

Oglala Medicine wheel differs somewhat from the Ojibway one described in the Glossary of Terms (Appendix A). Don Trent Jacobs gave me colour clarification:

In sacred Oglala, red is north, black is west (mystery), white is south (spirits) yellow is east (new beginnings)... As a Lakota sundancer, I have learned that the Oglala believe red, not white, is the colour of the North and it represents the blood of the buffalo and refers to sustenance. But the other tribe use white. There are various interpretations to the mysterious symbolism of the Medicine Wheel (Personal communication, October 30, 2001).

Part One, entitled “The Strength of the North,” provides the rationale for *Teaching Virtues: Building Character Across the Curriculum*, emphasizing the three C’s of *courage, connectedness* and *commitment*. Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer discuss the importance of recognizing our interconnectedness, standing up for that in which we believe and facing our fears. This section advises teachers to be authentic role models fully living character education across the curriculum every day. The successful implementation of “indigenous virtues” character education requires courage and commitment. It can materialize with recognition that “ultimately, character education is about love for the people, the planet, and all of God’s creation” (2001, p. 6). A traditional Lakota focus is clearly placed on honouring “all our relations.” I know from experience that when a Native person ends an oration or a letter stating “all my relations,” that individual is acknowledging the interconnectedness that we as humans share with all animate and inanimate beings within the Web of Life. It is a very respectful salutation.

Part Two, called “The Enlightenment of the East,” provides a blueprint for success, a glossary of terms and a process-focused, virtues-based curriculum instead of a product-focused, values-based one. To help with formative assessment during the transformational process, the authors include a teacher-friendly *Core Virtues Action Plan* and *Rubrics for Character Development* organized from levels one to four for each of the identified virtues, along with general Core Virtues and Care Rules rubrics.

Part Three is entitled “The Interconnections of the South.” In six chapters, various areas across the curriculum are explored, providing practical short-range plans and lesson plan samples. Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer provide opportunities for the Soul to

create and engage in meaningful ceremony through visual and performing arts, stressing the importance of subtly “planting seeds for character” (2001, p. 115). Here one can appreciate some similarity with the integrated arts approach of Waldorf schools.

Part Four addresses the “Mysteries of the West.” This section brings closure, warning educators to avoid mainstream extrinsic motivation character education that features fragmented flavour character traits like revolving specials in a “Value of the Month Club” (p. 154). Educators are urged to focus on developing the *whole* child, engaging in formative assessments that further *integrate* rather than fragment character education teaching. Teachers are challenged to stand firmly outside their comfort zones in their character education approaches rather than allowing themselves to become one more mindless follower in an already “dysfunctional community of teachers” (p. 155).

Like Justin Trudeau (2001b) and Saul (1993, 1995, 1997, 2002), Jacobs (2001e, 2002b, 2003), concerned that Earth is headed for catastrophe, argues for the persistent pursuit of questions and for mindful development of a conscious civilization. Like Kohn (1991, 1993, 1999, 2003) whom he frequently cites, Jacobs bemoans the extrinsic nature of the current American-led character education movement which often involves indoctrination, surface platitudes, systematic highlighting of daily, weekly or monthly character trait “flavours” and acknowledgement of “good” behaviour with extrinsic rewards that produce short-term positive effects that could even be detrimental to developing and maintaining any long-term intrinsic desire to do good.

Both Jacobs and Kohn lobby against product-oriented extrinsic character education which risks being fragmented, full of fanfare, bells and whistles and detracts from character. In “Five Reasons to Stop Saying ‘Good job,’” Kohn (2003) explains that extrinsic character education is manipulative, creates “praise junkies”, robs the child of the pleasure of doing good, causes loss of interest and reduces achievement. Kohn states “What kids do need is unconditional support, love with no strings attached” (p. 32) and “You don’t have to evaluate in order to encourage” (p. 33). Kohn and Jacobs both suggest simpler, more authentic, intrinsic, holistic, integrated, process-oriented character education as a viable alternative. Society needs unclouded definitions and interpretations

of character education so that consumers clearly understand what type of character development package our precious human capital is really getting inside the glitzy box.

Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer (2001) emphasize that displaying the courage to take a stand is key to initiating effective learning for character. They warn educators against school boards' hidden private political agendas and hidden curriculum as these can and often do lead to abuse of children. The authors suggest that we consider the "American Indian perspective as a viable alternative" (p. 157) to the dominant culture worldview.

A need to integrate worldviews to include Native perspectives.

The chasm between non-Native and Native worldviews can be made smaller through increased awareness. Jacobs contrasts the dominant culture three-legged stool approach balanced on "behaviorism, conservatism and religion" (as explained by Kohn) to the First Nations approach that includes "self-determination, community and spiritual awareness" (Jacobs, 2001, p. ix). Both worldviews seek a balance of mind, body and spirit, but from different angles. Mainstream culture seeks to control the Spirit to produce goodness, whereas Aboriginal culture seeks to liberate its goodness.

In 1999, Miller and Hunt were guest editors for a special issue called "Education and the Soul" of *Orbit* magazine, a publication of the Ontario Institute of Studies at the University of Toronto. Although no articles were contributed to that issue by any First Nations authors, many of the holistic strategies for engaging the Soul could be described as being indigenous in origin or compatible with traditional First Nations philosophies of life. Kessler (1999) concluded that one must honour *personal quests* of students:

Perhaps most important, as teachers, we can honour the quest of each student to find what gives their life meaning and integrity, and what allows them to feel connected to what is more precious for them. In the search itself, in loving the questions, in the deep yearning they let themselves feel, young people will discover what is sacred in life, what is sacred in their own lives, and what allows them to bring their most sacred gift to nourish the world. (p. 33)

Miller (1999) focuses on being mindfully present in the moment and being open to "the great mystery that surrounds us" (p. 11) *The Great Mystery* is a First Nations expression for the Creator (God) expressed through Nature's displays of the wonder of creation. Miller draws attention to music and song. Students learn to chant and to drum

connecting with the heartbeat of Mother Earth. Jacobs (2001) speaks of the importance to the American Indians of interweaving games, music and art into daily life (p. 42).

About Waldorf Schools, Kane (2002) states:

The pedagogy is rooted in a spiritual conception of the world and of the human being. For Steiner, the physical world is spiritual in nature, and we cannot separate out spiritual concepts or beliefs from our attempt to understand the world around us. Hence, spiritual concerns cannot be removed from the curriculum or made into a separate subject area for religion or moral values. (p. 244)

The Waldorf School incorporates naturalist intelligence, spirituality and experiential strategies similar to traditional Native American ones outlined by Jacobs & Spencer-Jacobs, leading to internal transformation and intrinsic motivation. Jacobs' spiritual philosophy shares similarities with the holistic Waldorf school approach (McDermott, 2002; Sloan, 1994, Steiner, n.d., Kane, 2002) referred to in the writings of Miller (1992, 1993, 1996, 2002) and in works he co-edits (Miller & Drake, 1992b; Miller & Hunt, 1999; Miller & Nakagawa, 2002).

A call to action for transformational teaching of virtues.

Don Trent Wahinkpe Topa (Four Arrows) Jacobs encourages students to learn to walk the *Good Red Road*. On his Website entitled *Teaching Virtues: Building Character Across the Curriculum*, Jacobs has posted over a dozen articles in the reference section. Jacobs invites teachers to “walk the talk” rather than just to “talk the walk,” affirming that actions do speak louder than words. He maintains that higher virtues must be taught in universities and teachers' colleges where teachers are formed and at elementary and secondary levels of education to guide our sacred children along the Good Red Road.

Coining a phrase from the Navajo Earth Spirit Prayer, “It is all in Beauty,” (2001, p. 169), Jacobs, like Cajete, entreats us to walk together in beauty. Many Aboriginal nations like the Hopi, the Cherokee, the Navaho and the Lakota sing beauty songs.

Jacobs is the only Native character education role model so far to express voice in the Canadian character education literature. His article entitled “Way of the Brave: An Indigenous Perspective on Character Education” appeared in the *Character Education/Citizenship Education: Help good kids stay good* Volume 33, Number 2 issue of *Orbit*

magazine in March, 2003. By including his article, Heather Berkley, editor of *Orbit magazine* has set the tone for inclusion of voices of Aboriginal scholars in Canada.

Jacobs suggests that serious researchers able to get beyond the romanticized version of Native peoples to seriously examine “ancient wisdoms” of holistic, time-tested traditional teachings will discover their value. Goforth (2003), a Master of Aboriginal Social Work student at Saskatchewan Indian Federated College wrote “Traditional Parenting Skills in Contemporary Life.” Her article sheds some light on traditional First Nations character education in the home. She published this in *Healing Words*, a magazine by Aboriginals for Aboriginals that is gaining readership and contributions from around the globe with articles coming from as far away as Australia. Voices like Goforth’s must be introduced into mainstream character education journals to raise our colonizing cultures’ levels of consciousness of traditional First Nations wisdoms.

First Nations Role Models of Character

Havercroft & Kielven (2003) describe creating character as “a life-long endeavour, taken on by many of those we call heroes, and just as many quiet, nameless, but worthy individuals who undertake to define consciously who they are in a positive way” (p. 7). Steelman & Sharp (1999) and Waters (1993) refer to Aboriginal heroes. Non-Natives should at least learn about some of the many positive Native character role models who helped shape North American history (Summerby, 1993; Sun Bear, 1970).

There is a wealth of knowledge to be explored from many different Aboriginal groups. As established by the November 18, 2002 report entitled *Learning About Walking in Beauty: Placing Aboriginal Perspectives in Canadian Classrooms*, published jointly by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies, there is budding interest in as well as a serious need for increased knowledge about First Nations peoples in Canada.

Some Aboriginal role models.

Iroquoian leaders like Handsome Lake, Cornplanter, Joseph Brant and Red Jacket helped shaped Canadian history. (Densmore, 1999; Kelsay, 1984; Parker, 1998; Wood, 1915). Few are aware of the role of Peacemaker of the Iroquois confederacy who created *The Great Law of the Tree of Peace* (Parker, 1991) (4th edition) . Few are aware of orator

Jake Thomas (1993, 1995, n.d.), now deceased, who knew and recited that law by heart. He bemoaned the fact that aging Elders are dying off, taking much of the knowledge with them. Thomas and Boyle (1995) stressed the importance of children growing up knowing their language, culture and traditions as well as maintaining strong, extended family ties.

According to Dorion, Prefontaine and Paquin (2000), “A strong philosophy in many First Nations and Métis communities is the collective notion that *it takes a whole nation to educate a child*” (p. 1). This is similar to the much-quoted, ancient African proverb, “It takes a whole village to raise a child.” Students should learn about the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) involvement and story of the *Great White Pine* as the symbol *Tree of the Great Peace* of the Iroquois confederacy of Six Nations and the *Code of Handsome Lake*. (Barreiro, 1988; Parker, 1991, 2000; Wallace, 1997)

Tecumseh played a key role in the War of 1812, yet, unlike Major General Sir Isaac Brock, he is known to few Canadians. (Raymond, 1915; Diebel, 2002) In his on-line essay about “Canada and the War of 1812,” Brown (1998) draws attention to Canada’s tendency to honour dominant colonizing culture contributors while dismissing significant First Nations contributions. Many war veterans came from Six Nations Reserve, Ontario. Some are descendents of the great military strategist Joseph Brant. Canadians know little about them or other Native leaders. (Diebel, 2002; Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies & Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2002b)

As little known to Canadians as Tecumseh, many First Nations men and women volunteered their services in the war effort overseas to help keep Canada free. (Hoffman, 2000) Few Canadians know about the sacrifices of over 7,000 Aboriginals who served in the First and Second World Wars and the Korean war, and an unknown number of Inuit, Métis and other natives who also participated. According to Summerby (1993), “one Native veterans’ group estimates that 12,000 Natives served in the three wars” (p.39). First Nations contributions to the war efforts should be included in the Grade ten Canadian History curriculum in Ontario. It deals with WW1, WW2 and the Korean war.

Summerby (1993) reinforces First Nations sacrifices to overcome cultural challenges and wide-ranging achievements in the Canadian army, navy and air force in pursuit of the goal of being Peace Keepers helping to restore world peace:

We, your sons and daughters of today, remember you, spirits of past wars and battles. We stand for peace on this planet called Mother Earth... We are armed not with terrible weapons of technology but with the wisdom of the Elders. We have not forgotten, we will not forget. We will live for our children and our future. (p. 39)

Bobby Nakoolak, Inuit storyteller and hunter, an unknown example of one quiet hero in his Coral Harbour, South Hampton community, is provided in Appendix M. Poet E. Pauline Johnson, known as Tekahionwake, of Six Nations, left a literary legacy. (Gray, 2002). Many Canadian First Nations role models of character are unknown to dominant culture members. Further research by First Nations peoples is needed in this area. Some Elders' stories and teachings have been published for crosscultural sharing. (See Bataille & Sands, 1984; Hungry Wolf, 1980; Kilcup, 2000; Sams, 1993; Vannotte, 1999.).

Honouring voices of the Elders.

Johnson (1994) interviewed Elders from across the United States. They shared important messages about character, community, interconnectedness and respect. The Elders, mostly American, speak of peace prophecies, returning to the Red Road, and mending the Sacred Hoop. McFadden (2001) provides many examples of Native Elders who are role models of character from both sides of the American border, most of them American. Canadian First Nations Elders consulted included two Mohawk Elders from the Great Peace tradition. All Elders express serious shared concern about the Earth.

In *Urban Elder* (Adams, 1997), Vern Harper talks about the Cree teachings of listening attentively to what is around us and guiding the children to make a “good journey.” Harper’s comments on the roles of Elders as shared with Johnson (1994) are “Elders are basically historians. They teach the faith, the old history of life, and as they become older they become more useful, because then the young ones can come and learn from them” (p. 134).

Wilson (1998) states “When our stories die, so will we” (p. 35). Some teachings are only meant for direct contact transmission in face-to-face, heart-to-heart context. It is common consensus that there is no substitute for meeting First Nations Elders first hand. Some stories are considered to be too sacred to be shared outside one’s clan. Cultural

factors must be tactfully taken into account when combing through the literature to document evidence of conscious character education amongst First Nations peoples.

Context of First Nations

More First Nations voices needed in character education literature.

At the time of this study, from 2001 to 2002, despite discovering a plethora of American literature and some Canadian sources of writing on character education, I uncovered mostly limited, indirect references to First Nations' involvement in educating for character. In November 1993, almost a decade ago, under the direction of guest editor, Thomas Lickona, *Educational Leadership* magazine published a special issue entitled "Character Education." That issue contains articles by thirty-three acclaimed dominant culture character education experts including Lickona, Ryan and Brandt. Not one single contributor was identified as being First Nations.

First Nations philosophies validated through the holistic movement.

Among Canadian non-Native experts in holistic education, the most frequent references to indigenous deep-rooted spiritual "knowings" come from Miller (2002) who subtly refers to First Nations wisdoms. He emphasizes a "wider interest in spirituality in the culture at large" (p. v), referring to the Dalai Lama who:

makes a useful distinction here between religion and what he calls secular spirituality. Secular spirituality is primarily concerned with fostering qualities such as wisdom and compassion in human beings. The development of wise and caring individuals should be at the center of our educational system. (p.v)

Traditional First Nations teaching strategies for developing character are not religion-based. They are spiritually-based, wholistic and deeply-rooted in nature. They reinforce virtues and respect rules of reciprocity. Organized religion gives man dominion over plants and animals, establishing him as superior. Native spirituality, steeped in story and ritual, places man instead as an equal with all within the Web of Life, honouring all beings as sacred. Suzuki, McConnell and Decambra (1998) reinforce Mother Earth's sacredness, emphasizing our interconnectedness and the importance of being reverent and respectful of this system that sustains us. Moore (1992) emphasizes the importance of experiencing daily sacredness as well as myth and ritual, stating "We care for the soul by

honoring its expressions, by giving it time and opportunity to reveal itself, and by living life in a way that fosters the depth, interiority, and quality in which it flourishes” (p. 304). Moore’s thoughts are a holistic *Quest for Soul by Other* that involves *being, becoming* and *honoring* each individual’s *original* authentic Self. (Moore, 1994, 2001). It appears compatible with the wholistic *Aboriginal Quest for Spirit*.

Growing awareness of Native peoples.

Aboriginal perspectives can contribute to a more complete understanding of the nature and implications of character education through a different worldview. Over the last decade, rigorous implementation of race relations policies in the public education system have placed public focus on positive race relations and inclusive celebration of multiculturalism with racial minorities. (CRRF, 2002; Burnett & Antiracism Team, 2002; Ontario Ministry of Education, 1993; R.I.S.E., 2003). In the 1900’s, I used Canadian history textbooks which included Aboriginal perspectives to increase appreciation of contributions of Native Peoples. (Clark & McKay, 1992; Marcotte, 1990).

Lyons (1994) stated that in traditional indigenous society children are not homeless and do not have to fend for themselves (p. 1). Concepts of sharing and caring cross all traditional Aboriginal groups. They are core to First Nations nurturing of character development. (See Appendix Q, Table Q1). In Johnson (1994), Haida Elder Lavina White talks about ceremonies being outlawed. (p. 193) Pow Wow dancing in general and the potlatch sharing system on the Canadian West coast were once made illegal by the Canada government. Carved masks of the Haida used in their dances were confiscated, collecting dust in museums for many years before being returned to the people. (Shiell, 1990, Appendix R). There were periods in American history where Native practices like the Sun Dance and Ghost Dance and their spirituality were outlawed too. (Medicine Eagle, 2000; Mooney, 1996). Ywahoo (1987) states:

Until 1979 it was illegal in the United States for Native Americans to practice their traditional religions... In 1979 the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed, permitting Native Americans to practice their traditional rituals and ceremonies once again (p. 1).

In the face of government retaliation, First Nations leaders brave enough to face consequences, maintained Aboriginal cultural identity, roots and sense of self. They often

took their celebrations underground, quietly maintaining their language and rituals at points in history where this was forbidden.

First Nations education systems.

The Ontario Native Affairs Secretariat and Ministry of Citizenship (1992) provides detailed profiles of First Nations communities in Ontario, including lists of their own school systems. I have visited three different First Nations communities in Ontario, touring educational facilities for on-reserve populations and witnessing curriculums in line with traditional teachings, organized according to the cycles of the Medicine Wheel. Many First Nations communities have their own school systems with bicultural programs structured around the Aboriginal worldview and inclusion of traditional teachings. Although there is Native-run education at higher levels, students are usually transported to public high schools for demographic reasons. In bi-cultural secondary schools both worlds can come together to participate in annual teaching pow-wows and workshops on First Nations traditions and culture facilitated by Native teachers.

First Nations Teachings in Cyberspace

Indigenous metaphor of The World Wide Web.

Aboriginals take advantage of opportunities to use the World Wide Web as a two-way communications tool. It links remote First Nations communities with the world. Many Native students access the web regularly from the classroom. Many Native schools post their curriculum on the web. Some First Nations teachings are accessible at the Schoolnet website at <http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/teachings-e.html>. Non-natives can access Native web-based resources to enrich Ontario curriculum course content. Many Elders perceive web-based learning as a technological Web of Life metaphor and a very practical means of reaching out to exchange knowledge. (See Appendix M.)

Sharing Native teachings in the school curriculum.

In April, 2000 two important grade nine and ten course profiles were published by the Queen's Printer for Ontario. (See Appendix K.) In Spring, 2001, five grade eleven course profiles were created for workplace, college and university preparation. Described in Appendix K, these are:

1. NBV3E and NBV3C *Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society*
2. NDA3M *Current Aboriginal Issues in Canada*
3. NBE3C and NBE3E *English: Contemporary Aboriginal Voices*
4. NDADO-LNODO *Native Languages*

There are not enough First Nations teachers. It is hard to find qualified, confident, unbiased non-Native instructors to properly facilitate learning in these courses.

Oral Sharing of Indigenous Knowledge

Forums for global sharing of indigenous knowledge.

I discovered three global forums for sharing traditional knowledge: The *World Council of Elders*, the *Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues* and the *World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education*. In all three cases, Aboriginal peoples come together for face-to-face communication and discussion. Ritual, song and ceremony are woven into special gatherings. Talks focus on important issues identified by stakeholders such as language, culture, education and the environment. A simple comparison of their mission statements sheds some light on how Aboriginal concerns for human development are also linked to environmental concerns. Related Web-based information is in Appendix M.

The mission statement of *The World Council of Elders* (2002) is “to support indigenous Elders, world-wide in awakening humanity to the urgent need to cherish and care for the Earth and all life.” The Council helps develop naturalist intelligence and positive character development by sharing ancient knowledge passed on through the oral tradition. Their purpose is to help facilitate global healing, restoring balance to nature and peace among humans on our planet.

In 2000, the United Nations established the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2000). The *Report of the First Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*, in Section B, Education and Culture, as recorded by First Nations *rapporteur* Wilton Littlechild, advocated the inclusion of traditional indigenous knowledge in the areas of spiritual and environmental contributions, philosophy and values in school curriculums:

The Permanent Forum stressed the importance of the respect and protection of traditional indigenous knowledge and heritage; the contribution of traditional knowledge in matters to do with spirituality, the environment and the management of natural resources within the ecosystems; objectively favouring the synergies between local traditional knowledge and modern science with indigenous participation.... requests Government include in their programs and plans and in their educational and cultural policies the contents of indigenous knowledge, indigenous spiritual and religious traditions, indigenous customs and ceremonies as well as indigenous history, vision of the cosmos, philosophy and values. (United Nations Economic and Social Council, 2002, June 1, p. 10)

The *World Indigenous People's Conference* (WIPCE) initiated by Vera Kirkness, took shape in Vancouver, B.C. in 1985. (Status of Women in Canada Research Directorate, 2002). Acknowledged as an active “spokesperson for aboriginal education” (Museum of Anthropology at UBC, 2002), Kirkness’ (1991) states: “We must strengthen both the inner and outer aspects of ourselves and of our children, of our schools, and of our communities, so that we may triumph. Truly, the answers are within us” (p. 110). Her comment reflects the Native philosophy of finding the bear (the strength) within to act upon what we know.

WIPCE gatherings nurture feelings of international interconnectedness, empowering participants. In 2002, WIPCE took place in Stanley Park, Calgary, Alberta at a site chosen for its spiritual meaning to the Nadoka nation and the Plains tribes. According to the posting¹¹ in August, 2002: “The Sixth World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education celebrates the sharing and promoting of Indigenous based initiatives by featuring holistic educational efforts to maintain and perpetuate our ways of knowing to actualize self-determination. *The answers are within us*” (WIPCE, 2002).

All presentations were made in tipis used as teaching wigwams as part of the original but modern version of Native Education. (Common & Frost, 1994) From real *Shingwauks*, in the true sense of *teaching wigwams* as originally intended, participants reclaim their voice and vision, strengthening and uplifting each other so they can move out into the world with greater confidence and stronger voices, in widening circles to share important teachings for the benefit of all. A tipi in itself is of great symbolic significance. Each pole of the tipi has a specific purpose and meaning related to ancient

¹¹ See <http://www.fnahec.org/wipce2002>

character education teachings of virtues in the family and community (Arts, 2002; Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, n.d.).

Virtues character education through tipi teachings.

At WIPCE 2002, one presentation at the conference dealt directly with character education, although that specific term was not directly used. Janet Johnson discussed *Virtues: Mikiwahp Teachings*. This was the only workshop that clearly focused on an Indigenous concept of virtues character education. There is little in writing that is commercially available on tipi teachings. There is some reference to them by Arts (2002). The Ministry of Education in Saskatchewan (n.d.) illustrates tipi teachings assigning meanings to fifteen poles, describes of the role of Elders and states Indian values at http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/curr_content/natstudies/pdf/tipi.pdf, stressing qualities important to safe, healthy, strong relationships. Tipis vary in style and symbolism, but share common universal qualities. They are used as mnemonic devices or teaching tools to emphasize desirable character traits. They reinforce guiding principles and reveal layers of meaning. Little information on tipi / teepee teachings is publicly available in the written tradition. This is an area requiring further exploration.

Finding Common Ground in Historical Perspectives

The concept of character education, neither new nor unique to North America, is a mindset dating back to pre-recorded history. Concern with character development is central to holistic schools of thought, yet they have not been officially included in the American-led literary character education movement. There is room and need for voice.

Holistic education and healthy character development.

Educating for character has been embraced for decades in Maria Montessori and Waldorf schools, birthed by holistic practitioners and visionaries. (Mooney, 2000; Steiner, 1976). Guiding youths to develop positive character traits is done naturally and intrinsically as students progress through their integrated, child-centred programs. Reinforcement of positive character traits and development of emotional intelligence is so subtly incorporated that it becomes as natural as drinking and breathing. I believe it is time to forge stronger links between holistic education and character education so that

positive transformation is more deeply rooted at a heart and soul level in the learner, and therefore more permanent.

Maria Montessori's holistic learning environment.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) a student of psychology and anthropology, the first female to graduate with a medical degree in Italy, used a scientific approach full of human warmth to demonstrate that a child could be liberated to learn through active involvement in his or her own learning process in an environment conducive to that process. (Mooney, 2002; Miller, 1992). Montessori (2002) affirmed that “Within the child lies the fate of the future” (Creative Process, 2002). In the Montessori system, children co-create themselves in direct collaboration with their environment, learning at their own pace. Montessori strove to create optimal learning conditions that left ample room for kinesthetic learning and physical manipulation of objects. This philosophy resonates with traditional First Nations ways of teaching and learning by doing.

Rudolph Steiner's holistic Waldorf education system.

Rudolph Steiner (1976), founder of Waldorf education, often referenced by Miller (1996, 2002), believed in developmentally appropriate education that balanced mind, body and spirit, nurtured self-esteem, creativity, a sense of wonder, and “spiritual unfolding.” Steiner (2002) states “Our highest endeavour must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives.” The Waldorf school system, present in North America for seventy-five years as of the year 2003, is offered by Dr. Raymond McDermott, Professor of Anthropology at Stanford University as a viable alternative to the crisis in values being experienced by North American society. McDermott is quoted at the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America Website as stating:

American schools are having a crisis in values. Half the children fail according to standard measures and the other half wonder why they are learning what they do. As is appropriate to life in a democracy, there are a handful of alternatives. Among the alternatives, the Waldorf school represents a chance for every child to grow and learn according to the most natural rhythmns of life. (2002)

New curriculum standardization and testing in Ontario public schools results in teaching to the tests as well as many less-able students not meeting grade requirements.

This, coupled with extrinsic character education that does not reach students at a true heart and soul level, creates a recipe for further frustration amongst our youth. In contrast, the Waldorf system focuses on integrating learning in a spiritual manner that will “nurture the inner life of the child” (Miller, 2000, p. 119). Some rites, roles and rituals integrating art and nature could stem from wholistic indigenous influence. At a local Toronto Waldorf school, students were recently building a canoe.

In the collector’s edition of *Orbit* magazine entitled “Holistic Education in Practice,” Miller suggests using Native literature to awaken deep earth connections (1992, p. 4). Booth (1992) stresses the importance of telling stories. Hutchison (1999) advocates returning to narrative as “a traditional strategy for transmitting ecological and cultural understandings to children” (p. 25). Berry (1999) encourages us to accept responsibility for our relationship with the earth and to enhance rather than deplete the universal life force. Miller (1996) responds to Berry’s call to hear the voices of the earth as an integral rather than separate part of the “web of life” (p. 9), by adding a new section on earth connections dealing with our relationships to the earth.

Waldorf schools stress links between environmental intelligence and the creative process. In *Education and the Soul* (2000), providing an example of art and science integration in a lesson on molecules in a Waldorf high school (p. 91), Miller emphasizes the intimate, shared cosmic connection between human creative expression and Nature as conceived by Steiner, creator of the Waldorf concept. (p. 76).

Weir (1987a) connected environmental intelligence with moral education:

Unfortunately, in some instances, science has come to be viewed with a sort of awe as if it were, in itself, a supreme power. This way of viewing science has perhaps removed scientific knowledge from ordinary moral constraints.... Cousteau and many others are alarmed at the rate we are destroying our world, and the world of the future. The choices are clear. Either we live in harmony with nature, or we face the possible extinction of much life on this planet. (pp. 23, 25)

Weir (1987b) links critical thinking, stewardship and environmental intelligence:

As I see it, our responsibilities are twofold. Firstly, to take part in ensuring a clean, peaceful world for our children to grow up in. Secondly, to ensure that they are equipped to function in a world where the use or misuse of science shapes everyone’s life. (p. 27)

Some Native Elders who have expressed to me their objection to the use of the term *stewardship* as it connotes control in a *power over/ power under* dynamic. This dynamic was experienced by many as wards of the state or province in Residential Schools and as wards in treaty agreements. The idea of *power with*, as equal partners in the Circle of Responsibility is more compatible with First Nations worldviews. Cajete's many writings (1994, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b, 2001) indicate that traditional Native peoples have long recognized that the *human tribe* must raise its awareness level in order to recognize and assume our dual roles caring for humanity and Mother Earth, transmitting this awareness to the children so they will help preserve this planet for future generations. Komisar (1987) stressed the importance of creating a sense of relationship between children and their natural environment so they could overcome misinformation and fear as well as develop thinking leading to "notions of relationships in nature and, ultimately, the meaning of ecology" (p. 29). Jacobs (1998) stresses that "Environmentalism divorced from a spiritual understanding of the human place in the cosmos is simply a sublimated version of the very mentality that is causing the destruction" (p. 238).

Placing humans in the web of sacred ecology.

First Nations involvement in developing environmental intelligence is not surprising. Traditional Aboriginals consider themselves to be an integral part of the environment, in partnership with it, not having dominion over it. Caring about the environment is linked to caring about the community and the individual. The presence of First Nations leaders in environmental activism is not surprising. Cajete, whose publications (1994, 1999a, 1999b, 2000a, 2000b) and presentations are based on the indigenous science education model, is rightfully touted as a leader in this area. Goldstein and Selby (2000) acknowledge that "indigenous knowledges make an important contribution to environmental education precisely because of a radically different premise that humans are part of, not separate from, environmental processes" (p. 204).

Personal experience has shown me that when Aboriginals give teachings to educate for character, nature metaphors and stories are used as tools to deliver powerful messages. (Andrews, 1998) Transcriptions and audiotapes of eloquent speeches of many Chiefs and Native Elders provide examples of this observation. (See Appendix N.)

Stephenson (2001) emphasized the importance of community problem-solving, writing “Total community demonstrates real respect for all other citizens regardless of differences. There is real urgency for the actions done to the Earth deal with our planet’s ecological and human problems. The school system is an excellent starting point” (Personal communication, April 27, 2001).

Increasingly, dominant culture science experts look to the wisdom of indigenous people for Earth-based teachings that might provide answers to our global environment crisis. After quoting from the sacred Mayan *Chilam Balam*, Suzuki and Knudtson (1992) stated “Even the most skeptical Western minds can admire the timeless human insights of the Native Mind into the recurring patterns of human nature and our need for healthier relationships with the natural world” (p. 249). This heightened level of awareness also opened the door to the Aboriginal environmentalist voices stressing our interdependence. (Cajete, 1999b, 2000; Cajete & Little Bear, 1999). In Battiste (2000a), Little Bear identifies desirable human qualities in his essay “Jagged Worldviews Colliding”:

Given the opportunity, Aboriginal cultures attempt to mould their members into ideal personalities. The ideal personality is one that shows strength both physically and spiritually. S/he is a person who is generous and shows kindness to all. S/he is a person who puts the group’s needs ahead of individual wants and desires. S/he is a person who, as a generalist, knows all the survival skills and has wisdom. S/he is a person steeped in spiritual and ritual knowledge. S/he is a person who, in view of all these expectations, goes about life and approaches “all his/her relations” in a sea of friendship, easy-goingness, humour and good feelings. S/he is a person who attempts to suppress inner feelings, anger, and disagreement with the group. S/he is a person who is expected to display bravery, hardiness, and strength against enemies and outsiders. S/he is a person who is adaptable and takes the world as it comes, without complaint (p. 83).

Character development involves respect for life.

Educating our youth to display respectful naturalist or environmental intelligence is an important part of effective First Nations character education. Like their Aboriginal counterparts, Suzuki and Knudtson (1993) and Suzuki, McConnell and Decambra (1998) advocate learning about the natural world from the teachings of Indigenous peoples, hoping that both traditional and temporary philosophies and stories will have a positive impact on living sustainably on this planet.

Nee-Benham and Cooper (2000) comment on a gathering that produced a book:

In particular we hoped to craft a Native Vision, which would replace the English-American model of learning... Hence, the hard work of the gathering was to think deeply about how Native and Western Worldviews might coexist in dynamic educational settings that value spirituality and connection to land, language and ancestry.... We, the Native educators, gathered during the summer of 1997, believe that the stories passed on by our kapuna (elders) coupled with our own life experience and research brought us to this pathway in our individual life journeys. We know first-hand the debilitating effects of Western ideology, assimilation, and cultural genocide on Native Peoples of North America, Alaska, Australia, Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Hawaii. (p. 2)

Being aware of stereotyping and bias.

Canada's dominant culture is highly sensitive to issues around multiculturalism, race relations and bias in teaching as well as selection and use of learning resources. Race relations committees exist in all major Ontario school boards to help ensure elimination of racial discrimination and bias. Initiatives such as that of L. Burnett and the Antiracism Team of York Region District School Board (2002) entitled *Creating Schools and Classrooms for Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity* are posted on the World Wide Web for easy public access. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship produced a document entitled *A Guide to Key Antiracism Terms and Concepts* with which teachers and administrators must familiarize themselves. Thirteen months after the Canadian federal government proclaimed the *Canadian Race Relations Foundation Act* on October 28, 1996, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation was established at <http://www.crr.ca/rt/>. This foundation collaborated with The Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies to produce the November 2002 *Learning about Walking in Beauty* report. This report encourages increased Native Studies instruction in our Canadian public school systems. *A Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues* has met for the second consecutive year at the United Nations. Pressure is being increasingly placed on dominant cultures to be more sensitive to Aboriginal issues, needs and cultural contributions.

Fossey (1991a, 1991b) stressed the richness of the Native oral language storytelling tradition as well as the importance of teachers from the dominant culture being well-informed and unbiased. Fossey suggested direct contact with Native peoples, and as a second resort, learning through books, cautioning teachers against presenting Native peoples in a romanticized, incorrect or stereotyped manner. Rodriguez (1994)

described her school's week-long unit on awareness of Aboriginal people during the week of March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. She stressed the importance of learning about Native contributions to fill in past and present gaps in knowledge about Native cultures. Rodriguez suggested various activities and unbiased resources including print, film and videos for classroom use, teacher reference materials and ways to assess for bias. She recommended inviting Native guest speakers to make authentic classroom connections to improve attitudes, skills and knowledge concerning First Nations people in ways that empower all stakeholders.

There are many excellent tools available to help us all grow. In our students, pride and self-esteem grew, especially in children who had hidden their Aboriginal heritage prior to this learning unit. They had been an invisible minority whose mixed heritage had been denied, both by themselves and by subtle systemic denial. There are many big and little steps forward that we can take to make a difference for the future. Valuing First Nations and Aboriginal heritages is an important one. (p. 31)

Doxtator (1992) warns us against buying into “noble savage” stereotypes. The word *costume* is an insult that should never be used (but often is) to describe *regalia*, ceremonial attire worn with pride and honour for special occasions. Photographic examples of regalia are included in this thesis. Aboriginals usually dress like citizens from mainstream society. There are commonalities to be discovered and differences to be appreciated. When we seek to see beyond the surface, there is much we can learn.

Identifying Common Practices

Upon completion of my extensive literature review, I drew four conclusions:

1. Colonized societies (Aborigines, Aboriginals, Native Americans, First Nations peoples) which focused on *giving* as a supreme form of *courage*, were no match for acquisition-based focuses of technologically superior colonizers.
2. *Spare the rod and spoil the child* was a rigid moral education colonizing culture philosophy but never has been a traditional First Nations philosophy.
3. Generosity, like gentleness, was generally considered by the dominant colonizing culture as a weakness rather than a strength. For millennia, in traditional Aboriginal societies, sharing ensured the peoples' survival.

4. First Nations character education is about surviving with beauty, nurturing hope and a sense of purpose in the individual for his or her life journey.

Two character education teaching strategies which clearly surfaced in my mind as being common between First Nations people and the dominant colonizing culture are the concept of learning circles which is associated with holistic approaches and the oral tradition of storytelling which encompasses a widespread cultural mosaic.

Learning circles.

The Foundation for Educational Renewal (2002) speaks of Learning Circles in its on-line magazine, *Paths of Learning* giving instructions on how to start one at <http://www.pathsoflearning.net/circles-start.cfm>. Kessler (1999) discusses various aspects of classes that welcome soul (pp. 30-31). Sitting as equals in Circle, a traditional First Nations practice, and storytelling in a climate of respect, where people take turns speaking and being listened to, are part of a soulful approach to teaching and learning.

For all Native peoples, the circle represents harmony and balance. In many cultures, from the Inuit to the Cherokee, it becomes the Medicine Wheel, a powerful symbol for many layers of teachings that help to bring lives into harmony and balance (Ywahoo, 1987). There are variations of the Medicine Wheel, depending on the geographic location of the peoples using it. I know from oral teachings that colours on the Inuit Medicine Wheel differ from those of the Cherokee. Colour orientation is different between the Ojibway of Ontario and the Tsmishian of British Columbia. Colours have specific placement and meaning in a given Aboriginal culture. Over the past ten years, in the oral tradition, I have received “traditional teachings of the Medicine Wheel, a central paradigm in many aboriginal cultures.” (Dudziak, 2000, p.242). It was this experience that had sparked my original belief that perspectives of individuals who follow traditional First Nations teachings, could offer a more complete understanding of the nature and implications of character education from indigenous perspectives.

Storytelling.

Kilpatrick, Wolfe & Wolfe (1994) discussed teaching values through storytelling. In the traditional First Nations home, parents and extended family members used and still

use storytelling as a tool to guide children. Kimberley Blaeser sums it up well in her testimony recorded by Vannote (1999):

Reading and stories were always important to our family. We were given the sense of being responsible for ourselves, of knowing what was good and what wasn't. They did it by telling us stories. We may never have met the people in some of those stories, but they're part of our family history, and the stories have a moral [within them]—not stated, but shown through what someone did. Indian people don't *teach* their children. They *story* them. (p. 5)

In Johnson (1994) Sara Smith, Elder of Six Nations in Ohseweken, Ontario, Canada spoke of acceptance of all peoples, stressing spending time together as family:

Children need the balance only their parents and the old people can give them. There was a time when the evening was storytime for both, when they could share the day's message. The children are also our teachers; we have forgotten to honor that, too. (p. 91)

Gates (2000) stresses the power of “join[ing] together with a common purpose to re-make our world in person-sized and interlocking pieces” (p. 277). Storytelling is a strategy for making meaningful connections with our own life experiences. It is an oral tradition that crosses all cultural boundaries. It is a common teaching tool used by Aboriginal peoples, but not unique to them. Kane (2002) reinforces the importance of storytelling through pure oral tradition: “Waldorf teachers tell these stories [fairy tales] to children. They do not read them. Each story is crafted in response to the mood in the classroom, the look in the eyes of individual children” (p. 259).

Cultures from around the world have their own myths and legends. Hulan and Monture-Angus (1999) validate this practice: “Traditional stories transmit the knowledge, ‘the spirit and the law,’ that has inspired the survival and the recovery of Native America after the trauma of European contact and civilization” (p. 12). Appendix O lists examples of First Nations myths and legends to explore. Grant (1992) stated:

Stories like myths, fables, folk and fairy tales have been passed from generation to generation for centuries. They have survived the passage of time through the oral tradition of storytelling. Long before books were generally available to all of society and education was available to all, the lessons and morals contained in the orally told stories appealed to the imaginations of children and guided their development.... Used as a communication bridge, storytelling demands the rapt attention of the audience while leaving the teller in complete control. The resultant experience helps to build a relationship between the storyteller and the audience. Each shared story becomes a shared journey. (p. 47)

Meighan (1992) identified three basic types of indigenous stories—creation stories, trickster/hero tales and “old laws” tales dealing with earth values. Hutchison (1999) highlighted the sense of reciprocity of self and world, stating “A narrative approach to teaching and learning marks the return of a traditional strategy for transmitting ecological and cultural understandings to children” (p. 25). Little Bear emphasized shared views of the world embedded in the “languages, stories or narratives” of colonizing and colonized peoples (Battiste, 2000, p. 85).

Miller and Nakagawa (2002) focused on nurturing wholeness, referring to four key aspects. These are depicted as cardinal points on the Medicine Wheel. The authors advocate spiritual worldviews coming together to bring needed clarity: “The aim of education should include the development of the whole person: intellect, emotions, body and spirit.... To lead us out of our present confusion we need a synthesis of Eastern and Western visions of wholeness and spirituality” (p. vi).

Miller and Nakagawa had wanted to include a chapter on Native American spiritual traditions to complete the overview on spiritual traditions (p. viii). Chapter five, with input from five First Nations interviewees, will hopefully add the missing piece.

Chapter Five: Methodology

This chapter constitutes reflections on primary data provided in complete transcripts of interviews contained with permission in Appendices D to H. The direct interview portion of the research enabled me to gain first-hand insights into teachings promoting positive character development in harmony with First Nations oral tradition. It also facilitated validation of discoveries about First Nations teachings for character education gleaned during the literature review. See the questions in Appendix B.

Choosing the Samples

Recognizing differences in worldviews between me as a researcher from the dominant colonizing culture and the interviewees, I was mindful not only of the guidelines for the normal OISE/UT ethical review process, but also of the *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Indigenous Studies* published by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2001). A main concern for me was to ensure that control of knowledge and ownership remained in interviewees' hands. Mihesuah (1998) stresses the importance of "consult[ing] tribal people for information" (p. 1), recognizing "no one Indian voice exists" (p.17) and holding "pro- or anti-Indian biases in check" (p. 5). As a non-Native researcher engaged in indigenous research, I sought objectivity and accuracy of information. I considered perspectives of Absolon & Willet (2003), Smith (1991, 1999a, 1999b, 2000) and Battiste & Youngblood Henderson (2000) as guidelines. I have been careful to avoid misinterpretations and engaging in dominant culture decolonizing methodologies that detract from Aboriginal voices.

I also explored some of the dominant culture literature on oral history (Baum, 1991; Dunaway & Baum, 1996; Perks & Thomson, 1998; Yow, 1994) and two from the indigenous culture (McClure, 1994; Wilson, 1998). One of the concerns with oral history is the accuracy of remembered events. Given that my focus with the interviewees was more about their current philosophies, traditional knowledge and activities in First Nations character education, accuracy of remembered events was not a major concern. I also benefited from familiarity and shared past experiences with all interviewees, plus access to newspaper articles, papers and Internet references pertaining to three of them.

I explored interview research literature. Robson (1999) provided general practical information on face-to-face interviews. Cohen and Manion (1989) describe an interview as a conversation “initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information and focused by him on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation” (p. 307). Kvale (1996) stresses there “is no common procedure for interview research” (p. 13), underlining the “absence of prescribed sets of rules” (p. 84). Respecting First Nations epistemologies and the power of oral tradition in First Nations cultures, I felt that Kvale’s *traveller metaphor* situating the interviewer as being “on a journey that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home” (p. 4) was in harmony with First Nations oral tradition. The definition of an *inter view* by Kvale (1996) is highly compatible with the indigenous concept of interdependence and co-construction of knowledge:

An interview is literally an inter view, an inter change of views between two persons conversing about a common theme. In postmodern thought there is an emphasis on knowledge as interrelational and structural interwoven in webs of networks. Knowledge is neither inside a person nor outside in the world but exists in the relationship between the person and the world. (p. 44)

With a trust factor already in place, I approached six First Nations Elders, and two First Nations authors of my acquaintance, in the hopes that at least three people would comply for the purposes of this study. After successfully completing the ethical protocol review process in October 2001, I mailed letters to all prospective participants, enclosing the interview questions and informed consent documents. (See Appendices B and C.)

Smith (1999) stresses the importance of “respecting cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology” (p. 15). According to the protocol I have been taught, I approached Elders with a prayer pouch of Sacred Medicine in the left hand (symbolic of my heart) to “officially” make my request. My understanding was that if my prayer pouch of tobacco were accepted, that would mean that the Elder would grant me the teaching and therefore consent to be interviewed for this study. We went over the informed letters of consent at the face-to-face meeting. These were explained and signed prior to engaging in any interview activity. The purpose of these questions was to fully address the three key research questions posed by this study on page seven.

Five First Nations representatives living in five different geographic areas of Ontario, Canada accepted to participate in this study. I had hoped for three participants, but accepted all five who responded affirmatively, feeling that the input of five people would provide more material for the study and that the qualitative data would still be manageable. Three are female. Two are male. Four are Elders. One is a playwright. Times were established with each person in advance for face-to-face, heart-to-heart interviews and for subsequent follow-up. I traveled to meet with each person. Data collection began on October 11, 2001 and ended on January 4, 2002. I transcribed the data from cassette recordings. Then I mailed out the written transcripts for verification and any possible modifications or deletions desired by the participants. Final drafts were achieved in August, 2002 except for one participant who chose to make further changes to responses in February, 2003 after receiving an updated thesis draft in January, 2003.

Monture-Angus (1995), Mohawk, emphasizes the wisdom of Elders: “Traditional knowledge, the ability to know who we are as Indians, is more essential to our well-being and survival. This knowledge is best transmitted through those wise old people who reside in our communities” (p. 5).

Native Elders are generally respected in their communities as repositories of knowledge, regardless of whether they have had “formal” schooling in an educational institution. Many Elders possess important oral cultural knowledge that should be recorded, to ensure it is passed on, just as Aboriginal languages themselves are now being recorded to ensure their survival. I felt that oral interviews with the Elders should be a source of primary data, recognizing delivery of teachings through oral tradition as being preferred to dominant culture written text-based tradition. The oral interview in a relaxed setting would afford a higher comfort level.

As part of my narrative, in the appendices, to introduce each speaker, I share how we have become connected. The interview participants were given the opportunity to choose pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Given the positive nature of this study, they all chose to be referred to by their real names, often selecting their Native names. Each expressed pride in being one of the authentic First Nations voices in the “sharing circle”

contributing to this exploratory study. All participants chose to include photos. I have compared their perspectives, searching for commonalities.

Designing the Interviews

I selected one out of three possible types of interviews: fully structured, semi-structured and unstructured. (Kvale, 1996; Merriam, 1988; Robson, 1993). These are described in detail in Interview Methods. Robson (1999) defines the type I chose, the:

semi-structured interview, where the interviewer has worked out a set of questions in advance, but is free to modify their order based upon her perception of what seems most appropriate in the context of the “conversation,” can change the way they are worded, give explanations, leave out particular questions which seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee to include additional ones (p. 230)

Participant observation in a natural setting was not part of the process. Interviews took place in interviewees’ natural environments, maximizing comfort levels.

The themes were encompassed by eight of the interview questions all of which were intimately linked to the umbrella concept of character education. (See appendix B.)

Interview Methods

The interviews were intended to be a conversation that facilitated a smooth flow of dialogue respecting the Native oral tradition as much as possible. I did not pilot any interviews. The planning took place with particular attention paid to ethical issues of the seven research stages in the seven stages as identified by Kvale (1996): thematizing, designing, interview situation, transcription, analysis, verification and reporting (p. 111).

Thematizing and designing occurred during the period between the literature review and interview stage. I had developed preknowledge of the subject in three areas—dominant culture character education, Aboriginal character education and holistic education. I determined the purpose of the study, established themes and selected a holistic theoretical framework for organizing data. I found no questions in the existing literature to guide me in generating mine. My questions evolved from four areas: personal interest on the topic, information revealed in scholarly publications about traditional teachings (Dei, Hall & Rosenberg, 2000; Dixon, 1994; Fleet, 1997, Milne, 1994; Riley, 1993, Wilcox, 1999; Young-Ing & Belmore, 1999), First Nations websites and oral

teachings. My thesis supervisor verified the interview questions and informed letter of consent. The university's ethics review committee approved them in October, 2001. I did not do any pilot interviews with any other First Nations respondents.

Essentially I engaged in semi-structured interviews and a basic "wrap-up" conversation. I had purchased a high quality Sony microcassette-corder M-200MC V-0-R with a zoom microphone for capturing distance voice with lecture mode. Placed within a metre from the interviewees, it recorded voices clearly and audibly. Questions were ordered to allow for a more natural flow of conversation that would produce beneficial knowledge with positive results and no negative consequences for the interviewees. During the interview situation, without interrupting, I used positive body language like nods, "mm," and pauses to encourage the interviewee to speak. I had suggested a desirable time frame, but gave the interviewees the time they needed to answer fully.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by me as soon as possible after each interview. Once each interview was transcribed, I mailed it back to the respective participant. All interviewees indicated that any "ums" or pauses should be removed from the transcripts. They didn't want attention drawn to inserted excerpts. They wanted their messages whole rather than fragmented. Like Kvale (1996) suggests, I respected these requests, involving myself in the "social co-construction of the final outcomes" (p. 183). Each participant was provided with ample opportunity to read his or her own transcript and make any additional desired changes. When they received copies of their transcripts, the interviewees chose to make some corrections and to elaborate on original statements. The corrections were made by the interviewees in one or a combination of the following manners: telephone discussion and phone dictations of minor wording modifications which I typed as we talked, corrections made directly on paper and returned to me, or in one case, refinement of the text by the interviewee who subsequently e-mailed it back. This reflective process was used through several drafts.

Schafer (1998b) and Smith (1999a, 1999b, 2000) suggest, I sought clarification from each participant at every level to ensure my clear understanding of intended messages. While engaging in ongoing dialogue with First Nations interview participants may not be standard research practice, I included this process to ensure that I would not

inject a Euro-centric, dominant culture, interpretation of their words and worldview. This approach allowed me to spiral back into a hermeneutical circle of interpretation with each interviewee, offering Kvale's (1996) "possibility of a continuously deepened understanding of meaning" (p. 48). Interviewees expressed satisfaction with having input.

From the onset, well prior to beginning our recorded interviews, I informed participants that there was no right or wrong answer to any question and there are many different ways of developing character. I encouraged participants to speak from the heart, sharing what they thought, felt and did from their own lived experiences. My theme was character education. My subthemes were really my guiding questions. (See Appendix B.) Relatively open-ended, these questions allowed ideas to be revisited. Sometimes the answer to a question appeared within the framework of another.

Interview number one.

My first interview, a *semi-structured respondent interview* as described by Robson (1999, p. 231) was scheduled to take between one and one and a half hours. Responses tended to be longer and more detailed, requiring more time than I had anticipated, taking at least two hours. One Elder spoke for four hours. The participants' significant storytelling experience could account for the length and detail of responses.

The first interview followed nine basic questions in order as listed in Appendix B. Kvale (1996), had indicated this would allow for more expanded, free-flowing responses: "It should not be forgotten that interviews are particularly well suited for studying people's understandings of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world" (p. 105).

This format seemed the most compatible with the Native oral tradition of giving teachings. Merriam (1988) states "Most common is the semistructured interview that is guided by a set of questions and issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of questions is predetermined" (p. 86). To quote McMillan & Wergin (2002), "Qualitative researchers use a preliminary literature review to present conceptual frameworks, broad areas of study, and scholarly concepts; this provides a foundation for phrasing foreshadowed questions" (p. 8). Foreshadowed questions received in advance by

interviewees gave them more time to reflect upon answers, as is traditional practice. (See Appendix B.) As meaning unfolded during the interview process, sticking closely to the framework provided by these questions, I was able to retain more control.

Interview number two.

The second interview follow-up was semi-structured with three basic open-ended questions for clarification. According to Merriam (1988) “This format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (p. 74). The purpose of the second interview was for clarification. It was loosely structured in direct reference to each particular typed transcript in order for each subject to “[give] voice to their understanding of an interpersonally negotiated social world” (Kvale, 1996, p. 298). This small-scale follow-up inquiry provided an opportunity to expand upon answers and allowed me flexibility in wording. (Robson, 1999, p. 227) The three questions I asked during this session were

1. What did you mean by...?
2. Could you please explain... further?
3. Is there anything you want to add/delete/change?

This dialogue provided an opportunity for further sharing according to what information the Native Elder or author felt should be passed on. Additional information was transcribed, inserted into the appropriate area of the text and then resubmitted to the interview participant for approval.

Follow-up telephone conference.

We worked through three interview drafts to the final copy. The third contact was a “wrap up” telephone conference. The interviewee received the final draft. Robson (1999) states that the major advantage of the telephone conference, as my interviewees were “geographically dispersed, is the lower cost in terms of time, effort and money” and “smaller interviewer effects” (p. 241).

Interview participants expressed satisfaction at being able to give feedback before the final transcribed interview was incorporated into the thesis. I verbally shared my own reflections, describing the impact of this experience on my appreciation for the oral tradition and possible implications I could envision for the classroom. Finally, I sought

feedback from the interviewee as to the feasibility and acceptability of sharing of certain First Nations character education techniques in various forms.

The final typed transcripts of our recorded interviews, which have been verified and approved by each participant, are included in the appendices D to H, enabling those who wish to refer to complete texts of primary data, to experience *whole* individual voices of those interviewed, rather than fragmented quotations. To facilitate sifting through the information, I italicized salient points relating directly to interview questions. A number of those key points also appear as quotations in this chapter.

Analyzing the Interviews

Merriam (1988) states “analysis of qualitative data is a complex task, especially since there is only limited literature in which principles of such analysis are described in sufficient detail” (p. 205). Triangulation and grounded theory were important parts of the interview process. I completed two comprehensive literature reviews—one of the official character education literature and another of First Nations publications in which I sought elements related to character education. I looked for commonalities, checking for common themes amongst interview respondents, as well as comparing their input with information unearthed during the double literature review.

Informant triangulation of data.

I designed semi-structured interviews in order to achieve *informant triangulation* of knowledge of character education. McMillan & Wergin (2002) define *triangulation*:

Triangulation refers to the use of different data sources, time periods and data collection methods that result in similar findings.... A second important way to increase credibility is member checking, submitting notes to informants to ensure that their perspectives have been recorded accurately. (p. 122).

Robson (1999) describes triangulation as “an indispensable tool in real world inquiry” which “provides a means of testing one source of information against other sources” (p. 383). He further states “Triangulation, discussed above in connection with credibility, could be argued as being more obviously a means of assessing dependability” (p. 405). The direct oral interviews were indispensable to balance text-based data of the

double literature review, both to assess dependability of data gleaned and to compare different viewpoints, seeking commonalities.

Grounded theory.

I embarked on this journey suspecting that First Nations character education strategies were compatible with Miller's (1996) theoretical framework. McMillan and Wergin (2002) explain *grounded theory*, helping to put the interviews into context:

The theory is developed from, or "grounded in," the data collected from the field. The primary method of collecting data is the individual interview, which typically is open-ended, searching, and extensive. The theory is developed through a process of constant comparison, in which emerging ideas and themes are continually "tested" with new data (p. 121).

Karsenti and Savoie-Zajc (2000) reinforce this *emerging* quality: "Le chercheur peut prendre en compte les événements vécus en cours de recherche, ses propres prises de conscience et les réactions des répondants face aux tentatives d'interprétation avancées" (p. 178). Deeply involved in the process, and equipped with pre-knowledge, I had pre-established a technique involving a category ordering system prior to the interviews.

Tesch (1987) in Seliger and Shohamy (1989) explains:

An ordering system of categories already exists at the beginning of the process and the researcher applies this system to the data. The system is derived either from a conceptual framework or from the specific research questions. These studies are more confirmatory and aim at some kind of explanation. The segments are selected and sorted according to the existing system. Then, in a second phase, the categories are investigated, for instance by cross-referencing, to see whether there are relationships that will assist in the understanding of the phenomenon under study (p. 205).

Intuitively, I began organizing First Nations strategies into a holistic chart. I looked for patterns that would confirm the applicability of Miller's framework. By the end of Chapter Five, a secondary chart of mnemonic devices emerged. (See Appendix Q.)

Data organizing continued throughout the interviews to the end of Chapter Six to complete the holistic framework. (See Appendice P). Once reorganized, the data would confirm my grounded theory that First Nations character education is indeed holistic.

Participants' Responses to Interview Questions

The full list of interview questions is available in Appendix B.

Question one.

Here are key points from the five responses to the question: *What does developing character mean to you?*, followed by my summary:

Mid-Day Star, looks at developing character from the perspective of rehabilitation. He states “You have to give teachings that will inspire them or change their thoughts so that they can become better people, that they are not in a hopeless situation, that their lives can really mean something and they can get out and they can be rehabilitated” (p. 238). To quote Mid-Day Star, “It is just like in life, if they want something bad enough, it actually will happen” (p. 238).

Nokomis stresses that character starts from conception “when those two Spirits from the universe come into the woman’s womb” (p. 273). From the moment of birth, family and extended family play a significant role. Character development is ongoing and continuously evolving. Nokomis refers to the Golden Rule, The Ten Indian Commandments, the Seven Grandfather teachings and the Medicine Wheel. (268, 269).

Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor contemplates character development from the perspective of a First Nations elementary school teacher working with Anishnabe children to instill a sense of pride and a sense of purpose. “They [the children] walked with great pride” (p. 305). Gloria stresses that although family plays the primary role involvement of schools, Elders, Chief and council is required. (p. 295). She offers this definition: “Developing character is to teach in a way to get the children to understand who they are, where they come from, their language, what is part of them and their spiritual connection” (p. 297). She models reclaiming cultural roots, language and interconnectedness, elements considered essential to developing a positive sense of self. (Anishinaabemowin Teg Inc Board of Directors, 2001; Barrie Area Native Advisory Council, 2001; Benedict, 1935; George, 2000; Thunderbird, 2002b; Wallace, 1970.)

Kahskennontora:ken, teacher of the Good Medicine, emphasizes the role of Peacemaker’s Great Law (Parker, 1991; 2000) in Iroquois society. She stresses three

aspects of Good Mind, Personal Power, and Non-Judgement as explained by Alfred (1999), stating “Character development, in my understanding of Culture, is seen as *mindfully practicing* the Good Mind, Culture’s expected behaviors from us, which make up our cultural social teachings and conditioning. The Good Mind among my people has to do with seeing all things and events each day in a good way, without anger, and with gratitude and thankfulness for all the events of that day” (p.316). Kahskennontora:ken adds “We did not deal out punishment and the disapproval of people was often all it took to keep us on track” (pp 317) .

Kahskennontora:ken emphasizes the spiritual and experiential nature of true character development, stressing like Nokomis, that character develops from the moment of conception of the child who is “sung to” and “told stories in the womb.” (p. 326) She stresses that “Character Development in the Native sense, is not to kill the intuition and imagination” (p.328) of the child. Unlike the others, Kahskennontora:ken talks about the “star chart at first breath” (p. 329) emphasizing a Native cosmology that assigns an impact to the moment and place of birth on the development of character. She stresses the importance of discerning between “Eye Candy” (detrimental wants) and using “‘Good Science’ in harmony with Natural Law” (p. 318) in “Spiritual connection to the Earth” (p. 330). She stresses Nine Hermetic Principles of Natural Law that impact on how we evolve, emphasizing “We are all at different levels and in different places on the **Great Spiral of Progression** towards **Spiritual Perfection**” (p. 329). Kahskennontora:ken states “All of Mankind has this knowledge in the bones, as they were all once Earth People, and still have those ancient memories in their body and Spirit. The problem is that we have suppressed and stunted the world of our Spirit and its true Knowledge, which uses intuition and imagination to guide us as we grow in Wisdom” (p. 319)

Drew Hayden Taylor, Ojibway playwright and scriptwriter who identifies theatre as the “closest kissing cousin to traditional storytelling” (p. 374), contemplates character development from the perspective of constructing characters on stage. He emphasizes the journey of the character on stage, in its environment, stressing that Native theatre is more community-based, often lacking a central character, as opposed to Western European theatre which focuses on a central character. Mirroring offstage reality, Taylor stresses that “within the Native community, it is the community that is the

star, not the individual.” (p. 375) Although the classic good versus evil struggle is evidenced in many legends, even on stage, as in traditional First Nations teachings, preservation of community harmony is paramount. Taylor stresses that “four fifths to five sixths of that white population [in the audience] have very little understanding of the Native community or experience with it” (p. 378). He identifies his role in character education through theatre: “I enjoy being that window from the white to the Native world” (p. 378) He firmly cautions us that there is “no one pan-Indian culture” (p. 380).

Summary: From all five people interviewed, I understood that the individual must accept ownership in his or her own journey of character development. In fact this journey is an intrinsic, inward and upward spiralling quest for evolution of one’s Spirit, rather than a simple extrinsic, outward quest for character. First Nations teachings are mindfully and gently offered to guide this evolution of the Spirit in response to expressed need, without interfering with experiences integral to learning. Different heart-to-heart oral teachings, various indigenous frames of reference and strategies are mentioned.

First Nations character education involves mindfully and respectfully offering positive, non-directive spiritual help relevant to the individual. Intricately intertwined with Natural Laws and earth-based teachings in various contexts, it helps the individual feel interconnected with a meaningful a sense of Life Purpose. Character can be gently guided and rehabilitated at any of the four stages in the Medicine Wheel, providing there is a sincere desire for transformation on the part of the individual. It is the community responsibility of those interacting with the learner. Kahskennontora:ken draws attention to a global character education philosophy shared by Elders: “Our role as First Nations people, as Spiritual People, and as peoples of the Earth is to *globally be called upon* to help that process of getting the Earth and its life *back into balance*” (p. 318)

Question two.

Key points from the five responses to the question: *In your culture, how is education for character traditionally caught or taught?* are followed by my summary.

Mid-Day Star is a devout Christian who respects Native traditional ways. To *catch* character, spiritual values and culture he encourages us to seek guidance from the God of our understanding. He advocates learning through observing Elders and others

truly living the traditional life. He suggests approaching Elders with *tobacco*, in the Ojibway tradition. “Because the Elder has lived a long time and experienced life’s problems, he probably has something that he can tell that young man or that young woman that will enable them to solve the problem that they have to address, or to understand why they are with problems” (p. 240). In the Lakota tradition, one would send a *peace pipe* ahead, prior to making a request. (Lame Deer & Erdoes, 2001).

Nokomis states that this is achieved “by observing, learning and being directly involved with whatever is going on” (p. 274). Learning is largely kinaesthetic.

Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor stresses the importance of prayerfully approaching life with gratitude and faith. “Each morning, I stop on my way out to pray with my tobacco and to also ask the grandfathers and grandmothers of these children and the Creator to help me to teach them well” (p. 297). Learning and reclaiming the Ojibway language for herself to “reawaken that language within” (p. 300), she encourages Native children to connect with the Creator through prayer in their language: “It is so strong when you say your prayers through the language of your heart when you communicate” (p. 300). To Gloria, *Caught* means getting the children “actively involved in their culture, language and tradition to where it’s going to interest them and they begin to feel, “Hey, this is who I am” (p.297). When they greet each other in Ojibway, she tells them “You are honouring our ancestors and our legends each time you say it [Boozhoo]” (p. 301).

Gloria relates language learning and positive race relations to teachings of the Wheel: “We talk about language and relate what we learn to the Medicine Wheel that I have up in the classroom. For an example, to show the children how each race has their own language and how important it is to them and their spiritual practices” (p. 300). She refers to Rainbow Teachings (Hallgren, 2002b; McFadden, 2001; McGaa, 1992; Moondance, 2000; Thompson, n.d.; Willjoya & Brown, 1962) and the White Buffalo prophecy (Medicine Eagle, 1991): “Ancient teachings tell us of a time when all colours will come together to work for peace. I remember hearing that from my Grandfather when I was little. Over the years, I have heard that prophecy from many different sources” (p. 301). Gloria adds “In having caught or taught character, the one thing that I

find too is to have the parents totally involved in their children's life in the school in a positive way" (p. 298). She helps children "feel they are in a place of belonging" (p. 292)

Kahskennontora:ken states "Shonkwai'tishon's [The Creator's] influence in our Character Development is that ninety percent we 'catch' of life's unspoken teachings" (p. 331). "When children see people at work in their lives, who are of good Character and they observe you living/giving a good example, the child has a chance to develop positively through caught and taught teachings" (p. 332). In *taught* teaching, she stresses the importance of defining "tangible and intangible" parameters as these provide reassurance and a sense of security. She emphasizes "teaching them the Good Mind of character development through reassurance, discussion and love." (p. 332). She defines "caught" teaching as "the Spirit of cultural teaching, where children are taken to places to have experiences for their Spirit growth. They are exposed to their aunties, their uncles, their teachers, and other wise people [counselors] among them. They listen to the wisdom of the stories and they receive 'caught' teachings by deciding not to do something or to go ahead and get into that life situation. They are given time off from school to observe **special ceremonies** that teach them about good Character and the Good Mind in their culture. They are immersed in celebration, which is a wise thing, because it teaches them caught teachings through oration from their Elders, through ceremony, song and dance [joy].... To me, the taught teachings are the parameters and natural cultural expectations you put into place for your children's safety and learning" (p. 333). "Each and every adult in Native society is a surrogate parent, grandmother, grandfather, auntie, uncle, sister or brother to every child." (p. 335)

Drew Hayden Taylor states "One of the ways of teaching in Native culture was through observation" (p. 380). "There is a saying that the parents are there to raise and teach the children and to show them right from wrong, but the grandparents are there to spoil and educate them. And I think that is where education for character comes from, through the watching of the grandparents and the watching of other Elders" (p. 380). Extended family play supportive roles to reinforce character education whose primary source "came from the family and the environment" (p. 381). Like the other interviewees, Taylor is "hesitant about speaking for all Aboriginal people" (p. 380).

Summary: All five people interviewed share common philosophical threads concerning *caught* and *taught* character. There is a meaningful balance of observing, listening and experiencing which the learner integrates into a personal interpretation of the world. In First Nations tradition, the learner is encouraged to interact at a balanced heart and head level in the context of caring community and in communion with nature.

Question three.

Key points from the five responses to the question *How do you consider yourself to be involved in character education?* are followed by my summary.

Mid-Day Star states “We have to take on the authority that has been bestowed upon us as Elders in our community. And have an answer [...] that is either our own or some teaching that we’ve received” (p. 240). Living in service to the community, an attitude stressed by Walsh (2001a, 2001b), Mid-Day Star helps others achieve their goals in personal quests for spiritual development, sharing “the oral teachings that have been passed on through the ages, from father to father, father to son, Elders to communities” (p. 241) digging deep down to his Spiritual center: “You will have an answer for the HOPE that lies within you. You will be able to reach deep within yourself to achieve a goal and help that person or lead him along the way that he should go” (p. 241).

In answering question three, **Nokomis**, identifies her two primary purpose to give “hope and guidance to all these children and youth that I work with, and showing them examples where there is always hope” (p. 274). Nokomis says “I have tried to share my story and the struggles I have been though to give Hope to other people—that they should never give up searching for their Path in Life or searching for a reunion with their families or somebody they love” (p. 276). In Appendix E, Nokomis shares a powerful related event at a Sacred Fire at a conference attended out west. A storyteller told her story, with permission from his community, speaking of little Suzie Nakoolak, a small Inuit child born on Nottingham Island in the North West Territories “with so much courage that our community spirit was uplifted” (p. 276). Nokomis’ name has changed a number of times, but she still has that round cardboard tag bearing her Inuit identification number. A chance encounter, in answer to her lifelong prayer, finally led to a reunion with her birth family after forty-two years. “You just have to keep praying for anything

you want and it'll happen" (p. 277). Nokomis stresses "We should be giving more honour and respect to our oral traditional teachings and be accepted in the educational system with the oral traditional teachings also, not just written, by the Elders" (p.283). She talks about the "four stages of life," emphasizing that "those Medicine Wheel teachings are so powerful and wonderful and something to hold onto" (p. 281)

Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor focuses on her role as teacher guiding young students. Gloria engages in ceremonies and outdoor activities that teach children respect for nature. She prepares Ojibway youngsters for active involvement in Pow Wows. She teaches the children about the important role of the Eagle staff at Pow Wow events and elsewhere. Gloria identifies "a strong feeling has come through in our community that a child must carry that Eagle staff" (p. 301). She carefully observed and listened to her students looking for and cultivating leaders just as Native matriarchs did in choosing worthy Chiefs many years ago. By her example, she teaches proper protocol. She approached a young boy to ask him to be the Eagle staff carrier in the same way one would approach an Elder: "I told him what the tobacco was for first, before I handed it to him" (p. 296). "He still walks with pride with that staff" (p. 302). Respect is paramount.

Gloria provides meaningful opportunities for celebrating identity, laughing and experiencing joy in the Anishnabe language. She stresses the importance of humour. "A lot of humour is needed to teach the language. When you laugh at your mistakes, then it's fun.... A big part of that laughter is the language" (p. 302).

Kahskennontora:ken was previously a formal teacher of the Good Medicine (Good Medicine Society, 1999, 2000) whose principles are of good, natural living. She states "all students teach the teacher. When it comes to teaching character education, the most helpful thing you can do is *plant seeds* in the minds of people through your Knowledge of life's experiences" (p. 336). She advocates the use of storytelling as "stories are less pointed and feel less like an attack on sensitive issues. Expressing my heart and mind in a good way with kindness and compassion would be what I would call my involvement in Character Development. In storytelling and in teaching which is ongoing through every day of my life is the way to teach that I see as most effective" (p. 338). According to her, traditional First Nations character development does not interfere

with another's path. "Noninterference is an important Native principle" (p. 330). "In Character Development within Native life as we know it, it was a softly given thing of guidance" (p. 340) and "People must want to heal their pain" (p. 339). According to Kahskennontora:ken, positive character development must be intrinsic. It "has to be self-motivated and of their Spirit, or there can be no true growth, no Knowledge" (p. 339).

Drew Hayden Taylor has expressed his mission to depict a more rounded perception of Native character in Canada that affords an appreciation of the "multifaceted base of Native Aboriginality" (p. 381). His portrayals, through the characters in his plays, earlier described by him as "a slice of life" (p. 376), are a far cry from the rigid stereotypes with which society at large is familiar. Taylor chooses to portray "a sense of humour that is inherent in Native cultures" (p. 381). With respect to his writing, he states "So one of the ways that I try to expand that perspective of Native people showed variances of Native character and to build up the perception of Native character was through humour. So it was humour that allowed me to ride the darker times and come out the other side. Whether it was a Residential School, or whatever, there was always humour" (p. 381).

Although Taylor is not an Elder, true to his role as a mirror, he gives invaluable insights into the roles of Elders. He states "I just wrote an article again comparing Native Elders to European philosophers" (p. 381). His position is "So I look at Elders who have lived a full and hardy life as almost having more wisdom than those that haven't. They have walked all roads" (p. 382). He talks about the importance of dialogue: "But if I go out there and I sit and talk with the Elders, and I talk with Edna Manitowabi about Nanabush and about how he left his footprints all across North America, that stays with me" (p. 382). (See Appendix H for more details on Taylor's thoughts on Elders.)

Summary: All interview participants expressed concerned about honest representation of Native Peoples, free from bias and stereotypes. Through various forms of storytelling in diverse settings, all five interviewees actively engage in guiding character development. Practicing the principle of noninterference, the Elders guide those seeking help to walk the Good Red Road. They help people of different ages, from different walks of life to cope in different circumstances in both formal and informal

settings. They all honour and share traditional teachings received from their respective Native communities, engaging in ritual and ceremony appropriate to their cultures.

Question four.

I ask: *In your opinion, how do teachings to develop character persist in present day reality? How do you relate them?* Interviewee responses are followed by my summary. Interpretations of this question vary with regard to the meaning of *relate*.

Mid-Day Star states “Basically amongst the Native community, the people, the children especially, are still conscious of holding Elders and older people in high respect. If those teachings are given, the people will respond in a good way. They are very respectful of the Eagle Feather” (p. 241). The Eagle Feather is a powerful, sacred symbol of truth and goodness. Christians might compare speaking holding the Eagle feather to placing one’s hand truthfully upon the Bible in a courtroom. People have “a choice to walk the Good Red Road.... They find them [the teachings] as helpful today as they were one thousand years ago.... Our teachings are all in line with what would build fine young people to be good, productive members of their communities” (p. 241).

This question was of particular interest to **Nokomis**. She reinforces the same concepts of “character building” teachings “handed down from generation to generation,” stressing that although character education is “rooted at home first” (p. 283), all community members are responsible to help children “live in a proper way” (p. 283). We should teach and treat them kindly and respectfully, working together in the spirit of collaboration. Nokomis emphasizes the importance of honouring individual rates of development, enhancing student self-esteem, and providing opportunities to learn practical life skills through “listening, watching and doing” (p. 277). She believes it is detrimental to a child’s self-concept to hold him or her back in school:

The Native way is to allow the individual to grow at their own rate and mature at their own rate because each individual has special gifts and it will take one person a little longer to develop, their own character, their own way of learning, their own way of understanding whatever they’re trying to learn and to be taught at their own rate. (p. 277)

Nokomis reflects at length on her personal character *miseducation* experiences in a Residential School in Brandon, Manitoba, contrasting that with the respectful Native way. Nokomis states “Whereas our way was much more kind and gentle and nurturing and they would always ask the Mothers, Grandmothers and Aunties to encourage them as they grew up with the family. They were the Circle of Relationship.... Children had an extended family that went beyond blood relations. The whole community supported them. It still happens. Susan Aglukark is an example of that” (p. 278).

Nokomis stresses the timeless value of the Medicine Wheel as a teaching tool: In doing the teachings, it also includes the teachings of the four seasons, which in itself has traditional teachings that are very sacred and honourable with many, many inner teachings of each season. The same with the Medicine Wheel which is broken down into other sections to include emotional, physical, mental and spiritual. (p. 283)

Elders and what they have ... all of those sacred teachings should be taught and learned.... if we see that they [the learners] are going off the Red Road, we will in some way try to approach them in a kind and respectful way without giving them direct instructions. We do it in storytelling, in teachings, but always in a gentle, kind way so that it appears that we are not interfering. (p. 284)

Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor reinforces the importance of drumming and dancing. She states of her First Nation run school, “We have the teachings of the sweat lodge and the drums brought in to the children” (p. 303). “In sounding the drum first is you honour those four directions and in the centre is the Creator” (p. 303). The drum is honoured in the four directions of the Medicine Wheel. Gloria discusses the benefits of singing, drumming, sweatlodges, ceremonies, Pow wows and the rain dance. “Little ones will go up to that drum, and if they are strong enough, they’ll pick up a drumstick and start beating on the drum. The children are never turned away from that. We never break a child’s interest” (p. 303). She describes the drum as being like a mother’s heartbeat that brings the child comfort in the womb, the heartbeat of Mother Earth who nurtures us. The babies will hear that drum of creation which is woman. They remember the heartbeat of the mother and inside how close they were to that. That is the connection that they made at the Pow Wows and the ceremonies. It is a strong connection (p.304).

The drum is voice of the “Anishnabe nation” (p. 303).

Kahskennontora:ken states that “ninety percent of our people who don’t follow tradition” (p. 332), so in dealing with First Nations traditional teachings on character education, we are looking at the remaining ten percent who do.

Now how I relate the old teachings and the old ways of developing Character in today’s world is through my life experience, and the teachings of other people that have touched my life, their stories, their experiences are timeless truths.... and the truth is that we are Spiritual beings having a human experience in relationship to Nature, and this natural truth is immutable. (p. 341)

Kahskennontora:ken advocates new ways of looking at problems in order to solve them, stressing that one should never remain stuck in past tragedies. She emphasizes the power of storytelling to touch intuitive minds of youths. She says we often set up road blocks to our spiritual growth until the pain is so great and “life’s teachings become so hard” (p. 341) that we have no choice but to take ownership, face our fears and deal with issues to end our discomfort.

Drew Hayden Taylor describes Native theatre as an effective way of passing on stories, stating that it “will always exist because nothing will ever take the place of imagination” (p.383). He emphasizes the importance of a sense of humour. It is an economical, primary teaching tool that preceded the “written word or any sort of mass media” (p. 385). “So I got my humour from my Elders. They taught me how to look at the world, how to laugh and how to respect the world. And so, laughing at something and respecting it are not opposites” (p. 385). Taylor emphasizes that cultural brands of humour are different amongst different First Nations ethnolinguistic groups such as the Cree, Haida, Iroquois and Ojibway. “The humour is so culturally based” (p. 385). Humour is stressed in all Native traditions. Each one has some form of Trickster teachings (Nanabush, Coyote, Raven). “I have very rarely found Native people without ownership of or having developed a Native sense of humour” (p. 385).

Taylor uses theatre as a medium for humour as well as a learning tool for examining multiple perspectives, rites of passage such as “coming of age” and issues such as gender appropriation. He explains that legends are layered with social,

philosophical and ecological aspects providing some “explanation of a natural phenomenon” (p. 384) that can be meaningfully examined.

Summary: Varied, wide-ranging interpretations of question four indicate a diversity of life experiences amongst interview participants. Regardless of their focus, all reinforce that Native character education in present day traditional First Nations teachings continues to be guided, intuitive and intrinsic, requiring willing participation of the learner. General community approval, principles and activities are cherished. In this section there was no comment made concerning difficulties in adapting ancient teachings to modern day realities. That surprised me. There is little reference to technology either as a tool or an obstacle. All five embrace a Native philosophy of education that includes timeless Aboriginal values (which really are virtues!).

Question five.

Below are key points from the interviewees’ responses to the question *Do you think there is potential for these teachings to impact positively and permanently on adolescents/ young adults in: (a) Native school systems; (b) non-Native school systems; (c) other settings?* They are followed by my summary:

Mid-Day Star talks about the Circle: “To begin the school day coming into the presence of the Creator, of passing an Eagle feather from one person to the next person and sharing what’s on your heart” (p. 242). He emphasizes the importance of the “sense of community” (p. 245) and the benefits of teachings from Elders: “We think we have teachings from our Elders in the North Country, that not only would help Native young people, but would certainly help white people that are in the school system.” (p. 243). Working as an Elder with people in the prison system, **Mid-Day Star** says “We want them to get excited that they would be rehabilitated” (p. 245).

Mid-Day-Star shares his personal experience of being assimilated in the non-Native school system. Removed from his own Native community at age six, he grew up in a primarily white society. He says “It wasn’t until I was much older that I went back to my roots on the Pow Wow trail to reclaim my identity” (p. 243). Speaking in Non-Native school systems, he identifies his responsibility to make direct contact with students and to “represent the Truth” (p. 243). His Eagle feather and Eagle staff help him share the Seven

Grandfather teachings. He talks about misleading cowboy and Indian film stereotypes (p. 243), reinforcing that misconceptions need to be clarified through discussion with knowledgeable people, raising “consumer” awareness.

Nokomis states “The Seven Grandfather teachings of the Grandfathers taught in many of the Native schools have definitely had a positive impact, not only in Native schools, but everywhere” (p. 284). In her opinion, the best strategy is to invite Elders into schools to establish direct heart-to-heart contact with students:

Hopefully they [the teachers] would contact the Elders in communities and surrounding schools to invite them to come in and help and let the Elders do the oral teachings and not just have it be written.... You still need the personal contact and vision of a Native person speaking to individuals in the classroom. (p. 285)

Nokomis expressed concern about misinformation and misappropriation of Native teachings by non-Natives for personal profit. Indigenous research experts share her concern. (Battiste, 2000b; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Henderson, 2000; Smith, 1999a, 1999b) “Some people charge big bucks for sweats and teachings. We call them ‘popcorn elders.’ They are not Traditional Elders. They bring dishonour to those of us who follow the Good Way” (p. 286).

Nokomis views improving environmental intelligence and awareness as part of character education. “We take care of the country for seven generations. Each generation that came along always had to look seven generations ahead to make sure that Mother Earth is going to be well and healthy” (p. 286). She states that non-Natives worried about the Earth are now seeking First Nations wisdom in this area. “Over the past years there have been more concerns brought to the Native people of the Native Communities because it has been realized that we know how to take care of Mother Earth properly” (p. 286).

I give thanks for all the beautiful gifts each day. These are traditional teachings that have been passed on from generation to generation that really ground us to the reality of life and the beauty that Mother Nature has to offer us each day” (p. 289).

We must be “grounded” and should experience Nature’s beauty.

Nokomis mentors Native students at the college level. “I can work with students, in an Auntie or Grandmother role to give them the confidence or self-assurance that whatever they are tackling in their subject, they are able to do it” (p. 287). She is involved in conferences, teaching circles and healing circles.

They [the participants] are honoured and respected, so that they can honestly release any anger and hurt that they have been holding in. They can release it in that Circle where it will be kept in confidence.... We are there as a support system for them (p. 288).

Healing circles have been extended into Canadian prisons with promising results for both Native and non-Native inmates. “The prophecies tell us that it is now time to share certain things that work for us” (p. 289). “We have extended our teachings and our circles to include anyone who has a firm belief and understanding of how we do things in our traditional way. We are inclusive” (p. 289). Many non-Natives are also benefiting from healing circles, joining drumming circles and becoming involved in Native ceremony.

Patience, respect and pride are key words for **Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor**. She talks about Native children sitting in Circle daily, learning patience and listening skills. Children engage in weekly ceremonies in her Native school setting. Elders accompany them on field trips. “We ask some of our Elders and our storytellers to come with us to tell the children the stories passed on by the Elders” (p. 304). Gloria stresses “You have to give them that grounding to bring them back to family values” (p. 305). She identifies the prerequisite for a successful Native/non-Native mixture in a non-Native school: “The teachers have to be accepting and show acceptance of a lot of other people’s individualities, cultural and spiritual beliefs. I find that is when the children, the youth, will work together in a whole setting” (p. 305). With respect to youth, “The hardest thing to do is to guide them through their mistakes. To be there to listen, not to question. To be there to accept, not to judge” (p. 305).

Gloria’s initial response when contemplating non-Native school settings was expressing the fear instilled in her at an early age of being “taken away” by white people explaining how she gradually adjusted to their presence. She stresses the importance of ceremony, citing the Three Fires celebration of the Ojibway, the Odawa and Potawatomi Nations that are part of the island population and a Spiritual Gathering in Maniwaki.

That Rainbow Medicine, that is part of the prophecies, I couldn't believe how many non-Native people were coming out to listen to our Elders and to come to our healers for healing.... Now today, I can be part of helping our non-Native brothers and sisters through their healing.... We need to bring all colours of people together to make the Wheel [Medicine Wheel] stronger. (p. 306).

She talks about the importance of the human connection to make the Medicine Wheel whole and to heal “brokenness in our Youth” (p. 307) and “to become better people—to heal with each other” (p. 307).

Gloria shares an experience at a spiritual gathering. “When people get together in prayer, in unity, it moves the energy” (p. 308). “Use that power of prayer in movement of that energy for our mother, Mother Earth” (p. 309). She also talks about the cycles of life and death. A Wake in the community for someone who has passed on offers an opportunity to grieve, to give support, caring and compassion and to teach the children to embrace life but also not to fear death, relating the stages of life and death to the Medicine Wheel. “We talk about Death and how much a part of Life that is” (p. 309).

Kahskennontora:ken explains about the dominant culture: “Somewhere in their history, they understood, respected and lived with the earth” (p. 345). She states: Underneath it all, is the inevitable need to come into harmony as Peoples of the Earth. If you have had the good fortune to have had exposure to several of the Native Nations, you'll begin to understand that those truths we hold so close—those same Natural truths are just said in different ways.... The principles by which we live are Earth teachings.... It is that way worldwide in all Earth based Traditional Cultures. (p. 344)

Traditional teachings are now being revived. In First Nations schools, “they are starting to teach the children from a First Nations cultural point of view” (p. 344). Excursions to participate in important Native gatherings are woven into the First Nations curriculum. Native studies are taught at the university level. Kahskennontora:ken talks about “the disassociation of those generations from being Native People who were shamed, taken away from their families from the age of five to the age of sixteen to Residential School, and punished for who they were” (p. 345).

Good Mind should be taught at all levels. Character education includes aspects of healing. Kahskennontora:ken states “There are **talking circles** being used by a Native society that deals with kids. They are using talking circles and Native justice with white kids” (p. 346). She says “there must be a set of teachings for the teachers” (p. 347) so they may turn towards a “Path of Good Medicine, Good Mind” (p. 347).

Drew Hayden Taylor discusses the Golden Rule of Reciprocity, the universal constant of a parent’s love for a child, emphasizing that “There are common teachings that everybody can understand, appreciate or embrace” (p. 386) “as long as some aspect appeals to us” (p. 387). Taylor refers to the tragic results of the Residential School system which

forced something on them that they didn’t want with often tragic results.

Traditional teachings are a lot simpler, a lot more user friendly and a lot more beneficial. If taught in the right way, they will have much more of an effect on the students because the teachings are very, very good and would not harm anybody” (p. 387).

Taylor talks about the De Ba Jeh Mu Jig Theatre from Manitoulin Island. This theatre tours schools to perform Native plays. About *Toronto at Dreamer’s Rock*, he says:

It has elements in it that everybody can relate to.... Everybody in the universe goes through that identity crisis. Everybody relates to having some sort of social relationship with their parents and everybody tries to figure out where they fit in this world. (p. 388)

The other setting Taylor proposes is in the Theatre itself. He refers to Augusto Boal’s (1985, 1990) “Theatre of the Oppressed” which gives a voice to underclasses. Taylor cautions us against misusing theatre to *miseducate* as was done overseas in the past with traveling theatre troupes “extolling the virtues of Nazism or Stalinism” (p. 389).

Summary: In response to question five, it is certain that all interview participants believe there is definite potential for traditional First Nations character education teachings to impact positively on learners ranging in age from the youngest child (even in the womb according to two respondents) to adult, in Native school systems, non-Native

school systems and a wide variety of other settings, both formative and reformatory, formal and informal. First Nations character education teachings do not involve extrinsic motivation or corporal punishment. Intrinsic and learner-centred, they focus on guiding rather than directing and involve a deep feeling of responsibility, interconnectedness and a sense of the Sacred. Oral tradition for the heart-to-heart connection is primary, involving telling stories passed on from one generation to the next. Listeners deduce lessons from the stories, drawing their own conclusions. They are not explicitly told the moral.

Meaningful ritual, ceremony and celebration in the spirit of community are integrated into daily life. I have observed all five participants taking time for quiet reflection. All know breathing techniques. This is not necessarily stated in responses in this section, perhaps because for them, it is as natural as breathing. I have observed this practice as a quiet, vital part of traditional wholistic First Nations character education.

All five participants share a wondrous sense of the Great Mystery. All participants are convinced that First Nations teachings help a person to make a good journey during their lifetime in a healthy, balanced, respectful, responsible way in harmony with the community and the environment.

Humour and laughter are defined by two of the participants as being very important. Humour helps with the teachings. From my personal knowledge of the interview participants, I can attest that all five laugh a lot—with you rather than at you, in a compassionate tongue-in-cheek, playfully irreverent sort of way. The *Trickster* aspect appearing in various forms and called by various names as explained on page 224, is common in many First Nations legends involving character education teachings. It is highly prevalent in Drew Hayden Taylor's work both on stage and screen.

Unsolicited, every person referred to varying degrees to what First Nations people experienced as character *miseducation* at the hands of the dominant colonizing culture. Although I had done a lot of previous reading on the subject, that came as a shock to me. The Canadian Residential School system stood out as a burning example of teaching that has had a negative intergenerational impact, leading to character *disease*, a sense of alienation and disconnectedness, the fallout of which many traditional First Nations people are working mindfully to heal as they reclaim identity, language and culture for

themselves while guiding others to find their own sense of purpose and place in intricate Web of Life relationships. All five First Nations interview participants expressed strong preferences for wider use of First Nations teachings to promote positive character development—that they have beneficial teachings for non-Natives as well as Natives.

Question six.

Below are key points from the five responses to the question: *In your opinion, how important is hope to developing character? (a) Can individuals develop positive character traits if they feel a lack of hope? (b) If they feel a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of “getting back” their hope?* They are followed by my summary. Based on a decade of previous experience with Native peoples, as I suspected prior to the interviews, hope plays a major role in First Nations character education.

According to **Mid-Day-Star**, “Probably a lack of hope has been our biggest enemy” (p. 245). “Institutionalizing Native children in the Residential School system led to a whole lost generation” (p. 247). “If you raise people and you don’t give them love, they don’t know how to give it” (p. 247). Mid-Day-Star identifies a growing movement over the last fifteen years to recapture the Spirit. “We have begun to work at building hope amongst our young people” (p. 245). Hope is linked to pride. “Well I think if they want to get their hope back, first of all, you have got to become proud of who you are” (p. 244). Hope is linked to the Spirit: “We need to get this hope back. We need to get the Spirit back, to be proud of being an Anishnabe man or woman” (p. 248). People who are proud of themselves, their families and teachings are more likely to be hopeful.

Nokomis states “I would say that in order to develop character, you have to have hope.... I think every individual has to have hope for something, whether it is to build character or other traits in life” (p. 289). “The Native way we do things is by sharing stories in the hope that the individual will pick up what they need from that story to continue their hope and get the message of hope from those teachings” (p. 290). “You just have to keep praying for anything you want and it’ll happen” (p. 277)

According to **Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor**:

Everybody needs hope to develop character. It is hard to go on without it. If a person doesn’t have hope, then the community as a whole must come in and give

it to that person. The hope is built for the person. It is almost like mirroring him or her.... Once a person has hope, then he can improve his character. They [children, youths] need to know how important their role is in society, how important their role is in life. (p. 310)

Gloria relates teachings to develop hope to the Medicine Wheel, building strong cultural and linguistic identity, with a sense of purpose in the context of caring community:

For me, I think that identity builds a strong character in a person. A positive identity about oneself and what their role is in their culture and in their language.... In our culture, in the Anishnabe way of life, that is using all of their medicines and the Medicine Wheel itself and showing where they belong in each of the stages of their life. (p. 311)

“This is why our people had passage of life [rites of passage] ceremonies to initiate them into their life, to honour and remember all they learned before” (p. 311). Gloria questions students on “what their dreams are—what they think they will be accomplishing when they read that area in the Medicine Wheel where they’ll be stepping over into that new role in their life that they will take” (p. 311)

Kahskennontora:ken states “Without hope there can be no positive growth in character development.... Hope and a sincere desire for change are the positive catalysts by which true change in humanity occurs” (p. 347)

And so I see character development and hope as being essential to the sincere desire that is needed to reach our life Path of Spiritual Learning. Spiritual learning and progression is the true purpose for being of all mankind. Character development and hope/ desire to achieve Spiritual Progression are part of the same positive life path, of seeing life’s teachings in harmony with Nature’s immutable Laws. Without hope or desire, the character does not develop towards a Good Mind.... With hope the Mind and Spirit are used to move forward on the *quest for optimizing growth* of a Good Mind and Spirit. (p. 348)

Drew Hayden Taylor describes two kinds of characters reflecting offstage reality on stage: those who are devoid of hope and those who “get their hope back through a journey” (p. 389). His response reflects the Native philosophy of the “individual’s

journey of growth in themselves” (p. 390) on the good Red Road. Taylor states “A character without Hope is a character almost without a future. He can have existence but no Hope” (p. 390). Taylor states that viewing “a character on stage or screen with no hope [is...] just like seeing with a real individual, it is very, very tragic” (p. 390). He concludes with an optimistic comment about hope rehabilitation which is self-learned but can be guided: “You can be shown the way, but those initial steps towards hope, towards love, towards any substantive and sense of positive emotion have to be self-generated” (p. 390). “It is a personal journey” (p.390).

Summary: Although I was originally questioned on the relevancy of hope to this study, my intuitive personal experience with First Nations peoples convinced me that it was an integral part, and in fact a prerequisite, for opening an individual up to the possibility of positive character trait development. Interviewee responses supported the literature review, confirming hope as essential to the spiritual journey of evolving character development. Development of hope and positive character development both require intrinsic motivation. From the perspectives of the interview participants, individuals who have the courage to seek help will receive support from the Native community towards achieving these goals. My understanding is that the success of the individual in facing challenges and overcoming obstacles is also considered to be the success of the community. This I have particularly felt in shared sweat lodge experiences where we nurture one another’s hope.

Question seven.

Below are key points from the five responses to the question: What positive attributes of character do you focus on in your culture and in your own personal teachings in working with/ guiding others? They are followed by my summary.

Three interviewees focus on the **Seven Grandfather** teachings. According to **Mid-Day Star** “you are dealing in a spiritual world” (p. 250). He emphasizes that the Creator works through him. He refers to the **Nine Gifts of the Spirit of Christianity** which he identifies as “Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Humility and Self-Control” (p. 249) comparing them to the simpler **Seven Teachings of the Grandfathers** which he identifies as “Wisdom, Love, Respect,

Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth” and whose teachings he shares using his Eagle staff which “happens to have seven feathers on it” (p. 248). In his story about Kanue, Mid-Day Star refers to tipi teachings and the Vision Quest. (See p. 256.)

Nokomis confirms: “that would be the guidelines of the Seven Grandfather teachings” (p. 290).

Gloria Oshkabewisens McGregor states “An Elder is understanding and supportive without interfering. The **Seven Grandfathers** are used every day in our schools” (p.311). She talks about guiding, moulding and allowing youths to go through the various experiences in their stages in life, being there for them to “answer the questions full-heartedly” and to “allow them to make those decisions” (p. 312). Gloria feels she needs the qualities of heartfulness, acceptance, availability, mindfulness and trust to fulfill this role.

Although **Drew Hayden Taylor** is very familiar with teachings of his Ojibway counterparts, as a playwright responding to this question, he examines it from the perspective of constructing characters on stage where we, as the audience, witness their journeys. He discusses the use of Aboriginal humour. He emphasizes “Everybody has the potential for good and bad” (p.391) and self-affirms: “I have this natural tendency to believe in the best in people” (p. 390). He generally puts a “positive spin” on his characters. They all face some kind of moral dilemma, like the Christian woman in *Bootlegger Blues* whose sale of beer could buy an organ for the Church. He talked about the quality of persistence required to be a good rewriter. Taylor expressed a sense of responsibility and moral accountability as a playwright to his Native community: “There is an immediate audience that knows me and wants to see what my opinion is. If they see something wrong with it... they will go out of their way to contact me” (p. 392).

Kahskennontora:ken, whose background is Mohawk, not Ojibway, also knows the Seven Grandfather teachings, which are not of her culture, but are harmonious with it. She states “we must talk about the basics of Peace, Power and Righteousness, as the foundation which develops the Good Mind and forms good character development” (p. 349). She speaks of Natural Law and the Good Mind that form part of her teachings. She goes to great lengths to emphasize three principles of The Good Mind, stressing related

qualities of respect, humility, mindful non-judgement and the use of personal strength of character and wisdom from the intuitive self.

Kahskennontora:ken emphasizes the importance of letting go of the ego and the need to control others: “This need to be the advisor, not the teacher, which is useless for the person you are trying to help, is simply feeding your own ego. It is a self-gratifying, learned behaviour for us to tell other people what to do” (p. 353). She emphasizes the importance of intuition: “These developing intuitions come to you freely from the Spirit World, when using a more caring and loving Mind with good intention” (p. 354). An important quality for Kahskennontora:ken is the ability to interact with people at their level of understanding: “If you go beyond the ability of the person to grasp Spiritual Knowledge, then they can’t understand you” (p. 353). She emphasizes and explains two guiding questions that influence her output into the world: “If I do speak, will it make any difference?” (p. 319) and “If I do speak, how will my thoughts that I express impact on the World, and on my Life, my Spiritual Path?” (p. 353). She emphasizes the importance of taking time to think mindfully and to tap into the intuitive mind to do a double-check between Spirit Knowledge and the logical mind: “These developing intuitions come to you freely from the Spirit World, when using a more caring and loving mind with good intention” (p. 354). Kahskennontora:ken focuses on the qualities of honesty, integrity and empathy, stressing that it is our “personal responsibility to bring balance back to life” (p. 358) and that what we learn must “benefit Mankind” (p. 359), not just ourselves.

Summary: A quick comparison of some of the Canadian First Nations teachings explained by the interviewees to Native American teachings shared by Don Trent (Four Arrows) Jacobs reveals refreshing ethnocultural differences that share soothing threads of universal similarities through virtues in harmony with Natural laws. Traditional First Nations peoples have consciously and mindfully cultivated these virtues for thousands of years, traveling the Red Road (Jacobs, 2001d, 2002c) to positive character development and upward spiritual evolution. (See Appendix Q.). This portion of the interview allowed me to appreciate the heterogenous nature of First Nations communities within the umbrella of a more universal indigenous worldview. Although teachings differ from one community to another, many are shared and understood by different cultures. Suzuki and Knudtson (1992) describes a primary role of Elders: “They freely offer this wisdom to

living generations of their people in an effort to help them connect harmoniously with their past, present and future” (p. 224). The bottom line is traditional First Nations character education is designed to guide the development of respectful, responsible, resourceful individuals who are proud of who they are and who are able to contribute in positive ways to their communities. These teachings can be adapted and shared with wonderful results in multicultural communities as is emphasized elsewhere

Question eight.

Below are key points from the five responses to the question: How do you believe Native teachings reinforcing character education could be best passed on in meaningful ways to today’s youth? They are followed by my summary.

Mid-Day Star emphasizes the power of oral tradition, adding that recording some of the teachings, as the Mohawks of Six Nations have done, will help preserve them.

I think it is really a matter of having the Elders—more Elders, respecting them, treating them well and having them infiltrate the school life on our reserves and having them speaking in the schools. Have them speaking in the prisons. Have them speaking in the Youth Detention Centres and passing on all of these good teachings that they know. These were made known not to be hidden but to give us a balance in our lives. It is like the teaching of the Four Rooms, which is another way of looking at the Medicine Wheel. (p. 251)

These four *rooms* are: intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical. “In this simple teaching lies the balance of my life” (p. 251).

Nokomis states “What we like to instill in the children and youth are the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, following the Good Red Path of life” (p. 290). She emphasizes the importance of support from the home. Parents must love, support and guide the child from the moment of birth through the life stages, “because the character changes and grows with that individual” (p. 290). She upholds the Seven Grandfather and Medicine Wheel teachings as two key frames of reference and distinguishes between “teaching circles and healing circles,” emphasizing the importance of both. Nokomis talks about mentoring “one-on-one,” heart-to-heart, describing information shared as “sacred and is held in confidence” (p. 290). Having

worked with many young people in a variety of advisory, supporting roles, Nokomis' main concern "is that they lack the support from home.... It is the responsibility of the parents to give love and support to their own children and to guide them in a good and proper way to live in today's society" (p. 291).

Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor stresses the importance of daily teachings of the Seven Grandfathers. She emphasizes a stance of supportive guidance:

That is a great role that you are given by the Creator to mould all these little ones in a positive way. No matter what culture you are from, to help mould them in a positive way to be a good person, a good person, a good human being with a good heart" (p. 312).

Kahskennontora:ken emphasizes that both the Seven Grandfather teachings as well as to her own culture's teachings of Peace, Power and Righteousness "are a general guideline for conduct for any person to develop a unique relationship with their Creator in the Spirit and to develop Character traits that work for them in positive ways in their physical lives" (p. 360). She speaks of each person's intimate relationship with the Creator and the power of creation "taught to us at Earth's University of Nature, where we learn our true purpose for being alive" (p. 360). Kahskennontora:ken states that the true teacher accepts the responsibility to share what they "have come to know when these other people are ready" (p. 361). She emphasizes two ways of life learning—to capitalize on our strengths and strengthen our weaknesses. She envisions stories told to children as planting "seeds for the future" (p. 363) through words. The aspect of healing our negative character traits is reinforced. "We must overcome and heal our weaknesses in order to improve and develop our Character" (p. 362).

Drew Hayden Taylor primarily entertains through his plays. As the characters evolve, taking on a stage presence, the theme evolves. He states "It [the moral] should come from the characters" (p. 394). He talks about using the Tricker's "mannerisms or ways of telling the story" (p. 395) to produce sudden twists.

Summary: Responses to question eight cover a wide span of strategies and varied settings. Each person has character education frames of reference specific to his or her teachings as shown in Appendix Q. There is also some crosscultural sharing between

different Native communities. For instance, all respondents live the concept of the Sacred Circle. They know about the Medicine Wheel, Earth wisdoms, the seventh generation concept and the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers. Only one respondent actively spoke about the Great Tree of Peace and peace, power and righteousness. Several referred to rainbow teachings and prophecies. Booth (1999) and Charles & Leppington (1997) emphasize that importance of using storytelling in school settings.

Aboriginals around the world give traditional storytelling, which restores authenticity, a place of honour for guiding positive character trait development. This teaching tool contributes to culture, language development and human spiritual evolution, as evidenced at World Indigenous Peoples' Conferences. Booth (1999) of OISE/UT was guest editor for a special issue of *Orbit* magazine entirely devoted to the concept of storytelling. The "art (and science) of storytelling" are a major focus for the upcoming symposium entitled *The Quest for Literacy: Leadership that Makes a Difference*, being held from November 20 to 21, 2003, in Richmond Hill, Ontario. (York Region District School Board, 2003). It is my hope that at least one First Nations storyteller will be included, given that storytelling, so integral to the Native oral tradition, is such a powerful First Nations character education tool.

All five interviewees use storytelling as a character education strategy, in a variety of settings, to share traditional Earth wisdoms. Teachings tend to be given one on one or in a Circle. They can be many sitting in the circle or few. Each interviewee demonstrated deliberate intent to guide and uplift learners without moralizing. Each demonstrated a sense of humour through use of tone, facial expression and body language. The *Trickster* concept is present in some form in all cultures. There is a sense of playfulness and an underlying message that we, as members of the human tribe, must be able to laugh with one another. Successful, direct heart-to-heart communication involves eye-to-eye contact. Physical presence is considered very important.

Chapter Six:
Framework for First Nations Character Education Analysis

Rationale for Selecting John P. Miller’s Holistic Framework

I selected the holistic framework of Miller (1993, 1996) as being the most appropriate for organizing and analyzing information gathered from the Elders and gleaned during the literature review. For the past decade, as a teacher researcher involved in proactive race relations, I have interacted closely with Native Elders and teachers from across Ontario. I believe traditional indigenous teachings offer wholistic tools for developing character that embrace the transformation position emphasized by Jacobs and Jacobs-Spencer (2001) in their Concentration Activated Transformation approach. First Nations traditional teachings are holistic and wholistic. As Miller (1996) identifies, a holistic curriculum is based on principles incorporating an ecological sense of human scale organizations, non-violence and androgyny (pp. 55, 67 – 68). Miller’s holistic stance is congruent with First Nations wholistic teachings following the *Good Red Road* (Hand, 1998; Jacobs, 2001d; McGaa, 1992) that I have received through oral tradition.

In this chapter, exploring six key areas of connections and teaching strategies: *Analytic-Intuitive Thinking, Body-Mind Connection, Subject Connections, Community Connections, Earth Connections, and Self-Connections*, I relate First Nations practices and philosophies to Miller’s (1993, 1995) transformational, holistic education framework. Provided first in simple table format, each area of connections is expanded upon.

Table III

J. R. Miller’s Transformational, Holistic Framework

Analytic-Intuitive Thinking	Body-Mind Connection	Subject Connections
Community Connections	Earth Connections	Self-Connections

Through the process of interviewing five Aboriginals, I explored relationships between First Nations traditional teachings and character education, within the holistic framework provided by John (Jack) P. Miller in *The Holistic Teacher* (1993) in Chapter 7, “Holistic Teaching” (p. 96) and *The Holistic Curriculum* (1996) in Chapter 6,

“Intuitive Connections” (p. 87, Fig. 6.1). Information gleaned from the literature review and the interviews resulted in the completed Table in Appendix P called “Holistic Connections in Traditional First Nations teaching strategies”. It was generated in relation to the chart of six transformative, holistic connections developed by Miller (1993, p. 96). An explanation for each category is accompanied by concrete examples.

Analytic-intuitive thinking.

Miller (1993) identifies analytic and linear thinking as connected (p. 96). With Analytic-Intuitive thinking, Miller links intuition and imagination, stressing the use of guided imagery, imagination metaphor and metaphor. These can involve relaxation exercises, meditation techniques, nature walks, concentration exercises and connecting outer world images to one’s inner world. Miller recommends guided imagery as “one of the main vehicles we have to stimulate the inner life of the student” (p. 109).

Miller (1996) discusses the metaphorical approach. I acknowledge this approach as an ancient traditional Aboriginal one deeply rooted in environmental intelligence. Stories and poems shared by Mid-Day Star in Appendix D and Nokomis in Appendix E provide concrete examples of it. First Nations orators, storytellers and Elders weave powerful nature metaphors into their narrations to help people make meaningful connections with their own lives. Traditional Aboriginals speak of dreams, and visions. They fast. They engage in personal Vision Quests, going into the heart of Nature to seek answers, as they have done for centuries.

Table IV***Miller's Analytic-Intuitive Thinking and First Nations Character Education Strategies***

Miller's Analytic-Intuitive Thinking	First Nations Character Education Strategies
1. Metaphor	1. Predominant oral tradition: powerful nature metaphors and imagery, symbolism in art, totems.
2. Guided imagery/visualization	2. Inner Journeying: Smudging, Eagle staff teachings, meditation, prayer, dreaming, medicine wheel, dreamcatcher, web of life, vision quest, sweatlodge, teepee poles, totems, retreats.

Notes. Holistic connections and teaching-related strategies framework from Miller, J. P., 1993, p. 96. Reprinted with permission.

Holistic connections in traditional First Nations teaching strategies are examples gleaned by the author from readings and interviews.

First Nations character education teachings often incorporate mnemonic devices in the form of visual and tactile aids designed to develop and improve long-term memory. The Seven Grandfather teachings of Wisdom, Love, Respect, Courage, Honesty, Humility and Truth (See Appendix Q) have been shared with hundreds of my students over the years by Ojibway Elder and Korean war veteran George Charles (Mid-day Star) in a storytelling format using his Eagle staff. (Personal communication, May 9, 2001.) He also gives Medicine Wheel teachings, comparing each of the quadrants: intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical to rooms in a house that require daily visiting. Jacobs' and Jacobs-Spencer's (2001) image of the Hoop Dancer combining wisdoms from several different Native American traditions helps reinforce virtues considered crucial to creating strong interconnected hoops (or webs) of relationship. Kahskennontora:ken refers to the Great Peace. Jake Thomas (1993, n.d.) was a great Six Nations orator who memorized and recounted The Great Law of the Tree of Peace. Oral tradition requires strong memory development to retain culturally significant stories, lengthy Thanksgiving addresses and important tribal laws.

Body-mind connection.

Incorporating aspects of First Nations culture into non-Native learning settings through kinesthetic, experiential activity is not new. Pearse and Taylor (1985) incorporated Native chanting, dancing and ritual into drama and boyscout activities. Growing interest in First Nations music is illustrated in Appendix N. Movement education connecting music and dance involves translating thought into physical experience. Dance becomes a metaphor like the Dariel Jacob's geese metaphor (2000) discussed earlier. Developmental drama, improvisation and games fit into this category. Covey (1989) recommends carefully balancing thinking and doing: "By centering our lives on correct principles and creating a balanced focus between doing and increasing our ability to do, we become empowered in the task of creating effective, useful, and peaceful lives...for ourselves, and for our posterity" (p. 318).

First Nations people on traditional paths give great importance to ceremony involving ritual and the use of ritualized objects. A drum is respectfully referred to as a Grandmother drum or a Grandfather drum, honouring associated energy. A *Windhorse* drum was made by Native men in prison from the original horsehide in 1998. It went through a lengthy physical and spiritual process to the finished product. Its vision was smoked and prayed upon in a sweat. Through various stages, it came to be. This drum, now used for healing with children, is said to carry the Spirit of the horse, also called the "sacred dog" (Goble, 1987). The horse symbolizes freedom, grace, power and beauty.

Shakers and rattles are believed to invite Spirits of the Ancestors to a Circle in a good way when traditional Aboriginals come together to drum, chant and pray. Shamans tend to use many ritual objects purported to have special energy. Moore (2001) states:

According to an old tradition in both the East and the West, when a human being has crafted some object beautifully and properly, a spirit will be so enticed by it that it will take up residence in that thing. If this is true—and this is one of my firmest religious beliefs—then millions of objects around us are available for our spiritual benefit. But not every object qualifies, because apparently the spirits can distinguish between the genuine and the bogus. (p. 141)

Table V***Miller's Mind-Body Connections and First Nations Character Education Strategies***

Miller's Body-Mind Connection	First Nations Character Education Strategies
3. Movement	3. Mindful Ritual: Four sacred medicines, braided sweetgrass, peace pipe, the sacred fire, drumming, singing, chanting, Rotinohshonni condolence ceremony, solstice and sunrise ceremonies, formal honouring of all blessings.
4. Dance	4. Pow Wows: jingles dancers, grass dancer, hoop dancing, traditional and intertribal dance, friendship dance, sundance, the spirit dance, the ghost dance.
5. Drama/Improvisation	5. Roleplaying, Plays: i.e., by Native Earth Performing Arts, De-ba-jeh-mu-gig Theatre Group, Drew Hayden Taylor at dhtaylor1@yahoo.com.

Notes. Holistic connections and teaching-related strategies framework from Miller, J. P., 1993, p. 96. Reprinted with permission.

Holistic connections in traditional First Nations teaching strategies are examples gleaned by the author from readings and interviews.

A Pow Wow is a social gathering where people drum and dance in a circle. A traditional Pow Wow begins with Grand Entry, honouring the Eagle staffs and First Nations war veterans. Non-Natives may participate in intertribal dances. I know Native people who, in their finest regalia, fervently follow the summer Pow Wow trail, dancing or drumming at a different Pow Wow in a different location every weekend. Teachings by Elders at the microphone increase understanding of various aspects of the Pow Wow.

In public school systems there are high schools attended by First Nations and non-Native students. Both worlds come together. Non-Natives participate in annual teaching Pow Wows open to the public. They can also attend traditional First Nations workshops facilitated by Native teachers and Elders. (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1992, 1993). The First Nations Studies Centre of Sutton District High School in York Region District School Board, Ontario, Canada hosts an annual teaching Pow Wow on the last Saturday in October. Each Pow Wow has a theme. For instance, the second

annual Pow Wow held on October 29th, 1994 was about “Living Together on Mother Earth” (“Maamwi wiijendahdiyng Shkikimi-Kweng.”) The third annual Pow Wow was “Learning Together on Mother Earth.” The theme of the 2001 Whitefish River First Nations Pow Wow, “Kicajik Kinomagewin—Elder’s Teaching for All People” appeared interconnected with the eighth annual teaching Pow wow theme at Sutton District High School in 2001: “Getchi-pildizijig Ezhi-kinoomaagwiing—Learning from our Elders.”

Subject connections.

In Figure 7.1 (1993, p. 114) Miller illustrates subject connections as reaching three levels: multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary, all of which may involve various levels of transmission, transaction and transformation.

Table VI

Miller’s Subject Connections and First Nations Character Education Strategies

Miller’s Subject Connections	First Nations Character Education Strategies
6. Theme-based learning	6. Integrated teachings based on the Medicine Wheel and sacred Medewin teachings.
7. Values (virtues) education	7. The Great Law, Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, Vision Quests, CAT-FAWN.
8. Integration through the arts	8. Crafts: Dreamcatchers, Navaho Sandpainting of the Mandala, Beading, Sewing, Carving, Drummaking, Ceremonial masks, Power stones.
9. Story model	9. Oral tradition: storytelling, plays.

Notes. Holistic connections and teaching-related strategies framework from Miller, J. P., 1993, p. 96. Reprinted with permission.

Holistic connections in traditional First Nations teaching strategies are examples gleaned by the author from readings and interviews.

Verral, McDowell & Keeshig-Tobias (1994) teach Native values through the arts. Fairy tales, myths and plays spark the imagination, providing opportunities for reflection and exploring values and virtues. Miller states that the fairy tale “encourages children to deal with conflict and supports their personal integration and emerging autonomy” (1993,

p. 115). He suggests that nurturing creative imagination involving the whole child can stimulate moral reasoning and serve as a conduit to moral vision with action. It is the teacher's responsibility to provide "contexts in which the student can respond, as a whole person, to basic moral questions" (p. 117). Miller suggests using the story model to investigate implicit and explicit values rooted in past problems. This helps participants progress from personal to cultural, to global story and global understanding. (p. 118).

Native storytelling is a perfect fit. Alexander and Glaze (1996) state:

We weave narratives to explain our histories and to shed light on our futures. Certainly the narratives are different, and depend largely on historical circumstances. Some are exalted, ring true, and stand the test of time. Some are not and do not. But the purpose of telling these stories—to understand the world in which we live—is the same across all cultures. We can all learn from the stories of others. Understanding the true value of cultural pluralism is the challenge facing Canada as it approaches the next millennium. (p. 272)

Storytelling is one of the most cited strategies in the literature. (Booth, 1999). A primary vehicle for transmitting knowledge through oral tradition, this was the most frequent mode of teaching cited by the Elders and playwright interviewed. An OSSTF Janet Cass action research project entitled "Learning English as a Second Language through First Nations Character Education Teachings and Aboriginal Language Strategies," completed by Dufault (2003b), successfully investigated the use of Native storytelling as a tool for encouraging the development of positive character traits, and incorporating the use of multiple intelligences such as kinesthetic learning involving drumming and chanting. The concept of *Vision Quests* can be transmitted through storytelling and by watching, discussing and performing plays like *The boy in the tree house* (2000) and *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock* (1990) that deal with this rite of passage. One can also seek a vision in a healing lodge. (Waubaneau People, 2001, Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2001b).

Community connections.

According to Miller (1996) community connections are at the core (le coeur) of holism. They are its very heart. Miller describes establishing community connections as essential to fostering cooperative learning, undoing harmful stereotypes and developing other-centered intrapersonal intelligence. Gibbs (1995) provides an example of this with the Tribes process, used increasingly across the U.S.A, Canada, Australia and Europe,

quoting Laura Horton, Native Student Retention Coordinator of Fort Frances Rainy River Board of Education in Ontario, Canada:

When looking for a classroom program that was culturally compatible with First Nation beliefs and values, Tribes was recommended. It surpassed our expectations. Tribes honours the sacred circle in which all people come together. The influence of First Nations beliefs is seen throughout the philosophy, norms and activities. Tribes has helped us teach the children how to be kind. It has helped the children own their responsibilities. It is helping us to talk and listen to one another, as the old ones still do. (p. 72)

Table VII

Miller's Community Connections and First Nations Character Education Strategies

Miller's Community Connections	First Nations Character Education Strategies
10. Co-operative learning	10. Gatherings: Elders' and other Indigenous conferences and forums, community events, councils, circles for healing, speaking, teaching and drumming, lodges, clans, Canadian Rangers.
11. School-community connections	11. Community cooperation: hunting, gathering, Pow Wows and guides to them, give-aways, potlatches, thanksgiving feasts, name-giving ceremonies, coming-of-age ceremony, wakes, Native Friendship Centres, Good Medicine Society, Anishnabek newspapers, Internet as a World Wide Web.
12. Global education	12. Prophecies: Great Peace of Iroquois, White Buffalo of Hopi, Rainbow Warriors, Hopi, Maya, International Peace gatherings, Native websites, networks: Indigenous Education (IEN), WIPCE, OISE's Aboriginal Education Resources Data Base.

Notes. Holistic connections and teaching-related strategies framework from Miller, J. P., 1993, p. 96. Reprinted with permission.

Holistic connections in traditional First Nations teaching strategies are examples gleaned by the author from readings and interviews.

Pow Wows end with a gift-giving ceremony known as a *give-away*. First Elders are called, then war veterans, First Nations dancers, intertribal dancers and anyone who attended. People go around the circle, often choosing a hand-made item from the sharing

blanket. Every gift must find a recipient. In a special dance, all give thanks for their gifts. These gifts symbolize our gift to ourselves of coming together in community. Dufault (1997) engaged in meaningful student-led community partnership projects that involved direct contact with First Nations peoples, practiced concepts of the give-away, and stressed generosity as a form of courage. This led to intrinsic participant satisfaction.

Use of the talking stick in a Sharing Circle creates powerful community connections. In the winter of 1993, I attended my first Elders' conference in downtown Toronto. There I had my initial experience with the *talking stick*, sitting in a circle facilitated by Knockwood (1992). Whoever holds the talking stick speaks. All others listen attentively without interrupting. When one person has finished speaking, the talking stick is passed on to the next person in the circle. In Ojibway tradition it is passed clockwise. Everyone in the circle is given the opportunity to be respectfully heard. Following the same procedure, Kessler (2000) passes bread or a smooth stone in Council. Pearse and Taylor (1985) used this technique in youth camp settings.

In circle, I learned about the power of voice and the importance of listening with my heart. In the classroom, I have successfully used this method with my students. Native children, raised traditionally, learn the value of the *talking stick* from a very early age when negotiating with their parents. When Native peoples come together in a circle, often the purpose is a talking circle or healing circle wherein information is shared only within the circle, and kept sacred within the circle. At other times, the purpose is to come together in a teaching circle to learn knowledge that is then to be disseminated outwards from that circle to other circles. In First Nations schools, much teaching and learning is done in circles. It is not unusual to begin the school day in a talking circle.

The concept of *rainbow warriors* is a community connection growing on a global scale. The First Nations concept of rainbow warriors balancing our masculine and feminine sides to live in peace appears to be in tune with these central values. The first Elder to share Native teachings like those of the Medicine Wheel with non-Natives, Sun Bear (1970), who did much good in his early years, is quoted in McFadden (2001b):

So it's a time when we are all having to acknowledge that we are all human beings upon the same planet, and that's what Rainbow Warriors is all about.

If you wake up and realize that we are Rainbow Warriors now, that we are a rainbow people upon the Earth, then the next step is becoming a spiritual warrior—someone who is willing to put their energy into something that helps to heal the Earth and restore the balance, and who is interested in doing that consistently, not just showing up for a weekend demonstration or something, but people who are willing to use their life energy to create a world of balance and harmony for our children after us. (p. 134)

First Nations references are increasing among First Nations peoples to the White Buffalo Prophecy of the Fifth World that all colours of the global human family will unite, working towards world peace. (Goble, 1998; McFadden, 2001; Medicine Eagle, 1991, 2002). The rainbow symbol is now prevalent in many Aboriginal wisdom teachings ranging from those of the Aborigine Rainbow Serpent creation story in Australia (Napaljarri & Cataldi, 1995; Thompson, n.d.) to the Native American Rainbow Medicine teachings on our continent that reinforce the White Buffalo prophecy of growing towards global harmony. (McFadden, 2001; Medicine Eagle, 1991; Moondance, 2000).

Kessler (2000) states that “the connection among souls is ultimately what education is about” (p. 159). Synchronistically, the Spring, 2002 edition of *The Global Link Newsletter*, announced that in Sudbury, Ontario, Canada, on April 29, 2002, “two hundred children from fourteen schools participated in the 2nd annual Rainbow Peacemakers Symposium” (World Peace Prayer Society, 2002). Together with a representative from the World Peace Prayer Society and Kids Can Free the Children International, Mauricio Montecinos, music teacher and Junos award nominee from Wikwemikong, an Unceded First Nation community on Manitoulin Island, helped lead a World Peace Flag ceremony. Could these children be what McFadden (2001) calls “rainbow warriors” of peace demonstrating interconnectedness on a larger human scale?

Earth connections.

The purpose of Earth Connections appears to be three-fold: to develop a sense of reverence for the sacredness of life, to experience a sense of wonder and to reawaken our senses to the Natural world. According to the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, indigenous peoples are responsible for sharing teachings about our connections to Mother Earth. Miller (1993), identifies earth connections as being at the basis of ecology and environmental education, as well as associated with indigenous peoples’ literature (p. 96).

This is not at all surprising given the First Nations focus on life and land as being sacred. (Black Elk & Lyson, 1991; Bopp, Bopp, Brown & Lane, 1985; Cajete, 1994, 1999a, 1999b, 2000; Cajete & Little Bear, 2000; Caldecott, 1993; Chief, 1997, 2002; Milne, 1994; Sams, 1990, 1993). Miller refers to this sense of sacredness revealed by Berry (1988), McLuhan (1972), and Roberts & Amidon (1991).

According to Alvord and Van Pelt (1999), earth prayers are significant in Navajo life. They speak about over three hundred songs being learned by heart by a Navajo Medicine Man as part of a *Blessing Way* ceremony. (p. 162). Songs were sung over Dr. Alvord during her pregnancy. (p. 167). In an interview, Alvord (1999) stated:

Beauty to Navajos means living in balance and harmony with yourself and the world. It means caring for yourself—mind, body and spirit—and having the right relationships with your family, your community, the animal world, the environment—earth, air, and water—our planet and universe. If a person respects and honors all these relationships, then they will be Walking in Beauty. (p. 186)

With respect to health matters, Navajo healers look at the whole person, looking for the disharmony within the self and/or imbalance in the natural world that causes illness and other “disastrous consequences.” (p. 187). Medicine Wheel teachings focus on balance.

Miller emphasizes a prime directive of Waldorf Schools to develop environmental awareness even within the school through connecting to “natural, organic processes” (p. 121). Miller (1996) explores Earth Connections in depth, maintaining that education has contributed to Earth’s destruction, removing the focus from global items. He paints the “broader picture” discussing values (virtues), human beings, consciousness, questions, conscience and wisdom. He stresses the need to re-awaken our senses to “the natural processes of life” (p. 154), pleading for environmental education integrated across the curriculum that “centres on a sense of the sacred” (1996, p. 154), respecting six principles that promote ecological literacy: (a) ultimate reference in all education to the environment; (b) self-mastery; (c) a sense of stewardship; (d) models with inclusive contexts that go beyond economic impact on communities to explore social and ecological impacts; (e) authentic examples, and (f) ownership in the learning process.

Table VIII

Miller's Earth Connections and First Nations Character Education Strategies

Miller's Earth Connections	First Nations Character Education Strategies
13. Indigenous peoples' literature	13. Transposed into Written Words: Myths, legends, plays, the Three Sisters, the Four Directions, the Six Sacred Winds petroglyphs.
14. Environmental education, deep ecology	14. Animal stories/adult role play, summits, retreats, pilgrimages to sacred power places, women's & men's wellness weekends, Star lodges.

Notes. Holistic connections and teaching-related strategies framework from Miller, J. P., 1993, p. 96. Reprinted with permission.

Holistic connections in traditional First Nations teaching strategies are examples gleaned by the author from readings and interviews.

The term *custodianship*, a Christian concept associated with principle two, reminds many Aboriginals of being wards and the power over/ power under dynamic. It does not resonate with the majority of First Nations resources and resource persons consulted. Jacobs best explains this reaction: "We are part of the Earth. The Earth is our home so we take care of it not as stewards which makes us superior, but as cohabitants." (Personal written communication, Monday, July 21, 2003).

Self connections.

Miller (2000) encourages and practices meditation. Kaufman (2001) agrees:

As I listen to the commitment of our Elders who share their thoughts and prayers with us, whether it is in a meeting or in private, I am reminded of the blessings we have received.... Therefore we should follow our hearts and use our minds to process the day's activities, as our ancestors did, for the good of all (p. 2).

Although Christianity tends to view meditation with suspicion as emphasized by Harpur (2002), and it tends to be associated with Eastern religions, it is also a long-lost Christian art. Meditation improves mental health of busy, stressed adults (Schaeff, 1995, 2000). Mind/body connections reduce stress. Meditation in a peaceful, nature setting is a daily practice for many traditional Aboriginals. Garrett (2001) quotes an unnamed Cherokee Elder's comment on meditation as an integral part of Cherokee daily life:

As the Sun sets, so does the Moon rise in the sky. While one gives us light and survival of life, the other gives us survival through darkness as we rest to meet the beginning again. This is the way of all creations in the Universal Circle. We must always remember to give thanks each day in a meditative way. It is the way to clear our minds, to heal our bodies, and to mend our hearts as we come full circle again to begin-again (p. 121).

Wesorick and Shiparkski (1997) state:

We are human beings; that is, we are beings within a BodyMind. This being is often referred to as the Spirit, the Heart, or the Soul. We innately seek quality in our life which respects our personhood, our wholeness of BodyMindSpirit... Quality exists in the balance of an integrated BodyMindSpirit. The human being cannot thrive if there is imbalance (pp.5 – 6).

Moore (1992) promotes honouring the symptoms of the voice of the Soul as well as accepting our personal responsibility to maintain our soul, discussing its care as a “fundamentally different way of regarding life and a quest for happiness” (pp.3-4). He stresses that the Soul’s care requires increased awareness of the world around us.

Miller (1993), an enthusiastic advocate of contemplation and meditation who has introduced hundreds of teachers to this way of being through his graduate courses at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, emphasizes the importance of centering the Self in a state of love and compassion: “The Self allows us to listen to ourselves and thus work with the aspects of our being that need attention” (p. 39).

Informal conversations over a period of years with all five individuals interviewed in this study led me to discover that each one daily invests some time to give thanks, to reflect and to simply *be*. According to Moore (1992), daily caring for the Soul lets:

our full genius emerge. Soul coalesces into the mysterious philosopher’s stone, that rich, solid core of personality the alchemist sought, or it opens into the peacock’s tail—a revelation of the soul’s colours and a display of its dappled brilliance (p. 305).

Moondance (2000) uses meditation for Spirit journeys. Indigenous and non-sectarian meditation techniques are beneficial in a school setting. Arnett (2001) found that the *Loving Kindness* meditation taught by Miller (1996) appears to calm second language students, relieves stress and enhances their ability to focus. (p. 126).

Table IX***Miller's Self Connections and First Nations Character Education Strategies***

Miller's Self-Connections	First Nations Character Education Strategies
15. Literature, story, and myth	15. Nature-based legends, myths, and trickster stories
16. Journal writing	16. Oral tradition slowly blending with written tradition: Wisdom keepers ie. Great Tree of Peace and Storytellers, dream journals to record process.
17. Story/The Universe Story	17. Earth-based creation myths from all tribes

Notes. Holistic connections and teaching-related strategies framework from Miller, J. P., 1993, p. 96. Reprinted with permission.

Holistic connections in traditional First Nations teaching strategies are examples gleaned by the author from readings and interviews.

During the Pow Wow event, a Sacred Fire is kept burning outside somewhere on the grounds. People go there to pray to the Creator, offering at the Sacred Fire one or a combination of the four sacred medicines: tobacco, sweet grass, sage and cedar. In Ojibway tradition Firekeepers tending the Sacred Fire, or Elders, upon receiving some tobacco, often in a small cloth prayer tie held in the left hand, generally give a teaching. Usually a sunrise ceremony is held at the Sacred Fire on the second day of a Pow Wow.

Miller (1996) identifies central values of human scale as including “individual fulfillment, community cooperation, harmony with nature, decentralization of power, and self-sufficiency” (p. 59). According to Caldecott (1993) these elements have all been interwoven into First Nations teachings for centuries following oral traditions.

Data Analysis Using J. R. Miller's Transformational, Holistic Framework

This study identified differences in terminology. It compared and contrasted worldviews between the dominant Eurocentric colonizing culture and indigenous cultures. It holistically examined First Nations perspectives on character education.

Using Miller's Framework for Holistic Connections and Teaching-Related Strategies, I placed First Nations strategies in all six categories. However one wishes to spell holistic/ wholistic, that *is* the essence of First Nations character education. It is not merely a quest for character, but as with holistic education, is a mindful quest for the Soul or Spirit in education that seeks balance, honouring all within the Web of Life. As a summary, examples of Traditional First Nations teachings strategies are provided in Appendix P, related to the framework of Miller (1996), p. 96 with permission.

Strategies I believe could be practical and acceptable for sharing First Nations teachings with students in non-Native public school settings include: (a) use of the talking stick; (b) storytelling; (c) mnemonic aids as frames of reference for teachings, (d) intertribal gatherings, and (e) kinesthetic, experiential activity. Whenever possible, First Nations speakers and performers should be invited into classrooms for direct interaction.

There are heart-to-heart teachings that are too sacred to be committed to paper and ceremonies too sacred to be photographed. According to the Good Medicine Society (1999) teachings abound on many levels to help bring a healthy balance of peace, power and right mind into one's life. Not all teachings are shared outside the group with Other, who are non-Native. There are ambivalent feelings for instance about sharing teachings of the sweat lodge. One Elder referred to the sweat lodge twice, but it was not dealt with in any detail in the interviews. I've had personal experience with the sweatlodge in a very safe environment. I've benefitted from its mindful, meaningful rituals around the Sacred Fire with speaking, singing, drumming, storytelling and honouring the four doorways.

Experiencing a sweat lodge allows participants to make many of the holistic connections of which Miller speaks, especially self connections, earth connections and body-mind connections. Voices expressed therein bring in subject connections and analytic-intuitive thinking. More than the release of toxins through the actual process of sweating, is the sense of kinship and interconnectedness created in an atmosphere of non-

judgement within the safety of the circle. There is a general feeling of wellbeing and moral strengthening. The experience of the sweat group is determined by its purpose, the participation and experience of those present. (Bruchac, 1993). Bucko (1998) states:

Knowledge of the past is valued and essential for the conduct of the sweat, but so is a sensitivity to present needs.... There is an irony here, for the past is mined in order to enliven the present. Texts do not have a final authority in Lakota thought, although they are growing in importance, abundance and availability. (p. 256)

Gloria, Elder-in-training, stated “It is good to have technology but nothing compares with face-to-face, heart-to-heart teachings” (p. 312).

Native character education is rooted in experience. There are different teachings in different Nations with some universal commonalities such as the Golden Rule of Reciprocity. This study is merely a beginning scratching the surface of the ideal of wholistic ancient First Nations Wisdoms teachings. I invite Native voices to continue the journey of sharing for the benefit of all peoples of the world—of the Medicine Wheel.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

A Challenge to Run with First Nations Character Education Knowledge

As of August, 2003, Canadian First Nations voices and worldviews remain excluded from the dominant culture Canadian character education agenda and literature. The awareness level of Other with respect to First Nations philosophies and practices regarding character education must be raised. The challenge to share Native wisdoms and strategies must be met by those courageous enough to embrace the metaphor of “run with the wolf and the horse.” Among the Lakota, the horse sits in the west and the wolf sits in the east. In Ojibway teachings the wolf is in the north. Thunderbird’s website (2002c) states of First Nations Culture “Horses and Wolves—Knowledge is Freedom. Run with it.” In 2002, I received crystal carvings of a horse and a wolf as gifts, symbols of this important message, reminding me of the urgency of sharing First Nations teachings.

Humanity could benefit from Native insights on character education. Increased awareness and recognition of what is essential to healthy, balanced mind/body/spirit connections is conducive to healing of the Sacred Hoop amongst all brothers and sisters of all colours and backgrounds on the Medicine Wheel. Wholistic First Nations virtues education offers wisdoms that could help us as a human tribe *thrive with beauty*.

Understanding First Nations character education as a quest for spirit.

First and foremost, this study established the importance of soul, primarily referred to as Spirit by First Nations peoples. (See Flaherty, 1992; Haig-Brown, Archibald, Regnier & Vermette, 1997.) According to Moore (1992) “ancient psychologists taught that our own souls are inseparable from the world’s soul, and that both are founding the many things that make up nature and culture” (p. 4). Wesorick, Shiparski, Troseth and Wyngarden (1997) advocate creating operational frameworks that enhance our soul connections, benefit from collective wisdoms and give accountability and ownership to each person on his or her life path or journey. Elders stress the importance of making a good journey, following our own path en route to Spirit world.

Answering the Questions

Having gleaned and recorded the thoughts of five First Nations interview participants, having compared their views to what appears in the literature and having examined the holistic education structure provided by Miller, I restated the challenge. I will now answer the three primary questions that guided this study.

Question One: What is the conception of *Character Education* from *First Nations* perspectives?

Answer: It is a *holistic quest* not only for character, but *for* soul or *Spirit* in an integrated, balanced inner way that stresses our interconnectedness to nature and each other, as well as our individual and collective responsibilities for working together towards peaceful living on earth and healing for our planet. It is virtues education rooted in naturalist or environmental intelligence, grounded in good relationships and developed by deep reflection on experience.

Question Two: What is their common conception of educating for character and nurturing its development?

Answer: There are many traditional First Nations approaches to character education, as was discovered in this study. A comparison of four lists of First Nations virtues in Appendix Q indicates different frames of reference, while reinforcing a crosscultural common foundation of the virtue of respect, a focus that is also shared by dominant culture character educators. First Nations character education in the traditional sense begins at the moment of conception when two Spirits join. The foetus is sung to from the womb, and both parents conduct life in a sacred, spiritual way as they are both considered to be pregnant. Ongoing, character education continues throughout one's life journey. First Nations character education does not interfere with another's path. It is guided, not directed. It is intrinsic, not extrinsic. Those guiding character development in the traditional manner are accepting, not judgmental. They are patient and loving, not harsh. First Nations character development is mindfully nurtured using a variety of wholistic techniques that respect the learner. It is virtues education that begins in the home, supported by the extended family and the community. Teachings based largely on oral tradition, often involve rituals, ceremony and celebration. Native Elders and their

teachings are valued. Hope and prayer are understood as essential to developing character and to developing a sense of self that honours the individual's identity, roots and language. Traditional First Nations character education does not involve corporal punishment. When the learner makes mistakes, considered lessons, he or she is guided to recognize errors, make atonement and engage in a healing process. Character development is the whole community's responsibility as well as that of the individual. Goals set are for individual and community benefit. Community members function like supportive members of an extended family.

Question Three: What are the relationships between *Native* conceptions of character and *non-Native* conceptions?

Answer: The foundation of *Native* conceptions of character is a common mindset rooted in a Golden Rule of Reciprocity reflected in respectful treatment of one another and Mother Earth. There is a Golden Rule of Reciprocity in all major world religions. Yet, the answer to this question is not clearcut due to multiple worldviews. Thus, the response to this question is by far the longest. Dufault (2003) states:

Like this, two people from two cultures bear one long, cylindrical stick. One person sees it as long and linear, a staff of power. Another sees its roundness, spiralling upwards and downwards, connecting earth and sky. Both people see according to how they have been taught to use their eyes and according to how they have been taught to think. Theoretical frameworks help us organize our world, relating back to how we have been taught to contemplate it (p. 23).

In *Native* conceptions of character, the child is a Spirit, a sacred gift from the Creator. Adults care for this Spirit, just as they care for Mother Earth. This is different from the Christian concept of custodianship. *Native* peoples are part of the earth, which is their home. Therefore as cohabitants, they take care of it. They do not see themselves in a superior role, but in an equal one like strands in the web of life. The child is to be gently guided and encouraged through life to learn the attitudes, virtues, skills and habits that will enable him or her to become a respectful, responsible, resourceful contributing member to society. As such, ideally the learner will become a deeply feeling, deeply thinking person with a clear sense of purpose in the context of service to the community. The goal is for the individual to develop a deep respect for life and recognize a shared responsibility for sustainable Earth-based practices that consider the long-term *seven*

generation effect of our presence on this planet rather than seek short-term profit detrimental to that long-term goal. Many traditional teachings occur in a circle.

All people are equal in the Circle of Life. The Circle is sacred. Many different holistic techniques help the learner live in balance and harmony in relation to the Self, Other and the natural world. Character education from a Native perspective is as much about nonhumans as it is about humans. It encourages contemplation and mindfulness. It encourages asking questions and seeking answers. It envisions life as a journey to be experienced with a sense of Spiritual Purpose.

Mending and rebalancing the broken hoop of relationship.

Non-Native conceptions of character have changed much over the last two centuries and in particular in the last two decades. As outlined earlier, there have been variations of five key movements in character development: religious indoctrination, moral education, values education, character education and virtues education. There are two very different key points of comparison and intersection between non-Native and Native conceptions of character at both ends of the spectrum. I will review these under the headings of *Christianizing corrosion* of the past, speaking briefly of the negative impact of the dominant culture on Native peoples. Then I will review *holistic compatability* with present day approaches in holistic and virtues education.

Christianizing corrosion.

History has born witness to the disastrous intergenerational effects of overly strict moral education at the turn of the century with the advent of Native residential schools in Canada and Indian boarding schools in the United States. Periods of staunch moral education known as religious indoctrination introduced character *miseducation* and corporal punishment to Native children. There is documented recognition of character *miseducation* of First Nations children as wards of Church and government in Canada, the USA and Australia. There are “apology” initiatives by the dominant culture. First Nations Elders are involved in a variety of settings in character rehabilitation and healing as well as in traditional proactive character education to nurture the child’s Spirit. There are movements not only to help heal negative intergenerational impact, reclaiming

language, culture and identity, but also to share Earth wisdoms with other cultures concerned with lack of character and in search of solutions outside the current realm.

Holistic compatibility.

Generally North American non-Native approaches to character education involve extrinsic motivation and outward appearance. Holistic education, with its intrinsic, inner transformation focus, is the exception that is compatible with First Nations character education. Both worldviews and approaches are earth-based. Both nurture creativity, intuition and naturalist intelligence. Both offer a sense of balance, solid roots and interconnectedness with the environment. Virtues education is compatible with holistic education. Native character education incorporates virtues and nature based, wholistic education. Thus a holistic virtues education approach in the dominant culture is quite compatible with a wholistic First Nations character education worldview.

Holistic education and First Nations character education are both quests for Soul or Spirit which honour earth-based teachings, sacredness of life and interconnectedness. Holistic education practitioners who focus on environmental intelligence are taking greater interest in Native approaches to character education as is evidenced by inclusion of First Nations articles by Jacobs in the holistic *Paths of Learning* magazine. Miller's six categories of connections (analytic-intuitive, body-mind, subject, community, earth and self) provide a ready framework for First Nations teachings strategies. A variety of strategies fit each category. I did not discover any strategies that did not fit somewhere into his theoretical framework. Since experiences are integrated, any given strategy can incorporate several of Miller's connection categories simultaneously. (See Appendix P.)

Final Thoughts on Incorporating First Nations Strategies

First Nations worldviews can and do offer insights and strategies into character education. They should be incorporated in ways that will enrich character education programs within our schools, for the intrinsic, holistic benefit of our students.

Four important considerations.

This study has raised four important considerations as by-products. This pertains to teacher qualifications, sensitivity to decolonizing methodologies, value judgements and inclusion of authentic First Nations voice.

1. Qualified teachers: Although approved Native studies courses are available, there are few confident, qualified teachers to teach them. This reduces the number of courses available. Given the minute Aboriginal population ratio (2.8%) and even smaller number of traditional Elders, there are not enough speakers to come directly into Canadian classrooms with sufficient regularity to properly support unbiased delivery of the Ontario Ministry of Education's new curriculum Native Studies programs as listed in Appendix K, or to guide integration of First Nations character development strategies into such programs or other curriculum areas such as language, art, music or drama.

2. Awareness of decolonizing methodologies: During this study, I was careful to ensure proper handling of information respecting Aboriginal perspectives. As a non-Native, or *Other*, on the *outside*, I cannot give insights from *inside* an Aboriginal perspective. I have been careful not to put my own stamp on centuries-old teachings. I have established an ad hoc system of checks and balances by regularly verifying First Nations information with two indigenous experts, both Aboriginals recognized in their fields, to eliminate misinterpretations or bias and to ensure proper sharing of information. Cognizant of the diversity of First Nations communities, I have approached First Nations character education teachings respectfully, without homogenizing Aboriginal peoples or pigeonholing Native history or culture. It would be foolhardy to generalize from these limited interview samples. Aboriginal peoples tend to speak from personal perspectives relating to personal lived experiences rather than speaking on behalf of a whole group. At best, I can be a bridge between worldviews or a window through which the dominant culture may gain some appreciation of some First Nations character education strategies.

3. Value Judgements: As a non-Native undertaking this research with Native Elders in the oral tradition and examining related literature, I have made value judgments. The eagle feather represents truth. The quill itself down the middle represents where our

perceptions of the truth meet. As Other, with eyes outside the First Nations lens, I have felt a tremendous weight of responsibility in this process: Smith (1999) explains

Researchers are in receipt of privileged information. They may interpret it within an overt theoretical framework, but also in terms of a covert ideological framework. They have the power to distort, to make invisible, to overlook, to exaggerate and to draw conclusions, based not on factual data, but on assumptions, hidden value judgments, and often downright misunderstandings. They have the potential to extend knowledge or to perpetuate ignorance (p. 176.)

As a non-Native I have taken great care through heart-to-heart interaction with First Nations Elders, reading and research, to achieve a realistic of understanding and appreciation of First Nations worldviews and contributions in the area of character education. Recent studies, discussed earlier, indicate that more people from colonizing cultures need to be aware of, sensitized to, hear and respect Aboriginal voices.

4. A Need for Aboriginal Voice: I believe that understanding and including Aboriginal perspectives in character education will not only enrich the literature, but is a life necessity for us as the *human tribe* if we are to hold any glimpse of hope of globally existing as a united people residing in harmony upon an intact Mother Earth. In this study, I provided a historical overview showing that First Nations voices, once quieted, are now being deemed by many American and Canadian European colonialists as worthy of being heard.

Across North America, school boards and educators are turning to character education, under new labels, as a viable solution to address increasing levels of violence and decreasing academic performance. Newspapers are filled with accounts of delinquent behaviour, dysfunctional families and lack of success at school and in the workforce. We must go far beyond band-aid solutions to superficial symptoms of today's social ills if we wish to weed out their root causes. We must listen attentively to understand what gets people to such deep, dark places that they feel there is no relief. We must find proactive ways to curb incidents that provoke violent outbursts and delinquent behaviour in our society. Justin Trudeau (2001b) stated "Numbers don't work. We need people with souls, character that can change the world. The only people who can create a new level of thinking for society are teachers." I would add that Native Elders are invaluable teachers.

A gap analysis of limitations.

During this study, I have successfully analyzed prevalent character education research literature and resources; surveyed First Nations literature to determine the presence of a focus on positive character development; recorded and interpreted interviews with four First Nations Elders and one Aboriginal author residing within Ontario; provided First Nations voices as primary data in Appendices D to H and organized overall data using the holistic framework of Dr. John P. Miller.

This thesis process has brought seven additional points to my attention:

1. The Canadian population at large has little knowledge of First Nations people and philosophies.
2. Despite current and historic existence of positive character role models amongst First Nations people, Canadians are largely ignorant of important roles they have played in Canadian history.
3. Few Canadians have previously encountered First Nations people.
4. Even fewer have been exposed to traditional First Nations teachings.
5. There is currently no recognized Canadian First Nations expert in the area of character education, although expertise abounds in this area.
6. There is a need for Other to honour and incorporate First Nations research done by different First Nations groups in order to better understand their shared, wholistic, traditional Earth-based worldview.
7. All researchers must establish a reliable system of checks and balances to ensure that information about First Nations worldviews in the area of character education are learned and shared in an objective, unromanticized manner free from stereotypes and bias.

First Nations character education is a large field of discovery needing further exploration. In this thesis, I have only begun to scratch the surface of possible strategies. This area, relatively new to colonizing cultures, merits further study. Some First Nations techniques lend themselves more readily than others for use with Non-natives in public school systems. There is a general consensus amongst First Nations peoples that the time has come to share some, but not all teachings and techniques with Other (non-Natives).

First Nations character education as a quest for spirit.

This thesis journey, exploring possibilities between First Nations teachings and character education has resulted in much personal growth for me. This *quest for knowledge* has taught me the importance of mindful, sustainable living, balance and respect. I appreciate the teachings of *Be! Do! Have!* and of the meditative, sacred *breath* to nurture the inner Spirit around which character is built and from which the individual reaches out into the world. In a sense I have found my own Spirit. I am relearning how to breathe and how to laugh that deep belly laugh we have as children.

This long thesis journey began as a *quest for character* and evolved on *Native Time* over a two-year period. An unexpected benefit for me has been developing more patience with others and myself. I was given the time I needed to properly gestate ideas. I now understand some shared roots of traditional First Nations teachings that guide the individual's character development as an integral part of the lifelong wholistic *quest for the evolution of Spirit* (called *Soul* in holistic education). Kaufman (2001) states "When we practice these good teachings and allow things to happen in their own time, sound decisions are made" (p. 2). Traditional First Nations character education involves strategies and processes that allow each learner to evolve at a personal pace, while acknowledging our individual paths and interconnectedness within the Web of Life.

This study offers an introductory forum for voice of First Nations peoples of Canada, voices conspicuously absent from the official research literature despite a wealth of indigenous wisdom. I invite more First Nations peoples to come forward to share their positive character education teachings with our students. Like Baldwin (1998), I invite non-Native teachers and students into the Circle to learn about the Original Peoples of this country. Having taken an hourglass look at life, I choose peace and balance. If that means *walking in beauty* on the *Red Road*, I'm prepared to buy a good pair of moccasins. The traveler metaphor now comes full circle. One journey ends. Another begins...

An Hourglass Look At Life

INSPIRATION

A feather floating
 In Light and Space
 Fulfillment—Spirit spiraling upward
 Thrive—**Proact**—Faith
 Change as Opportunity
 Shared Vision
 Reality of Unity
 Connected
 Purposefully Thriving
Power With

 CHOICE/
 FREE WILL

Power Over/ Power Under

Giving away my “thunder”
 Fragmented
 Illusion of Isolation
 Change as Obstacle
 Survive—**React**—Fear
 Unconscious addiction to victimization
 Silent martyr, my hope rapidly spiralling downward
 A heavy stone, I sink into the darkness and the void...

DESPERATION

Life is about choice.
 To be or not to be is a choice.
 To do or not to do is a choice.
 To have or not to have is a choice.
 I choose to follow the teachings of the *Medicine Wheel*
 And to walk the *Good Red Road*, one step at a time
 Even though for me it's not easy.
 I choose to think good thoughts
 And to manifest good deeds daily.
 Truly living is deeply loving.
 I choose to love myself so I can love others.
 I choose to seek harmony within the Self, with Humankind and Mother Earth.
 What do you choose?

Yvonne G. Dufault
 March, 2001

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Appendix A: A Glossary of Terms

First Nations Vocabulary

Aboriginal: (noun or adjective) This term refers to the real, **original people** described as “*Anishnabek*” or “*Anishnaabec*” in Ojibway or the “*Ohkehonwe*” in Mohawk. They are often called “**First Nations**” in Canada as they were here first. Synonyms are **Aboriginal, indigenous** and **Native**. A legal term in Canada used with respect to treaty documents, etc., that is not currently “politically correct” but is widely used is **Indian**. Indian really refers to Indian peoples from India. In fact, as Aboriginal Elders have pointed out, the early explorers were seeking a trade route shortcut to India. They were mistakenly labelled *Indian* by colonialist, Christopher Columbus, in 1492. Looking for a shortcut to the orient, he believed he had reached the country of India when he had really encountered this New World, The Americas (Alfred, T., 1999, p. xv). The Canadian Constitution defines these of Indigenous People: **Métis, Status Indians, Non-Status Indians** and **Inuit**. **The Innu** are Native people who reside in Labrador; they should not be confused with the Inuit of Nunuvut. Innu should be added to the list, insists Nokomis, one of the Elders interviewed for this study, as they are often confused with the Inuit. Aboriginal peoples have different identities and live different realities, but there are commonalities in traditional worldviews.

Aborigine: **1** an Aboriginal inhabitant. **2** an Aboriginal inhabitant of Australia. **3** an Aboriginal plant or animal (Barber, 1998, p. 4). Sometimes this term which refers specifically to the indigenous people particular to Australia and who are known for the concept of the *dreamtime* (Voigt, Drury & Nevill, 1998) is confused with Aboriginal which is a larger term to describe original peoples indigenous to an area.

Aboriginal World View: is a traditional indigenous Worldview of universal reciprocity and respect for earth connections which is common to all aboriginal groups. See **Web of Life** and **World View**.

All my Relations: is an expression that honours all life, emphasizing our interconnectness with all that exists within the Web of Life.

The Beauty Way: “A way of life that reflects Right Relations between all parts of Creation.” (Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies & Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2002b, p. 283.) It is another expression for walking the **good red road**. There are many songs and chants amongst aboriginal groups which focus on **Walking in Beauty**. An example is the Navaho chant.

We now come to the Beauty Path, the path of right action, of good relationship, of clear intention... The Beauty Path, the Great Peace, is the meeting of ourselves, the perception of our minds and the cessation of those waves and thought forms that create discord. Let us sow the seed of peace in all our actions, thoughts and words. Let us renew the sacred hoop. (Ywahoo, 1987, pp. 77, 109)

CAT-FAWN Connection: CAT stands for Concentration Activated Transformation. FAWN reminds us of four major forces most responsible for creating concentrative states that lead to deep learning. It stands for Fear, Authority, Words, and Nature. Our awareness of and beliefs about these forces determines whether the learning experience is constructive or destructive in our lives (Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer, 2001, p. 7).

Cedar: Leaves from the cedar tree are considered to be one of the four sacred medicines. Cedar leaves make an excellent cedar tea. They are high in vitamin C. Along with tobacco, sage and sweetgrass, cedar is often burned at the Sacred Fire where one goes to make one's prayers.

Centered: balanced, focused and at peace

Circle: Represents complete harmony and balance. People meet in circles for two basic purposes, either to share information within the circle and keep it within the Circle (talking and healing) or to come to consensus and/or disseminate information (sharing and teaching). The process within the Circle is what is important. There is no ethics committee but there is a code of ethics that is shared and understood amongst participants in the Circle (Restoule, 2001). The **power of the circle** is recognized by Black Elk in this renowned quote:

for the circle helps us to remember **Wakan-Tanka** (The Great Spirit, The Great Mystery, the Native concept of God), who, like the circle, has no end. There is much power in the circle, as I have often said: the birds know this for they fly in a circle and build their homes in the form of a circle, this the coyote also know, for they live in round holes in the ground. (Brown, 1989, p. 92)

Circles and spirals: There are many depicted versions of this symbol, and it also has many meanings ranging from: a reference to the Cowrie shell that suggested a long life was to be had; good medicine; an individual has spiritual power; national unity (Public District School Board Writing Partnership, 2000, Appendix K).

Clan: (noun) **1** the basic social and political organization of many Aboriginal societies, consisting of a number of related groups and families, often sharing a common symbol or totem. (Barber, 1998, p. 262) Animals associated with various clans amongst the five hundred First Nations groups across North America, such as the Bear, the Wolf, the Eagle, and the Deer are situated on the Medicine wheel. Clan names are not to be confused with *skin* names of the aborigines. The identification and lineage systems work differently. Aboriginal clans follow matrilineal blood heritage.

The Thirteen Original Clanmothers: The Medicine Wheel of the Thirteen Clanmothers is involved in a healing quest. Their teachings are described as ancient star nations teachings leading to peace. Their story is an **oral tradition** that has been passed down through the centuries. There are twelve clanmothers placed around the medicine wheel representing the twelve months of the year. Starting with January, these clanmothers are known as *Talks with Relations*, *Wisdom Keeper*, *Weighs the Truth*, *Looks Far Woman*, *Listening Woman*, *Storyteller*, *Loves all Things*, *She Who Heals*, *Setting Sun Woman*, *Weaves the Web*, *Walks Tall Woman* and *Gives Praise*. The thirteenth Clanmother located in the center of the Medicine Wheel is known as *Becomes Her Vision* (Sams, 1993). There has been increasing talk of the teachings the Clanmothers in many gatherings amongst different groups of Aboriginals over the last few years.

Creator: God, Manitou (in Ojibway), Wonkantonka (in Lakota), The Great Mystery, The Great Spirit.

Dreamcatcher: In Ojibwe tradition, this is a good luck charm to ward off bad dreams, made in the shape of a hoop from willow inside which is woven a spider-like web using deer sinew or coloured thread. A hole is intentionally left in the middle of the web and at least one bead is connected into the web. Dreamcatchers have myths and a history. There are many creative variations of this craft (Gottlieb, 1999).

Dreamer's Rock: This is a sacred rock located near Manitoulin Island on Birch Island, Ontario, Canada where Aboriginals hold special ceremonies and still go on Vision Quests after obtaining permission must be obtained from the Band Council. It is also a site of special spiritual gatherings. Objibwe playwright Drew Hayden Taylor wrote a play about a Vision Quest entitled *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock*. In Ojibway, the word **Toronto** means *the meeting place*. Taylor's play has drawn much attention to this sacred site.

Drum: Usually made from a hide stretched over a frame, the drum, appearing in many different forms, the drum is a percussion instrument sacred to indigenous peoples. The drum is described by Natives as the "heartbeat of Mother Earth." In Earth-based traditions, the act of drumming connects people to her heartbeat. It is said that the drum was created and given to the men by the women to help the men be more connected to Mother Earth. At Pow Wows in Ontario, Canada, the big drums are played only by men. Women play the hand drums. Women hold drumming circles.

Eagle: Like its South American cousin, the Condor, the Eagle is the most sacred bird to most Native peoples. The Eagle is perceived as the bird that flies the highest, carrying prayers to the Creator. The Eagle is the bird that flies the highest carrying, like the sacred smoke of smudge, our prayers to the Creator. Eagle brings us messages, teachings and information from the Creator. Shannon Thunderbird describes his role as being like a "feathered Internet Service provider." (personal communication, April 12, 2003.) It is a time to examine universal, holistic truths for the sake of our children.

Eagle Feather: It represents **truth** and **goodness**. If you speak holding an Eagle feather in your hand, you are expected to speak truth and talk from the heart with the same high level of integrity and reverence expected from a Christian swearing on the Holy Bible. One who holds it must speak in truth. My perception of the truth may be the hairs to the left. Another perception of the truth may be the hairs to the right. The Eagle Feather represents the Warrior in a good way. An eagle feather that is accidentally dropped during a Pow Wow is called a wounded warrior. It could represent a veteran who gave his life for the people. A special ceremony is required at the spot where it fell, to retrieve it. The Eagle Feather is considered a very sacred object. On Turtle Island, it can neither be bought, nor sold. An Elder presents an Eagle feather to a person in recognition of

character and good deeds or for personal healing. Eagle feathers may be used as prayer feathers, smudging feathers and/or part one one's regalia.

Eagle Staff: It is a staff often made of animal parts, which may include skin, fur antlers and wood. This staff holds Eagle feathers. To receive an Eagle staff is a special honour reserved mainly for Elders and war veterans who are Aboriginals. Eagle staffs are always carried in first at Pow Wows Grand Entry during the Honour Song (Hager, 1996). To be the keeper of an Eagle staff is a great moral responsibility, as its keeper is understood to respect **The Seven Grandfather Teachings**.

Elders: (noun) This term is not to be confused with the non-Native term *elders* which simply refers to those who are older than you. Amongst Aboriginals, Elders are wise men and women of various ages who have acquired the necessary wisdom to guide others in their spiritual development in a good way.

The Far North: Land in Northern Canada, generally above the tree line, where Innu and Inuit communities live. This area of snow and ice stretches up to the North Pole.

Fast: (verb and noun) abstain from all or some kinds of food or drink, especially as a religious observance or in preparation for medical tests, surgery etc. (Barber, 1998, p. 1372). Generally, those on a **Vision Quest** will fast unless there are health issues.

Four Corners: This is considered to be a Sacred, high-energy place in Central United States. This is where Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico meet. This is the location of the sacred rock on which Hopi Prophecies are depicted.

A Good Mind: This expression appears to have originated within the original Five Nations of the Iroquois. A Good Mind displays clarity of thought, honorable intent and focuses on balancing power, peace and righteousness. Developing a Good Mind is a key focus of an aboriginal organization known as **the Good Medicine Society**.

The Good Medicine Society: This is a non-profit Native organization at <http://www.goodmedicinesociety.com> founded by Métis Eli Gatoga which focuses on connectedness, developing and promoting health of mind, body and spirit. It is a correspondance school based in the United States, which teaches a Philosophy of Good

Medicine and holistic medicine which is common to most traditional Indian medicine societies and which is accessible not only through correspondence, but also online using the Internet. The teachings have been made available at no cost to incarcerated First Nations peoples.

The Good Red Road: is a way of life among Native peoples that is one of balance and continuity (Brant, 1994, p. 10). It involves living one's life in a good, truthful, respectful, mindful, harmonious manner. Robbie Robertson and the Red Road Ensemble promote Good Red Road teachings through their music created for The Native Americans.

The Great Peace (*Kayánerénhkowa*) in Iroquois, was established by Deganawidah of Five Nations at Onondaga by the Iroquois Confederacy in the late sixteen hundreds. The Peace (the Law) was righteousness in action, the practice of justice between individuals and nations.... Peace was a way of life characterized by wisdom and graciousness. The root word, which, in various combinations, is used to express *peace* in the Iroquois tongue, is the same as that used to *noble* and *the Lord* in the translations of the Bible. Peace was to their mind nobility, the Great Good (Wallace, 1997, pp. 34). Teachings on **The Great Peace** are available on CD Rom from <http://www.GoodMinds.com> at Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario.

Indian: (adjective, noun) Although many Aboriginals prefer not to use this term, note that it is a legal term in Canadian law which is used in the **Indian Act of 1876**. Many Aboriginals believe that the 1969 White Paper, which was not implemented, but is referred to as the “red paper” amongst some Aboriginal groups, was the defining moment in determining Aboriginal groups in Canada. However, it seems that the **Constitution Act of 1982**, which included a clause on Aboriginal people defined as **Indians, Inuit** and **Métis**, was a more key document. The term **Innu** referring to a Labrador Indian tribe often confused with the Inuit, is not included in this document, nor is it included in the *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* profile of the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics Profile series published in June 2001. To quote Andy Siggner, Senior Advisor on Aboriginal Statistics for Statistics Canada:

Even these terms are **not very precise** as there is no distinction between status Indians as recognized according to the Indian Act and non-Status Indians, not

recognized according to the Indian Act. There is no definition of who is Metis either in the 1982 Act. Yet, of course, Indian or First Nations and Inuit people have been here forever and the Metis emerged after European contact. (Siggnar, personal e-mail communication, July 25, 2002)

Lame Deer, John Fire: Full-Blooded Sioux and Lakota Holy Man, Seeker of Visions, born in early 1900's on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota. He had been a rodeo-clown, prisoner, painter and former student at an American Indian Boarding School. Playwright Drew Hayden Taylor compares John Fire Lame Deer to Nietzsche who was born in 1844.

Manitoulin Island: Island of the God(s) is the English translation of this island located in Central Ontario. Holding the largest tract of unceded land in Ontario, it is bordered by Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. Here live the nations or tribes of the **Council of Three Fires**—the Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi. There is a growing belief that this island is in the process of becoming a place for healing. The fact that Aboriginals and non-Natives from counties all over the world have come here for international peace gatherings and Pow Wows within the last decade appears to confirm this belief.

Maori: (noun and adjective) **1** a member of the Polynesian aboriginal people of New Zealand. **2** the language of the Maori (adjective) of or concerning the Maori and their language (Barber, 1998, p. 880). The Maori people have demonstrated strong voices in indigenous education and are rising as world leaders in indigenous voice. An example is Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Director of the *International Research Institute for Maori and Indigenous Education* of Auckland University.

Medicine (noun) **4** (attribute) (In Aboriginal societies,) used to designate the healing power that may reside in physical objects or in the knowledge and techniques of healing rites (Barber, 1998, p. 500).

Medicine Wheel (noun): a wheel-shaped arrangement of stones at which acts of ritual and meditation were or are performed by certain Aboriginal peoples, located at various places throughout North America (Barber, 1998, p. 500). It is a Sacred Circle, representing the **Cycle of Life** and the Sacred Hoop. For thousands of years, the

Medicine Wheel has been of central use by the Aboriginals of North and South America. It is used by the Elders to pass on the teachings of the Grandfathers and the Grandmothers. The Medicine Wheel teaches us the four directions—The Four Grandfathers—Mishoomsag, who are the Spiritual Guardians of the Four Directions. The Anishnaabec people receive spiritual and physical strength from the Grandfathers—Mishoomsag.... The Medicine Wheel also holds the Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers (Handout from the Ojibwe Culture Foundation, P.O. Box 278, M'Chigeeng First Nation, Ontario, POP 1GO). The Medicine Wheel appears to be a significant **universal symbol of balance** to hundreds of First Nations peoples. It is the structure around which many teachings and instruction in First Nations schools are built. The **colours** represented on the Medicine wheel for the Ojibway are yellow in the east, red in the south, black in the west and white in the north. These seemingly universal colours to represent the four races are also present in African and Australian Aborigine traditions.

According to Elders from the Plains Tribes, black is in the south (Africa) and red is in the west (North America). There is a Medicine wheel that has green and blue colours for earth and sky. Depending on the worldview of a given aboriginal group and physical realities of the geographic areas in which that group lives, there may be some variation as to colours choice and placement. For instance, in the Far North in Greenland, the land of snow, it is logical to place red in the west for the setting sun. White is still in the north, yellow is in the east and black is in the south. There are tribes like Tsimshian First Nations that do not have a Medicine Wheel as part of their own teachings.

Meegwetch: is *Thank you* in Ojibway. **Chi meegwetch** is *Thank you very much*.

Mother Earth: is to Father Sky as Grandfather Sun is to Grandfather Moon, part of *All Our Relations*. Indigenous peoples refer to the Earth as their “mother” who nurtures and sustains life.

Nanabush: Some native legends refer to a trickster/ shape shifter spirit called Nanabush. In their petroglyph handout, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources of describes the petroglyph drawing of Nanabush at Petroglyphs Provincial Park as follows:

This is believed to be a carving of Nanabush in its rabbit form. Nanabush has the ability to transform itself into anything it wants to be however it has to accept the

limitations of that particular form. Nanabush also likes to play tricks on people and animals and is the spirit who taught some people how to hunt and fish. (Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, n.d.)

Non-Native: (adjective, noun) This imprecise term refers to those of us who are not Native, who are not the original peoples of this land and who have come to North America in the last four to five hundred years. Consider those of us who are not Aboriginals but who are born in Canada, whether our origins are in Europe, Asia, Africa or elsewhere. We are native-born Canadians. However, we are not Native Canadians. In comparison to Natives whose ancestors have been on this continent for at least ten thousand years, we are recently-arrived immigrants. I would assert that most of us are ignorant of the issues and perspectives of Aboriginals. Few of us have formerly met a Native person. Non-Native Canadians are generally raised according to the social moors of the dominant patriarchal colonizing culture.

Ojibwa/Ojibewa/Ojibwe/Ojibway: (noun and adjective) 1 a member of an Algonquian people living especially around Lake Superior and certain adjacent areas. 2 the Algonquian language of this people. (adjective) of or relating to the Ojibwa or their language (Ojibwa, from a root meaning *puckered*, with reference to their moccasins) (Barber, 1998, p. 1011). Of the 600 First Nations recognized in Canada, over 130 are at least partly Ojibwe (Sultzman, 2000). There are about ten different ways of spelling Ojibwe. When referring to the language, the Ministry uses **Ojibwe** and when referring to the people, it uses **Ojibway** (Keith Lickers, Dept. of Indian Affairs, personal e-mail communication, July 30, 2002).

Oral Tradition: Stories and teachings are spoken and committed to memory rather than written. In this tradition, a verbal commitment is as binding as a written one. The oral history, laws such as The Great Law and the speech of Chief Seattle and treaties as agreed upon orally were committed to memory by trained wisdom keepers who memorized the words, ensured that the words were learned by others and passed on through succeeding generations.

Orenda: (noun, word from the Seneca language) This is the spiritual essence of creative principle called the **Eternal Flame of Love** that is found inside all life forms. There is

only one Original Source and we call that Creative Source, the Great Mystery (Sams, 1993, p. ix). In the traditions of Saint Germaine, we refer to the orenda as the *violet flame*.

Petroglyphs: (noun) a rock carving, especially a prehistoric one (Barber, 1998, p. 1088). There are petroglyphs near Peterborough, Ontario.

Peace Pipe: (noun) **Calumet** A North American Aboriginal tobacco pipe with a clay bowl and long reed stem smoked specially as a sign of peace. (French, ultimately from Latin *calamus* reed) (Barber, 1998, pp. 1069, 203).

Pipe Carrier: (noun) An Aboriginal person entrusted with the sacred responsibility of being a keeper of the Peace Pipe and a carrier of its teachings.

Potlatch: (noun) (among some aboriginal peoples of the Pacific Coast of North America) a ceremonial giving away or destruction of property to enhance status (Barber, 1998, p. 1134). In 1884, potlatches and spirit dancing, an important part of potlatch ceremonies, were banned by the Canadian government and made **illegal**. Potlatches did not involve destruction of property. They involved an elaborate form of *give-away* or gift-giving. Potlatches were much misunderstood and feared by Canadian government. Potlatches did enhance status of the givers but they also ensured that material goods were more evenly distributed across Native communities so that all basic needs were met. A wealthy person was one who shared (Shiell, 1990, p. 62). Generosity is considered to be one of highest forms of courage amongst Aboriginals.

Pow Wow: (noun and verb) **1a** a cultural gathering among some North American Aboriginal Peoples, with dancing, music, eating, etc. **2** a conference or meeting for discussion (verb transitive) hold a powwow (Barber, 1998, p. 1137). Native people spell *Pow Wow* as two separate words. There was a point in Canadian history where powwows were **illegal**. A Pow Wow is a gathering that welcomes all people of all races. It begins with a Grand Entry and honour songs such as Flag Songs and Veteran Songs at the conclusion of which the Eagle staffs are posted. This is a sacred procession during which photos cannot be taken. There are traditional songs as well as intertribal songs. Dancers become part of the sacred circle as they dance around the circle. Drummers play large

drums in the centre of the circle, usually under an arbor. This is an English word like the French word *arbre*. In this context, an arbor refers to a shaded area generally constructed of poles and covered with a roof of cedar branches. It provides the drummers with shade from the sun as they drum during Pow Wows. These gatherings may last a number of days. There are rules of Pow Wow etiquette that must be observed out of respect. There are two kinds of Pow Wows: **Traditional Pow Wows** where people come together to honour the Creator and celebrate all their relations and **competition Pow Wows** where dancers display their skills, competing for big purses. Both types of Pow Wows have intertribal dances wherein people from all races are welcomed to join in the dancing. Native crafts are usually sold at Pow Wows.

Rainbow Medicine: These teachings for all people, involve **mindful** use of all the colours of the rainbow. They focus on achieving **peace, unity, wholeness and joy**. Rainbow Medicine specifically involves the coming together of all races of many different backgrounds with the shared purpose of living **in harmony with Nature's Laws** and in **non-judgement** of one another while **striving for Spiritual Progress** up the spiral on their Earth Walk. Three key teachers and authors of Rainbow Medicine are Wolf Moondance (2000) and Brooke Medicine Eagle. Information is easily accessed on the WWW. Refer to Appendix L.

Rainbow Serpent: Australian Aboriginal Creation Story. (Thompson, n.d.) There appear to be connections with this story and other indigenous creation stories such as the story of the Feathered Serpent of the Maya of South America. (See Appendix N.)

Rainbow Warriors/ Warriors of the Rainbow: according to a Cree prophecy, these are brothers and sisters of the Global human family, uniting the Fifth World at this time in history to promote peace. They are connected to the White Buffalo Prophecy of peace.). Steelman & Sharp (1999) use music as the media to teach about Rainbow Warriors.

Rain dance: is a ceremony, marked by dancing, honouring Mother Earth. Its purpose is not always to bring rain. This term is not available in the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* (Barber, 1998).

Regalia: This is special clothing with symbolic spiritual meanings that dancers and veterans wear at ceremonies, Pow Wows and other important social events. Regalia indicates what types of dance one does. For example, there are Fancy Dancers, Jingle Dress Dancers and Grass Dancers. Regalia also includes symbols of one's totems, clan and aboriginal group of origin. It is an insult to refer to regalia as "costumes."

Reservation/Reserve: 5 (in Canada) an area of land set aside for the use of a specific group of aboriginal people (Barber, 1998, p. 1226). Aboriginals often refer to this tract of land as *the rez* (Maracle, 1996). Such shared land is generally managed by the band council.

Residential School: (noun) **especially Canadian.** A boarding school operated or subsidized by religious orders or the federal government to accommodate Aboriginal and Inuit students (Barber, 1998, p. 1227). The apparent purpose of these schools was to provide a Christian education while assimilating aboriginals into the dominant culture. Residential schools have had a myriad of powerful effects, many of them negative, stripping students of their identity, language and culture and affecting the quality of life of several generations. This is as true of the experiences of the Australian Aborigines as it is for Canada's First Nations peoples. Find further details at <http://www.canada.justice.gc.ca/en/justice2000/cyb00abor.html>. **American** Indian boarding schools are at <http://content.lib.washington.edu/aipnw/marr/marr.html>. See <http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/special/rsjproject/rsjlibrary/hreoc/stolen/> also to appreciate the impact of the removal of **Australian** aborigines from their families and subsequent placement in institutions. All three countries share a "**Sorry!**" movement to apologize to the aboriginal peoples.

Rite of Passage: (noun) (often in plural form) a ritual or event marking a stage of a person's advance through life, e.g. marriage (Barber, 1998, p. 1244). For example, a young boy may go on a Vision Quest as part of a rite of passage. When a girl has her first Moontime (menstrual bleeding), there is a celebration as part of the rite of passage honoring the girl becoming a woman capable of being a *giver of life*.

Ritual: (noun and adjective) **1** a prescribed order of performing rites. **2** a procedure regularly followed (Barber, 1998, p. 1244). For example, the Eagle bone whistle is worn and blown by a dancer during the Sundance ritual.

The Four Sacred Directions: **North** (Wolf, Mind), **East** (Eagle, Spirit), **South** (Buffalo, Deer, Emotions), **West** (Bear, Physical). These sacred directions, which are honoured in prayer, are also used on the Medicine Wheel to give teachings about the cycles of life. Animal helpers and sacred medicines are also associated with these four directions. There is some variation according to tribe. The Eagle however is always in the East and the bear is always in the West. Three additional directions that are honoured when speaking of the seven directions or seven sacred wings are **above**, **below** and in the **centre of the heart**.

The Four Sacred Medicines: cedar, sage, sweetgrass, tobacco. Various properties are attributed to the sacred medicines. Each has a place on the Medicine Wheel.

The Six Sacred Winds: above, below, east, west, north, south.

The Four Stages of Life: These are the teachings from the time of birth to the time of death. These four stages are represented by the four directions which are as follows: (East - Spiritual) **birth** from Spirit World **to child**, (South - Emotional) **adolescent**, (West - Physical) **young adult**, (North - Intellectual) **mature adult** ready to return to the Spirit World and preparing for physical **death**/rebirth. These life stages are understood using the Medicine Wheel teachings.

The Sacred Fire: Wherever there is a Pow Wow, there is a Sacred Fire where people can go to offer their prayers, giving at least one of the Sacred Medicines as part of the prayer offering. The Sacred Fire is a powerful symbol connected to hope, peace, and balance—to the positive transformation of the Spirit.

The Sacred Hoop: This is a prominent symbol amongst the First Nations peoples of Turtle Island (North America). “Together, by tracing our roots to the Great Tree of Peace, we make whole the sacred hoop, and the sacred fire will be alight in every heart again” (Ywahoo, 1987, p. 79). The **Hoop Dancer** is the illustration on the cover of Jacobs and

Jacobs' *Teaching Virtues: Building Character Across the Curriculum* for symbolizing **virtues** and the **hoop of relationship** (Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer, 2001).

The Sacred Pipe: This is entrusted to a worthy Pipe Carrier who will use it in a respectful, prayerful, soulful manner. Each part of the pipe (space, stem, bowl, tobacco offering) has symbolic meaning emphasizing one's overall **connectedness to the universe**. There is special ritual involved in the smoking of the pipe. It is used in seven different rites by the Oglala Sioux (Brown, 1989, p. 21).

Sage: Sage is a plant often grows high in the mountains and is considered to be one of the four sacred medicines. In the Aboriginal context this does not signify a venerable wise man or an herb for cooking. Like sweetgrass, it is burned, often in an abalone shell, and used for smudging as a form of symbolic, spiritual cleansing. Sage has a strong, pungent but pleasant smell.

The Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers: These teachings are *Nbwaakaawin*, Wisdom; *Zaadigwin*, Love; *Mnaadedmowin*, Respect; *Aakdehewin*, Bravery; *Gwekwaadziwin*, Honesty; *Dbaadendizin*, Humility; and *Debwewin*, Truth. (Handout from the Ojibwe Culture Foundation, P.O. Box 278, M'Chigeeng First Nation, Ontario, POP 1GO) (n.d.).

Six Nations: This includes the Five Nations of the Iroquois—the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca who were united politically and socially in a Great League of Peace around 1653. The Five Nations were joined much later by the Tuscarora (Dennis, 1993, pp. 6 – 7, 199). There is a Six Nations reserve in Ohsweken near Brantford, Ontario.

Smudge Pot: (noun) a container holding burning material that produces smudge (Barber, 1998, p. 1372). The definition does not suffice to cover the First Nations concept of smudging. The four Sacred Medicines are burned individually or in various combinations in a smudge pot . This pot is usually made of a simple abalone shell. Smudge pots are also made of carved stone or even some forms of hard wood. A smudge pot can be quite simple or very ornate.

Smudge: Smudge is to an Aboriginal similar to what frankincense (*franc ensens* meaning *pure incense* in French) is to me as a Roman Catholic. When burned in a smudge pot, the Sacred Medicines serve as a sort of incense—representing purity of intent, thought and heart—symbolically honouring good intent and calling in good energy, good direction and protection. *Smudge* as understood by Aboriginals, does not at all have European connotation of dirty soot or ashes.

Smudging: (noun and verb). This is the ritual act of symbolically and spiritually cleansing oneself, one's sacred objects and or a room. The person(s) doing the smudging ask for only good spirits to come to guide them, for the Creator's protection and for blessings for an individual or a group coming together in circle in a good way. Smudging can be done in a Sweetgrass Ceremony. Smudging involves prayer and is done prior to important events. One or a combination of the four Sacred Medicines may be used for smudging. The Aztecs used copalli or copal as incense. Copal has made its way into Canada for smudging also. Sometimes a tiny nugget of copal, a fossilized tropical tree resin from Mexico is used for smudging. When used to mark grandfather rocks in sweats, copal gives off a nice blue glow in the dark as well as a delightful fragrance. Often a feather is used for smudging along with a smudge pot in which the materials are burned. The smudging feather helps to direct the smoke rising from the smudge pot. Sometimes a burning strand of braided sweetgrass will be used for smudging instead of smudge from a smudge pot.

Storytelling: This is an oral tradition for passing on teachings. **Oracy.** The art of storytelling that transmits knowledge, values, and beliefs within Aboriginal cultures. Four basic types of stories are described in this Glossary of Terms: ***Story of the unknown.*** This is a reference to stories that often contain elements of truth and are told late at night to children. Mention of these night stories often elicits appropriate behaviour in children. ***Personal narrative:*** This story type focuses upon local folk heroes of great accomplishments, providing listeners with role models and characteristics that might be emulated. ***Creation story.*** These stories tell how the Creator placed various Aboriginal nations on the earth to live. The stories portray a balance of physical, emotional, and spiritual forces and represent all there is to know in the world view of Aboriginal peoples.

Creative Dreaming. The ability to plan and manipulate the content of dreams to promote learning and personal insight. Most traditional Aboriginal peoples in Canada value dreams and the knowledge derived from them (Public District School Board Writing Partnership, 2000, p. ix).

Sun Dance: (noun) an annual ceremony held at midsummer by some Plains Aboriginal peoples, marked by several days of fasting, dancing, and induced visions (Barber, 1998, p. 1453). The dictionary doesn't tell you that the Sun Dance, usually held during the summer Solstice is a painful ordeal of self sacrifice historically performed by the men as shown at <http://www.bnr-art.com/terpning/sundance.htm>. Some Native women are now also choosing to perform the Sun Dance. Given that, unlike men, women experience the pain of childbirth, it is not considered necessary for women to perform the Sun Dance.

Sweat Lodge: More sacrament than recreation, the sweat lodge is strongly associated with prayer and preparation. The entrance to any traditional sweat lodge is always in the East, which is the direction from which the Eagle comes. Inipi-type sweats are structures shaped like half-globes over which hides, cloth or canvas is stretched over a frame.

[There] are not only many varieties of the inipi-type sweats, there are at least three major sweat structures: the lodge into which stones are brought in and water is poured on them; the lodge in which no water is used and the central fire is made in the lodge (which is often used as a dwelling place as well as for sweats), and the Mayan and Aztec method of using a duct to convey the heat from a fire into a stone or clay sweat house. (Bruchac, 1993, pp. 6 – 7)

Sweetgrass: This is one of the four sacred medicines. Sweetgrass is a grass that is particularly good-smelling but not generally consumed by grass-eating animals. Native people call it “the hair of Mother Earth.” Sweetgrass is dried and braided. The braiding is to remind us that when mind, body and Spirit are intertwined they are strong. Sweetgrass can be used for craftmaking. Like sage, it is regularly used for smudging.

Talking Stick: This is generally a narrow hand-held object, mindfully painted or wrapped in leather and decorated with one or two feathers dangling from one end on a leather cord. It is passed around in the Circle. The person who is holding the talking stick speaks while others listen without interrupting. When that person is finished speaking,

he/she passes the stick on to the next person. Talking sticks can be used instead of an Eagle feather in a sharing circle.

Teachings: (noun) **2** what is taught, a doctrine (Barber, 1998, p. 1488). The Seven Grandfather Teachings referred to earlier in the Medicine Wheel definition deal with Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth. These teachings cut across many aboriginal cultures.

Trickster: (noun) 1. a person who enjoys playing practical jokes on others; a joker (Barber, 1998, p. 1549). This character appears in Native stories as having an exaggerated character flaw. The humour in the portrayal of the character helps to transfer some important lesson to help children be less egocentric. In some traditions *Coyote* is known as the trickster. In the Ojibwe storytelling tradition, the Trickster is known as *Nanabosho* or *Nanabush*. This is a shape-shifter. It could be a spirit that takes different forms to come and watch over the process of humanity. The form of the trickster at rest looks somewhat like a standing rabbit like the one depicted at the Petroglyphs near Peterborough, Ontario.

Trickster story: These stories reveal or make fun of people's character weaknesses through an examination of his or her own behaviour (Public District School Board Writing Partnership, 2000, p. x).

Turtle Island: This is the Native expression for North America. For Aboriginals of North America the United States and Canada together form Turtle Island without the distinction of a political boundary. A traditional Native person is more likely to say I am from Turtle Island than I am from Canada.

Journeying The "Good Red Road": This is an expression symbolizes the ancient Indigenous Worldview that focuses on a balanced way of life lived in a good, respectful way that honours the teachings. It is like a blueprint to living in harmony on Mother Earth with all that is part of the Web of Life. Another expression for it that is used less frequently in Canada is "**The Red Trail.**"

The Ten Indian Commandments now on the WWW, are an aboriginal alternative to the Ten Commandments of the Holy Bible. Note however, that having commandments is

atypical in any given Aboriginal culture as life is a journey of discovery on one's personal path. The Aboriginal stance tends to be more positive than proscriptive. The exact origin of these commandments, which started circulating many years ago is unknown and therefore begs questions. There are posters published by Joe Vlesti in 1989 and 1993. There is a version attributed to Chief White Cloud, a docile Ioway Indian Chief after whom the town of White Cloud was renamed from its original Morgantown on March 26, 1877 for saving Minnie, the daughter of Colonel Morgan from outlaws. (White Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce, 2002) The Ten Indian Commandments, like general positive guidelines to living a good life, as posted in homes I have visited, three of which belong to people in this study, are:

1. Treat the Earth and all the dwell thereon with respect.
2. Remain close to the Great Spirit.
3. Show great respect for your fellow beings.
4. Work together for the benefit of all mankind.
5. Give assistance and kindness wherever needed.
6. Do what you know in your heart and mind to be right.
7. Look after the well being of mind and body.
8. Dedicate a share of your efforts to the greater good.
9. Be truthful and honest at all times.
10. Take responsibility for your actions.

Totem: (noun) **1a** (among some North American aboriginal peoples) the emblem or symbol of a clan or family, usually the animal or plant that the family claims as a mythical ancestor **b** an image of this **c** an emblem or symbol (Barber, 1998, p. 1533).

The Tree of Peace: This tree with its roots stretching out in the Four Directions to embrace all peoples represents the Great Law. A pine tree with roots extending out; a recognition that the Iroquoian communities had set their weapons aside for a peaceful

lifestyle; and the roots symbolize peace spread throughout the world (Public District School Board Writing Partnership, 2000, p. vii). Deganawida

gave them [The Five Nations] the symbol of the Tree, under the shelter of which Five Nations gathered, and the symbol of the fire around which they say. He gave them as a further symbol a Bundle of Arrows, denoting strength through Union. (Wallace, 1997, p. 59)

Urban Indians: Aboriginals living in cities off reserve lands.

Virtue Education: is about passing on beneficial qualities that support one's free will in discerning and acting in accordance with what is true, right and lasting within the context of one's natural environment (Jacobs, 2002a).

Vision Quest: (noun) (among some North American aboriginal peoples) a sacred ceremony in which an individual, often a teenage boy, goes to a secluded place to fast and communicate with the spiritual world, often through visions.

Wampum: (noun, historical item) small, cylindrical blue and white beads cut from the shell of the quahog and woven into strings or belts by Aboriginal peoples of the eastern woodlands and Atlantic coast of North America to be used as a medium of exchange or to record treaties (Algonquian *wampumeag* from *wap* white + *umpe* string + ag.pl. suffix) (Barber, 1998, p. 1635).

Wampum Belt: In the Aboriginal oral tradition, "where people are trained to remember what they hear" (Barreiro, 1988, p. 4). These were used as mnemonic devices to record historical events and enhance accuracy of the memory's precision. The two-row white and purple wampum belt of the Five Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy is particularly noteworthy as a record of treaties promising peace and non-interference between the Native and Non-Native peoples.

Ward: 3a a minor under the care of a guardian or parents appointed by the court (Barber, 1998, p. 1636) Canadian Legislation defined Indians as wards of the State. Indian agents were hired to oversee band operations on Indian Reservations. Indian agents made many independent economic and life-impacting decisions such as distribution of housing and goods, education, etc. on behalf of Native peoples, without consulting them. Both socially and politically Native people on reserves were considered

to be the Canadian government's "wards" incapable of making decisions for themselves. Status Indians living on reserves are still treated as wards today.

Web of Life: This is a **metaphor for eternity** and **interconnectedness** within the Sacred Hoop of Life. A Web spreading around the world is part of the Hopi prophecy. It is believed that that *Web* is the internet. Thus the concept of Web, now used by countless Aboriginals for giving and receiving information has also expanded to include the World Wide Web as a means of **rapid global connection**. Widely quoted are the words of Chief Seattle, 1854 emphasizing the **concept of reciprocity**:

This we know... all things are connected, like blood which connects one family. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth. Man [sic] did not weave the web of life—he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself. (Miller, 1993, p. 160; O'Byrne, 2002)

Whirling Rainbow of Peace of the Seneca/ Whirling Rainbow Woman of the Nahavo and Hopi: There is an ancient prophecy considered to be coming into focus today:

When the earth is ravaged and animals are dying, a new tribe of people shall come unto the earth. From many colors, classes, creeds and who by their actions and deeds shall make the earth green again. They will be known as the warriors of the Rainbow. (Reaping, 2003)

The Whirling Rainbow symbol, representing the Whirling Rainbow Woman coming from all four directions is a promise of the world returning to peace, unity and wholeness amongst all Nations and Peoples of the Medicine Wheel. Many Aboriginals believe that now is the time at which the **Rainbow Prophecy** is manifesting. "The Warriors of the Rainbow would teach the people of the ancient practices of Unity, Love and Understanding. They would teach of Harmony among people in all four comers of the Earth" (Stone, 2002; see other quotations in Hallgren, 2002). The Sacred Whirling Rainbow symbol is used in Medicine Society sandpaintings. It also appears in Buddhism. This symbol was defiled by the Nazis with the creation of the swastika, reversing sun rays to rays of darkness. As a result, in today's society this symbol is often misconstrued as it has been given a very different connotation through that unfortunate German influence. This past year, there have been scientific write-ups about Sun Dogs which are like whirling rainbows at each of the cardinal points of the sun. Refer to Appendix M for a list of electronic articles concerning Rainbow sightings and Rainbow websites.

Whirling Rainbow Woman : who brings needed rain to the *Three Sisters*, which are Corn, Beans and Squash is for the Navaho and Hopi peoples, symbolized by the Whirling Rainbow. White Buffalo Prophecies speak of the Whirling Rainbow bringing Mother Earth's children to the teachings as **Rainbow Warriors** or **Warriors of the Rainbow** to unite the Fifth World, working in unity towards peace (Sams, 1990, pp. 153 – 157).

White Buffalo Prophecy: This Lakota prophecy by **White Buffalo Calf Pipe Woman** proclaimed that the birth of the White Buffalo on Turtle Island would be a sign that brothers and sisters from all four colours of the Medicine Wheel, representing all peoples, would work towards a peaceful new world recognizing the Great Spirit. (Stone, 2002) This Buffalo named **Miracle** was born on August 20, 1994 to a non-Native family in the Midwestern United States. This buffalo is currently in South Dakota, going the final of four colour changes. In 2002, a second white buffalo was born. (Medicine Eagle, 2002)

Wholistic: The spelling of holistic with a *w* was also chosen by the Aboriginal Family Joint Steering Committee to emphasize the *whole* rather than the *hole* (Dudziak, 2000, p. 245). The meaning is basically the same as for the more frequently-used term spelled as **holistic** without the **w**. It is important to note that there is a conscious distinction made in spelling the word this way. There appears to be consensus amongst the First Nations Elders whom I interviewed, in expressing a preference for the spelling which includes the “w” as it emphasizes for them the roundness of the concept of being **whole** or complete like a circle rather than having a **hole** or something missing (being incomplete) in the middle of the circle, although the concept of a *hole in the middle* is by no means the origins of the word *holistic* (which comes from the Greek *holos*, meaning whole, complete, total). I do honour concepts of completeness in both Native Holistic and non-Native **wholistic** world views.

Dominant Culture Character Education Vocabulary

Character: (noun and verb) noun **1** the collective qualities or characteristics, especially mental and moral, that distinguish a person or thing. **2** moral strength (*has a weak character*) **3** reputation (*a blot on her character*) **4** distinctive or unusual features (*a house with character*) **5 a** a person in a novel, play, etc. **b** a part played by a performer, a role **6** (attribute) **a** designating an acting role requiring strong delineation of individual and especially eccentric character, or an actor who plays such roles **b** designating roles in dramatic ballets, or the artists performing them, which require more acting than dancing. **7 informal** a person, especially an eccentric or outstanding individual (*he's a real character*) **8a** a printed or written letter, symbol or distinctive mark (*Chinese characters*) **b Computing** any of a group of symbols representing a letter etc. **9a** a written description of a person's qualities, a reference **10** a characteristic (especially of a biological species) *verb, transitive archaic* inscribe; describe **in (or out of) character** consistent (or inconsistent) with a person's character (Barber, 1998, p. 239). General Arthur G.

Trudeau's definition of Character is

Character is something each one of us must build for himself out of the laws of God and nature, and examples of others, and—most of all—out of the trials and errors of daily life. Character is the total of thousands of small daily strivings to live up to the best that is in us. Character is the final decision to reject whatever is demeaning to oneself or to others with the confidence and honesty to choose the right. (Vincent, 1998, p. vii)

“Three components of good character are moral knowing, moral feeling and moral action.... The highest form of character includes genuinely being attracted to the good” (Lickona, 1991, pp. 53, 59)

Character Education: (noun/ concept) the effort to help students know the good, love the good and do the good. In short, it is about helping students mature into persons of integrity—persons of intelligence and moral character. It is necessary, therefore, to help students wrestle with and understand the *good*—that is, what is true and worthwhile in life as well as what is right. To do this, we need to help them develop knowledge of the good and intelligent judgement so that they learn to choose well among competing and attractive options in life (Ryan, & Bohlin, 1999, p. 46).

Connected: (adjective) 1. joined in sequence 2. (of ideas etc.) coherent. 3 related or associated (Barber, 1998, p. 300).

Elder: “He is not thereby an Elder (thera) merely because his head is grey. Ripe is his age [Verse 260].... In whom are truth, virtue, harmless, restraint and control, that wise man who is purged of impurities, is, indeed, called an Elder [Verse 261].” (Dhammapada, 2002).

The Golden Rule Ethic of Reciprocity: (noun) a basic principle of action, esp. “do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (Barber, 1998, p. 601). This is a Christian maxim. Confucius stated “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.” See Gensler (n.d.). The Golden Rule exists in some form in all major religions (Sorenson, 2002).

Interrelate: (verb, transitive or intransitive) relate (two or more things) to each other. (Barber, 1998, p. 737).

Holism (also **Wholism**): (noun) 1. Philosophy: the theory that certain wholes are to be regarded as greater than the sum of their parts (compare reductionism) 2. Medicine: the treating of the whole person including mental and social factors rather than that just the symptoms of a disease. **Holist** n. **holistic** adj. **Holistically** adverb (Barber, 1998, p. 673). The word *holistic* comes from the Greek *holos*, meaning whole, complete, total.

Holistic Education: Holistic education places emphasis on connections and relationships among ideas, people, and phenomenon, focussing on right relationship and stressing a reverence for life in general and for ourselves as spiritual beings. This involves three aspects: balance, inclusion and connection. It seeks appropriate balance between rational/intuitive, outer/inner, quantity, quality, independent/interdependent. It makes possible the integration of learning by transmission, transaction and transformation in such a way that individual parts connect to fit into the whole. It flows from what Emerson called “depth” and “presence” of the Heart, the Self, the Soul. (Miller, 1993, pp. viii, 6, 10, 13, 16).

Indian Time: This expression used by a non-Native person usually means *late*. V. Kaufman (2001), past chair of the Edmonton Aboriginal Affairs Committee, clarifies the

meaning: “Indian Time” is often stated in a derogatory manner if one is late for a meeting or not meeting a deadline. It is often considered a negative phrase that perhaps should be reconsidered as a positive aspect of Aboriginal culture. By turning a negative into a positive, we are stating that, “Yes, I am proud to be on Indian Time for it is the time that things are meant to happen” (p. 2).

Moral courage: (noun) Moral courage is not about facing physical challenges that could harm the body. It’s about facing mental challenges that could harm one’s reputation, emotional well-being, self-esteem or other characteristics. These challenges, as the term implies, are deeply connected with our moral sense—our core moral values (Kidder & Bracy, 2001, p. 4).

Oral: (adjective) **1a** by word of mouth, spoken, not written (*the oral tradition*) **1b** designating a society which has not reached the stage of literacy (Barber, 1998, p. 1021).

Spiritual: Religions are particular answers to the universal human questions about the creation and meaning of life. Spiritual refers to the universal personal concern for those questions (Byers, 1992, p. 6).

Star Trek Ethic: Do no harm. (Henderson, 2001, p. 17).

Strategy: (noun) **1** an esp. long-range policy designed for a particular purpose (*economic strategy*) **2** the process of planning something or carrying out a plan in a skilful way. **3** a plan or stratagem (Barber, 1998, p. 673).

Transformational Learning: Illustrated as the widest circle in Figure 1.4 of *The Holistic Stance*, it is the most authentic one of three types of learning described in detail in Miller’s *The Holistic Curriculum*. The most inclusive, this approach establishes links to the other two approaches of transaction and transmission. Stressing interrelatedness instead of fragmentation, transformational learning helps the learner to construct meaningful personal and social connections. Transformational learning acknowledges the global development of the whole learner, incorporating strategies such as creative problem-solving, cooperative learning and whole language. (Miller, 1996, pp. 7 – 8).

Values: (noun) **6** (in *pl*) the principles or moral standards of a person or social group; the generally accepted or personally held judgement of what is important in life (Barber,

1998, p. 1605). It was in the 1880's that Friedrich Nietzsche began to speak of "values" in its present sense.... in the plural connotating the moral beliefs and attitudes of a society (Vincent, 1994, p. ix). "**Moral values** such as honesty, responsibility and fairness carry obligations" (Lickona, 1991, p. 38). Commonly shared values can be used by educators to "impart good moral and civic character to children" (Bennett, Finn, & Cribb, 1999, p. 523).

Virtue: (noun) **1** conformity of life and conduct with moral principles; voluntary adherence to recognized laws or standards of conduct; oral excellence. **2** a particular form of moral excellence; a manifestation of the influence of moral principles in life or conduct (*patience is a virtue*) **3** chastity or purity, traditionally especially of women (Barber, 1998, p. 1622).

World view: the ideas and beliefs of a group of people (consciously or unconsciously) holds about its world and the people and things in it (M. Christie, quoted in Harris, 1990, p. 44).

Appendix B: Interview Questions

Question 1: What does developing character mean to you?

Question 2: In your culture, how is education for character traditionally caught or taught?

Question 3: How do you consider yourself to be involved in character education?

Question 4: How do teachings to develop character persist in present day reality and how do you relate them?

Question 5: Do you think there is a possibility for these teachings to impact positively and permanently on adolescent or young adults in

- a) Native school systems?
- b) non-Native school systems?
- c) other settings?

Question 6: In your opinion, how important is HOPE to developing character?

- a) Can individuals develop positive character traits IF they see a lack of hope?
- b) If they see a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of getting back their hope?

Question 7: What positive attributes of character do you focus on in your culture and in your own personal teachings in working with/ guiding others?

Question 8: How do you believe Native teachings reinforcing character education could be best passed on in meaningful ways to today's youth?

Question 9: How would you like to be remembered when you are gone?

Appendix C: Informed Consent Documents

Letter of Informed Consent for Project Participant Printed on OISE/UT Letterhead

September 5, 2001

Dear Elder:

Thank you for your interest in my research on First Nations character education entitled: **A Quest for Character: Explaining the Relationship Between First Nations teachings and “*Character Education*”** wherein I examine and investigate the potential for weaving First Nations teachings promoting positive character development into a variety of learning settings. I have chosen you because your teachings and presence interwoven into my life have had a positive impact on me as a lifelong learner.

The research model I am using is a qualitative one through which I am seeking comprehensive depictions or descriptions of your experiences. In this way I hope to explore possible relationships between First Nations teachings on developing character and “character education” as understood in the public school system in Ontario. My study attempts to answer the following three questions:

1. What is the conception of *Character Education* from *First Nations* perspectives?
2. What is their common conception of educating for character and nurturing its development?
3. What are the relationships between *Native* conceptions of character and *non-Native* conceptions?

Should you consent to participate in this study, you can be assured that all data gathered from you would be kept confidential and anonymous at all times. A pseudonym that you choose will be used during all portions of the research process and any identifying traits about yourself, from your name and physical appearance to place of employment will not be disclosed in any written reports, publications, or conference presentations unless you choose to include them. I will audio-record each interview, and

they will then be transcribed. One year after the completion of the study, the tapes will be destroyed, unless you prefer to have them returned directly to you. You will receive full transcripts after each interview with me, and you will have an opportunity to revise and edit your contribution.

All of the data collected for this study (including informal conversations, telephone conversations) will be kept in a locked drawer at my residence, accessible only to me, unless being used. My thesis supervisors may have access to the data, but they will only use their knowledge of the information to help me with the data analysis and writing of the thesis. Upon the completion of my thesis, a summary of my findings would be available to you. There also exists a strong possibility that the data gathered in this study will be used as a basis for scholarly articles and conference presentations. In addition, should you agree to participate in this study, you could, of course, withdraw at any time, without fear of any repercussions and without giving a reason. All data that I would have gathered to that point would be immediately destroyed.

Should you agree to participate in this study, please complete the information/consent form below. The contact information will be used to arrange a suitable time for the observations. This information will also remain confidential. If at any time you have questions about this study, feel free to contact either myself, Yvonne Dufault, via telephone at 905-294-1886 extension 507 (work) or 905-479-0009 (home), or via email (windhorsedancer@hotmail.com), or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Jack Miller, via telephone (416-923-6641, ext. 2633) or via e-mail (jmiller@oise.utoronto.ca).

All my relations,

Yvonne G. Dufault
16 Hedgewood Drive
Unionville, Ontario
L3R 6J1
Canada
ydufault@oise.utoronto.ca

Participation in The Study by Yvonne Dufault

CONSENTING TO PARTICIPATE:

_____ I consent to participate in the study **A Quest for Character: Explaining the Relationship Between First Nations teachings and “*Character Education.*”**

_____ I understand that:

- a) this involves an interview of at least one to one and a half hours in length and that it will be tape-recorded.
- b) I will have an opportunity to give feedback on the transcript of the interview and thus will have influence over the editing process leading to the final product.
- c) the researcher may quote segments from the good copy of transcripts within the body of her thesis text.
- d) I may choose a pseudonym for myself as well as for names of other people and places.
- e) I may contribute photos as visual support to my message captured in the written thesis text but that this is in no way an expectation or an obligation.
- f) upon completion of her thesis, the researcher will share a summary of her findings with me.
- g) I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time.

DECLINING PARTICIPATION:

_____ I do not consent to participate in this study, and understand that this decision will in no way adversely affect me.

Signature _____ Date _____

Print Name _____

Telephone _____

**Appendix D: Interview with Gazh Gad Nang (Mid-Day Star),
Ojibway Elder and Korean War Veteran of Rama First Nations**

October 11, 2001

Meet Mid-Day Star, First Nations Elder

Gazh Gad Nang (Mid-Day Star), Deer Clan, Ojibway Elder and Korean war veteran, also known as George Charles, was interviewed on October 11, 2001. The full transcript of the interview appears here along with some of his personal writings that he wished to include. Mid-Day Star has authored many unpublished poems and short stories, co-authored one book and been the subject of a university paper.

We first met in 1994 at a teaching Pow Wow that I attended with my Dancers for Harmony. The theme was “Learning Together on Mother Earth.” Mid-Day Star was mainly raised away from his home reserve of Rama in the community of Cobourg. Over the past decade he has reclaimed his Native identity, journeying the Red Road, attending traditional gatherings, conferring with Elders and counselling.

Mid-Day-Star is like a rainbow bridge. Mid-Day Star was the subject of a university paper entitled “George Charles—A Lesson in Listening” by Martha McClure (1994) who comments that “His poetry clearly demonstrates what I found to be the most remarkable quality of George Charles; the gift of successfully bridging a reality between two distinct worlds and recognizing the intrinsic beauty of each one” (p. 17). Walking with ease in two worlds, he welcomes many non-Natives on the Pow Wow trail. He has good friendships with people of all races. He invites people from all colours of the Medicine Wheel to dance with him in intertribal dances in a circle around the arbour.

Mid-Day-Star has worked in Youth Detention Centers. He is an Elder and advisor in the penitentiary system. His stories and poetry such as *Kanue: The Legend of a Great Native Warrior* and *The Day the Eagles Came* have been shared in many settings beyond a typical classroom. Mid-Day-Star’s writings accompany him wherever he goes. They are readily shared whenever the right moment arises to help someone seeking direction.

Mid-Day Star (Gazh Gad Nang) has been a speaker at four schools where I have taught for events like Remembrance Day, First Nations Week and Proactive Race

Relations awareness days. He has addressed the entire school as well as small groups. With his permission, many students have reverently touched his Eagle staff bearing seven Eagle feathers after having listened to the character teachings of the Seven Grandfathers and to Mid-Day-Star's personal stories and poems. He listens, respecting confidentiality as is traditional custom, giving his full attention to others sharing their own stories.

Very involved in the Native Brotherhood, Gaz Dag Nang helps with healing circles in the penitentiary system. He is an Eagle staff carrier who follows the Pow Wow trail across Ontario from spring to autumn, welcoming many non-Natives to these events to learn about Native Culture. He has been CFB Borden Aboriginal Advisor for the Department of National Defence. In 2001, he co-authored one book.

Pow Wow Guide, Poet and Storyteller

Question 1: What does developing character mean to you?

I guess that you would say that people have been raised in all sorts of different manners. Some of them that I have dealt with have ended up in the prison system. But there were children who started off in Children's Aid and they graduated from Children's Aid to Youth Detention and from Youth Detention they went on into our prison system. They really didn't know any kind of a life. They had been victimized since they were children and they've developed into the people that they are today. So, you can talk to them and try to show them a better way of life. You can give them teaching. Sometimes, if the change is to be made, it will have to come because they want it. You have to teach them to really want it. Then the change will come. If they don't want it, it won't come.

So you have to give teachings that will inspire them or change their thoughts so that they can become better people, that they are not in a hopeless situation, that their lives can really mean something and they can get out and they can be rehabilitated. But rehabilitation is almost a dream in the prison system. I can't see where rehabilitation will happen unless people want to happen. When they want it to happen, if they want it bad enough, it will happen. It is just like in life, if they want something bad enough, it actually will happen.

Figure V. Earth connections.

Mid-Day-Star rests with his Eagle Staff and a hand-painted drum illustrated with an Eagle and Grandmother moon in West Coast artistic tradition. The drum was given to him by one of the artists in the Native Brotherhood. This photo taken in August 2003, has been included with permission.

Question 2: In your culture, how is education for character traditionally caught or taught?

I think that education from the Native perspective, is caught or it is taught also, by the Elders both men and woman. I think by the example, it is like people say “I’d rather see a sermon than hear one every day.” That makes a great deal of sense to me. If people are wanting to change, and get an education from the Native perspective, then, if they hang around places whereabouts there are Elders or people living the life, they have a good chance that they’ll catch character and culture. Anyway, there will be enough of a change come into their lives by observing these people and seeing the benefits from it. When they have an answer, they have question. They can offer tobacco in their left hand and ask the Elder for a teaching. If he accepts the tobacco, he will give a teaching. *Because the Elder has lived a long time and experienced life’s problems, he probably has something that he can tell that young man or that young woman that will enable them to solve the problem that they have to address, or to understand why they are with problems.* Or, to catch onto the spiritual value that would enable them to change in the spiritual aspect and become the person that they can’t become unless they have spiritual help in their lives.

Question 3: How do you consider yourself to be involved in character education?

Well, it seems like a pretty deep question, but I’ll try to do the best I can. I myself am a grade ten drop-out. I don’t let not having paper qualifications hinder me in my life. I’ve asked the Creator to give me wisdom. Many times he has given me wisdom that is beyond myself.

The biggest part about trying to be a spiritual man is when the spirit of God or the Creator or the God of your understanding tells you to do something, that you would be obedient to leading of the Spirit and will answer and prayer for people. It works but we have to be obedient. *We have to take on the authority that has been bestowed upon us as Elders in our community. And have an answer, an answer that is either our own or some teaching that we’ve received.* Or, if it is out of our hands, we ask the God of our understanding for help. He will give it to us. *So, it is just a matter of taking the oral*

teachings that have been passed on through the ages, from father to father, father to son, Elders to communities. The teachings are really valuable. Unless you have the courage to stand up and repeat these teachings, then your knowledge is not going to amount to very much. Taking on the spiritual aspect that the Creator is willing to help you, guide you and give you direction in your life, you are bound to help people. You will have an answer for the HOPE that lies within you. You will be able to reach deep within yourself to achieve a goal and help that person or lead him along the way that he should go.

Question 4: How do teachings to develop character persist in present day reality and how do you relate them?

I think that the teachings that were present a hundred and fifty years ago have been passed down carefully from generation to generation. Men and women haven't changed that much. *Basically amongst the Native community, the people, children especially, are still conscious of holding Elders and older people in high respect.* If those teachings are given, the people will respond in a good way. They are very respectful of the Eagle feather. They are very respectful of the Seven Teachings of the Grandfathers. They are very respectful of all the teachings. As an Elder, you have to relate these teachings not only back to one hundred and fifty years ago, but to our present day, so that they are relevant and meaningful.

If you give the teachings, the young people will listen. They will adhere to the teachings. If not, you have at least presented a choice for them—*a choice to walk the Good Red Road* or a choice to say "I don't believe in the teachings." I don't want anything to do with the teachings. I have a life to live and I'm going to live it the way I want to live it. People will listen to the teachings. The teachings offer them opportunities to go by what has been passed on for hundreds and hundreds of years. They find them as helpful today as they were one thousand years ago. The teachings are all good. We don't teach anything bad. *Our teachings are all in line with what would build fine young people to grow up to be good, productive members of their communities.*

Question 5: Do you think there is possibility for these teachings to impact positively and permanently on adolescents or young adults?

a) in Native school systems?

b) in non-Native school systems?

c) in other settings?

I think in our Native school systems, the teachings are bound to affect the young people there if they have been taught respect for the Elders and respect for the teachings. We are a group of people that are just getting back into our own Native teachings, into our own way of life. There should be no greater spot or opportunity than to pass on the teachings by beginning the school day with a circle. *To begin the school day coming into the presence of the Creator, of passing an Eagle feather from one person to the next person and sharing what's on your heart.* Native children are benefiting by these system. We have to teach our own people to be proud of who they are. We have to have people graduate from our school system and go on to higher education, and carry these teachings with them, and live by them and pass them on. We want people that are proud of who they are. Unfortunately, it was not a thing that you should be proud to be a North American Indian. I can speak because I went to school. I went to a regular school. During my time, the Indian people weren't presented in a very good way, like they are today. You just weren't proud to be Indian. You didn't step out and say "I am a North American Indian and I have some teachings from my people." It just didn't fit into the school system. It seemed to be the general outlook of the teachers at that time that you had a culture, and you as Indians were a defeated people. The attitude of the teachers representing most of society [the dominant Eurocentric colonizing culture] was "We are the prominent race, so lower your face." As a matter of fact, I don't think it would have been presentable for us as Indians to say what we thought or to say "I would like to add this to what you're teaching me here" because the whole system put us down. They were trying to do away with Indian people and make us assimilate. It wasn't a very kind outlook during those days that we could have had a culture that was worth sharing. We did have a culture. We had a culture that we should have been proud of. But you are not proud of it unless you are given the opportunity to think that the teachings in the school system are good, correct and not just made up to make Indians feel inferior. We were

treated as being less, being inferior on one side and not the other side that considered itself superior. Native culture was discussed very little by any of my teachers. They taught unpleasant things that showed we were obnoxious and had savage ways. I stayed quiet in those days. I did not want draw attention to myself as an Anishnabe. I became a very good boxer and did well in competitions. That was a good way to use my energy. It wasn't until I was much older, that *I went back to my roots on the Pow Wow trail to reclaim my identity*. I met all kinds of people, both Native and Non-Native. Overtime, I grew into the role of an Elder and people starting coming to me to ask questions.

Now the next question was non-Native school systems. I think that the greatest responsibility that the Native person, the Native Elder has to carry in the non-Native school system is to represent the Truth, to go into the school and to say “I’m going to teach you something and what I am going to teach you is no different from what I would teach in the Native school to the Native young person. I just want you to have an opportunity to listen to have I have to say and not to teach you anything different than what our young people would be hearing and that you might learn from it.”

We think we have a culture. We think we have the Teachings from the Grandfathers. *We think we have teachings from our Elders in the North Country, that not only would they help Native young people, but would certainly help white people that are in the school system. The truth is good for all of us.* The truth is good. When I was young, you could picture a Native person being a rebellious troublemaker, a wine-drinking wagon-burner who went around scalping people like we see in the Westerns—the cowboy and Indian movies made in Hollywood. *All of these things were untrue and misrepresented.* So if we go into a school and we represent a great teaching to the peoples, you can be sure that what we say is not any different from what we teach our own. All of it is true without fiction added to it. I think that the Non-native school system would definitely benefit.

The Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers are true. If I hold an Eagle feather and I speak to people, it should all be true. I should be passing on a message of truth, with no exaggerations. I just tell you who my grandfather and my grandmother is, my father, my mother, my brothers and sisters and just let you know that we are a race that do raise

wonderful citizens and we raise people that we can be proud of. Our people following the traditional teachings are raised in good way. It is nice that we can now stand up at my age and say; “I’m an Ojibwe Indian and I happen to be proud of that fact. That you for listening to that.”

Other settings. I think that going into Youth Detention places like I did for several years, that it was a good message for the young Native people. I was only dealing with Native people during this time. We would meet in a circle. We would pass the feather and we would talk about what kind of a week we had. We’d discuss a lot of the problems that they had and a lot of the problems that they could see. We’d encourage them to have a visitor. It would be an awful thing to be locked up in an institution. Because your people live a thousand miles away and a lot of our people are “low income” people, then it is a fact that often that boy or girl doesn’t get a visitor even though it [visiting] is very beneficial to them. Perhaps they have never been directed. They would like to think that somebody loves them, somebody is reaching out to them, somebody cares, so it is the type of thing that when people meet they need to be told “Hey you’re a good kid. You’re going to be all right when you get out of here. I love you.” It is nice to show that you love them because of who they are and try to impress within them that their mothers, their grandmothers, or their grandfathers or their aunties or their uncles love them also. *Give them something to HOPE for. Build a little HOPE into them so that they look forward that they are going to get out of this institution.* They are going to live a valuable good life. Nothing extra—just a normal, good life and become useful citizens.

Like in the jail system. I’m an Elder who works in the prison system. I work one day a week and I have lots of opportunities to talk to prisoners and to talk to them about the things that are bothering them. We talk about the problems that they have. I talk about substance abuse with them. I talk about what it takes to get out and to go back and live a successful life in their communities.

The big thing in the prison is repeat offenders. What I like to see is that people they come out and they get out on parole and that they get out for good and not be heading back to prison six months later. There is a bond that is built up in the prison—*this feeling of comradeship, this feeling of love for one another.* So, there is a sense of

community. It can affect you in your life, so everyday that you have on the outside, you miss the people on the inside, so you get yourself back in there again.

Were you the kind of person who talked about it before. The prison would like to rehabilitate you. But in the prison, whether you are white, black, yellow or a Native person, there is not a very great affect on people to be rehabilitated. Somewhere along the line we must get across to people that rehabilitation is good for them. *We want them to get excited that they would be rehabilitated.* When they want it, strive for it and work for it, it will happen. Meegwetch.

Question 6: In your opinion, how important is HOPE to developing character?

a) Can individuals develop positive character traits IF they see a lack of hope?

b) If they see a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of getting back their hope?

That is a big question. Can individuals develop positive character traits if they feel a lack of hope? I think amongst our own people *probably a lack of hope has been our biggest enemy. It has sent more destruction amongst our Native people than any other trait that I could imagine. We don't have to go back too many generations ago to find out that the residential schools created a lack of hope.* Unemployment has developed a lack of hope. Living in remote, Northern communities whereabouts there is no future for a job means you are a person who is living with a lack of hope and your only hope might be to leave the community. We find so many of our young people grow up sniffing gas, drinking and committing suicide. The reason they are doing this is because of a lack of hope. So you ask me, is a lack of hope important? I say that it's the most important ingredient to the people who live in all sorts of communities. It is since the last ten, fifteen years that *we have begun to work at building hope amongst our young people.* They have hope of being good productive people on the reserves. They have hope of attending local ceremonies. They have hope of going to Pow Wows. They have hope that people can become "brothers" now and be proud of who they are. They can become singers and be proud of who they are. They can become dancers and dance their hearts out and be proud of themselves. They have hope.

Figure VI. Dancers for harmony

Gazh Gad Nang (Mid-Day-Star) dances the intertribal dance with teacher Yvonne Dufault and the members of her group of Dancers for Harmony at an annual teaching Pow Wow held in October, 1997. This photo has been included with permission.

So, hope is an ingredient whose lack has been very, very destructive to the Native American Indian and especially to the Native person living in the Far North. Then again, there are the big cities like Metropolitan Toronto in southern Ontario where Urban Indians live. We have hundreds of our people living on the streets. They are living on the streets because they have no hope. It is often because they didn't get the education they needed in early life. Perhaps it is because they feel they are a disappointment. There are Urban Elders like Vern Harper who raise themselves up off the streets and work hard to lift others up. Remember the video I showed you?

Perhaps it is because of the way Native kids have been raised. So many of our children were raised without love. *Institutionalizing Native children in the Residential School system led to a whole lost generation.* It is said that whatever we do affects seven generations. Children born to parents following a traditional way of life were taken away from their parents. In the Residential School system, they grew up without loving role models. The children of these people had parents in need of healing who had become slaves to their addictions. They have a lot more of a struggle to overcome this hurt and to stop or break unhealthy patterns passed on to their own generation.

So, know that when people are raised without love, they can't give it the same way they normally could. *If you raise people and you don't give them love, they don't know how to give it.* So they were unaware of how to give it [love], because they didn't know. If two people marry each other and they've never been loved or were never told that they were loved by their mothers and fathers, if they were raised very certainly with a lot of anger towards others in the family who didn't give them love, they are more likely to pass on that anger. It is very, very important for all people to be loved by at least one person, unconditionally when we are growing up.

If you feel a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of getting back their hope? *Well, I think if they want to get their hope back, first of all, you have got to become proud of who you are.* They have got to look on themselves in a good way. You had better love yourself, because if you don't love yourself, you can't love somebody else. They have got to be proud of their mothers and fathers. They have got to be proud of their aunts and uncles. They have got to be proud of their teachings. They have to look at

their lives in a whole new way. *Perhaps the new surge of Native people seeking their culture, coming back to the reserves to live is producing a generation of strong people.* Our people certainly have been better educated in the last ten years. We have got people who have become doctors and lawyers and not just a few isolated cases. Overall, generally, a lot of people are becoming highly educated now. I think as I watch people grow up, they have these mentors, these people to look up to and they have some of these things to share for it. It isn't a dream anymore. It could happen to any of our young people if they could apply themselves and live by the teachings and take advantage of the teachings or take advantage of the schooling that is offered to them. Then their lives will end up with hope. *We need to get this hope back. We need to get the Spirit back, to be proud of being an Anishnabe man or woman.*

Question 7: What positive attributes of character do you focus on in your culture and in your own personal teachings when working with/ guiding others?

I guess as an Elder, I have to not only talk the talk, but walk the walk. I have to live by what I teach and teach in a good way. I have to feel good about it. I have to have the feeling that I am teaching as the Creator would want me to teach. This necessitates seeking Spiritual help on a daily basis. This is most important to me because, if I'm not spiritually right [authentic and balanced from a Spiritual perspective—in a good relationship with the Creator], then I cannot be very helpful to others.

I think I finished off talking about the spirituality that is involved in my life. I try to turn over my life and my care over to my God as I understand him on a daily basis. That way I feel I am spiritually right to pass on the teachings and guide others. I was presented with an Eagle staff several years ago and I was given the responsibility of carrying it. That Eagle staff happens to have seven feathers on it, so I use that quite often in my teachings. Each feather represents something. *That staff travels with me everywhere I go and has helped me share the Seven Teachings of the Grandfathers with many people of all ages, of all four colours of the Medicine Wheel, in many different settings.* I have written and shared poems and stories that I have written based on my own experiences. People like you have encouraged me to share them. I will share two of them with you at the end of this interview as they are part of our shared journey. You can

include them if you would like. Maybe they will have the right words that someone needs.

Like our Native spirituality in its many forms, all the great religions of the world have teachings. Christianity would teach that if we live by the Spirit and walk by the Spirit that we would receive the *Nine Gifts of the Spirit* which are Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, Humility and Self-Control. Well, *the Seven Teachings of the Grandfathers are a little simpler*. They teach us some very good things about qualities we should work to develop in our character so we can lead a good life. They teach us Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth. I like to elaborate on these things and try to bring them down to the level where we are at, where the students are at or where the prisoners are at in their lives and try to make it a reality. I teach these things as well as other things and I talk to people on a one-to-one basis. I tell them a little bit of what I know about substance abuse and guiding them. I've just celebrated fifteen years of sobriety myself. I did that one day at a time and looking out for the Creator to help me because suddenly somewhere along the way I realized that he was doing the things for me that I couldn't do for myself. So, it is a "livingness" that has helped me. Guiding others—having heart to heart talks with young men who are in prison—and I think some of these young men lacked the opportunity to talk to their fathers and their grandfathers, or if they tried to, nobody was listening. So what I've taken on is a father or a grandfather image.

We discuss some things that are important and just the passing on of time sometimes. Sometimes people just need to know that they can find somebody who will listen, and won't condemn them and they don't have to worry about them passing on the message to other people. And when you share a problem, a problem shared is a problem half solved. So it is very important just to listen. A listener is a great person in healing. He is a great person to talk to the troubled person. I talked to somebody that was thinking of committing suicide, a young man in prison, but after just talking about a whole bunch of things, and nothing really that come out of my lips that were particularly wise, I brought him from a very high, dangerous situation down to whereabouts we could laugh and talk about things and he could get rid of that damnable thing that he had in him that he wanted to kill himself. It was comforting to know that during these times, you should

ask for help, *you are dealing in a spiritual world*. When you go into that world, you want to be awful careful that you are not susceptible to these Spirits, because the Spirit—the living God tells us that “greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.” So, you have to ask for that help before you ever are presented with these cases. I can give in living testimony that I feel as is good when I walk out of those situations as I did when I went in. It is no great thing that I am doing this, because I’m not doing it. The Creator is. I’m capable of having that spiritual protection that is available just by asking. Meegwetch.

Question 8: How do you believe Native teachings reinforcing character education could be best passed on in meaningful ways to today’s youth?

That’s a good question. I think that with the teachings that we’ve had over hundreds of years in our Ojibwe tradition, we say that we have an oral tradition. We don’t write things down. *We pass down the teachings orally. I think myself that some of them should be recorded just for the fact that there is a chance that we could lose them.* So instead of having 150 teachings or more, we end up with 12, 15, 20 teachings you know, which hardly fits into the great need.

We think of the Mohawks. We think of the Six Nations and we think that they have recorded teachings over the years, which they have taught in their school systems. If you meet a Mohawk person, he knows all about who he is as a Mohawk man or woman. I think that he gets his teachings from the school and from his parents. Everybody knows the teachings. Everybody has the opportunity to receive the teachings that are available to them. *I think that with the Ojibwes, they need maybe to have more Elders going into Juvenile Detention places, going into prisons.* We sometimes put the prisoners way out in left field, out of sight, out of mind. But we have got to take a look at ourselves and say “We have a lot of Native people in institutions across this country of ours. That this is not right and maybe we should attack it right from the beginning, and try to get our Elders into the schools, get the young children from an early age to be familiar with what their teachings are.” I’m sure the Creator don’t make junk. So, he didn’t make us to be spending our life in a prison. He made us for a good purpose, to be good people and have a good life. *I think it is really a matter of having the Elders—more Elders—respecting*

them, treating them well and having them infiltrate the school life on our reserves and having them speaking in the schools. Have them speaking in the prisons. Have them speaking in the Youth Detention centres and passing on all of these good teachings that they know. These were made known not be hidden but to give us a balance in our lives. It is like the teaching of the Four Rooms, which is another way of looking at the Medicine Wheel.

The teaching of the Four Rooms is that we've been told that Man is like a four room house. There are four rooms in this house. *If he wants to live a balanced life, he should visit these four rooms, basically, on a daily basis.*

One room is a spiritual room. We should spend time in that room each day. I don't mean to become so spiritually minded that we become no earthly good. I mean to sit in there, spend amounts of time and try to stay in peace with the spiritual part of our lives. We have the emotional and the mental. We should go into each one of those rooms and deal with the problems that we have on a mental and an emotional basis. By doing this and spending part of our day in those rooms, we would accomplish this. Then we have the physical room. Physical exercise is almost looked at by a lot of people as a waste of time. Yet to involve yourself physically for part of your day is probably the wisest counsel that I could pass on. Like the spiritual aspect, you are not to go in there and spend three hours a day. I see this in the prison system. I see prisoners that work out. They look like Gods, but I always look at my own life and sometimes when I'm not happy, or I'm out of whack or I'm out of balance, I don't know how you want to call it, but it happens to all of us. What it means is that we are evading one of those rooms, or we are spending too much time in one of those rooms. When I first heard this teaching, I thought it was the most simple and even dumb ... what could you benefit by it? *Yet, the older I get, I realize that in this simple teaching lies the balance of my life.* And if I want to live a balanced life and do all the things that I have to do, then the best way that I can do it is to *adhere to this very simple teaching of spending time every day in each of these four rooms.* This was passed on to me from a young lad in the Youth Detention school. He said that it was passed on to him by his mother, from his Elder. Because he was such a good boy, I'll even give his name. His last name was Trudeau. I'm thankful for that teaching that he gave me. It has helped a lot of people. Meegwetch.

Question 9: How would you like to be remembered when you are gone?

How would I like to be remembered when I am gone? Well, that is a pretty serious question. *I would like to be remembered maybe as a person who was able to pass on some of the knowledge that I was given freely, both from man and from the Creator.* I like to think of a term that he was a waterer and a planter and that I watered and planted and helped people to rise to a better, happier and maybe got some home for life. I'd like to be remembered as a good husband and a good father. I have four children. I'd like them to think of me in a good way. This is quite important for me. Famous, I'll never be. This doesn't bother me. But I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and I'm just celebrating fifteen years of sobriety. I'd like to say that I've received a lot of help there and that I have been able to encourage a lot of young people that have come in. *It is nice to always have an answer for the HOPE that lies within you or to have some encouragement to offer people that there is a better way.* Problems will all work out if you just trust and try to find the God of your understanding. He will walk this road with you. Know that you won't walk alone. Those are things that are nice to be remembered for. *I'd like to even say that having this opportunity to be interviewed and recorded on paper will go on maybe to help another generation.* That generation can look back and say that that they are experiencing the same set of problems. They might say "Perhaps if it worked for people way back then, it'll work in our generation." *So the word written down, might be encouragement for people who are yet to come.* I would like to think that I was raised well.

When I was six years old, I left the Rama reserve, and I went to live in the small town of Cobourg. I grew up there and had friends that ranged from the white race, to the black race, to the yellow race. I spent three years in the army. I was in Korea. I spent a year in the hills. All of these things opened my eyes to the world. I would like to think that I have been fair to my fellow man, that he has been fair to me. I would like to say that living by the four colours has been something that has inspired me to honour the black man, the yellow man, the white man and the North American Indian. They are all very dear to me. We have a teaching about the four colours that we are created by the Creator. He doesn't make any junk. All of these races were put here for a purpose. It is great [sic] if we go around saying how much we respect the four colours and then we

treat people unkindly when we are at a Pow Wow, or we are at a gathering, because we were discriminated against, that we want to return it back to the people who did it to us. Well, I don't really feel that way. I have a lot of friends who are that I grew up with. I played a lot of sports when I was young. Among the people that I met, who were my best friends in growing up, were white people. They helped me in my life. They were there for me. I'm now in my seventies. They are still there for me and they are still my best friends. But I am enjoying this newfound life I have along the Red Trail. I have met some wonderful, wonderful Native people, both Grandmothers and Grandfathers, Elders and teachers and people who have looked at the Native life and have brought Native awareness teachings to their schools. One bunch was in the army. Yvonne Dufault was very instrumental to my going into schools and talking about the Native way of life. She from the beginning could see something good that I had to offer, that I couldn't see myself. So, I like other people, needed somebody to trust and believe in me. She certainly fulfilled that.

All the way along my walk, I'm thankful for the life I've lived. *I'm thankful on a daily basis.* I thank the Creator. I spend time thanking him for the six senses. I think of the sense of touch. How wonderful it is to touch a baby or touch the one you love. It is just too wonderful to comprehend. I think of the sense of smell. How wonderful it is to smell a cooked meal and to experience the good smells and the bad smells. We just take it for granted, but they are just wonderful things. And the sense of taste. To taste a fine home-cooked meal, to taste all sorts of things. It is just too wonderful to comprehend. None of these senses cost any money. They are gifts that were given to you by the Creator. The sense of sight, what a wonderful gift! I think in my own gift, I have thought more about the gift of sight because I'm a diabetic and it is a sensitive area in a diabetic's life. I think of this as being the greatest gift that any person could imagine, the gift of sight. The things we see and look at: We look at birds. We look at oceans. We look at the animals that live in the oceans. We look at everything and it is too wonderful to behold. It is just marvellous.

We think of the sense of hearing. We hear sounds that warn us of danger. We hear a wonderful symphony orchestra playing. We hear a pop tune on our radios. We hear the

voice of our children and our grandchildren, our wives. We recognize these voices even when we speak on the telephone. Of course, I can't say too much about it.

Then there is the sixth sense, the sense of being spiritual. Even though we can't see the Spirit World, it has been given to us to know that there is a spiritual world out there. To be aware of it is just wonderful. Somebody loves us and is concerned about our care. He will never leave you. He will never forsake you. He hears the cry of His people. He is very conscious of our going. This is something that we have to accept by faith. I feel very privileged to think that he opened up my eyes to a truth that was just something that was able to change my life.

If I could answer the question "*What made you an Elder?*" *It was a call from the Creator.* It was an opening up of my eyes, ears, heart and Spirit to Him. Just being aware that He was there and that he will always be there. *When I am gone, I hope that I might be remembered as one who put my hand in the hand of the God of my understanding,* and that it has been a wonderful joy and a privilege to be a part of his plan. I think that he has a plan not only for the Red people, but for the four colours. He has a plan for each of our lives. If we will just light that little candle and do what we can do and be the best person that we can be, I think he will look kindly upon us and when we leave here we won't have to be remembered and think about it. Probably a lot of the credit should go to this Spirituality, this person that we can't see, this person that we can't hear, this person that we have to accept by faith—that He is out there, that He does love us, that He is guiding us, instructing us. He has promised us a good afterlife also, so we won't have to look back on our lives. We can look ahead to all the glorious things that lie in a world to come. Meegwetch. Meegwetch. Meegwetch. All my relations. That was quite a bit of talking.

Interviewer: Ah, that's amazing. I can tell that you talk to a lot of different people in a lot of different settings because you...

Maybe I talk too much....

END OF INTERVIEW. [I shut off the tape and thanked the Elder.]

Figure VII. Teachings from First Nations Korean War veteran.

At left: On November 11, 1997. Gazh Gad Nang (Mid-Day-Star) visited an intermediate level classroom. He spoke to students at an elementary school for the Remembrance Day ceremony.

At right: A student with Mid-Day-Star who shared poems and stories with a high school drama class as part of October First Nations week. This photo has been included with permission.

KANUE: The Legend of a Great Native Warrior

(as recorded by George Charles)

On May 24th, 2000 during the evening circle at WARKWORTH INSTITUTION (prison), Paul McCue presented me with a talking and teaching staff. He had made it from one of the cedar poles from the old TEE PEE we had taken down a few weeks earlier. When a TEE PEE is put up, each of the poles has a specific purpose and contains a particular teaching, but that is another story. Paul had carved a beautiful piece of art work with an eagle on top of a peaceful warrior's face. The artwork depicts a native LEGEND of one of our greatest WARRIORS who was known to have never lost in any battle during his lifetime. His name was "KANUE" and he was known throughout his territory as the great warrior and a man whose enemies feared him. My friend Paul McCue related how he got the idea for the carving for the staff from this teaching which had been passed on to him by his Elder.

When Kanue was fifty years old, he decided to go on a **VISION QUEST**. He had grown weary of seeing his enemies dying in the many battles in which he had engaged over the years. Kanue left the area to travel to the sacred special place of his people. He carried the burning desire in his heart to see the CREATOR in his Quest for direction in his life. Kanue was gone many days. Upon his return, he shared this story with all who would listen.

Kanue fasted, in prayer, for many days and nights, experiencing many changes in weather. Finally, the vision came to him from the CREATOR that would change his life forever. Kanue was sitting in deep meditation, perched high on a mountaintop at a very sacred spot. CREATOR had spoken to the hearts of many people in this sacred place for as long as the Elders could remember. This is where others had gone before him for thousands of years to seek their own visions and commune with Creator and their ancestors. With closed eyes and alert ears, KANUE heard the powerful rush of wings of a bird in flight. He felt the sun and wind on his face. The winged Messenger hovered, circled over him four times and then landed with a might sweep, directly in front of him. KANUE opened his eyes. Before him stood the biggest Eagle he had ever seen. In his mighty talons, the Eagle was holding a newly-birther **Peace Pipe**.

Eagle spoke: “This peace pipe is for you KANUE. It is a special gift from the CREATOR. I am to tell you that CREATOR has heard your prayers. From this day forward, you will no longer be known as a warrior in the old way. You will be a **Rainbow Warrior**, a gentle warrior of Light. I want you to be my Peace Maker. As **PEACE MAKER**, you will travel throughout the land. Tell the people that you are no longer the great warrior known as KANUE. You no longer count coup. Tell my people that they are not to war amongst one another any more. They are instead, to sit with you and to smoke the Pipe of Peace together. You are to forgive all your enemies before you start this walk of peace amongst your people. You will be protected by the CREATOR as you share with your former enemies and pass on my message of Peace to all people. So, KANUE, at the age of fifty years who was the greatest Warrior known to all the Native nations, put down his weapons and went about doing the work of the CREATOR, the one whose messenger had come face to face with him on that mountain top during his VISION QUEST. The people of many nations **listened with open hearts** to this great Rainbow Warrior. They stopped fighting amongst one another. The great KANUE lived out his life as a spokesman and Peace Maker, sharing his pipe with all the people.

KANUE set before us a shining, living example of how we, as brothers and sisters, in the **Global Family of humanity**, should go about our own **Quests for Life**. The CREATOR hasn’t changed. We must remember that he has a plan for each of our lives. As with KANUE, the GREAT WARRIOR, this plan is the best for us. CREATOR will give us the path that is just right for us to walk if we surrender ourselves to him in faith, hope and charity.

For me, from this day forward, I promise that I shall carry this talking and teaching staff in a good way, with PRIDE, HUMILITY and DIGNITY, and like KANUE, walking in truth, will help carry the **MESSAGE of PEACE** to all MANKIND.

MEEGWETCH. MEEGWETCH. MEEGWETCH.
ALL MY RELATIONS.

June, 2000
George Charles
GAZH GAD NANG
MID-DAY STAR
Typed by Windhorse Dancer

A-Visit-To-A-Past-Sacred-Manitou-Meeting-Place

We gather as one in our Quest for Spiritual Enlightenment
We encounter a spiritual guide who will guide and drum us
To this sacred spot.

We each have needs to be met in our lives
We climb to this spot high in the clouds.
The rock formation calls us to leave the World Behind.

The climb exhausts but only the body feels fatigue.
Our spirits have lifted and reached out to be embraced
By the unknown.
We have returned to a time and place of Peace and Solitude,
Leaving behind the cares of this world
That rob us of the Spiritual world
We no longer think of as existing.

We separate high on the Rock to find a place of our own.
Now the Spirit speaks to each of us in our new-found Solitude.
The world is far behind and our mind only things on him, "Manitou."
We are in his presence and the World stands still
As we meditate on our life behind and days ahead.

We tell the Spirit of our need and fears.
Our innermost feelings we share with him.
The quietness continues as we draw near.
The encounter is upon us, Spirit meeting our innermost needs.

One cries with pain and wails aloud
As something within is released.
It leaves the body and is sent away
Rebuked, and told not to return.

Our inner person is searched by the Creator.
We confess inner wrongs of days gone by.
Our souls feel good as we unload
The inner shackles of yesterday.

Our spirits become free and we have met the One
Who heals and caresses and restores.
Peace settles in.

Our heart beats slow.
Time has lost its importance and only the Creator matters.

It is time to climb to the highest Peak
Where we sit in a circle at his feet.
We hold hands and in his presence,
No need to talk or converse,
We acknowledge him and lift our hands in surrender.

One after the other, we lift our voices in praise.
Creation is all around as we view the Sky and Forest below.
Creator has put all the colours and beauty known to Man
On this special outdoor Spiritual Wonderland.

The birds fly around and sing their songs of praise.
We have come as children and have met
With the Spirits of Days Gone By.

Refresh we stand and each offers Prayers and Praises
To the Four Directions.

Sweet grass is burnt and tobacco given
As our lives flash by in a moment of time.
Hours have passed with no thought of time.
We have encountered and spent time
On Holy Ground with Manitou this day.
It is getting dark as darkness begins to approach our Space.
Each of us descends the rock with thoughts of Gratitude and Praise.
We are better people now as we have been Strengthened and Cleansed
By Manitou from Above.

That evening, we sit around the circle.
A great campfire burning flames to reflect upon.
One after another we stand to share and praise
This past wonderful day,
Some happenings too sacred to be shared with fellow beings.

We bed down in sleeping bags beside the burning fire,
Looking skyward to the stars above,
Sparkling and twinkling like never before.
A star falls brightly all aglow, then fades away into infinity.
We each make a wish from our hearts refreshed.
It has been good to hold the hand of "Manitou."
He caresses our Spirits and gives us sleep.
Pleasant Dreams are ours and all Fear is Gone.

We have come to the rock each by different paths.
Different colours are our skin.
Manitou has met all needs and strengthened us within.
We will depart at dawn on our separate paths.

To each the Rock is sacred
And Manitou's blessing will go with us.
He will guide us in our Spiritual Quest.
We each depart different than when we arrived.
Manitoulin Island and this special Sacred Rock
Will be shared with those who walk
The Red Road.

August 9, 1996
A-Day-At-Dreamer's-Rock
Manitoulin-Island
George L. Charles
Guzhagad Nang (Mid-Day Star)
(e-mailed to Y. Dufault on August 26, 1996)

*The Legend of the Bird and His Special Songs to the Creator and Nokomis
(Grandmother)*

Robin was playing with her three best friends: Sandy, Ruth and Yvonne. They were all in grade three at school and also shared the same homeroom.

It was Friday of the Easter weekend and Robin's birthday was the next day. Tonight she was having a sleepover and tomorrow they would celebrate her birthday. Being together and spending time laughing and joking was the most important thing to the four young girls. As they talked about the party to come Sandy asked Robin what her name meant in "Indian."

"I don't know," replied Robin, "but my Nokomis (Grandmother) is visiting us from the Rama Reserve. Let's go and ask her."

The four girls went to Nokomis and asked her what Robin's name meant.

"I am so glad you thought to ask me this question," the older woman said, smiling at her granddaughter. "Robin is the fourth person in our family to carry this name since my own Nokomis was given the legend. Tonight, when you all come for the sleepover we will get together around the fireplace and I will share with you what the name Robin means in my language and the legend that has been passed down in our family. For now, you girls run along and play, and tonight we will talk of the old times when our people were close to the Creator."

Later that evening all the girls sat in Robin's front room in front of the fireplace waiting with great anticipation for Nokomis St. Germaine to pass her legend on to them. Robin's mother, Carol, came in to the room with drinks of raspberry tea and scone (Indian bread) fresh from the oven. The young girls ate their scone and drank their tea quickly so Nokomis could begin her story.

Nokomis stood in front of the fireplace, her grey hair glistening from the fire's glow. She could feel how excited the girls were to hear what she had to say and waited for them to quiet down before she began to speak.

“It is now time to pass on this story,” she told them as their rapt faces looked up at her, “but first we will thank the Creator for the beauty of all his creation, for all the animals, fowl and fish to feed us and give us strong, healthy bodies.”

The girls listened respectfully as Nokomis spoke to her God with a thankful heart. She asked for a blessing that each girl might grow up to lead lives that would please the Creator. Then, after a moment of silence, she began.

“My Nokomis was named Emma Gethons and she was the midwife on the Rama Reserve,” Robin’s Nokomis told them. “She was called “Ndimoooyenh,” meaning “Old Woman” in Indian. This name had been given to her as a name of honour since she was the oldest woman in the community. Nokomis Gethons had delivered hundreds of babies on the Reserve and in the white community surrounding the Reserve. But the delivery she was about to do was different because it was her youngest daughter, Anne, who was about to give birth.

“My Nokomis had arrived at her daughter’s the day before because she wanted to be sure she would be present for the arrival of the baby. It was well into spring but she had to come by horse and sleigh due to the deep snow conditions. Everyone that year said they couldn’t remember a winter when the snow and cold weather had lasted so long. All the people seemed to talk about it to one another and ask how long it would be before the warm weather would come.”

Robin’s Nokomis took a breath and continued. “The birthing started that night shortly after supper and it was to last eighteen hours. Eighteen long hours until the baby finally made her appearance with the help of Nokomis Gethons. By this time Nokomis Gethons was tired and hungry because she hadn’t slept or eaten since the night before when she was still with her family. She felt exhausted and stepped outside her daughter’s house to stand on the veranda for a few moments, thinking the fresh air might help to overcome her feelings of weakness and lightheadedness. She closed her eyes, just for a second, and when she reopened them she couldn’t believe what she was seeing. On the only cleared area of the yard, under the old birch tree, was a Pitchi (robin) singing his little heart out. So proud he was standing there in his bright red vest and charcoal grey

coat with his black head thrown back. His song seemed to say “Cheerily-Cheerily, Cheer up, winter’s spell is broken.”

My Nokomis stood motionless as the Pitchi kept singing to the Creator, bombarding the heavens with his happy voice, and she knew the Great Spirit spoke to her through the exuberant song of the small bird. She suddenly felt that the long winter was over and that the good weather would be upon them shortly. And she also knew that everything was going to be well with the new baby and that the child should be called “Pitchi.” The baby would grow up to be like the little bird and exemplify all the gifts of the spirit: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control.

The songs of the Pitchi filled Nokomis’ heart with great joy and tears of happiness streamed down her cheeks as she thought about the time she had just spent communicating with her God through the songs of the small bird. She stayed on the veranda until the Pitchi suddenly left, disappearing as quickly as he had come. Her spirit was refreshed and she went back into the house and shared with her daughter the message she had received from the singing of the small bird.

Anne listened to her mother relate what had happened outside and agreed the baby would be called Pitchi. They hugged each other and talked of how wonderful it was that the baby girl would be called by this special name.

There was a moment of silence in the room as Robin’s Nokomis finished speaking and then the older woman looked down at her granddaughter’s upturned face.

“That is how you received your name and you see now that it has been passed on to you from a time of long ago. Now it will be your choice to continue the name when you marry and have children or you own. And since the history of our people is passed on orally I ask that you share this story with our people whenever you are asked about your name. Or if you pass the name Pitchi on to one of your children let them too know of the legend.”

Nokomis looked kindly at her granddaughter and the other young girls who had listened intently to her story and told them that since they had been so good she would pass another legend on to them on her next visit.

Later, as the four girls finally settle down for the night in their sleeping bags, Robin asked them if they liked the legend her Nokomis had told them.

“I thought it was a neat story,” Sandy said, “and since I’m part Indian, I’ll ask my Nokomis if she knows any stories about our people that she can pass on to me.”

“Yeah, I thought it was a cool legend,” answered Ruth. “Someday when I’m grown up, I’m going to be a writer and Indian life is one of the subjects I’ll write about.”

“Well, I thought the story was awesome,” said Yvonne, “and since I want to be a teacher some day, I’ll teach classes about the Native way of life and how Native culture and legends should be respected.”

All the girls agreed that this had been a good day of fun and learning, but tomorrow was the day of the birthday celebration and they wanted to be well rested for the festivities. After a few more words to each other they finally settled down for a good night’s sleep.

This legend is dedicated to my mother Anne and her mother Emma Gethons who was a midwife on the Rama Reserve and delivered hundreds of babies on and off the Reserve. It is also dedicated to all women who represent the four colours of people on this earth. Our Elders teach us to hold all of them in very high esteem as they are the givers of life.

Written by: George Charles
“Giizhigad Nang” (Mid-Day Star)
April 24, 1996

The Day the Eagles Came

Thousands of years ago, Soloman,
 A man full of Godly wisdom, said
 “There is one thing too wonderful for me to understand:
 The way of an eagle in the sky.”

North on 60 from Whitney into Algonquin Park
 Our Creator smiled and put his special touch on this
 Outdoor wonderland
 Teeming with animal life and fowl and fish galore
 For all the Creator’s people to share
 Our Algonquin brothers and sisters say
 Men-Wah-Tay (a nice place to be).

The Algonquin Whitney First Nation
 Set aside three days in August of 1995
 To celebrate the first annual Pow Wow
 To be held in Algonquin Park.

The drummers started drumming and we all picked up the vibes.
 Mother Earth was speaking as the dancers hit their stride.
 All the Algonquin Nation were happy
 That Pow Wow days had come.

The Algonquin Nation was proud once again,
 Their heritage and teaching lying dormant for too many years,
 The grandfathers and grandmothers being stirred
 By teachings of long ago.
 Young men and young women seeking from their past,
 The children basking in their heritage with faces all aglow.

Feasts of moose meat and fish and Indian bread each day,
Give-a-ways for drummers and all elders, dancers and guests.
The time has come for the Algonquin Nation and all Indians
To listen to the drum and seek our teachings from the past.

In the last hours of our great Pow Wow the Creator sent a message
By his great bird, the eagle
As a sign of his power and love
Promising good Pow Wows to follow.

The first eagle arrived and soared over the east gate
Not moving a wing, just soaring and gliding.
He was looking below as the dancers danced-their-styles,
Listening to the drummers as he gazed below.

For fully ten minutes the great bird, witness of the Creator,
Hovers over this now sacred Pow Wow site,
Then he almost instantly disappears
As quickly as he came.

An honour song was requested from an Elder in the crowd
To thank the Creator for sending the eagle.
The drummers played with great delight,
This honour song of thankfulness.

After the honour song was over another song was played.
Soon the dancers began to murmur,
Heads tilt back and fingers point skyward.
Over the east gate, two eagles are hovering and gliding and looking below.

Our Pow Wow took on a more sacred meaning
To each man, woman and child that day.
Dancing was effortless as we stared in awe
As the eagles took in the Pow Wow, as they looked at all below.

They soared away and left us each to his own thoughts.
More songs were played and the tempo remained high,
From the east gate one more eagle did appear.
The Creator sealed his omen with this message from above.

At the closing of the Whitney First Nation Pow Wow,
Saying our goodbyes with hugs for everybody,
We all departed our separate ways to find homes near and far.

When we sit around our campfires and talk of days gone by
We will tell our stories of the eagles on that special day.

Our Creator sent a message from the king of birds above
A special omen to the Algonquin Nation.
We should pass on this true story in a good way
Of our Indian heritage and how it's here to stay.

This story is dedicated to the Algonquin First Nation of Whitby and surrounding areas and to all residents of the community of Whitney. Special mention to Jim Johnson (Burley Falls), announcer and M.C. of this first annual Pow Wow held in Algonquin Park.

Written by: George L. Charles, invited Elder
"Guzhgad Nang"
"Mid-day Star"
September 13, 1995

Appendix E

Interview with Nokomis (Grandmother), Chippewa of Mnjikaning First Nation.

November 15, 2001/December 29, 2001

Meet Nokomis First Nations Elder

I have visited the Anishnabe Resource Centre of Georgian College at the Orillia Campus where Sue Anderson-Kelly, **Nokomis** (meaning Grandmother), is an advisor.

I interviewed Nokomis, Deer Clan, Chippewa of Mnjikaning First Nation on November 15, 2001. Our primary face-to-face interview took place in her livingroom in Rama, Ontario. The full transcript of the interview appears in here. Nokomis served on the executive of the Ontario Native Women's Association from 1990 to 1994. She chaired committees on Aboriginal Justice, Environment and Health and was the representative of ONWA to the Board of the Native Women's Association of Canada.

Nokomis believes in being a rainbow bridge between Native and non-Native cultures. Newspaper articles illustrate the power of her voice in this area (Payne, 1993, Murray, C., 1998). Nokomis and her husband Nimkie-Benishie-Nini (Harvey Anderson) had actually adopted a white police officer, Constable Richard Moxley into the Native community, as their son, at the Rama Thanksgiving Pow Wow in 1992, before thousands of guests (Payne, 1993) in recognition of his devotion to Aboriginal people and his teaching to help Native children achieve a better quality of life. A founder of the Rama Traditional Thanksgiving Pow Wow, Sue Anderson-Kelly has danced as a traditional Elder for many years.

We met at a Race Relations conference one decade ago. Nokomis has given presentations on traditional teachings to groups at two schools where I have taught. On October 30, 2002 she gave teachings at my high school, talking about the Residential School Experience, the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers and the Medicine Wheel. When she gives talks, she shares her character *miseducation* experiences in Residential School, contrasting them with positive character education experiences of First Nations traditional teachings.

Nokomis is actively involved in healing circles, teaching circles and drumming. I have attended several Pow Wows and participated in two very moving ceremonies with her, in the spirit of family. I do not speak of them in this academic context.

Nokomis helped to establish the *All Native Circle Conference* in 1987. She has been the National Representative from the ANCC to the United Church Board of Directors and National Chairperson for the *Council on Healing and Healing Fund Committee for the United Church of Canada's Healing Fund* in response to the hurt of Native Residential Schools. Today Nokomis is very involved in an advisory capacity in the healing movement in Canada (United Church of Canada, 2001a, 2001b) and in Indiana in the United States to help heal negative intergenerational impacts of residential schools on Aboriginal character development. Nokomis emphasizes respect for the ancestors. She worked closely with Paul Lennox of the Ontario archeological society to properly bury Native bones once housed in Canadian museums. She is consulted on proper protocol and ritual for various ceremonies locally, nationally and internationally.

As a member of the Mnjikaning Fish Fence Circle, Nokomis worked hard with Nimkie-Benishie-Nini, now deceased, to help preserve an ancient historic site, known as Mnjikaning Fish Weirs. It is a five thousand year old complex system of Aboriginal constructed underwater fences for catching fish. In 1992, the couple received the Ontario Historical Society's Carnochan Award for promoting cultural awareness of the significance of Mnjikaning's traditional fish weirs in Lake Couchiching. The couple also received two prestigious awards: the *Simcoe County Volunteer of the Year Award* and the *Governor General's Canada 125 Award* for dedicated community involvement.

Nokomis has been *CFB Borden Aboriginal Advisor for the Department of National Defence* (Murray, C., 1998, p. 3). She was the first female Aboriginal advisor to serve on the National Parole Board, representing the Ontario/Nunavut region. She has been an Elder for the Canadian Rangers, a pre-recruitment officer for the Canadian Army, a liaison worker for the Aboriginal Justice Committee with Corrections Canada and a visiting Elder at the Beaver Creek Minimum Security Facility near Bracebridge.

Nokomis fights to preserve natural flora and fauna.. On the lakeside property she and her husband purchased years ago, Nokomis is planning to create a cultural center

where young people can receive Earth Wisdom teachings. She feels that too much of her community is being paved as land is gobbled up under the expanding influence of the local casino. Nokomis is upset that photos of traditional dancers (who abstain from alcohol) are lined up behind liquor bottles in the bar of a nearby casino. She has sewn regalia worn by some of those dancers and officials.

Nokomis' cultural background is both Inuit and Ojibway. Like Gloria who is reclaiming her language, Nokomis has been reclaiming and relearning both of her cultures, passing the teachings on to younger generations, incorporating drumming, singing, storytelling and ceremony. Nokomis begins every day with quiet contemplation and smudging. She emphasizes the power of prayer, staying strong, persisting to survive, nurturing hope and keeping one's dreams alive. She stresses the importance of putting out positive thoughts and rising above negativity.

Nokomis' approach to life with faith, gratitude and courage are described by Hunt (2002) in *The Intelligencer* newspaper in an article entitled "A tale of fire and ice and a reunion: Almost sixty years later Inuit woman meets man who helped save her life" (p. 14). Nokomis recounts life experiences include being born Inuit on Nottingham Island in the Northwest Territories, a prolonged stay in hospital six months after a serious accident, being taken far away to a Native Residential School in Brandon, Manitoba rather than being returned to her home community, being adopted by a loving non-Native family who fought hard to remove her from that institution, and later becoming part of the Ojibway community learning and adopting their culture, traditions and language.

An Authentic Model of Courage and Hope

Do you have any questions you want to ask?

Yes. I'm going in the order that I put them in, in my interview questions because I'm supposed to follow the proper protocol for the interview. I guess the first question I'd like to ask you is "What would you like to be called within the text that I'm going to write?"

Nokomis is the word "Grandmother" in Ojibway. That is my title. We are often referred to as Traditional Elders.

Figure VIII. Nokomis (Sue Anderson).

Nokomis posed for the National Defence at Base Borden in December 1999. This photo commemorates her appointment as their first Aboriginal advisor. It is included with permission.

So I will refer to you as Nokomis, a traditional Elder?

Um hum. Nokomis, Chippewa of Mnjikaning First Nation.

Question 1: What does developing character mean to you?

My first question, Nokomis, is “What does developing character mean to you?”

We are taught that before we are born, two Spirits meet in the Universe. Those two Spirits then enter the Earth’s atmosphere and into a woman and the two Souls fertilize and become this new person energy, whether it is male or female. At the time of conception, the genes of those two Spirits are already in that fertilized egg. *That is when the character starts, when those two spirits from the Universe come into the woman’s womb and that character of that Being is right there.* That is the beginning. After nine months, that individual is born and the character building starts from the time it merges on Mother Earth, through the love and affection it is given by its parents, the aunties, the uncles, the grandparents. As you grow in life, that character is continually being built. It can’t be done overnight, or in a week or in a month. It keeps evolving as the person is growing to become stronger.

The way that we are taught that character is developed in an individual is by being part of whatever activities are going on, by observing and listening to everything that is around them. It is not a case where you can sit a child down in a class and say “Okay , today we are going to write about character” *because character is an amalgamation of so many things that a person learns. It cannot be taught in one lesson, because it evolves with happiness, kindness, respect, even ... On the teachings of the Ten Native Commandments or the Golden Rule, the Seven Grandfather Teachings. All these things take time and years to learn, to create that character.* Each one of us has it [character], but we are all different. Does that make sense?

This Ojibway story about this happening in the Spirit World first before it enters Earth into human form is very lengthy. I’ve just given you a condensed version to give you an understanding of it. From those two Spirits that enter, the egg is fertilized and the character starts right there. This character is coming from two Spirits into one.

It is the blending of the two Spirits starts to form the character of that individual that is going to be born. I don't know if you have heard that story before or not. It is character, the word character itself, I find very hard to describe in one or two words because it is a combination of many, many things that makes individuals what they are. [Nokomis looked up word "character" in the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, reading out the various meanings.] A congregation of things come into your life to form that character.

The Medicine Wheel is common to all Native cultures. As we age and go through the four stages of life on the Medicine Wheel on our life journey, even our own characters change. Fortunately, I've reached my age. I feel very honoured that I can look back on a stage and say this didn't go right or that didn't go right. But, when you reach our age, it is a time of reflection and taking pride in what you have accomplished. They don't have to be great deeds, but you have helped in some small way in making another person happy.... As an individual, you are growing stronger and developing another side of your character that you didn't even know existed, with help from other people. Does that sound very complicated? I'm sure that you are going to get different answers to this from everybody.

Question 2: In your culture, how is education for character traditionally caught or taught?

I think in a way I have already answered that question—*by observing, learning and being directly involved* with whatever is going on. You don't sit down in a classroom setting and say "this is the lesson for the day, listen, read it and report on it." It is ongoing.

Question 3: How do you consider yourself to be involved in character education?

Giving hope and guidance to all these children and youth that I work with, and showing them examples where there is always hope.

We Inuit up North all had our sign, our identification disk with a serial number on it, but no name that we wore on a string around our necks. Some had their sign on the

face of the drum. I have to wait to get my name and then it will be painted on the face of the drum. I had the opportunity to speak to Susan Aglukark after a concert. She signed a CD there saying "Sue, Be strong" and she signed my drum. When I greeted her, I said "Hi, I am bringing greetings from Coral Harbour, South Hampton." She just looked at me and she says "Really. Where?" "From Coral Harbour." She said "Who is your family up there?" I said "Nakoolak." She got up and gave me a big hug and kiss. John took a picture of us together. I thought it was strange that she would write on the CD for me to be strong because those are the exact words that I remember being told by my family when I left to go to Residential School. In those days, we didn't have maps, globes, the radio or TV to know where we were. Native children from across Canada were sent to Residential School. Those who went to school close to home could return to their families in the summer months. Sometimes we were too far away to get returned. Those who lived too far away never got returned home.

My family was telling me to be strong. As a child, you don't understand what those words mean, until you get older. I always thought it meant but I had to fight, but fighting in a negative way. As I travelled through life, I was told that I could do more good if I fought in a positive way rather than a negative way. I'm still fighting, but I'm *fighting in a more gentle and thoughtful way.*

Even by other Elders, since I was born, I was always taught to push aside all the negativity. We have to rise ourselves above it. Good positive thoughts... all that surrounds us each day. Because of what I have gone through in my lifetime, I'm not even supposed to be here.

When I came through that terrible fire, there were five men down there that looked after me for five and a half months, with no medical supplies. It took that long for a plane to come in to the island and take me out and get me to the hospital. At which point, the doctor said that I was too badly burned and that there was nothing they could do for me, so they put me in a room to die. And fortunately, the following day, another doctor came along and asked the nurse why I had been put in that room. He told me the story and said he was taking over. He took care of me and by contacting other doctors using the wireless radio. He found out that they could start doing skin grafts on me to

save my life. So from six years of age until now, last year, was the last time I had a skin graft done. For all those years, as I grew, I had to have more and more operations. Forty-two years later, I would make contact with the men in the story, and the pilot's family. The pilot who flew the plane out, is now dead but I did meet his family and they all know the story. You have the newspaper article.

With the work that I have been involved in across Canada, I was also fortunate enough to meet other people who were sitting around the *Sacred Fire* one night after our conference. It was a beautiful, quiet night. This gentleman got up and he said "I would like to share a story about a little girl that had so much courage that our community spirit was uplifted when we heard her story. This story goes back to my grandmother's time. She told the story and the story has been passed on. So she gave me *permission to share the story* when I came to the conference."

So we were all sitting around the fire. It was a beautiful, quiet evening. The fire was glowing. This gentlemen stood up and started telling the story. And lo and behold, if it wasn't a story about ME! He said that everybody called her their little "Susie" and everybody claimed her as their own because of her fighting for life and having enough courage to live through all this, after all that she had been through. My husband and I sat there and we both jumped up and we both said "You're telling my story!" He just looked at me and he was like "Oh, who are you?" So I told him what happened. He ran across the circle to me. He cried and gave me hugs and said that his grandmother had said she hoped someday that he would cross paths and meet this person who he was telling the story about. Here it was me. That was an experience that sent shivers through my mind because you often hear people telling a story, but you never expect it to be about yourself.

So he had to phone his family that night to say that he had met me. They also had some questions to make sure it was me. I was able to relay the information that they had wanted to prove that I was the girl that he was telling the story about. *So, I have tried to share my story and the struggles I have been through to give Hope to other people - that they should never give up searching for their Path in Life or searching for a reunion with their families or somebody they love.* Some are separated from their families and they never find their families. It took me forty-two years to make the connection. If that can be

an inspiration of hope to others not to give up after looking for one year or five years, I hope I can at least leave that message with people so that they can continue have hope, even if it took quite a few years. It took me forty-two years for my prayer to be answered and to be reunited with my family.

It was like meeting a room full of strangers. I was forced into different cultures that were really not mine, but because of the system the government set up, it was an enforcement that we had to live by. Now I am trying to relearn a lot of my own culture, about my family, to be sensitive to their plight in life and what they had to go through. Hopefully I can pass all that on to future generations. Never give up hope. There is always light at the end of the tunnel as they say. My wish has been fulfilled. That's it. That's my hope. *There is hope for everything you do in life.* Okay. It is so simple. You don't have to draw up a proposal or write up a vision. You just have to *keep praying for anything you want and it'll happen.* Do you have any questions you want to ask?

Question 4: In your opinion how do teachings to develop character persist in present day reality? How do you relate them?

Shut off for a minute, I have to think about that. ...Um, All the Aboriginal people across Canada and other parts of North and South America have the belief that you let each individual develop and grow at their own rate. The European system is that no matter what age you are forced through one grade after another, whether you are doing good or not, you are pushed.

In the Traditional way, everyday life in the great outdoors provided many meaningful opportunities for lessons on living in a good way. Today we think of learning in schools being in a room with four walls, pencil and paper. Learning didn't used to be necessary like that. Children were taught real life skills daily. They learned by listening, watching and doing. Everything was done with the family who celebrated small successes. *The Native way is to allow the individual to grow at their own rate and mature at their own rate because each individual has special gifts and it will take one person a little longer to develop, their own character, their own way of learning, their own way of understanding whatever they're trying to learn and to be taught at their own rate.*

Our system, the Native system, also is not to put children in grade systems. We let each child develop at his or her own rate and never make them feel that they are a failure. In the system that we are taught now, even in grade one and grade two, if that child is not put into the next grade, they are immediately given the message that they are not good enough. We would never treat a child like that! We would let the child go on with their friends into the next grade and mature at their own rate, *making them feel very important and worthy of keeping up* with their friends rather than give them a negative message that means that “You are no good.” If negative energy is sent to that child, they’re going to get discouraged and that is why I am so against the educational system today.

And it carries on even at the college level, and it is a shame. I have seen these brilliant students come in there. Maybe there’s one or two subjects that they are just not keen on, but they know they’ve got to have and they just give up because they know they can’t keep up with the system because of the forced element that is put on each child. *Whereas our way was much more kind and gentle and nurturing and they would always ask the Mothers, Grandmothers and Aunties to encourage them as they grew up with the family. They were the Circle of Relationship.* People ask me, “Where were the men?” Usually they were out fishing, hunting, building, making things, providing for the family. The women raised the children, did the sewing and the cooking. People knew what their roles were. There was no confusion about this. Children today don’t have that to hold onto. *Children had an extended family that went beyond blood relations. The whole community supported them.* It still happens. Susan Aglukark is an example of that. Her success is the community’s success. Collaboration instead of competition is what counted in the traditional ways. We need to bring that back for our children. Nowadays, most parents are too busy trying to keep up with the Jones or the cost of living. They both have to be out working and the children are being neglected, where before, our way, children were always surrounded by aunts and uncles and grandparents to help them.

Also, by living in that extended family atmosphere, a child was never left alone, never left ...*Always loved and given the words of encouragement* that they needed, until the European system was forced on us and we were just stripped of everything, of our own culture, of our own history, of our way of life. We have become so assimilated into today’s society that we ourselves have to *relearn our precious Native way* of doing

things. *We are taught to honour, love and respect all the Grandfather teachings that were passed onto us. If there were some way that we could capture that into the educational system, it would be more beneficial to each child.*

I have always been a fighter. I rebelled so often in my lifetime against the [educational] system, because I know when I was with my family, everything that you were taught was with kindness and with respect. They would understand where each individual is coming from and at what level they're learning. In the Residential System that I was forced into, I rebelled so much. I was punished daily because I spoke up against things, being rushed to do something, being unable to take my time, or I had an assignment done in three hours when I hadn't had time to do any research in understanding what the topic was, because you had to translate all this from the language that you knew into a foreign language that you didn't understand. We would see an English word written, and pronounce it as it is written and get beat up again because we were pronouncing it wrong and that was the way it was written. The English language is very confusing. It certainly was to me and to many others. Because when you see something written out and you are supposed to pronounce it the way it looks and don't get help in doing that, well that to me is not showing respect and kindness in the teachings.

Our way would be to say, "Okay, this is how the word is spelled, but it is pronounced this way because of..." and give me explanations as you go along. I found all along the way, we were just forced to do the things the way we were taught and not to question why. I was always the rebellious one. I always asked why. I had to know the reason something was being done to see the benefit of what it was.

I can remember one time in class we had to write a little essay and I had to write about an island that I came from. I stood up in class, and I started to read about this island [Izland] that I came from and I got a strapping on both hands because *island* is spelled *i s l a n d* and pronounced it as I saw it and I got hell for that without the teacher explaining to me that you don't pronounce it that way. I wrote it out properly, but I said it wrong. That is just a small example of the message that I'm trying to get across. If you do something this way, explain why it is being done. I always asked so many questions. That

is why I was always in trouble. A lot of the other children wouldn't speak up. They would just lower their heads and do their work without questioning, whereas I always had to know to reason why, which got me in more trouble all the time.

[When I left home], I never saw home again. I never saw my family again until after forty-two years.

At that time, I couldn't see any positive character education in the Residential School. Teaching was just punishment, very infractious. There were things that we didn't know about and didn't do right or we didn't say things right or we raised our eyes when we shouldn't. We were always taught that we had to keep our eyes lowered and look at our shoes at all times to show respect to the people, for the people that were teaching us. We were shown great dishonour. They were above us and we couldn't raise ourselves to their level. So, it has taken us many, many years to raise our heads and put our shoulders back. *We take pride in who we are. We are special just like everybody else. It has taken many, many years to learn that.*

We were not allowed to speak our [Native] language. There were daily punishments. One of the biggest punishments that even remains with me today is I still have fears of going into any basement because it brings back memories of when I was locked in a coal bin, day after day for doing something.... Maybe I asked too many questions in class or I didn't keep up with the [English] language or I was doing things... maybe I dropped a pencil. Any little thing we were punished for. We were put into a dark coal bin and if we came out of that coal bin dirty, we got another punishment because we were supposed to sit there prim and proper and not get dirty. On a bed of coal!

Even to this day, I still have a fear of going into anybody's basement unless I know that there are back doors I can walk out of. I have had nightmares even to this day and I try to cope with that. Daily abuse was common for everybody—all types of abuses that I won't go into, but... no. The main thing that I can say about the Residential School was "Yes, they did help give us some education, but not enough education to take with us into the outside world." We were mostly cleaning ladies between the ages of sixteen to eighteen.

I was told that I had the mentality to wash dishes and scrub floors. That made me mad! Maybe they did it purposely. I don't know. But I was just determined that I would not spend the rest of my life washing dishes and scrubbing floors for somebody else! So, I got part-time jobs here and there and went back to school. And then, I met a wonderful family that adopted me and they helped me to overcome a lot of my anger and my hatred and try to turn this angry, bitter child into somebody that was going to blossom and turn into a beautiful flower and see the positive side in life—that life was worth living and that there are good things in life too. There were things to look forward to and accomplish and that I could do anything I wanted to. So, with their love and their guidance, I went to nursing school. I thoroughly enjoyed that. Then I found out I didn't like working nights and weekends all the time, so I worked for a few more years and saved my money and went back to a dental college. I knew I could get a regular job with a doctor or a dentist that had regular hours and weekends off. I don't like shifts. I'm a morning person, not a night person. That is what I have been trying to do at home.

I'm very strong, but you can only become strong if you have got struggles and hurdles to achieve in life and its not handed to you on a golden platter. I was told once that "Every knock you receive in life is a boost." I remember hearing that as a child and I thought, "These people are crazy! How can every knock we receive help you in any way?" *But, as you go through the four stages of life, you suddenly realize that it is a boost and you had better get up off your butt and get going. Don't give up. Another channel for hope.*

When you are talking about the Four Stages of Life, you are referring to the Medicine Wheel?

Those Medicine Wheel teachings are so powerful and wonderful and something to hang onto. You can't give up. The stories are so beautiful. Even listening to the stories my own family had to tell me when I had my family reunion up North, I thought "Wow, these people are so strong and powerful!" I asked, "Where did you get this inner strength from?" To me, I saw it as that inner strength to keep going despite all the struggles that they've had and continue to have it living in their environment. They said it is passed on from generation to generation and they said that I too still have it. It's a kind of blood

memory. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here today, especially when I was given up for dead when I was burned so badly and had five young gentlemen looking after me for five and a half months with no medical experience. I was very fortunate to be able to meet them forty- two years to the month after the accident happened.

Two of them to this day are in their late eighties. The first time I met them, I had them relate the story to me. They have carried that pain with them for all these years, not knowing whether I lived or died, even though all communication with me was lost. This was going back during the war. They still call me their little Susie. So, they certainly gave me a lot of hope.

The changes I have seen in my lifetime... *all the things that have been done over the years have always excluded the Native people*. Because we have gained the strength to use our voices again, especially the women, we have become very strong in voicing our opinions and our concerns at all political levels of government: provincial, federal and municipal. We are still not being heard. We want to be involved with whatever changes are happening instead of everybody deciding what what has to be done for us. Inform us! Communicate with us so that we have a good understanding of where each party is coming from, so that we can have a mutual understanding of what to do for the next generation! We have to be involved, not always being told what to do. Partnership... It is happening but very slowly. We are still stuck in the European educational system. That has got to change, not just for Native people but for all cultures. *We all have to have that sense of understanding and respect for each person. Every culture around the world has beautiful things to share*. I really believe in that. We all have to be involved at the table. *We can all learn from each other*. [Her comment here echoes the comment Justin Trudeau, son of former prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, had made to me.]

One important topic I would like to touch on is that *Native people around the world have always passed on the teachings orally*, mainly because we did not know written communication hundreds of years ago. That is very important to be taken into consideration that we did not know and understand the European way of writing everything down. *We should be giving more honour and respect to our oral traditional*

teachings and be accepted in the educational system with the oral traditional teachings also, not just written, by the Elders. (Here Nokomis read from the *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* the definitions of character, seeking confirmation of pronunciation for some words. She took great care to pronounce everything perfectly. She commented that this dictionary held more alternative meanings than the American one.) The other dictionary doesn't have all this. "A written description of a person's qualities." A reference. Hmm. That is about as close as they [in the dictionary] get, in saying that it deals with a person's qualities. That is the focus in character education—to develop personal qualities that contribute to enhance an individual's life, knowing they can now contribute within the fabric of society.

In our communities, we lived in a lifestyle that included extended families. *This would include all of our aunts and uncles, our cousins and grandparents who were the teachers and carriers of our Traditional Teachings. It was the responsibility of all community members to help each individual child be a family member so that they could learn to live in a proper way. That is how our character building was done in our communities and handed down from generation to generation.*

Character education is rooted at home first. From the time they are born, children are taught by all family members. As the child aged, the character development changed and they learned more. Now, that next question, can you break that down?

Developing the character of a child is ongoing and takes years of work. *The Medicine Wheel is all taught orally.* In doing the teachings, it also includes the teachings of the four seasons, which in itself has traditional teachings that are very sacred and honourable *with many, many inner teachings of each season.* The same with the Medicine Wheel which is broken down into other sections to include *emotional, physical, mental and spiritual.* It can also include the time of birth to the time of death and all those teachings that we go through and we go through all those stages of life we go through have many teachings that are passed on. Does that make sense?

We don't force any individual to believe what we are saying. Everybody has their own vision of hearing and telling a story and what it will be to them. With a child, we try not to relay any negative thoughts or feelings to make them feel inferior or not capable of

learning, but we will try to *guide them in a different direction or to redirect them* to show them another way of doing something or learning a teaching rather than going the wrong way. It would be like watching a person that is drowning. You wouldn't throw them a rock and say "Have a good time" and let them sink to the bottom. We would throw them a rope to guide them. That is just an example of *how to help* rather than that negative way of doing things. *We would try to approach it in a positive way.*

With an adult struggling? My understanding is the Native way is non-interference.

*The Native Way used to be non-interference, but because we have been forced into that present system, we have become that way more and more.. We have become so assimilated into today's society that we have been losing a lot of our old ways and pushing them aside. Elders and what they have ... all of those sacred teachings should be taught and learned. Some students will never use them, but in the back of their minds, some little things may remain with them to guide them in their path in life and say « Oh yes, I worked with someone along the way and I should be taking this road. .» We try to encourage each individual to find their own path in life, but *if we see that they are going off the Red Road, we will in some way try to approach them in a kind and respectful way without giving them direct instructions. We do it in storytelling, in teachings, but always in a gentle, kind way so that it appears that we are not interfering.**

Question 5: Do you think there is potential for these teachings to develop character to impact positively and permanently on adolescents or on young adults?

- a) in Native school systems?***
- b) in non-Native school systems?***
- c) in other settings?***

a) Native school systems

The *Seven Grandfather teachings* of the Grandfathers taught in many of the Native schools have *definitely had a positive impact, not only in Native schools, but everywhere.*

b) Non-Native school systems

Hopefully they [the teachers] *would contact the Elders in communities* and surrounding schools to invite them to come in and help and let the Elders do the oral teachings and not just have it be written.

Would it be considered to be acceptable to go through literature written by Native and/or non-Native people and to look at videos such as *Where the Spirit Lives* that talks about a young girl educated in a Residential School and to have discussions on that as we prepare for visits by Elders?

I think that would be beneficial, but you still need the personal contact and vision of a Native person speaking to individuals in the classroom. There is a lot of that that cannot be transmitted. You have to have that visual aid of that person standing right in front of you to honestly share and understand that person who has lived it. *A “heart to heart” contact with the students and not just an individual who has studied Native studies or our Native way of life.* They don't have the true understanding to fully capture that students' imagination of what it really is to be a Native person to learn in the educational system.

There is a lot of fear that we, the Elders, have about Non-native people misguiding or misinforming students. Some have learned a lot more than we intended to and have taken off and used it for their gain. There is the one lady who has profited financially from Elders who have developed their own stories, their own teachings, then shared the information and then disemboweled it.

Not too far from here, we had a young lady in the community that was very interested in learning about our sweat lodges and all of our teachings. She started up a company using all of our teachings and made a little business out of it, until there was such a point that we put our foot down, because why should this person take away all our teachings and make a business for herself, when real Native people aren't allowed to do that? So we were able to get a response. She moved on elsewhere. Whether she is counselling in our Native way, I don't know. We don't know where she is too. That is just one situation where we are aware of where something that is so sacred and has been

passed on generation through generation for us, has been abused and taken away by somebody else who used it for their own profit.

There are some Native Elders who advertise themselves as Traditional Elders but who are not Traditional Elders. They do not honour the sacred teachings in a good way. They call a lot of attention to themselves and look for profit in a Non-Native following. They see giving the teachings as business. *Some people charge big bucks for sweats and teachings. We call them "popcorn elders." They are not Traditional Elders. They bring dishonour to those of us who follow the Good Way.*

Over the past years there have been more concerns brought to the Native people of the Native Communities because it has been realized that we knew how to take care of Mother Earth properly. You had said that we...I forgot how you worded it, but something about we owned the land. We never owned the land. We have been taught that we are only the keepers of the land, of Mother Earth. We take care of the country for seven generations. Each generation that came along always had to look seven generations ahead to make sure that Mother Earth is going to be well and healthy and have good safe water to drink, and all the plants were going to be healthy to nourish our bodies so that we would be healthy, but over the years, to improve the advancement of community and city growth, everything was being contaminated but now even scientists are coming to the Native people saying that thousands of years you looked for this Mother Earth without damaging it anywhere. What are we doing wrong? So they are now coming to us for advice: What do we do, and what did our ancestors do in preserving and protecting the earth? It is nice to see that turn-around, but it is a little late because now we are even having to buy bottled water. It [the environment] isn't as healthy as it used to be. Then you get the erratic people like Greenpeace and other groups that are always doing a protest to take rights away from our own Native people like our fishing and hunting rights. We look at that in our history. We were the healthiest people on earth because we ate our natural food that we had grown up with. The fish have natural healing oils that helped to keep us healthy. The same with the caribou, the deer, the bison and all the other animals that our ancestors have lived on from generation to generation, but our modern day so-called activities are saying that this is all wrong and evil.

When I went up to Nunavut to visit my family, there was a group up there protesting that they were going to stop seal hunting and caribou hunting. I sat there and listened to these people coming from cities where they work in air-conditioned offices, they go to the grocery store to get their food and they never once took into consideration that this is my family that they were talking about --- taking away their fishing and hunting rights. They need the fish to survive on. They need the whales and they need animals to survive. They need to kill the caribou for their meat and used the caribou for their clothing to protect them in the severe winter conditions. They [Greenpeace] never once thought about that. All that they could visualize was “We’ve got to stop this hunting and fishing of seals, caribou and fish...” because they have never had to live in those harsh conditions. They are just sitting there comfortably living in cities where there are all those conveniences.

There are no grocery stores in the North. People can’t run to a shopping mall, or go to a theatre or go grocery shopping. They have to wait for planeloads once a month to come in to bring supplies and then they pay three or four times the price. So, there is a very big lack of understanding between groups in the south and groups in the north in various parts of Canada where all the ... what do they call them, energies—the basic necessities of hunting, food, shelter, as should be the right of every person on earth no matter what part of the country you live in where there are people in that area. We don’t need these groups saying “You shouldn’t do that!” and having to be forced into that lifestyle.

c) Other settings

So now we are at the part, “other settings” How do you as an Elder make those heart to heart connections with people and what are the settings in which you work with other people? I know that earlier you told me a little bit about being flown to different conferences as a speaker, and I know that you work at a college and I believe you are involved in some kind of a board.

Okay. At the college level I can work with the students, in an Auntie or Grandmother role to give them the confidence or self-assurance that whatever they are tackling in their subject, they are able to do it. If they have any concerns, they can come

and talk to me. I encourage them to continue on, that there are many doors to be opened in Life's adventures and go for it. I try to give the students the pride and self-esteem, to take the pride in self-esteem, in taking pride in their own culture that they can achieve that if they want and get them so *that they can be a benefit to themselves, to their families, and their communities once they get their degree and pass on what they have learned to help the next generation.* I also try to convey the importance of communication with all people that I leave *when I talk at conference, teaching workshops, or doing healing circles.* I'm getting people to accept who they are, what stage of life they're at and that they come from all sides, not just one individual. You cannot just heal one person. You also heal other people who are also unhealthy. *You do this by showing the Good Way of life, showing compassion, respect and honour to another individual that you meet and that they too are on the same healing path as you are.* I have had a lot of conflicts in my path. Today I can honestly say that I would not be as healthy and well as I am now, and I don't just mean physically only, but I mean spiritually and emotionally, if I did not have all *the help and guidance of all the Elders* that I have had in my lifetime. That helped me also to *become a very strong person.*

Could you explain what a healing circle is, what is done in a healing circle, please?

A healing circle is usually a circle that is formed by a group of people sitting around. Either a stone, *a talking stick*, an Eagle feather or any other object that has meaning to the individual in conducting the circle, has great meaning and understanding. This object is passed from person to person. Whoever is holding that object has the right to talk and express their true inner feelings without being laughed at or made fun of. They are honoured and respected, so that they can *honestly release any anger and hurt that they have been holding in. They can release it in that Circle where it will be kept in confidence.* When that person is finished talking, they pass it on to the next person. We, in the Circle, are living through their story, their hurts, their feelings. We are there as a support system for them. Even when the circle is finished and we meet them somewhere along the way, we are there to support them, but never betray the confidentiality that they shared in that circle. We are always there to support each other on the Healing Path.

The healing circles have been extended to the prisons at which I also volunteer my time to help all the prisoners to gain knowledge of their own roots, their own culture, their own history, by sharing in the healing circle. The Non-native people that have been part of the healing circles have been so intrigued and so put at ease that they too wanted to perform their own healing circles, *so we have extended our teachings and our circles to include anyone who has a firm belief and understanding* of how we do things in our traditional way. We are inclusive, not exclusive. *The prophecies tell us that it is now time to share certain things that work for us.* More people are ready to listen.

Also, listening to the drum. We believe that that is the heartbeat of Mother Earth in doing our traditional ceremony each day. I'd like to give an example. When I wake up in the morning, and I see I have another day of life, I use my abalone shell with the four Sacred Medicines and burn the four elements together and say a prayer to our Creator for the day to ground me for the day, to give me strength and positive feeling to help me through another day of life and to give thanks for all that Mother Earth has to provide for us: food, shelter, clothing, the beauty and scenery that we have and all the animals that we share this Mother Earth with. I give thanks for all the beautiful gifts each day. These are traditional teachings that have been passed on from *generation to generation* that really ground us to the reality of life and the beauty that Mother Nature has to offer us each day.

Question 6: In your opinion, how important is hope to developing character?

I would say that in order to develop character, *you have to have hope.* This is true at any stage of life.

Question 6a: Can individuals develop positive character traits if they feel a lack of hope?

Hmm. I find that question hard to answer. I think *every individual has to have hope for something*, whether it is to build character or other traits in life. That is the only way that I can understand that right now.

Question 6b: If a person feels a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of getting back their hope?

The Native way we do things is by *sharing stories* in the hope that the individual will pick up what they need from that story to continue their hope and get *the message of hope from those teachings*.

Question 7: What positive attributes of character do you focus on in your culture and in your own personal teachings in working with/guiding others?

I would say that that would be following the *guidelines of the Seven Grandfather teachings*.

Could you name them please?

I've got them written right here. Can you believe that I can't find them at a time like this when I do them all the time. Here they are. I also have an extended version. Have you heard the extended version?

No.

I should give you a copy of that. *The grandfather teachings include one wisdom, two love, three respect, four bravery, five honesty, six humility, seven trust.*

Okay, Trust or truth?

Trust or truth. Um hmm. They are two sides of the same coin.

Question 8: How do you believe Native teachings reinforcing character education could best be passed on in meaningful ways to today's youth?

I find that question hard to answer because of what I had relayed to you earlier. This goes back to what I said earlier about how two spirits come together and are conceived to form an individual. That is where the character starts, at the time the child is born and goes through the stages of life. Because the character changes and grows with that individual. Okay?

What we like to instill in the children and the youth are the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, following the Good Red Path of life. By learning and understanding all these teachings and sharing with the youth one on one, heart to heart. Whatever is shared with the individual is sacred and is held in confidence.

Okay, I wanted to clarify the difference between *a healing circle and a teaching circle*. Any information shared within a healing circle is kept confidential and within that circle. A teaching circle is different in the fact that any of the teachings that you hear and are taught can be shared outside the circle with the permission of the Elder that is doing the teachings.

The one topic I would like to touch in working with so many children and youth is that they lack the support from home. The parents have the idea that the children are sent to school and it is the teachers' responsibility to make sure that their children are learning, or behaving or acting the way they should when that is not the teachers' responsibility. *It is the responsibility of the parents to give love and support to their own children and to guide them in a good and proper way to live in today's society. That [guidance] is lacking in a lot of homes because too many parents are busy with adult activities and are not giving support to their children.*

Question 9: How do you want to be remembered when you are gone?

We have been taught where we are not supposed to build up our own Ego or talk about ourself. Other friends or family members may speak of us if we give them permission or if it is going to be a benefit to share that information with anybody else. *But, we are supposed to be humble at all times and not try to make ourselves important or see ourself as someone higher about anybody else.* Because again, we do not believe that we raise ourself above anybody else, no matter what grade or level of education we have, because each one of us has a special gift to share. Therefore we are all equal. As far as being remembered when I pass on, I am not looking for great praises or accolades. I just want to be able *to do what is right and proper each day and try to lead a good and honest life and hope that I have helped somebody in my lifetime.*

In today's society and the educational system, so many of our Traditional Elders have been pushed aside and not acknowledged for what they know and have shared. Today's educational system is set up so that you have to have a paper from a college or a university to prove that you have learned and can *share in all the teachings that have been passed down from generation to generation through our very valid time-honoured oral tradition.* Colleges and universities will not and have not have not honoured and

respected our Traditional Elders for the teachings that they know and can share with the students. They are more focused on written qualifications and the written tradition.

There needs to be a lot of work in this area because *the oral traditions have been passed down for thousands of years, are so powerful, so healing and so good for humanity*. All the degrees in the world don't necessarily make people kind, good citizens.

You don't need a piece of paper to prove that.

END OF INTERVIEW.

[I shut off the tape and thanked the Elder.]

The Drum

The Drum

The drum is sacred
 For it has life
 For life is a circle
 For you were nothing
 Then you were born
 You grew into adulthood
 Then went back whence you came

The drum is sacred
 For it has the four seasons
 The flowers of spring
 The green of summer
 The leaves of autumn
 The snow of winter

The drum is sacred
 For it has the four directions
 First where the thunder beings live
 Second where the giants live
 Third where the sun continually shines
 Fourth where you always face

The drum is sacred
 For it has the four winds
 The wind of the thunder beings
 The wind of the giants
 The wind of the sun
 The wind of where you always face

The drum is sacred
 For it has everything
 And everywhere
 For the drum is the centre of the circle

The drum is sacred.

Note: Sue Anderson-Kelly shared this anonymous poem upon presenting a handmade drum to Honourable James Bartleman (2002) at the 3rd annual BBQ of the Fish Weir's association sponsored by the Simcoe County Historical Association and filmed by the New VR on Saturday 21 September, 2002. She requested its inclusion in appendix F.

Appendix F:
Interview with Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor of Birch Island

Saturday, December 1, 2001

Meet Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor First Nations Elder-in-Training

Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor, Bear Clan, of Birch Island, Whitefish First Nation, was interviewed on December 1, 2001. Our primary interview took place in the livingroom at her home on McGregor Bay, Ontario. The full transcript of the interview appears below. Gloria considers herself an Elder-in-training. She takes part in talking circles, healing circles and drumming circles regionally, provincially and nationally. Gloria was honoured at a Peace Gathering in 1997. Gloria is committed to pursuing knowledge and skill to support reclaiming the Ojibway language for herself and her students in the First Nations school where she teaches.

She honours the Spirits of children, supporting their individuality, leadership and cultural pride in being Anishnabe people. She honours learning as a two-way street. She is like a loving Bear Clan mother and surrogate parent to many youths. Gloria helps the children to reclaim their Ojibway language, heritage and pride as she is doing for herself.

Reclaiming Ojibway Language, Heritage and Pride for the Children

Question 1: What does developing character mean to you?

First, what is character? I wonder if it describes the person. Is it their way of life that gives them character? Is it the community? Family?

I guess it would be allowing somebody to be what they're meant to be without imposing your ideas of "shoulds" and "don'ts." I really try hard to do that with my grandkids. I just look at them individually and honour who they are.

You know how you could look at a flat line? You look down at it. Make a flat line of character. That would be boring, wouldn't it? 'Cause when you look at the children and each individual's character, they're like mountains, mountains of character. And that's what makes the school buzzing. It's buzzing.

In school, we guide the children to be proud of their roots, of who they are and of who they are becoming. *Families are the first teachers of character, but involvement of schools, Elders, Chief and council is required.*

The Creator put everything on this earth to learn from. The little ones, they think about life—a bird, an animal, the grass, all that, and we talk about why Mother Earth is here. It is not somebody just to walk on. It is not somebody that you can just take the food from. They have got to know. *We help them learn that their first mother is the Earth.* She supplies everything. She would provide the animals that are put here to teach us the lessons through this life. She puts the animals here to nurture us through our physical bodies. They clothe us. Everything has a purpose. All the plants she puts on the Earth have a purpose—all the medicines, everything. I teach them sometimes how we are in the centre of all beings—the earth. [She gesticulates, making her left hand into a ball, holding her right hand flat, palm down above it.] I hold that like that as if you are the earth, and you are right here. You are right here and up above is the sky.

And then there is the Universe and the Creator. [She makes a fist to represent the world]. Inside is that earth and all that energy inside the centre—that is the Sacred Fire. It comes through as if you are standing right here. It is almost like you are learning to live in that Universe, what works through you. There is that connection up and down. It is so amazing to hear that. *For me to teach those little ones shows the importance of what great purpose they have in their life. I also teach them that the Creator gave us all the people in the whole world in the Medicine Wheel of different colours.* The Creator gave everybody languages. All the languages are sacred. I teach the children that when we do our prayer in the morning, we do it in Ojibway. The Creator is really busy up there, looking after these prayers looking at him. He could hear. All of a sudden, he'll stop. He can hear the Ojibway language coming from somewhere. He'll look down and say "It is those little people, those Anishnabne people, and he'll stop. They are praying in the language I gave them. I have to listen." And he listens. "You make me so proud. You are bringing back that language." And I let them know it was said a long time ago that the language is coming back. It will be through the voice of the children. I let them know, "You are that generation. You are going to reteach your parents."

Figure IX. Ron McGregor and Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor.

The couple poses on their wedding day, August 22, 1998 at Rainbow Lodge, located near the Birch Island Pow Wow grounds. This photo, taken by Cheryl Yost, has been included with permission.

Children need to know how important they are in society—the importance of their role in life. For me, I can see some of their pride. I find that you can't just go out there and teach language. [clicks fingers] They [the children] need to know where they come from, what it is. *It is a spiritual language that has that great connection.* When you speak in your language, the animals will understand you. It is something that I had learned growing up as a child, but that I had forgotten. But later, it came back to me.

Developing character is to teach in a way to get the children to understand who they are, where they come from, their language, what is part of them and their spiritual connection.

Question 2: In your culture, how is education for character traditionally caught or taught?

“Caught?” “Caught” means getting the children involved actively in their culture, language and tradition to where it’s going to interest them and they begin to feel, “Hey, This is who I am. And I wanna know more about it.” It’s understood in today’s society and curriculum. You have so much required of a child in school. Our First Nations schools are trying to implement the culture in the curriculum. It’s a fight trying to find a place in there. But I can see it’s something that the children need. And that is to build stronger, grounded children of the future. To allow them to be who the Creator meant them to be.

You know what little light we all have? That little light inside? When you feel that light inside the child just spark, you know when it’s sparked, it’s [character is] taught. *Each morning, I stop on my way out to pray with my tobacco and to also ask the grandfathers and grandmothers of these children and the Creator to help me to teach them well.* And I also ask for the Grandmothers and Grandfathers that have already journeyed on to help their children that are having difficulty. So I find with that, throughout the day, it reminds me if a child misbehaves or throws a tantrum, it reminds me of what I’ve prayed for and who is there helping them. In a sense, I have a connection with those Grandmothers and Grandfathers and I am able to see where it is coming from.

It is important to tell a little bit about yourself, where you come from and to share a little bit about your schooldays --- how it was, and to tell them that you were that age

one time and you remember when and give them examples. I do that once in awhile. It just opens up their eyes. It is good for them realize that you were there too. You were there sitting on the floor wherever you had to sit on the floor when you were small and how you felt when you were going to school. Sharing their feelings or fears and saying “I remember when I felt like that” makes a connection to the students. They say “Hey, Teacher understands!” *In having caught or taught character, the one thing that I find too is to have the parents totally involved in their children’s life in the school in a positive way.* I see sometimes when parents work with the teacher in trying to make it a better atmosphere, a better place for them to come. I see it in them sometimes where they say “Oh, Mommy and Teacher care about me” and it makes them *feel they are in a place of belonging.*

I remember when I started school. I was seven years old. We went straight to grade one. There was no kindergarten at that time. I went into this classroom with all these children. That was the first experience I had had outside of my home and my family. It was very frightening for me. But, my grade one teacher that I carry in my heart today, she gave me something that later on in my life came. It was a gentleness in her voice. I remembered her voice. That carried me later on in my life. I remember that she she didn’t stay too long. She left. And another teacher came who was a nun. She had an eye patch on. *I remember the gentleness in her voice also.* The other children also felt very comfortable with her, but she didn’t stay long. She left, but the reason, I don’t know. But since then, going to school was very scary. School was a very scary place.

To correct the character of the Native children, there were very rigid rules enforced by the nuns. For any mistake that we’d made, we were hit and we had put-downs. I hated going to school! I just hated going to school and to get up in that morning. But, I also never shared with my parents what the teachers were doing to me at school because we were told we were bad. We felt we were doing things bad—bad things. So, to tell our parents we were doing bad at school wouldn’t be a good thing. I kept that hurt, carrying that in my heart. I remember being humiliated.

One time I had this one teacher, in grade three or grade four. This teacher caught me chewing gum. I forgot to spit my gum out before I come into the class and I was

chewing gum. He called me up in front of the class and asked me to hand it in. He made me put it on my nose and made me face the classroom. Then he asked me to put my hands out. He used a big ruler and made me stretch my hand out. He just stood back and made that ruler go as high as ever and come down on my hands repeatedly. I tried not to cry. I didn't want to cry. I remember as a child not wanting to cry to give him the satisfaction of humiliating me, but it hurt so much pride. He kept hitting my hands. My brother who was sitting at his desk couldn't take it anymore. All of a sudden, I just remember my brother flying from somewhere. All of a sudden, he was yelling at the teacher, "Leave my sister alone! Leave my sister alone!" and I remember all of that. That was one of my horrific memories going to school. Since then, that is what makes me kind of nervous going into the thought of coming in every year. I know that I have that great responsibility of teaching them at the beginning of their education. I want it [the classroom] to be a nice place for them to come. *We're just unrolling all of what happened to my generation in school and to our ancestors in school so each individual child can stand with their own identity, their individuality without having to carry that past of Residential Schools or the abuses of the Church.* When this generation doesn't have to carry that anymore, they'll be free. I think this is what the Ancestors want. From North to South for the youth, this is the message from the Ancestors.

Growing up in my family, my father and my mother never spoke Ojibway to us. They never spoke our language to us, but they talked to each other in the language. They would talk to my grandparents in the language, but never to us children. They believed that we would be more successful in life if English was our language. My father one day said "I don't want you to get beaten up for talking the language at school, like somebody beat me up." My dad meant *spanked* for speaking the language. I only spoke English, but in hearing that language at home, I knew it was in me somewhere and I carried it inside me somewhere. *It was just like a voice that needed to be spoken.*

I remember in the schoolyard when we were playing at recess, some of the children would speak Ojibway. Let's speak the language. I used to look at them. It sounded like singing to me. It sounded like singing. I was a bit envious of that, that I couldn't do that. But when they were caught speaking it, they were punished for that, and so we had to be careful and this wasn't Residential School either. But, I knew, as I went

along in my life, I so much wanted to speak Ojibway, but I had to fight with that shame that was put into it by our teachers who were Nuns. I know now that that shame was not the result of me being Anishnabe or my language. *That is a powerful thing to overcome—to try and reawaken that language within.* I had to try to work on that. I still am.

One day as part of my healing, I decided to go and look at the possibility of learning my language. I ended up in Thunder Bay University as a student in the Native Language Instructors' programme. I wondered "What am I doing here?" I knew that it was part of my journey that I had to take. This year I ended up teaching the Native Language at my school.

Now I know why I went in that direction. *I am reclaiming the language that was lost.* I was guided to take that Native Language teacher's program in Thunder Bay. At the end of July, I will have gone for three summers out of four towards getting my diploma. I study the Ojibway language because that is an important part of my spiritual path, not because of the paper qualification. But I struggle with not being fluent. I'm still working to overcome that old shame of being told not to speak that language, that it's no good. But I also let the children know that I am not fluent. I do still struggle with the language and I let them know how we weren't allowed to speak our language when I went to school. But I let them know too that our language is a gift from the Creator.

We talk about language and relate what we learn to the Medicine Wheel that I have up in the classroom. For an example, to show the children how each race has their own language and how important it is to them and their spiritual practices. I take, for instance, a part of the Medicine Wheel out. I took the black part out and all that was left was the white, yellow and red. Then I asked if that was a full circle. And they said "No." "So, do we need the black race to make it a full circle?" "Yes, we do!" they said, so I put it back. And I took out the white and I asked: "If this a full circle if we take the white out?" "No, it isn't." So I put it back. I did that throughout the colours. I said "For each of these colours there is a race. For each race there is a language that was given by the Creator." *That is your spiritual connection also and through your prayers. It is so strong when you say your prayers through the language of your heart when you communicate.*

Ancient teachings tell us of a time when all colours will come together to work for peace. I remember hearing that from my Grandfather when I was little. Over the years, I have heard that prophecy from many different sources. Some of my Grandfather's teachings are really being echoed in those teachings from my Ojibway language instructor up in Thunder Bay. In school as teachers we have related the Rainbow teachings to the Medicine Wheel and we have talked about the White Buffalo prophecy.

Sometimes one language sounds like another. I have taught the children that everytime you go and meet somebody you say "Boozhoo" and just don't get it mixed up with the French greeting "Bonjour." Our greeting is "Boozhoo" with no "r" in it. It is the honouring of that Anishnabe teacher that came to the spirit Nanabosho [Nanabush]. Through greeting, shaking hands and saying "*Bohjoo*" [another spelling version] you are honouring that first teacher that was one of our teachers. *You are honouring our ancestors and our legends each time you say it.*

Question 3: How do you consider yourself to be involved in character education?

I'll give an example that I've gone through with one of the children. This little boy is in grade five. He is quite tall. Every August we have our Pow Wow here at Dreamer's Rock. Every year we need someone to be in charge of our school Eagle staff. So, a child from the school community needs to carry that staff, even moreso now. In the past, adults have carried it, *but a strong feeling has come through in our community that a child must carry that Eagle staff.*

Talk about character. Character education would be how I see it I guess. There is this boy who came to mind. I went to see him early one morning. I took some tobacco with me and I went to see his mom and I asked him and I asked the mom "Would it be alright for me to give your son this tobacco, for me to ask him to be the staff carrier for this year?" I said, "The reason why I think of your son, as he comes strong in my mind, is I've watched him learn. I've watched him grow. I've watched him be sensitive to other people. I've watched him visit with his grandparents, speak with his grandparents. I've watched him attend ceremonies. I've seen all of that with him. I think that he would be

very responsible in taking care of the Eagle staff for the school.” She smiled and she said “Yes.” So, she called her son over. I looked at him. He comes over with big eyes.

I held out my hand with tobacco and I said “This is for you.” I told him what the tobacco was for first, before I handed it to him. Yet still it gives a chance to say “I can’t accept” before you accept that tobacco. I said “I’ve seen you grow. I’ve seen you learn. I’ve seen how you deal with people. You are very sensitive to those around you. This is why I feel that this tobacco needs to go to you to be the staff carrier for the school.”

Then his eyes just went really wide and he goes “Ah! Me?” And I said “Yes. Do you accept to be the staff carrier and to represent the children of your community?” He was so overwhelmed. He says “Yes!” When I saw him dancing in with the Eagle staff and the pride he had in carrying in that Eagle staff and what he represented to the rest of his peers in the village, it was just grand. Today, when we do our Eagle staff ceremonies in school, he’s the one who goes to get the staff. The Eagle staff is kept down in the language room. They take it up to their classroom to do their ceremony. He still walks with pride with that staff.

I have to remember each child with their individuality. Actually, when teaching the children, sometimes you have to put aside the academics of a situation in order to handle what is coming up with them. Sometimes I have to put that [the academics] aside in order to deal with that [the affective domain] on a personal level. This one girl, she likes to laugh. I think sometimes she could get a little “much” for the class, but I let her know that what she carries in that humour of it. A lot of humour is needed to teach the language. *When you laugh at your mistakes, then it’s fun.* Then nobody’s afraid to make a mistake. Then they’ll try. How I look at the humor of things is never having to be perfect. So we put the laughter where it belongs.

When Anishnabe people can get together and they are speaking the language, they are just laughing and laughing. It is a joy. I let her [the little girl] know that that is the part she carries in that language. A big part of that laughter is the language. She was amazed to hear that part that she didn’t know. Now she shows pride even to have that humour and that laughter. She puts that to good use in the classroom. I remember her since kindergarten. Now she is in grade five and she still has that humour that she brings to the

class. It is not said to “leave it at the door” before you come in. It is said to bring it in because it is part of the education to teach where humour is at.

Question 4: How do teachings to develop character persist in present day reality and how do you relate them?

Our school is a First Nation run school. With that, it allows us to bring in the teaching of our Grandfathers and Grandmothers. We have the teachings of the sweat lodge and the drums brought in to the children. What we do is --- when I want to talk to the children in one of our teachings, I know when I talk to the children in one of our teachings I introduce the drum, how you play the drum, how you sound the drum. You know you sound the drum.

*In sounding that drum, first you honour those four directions and in the centre is the Creator and I teach the children about the drum, where the drum comes from -- what it is made from. A lot of them now realize that that drum is made from an animal and an animal skin on that drum helps you create the voice of the Anishnabe. I asked them who are the *Anishnabe* people? They know and they say “We are.” I say “What does this *Dewehgan* represent?” They know that it represents the Anishnabe nation, which is us.*

Teaching them to sound that drum brings voice. I tell them, “This is your voice, the voice of the Anishnabe people. When you sound this drum, when you sing this drum and the songs that you are learning, then your voice becomes stronger. But sometimes,” I said, “we forget to bring our voice out. *But when we sound this drum, we get our pride, we feel good about ourselves and we sing our songs that the Creator has meant for us through this drum and the animal that’s on this drum.*”

At Pow Wows and gatherings, the children are attracted to that drum teaching. Little ones will go up to that drum, and if they are strong enough, they’ll pick up a drumstick and start beating on the drum. The children are never turned away from that. We never break a child’s interest. My grandson Jade went to a raindance with me. He sat very still in front of the drums. He asked me lots of questions about the *raindance ceremony*, looking at the Grandfather drum. One of the drummers motioned and pointed to Jade, calling him over to the drum. The group kept waving him over. Jade got up and became like a little wise Elder. They handed him a drumstick. They drummed and sang.

Jade looked at every man and listened. Then his drumstick started in time, to the beat, moving exactly at the same rhythm with the others. I got all shivery just to see him so respectful and proud. *There is a saying that there is an Elder in every child.* I saw the Elder in my grandson that day.

If you'll notice carefully, with the children, they are attracted to that drumbeat. If a baby is fussing, and he hears the drum he will quiet ... she will quiet ... because that is the heartbeat that they're so aware of from where they were for the first nine months of their lives where they were inside and they will hear that drum of creation which is woman. They remember the heartbeat of the mother and inside how close they were to that. That is the connection that they made at the Pow Wows and the ceremonies. It is a strong connection.

Question 5: Do you think there is a possibility for these teachings to impact positively and permanently on adolescent or young adults?

- a) in Native school systems?***
- b) in non-Native school systems?***
- c) in other settings?***

a) Native school systems

At our school here in Whitefish River we have our ceremonies once a week where we bring the children together. In those ceremonies, we create a circle. The first lesson that kindergarten children learn is to have patience. We have had visitors come to our school that are amazed that the children can sit still in the circle for an hour and listen to stories. There are times we have field trips at the end of the school year. *We ask some of our Elders and our storytellers to come with us to tell the children the stories passed on by their Elders.* How quietly they sit! They are also allowed to lie down and close their eyes to do that visual journey with the story.

I know of one secondary school in M'Chiging. It is not Native. It is not a First Nation run school, but it is so close that it is considered to be like one. I went over to a Pow Wow there that the youth were putting on with the help of the Native counsellor. To see the youth given that responsibility in putting that Pow Wow on! How they walked with pride in letting people know that they were the ones that put this together! How

they walked around in their regalia —their jingle dress outfits and their fancy dance outfits! *They walked with great pride.* I used to tell my daughters that when they left Shawanosowe school to go on to a non-Native school, to stand proud. I taught my daughters a lot of pride in being Anishnabe, to give them that grounding in who they are, but also to keep in mind that they have to have that human experience also, *but you have to give them that grounding to bring them back to family values.* I found that what kept calling them back was their cultural grounding that was given to them—their history, their past, their Elders, the drum—That is what brought them back. And the drum! So, when they were out there furthering their education in high school, when someone teased them for being who they are, it didn't knock them down because they were given that grounding and pride in being Anishnabe and in having a culture to be proud of.

Being in the non-Native mixture like that where my daughters went to Espanola and the same with **M'Chiging**, which is a mixture of Non-native and Native children, somehow that works together. That could work together. I find that that would have to come a lot from the teachers too.

The teachers have to be accepting and show acceptance of a lot of other people's individualities, cultural and spiritual beliefs. I find that that is when the children, the youth, will work together in a whole setting.

When you think about youth, they're trying to break free from everything they were told, everything they were taught. They want to go out there and find their own teaching. The hardest thing to do is to guide them through their mistakes. To be there to listen, not to question. To be there to accept, not to judge. My strongest lesson was from my youngest daughter. What a teacher she was! How she went through experiencing life head on. Adolescence and youth are the most difficult time a parent will have (compared to a two year old). Sometimes I think what really gets to the adult is remembering when ... and saying "This is not my life." They fight allowing the child their own life and what the child fights so much for. If a teenager has been given a strong foundation in their culture, identity and spiritual beliefs, then when they reach their adolescent years, they'll know where to come home to.

b) Non-native school settings

I'll start with this. When I was growing up at home, we were taught to fear white people. We were taught to fear them while we were growing up. To safeguard us, our parents told us never ever to go near the road because the white people might come and take us away. I didn't know about the Residential School experiences of our people at places like Spanish. Every time a car would go by, we weren't allowed to go close to the road, but we did a couple of times, just to see. When the white people would come by, in our village, in our community, we would peek above the grassline and we would see that they are white. The white tourists would stop. They would say "Look at the Indians" and try to take pictures of us, but we would hide on them because we were told that they would take us away. I remember that.

In growing up, I had a hard time with the non-Native society—to be out there with them. I didn't understand that at the time. But later on, as I grew through my recovery, especially through my husband, he helped me. My husband Ron helped me look at that. He gave me a view—introduced me to that world of the non-Native people. He had so many friends as white people. He introduced me to them. I went visiting with them in their homes. I remember feeling very nervous and shaky. It was too much for me at one time. I told him. "I have to stop. I have to go back home." He understood. So we went back home. It just happened to be the *Three Fires Celebration*. There were Anishnabe all over the place. I just started breathing again. I felt "I'm home. I'm okay." I just had to take that break. Then I came back again and I worked on that. I realized that the white people have feelings just like us. That's one thing that made that connection is that they can feel just like us.

I go over to a *Spiritual Gathering* over in Maniwaki. That is another part that I like to look at—all those healers and teachers from all over. *That Rainbow Medicine, that is part of the prophecies*. I couldn't believe how many non-Native people were coming out to listen to our Elders and to come to our healers for healing. I was told that one day this would happen and I had just to look at that and to understand.

Now, today, I can be part of helping our non-Native brothers and sisters through their healing. I understand where they come from. We share a common bond like that in

order to become better people—to heal with each other. That makes such a common bond together. For that to be learned in the school system—that that is what we share—we all want the same thing -- to become better humans like the Creator has meant us to be.

I feel strongly that this is the time that we need to be together to heal and to let our children, our youth, know that it is okay for them to connect in that way and to share in each other's life in that way. That we don't need to split up anymore and to make that split in that *Medicine Wheel*. *We need to bring all colours of people together to make the wheel stronger*. The more we do that, the stronger our children will become. I feel so strong about that. There are times that I see the brokenness in our Youth. How many of them end up as wounded warriors in the prisons? A wounded warrior is a fallen Eagle feather. It needs to be picked up in a good way. We need to come together, even if it is just us as teachers, especially today with the education that is so packed down with everything. The teachers being so busy. They have to do this and that. Just to see five minutes! Five minutes to have that human connection in the classroom with all the races of the Medicine Wheel. I think it would make a difference.

c) Other Settings

In other settings that I know, people can come together and have teachings from Elders and people that want to come up and share their story.

They'll share a song. People accept the song the same way they would accept a great teaching. I was at a ceremony once in the bush. A man from India was there. I was just sitting and listening with some Grandmothers. It was a big circle, a teaching circle. And after one person was giving a teaching everyone listened. *The, after the teaching we weren't too sure if it as over but there was a space, a pause and I could feel the energy moving. All of a sudden, this young man breaks out into dance and song in the middle of that circle and I thought as I watched him, what a powerful movement of Spirit, of energy that he must have felt*. As he was dancing and singing, it looked like ceremony. All of a sudden someone yelled and told him, "Sit Down." What a shock went through that circle! What a shock that broke it! He broke away from the circle and went and sat down outside the circle.

I began to cry. Uncontrollable feeling I had, needing to cry. I could feel this flow when one of the Grandmothers said: “Let’s get up and put some tobacco in the fire.” So all together holding hands, we went to the fire. I could feel myself trembling and I told Lillian: “I can’t hold anymore. I can’t hold.” And she asked me: “What do you need to do?” I told her: “I need to let it go.” I didn’t know what it was, just that I needed to let it go. *I released.* She permitted me. I released through. It was like a cry and yell at the same time. *And I continued until I was clear.* When we were done, we went to sit back down. Nothing was said of that. But for me, what I seen, what I felt, when this voice said: “Stop!” and the way this young man retreated, is that getting caught up in “You’re not good enough,” and “Who are you to do this?” The young man had a movement of Spirit and Spirit doesn’t ask who you are. They don’t wanna know your title. And I think in that circle of sharing teachings, no matter what age you are, you can be a teacher. *In some ways, when the child stands up, they’re honoring you with their teaching. Can you allow yourself to be honoured enough to stand back and listen?*

At traditional Pow Wows, people can go and have fun and yet go get those teachings. I watch people at times, of all ages, move around, walk, dance, just sit and yet there is this person sharing and giving a teaching up there through the microphone and talking. But all the movement that is going on, you feel that nobody—that at times someone could come in there and feel that nobody is listening, but everyone gets a piece from that teaching that is going on. There’s times when children play when an Elder is speaking. You think that they are not listening, but if you talked to them to find out what they have learned, they would tell you what they have learned. They might look like they’re not absorbing the teaching, but they are absorbing it.

The prayers and the togetherness that everybody comes to through the prayers became so strong. *When people get together in prayer, in unity, it moves the energy.* When I was in Maniwaki at the Spiritual Gathering, there was this woman that come up, an older woman. She was walking with a walker when she come up and she asked for help so that she could walk without that walker. What happened is this Spiritual Elder from Africa came up and asked if we could get together and pray for this lady and put hands on her and make a continuous circle around with everybody putting hands on each other to help that energy move through. We were doing that. I was towards the outside of

the circle. I had my hand on the person in front of me. That person had their hands on the person in front of them too, until it reached the lady that was asking for that help. When we prayed all together, I could feel that energy move. Tears just came to my eyes. I could feel that energy of the people moving. The amazement of that was so overwhelming. It was beautiful! What happened was that the lady next day walked into that gathering without her walker. The power of prayer -- *Use that power of prayer in movement of that energy for our mother, Mother Earth.* It does help.

Through my life growing up, the other part of life that we learned about was Death and how much a part of Life it is. When a person passed on to go home to their original home, the body was brought into our own homes. People came. They brought food for four nights. People would talk and laugh. Children would play. We would pray for that Spirit who has to make that journey to the Spirit World. I grew up with that.

Here in our school when someone in the community passes away or “goes home,” we let the children know about that journey that that person has to make. We also take the children up to the *Wake* at our community centre, to pay their respects to this person that has gone home and also to shake the hand or hug the person that is grieving.

We talk about Death and how much a part of Life that is. We talk about the journey and where that journey leads. It is to go home to the original home. And to show the children on that Medicine Wheel where they start the journeying from is the East. Where their pictures are—I have pictures of the children up in the east and how they journey all the way around that Medicine Wheel. When they journey out towards the North, then to make the whole journey full circle. When they reach up there into the North, then it is time to go back home with all the experiences they’ve had and then they do go back home. They do make that journey.

One little child asked me “Do we come back?” I said, “Yes, we come back. We come back at times to finish the journey that we didn’t finish this time around.” That is what I’ve learned from an Elder.

When we go up to the Wakes, children are allowed to touch the hand of the person in the coffin. This helps them not to fear death. It helps them to understand that there is a grieving part—that you cry, that you are sad when a person leaves this world—

and that there is a part that you learn to be happy for—that they are gone and you know where that place is—to God, *the Creator*. Most of the children share a loved one that has already gone home and then we ask, I ask:

“Do you think that they are happy there?”

“Yes. They made a good journey cause they’re with God. They are home now.”

“Do you think they are here to help you every now and then when you need help?”

And they also say “Yeah, they’re here. You can’t see them though, but they’re here.”

So they understand that when you go home to your original home, that doesn’t mean that you cannot help the rest of your family that is back here on earth. You make that journey back to the Spirit World. At times you cannot help your loved ones when you are here in your physical form. When you go back home to the Creator, then you can understand how your loved one needs that help. Then you can work through that and you can feel those energies.

Question 6: In your opinion, how important is HOPE to developing character?

a) Can individuals develop positive character traits IF they see a lack of hope?

b) If they see a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of getting back their hope?

Everybody needs hope to develop character. It is hard to go on without it. If a person doesn’t have hope, then the community as a whole must come in to give it to that person. The hope is built for the person. It is almost like mirroring him or her. That person sees the hope in other people. Then it grows in him or her. Once a person has hope, then he can improve his character. They [children, youths] need to know how important their role is in society, how important their role is in life.

I would think what I focus on with the little ones first of all is identity. Number one would be identity -- to know where you come from. *For me, I think identity builds a strong character in a person. A positive identity about oneself and what their role is in*

their culture and in their language to give them a role in their life that they would live by. In our culture, in the Anishnabe way of life, that is using all of their medicines and the Medicine Wheel itself and showing where they belong in each of the stages of their life, going through their stages of life up until they are Elders, and showing them the progression of that growth.

There's a big medicine wheel at the school and on that Medicine Wheel one of the cycles is the life cycle. *The children were so interested to know where they were on that Medicine Wheel.* They say, "Where do I sit on the Medicine Wheel and when I get to be a teenager, where will I be on that Medicine Wheel?" So we go back up to when they were born and work down, bits at a time to when they're four years old. I ask, "What have you learned since you were born to where you're four years old and going to school?" Then we move a bit down further to when they're 7. "What did you learn from 4 to 7?" Then we move further down to when they're 10 or 11. This brings them closer to the south (the red). "What did you learn during that time? (7 to 11) Then, all that time in the East, what have you learned? Are you ready to step over into the South, into those adolescent years?"

This is why our people had passage of life ceremonies to initiate them into their life, to honour and remember all they learned before. We tell children, "No matter how old you are, you are an Elder to the people younger than you." *So having these rites of passage ceremonies, I can see how they'd be very important.*

When you get to be a teenager for instance, when you step over from the East and you step over to the South direction. For me it is so important for young people to know that, when I show them where they are on that Medicine Wheel. When they get to this certain spot. *Actually what their dreams are—what they think they will be accomplishing when they reach that area in the Medicine Wheel where they'll be stepping over into that new role in their life that they will take.*

Question 7: What positive attributes of character do you focus on in your culture and in your own personal teachings in working with/guiding others?

*An Elder is understanding and supportive without interfering. The teachings of the **Seven Grandfathers** are used every day in our schools.* We want the children to learn those teachings and develop those traits to serve them when stepping into that new role in

their life that they would take. For me, I find that you have to guide the children when they are small and teach them. That is a great role that you are given by the Creator to mould all these little ones in a positive way. No matter what culture you are from, to help mould them in a positive way to be a good person, a good person, a good human being with a good heart.

There is a time in their life as children grow older that you need to know when to back away. Coming from my experience with my daughters when they were going through their stages in their life, I had to know when to back away. My daughters let me know, not in so many words, but in their actions. They had to back away in order for them to go through those experiences that they needed to go through in order to learn. That can be a difficult thing to do at times. You have to let them experience that, yet be there for the questions that they ask. That is the type of teaching I find that you have to go through for youth especially. Be there, but don't stop their learning and say "No you cannot do this. No you can't do that." I have found out that you need to back away a bit and let them experience, but always, always let them know that you're there when they need you. I was able to answer the questions full-heartedly, the questions that they have, and the ones that come up as they go through the next stage of life, too. When my youngest daughter was at the age where they wanted to experience the adult part of life on their own, I had to do that once again, *to allow them to make those decisions*, which they felt they needed to make in their new role that they felt was coming up in the adult life. Once again, I stood back and watched them go through those experiences and learn by their actions, but I stayed right by and was there to answer their questions or be there for support and no matter what situation they go into, that support was very important. That they were accepted no matter what they did. It was important for them to know that they were accepted.

Question 8: How do you believe Native teachings reinforcing character education could be best passed on in meaningful ways to today's youth?

I've come to think about the Native teachings in today's society and how today's society has really gone with computerized everything. It is good to have technology but nothing compares with face-to-face, heart-to-heart teachings. I know it is hard to spread a

limited number of Elders around to a large population. Some things can be taught from videos, music CDs and Internet. *The Internet does not always show the truth. Many teachings are too sacred to be passed on in that way. They must be kept sacred, done in Circle with ceremony, heart-to-heart at a very human ground level following the oral tradition. We need the wisdom and the presence of the Elders.*

When I started thinking about taking a Native language instructor program in Thunder Bay, I came across a couple of people who asked that question. “Why do we need to go to school to learn our language and our culture? Why do we need to do that?”

To go into the school system, you need paper. I understand that in the school system, the government wants your paper saying that you are qualified to do this and that. So I have had those questions brought to me. I thought about that for a while. What I realized, for instance, is that our language is dying. There’s not very many people. Our youth, our children are losing it. They are losing the language. Getting the paper qualifications seems to be the only way that we have in today’s society to hang on to our language and if it has to go in that direction, then take that path.

A lot of times I pick up a book and read about stories of Elders and other Aboriginal people in their ceremonies and their life experiences. That has helped me. To pick up a videotape, to look at this great teacher standing there, doing his teaching, that is somehow the way our teachings have to go in order to keep the culture, the language and spirituality going, to reach out to a larger number of people. I see technology as a useful tool to help us. It is a second choice that cannot replace heart-to-heart contact.

Question 9: How would you like to be remembered when you are gone?

The first thought that comes to my mind is that I would like to be remembered as a person that found her Voice and the Anishnabe person that she is and that helped the children find their Voices and their identity. I am Anishnabe. I feel so proud when I ask the children “Whenesh-kiin? Who are you?” They would say “Anishnabe niin. I am Anishnabe.” And that is part of finding your voice, knowing who you are. For me, that is the strongest thing that I can think of.

END OF INTERVIEW

Sculpting the child

I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there.
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher : the tools she used
Were books, music and art.

One, a parent who worked with a guiding hand
And a gentle, loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled
With touch that was deft and sure
While the parent laboured by her side
And polished and smoothed it o'er.

And when at last their task was done
They were proud of what they had wrought :
For the things they had moulded into the child
Could neither be sold nor bought.

And each agreed he would have failed
If he had worked alone
For behind the teacher stood the school
And behind the parent, the home.

Anonymous

Like the sculptor, we must be able to recognize and appreciate the basic properties of the clay (nature). Then we must work towards the best possible outcome with that material (nurture). Gloria had voiced the opinion that as an educator she could consciously help shape and mould personalities to a certain extent. For that reason, I have included this poem which I received from a parent in 1982.

Appendix G:
Interview with Kahskennontora:ken (WhiteDeer)
Teacher and Elder of the Good Medicine Society, near Oshweken, Ontario

December 8, 2001

Meet First Nations Elder Kahskennontora:ken (White Deer)

Kahskennontora:ken (White Deer), Bear Clan of Oshweken was interviewed on December 8, 2001. She was first presented to me in 1993 as an Elder and teacher of *The Good Medicine*, in membership with the *Good Medicine Society* of Arkansas. Our primary interview took place in the livingroom of her home near the reserve. The full transcript of the interview appears below. She is Mohawk, Bear Clan. Her family's roots are in the Kahnawke Mohawk Reserve in the province of Quebec. Kahskennontora:ken has been involved with the struggle of the Métis for recognition as Native American Peoples. She advocates for Indigenous rights of the Métis people throughout North America, including Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Good Medicine Teacher of Right Living

Question 1: What does developing character mean to you?

My own understanding of character development is more of the Old Ways of my native ancestors and not what is seen today. What I understand as character development is that we are not alone in our social structure, we are related to all that is, and we learn Good Mindedness and proper behavior from the checks and balances of family and cultural values which were taught to us by our "Old Timers = Wisdom." *I am speaking of an older philosophy—The Peace Maker's teachings. My teachings were of the **Peace Maker's Great Law.***

My understanding, as I grew up, was those of the Peacemaker's Great Law, and his messages to the people that taught the **Good Mind, Personal Power** and **Non-Judgment**. The Peacemaker's message is Divine Word/Creator's Message. *Character development, in my understanding of Culture, is seen as **mindfully practicing** the Good Mind, Culture's expected behaviors from us, which make up our cultural social teachings*

and conditioning. The Good Mind among my people has to do with seeing all things and events each day in a good way, without anger, and with gratitude and thankfulness for all the events of that day. We give gratitude for having gotten through the day, by mindfully keeping the agreement we made with our Creator, which we make each morning, to practice the Good Mind through out the day. The next morning, we begin again by making an agreement with our Creator to see all things that happen that day with *a Good Mind that always gives thanks for all we are given*, and we see life's happenings of each day with a Good Mind, a mind of Peace. And every day, we give thanks for having lived through the night, and having awoken that next morning to the Sun, as it comes up, in order to have another chance to live our lives within the Spirit of the Good Mind on the next day of our life's journey. We are forever and constantly thankful and grateful through each day's events that we live for the Creator's gift of the Good Mind.

In **Peace**, it is here that we negotiate in quiet, thoughtful talking; finding common ground as we talk in which to agree upon, and we do not fight needlessly with any other person. If we can't agree with the consensus, then we must put aside our personal views and support the people's decision for the Good Mind to work within the Culture to keep the Peace for all the People.

Power refers to our own personal power that is encouraged to grow within us, through which we develop a strong sense of self understanding, and groom a sense of what is best for us in relation to our People and ourselves, as we lead our lives as individuals within our cultural structure.

Righteousness is having a just mind - a Good Mind that does not judge. As a People we support justice, not judgment. These were the things that brought the "League of Peace" together under the Ever Growing Tree through teachings brought to us by the Peacemaker. We have to understand how violent things were in those times long ago. Everyone was dying from fighting, disease and war. This Great Law came about because the Peacemaker knew that the people had to change their war-like ways, and they had to learn to encourage good character development within the people.

The Peacemaker knew that at all cost, Peace must be maintained and the weapons of war put down and buried beneath the four roots of the **Great White Pine** that would

become a **Symbol of Peace** for the People. As nations and cultures interacting with each other and following the Great Law, it took much negotiation to allow each nation to have its own Ceremonies and yet follow the **Laws of the Great Peace**: that is one way we develop good Character and stress the need for tolerance of differences in People. You might say that that is Nature's University in which the people live in harmony with the land, and where the Old Ones teach the younger ones. This way of teaching life's lessons uses life experience and does not dictate that they learn through do as I say, not as I do.

If someone goes wrong in their thinking, as I was taught when I was younger, and a person takes a "left turn" (instead of wrong and right, think of it as left and right). Let's say that wrong is left, for example: in order to help that left-thinking person, you would take your mind away from judgment. This is the first step in the use of the Good Mind. You chose in life to have a right or left decision and then take a corresponding set of actions.... If you take a left turn, your **Clan Mother**, your Grandmother or your Auntie would talk it over with the women. They would then decide on what action would be the best way to help you to get back on the right track using a Good Mind through redirective teachings, storytelling and experience. They would also decide which of the women/people would be the best person to teach you the just way of the Good Mind, so that person could get back on the right-thinking track as soon as possible.

Historically, we are a **matriarchal society**. The women would say, "Well there is only one thing to do. We'll send that person to the best teacher that we know until their mind is good again." That is how the Good Mind was kept among the People. We did not deal out punishment and the disapproval of the People was often all it took to keep us on track: we had no jails. *We taught a wayward person to use their Good Mind and come back into harmony with their people.* This is my understanding, reflective of our history. One Old Timer I heard speak asked the following question of another Old Timer: "How would you punish someone if they were acting out in your culture?" The Old Timer looked puzzled, and replied "I wouldn't punish them; I would teach them a better way."

Today, we have to relearn the message of the Good Mind and the Great Law as a people, and as a human race, very shortly. The world is changing too fast and far too quickly for human beings to adjust. Our Earth is sick and will purge herself of us in order

to be well if we do not soon become Mindful once again. *Our role as First Nations people, as Spiritual People, and as peoples of the Earth is to globally be called upon to help that process of getting the Earth and all its life back into balance.*

Aboriginal people's world wide will have to help man-kind learn how to use "Good Science" in harmony with Natural Law. Native People may be called upon to do this for all of mankind. We'll have to take an active part in that. If we can't rise up as a people of Good Minds, because we don't remember how this was done according to the Peace Maker's teachings as given to us long ago, we will be unable to fulfill the prophecies as we know them to be. As it was in the past, now too we must go back to these teachings and sharpen these mind skills once again. We must learn once again how to live in the present time using the ancient teachings of the Earth Knowledge in harmony with Good Science. We are now in an age of Knowledge—To Know. We can no longer take leaps of faith, and the two roads we see at in the fork in our life Path will seem alike: *these are the times of the Trickster. To take a left turn will have amplified consequences in the future and will lead to tragedy.* We must know what is real and what isn't.

This is the age of the Trickster, and each Native Nation has their own version of what this means to them. These negative, chaotic forces are at work in the world now, as we talk. What seems to be right-thinking, and what is right-thinking will not be easy to discern nor perceive through logic alone. It will take a great deal of intuition and imagination. In Nature's Ways, all truths are very simple, but our world has become so complicated through man's tendencies to manipulate Nature, we are easily confused as people. Now, Knowing what is right-thinking, through the simple immutable truths of Nature, is seen as very complicated by the innovation and creation of things that are not natural, not real and not healthy for us. We use these unnatural things as a common way of living every day. From textiles to food, Science has engineered Nature away from its natural state of harmony.

Knowing is understanding and extrapolating within the **Mind/Spirit** what is true knowledge and real. You should always to ask yourself two questions before you speak. These questions are very basic and very simple. If these questions were taught to children as youngsters, they would be able to use their own Good Mind, using the ancient

knowledge of Nature's Laws, and the inherent knowledge of their people's wisdom which resides in the very bones of all indigenous peoples. *All of Mankind has this knowledge in the bones, as they were all once Earth People, and still have those ancient memories in their body and Spirit. The problem is that we have suppressed and stunted the world of our Spirit and its true Knowledge, which uses intuition and imagination to guide us as we grow in Wisdom.*

These are the two questions that I see as important to answering anything that demands of you accountable truth. Nature's truth doesn't change, but when it comes to something that is not tangible, not seeable, you have to ask these questions of yourself to find that truth in a world filled with new and improved widgets. First of all, you ask:

“If I speak, will it make any difference?”

Will it make a difference? If your answer is no, then you don't speak. Not everyone wants to know the truth, and to interfere with the life teachings of another person through **Natural Law** is unjustified.

The other question that you ask yourself before you break your silence is:

“What will the impact/reaction be towards me, towards the world, if I do speak?”
Am I willing, brave enough and courageous enough to speak?

If you aren't willing to take the impact and consequences of your actions and wisely recognize that it is the other person's issue that will come back at you, then you don't speak. These are very simple principles that are within these two questions. Life will throw at you everything you can take to help you learn. If you are ready for the teaching, when you ask the question, there is always a price, for nothing we attain that helps us grow is free. And the price is very simple: “Are you ready to take what Nature gives back to you and tests you with as a consequence to your actions? - In the way that Nature sees fit? There's no good, no bad, it's simply left and right. You'll receive the gift, but you'll also have to earn its price. This gift of Knowledge can be a hardship if you are not mindful of the process which you are going through, as it develops.

You asked me about younger souls and older souls. The difference is only a degree of experience, resiliency, temperedness and personal Spiritual Power: in other

words, Wisdom through many lives of experiences lived. These teachings in life come from our **Creator** as we are ready for them. *The whole world mirrors back to us its reaction to what we do, think, act and speak within the Natural world.* We are presently very dull, very numb in our understandings of the signs of Nature all around us. It is to the point of being Spiritually asleep in this modern world filled with newer, better, improved and cutting edge “Eye Candy” {wants not needs}. When our Spirit is asleep, we are at the mercy of any force, left or right, man-made or natural that is directed towards influencing our lives in order to help us learn to be Wiser. *True character development, true Knowledge, is always Spiritual,* as we understand that anything which is true learning, is of the Spiritual. The things which we learn that are not of the Spirit are what fill out our worldly experiences and our cultural norms.

We practice many rituals, roles and rules that are used to fill out and to learn about what we understand to be our Spiritual Principles or Path. Spiritual character development is learned and taught through Nature’s Laws, helping us to envision our dreams, bring about the circumstances, and watch for the signs that aide us on our Path of Spiritual growth and development. When we ask to be guided through our Creator’s Power and Love each morning, we have to but see the signs in our Natural world that verify we are on the right track and follow them, thus making our true meaning for being alive come to us as real teachings in our world and mind.

Now that we have talked about general society, along with this we need a good dose of intuition and imagination. Through these understandings of our Natural World, and our Spiritual Knowledge that becomes immutable truth for us, we come to understand these Natural Principles of Nature and how they manifest in our lives. These principles of owning all that happens to us is what really helps us to understand our decided reactions to our life events. To learn in mainstream society about Natural Truth, a good place to start would be the *Nine Hermetic Principles* of universal natural laws, according to the teachings I have received. They all work together. They are the:

Principle of mentalism: Our thoughts become “reality.”

Principle of correspondence: As above, so below, in the Earth and in the Spirit.

Principle of polarity: For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Principle of rhythm: All things flow in tides. All things begin and all things end.

Principle of cause and effect: Everything in itself is a cause and an effect.

Principle of gender: This is polarity applied to sentient beings.

Principle of relationship: Everything is related. Life energy is different only by levels of vibration.

Principle of progression: All of life's eternal progress is towards perfection, but through the Laws of Nature.

Principle of Vibration: Nothing rests. Everything moves. Everything vibrates.

In all of this, in Nature's laws, the only constant is change. I'll speak a little to three of the principles. One of the primary Laws of Nature is the **Principle of Vibration:** *The higher the Spiritual Vibration, the more advanced our character development becomes as we are Spiritual beings, and through understanding we gain peace of mind, personal strength and learn compassion.* Nature's Truths become solid Principles of Truth through which we guide and understand our life.

The **Principle of Cause and Effect:** For every action, word, thought or deed we take, there is an equal and opposite reaction somewhere in the world {a reaction which is balancing our experiences for all things occur naturally in duality: in opposite pairs}.

The **Principle of Polarity:** When two things are their very opposites, and oppose each other in position they are said to be polarized—stalemated. The heightening of Personal Vibration and the application of Harmony can bring Polarization into balance. The list for Natural Truth is a little bit longer than that, but those are some of the Natural Principles which are very important. They work in our lives every day and our minds are stronger than anyone has any insight into.

At this time, *I would say that humanity's life-force and Spiritual Power is about 97% fast asleep at the wheel. The ball of Hope and awakening Spirits in Man is rolling and on the increase.* The problem is, that if man doesn't begin living life through Knowledge of Spirit and Natural Law soon, as a Navaho Head-Man with whom I spoke said only recently, "We only have twenty-five to thirty years to turn the boat around and after that, it will be too late."

Figure X. A wedding feast at Ohsweken.

Kahskennontora:ken and Howhnuydane with Yvonne Dufault, at their wedding feast at Odrohekta (Six nations Tourism).

Science and Man must come into Harmony {another Natural Law}, doing for Man and the World what is good science and good living; not living a life of greed, unnatural/unreal things or money, but a life of Spirit and Natural Law and the application of science in a way that benefits the Earth's well-being. We have a big job ahead and the biggest challenge that Mankind has ever known faces us now. That is one part of good character development that must come into Harmony throughout the whole human race.

The second part is easy, as it is about the children. Once, from the time that a woman conceived in our culture, she was put in the care of the Grandmothers and Aunties. She was guided through her pregnancy under the always loving, unconditional care of these knowledgeable women. There would be an Auntie and a Grandma that would guide and help her. Every day they strove to keep this woman calm and balanced in body and mind, helped her to work and stay strong and feel joy, and helped her to keep her mind in a good place. Both partners, man and woman, are considered by the people to be "pregnant," and both people during this time are considered to carry seven times the power that they would normally have.

In pregnancy, we see the character of the child as developing from the day of conception. The baby develops character in the womb, as it experiences the mother's state of mind, her heartbeat, and feels the Earth's vibrations from inside its safe sanctuary. There are many thoughts on when the Spirit enters the body but character, that which can be formed and is of the people's influence in the world, begins the moment the child is conceived.

The women, traditionally, are the ones that have to do the work concerning the children, the character development through the experiences of each day in helping the child to understand how they are to be, what they are to be and where they are going. That means that adults, as we are parents to all children, are guiding these young people mindfully and not just dismissing their young mind's perceptions as they grow. If they won't leave the stove alone, you have to let them touch it, and still keep them safe. An example would be to let them touch the hot side of the stove where it is safe but still hot enough to impress upon their mind the concept of danger and hot together. We "watchfully watch" the child touch the stove. The teaching is for both the child and the

adult and for both people; this has to be an experience and a teaching. You can't just teach it by telling the child that they are "bad," which is one way to make them feel less as a person and insecure.

Unfortunately, it is not that easy to be a human being. We don't listen or learn through other's experiences very well. We find it interfering and irritating to be told about things that are close to our hearts and Spirits, and it is. None of us is objective about our own Path. Even the children are not objective about themselves. And so, from a point of objectivity, transferring our experiences from our personal Spiritual path to another person's path, either older or younger, is very hard and can easily be interpreted as interfering advice. It is only through the experiences of your own life that you can teach, so I think that's where we are different in our influence towards our children. *It is through our experience, which we put into stories that we tell to the child being taught. This gives the child a chance to use their imagination and intuition, and gives them the chance to decide if the teaching is good and true for them. You can tell them a story, and they will listen, learn and think through the use of storytelling.*

It is harmful to explain things as "This is what I think! This is what you will do!" That's an opinion. Children need to learn from their own prospective and not from an opinion and quick advice that they may not be able to put into practice in their live events. Opinions are judging and children catch onto this very quickly. You may have to say something like, "Well, in my life, this is what I know." Share with the child whatever you can be truthful about though your own life's stories, and try to avoid telling the child what to do when the child comes up against a moral problem.

Most of our teaching is done through our stories, because of our concern and love for our children. It may be through our own eyes, or through stories given to us, that we learned from the "Old Timers" when we were children that we try to teach our young. In whatever way those teachings come to us, *storytelling is a gentle way of teaching that takes the personal edge of criticism out of it.* I've been told I'm a good storyteller. I've also been told that I've been hated for my storytelling, for within each story are the seeds of personal and Natural Spiritual truth. Many people don't want to see the truth, so they become angered when you tell them a story.

Figure XI. Kahskennontora:ken and Howhnuydane.

Kahskennontora:ken and Howhnuydane (standing in front) celebrate their wedding day, dressed in traditional Iroquois clothing of the 18th century.

Those Spiritually blocked people, I feel sad about them. When children don't want to hear stories, it's sad because they are locked up inside. They're stuck and they just can't get out of repeating a predictable left thinking act or thought process. Quite often with a child, if you're telling a story and they're blocked, this is when their objections become strong. *We need to listen with our intuition when the child can't learn the teaching from us and not be offended or feel unloved as adults and parents. Another person is needed to tell them a story to help them, usually because you are just too close to them emotionally. So again, we would send them to the best adult we know, who has had that experience in life become their teacher, and their understanding of Natural truth. Through a story, you aren't telling children what to do. You are teaching them the realities of nature, of the land, of natural consequence, of the cultural religion, roles, rituals and ceremony in life that help to form a culture's character development within its people. For the children, from the day of conception, they were told stories in the womb. They were sung to from the day that their mother knew they were there. Through this approach the beginnings of true character development were taught, and in the womb we started the development of Knowledge within the Spirit or the Soul.*

In the womb, their character was gentled through formation and then into life. From first breath as they came to know the Natural world, they began life as a gentled child. And so the Spirit and the birthing came easy, and without conflict. In the way I understand it, for many people that we see in the world, character development does not match their Spirit. The Spirit has to chisel its way into Harmony with the character, or the character is so strong that it shuts down the Spirit and sends it into sleeping unawareness. We see many of those people who are Spiritless {asleep} because of the character development that Life has brought them, and through the lack of Spiritual teachers which have come to them. If people are Spiritually asleep, what are they able to hear in their intuitive selves? Even if it's this broad, as broad as a barn door, they still can't see Nature's signs and teachings, as they are sleeping spirits. Then the child's character development becomes superficial in their experiences in life. Through trying to live up to the "Jones," the child learns experiences which become a life filled with unreal/unnatural wants, competition and copying. In turn, their children are conditioned to be unaware human beings, as history repeats itself if the Spirit is not healed.

If you have a father that cares about football or lacrosse and a beer; or pool tables and a beer; his child's character development suffers and his child learns those same teachings. Most parents are quite patronizing towards their children: "Oh that's very nice! Isn't that sweet? Mommy's busy now. Just go and sit down and watch television." In that one sentence, you have patronized the child, given them something to dull their minds, and instructed them to watch TV which decreases their mental intelligence.

These are three things which have impacted on the child towards negative character development in one mindless mother's interaction with her child. That is how easy it is to change the path of good character towards the left path of life in our children. It is not hard. They have learned you don't care about what they want to show you, that the television is a safer choice than trying to learn from a parent they love and respect but don't feel loved by in return. Children feel you don't value them enough to pay attention to their need to learn from you and to be loved for their young questioning, inventive and hungry minds. *Non-involvement and disengagement from your role as a responsible, Character-forming adult is enough to put a child on the left path of life.* The tragedy is that you didn't take the time to play, you didn't encourage them to play in a good way with other children, you didn't go outdoors and show them all the little things in the world—the birds, the trees, the plants, the little fishes in the river, or how to catch a tadpole. *All of these normal natural experiences are a part of our responsibility as parents towards our children's character development.* If these teachings aren't done by the parent or another adult the child holds respect for, the child is ill equipped to love their own children or and they are ill equipped to cope with life as adult and parent in relation to their own children.

Respect for nature in children is learned at the father and the mother's knee. It can be learned later if that person is able to overcome initial negative training, has a great desire to overcome what they have been taught and is gifted enough in the mind and the Spirit to learn the Good Mind/living connection. These are the natural gifts of a true survivor Spirit within a strong person. You can develop good Character later, but the amount of negative experience teachings to be overcome is tragic. Many children are damaged as badly as any Residential School child could be without Residential School experience. The child just has to be in a situation where the same deprivation and

devaluation that forms a person's Character is experienced. If the level of disassociation, negative reinforcement and disinterest used by the parent is great enough, that child will grow up with the same symptoms of not being able to love as did many of our parents.

Show me a calm baby, and you've got a Spiritually calm mother. Show me an anxious baby, and you've got a mother whose Spirit is in turmoil. Children do not learn through words at birth, nor do they later, for the greater degree of teachings they absorb and learn in life. *Ninety percent of our true Knowledge is never learned through talking: it is learned through experience and exposure to others with Wisdom, or the lack of wisdom, that teaches.*

What about a colicky baby?

Give the mother a sedative herb, and the baby will settle. It is just that simple. The connection between mother and child is present non-verbally from the very beginning and the baby reflects that mother's Spiritual state through its actions and reactions to a new world. This early in life, it is a very symbiotic relationship between mother and child. During the first two years of life, before children learn to talk, they speak the universal language of our Creator. It is everything about being innocent and pure of Spirit and not about what we know about worldly experience. We quickly start to socialize and civilize our children and lead them away from their intuition, imagination and yearning to understand about their need for natural experiences. We proudly say they are civilized and acculturated. The mix of life events that culture gives each child slowly accumulates into experiences that form their characters. *Character development, in the Native sense, is not to kill these gifts of intuition and imagination.* In the old days, the focus of an adult towards a child's experience was to encourage them to use imagination, but not to replace life's truth with something that was unreal or lacked true natural knowledge. It's simple; natural truth is always simple—it is our complicated world that makes decisions and ramifications difficult for us. As we drop the pebble in the stream, we know it is not hard to do, but the ripples that grow outwards from this one simple decision to act reach far in their effect on us and on others. I don't know what else I can add to this, except that our Spirits are as acorns at birth. When we look into the young Spirits that we see in our

children, we see that they have the potential to grow into **Spiritual Oak Trees** with the right approach, the right teachings and the right loving, caring teachers.

To add one more thing, *our time, place and race of birth, and our astronomical or star chart at first breath, influences much of how our character will perceive, even from infancy, how the world teaches us our character experiences as our Spirit develops.* We are all given a very different set of life teachings: a set of things to overcome in life, and a set of gifts which we must develop into their full potential. These shortcomings and strengths that we must bring to potential are our purpose for being **Earthly Spirits** having a human experience. This is why we are poor advice givers: we can't be objective about ourselves. To pose a question, if each of us has a different set of strengths and obstacles, how could we possibly think we can advise what should be done in someone else's life without interfering with their life Path?

*We are all at different levels and in different places on the **Great Spiral of Progression towards Spiritual Perfection**,* which includes all types of man and all the levels of Spiritual maturity in man. Each person is striving to have a life of good character and progression concerning their life goals, in order to be remembered as having had worth when they are gone. Wherever we are reborn to on the Earth in our next life-span on the Great Spiral of our Spiritual evolution, we are Spiritually progressive beings that come back for another life and another life in order to accumulate all the knowledge that humans can attain in the Perfecting of our Spiritual selves. Our Spirit Mind or Higher Mind collects and accumulates this knowledge and adds the teachings of each life-span to its great storage of knowledge, lifetime after lifetime, learning Spiritual Knowledge through the medium of being human. This is the purpose for which we live.

Our Spirit Mind {Universal in the Spirit World, and we all have one} decides when we need to have our next human experience, when we need to come back, where we need to be on the Earth and what we need to learn and to overcome next. The Spirit comes to the children as a piece of our great Celestial Spirit Mind at first breath. It's not so simple that we can just say we have a Spirit and we learn. *Our Spirit Mind in the Sky World has sent us here with a predetermined, real purpose for our present life's design.* In every life, life after life, there is a Spiritual purpose for living in this great Celestial

design for human-kind for we are children of our Father, the Creator and strive to become more like Him with each life we live on Earth until there comes a time we no longer need to progress through the use of a physical state. What is happening in the Star World is reflected in the microcosm below called the Earth.

Interestingly, scientists expected the Universe to begin to implode, but it didn't. Instead, it is moving some two hundred times faster than it was a couple of hundred years ago. Therefore though the **Natural Law of Correspondence**, the Earth, its scientific advancements, its swift changes and all its peoples are now cycling through their Spiritual Progression in hyperactive mode. Things are moving too fast, advancing too fast, and man is having difficulty telling the Eye Candy from Natural Law, and because of this, is easily tempted and corrupted into taking the easy path of non-natural options.

People will have to once again begin to slow down and understand Natural Law and Spiritual progression, our reason for having a human life. We must understand the speed at which the Universe is now expanding at that this speeding up has an imminent effect upon all the Earth's life forms. As the universe progresses and continues to grow at a tremendous rate, so actually does mankind's knowledge of science, but not for the better. Greed and artificial worth are the first thought of importance for man's reason to be alive. Mankind has messed up badly between science and man's ambition for the easy unnatural life in the past fifty years. We've managed to screw things up pretty good for ourselves, sickening the Earth to the point of Her expelling us to become well again. It is too much knowledge too soon. People have lost their reason of what life is really all about. This is my feeling about this speedy scientific progression we are now in—we as biological/spiritual humans just can't adjust to these rapid changes without corruption sneaking in to take its share of our speedy arrogant development. We are like people that have been catapulted out of living in a cave with fire and nature, and suddenly, we are flying in a plane over New York City with a lap-top computer in our hands!

We are now outside of our time-line in regards to natural order, and the world is in a state of critical crisis. We have to heal the Earth now, and so *the youth of today are showing us that they want to get back to the Old Ways and they are searching for the Spiritual connection to the Earth, that the entire world's people once possessed.* The last

two or three generations wanted to dump the Old Ways. “No, I’m not an Indian. I’m Black Dutch” or something to that effect was what they would say. “I’m just a Black Dutchman. I’m Slovenian or I’m Serbian, but I’m not no Indian.” The generation growing up now has a fierce pride in their heritage and all our young people are searching for answers that are more esoteric, intuitive and use good science.

Today, young native people are saying “I want my Heritage.” *Aunties, uncles, parents and kids are searching for and demanding to be told the truth about their roots to the Earth and the old traditions.* The aunties and uncles in denial are not happy about this change of direction, but the truth is what will finally win, so there is a definite swing back towards the old traditions and ceremonies that bring us a Spiritual growth in life. It has bought us some time to save the Earth’s balance and life-forms. *This new generation of the New Indian that is coming now will be one of knowledge-seeking, truth-seeking in Spirit, and they will focus on living in Harmony with the Earth. This is the hope of the masses that are Spiritually awakening today and this combined force will spread like a great web around the world.*

Question 2: In your culture, how is education for character traditionally caught or taught?

Education for Character is caught and taught. As I have said, ninety percent of what we learn we don’t say in words. *Ninety percent of Knowledge that we integrate into our lives is caught knowledge. That is our intuitive self at work. It is that part of us, our imaginations and our intuitions, which is more Creator-like than anything that is in our physical form.* Other people can relate to this concept through their Creator-like Spirit, for this is what our Spirit truly is. I use the word God because people everywhere can relate to that. *To me, it’s Skonkwaia ’tishon. Shonkwaia ’tishon’s influence in our character development is that ninety percent we “catch” of life’s unspoken teachings.*

What we are taught through the physical world {the concrete ten percent} can be very powerful, for we can hear it, feel it, taste it, sense it and touch it. If a punishment is received, even though we may have received one hundred compliments that feed the Spirit, tell me which experience you remember most vividly and most often: The one punishing teaching or the one hundred good teachings/reinforcements about your good

character? You will remember the one time you were punished. Many different negative experiences, {negative reinforcements, the wrong way of teaching} often outweigh the good, joyful way of experiencing our childhood, which is where we learn from parents and adults about becoming parents ourselves. This is why *we get rid of the word wrong—to take the judgment out of life's experiences and life's choices that we make*. It can be done with words or without words. Children observe, extrapolate and conclude in their understandings of life. It makes sense to us that our teachings are ten percent “taught” and ninety percent “caught.”

Children see the truth through unblemished but still inexperienced eyes and these are caught teachings. In these teachings which they extrapolate upon to make them their truths, they haven't yet had enough life experience to make their experience decisions about what they observe. They need to express how they see truth {caught} and to be gently taught {taught} the right way of thinking through stories that relate to their experiences. Children hear and talk and feed back to us how they see the teaching. Children seek out our counsel about what they feel and think, and that is where we are responsible for teaching them the Good Mind of character development through reassurance, discussion and love.

If there are no words of explanation for something, even then the Ancient Truths in the bones can teach us the Good Mind, but it takes a lot of discipline and searching for our teachers and guides to help us tap into the intuitive mind to do this. As well as doing mind work, the healing work must be done in order to extract the emotional harm and the damage we have suffered. But if children are given enough pain, the truth will be that they will act and understand life like you, in pain, anyway.

When children see people at work in their lives, who are of good character and they observe you living/giving a good example, the child has a chance to develop positively through caught and taught teachings. This is true even if the teaching is difficult and painful to learn through experience. Children's minds are more resilient. Their minds are less likely to wall up and close out teachings less not easy to experience. Young children can see and more easily accept the goodness within tough teachings.

*In the part of life experience which is “taught” teaching, children need to be able to reach out and touch their tangible and intangible walls of safety. We have to set limits in the world for them, their worldly parameters and invisible walls. Children’s minds are only able to handle and learn so much at one time, for if the teachings are negative, then they tend to get into unsafe and uncharted experience situations. They are like babies when you suddenly kick their swaddling off them. Their arms just shoot out in fear. If you take the walls and the parameters we set in place for their safety away from a child, they do the same thing as a newborn does; they react in fear and without thought out of the consequences of their actions, because they have no understanding of the situation that they can draw upon. They have no experience to tell them what to do. It is unfortunate, that given enough exposure to danger, many children become reckless through their feelings of being unloved and abandoned. They feel that no one cares about what happens to them. They get hooked on the dare-devil adrenalin thrill of risky situations. *Being disenfranchised as a child makes people pain-filled, wreckless and wild.**

*“Caught” teaching is the Spirit of cultural teaching, where children are taken to places to have experiences for their Spirit growth. They are exposed to their aunties, their uncles, their teachers, and other wise people {counselors} among them. They listen to the wisdom of the stories and they receive “caught” teachings by deciding to not do something or to go ahead and get into that life situation. They are given time off from school to observe **special ceremonies** that teach them about good character and the Good Mind in their culture. They are immersed in celebration, which is a wise thing, because it teaches them caught teachings through oration from their Elders, through ceremony song and dance {joy}. They don’t have to say anything. It is an experience. To me, the taught teachings are the parameters and natural cultural expectations you put into place for your children’s safety and learning. They don’t feel like you don’t care and are involved in a caring community experience that encourages good character development. They come from a culturally involved family. The real opposite of love is not hate. It is indifference. When you don’t care and you are indifferent, you cannot tell a child otherwise. They won’t believe you. Indifference is the real opposite of love.*

No one else will convince a child that is ignored that they are cared about until someone is able to “catch” their attention, and then children can be taught to bond with

other people and learn from an involved adult's stories. This significant person or people can reach through and "catch" them so that they are "caught" into understanding natural truth, and *then slowly the adult can get through all those protective mechanisms that the child has erected to keep pain away and guide them towards health of the Spirit.*

All those little bullies, those "boys in the hood," need to have something and someone who cares about them and someone who can teach them good character. If they don't find this in other people they can trust, they form a society of their own. They are not tough, but out of their depth and too conditioned to pain in life's experiences. In order to live their lives with a Good Mind they have little to no chance—no one cares about them. They make their own family or society of their own age group, because they don't have one, and social connectedness is a part of Man's essential needs. With what they have learned and understood so far in their lives, which may or may not be good, they mindfully draw up their own rules of conduct and are fiercely loyal to each other. These young people usually don't have the capacity to develop Good Character as their collective experience has no background in good character development. But one thing is sure, they love each other. They really do love each other. No matter what, street kids do look out for each other. They just lack the experience of the Good Mind and Wisdom that a good family and a caring community could have taught in order for them to be Good Minded, productive, and emotionally balanced people in life.

A lot of our children are lost in the abyss and darkness, some are in the healing process, and they are all very protective of their cultural remnants. In our culture, in order for them to learn the concept of being related to everyone, we give them a sister or a brother that is older than they are, usually an adult. That person plays a significant role in their character development. So we have this type of teaching as well, where they go nowhere without their sister or brother and they never travel alone. If they are coming home from school they are always in pairs. Part of the teaching is that in order for children to be taught the cultural values they need, *they have their mentor.* This person is a sister or brother who is older than they are, to help them see life's teachings from a different perspective. In this way, *you give the child several different ways of approaching good character development, through young and old people alike, and*

several ways of learning and seeing life's teachings. The adults, parents and adopted sisters and brothers are always on the lookout for the children's better good.

Each and every adult in Native society is a surrogate parent, grandmother, grandfather, auntie, uncle, sister or brother to every child. Every child who comes to your door is your child and your responsibility. There is an in-built understanding that all adults are in relation to us as our fathers and our mothers, our aunties and our uncles. We have special sisters and brothers, usually older, and we go everywhere with them as we walk in Nature. There were so many in-built things that could instill good experiences and teachings for our children. If you did something on the left hand side, you may not be punished, but everybody is going to know and you would be scolded through the approach of a Good Mind. It was like living in a fish-bowl. When you need to be helped and taught right-thinking, then a structured teaching took place, where we would send the child to the best teacher if the child did not learn from experience. If an adult catches you doing something left handed, they exercise their parental guardian role, and teach the right way, usually there and then. There were no jails in our communities—we just didn't need them. Caught knowledge? We catch that all the time. If the society is working properly, with the use of a Good Mind by all, there is no way you can't catch the proper and expected behavior of the society, as it is expected of you all the time. There is no doubt about what you know as **Good Mind** or **Right-Thinking**.

Question 3: How do you consider yourself to be involved in character education?

Well, mostly informally as people come to me for help and counsel; it is a daily living thing. In the beginning, *I formally taught Good Medicine principles, which are nothing more than the principles of good natural living.* As the years have passed, I find that my life's understandings and experience have come to a more informal way of teaching. I tend to do it when the needs of others come to me, I do what is needed, and let go. In this way, there is the *least amount of interference with the life Path of other people.*

The formal classroom situation of the past, I found was a great experience for me. I think that some of the people that I've taught learned much but I've found that those formal teaching days were the greatest teacher for me: *all students teach the teacher.*

*When it comes to teaching character education, the most helpful thing that you can do is **plant seeds** in the minds of people through your Knowledge of life's experiences. I have never believed that anyone is done learning or can't learn. We learn and experience until the day we die. Nothing is ever so brittle that there is no goodness within the teaching. All experiences in life contain some element of the Good Mind. It is only brittle when we believe. It is a "belief," that we can't learn anything more on a topic. Then we chose to stop learning on that subject, and that's an individual choice. Everybody chooses to stop learning about any given thing. When you decide you know it all then you can't learn.*

Our Creator is continually trying to find ways to sweeten our Cup of Knowledge. If we hoard our Knowledge, there is no flow, and our cup becomes stale. It is only when we give away the contents from our cup of Knowledge, that our Creator can fill our Cup with a deeper understanding of Knowledge which helps us to advance in our Spiritual growth and development on this **Earth Walk**.

In character education there is a time for you ask these two important questions before assuming the role of a teacher in order to not interfere with the Path of another person. These are the two simple questions: If I say anything, will it make a difference? And if it does, what is the impact on my Path in life?

Those two basic questions have to do with teaching, and perpetual teaching is what we all do for other people. If what I am going to say is a problem and will cause the person more pain, or causes me more grief in the price that it exacts from me than I am willing to pay, then I must reconsider and possibly walk away from interjecting what I know as truth. It will not be appreciated nor heard, as the person is not ready for the teaching. That idea goes further, because in character education, if you interfere too much you are walking all over the other person's Path, through your need to guide them. There are certain teachings that the child or person has been sent here to learn that are different from yours. They are in this life experience though their Creator's purpose and design, and as such, they must learn their life's journey in their own way.

Children's Paths need **guiding parameters** so that they can discover their purpose. It is born within them. It is already there just waiting for the right time, right place, right people and right circumstances to awaken the Knowledge within them.

Everything that you need to know is already within you. It is just the events of life, and the people in your life, who come along and provide the keys that unlock those teachings through their interactions with you, so that our progression through life stays on the Right Path, not the Left Path of life.

For our children, it is a guiding thing. It is the mother who knows, after telling the child the stove is hot, that she must be courageous and mindful enough to have the child touch that stove just enough to learn it is hot, and not harm the child. The child knows enough to pull their hand away very quickly. You don't let them touch a burning hot element, but touch from the side of the stove where it is safer to touch. They get the teaching without being traumatized. You must help them help themselves, to stay safe and to understand danger without living their lives in fear - help them to help themselves to meet their basic needs for food if they get lost, to meet their basic needs and seek shelter, to teach them to keep warm. All the basic needs of a child must be guided and taught by adults in ways that the child is able to do these things to keep themselves safe. This is not to be mistaken as child labor, but as a child learning to contribute to the people, working within their community, so that they can survive adversity. A good example of this was a boy who helped the Old Timers by bringing in their water, wood and cleaning out the ashes from their stove every day after school, before going home to do these same things at home as a routine after school.

Nothing is worse than placing a child in a gilded cage and vicariously living your life through your child. You can't stop a young person from doing anything that they have the will to do, right or wrong. If you have not given them the coping skills they needed, and you have given them everything they need and want, they will grow up without the tools and knowledge that brings about growth in the way of the Good Mind. This child may as well be a bird with clipped wings in a cage. When you guide a child, it cannot be patronizing. When an adult puts limits on a child that are too restrictive, they will learn to rely on you to do all their problem solving: they cannot learn to be self-sufficient and make choices, using a Good Mind. When they are protected and smothered as children, and they grow to an age to live independently, they will have to earn their teachings the hard way. Every teaching will feel like they are stuck between a rock and a hard place, and can break their spirit. The best way to learn through the tough times in

life is to know that all things will pass. Even if it is hard to learn the teachings of the moment, people flow a little better, grow a little stronger, when they are mindful of and have knowledge of Nature's Laws.

There are people that will tell you the truth straight out, but they will usually ask you: "Do you want the truth?" So, be careful what you ask for, because you will get it. Sometimes the teaching is a real thumping, but then again there are times when we need to smarten up. If we are not humble enough, we need to get to a place of simplicity and think things through. I give good words. That is what I do. But I tell people "Good words are not what you always want to hear. Do you still want to know?" I always warn people that in good words from a Good Mind are the teachings that are the closest to their heart and are usually very vulnerable. Try to give them the truth as nicely as it can be given. *Good words can make people mad, even when you've qualified it with their permission to speak freely.* Sometimes you have to decide if it is worth it to be truthful with them. You tell them "You can take this, or you can leave it, because it's your life. This is what I sense." The words "This is what I sense, my opinion is..." is often a better way to say what you see, because it is my sense, my experience in the matter that they are asking for. It is not their sense/understanding that they are getting and again, stories are less pointed and feel less like an attack on sensitive issues. *Expressing my heart and mind in a good way with kindness and compassion would be what I would call my involvement in Character development. In storytelling and in teaching which is ongoing through every day of my life is the way to teach that I see as most effective.* Teaching for me is not as formal as it was once was when I did classroom Native teachings. I don't think I could fit into that role today. I still do tutor formal teachings, one on one, but this too falls under the umbrella of character development. This is the best answer I can give you.

The one last thing I might say about teaching character development is that in the way of the Native peoples, **noninterference** is an important and respectful way of conducting our lives in relation to other people. It is not some passing idea. *Noninterference is an important Native principle.* If you see somebody messing up, maybe they have to mess up in order to learn what it is that works for them as they try to cope with their life's teachings. Sometimes in life, people need to learn what does not work in order to know what does. There are times that we have to let people mess up in

order to decide what it is that they don't want in life. It is only when they hit the bottom of whatever it is that they need to go to the bottom of that they can come back and begin to learn their teaching with a Good Mind. They have to experience what is the not good way in order to understand, "Well, this isn't working, so what are my choices now?" If they need to learn a better way or another way, then you can help them, if they ask you to aid them in redirecting their efforts. In native life, we get enough scolding from the Old Timers that we know when we need to take charge and change or ways, or things just stay uncomfortable in our relationship to our community.

It is also important not to get in People's way, and to let natural law teach them what does and doesn't work. Nature gives you clues of all kinds every day. They may come and say, "You know, somebody told me I'm gonna die if I don't sharpen up." This statement is often how other people will approach you for your thoughts and ideas on how to improve their lives. They have said what they fear, and they need help with seeing things that are difficult from a different perspective. Most people cannot bring it to the personal position of "I" right away; it takes them a long time to accept that their way of life is dangerous for them. Eventually bad living will end up in dis-ease and in real disease of the body as well as disease of the mind. Realistically, there are some people who never learn. Those people are the lost people. They have Spiritual character flaws that can't mend. I truly believe those flaws are in the bones - they are deep, old, inherited things. These people have *holes in their Souls*, in their Spirits, like Swiss cheese. Nothing fills in those holes but their sincere desire to heal these holes and true healing can only occur from within the Self.

It takes an act of our Creator to mend the holes and dents of the Spirit's pain from experience. When we have done our healing work, then we can make that positive and Spiritual life happen and it takes a true understanding of our personal relationship with our Creator and true Natural Knowledge. *People must want to heal their pain* more than anything, they must have a high desire and they have to risk asking others to help them. *Their desire must be very high in order to change those negative character traits and the reward must be greater than the dysfunctional things they have used to cope with during their lives*, such as alcohol and drugs. *It has to be self-motivated and of the Spirit, or their can be no true growth, no true Knowledge.*

There was a story recently about a man that was going to rewrite our sacred Divine Law for the year 2000. He said this to a good woman, and she advised him to go and talk to another woman here who is highly respected. What this woman did was sent him to the best teacher she could. The principle of sending people to the best teacher to advise them, to get their mind back into a good place, onto the right track, is very important. This is an example of how we can guide but not interfere. Whether he goes to that Old Timer or not, is up to him. He has a choice, but she guided him the best way that she knew to help him without doing anything more than advising him to talk to the best person she knew to teach him the concept of the Good Mind.

This man was allowed to keep their self respect intact and he will have a chance to reflect or not to reflect, but at least he has been given direction. In character development within Native life as we knew it, it was a softly given thing of guidance, and you either got the teaching or you didn't. And if you didn't, it could get rough for the person within the culture. It is a built-in kind of check and balance system, limit-setting thing. If you are not listening, the next time it gets a little tougher. People will be more direct and tell the person that they don't want to hear this talk as it is not of a Good Mind. You give the softest, least invasive idea and send them in the right direction. It is a choice for the person learning. It is not a command. It is a suggestion and that is all. The end result of the world's mirroring back to them the world's reactions, and how they react in return to the world is up to them, as they are responsible for their own journey.

Question 4: How do teachings to develop character persist in the present day reality, and how do you relate them?

For me, it is easier to do this because I have lived in cities, so I have an understanding of that dominant world and its way of assimilating us into the main stream. I've lived here. I have an understanding of the Native world and they [these two worlds] are very, very different. Being Native is not easy. It is a closed society even though it's open. You think you get in, but you don't. People give you some sense of acceptance, but often only to a degree. The true deep meanings and understandings of their intuitive mind or intangible thought are kept secret and sacred. Those Native people are the ones that are still following tradition. We have about ninety percent of our people who don't follow

tradition, even though they live on reserve lands. What that really means is that they are lost and they can't find anywhere to rest, to belong. Their Nativeness comes down to a band card, a tax exemption and some rules and regulations that are culturally based on their particular nation. So what it comes down to is that there are some ways of behaving and ways of observing that are cultural. *Now how I relate the old teachings and the old ways of developing character in today's world is through my life experience, and the teachings of other people who have touched my life, their stories, their experiences are timeless truths.* You could tell a story from a thousand years ago, or today, and the truth beneath it is of Nature, of Spirit, and it is this that you are really conveying. You are planting the seed of the Good Mind. *The timeless truth of Nature's teachings, and the truth is that we are Spiritual beings having a human experience in relationship to Nature, and this natural truth is immutable.* Those are constants within our Universe.

Most troubled and peer pressured kids find it embarrassing and uncomfortable to hear the stories, because they catch on very quickly to the meaning that we convey within these stories. Their intuitive mind is still alive. Most adults listen to it. They may or may not hear any teaching at all. They may listen to it and not get it or not take it to their Spirit by just shutting it out of their mind's experiences. Tuning out the truth is easier than having to own a problem and make life change and that's what it is, just avoidance. Native people are very good at shifting blame. The one thing I have to say about Native people is that they want to keep the peace. So someone might say, "My wife made me do it." "My mother made me do it." "It is so and so's fault. They made me do it." In order to avoid conflict and one's real work in life, blame is shifted onto an outside source, and weaknesses within ourselves are not frequently owned nor is the challenge of Spiritual growth addressed until life's teachings become so hard there is no choice but to grow in order to end the person's discomfort.

In reality, no one makes anyone do anything. We are led by our own actions and not by the actions of others. You see ownership, sometimes, can also cause conflict and so I would say that this over-concern or lack of ownership on our part as people is the one flaw I find in my culture. Ownership has been conditioned within us as something that is not high on the priority list. As there is more cultural meltdown today, relating to the now, when you teach and tell stories, the truth is inherently within that story, and Nobody

wants to hear the truth. *The Old Timers used to be able to take the truth and through their soft spoken words, set into action a thought that would come to you about your own truth after they were done speaking to you.* There was no conflict and people's attitudes and behaviors adjusted according to what needed to be changed. It would not be talked about, but the end result was that the person being taught kept their self respect and made necessary changes to stay within consensus with other members of the community.

Today it's not like that. They want you to come in, but they'll spit you out as fast as you come in the door. The moment that you tell the truth as you see it, it seems to be a threat, and they want you to leave, or may just decide you aren't liked and turn their back. There are times when the truth is just not culturally bearable. We haven't got long to turn this boat around now, if we are to save the Earth and all its life forms. Since the ways of destruction have to be turned around fairly quickly, people have understand that they don't have to be so sensitive, so easily insulted. This thinking, however, will take revolutionary change in the thinking of the Native people, as I see them as being closed due to being stuck in the process of their healing the tragedies of the past. They don't have to get angry and lose their Good Mind in order to learn. These problems that will open the minds of the people of the Earth's teachings to help others must be done at the grass roots, one thing at a time, accumulatively and it has to catch on like wildfire.

For instance, I said to a woman in the community not long ago, "Well, you heard what the man said. *They're coming in 2004 to Six Nations and we're going to have a big Peace Conference here.* They see us as the Eastern Door."

The woman replied "Is it! We had better get busy and apply for funding."

I just sat there, thinking, what is that about, this needing to have funding?

My reply to her statement was "Why do you need funding? What do you need money for? Put more potatoes in the pot and open your guest rooms. Everybody has a couch. Everybody has a cot. There are enough houses on this reserve to take care of everybody who is coming. We take care of the people. We have our own teachings of hospitality—we give our guests our best bed, our best chair, our best food. What has happened that these teachings have gone into the past? That's part of our culture. Inherently, these simple teachings of hospitality are what we are well known for...it's

part of our culture. We all have the ability to use our Good Minds. Why don't we demonstrate it? That's all you have to do, so where does the need for money come in?"

She laughed and said, "That's right, I just didn't think of it, but we should be looking after our own and those to come to us in the name of Peace."

She went to the restaurant the next day and she told somebody else, and he said "Oh geez, we had better get funding. We better get on the horn right away."

Then she repeated to him exactly what I had said to her. This little incident is one simple example which shows you how a Good Mind can be passed down the line and influence people in a good way. I said this to one person and two people were affected. Both of them were funding oriented, but they had a whole different way of thinking with just a simple thing like hospitality being put into what they were thinking. Where did we go wrong when it comes to our way of understanding hospitality and Good Mind? » When it comes to people who are strangers who come to our land, we know our rules of hospitality and have just simply forgotten, but it does work. And so, with a new way of looking at a problem it can be solved, and it does work.

Question 5: Do you think there is a possibility for these teachings to impact positively and permanently on adolescent or young adults?

- a) in Native school systems?***
- b) in non-Native school systems?***
- c) in other settings?***

My answer to that is yes, yes, yes, very simply.

- a) Native school systems

In Native school settings, it is already being done. The old ways are being taught and revived for the young. *We have immersion schools here, and we have McMaster University that now sponsors a degree in Native Studies.* We are talking about time proven Knowledge applied in the best way we can, given the world circumstances of today. In our Native school systems, talking circles, and classroom curriculum on the reserve, Native traditions are woven in amongst the writing, reading and arithmetic. Today, the children are given time off to attend the important gatherings at the time of

year that they occur. Now they are starting to teach the children from a First Nations cultural point of view. They are also given exposure to the things academically that they are going to need culturally, including learning their Native language.

French is important in Canada, but to me it is a government imposed thing. In Quebec, even though 20% of my background is French, I have say that Quebec is like an out of control adolescent and always has been. Quebec operates with a hot head and a cold heart—you are not going to get cooperation from the rest of Canada through the bully-system. To me, the cause of the disruption in Quebec is like the death throws of any nation. All things pass with time, even great civilizations. Adaptation is the way of survival and all things progress for the good or the ill. All things must evolve or die. It is a simple thing, a Natural Law. If you see it from that point of view, it is not much different Native society, you either evolve or die. In Native settings, it is becoming more homogenous all the time. That sounds like a desecration against Iroquoian truth, but so much has been lost in the past fifty years.

Underneath it all, is the inevitable need to come into harmony as Peoples of the Earth. *If you have had the good fortune to have had exposure to several of the Native Nations, you'll begin to understand that those truths we hold so close - those same Natural truths are just said in different ways, ritualized in different ways, rules were made in different ways, our roles are defined in different ways.* But if you take all that meat off the bones, the bones are the same and Nature's Laws are Universal in Nature. The principles by which we live are Earth teachings, full stop and they exist in simplicity. It is that way worldwide in all Earth based Traditional Cultures.

Everything of the Earth is seen, understood and taught through memory and through the way the people have harmonized with their environment in their home area. You've got Earth Peoples in Siberia. You've got Earth Peoples in the Rainforests. You've got Earth Peoples in the Woodlands. Our traditions are going to be a different set of Earth, plants, fishes, birds, and four leggeds. I mean we are talking about trees, plants, birds and animals that are unique to our biology, including us. Put that aside, and the rules of Natural Law are the same. Natural Law is just immutable truth. It is not something you change. It is timeless truth and it is a constant. So for Native school

systems, it is already being done and it is working. The children of this generation, from eighteen years and down, are progressing in leaps and bounds towards embracing their culture proudly. This is so much more so than their mother's generation, or their grandmother's generation, or their great grandmother's generation because of the *disassociation of those generations from being Native People who were shamed, taken away from their families from the age of five to the age of sixteen to Residential School, and punished for being who they were.*

In the Grandmothers and Great Grandmothers' experience we had the Residential Schools. In the mother's experience we had the fear of being Native in a society that just wouldn't give you a job or show any respect for you as an equal human being. In the young adults experience now, they are getting somewhere in the courts in this Land to have their rights recognized, and that makes a difference.

Their sovereignty or their indigenusness to this land is being somewhat respected. Many would disagree with me on this point because the courts may order the government or the police to change their behaviors and laws, but having the judgment carried through is not happening in many cases. We are winning court cases. We are making the papers. This is making people see. The consequences of the judgments in these court cases are often not being respected or carried through; that's the sad part. For Native people, the promised judgment is not a justice because it is never done. That happens all too often, and in many cases so far, it is just a slap that is written on paper.

b) Non-Native school systems

In Non-Native school systems, the same principles apply. They are human. We are human. Once they had Earth-based traditions somewhere in their history. Somewhere in their history, they understood, respected and lived with the Earth. We all did. It doesn't matter where you come from; we are all Native to some area of the Earth. Somewhere in their pre-industrial history they were Native People of the Earth. *At a time long ago, before contact with us, when many of those people were so cruel, the people that hurt the Native Americans were hurt in the same way and they too lost their Earth Culture. It always seems that the victim grows up to become the perpetrator.*

We are going back to before 1000 AD, before the specialization of tasks in Man occurred, when we relied on one another tribally, and it changed in Europe to a hierarchy situation. There were many circular dependencies where in these Earth based societies in Europe where everybody had to do certain tasks, but they could multitask within that society. Especially in Europe we saw this happen. Monarchies arose. There was fighting. Earth People's were conquered and the crusades and the great Inquisition changed the ways of the people forever. The modern world of mechanization began with the abolishment of the women's power within European cultures and male dominance was put in its place: the balance of the Natural world was upset and became one sided.

There were also takeovers of many cultures here in North America among our own Native People that no one knows about. As Native Americans, many cultures rose, lived and were vanquished or assimilated due to many factors. Some of these factors were cultural norms, weather changes, hunger, cultural imbalance and weakness and getting even: an eye for an eye, no matter who the victim may have been. Many full-scale wars were waged over long periods of time, but the people remained steadfast within their Earth Traditions and Knowledge.

There are **talking circles** being used by a Native society that that deals with kids. *They are using talking circles and Native Justice with white kids. What they do is have the offender face the people they've harmed and their family.* The family and the person that was offended face the family of the perpetrator and the one who perpetrated. They talk it out until a just decision that can be accepted by all is reached between them. If there could be anything that could be more life-changing and more life-challenging than that process, I don't know what it would be. The problem is that if you can't get punishment out of your mind, then you can't see how this benefits that child.

In traditional teachings that are being considered for Non-Native school settings, you have to remember that the *Native world we're talking about is very different from the main-stream, and it exists to keep harmony with Nature's checks and balances.*

c) Other settings

In order to use Native teachings, teachers, within themselves first, will have to deal with the shamer and the shamee. The average white teacher isn't going to be

comfortable teaching First Nations ideas because they've been calling the Native Way down, until that day. The only way around that is you can use a little biblical reference to Moses to help them understand. Moses led the people through the dessert for 40 years. In biblical writings the number 40 means for a very long period of time. Moses wandered for more that eighty years. Do you want to know why he did that? He wanted to give the people from the times "to obey" the time to die out so he could bring in the teachings of a new age: "to believe."

On the subject of "Other Things," it is here that *there must be a set of teachings for the teachers*. In the dominant society, they will be expected to do the job of our aunties, uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers: the job of being a teaching parent or guardian to all children. Teaching educators this concept will be no small feat. Conditioning of many years of schooling and many other life experiences will have to be challenged in a loving way and a new understanding of what Knowledge truly is will need to be presented to these teachers. *It will take a number of years for these people to turn their minds towards a Path of Good Medicine, Good Mind.*

Question 6: In your opinion, how important is HOPE to developing character?

- a) Can individuals develop positive character traits if they see a lack of hope?**
- b) If they see a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of getting back their sense of hope?**

Without hope there can be no positive growth in character development. For every change in human life, there must be a catalyst. Hope and a sincere desire for change are the positive catalysts by which true change in humanity occurs. *If you have no hope, then you have no reason to learn, you have no reason to change, and you have no reason to come out of that safe place (painful as it may be), and it is a predictable place that at least holds predictable outcomes.* If you stay within that state of defeated and stationary Spirit, then little to no progress will be the outcome of your life's Spiritual potential on your life journey.

With hope and a sincere desire to change our perspective towards a better way, where hope/desire for change is the catalyst, and the mind is open and ready to accept a

different perception that helps our Spiritual selves grow. The desire and our hope in life is not predictable, not judging and not narrow in its ability to adjust its viewpoints, and thus we are not afraid of a different outcome to life's next teachings through experience. Without fear, a person is not stuck on a decided outcome which is predictable in its ending, which in turn stops Spiritual progress. *A person with a strong Spiritual base is never finished learning, never finished progressing, and this person's Spirit can learn infinitely about its own Good Mind, and good character.* There will be trials of negativity along the way, to assure the Creator that we are ready for a less logical, Spiritual understanding. These trials are what we must understand as the balance, or earning, of all gifts of the Spirit. Nothing is free, and often the effect comes on us in the form of testing before the cause or gift is understood. *These are the trials of passage that teach us that the gifts of Spiritual growth and hope are not free.* When we learn that teaching, then we can see the trials or *life's problems as being our teachers:* We understand what we must go through in order to attain the next Spiritual gift.

Knowing that the desire of hope is the catalyst towards finding your Spirit's teachings or gifts, helps you to understand that all problems in life are teachings to be solved by us before Knowledge and Wisdom comes. Then we wait for the next problem to arise so that we may learn our next Spiritual teaching. We have a choice in the way we see it though - as a Spiritual teaching or as a punishment of the Universe, as hopeful or hopeless. *And so I see character development and hope as being essential to the sincere desire that is needed to reach our life Path of Spiritual Learning. Spiritual learning and progression is the true purpose for being for all of mankind. Character development and hope/desire to achieve Spiritual Progression are part of the same positive life path, of seeing life's teachings in harmony with Nature's immutable Laws. Without hope or desire, the character does not develop towards a Good Mind.* It is in protective mode due to negative experiences, and it has no reason to move out from under the mind's protective coping mechanisms which act much like an exoskeleton. *With hope, the mind and Spirit are used to move forward on the quest for optimizing growth of a Good Mind and Spirit, thus bringing our Spiritual growth to its full potential during this lifetime.*

Question 7: What positive attributes of character do you focus on in your culture and in your own personal teachings in working with/guiding others?

In my culture, again we must talk about the *basics of Peace, Power and Righteousness, as the foundation which develops the Good Mind and forms good character development*. From a cultural point of view, we are all unique as human beings who are on different levels of Spiritual sophistication. There are many types of different people. *We acquire our character type according to our time and place of birth and the needed development, on this current life journey for our Spirit*. This all interrelates with the Great Universal plan for each human being within the great, synchronized macro-development of the Universe. All things are one: as it is above in the Sky world, so it is below on the Earth. The World is but a microcosm of the Universe and the Earth is a physical manifestation of how the Universe is progressing. So we are now in a critical time, as the Universe has exploded in its growth and is moving faster and faster in space, and is expanding at an incredible rate.

Just like ants in an anthill, people are speeding up their work at the ant hill in response to the Universes changes. As people respond to the Universal condition, getting faster and hotter, speeding up their work and purpose, they lose their Spiritual edge. They lose their calm sharp minds and become frenetic about scientific advancement, personal gain and ever in creasing growth in wealth: the direct correlation is between the Universe as it expands, and as man reacts hurriedly and technically towards advancement. Mankind has all but abandoned Spiritual Simplicity, with the result of having out-striped his humanity. As the Universe changes, so does man change, so does the world change in the same corresponding reaction to the Natural Law of Cause and Effect.

Harmony with the universe is to be human and alive in this place at this time in this moment and not engaging in frenetic behavior: the whirling dervish and all of its negative effects. But man has been given the gift of choice and when man plays God and feels he can over-ride Natural Law, or if he thinks he has the Creator's power; man can change/break the Nature's rules. Nature will have her way, Natural Law always wins, and although she may be sick, Nature will retaliate to be in balance once again. She will turn things around to bring Natural Law and Harmony to all living things of the Earth, no matter what it takes, through the use of Natural Law.

If man were to disappear from the face of the Earth, in the wink of an eye, Nature wouldn't miss a heartbeat. No natural rhythms would change. The only living things that would be affected are those things which are completely dependant upon man for their care. This does not even matter, as the things that are so specialized and dependant upon man for survival would not be needed. The Earth could recover and come into balance and Harmony with time. Everything else, as it lives in harmony with Nature, will get along just fine without us. Human beings are the ones, the only living species that needs to change Nature and how we are cared for by Nature. The world and the rest of its living beings know how to live with Nature's Laws know when to let go of life so that another species survives, and knows what their purpose is. Every other living thing knows what their place is in the Earth's great scheme for the Earth's living breathing life-forms, in the face of constant change. I mean undomesticated living things of course. Domesticated things are dependant upon man. They have been changed and conditioned by man from what they originally were. That is not to say it is a bad thing. It is just not a normal thing, but it seems to be a human trait, that man tames Nature in order to survive.

I see that the positive growth, in my own understanding of Cultural development, starts from the time of conception. That child must be loved and nurtured within the womb, and the *mother must be helped through her pregnancy to develop a Good character within her child, by being at Peace within her own Spirit*. The influence of our Spirit and our Mind is so strong that their potential is limitless. The potential of Man's mind is such that the Hopi say that "if all of mankind were to unite with a Good Mind for one twenty-four hour period around the world, we could heal the Earth in one day." You see the chaos around you and how we humans have to structure our lives so carefully to live within a world that should be Natural. For us the World is not Natural, and we no longer remember how to survive in Nature. So, good positive character traits include:

RESPECT - Respect understands that you keep the PEACE {the first of three Great Principles}; you do not excuse breaking Natural Law; you see with a non-judging mind; and you use your personal power to take care that that the acorn Spirit that you were born with becomes that great Spiritual Oak Tree, strong and able to sway with the winds of change in the end part of your life. It is your responsibility to use a Good Mind to help your Spirit, to help the small acorn that is a part of your Creator to grow into a

mighty Oak Tree. *The good things in life harmonize with Nature, encouraging a relaxed, calm positive thinking person towards developing a Good character.*

In our symbology, the Oak Tree, like our good character should develop naturally, and Nature shows this great oak to us as a physical example to follow. That great oak can bend in any way it is required to, and it won't break: a teaching from Nature about our character's good traits, flexible yet solid. It has a character that can turn with the changes of time, that clearly experiences adversity, and that understands we must endure constant change as living progressive beings. Nature never assigns pain and punishment but follows only its simple Laws.

When change occurs, it can hurt, pain, ache as we develop a greater understanding. We know that we can talk to others who are filled with the Wisdom of Life's experiences - these people are our teachers and they help us to see another perspective or insight towards solving a problem when we can't handle it alone. *This ability to connect to another person and learn from their experience (wisdom) requires a humble heart, thus **HUMILITY** is a very important part of character development.* It recognizes that we cannot always do things alone and we must be humble in order to seek out the help that we need.

Without HUMILITY and the ability to reach out to others when we need it, not because we need attention, but because we need another perspective on thinking or solving a problem, is a strength we have as a people. If we ask for good words, we must remember that good words will not always be what we want to hear. *If we seek Wisdom, we must be able to look inwardly and go through the stress of our truths about ourselves (left and right / bad and good) and sudden able to adjust and learn from sudden change,* as all things of the Earth are in constant flux and so are we. The only constant in the Universe and in Nature is change itself.

If you want Ego strokes, then it is best to go to somebody who will agree with you. If you want to grow, then you must seek out someone who is willing to give you a different way to look at the problem, which will involve challenging the way you believe or think about a problem - a teaching is what we call it. All of life's problems are just gifts, just teachings which we are in need of. As one gift comes to conclusion in life, we

wait for the next problem to arise in order to find an opportunity to work towards a solution, a teaching, and thus we grow a little more in Spirit and Wisdom.

*The third principle of the Good Mind is **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.* This is the ability to use the mind without the use of judgment. It is to see a situation or a problem in our world that involves others without trying to fix it, or give out all the free advice that person will ever need even though they didn't ask us for our opinion: interference on the life Path of another. *Nature and our Creator will show us the way to solve a dilemma if we just ask to be shown "the Way," with a grateful and a loving heart.* Some things are so "Just" that we must not interfere as Nature is at work helping that person to grow through Natural Law and the breaking of Natural Law demands an equal and opposite reaction become manifest in that person's world: a problem only they can work through in order to Spiritually grow. We must understand that if someone has chosen to go through the school of hard knocks, the only thing that we can ask of them is "Is it worth it?" or "Is there another way that you could see this problem as your teacher?"

When you talk to someone about a life's event (teaching problem), mindfulness by you and an understanding that your words will have an impact upon their perception of the situation and their decision-making is imperative. You have to weigh your words and how these words will influence their life decisions. There are two basic questions that you must ask yourself. It makes is important that you make a mindful decision before you decide to interfere or to help, depending on if they have asked you to help them or not. If you are telling somebody what to do, you are interfering with their life.

If you are asked for your help by another, you first ask of yourself the following questions. When the problem that you have been asked for your advice on is mindfully respected from this point of view, it may be more helpful for the other person's growth.

These questions are in reference to the second Great Principle, **POWER** {personal strength and Wisdom}. The first question you should ask yourself is simple: "If I do speak, will it make any difference?" You have to answer yourself honestly from your intuitive Spiritual self, and listen to that Knowledge that comes to your understanding, because if it doesn't make any difference to that person, you are probably just talking and hearing yourself speak, make yourself feel better about the other person's

difficult life event, and probably being of no help at all to them. Nature can teach life's lessons much better than we can.

If we get out of Nature's way, she'll use Natural Law to teach the life lessons that this person needs. Don't rush your people. If you are rescuing them, you aren't helping them. If they need to understand a teaching, they will seek out help if it is needed. Then, the person can learn and be given the direction to go within Nature, the World, and watch for The Way, the answer. *It is our Creator's way to use Nature to teach us each day what our progressive Spiritual Path is all about.*

The second question is "If I do speak, how will my thoughts that I express impact on the World, and on my Life, my Spiritual Path?" You have to weigh if you are willing to go as far as to having that other person see you completely differently because of your words, or perhaps have them do what you want because they want to please you and you want them to do it. This is your need for judgment/control over others, and it is not because it's good for them, but because your need to control needs them to cooperate with you. *This need to be the advisor not the teacher, which is useless for the person you are trying to help, is simply feeding your own ego. It is a self-gratifying, learned behavior for us to tell other people what to do.* You haven't given of your Spiritual knowledge to help their personal development or progression but interfered with what is the best way for them to solve their own life dilemma.

These two questions are imperative: "Will the Spirit of my words be heard and will they make a difference? How will my words impact on the other person that has crossed my life Path? Do they really need my help and have they asked me to help them?" This is a good example of the discipline needed in order to use our personal POWER through the principle of Righteousness (the Good Mind).

It is important to remember that the preservation of one's Spiritual Knowledge is a lot like the biblical thought "Do not cast pearls before swine." Another way of saying it in the Native way is "Never give too much too soon." If you go beyond the ability of the person to grasp Spiritual Knowledge, then they can't understand you. They may then fear you and use your words against you as the words you have given them are often open to misunderstanding and often builds fear. Your own words can be used in the wrong way,

without bad intention, as the other person was not ready to grow into that Knowledge at this time.

These questions that you reflect upon before you speak are more in tune with what you understand of the other person's Spiritual intelligence needs and their level of intuition based on understanding your own life events through reflection and self-understanding. These developing intuitions come to you freely from the Spirit World, when using a more caring and loving Mind with good intention. I believe that those are the two most important questions we ask ourselves when we are asked to give of our own Spiritual Knowledge, and we know that it will influence the character development of another human being. It says something positive about the internal you and how you chose to mindfully and wisely impact other people. The world will always reflect back to you your imperfections through Natural Law in reaction to your actions in life. When you take the time to reflect in this inner way, you are using your personal Wisdom.

In life, there are many swift and unseen events that are sudden, threatening and feel like an attack or challenge. Taking the time when someone comes at you, not to answer until you are ready, as it is the better way to use your words mindfully and demonstrate Wisdom. You have a choice of which life between the time when you are presented with a problem and the time when you choose to answer. It is at this time when you can make a mindful decision on how you will answer or not. If you react in a knee-jerk fashion, then the consequences, the Law of Cause and Effect, will chose through Nature's Laws to impact on you and your world in its own way of doing justice in order to teach you your life's lessons through Natural Law.

In order to be of Good Mind, people must take the time to think about what they will say, and how they will say it. The other person may stand there in an expectant "must have an answer" way. It has been my experience that life-altering questions need time to answer and it may be better to tell them you will think about it and get back to them. This has the effect of cooling things off and giving time for both parties to use Spiritual thought and reflection for the good of all.

Another way they may approach you is to demand an answer: "Well, what do you think?" It may be better to say, "I'll have to think about it—I'll get back to you."

And, if they still persist and you feel pushed into dealing with the problem, you may have to say, “I’ll have to sleep on it.” Using these simple and respectful techniques of having the impatient person wait for a well thought out answer is simply a way to avoid having them draw you into a conflict which is not yours to do. It acknowledges that you both need time to think and reflect before the answer to their question can be dealt with. Not all things that are asked of us are “five alarm fires,” and people tend to react as if all problems are an emergency. One good barometer to remember in dealing with a conflict is take the time to think about if one will die, if the problem is not dealt with immediately. The responsibility and the caution exercised in problem solving situations are also under the understanding that problems must be talked out and dealt with, within a reasonable time frame. Otherwise, the essence of respect on the parts of both people can be compromised. *Life’s little problems are not going to kill people if they have to wait a reasonable amount of time for an answer, or perhaps an answer needs to be sought out from an Elder before the problem can be solved.*

When problems present themselves in life, you must ask yourself is it a survival question or not? If it is a survival question, then react in the best possible way which you know to do, in the situation that has been presented to you: these are a part of your life tests for Spiritual growth and a testimony to your personal strength and development. If it isn’t life or death situation, take the time to be mindful and to think from your Spirit for the answer to the life event that has been presented to you, as all true thinking that is real mankind comes from the Spirit, goes up to your logical mind to check it out, and then goes back down to your Spirit to see if it is the best understanding you have, and only then it is put out to the world as an influence upon life itself.

*In other words, check with your **Spirit Knowledge** first, your **logical mind** next, and then go back to your Spirit for a final recheck before giving your thoughts life. This is the process by which a person of Knowledge uses true Wisdom to answer life’s questions/events in a timely and mindful way. This avoids the use of knee-jerk auto-answers which avoid the use of Wisdom. Auto-answers are things like “Do it because it is appropriate.” What is that word *appropriate*? Have you ever thought about the word appropriate? It has no meaning or direction towards the resolution of a problem. It is*

what you think is right and what you think is wrong. That is simply you using diffuse and evasive avoidance and a judgment against another. It does not do justice.

*The other important ideal which I see in my life as contributing to character development is **HONESTY**, but once again, there is a caution. Honesty is often misconstrued for truth. Truth is not honesty. Honesty and honor is what you come to understand when the mind and Spirit are tempered with compassion. Your beliefs are what you know either through judgment or personal bias. *When you are honest, it is what you sense and feel, tempered with a good way of speaking through the use of compassion in order to help another person.* You may hurt someone beyond repair with your words, when in their reality they truly value your Wisdom. So be careful of what you might think is honesty. *HONESTY is a perception that gently teaches Wisdom and compassionately gives TRUTH.* It is a Knowing.*

Check carefully within yourself what you are delivering, because your words can hurt others. It may take them years to recover. They may come back and tell you that your honesty was hurtful or that your honesty made a good difference. The way that they understand your words will be colored by how they are delivered. It is a process of good thoughts that help us to differentiate between whether we help and whether we judge and do harm to another. The words you say will have a lasting effect, if they are taken to heart by the person you influence. Honestly see if situation leads to your perceptions towards personal truth, knowledge and Wisdom, as *not all "honesty" is objective* and sometimes people say they are just being honest when what they really feel is judgment.

INTEGRITY - I find that integrity is very important in the process of good character development and is greatly lacking in people today. You will always be swayed by things both positive and negative, as the negative forces of influence that affect our lives each day is a seductive thing. It is our inner sense of integrity towards ourselves and towards or world, which helps us to stretch our ability to be flexible and to flow with life's influences. Your integrity, your trustworthiness and your word lies within your Spirit/conscience, and to the outer world this is what your character is made of as it shines from the inside out. There is a flexible circle in which our integrity can bend without breaking. **INTEGRITY** is somewhat flexible, somewhat changeable, but not a

lot. You can see the other person's sense of integrity - their understandings, how developed their mind is, how progressive their Spirit is, because you've already been there yourself. To others, you can now EMPATHETICALLY reach out, but you are no longer in that spot that they sit in today. Your integrity comes from where you are now in your life journey and how true you are to following the life Path that each of us has as an inheritance of birth. What you see as your sense of integrity and what they see as their sense of integrity is not the same.

If you want people to see integrity from a higher Spiritual plane, with a deeper level of thought and mindfulness, then you must tell the life stories that led you to learn your sense of integrity, how you came to grow in Spirit, and talks about how to develop that inner Oak Tree to its fullest potential. That's how I see integrity being taught from one person to another. You can always look back, because you have been where that person is, but don't delude yourself into thinking that you can have that person jump into who you are, without teaching what you lived. The journey that you have taken to a deeper place of wisdom has been a long process, and life's processes have a beginning, a centre and an end. You can't expect a fifteen year old to have the integrity and sense of Spirit which a forty year old has, because it is just not their time yet along the road of life's experience. So you must go back to that point of Knowledge about integrity at their age, understand their ways, their false perceptions, and give them their options as to how they may see things differently. It is from this level that your Spiritual wisdom can lead them towards the way of right-thinking if they so choose.

There is one other thing that I'd like to say about the character traits of the deceptive and manipulative person. In the reverse or negative, people do come and try and influence your path. They cannot see that they are interfering, and they prefer that you conform to how they would have you live and experience life. This is simply, your interference. It is a negative trait that leads to resentful and angry thinking, usually for both people. Life calls upon us to use our Good Mind when someone of this negative point of view is trying to interfere in our lives, and also to know how to avoid a fight with a person with a negative nature. If people have the understanding all things are not neutral, and learn to walk away from a fight with someone with a negative Spirit, they

overcome their unwanted influence, they can avoid a lot of pain in life. The old Indian way was just to turn your back and walk away, silently.

You can use this silent technique and it will work, but if you have been unjustly dealt with by another, then there are times when it is so unjust that you must turn around and show strength in the face of adversity that lacks justice, conscience, Good Mind and common sense. There are times you must act for justice in a Good Minded way, and say “I will not allow this injustice to occur in my life without an answer...it is now a point of honor.” This takes mindful thinking, strong character, and courage, as our own character flaws are usually used against us in these extreme situations. There is also a price for taking action if you do decide to do justice, as there will be personal pain involved as a back-lash reaction by Nature. There will be a testing of your Spirit and your Good Mind, as well as the other person’s mind, which are meant to be teachings for both people. What bothers us about other people is often a reflection of the things that we must address within ourselves. With a Good Mind, if you have the personal strength of Spirit needed to do the inner work, the Creator uses Nature and other people to teach us and it is always simple, but filled with life changing teachings and some painful lessons.

If you decide to act in a way that cannot be argued with, that says, “this cannot be for me,” the ramifications upon others and yourself will ripple in the pond, like pebbles cast on glassy surfaced water. Whatever it is you decide to do is simple, but the impact upon the Earth will always be complicated and is usually far-reaching in the world. This is why even simple teachings we decide to give others must be thought through mindfully and must see the big picture of how our words will impact others and the world in which we live. We make sweeping laws now that affect people and people can suffer, sicken and die from these things; people just fall through the cracks. When injustice is brought to you, attacks you’re Good Mind, your just-mind, you must decide if what is happening is an acceptable thing. If it isn’t, then you must address it, because your personal integrity and the Oak Tree of your Spirit is being challenged to see the problem as your next teaching in life. When your path, or the way you are to walk and learn in life is interfered with, it is a personal responsibility to bring balance back to life.

Conversely, you cannot judge or make hardship for another. If you do, then they have the right to come back with justice. But they may not. They may judge you and so these things about justice and the mind and how you must react with the use of justice, is a very deep, well thought through, and a mindful way of thinking. It is a mindset where you cannot judge, and you must pity others for their misguided minds. You must come from a place of love and peace within your heart, saying it is a sad and pitiful thing, that these people are using a bad mind. The ultimate test and decision of your Good Mind is to be just in your reaction to human adversity, and to not to allow yourself to be angry in Spirit in reaction to the actions of another.

This mindfulness is what preserves the level of **INTEGRITY** that your Spirit has risen to—always mindful of your representative role in your society, and the level of integrity that it takes to preserve this sacred teaching as a way of life, this Good Mind. In all situations throughout our lives, we assign a level of pain to events and happenings that we must then overcome in the future. In effect, we build our own mountain of pain and then we must clear it away with an esoteric spoon. You have to go through life's experiences to the point where you turn your thinking around, the pain stops, and then you understand that the assignment of pain to life's events (escalating as like events happen to teach you) is not worth the price of victimization of the self. The self-imposed mountain is no longer a wall that protects you...

What you gain from difficult situational life teachings, because it came from such a stretching place of Spiritual learning, has to benefit Mankind and not just you. This is The Way to Good Mindedness and at this time in Man's evolution teachings must be shared, as so much Spiritual Knowledge needs to be taught to all of mankind. The people must be taught this system of Spiritual understanding in order to grow, become tolerant of each other once again, and begin again to seek true Knowledge as a way of positive living on the Earth.

In life, if we can keep the assignment of judgment and personal pain out of adversity, even though the hardest things may challenge us such as being denied the right to know your parents, being shunned, excluded, judged unfairly and sentenced about something you didn't do, it makes possible that our Creator's teachings can come to us

through our Nature's University and play itself out in the Natural World as it was always meant to happen. If you can keep the judgment out of life's happenings, and you can keep in mind and understand that all things serve to teach us, then the gift of what you are meant to become through the hard experiences that you have lived through, will help you to be a more peaceful Spiritual person. Within the darkest things, there is good, and we are gifted by the Creator for having **mindfully overcome** our adversities. Even in death there is good and we are gifted as we go through the grief of losing a loved one.

In an adverse moment, if all that you can do is be quiet, and then use this quiet state to wait patiently and peacefully until Wisdom can help and inspire you. Ask for your Creator's help. Tell him that you are weak and cannot do this task alone. Ask Him to help to show you "The Way." Be in a place of Solitude and keep your mind in the Sacred, open to intuition and inspiration. Seek help from wise people who will give you Good Words, not what you want to hear but what you need to hear, and you will come to resolution and understand. It is your teaching and it is your test to qualify for next small step of growth towards the greater Spiritual being that you are meant to become, in order to help your people. *I think this knowledge of solving life's teachings is the most important part of character development.* We will be tested for all things that we are given, and all of life's gifts demand that we give up many things and change many perceptions throughout our lives as our Spiritual progression occurs. Nothing is free. Everything is equal and opposite and seeks to be in balance within the Laws of Nature.

Question 8: How do you believe Native teachings reinforcing character education could be best passed on in meaningful ways to today's youth?

To me there is a presence of *basic Natural truths through our time-honored teachings in the teachings of Peace, Power and Righteousness. There are the Seven Grandfather teachings*, which are of another culture. These teachings are a general guideline of conduct for any person to develop a unique relationship with their Creator in the Spirit and to develop character traits that work for them in positive ways in their physical lives. Each of us develops in our own way. We have a unique, individual, private and **Sacred relationship** with our Creator and his Power taught to us at Earth's University of Nature, where we learn our true purpose for being alive.

Within each of us lies a piece of our Creator's Power which we are born with. When we connect to that Power with ourselves which is part of our Creator, He can help us to understand the teachings that are given to us, and then help us to apply them to our Spiritual Knowledge. Out of that Spiritual application and intuition about our life events, comes our truth and Wisdom. The truth in, or Knowledge of, our Spiritual teachings are what guide us every day to live good and helpful lives for ourselves and others. When our Spiritual Teachings come, we know that we cannot keep and hoard the answers, and *we in turn are responsible to teach others what we have come to know when these other people are ready*. This is "The Way" of the true Teacher.

It is a sad thing today, among the people, that our ancient Spiritual teachings can be learned and spieled off as a ritual without having to live them as our own truth. As one man said one day, "I'm not here to live the preaching's, I'm just here to speak them." In the mind of this man, the message he was relating to the people, as given to us to guide our lives with a Good Mind through our prophets, were just ritualized words said in the native language. This man has learned much-recited oration, and is an influential speaker. Regretfully, he learned a set of rituals, but not a set of Ceremonies to help the people develop and deal with being of Good Spirit/Good Mind. In sad fact, he had taken from a young man a beautiful headdress in the 1960's. He collected the headdress but never paid for it. The above quotation is what this preacher's response was to that young man, when the preacher was asked about paying for the headdress he had kept but did not ever pay for... "I don't have to live the teachings. I just preach them."

A teacher can give you a set of guidelines which are good, but that teacher doesn't necessarily have to live them. This is often the state of mind that Spiritual teachers have in this day and age. This type of person in a new-age word that I have heard lately, describes these speakers as "Plastic Shamans." These "Plastic Shaman" people can be learned from, with caution and Wisdom. Take only what feels right to you from what they say and watch for Nature's signs that verify the truth in their words so that your Spiritual growth is involved and intact.

In this way, even the most superficial of Native teachers can teach something good. No one is all bad and there is no life that passes without some learning and some

progression. We do not believe that people who are negative in character come back as lower life forms. *Take only those words which add to your Good Mind and help you to learn more of your own true Spiritual knowledge (added to what you already know).*

Teachings in the Native way are old - they are ageless and timeless. Whatever survives time as Nature's Laws are taught to us through the medium of oration. It is simply a guide for you to apply to your life. Pieces of that Natural Law can be taught by anyone who has a Spiritual passion for being what we call a "real person." *A real person is someone who is genuine, a kind person, an original person in the ways of living as one in harmony with Nature - these things speak of our connectedness with "all that is."* The people have always lived as one with Nature, the self in relationship to nature, and the relationship of the self with our Creator through every mindfully lived moment of our lives. So this is a multilevel Spiritual way of living that is both a personally accountable way of life, and is also a State of Mind regarding all that we hold Sacred and we continually give thanks as we move through each moment of each day of life. We can only be alive in the moment, for that is all that we have; it is all there is for us, at this place, in this time, and in this race, for each of us.

This has to be taught to all children of any race, as we all have but one Creator, who works through Nature to teach mankind globally what we must know to progress as a species. We already have within us what we need to know. It is already there, but there must be a catalyst that activates our sleeping knowledge, a key that opens our life teachings as our Creator feels we are ready for them. This catalyst of our inner teachings, brings to us events that open up for each of us our personal understanding of each teaching, at the right time and under proper set of circumstances, which present themselves in order for us to learn this current lesson. We learn these teachings as we become ready for them in order to progress in our own character development as per our Creator's design for our life.

We have two ways that we can learn in life. *We must identify and capitalize upon the strengths that we have been given, and we must overcome and heal our weaknesses in order to improve and develop our character.* Those are the two parts of character development which come to us as our unique journey, as given to us by our Creator at the

time of our first breath. We are given a time, place and race into which we are born, in order to complete our next set of life's teachings on our Spiritual human journey.

When we are born, we have individual strengths to develop and weaknesses that we must overcome. You can give the skeletal understanding and plant seeds of Wisdom that teach children, through stories and words, that are like seeds for the future within them as you see the strengths and challenges each child has as their human inheritance. Children learn through watching the world and they react to life's events. It is in observing our children's reactions that we can redirect and influence them to use their Good Mind by replacing fear with Nature's Truth and understanding. *Teach them early to explore and experience life, not to fear it.*

There will be many false teachers, and when they come, the children need to understand that it is a false teacher they see. Then, the children must back away from confrontation and do no harm to that person. This is the hardest part, learning how to avoid a fight. One speaker I heard said "I will offer you my hand open, but never in a fist, always an open hand." When people clam down, then you can talk with them through your own Good Mind's experiences. Our teachers must understand, and the children must be taught, that *kindness is much more powerful than punishment*. Whatever you as a teacher decide to do about a situation must be mindfully just. You can't kick a child, even verbally, in order to teach them.

Brute mentality is not the way to build up positive character. This tendency for teachers to judge children includes the "halo effect," when children set off reactions in us due to negative experiences with like-behaviors in other kids that we have taught in the past, and it also includes how we how tend to react to written reports before we know the child. Somehow, we need to move past the tendency to slot children in categories like brute man or the bully or the gang member. It takes a Good Mind and a good character not to judge the child we are trying to teach.

Teenagehood is a recent manifestation in the last 200 years. Prior to this, kids went from childhood to adulthood as a rite of passage. Teenagehood is something that we've invented as adults, with the dawning of the industrial revolution, which gives us a way to keep our kids in the family and out of the work force for so many more years. It is

kind of a fantasy we have imposed on them, as they are required to work as hard as adults in school in our modern day, and yet we deem them as seemingly too young. This must be very confusing.

The further we get into specialization as a human culture, and grow away from Nature, the more we see our children as needing from 8 to 15 years of additional growth and learning time. We hold them down in maturing. At the same time we expect them to act more mature. We judge that they should know. So how do they know? They don't. They are very confused as they watch their adult parents and relations suffer from so much dis-ease and mental strain in their much sought after and hard-earned professions.

Each person has a *rite of passage* from childhood to adulthood in every other world culture, but when it comes to industrialized culture, we have this interim thing called teenagers, that doesn't work very well for our children. The best teacher is the one that stands there before them, encourages them to seek out their own Good Minded answers and that gives a child Good Words to help their internal Spiritual development. It is the adult who plants the seeds for tomorrow's thinking and growth, in the future of a child that is doing the best job for kids. If they ask of you your Wisdom, give them what they need to know, not what you think they need to know. Be careful how much you give at a time. It is better to plant seeds than to give complete answers. Life is an adventure, and Spiritual development should be natural and without fear and shame.

The old timers always said "Never give too much too soon." *Only when they are exhausted and have tried to solve their life's problem, and you can see that they are feeling hopeless and resource less, can you help them to answer the question by planting seeds that will direct them towards truth and personal growth.* Children have to learn how to search using their intuitions and imaginations in order to find solutions on their own. They should not be so conditioned to getting free answers before they learn how to find their own answers: this stops them from doing their own thinking. If you teach them nothing else, teach them to be the hunter and huntress, the explorer, the researcher of their own mind, their own Spirit. Teach them how to feel the desire to know and to want the knowledge of their Spirit and Natural World badly. Teach them to respect all that they

experience in life, to respect all living things, as if they were learning from an Elder and not just problem, a life happening.

“What do you feel? How do you see? What does it look like? How does it feel? Can you smell it, taste it? And so on...” They may not answer you at that time, but you have set in motion a chain of events and you have kindled their own inborn desire to know, which will lead them to new, satisfying, increasingly deeper answers and Spiritual understanding. That is all teachers were meant to do. What happens to us in life is what was meant to happen. Parents, guardians and teachers have to realize their limits too, when it comes to rearing a child. The children don’t need quite as much formal teaching as we tend to give them, and can grow into people of Good Mind if they are not repressed in their intuitions and their imaginations. Most of the time, all we need to do is to help them fine-tune what they can learn from Nature’s University through the use of Good Mindedness, intuition and imagination.

Their character, from the time of conception, is being formed. Do the best you can. Children will learn to think from the Spirit if that is the way that you live your life and they will learn through the teacher’s example. *Teach how to think from the Spirit and the seeds you plant will accomplish what you intended for the child to develop within themselves.* Children have access to the **Spirit World** - not just the teacher. They have a **Divine Source**, which will prove throughout their lives to be their greatest resource.

The children have to do the work of asking their Creator to help them find a way to accomplish what they need accomplish here on Earth, to help them to find what they need in their lives, so that these real teachings become real in their developing child’s world. It has to become Earthly and connect to the Spirit in order to be true and right for them to learn from. The other half of understanding of the inner Spirit is to understand that children can and do speak in direct relationship to their Higher Power, their God, their Creator. Mankind is born with a mind that can, through direct relation to the Spiritual World, make manifest what is needed for life’s progression. Life does not need to be such a series of difficult jobs and overworked, strained minds. The truth is that people need to start to realize what is real and what is not real. *The only true learning that takes place for mankind in life is of the Spirit.* We are Spiritual beings having an Earthly,

human experience: for me, this is the definition of life. Define for yourself that thing which you think you want: Is it “Eye Candy” or is it a necessity?

Question 9: How would you like to be remembered when you are gone?

That’s difficult to answer because it is so multifaceted and I am not near to being done defining my own journey. I would like to think that when I am gone, that I made some small difference for the better with the people that I touched in my life and caused them to smile. I would like to think that the people who remember me saw me as a human being with a Spiritual Journey, and that the most important part of *my life was my Spiritual Journey*. I would like to think that my sensible Good Mind, within and without, is what I have lived. I would like to be remembered as having dealt with other people in a just and kind way. I would like to be remembered as having had a kind heart, and that at the end of my life, I had accomplished growing that Oak Tree inside my Spirit that all people who know me could see.

I ran across someone on the Internet who wrote about himself “I am told that I am wise, but that my physical being is somewhat crusty.” There are those saying to me in this culture, people who are tolerant of knowledge and truth: “Yeah, that’s it. Just tell it how it is” And my answer is always “I just don’t have a lot of time for frills and if you ask me for the truth, I’m going to give **Good Words**, using the best Mind I can tempered with compassion. I don’t want you to see just what I perceive or what I want you to hear. All I can give you is what I know from my Life’s journey - the experience of my Spirit in a physical world. I feel that is what I want to be remembered for...

If I did good things in this World, I hope to be remembered as that I lived with a *sincere desire to Know*. If people remember me for whatever I did wrong, I want to be remembered for being totally human, as a student of life that was far from perfect. I make mistakes. The more Spiritual my life events are, the bigger the obstacles, the testing seems that I must overcome. I have a lot of work yet to do this time around.

In ending, I wish to be remembered as someone who *was reflective in my interactions*, a person that reflected upon what justice meant (Good Mind), and tried hard not to hurt people. I hope to be seen as having addressed the injustices of my life with strength, fairness and courage. I would like to be remembered as having, in the end, *done*

my best to help mankind. My life's task is my Spiritual Journey and in summing it all up, that journey is what I wish to be remembered for.

If I could teach one thing to mankind, I would hope to be remembered as *someone who taught chronic hopefulness. Never give up. No one gets left behind...*

Many times, when you think that people are unable to learn, it is because you gave up on them or you could not help them. When you are chronically hopeful, you never give up on people. You say prayers for their Spirit because they are in a sad state, and in a pitiful situation in their lives, and their Spirits are sick. I don't see them as bad people - I see them as Spirit sick. People always decide how difficult life is going to be. Remember what you judge and how high you put it on the Richter scale, because that is the mountain you will have to dig through to come to peace, balance and resolution through any of life's teachings. It is the strength, the ability to decide to never give up growing that helps a person to Know they have done all that could be done, and then give it all up for the Creator to work His manifestations of our sincere desires we work so hard for within our lives.

I'd like to thank you for your inspiration to never give up no matter how hard the obstacles, no matter how hard the teachings. In my understanding of what is Good Red Road, to follow the heart - the head will follow. You live your life in a good way. I understand that you want to be an example of a person who has lived with integrity and who has followed the truth, and that truth and honesty have been in harmony. I understand that by living your truth in this way you serve as a model to give others the courage to live according their truth, honestly, so that they too can be examples of positive character walking on the face of mother Earth and living in harmony. Have I understood you correctly?

Yes, but with one additional thing: that you are not spared the teachings of this life you are living. Whatever your life is about, you are not spared some hardship as the price of earning true Wisdom. I know it and Knowing is true Spirit Knowledge. When Nature's Laws are taught, and given in a good way, people can learn as Nature's Truths are timeless and immutable. No one is spared the teachings of life. Whatever it is that you need to do on your life's Path, all happenings and events that are yours to experience will

come to you as you are ready for the teaching within. It should be understood, that all of life's problems and hardships are our teachers, no matter how hard the event, it always teaches us something of Love and Knowledge for our Spiritual progression.

Sometimes, when we are in need of healing, the only way that we will know is by our automatic reactions to situations like those from the past which trigger our irritability and defense to what our being understands as a threat. Our child within is still on alert from what that child understood as dangerous; your child has not been given the chance to relax and to let go of the pain. That small child needs to be nurtured into understanding that it no longer needs to be protective and is unknowingly hampering your growth by staying stuck in the past. Teaching that small child within, with Love, that there is nothing to fear. New ways of handling life are possible so now they (the child) can relax, simplifies our journey.

Whatever you need to learn will to come to you in the right time, according to your Creator's plan, when you are ready for the next teaching. When someone helps you, acting as the Creator's messenger, to connect you with what you need to address, suddenly you understand: this is Knowledge of the Spirit and once you Know, no one can take it from you. You have an Ah-Hah moment and the Wisdom is now a part of your being. Ask for the Creator's help in what you need, you will get what you need, not what you want.

It is like an old prayer that I'll always remember: "Oh Great Spirit, whose voice I hear on the wind, I seek The Way to overcome my greatest enemy: myself." The enemy is within and all things that must be overcome are within us. The Earth is alive and aware of these enemies we must all overcome, and thus it is a place that sets up the right circumstances and events to help us reach the goals and overcome the problems of our **Earth-Walk**. All the things you need to know are born within you. Even the other part of you, the dark side, must be understood as all things in nature exist in balance especially within the hearts of Man. Acknowledge these dark tendencies, examine and know them well, with respect, but do not go there. Instead, turn the power of this darkness over, and use it for the good...*energy is just energy...it does not judge but simply exists.*

Adjustment is good, for the only constant there is in life is change. Growth is the process of fine-tuning and adjusting to the layered teachings we receive, thus growing towards a deeper Spiritual Understanding. It is beautifully simplistic in its great Universal design for each of us. When you get to the level of understanding Simplicity and Beauty, the point where you understand how simple and beauty-filled life's real answers are, the ramifications of how it impacts your world are then up to you and you are not as prone to be dictated to by your past's life events, pain and discomforts. It is a very choreographed and predetermined chain of events our human life-direction, which you must be able to see, as the world shows you your Path. True Teachings of the Spirit are very simple Natural Truths. There are choices and many Paths that each of us can take towards Simplicity: it is all in how we decide to take the journey. That is all.

I'd like to make one observation and ask one last question. It's not an interview question. I've noticed that you all seem to have a copy of Prayer to the Great Spirit and you all have the Ten Indian commandments. Do you believe everything that is written on those teachings?

I do and I'll tell you why. *They are all written in a positive way.* There is no "Thou shall not." These are things you must do as "The Way" of Right Living. It is not punitive, is it? Our Creator is a loving parent, and not a punishing one. That is how I know it; I don't just believe it. Belief is a leap of faith. Knowing is true knowledge that leads to Wisdom. When knowledge is given in a good way, people can learn. When they are given teachings in a punitive way, people fear. Fear is not knowledge.

The ways that you have shared with me have helped impact on me over the years. I really appreciate that.

We have been good and honest friends for many years...

Appendix H: Interview with Drew Hayden Taylor, Ojibwe Playwright from Curve Lake First Nation Now Living in Toronto, Ontario

January 4, 2002

Meet First Nations Playwright Drew Hayden Taylor

Drew Hayden Taylor, Otter Clan of Curve Lake First Nation near Peterborough, Ontario was interviewed in a pub in downtown Toronto on January 4, 2002. The full transcript of the interview appears here. I first met Taylor in August, 1994 at Curve Lake, when I attended the FWTAO Aboriginal Education Summer Course for grades one to eight offered by the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. Our paths crossed again at a Curve Lake Pow Wow.

In May, 1995, I accompanied a group of elementary school students down to the Theatre Direct Canada's Native Earth Performing Arts theatre in Toronto to see his production of *The Girl Who Loved her Horses* (2000). Prior to that, my intermediate students and I had fund-raised to purchase class sets of *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock and Education is Our Right* (1990) and *Someday* (1993) . We read these, careful not to damage them, then donated them to Alan Kelly at First Nations School in Toronto. I had taken particular interest in Taylor's work after an approved visit to Dreamer's Rock on Birch Island and to the De Ba Jeh Mu Jig Theatre on Manitoulin Island. Taylor's first play, *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock* dealing with rites of passage and the teenage identity crisis in different time periods was later performed at a school where I taught.

On November 5, 2002, Taylor gave talks at my secondary school to grade ten English students on the craft of being a writer. Taylor has facilitated writers' workshops in Canada, France, Germany and Italy.

Taylor's many plays and one film illustrate, with humour, how fiction can be rooted in fact transformed from real life experiences. In 2000, Drew Hayden Taylor directed his first film, a fifty-five minute comedy called *Redskins, Tricksters and Puppy Stew* for the National Film Board of Canada, successfully showing the healing powers of humour while undoing the media-reinforced stereotype of the stoic Indian. In this film,

presented for the first time on November 25, 2000 at the 7th Annual Canadian Aboriginal Festival held in the Skydome in Toronto, Taylor explored issues surrounding Native identity, politics and racism. The film played in Montreal, Quebec for the 11th edition of *Présence autochtone* (Native Presence) along with one other Native film, in June 2001.

Taylor writes for *Windspeaker*, Canada's National Aboriginal newspaper and for *Generations 13*, the Journal of Aboriginal People published by the En-owkin center in Penticton, B.C. At the book launch I attended in 2001, Taylor was assisted by Dawn T. Maracle, a Mohawk woman from Tyendinaga whose unit on Iroquois Creation to examine oral story is part of a SchoolNet Digital collections project for Queens university. Maracle inspired some of Taylor's writing like *The Boy in the Treehouse*.

Taylor sent me the original draft of his essay entitled "My Elder is Better Than Your Elder" published in *Windspeaker*, *The Peterborough Examiner* and *Generations 13*. Taylor humorously raised the question of the "hierarchy of Eldership" on the scale from "bad" to "good." "You can read all you want, take as many workshops as you like, but unless you've wrestled with those demons yourself, there's only so much hands on experience you can bring to the job" (Taylor, 2002, p. 16). Those individuals who formerly made mistakes, experienced some of the seven vices of life and changed their ways prior to becoming Elders, might find themselves considered lower on the hierarchy than those Elders who have only walked on the Red Road, consistently practicing the seven virtues, their polar opposite. Taylor defends Iroquois Elder Handsome Lake (Parker, 2000) whose vision came during a drinking-induced coma, stating that the Seneca prophet "cleaned up his act" (Taylor, 2002, p. 15) and then went on to make a positive difference in other people's lives.

An Elder is a positive character role model whose life experiences have prepared him or her for the vocation of wisely and compassionately guiding others. Taylor states "The fortitude that I find in many Elders can sometimes only be forged from experience and pain" (2002, p. 16). Lakota heyoka John Fire Lame Deer (1994) and his son Archie Fire Lame Deer (2001) orally shared their colourful stories with non-Native Richard Erdoes who transcribed them in written tradition. They became examples of Elders

walking with true understanding of many whom they later helped. Some people who attend Taylor's plays compare Elder-like Nietzsche to Lame Deer.

Drama Bridge Between The Non-Native and Native World

Okay. Today is the fourth of January, 2002. You are the fifth and final person whom I am interviewing. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for accepting to be interviewed, because in my life you have had a very powerful impact and in the lives of my students.

Thank you very much.

My vision is to see your work in many schools across Ontario over the next two years.

Hah! That would be lovely. Absolutely lovely!

What would you like to be called in the transcript?

Drew Hayden Taylor. No hyphens.

No hyphens. So you want your real name used?

I am a professional writer and I have nothing to hide.

Thank you. Some people, when they get older, they have nothing to hide and they've had time to live their lives and to tell the truth. You are telling the truth at a very young age [laugh].

I try. I try. I am telling truth through lies, because I make things up, but within the context of those lies is a larger truth. Ohh. That's good. I like that [chuckles].

That's beautiful. That's making me think of the storytelling genre wherein we create fiction, but it always has a strong element of truth in it.

Um hmm.

Figure XII. Drew Hayden Taylor.

Drew Hayden Taylor, Ojibway of Curve Lake First Nation, and playwright, poses with teacher Yvonne Dufault in her homeroom classroom. In May 1995, accompanied by sixty-five elementary school students, Dufault organized a trip to Toronto to Theatre Direct Canada's Native Earth Performing Arts theatre in Toronto to see Taylor's *The Girl Who Loved her Horses* (2000). Taylor is holding samples from class sets of *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock / Education is Our Right* (1990) and *Someday* (1993). Dufault and her students had done fund-raising, then purchased and donated the materials to teacher Alan Kelly, now principal, at First Nations School in downtown Toronto, for use with students. This photo has been included with permission.

Okay, question number one.

Question 1: What does developing character mean to you?

Well, I have to preface this question by saying that I am a professional writer, primarily a playwright and a scriptwriter. Ask a question like that knowing I approach it from that perspective. When I am approaching doing a play, there are two aspects of the play that have to be manipulated and massaged. One is “Who are you telling your stories through?” And secondly, “What is the story you are telling?” And depending on the piece, on whether it’s a play, a short story or a novel, it varies. Because you will find some books, novels, whatever, that are very character based. It’s all about the character, what the character thinks, how the character goes through life and in other cases, you will find stories that are very plotted. The characters are subservient to the plot.

The progression of the story is through events from a to z. Both are valid. Both are fine. I prefer a character-driven play because it makes it much more interesting. If you develop your character well enough, they will do half of the writing for you. I’ve been in situations where I am up against a wall. I don’t know what happens next. I don’t know where to go from the situation and I literally sit back and I think “Okay, if I put this character in this situation, what would happen?” If I know the character well enough, they’ll answer for me and I’ll run with it.

Now, speaking as a Native playwright, I have to say that I am not re-inventing the wheel here. What we call contemporary Native theatre basically had its genesis in 1986, in the last week of November when a play called *The Rez Sisters* was premiered here in Toronto which started an amazing avalanche into Native Theatre. But, prior to that, Native theatre had already existed in several different forms. One of the reasons I think Native theatre really took off in the Native community, post ‘80s was because *theatre is the closest kissing cousin you’ll find to traditional storytelling. See you have the ability to take the audience on a journey of words using imagination, using your voice and your body.* You get any good, half-decent storyteller up there telling a story, and you have... you have your actor, you have your writer, you have everything.

In the late ‘80s and ‘90s, there were so many plays being pumped out, much more than music much more than novels, much more than any other genre at one time, and that

this is because I think it was the most user friendly from of traditional Native story telling. It wasn't that grand a leap to go from storytelling to writing a play as opposed to writing a movie or writing a novel. With a novel, you have to have a much higher command of the English language and it is much more intense and longer and much more difficult. Whereas, with writing a play, you just sit there and tell a story in your own voice.

On the west coast, during their ceremonies, they used to have the most intricate ancient theatrical traditions...such as smoke effects, intricately carved and working masks and trap doors. So, what we are doing today is not that different. We have just gone from telling stories around the campfire to telling stories around the stage. So with that sort of character development thing, it is just matter of learning to hone that character in their environment.

There are two basic differences between Western European Theatre and Native Theatre. One is character based. One is community based.

Are you familiar with Tomson Highway's plays?

(Interviewer nods yes.)

Okay, if you look at his plays, there is an interesting fact that when he was trying to sell *Dry Lips* and the *Rez Sisters* to artistic directors across Canada, specifically in Toronto, they wouldn't touch it because they had this belief that there is no central character. Most western European drama has a protagonist and an antagonist. Basically, at the beginning of the play, your protagonist has a goal or a mission that they either have to achieve being denied by the end of the play and your antagonist is the chief obstacle that tries to prevent them from achieving their goal. You can find that in almost any novel, movie or whatsoever.

But you look at the *Rez Sisters*, *Dry Lips* or a lot of Native plays, there is no central character. There is no one person that the action revolves around. It's that they're ensemble pieces because *within the Native community, it is the community that is the star, not the individual. Everybody works to the health of the community and to say that everything revolves around one person in that community disrupts the harmony of that*

community. In *Rez Sisters* and *Dry Lips*, if you look at each of the characters, they are equally important with equally interesting stories that stand by themselves. A lot of artistic directors who come from the Classic Shakespearean Tradition like *Hamlet* and *King Lear* where there is one character and the world revolves around one character, they had trouble understanding that. They just said “Ooh, who are we to relate to?” Now that was problematic, but gradually over the last fifteen years, most of them have accepted that that is the way that we tell our stories to the community.

Now there are exceptions to every rule. I’ve written a couple of plays where there is one central character. In *Baby Blues* everything sort of revolves around this. But I’ve written other stuff like *Alter-Natives*, *Bootlegger Blues*, *Toronto at Dreamer’s Rock* where the characters are pretty well equal. Everybody has an important story and are pretty well equal in terms of the dramatic thrust and drama of the piece. So that’s one thing.

The other difference “character-wise” is the fact that as I said earlier, your central character has to achieve their goal by overcoming a series of obstacles, such as through conflicts. When, for instance when I took *Someday* I talked to the artistic director and the artistic director said “All the information happens too easily. There needs to be more conflict.” That is the other major difference. If you look at the *Rez Sisters*, right, the goal of the story is that a group of seven marvellous women want to go to Toronto for the World’s largest bingo. Basically they have two obstacles, raising the money, having a flat tire and having to change it in the dark. And, that’s it. There’s no map. No murder. There’s no betrayal or all that sort of stuff. It is a slice of life. A lot of artistic directors said “No, they have to claw their way to the end to either achieve or be denied their goal.”

Within the Native community, open disagreement within the community was potentially harmful to the harmony of that community so there were subtler, quieter ways of dealing with this conflict rather than an all-out argument, an all-out fight or anything of that way of thinking. So, oftentimes, like in when I wrote *Someday*, the information that was coming out and the way in which it was coming out felt very natural from the environment I came from. There was not a lot of anger in my community, only when

pushed beyond a certain limit. So, a lot of artistic directors had a problem with the fact that these characters really need the fire lit under their asses, to be more stirred up and more conflict oriented which is not the way that a lot of us [Native playwrights] write. Now, please keep in mind that there are exceptions to every rule. As I have said, I have written single character plays where everything revolves around their character, where other people have perfect plays that do tend more towards mainstream drama where there is more conflict. That is not to say that it doesn't happen in the communities, but look at a lot of traditional legends.

One story that I was once told by Esther Jocko who is now Esther Oshee from Birch Island—She is the traditional storyteller at Dreamer's Rock and she told me the traditional story of the Thunderbird Children. It is a long twenty minute, thirty minute that I can't go into, but basically these two Thunderbird children want to become human and their father gives them a task to perform. The task is to find a lodge to be born into as humans. So it is a long, long legend. Basically, they go down. They look around. Nothing tries to stop them. Nothing fights them. They find it. They are born. They live their life. They die. They go back to the Thunderbird father. There is almost no conflict in that story, so that would not make a good dramatic story [according to the European dominant culture]. As I said, there are exceptions to every rule. There are a lot of legends that show bad, fights between good and evil and monsters and stuff like that. So, I'm talking about Native theatre as a whole, but not everything.

I've absolutely loved the way that you have answered from the perspective of a playwright and an author. Now, as a playwright-author looking at the people in your audience, and looking at your story-telling, your drama as developing character, what does developing character mean to you with respect to those souls that are sitting in your audience?

Well, ninety-seven percent of the Canadian population is non-Native. *I was raised entirely in a Native community and I didn't leave until I was eighteen*, so my subconscious and my conscious are of that nine hundred population reserve in Central Ontario. So that is the perspective I write from. It has only been within the last three to four years that I actually started writing urban flavoured stories. My last two plays, *Alter-*

Natives and *Boy in a Tree House* are my first stories that took place in the city entirely. And, I had to make a conscious choice to do that, because *when I let my imagination go, it flows back to those first eighteen years on the reserve.*

So, when I am sitting looking at those souls in the audience, it is like going between the artist and the pragmatist. I'd say that with anyone of my plays, usually from four fifths to five sixths of the audience are non-Native. *I would say again that four fifths to five sixths of that white population have very little understanding of the Native community or experience with it.*

So I am sitting with this situation of wanting to write stories about my people for five percent but also with the knowledge that if I just write for the Native population, on any given night, I'll have six to twenty people in the audience. In some ways that is also writing to the converted, because part of the wonders of theatre is education and I think with a lot of my work, *I have done a lot towards educating the non-Native population to the Native way of life, The Native beliefs with Toronto at Dreamers' Rock and with the perception of what is Native and what isn't and how it affects individuals with things that are really important*, so I want to keep those. In many ways, I think the *Native peoples have been, you know, locked away on reserves or are so tied up with certain issues that they often need to be hand-held and look at other issues, more wholistic issues.* So that when I look at *Alter-Natives* which dealt with a whole lot of other issues—Native issues a lot of people come up to me and go “I never thought of it that way,” so what I like to do with my work, I develop my characters in the community put in this environment and every once in a while throwing in a white character to see how they interrelate as a smaller example of the public at large. So a long way of getting back to your answer about how do I develop character for those people sitting in the audience, um a lot of people have said, “Why are you a Native playwright? Why aren't you a playwright that just happens to be Native?” And I thought about writing plays with white characters and I have equipped them in a lot of my plays, but having them to do nothing with Native community. But that's just not me, because I wouldn't want to do it. *I enjoy the characters I create, I enjoy the places that I go with them and I enjoy being that window from the white to the Native world.* And so, getting back to your original question...

Are you a two-way window?

Yes. Completely. In *Alter-Natives*, I had some Native characters sit down and have a discussion about the benefits of Sartre versus Nietzsche. Because one of the things I really like doing in creating characters, yeah that's a good story, one of the things that I like doing in creating characters is creating characters that you don't see represented on stage.

If you look during the first ten years of Native theatre, the majority of female roles broke down into three categories: Somebody who plays bingo. Somebody that has a whole bunch of kids is living on a reserve and is poor. Or the third one and most often used one, is the woman who is a victim of some form of physical or sexual abuse. If you look at the plays *Rez Sisters*, *Dry Lips*, *A Path with No Mocassins*, *Jessica*, uh, *The Trickster of Third Avenue*, *The Night of the Trickster*, almost all of the female characters are survivors of rape in one aspect or another.

A friend of mine, Columpa Bobb, a very talented actress once was in a play called *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe*. Columpa Bobb said "You know, sometimes it is hard being raped eight times a week, twice on Wednesdays."

And when I did Janice/ Grace in *Someday*, I had a whole bunch of actresses come up to me and say if that play ever is mounted "Let me know, I want to audition for Janice." I'm sort of going "Why just Janice? Because Barb's an interesting character. The mother's an interesting character." And they said "Because you don't get to play a successful Native woman, driving a Saab who makes her entrance in a white fur coat. It is always some poor rape victim alcoholic, mother of half a dozen kids." And they want the variety. I was completely amazed by that. It became a kind of game for me as I got older to try and create new and different manifestations of the Native community on stage that I know existed by other Native playwrights had not really explored.

Like, so for *Alter-Natives*, I had very intelligent native academics who at one point were discussing *Lame Deer* versus Nietzsche, stuff like that, stuff that had never really been done before. And people were surprised. And I had real fun doing that, playing with it, *giving a real Aboriginal analysis of Star Trek ethics*. And so, when I am doing characters, I sort of, my primary motivation is to make a very interesting character

with a very interesting story that has a very interesting way of telling. Three quarters of the time they are Native characters, for obvious reasons, but I just have fun creating them.

You talk about Star Trek ethics. The prime directive is “Do No Harm” and so many watched the movie where there is this world where the Native people are following the traditional ways.

Oh yep. Completely. Completely.

Question 2: In your culture, how is education for character traditionally caught or taught?

Oh, my goodness. Could you please define education for character?

Education for character is helping to educate people to develop positive character traits.

Oh. There are many traditional ways of teaching and then again there is no one pan-Indian culture. Prior to contact there were approximately fifty-four separate Indigenous cultures in Canada alone so *I am very hesitant about speaking for all Aboriginal people. I can only talk very generically.*

One of the ways of teaching in Native culture was through observation. There was never a very strict “You know, do this and I’ll come back and check on how you are doing it.” The child would watch what the parent was doing several times, then would try and go out and imitate their levels of success until they managed to do it. I think that was true of the development of culture. They would watch their parents and more importantly they would watch their grandparents. They would take their teachings from their grandparents so important in the Native community.

There is a saying that the parents are there to raise and teach the children and to show them right from wrong, but the grandparents are there to spoil and educate them. And I think that is where education for character comes from, through the watching of the grandparents and the watching of other Elders. I discovered in my research on Native sexuality, it is a common Iroquoian practice, years ago before contact, and off and on since then, that when a young man or woman came of age, the nearest aunt or uncle,

depending on the child's sex, would take them aside and spend the day with them explaining the mysteries of sex, so that it wouldn't be a mystery anymore, so that they would have education and knowledge. They would face it head on with knowledge, with education and with no embarrassment. The young person would become more knowledgeable, better educated and not have any misconceptions or ignorance about it. *So education of character definitely came from the family and the environment.*

Question 3: How do you consider yourself to be involved in character education?

Through my work. I'm not only a playwright, but I also write humorous articles and essays that appear all over the place. In it [my writing], I try to foster a sense of humour that it is inherent in Native cultures. It is through articles and books that the Canadian public is primarily aware of form. From their perspective of Native people writing their own stories, they are usually writing about Native people being oppressed. If you look at books that were written by Non-Native people about Native people they were always focused on some dysfunctional aspect of the Native community. Alan Fry's *The Dispossessed*. Alan Fry's *How do People Die?* All these books that sort of deal with the tragedies and darker aspects of Aboriginal life, you know.

And one day, I was sitting around looking at all these things and I sort of came to the conclusion that I am not oppressed, depressed or suppressed. And my mother isn't. My girlfriend isn't. I was thinking that a vast part of the Aboriginal population are not rape victims. A vast part of the population are not alcoholics. I was just thinking, you know, we need to show that there is a variety, a whole multifaceted base of Native Aboriginality. *So one of the ways that I try to expand that perspective of Native people showed variances of Native character and to build up the perception of Native character was through humour. So it was humour that allowed me to ride the darker times and come out the other side, whether it was a Residential School, or whatever, there was always humour.* So, I try as part of my involvement in character education, to create characters who have a sense of humour, who are also very, very bright, and *I just wrote an article again comparing Native Elders to European philosophers.*

Can I have a copy?

Yes, you can have a copy. I went to this Native thing called “A Gathering of All Nations.” I heard a comment of an Elder there. He was the worst drunk on the reserve in the sixties and seventies. Why is he being treated as an Elder? I remembered the William Blake line that “The Road of Excess leads to the Palace of Wisdom.” So the best drug and alcohol counsellors are often people that have come through it themselves. So I look at Elders who have lived a full and hardy life as almost having more wisdom than those that haven’t. They have walked all roads. All those roads have come together at the end of their journey here with many different levels of education, right? And I was at an Elder’s conference at another time, talking to this Elder where he forbid anybody to write stuff down because he said “Writing stuff down is asking for permission to forget it.” I discovered sometime later that Plato said “Writing is the instrument of forgetfulness.” Those words were almost identical. So I find those little nuggets of comparison of the great philosophers in Europe and of the Native community and so I’m writing about that. Through my writing, I’m trying to just fill out the perception of the Native character in Canada.

Can you think of Native People who are examples of character educators?

There was Chief Seattle in his Web of Life speech, and Lame Deer. There were several, even Sitting Bull is quoted quite frequently. Red Cloud, people like that, so yeah, they exist out there.

I was never taught in a conscious manner. It was more of less observation. Soaking in. Reading. I’ve been into over a hundred and twenty Native communities across Canada and in the States, so I’ve just soaked in a lot of stuff. It’s just sitting around talking, having cups of tea and keeping your ears open. If you want to write, you have to read. If you want to tell stories, you have to listen to stories. And if I want to develop characters that have something to say, I have to hear it from people who have something to say. If I end up in a room by myself and have no contact with anyone besides myself and I write plays, they won’t be my voice. *But if I go out there and I sit and talk with Elders, and I talk with Edna Manitowabi about Nanabush and about how he left his footprints all across North America, that stays with me.* And I file that in my

head, both in a personal file and in a “Can I use that in a play somewhere else?” file. So, um, the best advice I give to writers is just to be a good listener. The more you listen, the more you will soak up material. And the more you soak up, the more in the veins you’ll have to write.

Question 4: How do teachings to develop character persist in present day reality and how do you relate them?

Please explain.

Present day reality right now is, a lot of people are living in urban settings. There is increasing encroachment of technology according to those who believe that technology is a God living in competition with those who are living in harmony with Nature. So taking into account that we are increasingly an information-based technology society, where more people are spending more and more time in regular classrooms, how do traditional teachings like you do through storytelling, to develop character persist in present day reality? A lot of people can just go to Blockbuster video to rent a movie instead of coming to your theatre.

It’s boring though, so very very boring. I have this conversation with somebody once. On the Internet, with videogames, with Blockbuster, “Is theatre dying?” and more importantly, “Is reading dying?” They said “No, *theatre will always exist because nothing will ever take the place of imagination.*” I love movies! I go to about three movies a week of I can. I love it, but I also love theatre. I think, you know, that in this quite complex age that as more and more time is diminishing and you never have enough time to do everything that you want to do.

In my writing and what I do, one of the wonderful manifestations that happens with the theatre I do is, giving you an example, *Toronto at Dreamer’s Rock, a story of three teenage boys coming of age in two different time periods with two different perceptions of what being Native is.* It was my very first play, before I knew what the hell I was doing and my most successful play. It has been done about twenty-five times across Canada, even in Germany. I have just been blown away by its popularity. I had no idea what I was doing and evidently it just went through the roof. Keeping that in mind, I have

had numerous requests from organizations in Canada saying “*It is a wonderful coming of age story for young boys. It is a pity there’s not one for young girls.*” They have either said “Can we adapt this for girls or have girls do it?” Or, “Could you write us one about young girls coming of age?” That sets up a whole different series of gender appropriation issues. Can I write a story about young adolescent girls? And all that sort of stuff.

That reminds me of *Where the Spirit Lives* with Amelia where the women in the Blackfoot community have a special rites of passage ceremony for a young girl when she has her first moon time. Back home, it’s actually for a friend of hers. Then, when Amelia is in a Residential School and it is her moon time, the nuns say “Shhh! We don’t talk about this.” It’s like it’s something dirty. So, she does her own small ceremony in secret with a friend.

Yeah, don’t talk about it. It’s a bad thing. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. Exactly. I’ve actually done a few numbers of it, but I have no idea of how I got to this particular topic [rites of passage] in terms of what is your reality and how you relate to it.

I think you’ve got a really good point. What you have really emphasized for me is theatre is imagination, is creativity. No matter how much technology is out there and how easy it is to be plugged into something without leaving one’s home, theatre is here to stay.

And you can play with it. How many productions have you seen of Shaw or Shakespeare or whatever that have been done, contemporised, right, or in a different place. The movie *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was done in that 1890’s in Italy on Mount Athena or wherever it took place. Romeo and Juliet took place in Mexico in contemporary style. You can take theatre and give it a whole different swing, a whole different context and just have fun with it. *And I think that in terms of the traditional teachings and all that, that what I was taught, it is like legends. Any half-decent legend has three or four different layers. They have a social layer, a philosophical layer. They have an explanation of a natural phenomenon, any number of different layers. It’s always scratching away at one layer to get to another layer, because these were the primary*

methods of teaching before the written word or any sort of mass media of that nature. So as a result, economically based, it had many different purposes. It would tell you what to do, what not to do, how to do it and there are so many different messages in any different legend. And so, when I am writing, I try to do that to, to various different levels.

In my comedies, particularly in *Baby Blues* and *Buz 'Gem Blues*, it is more of a sheer celebration of the Aboriginal sense of humour, the kind of humour I was taught as a child. Sitting around at night, you know, I've got a reputation as a humourist, and sitting around the kitchen table with my aunts and uncles, I was a rank amateur compared to them. *So, I got my humour from my Elders. They taught me how to look at the world, how to laugh and how to respect the world. And so, laughing at something and respecting it are not opposites.* You know. You can see somebody taking a sip of tea and wiping their mouth and dribbling, but it is not at their expense. This is important on how to view and write comedy. *Comedy should amuse not abuse.* Right? That sort of has come from my cultural background, though I have to say a lot about the people I've spent time with, older people, the *humour is so culturally based.* Some humour is very very brutal—in your face and you don't know if you are being insulted or teased. For instance, I find amongst the Haida, and to a lesser extent amongst the Iroquois, that the humour is very, very aggressive. It is very in your face and very at your expense, whereas in some places like with the Cree or the Ojibway it is very sly and very subtle and sometimes you don't know that you are being teased, until they themselves start laughing.

And so finding that brand of humour and celebrating it as I do in my comedies, is a direct reflection of the child that I grew up with. I'm sitting around with my aunts and uncles. Here I'm telling, not even telling jokes about two people walking into a bar. It's just sitting there and talking with somebody and you'll say something funny, you know. It sounds very cliché but keeps you aware of Native sense of humour. *I have very rarely found Native people without ownership of or having developed a Native sense of humour.*

Question 5: Do you think there is a possibility for these teachings to impact positively and permanently on adolescent or young adults?

a) in Native school systems?

b) in non-Native school systems?

c) in other settings?

a) Native school systems

Definitely. Or else there wouldn't be teachings. That's the point of teachings. Oh, this is such a big topic here. When I write a play, people say things like "You have written this about Native people in their environment. Why do white people go and see it? If you are writing a comedy, is the comedy very cultural? Are all the jokes very narrow-minded? Comedy is very cultural. I take a story like *Someday* which is about a woman who finds out that the daughter she lost to the Children's Aid Society is coming back after thirty-five years. And you look at that. It is very Native in structure and character with the Children's Aid "society scoop"-up and all that stuff. *Yet, if you look at it objectively, there's no uniquely Native way for a mother to love their daughter. It is a universal constant. That is what makes theatre work.*

I may not relate to life in 16th century Venice ie. *Romeo and Juliet*, but I can relate to loving somebody and not having that love fulfilled. So it's the emotions that are universal—minor stuff like locations and settings—just make it specific and interesting. *When September 11th happened, I read in the newspaper once that they were doing a study of Islam and other religions. It was very interesting. Every religion... In Christianity, they have the Golden Rule "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." And they have an equal quote in Islam, an equal quote in Buddhism, an equal quote in Hindu and an equal in Judaism. In fact an interesting thing, in the Judaic tradition it says "Treat everybody well. Everything else in the Torah is commentary on that." So I sat back and I thought, "Yes, things we Native people have, have sprung up over thousands and tens of thousands of years, living on this continent, with this environment, with our People, and so they have sprung from those origins. However, we are not reinventing the wheel or reinventing humanity. These are common teachings that everybody can understand, appreciate or embrace.*

So when we take these teachings into the Native school system, of course they have a place because they are Native people for our Native students. They can embrace them. Many of them are already known. They have access to them. They have experience with them and can embrace them easily.

I grew up going to school standing up and singing The National Anthem, and I think during some years we actually said The Lord's Prayer, if I remember correctly, before it was outlawed. We can embrace stuff that was not in our culture easily as long as some aspect appeals to us, relates to us. That is the important thing. If you come in with something that is alien, that we have no relationship to, know it's not going to have any effect whatsoever no matter how hard you try.

But, look at what the whole Residential School system did to so many generations of Native people. It forced something on them that they didn't want with often tragic results. Traditional teachings are a lot simpler, a lot more user friendly and a lot more beneficial. If taught in the right way, they will have much more of an effect on the students because the teachings are very, very good and would not harm anybody.

b) Non-Native school systems

I believe you also talked about Natives going out into the school system.

Yes. My first two or three plays were aimed at touring. That was how I learned theatre, guerrilla theatre. As few characters as possible. You find if you go into college and do that sort of university/college theatre thing, because you are on Shakespeare or O'Neil or whatever and you have a cast of eight to twelve. In these economic days, it is very, very expensive.

I was trained at the De Ba Jeh Mu Jig Theatre on Manitoulin Island to take plays out into schools. It costs money to take actors out, so I was taught to be very, very economical. And, uh, so, my plays are very easy to tour and they are taught in a very simple way because I always go back to my own childhood, sitting watching plays in school.

I remember seeing one play. I was like eight or nine. Some theatre company came to our Reserve and did this play about the evils of Nuclear Energy. I'm sitting there as a

nine year old kid, barely capable of saying nuclear, watching this play, having absolutely no understanding of why they were telling me this. It was obviously a theatre company with a social conscience, which I can understand, *but it [the troupe] had not taken its audience into context.* As nine year old kids on the reserve, we did not know that much about nuclear energy.

But however, keeping that in mind, I include something like *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock*. I committed all the cardinal sins that should have destroyed *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock* because I didn't know what I was doing. When you look at it, it is a play for teenagers, naturally fidgety teenagers. First of all it is one act, one scene, with no scene breaks whatsoever. It is one long scene. It is at the top of a rock no bigger than this table, so there is very little opportunity to keep the physical energy going. And thirdly, it is all talk. It is a fifty minute conversation which, has theoretical heady stuff. When you put all of those things together—very little action, talky, just complete just running and running and running with no breaks. You would think teenagers would tune out. It has elements in it that everybody can relate to. *Everybody can relate to being sixteen. Everybody in the universe goes through that identity crisis. Everybody relates to having some sort of social relationship with their parents and everybody tries to figure out where they fit in this world.* At no time do you feel that more than when you are sixteen. They grit their teeth and sit through a fifty minute diatribe because it does touch them. And so, with all of that in it, it became, oddly enough, a success.

Could there be any connection between them with students knowing the story of the Ghost of Christmas Past, Present and Future?

They could on a subconscious level. But, actually it is *Education is Our Right* that has more the Christmas carol feel to it with education's past, present and future. But this one, I wasn't actually thinking of it. I was thinking more or less along the lines of taking an identity issue, something that I wrestle with a lot, and looking at what are the three different perspectives of it—past, present and future. It makes a lot of sense. Of course the story came from Dickens. I decided to interact with it.

c) Other settings

Other settings? Yes, of course. *Theatre and teachings in theatre were often the poor man's way of getting something across.* There is an old saying in theatre that all you need are two planks to stand on and a passion for communication. And, so as a result, you have what is called the Theatre of the Oppressed.

You mean by Augusto Boal?

Yes, which is basically giving to the underclasses, the oppressed, a voice in expressing their oppression. Often there is little more than the clothes on their back.

I mean, to take a slightly different turn here, *the Nazis and the Bolsheviks during the early part of the century, would have a huge train to take these plays from town to town with a play extolling the virtues of Nazism or Stalinism in each town they went to. They would just close it and move on. That is a darker version of the power of theatre.* Did I answer the question?

I think you did.

Somewhere in there.

Question 6: In your opinion, how important is HOPE to developing character?

- a) Can individuals develop positive character traits IF they see a lack of hope?***
- b) If they see a lack of hope, what do you suggest as a way of getting back their hope?***

Well, hope is an interesting, interesting characteristic in a character. You see characters with absolutely no hope. You see characters with hope. *You see characters that get their hope back through a journey.*

Can a character develop positive character traits if they have a lack of hope? Oh, that's a hard one. That is a hard one! One of the interesting things I find about my work is, one of the reasons I wrote *Alter-Natives* is I was told by a lot of people who see my plays that I have never written an unsympathetic character. All of my characters are likeable. So I decided that I would write a play with characters in it that were not so embraceable. That is one of the reasons I wrote *Alter-Natives*. I wanted to make

unsympathetic Native characters too, just to see if I could do that, never having done that. The whole thing about hope is an interesting thing because it is such a positive aspect. *A character without hope is a character almost without a future. He can have existence but no hope.*

You say that about a character on stage, but what about a real character?

I have to say that is the same because you can have shallow, flat characters. *I think that people latch onto characters in plays and movies because they see something in themselves in a friend or something that they would like to see.* So to see a character on stage or screen with no hope, it's sad, just like seeing with a real individual, it is very, very tragic. Um. I don't know about how you would advise somebody to get it back. *It is a personal journey.* You can't tell somebody how to love somebody. You can't tell somebody how to hate somebody. *I don't think you can tell somebody how to hope or how to get their hope back. It is a journey of growth in themselves.*

I have to teach courses in writing. I have to tell people "I can't teach you to write, but you can learn how to write." It is all self-learned. *The same with hope. You can be influenced by other factors. You can be shown the way, but those initial steps towards hope, towards love, towards any substantive and sense of positive emotion do have to be self-generated.*

Question 7: What positive attributes of character do you focus on in your culture and in your own personal teachings in working with/guiding others?

Well, I tend to, as you have heard me just say, I tend to rely too much on the positive. I tend to write too many nice people, good people with journeys. That is not to say that they all lead happy lives. In *Someday* and *Only Drunks and Children Tell the Truth* there are journeys in there. There is pain. There is reality. But, I have this natural tendency to believe in the best in people and that does come out in my writing and, you know, while my characters in *Alter-Natives* were not entirely likeable, they weren't nasty or hateable either.

Someday I want to do a really nasty, nasty character. But the art of doing characters is that people are not all black or all white in this world, using a colour

metaphor. What makes a character interesting is the shading, good and bad. Everybody has the potential for good and bad. That is what makes a character interesting. In my writing, I tend to lean towards the more positive, with little bits of bad coming out. So, I tend to show the positive aspects of the Native culture. In a play I did call *Bootlegger Blues*, which is about a really good Christian woman who, through a series of circumstances, finds herself in possession of a hundred and forty-three cases of beer that she has to sell to buy an organ for the Church. As I've said, it is a celebration of the Aboriginal sense of humour. However it deals with bootlegging and alcohol, which is a problem in communities. However at times, in the play, nobody ever picks up a bottle and drinks on stage. That was important to me. I don't try to hide this stuff, but I don't have to rub it in peoples' faces. And, I decided it to take a little more finesse to deal with that issue without actually have a beer party on stage. So with my characters, I give them as much of a positive spin as possible and then a negative spin. In *Someday* and *Only Drunks*, Barb has an attitude towards her sister and an attitude towards her mother, a negative attitude. It comes out, but in her heart she is a good person. It's just the cards that she has been dealt in life. My own personal teachings in working with and guiding others, *I am often asked if I am a role model and that type of thing and I am uncomfortable with that. Because, there are things in my past I'm not proud about.* I get asked to teach writing courses and I turn it down because I actually don't know how I do what I do, but one of the things I try and tell first time writers and people who are interested in expressing themselves is two things:

One, there is no such thing as a good writer, only a good rewriter. Doing my first part of my career, I hated rewriting. I hated writing my own material. I had tried to get away with one draft and send it off and I'm sure in the academic world as in the creative world, you don't do that. It has taken me fifteen years to figure out that it is not a great sin to rewrite. In fact it is a great sin not to rewrite. So I try to tell people that—don't be afraid to rewrite your words.

Second, I often tell them don't be afraid of being rejected. It's part of the monster. I'm a very successful writer, but I still get rejected quite frequently. Don't take it personally. That's the biggest problem. People who want to be a writer and they send something off to one person, one venue and could get a rejection letter and they curl up

somewhere, lick their wounds and never participate again. That's not a writer. You have to have a thick skin and go in and play. So in my personal teachings in working with people, I was telling them, you know, you walk this fine line because as a writer you have your art and your culture. *Unlike many writers, at some point, you do have to answer to people in your culture.*

When I write something, my mother reads it. My friends read it. They are going to question me on it, more than say if I was a white writer from Brampton living here and wrote something about Brampton. Chances are nobody would phone me up from Brampton and chew me out whereas everything I write in article, play, short story, whatever, there is an immediate audience that knows me and wants to see what my opinion is if they see something wrong with it or think I'm saying something wrong, they will go out of their way to contact me and investigate it.

So, in a sense, they see you as an ambassador and a representative of the people, whether you declare yourself to be one or not?

Yes, exactly. It is problematic at times because *every once in a while you have a personal opinion which has nothing to do with my being a member of the Mississauga Band of the Ojibway Nation from Curve Lake.* Sometimes it's just me. You know, I remember many years ago. Who was it? It was George Bush. When he was in office, it was George Bush senior who said he hated brussel sprouts and he told the White House chef not to serve brussel sprouts. He got so much flack from the farmers association and all this sort of stuff, for publicly saying he didn't like brussel sprouts. His reaction was "I'm the president. I should get a few perks. I don't like brussel sprouts and I don't want to eat brussel spouts." So sometimes, walking that line with my writing is something dramatically interesting. So in writing a comedy about drinking, about bootlegging, some other Native community would find that offensive.

Have you had flack about that kind of play being presented in high schools to students who are under age?

Well, that play has never been toured to high schools.

Do you think it should?

Well, no, not that one. I think it isn't a tourable one. It has a cast of six, in three of four different locations. It is just structurally problematic. For instance, with one like *Someday*, because it deals with the "scoop up" for adoption, I've had people contacting me who were adopted saying to me, well you weren't adopted, you don't know our story, you can't write it. And, um, I had people congratulating me on doing such a good but such a positive one. Somebody didn't come up battle scarred or in a coma. *But, I often get flack because I write what the Native population thinks of it rather than what the White population thinks.* I've also got flipped in *Alter-Natives* because they were unsympathetic Native characters.

I had one woman come up to me and say "Is that what you really think about Native people?" So I have to always give every Native character a positive spin. Oh, and I did a Native musical called *Sucker Creek* which is an adaptation of a Bertolt Brecht / Kurt Weill play, an adaptation and immunization of a 1930's play from Germany. It is about these three Native con artists setting up a crooked casino. And, um, one of them was raised by his grandfather who died and then came back for the funeral and decided to do the Casino thing and so he's telling the story but as the White reviewers said "It's a good thing Drew Taylor has Native blood or his negative portrayal of Native people would brand him as a racist" and all sorts of stuff like that.

It is kind of like being a Jewish person telling Jewish jokes.

Yeah. Exactly. I think, you know, *to say that Native people are above common human emotions and are even above human emotions like greed is to do a great disservice to Native people by saying that they are not human.* Having spent almost all of my life in the Native community, I have met less than charitable Native people. I have met narrow-minded people. I have met Native people who don't give a damn about other people. I know one Native woman who says "There's no such thing as a bad Native person. Anyone, anyone who does anything bad has been corrupted by the white superstructure."

So your personal feeling is that there are good and bad people in every culture?

Completely. Completely. If you look at our traditional legends before contact, there were good and bad people in those legends, so they must have gotten that from somewhere. Right? So, it's all confusing.

Question 8: How do you believe Native teachings reinforcing character education could be best passed on in meaningful ways to today's youth?

How to do that? Well... ah gosh, 'cause I'm not an educator, so that's difficult.

You're not an educator, but you educate through your storytelling. Your storytelling has themes that uplift and inspire as well as "make right." So do you feel that the art that you are using in theatre and so on—that the best way is storytelling in theatre?

It works for me but it is not as didactic as a lecture. It is... *I try and quote the messages that I get across.* It is often funny too, because I'm so character-based in my writing. People often ask me "What is the theme? What is the moral in this play?" and I go "I don't know." My characters are strong enough to handle the story by themselves. I don't have to sit down and figure out academically or clinically what the moral is. It should come from the characters. So oftentimes, I have actually a random idea of what the moral and thematic consequences of *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock* are because I let the three characters handle that.

Let's look at the *Boy in the Treehouse* for instance. I was reading in the grade nine open curriculum about the different types of storytelling. In the unit involving the Trickster, it can be at the very end of the play that there is sort of a twist which people finally get at the very end. The trickster seems to be... I'm just gonna re-read that and re-say that again. When you were talking about your theatre, for instance, with *The Girl Who Loved her Horses* and *The Boy in the Tree House* we dealt with the whole Trickster aspect. Could you explain how you use the Trickster aspect again in your storytelling through theatre?

I use the Trickster influence in my work, not so much the trickster myself but more or less his or her mannerisms or ways of telling the story. So, for instance, with the Girl Who Loved Her Horses, that's not a trick ending, but it is a sudden twist at the end where one person is not who you thought she was. She is a completely different character which is very "trickster" in structure and is necessary to the telling of the story.

It's like my other stuff. I like taking story and twisting it. I guess it is from all those years of watching the *Twilight Zone* and reading O' Henry, the writer, author of *The Gift of the Magi* and all those wonderful twisted things that just sort of set you off going one way and then send you off on a in a completely different direction. It often adds this sort of poignancy too, where it ends and you get a nice warm flow. But in something like *Boy in a Tree House* it sort of gives you a warm glow, but it also makes you go "Ahh..." It is like icing on the cake.

So you like to lead your audience to draw their own conclusions and "discover" rather than telling them what it is.

I like to take them all down a particular path and then make them go off on a sideroad.

[chuckling] Okay, Thank you. Here is the last question.

Question 9: How would you like to be remembered when you are gone?

As a pretty good contemporary storyteller. That is basically it. I just want them to remember that I had a few funny things to say, a few interesting things to say and

hopefully I said them well. And I'll be happy. *I want to make them smile; I want to make them laugh; I want to make them cry and I want to make them think.*

Appendix I: Leaving the Message of A Sense of Purpose

Question Nine

The literature shows that human beings fare best when they have a sense of purpose. (See Eastman, 1980; Frankl & Allport, 1997). Although the question *How would you like to be remembered when you are gone?* shed some light on the positions of the respondents with respect to their individual life purposes and brought interviews to a pleasant close, it did not directly impact on the three key thesis questions. Thus, I choose to provide that information here in Appendix I. The interviewees' feedback is followed by an anonymous traditional wolf story that has been often shared verbally as well as electronically on the World Wide Web. That wolf story emphasizes that how we choose to see and be, influences the energy that we project out into the world.

Mid-Day-Star, "Pow Wow Guide, Poet and Storyteller" (Appendix D) expressed his thankfulness for the "opportunity to be interviewed and recorded on paper.... so the written word down, might be encouragement for people who are yet to come" (p. 252). He stated "I would like to be remembered maybe as a person who was able to pass on some of the knowledge that I was given freely, both from man and from the Creator" (p. 252).

Nokomis, "An Authentic Model of Courage and Hope" (Appendix E) underlines the importance of being humble rather than full of Ego. She emphasizes that singing one's own praises is not the Native way. She stresses that we are all equal in the Circle and all people have a special gift to share. She states

As far as being remembered when I pass on, I am not looking for great praises or accolades. I just want to be able to do what is right and proper each day and try to lead a good an honest life and hope that I have helped somebody in my lifetime.
(p. 291)

Gloria Oshkabewisens-McGregor, Elder-in-Training and teacher "Reclaiming Ojibway Language, Heritage and Pride for the Children" (Appendix F) values finding voice and identity for self and others. "I would like to be remembered as a person that

found her Voice... and helped the children find their voices and identity.... *Whenesh-kiin?* Who are you?" They would say "*Anishnabe niin*. I am Anishnabe" (p.313).

Kahskennontora:ken, "Good Medicine Teacher of Right Living" (Appendix G) by far the wordiest of all the interview participants in her responses comments on the multifaceted nature of the question which is hard for her to answer because she has not finished her journey of learning and teaching. She makes several salient points concerning how she would like to be remembered. Kahskennontora:ken hopes that after passing over she will have "made some small difference for the better with the people" (p. 366) to be remembered as someone whom other acknowledged above all as "a human being with a Spiritual Journey" (p. 366) who "dealt with other people in a just and kind way." (p. 366). I would like to be remembered as someone who taught chronic hopefulness.... When you are chronically hopeful, you never give up on people. You say prayers for their Spirit.... You are not spared the teachings of this life you are living. (p.367)

Drew Hayden Taylor, "Drama Bridge between the Native and non-Native World" (Appendix H) who is both mirthful and mindful, would like to be remembered as "a pretty good contemporary storyteller" who "had a few funny things to say" and said them well. He states of his audience "I want to make them smile; I want to make them laugh; I want to ake them cry and I want to make them think." (p.395)

Overall summary: All interview participants express a clear, heartfelt, mindful vision of what they want to accomplish in their *personal life quests*. With a distinct sense of purpose in service to their communities, they all want to help others lighten their burdens in a variety of ways. This may be done through helping others reclaim language, culture, identity, self-esteem, hope and/or the ability to laugh at life. They all focussed less on how they want to be remembered than on their desire to make a positive difference in the quality of life of others offstage or on [sic]. All five people interviewed display a distinct, playful sense of humour, but none take their responsibilities lightly. All interviewees demonstrate a sense of purpose, self-worth and community connections, following their individual paths on the Good Red Road. Not one person ever boasted at any point in time about being an Elder, an Elder-in-Training or a successful storyteller. Each of the Elders grew into the roles conferred upon them by community members in

recognition of their service to their communities and their wisdom. They relate to others with a high level of awareness of the impacts of their words and actions. They teach about our interconnectedness within the Web of Life, consciously promoting a sense of responsible Earth citizenship. They choose the good. Now follows a story about choice.

Two Wolves: Which Wolf Do You Feed?

An old Indian Grandfather said to his grandson who came to him with anger at a friend who had done him an injustice...

“Let me tell you a story. I too, at times, have felt a great hate for those that have taken so much, with no sorrow for what they do. But hate wears you down, and does not hurt your enemy. It is like taking poison and wishing your enemy would die. I have struggled with these feelings many times.”

He continued...

“It is as if there are two wolves inside me; One is good and does no harm. He lives in harmony with all around him and does not take offence when no offence was intended. He will only fight when it is right to do so, and in the right way. He saves all his energy for the right fight.

But the other wolf, ahhh!

He is full of anger. The littlest thing will set him into a fit of temper. He fights everyone, all the time, for no reason. He cannot think because his anger and hate are so great. It is helpless anger, for his anger will change nothing.

Sometimes it is hard to live with these two wolves inside me, for both of them try to dominate my spirit.”

The boy looked intently into his Grandfather’s eyes and asked...

“Which one wins, Grandfather?”

The Grandfather smiled and quietly said “The one I feed.”

(Indian Author unknown)

Appendix J: The Sacred Circle

I began this poem in prose on August 30, 1994, after being exposed to Native Spirituality for one solid week with a group of women at Lake Buckhorn and Curve Lake First Nation in Peterborough, Ontario. I finally completed it on March 15, 1995. Reading this might make a fitting conclusion for students who have had meaningful experiences in Circle with First Nations Elders or teachers.

Life is a cycle, never ending. Love is a circle, ever bending. Be the best you can be. Live in harmony. My circle must be unbroken for me to feel complete. I, like many, am a dented circle unsoldered, discouraged, hungering to mend. On big-hearted friends in the Sacred Circle, I know I can depend. When someone needs uplifting or when I'm feeling low, physically or in Dreamtime that is where I go.

Alice, our Elder from Curve Lake, began our teachers' Circle last summer with a smudging and a prayer, patiently explaining the meanings of sacred heartberries, blueberries and raspberries to our FWTAO woman community from across Ontario, gathered there. The waterbowl was carefully passed. Each turned it clockwise a little before we drank murmuring *Meegwetch*.

That is the Ojibway way to *thank*.

The wise, gentle Elder passed the bowl of berries, telling us of her father's annual Spring ritual of feeding her, the growing woman-child, the very first heartberry of every season. On Mother Earth, women are the Nurturers, the Healers. "Why do you do this father?" she asked. He said "To Honour Woman" was the reason.

Now, my far-seeing Ojibway friend Jan has welcomed me into her healing circle. I feel like an adopted member of the great Bear clan. Pure-hearted women of good intent gather, sipping herbal tea before retreating in comradery and empathy to the special gathering place of Peace near the Child-blessed Medicine Wheel, beside whispering White Pine trees stretching towards a canopy of stars.

Thanks is given for all that is Good and for the Four Sacred Medicines. Good Spirits gather as Sweetgrass is burned. We chant, sing, meditate and reflect on what we've learned. Our hearts beat in rhythm with our drums. To lead our dream walk, the Ancient Ones, Native Spirit Guides like Guardian Angels softly come. We ask the Creator to channel our combined energies for the Highest Good to protect and uplift the Children of the Human Race. May they gently walk in beauty upon Mother Earth's face. In mindful unity, we empower one another to help heal the world, confident it can and will become a better place. Hands reach out communicating courage and strength. Standing like proud trees, we branch out to complete the Circle. Dream-like Nature images waft, ethereal in the night. Common Vision and Intensity of Purpose unite us in Moon Light.

Each speaks uninterrupted when passed the Sacred feather, knowing no word leaves the Circle when the sharing ends. We communicate our deepest dreams and feelings. Words of praise and pain in truth are told. Energy mounts like steps ascending a heavenly staircase. How much power can a feather hold?

I reflect on last summer with our Elder Alice, when my Spiritual Journey began. The first person spoke to my left. Voices flowed like successions of waves, seeming to follow the path of the Sun. Then, with mixed emotions, I was the last to speak. I had not intended to. Reverently stroking the spine of the Eagle feather where your and my perceptions meet, I recognized its precious significance. The words flowed by themselves, effortlessly, with a life of their own, Truths released from my heart. From my firm yet gentle grasp, back to the Elder, it was passed.

I am non-Native of European descent but Native-born Canadian. I am still relatively new to such healing gatherings. I believe communing in the Sacred Circle holds for us many untold, invaluable Blessings as we share in trust and truth who we really are—our dreams, joys and sorrows. We strengthen ourselves within the Sacred Circle, hearts, minds and ears focused. Hands interwoven, we stand proudly as One. The ends of our own broken circles bend until they touch and fuse again, interconnected in a sunlit chain that neither begins nor ends.

Love and acceptance from the Sacred Circle beautifully bond our Spirits to help heal our human pain. Energized, we know we are accepted, wanted, belong and feel *whole* again. I sing the Beauty Song that came to me in a dream:

*Beauty above me, beauty below me, beauty before me, guard and restore me!
Beauty beside me, beauty to guide me, beauty behind me, always remind me:
I walk in Beauty!*

Today's dreams are tomorrow's realities. We part with loving hearts and feet on wings. There is room for many Circles. We are all interconnected, like the moving, swirling Hoops of the Hoop Dancer—part of the wonder, splendour and unity of the Great Mystery. It is good to be here. It is good to be alive. The Sacred Circle calls me home. It is a haven for my heart, no longer on the ground.

Appendix K:
Aboriginal Education Course Profiles

Annotated Course Profiles for Aboriginal Education in the Ontario, Canada, Public School System

Note: The following courses of study were prepared for teacher use. These sample courses are not mandated approaches but may be used, as appropriate, to help teachers meet local classroom needs. They may be used in their entirety, in part, or adapted. The materials on the Government of Ontario Web site are protected by Crown copyright held by the Queen's Printer for Ontario. The materials listed may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes providing that proper credit is given and Crown copyright is acknowledged. (See <http://www.gov.on.ca/MBS/english/common/queens.html>. Call 1-800-668-9938.). These are available at Publications Ontario, 880 Bay Street, Toronto.

Course descriptions.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (April, 2000). *Course profile:*

Expressing Aboriginal cultures grade 9 open Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Unit titles: Oracy: Aboriginal stories, Visual Arts, Functional Arts and Aboriginal Culture, Music & Dance, Celebrations of Aboriginal Cultural Event: Individual and Group Performance Demonstrations.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (April, 2000) *Course profile:*

Aboriginal peoples in Canada grade 10 open. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

The course overview is presented in two sections:

Section One: Units 1 and 2. View of Nationhood, 1900; Challenges to Aboriginal Self-Determination, 1900-1950.

Section Two: Units 3, 4, 5, and 6. Continuity and Change in Aboriginal Canada, 1950-1969; Renewed Dialogue Between Aboriginal Nations and Canada, 1969-1985; Aspirations of Aboriginal Nations, 1985-1999; Views of Nationhood: Nunavut, 1999.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (April, 2000). *Appendices for course profile: Aboriginal peoples in Canada grade 10 open*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

This is a twelve-page sample course of study with appendices for Units 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (Spring, 2001) *Course profile: Aboriginal beliefs, values, and aspirations in contemporary society grade 11 workplace preparation NBV3E*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Five Units: Aboriginal Identity: Perceptions and Realities; Aboriginal Beliefs and Value Systems; Leadership, Responsibilities, and Aboriginal Knowledge; Pride, Power and Accomplishments; Renewal and Reconciliation.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (Spring, 2001) *Course profile: Aboriginal beliefs, values, and aspirations in contemporary society grade 11 college preparation NBV3C*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Five Units: Aboriginal Identity: Perceptions and Realities; Aboriginal Beliefs and Value Systems; Leadership, Responsibilities, and Aboriginal Knowledge; Pride, Power and Accomplishments; Renewal and Reconciliation.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (Spring, 2001) *Course profile: English: Contemporary Aboriginal voices grade 11 workplace preparation NBE3E*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Five Units: Identity; Relationships; Sovereignty; Challenges; Who Am I?

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (Spring, 2001) *Course profile: English: Contemporary Aboriginal voices grade 11 college preparation NBE3C*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Five Units: Identity; Relationships; Sovereignty; Challenges; Who Am I Now?

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (Spring, 2001). *Course profile:*

Current Aboriginal issues in Canada grade 11 university/college preparation NDA3M. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Six Units: Who is an Aboriginal Person?; Aboriginal Viewpoints and Canadian Law; Land Claims and Resource Management; Health and Wellness: Contemporary Challenges; Education and Community Development; The Contemporary Aboriginal: Maintaining an Identity in the Modern World.

Public District School Board Writing Partnership. (Spring, 2001) *Course profile: Native languages, level 4 open LNAD0-LN0D0.* Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Five Units: Messengers—traditional and contemporary methods of communication in an Aboriginal world view; Native and Non-Native Concepts of Citizenship; Native Alliances: Traditional and contemporary —survival, well-being, prominent leaders, partnerships; Native and Non-Native concepts of Ownership—cultural differences with respect to man's relationship to the land and treaty interpretation; Cumulative Project-sharing with the global community via the Internet.

Curriculum guidelines.

Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. (1999). *The ontario curriculum for grades 9 and 10*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Native Languages.

The French equivalent, known as Le curriculum de l'Ontario, 9e et 10e année, Langues autochtones, is also available at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca>

Course code designations for Native Languages are as follows:

- LNA: Cayuga
- LNC: Cree
- LND: Delaware
- LNL: Oji-Cree
- LNM: Mohawk
- LNN: Oneida
- LNO: Ojibwe

Ontario Ministry of Education and Training. (1999). *The Ontario curriculum, grade 9 and 10: Native studies expressing Aboriginal cultures, grade 9, open (NAC10;) Aboriginal peoples in Canada, grade 10, open (NAC20)*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Queen's Printer for Ontario. Retrieved August 23, 2002, from <http://mettowas21.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/curricul/secondary/native/natiful.html#Overview>.

Appendix L: Dominant Culture Web-based References

EveryTeacher.Com. (2003). Character education links section. In *EveryTeacher.Com* [Website]. Retrieved January 6, 2003 from <http://www.everyteacher.com/cgi-local/teacher/links/category.cgi?category=/Character+Education&start=0>.

EveryTeacher.Com is a website for teachers by teachers which incorporates contributions from teachers and educational experts from around the world. Containing lesson plans, news archives, tips for teachers and thematic links, it is the brainchild of Canadian Ilan Danjoux, Masters Graduate of Queen's University and a teacher from York Region District School Board. This is the most relevant dominant culture web-based character education reference website. It incorporates an regularly updated list of character education websites from many sources in Canada and abroad. Most listings are from the dominant culture, but there is at least one Native American listing.

Alphabetized, as of January 5, 2003, dominant culture character websites listed are: Adventures from the Book of Virtues, Association for Moral Education, Canadian Young Leadership, Character Counts!, Character Development Group, Character Education in the FSL Classroom, Character Education Catalogue, Character Education Network, Character Education Partnership, Character Education Quality Standards, Cogan's Model of Multidimensional Citizenship, Cocnerstone Values Organization, Educating Peace, The Education Trust, The Golden Rule, the Golden Rules Poster from Interfaith Nexus, Institute for Global Ethics, The Institute for Youth Development, Josephson Institute of Ethics, Kids Who Care, Mayor's Markham Task Force, The Power of Caring, Nova Roma's Roman Virtues Site, Short Essay on the Golden Rule, Teaching Kids to Care, Virtues Project—The Family Virtues Guide, Quote Unquote Library from Josephson Institute of Ethics, World Culture Project—Canadian Culture.

Appendix M: Some Useful First Nations Websites

Alphabetized Lists of Indigenous Communities:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Aboriginal Links Data Base. (2000) *Worldwide Aboriginal and Indigenous links*. Retrieved on July 12, 2002 from <http://cf.vicnet.net.au/aboriginal/links/setpage.cfm?page=Worldwide%20Aboriginal%20and%20Indigenous>.

Dill, J.S. (2002). *Alphabetical listing of Native tribes of the U.S. and Canada*. Retrieved July 12, 2002 from <http://www.dickshovel.com/trbindex.html>.

Sultzman, Lee. (2000). *Compact history working bibliography*. This includes approximately 240 tribal histories from the Americas. Retrieved on July 12, 2002 from <http://www.dickshovel.com/bib.html>.

First Nations character education.

Anonymous. (n.d.). *A Native American prayer*. Retrieved July 12, from <http://belle.pcpros.net/~grandma/native.html>.

Fadden, J.K. (2002). *The Six nations: Oldest participatory democracy on earth*. Retrieved July 12, 2002 from http://www.ratical.org/many_worlds/6Nations/.

GoodMinds.Com. (2001). *Good minds links*. Retrieved November 1, 2002 from <http://www.greatpeace.org/frames.htm>. This site contains interesting links about North American First Nations people. Information is organized into the following categories: Elementary, Secondary, Post Secondary Library Resources, Teacher Resources, Iroquois, Individual. It is through this company based on the Six Nations Reserve that the *The Great Peace—The Gathering of Good Minds CD-ROM* can be purchased. E-mail Jeff Burnham, President, at helpme@goodminds.com or call toll free at 1-877-862-8483 Monday to Friday.

Good Medicine Society. (1999). *The good medicine society* [Website]. Retrieved July 12, 2002, from <http://www.goodmedicinesociety.com/>.

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Figure XIII. Bobby Nakoolak.

Bobby Nakoolak, Great Storyteller and Hunter. Nokomis, born Susie Nakoolak, remembers her grandfather for his courage, gentleness and loving manner. She describes him as a fine role model, a very good man, and an excellent craftsman known as the best hunter in the community. After forty-two years of separation from her family, Nokomis received this photo. It is included at her request to honour him as a positive role model of outstanding character. He was her hero.

First Nations Leaders

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Appendix N:
First Nations Audio-Visual Resources

Technological tools are a practical second-choice for those unable to locate Elders to give face-to face, heart to heart experiences in the school setting.

Films and Videos

Films

National Film Board of Canada. (1993). *Beyond the shadows*. (Gryphon Productions Limited). 28 minutes. This film depicts the devastating consequences of residential/boarding schools on Canadian Indians, describing widespread sexual and physical abuse to which native youths were subjected. The video relates the historical background of these government mandated schools and shares painful personal experiences of its inmates: the causes of “multi-generational grief” (the seventh generation effect) and Native healing processes today to help address the damage affecting multiple generations.

Contact:

National Film Board of Canada
P.O. Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
H3C 3H5

National Film Board of Canada. (1997). *No turning back*. On November 21, 1996, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples delivered its recommendations on the status of Canada’s First Nations. For five years, the Commission traveled to more than 100 communities and heard from more than 3000 representatives. The Royal Commission focused its inquiry on sixteen Aboriginal issues and became a sounding board for all the past government injustices including the slow process of land claim settlement, the reluctance to recognize Aboriginal self-government, the inequity of Aboriginal prisoners held in jail, and the legacy of residential schools. For two-and-a-half years, Edmonton director, Greg Coyes, worked with teams of Native filmmakers, following the Commission on its journey from coast to coast. The video weaves the passionate and articulate voices of Indian, Inuit, and Métis people with the history of Canada’s relationship with its First Nations peoples. In this video, Canadian Aboriginal voices are heard collectively, providing a valuable tool for informing both non-Native and Native people about their living conditions and their history. Also available in French as *Pas question de retourner en arrière*.

National Film Board of Canada. (1978) *Wandering spirit survival school*. 27 minutes.

This school, organized by concerned Native parents, introduces subjects relevant to Native pupils. Indian legends, traditions, languages and crafts balance the program of academic subjects required by the Ontario Ministry of Education. The positive character education experience of the children at Wandering Spirit contrasts significantly with the character miseducation experienced by their parents who were educated in the old residential schools.

National Film Board of Canada. (1994) *Keepers of the fire*. 54 minutes, 50 seconds.

Close captioned. According to an aboriginal proverb, no people is broken until the hearts of its women are on the ground. In *Keepers of the Fire*, aboriginal women let their hearts speak. Mohawk and Haida, Maliseet and Ojibwe, these are the voices of “warrior women”—those who have been on the front lines of some of the most important struggles aboriginal people in Canada have faced in the later part of the 20th century. Storytellers, dreamers, healers and fighters, they are just some of the women who are keeping the fires of hope and determination burning in aboriginal communities right across this land. With dignity and courage, these women speak their truth. And, as long as they speak, the fire will burn. (This video is cleared for classroom use and public performance providing no entry fee is charged.)

For sales information call 1-800-267-7710

Order number 9194 085.

Videocassettes

Reinbergs, G. & Karkut, T. (1993, July). *Native peoples video cassette collection:*

Mahsinahkehahnikahmik. [Catalogue]. Toronto, Ontario: Toronto Public Library.

This catalogue is a listing of videos on Native issues/ themes in the collection begin in 1987 at the Spadina Road Branch of the Toronto Public Library.

Reader's Digest. (2001). *Canada, a magnificent journey: New frontiers* The Reader's Digest Association Canada. Experience the early cultures of Canada's First Nations people—the Thule ancestors of the Inuit, the great Cree nations, the Iroquois and the Six Nations confederacy, Ellesmere Island—Tooley People 1940's residential schools, Program called Elder Host Rose, Albert—Inuit Elder.

Contact:

Good Earth Productions Inc.

314 Roncesvalles Ave.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

M6R 2M7

Tel: 416 535-3379

Atlanta Films. (1989). *Where the Spirit Lives. (The Canadian Collection)*. 93 minutes. This drama, set in 1937 amid the rugged beauty of the Canadian Rockies, is the story of Amelia, a courageous young Blackfoot girl. She is taken from her home in the reserve and relocated by the government in an English-speaking settlement. With only the help of Kathleen, a compassionate school teacher who befriends her, Amelia must find within herself the courage to live in what white society calls civilization, a place that is for her a foreign and hostile environment. The last two Canadian residential schools closed in 1988.

This video is distributed in Canada by:
 Magic Lantern Communications Ltd.
 10 Meteor Dr.
 Toronto, Ontario, Canada
 M9W 1A4
 Tel: 416 675-1155
 Fax: 416 675-1154
 Toll Free: 1-800-263-1717
 E-mail: video@magiclantern.ca
 World Wide Web: www.magiclantern.ca

Indigenous Music CDS and Audiocassettes

Aboriginal Women's Voices, The Banff Centre. (1997). *Hearts of the nations*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada: Sweetgrass Records. The eight new songs on this tape were the collective creation resulting from the gathering of Aboriginal women from different Nations in the winter of 1997, at Sleeping Buffalo Mountain in Banff, Alberta .

Aglukark, S. (1996). *This child*. Mississauga, Ontario, Canada: EMI Music Canada. Two songs on this album are "O Siem" about all of us being family and "Hina Na Ho" which is a community celebration. *Note*: Susan Aglukark consults the Elders when an album is in process. The whole community celebrates with her upon its completion.

Eagle Tale Singers. (1999). *Singing for the people*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Sweet Grass Records. Songs include "Flag Song," "Victory Song," "Follow the Red Road," and "Singing for the People."

Girard, L. (2003). *Whale rider* [Score]. New York: 4ad records/ WB US. This is the musical score accompanying the film by the same name, directed by Niki Caro and based on the book *Whale Rider* by Witi Ihimaera, Maori writer of New Zealand. The film is about the character qualities of courage, persistence, embracing cultural tradition and heritage in the face of change and holding onto one's hope and dreams.

- Gordon, D., & Gordon, S. (1994). *Sacred earth drums*. Sequoia Records. Some of the proceeds from each sale to the U.N. Centre for Human Rights to aid world indigenous peoples. Songs include "Prayer for the Four Directions," "Sunset Ceremony," "Call of the Medicine Drum," "Dancing for a Vision," "Power Animals," "Guardian Spirit," and "Sun Rise in Peace."
- Little Island Cree. (1999). *For old times sake*. Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Sweet Grass Records. One of the Pow Wow songs is "Heart Beat of Indian Nations." This group reinforces the important of being humble, respecting one another and respecting the drum.
- Maracle, D.R. (n.d.) *Spirit flutes*. Don Mills, Ontario, Canada: Reflections. These are peaceful melodies by a Mohawk artist on the Native flute.
- Medicine Eagle, B. (1995). *A gift of song*. Sebastopol, CA: Booke Medicine Eagle Tapes. Songs of Wisdom include "Ama Terra."
- Mesa Music Consort. (1994). *Spirit feathers*. San Antonio, Texas: Talking Taco Music Inc. This "sonci stories" which honour the winged ones, are based on ancient myths. A portion of the proceeds from the sale of this recording benefits the children of the Taos Pueblo through the Save the Children Program.
- Tree Cody, R. (1993). *Dreams from the grandfather: Native American songs for flute & voice*. Phoenix, Arizona: Canyon Records. The first song on the CD, called "Earth Mother," reinforces the Earth-based traditions of the Dakota-Maricopa, Lakota, Zuni, Acoma and Cherokee peoples. All eight of his CDs are available at <http://www.treecody.com/>.
- On Wings of Song & Grass, R. (1992). *Medicine wheel*. Boulder, Colorado: Spring Hill Music. Traditional American Indian songs include "Song of Chief Seattle," "Buffalo Entrance Song," and "Medicine Wheel."
- Robertson, R., & The Red Road Ensemble. (1994). *Music for the Native Americans*. This CD features songs like "Coyote Dance," "Ghost Dance," "The Cherokee Morning Song," and "Ancestor Song," which honours the teachings of the elders "who teach us of our creation and our past so we may preserve mother earth for ancestors yet to come." Sandy Kewanbaptewa asks the Grandfather to bless and guide the white man. "Bless them, show them the peace we understand, teach them humility. For I fear they will destroy themselves and their children as they have done so with Mother Earth.... After all, they are my brothers."
- Shenandoah, J., & Kater, P. (1995). *Life blood*. Boulder, Colorado: Silver Wave Records. These are ancient songs of the Haudenosaunee Iroquois. The song "Path of Beauty" talks about the woman's role as an elder and her qualities of kindness, dignity, modesty, peacefulness and accessibility, and guidance through example.

Shenandoah, J., & Laughing, L. (1998). *Orenda* [CD]. Boulder, Colorado: Silver Wave Records. *Orenda* means *the soul of all things* in the Iroquoian language. These songs celebrate life and our connection to the universal spirit. Three songs are of particular note: “All My Relations” honours the matrilineal clans of the Longhouse, reminding us that children are the responsibility of the community. “Unity” is a round dance meant to restore good mind while reminding us that life is a mixture of joy and strife. “The Prophecy Song,” which says we are recognized in the spirit world, reminds of us of our responsibilities to all within the Web of Life and our accountability to the Creator.

Spirit Dreams. (n. d.) Balmain, New South Wales, Australia: Indigenous Australia. Three Aborigine song titles include: “Spirit Dreams” (*Doowi*), “The Gathering” (*Uwan Bullima*) and “Ancient Legends” (*Rawal Woggheegui*).

Appendix O:
References to Sources for Aboriginal Legends

These legends are suitable for character development through the art of storytelling. Note that Paul Goble is not a Native writer.

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Balin, P. (1978). *The flight of the feathered serpent*. Venice, CA: Wisdom Garden Books.

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Bruchac, J. (1994). *A boy called slow*. New York: Penguin Putnam.

Bruchac, J., & Locker, T. (1996). *Between earth & sky: Legends of Native American sacred places*. San Diego, CA: Voyager Books.

Bruchac, J. (2000). *Crazy Horse's vision*. New York: Lee & Low Books Inc.

Bruchac, J. (1985). *Heroes & heroines, monsters & magic: Native American legends and folktales*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.

Bruchac, J. (2002). *Many nations: An alphabet of Native America*. Mahwah, NJ: Bridgewater Books.

Bruchac, J. & Locker, T. (1995). *The earth under the sky bear's feet: Native American poems of the land*. New York: Penguin Putnam.

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Caduto, M. J., & Bruchac, J. (1997). *Keepers of the animals: North American stories and wildlife activities for children* (2d ed.). Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

- Caduto, M. J., & Bruchac, J. (1988). *Keepers of the animals: Teacher's guide*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.
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- Goble, P. (1993). *Her seven brothers*. New York: Aladdin Paperbacks.
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Toronto Public Library. (1993). *Native collections shelf list: Mahsinahhekahnikahmik*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Toronto Public Library.

Appendix P:

Holistic Connections in Traditional First Nations Teaching Strategies

Holistic Connections and Teaching-related Strategies	Holistic Connections in Traditional First Nations Teaching Strategies
Analytic-Intuitive Thinking	
1. Metaphor	1. Predominant oral tradition: powerful nature metaphors and imagery, symbolism in art, totems.
2. Guided imagery/visualization	2. Inner Journeying: Smudging, Eagle staff teachings, meditation, prayer, dreaming, medicine wheel, dreamcatcher, web of life, sacred hoop, vision quest, sweatlodge, teepee poles, totems, retreats, sacred hoop.
Body-Mind Connection	
3. Movement	3. Mindful Ritual: Four sacred medicines, braided sweetgrass, peace pipe, the sacred fire, drumming, singing, chanting, Rotinohshonni condolence ceremony, solstice and sunrise ceremonies, formal honouring of all blessings.
4. Dance	4. Pow Wows: jingles dancers, grass dancer, hoop dancing, traditional and intertribal dance, friendship dance, sundance, the spirit dance, the ghost dance.
5. Drama/Improvisation	5. Roleplaying, Plays: i.e., by Native Earth Performing Arts, De-ba-jeh-mu-gig Theatre Group, Drew Hayden Taylor at dhtaylor1@yahoo.com.

Holistic Connections and Teaching-related Strategies	Holistic Connections in Traditional First Nations Teaching Strategies
Subject Connections	
6. Theme-based learning	6. Integrated teachings based on the Medicine Wheel and sacred Medewin teachings.
7. Values education	7. The Great Law, Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, Vision Quests, CAT-FAWN.
8. Integration through the arts	8. Crafts: Dreamcatchers, Navaho Sandpainting of the Mandala, Beading, Sewing, Carving, Drummaking, Ceremonial masks, Power stones.
9. Story model	9. Oral tradition: storytelling, plays.
Community Connections	
10. Co-operative learning	10. Gatherings: Elders' and other Indigenous conferences and forums, community events, councils, circles for healing, speaking, teaching and drumming, lodges, clans, Canadian Rangers.
11. School-community connections	11. Community cooperation: hunting, gathering, Pow Wows and guides to them, give-aways, potlatches, thanksgiving feasts, name-giving ceremonies, coming-of-age ceremony, wakes, Native Friendship Centres, Good Medicine Society, Anishnabek newspapers, Internet as a World Wide Web.
12. Global education	12. Prophecies: Great Peace of Iroquois, White Buffalo of Hopi, Rainbow Warriors, Hopi, Maya, International Peace gatherings, Native websites, networks: Indigenous Education (IEN), WIPCE, OISE's Aboriginal Education Resources Data Base.

Holistic Connections and Teaching-related Strategies	Holistic Connections in Traditional First Nations Teaching Strategies
Earth Connections	
13. Indigenous peoples' literature	13. Transposed into Written Words: Myths, legends, plays, the Three Sisters, the Four Directions, the Six Sacred Winds petroglyphs.
14. Environmental education, deep ecology	14. Animal stories/adult role play, summits, retreats, pilgrimages to sacred power places, women's & men's wellness weekends, Star lodges.
Self-Connections	
15. Literature, story, and myth	15. Nature-based legends, myths, and trickster stories
16. Journal writing	16. Oral tradition slowly blending with written tradition: Wisdomkeepers ie. Great Tree of Peace and Storytellers, dream journals to record process.
17. Story/The Universe Story	17. Earth-based creation myths from all tribes

Notes. Holistic connections and teaching-related strategies framework from Miller, J. P., 1993, p. 96. Reprinted with permission.

Holistic connections in traditional first nations teaching strategies are examples gleaned by the author from readings and interviews.

Figure XIV. Self connections.

Gazh Gad Nang (Mid-Day-Star) gives teachings to a couple from Sundridge, Ontario, in July 2000. This photo has been included with permission.

Appendix Q: Character Education Comparison Charts

Table Q1

Universal Virtues/Values

Six Nations Philosophy of the Great Law— Kayanerenthsera:kow a (or Kayanere:kowa, in Mohawk)	Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers	Teachings of the Sacred Hoop	Tipi (tee-pee) Teachings Of Relationship	Character Matters! & York Region Character Communities
1. Sken:nen *Peace	1. Nbwaakaawin Wisdom	1. Fortitude	1. Respect	1. Respect
2. Ka'shatsten'tshera *Power	2. Zaagidwin Love	2. Wawokiye Generosity	2. Obedience	2. Responsibility
3. Ka'nikonhri:yo *Righteousness	3. Mnaadendmowin Respect	3. Patience	3. Humility	3. Honesty
4. Gentleness	4. Aakdehewin Courage (Bravery)	4. Courage	4. Happiness	4. Empathy/ <i>Compassion</i>
5. Consistency of character	5. Gwekwaadziwin Honesty	5. Wowicake Honesty	5. Love	5. Fairness
6. Thankfulness	6. Dbaadendizwin Humility	6. Wahwala Humility	6. Faith	6. Initiative
7. Kindness	7. Debwewin Truth	7. Waohola Respect	7. Kinship	7. Courage
8. Sharing			8. Cleanliness	8. Perseverance
9. Honesty			9. Thankfulness	9. Optimism
10. Humility			10. Sharing	10. Integrity
11. Caring			11. Strength (Courage)	11. <i>Inclusiveness</i>
			12. Good child rearing	
			13. Hope	

Explanatory Notes. For ease of reference, I prepared this chart, including original indigenous words for concepts, wherever possible, as is appropriate.

Philosophy of the Great Law: Political and social structure in the development of Iroquoian cultural character. For the Mohawk, three main keys are “peace, power and righteousness,” provided in the Mohawk language by Guy Spittal. Traits four to eleven which have been added are integral to these basic concepts of good-mindedness. Dawn T. Maracle, Mohawk writer and a Doctorat of Education student in Adult and Aboriginal Education at the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto states “Also important to the Haudenosaunee, imparted through teachings and storytelling that I have heard and experienced are these five which are consistent with other nations: kindness, sharing, honesty, humility and caring, but

particularly unique to our teachings are gentleness, consistency of character and being thankful/giving thanksgiving.” (Personal e-mail communication of July 7, 2003.)

Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers: These are presented in the Ojibway language as well as English. The words have been verified by three different sources (Ojibway Cultural Foundation, n.d.).

Teachings of the Sacred Hoop: The Hoop of Relationship shared by Don Trent (Four Arrows) Jacobs, contains wisdoms from a combination of Raramuri, Lakota, Cherokee and Navajo teachings plus his personal insights. Four of the words have been provided in the Lakota language (Jacobs & Jacobs-Spencer, 2001).

The Tipi Teachings (also spelled tee-pee) of the plains tribes address family-based character education. They tend to be transmitted through oral tradition. There are different tipis in different cultures. Desired character qualities, each represented by a different tipi pole, are listed in the fourth column with permission from Jennifer Malhberg, Aboriginal Education Consultant, Prince Albert Catholic School Division # 6 in Saskatchewan. Poles 14 for “ultimate protection” and 15 “control flaps from the wind” are not listed, nor are the 14 pins symbolizing keeping family intact. The illustration for the Tipi Teachings is adapted from information from Saskatchewan Federated College. Permission is not granted to include the illustration in this appendix but it can be retrieved from the Internet at http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/curr_content/natstudies/pdf/tipi.pdf along with a description of Elders’ roles and Indian values posted by the Ministry of Education of Saskatchewan (n.d.).

Points of Reference from the Dominant Culture in which I Live and Work: The desirable character attributes list from “Character Matters!” of York Region District School Board, the school board for which I teach, and the Town of Markham, the community in which I live and which has declared itself a “Character Community” have been combined to provide a dominant culture frame of reference. The first ten traits are listed in the order in which they appear on the YRDSB Character Matters literature at <http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/page.cfm?id=ICM000012> and general information is available at <http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/character.matters>. The organization of the eleven character traits identified as desirable by the York Region is slightly different from the *Character Matters* traits. Markham is an example of a York Region character community as defined at <http://www.region.york.on.ca/cc/pdf/English.pdf>. Doing a word for word comparison, not taking into account the order of character traits listed for the Town of Markham, I compared the two lists. Nine out of ten words were perfect matches. There was one discrepancy between “empathy” and “compassion” which are similar terms. The York Region added an eleventh trait, “inclusiveness” which was not on the *Character Matters!* list. The words compassion and inclusiveness are in italics, indicating that those words are only on the Town of Markham (i.e., York Region) character trait list (York Region District School Board, 2002a; York Region, 2001).

Summary: The foundation or underlying theme amongst traditional First Nations peoples consulted is to interact with all within the web of life in a respectful manner. Respect was identified as the most desirable trait according to the dominant culture references. Respect, responsibility and honesty were the first three traits named in the same order on both the Character Matters and Character Community lists from the dominant culture examples combined in column five.

A Word of Caution: One must take extreme care when translating between languages. Often important meanings are lost in translations. Often word for word translations do an injustice to original concepts. For example, when I requested the Mohawk words for Peace, Power and Righteousness, this required some research on the part of the historian in order for him to feel confident to give the best possible meaning. In a personal communication to me, Guy Spittal,

elaborated meanings and pronunciation for the Mohawk words for The Great Law, Peace, Power and Righteousness. Note the breadth and depths of these indigenous terms.

Historian's Note on Four Mohawk Words:

Kayanerenthsera:kowa (or **Kayanere:kowa**) At S/N *y* has always substituted for the *i* before vowels--to give the *y* sound—used by the French when recording Mohawk and which the St Lawrence Catholic Mohawk employ; only recently have schools here begun using the *i* form since there is an enormous wealth of printed material available from language programmes among the St Lawrence peoples; the *t* in the first word of this paragraph is pronounced as a *t* because of the *h* following it—in this situation it is NOT an aspirate *h*—ithout the *h* it would be a *d* before a vowel; the *s* is pronounced as an *s*, were it surrounded by vowels it would be a *z* sound] literally means *it good great*, but is understood in Kanyenke'ha (Mohawk) to mean *it law great* or the Great Law as used in the literature.

Peace (**Sken:nen**) This means peace, health, wellness. When you see the : symbol for an elongation of the vowel—and *en* and *on* are vowels, pronounced as the *un* in *sun* and the *on* in *moon*, but leaving out the *n* sound, remember, nazalized sounds as in French—place a STRESS sound on that preceding vowel, most of the time it is a strong stress, very occasionally a declining one.

Power, Strength—**Ka'shatsten'tshera**. The apostrophe (') is a glottal stop). The first part means *it strong*, the addition of *tshera* nominalizes it. (The 2 *h*'s which you see here are aspirates for, first, the preceding *s* and, second, the *ts* cluster, which cluster sounds something like the *ts* in *eats*).

Righteousness—**Ka'nikonhri:yo**. The first part is *it mind* (*o'nikora* is the isolet for the mind) and *i:yo* (or *i:io*) expresses what is commonly and not necessarily properly translated as *good*, it more especially means that the noun to which it is attached is performing its function as designed/intended; thus *ahsa:re* (knife) with this feature becomes *ahsari:yo* (you could say *a good knife*, or *a nice knife* but what you are really saying is that it performs as a knife should, in otherwords it is a sharp knife, and I suppose that is what people mean in English when they say “it is a good knife” they are indicating that it is sharp, functioning as a knife is expected to; this is something you intuit from that expression without even thinking of what the words are saying in and of themselves!) You may see here that the translation of our Great Teacher's name really falls far short of the actual meaning when it is given as *Handsome Lake*. It has an entirely different meaning, one which I have only once seen in a document dating back to his time where the translation was given as *Good Lake*.

It Mind Good is what we mean when you hear in English around here the expression *the Good Mind*. It is a way of behaviour for which we strive.

The above may be longwinded (not unusual for me), but to give it to you briefly would not do justice to what the concepts are. You don't need to explain all of that in your chart, but you should have the background in your mind so that you can elaborate in presentations—if you feel the compelling urge! Power—**Ka'shatsten'tshera** (Guy Spittal, Personnal communication, July 7, 2003).

Table Q2

Dominant and Indigenous Culture Character Education Philosophies

Philosophical Stance and Period	North American Colonizing Culture	Important Points of Contact	First Nations Culture
Moral Education 1. Since cultural contact by Christopher Columbus in 1492 2. Indian boarding schools in the U.S. from 1880's to early 1900's 3. Residential schools in Canada from 1890's to mid-century 1950's	Since recorded history: <i>A Quest to Conquer</i> A combination of: 1. religion based and/or involving a scientific approach 2. learning is by transmission and/or transaction 3. extrinsic focus	Impacts exerted by the dominant culture: 1. colonization, cultural contact, conflict, assimilation, segregation 2. Christianizing efforts to "educate the savage," 3. cultural genocide of Canadian and American Aborigines through boarding school abuses There are no significant points of intersection according to resources consulted.	Personal Vision Quests since pre-history 1. Pre-contact: wholistic, intrinsic, transformational, nature-based, virtues education 2. Post-contact: negative repercussions of intergenerational impact caused by the residential schools 1. continued of intrinsic traditional teachings vs b) <i>A Quest for Identity</i> of "the lost generation" and those severed from their cultural roots
Values Education Mainly in the 1970's as a dominant culture peace movement in the USA in reaction to the Vietnam war	<i>A Quest for Freedom</i> 1. individual values vary 2. judgement is withheld 3. transaction learning 4. values clarification 5. unclear focus & terms	1. beginning of impact by indigenous cultures on dominant culture where there is a focus on virtues education 2. positive impacts on dominant culture re environmental earth wisdoms 3. universal Golden Rule of reciprocity	1. continued of intrinsic traditional teachings vs b) <i>A Quest for Identity</i> of "the lost generation" and those severed from their cultural roots
Character Education branching in different directions since mid 1980's: 1. New, "improved"[sic] version of moral education 2. virtues education with some confusion with values education	<i>A Quest for Character:</i> 1. need for values versus virtues clarification 2. spectrum of character education approaches 3. need for virtues clarification and search for universal virtues 4. predominantly extrinsic focus	1. beginning of impact by indigenous cultures on dominant culture where there is a focus on virtues education 2. positive impacts on dominant culture re environmental earth wisdoms 3. universal Golden Rule of reciprocity	<i>A Quest for Healing</i> 1. wholistic, intrinsic, transformational, nature-based approaches to virtues education 2. various aspects of healing incorporated into virtues education to heal impact of residential schools 3. interconnectedness
Holistic Education Virtues Education at its best is approached with the goal of achieving balanced harmony with Self, Other and the environment	<i>A Quest for Soul</i> 1. holistic approach to character education treating the whole person in harmonious, balanced context with the self, others and the environment 2. "discovery" of naturalist and spiritual intelligences	Positive wholistic indigenous influence on dominant culture 1. compatible intrinsic transformational philosophies / Impact of indigenous thinking on holistic education 2. rule of reciprocity 3. interconnectedness 4. transformational	<i>A Quest for Spirit</i> 1. wholistic, intrinsic, transformational, nature-based approaches to virtues education 2. enhanced focus on naturalist intelligence continued focus on human healing and healing of Mother Earth 3. interconnectedness
A Call to Moral Courage Various approaches.	<i>A Quest for Action</i> 1. transformational and transitional approaches 2. concept of stewardship	Indigenous cultures sharing the beauty way: 1. accountability 2. responsibility 3. call to environmental awareness and respect	<i>A Quest for Voice</i> 1. traditional, wholistic, intrinsic, transformational 2. focus on healing for Mother Earth and humanity

Appendix R: Circular from the Deputy Superintendent General
to the Department of Indian Affairs, 15th September, 1921



DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

CIRCULAR

OTTAWA, 15th December, 1921.

Sir,-

It is observed with alarm that the holding of dances by the Indians on their reserves is on the increase, and that these practices tend to disorganize the efforts which the Department is putting forth to make them self-supporting.

I have, therefore, to direct you to use your utmost endeavours to dissuade the Indians from excessive indulgence in the practice of dancing. You should suppress any dances which cause waste of time, interfere with the occupations of the Indians, unsettle them for serious work, injure their health or encourage them in sloth and idleness. You should also dissuade, and, if possible, prevent them from leaving their reserves for the purpose of attending fairs, exhibitions, etc., when their absence would result in their own farming and other interests being neglected. It is realized that reasonable amusement and recreation should be enjoyed by Indians, but they should not be allowed to dissipate their energies and abandon themselves to demoralizing amusements. By the use of tact and firmness you can obtain control and keep it, and this obstacle to continued progress will then disappear.

The rooms, halls or other places in which Indians congregate should be under constant inspection. They should be scrubbed, fumigated, cleansed or disinfected to prevent the dissemination of disease. The Indians should be instructed in regard to the matter of proper ventilation and the avoidance of over-crowding rooms where public assemblies are being held, and proper arrangement should be made for the shelter of their horses and ponies. The Agent will avail himself of the services of the medical attendant of his agency in this connection.

Except where further information is desired, there will be no necessity to acknowledge the receipt of this circular.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Duncan Scott'.

Deputy Superintendent General

Mr. Graham, Esq.,
Indian Agent

**Appendix S: Considerations Regarding
Indigenous Research and Decolonizing Methodologies
(previously published as Dufault, 2003c)¹²**

***A Canadian's Quest for Spirit: Explaining the Relationship Between First Nations
Teachings and "Character Education"***

Since the introduction of the term "character education" into the teaching curriculum, teacher researchers, school boards and politicians have been exploring ways to consciously target and proactively promote the development of specific, positive character traits in our youth in an effort to create more respectful, responsible citizens.

The Aboriginal perspective on character education deals with an intrinsic relationship between moral development and civic responsibility.¹ Indigenous character education, therefore, offers wonderful solutions that can help learners to address deep-rooted society problems surfacing today.

A second-generation Belgian-Canadian, I am native-born to southwestern Ontario, but I am not Native Canadian. I grew upon a small tobacco farm close to two different native communities and only a few kilometres from Tecumseh's statue and his unmarked burial site. Arrowheads, spearheads and cutting and scraping tools were a part of my daily life, though I was as ignorant of their significance as I was unaware of indigenous contributions to Canada. Tecumseh, a great role model of character who fought hard to keep Canada from becoming American, is better known in American history books than Canadian ones.

Despite expressed interest, we Canadians know little about the First Peoples, the Aboriginals of this land. Representing 2.82% of the total current Canadian cultural mosaic, they are vibrant contributors to the fabric of society whose voices must be heard.

My personal journey learning about indigenous ways of being and seeing began in 1992. Active involvement in proactive race relations initiatives synchronistically brought me into contact with Aboriginals. I was rooted in Catholicism, but my heart and spirit hungered for earth wisdoms. These included universal truths taught through natural laws, gentle teachings about virtues like generosity—considered to be the highest form of courage—as well as understanding of "hoops of relationship" and walking the path of integrity. Over the past decade, indigenous teachings have guided me towards increased self-acceptance, self-love and healing, paralleled by an increased appreciation of my interconnectedness with others and mother earth that I had not grasped as easily from other sources.

Native teachings state that the eagle is the bird that flies the highest, carrying our prayers to the creator. It is the American symbol of justice and is treated with greater reverence by indigenous peoples than many from my own Roman Catholic

¹² This article has been reprinted with permission from Kali Wendorf, editor of *Byronchild* magazine (Australia), www.byronchild.com. For further information, contact kali@byronchild.com.

religion treat the Bible. One who holds its feather must speak in truth. My perception of the truth is represented by the hairs to the left. The hairs to the right are other perceptions of the truth. The absolute universal truth lies somewhere down the middle, along the spine. It is a time to examine universal, holistic truth that is inclusive of many truths, for the sake of our children.

On a spiritual and academic quest to learn more about Aboriginal traditional teachings on character education, I have travelled in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. As a result I have learned that non-Native educators must achieve an equitable, respectful balance between colonising culture methodology, Aboriginal research methodology, and their respective protocols. As educators we have the opportunity to promote cultural understanding to help dominant cultures become aware of and listen to the circle wisdoms of the “original” peoples whose earth-based teachings and daily being reinforce her sacredness as a nurturer of life, and our interconnectedness as a whole.

There are many sticks in many cultures. My grandfather used a walking stick or cane. In healing circles and sharing circles, participants often speak holding an object such as a talking stick and for very special sharing, an eagle feather. Like this, two people from two cultures bear one long, cylindrical stick. One person sees it as long and linear, a staff of power. Another sees its roundness, spiralling upwards and downwards, connecting earth and sky. Both people see according to how they have been taught to use their eyes and according to how they have been taught to think. Theoretical frameworks help us to organise our world, relating back to how we have been taught to contemplate it.

Today’s current accepted research methodology reflects theoretical frameworks of the dominant colonising culture. It does not reflect research methodology of indigenous peoples whom conquerors have often sought to disempower, disembowel, disenfranchise, assimilate, convert, Christianise, eliminate and finally segregate, often in communities where the land has been raped, plundered, pillaged and stripped bare of many of her natural resources.

How can an outsider accurately examine indigenous character education? How can I as a blond, blue-eyed second-generation Canadian of European descent gain a true appreciation not only of indigenous world views with respect to character education, but also with respect to protocols, epistemologies and research practices that avoid the empirical pitfalls of the dominant colonising culture?

Like a blind person, I have learned the importance of listening carefully, taking many precautions to ensure accuracy of information. I have involved my research partners-or subjects-through every stage of development, to ensure correct, respectful dissemination of information from a place of good intent and power.

Indigenous power structure is predominantly matriarchal. Women are acknowledged as nurturers, healers and life givers. Genealogical lineage is traced through a system of clans through the mother’s side. Life cycles are acknowledged as being cyclical. Life moves in a spiral. Teachings are given in a circle, honouring a sacred hoop of relationship. There is movement towards inclusion, consensus and a

celebration of power with individual voices heeded in turn, as others listen attentively with respect, without interrupting.

Traditional dominant culture power structures are patriarchal. Genealogical lineage is traced through the father's side. This is reflected also in how family names are passed between generations. Thinking is linear, hierarchical and compartmentalised. Decision-making as reflected in our public school systems, is often top-down with dictates to follow, a power-over/power-under dynamic and a clear authority-directed focus placed more on extrinsic, short-term, outward conforming external behaviour than on intrinsic, internal, long-term inward personal transformation projected onto the outside world in a connected way. Increasingly I encounter dominant-culture people who are hyphenating their names to acknowledge both maternal and paternal origins, in ways that honour both lineages, perhaps in an effort to bring the two into better balance. It is time for dominant colonising cultures and indigenous cultures to hyphenate their relationships as well.

In the time of King Solomon, two women argued who was the mother of a baby. To settle the matter, Solomon offered to cut the baby down the middle, giving each woman half. When one woman cried to give the baby to the other one, the king knew he had found the true mother. He handed the baby to the woman who had insisted that it remain whole. In traditional native teachings, indigenous character education involves this kind of daily wholistic thinking.

The indigenous researcher is like the mother of a beloved baby. I was told at an Elder's conference that there is an indigenous word meaning "this Spirit around whom I wrap my love" used to describe a child. Considered a sacred gift from the Creator, her baby must be kept pure and whole. No mother who truly loves her child would allow it to be carelessly dismembered—even mothers afraid to protect themselves will fiercely fight to protect their child. This baby is the physical embodiment of the presentation of new knowledge that must be presented intact to the world in a respectful, truthful, unbiased way, reflecting the indigenous journey towards wholeness. There is a serious need for indigenous epistemologies and research methods to be acknowledged and recognised in dominant-culture academic circles.

Traditional indigenous teachings do not occur in fragmented steps, according to linear time with tight deadlines. They involve a more open, spiral and cyclical path towards wholeness, following seasonal cycles, according to native time. Learning is not ruled by the clock, but unfolds instead at the right time for the individual who retains ownership. I have learned through native modalities that when I seek frantically to rush a task to completion, it is time to go into the stillness. I reflect mindfully. I seek counsel of respected indigenous experts—Aboriginal elders—to ensure that my writing honours the spirit of indigenous teachings not only in content, but also in structure.

In undertaking ground-breaking research involving cultures that are not my own, I have been mindful of warnings against the use of decolonising methodologies by outside experts³ and of the importance of reclaiming indigenous voice and vision for indigenous peoples by indigenous peoples.⁴ The typical written tradition research structure

dominating the academic world, applied to oral tradition indigenous research risks becoming another example of colonialist viewpoint domination.

To maintain indigenous integrity in research involving indigenous peoples, it is important to ask ourselves questions such as:

1. Will my speaking make a positive difference?
2. How will my words impact on others?
3. Am I helping rather than interfering?
4. How will others react towards me and towards the world in which they live if I do speak?
5. Do I have the courage to speak and to take a stand for that which my body, mind and spirit know to be true, right, and good?⁵

We may think we journey alone, but isolation is illusion. We are all interconnected. We must access courage and intuitive knowing to successfully address the polarities in world views at the very basis of research itself to bring our work into holistic harmony. With indigenous character education, the journey is life-long, as, once we awaken to the reality that we are spiritual beings here to learn about being human and whole living in sacred connection with all within the web of life on this planet, we mindfully engage in the process of self-sculpting ourselves in an upward spiral.

We will continue to be challenged to truly represent indigenous cultural perspectives using a Western framework that detracts from authentic indigenous world view representation of the lived reality of those who follow “traditional” teachings. I invite dominant-culture scholars and educators to include indigenous teachings, while maintaining their integrity within a non-indigenous framework. Persistence and perseverance in doing so can lead to many benefits for our children and society.

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Footnotes [Article]

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