

**Three-Partner Dancing: Placing Participatory Action Research Theory into
Practice Within an Indigenous, Racialized, and Academic Space**

by

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B. PE., University of Alberta, 1995

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ABSTRACT

Historically, most research on Indigenous peoples has been framed by Western empirical positivism which fundamentally conflicts with Indigenous circular ways of knowing. Current research governing bodies, scholars, and Indigenous communities have generated new theories and guidelines for research structures that support respectful and meaningful practices with Indigenous peoples. Participatory action research (PAR) attempts to address the unequal power structures inherent in research relationships: participants set the agenda for the research and are co-researchers in the project. In this study, I placed PAR theory into action to problematize research practices and to generate new discourses for research within an Indigenous context.

The Lil'wat Nation and I collaborated on a PAR project in 2006-2007 that led to the formation of the Lil'wat Girls' and Women's Affirmation Group. Through the process of reflection-in-action we identified several opportunities for growth as we examined PAR theory in practice. Using decolonizing research methods and a metaphor of the Lil'wat **s7istken**¹ (pit house), the model of practice wove between three distinct

¹ Several of the Ucwalmicwts words in this thesis contain a glottal stop, which is expressed with the character 7 (e.g., s7istkens, Lil'wat7ul).

worlds with divergent protocols and pedagogies: the worlds of the Lil'wat, academia, and the researcher's racialized lived experiences. This model of practice aimed to disrupt the essentialized dichotomies of Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships and to problematize research practices for the academic and research communities to consider for their practice. The findings exposed several lessons at sites of praxis pertaining to the intersection of PAR theory and practice: definition of the community; ethics in the community; racialized researcher space; and PAR incongruence. The model was intended not as a "how to" manual, but as an entry point for discussions to advance respectful decolonizing research practices.

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PREFACE

My Entry Into the Study

Fune Ying Kwok Wei, or gor mang hei Chow Wing Yee. Welcome everyone, my name is Chow Wing Yee. Before we begin, I feel it is pertinent for me to explicate my location in this study, as it provides context for my research and it will give the reader some insight into my diasporic and transnational history, which contributes to the lens through which I view the world. I am a first-generation Chinese-Canadian woman who grew up in Edmonton, Alberta and who currently resides on the traditional territory of the Lkwungen, a Coast Salish people. As a racialized woman in Canada, I live under whiteness and I bridge the Western and Chinese ways of knowing on a daily basis. I am indigenous to the land of China, where my grandparents escaped Mao's Cultural Revolution to Hong Kong. Afterwards, my parents immigrated to Canada, where I was born. I come from a long line of strong, independent women activists (who do not identify themselves as activists, but see their actions as acts of survival). I carry the emotions and experiences of my family's history close to my heart, for it represents where I come from, defines who I am, and challenges me in where I will go.

My great-grandmother, ti-po, was born into a poor agricultural family. She married my ti-goan who, in 1910, spoke fluent English and was the teacher to many of the high officials in China. Their daughter, my grandmother, was two years old when my ti-goan died of an opium overdose and left my ti-po in the care of his family. Because my grandmother and her sister were girls, they would be provided for under my great-great-grandfather's house, but they would not be afforded any educational opportunities. So that she could send her daughters to boarding school for education, my ti-po chose to

leave a life of comfort and luxury to become a servant. At the age of 20, my grandmother became an administrator of a primary school in Ghungzhou. Once my po-po (grandmother) and gung-gung (grandfather) married, my ti-po joined them to care for my mom and her two sisters and three brothers.

My grandmother is a fiercely independent woman who defied most Chinese roles and expectations. She does not cook or perform any domestic duties, and she insisted on a maternal family structure wherein ti-po lived with them instead of with my gung-gung's family. She was physically active in an era when women did not sweat; she was a leader in an education system dominated by men. It was my po-po who endured Mao's "re-education training" sessions and who planned the family's escape to Hong Kong. My grandparents packed two suitcases, leaving behind my ancestors' possessions so that the village officials would not be suspicious of their "weekend" holiday plans. With my aunt and my mom in tow, they reached Hong Kong two days before the Chinese government closed the border to signify the start of the Cultural Revolution. My ancestors – ti-po, my grandparents, and my parents – created the privileged space I have here today because they had the foresight to dream and to act on what they wanted for the future generations. I am thankful for their courage and their uncompromising determination for a better life. It is with that same determination that I dream of and move toward a more just and equitable society. That dream fuels this research project.

Growing up in Canada as part of a racialized minority group, I am painfully aware of the inequities that exist in daily life for outsiders to the mainstream. I grew up between two worlds that taught me opposing values and histories of who I am. My Chinese culture was taught under the ethnographic gaze of anthropology that collected and classified my

heritage into an archived history unit. At the same time, my family embodies our evolving, dynamic, present-day culture. I quickly developed survival strategies to bridge between who I was told I am by the outside and who I know I am from the inside.

As a teacher for the last ten years, I have witnessed racialized and Indigenous youth struggling with their identity with as much or more grief and pain as I experienced. As I searched for my identity under whiteness, I realized the need to be rooted in my Chinese culture, for it is the foundation of who I am. At the same time, I was confronted with questions about my authenticity: Who is considered to be Chinese? What is the criterion for being a Chinese person? Chinese immigrants did not fully embrace me into the Chinese community. They often referred to us Canadian-born Chinese as “jook sing” (bamboo pole). Bamboo poles have hollow shoots with joints sealed off at the ends. The Chinese immigrants used the name “jook sing” to imply that Canadian-born Chinese are cut off at both ends, meaning they are not accepted by either the Canadian or the Chinese community. The white Canadian world does not accept me because my phenotype sets me apart from the majority. Each time I am asked “Where are you from?” I am denied my belonging to Canada. “Edmonton” is a response that doesn’t agree with the white settlers’ perception of who is Canadian born. From what I have gathered, I am not Canadian or Chinese enough to belong to either community.

It was not until my first teaching position at Xit’olacw Community School in Mount Currie, British Columbia that I found my diasporic hybrid identity reflected back to me. For the first time in my life, I was living not under whiteness but with Lil’wat7ul, with people who also walked the border of two worlds, one white (the descendants of the European settlers to the territory) and one Lil’wat. Homi Bhabha (1994) argues that

the transgression of national and ethnic borders is the key to the condition of hybridity; [it provides] a double perspective.... [A hybrid individual] is a migrant that speaks from two places at once whilst inhabiting neither. This is the space of liminality, of “no place” or of the buffer zone of “no man’s land.” (p. 31)

Traditionally, the discourse of hybridity described “mixed-race identities” which exist within fixed binaries of white and black parentage (Ifekwunigwe, 2004). I align with contemporary approaches that conceptualize hybridity as social forms resulting from intercultural and diasporic relations and that reject the idea of preexisting pure categories. The traditional paradigms do not fit my perspective as a Canadian-born woman of colour living in an occupied space, in which I am not accepted as either a white settler or as an Indigenous person of this land.

As I entered this new space at Xit’olacw Community School, I found myself in a school environment that demonstrated a hybridity in practice that the local public school system failed to address. The school promoted a blended curriculum of Lil’wat education and the B.C. curriculum as a commitment to provide learning and teaching environments rooted in the Lil’wat way. We attempted to address the “cultural blanks” (Alfred, 2005, p. 11) created by the legacy of colonization in the community by indigenizing the curriculum and revitalizing the language. I worked with community Elders and knowledge keepers to create a family life course that brought Elders into the grade seven classroom to share traditional knowledge on coming of age for boys and girls. At the end of the year, we hiked into the Stein Valley, the Lil’wat traditional site for rites of passage, to connect the students with their ancestors via petroglyphs, ceremonies, the land, and their dreams. Over the course of seven days, we witnessed personal transformations in

the students as they moved from boys to men and girls to women. This powerful experience compelled me to pursue this community research project in the hopes of creating a sustainable structure for intergenerational sharing for girls and women.

I enter into this study as a hybrid attempting to balance and attend to the needs of three complex worlds: the Lil'wat, the academic, and my racialized realm of existence. Each world has its own codes of conduct and ways of knowing that often clash fundamentally. The study involves two projects with different needs and histories. One is a PAR project on the regeneration of women's traditional knowledge; the other develops a model of practice for PAR researchers that emerged from the first project. As a researcher bridging between the two projects, I mediate a delicate dance between two "masters." One master is an academic institution that has a rigid set of criteria for research. I am expected to generate new knowledge and to theorize my data through systematic analysis communicated by means of written text. Within this academic structure, I am graced with three committee members who navigate within the academic master from their own distinct locations, to which I must also attend. My committee consists of Drs. Lorna Williams, Gloria Snively, and Taiiaike Alfred, who are working toward the same goal of strengthening Indigenous peoples and communities, each using a different approach.

The Lil'wat7ul are the second master in the dance. As diverse as my committee members, the Lil'wat7ul have a rich history of resistance to the colonial system that contributes to their community's multifaceted and politicized dimensions. During my teaching experience, I gained insight into the pride associated with being Lil'wat7ul, as well as their tremendous drive for healing from the impacts of colonialism. There is

honesty and openness about the past as the community continues on a journey of transformation, driven by their needs as Lil'wat7ul.

Between these two masters, I enter the dance, with a commitment to decolonization and with intersecting perspectives informed by ethnography, Indigenous methodologies, feminist research, community action-based practices, and my personal lived experiences of racialization. I currently work within a social justice organization, Anti-dote,² that aims to centre the voices of racialized and Indigenous girls and women through a feminist, anti-racist, community-based, and participatory action framework. I enter this dance as an outsider who nevertheless possesses insider knowledge of the Lil'wat community based on my teaching experience at Xit'olacw Community School. I believe that my experiences of mediating two worlds and speaking two languages affords me some methodological and cross-cultural communication advantages in this tricultural dance.

Throughout this project, I struggled with the use of language to ensure respectful representation. I wanted to counter the oversaturated pathological accounts of Indigenous peoples in the research literature and to present this study from a strength-based position. However, as many Indigenous communities rebuild and transform themselves, I am pulled by the need to remember the legacy of colonization. To exclude this history is to silence the survival of Indigenous peoples who “continue to live within political and social conditions that perpetuate extreme levels of poverty, chronic ill health and poor educational opportunities” (Smith, 2001, p. 4). It is a tarnished history that settler society

² www.anti-dote.org

wants to forget, but it is our responsibility to remember and acknowledge the realities of colonialism if we are to truly engage with processes of decolonization.

This project entered an ambiguous territory. I had no clear answers with which to mediate this intricate web of relationships. Throughout this study I placed myself into three contested positions: my racialized world, the Lil'wat community, and the academic institution. These positions often clashed in language, perspective, history, and politics. My attempts to reconcile all of the voices involved may at times produce a disjointed whole. Each voice utilizes a distinct language code with assigned meanings that fundamentally oppose the other voices. To make visible the invisible, this process must be exposed. To contest the language in the research process and the assumptions linked to the words produces new discourses for decolonizing research. So this work was purposefully written to reflect the challenges and complexities I encountered as I danced between the three worlds along a fluid continuum. I interpreted and attempted to validate the three worlds and aspired not to privilege one system over another.

Terminology

I would like to position my use of the term 'Indigenous' within the context of this research. In our colonial history, we have socially constructed various terms to refer to Indigenous peoples. Our resistance or surrender to our colonial history complicates this contested identity. For many, the terms 'Indigenous,' 'Aboriginal,' 'First Nations,' 'Native,' and 'Indian' are used interchangeably. 'Aboriginal' is commonly used in Canada to refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples collectively. However, as Alfred (2005) points out, the word 'Aboriginal' is "a legal and social construction of the state, and it is disciplined by racialized violence and economic oppression to serve an

agenda of silent surrender” (p. 23). There was such incongruence in the use of terms among academics, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous people that I was paralyzed in choosing one over the other. To resolve this highly contested naming dilemma, I use the term ‘Lil’wat7ul’ (people of the land) because it is specific to the Lil’wat participants and their territory. I also use Lil’wat (people from the culture) to represent the community that shares a collective Lil’wat culture. Ucwalmicwts is the language of the Lil’wat, and the term ‘Ucwalmicw’ translates to ‘people’ (L. Williams, personal communication, April 21, 2007). In this study, I use these three terms interchangeably to refer to the people, the land, and the culture that is distinctive to the Lil’wat Nation.

In adhering to decolonizing practice, I am predisposed to using the term ‘Indigenous’ to refer to the original peoples of Turtle Island. Although this is a generalized term, I use it to represent Indigenous groups who share a similar political consciousness and histories of colonization. For the purpose of this paper, I acknowledge that I may at times use ‘Indigenous’ and ‘Lil’wat people’ to mean the same; I may also use ‘Aboriginal’ when referenced from an original source.

I also concede to the problematic nature of using an Indigenous/non-Indigenous binary in framing my research question. This study aimed to fragment these fixed labels that play into race politics and reify racialized categories. But I purposefully use these binaries to invite the settler/migrant/academic/educator who resides in these dualisms to walk through this process with me. I enter this conversation using the colonizer binary to allow us to envisage, progress, and exit as researchers with decolonizing research approaches, which Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2001) defines as “centring our [Indigenous]

concerns and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own [Indigenous] perspectives and for our own [Indigenous] purposes” (p. 38).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Research Design

Historically, Indigenous peoples participated in research within and beyond their territory using distinct protocols, ethics, values, and procedures that reflected each nation's ways of knowing. With the arrival of European settlers to their territories, Indigenous communities experienced research methodologies that followed colonial protocols, ethics, values, and procedures. Most settler researchers supported methods of knowledge extraction that had limited benefits for the Indigenous communities and that left behind a legacy of mistrust and suspicion. Research findings were almost always presented from a Western perspective, framed by empirical positivism, that elicited inaccurate portrayals of Indigenous peoples (Deloria, 1991; Dickson, 2001; Hoare, Levy, & Robinson, 1993). Traditional methods of research stemmed from a Cartesian philosophy of modernity that supported the separation of thought from action and that promoted the development of empirically testable general laws to govern the behaviours of physical entities (Reason, 1994). In contrast to deterministic linear research models, Indigenous research investigates the relational and interconnected parts that combine to produce a situated knowledge of a whole system (Fixico, 2003).

Decolonization of research methodologies exist to address this history but it is juxtaposed with a lack of research that examines how this theory plays out in action to expose the lessons for us as researchers to attend to. The design of this research study attempted to heal the split between research and practice through a process Donald Schön termed 'reflection-in-action.' In *The Reflective Practitioner*, Schön (1982) speaks to a

generative inquiry approach for epistemology where “knowledge is in the action” (p. 54).

According to Schön, when

someone reflects-in-action, he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique.... He does not separate thinking from doing.... Because his experimenting is a kind of action, implementation is built into his inquiry. (p. 68)

Through reflection-in-action, I put Participatory Action Research (PAR) theory-in-use and confront the contradiction between theory and practice, thinking and action. This process led me to new ways of framing or testing the situation as I examined my tacit understandings, made conscious my underlying assumptions, and provided access to an alternative theory-of-action.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine PAR theory in practice as I worked with the Lil’wat Nation in a PAR project to regenerate women’s traditional knowledge (refer to Appendix A for more information on the PAR project). Through our process of reflection-in-action, we developed a model of practice for research protocols specific to the Lil’wat Nation. Thus, this study combines two distinct projects wherein project 2 emerged from project 1:

1. PAR project: Regeneration of women’s traditional knowledge.
2. Development of a model of practice on Lil’wat research protocols.

Action researcher Bill Torbert (1976) points out that action inquiry can only take place in its fullest sense within a community of like-minded souls that also encompasses enough diversity to both offer its members support and to challenge them in the

development of knowledge in action. Such a community can move toward the establishment of organizational structures and a process to provide relevant information concerning the consequences of different courses of action. Without engaging in a PAR relationship with the Lil'wat community, it would have been difficult to produce relevant data on research protocols for this study. In essence, this study involved two distinct projects with diverse needs that are intimately intertwined in the process of action. It is useful to think of this as a nested research study (as illustrated in Appendix G), wherein the PAR project was wrapped by the larger study and informed my analysis and development of a model of practice identifying Lil'wat research protocols. The richness of this study is a result of our lived experiences together, which generated new knowledge and a "consciousness in the midst of action" (Reason, 1994, p. 4).

As an action research project, the main purpose was to create change and transformation. This unfolded in three areas:

1. *The participants*: Lil'wat7ul women and girls regenerated and documented traditional knowledge during monthly intergenerational gatherings that focused on traditional knowledge in the areas of language, crafts, song, history, and dance. The community gained multimedia skills through a digital filmmaking workshop that I facilitated in February 2007. These skills contributed to the larger vision of documenting traditional knowledge for Lil'wat7ul learning.
2. *Society and knowledge*: One of the major outcomes of this study is the Lil'wat Research Protocols Handbook that was based on our research collaboration. The handbook documents decolonizing research approaches and generates

new discourses on PAR for researchers and the broader community to attend to for relevant and meaningful research.

3. *Personal Transformation*: I developed an intimate understanding of my position as a racialised researcher in an academic and Indigenous space. I became more conscious of my actions, values, and interactions with others that challenged me outside my comfort zone. But it was in this space I witness my own transformation into a more respectful and conscientious researcher and a person.

Research Question

To generate a new consciousness for practice, we investigated the central research question: “What were the lessons that emerged from placing PAR theory into practice in an Indigenous context?” Given the divergent views of research between the academic and Indigenous communities, the following questions provided an entry point into the research study:

- Who is part of the community and who is not included?
- What issues arise when Western and Indigenous research protocols, values, procedures, and ethics merge in a research partnership?

Limitations

The biggest conflict that I find with the type of people I deal with is timeframe. We don't move fast enough and that generates conflict. That's where I found there is more conflict, because people's demands and stuff are outside of community where their time frames and the community's timeframes don't necessarily match up. (Lil'wat 4,³ Interview, May 2006)

³ I assigned numbers to the participants to protect their privacy. For more information about each participant, please refer to Table 1, Participant Matrix, in chapter 4.

The major limitation of this study was the conflict between my availability and academic requirements and the needs of the participants. I had to adhere to regulated timelines from the University in order to complete this thesis in a timely fashion. This requirement intersected with my ethical responsibility and personal commitment to establish meaningful relationships within the community that required more time than what the University recommended. The relationships I had established during my teaching years in the community afforded me a head start in the relationship-building process. Upon reflection, if these relationships had not already been established, I would have extended the timeline for this project.

Mount Currie's location contributed to long travel times which made it difficult, with my work obligations, for me to spend extended periods of time in the community. To address this limitation, I was transparent about my time commitments with the community during my presentation and meetings, and I reassured the group of my pledge to offer my assistance based on what the community designed for the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project. The design team was understanding and receptive to my time commitments and created their own schedule for planning and gathering while providing me with an open invitation to participate. From February to September 2007, I worked in the community for 3-4 days a month.

The second limitation to this study was my personal process of decolonization and of unlearning racism. I am a product of the colonial dominant education system that centres mainstream and racist policies through the process of socialization. As a racialized woman, I have an enhanced understanding of racialized oppression because of my lived experiences. Some could view this location as an opportunity when working in

an Indigenous community, but I am a settler in this land, one who is in the process of unlearning self-oppression and the dominant discourse of ‘othering’ the Other. My hybrid position as a Chinese-Canadian, middle-class, feminist, insider/outsider woman researcher played out in the power structures and relationships with participants in the study. I had to fracture my learned colonial categories and assumptions as I was careful not to replicate either the ethnographic gaze or the pathological portrayal of Indigenous peoples. At the same time, I had to rupture learned categories of the Other from my own experiences of oppression. I had to deconstruct each question, each answer, and each relationship from the ‘other-other’ perspective. I encountered resistance within myself: How could I develop an Indigenous perspective or understanding when I have not had that lived experience? To counter this bias, I reflected in my journal and shared my experiences with a multiracial and Indigenous advisory committee to gain their feedback. My committee members were selected based on their knowledge and experience of feminist participatory action approaches and Indigenous methodologies and/or their personal connections with the Lil’wat community. Further discussion of a racialized researcher space is developed in chapter 5.

The third limitation to this study was attending to the needs of the three-partner dance. As previously stated, no definitive method existed to address this limitation but to enter into this cross-cultural dance with eyes and ears wide open so as to learn from all three worlds. I was guided by Schön’s model of reflection-in-action, which requires researchers to “think on their feet” (Schön, 1982, p. 54). Reflection-in-action involves looking at our experiences, connecting with our feelings, attending to our theories in use,

and building new understandings to inform our actions in the situation as it unfolds (Schön, 1982).

Significance of this Study

This study offers several contributions to the broader field of research and to Indigenous communities who desire to engage in decolonizing research practices and participant transformation. It is not prescriptive, nor is it intended to be used as a universal manual for Indigenous research practices. It does, however, provide an entry point for conducting research that is meaningful, relevant, and respectful. Readers may take from this what they need, but they must understand that this research and the knowledge it generated was situated within the Lil'wat7ul community, who volunteered to contribute to this study. This knowledge cannot be fully transferred to other communities or to all forms of research studies.

This study identified Lil'wat research guidelines to balance the established research protocols supported by academic institutions and ethics boards, in particular, the documents pertaining to Indigenous community approval. Policy papers such as the *Tri-Council Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (Canadian Institute of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998) aim first and foremost to protect the interests of the research institution and second, those of the research participants. Beginning a research relationship with mutual respect required a system that also protected the best interest of the Lil'wat research participants and reflected their values, ethics, protocols, and procedures. In this study, we developed specific guidelines for the Lil'wat Nation in the midst of action, where I tested in practice

the theories of academic and Indigenous research protocols and revealed sites for possible growth within the research community. This process is discussed in chapter 5.

This study provides an innovative tool for data analysis that blended feminist academic and Indigenous qualitative interpretations to honour the tricultural relationship that was core to our collaboration. The blended framework, described in chapter 4, attempts to “situate responses into larger historical and societal contexts that can frame a meaning, in order to avoid the risk of either giving voice to stereotypes or perpetuating stereotypes about one’s research subject” (Lal, 1999, p. 120).

This study disrupts the dichotomous representation of either a white researcher or Indigenous researcher working with an Indigenous community. It fills a gap in the literature that excludes the voices of racialized researchers working with Indigenous communities. It offers new insights into the hybridity of a racialized insider/outsider position that denaturalizes the fixed white/Indigenous binary in an Indigenous context. Overall, this study provides a window into my experience as a racialized researcher embarking on a tricultural research project as I grappled with the possibilities and tensions of traversing three complex worlds, using decolonizing approaches.

Thesis Overview

The chapters of this thesis reflect the needs of two separate but interconnected projects, blending academic and Indigenous approaches to research. Chapters 2 and 3 provide the literature reviews and background research for both projects as preparation to my entry into the Lil’wat community. Chapter 4 introduces the **S7istken** Interpretive Model that blended the PAR and Indigenous methodologies utilized in this study. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study for us to attend to as a research community. Chapter

6, “Sites for Possibilities,” describes the outcomes of the project that have implications for the Lil’wat community, academia, and researchers. In this paper, the knowledge shared by the Lil’wat7ul, the research participants, and the design team members is emphasized in italics, and Ucwalmicwts words appear in bold text. This is a purposeful measure to highlight the Lil’wat voices and ways of knowing in the midst of this academic text that is my interpretation of our journey together.

Lil’wat Teachings

You cannot use the same consciousness that developed the system to change it. You need a new consciousness. Albert Einstein

It is impossible to truly reflect Indigenous knowledge systems using a non-Indigenous language framed by Eurocentric research methods. Therefore, I needed to create a new system, a new consciousness. To begin, I carefully attended to Lil’wat teachings to guide my process of learning and reflection throughout this project. These concepts are expressed in Ucwalmicwts; they are Dr. Lorna Williams’ interpretation of the words for the purpose of teaching Indigenous ways of knowing in academia (Williams, 2006). In *Wasáse*, Taiaiake Alfred (2005) highlights Leroy Little Bear’s perspective of the differences between Onkwehonwe and European languages. He explains that European languages “centre on nouns and are concerned with naming things, ascribing traits, and making judgments. Onkwehonwe languages are structured on verbs; they communicate through descriptions of movement and activity” (p. 32). For that reason, the development of my understanding of the Ucwalmicwts words transpired in the process of activating and embodying the terms through my actions. The following are the Lil’wat learning and teaching concepts I attended to throughout this study:

Celhcelh. Taking responsibility for personal learning and the initiative to do what needs to be done.

Cwelelep. The discomfort and value of being in a place of dissonance, uncertainty, and anticipation.

A7xecal. Locating the infinite capacity we all have to answer our own questions as learners.

Kamucwkalha. The energy indicating group cohesion around a common goal.

Watchful listening.⁴ Having an openness to listening beyond our personal thoughts and assumptions.

Kat'il'a. Finding stillness amid our busyness and need to know.

⁴ There is no Ucwalmicwts word for this learning concept. This is Lorna Williams' interpretation in English of a Lil'wat way of knowing.

CHAPTER TWO: CELHCELH

Celhcelh is an Ucwalmicwts word translated to mean that each person has the responsibility and initiative to do what needs to be done (Williams, 2005). Chapters 2 and 3 represent my **celhcelh**. This chapter provided the background research into the PAR project on the regeneration of women's traditional knowledge on the coming of age. It was written in a circular structure to represent the cycles of the circle of life in relation to the historical and social contexts of Indigenous women in this territory renamed Canada. The chapter weaves the story of traditional Lil'wat child rearing practices into a history of the traditional roles of Indigenous women in the community, outlines the significance of circles and cycles and the impact of colonization on Indigenous girls, and closes with contemporary approaches by Indigenous women and girls for the recovery of traditional knowledge.

Fixico (2003) states:

The Circle of Life is inclusive of all things, including the physical, metaphysical and time. All things exist in a spiritual energy.... Within this circle, animal and plant beings live in migration patterns as regulated by the cycles of season. Nature has given humans, plants, and animals "constants" in life which provide rhythms, celebrated by ceremonies. (p. 59)

Traditionally, observing the cycles provided order to life and regulated community activities. A rupture in the natural order of life and in the circle affected all things.

The lessons learned from the circle of life are transmitted through storytelling that interlaces the principles of harmony, relationships, balance, and dignity. As Cajete (1994)

argues, “story forms the basic foundation of all human learning and teaching. Through story we explain and come to understand ourselves” (p. 68). In this chapter, the sections in single-spaced italics present one version of the Lil’wat traditional child rearing practices prior to the residential school system, as described by Lorna Williams. This story shares with the reader how children, adults, Elders, environment, song, mysticism, and community values fit together in the circle of life. This story assisted my growing understanding of the Lil’wat worldview and process of knowledge transmission. I invite you to join this journey of learning through the circle of life, starting with the past and moving into the present and future of Indigenous women.

Lil’wat Child Rearing Practices

Child rearing in traditional times was very important. The whole community raised the children. The first principle of child rearing was based on balance and harmony. The whole community used this principle at the time of conception when the child was in the mother’s womb. The whole family worked to maintain balance (emotional, physical, spiritual, and cognitive). Expecting mom could not laugh or cry too hard; she could not overexert herself physically; she was not allowed to eat fresh meat because the spirit in the animal was still there and the connection to the animal would be too powerful; food had to be eaten at body temperature. There was a story of a pregnant woman who told her mom she was craving an orange. Her mom picked up the orange and put it in the oven to warm up before she could eat it.

The Old people would talk as if this child was already in the family (in the womb). The child was already introduced to the land. If there was a death in the family, the expecting mother stayed away for the spirit was close to the land at death. The mother was wide open at this stage.
(Williams, 2005)

Since time immemorial, Indigenous women have held a position of authority in the family, clan, and nation. The Lil’wat child rearing story speaks of women sharing the spirit of Mother Earth, the bearer of all life. Since women possessed this unique status, they had an equal share of power in all aspects of life (Ackerman, 1996; Allen, 1986; Hall, Sefa Dei, & Rosenberg, 2000; Hammersmith & Sawatsky, 1995; Saganesh, 1997;

Sinclair, 1998). European settlers held paternalistic values and upheld structures that devalued Indigenous women as subservient to men (Bressette et al., 1993; Hammersmith & Sawatsky, 1995; Saganesh, 1997). The European colonists' practice of trading and negotiating treaties exclusively with Indigenous men resulted in the erosion of the Indigenous woman's traditional position among her people.

Circular Framework

In circular thought, if a circle is envisioned and items placed within it, we realize that each item or element has a relation with each other in a fixed order within the system (Bruchac, 1994; Fixico, 2003; Simpson, 2000). Each item/element is treated equally, for they belong to the same universe. If one is removed from the circle, the balance of the universe is broken, since the whole is greater than any one of its parts (Cajete, 1999; Fixico, 2003; Lee & Lee, 2003; Piacenti, 1993).

In circular views, no one person or species takes precedence; we are all linked together equally in the circle of life (Bruchac, 1994; Kawagley, 1995). Continuance and balance are the primary principles so that we can be self-sustaining and stable. This does not mean that systems are static. Since the natural environment is in a constant state of flux, as is evidenced by such violent events as the recent tsunami in Asia, humans must observe and must be open and ready to adapt to any situation. We always come full circle to the place of renewal. In order for the circle to continue in a healthy cycle, we must adapt. Joseph Bruchac, an Abenaki storyteller, explains:

If you see things in terms of circles and cycles, and if you care about the survival of your children, then you begin to engage in commonsense practices.... The circle is the way to see. The circle is the way to life, always keeping in mind the

seven generations to come, always asking, how will my deeds affect the lives of my children's children's children? (Bruchac, cited in Piacenti, 1993, pp. 11-12)

When we look at our present-day linear thinking leaders, we can see that there is no responsibility to the future generations in their actions; they are focused on the here and now. This focus is contrary to Indigenous circular thought in which what goes around the circle is expected to come back to you.

In linear thinking, people are categorized into boxes and placed on a scale of inferiority and superiority. In contrast, in circular thought, each member of the society has a role that is considered important to the wholeness of the circle and accorded respect (Allen, 1995; Erdrich & Tohe, 2002; Lee & Lee, 2003). Indigenous women traditionally were situated equally in the circle. Knowledge transfer was a right and responsibility for both men and women, unlike in the paternalistic structures of the European world where women, deemed as subservient, had to fight to be treated equally in all areas of life (Strong, 1998). Eurocentric paternalism was clearly supported by academic institutions in 1858, when the University of Michigan's president, Henry Philip Tappan, voiced his objection to accepting three women into the University: "Men will lose as women advance, we shall have a community of defeminated women and demasculated men. When we attempt to disturb God's order, we produce monstrosities" (cited in Sadker & Sadker, 1994, p. 22).

In Western society, we validate knowledge through language and documentation of thought via written and published texts. When Indigenous oral history and circular thought are translated or placed on paper, the structure, content, and purpose clash with linear thought and misinterpretation results. Paula Gunn Allen stresses that the difference

between American Indian and Western literary traditions is the purposes they serve. The purpose of Western literature is self-expression of the individual's emotions, thoughts, or experiences, whereas traditional American Indian literature expresses the collective consciousness (Allen, 1986, 1996). Through language, one can share one's individual being with that of the community and know within oneself the communal knowledge of the tribe.

For the Lil'wat, dancing, sharing circles, and ceremonies normally follow a clockwise direction, patterned after the Earth's rotation, in order to maintain harmony in the circle (Hart, 2000). At pow wows, the circular drum is at the centre like a heartbeat for all of the people participating in unison.

The observation of children's patterns through Lil'wat child rearing practices demonstrates the centrality of circles and cycles to the Lil'wat worldview.

Ka Tselha (6 Years Old)

At the moment of birth, the baby had two mothers, the birth mom and the midwife. Just after birth, the grandparents brought the baby to an uncle, who sang a song to the baby. That song belonged to the baby. It was a song at the beat of the heart at rest. This was the beginning of the process of individuation.

The child spent most time with old people, mainly women, who never left the child alone. The women talked, told stories and included the child in their conversations. They talked about characteristics and qualities of the child: "What makes this baby smile? What does it notice?"

*The women constantly observed to understand the child's patterns, and because of their acute observations, the women anticipated everything the child needed, so the child rarely cried. These observations were key to what they fashioned for him/her to grow up and become. Everyone had positive and negative qualities and when people lived close together, you learned how to work without upsetting each other by understanding the positives and negatives. Birth parents were around but did not play a central role like the old people who watched for the moment of **Kitchila**, or awakening. (Williams, 2005)*

Kitchila (Awakening)

***Kitchila** was the moment of awakening, when the child's eyes opened to the world. Before **Kitchila**, the child and old people spoke the same language which involved no words; during this time, there was a powerful connection between the two. **Kitchila** was when the child was "kicked out" of the circle of the old people and spent the next period with sibling peers. Older children looked after the younger children. They learned about the world and community through play. Children could enter all the kitchens in the community to eat whenever they needed. Older children learned responsibility. People in the community observed the older children. (Williams, 2005)*

Ka Amha (9 Years Old)

This phase involved the coming into comfort of one's body; the focus was on how to be in the world. Once this happened, children were given responsibilities, for example, boys were responsible for trap lines, fishing area, and rabbit runs. Jobs that were given came from the old people's observations over the last 9 years. The community, especially the old people, would observe how the child carried out his/her responsibilities. If the child used a method that did not work, the old people would tell stories that reflected the child's work ethic. This story would be told throughout the community. If the child were female, the key relationship was with her aunt; if the child were male, with his uncle. (Williams, 2005)

Women's Traditional Knowledge

A Lil'wat girl's transition from **Kitchila** to **Ka Amha** signified her entrance into womanhood. The importance of this time period cannot be overstated. This was a time when girls learned the knowledge, skills, and stories that linked them to their family, clan, and nation. It was believed that whatever she did or experienced then was bound to affect her entire subsequent life, and that she had exceptional power over all persons or things that came near her at that period (Bruchac, 1994; Saganesh, 1997; Schnarch, 2004; Shenandoah, 2004). Ritual and ceremony were the major building blocks for the socialization of children in most Indigenous cultures. Community members were initiated at different stages of the individual's life cycle to help him/her internalize the knowledge

inherent in the activity to maintain community consciousness (Ackerman, 1996; Allen, 1996; Erdrich & Tohe, 2002; Hanna & Henry, 1995). Cajete (1999) states:

In every Native American language there is a phrase which is said or implied in ritual and ceremony. This phrase has variations from tribe to tribe, however it is usually translated to mean “to find our life” or “in search of our life.” (p. 59)

Mary Wright (2003) suggests that the construction of Plateau gender roles was tied to the importance of a sense of place – the women’s lodge – in four defined ways. First, the lodge was a women-built structure using women-made materials on a preferred site selected by women. Second, the lodge was the puberty ritual’s site, where Elders trained each generation in ways appropriate for women. Third, the lodge was a place of production, where skills were introduced to girls and where menstruating women made goods. Finally, the women’s lodge was the place of birth of the new generation. Women’s gender construction came from this space, but also from the life cycle connection established there between the newborn, the pubescent girl, the mature woman, and the Elders. The women’s lodge was central to the Plateau women’s development of their sense of identity, community values, belonging, and place through the training and teachings they received from their own grandmothers, other female family members, and community Elders (Wright, 2003).

Puberty (12-17 Years Old)

*As children hit puberty, they were described as being in the present moment, not in the past or the future. In Ucwalmicwts, the stages of puberty are **Emhamam** (12 years old), **Selselpus** (14 years old), and **Squyqeycw** (17 years old). Based on community observations, the puberty stage ranged in length from two months to four years. At this time, youth lived independently of their families. During puberty, children moved into the adult world. They had important positions in the community, where men and women were seen as equal. The aunt/uncle relationship was the*

important relationship with the youth because the connection with parents was so intense that it often broke down communications. Parents had “tight feelings” with their son or daughter due to the fact that they had raised them from birth. (Williams, 2005)

Coming of Age Practices for Girls

A young woman exercised in the morning and bathed in the river. She rubbed her body with cedar or fir boughs during all four seasons. She was given the task of picking off one needle at a time as fast as she could from fir boughs while she sat in a hole dug in the earth [primary connection to the earth; women and earth are the same]. This process trained her hands and attitude to allow the feeling of frustration to prevail over her as she figured a way to overcome it. Young women would make baskets and small items such as berry baskets. Once a basket was completed, she would hang it on the house or path for people to take. Giving was to be a habit; girls were trained to give without attachment. If the young woman wanted to give the basket to someone special, it was removed and burned. Baskets were all different sizes and everyone had a basket according to their age and berry-picking ability. (Williams, 2005)

Circle Rupture

The genocide of Indigenous people through the formula of domination systemically ruptured the circle of Indigenous families, clans, and nations (Battiste, 2000; Bressette et al., 1993; Farris-Manning & Zanstra, 2003; Kingsley & Mark, 2000; Smith, 2001). The principles of balance and harmony in Lil’wat child rearing were severed when children were removed from their families and communities to residential schools and forced to learn the Euro-Western way of being. The social fabric of the community was broken when one segment of the community disappeared, thus displacing the knowledge transfer that occurred in most Indigenous communities between the generations, especially between children and Elders (Blackstock & Trocme, 2004; Farris-Manning & Zanstra, 2003; Mussell, Cardiff, & White, 2004). The scope of this thesis does not allow a lengthy discussion of the impact of colonization on Indigenous girls. Therefore, I focus

on the areas of education and identity formation, as they provide a rationale for the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project.

Education

The Lil'wat coming of age training was rooted in a knowledge system that was transmitted orally and through experience. Our current education system excludes Indigenous knowledge from the curriculum. According to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (1995), education represents a powerful tool that equalizes cultures through time. Education permits individuals to overcome institutional barriers to economic and social success. For the Indigenous population as a whole, a strong and direct relationship exists between economic success and the duration of an individual's education (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1995). Anderson (2003) found that in 2001, only 8% of the 25-34 age group of Indigenous people had completed a university degree, while 28% of all non-Indigenous Canadians had. In 2001, approximately 50-66% of Indigenous youth were in school compared to 60-70% of non-Indigenous youth. Only 24% of Indigenous people under 25 were able to converse in an Indigenous language (Siggner & Costa, 2005).

Since there are numerous definitions for Aboriginal population, these statistics are the result of Canadian government's designation of the Aboriginal population to include persons who reported to Stats Canada as having Aboriginal ancestry, Aboriginal identity, registered, status or treaty Indian, or member of an Indian band or First Nation. These statistics stemmed from a voluntary survey that excluded persons who were outside these government imposed definitions. Therefore, I use these numbers with caution and only as

an initial indicator to the Aboriginal population with the understanding the numbers are lower than in reality.

In addition, these statistics use a linear framework to measure success, and we need to caution against making correlations between these statistics and individual ability. We must first acknowledge the Eurocentric curriculum and teaching methodologies that do not reflect Indigenous worldviews and knowledges (Battiste, 2000). We need to look at the systemic barriers that restrict the access of Indigenous girls to school success, and we must also consider gender exclusion. Sadker and Sadker (1994) challenged senior high school students to name 20 famous U.S. women from the past or present in five minutes, excluding sports figures and entertainers and including only those presidents' wives who are famous in their own right. On average, students listed only four or five women, and the researchers could count on the fingers of one hand the number who were able to meet the challenge. What if we substituted 20 Indigenous women in the challenge? What results would ensue?

In *Invisibility in Academe*, Adrienne Rich describes the result of denial and oppression of marginalized groups in the Canadian education system: “When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into the mirror and saw nothing” (Rich, 2002, p. 37). In schools, the perspectives of Indigenous women are missing in the literature – how does that affect girls' identity formation, pride in their Indigenous roots, and sense of visibility?

For many Indigenous women who survived residential school, there was a real sense of loss of their Indigenous identity. A participant in Lawrenchuk and Harvey's (2000) research on parent participation reflects on her self-identity:

I always felt lost. I didn't even know I was an Indian. This lady use to call me her little apple, you know, red on the outside, white on the inside. I didn't even know what that meant. When I found out I was mad. I started to want to find out about my identity. Well, I think for me it's too late, so I want to concentrate on the kids, making sure they know. (p. 89)

How then do we create the space to be sure that Indigenous girls learn about their identity? How do we create a sense of identity and belonging for Indigenous girls in the education system, the community, and society?

Identity

At different points in their lives, children and adults are given a name. Old people selected a name based on observation. During a naming ceremony, the child sat next to the old people and they shared stories about the person who had their same name and all their characteristics. Inside this name were the challenges to how to be based on the associated characters to the name. Sometimes names were opposite of the person's nature and they would have to grow into their name. (Williams, 2005)

For many Indigenous girls, forced attendance at residential school not only disconnected them from their relations, it took away their rightful coming of age ceremony that transferred the knowledge and skills for their given roles in their family, clan, and nation. Indigenous girls today face tremendous barriers to a healthy existence because they are challenged by living in an Eurocentric society that systemically silences and erases their culture from the mainstream. The stronghold of whiteness, systemic racism, and the legacy of colonization continue to fragment Indigenous girls' formation

of identity and sense of self, restricting their access to a healthy life (Battiste, 2000; Blackstock & Trocme, 2004; Bressette et al., 1993).

Girls' gender identity is affected by constructing and deconstructing messages and by adopting behaviours that conform most compatibly to their social environment (Sadker & Sadker, 1994). Identity formation is a critical developmental task for adolescents and adults (Erickson, 1968). An important subcomponent of identity is ethnic identity, which "includes feelings of ethnic belonging and pride, a secure sense of group membership, and positive attitudes toward one's ethnic group" (Phinney & Alipuria, 1996). If girls are confronted by messages from the media, family, or school that depict them as inferior or limited, they are more likely to integrate a defective identity. Schools do an inadequate job of challenging cultural myths and models of female success, thereby contributing to girls' striving to attain unrealistic goals and emulate unhealthy behaviour patterns which contribute to negative self-perceptions (American Association of University Women, 1995; Sadker & Sadker, 1994; Sigall & Pabst, 2005; Strong, 1998; Zittleman & Sadker, 2003).

Naming ceremonies were pivotal in Lil'wat girls' identity formation, for they positioned them in the community with roles and responsibilities. Breakwell (1986, 1988) Adams and Marshall (1996) and Kaplan (1993) recognize that the development of identity is a process that emerges from the interaction of personal and contextual factors or through a repetitive exchange of information between the person and their context. An Indigenous woman's sense of purpose was validated when she received her Indigenous name. Ruth Morin, a Cree woman, argues that "our names are a guide for us ... [they] tell us where we came from and where we are going, and what we need to do" (K. Anderson,

2000, p. 203). What happens to Indigenous girls' identity development when they have no assigned or ascribed identity (names, roles, belonging) from their community?

Reclaiming the Circle

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, in its concluding remarks to Canada in 2003, stressed that Indigenous children continue to face significant and disproportionate levels of risk in areas such as education, youth justice, health, and poverty. One third of the concluding observations for Canada make specific mention of Indigenous children (United Nations, 2003). With such glaring recommendations, what has been done to reconcile and heal the rupture in the circle? Battiste (2000) frames a solution:

The best response to violence is healing. It is a personal process and an internal process to be shared with others. While Indigenous peoples may not succeed with “macro” issues such as jurisdiction, land-use control, or dealing with outsiders and intruders, they can succeed with “micro” issues. Taking control of one’s own life is a healing issue. Strengthening the family is healing. Communities must consider how they can effectively reassume control of their destinies. (p. 47)

Indigenous communities are resisting and breaking through the barriers by reclaiming their traditional knowledge and the circular framework of life and integrating these practices into their contemporary lives as a basis for healing. A young Indigenous woman speaking to an Indigenous circle formed to identify the current state of violence against women expressed her cultural confusion:

I was never taught to feel proud of my heritage.... There is a perception that “white reality” is the absolute reality, and this is part of the balance of power....

Indigenous cultures need to be revitalized, and women Elders need to come out and be recognized for the strong leaders they are. (cited in Bressette et al., 1993, p. 138)

To reclaim the circle, healing cannot be a band-aid solution; a holistic approach is required wherein all connections are valued and considered. There is limited academic research that focuses specifically on the significance of reclaiming coming of age ceremonies and traditional knowledge in relation to Indigenous girls and identity formation. But as Marie Battiste (2000) suggests, communities must consider how they can effectively reassume control of their destinies. So I looked to Kim Anderson, a Cree/Métis educator, who draws on the experiences of Indigenous women on how they are reclaiming their cultural traditions and creating positive and powerful images of themselves true to their heritage in the contemporary world. Anderson (2000) states:

Our way of typically dealing with menstruation at present is to acknowledge and adhere to menstrual taboos ... to not use traditional medicines or to participate in certain ceremonies while “on our time” ... it acknowledges the power of a woman. Yet we must go on and reclaim more than taboos, with their current emphasis on what we can’t do. (p. 165)

In *Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood*, Anderson shares with her readers how Indigenous women are recovering and implementing traditions that honour their power and sacredness as women. Many communities are embracing puberty rites related to girls’ “first moon” to assist girls as they navigate their future with a strong foundation of the sacredness and power of womanhood and how it is related to their life-giving abilities.

Since circles represent beginnings, endings, and renewal, adaptations to traditions in contemporary times are inevitable or we run the risk of trying to ossify culture that is dynamic and that is adapting to the space we occupy. Valerie Edebwed Ogichidaa Kew (Speaks the Truth Warrior Leader Woman) King Green (cited in Anderson, 2000), an Ojibwe, acknowledges that few women have the time or the opportunity to go to a moon lodge every month to learn the teachings on being a woman, and they have adapted this menstrual tradition by reinstating the berry fast. This was where pubescent girls abstained from eating and picking berries or berry products for one year, during which time they would meet with older women who instructed them on the basic life skills they would need as adults, including sex education (J. Anderson, 2003).

There are traditional teachings that work alongside menstrual taboos and that speak of the power of women. For example, Dianne Eaglefeather, a Blood, shared with Anderson (2000) how her mother explained to her that when Eaglefeather had to leave her first Sun Dance to go fast and dance by herself when she began to menstruate, she was as strong as any of the others, carrying on as she did: “This is what being a woman is all about. No matter what the adversity, we keep on going” (p. 166). Mrya Laramee, who is Cree/Métis, creates a space for menstruating women at ceremonies because, traditionally, a moon lodge was set up during every ceremony. “Menstruating women were to pray that any of the negativity that might want to come and hurt or harm anyone be filtered back through their blood and sent back to Mother Earth to be neutralized” (cited in Anderson, 2000, p. 167). Through reclaiming this tradition and space, women are recovering their understanding of Indigenous womanhood and the power of

menstruation and are able to reject the dominant discourse of menstruating women as problematic (e.g., “having a curse”).

Ceremony was one component of traditional knowledge related to menstruation, but the basic teachings can be incorporated in contemporary living. Some Indigenous women acknowledged menstruation as a time for rest, seclusion, and introspection, and they slowed down in their lives accordingly. It was also a time for women to be together to explore the powers and sacredness of womanhood (J. Anderson, 2003). For girls, the berry fasting is a time to learn from their “aunties and grannies” about the value of honesty and the need to nurture, honour, and respect their bodies. All of these practices help young girls to deal with the many issues they will face as teenagers growing up in modern times (J. Anderson, 2003). In the current education system, we teach girls the facts related to issues of pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and violence, but we lack the capacity to teach values that would counter these problems in society.

These stories from Indigenous women share with us the key to healing the ruptured circle: honouring and respecting oneself in the circle. All the stories speak of the sacredness of woman; rediscovering a sense of purpose, self-respect, and self-esteem is central to healing. Dianne Hill, a Mohawk, explains:

The answers related to who we are, how we are connected to life, and why our spirits have entered this life are already inside us. So we just have to be taught how to open ourselves and to look inside for the purpose of remembering. We just need to remember who we are. (cited in Anderson, 2000, p. 202)

New Cycle

*Family and community guided young people to learn and understand.
After they emerge from puberty, the young man and woman negotiate an*

apprenticeship within the community. The young man or woman learned by working along side the teacher. Teaching was seen as incidental. They worked together until the young man or woman was ready. The teaching began when the teacher sensed readiness in his or her apprentice. There was room for creativity during the apprenticeship, and young people's contributions were valued. (Williams, 2005)

Lil'wat young people transitioned to the next cycle of the circle of life and became productive members of the community through learning by doing; with each cycle, a new generation moved forward. We are left with a picture of young Lil'wat7ul who have a strong sense of identity, belonging, and responsibility. This chapter provided the foundation of the circular worldview to which I attended in order to form the basis of my thought process throughout this study. As part of my **celhcelh**, I used the lessons learned in this chapter to mend the circle rupture and to start a new cycle of healing with the Lil'wat community. The methods of our research collaboration are presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature reviewed in this chapter provided the background research for project 2, the model of practice on Indigenous research protocols. This literature supports the theory-in-action to address the central research question: “What lessons emerged from putting PAR theory into practice within an Indigenous context?” To begin the process of understanding respectful research practices within Indigenous communities, we first must grasp the history of how research has been conducted. This literature review examines current thoughts on research protocols and challenges that arise when non-Indigenous researchers work in an Indigenous research environment.

The Past

The literature points to a general consensus among Indigenous peoples and marginalized groups that they have been “researched to death” by governments and academics (McShane & Hastings, 2004; Smith, 2001). The time of examining and presenting Indigenous issues from a negative outcome perspective has passed, as we shift to a new cycle of competence outcomes focused on resilience and on what works in the community (McShane & Hastings, 2004). There exists an abundance of literature by non-Indigenous academics writing about Indigenous peoples, cultures, and issues from a Western perspective. Unfortunately, the cultural disconnect between the researcher and the community typically renders the research findings unusable by the Indigenous community being researched (Ball, 2005; Darou, Kurtness, & Hum, 1993; Kawagley & Barnhardt, 1999; McShane & Hastings, 2004). A growing wave of Indigenous scholars and students is challenging the “dangerous state of liminality” (Chataway, 2000, p. 252) by presenting their truths, in their own words, through academic research. These scholars

often risk their relationships within their own communities as they assume the mistrusted role of the researcher. A number of challenges plague both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers who want to work in an Indigenous community.

The Western standard of research is best described by the “helicopter” analogy, where the researcher drops in for a quick data collection trip and is never seen again. Montour (cited in McShane & Hastings, 2004), describes the helicopter process as one in which “outside researchers swooped down from the skies, swarmed all over town, asked nose questions that were none of their business and then disappeared never to be heard again” (p. 2). The standard researcher-initiated approach drives the research process and profits only the researcher, leaving little or no benefit to the community. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) and Schnarch (2004) offer critical reviews of colonial research practices and recent institutional efforts to improve ethics in Indigenous research. Both outline the need to rebuild trust, improve research quality and relevance, decrease bias, and develop meaningful capacity leading to community empowerment to make change (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996; Schnarch, 2004). The literature contains a plethora of recurring grievances about research and researchers over the years (Ball, 2005; Fixico, 2003; Hammersmith & Sawatsky, 1995; Smith, 2001). The following is a small sample of reasons why Indigenous communities are resistant to government, industry, and academic researchers coming into their communities (Schnarch, 2004):

- The majority of research projects are initiated, paid for, and carried out by non-Indigenous people from universities, government, and industry.

- Researchers have essentially preempted meaningful community involvement by presenting completed research designs, often already funded, for community approval rather than collaborating with the community from the start.
- Researchers have treated Indigenous researchers as informants rather than colleagues and have appropriated or failed to acknowledge some of their work.
- Information made available by researchers has been distorted and treated like a commodity for the benefit of the researcher (e.g., Indigenous legends and stories have been used for movies, books, and toys; spiritual practices and ceremonies have been adapted and often marketed to practitioners of New Age spirituality).
- Research focuses on problems without looking at the positive and has often portrayed Indigenous people as poor, sick, dependent, violent, and child-like.
- Research results are not returned to the community, or they are returned in a form or language that is inaccessible.

How Do We Address These Grievances?

Based on their past experiences with non-Indigenous researchers since contact, some Indigenous communities have become seasoned researchers. Today, they are setting the agenda for a new era of Indigenous research that involves building relationships sensitive to cultural diversity and using PAR methodology. This agenda challenges outside researchers first and foremost to build authentic and respectful relationships *before* any research is negotiated (Dickson, 2001; Hammersmith & Sawatsky, 1995;

Hoare et al., 1993; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). The responsibility of outside researchers is to have a strong sense of where we are located in the context of Indigenous histories as they relate to the Canadian state. As Jessica Ball (2005) states:

Non-Indigenous researchers need to acknowledge being members of the dominant culture and being researchers who are in positions of power. The potential to oppress and exploit Indigenous people is a matter of concern, and deliberate efforts should be made to level the playing field in negotiating research relationships. (p. 82)

Researchers should be honest with the community about where they are coming from and should also become familiar with the sociopolitical history of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people (Hudson & Taylor-Henley, 2001). Memories of the past combine with contemporary forms of colonization to continue to influence relationships and interactions between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples (Ball, 2005).

In a workshop on nurturing resiliency in youth, Martin Brokenleg (cited in Kovach, 2003), stated that “the biggest enemy of relationships is busyness.” Although his lecture focused on building positive relationships with youth and community, Brokenleg’s words spoke truth for all relationships, including research. Kovach (2003) illustrates how the process of building a relationship is similar to making good bread:

Creating strong relationships moves beyond prescriptions found in a ‘recipe.’ It is knowledge born of an organic progression demanding give and take, energy and effort. And more than anything else it asks of our time. (p. 15)

The literature supports the need for researchers to spend time building authentic relationships in the community. Time is needed to gain a better understanding of the community's needs and strengths, as opposed to entering a community with preconceived assumptions of the people and the place (Ball, 2005; British Columbia Aboriginal Child Care Society, 2003; Chataway, 2000; Haig-Brown, 1992).

Historically, anthropologists and ethnographers went into Indigenous communities to document what was perceived as dying cultures and peoples due to the catastrophic impacts of colonization on their way of life (e.g., residential schools, exposure to infectious diseases, the Indian Act; Miller, 1996; Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). Edward Curtis, like other researchers of that era, gave rise to the generalized and stereotypical 'Indian': Curtis photographed Indigenous people who, for example, fashioned a Plains Indian headdress, wore a Chilkooot button blanket, and paddled a Kwagiulth canoe. The mixing of a potpourri of Indigenous cultures into a single entity was insulting to the diversity of Indigenous peoples. These misrepresentations continue today, and they must be addressed in order to build authentic research relationships. We need to respect the heterogeneity of Indigenous peoples throughout the territories now known as Canada. Over 1.3 million people in Canada are Indigenous, of which 31%⁵ live in over 1,000 communities on reserves or settlements (J. Anderson, 2003). Over 50 Indigenous languages survived Canadian language extinction policies and continue to be spoken in ceremonies and traditions unique to each community (Natural Resources Canada, 2006). In the literature, there is increasing

⁵ This statistic is a general indicator of the Indigenous demographic and is based on a government definition of Aboriginal population and is not representative of all persons who identify as Aboriginal or Indigenous to this territory known as Canada.

recognition that researchers must address the systemic racism that was at the core of positivistic and reductionist research frameworks that inherently impose categories and characteristics on groups of people (Schnarch, 2004; Smith, 2001; Smye & Mussell, 2001). Research findings within one Indigenous community cannot be generalized to all Indigenous peoples. The realities of urban, reserve, Métis, Inuit, status, and non-status individuals in each location are exclusive and need to be represented as such (Darou et al., 1993; Smye & Mussell, 2001). This understanding of Indigenous peoples at an individual, family, and community level is a requisite for all research endeavours that hope to be meaningful, accurate, and useful (Leadbeater et al., 2006; McShane & Hastings, 2004).

One must also ask whether it is possible for a researcher to have an accurate representation of a group of people when s/he is an outsider (albeit with inside knowledge) to the group, especially when Western science is rooted in “empiricism which offers no more an ‘objective’ explanation of the world and reality than, for example, ancient myths” (Chambon, Irving, & Epstein, 1999, p. 34). All interactions are cross-cultural, and we each bring to the table our own unique perspectives, history, worldview, and bias that influence how we interpret what we observe. Potts and Brown (2005) outline three emerging tenets of anti-oppressive research. One of the tenets states: “Anti-oppressive research recognizes that all knowledge is socially constructed and political” (p. 261). Therefore, to address the issues of interest and bias, working collaboratively with a community is perhaps the most culturally sensitive approach to research with Indigenous peoples. To attend to the issues of research relevance, ownership, and community collaboration, there is strong support by Indigenous groups

and researchers for the use of PAR methodology (Hammersmith & Sawatsky, 1995; McShane & Hastings, 2004; Robinson, 1998; Smith, 2001; Smye & Mussell, 2001).

Participatory action research (PAR):

starts with social concerns and lived experiences, values the knowledge produced through collaboration and in action, places emphasis upon the research process, and reconsiders the value of research as a vehicle for social change.... Critical to the success of a participatory action research process is the building of a community of researchers. (Torre et al., 2001, p. 156)

PAR promotes active community participation in research and replaces the traditional research model of an unbalanced power structure that favours the researcher. The *Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* reflects a new trend that promotes shared leadership, research design, and decision making (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998). At the same time, Indigenous groups such as Inuit Tapirisat of Canada and Nunavut Research Institute promote PAR methodology to shift to a more equitable model of research that addresses the power dynamics in collaboration (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, 1998). PAR will be further discussed in chapter 4, the methodology section of this study.

What Are the Gaps in the Literature?

Red and White – What About the Brown, Yellow, Black, and Mixed?

Racial categories are commonly thought to reflect natural groups of peoples based on inherent cultural and physiological differences. A growing consensus in the scientific

community contests this ideology with evidence that race has been socially constructed to benefit the dominant majority (Cheng, 2003). In the literature, most research “on” Indigenous peoples has been carried out by Euro-Western researchers who provide an analysis of the Other (Buttny, 2003; Winant, 1994). This binary of white researcher/Indigenous community omits a large body of racialized minority researchers in the literature. A wealth of research critiques and reflects the challenges of relationship building with Indigenous communities for white or Indigenous researchers (Chataway, 2000; Haig-Brown, 1992; Lykes, 2000). Yet, scanning through the databases reveals an underresearched paradigm of the hybridity of a racialized researcher in Indigenous communities. This gap presents an opportunity for discussion within this thesis to dismantle fixed notions of researcher positions in an Indigenous context, expose the barriers and space that may be created, and highlight implications for research.

Praxis of Ethical Research

Community-university partnerships and ethical research with Indigenous peoples are current focus areas within academic institutions (Riecken & Strong-Wilson, 2006). University research ethics boards govern how research is conducted in the community by implementing guidelines that protect the institution and the participant, or the “researched,” in the areas of confidentiality, benefits, control, and ownership of knowledge. *The Tri-Council Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (1998) is the result of a longstanding collaboration between the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR, formerly Medical Research Council), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to provide a framework for ethical research based on

principles of respect and minimizing harm. Due to historical research practices, the Tri-Council acknowledged the need to establish research guidelines involving Aboriginal peoples. Following nearly two decades of external consultations, the Tri-Council acknowledged that the main limitation to their process was a lack of dialogue with Indigenous peoples, groups, and academics to appropriately establish policies on research. To address this gap, they built upon the current literature from Canada, Australia, and the United States to provide guidelines as a starting point for discussion on the topic of research involving Indigenous peoples (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998).

An extensive scan of the literature reveals a gap in analysis of the application of the recommended guidelines in the research field. An investigation of the praxis of ethical research would be of great benefit. Specifically, what issues arise when theory and practice meet? In the spirit of thoughtful implementation of the above-mentioned guidelines, the Tri-Council recognizes that “considerations around the ethical conduct of research involving human subjects are complex and continually evolving. We therefore welcome comment and discussion, and commit to regular updates of this document” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998). In a similar spirit of collaboration, this study contributes to the advancement of ethical research practices through sensitive and critical analysis of the praxis of ethical research.

Who is the Community?

The term ‘community’ is loaded with ambiguity. Who is the community and who represents it? According to Smith (2001), the Maori have several ways to identify one’s indigenous community. One common way is to introduce yourself by naming the mountain, river, tribal ancestor, tribe, and family from which you come. The term ‘community,’ in a research sense, refers to the field, but this differs significantly from the “community’s perspective which conveys an intimate web of human and self-defined spaces” (Smith, 2001, p. 126). For a researcher interested in working with an Indigenous community, defining the community is laden with paradox and complexities unknown to an outsider.

All communities are in constant flux and evolution. As previously stated, 31% of Indigenous people in Canada live on reserve as a result of land settlements or treaty negotiations between the Canadian government and the Indigenous peoples of this territory (Schnarch, 2004). These 31% are supported by legal structures and rights associated with belonging to this “reserve” space and administered through a legal governing body acknowledged by the Canadian government to act on behalf of the community. Yet, these structures recognize only Indigenous people who are registered through a Western system of membership; they exclude belonging that is based on linguistic and cultural participation. The 69% of the Indigenous people who live “off reserve” are not supported by a legal body. What are the implications of the Tri-Council statement when we seek Aboriginal approval for research participants who represent the 69% who do not reside in the reserve space?

Because there is heterogeneity among most Indigenous groups, diversity also exists within the highly complex system of governance within each group (Piquemal, 2001). The Tri-Council acknowledges that the effective working of the ethics guidelines: across the range of disciplines conducting research involving human subjects ... requires a reasonable flexibility in the implementation of common principles ... [and] seeks to avoid imposing one disciplinary perspective on others, while expressing the shared principles and wisdom of researchers in diverse fields. (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998)

Is it possible, however, for the Tri-Council policy to establish terms of reference that address the diverse needs of each group?

Question 21 of the University of Victoria ethics application recommends that researchers seek Indigenous community approval if their research “involves Indigenous people, the cultural knowledge and/or resources of Indigenous people, or where individuals speak on behalf of an Indigenous nation” (University of Victoria, 2006, p. 4). This protocol validates Indigenous governance as separate from the Canadian political structure, but it opens debate on who or what governing body can possibly represent all the members of a community. Because each community is unique, there is no universal definition of ‘community’ that encompasses its complexities. To ensure proper representation for this thesis, I worked with the Lil’wat community to gain a better understanding of the involved structures of the community. Through our collaboration,

the Lil'wat7ul defined 'community' and presented the intersecting layers involved in community belonging.

Summary

A scan of historical research methodologies and outcomes demonstrates the centrality of the dominant culture's approach in the research process with limited to no benefit for Indigenous peoples. The literature examined presents a positive shift in the current research agenda that aims to address the lack of cross-cultural understanding, community collaboration, and research relevance with Indigenous peoples. Several major themes emerge in cross-cultural research practices, such as relationship building, the cultural diversity of Indigenous peoples, the use of PAR, and new guidelines for ethical research that address power dynamics in the research relationship. The impact of colonization and systemic racism emerge as overriding themes that researchers need to be aware of, as well as their own locations and histories, when developing non-Indigenous/Indigenous relations in the current context of Indigenous protocols. Considering that the Tri-Council policy statement was published in 1998, we have less than a decade of research to refer to. At the same time, there is limited research analyzing the challenges and opportunities in fulfilling these guidelines.

This study addresses gaps that exist in the literature regarding three areas of research with Indigenous peoples. First, it investigates the experiences of a racialized researcher working with an Indigenous community. This is a research question that, according to the literature, has yet to be answered. Second, this study analyzes the application of the current research ethical guidelines with Indigenous communities and opens up a much-needed conversation on the praxis of ethical research. Third, this study

delves into general assumptions embedded in the term ‘community,’ as interpreted from the perspective of the community, academia, and the researcher.

This chapter provided theory as a starting point for the iterative cycles of reflection-in-action for project 2, the model of practice for Indigenous research protocols. As the research design team and the Lil’wat community worked collaboratively on project 1, the Regenerating Women’s Traditional Knowledge Project, we addressed the gaps presented in this chapter and became conscious of the conflicts and contradictions that informed our model of practice.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

We shall not have our great leap forward ... until the marginalized and exploited have begun to become the artisans of their own liberation – until their voice makes itself heard directly, without mediations, without interpreters ... (Gutierrez, 1993, p. 201)

In this chapter, I explain the methodology used in this study to attend to the complexities of interpretation in tricultural research. I describe the research setting, participants, and procedures, and I examine several issues of validity. Given the highly contested nature and history of the methods used by Western researchers to interpret Indigenous peoples, this chapter makes an important contribution to decolonizing research methodologies. Careful attention was paid to ensuring that the methods for data analysis in this study produced findings that represent the diverse Lil'wat worldviews. Therefore in this chapter, I introduce an original blended interpretation tool designed to bridge PAR methodology with my understanding of Lil'wat ways of knowing as a means to analyze the praxis of research situated in an Indigenous pedagogy. My journey of learning the diverse Lil'wat worldviews is a continual, never-ending circle. The lens I utilized in this study will not be a pure reflection of the plural Lil'wat ways of knowing; rather, it represents my current stage of understanding and interpretation. Nor do I intend to signify one Lil'wat way of knowing; there are multiple Lil'wat ways of knowing. I ask that readers be aware of this limitation. To members of the Lil'wat community, I welcome any suggestions and differing perspectives to this analysis that would broaden the scope of understanding in this study.

Participatory Action Research

Indigenous communities and leaders recommend PAR as an appropriate research methodology that addresses some of the grievances about research in Indigenous

communities outlined in chapter 3 (Ball, 2005; Chataway, 2000). PAR's goal is transformation through authentic participation. Participants are collaborators, setting the direction of the inquiry, participating in the data collection and analysis, and controlling the use of outcomes and the whole process (Tandon & Fernandes, 1984). Through such research, people work toward improving their own practices (and only secondarily toward improving other people's practices). PAR is a means of putting research capabilities in the hands of deprived and disenfranchised people so that they can transform their lives for themselves (Brydon-Miller, 1993, p. 1). Freire (1982) explains:

In the participatory research propounded here, the silenced are not just incidental to the curiosity of the researcher but are the masters of inquiry into the underlying causes of the events in their world. In this context research becomes a means of moving them beyond silence into a quest to proclaim to the world. (Freire, 1982)

Regardless of the geographic origins of the theoretical bases that inform PAR, a basic set of methodological tenets defines its practice. Hall (1981) summarizes the criteria that characterize PAR into three basic guidelines:

- PAR focuses on communities and populations that have traditionally been exploited or oppressed.
- PAR works to address both the specific concerns of the community and the fundamental causes of the oppression with the goal of achieving positive social change.
- PAR is a process of research, education, and action to which all participants contribute their unique skills and knowledge and through which all participants learn and are transformed.

Over the last five years, participatory action researchers and practitioners have continued to break new ground in social science research. Weis and Fine (2004) identify five critical turns in PAR that guided my practice of PAR for this study:

- Recognition of participation *with*, not only *for*, community.
- Recognition of the intellectual power and searing social commentary developed at the bottom of social hierarchies.
- Recognition not only of the knowledge accumulated in Indigenous communities, but also that Indigenous values, beliefs, and behaviours must be incorporated into the praxis of PAR. Respect for local custom and practices is not an obstacle to research but a site for possible learning, shared engagement, and long-term social change.
- Recognition that the researcher is responsible for satisfying high standards for quality work, using the following criteria for feminist objectivity:
 - a) *Inscription*: The researcher must hold herself accountable to produce stories about young women and men that counter – and do not reinforce – dominant, stereotypic scripts.
 - b) *Micropolitics*: She should explicitly analyze, in her empirical texts, her relation to and with the “subjects” of her research.
 - c) *Difference*: She must theorize not only the strong trends that sweep across her data, but interrogate, as well and with equal rigor, the subtle and significant differences within.

- Recognition that it is crucial to theorize and strategize how PAR gives back to communities. Creating a legacy of inquiry, a process of change, and material resources to enable transformation are crucial to the PAR project.

This research study was in line with PAR guidelines. I worked with the Lil'wat Nation to identify and address the relational, cultural, and knowledge disruptions in the community to generate research protocols and developed a collaborative knowledge regeneration project. Through our partnership, we created community action, achieved participant transformation, and produced new knowledge on respectful research practices.

Indigenous Protocol/Methodology

If anthropology is to be decolonized, it must start by situating itself, its practitioners, and the objects of its research within the same plenary space and time and with reference to the same world political, economic, and cultural hierarchy. (D'Amico-Samuels, 1991, p. 49)

To decolonize research practices, we must employ Indigenous research methodologies to challenge the ontological and epistemological foundations of traditional Western methods that are rooted in linear and hierarchical dualisms. Susan Strega (Brown & Strega, 2005), a feminist social justice researcher, explains that both existence and knowledge are contingent on others, and/or on the world and other living entities, which is supported by Fixico's (2003) description of the interconnections in the circle of life. Therefore the basis of knowledge is connection, and our understanding of the connections is the beginning of knowledge. Generally, within an Indigenous pedagogy, connection is based in relationships between humans and the environment (Fixico, 2003). In supporting Indigenous research methodology, I utilized culturally appropriate methods to develop rapport and establish genuine relationships with the participants.

Below I outline the Indigenous research methods that guided my entry into the Lil'wat community as well as the research process throughout our collaboration. These are traditional and present-day practices drawn from the literature and my personal conversations with members of the Lil'wat (Interior Salish) and Coast Salish communities engaged in the treaty and research processes.

When undertaking research within the Lil'wat Nation, the researcher should:

- Bring a gift that is significant to the local community (e.g., tobacco, sage, berries) when meeting participants for the first time and also when doing interviews.
- Spend time and get involved in the community to establish rapport in a sincere manner (Deloria, 1991, p. 465).
- Recognize community members' knowledge and compensate it accordingly. Elders must be treated as professionals and compensated for their educational contribution at a rate and in a manner that shows respect for their expertise, unique knowledge, and skills (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996). As Deloria asks, "If knowledge of the Indian community is so valuable, how can non-Indians receive so much compensation for their small knowledge and Indians receive so little for their extensive knowledge?" (Deloria, 1991, p. 465).
- Be aware of the time of day when conducting interviews, especially when working with Elders (regarding issues of routines, fatigue, etc.). Plan for several short visits instead of fewer long visits for interviews with Elders.

- Ask participants if they have been interviewed about this topic. Since the First Nations have been so heavily researched, it is important to ask whether they have previous interviews on the topic; if so, look up the research findings instead of having participants repeat themselves (Deloria, 1991, p. 467).
- Visit the Elder, community member, or participant in person instead of telephoning on the first contact.
- Be prepared to talk with the participants and record information from memory after the interviews, as there may be an aversion to media (recorder and cameras; Kawagley, 1995, p. 155).
- Be flexible about the location of the interviews. Conduct interviews that are a natural part of the participants' surrounding. Because the Lil'wat community is geographically separated into two sites, transportation is a barrier to participation.
- Cross-check information with participants to ensure accuracy (Kawagley, 1995, p. 153).
- Be aware that silence often is not an opportunity to speak, but a time to process and reflect on what is being discussed (Fixico, 2003, p. 5).

Reflective Methodology

To capture our process, we borrow from what some have described as oscillation, a deliberate movement between theory "in the clouds" and the empirical materials "on the ground." (Fine, 2004, p. xvi)

Reflection is a central process in PAR and Indigenous methodologies. These methodologies use a cyclical framework for understanding and content analysis as the researcher moves "from the clouds to the ground." In PAR, a spiral commonly represents the process of reflection. Action research is structured by iterative cycles of planning,

acting, observing, and reflecting (Herr & Anderson, 2005). The point of change is at praxis, which requires the researcher and the community to debate and reflect on what has happened in order to create positive changes for the next cycle of the spiral (Weis & Fine, 2004). This process is commonly used in most Indigenous methodologies in order to observe the interconnectedness of all things and to identify and address any imbalances in the ecosystem (Kawagley, 1995).

Feminist research and other critical research approaches have made insider/outsider methodology much more visible and accepted in qualitative research (Smith, 2001). Most research methodologies assume that a researcher is an outsider who comes into a community to observe without affecting the research site or process. In this study, I positioned myself as a participant observer, an outsider with insider knowledge of the community. Throughout the study, participants clearly affirmed my insider status based on my previous relationship with the community. Most participants echoed the words of Lil'wat 1: "You are part of the community already" (Interview, April 2006). This relationship provided me with a privileged space as an outsider with insider knowledge where I moved between the two positions. Certain community members granted me access to the Lil'wat history and background information because of our relationship. Ironically, at times I was more an outsider to the academic institution than to the Lil'wat community.

My experience as a researcher/participant engendered a double consciousness consisting of two parts: a consciousness associated with participation and then consciousness associated with reporting (Bannister, 1999). Turner (1974) refers to this state as "between and betwixt," a phrase that reflects the dichotomy between emotional

detachment and self-reflection, between intellectualization and bodily experience (Geertz, 1988), and between observing the experience and fully entering it (Alder & Alder, 1990). Documenting my double consciousness experience was a critical component of the data collection and analysis. I reflected in a journal on my role as an insider/outsider researcher and my process of interaction with the community.

Establishing Reliability in Participatory Action Research

The most difficult dimension of qualitative research is the question of how to evaluate a particular interpretive account. Given the complex power dimensions within PAR and Indigenous research histories, I carefully attended to debates on data interpretation, particularly to the validity of knowledge claims within outsider interpretations of Indigenous communities. No fixed or prescribed procedure exists within PAR to achieve validity, nor is there a single model of practice for research with Indigenous communities that honours the diversity of each nation and people. In this study, I entered the meaning-making process using hermeneutic approaches that closely reflect both Indigenous and Chinese ways of knowing. Hermeneutics pertains to interpretation and can “be understood as a form of data analysis which seeks to analyze a text from the perspective of the person who penned it, whilst emphasizing the social and historical context within which it was produced” (Grix, 2004). Hermeneutic approaches provide an appropriate frame that views the knower and the known as fundamentally interrelated and assumes that any interpretation involves a circularity of understanding – a hermeneutic circle (Tappan, 2001).

PAR and Indigenous research requires a dynamic and recursive dialogue – or triangulation – among many sources, or what Tappan identify as an “interpretive

community” (Tappan, 2001). The different sources that represented my interpretive community, and with which I engaged with analytically, included my own interpretive voice as a feminist, racialized researcher-practitioner-student (reflective journal); the documented perspectives of co-participants (interviews); the community members involved in the research; other data documented throughout the project data, including that produced through various presentations and community consultations; and other critical sources within the interpretive community and my external multiracial and Indigenous advisory committee. The triangulation of my data sources tested the coherence and validity of observations, interpretations, and theorizations by establishing verification from my interpretive community.

Research Methods

Study Site

The study site is located in the traditional territory of the Lil’wat Nation, in Mount Currie, British Columbia, which lies in the Pemberton Valley, 220 kilometres north of Vancouver. The Lil’wat7ul are Interior Salish people who are a separate and distinct nation while remaining part of the St’at’imc group. Their language is Ucwalmicwts, which means “the people of the land.” The traditional territory spans 797,131 hectares, equivalent to one fourth of Vancouver Island; it extends south to Rubble Creek, north to Gates Lake, east to the Upper Stein Valley, and west to the coast inlets of the Pacific Ocean (Lil’wat Nation, 2006). Surrounded by mountain ranges, the Lil’wat7ul traditionally were traders. They have a close connection to the land, and they are skilled fishers and hunters.

The Lil'wat7ul first came into contact with Europeans in 1793, when Alexander Mackenzie made his overland journey to the Pacific. Over the next two centuries, like other First Nations in British Columbia, the Lil'wat7ul were systematically stripped of their land, rights, and resources. Starting in the late 1800s, the Lil'wat7ul were disenfranchised and confined to 10 tiny reserves totalling 2,930 hectares, or .004% of their traditional territory (Lil'wat Nation, 2006).

The first train into Lil'wat territory in 1918 brought non-Indigenous settlers who were sanctioned by the colonial government that gave them free 160-acre allotments. The construction of a highway in 1970 resulted in a further increase in the non-Indigenous population. The strength and determination of the Lil'wat people provided the basis for their ability to overcome the many obstacles colonization put in their way. Today, over 70% of a total population of more than 1,850 Lil'wat7ul live on reserve; about 550 live off reserve (Lil'wat Nation, 2006). The Lil'wat7ul are the fourth-largest on-reserve First Nation community in British Columbia. They are actively engaged in business, including land and resource development, and, at the same time, they are building on their cultural and traditional heritage (Lil'wat Nation, 2006). As a demonstration of their active resistance to the imposed colonial policies and structures, the Lil'wat Nation is one of 78 B.C. First Nations that have chosen not to participate in the B.C. Treaty Commission process (Lil'wat Nation, 2006).

Participants

In total, 17 participants volunteered to contribute their time and knowledge to this study. Fourteen Lil'wat women, girls, and Elders collaborated on the design team to implement the PAR Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project. Seven of the

14 members of the design team volunteered for individual interviews. Three additional community leaders involved in the band administration also contributed their thoughts on research protocols in the community via individual interviews, for a total of ten interviews. Table 1 is an interview matrix that provides an overview of the diverse participants in this study.

Table 1: Interview Matrix

Participant	Birthplace	Lil'wat Membership	Roles in Community
Lil'wat 1	Mount Currie	Born and raised in Lil'wat. Left for Vancouver for school for 2 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Band Council • Cultural Centre Coordinator • LCHLA Member • Design Team
Lil'wat 2	Pemberton	Born and raised in Pemberton and through marriage moved into the Lil'wat community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Administrator • Band Council
Lil'wat 3	Mount Currie	Born and raised in Lil'wat. Moved to Vancouver for work for 5 years and moved back 5 years ago.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Centre Manager • LCHLA Member • Design Team
Lil'wat 4	Toronto	Came to community 3 years ago for employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Band Administrator
Lil'wat 5	Mount Currie	41 years in community. Left to travel in Europe for 1 year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Member • LCHLA Member • Design Team
Lil'wat 6	Mount Currie	Born and raised in Lil'wat. Lived here all her life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Member • Elder • Design Team
Lil'wat 7	Mount Currie	Born and raised in Lil'wat. Moved to Pemberton Valley with husband when married. Moved back into the community 2 years ago.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Member • Elder • LCHLA Member • Design Team
Lil'wat 8	Mount Currie	Born and raised in Lil'wat. Moved away from the community for 12 years. Lived in Alert Bay with husband and daughter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Member • Forestry Department • LCHLA Member • Design Team

		Moved back 1 year ago.	
Lil'wat 9	Mount Currie	Born and raised in the community and lived here all his life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief and Band Council
Lil'wat 10	Mount Currie	Born and raised in Lil'wat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elder • Design Team

Research Stages

For the purposes of this paper and for clarity, the study was broken down into three stages, but the interactions and events flowed back and forth along a continuum that was not contingent on three static stages.

Stage 1: Ethics application and relationship building.

I made several visits to the Lil'wat community from March to December 2005 to reestablish connections with former colleagues, students, and friends. Informal conversations helped to identify some of the current needs of the school and the cultural centre. A proposal was submitted to my supervisory committee in August 2005. Identifying distinct types of knowledge ownership was a vital consideration in this proposal. I submitted an ethics application for human research in November 2005 and received approval in January 2006.

Stage 2: Entry into the community.

Indigenous research methodology and Lil'wat teachings guided my process of entry into the community. After receiving consent from the University, I made formal contact with the band administrator of the Lil'wat Nation. Through telephone conversations and electronic correspondence, I submitted a Request for Chief and Council Approval letter (Appendix F) with the research proposal (Appendix A). In early February, I received an invitation to present my research idea to the Lil'wat Culture, Heritage, and Language Authority (LCHLA) from the Director of the Lil'wat Cultural

Centre. Using a storytelling approach, I presented a picture slideshow and information package on February 20th, 2006 (see Appendix A). This presentation connected me to the community, provided my rationale to give back to the community, and outlined the benefits of the research project, both for the community and for myself. I received approval from the LCHLA in early March 2006.

Stage 3: Project collaboration.

The development of a design team and the project agenda for the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project evolved from March through August 2006. During this phase, I worked closely with the Lil'wat Cultural Centre to ensure that our methods followed the Lil'wat way. As we jointly created the informed consent form for this study (Appendix B), I realized that the templates I used in my ethics application stated that copies of the consent form would be in my possession only and not that of the community. This realization brought out a hidden power dynamic of research collaborations that privileges the researcher. To address this imbalance, the LCHLA and I agreed to make copies for the participants, the Lil'wat Cultural Centre, and the researcher. Committed participants signed the informed consent form before any data were collected for this study. Data collection consisted of individual interviews with members of the design team and with Lil'wat leaders to discover their thoughts on how to conduct research in their community. Meetings and focus group discussions took place on a monthly basis, with the final focus group held in February 2007 to discuss and share interpretations of this study (see Appendix C: Interview Questions and Appendix D: Focus Group Questions). Two external transcribers (who signed confidentiality waivers, see Appendix E) and the researcher transcribed the interviews.

Data Sources

Watchful listening involves being open to listening beyond our personal thoughts and assumptions (Williams, 2006). This Lil'wat way of knowing guided what I conceive of as listening, gathering, and learning, and which academia would classify as data collection. As I listened with my eyes and ears, I gathered my experiences using the methods described below:

- *Field notes*. These documented on-site experiences in the community, design team meetings, community consultations (focus group), interpretive community meetings, community presentations, and interviews.
- *Reflective journal*. Print and digital journal entries documented events, feelings, tensions, and opportunities that transpired throughout the project. Entry times varied based on personal need and directed experiences, such as after the interviews, meetings, presentations, informal conversations in the community, and discussions with members of my interpretive community. In addition, bi-monthly reflections occurred from September 2005 to November 2006 and ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour of reflection time.
- *Individual interviews*. Loosely guided by questions (see Appendix C) our conversations were recorded on a cassette tape recorder, digital voice recorder, or video camera. The interviews lasted between 1 and 2 hours and took place in the community.
- *Meeting notes and electronic correspondence from participants and interpretive community*.

Meaning Making

I borrow the term ‘meaning making’ from Potts and Brown (2005), whose reconstruction of research language resonates within me. Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith speaks of decolonizing research methodologies that reframe “ways in which Indigenous issues and social problems are discussed and handled” (Smith, 2001, p. 153). In addition to reframing the discussion and terms, we must also replace the traditional interpretation methods we use to generate knowledge. History, Smith argues, is “told from the perspective of the colonizers” (p. 29), which directly affects the data interpretation methods the colonizer uses. At the same time, decolonization of research methods does not mean “a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge ... it is about centring [Indigenous] concerns and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from [Indigenous] perspectives” (Smith, 2001, p. 39). Because this PAR study was situated in Indigenous (Lil’wat) pedagogy, I challenged myself to move outside linear methods of data analysis by incorporating an interpretive model that was shaped by Lil’wat ways of knowing as an attempt to understand and write theory that centres Indigenous methodologies and perspectives.

A wide array of theoretical bases in the literature illustrates why and how PAR unfolds in the research design (Hall, Sefa Dei, & Rosenberg, 2000; Tolman & Brydon-Miller, 2001; Weis & Fine, 2004). Unfortunately, few examples exist of documented critical decolonizing methodological procedures for data analysis/interpretation to guide PAR researchers (Creswell, 2002; Srivastava, 2004; Weis & Fine, 2004). This chapter therefore presents a new tool for data analysis to address this gap; this tool also challenges the rift between Western, Indigenous, and my Chinese way of knowing.

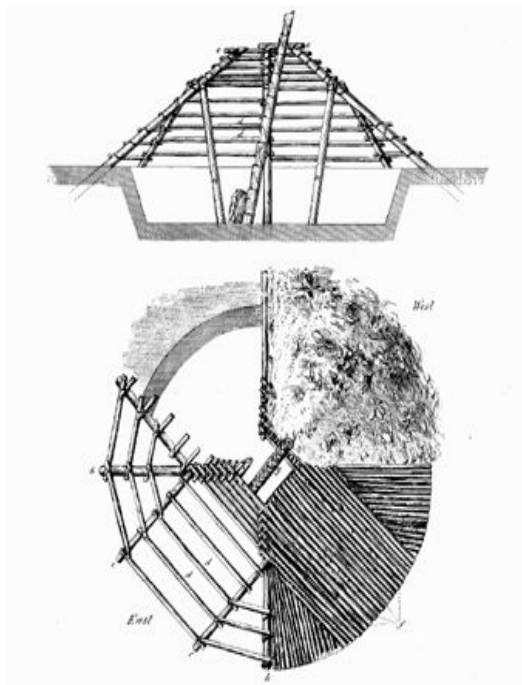
Thin Elk, a Lakota Elder, illuminates the crux of my frustration:

In the scientific way of research they try to understand things by reducing them to parts. Then, they study those parts, and in doing that, they claim ownership over them. That is how they try to achieve control: because they can take something apart, name it, and then reconstruct it and make it work. That is how they claim dominance: the sub-parts become more important than the whole. But these things [traditional Lakota healing and spirituality] cannot be understood in parts. When you break a ceremony down into smaller details, or try to analyze the content of a medicine, the Spirit is lost. Then when they try to make sense of it, or put it back together, there is no Spirit – it is not the same. It will never work. (Thin Elk, cited in Ellerby, 2000, p. 14)

As I struggled to resolve this conflict, an image appeared to me in a dream that later provided a conceptual framework to interpret and illustrate our story/process of research collaboration in this study: the traditional **s7istken** (pit house), a favourite place for Lil'wat7ul children to play. My dream carried me back to my first year of teaching at Xit'olacw Community School during the annual salmon barbecue gathering in September. High school students enrolled in a fish camp 'supercourse' fished for the community and then prepared **t'wain** (dried salmon). At the completion of the course, the whole community gathered on the Lil'wat grounds for a traditional salmon barbeque. We baked potatoes, boiled corn, fried bannock, and, most importantly, barbequed salmon the traditional way – around the fire on sticks. As part of informal rites of passage into the community, first-year staff members were initiated by cleaning about 20 enormous salmon and putting them on the sticks. To honour the salmon and to ensure a plentiful run

next season, the bones of the first salmon eaten were placed ceremoniously back into the river. In my dream, I returned to this place, where I saw the image of four students laughing and climbing on the cedar-shingled roof of the **s7istken** as they peered down the roof hole.

Figure 1. S7istken (pit house) cross section.



Archaeologist James Teit drew this plan and cross section of a pit house built by the Thompson Indians in the Nicola Valley during the 1890s (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2007).

Since time immemorial, Lil'wat ancestors moved from their summer fish camps into winter villages consisting of clustered semi-subterranean dwellings known as **s7istken** (pit houses; see Figure 1; Lil'wat Nation, 2006). Usually one main structure housed the family, with a second **s7istken** for the single males of the family and a third for storage (above and below ground). Each family member, including grandparents and other relatives, had his or her own designated space inside the **s7istken**. Archaeologists

confirm that human beings occupied village sites along the Birkenhead River some 5,500 years ago, “at a time before the Pharaohs ruled Egypt” (Lil’wat Nation, 2006).

The **s7istken** provided a conceptual frame in the form of a metaphor that placed all the elements of our collaboration into the circle and kept the Spirit together as a demonstration of interconnectivity. Metaphors act as a bridge for understanding between one conceptual domain (the target domain) in terms of another conceptual domain (source domain), which leads to a conceptual metaphor (Knowles & Moon, 2006). They are powerful linguistic devices that can be used to link between abstract concepts with touchable, physical structures in everyday life. Sfard (1998) argues that metaphors have a special power in crossing the borders between the spontaneous and the scientific. Moreover, they provide a means of explaining in a way that turns old knowledge into new. Jerome Bruner (1986) suggests metaphors are ‘crutches to help us get up the abstract mountain’ so that we can throw the crutches in exchange for a newly constructed theory (pg. 16). Therefore, the metaphor becomes a tool to center Indigenous knowledges and theory so we can “understand theory and research from [Indigenous] perspectives” (Smith, 2001, p. 39).

Our story of research partnership was akin to the process of building a **s7istken**, which embodied the values, worldviews, and knowledge of the Lil’wat7ul. The s7istken metaphor assists the reader to envision the relationship building process through the visceral process of the s7istken construction. Which supports Black’s (1979) assertion that, “some metaphors enable us to see aspects of reality that the metaphor’s production helps to constitute” (Black, 1979, pg. 89).

Lil'wat culture, knowledge, and values are embedded in this architectural metaphor. Nabokov and Easton's (1989) compilation of *Native American Architecture* explicates a Kickapoo pedagogy: "By our house you will know us" (p. 11). Nabokov and Easton understand architecture:

to embrace what happens whenever human thought or action makes order and meaning of random space: naming places, designating sacred parts of "wilderness," clearing village areas, food-gathering areas, planning and constructing buildings, and arranging the spaces that surround and connect them. Finally, it includes the often unseen social and religious meanings which are encoded into buildings and spatial domains. (Nabokov & Easton, 1989, p. 11)

According to Lorna Williams (personal communication, 2007), the science involved in the **s7istken** construction provided one with an understanding of how the structure worked for the people by meeting their physical and social needs.

Humans and animals imprint their ways of knowing in their organization of space and the structures in which they reside. As an example, the architecture and physical structures in the city of Victoria, such as the legislative buildings, double-decker buses, and many street names, reflect a colonial space; British settlers constructed this space to reflect their worldview and knowledge systems. Yet the Songhees big houses, Kwagiulth totem poles, and diverse Indigenous artwork interspersed throughout the city speak to the rich history and ways of knowing of the Indigenous people, representing three distinct nations, who reside on this island. In learning the science and values involved in creating a structure such as the **s7istken**, I developed a better understanding of Lil'wat ways of knowing, which assisted my interpretation of the research collaboration.

The interpretation process involved two phases, which started with the assembly of the research **s7istken**, using the science of the **s7istken** pit house construction process to frame the stages of our research project. The steps are as follows:

1. Site Selection
2. Digging the Foundation
3. The Four House Posts
4. Roof Beams and Cross Beams
5. The Ladder
6. The Roof

In addition, certain Lil'wat learning and teaching concepts (outlined in chapter 1) provided me with guiding principles during each step of the **s7istken**/research construction. It is important to recognize that this is my synthesis of Lil'wat **s7istken** construction science based on discussions with the participants and Dr. Lorna Williams, as well as on the drawings and documentation of anthropologist James Teit (Boas & Teit, 1906; The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2007). The following example highlights the site selection step in the **s7istken** metaphor used in the meaning-making process.

Phase 1: Construction of the Lil'wat Research Protocol S7istken

Step 1: Site Selection



**Lil'wat Teaching and Learning Concept:
Celhcelh**

Taking responsibility for personal learning and taking initiative to do what needs to be done.

S7istken Construction	Research Construction
Lil'wat7ul surveyed the land to find a site to build the s7istken . Careful attention was paid to ensuring access to water and food, assessing the quality of the soil, and placing the s7istken in relationship to the cardinal direction. (Teit, 1890, cited in The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2007)	During this step, I attended to two sites, those of the Lil'wat and the academic community. Before initiating the research collaboration, I gained as much understanding as possible of both communities to ensure that the project was a good fit. I took the initiative to build relationships with the community, researched community needs and research processes, and learned the governance structures and the process of entering the community. Chapter 3 of this study demonstrates a portion of my site selection process as I took the initiative to learn as much as possible about the regeneration of women's traditional knowledge in the context of the Lil'wat people.

Please refer to the Lil'wat Research Protocols Handbook for a complete description of the six steps of the Lil'wat research **s7istken** (Appendix H). Once I had assembled the research **s7istken** (phase 1), I then incorporated a modified version of Weis and Fine's (2004) Compositional Theory of Method model within the **s7istken** structure as phase 2 of the interpretation process. I analyzed my experiences at sites of praxis within the **s7istken** and produced the findings. This process allowed me to honour the spirit of our story as a whole as I exposed the lessons learned at each site of praxis.

Phase 2: Weis and Fine's Compositional Theory of Method Model

Weis and Fine's (2004) compositional interpretive method highlights the intersection of theory and practice, providing analytical interpretations of the social environment. The compositional theory of method provides concrete applications to "help readers and audiences imagine where the spaces for resistance, agency, and possibility lie" to encourage social change with and by communities (Weis & Fine, 2004, p. xxi). Weis and Fine represent it as "a series of possible design frameworks that may prove

useful in research on social (in)justice” (Weis & Fine, 2004, p. xx). I used this method within the structure of the **s7istken** to read, make meaning, and theorize my data. The method included the following five analytical steps for meaning making:

1. Full compositional analysis
2. First fracturing analysis
3. Counter analysis
4. Historic trajectory
5. Sites for possibility

The Lil’wat Research Protocol **S7istken** represents the first interpretive step, “full compositional analysis,” where I mapped out the process of research as a whole. I surveyed what I gathered and identified patterns that helped me to “view the site through a lens of coherence and integrity” (Weis & Fine, 2004, p. xx). This step involved teasing out dominant and familiar interpretations of the data to yield fundamental theoretical patterns.

The second step, the “first fracturing analysis,” destabilized the first step’s homogenous mapping through an “interior analysis of the institution/community through lines of difference and power” (Weis & Fine, 2004, p. xx). To respect the voices of the participants, I modified this step, which imposes a lens of power and difference that may not be present. Instead, I entered the process of interpretation at sites of praxis where tension or conflict arose within myself and/or the participants during the study and analyzed the hidden meanings. This step exposed the use of language and PAR incongruence as structural conflicts during the site selection phase of the research collaboration.

The third step introduced a “counter analysis” to further complexify and destabilize the fractures in the second step. The aim was to juxtapose “the principle fracture lines with other lines of challenging analysis ... to reveal the competing stories that can be told ... and where mobilization can begin” (Weis & Fine, 2004, p. xxi). The counter analysis allowed me to view my own position and complex intersectionality of being, to link my findings within and across multiple social structures, and to identify specific complexities and contradictions that pervade the data. This step exposed my researcher position and the challenges of incorporating decolonizing research approaches as I navigated the Lil’wat and academic spaces mediated by our histories of colonization.

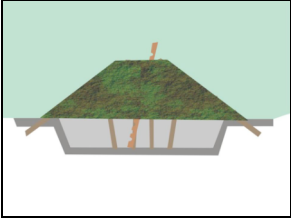
The fourth step, “historic trajectory,” connected the circular relationship between history and the current context of the community, academia, and the researcher. Weis and Fine define this as the “field of force” that sculpts our everyday social practices (Weis & Fine, 2004, p. xxi). In this step, I gained a deeper understanding of the data as I mapped the shifting sociopolitical, cultural, and economic conditions that structured everyday stories in the Lil’wat community, our interactions, and my meaning-making process. This step exposed the historical links to the complexities of defining the Lil’wat community and the lessons that emerged from implementing PAR methodology within Indigenous and non-Indigenous spaces.

The fifth and final step helped to reveal “sites for possibility.” In staying true to action research commitments, Weis and Fine stress that researchers should work toward research findings and outcomes that produce social action. There were many products that emerged from this study which will be presented in Chapter 6.

S7istken Interpretive Model

To connect the **s7istken** and compositional theory of method frameworks together, I borrow from De Finney's (2007) Interpretive Spiral Model as a template for the **S7istken** Interpretive Model. My research question, *What are the lessons that emerged from placing PAR theory into practice in an Indigenous context?* was the entry point for building the research **s7istken**. Once the **s7istken** was completed (phase 1), I modified Weis and Fine's Compositional Method of Theory Model to produce my **S7istken** Interpretive Model.

Table 2: S7istken Interpretive Model

Research Question: <i>What are the lessons that emerged from placing PAR theory into practice in an Indigenous context?</i>	
Lil'wat Research Protocol S7istken (attached as Appendix H)	
Full compositional analysis	<p>Point of entry in the iterative cycle: Site selection – Research community and academic history</p> <p>Interpretive process to address the interpretive question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Organization and coding of what was gathered ii. Theorization through oscillation: Full compositional analysis iii. Checks for congruence and trustworthiness (drawing on

	<p>interpretive community)</p> <p>Central Concept/Ladder: Building respectful relationships</p> <p>Praxis: Language and PAR ideology incongruence</p>
<p>Fracturing, counter analysis, and historical trajectory</p>	<p>Point of entry in the iterative cycle: Digging the foundation – Seeking community approval</p> <p>Interpretive process to address the interpretive question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Coding and critical analysis of what was gathered ii. Theorization through oscillation: First fracturing analysis, counter analysis, and historicized analysis (drawing on Weis and Fine’s compositional theory of method with five interpretive steps) iii. Checks for congruence and trustworthiness (drawing on interpretive community) <p>Praxis: Definition of community; PAR and ethics application process; racialized researcher space</p>
<p>Sites for possibilities</p>	<p>Research question: What are the possibilities for Indigenous research protocols?</p> <p>Point of entry in the iterative cycle: Four house posts – Products and outcomes of the collaboration</p> <p>Interpretive process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Final review and reflections on the four house posts and roof beams ii. Theorization through oscillation: Sites for possibility (drawing on Weis and Fine’s compositional theory of method with five interpretive turns)

	iii. Checks for congruence and trustworthiness (drawing on interpretive community)
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Summary

This project blended participatory action research, Indigenous research, and reflective methodologies to address the needs of a tricultural research collaboration. I was mindful to implement a research design that attended to grievances from the past about research data analyzed through a Western lens. The creation of the **S7istken** Interpretive Model was a tool to attend to this reality. The following chapter provide the findings that emerged from this interpretative model.

CHAPTER FIVE: LESSONS FROM ACTION

This chapter addresses the central research question in the study: “What were the lessons that emerged from placing PAR theory into practice in an Indigenous context?”. The lessons address the guiding questions of “Who is community?” and “What are the issues that arise when Western and Indigenous research protocols, ethics, values, and procedures merge in a research partnership?” The Lil’wat Research Protocols Handbook in Appendix H is the culmination of our work; it offers insights into the approaches we used to address conflicts and tensions within Indigenous/non-Indigenous research partnerships. Although Aboriginal ethics and guidelines exist in academia, few Indigenous communities have developed their own set of criteria to represent the needs of their nation in research collaborations. The following findings are rooted in the needs of the Lil’wat7ul who participated in this study and aims to balance the research guideline opening that existed prior to this study.

Lil’wat7ul Suggestions for Research at the Proposal Development Stage

Researchers are required to engage in an in-depth survey of the literature, methodology, and background information about the possible research site prior to the development of their research proposal. This section elaborates on the research requirements that the Lil’wat7ul would like researchers to fulfill as they are prepare to approach the Lil’wat Nation:

1. Learn the Lil’wat history, impacts of colonization.
2. Prepare to spend time in the community.
3. Locate researcher position in the context of participants and the study.
4. Investigate the history of research in the Lil’wat community.

Learn the Lil'wat History

Until the lion writes his own story, the tale of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. (African Proverb, 2006)

In the past, several researchers such as James Teit and Franz Boas documented Interior Salish culture, dance, ceremony, and knowledge systems (Boas & Teit, 1906). The books were in the colonizers' language and the culture seen through anthropological eyes. Today, the Lil'wat7ul are rewriting their own history, as expressed by this study participant:

Understand, first of all, our history of our people. This will make sure that they are not going to be writing generalized and stereotypical stuff. They need to read a lot of our histories and as Lil'wat. They need to look for information and have an understanding of who we are. (Lil'wat 6, Interview, May 2006)

All of the participants in the study voiced similar sentiments regarding researchers' responsibility to learn the local history from the Lil'wat perspective. This quote provides insight into the participants' resistance to the imperialist accounts of Indigenous peoples, which aimed for the "negation of indigenous views of history [that] was a critical part of asserting colonial ideology" (Smith, 2001, p. 29). To reclaim Lil'wat history is to also understand the history of the present and the critical and essential dimension of decolonization. Another participant reinforced the concept of **celhcelh** (i.e., each person has the responsibility and initiative to do what needs to be done):

I feel the most important thing researchers need to do is to get as much information about the community before entering the community. (Lil'wat 9, Interview, May 2006)

Impacts of Colonization

Well, to me the reserve is our last bastion of freedom. It's a place that I can be without interference, I can live, I can breathe, I can dance, I can ceremony, I can whatever without interference. And when people come looking, asking, seeking, there's a sense of protection because so much

has been exploited. And there's a fear of racism. And fear of whatever it is being sought after is going to be abused, turned about, and made harmful to the person and the community. (Lil'wat 3, Interview, April 2006)

The participants' honest conversations on the topic of colonization speak to the strength and spirit of the community of Lil'wat7ul. The community is redefining their present and future through rewriting and learning from the Lil'wat past. As one participant expressed:

We need to get to know ourselves again, we have to know where we are coming from in order to know where we are going to continue to be First Nations people. (Lil'wat 5, Interview, May 2006)

The deep-seated history of colonization permeated every discussion, interview, meeting, and planning session that I was privy to during this study. During our interview, this participant shared a glimpse of our colonial history:

I think that those breaks caused a lot of people to be afraid to indulge in their language and culture, but it is coming along with the younger generation. They are starting to pick it up and are interested in it. My parents went to residential school and they didn't teach my sisters, brothers and myself, because they were afraid of what would happen to us if we spoke our language and did our cultural dancing and singing because they were punished for doing that in school. (Lil'wat 1, Interview, April 2006)

It is the author's position to present this section as a reminder of the enormous mountain we need to climb to address the impacts of colonization. I want to acknowledge our past and present colonial history in this study, but I do not want to centralize an oppressor by sharing all of the accounts of imperialism through which the Lil'wat community survives today. This history has been written and documented by Indigenous people and there would be no benefit for this study to contribute to what is already known. Colonization is a fact and a part of our history that continues to influence the lives of Lil'wat7ul and Canadian society; it will unquestionably affect all aspects of the

research relationship. I draw out the impacts of colonization in this model but present the findings in a manner that counters the negative pathology discourse.

Prepare to Spend Time in the Community

To learn the history of the Lil'wat people is not a simple process, for learning is not based solely on what we find in books and academic journals or on the Internet. Participants unanimously supported the idea of spending time in the community to really understand the place, the people, and the history so that researchers are **celhcelh**. This participant articulates the relevance of research studies emerging from community experience:

You really have to sacrifice to live here if you are going to do research. For me, that is something researchers have to do so they can experience and understand everything that goes on here. Before you can actually pick something here. (Lil'wat 5)

Another participant stated:

Upon entering or even before entering the community, researchers should participate in as much community events as possible to learn and meet Lil'wat7ul. (Lil'wat 9, Interview, June 2006)

PAR centres on participants setting the agenda of the research study, but it falls short of requiring researchers to seek an understanding of the needs and desires of a community before approaching the community for research purposes. The two participants above shared a desire for researchers to develop genuine relationships with the community before embarking on research inquiries or research relationships.

Locate Researcher Position in the Context of Participants and the Study

Researchers working in an Indigenous space, embody a complicated, political and contentious history stemming from the legacy of colonization (McShane & Hastings, 2004; Smith, 2001). To move into a new era of research, we as outsiders need to

understand this history which is countered by the Lil'wat community's commitment to rebuilding and healing. As a starting point to address these needs, researchers should recognize their own location in this history.

One participant commented on outsiders who

[ignored their position in colonialism and] came in with completely Western civilization glasses on and judged and interpreted everything in that way, they ended up with distorted information and biased information. (Lil'wat 2, Interview, April 2006)

Researchers have the opportunity to create social change through the use of research methods that address the historical power imbalance between the researcher and the researched. Montour's "helicopter" analogy, described in chapter 2, has a history in the Lil'wat community (McShane & Hastings, 2004), as this participant recalls:

She used the results or whatever in her thesis, and ... I didn't find her very open about what she was doing and I didn't like it. And I brought it up.... I haven't seen her but I talked to people that have seen her.... I've asked them about it because she was going to provide copies to us about the results. I have yet to see that. (Lil'wat 3, Interview, April 2006)

The outcomes of such research have sometimes benefited Lil'wat7ul and sometimes inflicted harm through inaccurate representations of the community. One participant shared his recollection of past research in the Lil'wat community:

I have seen a lot of research that have been done within the community or elsewhere and some of them are good work and some of them are you know are not. Some of them basically we can't use it or it's not all true. (Lil'wat 10, Interview, April 2006)

The participants expressed their view that the process of understanding the research history in the community will give researchers insight into where the researcher is positioned in the community upon initial entry.

Investigate the History of Research in the Lil'wat Community

Our names, stories, you name it hasn't been passed onto us because of residential school. So when I came home and had my family, I was hungry for the information and I thank all the people who have come into our communities, like Teit. And I feel thankful for them and as I watch community members as they discover something from our past, like pictographs, petroglyphs. They will go match it up with ethnographers' research, stories that were told in our language, they are gone now. So it is there, through the recordings, through the written transcripts or whatever. We can recover through the research that has been done. (Lil'wat 6, Interview, May 2006)

In the past, ethnographers and linguists came into the community to document Lil'wat culture, traditional stories, songs, and ceremony. This documentation has provided useful resources for the Lil'wat community to regenerate and rewrite aspects of their culture and language as they compare these documents with the community knowledge keepers. However, certain researchers have also left a legacy of mistrust through research practices and unequal partnerships that advanced the researchers' careers with no benefits to the community. For example, a writer published a book of Lil'wat Elder stories and photographs without the permission of the LCHLA, wherein the profits from the sales go directly to the writer, with no benefits to the community. Furthermore, Lil'wat community members have identified many inaccurate representations in the stories (Lil'wat 6, Interview, May 2006; Lil'wat 7, Interview, April 2006).

There have also been researchers who provided inappropriate forms of incentives, such as alcohol, in order to gain access to traditional stories for research purposes (Lil'wat 6, 7, 8, Interviews, May 2006). Some research findings did not give truthful portrayals of the Lil'wat community because a lack of **celhcelh** of the Lil'wat way. Most

participants expressed their displeasure when researchers failed to consult with community members to ensure correct representation during the data analysis phase:

Everyone hates to get portrayed in a negative way and especially when it is based on a misunderstanding on what they see, and the community has had that happen and it happens all the time. And so, they don't want to be involved in that kind of portrayal of Lil'wat people. (Lil'wat 4, Interview, June 2006)

Rising from past research practices is a new era of research in the Lil'wat community. One participant emphasized the role of research in the community:

People [Lil'wat7ul] want to redefine what's traditional and what gives them strength and what they want to hang onto and what needs to be changed. And I don't know any other way besides research to do that, really. It's the vehicle to make that happen. (Lil'wat 2, Interview, May 2006)

This is a powerful statement that argues against static and bounded assumptions that are made when the terms 'traditional' and 'Indigenous peoples' are grouped together. The statement demonstrates the growing, building, and evolving people I have come to know. At the same time, the overall community vision may not attach the same significance to research:

The council doesn't really have a research agenda. They have a strategic plan and if something really fits to advance one of the areas in the plan, then they would look at it. But for the most part, if they are not driving the research, it is not their project; they don't really care in a way to advance that person's project. (Lil'wat 4, Interview, June 2006)

This is an opportunity for the community to define a research agenda along the lines of their strategic plan so research works in the favour of the community. The Lil'wat7ul are transparent in their vision to strengthen the community and the people and will support research initiatives that will support movement in this direction. (Design team meeting notes March, April, May and June, 2006)

The PAR Relationship

PAR is well supported by Indigenous communities because its methods encourage the development of agency by which participants can create change in their lives. With good intentions, PAR methodology names “marginalized” and “oppressed” groups as the principal research partners (Hall, 1981; Tandon & Fernandes, 1984). With each reading of PAR literature, I could not help but to feel unease in naming the girls and women I worked with as oppressed. They are not oppressed; they are dynamic individuals with resolute strength comparable to that of my great-grandmother.

As I reflected more on the hidden assumptions in the terms ‘marginalized’ and ‘oppressed,’ a power relationship emerged that, ironically, PAR aspires to offset. The sheer fact that the researcher imposes the labels of marginalized or oppressed on the community privileges the researcher in a power position. PAR methods create an environment rich in potential for transformative engagement, but the ideological assumption of subjugated participants in need of liberation contributes to paternalistic attitudes entrenched in colonial positions of liberator and victim. The time has come to revisit and reframe this point of praxis from the community perspective and examine the connotations that PAR ideological language imposes on community partners.

Who is the Community?

The term ‘community’ is as diverse as the ocean and mountain geography of the Lil’wat territory. Researchers interested in working with an Indigenous community are required by the ethics application (University of Victoria, 2006) to seek “Aboriginal community approval.” In theory, the measure to seek community approval ensures a consultation process to establish balanced research relationships. When this theory is

placed on the ground, however, we are confronted with a larger question: Is there a governing body in the position to represent all the members in the community? Herein lies the challenge of defining community, for “community” is fraught with contradictions that are unknown to an outsider and involved to an insider.

During interviews, I posed the questions “Who is the community? Who represents the community?” The participants unanimously responded that community was structured along lines of membership and governance systems that exist in the Lil’wat Nation. More specifically, participants interpreted community in terms of how one belongs to the community and of the legal structures in place that define one’s membership. No single definition encompasses the multiple facets of community, and the criteria for community membership are equally complex.

Indigenous belonging in a colonized space is a delicate and controversial issue that intersects Indigenous politics, pre- and colonial history, and an imposed political state of being by Canadian law that regulates inclusion and exclusion to a community.

One participant shared the hybridity of Lil’wat⁷ul belonging:

I think that it gets a little confusing because there’s a government definition imposed on the people and some people totally accept that definition, but there’s also a traditional definition ... I don’t think it’s totally sorted out. I think the band is working on a membership code, but you get a lot of friction that way. Whether people really came from here in the beginning or not, are they really Lil’wat or are they not. It can become an issue, if people want to make an issue. (Lil’wat 2, Interview, May 2006)

This quote illuminates the convoluted layers of community belonging, where the colonial systems press the concept of authenticity and who is Indigenous. But, more importantly, who defines this term? Exclusionary policies in the B.C. treaty process require Indigenous peoples to provide evidence of their existence at contact.

Paradoxically, every Canadian student taking Social Studies 10 can read in their textbook that the Nuu-chah-nulth peoples occupied the west coast during Captain Cook's "discovery." The participants identified the unequal, gender-biased government definition represented by the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), renamed Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). One participant shared her perspective on disenfranchisement based on the INAC system of membership when she married outside the Lil'wat Nation:

How did I lose my status? I am the same person. I still know my language and I was brought up in this community, how come I cannot belong to it anymore? (Lil'wat 8, Interview, May 2006)

Some members of the Lil'wat community resist and reject the forced labels and do not engage in activities associated with INAC. Most participants expressed the tensions of an "almost impossible choice that is imposed by Canadian law, between meeting their identity needs through the [Lil'wat7ul] system, and meeting their pragmatic needs through the imposed band council system" (Chataway, 2000, p. 253). As exemplified by this participant:

There are two groups in the community... there is one group who pulled out of the DIA system. I have a concern about them if they will survive or not. They are outside the system and any funding from DIA. They have no voice and they choose to not be in the DIA system and so they will not have a voice about research. Yet they have footage taken of them [by researchers, without their permission]. (Lil'wat 5, Interview, May 2006)

This dual system of governance has implications for researchers and draws out the invisible assumptions about community held by academic institutions and the broader society. Is the community represented by an imposed governing structure that elects people to represent only the community members who are in this system? Or is the community represented by the traditional system of governance that is outside of INAC control? As researchers, the choice we make in terms of who we approach in the

community for research approval is a political act that will acknowledge and privilege one system of governance over the other.

To gain a better understanding of the complexities and paradoxes posed here, please refer to the Lil'wat Research Protocols Handbook (Appendix H) for a more detailed illustration of Lil'wat community membership and governance systems identified by the participants.

Praxis of Ethical Research and PAR

With the growing number of researchers using PAR as the methodological framework, governing ethics boards are in the process of redefining structures that traditionally centre Western research methods. I was challenged by the University of Victoria's current ethics application form because it requires detailed procedures and questions that counter PAR's emergent principles. For example, question 9b, on methodology and procedures, requests that researchers:

Provide a sequential description of the procedures/methods to be used in your research study. List all of your research instruments and assessment tools, and in an appendix provide copies of all instruments. If not yet available, provide drafts or sample items/questions. For multi-method or other complex research, use this section and the following sections in ways best suited to explain your project.

(University of Victoria, 2006)

The application provides a space for researchers involved in complex research such as PAR to speak to the evolving design framework. However, there is a gap in the process that fails to meet the needs of participant engagement in the research design of PAR involving community consultations in the creation of forms, research questions,

methods, etc. There is no space in the application process that provides a structure for recursive dialogues between the researcher, the participants, and the ethics board.

In this study, the Office of Research Services at the University of Victoria addressed this issue by segmenting my project into two phases: community consultations and project collaboration. During the first phase of the project, I consulted with participants about project relevance, research design, methods, forms, etc. I then reported back to the ethics board with the second phase of the research project and the forms produced from our discussions. This structure provided an alternative to the traditional structure of the researcher entering the community with preconceived questions, documents, and protocols. This collaborative model may not be appropriate for all research structures, but it provides evidence of possibility and a space within the evolving ethics application process to meet the emergent needs of PAR methodologies.

Racialized Researcher Space

Audre Lorde (1979, cited in Olsen, 2000) coined the phrase, “The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”; she identified the master’s tools as explicit, systemic, designated techniques of domination through the exercise of political power, moral judgment, and social privilege (cited in Olsen, 2000). During the meaning-making process, I became conscious of how I had used the master’s tools to assemble his house in the way I framed the question on perceptions. Because I wanted to make visible the relationship between Other and Other, I had asked, “What are your perceptions of a visible minority researcher such as myself coming into the community to do research?” I found I had used essentialized categories to search for differences and similarities to unintentionally provide evidence to the master’s house to justify different treatment for

different races. Historically, Western science has focused on providing evidence of differences between white and the Other, but in this study it was the Other researching the Other. I questioned why is this important knowledge to expose? Would I reproduce the same system I aimed to dismantle? My data could provide evidence of racial differences based on skin colour and ethnicity and this might justify racially based research. How had this happened with the care and attention I put into decolonizing my own research processes and practices? bell hooks speaks to this question:

Every black person and person of colour colludes with the existing system in small ways every day, even those among us who see ourselves as anti-racist radicals. This collusion happens simply because we are all products of the culture we live within and have all been subjected to the forms of socialization and acculturation that are deemed normal in society. (hooks, 2003, p. 35)

This was a very important point of praxis for me personally as an anti-racist/peace educator and social activist. This paradigm shift challenged me to delve deeper into my thoughts and assumptions as I chip away at my lifetime of colonial training. The journey of working toward decolonization is filled with landmines so hidden that you could step on one and not realize it has gone off. As I stepped on my own landmines in this study, I was forced to acknowledge my contribution to the master's house. Now I aim to dismantle my carpentry work.

There are social justice academics who are committed to challenging “the box” and, more importantly, teaching through a critical lens. I want to acknowledge those individuals who are fighting most of the time in isolation and in an ongoing state of **cwelelep**. Without **cwelelep**, complacency sets in as one of the master's tools of

domination. When I began this research process, I was content in how I had framed the interview question on perceptions. I did not challenge the hidden assumptions, nor did the institution dispute them. Through the process of reflection-in-action, I uncovered my use of the master's tools. From this experience I learned that to be involved in a process of decolonization is to be in a state of discomfort and uncertainty that reminds us that we are resisting the norm. The institution did not contest this line of questioning because we have been socialized as a society to believe that differences exist, but the explanations for those disparities need to be exposed to counter the embedded essentialism inherent in our colonial education system.

Cultural and biological differences certainly exist between people (e.g., skin colour, cultural values, religious beliefs, and languages), but these differences are neither markers of superiority nor the basis of relationships between cultural or ethnic groups. Relationships require a personal investment of risk where each person in the partnership gambles exposing themselves to a total stranger. It would be a grave injustice to represent complex relationships based on superficialities such as culture and phenotypes. Therefore, this section will elaborate the hidden layers of a respectful collaboration despite essentialized differences, mediated by whiteness, between a racialized researcher and members of an Indigenous community.

Open Spaces

My first day of school at Xit'olacw was filled with excitement and endless possibilities. The school had an informal teacher/student relationship where we were on a first name basis, so nobody knew that my last name was Chow. At the end of the day, one

of my students asked me which community I was from. I responded, “Edmonton.” He looked confused and replied, “Oh, I thought you were from around here.”

This moment has replayed over and over for me in different Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities; the difference is the inference to where I am from. To the white community, I am not from here, and the question is posed with the intention of eliciting a response that locates me in China. Some Indigenous community members accept my answer but are curious as to which Indigenous territory I am from. Because my phenotype closely resembles some Indigenous people’s, it opened up spaces for building relationships with some community members. As one participant commented, “*Yeah, when I first met you at the meeting, I wasn’t sure if you were from here. And I kept on looking at you to see which community you might be from, maybe from the West Coast or something*” (Lil’wat 9, Interview, June 2006). One participant articulates the reverse of this:

I am thinking about how you might get some space just because some people are not sure.... But here is the reverse of that, I’m Métis and I get passed off as Italian, Puerto Rican, rarely as First Nations, you know like White, right. So for me, I share a lot of stuff with First Nations people but I don’t get the benefit of the perception. (Lil’wat 4, Interview, June 2006)

Both examples demonstrate once again the complexities of belonging, identity, and community membership. Phenotypes commonly open and close doors for people depending on the context and the environment one is entering, but to keep the door open requires more than biological similarities.

Character Matters

Regardless of skin colour or ethnicity, personal character will determine whether you will be invited into the house for tea. All participants shared similar comments on the importance of individual character:

What makes a difference in my mind... people will judge the individual. Sometimes though I guess getting in the door, it may be helpful that you are non-white. But once you are in the door... people I think evaluate like your energy, passion, compassion like you know, a general sense of... Can we get along with this person? (Lil'wat 4, Interview, June 2006)

In addition to character, all participants emphasized the need to build trust in relationships. The following quote conveys a more explicit requirement of researcher integrity expressed by a participant. For the Lil'wat7ul, the measurement of one's character is evaluated not by letters after one's name, commonly used in the Western world, but through a Lil'wat knowledge system based on an intuitive process of deduction:

A non-Native person coming here ... we probably could feel what their ultimate goal is. If it is with integrity and trust building, we wouldn't differentiate between a minority such as yourself and them [white researchers]. (Lil'wat 6, Interview, April 2006)

Our collaboration was the result of a deep level of trust and respect which had been nurtured over 15 years. Therefore, it is important to contextualize our relationship that was initiated before the date of ethics approval to truly uncover the process of trust building in this study. Before entering the Lil'wat Nation as a teacher, I had limited understanding of colonialism or Indigenous peoples' histories in Canada. My academic training had provided one lesson on Canadian history that covered residential schools from a colonial perspective with an Alberta focus. The discourse on Indigenous peoples today and the impacts of colonization were outside my university's radar.

During the first month of working and living in the community, I learned by fire because I had no knowledge of the Lil'wat community, history, or protocols. But I held the teachings of my family close to my heart, where I was taught to enter all relationships as if you are visiting a friend's home for the first time. You enter the house by

acknowledging everyone in the home, attending to the eldest person first. I was taught to never show up empty handed, to show appreciation, and to not be demanding of the host. Many homes opened up to me as I integrated my experiential learning/teaching philosophy with the community's desire for cultural revitalization. I shared myself through teaching, coaching, and participating in community events but, more specifically, I imparted who I was as well as my roots. I shared my Chinese culture when I saw similarities, such as the importance of the colour red, and differences, such as the number four.⁶ Through honesty and humour, we bridged the outsider/insider gap and I gradually gained the trust of my students and the community members.

I had a mountain to climb to gain the students' trust, and this was made evident when one student asked me after the first week of school, "How long are you going to stay?" There was visible unease in the class as they awaited my response because in the last year, they had had three teachers; one stayed for three months, another for one, and the last teacher had left after five months in the community. Retaining qualified teachers for the long term is a constant battle for school administrators in rural communities such as Xit'olacw Community School. Many factors contribute to this challenge, including remote distances, limited resources, culture shock, differential pay scales for public and independent schools, and housing shortages. These systemic barriers are the common reasons teachers leave the Lil'wat community, but most students and community members associate their departure on a more personal level. They resist developing a relationship with an outsider because they know from experience that the teacher is unlikely to stay until the end of the school year, let alone see them graduate. I responded,

⁶ The number 4 in Chinese sounds like the word death. But for the Lil'wat, four is a sacred number that represents the four cardinal directions.

“I’m going to stay a while, you’re not going to get rid of me that easily” (Chow, field notes, December 2006).

Trust building was an involved process: I needed to understand the history of the Lil’wat people and their experiences with strangers to contextualize the roots of their fear of the unknown. As an outsider to the community, I embodied this unknown, and it was my responsibility to demystify who I was to the students and Lilwat7ul. I elaborate on this process of trust building in the Four House Posts section.

Shared Histories

During the interviews, the participants confirmed the embedded histories of colonization and shared strategies of resistance between Indigenous and Chinese communities. All the participants agreed that primarily white researchers have conducted research in the Lil’wat community since contact.

Most of what has been done... that has not been good has been done by the majority white European, Caucasian. And then with other minority groups... they have more in common supposedly throughout the crests of history. (Lil’wat 2, Interview, May 2006)

Similar to Indigenous peoples in Canada, racialized groups were excluded from belonging to this land with policies such as the Chinese head tax and Japanese internment during World War II. One participant explained:

They [racialized peoples] understand what it feels like to not belong in the dominating group. It’s like a comradeship. (Lil’wat 2, Interview, April 2006)

We also share a legacy of our having our ancestry written from the colonizers’ perspective, which provides a shared consciousness of understanding imperialist power systems, as stated by this participant:

Personally I have always felt that minorities, in the way of visible minorities or sexual orientation minorities, is that they all have a common

experience of oppression. There should be greater sensitivities to the way power works in society and the way people experience power and positions of power. (Lil'wat 4, Interview, June 2006)

During the 1900s various Indigenous and Chinese groups developed relationships under whiteness, as they lived in close proximity to each other (Li, 1998). This cross-cultural space provided opportunities to learn of similarities of the Other, as expressed by one participant:

Some other minorities, they have the same strength and extended family, some of their ways are a little bit more similar to the First Nations way of thinking. (Lil'wat 2, Interview, May 2006)

From my experience, we also shared some common social protocols. At the first LCHLA presentation, I gave the board members a package of Chinese treats as a token of thanks for inviting me back to the community. One participant commented:

I thought it was nice that you brought some things [gift bag of food] for the people up there ... I thought that was your Chinese way, because that is the way we are too. We bring a little something. (Lil'wat 7, Interview, April 2006)

It is important to note that although racialized and Indigenous peoples share a history of colonization, differences exist in the methods of exclusion and the effects of the “formula for domination” (Smith, 2001, p. 68).

A Pecking Order

A shared space of history and learning has created some strong bonds of friendship between some racialized and Indigenous communities in Canada. Lines of difference have sometimes been hidden, however, especially within the current discourse of racism that constructs a white/coloured binary. To make visible the invisible on racial perceptions is a challenging process because it may not paint everyone in a good way. I write this with a good heart and with the intention to open conversations about an

uncomfortable reality: the “othering” of the Other. Open and honest dialogue may open up sites for possibility to counter the essentialist constructions of the Other that are escalating racial tensions around the world.

In Canada, regardless of where we are from, we all share a common history of colonization where our relationships are mediated under the colonial system that labels racialized and Indigenous peoples as “the Other”. In this study, there were moments of discomfort when discussing the perception of white researchers coming into the community because, as one participant expressed, “*I don’t want to sound racist*” (Lil’wat 7, Interview, April 2006). The level of unease increased when participants acknowledged their perceptions of other racialized groups:

See I wonder if it is different for different visible minorities too. Because I have noticed, and this is not scientific ... there is an uneasiness with black people and I’ve heard, kinda of racial negativity that I would expect to hear from mainstream society. (Lil’wat 4, Interview, June 2006)

This quote indicates how deeply embedded colonization has become in the community through the use of the master’s tools. We learned the hierarchy of oppression through imperialist structures in our Canadian history, as demonstrated in ethnic pay rates used by CN Railway that created an environment of racial segregation (Li, 1998). Even though the railway has long since been completed, this quote brings to light that the space we live in today is still refereed by whiteness at the centre. As the Other, we have learned where we fit in this hierarchy, and our place is rooted in the history we learn in school and in mainstream society. One participant commented:

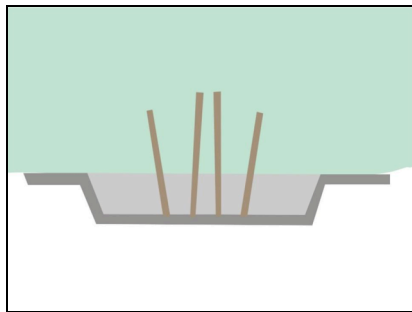
On the other hand I have noticed some ... racism ... it’s not healthy thinking, but it is out there with some people, and it probably comes from their own ... being humiliated or ashamed as a people. They’ll sometimes look at another group and think, “Well at least we’re better than them” sort of thing, which is just practicing what they were taught. I think a

pecking order or something. When I see that I feel really sad, because I don't think that's traditional at all. (Lil'wat 2, Interview, June 2006)

This speaker identified othering as “practicing what they were taught,” which links racism to a learned behaviour. It is a fact that we are not born with racist thoughts but, through the process of socialization, we learn the dominant social cues and values. This fact engenders hope, for we can also unlearn what we have learned. It begs the question: What methods of instruction must teachers use to rupture this cycle of Othering? Are the histories we teach in school creating racial hierarchies that continue to support a racist, colonial agenda of segregating the Other? How do we teach so that students learn that differences mean ‘normal’ and not ‘inferior’? These questions have serious implications for the education system.

The Four House Posts in the Research S7istken

Figure 2. Four house posts.



The four house posts in our research process mirrored the structural support function of the **s7istken**'s four house posts. As I interpreted the interviews, our process, and project meetings, I found four central themes that were foundational and instrumental to our collaboration. Each stood alone as a state or quality of being, but, when assembled together, they created the pillars of the research process for this study. The four house posts are:

1. Trust
2. **Kat'il'a**
3. Family
4. Sharing

Trust

Once I received approval from the LCHLA, I worked closely with the Lil'wat Cultural Centre coordinators. I did not have a previous relationship with the director of the centre, who was also the community gatekeeper to researchers. She expressed, "*I've heard a lot about you from the teachers at the school and the people here, but I am going to make up my mind for myself*" (Field notes, March 2006). Gaining her trust was essential to working in the community. Throughout the planning process, I sensed a tremendous wall of protection toward the community from her. I did my best to share what I knew of the Lil'wat community and my connections with certain families, but she still considered me an outsider after several months of meetings. Before her interview, I gave her a gift of tobacco and she stated:

Now you are talking my language. You know I am a sweatlodge keeper and this is medicine for me. I take this gift from you and you have my word that I am committed to this project. This is our contract. (Field notes, April 2006)

This story reveals the complexity of trust building, as the director and I came to the table with different cultural worldviews. This experience illuminates one of the challenges that emerge when Western protocols buttress against Indigenous protocols. We were using two different knowledge systems to communicate even though we conversed in the English language. The director's wall of protection was rooted in a long history of mistrust of outsiders who used research and education as tools for colonization.

Trust was one of the four house posts of our research relationship; trust was opposed by fear of the unknown. This fear functioned as a barrier between the binaries of researcher/participant, Indigenous/non-Indigenous, or insider/outsider. One Elder expressed her encounters with outside researchers in this way:

Our experience with the non-Native world is of course they are judgmental and put on their stereotypical glasses and stuff like that and in awe of our beliefs. For a non-Native to come in and do research, they need to know more about our community and gain that trust from the community. Gain the respect from the community. And actually understand a bit of what they are talking about a certain practice, the purpose of that and the way it is practiced. (Lil'wat 6)

Another Elder gave insight into her fear and confusion during her first contact with an Indian agent:

I was sitting in my porch and cleaning corn. My husband was at work and it was just me and the baby at home here. And then this white guy comes around and I was really scared because we were alone. (laughter) I didn't have a phone or anything. This guy comes along to see what I am doing and then he said, "I'm the Indian agent."

An Indian agent? How could he say he was an Indian agent, when he was white? I was wondering if he knew what Indian was? (laughter)

And he looked at my house and said, "You know you can get windows and flooring for your house? I could have some shipped out here for you."

I responded, "Well you would have to talk to my husband and I don't know how he would pay for them."

And he said, "Oh no, you don't have to pay for them."

I was so surprised, I didn't know if I could trust him because he was telling me that I could get something for nothing. I was really scared, I didn't know what an Indian agent was. (laughter) Nowadays, you try to get something for free ... (laughter). (Lil'wat 7, Interview, April 2007)

The Elders all shared stories of recollection of their first contact with a white person. The stories linked their memories to a fear of strangers and illuminated the different social protocols for entering into a conversation. To counter the unknown, we need to make it known. In this study, I gained the trust of the participants by showing transparent intentions and an honest interest in learning, as well as by sharing what I had

learned from the community. As I used the Ucwalmicwts words from the Lil'wat learning and teaching section, I was conscious of the pronunciations so I would not offend the language speakers in the group. One Elder expressed:

*I think it is great how you used our language in the right way and used the **s7istken** to represent the work we did. It is very creative. (Field notes, February 2007)*

Language is an expression of culture, and through learning and reflecting the meaning of the Ucwalmicwts language, I developed a better understanding of the Lil'wat ways of knowing.

Kat'il'a

Kat'il'a is an Ucwalmicwts word meaning 'to find stillness amid our busyness and need to know' (Williams, 2006). This second house post was a quality of being that I experienced as patience in order for me to find my stillness. In research, we have a pressing agenda for the "need to know" on a fast-paced scale, but for this study, I practiced patience to gain insight into Lil'wat communication styles so that I could fully comprehend the information shared by community members. Answers to my questions emerged from numerous interactions with the participants, which required personal reflection and time. Direct questioning produced the minimal responses from most participants. The following quotes provide insight into the Lil'wat communication style that I attended to throughout the project:

But some people talk a lot and really fast. They talk like they know even if they don't know. That stuff really turns people off, right. Talks too much ... I can't get my words in ... what does he know ... and so I think they [the community members] evaluate more on those kinds of clues that people send out. (Lil'wat 4, Interview, June 2006)

I was used to the Western style of debating and jumping in, which is considered very rude here. And probably the statement that you make to the people when you do this is you don't think very much about what other

people say. When you first get involved in the community, you're used to the Western way. You don't really realize that it's respectful and that you're suppose to be thinking about what the person said and not answer right away and argue right away. (Lil'wat 2 Interview, April 2006)

It's a whole different way of communicating. And it is hard to get used to, hard to even figure out at first because you're not aware of it. You're not told about it. Because in the Western civilization it seems like the faster you talk, the quicker you can answer is looked at the smarter you are. Not so here. And this probably has something to do with some of the children who have trouble in the education system because of that difference. (Lil'wat 2, Interview, April 2006)

You can't just get an answer right now. These are what people have attempted to do, time after time. They feel frustrated because they can't get the answer, because they're not sensitive to the response that they're getting. (Lil'wat 3, Interview, April 2006)

Lil'wat7ul, generally there's a lot of body talk, without even realizing it and... I don't even know if people here realize it, they just do speak like that. Being sensitive in that way so that you are getting the answers that you're seeking, knowing that those answers may come in a variety of forms. (Lil'wat 3, Interview, April 2006)

Family

Family was the third house post in the research process. In the English language, 'family' is a noun that represents a collective of people affiliated by birth or marriage (Wikipedia, 2007). In my observations and discussions with participants, 'family' is a verb, which is expressed by certain actions that are dynamic, intersecting, and shifting. It is more than a noun or a name. The Lil'wat family is supportive, interconnected, loving, caring, and growing. Regardless of the political definition of community, Lil'wat Nation is made up of family groups who are intricately woven together to form a connected and related collective through their actions as a family. In our collaborative research process, we identified family as the Lil'wat way of being that involves **kamucwkalha**, the energy indicating group cohesion around a common goal (Field notes, February 2007).

Conversations during meetings and consultations always reinforced the centrality of

family in the research design and participation. We were careful to nurture the family dynamics and relationships of everyone involved in the project. Each family group had a strong and distinct sense of family pride and history. I had to be aware of these distinctions and respect the different needs of each family group as I worked with various community members. We had to ensure methods of inclusive representation from all family groups in the community so that no one was left out. One participant shared her perception of the community and the deep-rootedness of family:

There is a very strong component of group living and it is different from living in a non-Native town or village. There's something that goes much deeper than even some small towns, they get really close knit. But there's something that goes deeper than that in a First Nations community. And probably because for a lot of First Nations communities, extended families stay in that community, so there's a lot of extended family in one area, in one place. You know the old saying, "blood is thicker than water."
(Lil'wat 2, Interview, May 2006)

Sharing

Sharing was the fourth house post of the research process; it combines the other house posts of trust, **kat'il'a**, and family. Sharing in the Lil'wat way is reciprocal, as Elders expressed: *"If they [outsiders] want to learn, we teach them"* (Lil'wat 6, 7, 8, Interviews). The Lil'wat7ul informed and supported the first settlers as they attempted to survive their first winter in the valley because this was the Lil'wat way. The Lil'wat7ul continue to uphold this pedagogy today as they share and open their homes to outsiders who are genuine in their intentions to learn. Ironically, when I presented this project at an academic conference, one audience member questioned this principle of sharing framed in my methodology, *"Well, what if they don't want to share information with you, then would you go back to square one?"* (Field notes, March 2006). This question illuminates the divergent social values around sharing held by the questioner and the Lil'wat7ul. The

question reflects a social value of knowledge ownership that is individualistic and the principle of personal choice in regard to the act of sharing information with others. If we examine the word **celhcelh**, it involves a social value of responsibility to learn and do what needs to be done for the collective. Sharing is the responsibility of the knowledge keepers and the knowledge seeker. If we as researchers do not search for the answers and methods with an understanding of the social values of the participants and community members, than we do not enter the relationship as equals. Academia holds an assumption that Indigenous communities protect their knowledge and do not want to share it with others; this assumption reflects Western values of knowledge as a commodity. One participant countered this assumption by saying:

We have been given that knowledge from the Great Creator. As the traditional Lil'wat people, you can have knowledge about it but you can never own it. (Lil'wat 6 Interview, May 2006)

According to Lil'wat values, knowledge is not owned, it is meant to be shared. At the same time, some knowledge is sacred and is therefore protected. Sharing is based on a reciprocal relationship. The outcomes presented in the following chapter demonstrate the benefits of reciprocal sharing that emerged from this study.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings to the central research question: “What were the lessons that emerged from placing PAR theory into practice in an Indigenous context?” These findings was a result of our collaborations wherein we problematized research language and identified ideology incongruence in PAR. We also addressed gaps in the literature pertaining to definition of the community; ethics application and PAR methods; and racialized researcher space. Trust, **kat'il'a**, family, and sharing emerged as

our four house posts to our collaboration that ensured our research process would stand tall.

The outcomes of this study and recommendations for future research will be shared in the following chapter as sites for possibilities.

CHAPTER SIX: SITES FOR POSSIBILITIES

Weis and Fine (2004) recommend that the final step of action research is for researchers to fulfill the commitments involved in working toward findings and outcomes that produce social action. In this final chapter, I share with you the outcomes of our research collaboration. These outcomes provide insights into possibilities for researchers who are interested in working with Indigenous communities using decolonizing approaches. I also suggest, as an outcome of the findings, sites of possibilities for resistance, in terms of both academia and the Lil'wat community.

Partnership Agreement

To connect the trust and sharing house posts in the research **S7istken**, the participants identified two structures to guide each partner in developing a respectful partnership which outlined roles and expectations: (1) a letter of approval from Chief and Council and (2) a Memorandum of Understanding. These structures use a Western government model of print and legal proceedings to ensure that partners adhere to the roles and responsibilities of the collaboration. The complex layers of community approval presented in chapter 5 made choosing between the two systems of governance a challenging choice for me as a researcher. My knowledge of the division between the government-imposed and the traditional form of governance based on Lil'wat family social organization placed me in an ethical dilemma. Based on recommendations of the participants in this study, I approached the government system for approval. At the same time, to balance the Western structures, I made my best effort to speak to members of each family group in the community about the project to respect the formal family governance structure.

Community Member Guide

Once I had received approval from the Chief and Council and the LCHLA, one of the cultural centre coordinators gave me a tour of the community and reintroduced me to many of the parents I knew from my teaching years. She was a tremendous guide and resource for me in terms of re-establishing trust and relationships in the community. She also networked with community members to help promote the project because she wanted *“to make sure people knew what was going on and they [community members] won’t talk to you unless they trust you. I want to make sure they give you a chance”* (Field notes, March 2006). The participants suggested that part of the Lil’wat Research Protocol should be the establishment of a trusted community member guide whose specialty is in the field of the research study. This person would act as a mediator between the community and the researcher. This person would be responsible for introducing the researcher to various community members and leaders. The guide would address concerns from community members who may be inquiring, “Who is this stranger? What is s/he doing?” and would also assist the researcher in developing an understanding of Lil’wat ways of knowing. The guide would update the LCHLA and the Chief and Council to monitor the progress of the research project. The challenge to this structure is implementation, due to the limited time and resources available to the community. Most community experts have full schedules related to their commitments to building the community; the duties as guide to a researcher would need to balance the tangible benefits of the research project with the community’s overall vision.

Seeking, Listening, and Learning (Data Collection)

Lil'wat research protocols presented in the methodology section gave structure to the seeking, listening, and learning phase of the project. As I reflected on the whole process of data collection, the coming together to share a meal was a critical space in which to nurture the four house posts of the research **s7istken**. Before engaging in the design team meetings or during interviews, we shared food together as a way to establish trust, connect with families in the community, and provide a space for us to **kat'il'a** as each of us contributed our ideas and feelings. Everything came together over meals; it cannot be overstated how essential this structure was in developing relationships within the community and among participants. I hosted the first two meetings and prepared dinner for the participants, who then reciprocated for the remainder of the project. As we imparted the recipes and stories behind the food we shared, the binaries of outsider/insider, researcher/participant, and Indigenous/non-Indigenous began to blur.

Even though food is a universal basic need for all human beings, the protocols in how we engage in sharing meals is influenced by our worldviews. One participant shared:

I try to give them [outsiders] some tea and they don't want it. But you know we are taught "never say no" if you are going to a house and they give you tea, you should say "thank you" and things like that. (Lil'wat 7, Interview, April 2006).

This is a clear example of the cross-cultural communication barriers that had the potential to negatively affect our relationship. The participant illuminated how courtesy is understood from a Lil'wat and a Western worldview. Both are proper protocols in their own context, but when two cultures come together in one space, how do we delicately navigate between the two? In this project, the answer that emerged was through **celhcelh** by both partners to come to an understanding of each other's protocols.

As we implemented the protocols and structures in our research **s7istken**, one participant revealed a layer that exposed a fine fissure in the power structures embedded in participant permission that researchers should consider:

Even if the council and the community gives you permission, it doesn't mean you can go and say to whoever you want that you have permission to do research. If the person does not want to be researched, then you have to be respectful of that. (Lil'wat 10, Interview, April 2006)

Permission from any governing body does not supersede or abrogate the rights of an individual, especially in a research context. How are the individual's rights protected in the Aboriginal community approval section of the ethics application? Or does the piece of paper give the researcher and the community members the impression of a *carte blanche* power for the researchers? And, once again, this permission may be granted by a governing body that some community members may not acknowledge. During each interview and focus group, I reviewed the statement of voluntary participation to ensure that each participant understood their power of choice. In addition, I was conscious of the protocols of consent wherein the acceptance of a gift or meal by members of the community constitutes a contract of consent.

Ownership of Knowledge

A clear boundary of the ownership of knowledge generated by the group was a critical structure that needed to be in place before any data collection was initiated. Since research and media have in the past portrayed certain elements of the community in a negative light, I suggested a plan that would ensure transparency and a recursive dialogue between the participants and me. In staying true to participant suggestions, I “[*came*] back to present the research findings and gave research participants a second phase to reconsider what they said in context of what has been generated so far” (Lil'wat 4,

Interview, June 2006). Transcripts were given back to participants to scan for errors and misinterpretations. The findings were presented at meetings for discussion and changes were made. The LCHLA expressed their contentment with the accuracy of the preliminary findings and planned to use sections of the findings in their Chief and Council community planning. In addition, the Lil'wat Research Protocol **S7istken** will be used by the Lil'wat Cultural Centre to field research requests.

The LCHLA and I agreed that the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project would be owned by the community and would not be documented in this thesis. We felt that the knowledge related to coming of age, puberty rites, ceremonies, family histories, and personal experiences is sacred and sensitive to the families and the Lil'wat community. Ultimately, who benefits from documenting this knowledge? It is Lil'wat7ul, who have a vision to strengthen their community through culture, language, and history written from the Lil'wat7ul perspective; documenting it in the space of this thesis would not honour this aspiration. My role in the PAR project was that of a facilitator who provided research support and training to build the capacity of the women and girls to document their knowledge. I initiated discussions with the cultural centre coordinators to bring together a design team to create the Lil'wat Girls' and Women's Affirmation Group. I provided opportunities for participants and community members to learn how to use digital film editing software as a tool for cultural/language regeneration and documentation. While ownership of knowledge for the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project rests within the Lil'wat community, our experience and the stories we shared together rest within my heart.

The information presented in this paper represents our collective knowledge, but it is written from my perspective and I have complete ownership. In addition to the production of this thesis, the creation of the Lil'wat Research Protocol Handbook represents our collective learning that is owned by both the Lil'wat community and myself.

Respectful Relationships

In my First Nations Education and Environmental Studies cohort, we hold the motto: *“Live like you plan on staying”* (Field notes, September 2006). This motto speaks to the circularity of respectful relationships because it puts the responsibility on all of us to think about our actions and how they affect and influence everything around us. More importantly, it requires us to think beyond ourselves to the future generations. It is our responsibility to address past grievances through thoughtful and respectful research practices today to ensure a brighter future for cross-cultural relationships. In this study, I was guided by one question that tested my intentions and actions as it required me to think critically about our partnership: Who benefits from this research? More specifically, how does this research benefit the community? How does it benefit me the researcher? Are these benefits equal or unbalanced? Whenever the answer tilted in favour of one at the expense of the other, we engaged in dialogue to amend the imbalance. This process was exemplified in the ownership of knowledge discussion described in step four.

Sites for Possibilities

The following section provides a glimpse into the possibilities for action, change and transformation that emerged from this study. They are located in the Lil'wat Nation, Academia, and the site of our collaboration.

Lil'wat Site for Possibilities

The Lil'wat Culture, Heritage, and Language Authority (LCHLA), formed in December 2005, is made up of community members who are knowledgeable and recognized by the community as experts in the areas of Lil'wat culture, heritage, and language. My research proposal was one of the first studies approved by the authority. In the course of our discussions, we realized the lack of research structures in place in the LCHLA to represent the needs and desires of the community. One of the outcomes of our collaboration was the Lil'wat Research Protocols Handbook (Appendix H) that was based on the findings discussed in this study. This was an evolving document meant to be a starting point for community discussions on research. One participant commented:

*I enjoyed reading the handbook. It is very good work and will be a huge asset to Lil'wat. I was particularly impressed with the Research Protocol **S7istken**! This was very creative on your part and utilizes some great imagery in a very powerful way. I was amazed how you could weave the concepts related to the **S7istken** construction, the Lil'wat values as encapsulated by Ucwalmicwts words, and optimal research methods all into the metaphor. And it all came off so easy and natural. Again, very impressive. (Lil'wat 4, Electronic correspondence)*

The community section in the handbook is currently being debated by Chief and Council as they set the criteria for the membership code. In addition, discussions are ongoing as to how research can be used to benefit the community and, more importantly, be defined by Lil'wat7ul. Enormous potential exists for the Lil'wat Nation to marry research with their Strategic Plan to move the community forward. This project provided one of the first steps toward this process of uniting community and university to start a conversation on the grounds of respect and relevance.

Academic Site for Possibilities

This study exposed many sites of praxis in the context of decolonizing research methods that require further investigation. Researchers need to continue to push the envelope of dominant norms on an ongoing basis to generate new ways of thinking. More research is needed to challenge the traditional methods of research that view knowledge as a commodity that can be generated and owned. How do we as researchers engage in research practices that respect the people who have the knowledge as complicated human beings rather than as subjects/participants? In addition, PAR researchers need to reframe and rename participants not as marginalized and oppressed but with terms that reflect the pride and strength of the people.

We also need to problematize universal terms such as ‘community.’ The Lil’wat Nation has clear geographic boundaries for their territory that frame a complex system of membership. The lines of membership become less defined and clear when the participants or the research site are situated in urban and migrant contexts. This lack of clarity is made evident when governing bodies such as band councils have no jurisdiction over the 69% of Aboriginal peoples who live off reserve, with almost three quarters of this population living in urban centres (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 2005). This confusion has implications for the Tri-Council statement (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998) as it pertains to Aboriginal community approval. Which governing body gives approval for Indigenous participants who are migrants/visitors to another Indigenous territory?

To dismantle the master's house that upholds and maintains imperialist, capitalist patriarchy, we need to develop our own tools. To counter essentialism, the binaries that exist in academia need to be disrupted to expose the hidden relationships. In this study, I challenged the dichotomy of Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers with my racialized position. I disturbed the hegemonic notion of biological and cultural differences by demonstrating that our relationship was shaped by shared histories, respect, trust, and sharing in the place of essentialized skin colour and culture. Further investigations with Indigenous peoples working in solidarity with the Other would contribute to further dismantling the master's house that aims to segregate to maintain control of the Other.

Our Collaboration

After 6 months of design team consultations and planning, we established the Lil'wat Girls' and Women's Affirmation Group. This group of girls, women, sisters, daughters, aunties, grandmothers, and mothers meets every 28 days, following the woman's moon cycle. The goal of the group is to create a space for women and girls to get together to share and learn from each other. The women bring food to fuel the soul; the Elders, women, and girls bring their curiosity and knowledge to nourish their minds. At the first gathering, the women invited me to share my story and the reasons for my return to the community. It was an emotional evening for me personally because some of my previous students brought their daughters, the moms invited their moms, and the Elders were acknowledged for their wisdom and courage. Regardless of the research methodology and interpretation models employed, that evening fulfilled my motivation to come back to the Lil'wat community. I was afforded the opportunity to give back to the

Lil'wat7ul in gratitude for what they taught me during my teaching years at Xit'olacw.

One Elder expressed, *"I want to thank you for bringing this into our community, because we need it. This is what will make us strong again by being together and supporting each other"* (Field notes, September 2006). Another Elder expressed:

I remember when Winnie invited me into her classroom to share with the young ones, that was the last time I was in the school to talk about that stuff [coming of age]. But I want the group to know I support this and I am willing to give my time to share whatever I know. (Field notes, September 2006)

The evening was transformational as I witnessed and participated in sharing my coming of age experience with the group. I witnessed a bonding of community, family, and friends that ruptured the pathological and colonized discourses on Indigenous peoples. The group started off as an idea to create a space for girls and women to gather and share. Now it is a reality, energized by the commitment and passion of a group of Lil'wat women who have a vision to strengthen the community from within, one girl, one woman, and one family at a time.

Summary

It is impossible to summarize the numerous sites of possibility or to truly reflect the lived transformations that emerged for everyone involved in this study. I can only close with four central lessons I learned from this experience of putting PAR theory into practice within an Indigenous context as I move forward on my journey. First, I learned that gaining an understanding of the master's house and the tools used to uphold it is a critical step in decolonizing research methodologies. Second, I learned that one tool that is useful in dismantling the master's house is the state of **cwelelep**, where comfort in uncertainty provided me the strength and means to counter the dominant norms of certain "truths" that are imposed by the prevailing discourses. Third, I learned to engage in a

respectful relationship-building process by **watchful listening**. Understanding cross-cultural cues, values, ethics, procedures, and protocols involves a commitment to learning the non-verbal as well as the verbal language skills that require an openness of the eyes and ears more than of the mouth. Lastly, I learned that respect is an action. Respect involves reciprocal sharing, wherein we as researchers also need to share with the community as much as we hope participants will share with us. Respect also requires showing appreciation of diverse ways of knowing in the way we think, question, and act to begin to bridge the cross-cultural barriers.

To close this study, I would like to thank the Lil'wat Nation for the opportunity to learn and grow as we worked together in the last year. It is with a good heart that I conclude this thesis, but not our relationship together. As each lunar cycle begins, I take time to appreciate our time together and place hope in the Lil'wat girls' and women's gatherings to complete the circle of life.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMATION PACKAGE FOR COMMUNITY

PRESENTATION

Project Title

Model of Practice for Respectful Research with Indigenous Communities: Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Through Intergenerational Sharing Project

Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research project is to develop a model of practice on engaging in respectful research practices with Indigenous communities. Research in Indigenous communities has been fraught with colonial research methodologies wherein knowledge was taken from community members by outside researchers, leaving a legacy of mistrust and suspicion. With the growing acknowledgement by academia and government agencies of the benefit of respectful and meaningful research in Indigenous communities, there is a need to explore the process by which non-Indigenous researchers gain entry into an Indigenous community for the purpose of research.

Research Question

How can a researcher best engage in respectful research with the Lil'wat community?

Procedure

This is a nested research project using Participatory Action Research methodology wherein the participants (community members) are partners in the research process. All participants have voice in the direction and agenda of the research. For the first phase of the project, I will research my process of entry into the community. I will seek to answer the following questions as we negotiate approval and terms for the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project: (*Note: This section is to be documented for the community outside of the Lil'wat Nation and the Lil'wat community.*)

- What are the barriers and opportunities when attempting to gain support from the community?
- Who is part of the community, and who is not included?
- What is in the best interest of the community? Who in the community will benefit from this research?
- How does a researcher assure who lays claim to the knowledge?
- What does a partnership look like?
- How do participants benefit from action research?
- What are limitations in the process of bridging Western ethics requirements and Indigenous community protocols when developing a partnership?

Once approval has been granted by the Chief and Council, I would like to recruit members from the community who would benefit from regenerating women's traditional knowledge on puberty. This project would involve a team of community members who

will make up the research team (Elders, girls, Cultural Studies teacher, Grade 7 teacher, school administration, parents, council members). The team, including myself, will design, implement, and evaluate the project.

Rationale Behind this Project

Since most First Nation students were removed from their community during the residential school period, they were stripped not only of their culture, but also of their rightful coming of age ceremony that signified their transition from childhood to adulthood. In most First Nation cultures, the passage into adulthood was a guided and mediated process culminating in a celebration, and youth were empowered to make this transition. Most of today's First Nation youth are taught the anatomy and physiology of these changes in the education system, but the cultural celebration that links them to their community, culture, and family is largely absent. With the aging of the Elders in the community, this knowledge is quickly slipping away. It is urgent for the people of Mount Currie to preserve this knowledge and to continue these teachings that were forcibly taken through the residential school system.

Community Research Project

My hope is to have the Elders and girls share traditional teachings around coming of age for girls. The research team will determine the process of information collection, documentation, and distribution. The Lil'wat community will own all documentation for regeneration of women's traditional knowledge. The following research questions will guide the project of regenerating women's traditional knowledge:

- What are the traditional teachings/knowledge related to puberty in girls and human reproduction? How was this information traditionally transmitted to girls?
- What were the traditions, traditional medicine, stories, and ceremonies related to puberty rights for girls in the Lil'wat Nation?
- What was the significance and meaning of circles and cycles in the First Nation worldview?
- Cultural and Knowledge Transmission – Should traditional ceremonies be part of school curricula and programs? Under what circumstances could we incorporate women's traditional knowledge without institutionalizing the knowledge and desecrating the tradition by placing it in a formal curricula and programs?

Attached is the Model of Nested Research; it demonstrates how this project will be designed and informs the community of the process of the researcher's analysis and development of the model of practice for respectful research.

Benefits

To the participants:

The community will have an opportunity to regenerate and document traditional knowledge that is disappearing as each Elder passes on. The girls and women will gain skills that will possibly contribute to the continuation of regenerating traditional

knowledge in other areas such as language, song, history, and dance. The project will assist in providing a space for intergenerational communication to occur between youth and Elders. The community will gain a documented source of traditional knowledge that will contribute to teachings of the future generations.

To society and knowledge:

The results of this study will help us better understand how to conduct respectful research with an Indigenous community. The model of practice will document and redefine research methodologies to be meaningful and decolonizing where developing true partnerships between researchers and First Nation communities is challenged and identified by all parties involved.

Timeline

I want to acknowledge the community's commitments and timelines and do not want to disrupt the community with this project. As this is a research project for my master's degree, I unfortunately have a timeline to adhere to in order to graduate. I would like to present you my timeline so that you are aware of my constraints; please understand that I am willing to work around these dates as best I can. As in all partnerships, I feel it is important to understand the needs of each party, so I want you to know these constraints are in place so that I can graduate in due course.

February 2006:

- Presented research proposal to Lil'wat Culture, Heritage, and Language Authority.

March 2006:

- Obtained consent from Lil'wat Culture, Language, and Heritage Authority to proceed with research project.

March-July 2006:

- Recruited interested community members to be on the design team.
- Design team meetings to discuss and create the direction, details, and process of the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project. (4-8 hours)
- I would like to conduct individual interviews with community members and design team members about their views on research and how to conduct respectful research. (1 hour interview)
- Implementation of the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project – Data collection will be owned by the community. I will be a resource for the community to assist in any capacity for research skills training (videography, transcriptions, data collections, etc.). (Estimated time is one month and is dependent on the design team's plan. We may have to design this project in phases due to summer and timelines.)
- When the project is finished, I would like to conduct a focus group discussion with the design team about their experiences and reflections on the project and

research in hopes of collectively creating a working model of practice for the community to use when researchers want to come into the community.

- Item to consider: Would we be able to finish the interviews and project before the school year ends to allow for community summer travel, fishing, and berry picking? These activities would affect the ability to bring the group together.

August-October 2006:

- Data analysis phase – Development of the model of practice for respectful research. The design team will consult on the model and have final edits of the model.

November-December 2006:

- Thesis writing.

New Year 2007:

- Feast with design team to share my final thesis with the community.

August 2007:

- Thesis defense: I would like to invite participants and interested community members to attend the event at UVic. I will also invite an Elder in the community to sit as a committee member so that the community voice is represented during my thesis defense.

I am carrying out this study under the supervision of Dr. Lorna Williams. She can be reached at (250) 472 5499 or at lornwil@uvic.ca. You can contact me at (250) 661-4705 or jaspach@uvic.ca. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research, at the University of Victoria (250) 472-4545.

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR ADULT PARTICIPATION

IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODEL OF PRACTICE FOR RESPECTFUL

RESEARCH

Researcher: Winnie Chow
Contact: (250) 661-4705 or jaspach@uvic.ca

Dear Community Member:

In my research to develop a model of practice for respectful and meaningful research in a First Nations community, I am inviting you to participate in an interview and a dinner/focus group. This is my thesis project for my master's degree in First Nations Education and Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria. The purpose of the project is work with the community to develop a model of practice for researchers and educators wanting to work with the Lil'wat. This model will look at the issues around community, permission, ownership of knowledge, community protocol, documentation, and Indigenous worldview.

Benefits to the Community

This research project will benefit the Lil'wat Culture, Language, and Heritage Authority, Chief and Council, and others interacting with researchers because it will offer these groups a working model to use and refine. The process of developing this model also initiates a conversation among community members about how research should be conducted in the Lil'wat community. This model has implications for the larger population of researchers and educators wanting to work respectfully in a First Nations community for it will document and redefine research to be respectful and meaningful. This study will look at developing true partnership between researcher and First Nations community.

Your Participation Involves:

Your participation will involve taking part in an individual interview and one focus group discussion. Participation in this study may include time away from family and extracurricular activities. It may require you to travel to the interviews and focus group session (which will all take place in the community).

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to refuse to answer questions posed in the focus group discussions. You may withdraw from the focus groups and project at any time without having to explain why. If you withdraw from the study part way through, I will request that the information you have provided to that date be used for the research project. At your request, I will withdraw any photos, written materials, etc., that you produced.

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will ask you at each step of the research if you remember this is for my research and I will ask if you are still willing to continue with the study.

Confidentiality

In terms of protecting your anonymity, I will make sure that any information you provide is anonymous. This means that we will change such things as your name, details about your family, and any kind of information that identifies you or any family members. With the nature of focus group discussions it will be impossible to keep your identity anonymous since you will be working in collaboration with the community members who are part of the research team.

Later, when people read my research results, they will not be able to tell the identities of the participants or the families. Since you will be in a focus group, I will ask that all participants respect the confidentiality of the group by not repeating anything outside the group. But please be aware that it is not 100% possible for the researchers or interviewer to ensure that each and every participant will adhere to this agreement even if I explain to all participants why it is so important. Also, if any information is disclosed in the focus groups which the interviewer/researchers deem to be of an illegal nature, I am obliged to follow reporting procedures to the appropriate authorities and professionals.

Participant confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by making sure that the tape recordings and transcripts of all the interviews will be kept safe in a locked office. Only those people who are directly part of the project, such as the researcher, will have access to the taped discussions, interview transcriptions, and any field notes or documents concerned with this study.

Ownership of Knowledge

The data collected from my process as a researcher in this project will be used only for the purposes of communicating the model of practice for respectful research informed by the project at my thesis defense and possibly for presentations at conferences, meetings, and publications in journals and books. The Lil'wat community will receive a copy of the model for use.

Before I defend my thesis, I will share my final report with you at a feast in the Lil'wat community. I invite you to witness my thesis defense when I am ready to present to ensure that I have presented an accurate account of our experience. The results of my research will be presented in my written thesis dissertation, and you will be given an opportunity to read any document arising from this study prior to publication and the thesis defense for your information and feedback. A summary of my findings will also be distributed to all participants upon completion of the study.

Data from this study will be disposed of after the videotape recordings have been transcribed. The transcriptions will be kept in a locked office and made available only to the researcher.

There are limited research studies involving a researcher reflecting on her own practice in working in a First Nations community to develop a model of practice for respectful research. This project will benefit the Lil'wat and larger community in terms of regenerating knowledge and developing respectful research practices.

Contact Information

I am carrying out this study under the supervision of Dr. Lorna Williams. She can be reached at (250) 472 5499 or at lornwil@uvic.ca. You can contact me at (250) 661-4705. You may also verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research, at the University of Victoria (250) 472-4545. You can also contact Maureen Leo at the Lil'wat Cultural Centre (604) 894-5826.

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher.

Name of Participant	Signature	Date
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A copy of this consent form will be left with you, and copies will be given to the researcher, Winnie Chow, and the Lil'wat Cultural Centre.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MODEL OF PRACTICE

The following questions are intended to initiate conversations with participants to explore several broad topics. The questions listed below will loosely guide the conversations.

Community

- How long have you lived in this area?
- Have you ever lived anywhere else?
- How would you define the Lil'wat community? Who is included and who is not?
- If you wanted to voice a concern about something happening in the community, what are the steps you would take to get heard?

Concept of Research

- What do you think about research? What does it look like and feel like?
- Have you been involved in a research project with a university before? If so, which one and what was that like?
- What made you decide to participate in this research project?

Research Protocol

- How do you feel about outsiders coming into the community to do research?
- In your opinion, what are the steps researchers should take if they want to work with the community on a research project in a respectful manner?
- What are the steps outside researchers need to take in following First Nations protocols or teachings?
- What are the mistakes outsiders make when they come into the community?
- Who do you think should give permission for researchers to come into the community? Please explain why.
- What does a respectful partnership look like? What elements are important for research partnerships?

Perceptions

- Do you think there is a difference when the researcher is white compared to someone who is First Nations? Visible minority like myself?

Ownership of Knowledge

- How can we document the women's traditional knowledge for this project in a respectful way?
- Who do you think owns this knowledge?
- How do you feel about the use of digital video/film as a form of documenting traditional knowledge? Is there a time and place for this?

Western and Indigenous Worldviews

- Are there differences between Western and First Nations ways of seeing and doing things? If so, what are they?

Personal Reflections

- What have you gained through participating in this research project?
- What was it like working with the research team members? Where there any issues?
- How do you think the community has benefited from your involvement in this project?
- What have you learned about research?
- What do you think is the most important element to establishing a research partnership with outside researchers?

APPENDIX D: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR MODEL OF PRACTICE

Based on your experience in this research project, what were elements of the project you felt were done in a respectful manner? What about in a disrespectful manner?

How did the community gain from your participation in this research project?

In terms of the data and information you have collected, how should this knowledge be distributed? Who has ownership of it?

With a project like this with an outside researcher, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages as compared to someone from the community?

APPENDIX E: CONFIDENTIALITY WAIVER

Model of Practice for Lil'wat Research Protocols

Confidentiality Procedures (for transcribers to sign)

Researchers at the University of Victoria are committed to the principle that the confidentiality of each individual and family's data obtained through research projects must be protected. This principle applies whether or not any specific guarantee of confidentiality was given at the time of the data collection.

The following guidelines delineate the responsibilities of project staff members in maintaining confidentiality. These guidelines are broad based but may not address all confidentiality issues that arise in your work. When issues arise that are not covered by this policy, you must contact the Principal Investigator, Winnie Chow (jaspatch@uvic.ca), who will help you decide how the issue should be handled. You should never feel you have to make these decisions on your own. Please feel free to consult.

1. All transcribers must sign the Confidentiality Pledge.
2. All transcribers shall keep confidential:
 - a) the names of all participants;
 - b) all information or opinions collected during the study that are linked to a particular individual or family; and
 - c) the names of participants in the project, for whom confidentiality must be maintained, including children and their families.
3. Information is always "owned" by the research participant. The research participant decides which information will be disclosed and to whom it will be disclosed. When

researchers ask for permission to collect data from the participant, they promise that the information will be summarized, analyzed, and reported in such a way that individual responses cannot be identified. Data that can be linked to an individual shall never be shared with non-project staff without first obtaining written permission to do so from the research participant. Only the Principal Investigator of the project has the authority to make these types of requests.

4. Access to the data shall be limited to only those persons who are working on the project and who have agreed to the study's confidentiality requirements. All data, including personal notes and summaries, containing personal identifiers (e.g., names, addresses, phone numbers) shall be kept in a locked cabinet and/or room when not being used in project activities. Transcribers shall not share raw data or summaries of data with anyone unless authorized to do so by the Principal Investigator.

5. Computer files that contain personal identifiers shall be kept confidential.

6. When data containing personal identifiers are being used or discussed, transcribers will ensure that data remain confidential by working in a private location and keeping information out of public view at all times.

7. Only information relevant to a specific research purpose and to the particular communication should be included in written and oral reports.

8. A separate file will be established linking the identification numbers to individual respondents; this file needs to be locked when not being used in project activities. Much of the information collected for the project will be entered into computerized data sets.

Prior to entering raw data into a data set, identification numbers shall be assigned to

individual families. Personal identifiers such as name and address will not be a part of the data set.

9. When records with identifiers are to be transmitted to another party, confidentiality must be maintained.

10. Shred documents containing personal identifiers. If you do not have access to a shredding machine, you may give them to the Principal Investigator to shred. You must keep the documents in a locked file cabinet until you are able to give them to the appropriate staff member.

10. The Principal Investigator will ensure that all project personnel involved in handling data are instructed in these procedures, have signed this pledge, and comply with these procedures throughout the study.

If you have any questions about confidentiality issues, please contact:

Winnie Chow
(250) 661-4705
E-mail: jaspach@uvic.ca

CONFIDENTIALITY PLEDGE

- I hereby certify that I have carefully read and will cooperate fully with the Statement of Policy and Procedures for Maintaining Confidentiality for the Project “Model of Practice for Lil’wat Research Protocols.”
- I will keep completely confidential all information arising from the study concerning individual respondents to which I gain access.
- I will not discuss, disclose, disseminate, or provide access to data and identifying information except as authorized by the Principal Investigator.
- I will comply with any additional procedures established.

- I will devote my best efforts to ensure that there is compliance with the required procedures by personnel whom I supervise.
- I understand that violation of this pledge is sufficient grounds for dismissal from the project.
- I also understand that violation of the privacy rights of individuals through such unauthorized discussion, disclosure, dissemination, or access may make me subject to criminal or civil penalties.
- I give my personal pledge that I shall abide by this assurance of confidentiality.

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

830 Victoria Avenue
Victoria, BC
V8S 4N3

APPENDIX F: REQUEST FOR CHIEF AND COUNCIL APPROVAL LETTER

January 18, 2006
Chief and Council
Lil'wat Nation
PO Box 604
Mount Currie, BC
V0N 2K0

Dear Sheldon Tetreault:

Application for community based research project

My name is Winnie Chow and I was the Grade 7/8 classroom teacher at Xit'olacw Community School from 1995-1998. I hold many fond memories of the school, students, staff and the community in Mount Currie. Presently, I am in the midst of my graduate program at the University of Victoria in the First Nations Education and Environmental Studies program. As part of my degree requirement, I am to conduct research in my field of studies. I am seeking your permission to carry out this research with the participation of the Elders, girls, schoolteachers, community members, and yourself in the Lil'wat Nation. The project is titled: "Model of Practice for Respectful Research with Indigenous Communities: Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge through Intergenerational Sharing Project."

My three years at Xit'olacw Community School were my formative years as a teacher and I feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to learn about Lil'wat education and worldview during that time. Since my departure from Mount Currie, I have always felt the need to give back to the community for all the gifts the community has given me in terms of professional and personal growth. I learned the value and importance of my language and how it is key to understanding my Chinese culture through attending Ucwalmicwts classes and the immersion of cultural studies with the students at Xit'olacw School. I also learned how much colonization has impacted our education system into seeing only one way of thinking, the Western worldview.

Through my studies I have come to learn how research has been done in the past in Indigenous communities, wherein outside researchers follow a traditional, linear, and colonizing model that extracts information from community members so the researcher benefits from the knowledge and leaves nothing behind in the community. This research project aims to decolonize research practices so that both the community and researcher benefit from the relationship.

During my teaching time at Xit'olacw, I taught Family Life Grade 5-7, which incorporated Western science and traditional knowledge related to puberty/coming of age for girls and boys. I worked with Elder Marie Leo to share women's traditional knowledge with the girls about the moon cycle and what it means for the Lil'wat people for girls to transition to womanhood. In 1998, my grade seven class journeyed into the

Stein Valley to connect with their traditional territory that was significant for coming of age and they had the opportunity to reflect on the petroglyphs of their ancestors. My goal was to create a circle of learning for the youth so they could connect with the Elders in the community to learn traditional knowledge, prepare physically and mentally for the 7-day hike (September to May hiking trips with community members in the local area), and connect with the territory to gain a sense of place. This circle was my hope to create a space for the youth to understand who they are, where they come from, and where they are going.

When I was invited back to Mount Currie for the 2003 graduating ceremony, I asked the graduates what were some memories they hold close to their hearts about their schooling at Xit'olacw and most of them said the Grade 7 Stein Valley trip. One student shared that he achieved what he thought was impossible. Another student said, "I started on this trail as a girl and I walked out a woman." I share these same memories with these young adults for they are strong in my heart and they drive me to pursue my research project in Mount Currie. I believe there is much value and importance in the transition from childhood to adulthood, but in the Western schooling system and society, we have made puberty scientific and lost the significance in how this knowledge is transferred, the meaning and symbolism that defines each culture and makes up the person as they move through this tumultuous time.

To ensure both parties gain from this research project, two research themes are nested together. The central part of my research project is the regeneration of women's traditional knowledge about puberty for girls through intergenerational sharing. I would like to work with interested girls in Grade 7 and Elders, such as Marie Leo, to research and document this topic for the community. All data and documentation on women's traditional knowledge will stay in the community, and I will not be using it in my thesis.

The Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project is nested in the development of a model of practice for non-First Nation researchers working with a First Nation community. I would like to research the process that the community and I experience as we build a respectful and meaningful partnership for the Regenerating Women's Traditional Knowledge Project. This model would reflect my process of entry into the community, establishing a working relationship with the community members, and the challenges, barriers, and opportunities throughout this project. During the development of the model of practice, I would like to involve community members in the process so that their perspectives are represented. Since I will be focusing on my process of doing respectful research, Mount Currie will also benefit from the experience of participating in decolonizing research that honours the voice and needs of the community. This model of practice is what I will gain from this research project and will defend for my thesis.

One model of research that I have found to be respectful and meaningful to Indigenous communities is Participatory Action Research. The participants (youth, Elders, community members, school faculty, and myself) are the researchers in the process who determine the direction of the research (thus creating a research team). Since everyone in the research has voice in the project, I hope this research project will be carried out respecting "the Lil'wat way" as stated in your mission statement. At this time, I would

like to express that my interest is to regenerate traditional knowledge with the community and I have identified women's traditional knowledge, but I am also open to change the direction of the traditional knowledge that is documented based on our collaborative discussions as a research team. The participants will establish how to document and distribute the information gathered for this project to reclaim traditional knowledge for community use. My intention for this project is for the community to regenerate sustainable knowledge so that it is not lost once the Elders or knowledge keepers pass on. I also acknowledge that it is the role of the community to set the direction of reclaiming this knowledge and not an outside researcher. Once the data is gathered, it will be up to the participants (research team) to decide how and if the knowledge is to be shared in the community and beyond.

Presently, various First Nation communities are using various mediums to document traditional knowledge in a respectful manner. One possibility could be the use of multi-media (DVD, film making, and slideshows) through the lens of community members to reclaim traditional knowledge. Looking through your school website, I see that it reflects the Lil'wat Nation's strong desire to preserve the Lil'wat way so it continues to be a living culture. It is my hope that this project would benefit the Cultural Studies Centre wherein the end result of the project could be additional resource materials for families, girls, and teachers to access. In addition to possible resources for the community, the girls will gain skills (in whatever medium the research team decides on), for reclaiming traditional knowledge for their community. Through participating in this project, the girls will develop a skill base that can assist in further documentation of traditional knowledge on other topics such as traditional medicine, language, and ceremony for the community. The girls and Elders will also develop intergenerational communication skills by working together with community members and teachers on this project. As part of the Participatory Action Research model, the action of reclaiming women's traditional knowledge continues to evolve and build even after the researcher has finished the project because the participants are empowered through the process of the research project to continue creating the change they see is needed in their community.

In addition to this research project informing the basis of my thesis, the Model of Practice will be published and partly funded by B.C. Ministry of Education to create a handbook on Aboriginal Science Curriculum. This project is directed by Dr. Lorna Williams from Mount Currie and Dr. Gloria Snively (who was an instructor for the Simon Fraser University Ts'zil Teacher Training program), both professors at the University of Victoria. The Model of Practice will be helpful to other researchers interested in doing respectful research in First Nation communities. Therefore, First Nation communities will gain from having researchers use a respectful model of interaction that will inform their practices, thus creating a new generation of research in First Nation communities that honours the people and the needs of the community.

Please find my research proposal attached. If you are interested in discussing this research project in the Lil'wat Nation, I would like to set up a meeting with you in Mount Currie at your earliest convenience. I would like to also meet with community members who would have a vested interest in this project, such as the Elders, Band Office Director of Education, the Chief, community members, and the Cultural Studies and

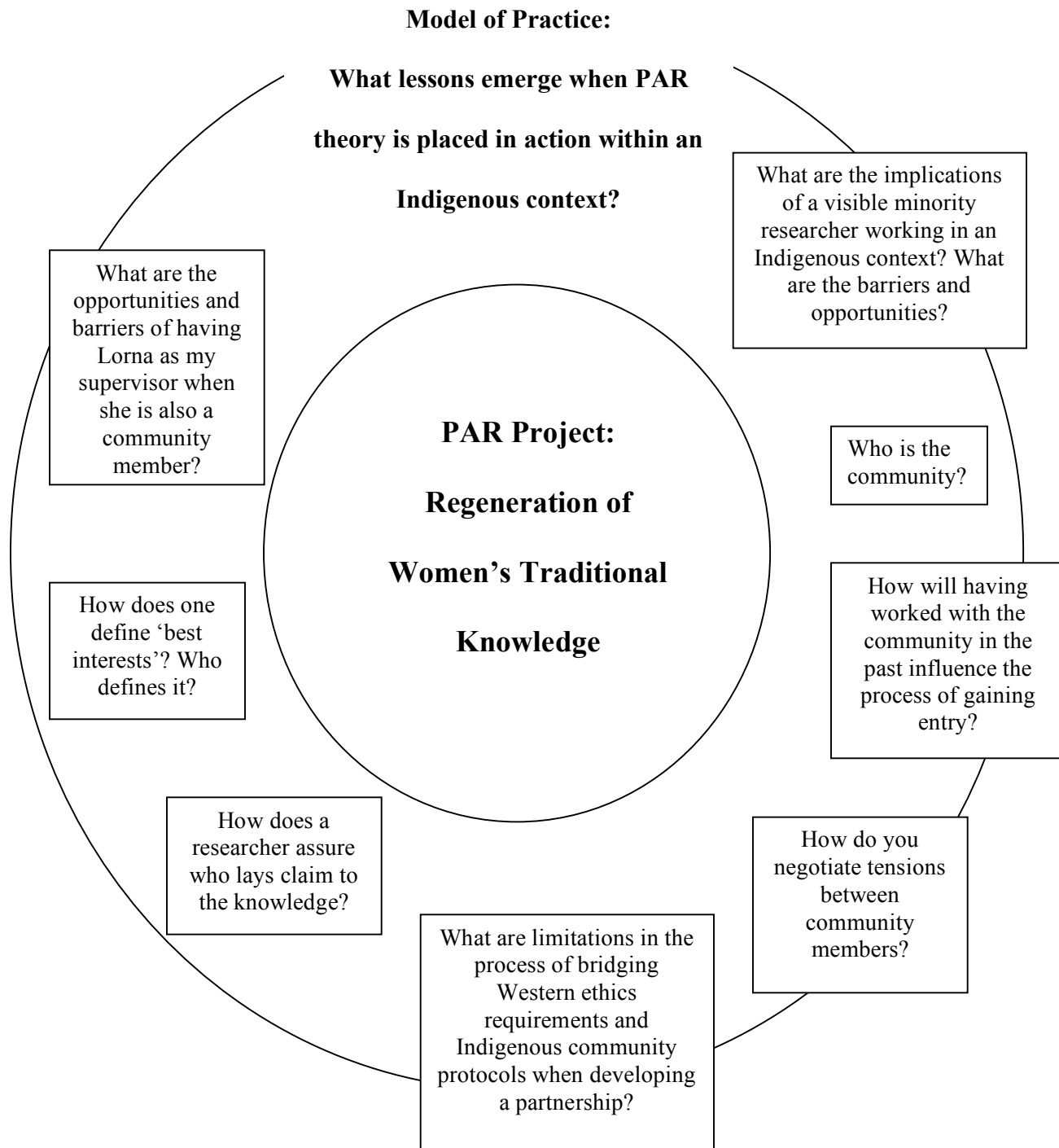
Grade 7 teachers to discuss the possibilities for this project and how to next proceed. I would like to visit the community in February.

Please let me know if you have any further questions regarding my research proposal. I have applied to the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Committee for approval to begin my study. You may reach the Associate Vice-President, Research, at (250) 472-4362 if you want to verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns. You can also contact my supervisor, Dr. Lorna Williams, at (250) 472-5499. Please contact me at (250) 661-4705, or email at jaspach@telus.net for further information. I look forward to meeting with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Winnie Chow

APPENDIX G: NESTED RESEARCH MODEL



APPENDIX H: LIL'WAT RESEARCH PROTOCOLS HANDBOOK

The following handbook is a working document that is continually changing. This is the second draft of the Lil'wat research protocol handbook based on a recursive dialogue between myself and the members of the Lil'wat Culture, Language and Heritage Authority. This is a collective representation of the lessons we learned through our research relationship and is open to recommendations.

Lil'wat Research Protocol S7istken

Handbook for
Researchers



Stein Valley Petroglyph Reproduction
Johnny Jones

Acknowledgements:

This handbook is the product of a relationship that spans over a decade between myself and the various members of the Lil'wat Community. I first came to know the community in 1995 during my first year of teaching at Xit'olacw Community School. It was during my teaching experience I truly gained an understanding of the Lil'wat way. I want to thank all the students, the staff, parents, Elders and community members who opened up their hearts and friendships to me. This handbook is inspired by our friendship and as a token of thanks for the lessons you have taught me.

Kwkwstum'ulhkal'ap to the Lil'wat Culture, Language and Heritage Authority and the Chief and Council for inviting me into the community to carry out my research project.

Kwkwstum'ckacw to Lorna Williams, my committee supervisor and Lil'wat community member, for providing the teaching concepts for me to learn from, to live and to grow.

Kwkwstum'ckacw Maureen Leo for believing in this project and providing guidance to ensure the project comes out in a good way. Kwkwstum'ckacw to Lois Joseph who took the time to introduce me to the community and helped me network for this project amidst her busy schedule. This project is a direct result of the knowledge, passion, and background work of both women.

Kwkwstum'ulhkal'ap to all the participants in the design team for their genuine friendship and caring towards my family. Thank you for sharing and giving me the opportunity to learn in your company. Thank you to: Veronica Bikadi, Georgina Nelson, Priscilla Ritchie, Martina Pierre, Anita Willier, Maureen Leo, Sue Nelson, Lois Joseph, Maxine Bruce, Lorna Bruyere, Shawn Wallace, Terry Williams, Jo-Anne John, and Teresa Zurowski. This project is possible because of the strength and determination of this group of women and elders who want to create a legacy of empowerment for the future generations. I thank you for sharing with me and inspiring me on my journey to create a world we want.

Kwkwstum'ulhkal'ap to all the community members who participated in the Lil'wat Girls and Women's Affirmation Gatherings.

Kwkwstum'ulhkal'ap to all the community members who participated in the interviews that helped frame the findings for Lil'wat Research Protocols.

Kwkwstum'ulhkal'ap to my family and friends who supported me through this study.

Front Cover:

This photograph is a reproduction of some of the petroglyphs located in the Stein Valley. This site is part of the traditional territory of the Lil'wat Nation. For more information on the significance and history of the petroglyphs please contact the Lil'wat Cultural Center.

Many thanks to Johnnie Jones who painted the reproductions now housed at Xit'olacw Community School.

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Introduction

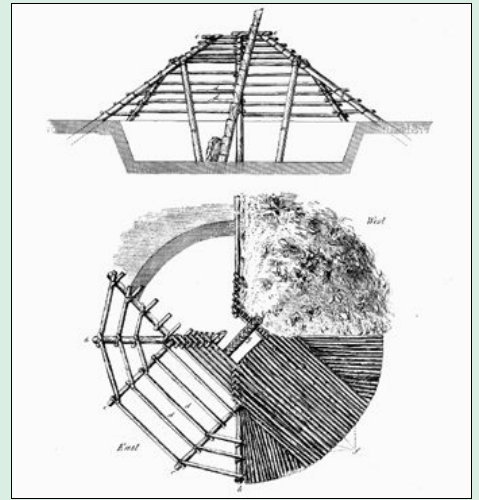
The purpose of the Lil'wat Research Handbook is to provide a starting point for researchers interested in working with the Lil'wat Nation for research collaborations. This handbook is an outcome of a Participatory Action Research (PAR) study between the Lil'wat Girls and Women's Affirmations group and Winnie Chow, a researcher from the University of Victoria. As part of the research design, Winnie worked with 20 participants and community leaders involved in research administration to investigate how they would like research conducted in the Lil'wat Nation. The ideas expressed in this handbook are representations of the 20 individuals who generously offered their time and opinions on research protocol and is not reflective of all members of the Lil'wat community. It does however, provide an entry point for conversations on how to conduct research so it is meaningful, relevant and respectful.



Using participatory action research principles, community members became co-researchers in this project and set the direction to create a women and girls group for the purpose of intergenerational sharing of traditional women's knowledge. As we worked together to establish guidelines for a respectful research relationship, we identified a need for more conversations on the topic of research protocols, procedures and terms and references. There is movement within the community that sees value in research but on Lil'wat terms. The creation of the Lil'wat Culture, Language and Heritage Authority in December 2005 is a direct outcome of the community's commitment to advance a research/project agenda that benefit the Lil'wat7ul. We have compiled background information and a model of practice for researchers to consider as they inquire about research opportunities in the Lil'wat Nation. Due to the complexity of the community, environment, and political structures, this handbook is a snapshot of this moment in time and these guidelines will evolve and change based on the needs of the community.

Lil'wat Research Protocol

Since time immemorial, Lil'wat ancestors moved from their summer fish camps into winter villages consisting of clustered semi-subterranean dwellings known as s7istken (pit houses). The construction of the s7istken is similar to the creation of research collaboration. Parts come together to form a structure, which is held together by various relationships, elements, history and needs. The following is a model for Lil'wat Research Protocol that is represented by a traditional s7istken. It provides a conceptual framework with Lil'wat teaching and learning concepts weaved throughout to guide researchers. The number 4 is considered sacred to Indigenous peoples for it represents patterns in nature such as the four cardinal directions. Using the s7istken as a conceptual model was an explicit choice by the researcher in respecting Indigenous worldview for it has 4 house post and 4 roof beams. This model is not intended to be used as a “how to manual”, but as a guide to the research process based on the researcher's experiences and feedback from the participants during our research collaboration.



Lil'wat Teaching and Learning Concepts

As all cultures and groups of people have their own ways of knowing, we share with you Lil'wat teaching and learning concepts to guide your understanding of Lil'wat worldview and your research process. These concepts are interpreted by Dr. Lorna Williams, Lil'wat member and Director of Aboriginal Education at the University of Victoria, for the use of teaching Indigenous ways of knowing. The translations from Ucwalmicwts are Dr. William's interpretation of the words and each Ucwalmicwts speaker has their own understanding for the terms.

Celhcelh

Taking responsibility for personal learning and taking initiative within the learning community.

Cwelelep

The discomfort and value of being in a place of dissonance, uncertainty and anticipation.

A7xa7cal

Locating the infinite capacity we all have to answer our own questions as learners.

Kamucwkalha

The energy indicating group cohesion around a common goal.

Watchful Listening

Having an openness to listening beyond our own personal thoughts and assumptions.

Kat'i'la

Finding stillness amidst our busyness and need to know.

Lil'wat History

There is a general consensus by Indigenous peoples and marginalized groups, that they have been “researched to death” by governments and academics (Smith, 2001). The time to examine and present Indigenous issues from a negative focus has passed, as we shift to a new cycle of competence, focused on resilience and what works in the community (McShane & Hastings, 2004). To move into a new era of research, there needs to be an understanding the Lil'wat community is rebuilding and healing from the impacts of colonization. As a starting point in addressing the consequences of colonization, researchers should recognize their location in this history.

Researcher Responsibility

“Non-Indigenous researchers need to acknowledge being members of the dominant culture and being researchers who are in positions of power. The potential to oppress and exploit Indigenous people is a matter of concern, and deliberate efforts should be made to level the playing field in negotiating research relationships” Dr. Jessica Ball- University of Victoria School of Child and Youth Care

Residential Schools

“I think that those breaks caused a lot of people to be afraid to indulge in their language and culture, but it is coming along with the younger generation. They are starting to pick it up and are interested in it. My parents went to residential school and they didn't teach my sisters, brothers and myself, because they were afraid of what would happen to us if we spoke our language and did our cultural dancing and singing because they were punished for doing that in school” (Lil'wat 1)

Education

“We need to get to know ourselves again, we have to know where we are coming from in order to know where we are going to continue to be First Nation's people.” (Lil'wat 5)

The Lil'wat7ul have a rich history of strength, courage and resilience. They are one of the 78 BC First Nations that have chosen not to participate in the BC Treaty Commission process and in 1911, Lil'wat leaders signed the Lillooet Declaration outlining the demands for the reinstatement of their rights to their traditional territory.



Lillooet Declaration

We have never given or sold any of our land to any government or nation. Although settlers and colonial governments marginalized us from the land, we never relinquished our right to our home. As we fought to restore and preserve our rights, we earned a reputation for political protest and resistance. (Lil'wat Nation, 2006, p 14)

To learn more about the past, present and future Lil'wat Nation written by community members, please refer to:

Lil'wat Nation website

<http://www.lilwatnation.com/>

Lil'wat Fact Book

<http://www.lilwatnation.com/+peopleland/storys/documents/LilwatBookSpreads.pdf>

The Lil'wat Community

The Lil'wat are Interior Salish people who are a separate and distinct nation while remaining part of the St'at'imc group. Ucwalmicwts is the language, and it means “the people of the land”. The traditional territory spans 797,131 hectares, equivalent to one-fourth of Vancouver Island- it extends south to Rubble Creek, north to Gates Lake, east to the Upper Stein Valley and west to the coast inlets of the Pacific Ocean. Today, there are more than 70 percent of Lil'wat7ul living on reserve with a total population of more than 1,850, of whom 550 live off-reserve. (Lil'wat 2007)

The term “community” is as diverse as the geography of the Lil'wat territory. Who is the community and who represents the community? As a researcher interested in working with an Indigenous community, defining the community is laden with paradox and complexity that are unknown to an outsider. The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), also known as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), enforces community band membership as a form of government regulatory control. Some members of the Lil'wat community resist and reject this label and do not engage in activities associated with DIA. The term community is too broad to truly represent the complex reality of community membership. The following will provide researchers with a basic understanding of the informal and formal structures that exist in the community.

There are 2 groups in the community and there is one group who pulled out of the DIA system. I have a concern about them if they will survive or not. They are outside the system and any funding from DIA. They have no voice and they choose to not be in the DIA system and so they will not have a voice about research. Yet they have footage taken of them. (Lil'wat 5)



Everyone is accepted in the community as active members regardless of one's status as Indigenous, non-Indigenous, Lil'wat or from other communities. In the discussions with research participants about “Who is the Lil'wat community?” they identified many gray areas and sites for tension. Lil'wat7ul whose parents are both from the Lil'wat Nation are definitive Lil'wat community members. Debates arise when we look outside this definition, as there is a formal and informal continuum of community membership that flows between locations based on family relationships, governance system, marriage and voting rights. Central to the debate of community membership involves who defines the system of membership and who has the right to represent the Lil'wat community in the decision making process. When identifying community in your research proposal, consider the following evolving summary of distinct groups identified by the research participants:

1. Lil'wat7ul- Born and raised in Mount Currie with both parents from Lil'wat Nation. Have full voting rights and are band members.
2. Marriage- Outsider (non-Lil'wat7ul) married into the Lil'wat community are considered part of the community but does not have voting rights.

3. Children- They are all recognized as Lil'wat7ul but according to INAC and the band membership code, if one parent is not a Lil'wat member, than the child would need to be voted in via referendum to become a Lil'wat band member. If both parents are Lil'wat7ul and band members, the child is an automatic band member.
4. Non-Indigenous, non-Lil'wat7ul, outsiders who work and live in the community are considered part of the community but have no voting rights.
5. Bill C-31- Lil'wat7ul women who married outside the Lil'wat Nation lost their status in the DIA system and this was reinstated with Bill C-31. In order to reinstate Lil'wat membership status in the community, all Bill C-31 women and children need a referendum vote.

Lillooet Community

There is a very strong component of group living, like it is different from living in a non-Native town or village. There's something that goes much deeper than even some small towns, they get really close knit... but there's something that goes deeper than that in a First Nations community. And probably because for a lot of First Nations communities, extended families stay in that community, so there's a lot of extended family in one area, in one place. You know the old saying, "blood is thicker than water". (Lil'wat 2)



Lil'wat Governance

There are two groups in the community that represent Lil'wat governance. The Chief and Council are formally recognized by INAC and voted in by members of the community every two years. The Chief is elected by Lil'wat community members, and according to INAC he/she does not have to be a Lil'wat band member. There are 12 council members who are band members responsible for a portfolio that address: housing, education, land use, fisheries, community wellness, social development, external affairs, agriculture, recreation, economic development, and culture/ heritage. The Chief and Council have a legal duty to protect the lands and assets of the Lil'wat Nation. They also set the overall direction of the administration. They represent the voice of the community and it is the responsibility of the council members to bring community concerns to the Chief and Council meetings. The vision of the voting members of the community is represented in the Strategic Plan and is worth reviewing to develop parallels to your research proposal for relevance.

Well they should know that number one, we have our own leadership outside of any province, federal or municipality, and number two, that there's generally a cultural or traditional protocol that either is recognized formally or informally (Lil'wat 3)

The second group in the community follows a traditional system that historically was represented by a Traditional Family Head System. Each family group had a representative who would participate in the larger meeting of the family heads to address issues of community governance. In this system, community members are recognized as leaders in specific areas such as ethno-botany, based their expertise and knowledge rather than through an elected system of governance. This leadership system is formally recognized in the community today.

There are traditional jobs that have been passed on to them. And there are a lot of different ways that people are recognized for what they know. There's sort of a natural leadership that happens. Nobody says, 'You're in charge of this', if somebody becomes the most knowledgeable and people recognize that, then it's just sort of a natural respect and people will start saying 'Ask so and so' because they recognize that person as having the most experience or the most knowledge. (Lil'wat 2)

In addition to the DIA and Traditional system of governance, Lil'wat Nation is situated in the larger St'at'imc Nation, which is comprised of various nations in the upper and lower Lillooet. They share similarities and differences in language (different dialects), cultures and stories, but they each have a separate governance body. Researchers should become familiar with the various governing bodies within the St'at'imc Nation and the territory maps of each nation to ensure consultations match with the governing body that administers the territory in which the research will take place.



Lil'wat Culture, Heritage and Language Authority

The Lil'wat Culture, Heritage and Language Authority (LCHLA) formed in December 2005. The Authority is made up of community members who are knowledgeable and recognized by the community as experts in the areas of Lil'wat culture, heritage and language. They aim to preserve and regenerate Lil'wat culture, heritage and language in the community. LCHLA is the first point of contact for researchers interested in working with the Lil'wat community for research in the areas of culture, heritage and language. The group meets once a month on the second Monday of each month. The contact person is: Lois Joseph, Lil'wat Cultural Centre

Lil'wat Communication

All interactions are cross-cultural for we each come to the relationship with our own ways of knowing and communicating. When Lil'wat circular worldview meets with the linear research world, there are subtle and distinct differences in the communication process. This section came out of discussions around community member experiences of outsiders and some communication styles that had negative impacts on the relationship building process. The following are quotes for researchers to reflect upon:

But some people talk a lot and really fast... they talk like they know and even if they don't know. That stuff really turns people off right. Talks too much... I can't get my words in...what does he know...and so I think they [the community members] evaluate more on those kinds of clues that people send out. (Lil'wat 4)

I was used to the Western style of debating and jumping in, which is considered very rude here. And probably the statement that you make to the people when you do that, is you don't think very much about what other people say. When you first get involved in the community you're used to the Western way. You don't really realize that it's not respectful and that you're suppose to be thinking about what the person said and not answer right away and argue right away. (Lil'wat 2)

It's a whole different way of communicating. And it is hard to get used to, hard to even figure out at first because you're not aware of it. You're not told about it. Because in the Western civilization it seems like the faster you talk, the quicker you can answer is looked at the smarter you are. Not so here. And this probably has something to do with some of the children who have trouble in the education system because of that difference. (Lil'wat 2)

You can't just get an answer right now. These are what people have attempted to do, time after time. They feel frustrated because they can't get the answer, because they're not sensitive to the response that they're getting. (Lil'wat 3)

Lil'wat7ul, generally there's a lot of body talk, without even realizing it. Being sensitive in that way so that you are getting the answers that you're seeking, knowing that those answers may come in a variety of forms (Lil'wat 3)

History of Research in the Lil'wat Community

Well, to me the reserve is our last bastion of freedom. It's a place that I can be without interference, I can live, I can breathe, I can dance, I can ceremony, I can do whatever without interference. And when people come looking, asking, seeking, there's a sense of protection because so much has been exploited. And there's a fear of racism. And fear of whatever it is being sought after is going to be abused, turned about, and made harmful to the person and the community. (Lil'wat 3)

Research is a powerful tool and it can be used as an instrument of colonization and also as an instrument of de-colonization. Researchers have the opportunity to create social change through the use of research methods that address the unbalanced researcher/ researched relationship. Montour (1987) describe a commonly applied technique he coins as the "helicopter" process wherein, "outside researchers swooped down from the skies, swarmed all over town, asked nosey questions that were none of their business and then disappeared never to be heard again". This method of research has a history in the Lil'wat community. The outcomes of such research have both benefited Lil'wat7ul and also some have inflicted harm through inaccurate representations of the community. It is important for researchers wanting to work with the community to learn from these experiences of past research relationships to be able to address these grievances in their research methods.

Our names, stories, you name it hasn't been passed onto us because of residential school. So when I came home and had my family, I was hungry for the information and I thank all the people who have come into our communities like Teit. And I feel thankful for them and as I watch community members

discover something from our past, like pictographs, petroglyphs, they will go match it up with ethnographers' research, stories that were told you know, and stories that were told in our language, they are gone now. So it is there, through the recordings through the written, transcripts or whatever. We can recover through the research that has been done. (Lil'wat 6)

In the past there were ethnographers and linguists who came into the community to document Lil'wat culture, traditional stories, songs, and ceremony. This has provided useful resources for the Lil'wat community to regenerate aspects of their culture and language that have been displaced. However, certain researchers have also left a legacy of mistrust and suspicion through unethical research practices and unequal partnerships that advanced the researcher's careers with no benefit to the community.



Everyone hates to get portrayed in a negative way and especially when it is based on a misunderstanding on what they see, and the community has had that happen and it happens all the time. And so, they don't want to be involved in that kind of portray of Lil'wat people. (Lil'wat 4)

Community members shared stories of researchers who came into the community and took pictures of homes and people without permission and then published these pictures for personal profit.

There were also researchers who provided inappropriate forms of incentives, such as the use of alcohol in order to gain access to traditional stories for research purposes. Some research findings did not give accurate portrayals of the Lil'wat community because a lack of understanding of the Lil'wat way nor did researchers consult with community members to ensure correct representation during the data analysis phase.

We have these theses going through quite often. Research has been done and it gets put on a shelf. And I think that the ones that are being done these days are very helpful for different departments, and I wish that they would utilize it more. (Lil'wat 1)

Rising from past research practices, is a new era of research in the Lil'wat community. Lil'wat Nation does not have a research agenda but Lil'wat7ul are clear about supporting initiatives that benefit the community, to strengthen the people, and advance the Strategic Plan. Lil'wat7ul are interested in projects that make a difference instead of a book that sits on a shelf. Possible research area identified through this study

People want to redefine what's traditional and what gives them strength and what they want to hang onto and what needs to be changed. And I don't know any other way besides research to do that, really. It's the vehicle to make that happen. (Lil'wat 2)

Possible Topics for Future Research as Suggested by Lil'wat7ul:

1. Creation of Lil'wat Research Guidelines
2. Restore NxeKmen and Nt'akmen our law and our way of life.
3. Identify the distinctions between Lil'wat and the other St'at'imc groups in the context of dialect, stories, histories, and family lineage.
4. Family ownership of Lil'wat songs and dance.
5. Protocol for gaining permission to use Lil'wat songs and dances
6. Identify and regenerate traditional communication protocols between



Lil'wat Research Protocol

s7istken



Step 1: Site Selection

Lil'wat Teaching and Learning
Concept: **Celhcelh**

Taking responsibility for personal learning and taking initiative within the learning community (Williams, 2006)

s7istken Construction

Lil'wat7ul would survey the land to find a site to build the s7istken. Careful attention paid to ensure access to water and food, assess the quality of the soil, and the placement of the s7istken in relationship to the cardinal direction.

Research Construction

Researchers are responsible to take the initiative to build relationships with community, research community needs and research processes, learn governance structures and the process to enter the community. This is to ensure the site for research is appropriate to the needs of the participants/ community and the researcher.

- Research the local history of the Lil'wat peoples
- Develop a relationship with the community outside of a research relationship
- Contact Lil'wat Culture, Heritage, Language Authority in person or make the initial phone call to set up meeting.

Things to Consider:

Prepare to spend time in the community

You really have to sacrifice to live here if you are going to do research. For me, that is something researchers have to do so they can experience and understand everything that goes on here. Before you can actually pick something here. (Lil'wat 5)

Acknowledge the past

Understand first of all, our history of our people. Making sure that they are not going to be writing in generalized and stereotypical stuff. They need to have read a lot of our histories and as Lil'wat. They need to look for information and have an understanding of who we are. (Lil'wat 6)

Research

I feel the most important thing researchers need to do is to get as much information about the community before entering the community. Upon entering or even before entering the community, researchers should participate in as much community events as possible to learn and meet Lil'wat7ul. (Lil'wat 9)

Step 2: Digging the Foundation.

Lil'wat Teaching and Learning Concept: **Cwelelep**

Discomfort and the value of being in a place of dissonance, uncertainty, and anticipation. (Williams, 2006)

S7istken Construction

Mid-November floor excavation: First crossed two bark ropes the length of the pit at right angles, pointing their ends in the semicardinal direction. Stakes marked the centre, quarter midpoints; the women dug a hole 3-4 feet deep with sloping sides.

Research Construction

In a research context, digging the foundation is represented by the research proposal which integrates all the information from community consultations, and presented to the Lil'wat, Language, Culture, and Heritage Authority for approval.

After establishing a relationship the coordinator for the Lil'wat Language, Culture and Heritage Authority:

- a. Submit a letter to the community to the Lil'wat Culture Language, Heritage Authority. State the purpose of research and link how this research would benefit the community based on your pre-entry research (celhcelh-learning concept pg. 2)

b. If the authority is interested in the project, you will receive an invitation to present to the Authority. In preparation for the presentation, address the following:

- i. Traditional territory acknowledgment of the Lil'wat Nation
- ii. Share your understanding of the community and connections to the land if applicable (if this is not established, need to readdress step one)
- iii. Identify benefits to the community and yourself the researcher
- iv. Clearly state your intentions for ownership of knowledge once the data is collected.

Things to Consider:

Language accessibility; relevance to the community; bring a gift to give to the authority for their time to hear your request; watchful listening (Learning concept pg. 2); flexibility and willingness to change your proposal.

Step 3: Four house posts.

Lil'wat Teaching and Learning Concept: **Watchful Listening**

Having an openness to listening beyond our own personal thoughts and assumptions. (Williams, 2006)

s7istken Construction

Fresh cut logs were brought to the site and stripped of bark. 4 main house posts were planted into holes in the floor at an angle roughly parallel the excavated walls.

Four House Posts to the Lil'wat Research Process

The four house posts to the Lil'wat Research process are trust, Kat'il'a, family, and sharing. They mirror the function of support of the four house posts in an s7istken. Researchers need to attend to the 4 house posts throughout the research project. If one house post collapses, the whole s7istken/ research process will fall apart. Watchful listening is a vital component to ensure the four house posts stand tall.

House Post One: Trust

There is a long history of mistrust based on a shared experience of colonization where research and education was a tool for such destruction. Fear of the unknown and strangers are barriers researchers need to address to build trust as a foundation to the research relationship.

Our experience with the non-native world is of course they are judgmental and put on their stereotypical glasses and stuff like that and in awe of our beliefs. For a non-native to come in and do research, they need to know more about our community and gain that trust from the community. Gain the respect from the community. And actually understand a bit of what they are talking about a certain practice, the purpose of that and the way it is practiced. (Lil'wat 6)

House Post Two: Kat'il'a

Finding stillness amidst our busyness and need to know. To be in a state of Kat'il'a requires patience. In research we have a pressing agenda for the "need to know". But researchers need to practice patience and understand Lil'wat communication styles to fully comprehend the information community members are sharing. Answers to questions will emerge from interactions and least likely from direct questioning.

So the biggest conflict that I find with the type of people I deal with is timeframe. Is that we don't move fast enough and that generates conflict because their time frames and the community's time frames don't necessarily match up. (Lil'wat 4)

House Post Three: Family

Family is the third house post to the research process. Regardless of the definition of community, Lil'wat Nation is made up of family groups who are intricately woven together to form a very connected and related collective. Conversations during meetings and consultations always reinforced the centrality of family in the research design and participation. Family is central to the Lil'wat way of being and life. It is through building relationships not just with individual community members, but with the families that created kamucwkalha (the energy indicating group cohesion around a common goal). There is a strong sense of family pride and history that is distinct from each family group. Researchers need to be aware of these distinctions and respect the different needs of each family group as they work with various community members. One must also ensure methods of inclusive representation from all family groups in the community so no one is left out.

House Post Four: Sharing

Sharing is the fourth house post to the research process; it combines the other house posts of trust, Kat'il'a, and family. Sharing in the Lil'wat way is reciprocal, as elders expressed, "if they want to learn, we teach them" (Lil'wat 6, 7, 8). The Lil'wat supported the first settlers as they attempted to survive their first winter in the valley because this was the Lil'wat way. Lil'wat7ul continue to uphold this pedagogy today as they share and open their homes to outsiders who are genuine in their intentions to learn. Sharing in research collaborations centres on the reciprocal relationship between the researcher and the community. The production of this research handbook would not have been possible without the skills, needs, and energy from both partners involved.



Step 4: Roof beams and cross beams.

Lil'wat Teaching and Learning
Concept: **A7xa7cal**

Locating the infinite capacity we all have to answer our own questions as learners (Williams, 2006)

s7istken Construction

Tops of the 4 house post notched to support the four main roof beams. A webbing of spaced rafters was lashed in concentric circles from pit to the smoke hole. The roof and cross beams provide structure to the roof and hold the 4 house posts together

Lil'wat Research Structure

The following provide structure to the research process like the roof and cross beams of the s7istken. Once a research proposal is accepted by the LCLHA, you will receive a letter of approval from the Chief and Council. The following structure will assist in the project taking form:

Partnership agreement

Initial meeting with community gatekeeper from LCLHA to draft a memorandum of understanding which clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, ownership of knowledge, expectations, conflict resolution. Signed by both parties (legal and binding)

Community member guide

- Introduces the researcher to various community members and leaders. This gives an opportunity for relationship building and also for the researcher and community members to field questions from each other.
- Develops research design with researcher.
- Co-design the informed consent forms.
- Reports back to the LCLHA of the researcher's work

Seeking, Listening and Learning (Data Collection)

- Copies of all Informed consent forms will be given to the participant, Lil'wat Cultural Center (LCLHA), and the researcher.
- Provide a token of thanks for the participants time (honorarium or gift)- it is not the value of the gift, it shows that you are thinking of them. Acceptance of the meal and/or gift is agreement to the partnership.
- Tobacco and berries are a traditional gift.
- Family involvement in the process, especially working with Elders to have family support during interviews, events, meetings, etc.
- Transportation is an issue for participants since the geography of the community is split into two neighborhoods (old site and the new site).
- Be prepared to write down field notes from memory as some community members may not feel comfortable using recording devices.
- Use of video or voice recording- dependant on individual or event. Need to get permission from LCLAH and the individual who is being recorded. Informed consent forms signed and given to participant, LLCHA and researcher. Copies of recordings to be given to participant.
- Sharing a meal is a traditional means of establishing a relationship before business.

Things to Consider:

Permission

Even if the council and the community gives you permission, it doesn't mean you can go and say to whoever you want that you have permission to do research. If the person does not want to be researched, then you have to be respectful of that. (Lil'wat 10)

Courtesy

I try to give them some tea and they don't want it. But you know we are taught “Never say no”, if you are going to a house and they only give you tea to say “thank you” and things like that. (Lil'wat 7)

Sharing and Ownership

- a. Transcripts- copies given to participants to scan for errors and misinterpretations.
- b. Interpretations- Involve participants to verify your interpretations to ensure accuracy.
- c. Preliminary findings should be brought back into the community for discussion and input. Be prepared to make changes to your findings/ interpretations.
- d. Final outcome of the research findings should be brought back to the community to be shared. Hosting a lunch or dinner would provide a good forum for celebration of the partnership and research process.
- e. Findings should be presented in a language and format that is user friendly and accessible.
- f. If you plan on using elements of your research for presentations, you should contact the LLCHA to let them know of your plans and also provide a copy of your presentation to the LLCHA.

Meaning Making/ Data Interpretation

Researchers to come back to present their research findings and give research participants a second phase to reconsider what they said like in context of what has been generated so far (Lil'wat 4)

Lil'wat Worldview

We have been given that knowledge from the Great Creator. As the traditional Lil'wat people, you can have knowledge about it but you can never own it. (Lil'wat 6)

Issues to Address

What level of consent do we need to give?
What about the results, who has ownership?
Publications? (Lil'wat 4)

Step 5: The Ladder.

Lil'wat Teaching and Learning Concept: **Kamucwkalha**

The energy indicating group cohesion around a common goal (Williams, 2006)

s7istken Construction

A notched log ladder was lowered through the smoke hole which runs through all the pieces of the structure. Attention was paid to the ladder placement to prevent getting burned by the fire and to ensure safe entry and exit from the s7istken.

Respectful Relationship

Building a respectful relationship is the ladder that runs through the foundation and the roof of our research s7istken. The level of respect one shows to another will determine a successful or failed relationship. Researchers need to be mindful of the position they take up in the context of the people and the environment throughout the collaboration. Presently, research with Indigenous communities needs repair from certain research predecessors and it is our responsibility to address the past grievances through thoughtful and respectful research practices today. As a starting point, researchers should ask themselves the following guiding questions:

1. Who benefits from this research?
2. How does this research benefit the community?
3. How does it benefit me the researcher?
4. Is this equal or unbalanced?



Step 6: The Roof.

Lil'wat Teaching and Learning

Concept: **Kat'il'a**

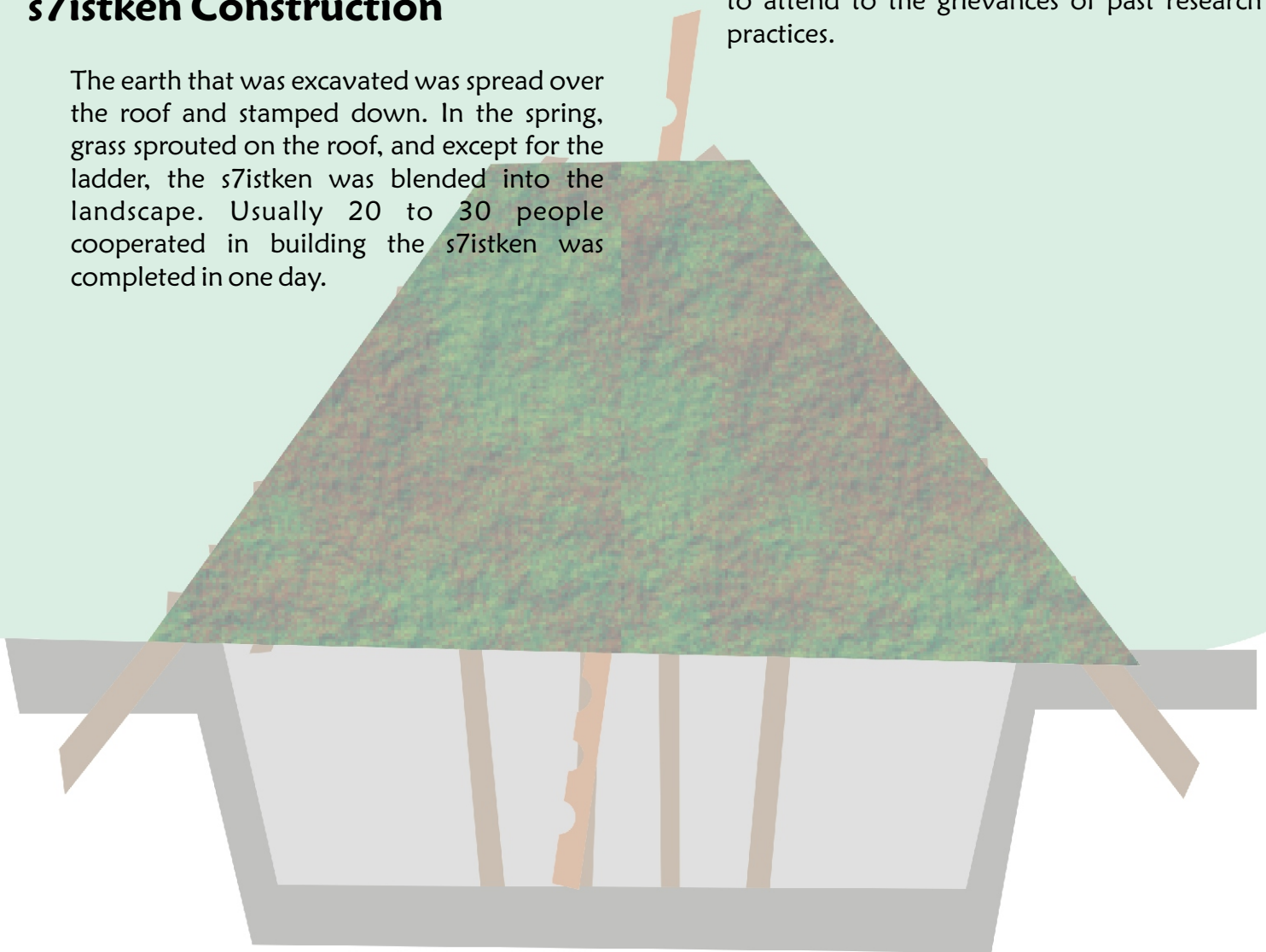
Finding stillness amidst our busyness and need to know. (Williams, 2006)

s7istken Construction

The earth that was excavated was spread over the roof and stamped down. In the spring, grass sprouted on the roof, and except for the ladder, the s7istken was blended into the landscape. Usually 20 to 30 people cooperated in building the s7istken was completed in one day.

Research Construction

The final step of the research s7istken is the final product or outcome of the process of collaboration. In this particular s7istken, it is the creation of this handbook on research processes grounded in respect and relevance to attend to the grievances of past research practices.



How to Contact Us:

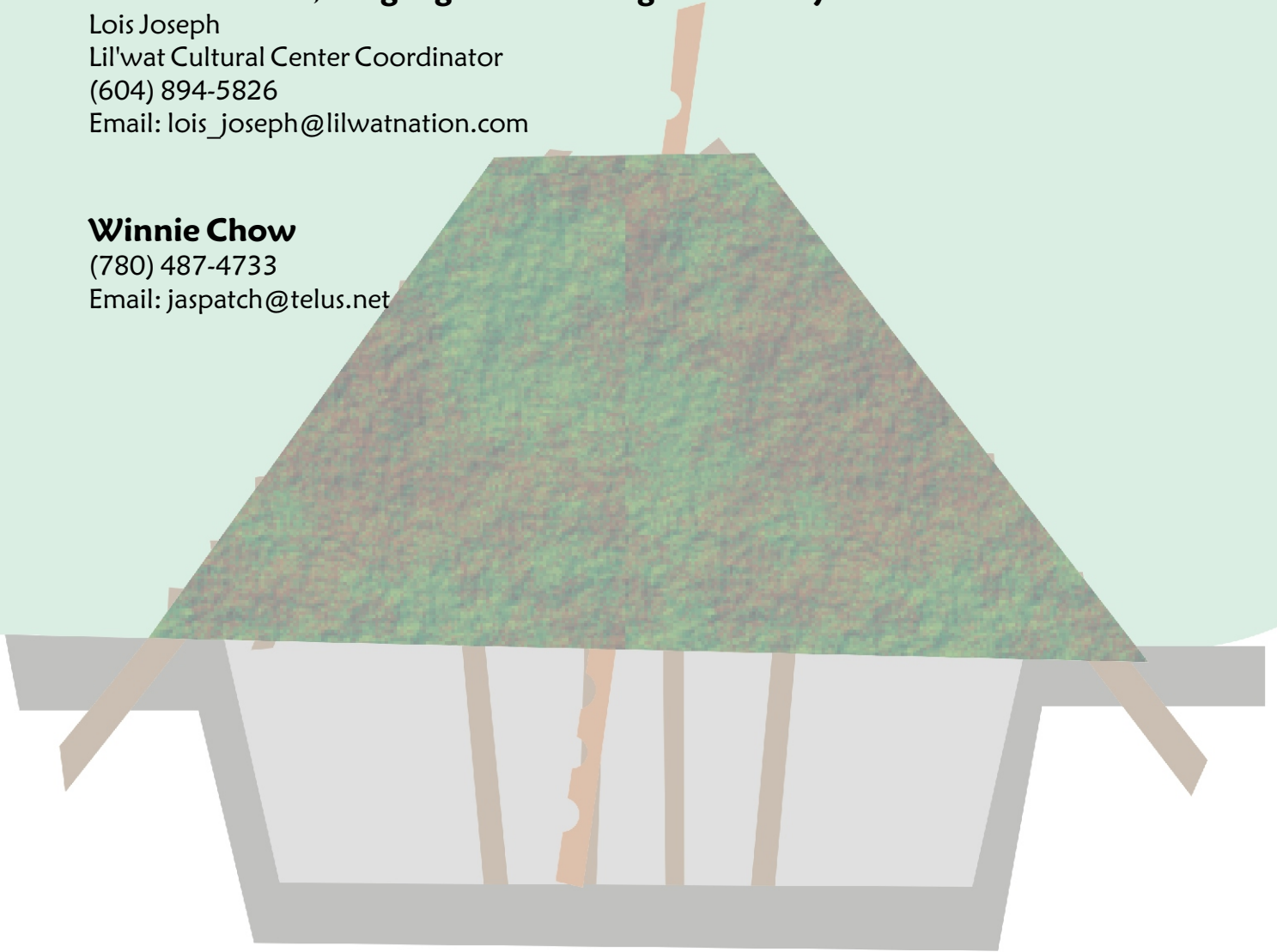
As this handbook is an evolving project, we invite you to contact us to make suggestions for improvements, additions, or deletions to this handbook to help future researchers.

Lil'wat Culture, Language and Heritage Authority

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