

Redefining Success in Aboriginal Learning Workshop February 8 – 9, 2007

Métis Session Report

Workshop Background

The primary purpose of this workshop was to develop the appropriate tools to measure learning progress for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. First Nations, Inuit and Métis participants took part in the event and spent the majority of the workshop period in break-out sessions specific to First Nations, Inuit or Métis learning.

The objectives of the workshop were to:

- Identify the areas of learning, represented within three *Holistic Lifelong Learning Models*, that foster success in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities;
- Identify the indicators that are needed to measure learning progress for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities, based on the three *Holistic Lifelong Learning Models*.

The Métis session discussion focussed on issues, content and processes related to learning, as represented in a draft *Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* for Métis. This session was the first step in a larger initiative aimed at redefining how Métis learning is measured.

Session Participants

1. Ted Amendt, First Nations and Métis Education Branch
2. Douglas Bartlett, National Indigenous Literacy Association
3. Rita Bouvier, Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre
4. John Boyle, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
5. Bonny Cann, Métis Nation of Ontario
6. Susan Cardinal, Métis Settlements General Council
7. Cort Dogniez, Saskatoon Public Schools
8. Brian Gallagher, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Aboriginal Student Activity Centre
9. Calvin Hanselmann, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
10. Marc LeClair, LeClair Infocom

11. Judy Okanee, Saskatoon Tribal Council
12. Kevin Pilon, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools
13. Karon Shmon, Gabriel Dumont Institute (Facilitator)

The proposed draft *Holistic Lifelong Learning Model for Métis* was used as the point of discussion, and is attached at the end of this document.

Session Agenda and Discussion Content

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2007

What works well with the learning model?

- Only needs to be reframed; it is a good working model
- Organic
- Holistic
- Self-generating
- What impacts part, impacts the whole
- Not Western world view
- Draws on many sources of knowledge (still being finalized by this group)
- Based on a foundation of indigenous knowledge and values from language, culture and Elders to express (the sacred act of living a good life)

What are the concerns with the learning model

- Linear
- Compartmentalization of some aspects
- Perhaps too focused on the individual
- Could reflect more emphasis on the learning environment
- Métis draw on multiple sources of knowledge; traditional and current
- Indicators may be structured to imply deficits

How can the learning model be improved, including graphical changes?

- Experiential and formal learning need to be merged into one holistic view of knowledge.
- Greater emphasis put on the foundation of indigenous knowledge from language, culture and Elders.
- Impact of variables in one's life determine level of learning.
- The trunk, viewed in cross section, shows the lifelong learning model influenced by our cultural, economic, social and political environments, and by natural law; is ideally in balance regarding our learning styles and shows varying degrees of growth with each ring.
- The over-riding theme of the Métis Lifelong Learning Model is “the sacred act of living a good life.” At its foundation are Indigenous knowledge and values as formed by our languages, culture and Elders’ wisdom. It is always influenced by “natural law” and the various environments shown in the roots: social, economic, political (self-determination), land, spirituality.

- A cross-section of the trunk shows the individual's growth with each ring, as influenced by these areas: cultural, economic, social and political environments, and by natural law. It is ideally in balance regarding our learning styles and shows varying degrees of growth with each ring. This should be indicated in detail by an enlarged side image.
- The domains of knowledge are called "Sources of Knowledge and Knowing." Those identified to date are:
 - Identity, Language and Traditions (Our Story)
 - Technological Innovation
 - Self
 - Land
 - People

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2007

Indicators

- The discussion did not get this far.

Next Steps

- Develop criteria for indicators which enable systems to determine what to do to achieve the indicators.
- Move/actualize. Don't take too long.
- We can say what is worth measuring. Concentrate carefully on what these must be.
- Task is loaded with responsibility (on us) and full of influence
- We can learn from it (as individuals)
- For communities (actual communities, learning communities), it will show what we value, our world view to serve a bridging function from a Métis perspective
- The wisdom that came before us is paying off in stronger communities
- Tell our story
- Acknowledge those who paved the way, learn from the teachings of our Elders
- When can we meet again? (to continue the discussion)
- Allegorical model generates discussion
- Think about what Elders teach us
- A great story for "our journey"
- Honour and remember our past without playing the victim; we are, instead, courageous survivors

Métis Session – Detailed Notes

A HOLISTIC LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL FOR MÉTIS

DAY 1 SUMMARY

- Reframed the original model which is still organic, holistic, regenerating
- Is based on a foundation of Indigenous knowledge and values from language, culture and Elders
- Sacred act of living a good life
- Draws on many sources of knowledge and ways of knowing which we are still finalizing
- The trunk, viewed in a cross-section, shows the lifelong model – influenced by our cultural, natural law, economic, social and political environments – is ideally in balance and shows varying degrees of growth with each ring
- *PICTURE 8*

CONCERNS

WHO IS THIS FOR?

- Will the model help us improve our learning environment?
- What is important to know?
- How would we know it happened, that we succeeded?
- **Success: acknowledge who are our very wise people for what they know (even if rest of Canada doesn't)
- Knowing and passing it on – success
- Will this model validate me as a Métis person?
 - a) Doing (ways of)
 - b) Knowing (ways of)
 - c) Perceiving (ways of)
- Who else is the model speaking to? Is it validating them too?
- Is this model consciously and formally showing how we learn and what we consider knowledge and learning?
- Which of our “other ways” can be validated by the model?
- Does it spin? Additional ways?

IMPROVEMENTS

IDENTITY

- Whose acceptance matters?
- What are our common shared values?

RESPECT

- PROTOCOLS – Indigenous (Métis) knowledge and values: How can the model reflect this?
- Remain aware that language used in the model may imply something, e.g., “lifestyle” implies choice
- Values is an area of knowledge
- Actual model is more whole, fluid and organic than the image
- We are shaped and influenced by a number of forces, e.g., political pop culture
- We are challenged in that the indicators, as they are, focus on the individual instead of the environment
- Frame indicators positively to avoid making negative causes and deficits the focus
- Comparisons to mainstream almost always show us at a deficit
- What is it within our own communities that keep us from becoming a statistic?
 - Self sufficiency
 - Self determination
 - Self empowerment (all 3 “selves” make a difference)
- Is it difficult for the rest of the world when we feel, do, utilize it?

WHICH “MEASURE OF SUCCESS” ARE WE CHOOSING TO USE? WHOSE?

Other measures of success:

- Who are our mentors?
- What thread ties us together as Métis (who are also diverse)?
- Métis identity: We have an intangible tie, a history that binds us. It is often political and not by choice.
- Model as is is not acceptable because formal and experiential doesn’t fit
- Does formal learning fit within the root system?
- Is there just “learning” with context and not separate types of categories?
- Maintain a focus to develop indicators for experiential learning
- There are different contexts for learning, not just 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Formal has outcomes as indicators
- Combine formal and experiential
- Is the lack of learning opportunities an indicator?
- The indicators may mean one thing to the Métis and another to rest of Canada (success)
- Is the learning we value reflected by what has been learned?
- What impact do the various levels of enrichment to the learning environment have on learning?
- Is the trunk of the tree “all learning”? Layer upon layer, elements and nutrients are variables impacting each layer?
- Elders reinforce values as learning
 - Respectful
 - Diversity
 - Self-sufficiency
 - Living in balance and harmony

- Tree metaphor teaches us about truth and honesty as it cycles through the seasons
- Healthy ground: Healthy tree – impacts both the trunk and branches
- Growth cycle – seasons like the learning cycle
- DAVID KOLB LEARNING STYLES MODEL
 - Connection
 - Exploration
 - Experiential
 - Practical application
- Or MEDICINE WHEEL or MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES
 - Point being: Formal learning has measured too narrow a realm of indicators
- Métis measure success by our well-being, as we see interpersonally and within our community, rather than by material gain or acclaim.
 - Substantial consensus on the elements built on reframing the original model
 - Organic
 - Holistic
 - Self-regenerating
 - Indigenous knowledge and values from our language and culture, from Elders – is the foundation and main component
 - Overall, we see it as “the sacred act of living a good life”
 - The trunk can be viewed in cross-section, which ideally has in balance a number of ways of learning (preferences, styles) and IS influenced by our cultural, economic, social and political environments and by natural law, making the rings vary in size
 - Draws on many sources of knowledge and knowing, a list which has not yet been finalized.

NEXT STEPS

- Develop criteria for indicators which enable systems to determine what to do to achieve the indicators
- Move, actualize, don't take too long
- We can say what is worth measuring. Concentrate carefully on what these must be
- Task is loaded with responsibility (on us) and full of influence
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- For communities (actual, learning) will serve a bridging function from a Métis perspective
- The wisdom that came before us paying off – stronger communities
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- Honour and remember our past without playing the victim; courageous survivors

- Where will the sash, guiding the path, be placed?
- This should tell “our story” in a way that benefits Métis
- **Now and ongoing – share the information
- **Soon and ongoing – meet again at the conference and after the report comes out