

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

by

Tthot'iné Gun Bilozaze - Danita Lewis

B.Ed., Vancouver Island University, 2010

B.A, Vancouver Island University, 2008

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTERS OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION
in the Faculty of Education

© Danita Lewis, 2020
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This project may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

Supervisory Committee

Jean-Paul Restoule, Professor and Chair Indigenous Education, University of Victoria
Supervisor

Dr. Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins, Professor Linguist, University of Victoria
Co-Supervisor

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

Abstract

Indigenous languages are disappearing at an alarming rate and many face the risk of extinction. In the recent past, Canada implemented language policies and laws aiming to eradicate Indigenous languages and cultures thus putting them at risk of extinction. In 2019, National Chief Perry Bellegarde spoke to the Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly in Ottawa on this subject, “Our languages connect us all to our ceremonies, to our lands, to our waters and to our right to self-determination as Indigenous peoples, we want our children to grow up with these rich and beautiful languages.” (p.1)

Oral tradition has been in place since before the creation of time. Indigenous people in Canada come from this tradition, their language being the primary tool for daily communication and holding within it a connection to the land, ancestors, memory, and identity. Orality is dynamic as it holds living memories and serves to transmit knowledge and beliefs, as well as maintains historical records and sustains culture and identity. Dēnesų́líné language, like every Indigenous language in Canada, faces extinction. Canadian educators are now doing the complex and emotional work of Language Revitalization. Decolonizing, Indigenizing and reconciling are parts of the process.

This project explores the importance of orality for the Dēnesų́líné (pronounced as Den-a-sooth-leh-na), of the Athabaskan language family. This project is a unit plan developed with the guidance of elders, knowledge keepers and fluent language speakers of Łuechok Túe. The unit plan serves to bridge the knowledge between a Euro western system and the many ways of knowing with Canada’s Indigenous people, namely the Dēnesų́líné. The research was guided by a Dēnesų́líné framework supported by community members and fluent Dēnesų́líné language speakers. The author is not fluent in

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

Dēnesųliné; however, she shares the same goal of her home community to use education to “create speakers, and to re-establish Denesųliné as the first language on Cold Lake First Nations.” This paper outlines the process of working collaboratively from a distance with fluent Dēnesųliné language speakers with the goal of creating a resource that can be used in the public school system to meet the requirements mandated by the BC Ministry of Education with whom the researcher is employed as a public school teacher. The research uses the important teachings, ceremony, culture, Dēnesųliné language and worldview obtained through interviews with fluent Dēnesųliné language and culture carriers. This unit plan is intended to be shared as a resource for her own community but also to be shared within the public school district where she is employed so that others may understand the importance of language, culture and traditions while taking into account the impacts of colonization. This fosters understanding and a supportive learning atmosphere built upon encouragement and humour, while recognizing that working on language revitalization is a healing journey.

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
Table.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
Dedication.....	xi
Chapter 1: New Constructs.....	1
Chapter 2: Situating self in the research.....	8
Chapter 3: The path taken.....	20
Chapter 4: Learning from the current resources and honouring the voices of those who came before.....	33
Chapter 5: How do I get there and am I prepared?.....	57
Chapter 6: The path forward and conclusion.....	72
Bibliography.....	75
Appendix.....	87

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

Table – Glossary of Denesúliné words

Glossary of Denesúliné words:	Pronunciation in English	Definition
á̄nethi	Alth-neth-ee	My Elders, ancestors
beba	Bay-bah	Waiting for somebody
Bilozaze	Bill-o-za-zee	works with/makes things with hands
Chu	Chew	And
Dēnesúliné	Den-a-sooth-leh-na	Human Beings
ghedēli	Gay-death-ee	Travelling
kón dháredi	kon d hair ree dee	Feed the fire
Łue Chok Tué	thluu-ee -choke tu-ee	Big Fish Lake
nátthe theȳi	Nath-ee-they-ee	headmen or the one who stands in front
n̄īh̄ōłtsin̄i	Knee-hoot-see-knee	Mother Earth
sel̄je'	Sey-lee-eh	My daughter
Sekwi	Sek-we	Children
s̄īn̄i chu	See -Knee-chew	A term of gratitude making my mind happy
s̄īnie xa	See-knee-ha	An expression of gratitude to make me happy
setihkwi	Seth -ee -kwee	parents
setsuné	Tset -tsu -nay	Grandmother
Setsiye/ Setsíe	Tset-see-aye	Grandfather
t'ąhi	Taa-he	Those who are

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire
List of Figures

Figure 1: Traditional Territory and Cold Lake Air Weapons Range.

Figure 2: Circle of Livelihood before and after 1952

Figure 3: Crown and Oil Company Leases.

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

Acknowledgments

I raise my hands with gratitude to my Setsiye who has guided me toward education and left me with a rich legacy to continue, I am his heartbeat. To both of my grandparents and their influence; they played the biggest role in my life giving me a solid foundation built upon our Dēnesų́liné values and laws. You helped me from the spirit world; you gave me drive and reminded me that the language is in my DNA, it is who I am.

I raise my hands with gratitude and appreciation for my family and friends who helped and supported me while I reach my educational goals. My supervisor Jean-Paul Restoule helping guide my journey with positive feedback and encouraging me to consider many aspects of worldview. My professors, Dr. Trish Rosborough and Dr. Lorna Williams for teaching me how to situate myself as a scholar. Dr. Ewa Czaykowska-Higgins for teaching me what an ally is through your actions and helping me to be more explicit in my written words.

I am grateful for ą́nethi Allen Jacob for his gentle guidance and open sharing of cultural knowledge and deep understanding of cultural protocols. Sų́nı́ chu to Jessie Sylvester, she treated me as a sister and encouraged me along the way openly sharing, translating and leading the way. To my Ene who helped me understand words more deeply. For my aunt Lynda Minoose who is a language champion and for Noella Amable for helping me unpack and understand the language while providing moral support. For LeeAnne Cornish who was eager to review, learn and edit this project and paper.

For my friends, the Poulin and Holland families, who gave me soft bed to sleep in, who fed me, who helped me find laughter during the tense times. For friends who are my chosen family, Hedbaults', who opened their home and took special care of my selje

kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire

while I was on campus. I appreciate the support you provided so that I can achieve my goals.

For my reason for living, my heartbeat, my sel̥e' Danielle she is my legacy. She is my breath and I'm filled with gratitude for her unconditional love. Danielle is always watching and that makes me a better person, she inspires me to learn and speak language daily and to live our life in our Dënesų́liné beliefs and values.

**kón dháredi - Feeding the Fire
Dedication**

á̄nethi chu Sekwi t'á̄hi ʔá̄lu ghedeli beba

We are waiting for the ancestors and unborn children travelling toward us.

The youth will shape and design how we hold each other up and honour one another.
They help us realize our own importance. In the spirit of inclusion, understanding,
sharing and compassion

Chapter 1: New Constructs

The British Columbia Ministry of Education (2015) indicated in *Aboriginal Worldview and Perspectives in the Classroom*, "New constructs for leadership, Indigenous pedagogical practices, Aboriginal perspectives and content, and a vision for decolonizing mindsets were among the wealth of ideas expressed as to how we move forward both individually and collectively. It is our responsibility to sustain this conversation and to make commitments to ensure that we are successful." (p. 1). These new constructs are part of a moving forward initiative to include and weave Indigenous perspective or worldview into each area of the curriculum. The oversight in the new construct is that the resources that are available do not sufficiently cover each First Nations worldview, in this case the Dënesųłiné. This gap I will refer to as the under resourced problem. The purpose of this project is to develop an understanding of the resources that are available to support the mandated changes made by the BC Ministry of Education, specifically the Dënesųłiné resources that are available, while finding solutions to fill the gap. Because I live and work in Liqwiltokw territory, I will honour their Indigenous language Kwak'wala in the resource. Having both languages also helps to show the diversity of Indigenous languages, traditions and culture which are the foundational pieces of worldview. I have included in the resource the English pronunciation of the words to make it more useable to non-language speakers. I will speak to this more in later chapters.

Added to the new constructs and expectations made by the Ministry of Education is to fulfill the recommendations brought forward by the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission's (2015) Call to Action #62 stating, "Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms." (p. 3). The TRC or Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created in 2008 to educate about the legacy of Indian Residential Schools in Canada. Indian Residential Schools operated in Canada after 1880 until 1996 with the goal of assimilating Indigenous children into the dominant Canadian culture. The TRC recommendations are in the spirit of reconciliation and healing, and to provide a framework for all Canadians moving forward. This paper outlines the process of working collaboratively from a distance with fluent Dënesų́łíné language speakers with the goal of creating a resource that can be used in the public school system to meet the requirements mandated by the BC Ministry of Education with whom the researcher is employed as a public school teacher. The research uses the important teachings, ceremony, culture, Dënesų́łíné language and worldview obtained through interviews with fluent Dënesų́łíné language and culture carriers. This unit plan is intended to be shared as a resource for her own community but also to be shared within the public school district where she is employed so that others may understand the importance of language, culture and traditions while taking into account the impacts of colonization. This fosters understanding and a supportive learning atmosphere built upon encouragement and humour, while recognizing that working on language revitalization is a healing journey.

The TRC recommendations and the Ministry of Education mandate that Indigenous ways of knowing be woven into the curriculum in collaboration with Indigenous peoples. This educational requirement has placed pressure on Indigenous communities, Indigenous teachers and knowledge keepers to make age appropriate

curriculum resources for K-12 students. According to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, reconciliation is defined as, “ongoing individual and collective process, and will require commitment from all those affected including First Nations, Inuit and Métis former Indian Residential School (IRS) students, their families, communities, religious entities, former school employees, government and the people of Canada.” (p. 1). Reconciliation belongs to all Canadians.

Most educators are wanting to fulfill the calls to action and the requirements of the Ministry of Education, however the reality is that teachers are encountering significant limitations acquiring firsthand stories and resources that provide authentic Indigenous worldview. Although the government legislated this change, there are not enough people to make it happen which means there is underrepresentation of Indigenous staff and knowledge keepers to keep up to the demand for authentic Indigenous resources. The term authentic will be discussed later in the paper. Added to this, the lack of funding and the lack of collaborative efforts ultimately result in a lack of authentic resources that provide understanding of culture, Indigenous language and ways of knowing.

An example of the underrepresentation of Indigenous staff can be seen in the district I am employed in. According to the district website, the student population is 5550. The Indigenous student population represents 23% of this number. According to the district website there are 900+ employees in the school district. For the statistics to represent an equivalent percentage of Indigenous students to staff of 23%, there should be 207 Indigenous staff. However, the current number of Indigenous Language and Culture teachers is 6 for the entire district, or less than 1% of the 900 employees. The District

Language and Culture teachers are not only underrepresented, they are overextended and expected to provide the worldview of the local nations and their own nations to fulfill the calls to action and the changes to the curriculum to provide authentic perspectives and content in the resources. The Calls to Action points out, “this will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). In addition, the demand for authentic voice overtaxes any current role models who are available in the community for classroom visits. Basically, it is unrealistic to expect a staff of less than 1% to fill the large lack of authentic Indigenous resources. This is not to say resources are not being created by non-Indigenous teachers, however this is often done without consultation or authentic Indigenous voice. Without deconstructing and offering solutions to the under-resource problem, the dominant voice of the Euro-western worldview will continue to offer incomplete and inaccurate information. The following interview with an elder illustrates the fundamentally flawed relationship with the dominant society and Indigenous people, this interview demonstrates this long history Indigenous voice not being included: In 1992, a land claims commissioner interviewed my Setsiye (grandfather) Charlie, was asked about the importance of the land to the Dēnesųlíné and the lack of their voice being heard. He replied:

I would like to say thank you. This is the first time we've had white people sitting with us to listen to us, thank you. This is the first time we have had something like this ever since I was born. I would like to thank them, thank you again. If they are going to help us and if things happen well, for our benefit, then it will be good because we are poor people these days. A lot of my people are

here today, and I am thankful, and this is the first time since I was a child that I see many white people here to witness with us and listen to what we have to say.

Thank you. (Blackman, p. 293)

The significance of this quote by Setsiye Charlie is to show that the relationship between the Indigenous people of Łue Chok Tué and the settlers was not reciprocal. Setsiye Charlie pointed out that although the Air Weapons Range was in place since 1952, forty years later in 1992 was the first time the people of Łue Chok Tué had a voice in sharing how placing a Bombing Range on their traditional territory has affected the Dēnesųłiné people. When looking for resources that can provide the Dēnesųłiné worldview, the resources currently available are written largely from the settlers' perspective, or from the outside looking in because Indigenous people were simply not listened to, as Setsiye Charlie indicated. Since this interview 30 years ago, not much has changed. Similarly, a summary written about the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1995), "determined that the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Canada was fundamentally flawed." (Turpel-Lafond p. 2)

When considering Dēnesųłiné worldview, I am also taking into consideration that some Dēnesųłiné are not able to offer worldview because of urban living, loss of language and disconnection from community which I will point out in the next chapter of the paper. In a CBC article by Kyle Muszka (2019), he writes, "When Indigenous people move to the city, they lose a physical connection to their homeland that would otherwise help them retain their language." (para. 2). I also recognize there are valuable non-Indigenous allies who have spent time practicing and immersing themselves in culture that may not be their own who can offer the beginnings of embodiment of worldview.

However it is not, for a lack of better terminology, their place to speak on behalf of a culture that does not belong to them unless they have been asked. Bissell and Korteweg (2016) propose that Indigenous peoples have been silenced and marginalized by a lack of culturally relevant teaching methods and texts.

The time has come when Indigenous people have a voice and are valued and through this worldview another perspective that is deeply imbedded in place-based ways of knowing and learning. It is worth mentioning, when considering the importance of authentic Indigenous worldview and Indigenous language revitalization, the University of Victoria website sums up the position nicely, “Embedded within each Indigenous language is a wealth of knowledge and unique expression beyond words and sentences. Each language carries and represents a whole history and relationship to the land, distinct ways of thinking, as well as knowledge about living in the world, seasons, place names, ceremony, plants and more.” (UVIC, Oct 2019). In addition to this, The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2006) states in Article 11, “Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artefacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.” (p. 11)

Aside from the significant UNDRIP article, it is also relevant to note the use of the word, “authentic” throughout the paper in reference to recommendations made by Terri Mack from Strong Nations, a book and gift store that focuses on Authentic Indigenous literature and gifts. My meeting with her echoed the following statement: “At Strong Nations we recognize the need to continue to provide support for all educators in

understanding the need for authentic resources in the hands of all learners. One source from which we pull strength is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).” To further expand on Strong Nations viewpoint on authentic resources, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (2019) says the following about the value of using authentic resources:

In the past, resources dealing with Aboriginal content have contained inaccurate information, and/or have not fairly represented the unique experiences and worldviews of First Peoples. Regardless of how well-intentioned or well researched these resources may be, FNEESC advocates that only authentic resources be used in the classroom to ensure that First Peoples cultures and perspectives are portrayed accurately and respectfully. An increased use of authentic First Peoples resource will benefit all students in BC:

First Peoples students will see themselves, their families, their cultures, and their experiences represented as being valued and respected.

Non-First Peoples students will gain a better understanding of and appreciation for the significance of First Peoples within the historical and contemporary fabric of this province. (page 9)

There is a gap in the authentic resources developed and available that can provide the authentic unique expression each Indigenous language holds: the harmony, interconnectedness and wealth of knowledge from an Indigenous perspective.

Chapter 2: Situating self in the research

“You're here for a purpose. Let's help you find that purpose. Let's help you to build upon that purpose and find ways to nourish it.” (Coleman, Battiste, Henderson, Findlay, & Findlay, 2012, p. 147) Who am I? Sį́zı́ Tthotine Gun Bilozaze, my setihkwi (parents) are Albertine and Dan Finney. John and Josephine Blackman and John and Anne Finney are my setsune' and setsiye (grandmother and grandfather). I am Dēnesų́liné from Łue Chok Tué (Big Fish Lake also known as Cold Lake First Nations). My setsiye (grandfather) was one of the greatest influences in my life. John Blackman was an elder, a knowledge keeper, the wisest person I've met, and I draw strength and direction from his guidance and advice which has led me to the Masters of Indigenous Language Revitalization program. Setsiye was considered a nátthe theyı́ (headman or the one who stands in front) who are selected by the community because of knowledge and understanding of the event at hand. Setsiye was a designated leader who had the ability to voice the words of the people. He was someone who promoted cultural and political balance and harmony. Setsiye remained a community leader for all my life.

Setsiye encouraged his children and grandchildren to get a formal education. He would say, “It doesn't matter our relationship with the white man, if you want to get off the reserve you have to get an education.”(p.c. 1993) He knew that in order to compete in today's economy one needs an education. I am using my formal education as a tool to create space for Indigenous voice and a tool to help decolonize education from within the education system.

The most important role and one that guides me forward is I am ɛnɛ (a mother). Selje' (my daughter) is my breath, as the old people would say, she gives me purpose and she is an inspiration to me. I feel a tremendous responsibility to pass on the knowledge I was blessed to receive from ɔ́lnethi (my elders) onto my child and the students I teach. I am an ex-wife, and a parent who is the main caregiver. At times having the responsibility of both parents is enormous but very gratifying and fulfilling. I am a public-school district language and culture educator (K-8), a twice national award-winning educator. I am a researcher and a scholar. I am an artist. I am spiritual. I am part of a cultural society that isn't my own culture as well as a board member. I am a two-eyed seer because of my Dēnesų́liné heritage and my non-indigenous heritage. Because of this combination, I am a bridge between two worlds or maybe a walking contradiction because I have been educated Denesų́liné yet raised in a military community. I am true to my Denesų́liné roots with my love of travel and love of learning about cultures and ways of knowing.

I am a Finney (of strong mind - the definition of my maiden name), I am a Bilozaze (maker - the definition of my Indigenous family name before missionaries changed it). I am a traditional woman in a modern world, and I value kindness, honesty, integrity with a healthy dose of humour. I am a role model and a voice for those who need help advocating because of the culture of silence and deep understanding of the many impacts of colonization. I come from a line of people who are resilient and strong and who know the relations with the land that allowed us to thrive in the harshest of climates. I surround myself with people who are like-minded. I have made K'omoks my home because of my appreciation for the ocean and the strong Kwakwaka'wakw

community ties on the unceded territory I am a guest on. I will use these personal attributes to guide me in answering the questions while being mindful of ways to remember rituals/ceremonies and the language that have gone to sleep because of colonization. What does it mean to be Dënesųłiné, and who are the Dënesųłiné? They are nomadic Indigenous people who live within the natural laws, thriving and living on the Subarctic land since before time immemorial. Łuechok Túe is located north-east of Edmonton, Alberta. Dënesųłiné traditionally were nomadic and traveled the land following the seasons between fishing Łuechok Túe, and the hunting/gathering places Denne Ni Nennè (Primrose Lake). The Dene Nation is made up of 30 Dene communities who live from the North West Territories all the way to Mexico. Dënesųłiné has two dialects: The T and L dialect. The Łuechok Túe Dënesųłiné speak the T dialect. The Dënesųłiné language is reflected in the close relationship with the land and the natural cycles.

Nátthe theyi John Blackman (the one who stands in front) said, “We were rich people, we didn’t depend on anyone.” (p.c. 1993) It was the relationship the Dënesųłiné had with the nįhųłtsinį (mother earth) that was reciprocal and allowed for self-sufficiency. Nįhųłtsinį took care of the Dene and in turn the Dene took care of her to ensure the abundance of the land would be there for future generations. She kept the Dene rich with food and resources and allowed them to be independent people. The concept of ‘the land’ for many Indigenous peoples extends well beyond the physical landscape, encompassing the sky, the air, celestial bodies, the waters, the elements, and all living and non-living things to be found within it. For this reason, Indigenous Corporate Training Inc (ICT) states:

Since time immemorial, First Nations have had an intricate, respectful, spiritually and physically dependent, grateful, and protective tie to the land. The nature of this tie is not so much one of ownership but one of stewardship. They feel they have been bestowed with a responsibility for the land (and sea) and all of the creatures that inhabit the land with them. This sense of responsibility is greater than an emotional tie – it is intrinsically tied to the spirits of all aspects of the earth. (page 1)

Dënesų́liné Elder Allan Jacob remembers, “It was a good life, winters were spent hunting and trapping at Denne Ni Nennè (Primrose Lake) and the summers harvesting fish, berry picking and preserving food at Łuechok Túe,”(p.c. 2019) which today is known as Cold Lake. Tia Oros Peters, Zuni Nation and director of the Seventh Generation Fund for Indian Development quotes Hildner: “Indian people came out of the land... We came out of particular places and our specific thoughts and belief systems came from those places as well; we were shaped by the land, our language comes from the land.” (as quoted in Hildner, 2001, p. 1). The concept of the earth and the concept of respect for the nįhų́łtsinį (mother earth), are deeply embedded into the Dënesų́liné language.

Something drastically changed the good life the Dënesų́liné lived. The formation of the country we now know as Canada brought with it many unjust policies that were implemented by the Canadian Government such as the Indian Act, Treaty 6, Reserve system and residential schools. In addition to those devastating policies that were meant to colonize Canada's Indigenous people, the final blow to the Dënesų́liné traditional way of life was the placement of the Air Weapons Range onto the Denne Ni Nennè in 1952.

(see Figure 1). This led to the destruction of their rich lives and to the destruction of n̄h̄łtsin̄j of the Denne Ni Nenn̄ forcing many people to move away from the community. The previous 2028 square miles of traditional territory was reduced down to 56 square miles. When a Land Claims commissioner interviewed the community elders, all interviewees stated that this was when D̄nesūlin̄e life changed, when the government took away their access to land and began to destroy n̄h̄łtsin̄j by dropping bombs onto her. Many Indigenous communities across Canada are finding their way back to the land allowing their language to remain strong. So what happens when the land is no longer accessible? What happens when the land is contaminated?



Figure 1: Traditional Territory and Cold Lake Air Weapons Range.

The green area indicates the traditional hunting, gathering and fishing area of the D̄nesūlin̄e. The rectangle indicates how much of the Traditional Territory was lost and re-configured following the construction of the Air Weapons Range in 1952.

The Łuechok T̄e community has a tribal band membership of 2500 with less than 70 fluent speakers remaining. According to Statistics Canada (2016) only 670 live on reserve. This urbanization is the direct result of the placement of the Air Weapons

Range that was place on the traditional gathering area, their *n̄h̄łtsin̄j* or *Denne Ni Nennè* (Primrose Lake). In 1975, 1986, 1992 and again in 1993 the community of Łuechok Túe submitted land claims to the federal government claiming Indigenous ways of knowing and languages come from the land. “From an Indigenous perspective, ways of knowing and learning are derived from Creation, therefore, knowledge is sacred; inherent in and connected to all of nature, its creatures, and humans” (Graham & Ireland, 2008, p. 33). As a part of the land claim, many *Dēnesułíné* elders were interviewed to get firsthand accounts on the importance of the land. The Claims Commission (1993) interviewed elder Rosalie Andrews. This is her explanation of life on *n̄h̄łtsin̄j* or *Denne Ni Nennè* (Primrose Lake):

“As a child, I was raised in Primrose. We used to live year round in Primrose. We had our home over there; I lived with my parents, of course, as a child. My dad did trapping, hunting; my mother made moose hides and made dry meat for the summer, or in the fall people would go hunting. They would do the same thing put the meat away for the winter. Everything that they got was fish - just like fish, buds, moose, things like that, anything edible. It wasn't played with, people use it - even the rabbit, the chicken. The rabbit, in the winter the woman made blankets with it, they made rabbit blankets or they made vests and lined it for the leggings for the children to wear. The feathers from duck they made blankets, everything used. They never threw anything away.’ (Cold Lake Transcript, vol. 1 p. 55-56).

After hearing all the accounts, the Indian Claims Commissioner Jim Prentice said during a news conference in Edmonton on Aug. 17, 1993:

It is clear, from the accounts of the First Nations people and the overall historical record, that when the First Nations signed the treaties, their primary concern was to protect and preserve their ability to make a living and to remain self-sufficient.

The creation of the air weapons range completely destroyed their independence.

The Claims Commission concluded the following regarding the creation of the range and the effects on Cold Lake First Nations:

There can be no dispute that the exclusion of the people of Cold Lake from the air weapons range almost destroyed their livelihoods and their access to food and other resources. The damage to the community was not only financial, it was psychological and spiritual. (Vol. 11, Page 3)

The Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) also echoes these significant connections:

Language is the principal instrument by which culture is transmitted from one generation to another, by which members of a culture communicate meaning and make sense of their shared experience. For Aboriginal people, the threat that their languages could disappear is more than the prospect that they will have to acquire new instruments for communicating their daily needs and building a sense of community. It is a threat that their distinctive world view, the wisdom of their ancestors and their ways of being human could be lost as well. And, as they point out, if the languages of this continent are lost, there is nowhere else they can be heard again. (1996, Vol. 3, Part 6, p. 573).

The tragic consequence of the Air Weapons Range was devastating to the Dënesųliné community; it contributed to mass urbanization which contributed to the loss of language and culture. (see Circle of Livelihood; see below). As the Łuechok Túe Dënesųliné regain footing and rebuild from the financial, psychological and spiritual damage done from not having access to the traditional territory, it is reflected in the fragmented language and culture of the community. On the heels of the devastation created by the Air Weapons Range, the oil companies moved in forbidding further access to land (see Figure 3). The bombing range and the oil companies taking over the territory annihilated the once reciprocal relationship the Dënesųliné had with the land and was ultimately responsible for the destruction of their self-sufficient lifestyle, directly destroying their connections to the land, culture, language and traditions. The United Nations (2019) states:

Indigenous Languages matter for development, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. Languages play a crucial role in the daily lives of people, not only as a tool for communication, education, social integration, and development, but also as a repository for each person's unique identity, cultural history, traditions, and memory. But despite their immense value, languages around the world continue to disappear at an alarming rate. With this in mind, the United Nations declared 2019 The International Year of Indigenous Languages in order to raise awareness of them, not only to benefit the people who speak these languages, but also for others to appreciate the important contribution they make to our world's rich cultural diversity. (page 1)

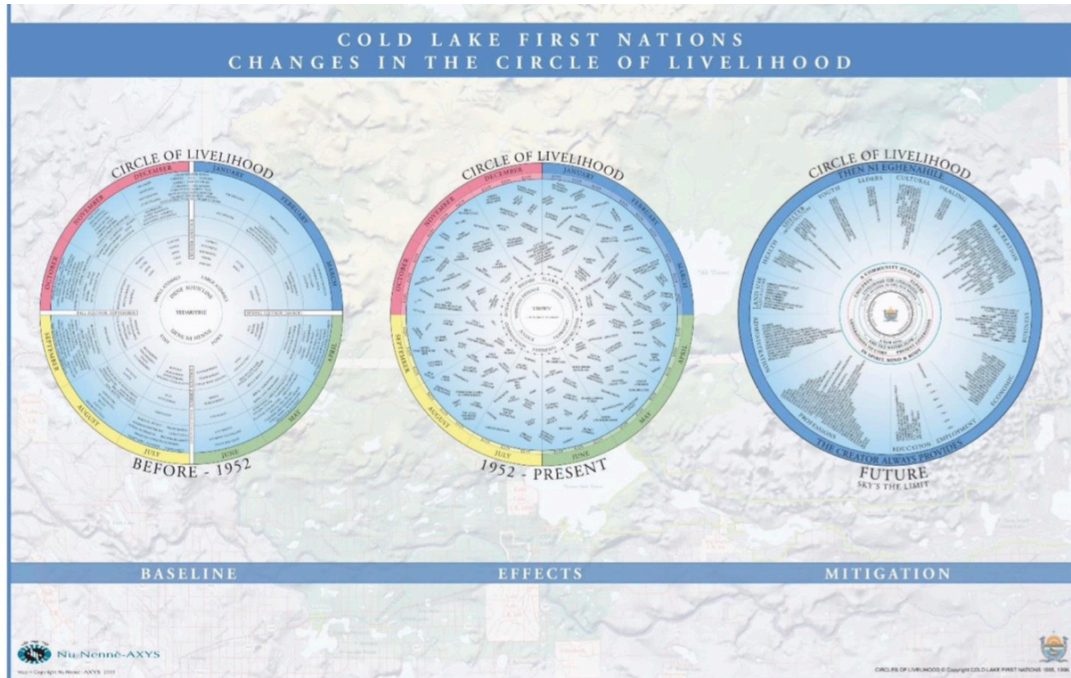


Figure 2: Circle of Livelihood before and after 1952

The circle to the left indicates how traditional Dënesųliné life was organized before 1952.

The circle to its immediate right indicates urbanization and the chaos the placement of the bombing range created for the Dënesųliné.

The circle to the right is the future which includes rebuilding, reorganizing and reclaiming Indigenous language and culture.

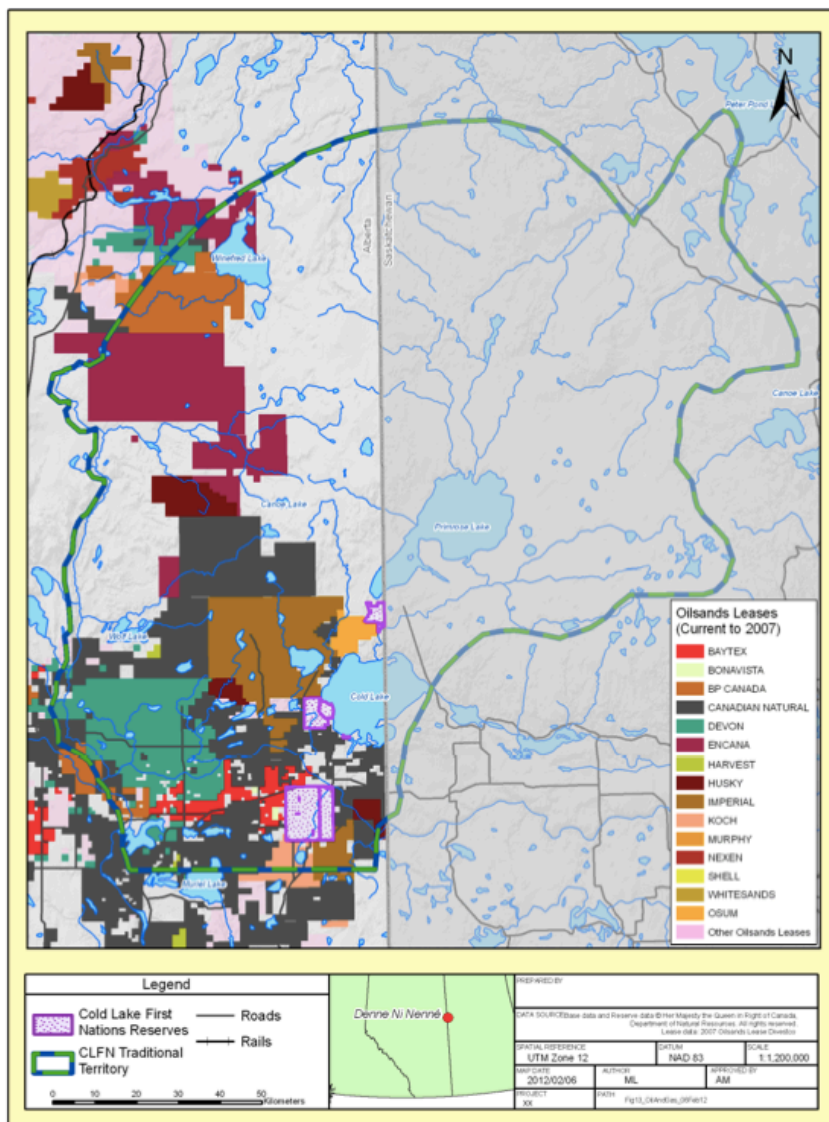


Figure 3: Crown and Oil Company Leases.

There are over 1000 leases with the Crown and Oil companies. This figure shows Oil Sands Leases in Relation to Denne Ni Nennè. None of these Oil companies permit access to the land

Today, this loss of language is most evident in the lack of language learning resources. Dēnesūliné Elder Allen Jacob says to a land claims commissioner, “Our Dene people were masters of the forest. They had complete and almost intimate knowledge—I would say almost complete knowledge of their environment.” (page 777). In our telephone interview he says, “We have forgotten who we are.”(p.c. 2019) This statement guides and motivates me. It echoes so deep into my soul and inspires me to move forward

in regaining my footing and contributing toward the reclamation of Language and Culture for my community which will also benefit the public school system I teach in. I have worked with community members and received clear guidance on the direction of my work. I have used my scholarly background as an educator in the BC public school system. The intent of this research is to contribute to the processes of decolonization and language revitalization through my role as a public-school language and culture teacher. It is my role to ensure Indigenous perspective is offered and to help non-Indigenous educators with ideas to weave Indigenous content into their own practice, to decolonize, indigenize and revitalize language. In order to work towards the mandated changes and towards a reconciled Canada, Battiste (2002) calls upon the decolonization of our minds and our hearts. As stated, there is a lack of authentic resources available which is why it is important to fill the gap.

I have been guided to this point by the teaching of my grandfather and often use my own family's stories to impart worldview. When reading the land claims from my community and understanding UNDRIP, all these remind me of my right to practice and revitalize my language, culture and traditions. Land claims involve an Indigenous community, Łuechok Túe in this case, asking the Government of Canada to address historic wrongs. It is only fair to recognize, when creating resources, that the process should also involve the voice of the people. The community I am from shares historical and legal documents to support and prove that the people of Łuechok Túe are legally entitled to land and to financial compensation when a treaty has been signed to share the land but not the resources. I have the right to maintain, protect and develop resources that can offer Dēnesųliné worldview. This project also serves a larger purpose, to help others like

myself reconnect to our ancestral Dënesųliné customs, traditions, truths and language. I am grateful that my Setsiye had the courage to use his voice at a time where many had been denied theirs and I will explain how I needed to tap into his leadership to find solutions to overcome the many obstacles that were placed on the path.

Chapter 3: The path taken

Ram Dass (2012) once said, “It is important to expect nothing, to take every experience, including the negative ones, as merely steps on the path, and to proceed.” (p. 28). After reading the land claims accounts between the Government of Canada and Łuechok Tűe, when I read the words of my Setsiye, it became very clear to me that the time I spent with my Setsiye was purposeful. He set me on a path since the day I was born. Setsiye and other elders from Łuechok Tűe played a huge role in providing first-hand accounts of what life was like before contact, before the air weapons range and oil companies were placed on the traditional fishing, gathering and hunting territory compared to the present way of life. My Setsiye and his brother Setsiye Charlie shared stories about what it meant to be Dűnesűlinė and reading the words he spoke to the land claims commissioner surprised me:

As long as I am alive, and after I die, my family that’s following me should be helped as long as there is a bombing range. This is what I think; that’s why I’m saying this here. I’m only asking for help, even if I don’t get my land back. I want what was always ours for our next generation coming up....If it was only for myself, I wouldn’t ask. But for coming generations, if their way of life is cut off, what are they going to do? (p. 556)

When I was a child my Setsiye put great effort into providing a safe nurturing environment for his family, especially his grandchildren, which I didn’t fully appreciate until I was much older. He treated his grandchildren as though we were the biggest gifts he had ever received. He taught valuable lessons about how to live off the land, lessons about respecting the land and lessons on cautiously working within the limits of the natural laws. From my reading I learned that the soft spoken man I knew had zero qualms

about standing up to the government or to big oil companies and expressing his dissatisfaction with the oppressive laws; being the voice of the people who were once considered to be rich, self-sufficient and proudly independent people. While reading the transcripts, I would raise an eyebrow seeing my Setsiye as a political person, concisely defending the land and standing up for n̄h̄łtsin̄j and for future generations. He pointed out the obstacles that were put on the path, disempowering the Dene people and their way of life. He spoke about how any conversations or anything that was in English writing was not translated into D̄nesūliné because at that time it was rare for anyone to understand English because there weren't any white men around until after the bombing range.

When the white man came in, they had control over the Chippewayans in everything, even now. Even the fish and wildlife are in control over us, and it's really none of their business; but they control our fishing. There are game wardens in charge, and they have no business with us. If we needed game wardens, we would ask for them. The white man should not be allowed to take animals that we need for our survival. As well, they should not take the fish we need according to our treaties. It's only they who are in control of everything these days. Now it seems the white man is destroying everything for us. (p. 566)

Setsiye pointed out how we were once self-sufficient and rich because of our relationship with the land and now with all the limitations and obstacles placed on our path, he saw the community changing. He saw a once peaceful collaborative life being taken over and destroyed, his relatives having to move away from their homeland because of overcrowding and lack of resources available for everyone to thrive. He saw the

destructive forces of all the oppressive laws. It's one thing to see those things but he stood up for the rights of his people and the land long before he was asked by the land commission investigation. He ended his interview with this:

I'll sit and talk to any high-level government official. I'm not afraid of them, because this is my land; it's not their land. (p. 567)

In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Gerald Alfred (1995) is quoted, "It has been said that being born Indian is being born into politics," this took me back to reading these transcripts and reading my grandfather's words. He spoke from his heart, spoke with clear, concise determination reminding the court of the broken treaties, the broken agreements and sharing his experience of being taken off his land because the "white man" sought the land they needed, took and destroyed. This did not seem like the same gentle, kind, tenderhearted man who taught me because I never witnessed him as a political person or a person who confronted anyone let alone asserted themselves and spoke fierce truths when asked about the impacts of being denied access to the land. He showed dignity and respect and spoke without attacking. Through reading the land claims and my grandfather's words, I recognized and honoured that there are many ways of knowing and that it is crucial to use your voice! This idea has carried forward in my job as an educator. I work in a system that is based in a Euro-western viewpoint and I recognize that I will be more effective if I can tap into the same voice as my Setsiye used: fair, firm and friendly. I have used my voice and all the gifts I have been given to give voice back to the Dēnesūliné through the creating and a re-awakening of traditions, language and culture offered in a unit plan. This work will lead to larger

works including the creation of a set of four books, one to represent the air, the land, the water and the supernatural stories that have fallen asleep or simply have been hidden because of the oppressive laws such as the Potlatch ban.

Consider the Potlatch ban, a prime example of oppression. The Indian Act banned and prohibits Potlatch ceremonies for First Nations along the west coast of Canada. In 1895, the potlatch ban was later amended and expanded to include not just the Northwest Coast but to include all of Canada and included all dances and ceremonies in which gift giving was practiced. The 1895 amendments to the Indian Act read:

Every Indian or other person who engages in, or assists in celebrating or encourages either directly or indirectly another to celebrate, any Indian festival, dance or other ceremony of which the giving away or paying or giving back of money, goods, or articles of any sort forms a part, or is a feature, whether such gift of money, goods or articles takes place before, at, or after the celebration of the same, and every Indian or other person who engages or assists in any celebration or dance of which the wounding or mutilation of the dead or living body of any human being or animal forms a part or is a feature, is guilty of an indictable offense. George V, “An Act to Amend the Indian Act”, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Indian Acts and Amendments, (1868-1950)

The potlatch ban lasted 67 years, forbidding Indigenous people to practice their language or culture, leaving huge gaps in their knowledge. Reclaiming the stories, language and traditions can be tiring emotional work.

It is worth mentioning that when I signed up for the Masters in Indigenous Language Revitalization I did not consider the fact that a language revitalization journey would be emotionally taxing. I started out with a clear idea, a vision in my mind about the way it could be, but there are many hoops to jump through and many obstacles on my path. Here is a brief glimpse of part of my journey and the path I have taken:

Many years before my Setsiye died, I knew the importance of recording him telling stories both in the language and in English. When I returned back to Łuechok TÚe in the mid 90's, my goal was to soak up any time I could with my Setsiye. I brought a video recorder to document his stories in the language. During one visit he told me about these people who came around to record him which I now understand was the University of Alberta working with another community member on a project called the Daghida project. These recordings were taken before the official start of the project. This project was spearheaded by Sally Rice from University of Alberta and Val Wood, a Dene speaker, who was married into the community of Łuechok TÚe. They interviewed fluent language speakers including my Setsiye because he was not only a fluent speaker, he was a knowledge keeper and well respected elder. Sally Rice says this about the project:

The three-year Daghida Project will begin by establishing a language center at Cold Lake. It will conduct linguistic and psycholinguistic research to see how the language is learned and will produce a Chipewyan/English dictionary, says Rice. The second phase will involve teaching the program to youth through mentoring programs with elders and introducing an immersion program in day care. University-level courses in the language will also be initiated at the U of A (Folio: vol. 37, #9).

During this time there were 200 fluent speakers remaining. The government of Canada at that time referred to the Dēnesų́líné language as an endangered language. Additionally, they estimated that in 20 years there would be only 60 fluent speakers remaining. They were not far off with their estimation, as over 20 years has past and there remain 70 fluent elderly speakers.

I took a video of my Setsiye telling stories about a time when he remembers no white people living in the community; this he says, is when we were rich people. I kept the video recordings in the case that also held the video recorder. Unfortunately, a few years after my Setsiye made his journey back to the stars (died) in '98, my vehicle was broken into and the video case and all the recordings were stolen. I was heartbroken.

Much time passed and I was visiting with my aunt who visits Vancouver Island once a year. We sat and I told her about my car getting broken into and about the recordings being stolen. She responded that she heard that one of our relatives had recorded my Setsiye. She suggested I talk to this well-known artist in our community who I found out also played a key role in the Daghida project. I reached out and discovered that he in fact knew about the recordings because he participated in the coordinating of the recordings which included recordings of my Setsiye. He told that me that all the recordings were turned over to the band administration in the early 2000's. However, when I telephoned and wrote a letter to the Łuechok Túe administration, I didn't get any response to my request about the recordings. Consequently, I decided to ask in person when I returned home for a visit. In the meantime, my ene started to ask around because she also was interested in hearing the audio tapes from the Daghida project. Keep in mind that this wild

goose chase began long before I became a schoolteacher to later learn about the lack of resources. More than anything I just wanted to hear the voice of my Setsiye again.

My family, although not fully grasping my heartbreak, did their best to understand the depth of my grief over the loss of the recordings and the frustration of the roadblocks, were willing to help. I had hope once again and I returned home with my child and with an audio recorder in hand because my mom set up a meeting with one of our relatives who said she had a copy of the recordings. I was beyond excited to make the 17-hour trek back to my community to get to hear my Setsiye's voice again on the recordings. We met with the old lady along the shoreline where she confessed she couldn't find the recordings and didn't know what she did with them. My heart sank. After I finished being frustrated because of the distance I travelled to get copies of the recordings, I decided that while we were there, we might as well get some recording done with the fluent language speakers and cultural knowledge keepers.

So, I sat with two of the fluent language speakers and asked for permission to record our conversations. This was many years before I started the MILR program. My Ene didn't quite understand why this was so important to me and why I so urgently wanted to get recordings, but neither did I. I can only describe this as an inner knowing. During the recording, when listening to the elder male speaker, I cried and cried hearing him speaking the language. Until that day, the last time I heard an older male speaking in the language, it was my Setsiye. The man, Allen Jacob, asked how I got so tender hearted. I replied that "it's because of my Setsiye, who always told me that I was his heart. Even on his deathbed, he asked my aunt to pass on the message to me not to forget that I am his heart." That day, hearing the language spoken by the old man, I knew that it was worth

all the bumps in the road. Now I can see that my journey was nowhere near complete. I was just starting.

In the meantime, I got my teaching degree and then learned that the path I was on, my journey, was all for a reason. I quickly learned how few authentic Indigenous resources are available, specifically Dënesųłiné. I did searches across Canada for any authentic resources and made contacts with the Smithsonian in Washington, DC to find more stories that could provide Dënesųłiné worldview.

During another visit home in 2016, I sat with another relative and recorded more of the conversations both in English and Dënesųłiné. I expressed how hard it is to find any resources that represent our Dënesųłiné worldview. I shared with her my vision of creating four books. I even showed her examples of other books by Roy Henry Vickers so she could get a better idea of what I wanted to create: books offering stories from the land, the air, the water and from the supernatural world that offered our Dënesųłiné worldview. The books would include Dënesųłiné language but be mostly written in English because I would like the books to bridge the gap between the Euro western world and the Dënesųłiné community who are not literate in the language. What I needed was more material for the content. I knew of different stories to represent creation and the seasons and I knew about the supernatural because the supernatural was a normal part of my life. Eventually, I want to write about the stories from a time when giants roamed the earth and about our Dënesųłiné medicine powers. I just wasn't trusting myself and I was worried that the lateral violence in the community would put me down for sharing the stories.

Lateral violence is believed to exist within many Indigenous communities worldwide with the common causal explanation as oppression, colonization, racism and

intergenerational trauma. (Bombay, 2014; Derrick, 2006; Native Women's Association Canada [NWAC] 2015). Some of the behavioral manifestations of lateral violence include gossip, jealousy, shaming others, verbal and physical attacks, sabotage and bullying. (Bear Paw Media, 2006; Derrick, 2006; Equay-Wuk, 2012; NWAC, 2015).

My level of education, my blood quantum, and the family I come from has put me directly on the receiving end of lateral violence. Naturally this caused me to pause and go forward cautiously. Added to this frustration, I learned that many of the fluent speakers are not literate in the language because of the colonial laws put in place by the Indian Act to ensure Indigenous people were stripped of their language. The fluent speakers who I interviewed who are not literate in the language reported feelings of frustration toward not understanding the orthography.

Each elder I sat with spoke about stories but unlike my Setsiye's stories, they were all about post-contact life. I wanted to hear stories that were about pre-contact times. I once again was pointed in the direction of one of our community's famous artists because he had the stories I was looking for. My Ene and I went to his gallery, but he thought we were meeting at the lake side. His family said he was expecting me but was waiting for me at the lake. We quickly jumped into the car and drove to the lake. Meanwhile, he went back to the gallery. My aunt who was at the lake said, "Uncle was looking for you, he just went back home to his gallery." Even modern technology is no help in Rez life where cell phone communication is rendered useless because there isn't reception in most areas. Unfortunately, on his way back to the lake to meet with me, his wife received word that there was a tragedy in her family, and they had to leave town. Since

then, I've tried to set up phone calls, but he is old and hard of hearing, so that isn't ideal. The part of me that was trained to arrive on time, and be appreciative of people's time because it is the only non-renewable resource thought, "how could it be this hard? It's a simple meeting." I've since come to realize that this is a colonized way of thinking. I must shake those thoughts and recognize that the timing is not right and like my Setsiye would say to me, "not everything is meant for everyone to hear." (p.c. 1993) I had to catch myself and decolonize my own thinking. I had to unlearn my learning. Steinman, Scoggins and College (2005) define decolonizing, "Decolonization refers to undoing and dismantling of policies, practices and frameworks that perpetuate settler colonial power and domination."(p.7)

Added to my self-doubt and fear of lateral violence or worse, the possibility of being seen as an outsider, I had to quickly learn and understand what "gate keeping" was and how to work around it. There are fluent language speakers who are afraid to share stories for many reasons. Where does this gatekeeping come from? Some people do not want stories being recorded because they feel some stories are too sacred. There are stories that have to do with our medicine power that cannot be discussed over the phone and when they are brought up, there is ceremony and ritual to observe before talking about such matters. There is also the idea that knowledge holds political power, therefore, knowledge itself is power, which brings up power dynamics. Acknowledging this clarifies the true depth of colonization and the damage to worldview. Traditionally, "Knowledge is received or gifted from all living things and from the spirit world." (Wilson & Restoule, 2010, p. 33) Gatekeeping could be the result of years of being silenced,

the destruction that came from misusing and misunderstanding Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Moving forward, I keep this in mind:

Sovereignty is ensuring that research done about Indigenous people is done by Indigenous people (Absolon, 2011). Knowledge sovereignty means Indigenous people decide why, what and when knowledge is being sought and the methods being used to seek it. It also means standards are used to judge whether what is learned is really “true” (Wilson, 2008) (McGregor, Restoule and Johnston, 2018, pp. 7-8).

Some fluent speakers and knowledge keepers are simply afraid to tell the stories they remember because Indigenous perspectives have not been considered up until the TRC and UNDRIP. Just because the government wants that voice to be present does not make it automatic that people who have been oppressed for so long be will so willing to share their stories. The worst kind of gatekeeping is the one that comes from not wanting to see another person succeed, the lateral violence that plagues most Indigenous communities. It would be nice to know the reasons why, but what I’ve come to understand is that when the time is right the stories will come to me and the obstacles that are on the path will fall away.

When joining the MILR program, I acquired a few stories, but I am not ready to complete them or the artwork to go along with them because of time limitations. Let’s face it—working full time and going to school full time leave little time for the creative process. When I interviewed one of the fluent language speakers, Allen Jacob, he gave me very useful advice which reminded me of my instructor Lorna Williams’ advice: “Trust yourself,” they said. Elder Allen Jacob said, “All those stories are in you, trust

yourself, remember your grandfather and grandmother.” Allen’s advice was solid, it’s true, I felt like I needed the recordings or validation from my elders when in reality, I’ve got a lifetime of hearing stories and knowing the stories, traditions and ceremonies that go far beyond the recordings that were stolen from my vehicle or the recorded stories that U of A did for the Daghida. I need to trust myself, trust my memory and just to be safe, run it by a knowledge keeper for good measure.

Part of the process was connecting with fluent language speakers and knowledge keepers. From this I gained a clearer understanding of the importance of our land and the connections to land and the language. This was brought up over and over again which gave me clear direction to write and to teach about. This was where the emotional work happened. Listening to my elders and hearing the happiness in their voice that I am willing to take on this work helps motivate me to create the resources. Allen said to me when I was asking if he wouldn’t mind me interviewing him, “My prayer has always been that some young person would ask me. Of course, I’m available for any information you need. This information is fast disappearing and time is crucial. Thanks for being that person.”(p.c. 2019) This gave me a tremendous sense of urgency to complete the work but to do so with responsibility and care.

From my interview with Jessie Sylvester, I learned a prayer in the language and gained a deeper understanding of a ritual I perform regularly but up until November 2019, I always said the prayer in the English language until learning the prayer in my own Dënesųliné language.

In the Lewis Carroll book *The Adventure of Alice in Wonderland* (1865) when Alice reaches a fork in the road and asks the Cheshire Cat, ‘Would you tell me, please,

which way I ought to go from here?’ “That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,’ said the Cat. “I don’t much care where—” said Alice. “Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,’ said the Cat. (p. 61). Unlike Alice, I have had clear direction and guidance from my elders as to which direction I should take. The goal of the project started with a research-based approach to solve the problem of the lack of Dënesų́łíné learning resources and to explore ways to fill the gap, offering authentic Dene worldview learning resources. The project connects the learning thus far with the knowledge gained from the Masters in Indigenous Language Revitalization program. Also, it deepens and expands on the understanding and knowledge gained from community language and knowledge keepers: Allen Jacob, Noella Amable, Albertine Finney, Jessie Syvester and Lynda Minoose, which will ultimately help to guide, shape, build upon and extend the perspectives of educators in the public school sphere with regard to authentic Indigenous resources. The unit plan resource I developed implements principles of decolonization through heritage, connection to place and community from which it will serve as a foundation for healing, reflection and empowerment; reflection as students are able to identify similarities about themselves based upon resiliency and Indigenous peoples’ ability to thrive.

This project also extends and builds upon the relevant literature from Indigenous Language Revitalization in addition to other related literature in the field of language reclamation, decolonization and Indigenization.

Through this project I have gained experience in gathering, writing, responding and proposing a solution to the problem of authentic Dënesų́łíné under resource. This is the path I’ve taken.

Chapter 4: Learning from the current resources and honouring the voices of those who came before

As mentioned in Chapter 1, The British Columbia Ministry of Education (2015) mandated, "New constructs for leadership, Indigenous pedagogical practices, Aboriginal perspectives and content, and a vision for decolonizing mindsets were among the wealth of ideas expressed as to how we move forward both individually and collectively. It is our responsibility to sustain this conversation and to make commitments to ensure that we are successful" (p. 1). This mandated change was in response to the recommendations made by the Calls to Action through Truth and Reconciliation (2015), including

“ .ii.62 Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms”

If the TRC is recommending that post-secondary institutions educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous Ways of Knowing and teaching methods into their practice, it should be noted that part of this knowledge system includes Indigenous languages. Language must also be a part of the integration of knowledge and teaching methods being that language is the foundation of Indigenous knowledge. The TRC Calls to Action clearly call on the Federal Government to include and recognized that Indigenous languages are not only valued but the root of Canadian culture and society.

14. “We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles: i. Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an

urgency to preserve them. ii. Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties. iii. The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation. iv. The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities. v. Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages (p. 1).

The Moving Forward initiative mandated by the BC Ministry of Education is meant to decolonize the Euro Western institutions that have systematically excluded Indigenous ways of knowing. Educators have been struggling to find resources that provide holistic, rich Indigenous worldview, Indigenous ways of knowing, experiences and language. It is not surprising to learn that there are gaps in the resources available when there have been concerted efforts to eliminate Indigenous language, culture and ways of knowing.

The mandated initiative made by The British Columbia Ministry of Education was intended to meet the TRC Calls to Action but as a result has uncovered serious gaps in the resources available, including resources that offer an authentic Dënesųłné worldview. The Dene are the largest language group in Canada—the Athabaskan languages can be heard from as far as northern Canada all the way down to Mexico. The language subgroup that will be focused on is the Dënesųłné following the mandated recommendations. “Indigenous values and ways of being and the direct relationship and connection between academic programs and students services in supporting Indigenous students,” Cull, Hancock, McKeown, Pidgeon, Vidan (1991, p. 1) I will help create this

support through resources that connect values and ways of being starting with self-first, followed by the local community and reaching out to the surrounding nations to acknowledge the diversity of Indigenous peoples' heritage across Turtle Island.

Secondly, the new change in curriculum demonstrates the impacts of urbanization and an uncomfortable uncovering of the failures. Contradictions between past and current resources and the imbalance between the many ways of knowing regarding Eurocentric perspective and the diversity of Indigenous understandings have been unearthed since this mandated change by the British Columbia Ministry of Education.

The objective of this chapter is to review the Dënesųłné resources that are currently available to describe whether the information in the resources provides authentic Indigenous knowledge while providing a baseline to improve educational resources. As a result of the description and evaluation of the significant work done on Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy, it becomes clear that policy makers may need to consider having adequate supports in place before mandating change.

It needs to be noted regarding the effectiveness of literature reviews on Indigenous Ways of knowing that the literature available is severely lacking due to the fact that we come from an oral tradition. In addition, because of the history with colonization, there is a lack of trust, and therefore Indigenous people are very cautious about sharing the stories that the government tried to eradicate. Indigenous ways of being were governed by a unique set of technologies, protocols that were sustained since time immemorial. Often, Indigenous oral tradition is symbolic and retold or transmitted through the language of the land. The Indigenous languages sometimes are complex, and one word could hold an entire story. Therefore, there isn't a translation available or the spirit of the

story might be overlooked without the understanding of the language or the culture. In "One Generation from Extinction," Basil Johnston argues that when Indigenous languages are lost, the people "lose not only the ability to express the simplest of daily sentiments and needs but they can no longer understand the ideas, concepts, insights, attitudes, rituals, ceremonies, institutions brought into being by their ancestors" and so "cannot sustain, enrich, or pass on their heritage" (10). When remembering the old folks telling stories, my Setsiye would tell his stories in an animated way using his hands, with a tone of voice that the written word cannot translate or capture the spirit of. In my opinion, a literature review is not an appropriate vehicle for reflecting Indigenous ways of knowing because these ways of knowing are embedded in experience, in the language, and not found in a library book. This implies that Euro Western education can close the gap in the misunderstanding of Indigenous Ways of Knowing found in Euro Western philosophy and written ways when in fact they are two very distinct and separate ways of knowing and being that do not reflect values, knowledge or ways of being. Battiste and Henderson (2000) referred to this "Eurocentric diffusionism is a concept that naturalizes the spread of European people and European thought, and allows for diminished perceptions of non-European thinking and being, as if European worldviews are the only ones with substance," (p. 1).

Oral tradition was "backed up" by our ancestors in order to prove its legitimacy. This provided the validity, credibility, reliability and legitimacy which are different than the Eurocentric way of establishing knowledge claims. In Hanna's (2000) research paper he writes, "The Delgamuukw decision dictated that courts must "come to terms with oral histories of aboriginal societies" in its recognition that most "Aboriginal societies 'did not

keep written records” (Page 2) Here is where things get tricky, with a government mandating that Indigenous Ways of Knowing be woven into each subject area, only to find that there is not only a shortage of resources created by European settlers about Indigenous Ways of Knowing but there is a shortage of resources that are created in collaboration with or by Indigenous people that can offer the voice, language and understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems, such as those of the Dënesųłné which are the focus of this paper. Keeping these points in mind, I will discuss the literature on the topic of Dënesųłné resources that are available, although these are limited in both depth and scope of understanding language, tradition and culture. The mandated changes are justified because it is important for Indigenous students to see themselves in the resources for them to achieve success and to close the graduation gap. Added to this, it is proven that what is good for the Indigenous student is good for all students. In an article written by Jean-Paul Restoule and Chaw-win-is for CCUNESCO they state, “It’s an opportunity for all students to learn from historically misrepresented and marginalized sources of knowledge. When Indigenous perspectives are included, students receive a more comprehensive approach to all the disciplines and subjects taught in schools.” (p. 9) This change will benefit all students and increase graduation rates by empowering or at least encouraging Indigenous students to place themselves and see themselves in the education system by curriculum integration if done correctly. A recent example of a school district leading the way is the Sea to Sky District, according to a 2019 CBC article, “Ten years ago, B.C. School District No. 48 overhauled its curriculum to include more Indigenous content. Now, it's graduating a record high number of Indigenous students.”

It is important to bear in mind, since 2015, Indigenous education and the resources available have been at the forefront of education in BC because of the TRC's Calls to Action and the BC Ministry of Education mandating change. This has pushed us to make Indigenous Knowledge a priority. Canada is at a crossroads. This is important and worth mentioning as it will tie in with resources being published, which I will discuss below.

Canada is at a crossroads. After decades of neglect, First Nations are poised to become pivotal players. The path we take in reconciling this reality will shape the political, cultural and literal landscape of this country for generations. The power of our nations lies with our youth. We must support them to be the change we seek. Canada stands at a crossroads. But we have the advantage of knowing which path will take us forward. We need only do the right thing and work together for a new tomorrow. Shawn A-in-chut Atleo, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, (2018).

Since 1620, when the first known educational institutions for Indigenous students were established near Quebec by the Récollet missionaries, Indigenous ways of knowing have not been a priority in schooling.

Priorities shifted and historical changes were in the making in 2007. The United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People was adopted by the United Nations. Following that, the Prime Minister of Canada made an official apology on June 11, 2008 to Residential School survivors. In that same year Canada upheld the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Following that, students petitioned the government and eventually reported to the United Nations requesting that education be equitable for Indigenous children. This initiative is called Shannen's Dream. Shannen Koostachin, a youth from the isolated community of Attawapiskat, had to move away from her community in order to attend school because her community's school was extremely underfunded and condemned due to contamination from an oil leak, mold and disrepair. Shannen moved several hundred miles from home to attend school and sadly, she died in a car wreck that could have been avoided had she the opportunity to live in her home community to attend school instead of having to travel hundreds of miles to receive an education. Before Shannen's death, she brought about national awareness to the horrid conditions which led to a youth-driven movement advocating for equitable funding for First Nations children's education. Shannen Koostachin spoke out about the horrid conditions and her experiences trying to get an education through various social media sites and on the steps of Parliament Hill in 2008. On reserve, schools were funded by the Government of Canada whereas public schools are funded by provincial or territorial governments. Shannen brought national and international attention to the developing world conditions on First Nations reserves, highlighting the lack of clean drinking water, less than desirable or safe living conditions and minimal funding for schools.

Another important point this petition brought forward was, "First Nations children are denied an opportunity to receive a culturally based education," (Blackstock, 2011). This approach brought about awareness regarding Indigenous rights and education, and showed that the resources that are available were limited in number. As Frank Smith (1988) said, "they must see themselves as a part of the literacy club," It is imperative for

students to be able to see themselves in the education system if they are to succeed, which is why it is important to create learning resources that reflect the student. When the resources reflect Indigenous students, this allows others to learn about their world view and in turn builds a stronger society. The BC Ministry of Education (2014) states, “With the education transformation, the province is attempting to embed Aboriginal perspectives into all parts of the curriculum in a meaningful and authentic manner.” Part of this literature review that is noteworthy, is the concept of authentic Indigenous voice. Kaitlin B. Curtice (2018) wrote in her blog about including Indigenous authors as a way to decolonize, and called attention to voice when she said, "If you want to break cycles of colonization and assimilation, you must take the time to learn from Indigenous experiences, through our own words.”

Prior to 2007, when the United Nations adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and First Nations Education Chiefs-in-Assembly called upon the Federal Government to comply with the principles and standards of the UNDRIP with respect to any new legislative, policy, or program initiatives on education, and to respect the right of free, prior, and informed consent, there were few resources specific to the Dēnesųłné people.

When researching, it needs to be stressed that Indigenous Research Methods are different than Euro Western approaches. When changes in the public school system mandate that Indigenous ways of knowing be woven into all areas of curriculum and Indigenous people are finally being asked to bring ourselves to the table so that our voices are heard in the academic world, it has been my experience, that as long as my voice and indigeneity is left at the door, or as long as I work within the Euro Western parameters,

only then will it be considered as valid research or work. In the Masters of Indigenous Language Revitalization program, one of the first projects was to locate ourselves not only as scholars but to locate ourselves and bring our Indigeneity with us wherever we go. To me, this was groundbreaking; it was a welcomed shift in my career experience in education and as a scholar. When asked to locate myself in my research, that meant I would be bringing with me my Dēnesųlné worldview, values, belief, cultural knowledge, language and ways of knowing which had been diminished until I was being asked to locate myself in the scholarly work. It is through the work in Indigenous Language Revitalization that not only are the TRC Calls to Actions met but also value is placed on cultural knowledge, which includes language revitalization and reclamation. Wesley Y. Leonard (2011,2012,2017) writes about language reclamation being defined as a social process which involves, “revitalization efforts that are grounded in and driven by community needs and values.” (p.56) Placing language in the appropriate cultural context and placing value on Indigenous languages is essential to social change. Language reclamation and revitalization is a key factor of this change that includes self-determination, making it possible for Indigenous communities to make decisions for themselves and to determine what their needs and goals are. Wes Leonard speaks of overturning the power dynamics of the colonial system and creating opportunities for growth in understanding that challenge the dominant Euro Western assumptions traditionally made about the value of Indigenous language and culture.

Decolonizing a system first will start with changing our viewpoint on the value of languages. When having a conversation with a colleague who is an Indigenous language speaker, she was saying the only thing she brings to the table is her Indigenous language.

I paused a moment to collect my thoughts and asked how many speakers remain. She went on to tell me about the urgent state of her communities' language and that there is much work to be done. This is like my own community where there are fewer than 70 fluent speakers. It is urgent that language reclamation work be done and placed as a priority; otherwise the language will go to sleep. Through this conversation she came to understand her own value as a fluent language speaker. Sometimes, we must start with decolonizing our own mindset and calling ourselves and each other out when we slip back into the dominant mindset that Indigenous languages do not hold value. The process of decolonizing and bringing back harmony to the imbalance in the power structures will be no small task within Indigenous communities and within the Euro western education system in which I am employed. Following Indigenous Research methodology is a key factor in moving forward toward decolonizing education in Canadian classrooms and Indigenous Language Reclamation and revitalization are connected to each other and to decolonizing education. Shawn Wilson (2001) stated,

“Indigenous researchers must move beyond merely assuming an Indigenous perspective on non-Indigenous research paradigms. An Indigenous paradigm comes from the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational, is shared with all creation, and therefore cannot be owned or discovered. Indigenous research methods should reflect these beliefs and the obligations they imply. (p175-179).

Please note that in this project, I follow Shawn Wilson's point that Indigenous researchers must move beyond merely assuming an Indigenous perspective on non-Indigenous paradigms. In the work that I bring forth, I am looking from a specific lens and

offering another perspective. I would argue that the Euro Western and Indigenous ways of knowing are not to be woven together but to be looked at separately. What I mean by this is that the BC curriculum states that the Euro Western way of knowing and Indigenous way of knowing be woven together, but how can they be, when they are opposing?

I will offer this an example: I was working on unit plan and had a stack of scholarly resources to support the unit plan on “oral tradition”, I struggled to fit the knowledge that has been passed down to me from my ancestors into the unit plan. I had been struggling for nine hours straight, when my 13-year-old daughter asked me what I was struggling so hard with. When I explained it to her, her response was like she embodied my grandfather. She said, “Ene (mom) you should know better! Our way of knowing doesn’t fit in that box. All those books and pieces of paper (the scholarly articles) are not helping you. You have to trust your own knowledge.” Part of the process is trusting my own knowledge. For an entire lifetime Indigenous people have been oppressed and part of the reason for not trusting my own knowledge is that much of the information that has been written about us is from a Euro Western perspective and Indigenous ways of knowing have been marginalized and considered as an alternative and only used when all other ways have failed. As a result of assuming this type of superiority of knowledge, Western thought has had the upper hand over Indigenous ways of knowing. What I mean by this is simple: in each school district, the students who do not fit into the regular school system often are offered “alternative education” as a last resort. In many cases this type of education is also associated with Indigenous Education; this perpetuates the idea that alternative and Indigenous Education are less than. In order to move forward, it is essential to create the necessary space through the process of decolonizing. Wesley Leonard

refers to, “decolonization, by extension, disrupts the ideas and institutions of colonialism, it is way of thinking and acting that emphasizes the sovereignty, peoplehood, intellectual, traditions, and cultural values of groups that experience colonialism.” (p.56)

As Indigenous people, we must learn to trust ourselves and learn that Indigenizing education is one distinct way of many ways of knowing. It should not be considered as an alternative or last-ditch effort or woven in with the current Euro Western perspective because it is a standalone. This is what I will model through the creation of the resource. From this thirteen-year-old but also very wise old soul’s advice, I put all the books to the side and the unit plan flowed, like a river that had been blocked by a dam. The knowledge is within me, it comes from the ancestors and it is our Dēnesųłné belief that we come from the land. When I spoke with a Dēnesųłné community member, she said many times the name of our nįhųłtsinį (mother earth). “Let nįhųłtsinį guide you and let the ancestors guide you, they are with you.” (p.c) This was her repetitive message, to place value on the knowledge that is within me. The Euro Western way of knowing values scholarly achievement and places value on credentials like B.A. M.Ed. Ph.D. Whereas on the opposing spectrum, Indigenous Ways of Knowing involve culture and cultural protocols, and elders and fluent language speakers who ultimately hold the credentials because, unlike a four year degree program, this knowledge has been passed down for thousands of years. This is going to require a total overhaul in what we deem as valuable when asked to Indigenize Canadian classrooms. In an article written by Cull, Handcock, McKeown and Pidgeon(n.d.) they write:

Indigenization is a collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts. In the context of post-secondary education, this involves including Indigenous perspectives and approaches. Indigenization benefits not only Indigenous students but all students, teachers, staff members, and community members involved or impacted by Indigenization.

Indigenization requires not only relevant programs and support services but also a fundamental shift in the ways that institutions:

- Include Indigenous perspectives, values, and cultural understandings in policies and daily practices.
- Position Indigenous ways of knowing at the heart of the institution, which then informs all the work that we do.
- Include cultural protocols and practices in the operations of our institutions.

When considering the work that has been written about the Dene, I am keeping in mind the terms reconciliation, indigenizing and decolonizing to identify whether the sources fall within the Euro western viewpoint, an Indigenous viewpoint or somewhere in between. Being able to identify colonial structures that influence the literature is key to determining whether the resource is helpful towards documenting language and cultural knowledge and whether it should be deemed as authentic Indigenous knowledge. While reading the literature, I ask myself does the resource help lay a strong foundational knowledge toward Indigenous language and cultural knowledge or does it build upon

existing knowledge. The literature review honours the voices of the people who came before, those who have worked toward adapting and devising literature that is appropriate to the challenge at hand.

One resource worth mentioning, and reviewing is *Byron through the seasons: a Dene-English Story* by *Dene Children* released in 1990. This book was the group effort of a teacher committee of six who worked on the project for two years. Part of the research meant that “over 400 hundred students provided ideas for the story line and art samples for the illustrations. Two hundred letters went out to the community families asking for ideas and information regarding story content. A dozen elders were consulted to provide accurate and culturally correct information. “This is a story that works toward giving voice to Dene children and their understanding of culture. It raises the question, how many of those children have been affected by urban living and disconnection from language and culture? It is a heavy weight to place on a child. This book could be considered a solid effort in collaborative attempts to help non-Indigenous people understand the Dene way of life and gives students a resource that reflects them personally. However, although “modern changes are noted”, there are glaring changes that have negatively affected the culture that are glossed over when they should be pointed out; for example: the belief in Catholicism which demonized the Dene belief system in *n̄h̄q̄tsin̄j* (mother earth). This book shows the importance of the Catholic Church in the community when it could be argued that it, Catholicism, is one of the MAIN reasons for language loss and culture. It should be noted that this resource is both written in English and translated into Chipewyan. The supplemental information written in English in the back of the book is to

provide a richer understanding of the lifestyle. It would be helpful if this was offered in both languages.

Another noteworthy resource was created in 1997 by elder and author George Blondin called *Yamoria the Lawmaker: Stories of the Dene*. This resource provides an authentic voice and predates the mandated changes that would follow by the BC Ministry of Education. Elder George Blondin writes stories that are rooted and founded in deep meaningful Dene perspective. They are written to offer an authentic voice in the English language. NuWest Press describes the book, “A spiritual guidebook that weaves together oral stories with the recounting of how the northern Canadian Dene came to depend on the European fur traders. The result is a magical journey for readers of any heritage.”

(p.1) The importance of medicine is a common theme in this book. George writes about the powerful medicine the Dene people carry. Medicine is one of the attributes that has gone to sleep due to colonization as the church demonized Dene medicine people. Another important note is that the author also is sure to let the reader know which Dene group he is writing about since there are the Dēnesųliné (formerly known as the Chipewyan), the Tlicho, the T’atsaot’ine, Slavey, Sahtu, Tsuu T’ina, Danezaa, Tahltan, Kaska, Sekani, Dakelh (Carrier), Tshilhqot’in, Stuwix, Gwich’in and Tanana to name some of the Athapaskan dialects. By indicating the difference between the different groups, the author helps the reader understand that we had our Dene laws in common and we abided by them. However, the Dene are diverse and do not speak the same dialect, differing from area to area, and consequently had different medicine powers. Therefore, our relationship and understanding of the nature of the people we were surrounded by were as diverse as the land. This book helps the reader understand the importance of our

medicine power that all Dene carry. George Blondin allows the readers to understand that some people carried very powerful medicine and people who needed the help would travel hundreds of kilometers in search of those medicine people. George Blondin could be considered a trailblazer for decolonization, through this significant text that serves to help the readers shift their frames of reference regarding the knowledge the Dene hold. It asks readers to examine how the Dene arrived at such knowledge, and implores them to consider how they might change misconceptions, prejudice, and assumptions about Indigenous Peoples.

An interesting resource followed in the year 2000 by author and educator, Miggs Wynne Morris, entitled *Return to the Drum: Teaching among the Dene in Canada's North*. It is important to note that the author was born in North Wales and arrived in Canada in 1963. The author spent three years living in an isolated Dene community. In those three years she wrote about the shift in that community's culture and education that she witnessed and described, "Although the book focuses on one community, it sheds light on the concerns, struggles, and successes of First Nations people across Canada." This book serves as a tool, showing one non-Indigenous teacher's perspective on the effects of colonization in one isolated Indigenous community. The author could see the shift and made efforts to bring awareness to what she saw from the outside looking in on the community. Although this book about the Dene is not written with an authentic Indigenous voice, this resource might be useful to help bridge a gap and gaining non-Indigenous allies. However, it is a resource that is not based in an authentic Indigenous worldview or perspective, language or an understanding of the impacts of the Indian Act. An example of this is when the author is learning about the treaties from Father Fumoleau who

believes the Indigenous community members look forward to treaty day, “The people also ask the Indian agent for things like gas for their canoes and lamps, plywood sheets and other supplies for repairing their houses, then the agent gives them some of these things. They view him rather like Santa Claus.” (p.115). From this, it could be argued that both Father Fumoleau and the author are disconnected from the realities of life on a reserve. Furthermore, if the author is getting her understanding from a priest who thinks the Indigenous people view the Indian agent as “Santa Claus” this highlights how little the author knows about the Indian Act let alone significance of the church and government who are ultimately responsible for the destruction of the culture she is trying to learn about. According to the Canadian Encyclopedia (2018), “agents managed the distribution of rations and farm supplies, and were empowered to pay annuities, inspect schools, negotiate the surrender of reserve lands, manage band finances and tender contracts for infrastructure projects on reserves,”(p. 1) This shows that the Indian agent was not Santa Claus. He was doing his job because Indigenous people were on a pass system and not allowed to roam freely unless they applied for a pass to leave the reserve and therefore, were dependent on the Indian agent for their supplies.

The author does make a connection to how foreign the English language and concepts are to the children she teaches, and she wonders whether their own Dene language might hold value. T’lat’lakūł Trish Rosborough echoes this idea of the value of understanding Indigenous languages when she mentions in *Beautiful Words: Enriching and Indigenizing Language Revitalization through Understandings of Linguistic Structure*:

An Indigenized approach to language revitalization can recognize and respect the highly regarded ancestral origins and messages about identity that are reflected

within the language. In developing understanding of the morphemes of the language, learners can grasp literal meanings and metaphors embedded in Kwak'wala words, leading to deeper understandings of Kwakwaka'wakw worldview and appreciation of the beauty of the language. (2017)

Basically, it is important to acknowledge and place value on Indigenous languages because of the rich worldview held within the languages. The author wonders if the Dene traditional way of life could also hold value, noticing that the Dene students she taught were not seeing themselves in the foreign European way of teaching and acquiring knowledge. When the author writes about spiritual beliefs, "There appears to be no conflict in holding what might seem to be two sets of beliefs," (p.221) she describes that everywhere you look, you see symbols of Catholic beliefs "alongside the more traditional spiritual ways." This demonstrates a lack of true understanding regarding what Catholicism has done toward demonizing traditional ways. This resource does not include the Dene voice. Today it is mandated to include the "voice of Indigenous people in all aspects of the education system, increasing the presence of Indigenous languages, cultures, and histories in provincial curricula, and providing leadership and informed practice." In Kaandossiwin, Dawn Mardsen (2003) writes about the dangers of things being taken out of context when there is little to no understanding of language or culture, "I've seen so many Indigenous ways and the things taken out of context, disconnected, just like the stories. They lose meaning and they lose the whole embeddedness in the sacred. And so, there's a very real danger of non-Indigenous people doing Indigenous research." (p.162)

As mentioned above, after the United Nations adopted the UNDRIP, positive momentum began in Canada even though Canada did not adopt UNDRIP until almost a

decade after it was adopted by the United Nations. Article 14 states, “Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.” This article is significant because it represents a major shift from a sprinkling of Indigenous content in Education to the pendulum swinging and focusing on culture, language, accessibility and choice in Indigenous education. As a result, including Indigenous content, language and culture in education contexts is put on the table as are Indigenous voice or collaborative efforts to offer Indigenous worldview. This idea was groundbreaking and would serve as a foundation in decolonizing a system that has a very long history of not honouring Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Also, although it was a solid collaborative effort, I think it should be noted that the book, *Return to the Drum*, does not offer Dene language which is the foundation to understanding worldview.

In the spirit of collaboration Alice Legat created, *Walking the land, Feeding the Fire: Knowledge and Stewardship*, in 2012. According to the foreword by elder Joanne Barnaby, the author, Legat, “Approaches her work as a community partner—providing a powerful methodology that will impact the way research is conducted for decades to come—and provides unique insights and understandings available only through traditional knowledge.” This is a book written by a non-Indigenous author who notes, “my aim is to describe accurately and sensitively what I observe. I noticed that every researcher who has worked with the Dene has a slightly different interpretation of similar experiences” (p. 9). The author comments on her perspective vs. Tlicho’s perspective showing a divide in her own worldview and beliefs. This approach poses the question whether one can really remove themselves from their own viewpoint. The author’s

intention is to give voice and breathe life into values and rituals that have gone to sleep because of colonization. The author includes words in the Tlicho Dene language when quoting the stories; this is beneficial in helping lend a valuable cultural perspective. Leanne Simpson (1999) speaks to the importance of having not only cultural perspective but also an understanding of language,

Once Indigenous knowledge has been filtered through western conceptual models and definitions and constructed into TEK; it is textualized. The textualization process has the effect of mis-translating knowledge across perceived conceptual universals, transforming the knowledge from process to product, de-contextualizing the knowledge, de-personalizing knowledge by separating it from the people, and transferring authority from the people to the content of the text. Textualizing ultimately produces Indigenous Knowledge in a form that is completely accessible to the mainstream society...Indigenous knowledge cannot be separated from the people. (p.ii)

Two years later in 2014, Bern Will Brown authored *End of the Earth People: The Arctic Sahtu Dene*. A description of the author says, "Having lived among them (Sahtu Dene) for over sixty years and as a speaker of their dialect, Brown is well positioned to provide an adventure in history and culture rooted in the Hareskin traditional way of life." The weakness in this statement is that, although the author intended to share Sahtu Dene worldview, he can only offer the beginnings of embodiment of worldview. It could also be argued that the author mis-stepped as it is not his place to speak or write on behalf of a culture that does not belong to him or to make profit from that culture through the

sales of a book. Jaja Grays describes these kinds of acts, “Cultural appropriation refers to a privileged culture borrowing or stealing from a marginalized culture and strips elements of the culture to use it as a prop or for profit.” A Non-Indigenous author publishing an entire book based upon a marginalized culture such as the Sahtu Dene and making profit through the sales of the book, one could argue, fits the description of cultural appropriation as defined by Jaja Grays (2016).

In 2014, History Canada recommended the following resource *The Peacemaker: Thanadelthur*, written by Swampy Cree author David A. Robertson. This graphic novel is one in a series about Indigenous leaders. It is important to note that the Cree and the Dene are not from the same culture or language family. The languages spoken are as different as the beliefs. This book calls to attention the voice that is offered through the graphic novel written about the peacemaker, Tthandelthur, who is a Dene woman. This graphic novel is noteworthy because it is a recommended resource by History Canada, which I find ironic because this story is about the historical war between the Dene and the Cree, written from a Cree man’s perspective of the peacemaker named Thanadelthur. This reveals that Indigenous voice is being recognized as valuable, but it could be argued that the mark is still being missed. This reminds me of the revisionist tale of *The Three Little Pigs* (Jacobs, 1890). From their perspective there is a big bad wolf that is bloodthirsty and will not stop until the three pigs are killed and eaten. However, consider the tale from the wolf’s viewpoint, as told in the storybook *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Scieszka, 1989), where we read about him having the sneezes and trying to make cookies for his grandmother when he runs out of sugar and tries to borrow some from his pig

neighbors. His huff and puff were actually a sneeze that accidentally blew the pigs' house in, consequently killing the pigs. The wolf then ate the pigs, not wanting to waste a good meal. The important message that children are taught, is that there are always at least two perspectives to a story. I am just not sure which perspective the Cree man is writing from, given he is writing about a Dene peacemaker who helped bring peace between the Dene and Cree. Is the Dene portrayed as the big bad wolf or are the Dene being portrayed as simply borrowing sugar? The point being made here is the importance of paying attention to the significance of authentic voice in culturally appropriate resources that are being created and that will offer authentic perspectives from within the culture.

The noteworthy novel resource, *The man who lived with a Giant: Stories from Johnny Neyelle, Dene.*, edited by Alana Fletcher and Morris Neyelle, came out in 2017. These stories are described by Deborah Shatz, "as a precious collection of traditional and personal stories told by Johnny Neyelle, a Dene Elder from Déline, Northwest Territories." Most significant is that the stories were told orally and then transcribed and edited. This is a Dene nation collection of stories of a shared creation story about the giants who roamed the earth, written with the intention of lending the worldview of Dene culture and language. This book illustrates the importance of an authentic resource that comes from within the culture and offers an authentic Indigenous worldview. Without his cultural knowledge of the language, large meaningful pieces of the stories might be misunderstood or misrepresented. Johnny Neyelle explains, "The Elders knew if you grab hold of a story and put it in your heart, you will benefit from it in the future." These stories are meant to be grabbed, cherished and learned from, embodying voice, cultural

authenticity, understanding of place and language. Johnny's son, Morris, translated the recorded stories told in the Denendah language into English.

The next resource also published in 2017, is a beautifully illustrated colouring book titled, *Colouring it forward – Discover Northern Dene Nation Art &* by an Algonquin Métis, Diana Frost. Diana is Indigenous but she is not Dënesų́liné. In a sense, this is written from the outside looking in. The author can be commended for her effort to learn from an artist, Michael Frost, who is Dene (Chipewyan), who is healing through learning about his culture and roots. The artist uses his art to depict stories told from the late George Blondin's family and uses these stories as a healing tool in an effort to find his way back to his culture roots. Michael Frost spent a lot of his time in and out of foster care and consequently in and out of jail. He uses his artwork and cultural connections as a way of giving back (reciprocity) and healing. The book was created in the spirit of reconciliation. In this collaborative effort, the author works with George Blondin's family who gave her permission to retell the stories from the Dene ancestral wisdom/knowledge. This colouring book, filled with rich art and the stories borrowed and retold from George Blondin, is an excellent example of the value of a resource that comes from within the culture.

Finally, in most recent years, *The Tree by the Woodpile: and other Dene Spirit of Nature Tales* by Raymond Yakeleya (2018), offers the reader authentic culturally sound stories in addition to language based learning, written in English and Dene for middle-grade children, ages 7 to 12. According to Strong Nations, this resource supports the "First Peoples Principles of Learning," particularly recognizing the role of Indigenous knowledge and learning embedded in memory, history, and story. The author Raymond

Yakeleya pays homage to his granny while encouraging youth to write their stories of their nation as he did for the Tulita Dene.

As Kathleen Absolon said, “I seek to advance Indigenous knowledge systems in a mainstream education system,” (p.19). As we have seen described in this paper, with the limited number of authentic Indigenous resources specific to the Dënesųhné, there is a demand for the project that I am proposing in order to advance mainstream education. Therefore, I feel motivated to create one tool that can offer a foundation that Indigenous students will see themselves in, while offering the non-Indigenous educators an authentic Dënesųhné perspective. Because I am situating myself from within culture, I understand the stories from within the culture. This project will help fill a gap, while creating an opportunity to honour the many ways of knowing and understanding within Indigenous culture; specifically the importance of language and oral tradition through the curriculum resource created. This project serves as one solution towards filling a gap in authentic Indigenous worldview and perspective as mandated by the BC Ministry of Education, and meets the TRC Calls to Action, while decolonizing, indigenizing and placing language reclamation as a priority.

Chapter 5: How do I get there and am I prepared?

Stephen Keague (2012) said, “Proper preparation prevents poor performance.”

This reminds me of a story my Setsiye told me about once going to the trap line. He said it was hot, warm and sunny. He prepared to go for several weeks. He had his food, he had his summer clothes and he had the shelter at the trap line, but what he was not prepared for, was a freak snowstorm in the middle of summer. Setsiye never owned a vehicle; his mode of transportation was horse and wagon. He said he and his friend nearly froze to death because they were not prepared for all weather conditions. From this I learned to always ask myself questions; and this will help me be prepared. Also, I always carry extra clothes for all weather conditions in my vehicle, just in case. To honour the teachings of my setsiye regarding preparedness, while working on my goal of creating a resource that reflects language reclamation and revitalization, I ask myself a series of questions to ensure I am prepared. I began with a large question and from that question I had to ask many other questions to uncover the answer to the larger overarching question: In developing a public-school learning resource that is based in Dēnesų́líné worldview that can influence and support mainstream non-Indigenous educators, what did I learn about Dēnesų́líné language and worldview, protocols and Indigenous research methodologies?

In developing a public-school learning resource that is based in Dēnesų́líné worldview, I need to ask myself: Who is the audience for the unit plan? The answer is: Children and youth from Cold Lake and their educators both Indigenous and Non-Indigenous. ą́łnethi chu Sekwi t’ą́hi ʔą́lu ghedeli beba. When creating resources, it is

imperative to consider the different types of learners and their age group. I work with grades K-8. Another aspect I need to consider is place. Because of urbanization, I am Dënesų́liné living in a territory that is not my own. What this means is that I need to collaborate not only with my own nation's elders and language speakers, I also need to ensure I am collaborating with and honouring and including the Liqwiltokw language Kwak'wala. I have seen success imparting knowledge or Indigenous worldview using story, through memory or books when available. I have seen the most active learner engage with stories when asked to visualize the story they are hearing. I have collected interviews, documents, recordings, transcripts and memory to gather knowledge from. Because the Dënesų́liné worldview has been largely underrepresented, I kept these questions in mind to help guide the process to create a unit plan that can offer Dënesų́liné Worldview. The objective of this project is to provide the worldview of the Dënesų́liné through a learning resource that will support the demand as mandated by the Ministry of Education for authentic perspective and content. The focus will be beliefs and philosophy of life cycles, medicine, spirituality, guardianship and Dënesų́liné language and cultural perspective offered through a unit plan aka learning resource. This resource will be different in the fact it is offering worldview from Dënesų́liné perspective, while showing the diversity of Indigenous people across Turtle Island through honouring connections with the local first nations culture and language, thereby modelling collaborative work.

Now I know who my audience is, the key is to define what the Dënesų́liné worldview is. Through my interviews, I recognized myself in the answers. My Ene (mom) often asks me what my Setsiye would have said, because of my connection with

him. He taught me who I am and made sure I had firm ground to work from. The other interviewee, Allen Jacob, would reference my Setsiye and remind me that he mentored me since the day I was born. Allen encouraged me to use my memory of the teachings. Setsiye was clear. In order to compete in today's world, I need to have an education. Now I see this education as the key to changing a system that has done so much damage, killing the Indian in the child. Today, the pendulum is swinging and there is a need for Indigenous ways of knowing as mandated by a government that once tried to permanently eliminate our ways of knowing, language and culture. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (2016) states: "With the increased inclusion of First Peoples' content in the changing BC curriculum, there is a need to incorporate unappropriated First Peoples' perspectives across the curriculum." (p. 1) This complies with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (2015), including the call to "integrate Indigenous Knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" and "build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect."

My elders reminded me about key words: reciprocity, interconnectedness, responsibility (stewardship), and the word for our land which is our mother earth: *n̄h̄łtsin̄j*. According to FNESC, worldview should include the following aspects: "connection with the land and environment, the nature and place of spirituality as an aspect of wisdom, the nature of knowledge — who holds it, what knowledge is valued. The role of Elders. The relationships between individual, family, and community. The importance of the oral tradition. The experience of colonization and decolonization (e.g., residential schools, the reserve system, land claims). Humour and its role." (p. 2).

Ensuring those aspects listed by FNESC about worldview which are founded on the First Peoples Principles of Learning:

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

These respectful and holistic approaches to teaching and learning guided me as I created resources using information gathered from the interviews with elders and readings from the elders who passed. The Dënesųłiné worldview resource will encourage the reader/listener to look deeper to see that knowledge is conveyed in the terms and language used and that language is fundamental to the wellbeing of the planet. The First Nations Education Steering Committee (2016) suggests, "First Peoples students will see themselves, their families, their cultures, and their experiences represented as being valued and respected," (p. 9). Non-Indigenous students will benefit through their

understanding of the historical context and contemporary fabric of the place we call Canada.

Worldview defined by FNESC helped guide me to ask these questions when interviewing community members: What does it mean to live on the land? What does it mean to live and be a member of a community? From this question, I gathered that this was the biggest loss. This is when the interviewees and I shared profound feelings of grief and sadness for Denesúliné people and ways of life. This is where the trauma from the effects of colonization etches itself into the psyche of Łuechok Túe people. This is where the shame lives, where the stereotypes, addictions and other unhealthy conditions live. This is where the work and healing can happen as Denesúliné release the story that does not belong to them, the story of colonization and the spell of false dominance and control that were placed upon the Dēnesúliné. That spell will be broken through language reclamation. The goal is to find a way back to health through revitalizing Dēnesúliné language, culture and ways for our ąłmethi chu Sekwi t'ąhi ʔąłu ghedełi beba. In Kaandossiwin, Absolon (2011) says, “Healing is implied through methodological concepts of reconnection, remembering, learning, recovering and reclaiming.” (p. 93). If students see themselves in the unit plan, this will serve as a tool for healing and reclaiming land. Pidgeon (2018) writes:

Indigenous ways of knowing reflect the interconnectedness of the physical, emotional, intellectual, and cultural realms, and they are interwoven with interconnected relationships of the individual, family, community and nations. Indigenous knowledge is therefore inherently tied to place, connected to and embedded in the land, sea, and air (p. 137).

The resource that I have created is written in third person so that anyone can read it and will learn about the importance of land acknowledgment. Through this acknowledgement the learner is given an opportunity to understand the connection Indigenous people have to the land. Land acknowledgement is an act of reconciliation. Making a statement that acknowledges the traditional territory of the First People who have lived on the land before settlers arrived, this reminder that we are guests on someone else's land, helps to prompt us to walk gentler. According to the Canadian Association of University Teachers (2019), "Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Indigenous Peoples. It is recognition of their presence both in the past and the present. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are key to reconciliation." (p. 1).

Getting the answers to the question about land naturally led to the importance of oral tradition and the role oral tradition played within Dënesųłiné lives. In the resource created (see Appendix A), I incorporated the use of a beaded timeline so that the learner gets a visual of how long Indigenous people have been living in harmony with the land. This timeline runs 14,000 years, which surpasses any ancient civilization students study in social studies. Indigenous people come from an oral tradition and the stories are passed on from generation to generation through stories, song, dance and art. Often these are called ancestral stories. They are NOT called legends or myths. The stories could be about how something was created or came to be or told for understanding of spiritual ceremonies. Often stories were told and retold with precise exactness because of containing the important **cultural teachings and responsibility (stewardship)**. There are stories that will not be told to people who aren't from the tribe and sometimes secret

societies held **sacred ceremonial teachings** only shared with members. With some Indigenous nations, stories would only be told in the winter, when it was believed the spirits in the stories would be sleeping and less powerful. There are also stories told during certain seasons to pass on important information such as **gathering or hunting** or mapping directions to rich hunting and gathering spots and the ceremonies associated with them. There are ancient stories from **when the world was different**, and some animals were giant, and animals were able to communicate with humans. In these old stories, animals and people could change their form or be in many places at one time.

What does it mean to interact with the natural world and to live in harmony within the Dene laws? Each interviewee described how the balance and harmony was interrupted by the placement of the Bombing range and oil fields. (see Figure 3). This is where I cannot shake the idea that I need to do my part to help us remember who we are as the rich people we once were. This is also where Allen Jacobs' words echo in my mind, "we have forgotten who we are." The resource I created begins with the importance of oral tradition as this is how important information was passed forward and then leads to the reciprocal relationship the Dënesųliné had with the land and the cultural teachings and responsibility (stewardship).

The worldview resource encourages the reader/listener to look deeper and to see that knowledge is conveyed in the terms and language used; language that not only builds a bridge to learning the diversity of Indigenous Languages across Canada but also incites the learner/listener to connect wellbeing to land and oral tradition. The world view resource discusses the difference between, Indigenization, decolonization and reconciliation. Part of the reconciliatory actions is reflected in **Language Reclamation**: ensuring

cultural continuity (e.g., knowledge of ancestors, language) as stated by the United Nations (2019):

Indigenous Languages matter for development, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. Languages play a crucial role in the daily lives of people, not only as a tool for communication, education, social integration, and development, but also as a repository for each person's unique identity, cultural history, traditions, and memory. But despite their immense value, languages around the world continue to disappear at an alarming rate. With this in mind, the United Nations declared 2019 The International Year of Indigenous Languages in order to raise awareness of them, not only to benefit the people who speak these languages, but also for others to appreciate the important contribution they make to our world's rich cultural diversity. (p.1)

This is part of decolonizing, reconciliation and Indigenizing.

First Nations Education Steering Committee (2016) suggests, "First Peoples students will see themselves, their families, their cultures, and their experiences represented as being valued and respected," (p.9). Non-Indigenous students will benefit through their understanding of the historical context and contemporary fabric of the place we call Canada. The first lesson in the resource is written in third person so that anyone can read it and anyone who is living as a guest on someone else's territory can learn to walk gentler and learn to be a steward. Stewardship is taking care and being responsible for the environment by specifically managing resources within the ecosystem. Some may question whether it is appropriate for an Indigenous person who is not from the local nation to teach about their own culture as a guest on someone else's territory. The answer is yes!

It is appropriate and it is important for the reader/learner to understand the diversity of Indigenous languages and cultures across Canada.

It helps unfold one more layer of understanding and the depth of work that still needs to be done decolonizing the education system.

Within the lesson, students are guided toward the idea of being responsible for taking care of the land and water. Indigenous people have been living off the land and walking gently and using only what they need. Our relationship with natural resources and some of these stories are as old as the tide that falls on the shore.

What are the protocols followed to ensure there are always plants or animals left for future generations? What are some things to consider when exploring the natural world when you are a guest in someone else's territory? For this question I thought it would be relevant to reach out to June Johnson, who is a Kwakwa'kwakwa elder, a fluent Kwak'wala language speaker who knows medicines and the protocols. I compared this with the protocols we follow in the prairies where I spoke to Dēnesųliné fluent speaker and knowledge keepers Jessie Sylvester and Lynda Minoose. This demonstrates to the learner that the diversity among Indigenous peoples and protocols are as unique as the land and the people they represent.

AFN (2019) states the following with respect to connection to the land and health:

First Nations people have long recognized that the health of the environment and the health of the individual are intimately connected. From a First Nations holistic perspective, health includes the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual

aspects. The environment plays a vital role with respect to all aspects of health.
(p. 1).

In another lesson students are asked to consider the following concept of being a guest: When you are going into the forest, remember, we are guests in this territory. If we want to be good neighbors to our hosts, the forest, rivers, lakes and oceans are like the gardens that belong to our hosts. How should we behave in our neighbors' garden?

Walk gently. Use a path if there is one because we don't want to trample living plants.

Do not leave anything manmade behind. Whatever you bring into the forest (or beach) pack out with you.

Ask for permission from our hosts if you plan on harvesting medicines.

Once you have permission, **speak to the plants** and the animals in the Indigenous language of the land. It is important that the plant or animal knows what your intention is.

Be sure to thank the animal or the plant.

Take **ONLY** what is needed to ensure plant/animal regeneration.

It is protocol in the prairies to **leave tobacco** when you take anything from land or water.

We are guests on this land, and it is our shared responsibility to take care of the earth, the animals and water.

In speaking with June, she mentioned never to pick any plant that has garbage next to it.

If there is a pop can or oil container for instance, the plant will absorb the waste.

Next I had to find out more about sacred ceremonial teachings. When conducting my interviews, this is where I felt I had to step back from what I had visualized in my mind. What I mean by this is that I really wanted to do a project that had to do with a ceremony that is done when someone dies; a ritual that is done to feed the fire. Jessie Sylvester told me about the ceremony. I learned that the Indigenous people on the West Coast share a similar tradition. I didn't feel like I had enough to write a story, so I asked for direction and through talking with my aunt Noella Amable and Jessie Sylvester, we spoke about a ritual that is a cleansing ceremony called smudging. This ritual is something that my daughter and I perform regularly in our home. I have been asked to perform this ceremony within the school district I am employed with, but I always decline because I feel that it is too personal. Ironically, in November 2019 an article in the Globe and Mail reported:

A mother on Vancouver Island says her two children's Charter right to religious freedom was infringed when their classes participated in an Indigenous smudging ceremony and is seeking a court-ordered ban on the practice in schools.

But the tribal council that demonstrated the Nuu-chah-nulth cleansing ritual, in which students held cedar branches while sage smoke was fanned in the classroom, argues the ceremony is not a religious act and a third party shouldn't be allowed to arbitrarily categorize its cultural practices.

This parent has a misunderstanding and believes this practice is tied to religion, but I practice this cleansing ceremony for protection and spirituality. This lawsuit prompted me to rethink my perspective on this being too personal to share, and I realized that what was at the heart of me not wanting to share this was fear. Fear of being criticized, fear of

being judged, and fear that a cultural practice be misunderstood. This is a teachable moment!

The smudge smoke is like a shower, clearing and cleaning away negative or bad energy. When visiting places with lots of people, or if people came to visit their home, it is taught that it is important to bring the balance back into the home by smudging. Using an eagle feather and making sure to get every nook and cranny with the smudge smoke, asking for the smoke to take away any bad energy and leave space for good energy. When the smudge smoke is cupped overhead it is meant to heal and connect the body, mind and heart. To cleanse hands so they do good work. To cleanse the mind to think good thoughts. To cleanse the eyes to see all the wonders of the world around us. To cleanse the ears to hear all the sounds of laughter and words of love. To cleanse the mouth and throat so that good, kind caring words are spoken. To cleanse the heart to feel love; making it easier to show love to others. To cleanse the feet so that they always take me in a good and safe direction. When the smudge turns to ashes, the ashes are returned to *n̄h̄q̄łtsin̄j* (mother earth) soil. The energy that doesn't belong to the person smudging, is absorbed into the ashes and placed on the soil. This ceremony called smudging has been scientifically proven to eliminate bacteria in the air. Our Indigenous people are so brilliant that science is always trying to catch up to Indigenous ways of knowing. In a study done by Hayes (2016) on the white sage, she concludes her study of the plant,

Salvia apiana is a plant found in southern California and Mexico that has many traditional uses ranging from purification to treating sore throats, respiratory infections, coughs and colds. The extract showed 58.3% inhibition towards the

CB1 receptor, indicating high potential for the isolation of active compounds.

Bioassay guided fractionation was used to isolate nine compounds. (p. 40).

This is one sacred ceremony that some Dene people practice. It is important to acknowledge that Indigenous people across Canada practice different ceremonies based on their land and beliefs. Each nation and each family are different, and it is our right as Indigenous people and as Canadians to be able to practice and celebrate our beliefs. The Dënesųliné words for the smudge ritual:

“n̄ih̄ŋ̄tsin̄j, sen̄ih̄ nar̄ĩk’al, bet’á el̄th’i nánesther xa, senaghé nar̄ĩk’al, asíe nez̄u k’anesta xa senáre, sedzaghé nar̄ĩk’al, dlók dáȳj destth’ak xa, sedhá chu sedheghe nar̄ĩk’al, yati nez̄u t’á dene xél yasti xa, sedzié nar̄ĩk’al, dene begh̄anowé̄t̄a chu dene bek’ésoredli bek’óresȳa xa, seké nar̄ĩk’al, bet’á el̄th’i t’ahúk’e sehó?̄a ghesal̄ Xa” *translated by Jessie Sylvester

I was taught to make sure when teaching, to always start with self, then family, community and world. Within Indigenous ways of knowing, all these realms are interconnected. The unit plan then connects with West Coast stewardship taking the students to the ocean. The lesson plan I included was co-created with other Indigenous Language and Culture teachers in 2018 and adapted to fit the theme for the unit plan. The unit plan that was adapted and connected to West coast and stewardship entitled: Ocean Guardians (2018) was created in partnership with Keisha Everson, Emily Aitken, Jennifer Harry and Danita Lewis. Three additional lessons about stewardship contain lessons that include the book *Orca Chief*, From Good Reads:

Orca Chief, the story of four hunters who encounter the Chief of the Killer Whales, is the third in a series of Northwest Coast Legends by Roy Henry Vickers and Robert Budd. Thousands of years ago in the village of Kitkatla, four hunters leave home in the spring to harvest seaweed and sockeye. When they arrive at their fishing grounds, exhaustion makes them lazy and they throw their anchor overboard without care for the damage it might do to marine life or the seafloor. The anchor lands on the roof of the Chief of the Killer Whales' home. He sends a ratfish to investigate, but the men, annoyed by the sound of the scout, pull its fins off and throw it back into the ocean. When Orca Chief discovers what the hunters have done, he has his most powerful swimmers drag the men and their boat to his house. The men beg forgiveness for their ignorance and lack of respect, and Orca Chief sends them out with his pod to show them how to sustainably and respectfully harvest the ocean's resources. When the men return to their village, they share the knowledge and the food they have gained from their time with the Killer Whales. (p. 1).

From this lesson, students learn the words for the Kwak'waka word Orca *Maḥʔinux^w* (Mahx-ee-nooxw) and the Coast Salish word for Orca – *nənqəm*. The *Dënesūhñé*, from the prairies, do not have a word for whale. Students are asked to think about why they think that is? The closest word is *Łuéchok* meaning big fish. I remember when my Setsiye took his first trip to Vancouver Island. At that time, there was Sealand of the Pacific in the Oak Bay Marina. Three orca whales, Nootka, Haida and Tilikum lived in a small pen. My setsiye, seeing the orca whales for the first time, his eyes were

as big as plates as he said in broken English, “those are the biggest fish I’ve ever seen.” I giggled thinking he called the Orca whale a ‘big fish’ but then later found out it was because the Dënesųłiné come from a place without ocean water. In Dënesųłiné there aren’t words or names for the some of the plants and animals that live by or in the ocean, including the big fish known as the Orca whale or Maǰʔinux^w. This is an important lesson on the diversity of the Indigenous people across Turtle Island and how language comes from the land.

In this lesson, students also watch a video from *Great Bear Sea Intertidal Walk* and are asked questions about their surroundings and learn more about what the tide line is, what different sea animals are and the term, “when the tide is out the table is set” and the importance of the foods harvested on the West Coast. The last lesson is going to the beach. The main idea is for exploration and stewardship; putting all their learning into practice while they participate in a beach search and find. The information was gathered collaboratively by the team Keisha Everson, Emily Aitken, Jennifer Harry and Danita Lewis and it was decided that the language to be used in the written resource would be Kwak’wala only because of location, being that there isn’t an ocean in the prairies. One of the conversations with the Dene fluent speakers was the possibility of future works being created based upon stewardship but focusing on plants and animals found around sloughs and lakes that would include the Dënesųłiné language and cultural knowledge.

Chapter 6: The path forward and conclusion

As Kathleen Absolon (2011) said, “I seek to advance Indigenous knowledge systems in a mainstream education system,” (p.19). Given the limited number of authentic Indigenous resources specific to the Dënesųłné, there is a need for the project that I have created. Therefore, I felt inspired to create a tool that can offer a foundation for both Indigenous and settler teachers and students to have an authentic Dënesųłné perspective. Because I am situating myself from within the culture, I understand the stories from within the culture. This project will help fill a gap while creating an opportunity to honour the many ways of knowing and understanding within Indigenous Ways of knowing. Specifically, the importance of language and oral tradition are shown throughout the curriculum resource created in this project. This project serves as one solution to fill a gap toward authentic Indigenous worldview and perspective as mandated by the BC Ministry of Education, and the TRC Calls to Action.

Dawn Marsden (2005) wrote the following about her learning:

One of the biggest gifts that I’ve received is remembering what was taught to me and who taught me - my father and my grandmother. And all those things that they made conscious, in my mind, whereas before they were operating unconsciously, like how to engage with people and what is respectful way and about the vigilance and awareness and all those little subtleties that are steeped in values; values and ways of seeing the universe and relationships. And so that was a real big gift. By passing on the teachings that I’ve received, I’ve become aware of the teachings that I’ve got and where I got them from. (page 77)

I can relate. On this journey with the Masters in Indigenous Language Revitalization, I learned of tremendous heartbreak and loss but also about memories that pre-date the vicious rules that colonization put on the path. From this recollection, I have gathered strength through friends and colleagues and have had deep meaningful conversations and tears shared with community members. I recognize, through this journey, that I have also gained allies in the teaching community. Through this project, I have come to understand myself, my family and my community better and I am more compassionate, empathic and sympathetic because of this learning. Like a bow and arrow, we must go backwards in order to go forwards. Through the backwards motion, my learning has deepened around the horrible historical realities but going further back I've learned more about the strong resilient people I come from. Through the learning and the path taken, I've found ways to communicate about decolonization through heritage, connection to place and community that serves as foundation for healing, reflection and empowerment. Reflection and empowerment, as students are able to identify similarities about themselves based upon resiliency and Indigenous peoples' ability to thrive. A quote that resonated with me written by Richard Wagamese sums up this journey I am on and I am hoping that others who chose this journey come to this learning,

I no longer feel like I stood in the middle of a bridge between two cultures but rather that I had a foot firmly planted in each. I was the bridge. My racial and cultural displacement hadn't assimilated me. I assimilated it. (p. 267).

Finally, to quote one of my instructors who pushed me to go beyond my comfort level and grow beyond the constructs of colonization, Wanosts'a7 (Dr. Lorna Williams)

said the following when she gave the keynote speech at The HELISET TFE SKÁL (pronounced ha-LEE-sut-te-skwayl) ‘ –Let the Languages Live – ’ 2019 International Conference on Indigenous Languages language conference in Victoria:

With the declaration of the 2019 Year of Indigenous Languages, the UN recognizes that Indigenous Peoples will be silenced no more, and so begins a global shift in the history of Indigenous Peoples on this planet. Here in B.C. and around the globe, Indigenous Peoples are continuing their work to remember, reclaim, restore and revitalize their languages, knowledge and wisdom – the voices of the land and our ancestors....You have a responsibility, the language is the voice of the land, air and water. It keeps our ancestors’ connections alive; it is our legacy to the descendants. For our children. (2019)

áłnethi chu Sekwi t’áhi ?álu ghedełi beba

Bibliography

Absolon, K. E. (2011). *Kaandossiwin = how we come to know*. Halifax: Fernwood Pub.

Antoine, Mason, R., Mason, R., Palahicky, S., & France, C. R. de. (2018, September 5).

Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers. Retrieved from

<https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/chapter/indigenization-decolonization-and-reconciliation/>

Archibald, J.-ann. (2014). *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body, and Spirit*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Assessing endangerment: Expanding Fishmans GIDS. (n.d.). Retrieved July 18, 2019, from

Background of FPPL and Current Contexts. (n.d.). Retrieved October 12, 2019, from

<https://firstpeoplesprinciplesoflearning.wordpress.com/background-and-current-context/>.

Battiste, M. (2002, October 31). Retrieved November 30, 2019, from

https://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/24._2002_oct_marie_battiste_indigenousknowledgeandpedagogy_lit_review_for_min_working_group.pdf.

Battiste, M. and James Sa'ke'j Youngblood Henderson. 2000. Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage: A Global Challenge. Saskatoon: Purich Publishing Ltd.

BearPaw Media Productions (2006). Lateral violence [DVD]. Alberta Law Foundation and Native Counselling Services of Alberta. Retrieved from: <http://www.bearpaweducation.ca/videos/lateral-violence>

BC's New Curriculum. (2018). Curriculum overview. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/overview> Beaver, J., & Magee, D. (2006). Aboriginal voices in the curriculum: a guide to teaching aboriginal studies in K-8 classrooms. Toronto, ON: Toronto District School Board.

Biin, D., Simcoe, J., Marlene Erickson, A.-na-hi A., Cull, I., Hancock, R. L. A., McKeown, S., ... Vedan, A. (2018, September 5). Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationfrontlineworkers/chapter/indigenous-ways-of-knowing-and-being/>

Bissell, A., & Korteweg, L. (2016). Digital narratives as a means of shifting settler-teacher horizons toward reconciliation. *Canadian Journal of Education/Revue canadienne de l'éducation*, 39(3), 1-25.

Blackman, J. (1992). [Personal interview].

Blackstock, C. (2011). The Caring Society. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://fncaringsociety.com/>.

Blondin, G. (1997). *Yamoria the Lawmaker: stories of the Dene*. Edmonton: NeWest Press.

Brown, B. (2016). *End Of Earth People: the arctic sahtu dene*. Place of publication not identified: READHOWYOUWANT COM LTD.

Building Student Success - BC's New Curriculum. (n.d.). Retrieved November 30, 2019, from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/>.

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, New York:MacMillan. (1865)

Camp, S. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/Pages/default.aspx>

Canada., Indian Claims Commission (1991-2009). (1994). *Indian Claims Commission proceedings*. Ottawa: Indian Claims Commission.

Canada., Indian Claims Commission (1991-2009). (1993). Primrose Lake Air Weapons Range report, Cold Lake First Nations rejected claim inquiry, Canoe Lake Cree Nation rejected claim inquiry. Ottawa: The Commission.

Castellano, M. B. (2000a). "Conclusion." *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise*. Eds. Marlene Brant Castellano, Lynne Davis, and Louise Lahache. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, p. 42.

CAUT. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.caut.ca/>

Children of La Loche and Friends (1990). *Byron through the seasons: A Dene-English story book*. Saskatoon. Fifth House.

Cull, I., Hancock, R., McKoewn, S., Pidgeon, M., & Vedan, A. (n.d.). Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being appropriate Landscape: Learning from Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Being and Doing Through Conversation. *Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being, Chapter 2*. doi: 10.22215/etd/2016-11478

Coleman, D., Battiste, M., Henderson, S., Findlay, I. M., & Findlay, L. (2012). Different knowings and the Indigenous humanities. *ESC: English Studies in Canada*, 38(1), 141- 159. <https://doi.org/10.1353/esc.2012.0009>

Curtice, K. (2019, November 19). 25 Books by Indigenous Authors You Should Be Reading. Retrieved November 30, 2019, from <https://www.evangelicalsforsocialaction.org/racial-justice/25-books-indigenous-authorsreading/?fbclid=IwAR3xpglLwNqtPLCsLKPCWxmjFyWJCryiUaZIkDPAZk6Nad-TQBK-lkHfdn8>.

Curtice, K. B. (2018, September 6). Retrieved from <https://kaitlincurtice.com/tag/25-books-to-read/>

Education. (2018). Manitoba Education. Retrieved November 30, 2019, from <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/>.

Expert Panel for the Review of Federal Environmental Assessment Processes [Letter to Expert Panel]. (2016, December 23). Cold Lake First Nations, Cold Lake, Alberta.

EXPLORING THE GREAT BEAR SEA. (2017). Retrieved from <https://great-bearsea.net/>

First Voices. (2011b). Dene Community Portal. Retrieved December 30, 2019 from <https://www.firstvoices.com/explore/FV/sections/Data/Athabasca/Dene/Dene>

(2019, February 21). Retrieved from http://www.fpcc.ca/files/PDF/Press_Releases/FPCF_FPCC_IYIL_Conference_-_Launch_NR_-_FINAL_-_02.13.2019_-_ENGLISH.pdf

Fishman, J. A. (1991). Reversing language shift. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Frost, D., Latham, C., Fatt, M., & Blondin, G. (2017). Discover Northern Dene Nation art and wisdom: an Aboriginal art colouring book. Calgary, AB: Colouring it Forward.

Fpcc. (n.d.). FirstVoices. Retrieved July 19, 2019, from

<https://www.firstvoices.com/>Grays, J. (2016, December 16). CUNY Academic Works. Retrieved November 30, 2019, from <https://academicworks.cuny.edu/>.

Grays, J. (2016, December 16). The Blurred Lines of Cultural Appropriation. Retrieved from https://academicworks.cuny.edu/gj_etds/181/

Hanna, D. (2000, June 25). Retrieved December 13, 2019, from www.fngovernance.org.

Hayes, T. (2016, May). Retrieved January 18, 2020, from http://thesis.honors.olemiss.edu/622/1/Taylor_Hayes_Thesis.pdf

Hildner, A. 2001, Native Hands Project: Interview with Tia Oros Peters and Christopher Peters of the Seventh Generation Fund, Interview, Center of the American West:

Boulder, Colorado. Retrieved December 30, 2019 from <http://www.center-west.org/projects/past/nativehands/seventhgen.html>.

Hinton, L. & Hale, K. (Eds.). (2001). *The green book of language revitalization in practice*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Home. (n.d.). Retrieved July 16, 2019, from <https://clfns.com/>

Hill, L. 2000. "What does it take to change minds? Intellectual development of preservice teachers." *Journal of Teacher Education*: 51(1): 50-62.

Hinton, Leanne (ed.). 2013. *Bringing our languages home: Language revitalization for families*. Heyday.

http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/kes/pdf/or_cf_fnmi_ot_02_intro.pdf. (2007).

Retrieved October 10, 2019, from.

Hunter, J. (2019, November 19). B.C. mother takes school district to court over Indigenous smudging ritual in class. Retrieved from <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-bc-mother-takes-school-district-to-court-over-indigenous-smudging/>

Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. (n.d.). Indigenous Corporate Training Inc. Retrieved July 16, 2019, from <https://www.ictinc.ca/>

Indigenous language revitalization - University of Victoria. (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2019, from <https://www.uvic.ca/future-students/indigenous/language/index.php>.

International Year of Indigenous Language. (2019). Retrieved from <https://en.iyil2019.org/>

Jacob, A. (2018, August 16). Interviews with Elder [Personal interview].

Jacob, A. (2018, July 12). Recorded Interview [Personal interview].

Jordy. (2017, August 3). Honouring Earth. Retrieved from <http://www.afn.ca/>

Joyce, S., McQuillan, S., Ball, S., McAleer, N., & Richards, S. (n.d.).

https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/sites/curriculum.gov.bc.ca/files/Starting_Points_Draft_6.pdf. Retrieved October 12, 2019, from.

Kenny, C., & Fraser, T. N. (2014). Living Indigenous Leadership Native Narratives on Building Strong Communities. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Keague, S. (2012, June 7). The Little Red Handbook of Public Speaking and Presenting by Stephen Keague. Retrieved from <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/16067136-the-little-red-handbook-of-public-speaking-and-presenting>

Kirkness, V. J. (1999). Aboriginal education in Canada: A retrospective and a prospective. *Journal of American Indian Education*, 39(1), 14-30.

Language Keepers. (2012). Language Keepers: Documenting endangered language for education, research and revival. Retrieved May 22, 2012 from <http://www.languagekeepers.org>.

Legat, A., & Barnaby, J. (2012). Walking the land, feeding the fire knowledge and stewardship among the Tlicho Dene. Tucson: University of Arizona Press.

Leonard, W. Y. (2007). Miami language reclamation in the home: a case study.

Leonard, W. 2011. Challenging 'Extinction' through Modern Miami Language Practices. AMERICAN INDIAN CULTURE AND RESEARCH JOURNAL, Volume 35, Issue 2.

Marsden, D. (2003). Kaandossiwin: how we come to know. Halifax: Fernwood Pub.

Miller, J. R. (n.d.). Aboriginal Policy Research: Aboriginal Policy Research. Retrieved November 30, 2019, from <http://apr.thompsonbooks.com/>.

McIvor, O. (2012). *îkakiwiy nîhiyawiyân: I am learning [to be] Cree*. (Doctoral dissertation). University of British Columbia.

Ministry of Education. (2019, February 04). Aboriginal Education in British Columbia.

Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/ab-original-education>

Ministry of Citizens Services. (2019, September 23). Ministry of Education. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/education>

Morris, M. W. (2000). Return to the drum - Teaching among the dene in Canadas north.

Newest Press.

Moss, W., Gardner-OTOole, E., & Moss, W. (1987). Aboriginal people: History of discriminatory laws. Ottawa: Library of Parliament, Research Branch.

Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC). (2015, January 4). Aboriginal lateral violence. Retrieved from www.nwac.ca

Neyelle, J., Fletcher, A., & Neyelle, M. (2019). The man who lived with a giant: stories from Johnny Neyelle, Dene elder. Edmonton, Alberta: Polynya Press, an imprint of University of Alberta Press.

Oral Traditions. (2018). Retrieved from http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/oral_tradition/

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations guide for

Indigenous peoples: leaflet, United Nations guide for indigenous peoples:

leaflet 10-11 (2001). Geneva, Switzerland.

Ram Dass (2012). "Journey of Awakening: A Meditator's Guidebook", p.28, Bantam

Restoule, J.-P., & Chaw-win-is. (2017, October). Retrieved December 16, 2019, from
file:///C:/Users/11000216/Downloads/20171026_Old ways are the new way
forward How Indigenous pedagogy can benefit everyone_FINAL.pdf.

Robertson, D., & Tien, W. (2014). *The peacemaker: Thanadelthur*. Winnipeg, MB,
Canada: HighWater Press.

Rosborough, T., Rorick, C. L., & Urbanczyk, S. (2017). Beautiful Words: Enriching and
Indigenizing Kwak'wala Revitalization through Understandings of Linguistic
Structure. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 73(4), 425–437. doi:
10.3138/cmlr.4059.

Shahzad, R. (2017, July 15). What is the significance of acknowledging the Indigenous
land we stand on? Retrieved from
[https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/territorial-acknowledgements-
indigenous-1.4175136](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/territorial-acknowledgements-indigenous-1.4175136)

Smith, Linda T. 2012. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*
(2nd ed.). London, UK: Zed Books.

Smudging. (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/arti-
cle/smudging](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/smudging)

- Simpson, L. (1999, March). Retrieved December 16, 2019, from <https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp02/NQ41628.pdf>.
- Snively, G., & Williams, W. L. (2016). *Knowing home: braiding Indigenous science with western science*. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria.
- Strong Nations - Indigenous and Native American Books, Aboriginal Kids Books, First Nations Kids books, Inuit, Metis- Building Strong Nations Together! (2005). Retrieved December 26, 2019, from <https://www.strongnations.com/>.
- Suzuki, D. (n.d.). What you can do. 10 Ways to Stop climate change. Retrieved from <https://davidsuzuki.org/>
- Tasker, J. P. (2019, December 17). 'Brink of destruction': AFN national chief demands action on fading Indigenous languages at UN | CBC News. Retrieved February 16, 2020, from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/brink-destruction-afn-national-chief-languages-un-1.5399245>
- Tatti, F., Jerome, S., Firth, W., Modeste, J., Baton, A., Pelletier, T., ... Oishi, M. (1993). *Education, Culture and Employment*. Retrieved November 30, 2019, from <https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/>.
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.trc.ca/>
- Vickers, R. H., & Budd, R. (2015). *Orca Chief*. Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing

Wilson, Shawn. 2008. *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Halifax/Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

Wood, V. (2019, July 13). [Telephone interview].

Yakeleya, R., Desmarais, D., Andrews, P. W., & Modesta, J. (2018). *The tree by the woodpile: and other Dene spirit of nature tales*. Calgary, Alberta: Up Route Books and Media, an imprint of Durvile Publications Ltd.

Appendix

Understanding Worldview and Oral Tradition through Indigenous Ways of Knowing Unit Plan by Danita Lewis

Background:

BC Ministry of Education mandated Indigenous Ways of Knowing be woven into all areas of curriculum. In order to move forward we need to understand the concepts Indigenization, decolonization, reconciliation and language reclamation. The terms are separate but interrelated according to Indigenous scholars and activists (see Alfred, 2009; Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Pete, 2015).

Indigenization can be understood as distinct knowledge systems. When woven into the western knowledge system learners are given opportunities to understand and appreciate both. It should also be noted ethics of and criteria for understanding Indigenous Ways of Knowing is done in a respectful way when integrating it into the classroom.

Decolonization, “refers to the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of Western thought and approaches. On the one hand, decolonization involves dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo, problematizing dominant discourses, and addressing unbalanced power dynamics. On the other hand, decolonization involves valuing and revitalizing Indigenous knowledge and approaches and weeding out settler biases or assumptions that have impacted Indigenous ways of being. Decolonization necessitates shifting our frames of reference regarding the knowledge we hold; examining how we have arrived at such knowledge; and considering what we need to do to change misconceptions, prejudice, and assumptions about Indigenous Peoples. For individuals of settler identity, decolonization is the process of examining your beliefs about Indigenous Peoples and culture by learning about yourself in relationship to the communities where you live and the people with whom you interact,” (Asma-na-hi Antoine, Rachel Mason, Roberta Mason, Sophia Palahicky, and Carmen Rodriguez de France 2019).

Reconciliation is defined by Chief Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as “not an Aboriginal problem – it involves all of us.” With reconciliation, it is acknowledging the oppressive history between the dominant society and many distinct groups of Indigenous people over hundreds of years. The onus for the action is on the settler society. Part of this involves intensive emotional work for all parties including Indigenous people revisiting a traumatic history in order to get to a place of forgiveness which cannot be forced; understanding the importance of an apology, building trust, listening to one another's stories and taking action to show that the relationship will be honored and valued.

Language Reclamation: ensuring cultural continuity (e.g., knowledge of ancestors, language)
“Indigenous Languages matter for development, peacebuilding, and reconciliation. Languages play a crucial role in the daily lives of people, not only as a tool for communication, education, social integration, and development, but also as a repository for each person’s unique identity, cultural history, traditions, and memory. But despite their immense value, languages around the world continue to disappear at an alarming rate. With this in mind, the United Nations declared 2019 The International Year of Indigenous Languages in order to raise awareness of them, not only to benefit the people who speak these languages, but also for others to appreciate the important contribution they make to our world’s rich cultural diversity.” (p.1) This is a part of decolonizing, reconciliation and Indigenizing.

It is important that we make every effort to do our best effort to pronounce the Indigenous words when they are made available. This is reconciliation. The intention with this lesson is to bring about a blended educational context that respects and builds on both Indigenous and Eurocentric knowledge systems and to honour the many ways of knowing.

Guidance:

Dënesųłné elder and fluent Dënesųłné language speaker and culture/knowledge keeper: Allen Jacob

Fluent Dënesųłné language speaker and culture/knowledge keeper: Jessie Sylvester

Dënesųłné elder and fluent language speaker: Albertine Finney and Noella Amable

Wei Wai Kum elder and knowledge keeper: June Johnson

Dënesųłné words for the smudge prayer are translated by Jessie Sylvester.

Big Ideas/Learning Intention:

1. To activate prior knowledge.
2. To process and analyze data and information on guardianship and stewardship.
3. To develop specialized vocabulary pertaining to intertidal walks.
4. To read a book and make connections to what we know
5. To communicate learning through self, social and/or teacher assessment.
6. To strengthen students understanding of themselves, diverse cultures, and multiple perspectives through the exploration of First Peoples' and other Canadian and international texts.
7. To contribute to Reconciliation by building greater understanding of the knowledge and perspectives of First Peoples.
8. To appreciate the power, beauty, and artistry of language and texts and their impact on personal, social, and cultural life.
9. To use language to design and share information interpersonally, interculturally, and globally.
10. To understand, critically analyze, and create a variety of forms of communication, including oral, written, visual in order to accomplish one's goals

Learning Standards/competencies:

- Students will be able to explore and create oral, and visual texts, students expand and deepen their understanding of both real and imaginary worlds, gaining insight into their own lives and the lives of others.
- Students will be able to come to understand the influences shaping Canadian society and the unique contribution of First Peoples to our country's and province's heritage.
- Through the study of First Peoples texts and worldviews, students gain awareness of the historical and contemporary contexts of First Peoples, leading to mutual understanding and respect.
- Students will be able to reflect on their overall learning of some of the key themes presented in this unit and consider how to become stewards of the land and water as well as thinking about being stewards in their own communities.
- Students will be able to understand that their participation and plans are visions and the key to preserving the environment for future generations.

Lesson adapted from:

- Walking together. First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/oral_tradition/documents/oral_tradition.pdf
- BC Open Textbooks. Open Textbooks Adapted and Created by BC Faculty <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/chapter/indigenization-decolonization-and-reconciliation/>
- Canadian Association of University Teachers
- Indigenous Education SD 71. Beaded timeline by Suzanne Camp. [http://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/resources/teacher/Pages/BeadTimeline.aspx#/=](http://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/resources/teacher/Pages/BeadTimeline.aspx#/)
- Adapted from GBS lesson plan #10. Map from GreatBearSea.ca
- David Suzuki Foundation. One Nature. <https://davidsuzuki.org/what-you-can-do/top-10-ways-can-stop-climate-change/>
- Assembly of First Nations. <http://www.afn.ca/honoring-earth/>
- The Canadian Encyclopedia <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/smudging>
- ***Ocean Guardians*** unit created in partnership with:
Keisha Everson, Emily Aitken, Jennifer Harry and Danita Lewis

References:

Antoine, Mason, R., Mason, R., Palahicky, S., & France, C. R. de. (2018, September 5). Pulling Together: A Guide for Curriculum Developers. Retrieved from <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/chapter/indigenization-decolonization-and-reconciliation/>

Camp, S. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www3.sd71.bc.ca/School/abed/Pages/default.aspx>

CAUT. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.caut.ca/>

EXPLORING THE GREAT BEAR SEA. (2017). Retrieved from <https://greatbearsea.net/>

International Year of Indigenous Language. (2019). Retrieved from <https://en.iyil2019.org/>

Jordy. (2017, August 3). Honouring Earth. Retrieved from <http://www.afn.ca/>

Ministry of Citizens Services. (2019, September 23). Ministry of Education. Retrieved from <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/ministries/education>

Oral Traditions. (2018). Retrieved from http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/aswt/oral_tradition/

Smudging. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/smudging>

Suzuki, D. (n.d.). What you can do. 10 Ways to Stop climate change. Retrieved from <https://davidsuzuki.org/>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). (2015). Retrieved from <http://www.trc.ca/>

Vickers, R. H., & Budd, R. (2015). *Orca Chief*. Madeira Park, BC: Harbour Publishing

Materials:

Lesson 1: Beaded timeline. Adapted from Suzanne Camp SD71 Beaded timeline. Link: [How to use beaded timeline](#)



Lesson 1 and 2: Pencil, eraser, pencil crayons, blackline master copies

Lesson 3: Scarf, moccasins, shell, medicine bag, visualization worksheet.



Lesson 4: Orca Chief Kit

Orca Chief by Roy Henry Vickers, One orca puppet, carved canoe, cedar rope



Lesson 5: Internet access for Great Bear Sea online resource.



Lesson 6: Intertidal zone search and find includes beach information cards and dry erase search and find activity with dry erase markers.



Assessment:

Complete visualization worksheet.

- Drawing in pencil
- Minimum of five colours
- Effort to colour in one direction
- Written explanation of their image
- Intermediate Key words defined in words or pictures
- Complete vocabulary.
- Draw or write the definition of new vocabulary.

Content:**Lesson 1: Acknowledgment of territory and Oral History**

1. **Acknowledge** the traditional unceded territory of the Liqwiltokw (pronounced “lee-gwith-dahw”) First Nations who are our hosts and are Kwakwala and Lik’wala speaking people. I am grateful to be a guest on their territory. In Canada there are 12 language families and 70 distinct Indigenous languages in Canada. Gilakas’la! (this means thank you and you’re welcome).

○ **Teachers note:** For more information or ideas on how to incorporate Indigenous language into your practice, here is a link: [Incorporating Indigenous Language](#)

“Acknowledging territory shows recognition of and respect for Indigenous Peoples. It is recognition of their presence both in the past and the present. Recognition and respect are essential elements of establishing healthy, reciprocal relations. These relationships are key to reconciliation.” (Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2019, P.1)

○ Teachers note: There are 12 language families and 70 distinct Indigenous languages in Canada – “ IYIL 2019 aims to draw attention to the critical loss of Indigenous languages and the urgent need to revitalize and promote them at national and international levels.” Statistics Canada

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeRzaFvs4iI>

○ <https://www.canadiangeographic.ca/article/mapping-indigenous-languages-canada>

2. **Introduce self:** Dēnesųłné (Den-a-sooth-leh-na) from Łuéchok Túé (thluu-ee-choke-tu-ee) otherwise known as Cold Lake First Nations, which is my language and my tribal name, I am a member of the Cold Lake First Nations. My grandparents are John and Josephine Blackman, my parents are Albertine and Dan Finny. I am a member of a large language group, the Dene language and nations are vast and can be heard across North America, from Alaska to Mexico.

○ **Teachers note:** Above is an example based upon the author of the unit’s own identity and location of self. Below are ideas on how to use your own introduction or locating self. It is common practice or protocol to: Acknowledge Land; Acknowledge ancestors; Introduce yourself. This is an important aspect because our relationships are key. These relationships with the land, our ancestors and to self are woven together and serves to make connections to others. “Indigenous people value those who have come before us, we value our ancestors, we value our knowledge keepers.” - Onowa McIvor (personal communication 2019). These are the people who have shaped our lives and ways of knowing. An example of an introduction if you are a settler: I am _____, I am a settler Canadian with ancestry from _____.

3. **Introduce** the 14,000-year beaded timeline.

○ **Teachers note:** If you are unsure how to use the beaded timeline, please follow this link: [How to use beaded timeline](#)

a. Begin with the students as the first bead so they realize they are an important part of the timeline; this bead represents today/now/students' generation. Mention the students are the most important generation because they are the future leaders.

b. Add one bead. **SAY:** “This is your parents' generation, if I added one more bead who would that be?”

c. Add one or two more beads to show a long time in their family history. This also defines what generations are. Each bead represents a 20-year generation.

d. **ASK:** “Isn’t that a long time in your family’s history?”

- e. **Point out:** The red beads are how old Canada is. It is a very young new country in comparison to how long Indigenous people have lived here. As you continue with the beaded timeline, all the white beads in between are 0-2020. When you get to zero, talk about all different colors representing all the ancient civilizations (Mayan, Rome, Greek, China, India, Egypt and Mesopotamia) they will learn about in middle school, which is 5500 years ago called ancient Mesopotamia. The history Indigenous people have with this land goes far beyond the 5500 years.
- f. **Intermediate:** There is one black bead amid the white beads which represents 500 years since first contact.
4. **Show and Tell:** While showing the remainder of the beaded timeline past 5500 years, **SAY:** The Indigenous people of Canada are considered the guardians of the *nìhqłtsinì* (pronounced Knee-hoot-see-knee) meaning mother earth. Indigenous people have been living off the land and being sure to only take what was needed, never taking more than what was needed. This is a rule that many Indigenous people have. The rules are also called **PROTOCOLS**. Indigenous people know the earth, they live in relation with the Earth, which is why the Indigenous people thrived for over 14,000 years. **Remind** students of the four beads and their family which shows the contrast in time but also reminding students they are an important part of the timeline.
- o **Teachers note:** “B.C. archaeologists have excavated a settlement in the area — in traditional Heiltsuk Nation territory — and dated it to 14,000 years ago.” CBC.ca
5. Indigenous people did not write down their history until 150 years ago. Refer to the red section on the beaded timeline.
6. **ASK:** If Indigenous people did not write down history, HOW did Indigenous peoples pass on their stories such as how to take care of *nìhqłtsinì* (pronounced Knee hoot see knee) from generation to generation?
7. After students discuss, **SAY:** “Indigenous people came from an oral tradition and the stories were passed on from the generations to generations through stories, song, dance and art. Often these are called ancestral stories. They are **NOT** called legends or myths.”
- a. The stories could be about how something was created or came to be or told for understanding of spiritual ceremonies. Often stories were told and retold with precise exactness because of the important **cultural teachings and responsibility (stewardship)**.
 - b. There are stories that will not be told to people who aren't from the tribe and sometimes secret societies held the **sacred ceremonial teachings** and only shared with those members.
 - c. With some Indigenous nations, stories would only be told in the winter when it was thought those spirits in the stories would be sleeping and less powerful. There are also stories told during certain seasons to pass on important information such as **gathering or hunting** or mapping directions to rich hunting and gathering spots and the ceremonies associated with them.
 - d. There are ancient stories from **when the world was different**, and some animals were giant, and animals were able to communicate with humans. In these old stories, animals and people could change their form or be in many places at one time. These stories are as old as the tide that falls on the shore.
 - e. There are stories that were told for pure entertainment.
 - o **Teachers note:** Some children might understand a story for its entertainment value whereas, another child might understand its spiritual value. Each listener will take away their own learning depending on their

age and what they are experiencing in their own life. There isn't a right or wrong way of understanding a story.

- **Teachers Note: “Protocols related to ownership and use of First Peoples’ oral texts:** stories often have protocols — when and where they can be shared, who owns them, who can share them.” BC Ministry of Education, English First Peoples.
- **Teacher Note:** Please note protocols when using this unit plan: The text/stories within this unit plan can not be replicated or used without permission of the author.

8. Definition: Stewardship: taking care and being responsible for the environment by specifically managing resources within the ecosystem. Guide students toward the idea of being responsible for taking care of the land and water. Indigenous people have been living off the land and walking gently and using only what they need, our relationship with the natural resources and some of these stories are as old as the tide that falls on the shore.

9. Brainstorm ideas how to be a good steward.

10. Hand out visualization worksheet. Write names and date.

11. Ask: What does it mean to visualize? Building a picture in your mind. Today we are going to talk about what it means to be a good steward of the land and you will draw your examples. Before we do that, I will share a quick story:

The elder from Łuéchok Túé (thluee-ee-choke-tu-ee) otherwise known as Cold Lake First Nations, we will call him Setsie John, (grandfather), was considered a knowledge keeper of both culture and language in that community. People would travel great distances to sit with Setsie John because he had special knowledge. If someone was seeking this knowledge it would be a protocol to offer him tobacco for him to share his teachings about spiritual or cultural ways. Basically, he was a living memory who knew about the old ways and he knew how to keep good relationship with nìhòłtsinì (pronounced Knee hoot see knee) mother earth. Sometimes, these secrets he held were so sacred he would refuse to tell them to some people, he would only share those sacred stories to the chosen one that was meant to hear it. Setsie John (grandfather) would share stories to help restore balance and harmony focusing on respect, love and responsibility. Setsie John (grandfather) would never say what the story or the moral is about because each person would take away something different, for example a young person might hear something that an older person might not or vice versa. The listener would then take this teaching and use the story as a guide or “words to live by.”

12. Setsie John (grandfather) would often remind the people, “we are rich people.” What do you think he meant, “we are rich people?”
- a. Students brainstorm ideas. Often, western society will answer that being rich means to have fancy cars, big homes and money etc. but that isn't what my grandfather meant. Often, western society's view of richness or wealth does not line up with Indigenous perspective of richness or wealth.
 - b. It wasn't uncommon to grow up thinking the people from that community were rich because Setsie John (grandfather) would say,

“we were rich because we had our *nihqłtsini* (pronounced Knee-hoot-see-knee) mother earth. Our *nihqłtsini* (pronounced Knee-hoot-see-knee) mother earth always took care of us and provided our food and water, and in return we were responsible to take care of her. When you go out in the bush, only take what you need.”

Why do you think he would say “only take what you need”?

13. The traditional hunting and gathering territories were divided; each family had their own area. They were not responsible for taking care of the entire Earth, only their territory. They shared with one another and took care of the old people, making sure they had enough food. There were also protected areas, and no one could harvest animals or food from those areas.

Why do you think there were protected areas?

- a. “Everything is taken and used with the understanding that we take only what we need, and we must use great care and be aware of how we take and how much of it so that future generations will not be put in peril.” (AFN Honoring Earth, 2011).
14. **Say:** We share living in the place we now call Canada; raise your hand if you consider yourself a steward.
15. What are some things you think we can do to take care of the earth? Brainstorm ideas. **Write** student ideas on the board.
- Alternate energy to fossil fuels (renewable energy)
 - Buying local meat
 - Adopt plant rich diet
 - Reduce deforestation
 - Raise awareness- have conversations
 - Ride a bike, take the bus, car-share, consider electric vehicles
 - Reduce flights
 - Consume less, waste less
 - Reduce use of plastic one-time use
15. **Hand out worksheet and write:**
- Drawing in pencil
 - Minimum of five colours
 - Effort to colour in one direction
 - Written explanation of their image
 - Intermediate Key words defined in words or pictures
16. **DRAW:** Please draw an example of you being a steward on the worksheet. Intermediate: please write examples of STEWARDSHIP on the space provided on the back of the worksheet.

Extension: Pick pictures from a bag that represent Stewardship or the opposite and organize into examples of Stewardship YES or NO

Lesson 2: 40 Minutes Cultural teachings and responsibility (stewardship)

1. Review previous lesson ideas: How long Indigenous people have been living on the land and stewardship.
2. **Ask:** What are the rules of your school?
3. **WHY** do you think the school has those rules?
 - Safety
 - Behaviour
 - Learning conditions
4. A special word Indigenous people have for rules, is **protocols**.
5. What do you think are the **protocols** Indigenous people followed to make sure there were always plants or animals left (for example: not overharvesting)?
6. When you are going into the forest, remember, we are guests in this territory. If we want to be good neighbors to our hosts, the forest, rivers, lakes and oceans are like the gardens that belong to our hosts, how should we behave in our neighbors' garden?
7. **WRITE** on board:
 - **Walk gently.** Use a path if there is one because we don't want to trample living plants
 - **Do not leave anything manmade behind.** Whatever you bring into the forest (or beach) pack out with you.
 - **Ask for permission** from our hosts if you plan on harvesting medicines.
 - Once you have permission, **speak to the plants** and the animals in their language which is the language of the land. It is important the plant or animals know what the intention is.
 - Be sure to **thank the animal or the plant.**
 - **Take ONLY what is needed** to ensure regeneratively.
 - It is protocol in the prairies to **leave tobacco** when you take anything from land or water.
 - **Teachers note:** Protocols were taken under the advisory of June Johnson from Wei Wai Kai Nation.
 - **Teachers note:** "First Nations people have long recognized that the health of the environment and the health of the individual are intimately connected. From a First Nations holistic perspective, health includes the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects. The environment plays a vital role with respect to all aspects of health." gathered from <http://www.afn.ca/honoring-earth/>
8. We are guests on this land, and it is our shared responsibility to take care of the earth, the animals and water.
9. Hand out worksheet. Students can write or draw the protocols and explain their drawing.
 - Draw in pencil
 - Colour with a minimum of five colours
 - Colour in one direction
 - Explain your drawing
 - Intermediate: Key words defined

Lesson 3: 40 minutes Sacred Ceremonial Teachings

1. Review previous lesson ideas: How long Indigenous people have been living on the land and stewardship.
2. Review the protocols for forest walk.
3. Show visualization worksheet. Listen to the story and picture it in your mind. After the story, hand out complete visualization worksheet and vocabulary.
4. Write criteria on board:
 - Drawing in pencil
 - Minimum of five colours
 - Effort to colour in one direction
 - Written explanation of their image
 - Intermediate Key words defined in words or pictures

Setsuné (Pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) Hair:

She sat in her grandparent's kitchen looking out the window. She was appreciating the home she grew up in, the home built by her Setsie (Pronounced: tset-see-aye), her grandfather. She was remembering and could feel the love, determination and good intentions that the home was built upon. A modest three-bedroom rancher that has stood the test of time. The kitchen window looked out to the field, alongside the field runs the long dirt driveway. She peered through the window seeing her own reflection in the window but noticing the long prairie grass dancing in the wind. This dancing grass took her back for a moment and she smiled as the warmth of the memory washed over her thinking about the chair where she now sat was her Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) chair. At the end of the day Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) grandchildren would gather while she told stories about the Dënesų́łné (Den-a-sooth-leh-na) ways. To her grandchildren, it was the most magical moment in time, almost as though time did not exist. It took her back to when she was four years old and every day at this time the grandchildren would eagerly wait for setsuné to sit in her chair because it represented when the magic would unfold. Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) would take her hair from her braid that she had wrapped up into a bun held under a hairnet with a scarf like a beautifully wrapped present. Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) was beautiful, and her hair was fascinating. The shine from the silky straight strands gleamed with the silver of the salt and pepper. Setsuné's (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) hair held all the knowledge of the people who came before, her ancestor's stories and her hair also represented the world beyond this realm. It was magic.

The grandchildren would sit in awe at the end of the day when she would take her scarf from her head. Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) wore a scarf around her head almost as though to protect this sacred knowledge held within her hair. The scarf was set aside and for her grandchildren, it represented when they truly got to see setsuné; but she was not alone. She would then take off the hair net and they would get a glimpse of the tightly wound braided bun. The braid was long a reminder of the braided sweetgrass. The one strand a reminder of us, the Dene and our resiliency and ability to thrive in the Subarctic region and the importance of taking care of it to ensure good health. The Dënesų́łné (pronounced: Den-a-sooth-leh-na) are very healthy because of our relationship with n̄h̄łtsin̄ (pronounced: knee-hoot-see-knee mother earth) who provided for them and they were always sure to only take what we needed. It is the one of the laws to only take what is needed.

(STOP ASK: why do you think it's important to have the rule to only take what is needed?)

One strand representing the mind. The Dēnesuḷnē (pronounced: Den-a-sooth-leh-na) are planners with excellent memories and their minds contain the knowledge needed to have good relations with n̄h̄łtsin̄i (pronounced: knee-hoot-see-knee mother earth). One strand representing their soul and connection to the other realms. They believe they had the ability to travel through space and time with the medicine within their souls. The sweetgrass that was burned to welcome the positive energy when smudging. Granddaughter watched the soft wrinkled skin on her Setsuné's (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) hands and noticed the callused thumbs from her constant making, creating beaded clothing to keep her family warm, callused from the work of scrapping and preparing hides, callused from working in the garden, her hands callused but delicate at the same time. Setsuné's (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) wrinkly hands would unravel the long, long braid that seemed to go on forever like there was no beginning or end. The shine reflecting her excellent health from the foods that were provided from the land, the animals and the water. She would take out the tie and mindfully always moving with care and intention, every stroke of her hand gently allowing the magic to unfold showing who she really was. Unveiling the glow of her gentle powerful strength and identity. In that fleeting moment that was frozen in time because this is when all the people who came before, their ą̄nethi (pronounced: alth-neth-ee - ancestors), the ancestors gathering and surrounding them in that moment creating a feeling of strength and safety. Setsuné's (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) hair held our story, it held her identity, spirituality and her connection to ą̄nethi (pronounced: alth-neth-ee – ancestors). It contained the story of their cultural and sacred knowledge, their medicine, their relationship with the air, land, water and other realms. Her hair, a reminder, was sacred and powerful like the sweetgrass that is used in one of the sacred ceremonies called smudging.

Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) taught through example about this ceremony; there were four elements. Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) and Setsie (pronounced: tset-see-aye) always said, "Four is also an important number, many things happen in fours for example seasons, stages of life and times of day." Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) would gather her special shell, this was the container that was used to hold the plants for smudge. This family was very fortunate because they had been gifted a beautiful abalone shell from their relatives from the west coast, this container represented the water element.

Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) and Setsie (pronounced: tset-see-aye) gathered the plants from the medicine pouch. There are four important plants used in the ceremony, each had an important job, and each were a gift from the earth. Sage, sweetgrass, tobacco and cedar. The plants are rolled into a bundle and lite on fire with a wooden match, the fire was the third element. The smoke was the fourth element representing air. Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) and Setsie (pronounced: tset-see-aye) said, "This ceremony can be done in different ways," but their grandchildren followed what their Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) did and these are the words she said as she cupped her hands and wafted the smoke over her:



New Recording
2.m4a

“n̄h̄łtsin̄i, sen̄ih nar̄ilk’al, bet’á elthh’i nánesther xa, senaghé nar̄ilk’al, asíe nez̄u k’anesta xa senáre, sedzaghé nar̄ilk’al, dlók dáȳi destth’ak xa, sedhá chu sedheghe nar̄ilk’al, yati nez̄u t’á dene xél yastí xa, sedzié nar̄ilk’al, dene begh̄anowét̄a chu dene bek’ésoredli bek’óresȳa xa, seké nar̄ilk’al, bet’á elthh’i t’ahúk’e sehó?ą̄ ghesal Xa”

***translated by Jessie Sylvester**

(Mother earth cleanse my hands so that I do good work. Cleanse my mind so that I think good thoughts. Cleanse my eyes so that I see the good in the world. Cleanse my ears so that I hear the goodness and laughter. Cleanse my mouth so that I speak good kind caring words. Cleanse my heart so that I feel the love that surrounds me and that way I can show others love. Cleanse my feet that they take me in a good and safe direction.)

The smoke is like a shower, clearing and cleaning away negative or bad energy. When visiting places with lots of people or if people came to visit their home, It was taught that it is important to bring the balance back into the home to smudge using an eagle feather making sure to get every nook and cranny with the smudge smoke, asking for the smoke to take away any bad energy and leave space for good energy. This is done beginning in the east and ending in the north because it is how the sun rises and sets. When Setsuné (pronounced: tset-tsu-nay) cupped the smudge smoke over her it was meant to heal and connect the body, mind and heart.

To cleanse hands so they do good work.

To cleanse the mind to think good thoughts.

To cleanse the eyes to see all the wonders of the world around us.

To cleanse the ears to hear all the sounds of laughter and words of love.

To cleanse the mouth and throat so that good, kind caring words are spoken.

To cleanse the heart to feel the love that way it's easy to show others love.

To cleanse the feet so that they always take me in a good and safe direction.

When the smudge turns to ashes, the ashes are returned to n̄h̄łtsin̄i (pronounced: Knee-hoot-see-knee - mother earth) soil. The energy that doesn't belong to me is absorbed into the ashes and placed on the soil.

Since the grandparents teaching that this ceremony call smudging has been scientifically proven that smudging eliminates bacteria in the air, our people are so brilliant because science is always trying to catch up to Indigenous ways of knowing.

This is one sacred ceremony that some Dene people practice. It is important to acknowledge that Indigenous people across Canada practice different ceremonies based around their land and beliefs, each nation and each family is different and it our right as Indigenous people and for Canadians to be able to practice and celebrate their beliefs.

- **Teachers note:** The scientific paper entitled **“Medicinal Smokes”** published in the Journal of Ethnopharmacology focuses a scientific lens on the practice.
- **“Smudging connects people to the Creator and provides communities with a way to gain spiritual protection and blessings, as well as to improve spiritual health.”** gathered from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/smudging>

Lesson Four: Connections to West coast and stewardship.

**Lesson adapted from Ocean Guardians unit created in partnership with:
Keisha Everson, Emily Aitken, Jennifer Harry and Danita Lewis 2018/19**

From Good Reads:

“Orca Chief, the story of four hunters who encounter the Chief of the Killer Whales, is the third in a series of Northwest Coast Legends by Roy Henry Vickers and Robert Budd.

Thousands of years ago in the village of Kitkatla, four hunters leave home in the spring to harvest seaweed and sockeye. When they arrive at their fishing grounds, exhaustion makes them lazy and they throw their anchor overboard without care for the damage it might do to marine life or the seafloor.

The anchor lands on the roof of the Chief of the Killer Whales' home. He sends a ratfish to investigate, but the men, annoyed by the sound of the scout, pull its fins off and throw it back into the ocean. When Orca Chief discovers what the hunters have done, he has his most powerful swimmers drag the men and their boat to his house. The men beg forgiveness for their ignorance and lack of respect, and Orca Chief sends them out with his pod to show them how to sustainably and respectfully harvest the ocean's resources. When the men return to their village, they share the knowledge and the food they have gained from their time with the Killer Whales.”

Lesson 4: 40-minute lessons.

1. **Acknowledge traditional territory.**

2. **Review:** stewardship

3. **Write** vocabulary on board:

stewardship and **sustainable harvesting**

the Kwakwaka'wakw word Orca Maḥʔinux^w (Mahx-ee-nooxw)

The Coast Salish word for Orca – nənqəm

The Dēnesųłné, from the prairies do not have a word for whale, why do you think that is? First Nations from the prairies like the Dēnesųłné, their closest word is Łuéchok (pronounced: thluu-ee-choketue-ee) meaning big fish – write it on the board.

4. **Ask** the students to listen carefully and try to identify from the book examples of STEWARDSHIP or examples of not being a steward.

5. **Pick** up book and show cover of the book. **Ask** students to make predictions what the book is about.

6. **What does visualization mean?** Yes, building a picture in your mind. While I am reading the book, your job is to build pictures in your mind, when we are finished you will draw your visualizations.

7. **Read** the book be sure to use the Kwak'wala word Maḥʔinux^w for Orca.

8. In the book, when the men throw the anchor over, **ask** if they are being going stewards. When the tired man injures the ratfish **ask** if he is demonstrating how to be a good steward.

9. **Stop** and **show** artifacts: the wooden boat, the cedar rope.

The cedar tree on the west coast is called the tree of life because the Indigenous people from the NW Coast used the cedar tree for their homes, boats and the inner bark was used to create ropes and clothing. The inner bark would be processed by crushing the fiber using a Mal which would make the fiber soft like cotton. The cool thing about cedar clothes is they have a natural water repellent which kept them dry.

10. **Stop:** Candlefish: **Say**, the candle fish are also known as eulachan. Only certain families have the rights to render eulachan oil called T'LI'NA. T'li'na or grease made from eulachan fish. This is a highly valued gift at potlatches. The gift of t'li'na is the highest honour a chief can bestow on his

guests. At a t'li'nagila, or grease potlatch, a host will throw t'li'na on the fire to show his wealth. Another name is liquid gold because of its value is compared to the value of gold.

11. **Hand out** worksheet on visualization. Draw in pencil first, use your own ideas, please don't copy someone else's work or ideas, minimum 5 colors and color in one direction.
12. **Ask** Can anything be added or changed to your initial ideas about stewardship and guardianship?
13. **Record** the new vocabulary into their journal.

Lesson 5: 40-minute lesson 10 Intertidal zone - Great Bear Sea

1. **Acknowledge traditional territory.**
2. **Review:** stewardship, sustainable harvesting and Indigenous language words.
3. **Ask:** what is the tide? (the area that is above water level at low tide and underwater at high tide).
4. **Ask:** How do you know where high tide is? And low tide? Does anyone know what the area between high and low tide is called? The intertidal zone.
5. **Say:** There is a saying here on the west coast that when the tide goes out the table is set. What does that mean? What kind of food could you put on your dinner table from the intertidal zone?
6. **Watch** Intertidal walk from Great Bear Sea elementary lesson 10. Great Bear Sea Intertidal Walk

While watching the video pause at 4:56. Ask students to guess what the lady in the video is holding.

Pause video at 6:44. **Ask:** where your special place is, which place do you take care of?

Pause video at 7:08. Show the moon snail shell.

Pause video at 7:28. Show the clam shell with the hole in it. **Ask:** How do you think the moon snail made this hole?

Point out how gently and carefully the students in the video are walking.

7. **Ask** What are ways YOU can be a steward in your own community? (write brainstorm ideas on the board)

From the video:

You can check on the plants and animals, walk gently, pick up garbage, tell other people how they can be stewards, if everyone picks a special place whether it's a section of beach or forest we are all doing our job to help.

8. **Hand out** worksheet: **Record** ways you are a steward in your community when at the water, beach, ocean.
9. Write on board:
 - Drawing in pencil
 - Minimum of five colours
 - Effort to colour in one direction
 - Written explanation of their image
 - Intermediate Key words defined in words or pictures

Art Extension:

These lessons can lead up to a Roy Henry Vickers inspired art class.

Criteria:

- Draw in pencil
- Minimum of 5 colours (oil pastels or tempura paints)
- Colour (or paint) in one direction
- Solid bright colors
- No white spaces showing
- A silhouette (mountain, person, animal etc.)

- most pictures are scenes of the land or sea *outdoor nature theme*
 - Do not copy an artist's work
- INSPIRED art is the goal. Using basic shapes (circles, squares, triangles) as a starting place for drawing, asking student to point out the shapes in the pictures they see in a form.

Intermediate extension: Watch [Acid Test: The Global Challenge of Ocean Acidification](#) [Ocean Acidification](#)

To follow up watching the documentary, doing an inquiry project through: http://www.bethechangeearthalliance.org/climate_action_unit

Lesson 6: Beach Search and Find – Intertidal Zone

The previous lessons lead up to a beach walk to find things from the intertidal zone. Always be mindful of walking respectfully and do not leave behind any traces you were there. What to do if you find dead animals on the beach? **LEAVE THEM ALONE.** It is disrespectful to harm any animal including those that are now returning to the earth. If you find baby animals, leave them alone! The mothers are close by, if you disturb the baby animals the mother might abandon them.

Please use Ocean guardian search and find with dry eraser markers while at the beach. The laminated search and find is part of the package.

Extension: Indigenous Art

Gather white shell and crush it into a fine powder using a rock and mix water or spit. This is how white paint is created. To make it oil-based a salmon egg is added to the mixture.

If there is coal from a firepit, point out that coal is used to create black and the black coal from different cooked medicines are used in ceremony today on the west coast.

Lesson 7: Ethnobotany connections - Plants Lesson – Observation skills**Learning Intention:**

1. To activate prior knowledge about the forest and the plants that live there.
2. To process and analyze data and information on the plants and the forest.
3. To develop specialized vocabulary pertaining to plants and the forest.
4. To read a book and make connections to what we know about plants and the forest.
5. To communicate learning through self, social and/or teacher assessment.

Learning Outcomes:

1. To brainstorm as many different characteristics when doing a comparison.
2. To teach students to look at different characteristics of a plant.
3. To introduce students to the **Pacific Northwest Plant Knowledge Cards**.
4. To develop observation skills and search and find

Word

Picture or symbol

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 15 rows. Each row has a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line.

Visualization worksheet

Name:

Date:

DRAW: Please draw an example of you being a steward and explain your drawing.

Did you:

- Draw in pencil
- Color with a minimum of five colours
- Color in one direction
- Explain your drawing

Name:

Date:

Please write examples of STEWARDSHIP on the space provide

