

Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology

Christine Stoeck, McGill University, Canada
Christine.stoeck@mail.mcgill.ca

Chief Rodney Mark, Cree Nation of Wemindji, Wemindji, Quebec
rodney@creenet.com

I. INTRODUCTION

The Cree Nation of Wemindji is located in northern Quebec, Canada. It is one of nine officially recognized Cree communities and is situated along the east coast of James Bay at the mouth of the Maquatua river. It has a population of approximately 1,300 people, many of whom continue to practice Cree traditional activities, such as hunting and fishing along family trap lines and territories, which express their deep attachment to the land and ways of life that have supported Cree ancestors for generations.

The Cree Nation of Wemindji is located in northern Quebec, Canada. It is one of nine officially recognized Cree communities and is situated along the east coast of James Bay at the mouth of the Maquatua river. It has a population of approximately 1,400 people, many of whom continue to practice Cree traditional activities, such as hunting and fishing along family trap lines and territories, which express their deep attachment to the land and ways of life that have supported Cree ancestors for generations.

Wemindji is taking control of its collaborative relationships. Northern aboriginal communities working within marginalizing systems require new respectful relationships. While under pressure from the encroaching instrumentalisation of the surrounding culture to balance long-term economic development, cultural resource enhancement, protection of lands, diverse forms of education, as well as childcare and traditional skills of local artists, Wemindji demonstrates its approach to negotiating new forms of alliances by drawing on the Cree values of respect and relationship. According to Mark, “we want to be in a position to control these projects as much as possible through collaborative processes with outside expertise. Outside expertise is valued when it means sharing specialized knowledge that contributes to ... our self-determination and to our aspirations.”ⁱⁱ

Improving collaborative projects and partnerships between aboriginal and non-aboriginal partners requires experience. Both authors, Stoeck and Mark, often have been asked when making research presentations, “How can someone just beginning, new to working in aboriginal communities, make a start?” This simple question, for the most part about participatory action research (or PAR) and how to work with another culture, has challenged and perplexed us. We do not have a simple answer, nor is the type of collaborative work we aspire to simple. The content of this paper represents our attempt to respond to this question and some of the complexities it engages.

This is a co-authored paper. Both authors come from different experiences and cultures. Rodney Mark is Chief of the Cree Nation of Wemindji. He is a Cree speaker who also speaks English. Christine Stoeck is an English speaking teacher and PhD student. This collaborative work grew over the years from dozens of

conversations. Experiences both authors have to offer serve to expand our ideas in original ways and add depth to the content we wish to share. When relevant to clarify whose voice is speaking we have chosen to directly cite content representing either author's voice.ⁱⁱⁱ Further on in the paper we specify when the we does not represent Stoczek and Mark.

In a previous publication (Stoczek, Mark, 2009 pp. 75-79) we introduced a series of pointers that we titled "How To Approach Collaborations," the writing of which was a catalytic event in the development of our working relationship. Yet, in that chapter, we were not ready to tell the whole account and focussed on experiences that followed this significant turning point. We have been left wondering when we would find an appropriate audience where we could relate the broader context out of which our collaborative working relationship evolved.^{iv} The list of pointers will be presented in this paper.

This fuller account takes into consideration our experiences that led up to the creation of this list and how our work evolved once these pointers were put into practice. Our earliest work experiences served to raise our consciousness (Freire, 2000) about aspects of our work we found troubling. Discussions, which elicited the How to Approach Collaborations list, served to humanize, in a Freirian sense, our working relationships. Some of these aspects will be discussed in the following sections of this paper. They raise themes of self-determination for indigenous people and the ways in which the authors' and our colleagues' experiences elicited fundamental issues. Issues such as de-colonizing and improving collaborations between aboriginal and non-aboriginal colleagues, indigenous research methodology, PAR, and changes to the implementation and practice of adult education and learning in aboriginal territory.

Writing this paper provides us with the opportunity to make an honest attempt to answer how challenges, disappointments, and successes have motivated us to forge ahead to improve our work. We discuss three collaborative projects; the establishment of the community's first child care centre and the development of the Wemindi Traditional Skills artists' group, as well as provide an example from current mining negotiations. These projects reveal how experiential forms of learning, work, and research cannot be contained within the boundaries of specific endeavours but spill over into diverse areas of the authors' work with the community as a whole.

At this point we would like to back up and offer the reader some insights into the trials and accomplishments of our prior work. It was the establishment of the community's first childcare centre that inspired the suggestions offered in the "How To Approach Collaborations" text.

II. EXPERIENCE AS MOTIVATION

In Wemindji in the winter of 1997 Mark, then Youth Chief, and Stoczek, a teacher in an accredited college teaching early childhood education (ECE), met for the first time and began to work together. By 2004 Mark, who had been both the local project manager and regional representative for the Cree childcare projects, collaborated at both levels of government to build and open the community's first childcare centre. Two ECE attestation programs, taught by Stoczek, were delivered in the community to staff the childcare centre. By this time both authors were no longer 'green' – we were running on sheer optimism and a stubborn refusal to quit while the other continued to struggle. The process was successful but not in the way the local board, and we, had envisaged. Apple (2000, p. 99) makes the distinction between intentional and functional explanations. "Intentional explanations are those self-conscious aims that guide our policies and practices. Functional explanations, on the other hand, are concerned with the latent effects of policies and practices." Functional explanations, in this case, overcame local intentions. The community ended up with a childcare service they had not set out to create.

The initial local committee, which included the authors, struggled with the regional direction. The regional direction is a predominantly Cree governing body that employs many consultants and experts. One of whom was the regional advisor, employed to ensure the childcare centre supported to varying degrees of success the objectives and needs of a community-based service. However, to our great disappointment the regional direction had consumed local objectives and initiatives replacing them to

implement a childcare service that aligned itself with a plan set up to efficiently implement, provide for, and direct, centres operating in all nine Cree communities.

It soon became clear, as the project snowballed, that the local and regional representatives were hard-put to understand and keep up with the pace of the project. They began to feel their efforts to work for the benefit of their families was not good enough. This form of condescension or patronization was clearly demotivating, reminding us of the old *'Indian Agent's'* attitude concerning the false and misunderstood passive stereotype of aboriginal people. When both intentional and functional explanations of policy-making clash, they should be addressed at the regional and local levels, as well as their "racialized and racializing structures, discourses and practices" (Apple, 2000, p. 80). As Mark remembers:

I was given the project manager's job for the childcare project; I didn't understand the title, but I found myself arranging public meetings, coordinating the start of a day care committee, and arranging the committee meetings and taking those minutes ... I got involved in the regional childcare committee; I was appointed chairman. I chaired meetings; the agenda was pre-prepared (without the chairperson's input). There were a lot of strong personalities at this level, and each of them I felt cared about the childcare centre in the communities and how best to serve, but any opposition against the regional advisor, or just simple questions, were seen as not appreciative of the advisor's long hours of work. You could not question. After two years of involvement, somehow another committee was set up, and I knew they didn't want me. The initial regional committee that was set up did not exist anymore. I don't know who sits there now, but I am sure that the ones that are sitting there 'okay' everything.'

Early on consultations had been held with individual members of the community concerning the possibility of having a day care centre; people agreed there was a need:

But always the concern was that it not only be a babysitting program but rather a resource centre for our community, for our children and their families. There was no control - everything ran too fast. We did not get the chance to think about the resource centre, we were functioning in a reaction mode...we got an 8:30 – 6:00 daycare service

vi

Originally Cree students had the choice of several programs, offered in their communities, to register for. These programs included early childhood education, school age care, special needs, and elder care. After the first semester this offer was quietly withdrawn. Students who had not chosen to specialize in ECE found themselves enrolled in that program. The special needs and school age care programs were replaced by a single course under the umbrella of one new ECE program. The Elder program was eliminated. Apple (1992, p. 112) has described the pressure building to have teaching and curriculum completely specified and "tightly controlled for the purposes of 'efficiency', 'cost-effectiveness', and 'accountability'". In many ways the deskilling that is affecting jobs in general is now having an impact on teachers as more and more decisions are moving out of their hands and as their jobs (as well as those the Cree students assumed responsibility for which became broader, with less specialized help), and more difficult to do."

Control over what type of centre or form of services offered was clearly not in the hands of the local community. Local committee members felt their input was disregarded. The resource aspect of the centre ended up under the regional direction and has yet to offer the many services people had hoped to create. Concentration on the development of the ECE program was designed to facilitate regional standardization and accountability. Culturally appropriate or local preferences were not favored where expediency was required. Emphasis was placed on the ability to transfer or administer worksite experience, not theoretical or cultural content. Once the ECE program was delivered, it became the basis for the educator's job description. The focus of the regional advisor's job shifted from ensuring the training of aboriginal students to regional centre management, thus effectively perpetuating the necessity for this direction to continue and expand.

Stocek, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

Another example of the loss of control the community was subjected to was over the development of the human resource policy. The students taking management courses and the local committee wrote their own policy after extensively reviewing provincial regulations, even as they were changing, and other center's policies to determine what they wanted to include. Several of the members of the committee were local Cree teachers who had plenty of experience as full time employees; they had knowledge concerning how to work with children and needs of local families. Mark stated at the time, "Instead of working with our document, the regional advisor, without consultation, simply replaced it with a regional document. The committee felt their work was disrespected; they were tired and did not want to review new documents. I sat down and went through it."^{vii}

One of the frustrating aspects of the project was knowing that we could do the work and that we knew best, but at the same time we knew somebody outside was going to bring something a lot better, sexier. After all this process, we were handed a better-formatted and organized document.^{viii}

The regional advisor, a non-aboriginal person, speaks with genuine caring about her vision for Cree children - not just some children, all Cree children. But, all the same, it is *the regional advisor's* vision for Cree people. We think when you speak about children and their families there is a great potential to reach people, to touch people, where they are most vulnerable. Due to colonial legacies, including residential school syndrome, and the loss suffered by aboriginal people to parent their children, their experiences of colonization and assimilation (Churchill, 2004, Schissell, Wortherspoon, 2003), once you touch people evoking their vulnerability, it is integral to ask yourself whose vision is this and who should be leading the way to "learning our way out."^{ix} Aboriginal people do evaluate the successes (once their children are safe) that in the end continue to function assimilating their identity.

When the community held the childcare centre's grand opening, representatives from the Quebec MFE (then Ministère de la Famille et Enfance) and the Ministère attended. It was an exciting celebration. From the old house where the program was taught with a capacity of 17 spaces, we moved into a newly constructed centre with a permit for 30 spaces. Then to the community's surprise they were presented with an additional 15 spaces at the opening ceremony, bringing the total number of spaces to 45. This was not a community request. The spaces had been previously offered but were turned down. The community was told that if they did not accept the spaces now they might not get them, representing a loss in corresponding funding. Staff were very reluctant; they never committed to this decision. Everything had been coming to life. The staff were enjoying developing the program, but administering the additional 15 spaces (on top of the pressure of almost doubling their capacity), was too much to cope with, which resulted in problems supporting the quality of the children's program. This became a problem that persists today. The "sense of ownership by staff and community was diminished, it had a huge impact taking away the momentum of assuming ownership."^x

The manager of the childcare centre had mixed emotions. Just when we were getting the hang of operating 30 spaces, we were back to square one because we didn't have enough qualified educators. We didn't have time to enjoy and fully take ownership of the childcare centre. Then back to another training program. Generally people were excited about another training program, but the volunteers did not come. We had more, and yet no sense of accomplishment. We had a very nice building and created eight new jobs for our community which seemed so great. Did we make this happen or did someone else?^{xi}

At one point the Cree regional government decided not to renew the regional advisor's contract. The childcare centre then received a huge bill as a professional fee, which the advisor knew the centre had not budgeted for. The community felt threatened, and insulted, and was forced to support the renewal of the advisor's contract at the local level. The contract was eventually renewed. At that time Mark concluded "I don't know how it all happened, but my trust was not there any more. I felt conned, manipulated, used. It

no longer felt that what we were doing was for our children. It was economics and a big experiment.”^{xii} Apple (1992, p. 107) writes about how “educational officials and policy-makers, legislators, curriculum workers and others have been subject to immense pressure to make the ‘needs’ of business and industry the primary goals of the school system. Economic and ideological pressures have become rather intense and often very overt”.

Apple (2000, p. 79) explains that:

Education is a site of struggle and compromise. It serves as a proxy as well for larger battles over what our institutions should do, who they should serve and who should make these decisions. And, yet, by itself it is one of the major arenas in which resources, power and ideology specific to policy, finance, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation are worked through. Thus education is both cause and effect, determining and determined.

While our position was fraught with tensions, the opportunity to bridge these tensions, between aboriginal and non-aboriginal, between both the common-good and the institutional or private interest, has illustrated the vulnerability of aboriginal people. In the face of regional administrative efficiency, privatization, instrumentalisation, and commodification clearly out-weighed local initiatives. By offering this example we want to extend the struggle for voice and determination. The example of the childcare centre’s assimilation offers just one example, in the history of colonization, of the strength and perseverance of aboriginal people to effect and re-effect, to claim and re-claim, their institutions and the process of institutionalization itself. The potential for strong partnerships is abundant. Apathy, and even well intentioned plans, continue to denigrate or ignore these lessons. Notwithstanding the issues of sovereign injustice and aboriginal peoples’ rights, we can no longer afford to brush aside the practical alternatives, aboriginal wisdom and the courage of aboriginal people to make clear and powerful decisions.

In order to be fair we think it is important to acknowledge the opposing contradictions and conundrums aboriginal people face. In our opinion it is true that the Crees have lost control over the development of a major culturally sensitive service. The claims of success made by this newly emerged system of policy and structures often appear to be more successful than they are. The merits of any program that offer relief or solutions to issues that involve the neglect and abuse of children, women, and elders must be seriously considered. These systems have been using these claims of success to push forward their own agenda. It’s a dangerous mix, when on the surface it professes to support aboriginal independence, yet at the same time fosters dependency by framing ‘freshly’ articulated needs that they are ‘magically’ prepared to meet. The regional advisor had established a private company that was set to help meet the needs identified through the advisor’s work. However, the social problems are extreme and generally beyond a non-aboriginal’s ability to comprehend or support. The need to find solutions drives the community’s and Mark’s dedication to work towards offering something different for their children and engaged the love Stocck felt for both the community and the students. This experience encouraged Stocck to return, motivating her to continue to find ways to serve the community. At the end of the day, many children are enjoying a healthier, happier experience. People achieve, supported by or sometimes despite programs and the means used to pave their implementation.

The system that has evolved to offer the delivery of this program is as questionable as it is successful. Unfortunately it is filling a vacuum, a void created by colonization, desperate human need, and a history of successive institutional failure or plain indifference. Those needs are hard to set aside or deny when we feel our choices are limited.

The pattern of monopolizing social functions in adult education, regulating, institutionalizing, and then serving or meeting these same ends, was objectified. Learning from schooling became so pervasive that learning from other diverse systems has become devalued and, within the context of globalisation, commodified. Sources, characteristics, and practice of traditional aboriginal knowledge (Castellano, 2000), and ways of learning, mentoring, and teaching were not considered. Students do take a ‘Cree culture’

Stocck, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

course but in practice it is isolated in the program. Cree worldviews do not form the basis of their program, nor the foundation of services offered Cree children and their families. This situation Finger and Asún, (2001, p. 14) recall has created experts who have not heeded Illich's call for "the creation of a radically new relationship between human beings and their environment". Finger and Asún (2001, p. 15) call for a practice, grounded both in epistemological and political understanding, that challenges the 'dead ends' in adult education and supports a much-needed mutuality between peoples and with nature. The 'dead ends' laid out include the coupling of institutions with advanced industrial development that have become less and less a means of social change and emancipation than a means of furthering the instrumentalisation of education as a means to ... commodification itself.

Grande, (2000, 2008, p. 236) discusses border crossing and the construction of the "radical mestizaje". She argues that while American Indian scholars share many of the same concerns as other critical scholars, they must also "work instead to balance their community's needs to both cross and patrol borders of identity and location. They also retain as the central and common goal the perseverance of American Indians as distinctive and sovereign peoples". Grande, (2008, p. 236) although very cautious about engaging "Whitestream discourses", quotes Indigenous scholar Robert Allen (1995, pp. 123-124) noting:

American Indian intellectuals have remained caught in 'a death dance of dependence between, on the one hand, abandoning ourselves to the intellectual strategies and categories of White, European thought and, on the other hand, declaring we need nothing outside ourselves and our cultures in order to understand the world and our place in it'. ... He observes that only when American Indian intellectuals remove themselves from this dichotomy that 'much becomes possible'.

If Cree adult education, in aboriginal territories, wants to maintain and build its social action agenda, Crees have to clarify what self-determination means and how it is translated or transformed by processes of institutionalization and through their growing integration and collaboration within dominant cultures. The Cree Eeyou Astchee Commission (1995) reported on self-determination stating that,

The inherent right to self-determination was given to each and everyone of us by the Creator at birth. Self-determination derives not from the Whitman nor from his institutions such as governments, constitution, and laws. It is not negotiable.

The right to self-determination does not supercede the rights of other creation but is a part of and complementary to them. The creator gave us each a mind to understand the basis on which we will build upon this right. The Creator has provided everything to enable us to realize this gift. The Cree Nation of Quebec intends to walk ahead with what the ancestors held to be true and good. Self-determination is not a political nor a legal concept to be legislated by man. It is innate, welded to the spirit, and given by the Creator.

"Many times we were near starvation but we never wished for any other place to live."
(Joseph Petagumskum, Whapmagoostui).

The Wemindji childcare project, described here, often failed to reflect Cree values, respect local decisions or acknowledge local questions and concerns, pushing through an agenda that created a perpetual need for support. This diminished local ownership, constructing a service that does not provide the objectives the community had originally identified. At issue are the lessons aboriginal people have to offer dominant cultures. The prevailing models of leadership that view leadership as warrior, and leadership as economist, risk overcoming equally profound views of leadership as land steward, collaborator, faith keeper or leadership as mentor/teacher. Lessons of leadership that are understood as being a part of, integral to but not necessary to, ecology, as opposed to having dominion over ecology, are at stake - lessons of wholeness based on physical, mental, spiritual, and ecological sustainability, lessons of community, interconnectedness, equality, and reciprocity.

Aboriginal people have dual challenges. Not only do they have to work twice as hard to get an education, but also they have to fight to maintain their identity, their institutions, and the collective wisdom that supports it. Ultimately, their process of resistance and awareness to organizational change and learning, combined with Cree worldviews and perspectives, leadership relating to developing self-determination, local capacity, and a sustainable community, may have more to offer the dominant cultures of this world than has been offered them.

As a direct result of these childcare experiences, during a phone conversation, after having returned home from Wemindji, Stoczek asked Mark, then Deputy Chief, “If we were to work together again on a new project what would you recommend, how can we work together differently?” Stoczek then challenged Mark to send her 10 points or tips to improve their collaborative work. Mark responded with a list of 12 points, which have since become a guiding source for discussion on subsequent projects, including the development of a local artists’ group, the Wemindji Traditional Skills Association and a mining negotiation project. These pointers speak to themes that were raised in the introduction to this paper; on-going issues engaging improving collaborations, supporting the inclusion of indigenous values, knowledge, and methodology, principles common to PAR, and the practice of adult education. These themes are important in collaborations that wish to address principles of aboriginal self-determination and the ways in which colonization remains a force to be challenged.

III. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE & INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

“How to Approach Collaborations” was originally titled “How Could It Be Done Differently.” We changed the title when the list was first published, (Stoczek, Mark, 2009 p. 75) to emphasize the positive intentions these pointers represent. We felt the title was negative or passive and that it required not a critique but a call to action. We wanted the title to reflect our aspirations for the future, to be more proactive in its decolonizing efforts, shifting old paradigms of the culture of dependency to focus on agency and self-determination. While the original title reflects more accurately our frustration with adult education and development projects in aboriginal communities, the new title reflects our perseverance in the face of struggle.

How To Approach Collaborations?

- Work using a collaborative team concept approach. Identify values, vision, and specific objectives. How is this project meaningful to the community and the individuals involved? Both parties need to develop a sense of ownership.
- Decide together the rules of engagement, what are the roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities; once the agenda is set the main principles supporting the work should not change. The expectations of each party need to be clarified in order to best deliver the project in a process that engages all.
- Decide what to do if things are not going as planned, especially if they are evolving too fast or too slow for one partner.
- Demonstrate respect for key individuals involved at the local level who are committed to many projects. Limited human resources are a reality in small communities; very often you are working with individuals who are responsible for many files.
- Plan a schedule or action plan together, specifically what needs to be accomplished with target dates. Going with ‘the flow’ of the community is hard to do.
- Plan how to integrate fiscal relationships into the partnerships. Often the funding source limits the project to a strict schedule. There should be some understanding by both parties regarding these impacts. Funding sources rarely consider local capacity building and can be detrimental and threatening to both the project and the work being carried out.

- Define passive roles, advisory roles, and leading roles. Who ultimately has the authority to make decisions? Financial reasons should not be used to create pressure when decisions are jointly made. Disregard for local values, human resources, and capacity building fosters a lack of accountability and a breakdown in local ownership. Often the threat of losing a project, or missing out on a potential funding opportunity forces the community to agree to decisions they are not ready for. Decisions should not be made before all partners understand the implications and feel ready or capable of beginning a new development.
- Consider seriously when starting and ending a project, are you creating the need for a perpetual advisory role? This is a crucial factor. How will the project develop local capacity and how will the partnership conclude?
- Set the agenda for independence and local ownership as an end result. Local ownership builds capacity and increases the chances to achieve ongoing development and the quality of the project or services being offered. Real ownership may lead key local people to long-term interest and commitment, remaining with the project or services.
- Plan activities and allow time for getting to know people you are working with as well as the people they are serving. This is vital to the work at hand. Establish a mutual, meaningful relationship.
- Collaborate and work to build confidence within the community and with the people involved? How can this be built into the process?
- Ask yourself if you are not involved in this project will it succeed and if the answer is no, then you should seriously evaluate how to ensure the success of the project when you are no longer involved.^{xiii}

When Mark was Deputy Chief he worked hard with the Council and Elders to develop a new vision statement.^{xiv} During this rich time Mark and another colleague continued to work with Elders. They asked the Elders to describe what leaders were like and how a leader was identified in the past. The land-based anecdotes they shared were analyzed and a list of values was derived, including kindness, humility, humour, honesty, ability to conserve, thankfulness, compassion, sharing, caring, dignity, integrity, faith, understanding, patience, equality, and self-reliance. Respect and relationship form the core values of this local leadership paradigm, embracing teaching and knowledge and holistically featuring the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects of Cree worldviews and values.

Wilson (2001) defines a paradigm as a “set of beliefs about the world and about gaining knowledge that go together to guide your actions as to how you’re going to go about doing your research.” Wilson states that an indigenous paradigm is based on the foundational concept of relational knowledge:

Knowledge is shared with all creation. It is not just interpersonal relationships, not just with the research subjects I may be working with, but it is a relationship with all creation. ... It goes beyond the idea of individual knowledge to the concept of relational knowledge ... You can extend this to say that ideas and concepts, like objects, are not as important as my relationship to an idea or concept. This language speaks from an epistemology that is totally foreign to the other research paradigms, an epistemology where relationships are more important than reality.

For Wilson (2001), an indigenous methodology “means talking about relational accountability ... you are not answering questions of validity or reliability or making judgments of better or worse. Instead you should be fulfilling your relationships with the world around you.”

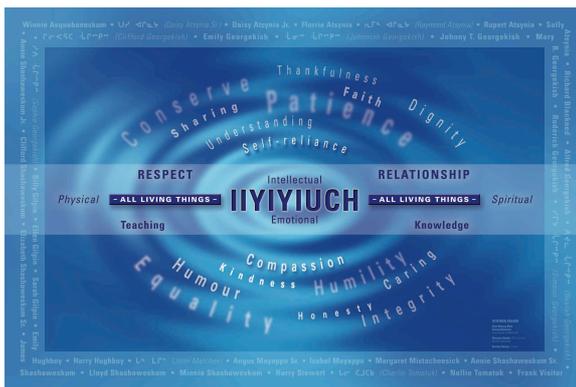
Absolon and Willet (2004) further explain the purpose of oral traditions as recalling “authentic realities.” Absolon and Willet synthesize the thoughts of their colleagues:

Indigenous thought ... is holistic, circular, and relational. “Indigenous peoples have traditionally seen all life on the planet as so multidimensionally entwined that they have not been quick to distinguish the living from the non-living” (Kincheloe & Semali, 1999, p.42). “All my relations” is a popular phrase we use to acknowledge our relationship with all things on earth: plants, animals, earth, water, air, and other humans. As such, “the non-western forager lives in a world not of linear causal events but of constantly reforming, multidimensional, interacting cycles, where nothing is simply a cause or an effect, but all factors are influences impacting other elements of the system-as-a-whole”(RECAP, 1996, Vol. 4, Ch 3, s. 1). (Absolon, Willet, 2004 p.10).

Weber-Pillwax, (2001, pp. 37) also refers to the importance of relational accountability when she writes about “not compromis(ing) my integrity (which) is based on how I contextualize myself in the community, with my family and my people, and eventually how I contextualize myself in the planet, with the rest of all living things.” See also Cardinal (2001, pp.180-183), who stresses that indigenous foundations exist and questions how they can serve as platforms to enable worldviews and perspectives to be brought forward and implemented. Indigenous research methods and methodologies “are as near as our dreams and as close as our relationships.”

Mark’s prior research into leadership reflects Wilson’s understanding of an indigenous paradigm, the results of which are illustrated in the Wemindji Iiyiyiuch diagram, presented next. Clearly the Cree core values of respect and relationship represented, in the diagram, defined by anecdotes told by Wemindji’s Elders offer an indigenous paradigm of relational accountability. One that has served as our guide to indigenous research methodology. Once Mark became Chief and his research was bearing fruit, he invited Stoeck to illustrate these values, and the Wemindji *Iiyiyiuch* core values diagram was created.^{xv}

Iiyiyiuch in the local Cree dialect means all “peoples of the land.” In the Cree Nation of Wemindji Iiyiyiuch is now commonly used to refer to the Cree people themselves. In this diagram the use of the word Iiyiyiuch both specifically locates these Cree people geographically and at the same time illustrates how the values identified from the stories told by community Elders are local and land-based in origin.



The Wemindji Iiyiyiuch diagram and its meaning has been well described in Stoeck, Mark, (2009, pp. 81-83). The origin of this diagram is a powerful example of how aboriginal people are conducting indigenous research in the pursuit of restating indigenous relational and experiential knowledge (Castellano, 2000) in contemporary forms. In the interest of disseminating this knowledge we feel it worthwhile to cite a section of the description with this new version of the

diagram.

Respect and relationship form *The Wemindji Iiyiyiuch Core Values*. Respect and relationship connect our physical and spiritual selves. The intellectual and emotional self also are integral to the connection between the physical and spiritual self. They are needed to achieve equilibrium in life (represented by the horizontal line). ... we need to work to try to achieve and maintain a healthy balance ... through our interconnectedness and active engagement in respectful relationships. Teaching and knowledge are gained through this process. We must be taught these values. As your

Stoeck, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

life becomes a reflection of this ... we become in turn a mentor or a teacher. Once the rapport between these values becomes a living manifestation in our life, our intellectual and emotional states are balanced, and our physical and spiritual well-being is achieved. At that moment the ability to think clearly and express wisdom is manifested. ... These values are all interconnected and interdependent. When a value is not active, the balance at our core shifts; in an infinite, never-ending variety ... Life is understood as challenging; how we respond to the events in our life provides ample opportunity to achieve this balance.

Maintaining this balance is not only a reflection of our relationship with our internal self but, just as important, it is a reflection of our relationship to our environment, to everything outside of us. ... If we are balanced and have achieved interconnectedness, these divisions become immaterial. ... Our relationship to the environment, to the animals, or to other people is a reflection of who we are. Equally important is the relationship the environment, the animals, and other people have with us; it is both a reflection of who we are and how the environment is. The balance (also represented by the horizontal line) we achieve within ourselves is a reflection of how our values manifest in our life and how the environment, manifesting in an infinite variety, relates and interacts with our lives.

At this time in our understanding of how to improve aboriginal and non-aboriginal collaborations, we would like to discuss several themes which reoccur as relevant outcomes of our efforts to implement the above pointers and the Wemindji Iiyiyiuch core values throughout our work. Space is limited, but we chose to write about our fledgling experiences collaborating on the childcare centre in order to convey how imperative it became to us to find a way of working based in relational accountability, and from indigenous knowledge and worldviews.

Stocek refers to her fieldwork based on core PAR research (Hall, 1993; quoted in Hagey, 1997, Finger, Asún, 2001) from a Freirian or liberatory perspective and indigenous research methodology (Weber-Pillwax, 1999, 2001, 2009 & Weber-Pillwax quoted in Steinhauer, 2003) conducted with the Wemindji Traditional Skills Association. Stocek's position and theoretical understanding of the connections between Freire, PAR, indigenous research ethics, and methodology was thoroughly explored in Stocek, Mark, (2009, pp. 77-93).

Mark has chosen to refer to a new Cree mining policy that as Chief he has been spearheading. For the past three years Mark and the negotiating committee have created, on behalf of the Cree Nation of Wemindji and the region, a new collective agreement with a mining company. This agreement changed how Crees in northern Quebec negotiate local natural resources, especially mining, with dominant organizations and cultures. It may in fact impact how aboriginal people across Canada approach natural resource negotiations, once other aboriginal nations have satisfactorily settled out-standing land claims, issues of sovereignty, and Indigenous rights.

Kapoor and Jordan, (2009, pp.7) discuss how “aboriginal communities have managed to maintain and reproduce social relations and practices that effectively constitute organic forms of PAR that are specific to the indigenous cultures that generate them.” In our work PAR has served both as a vehicle for, and a bridge to, those forms of “organic research” forms comprised of indigenous knowledge and research methodology discussed in the next two sections.

IV. ARTISTIC MANDATE & COLLABORATION

In 2007 the Wemindji Traditional Skills Association, a non-profit group, referred to as *Skills*, was formed. Since 2003 they have been conducting PAR projects with Stocek. These five women are recognized, as are many of the Cree women living in the community, for their talent in working with traditionally smoke-tanned moose hide. The group typically makes moccasins, mukluks, gloves, and

Stocek, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

mittens embellished with embroidery or beadwork. Wemindji's work is particularly valued for the fine skill of embroidery on hide. Other popular items include sealskin bags, gun covers, lunch bags, and tee pee covers. Recently the group has revived spruce bark basket making.

Wemindji's artistic production has grown from needs originating within the community rather than catering to tourism. The objectives of the Wemindji Traditional Skills Association include producing the highest quality craftsmanship that will serve as a model and mentor the next generation, reflecting the accumulation of Cree skill and understanding. The group's orientation comes from the Cree peoples' strong connection to the land, their heritage and respect for their Elders' mentoring and teaching. The inherent respect for materials drawn from natural local resources contributes greatly to the significance and meaning of local work.

Skills researches local craft practices, consults with Elders, and mentors youth. Maintaining their high standards of craftsmanship celebrates the learning process necessary in acquiring these standards. Practicing both popular forms of Cree craft and those craft skills that are in danger of being lost, *Skills* produces traditional objects, as well as contemporary forms of these items for daily use. Collectively, they believe the Cree values that support their work continue to be relevant in contemporary life.

The community is proud of how their artwork has been received in the media and by various commercial venues both within and outside of aboriginal communities. Understanding and appreciation of Cree culture is increasingly important to the community and to its youth who will determine how their heritage will be carried on. Supporting the identification and development of the group's mandate both locally and regionally, highlighting questions raised, writing grants, motivating local research, coordinating workshops with other aboriginal artists, conducting archival research in museum collections with the group, and publishing the group's work in local Cree media, are some of the ways Stoczek has been able to collaborate and contribute to this PAR project.

The Council had wisely refrained from defining the group's mandate, opting instead to observe the group and see how they developed from the strengths and interests of both the participants and the community. The process of collaboration which Stoczek and the group carved out was an evolving one, it engaged dismantling pre-conceived notions of power structures that almost always exist between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people working in the community. The process relied on emergent relationships that gradually allowed (while working with Stoczek), Cree worldviews and knowledge to come to the fore. Working without a pre-determined framework is time consuming. The process requires trust and patience that the project will unfold in a manner suited to everyone. PAR methodology, based in liberatory theory proved to be ideally suited to this process.

Skills is especially pleased with their efforts to revive Wemindji's spruce bark basket tradition. When working closely with Wemindji's Elders, the group recovered enough skills to begin experimenting with these baskets. With the support of the Canada Council for the Arts, the group spoke with Elders in Eastmain and Chisasibi, who, confirmed and built on knowledge offered in Wemindji. The group also studied baskets at the Museum of Civilization and took a birch bark basket-making course with Atikamekw artist Édmond Dubé. The group quickly learned new skills and expanded upon their knowledge of working with spruce roots used in both birch and spruce basket making. *Skills* learned how to prepare and separate the roots, dry and store them, and how to use a variety of different stitches.

Skills adapted and used their new-found knowledge of working with roots. They can now double the roots when constructing the rim of their baskets. This technique helps to prevent warping in the drying process, which successfully increases the range of both size and shape of baskets they can make. Elders who were able to speak about basket making, but found it difficult to actually demonstrate, verbally passed on much of their skills. Observing demonstrations by a recognized artist of Édmond's caliber expanded on their understanding of the verbal information they had put into practice to date.

Curiosity and the natural desire to experiment in order to perfect one's mastery of materials is a natural instinct shared among artists. The group has demonstrated this as they continue to develop and refine their basketry techniques. The group can patch knotholes, form stacking and oval baskets, and make trays. They have also extended the season by freezing the bark and drying and soaking the roots. They can now produce 'laundry' size baskets as big as the largest piece of bark down to tiny one-inch 'jewel' sized baskets. The group plans to explore burning traditional designs into the bark and staining the interior of the baskets with non-toxic finishes.

During the summer of 2007, *Skills* conducted a mini study that proved the number of baskets they can make far exceeded their predictions. Their ability to produce a variety of quality baskets dramatically increased. The basket-making project is once again a healthy and vital addition to their repertoire of skills. The group has successfully sold their baskets at the McCord Museum Boutique, the Canadian Guild of Crafts and at numerous craft fairs. Despite challenges, *Skills* looks forward to securing a larger market.

One of the first and on-going research projects Stoeck and *Skills* conducted was called The Path of a Moose Hide. This consultation, with the help of local experts, traced the path of a moose from when it was hunted through the tanning and production of moose hide products, to the sale of their work. The project recognized the need to focus on local resources, tools, and Cree knowledge in order to support local development from within. An economic development model by Sherry Salway Black called The Elements of Development was used to consider the information after it had been gathered. This model is designed to provide space and embrace aboriginal values and economics enabling us to consider the breadth of information we had collected from the consultations. Cree skills and values, that once formed the sustainable foundation of Cree art in a mixed economy, are faced with many challenges today; it is the group's mission to re-establish traditional practices in the face of contemporary economic challenges, while maintaining the values that support Cree heritage. We were starting our research process, as the group began, from basic Cree Knowledge.

Consciously working from Cree heritage required the group to recommit to forms of artistic practice they valued, especially when they were highlighted in contrast to entrepreneurial perspectives that came up against their own standards and work ethic. Many decisions were made as a group in the service of Cree heritage and culture. The group resisted several temptations to convert their artistic practice to meet competitive 'better' and 'faster' principles. Wuttunee (2004, p. 224) quoting Salway Black (1994, p. 24) reminds us, "that most programs for aboriginal peoples encourage them to enter the very market-based, capitalist system that has marginalized many of them."

Understanding what motivates consumer interest and what informs the group's own choice of what it should make has highlighted division and conflicting crosscurrents in the cultural politics of the group. An on-going example of contention involves how the group wavers on the labelling of their items for sale outside of the community. In the beginning the group simply used the community's name. As the group has evolved, they have subsequently experimented with individual names and/or the group's name. These decisions were largely dependant on issues such as whether the item sold as a high-end item or not. Experience has taught the group that attaching an artist's name and biography can substantially raise the price of items sold outside of the community, and if each item is signed by an individual artist it impacts export tax to the U.S.A. Individual biographies were included with the sales of baskets at the Canadian Guild of Crafts. Recently, however, the group has opted instead to use their group name, enclosing a general description of the item's significance or how it was made.

Skills also makes a special effort to participate in the community's cultural events. Continuity, ensuring that traditions, knowledge, skills, and values are passed from one generation to the next, is a key component of the *Skills* mandate. The group is also establishing new ways to reach out, experimenting with new arenas for traditional research, education, and ways to be more inclusive that are far less quantifiable than sources of revenue but nonetheless just as important. They recognize that the manner, which Cree traditionally taught cultural practices, has gone through many changes in recent generations. While

experiential learning through observation and practice on the land continues, for many the continuity or time required to become sufficient practitioners of craft skills are no longer possible. *Skills* supports women who practice Cree art from their homes but acknowledge that school and work increasingly structure the community's time; therefore, the group strives to provide alternatives within community life so the living practice of Cree art skills continues to provide important opportunities for observation and learning in the daily life of its youth (Douglas, 1989, 1998, Battiste, 2000). *Skills* has tentatively begun to identify a broader role within their community, developing a research and educational mission that may eventually contribute to easing the tensions between the fragmented opportunities currently provided to learn from traditional cultural pursuits.

The artistic mandate of this group is still evolving. *Skills* is now active at the regional level and hosted the 2nd annual general assembly of the newly founded Regional Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association. Members have consulted in regional meetings and are hopeful that regional support may serve as one avenue for resisting the consuming and colonizing influence "modern" ways have of dictating how Cree culture, and the social interaction it supports, should continue to shape community life.

As noted in the development of the childcare service, indigenous communities are struggling with decolonizing the process of structuring and organizing the development of Cree institutions. Understanding these same challenges helped *Skills* conceptually rethink the relationship between learning and organizations and to better understand the power and dynamics of economics to organize institutions. They discovered that success, in limited economic terms, can conceal the fact that institutionalization governed by economics can be counterproductive and ultimately destructive to Cree ways of being and knowing, to Cree livelihood.

The Wemindji Traditional Artists Association through their projects demonstrate how Wemindji is developing new collaborative partnerships that support the community's interests. Wemindji wants to maintain control and leadership; one of the reasons is to maximize employment opportunities for its membership while maintaining Cree values. All of these projects empower community and the people involved, not just the local community. They also offer alternative approaches to ways of learning and understanding different worldviews and new ways of doing things for aboriginal and non-aboriginal alike. They maintain Cree identity, which means maintaining all respectful relationships reflected by the exchange of knowledge, mentoring, and teaching.

Drawing on both the *Wemindji Iiyiyiuch* values as a set of principles and the How to Approach Collaborations list to guide development of collaborative projects requires changes in perspective. When implemented, a remarkable new reality cannot help but emerge through relationships that have historically marginalized indigenous knowledge and methodologies. These values and guidelines have elicited strategies crucial to enriching dialogue and eliciting new and creative applications of traditional knowledge to current understanding of development.

V. LEADING THE WAY TO RESPECT & RELATIONSHIP

In this section the use of we, implies not the co-authors but Chief Mark and his colleagues.^{xvi} Mark, drawing on his recent experience with a mining company, found that when establishing a collaborative team you have to begin how you want to carry on, then make the effort to maintain those relationships. For example, at the first meeting the whole team, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, went through an informal brainstorming session. They did so without worrying at the next meeting who would come back and say "what?". There was no "he said/she said". We were able to identify expectations we wanted to achieve in a non-prejudicial, non-threatening way, without fear. We began each successive meeting in the same atmosphere. We went around the table and each offered a personal comment, unrelated to the agenda, about their own lives. People became comfortable with each other. We had the sense that we were all humans aspiring to do things. If things did not go as planned, or were evolving too slow or too fast, we would take breaks, end a meeting or have an independent caucus. With really tough decisions we sat down and discussed how we could agree.

Stocek, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

Many people with prior experience negotiating on behalf of Cree people feel that these meetings are too “soft” or for lack of a better term “flaky.” But it works. The older Cree generation are used to confrontational meetings; they think they have to give people a hard time, using injunctions to annoy them enough so that they know they were there. Confrontation is the old way. Negotiations are better when people are collaborative. The older generation are used to tactics that find ways to “really give it to them” or “to put them on the spot.” We were just not simply “there”, our presence was not tokenistic; we were about getting things done. The changes came from within the team, changing preconceived expectations that the nature of our partnership could be, and was, more cohesive. This represents a profound shift from the old way of thinking.

We raised issues of environment, business, revenue, hunting, respect for hunting territory, contracts, employment, meaningful jobs and relationships, sharing, and identity of values. We built into the process a sense of our values benefiting the community and the company. If the Cree Nation of Wemindji or the mining company said they would do something, then we decided to make a commitment to do it.

The team meetings to negotiate the mining policy and project in Wemindji came to be called “collaboration meetings” and led to the actual agreement being named the “Collaboration Agreement”, which replaced the former standard “Impact Benefits Agreement” or IBA. These meetings were held periodically, everyone spoke. We brainstormed and held discussions. We did not sit down confrontationally to list our issues, nor did the company. Often different partners raised issues that would be of concern not to themselves but to someone else at the table. Sometimes we did not know who was on whose side. It was an extremely rare experience; there was division, but there was enough meaningful dialogue on other issues that we were comfortable coping with disagreement.

We used to speak about IBA’s, but this title implies victimization, which perpetuates developer/colonizer relations. In eliminating the victimization/victimizer roles a sense of real ownership developed on both sides. We changed the name to reflect our effort to get things done differently, and in order not to continue to perpetuate the idea of a victim, we were all proactive partners.

We exceeded our expectations as to what we wanted to achieve. People from the communities have said that this agreement is too good to be true. They imply something bad is going to come out of it. They assume we will be taken advantage of, or we could have got something better. Often this is communicated after the fact (after public consultations and meetings); it is a condescending attitude. People do need reassurance. A tallyman, or hunting leader, responsible for the family’s traditional hunting territory asked for a separate agreement, basically in the IBA format. He was concerned for his family and their rights to funding for future projects or work. The collaborative committee was thrown off, but in the end he simply needed reassurance. History has led to a lack of trust, ironic perhaps, in the development of a new system but to be expected, based on new experiences of collaboration and cooperation.

We made a calculated decision to bring in a non-aboriginal person to explain the Collaborative Agreement, to tell people that this was good. There is an implicit lack of trust among Cree people that we cannot get the best deal. The idea in the beginning was to form an all-aboriginal negotiating team. The Cree Regional Authority put their people on the team, aboriginal and non-aboriginal. Cree Nation of Wemindi committee members admit that they could not find an aboriginal financial expert. However, someone was found that the team trusts and who is sympathetic to aboriginal history and issues. It is best to have faith in cooperation when negotiating; collaboration does not have to be a legalistic hammer, despite the legal context of negotiations.

In other conversations Mark has often questioned the attitude witnessed amongst members of the community who seem to automatically expect compensation.

I believe it comes in part from the IBA’s and has manifested over generations. I feel that it diminishes responsibility as opposed to empowering people; there is a sense of entitlement. This feeling can diminish collaborative relationships. The council refer to

this as a “culture of dependency.” People basically believe that the system (Chief and Council or Cree Regional Government) is going to take care of them. Twenty years ago this may have still been true; people expected and needed to be subsidized, but they have remained stuck in that mentality. People think if I pay for something I should be compensated. ^{xvii}

This sense of entitlement diverts agency and diminishes initiative. When people take responsibility for their lives, they create opportunities. There has been a lack of self-reliance, which traditionally was a crucial survival mechanism that is just as necessary today for the survival of Cree people. There is evidence that people are already willing to engage with this new system. One family wrote the mining company a letter for funds, followed up on their letter and erected a memorial to their ancestors at the project site. Some of the initiatives already taken are really interesting. You have to have a sense of initiative to obtain entitlement. People need to have confidence in their own ideas and make things happen, not wait for a committee to do something for them. We want to support people through their own strengths. They have to have confidence in their own ideas, self-reliance.

In conclusion if you want to win a battle you send a warrior; if you want to reconcile, you don't send the warrior, you send a collaborator. Warriors are needed when injunctions and confrontation is required. In the past we had no choice but to adopt that approach, we had to be aggressive – it's not necessary anymore.

Mark recalls Mathew Coon Come, the Cree Grand Chief, saying “Our generation was about confrontation, about arguments, about making arguments concerning housing, infrastructure ... we are seeing the results, but now we have to think differently, the next generation has to ask ‘what are we going to do with this, how are we going to build and develop?’” This is the first agreement in Iiyiyiuch territory and in Canada that may set new standards for how to develop agreements with an aboriginal community and may also benefit non-aboriginal communities.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Grande (2008, pp. 227) elaborates on some of the distinctions between critical scholars and American Indian intellectuals. While they share many of the same concerns and visions for a “time, place, and space free of the compulsions of Whiteman, global capitalism and the racism, sexism, classism and xenophobia it engenders” they do diverge, as do the Crees of northern Quebec, where “critical scholars ground their vision in Western conceptions of democracy and justice that presume a ‘liberated’ self, American Indian intellectuals ground their vision in conceptions of sovereignty that presume a sacred connection to place and the land.”

The myth of Canada's two founding nations, as opposed to Canada's many founding nations, supports ongoing aboriginal struggles that continuously fail to recognize aboriginal presence and deny aboriginal need to protect and define themselves by their literal and cultural borders. Cree people have to be vigilant to ensure their land is cared for and developed according to their values and in the face of contemporary challenges in ways that respectfully meet all their relationships.

Battiste (2008, pp. 85) reminds us of the importance in aboriginal education that aboriginal knowledge engage the “effort of thinking and unthinking and rethinking” which has “in so many places proven unthinkable.” The example of the establishment of Wemindji's childcare centre never allowed for the possibility of “unthinking and rethinking.” This *was in contrast to* the development of the Wemindji Traditional Skills Association and the work of the mining negotiations team, which have reasserted this way of deliberating, of “unthinking and rethinking” when they assume the freedom to match the pace of their negotiations and institutionalization to the process of humanization and conscientização (Freire, 2000) to everyone's needs. Battiste (2002, pp.39) reminds us that:

While many indigenous peoples are aware of our acute or chronic reaction to genocide and colonialism, many are unaware of how to resist colonial paradigms. Decolonization

Stocek, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

cannot be achieved without taking into consideration the historical context that has created the fragmentation of identity and community. Nor can a post-colonial framework be constructed without indigenous peoples renewing and reconstructing the principles underlying their own worldview, environment, languages and how these construct our aboriginality.

Several times throughout Stoczek's PhD research, she and Mark reviewed how they were doing in relation to the 12 points. The concerns that the How to Approach Collaborations list brought into focus are diverse, as are the issues which were brought forth in the light of thinking through the Wemindji Iiyiyuch values. The themes deal with indigenous knowledge, leadership and values, entitlement, initiative, responsibility, passive and active roles, faith and cooperation, setting objectives and an agenda for independence, understanding fiscal relationships, indigenous methodology and PAR. What we found most important was not our difficulty or failures to exemplify the pointers or values, but the on-going discussion we engaged in. These conversations fostered many rich dialectic exchanges that deepened our understanding of who we are and how we function collectively, as well as each other's worldviews and knowledge, without sacrificing ones right to political, spiritual, social, and geographical borders. Carrying out these conversations embodied respectful relationships and created the space, helping the authors to understand, communicate, and work together. Over time, as community members felt more at ease assuming leadership roles Stoczek was increasingly provided with opportunities to decolonize her interactions and respect aboriginal worldviews and agendas. Questioning served to raise our consciousness, asking the sorts of questions that shift power, when making sensitive and key cultural decisions to local authority; our work has greatly improved as a result. It would be a service in the future to foster sharing beyond the Cree nation; Cree knowledge is a resource for all.

ⁱ We have used the term aboriginal to refer to the indigenous peoples of Canada. Indigenous refers to tribal and first nations peoples globally. When quoting Grande we have used the term Indian, as this author does, when speaking about American Indian scholars and intellectuals.

ⁱⁱ Field notes: verified by Chief Mark July 2007.

ⁱⁱⁱ Mark's voice is cited directly many times. Due to space limits content relating to Stoczek's direct experience teaching early childhood education has been set aside for a further paper. By default Mark's own voice inadvertently but justifiably represented. This respects the nature of the experiences we wish to represent.

^{iv} Part of the left out story dealing with Stoczek's teaching experiences was explored in Stoczek, C. (2003). *Leading the way to 'learning our way out' Aboriginal Education, Possibility & Vulnerability*. Unpublished paper, University of McGill, Montreal.

^v Field notes: from a text titled "Thoughts from a childcare project," personal email between Mark and Stoczek. September 3, 2003

^{vi} Field notes: From a text titled "Thoughts from a child care project", personal email between Mark and Stoczek. September 3, 2003. Further elaborated from phone conversation notes between Mark and Stoczek July 9th, 2007.

^{vii} Phone conversation notes between Mark and Stoczek July 9th, 2007.

^{viii} Field notes: From a text titled "Thoughts from a child care project", personal email between Mark to Stoczek. September 3, 2003 and elaborated from phone conversation notes between Mark and Stoczek July 9th, 2007.

^{ix} Finger & Asún (2001) discuss the dual meanings of 'Learning Our Way Out' framed in the introduction to their text of the same name, *Adult Education At The Crossroads 'Learning Our Way Out'*. The authors raise current challenges inherent in adult education's rise to success to its commodification and its consequential demise as an intellectual discipline.

^x Phone conversation notes between Mark and Stoczek July 9th, 2007.

^{xi} Field notes: From a text titled "Thoughts from a child care project", personal email between Mark and Stoczek. September 3, 2003. further elaborated from phone conversation notes between Mark and Stoczek July 9th, 2007.

^{xii} Field notes: from a text titled "Thoughts from a childcare project," personal email between Mark and Stoczek. September 3, 2003

^{xiii} "How Could It Be Done Differently?" Was originally written and emailed from Mark to Stoczek on January 9th. 2004. It has been revised in minor ways for publication but remains true to its original intent and format.

^{xiv} See Cree Nation of Wemindji "Revitalizing and Strengthening Our Traditional PhilosophiesTowards Building Strong Governance, Administration and Accountability Systems" at <http://www.wemindji-nation.qc.ca/>

^{xv} An earlier version of the *Wemindji Iiyiyuch Core Values* diagram was published in Stoczek, C. and Mark, R. (2009). "Indigenous Research and Decolonizing Methodologies, Possibilities & Opportunities" In *Indigenous Knowledges, development and education*. Ed. J.Langdon, Rotterdam, Sense Publications, p73-96. 1) Since that time a version of East Cree syllabics has been officially adopted, therefore we have used Iiyiyuch instead of the former Eeyouch. 2) The names of Elders who contributed to the discussion have been printed in syllabics forming a border for the new diagram. The diagram itself was then printed and distributed to families

Stoczek, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

and entities in the community. It went through a year-long validation process that included a presentation to the community and Elders at Old Factory Lake during a summer gathering and general assembly.

^{xvi} The “Leading The Way To Respect and Relationship” section of this paper was written after reviewing interviews conducted numerous times over several years between Mark and Stocck, sending new questions via email which were answered and reviewed over several phone conversations in July 2010.

¹⁷ Phone conversation notes between Mark and Stocck July 9th, 2007.

REFERENCES

- Absolon, K., Willet, C. 2004. *Aboriginal Research: Berry Picking and Hunting in the 21st Century*. [Online] Available at: http://www.fncfcs.com/pubs/vol1num1/AbsolonWillet_pp5-17.pdf [Accessed April 2, 2007].
- Apple, M., 2000. Racing toward educational reform: *The politics of markets and standard*. In R. Mahalingam & C. McCarthy. eds. *Multicultural curriculum: New directions for social theory, practice, and policy*. New York: Routledge, pp.84-107.
- Apple, M. 1992. Is the new technology part of the solution or part of the problem in education. In J Beynon & H. McKay eds. *Technical Literacy and the curriculum*. London: The Falmer Press, pp.104-124.
- Asun, J.M. & Finger, M. 2001. *Adult Education At The Crossroads Learning Our Way Out*. London: Zed Books.
- Battiste, M., 2002. Decolonising University Research: Ethical Guidelines For research Involving Indigenous Populations. In G. Alfredsson & M. Stavropoulou eds. *Justice Pending: Indigenous Peoples and Other Good Causes Essays in Honour of Erica-Irene A. Daes*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, pp.33-44.
- Battiste, M., Henderson, Y. J. 2000. Decolonising Cognitive Imperialism. In *Education. Protecting Indigenous Knowledge and Heritage A Global Challenge*. Saskatoon: Purich, pp.86-96
- Catellano, M., 2000. Updating Aboriginal Traditions of Knowledge. In S. Dei, B. Hall, & D. Golden Rosenberg eds. 2000. *Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts Multiple Readings of Our World*. Toronto: OISE/UT, pp.21-36.
- Cardinal, L., 2001. What is an indigenous perspective? [Electronic Journal]. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. 25 (2), pp.180-183.
- Churchill, W, 2004. *Kill The Indian Save The Man The Genocidal Impact of American Indian Residential Schools*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
- Cree Eeyou Astchee Commission Report, 1995. *The Voice of a Nation on Self-Determination*, (Eeyou Astchee legislature Special Sitting) Chisasibi.
- Douglas, A. S. 1989. The Significance of James Bay Cree cultural values and practices in school committee policy-making: a documentary study. Unpublished master’s thesis, University of McGill, Quebec, Canada.
- Douglas, A. 1998. “There’s life and then there’s school”: School and Community as Contradictory Contexts for Inuit Self/Knowledge (McGill University, 1998).
- Freire, P. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. 30th ed. New York: Continuum.
- Grande, S. 2000. American Indians Geographies of Identity and Power: At the Crossroads of Indigenous and Mestizaje. In M. Villages, S. Neugubauer & K. Venegas eds. 2008. *Indigenous Knowledge and Education: Sites of Struggle, Strength, and Survivance*. Cambridge: Harvard Educational Review, pp.211-242.
- Grande, S, 2000. American Indian Identity and intellectualism: the quest for a new red pedagogy. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 13 (4), pp.343-359.
- Kapoor, D., Jordan, S. 2009. Introduction. In D. Kapoor, S. Jordan eds. *Education, Participatory Action Research And Social Change. International Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.5-11.
- Salway Black, S., 1994. *Redefining Success in Community Development: A New Approach for Determining and Measuring the Impact of Development*. The Lincoln Filene Centre Education for Action, Richard Schramm Paper on Community Development, Tufts University.
- Schissel, B., Wortherspoon, T., 2003. *The Legacy of School for Aboriginal People, Education, Oppression & Emancipation*. Ontario: Oxford University Press.
- Semali, L. & Kincheloe, J., eds. 1999. *What is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices From The Academy*. New York: Falmer Press.
- Steinhauer, E. 2003. Thoughts on an indigenous research methodology. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. 26(2), pp.69-81.
- Stocck, C., Mark, R. 2009. Indigenous Research and Decolonizing Methodologies: Possibilities & Opportunities. In J. Langdon ed. *Indigenous Knowledges, development and education*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, pp.73-96.
- Stocck, C., 2003. Leading the way to ‘Learning our way out.’ Aboriginal Education Possibility & Vulnerability. Unpublished paper, University of McGill, Montreal.
- Weber-Pillwax, C. 1999. Indigenous Research Methodology: exploratory Discussion of an Elusive Subject. *Journal of Educational Thought*. 33(1), pp31-45.
- Weber-Pillwax, C. 2001. What is indigenous research methodology? [electronic version]. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. 25(2), pp.175-180.
- Weber-Pillwax, C. 2009. When Research Becomes a Revolution: Participatory Action Research with Indigenous Peoples. In D. Kapoor, S. Jordan eds. *Education, Participatory Action Research And Social Change. International Perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.45-58.
- Stocck, C. & Mark, R. (2010). *Wemindji Traditional Artists Association: Improved control over research collaborations supports the emergence of indigenous methodology*

Wilson, S. 2001. What is indigenous methodology? [electronic version]. *Canadian Journal of Native Education*. 25(2), pp.175-180.

Wuttunee, W, 2004. *Living Rhythms: Lessons in Aboriginal Economic Resilience and Vision*, Montreal, McGill Queens University Press.