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## Understanding Aboriginal Learning Ideology Through Storywork with Elders

*Five Nuu-chah-nulth Elders engaged in the examination of a Nuu-chah-nulth story for what they considered learning. A network of eight learning archetypes inhabited the story to demonstrate a range of learning strategies. The Elders identified features central to a cultural learning project, which included prenatal care and grandparent teaching, spiritual bathing, partnerships, ritual sites, and ancestor names. Learning strategies were understood as embedded and embodied in the form of characters displaying the archetypes. The storywork process used by the Elders, systematized as phenomenological orienteering and operationalized as metaphorical mapping, was found to be a useful methodology.*

*Cinq aînés nuuchahmulth ont participé à une étude portant sur un récit nuuchahmulth qui avait, selon eux, une visée pédagogique. Le récit comporte un réseau de huit archétypes pédagogiques qui illustrent une gamme de stratégies d'apprentissage. Les aînés ont identifié des éléments clés d'un projet d'apprentissage culturel, dont les soins prénataux, l'enseignement par les grands-parents, le bain spirituel, les partenariats, les sites rituels et les noms ancestraux. L'on estimait que les stratégies d'apprentissage étaient intégrées dans les personnages qui leur donnaient corps en représentant des archétypes. Le processus de construction d'un récit qu'emploient les aînés, systématisé par une orientation phénoménologique et opérationnaliser par la représentation métaphorique, s'est avéré une méthodologie utile.*

### Introduction

The absence of theorizing about the learning concepts of Indigenous people (First Nations, Aboriginal, Inuit, Metis, and Indian are used interchangeably in this study) in current educational literature is a problem for the educational participation and achievement of Aboriginal students. North American systems of schooling based in a Euroheritage and social evolutionary tradition of social Darwinism have historically framed the problem of Indigenous educational failure as based in inherent incompetencies of an underdeveloped people (Adams, 1995) that pathologizes the experiences of Aboriginal children (Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2004). This historically perceived underdevelopment required first the Crown and then the authorities of the emergent nation state to intervene through the "civilizing" effects of residential schooling to ameliorate the effects of early childhood Indigenous cultural socialization and "deprivation" (Miller, 1996). More recently the problem has been cast as a misfit of learning and teaching styles (More, 1987) based on differences in the cultural construction of environments. However, this "failure" goes deeper than the mere technicalities of learning and perceptions of evolutionary backwardness to what Goddard (1997) has identified as the delegitimation of a

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people. The very lifeways and thinking of peoples have been delegitimated, and community control usurped through colonization. This has resulted in inequality of power relations between communities and the state that includes a lack of an emic control of curriculum development that can support a local habitus (Bourdieu, 1993) for Aboriginal survival and an ethos on which schooling for socioeconomic equities can build.

Such delegitimation is confirmed by Indigenous achievers who function from the strengths of their socio-historical competences. They speak of wresting their education from the hostile and alienating contexts of educational institutions (Garcia, 1999; Huff, 1997). Such success is testimony to the illegitimacy of racial superiority that underpins the ideology reproduced in Canadian systems of schooling. More important, orientations to learning in Indigenous cultures have not been systematically recognized in the co-construction of education for Aboriginal people. Instead Canadian education begins where Aboriginal people are not: from a Euro-institutional perspective of pedagogy in the context of formal Western schooling. In this study (Atleo, 2001), I drew on literature from diverse disciplines (cross-cultural psychology, philosophy, ethnography, linguistics, postmodern and postcolonial studies, Indigenous/Aboriginal/First Nations/Native/American Indian studies, and educational studies) to develop a conceptual framework (Bruner, 1996). In the framework, a Nuu-chah-nulth Aboriginal perspective of Indigenous learning (Atleo) in the context of Indigenous storywork (Archibald, 1997, 2008) was illuminated. In such a storywork process that recognizes respectful relations and more meaningful educational practices, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators, policymakers, and researchers can participate together.

### *Objectives*

If cultural strategies are persistent and fundamental to the survival of a people, identifying and understanding Indigenous learning orientations and ideology such as those of the Nuu-chah-nulth would provide emancipatory insight for Aboriginal learning in contemporary educational settings. Adopting principles of storywork used by Coast Salish Elders from British Columbia in the development of a justice curriculum (Archibald, 1997), this study developed a concept map or conceptual framework to use as a social protocol in which to talk with Aboriginal Elders about cultural understandings of learning through the interrogation of Nuu-chah-nulth narratives about Umeek, the first whaler. These narratives were chosen for three reasons: (a) because they have a cultural depth judged to be more than 4,000 years (Marshall, 1993); (b) they are concerned with an economic adaptation in the shift from sealing to whaling; and (c) they are focused on the name *U-meek*, which means "a person who can get (meek) anything (U) because he or she knows how to learn to get it."

### *Educational Importance*

Understanding the learning ideology of individuals and institutions is central to the strategic administrative functioning of educational systems and nations. Education is a public good that creates knowledge and makes nations strong (Jones, McCarney, & Skolnik, 2005; Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005). Consequently, understanding historically embedded, culturally diverse learning ideologies would seem central to contemporary administration of educa-

tional diversity and the development of programming (Bruner, 1996), especially for an Aboriginal constituency. Understanding Indigenous learning ideology would provide a broader, more complete range of potential strategies to conduct educational research, develop curriculum, and advance policy. A broader understanding of what was, and what is, allows an envisioning of what could be (Archibald, 2008; Atleo, 2004). An understanding of orientational diversity can more readily facilitate administration of Aboriginal educational opportunities by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders and policymakers (Atleo, 2006; Bruner).

#### *4Rs and 4Ds: A Conceptual Framework*

This work is informed by a conceptual framework developed from the work of Kirkness and Barnhardt (1991) and grounded in seven principles of storywork of Coast Salish First Nations Elders (reverence, respect, responsibility, reciprocity, wholism, interrelatedness, and synergy, Archibald, 1997, 2008). These were organized into two sets of four principles: “The 4Rs and 4Ds” for mnemonic ease that is consonant with oral tradition (Atleo, 2001) to permit an ongoing and unfolding awareness of the deep patterns of the Indigenous Nuu-chah-nulth philosophy; all is one, Hisuk-ish-tsa’walk (Atleo, 2004; Bunnell & Atleo, 1995). The heuristic provided a frame with which to examine the themes and elements of the learning ideology the Elders identified in the Nuu-chah-nulth narratives as organized by aspects of culture such as oral tradition, language, history, institutions, norms and values, territory, environment and ecology, and so forth (Atleo, 2006). The frame permitted a deeper probing of cultural practices and meanings in the dialogue with the Elders, who suggested that I watch until it became clear to me (Atleo, 2008).

The 4Rs and 4Ds were described in a mytho-poetic discursive frame using the metonymy of basketwork and the metaphor of *qa’uuc*, a large Nuu-chah-nulth burden basket. This strategy allowed me to see both the narrative logic of my Nuu-chah-nulth teachers (Atleo, 2008) and that of Western research and thought in the literature (Atleo, 2001). This process permitted a foregrounding of figurative patterns of speech and doing such as the metaphors that underlie and frame both scientific and narrative thinking (Bruner, 1996; Oatley, 1996).

#### *Methodology*

Five Nuu-chah-nulth Elders (Atleo, 2001) responded to three questions about what the story had to say about their cultural beliefs as related to learning for past and present success in a Nuu-chah-nulth life career (i.e., providing/achieving) using narratives about Umeek the First Whaler as a stimulus. The interviews were analyzed for common themes, elements, experiences, and concepts.

Of greatest theoretical significance was the challenge of accounting for the bicultural interaction in this investigation that included the socio-historical background of cultural habitus of the study population (Bourdieu, 1993; Golla, 1987, 1988). To meet the need to develop field independence in the habitus, I employed a technique of metaphoric mapping in a phenomenological field (Alverson, 1991; Atleo, 2008). This approach recognizes the adaptive ability to move between phenomenological fields and indeed world views operationalized through a process of mapping salient aspects of metaphors from one

conceptual space to another. Alverson harnesses the notion of an “image schema” to expound on the many ways that metaphor is related to experience beginning with Lakoff & Johnson’s (1999) definition of metaphor as “an experientially based mapping from an idealized cognitive model (ICM) in one domain to an ICM in another domain” (p. 417). The idealized cognitive model is perceptually held by an individual based on experience or as an action schema. The model that is held (Source) is superimposed on something similar (Target), and the two are subjectively compared. In this case, the models of learning that the Elders understood in a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective and from the narratives served as the Source were compared with those Euroheritage models of learning with which they were familiar based on their experience of Euroheritage schooling which was the Target. This was possible because metaphors can be understood as conceptual artifacts of experiences, philosophy in the flesh (Lakoff, 1999), where language and experience meet in embodiment. Metaphoric blending (Fauconnier, 1997) and integrative complexity (Turner & Fauconnier, 1999) then serve to facilitate ongoing orientation by and for the skillful cultural person in which both affective and cognitive dimensions of experience and action are employed as models mapped from one domain or action context to another. Their similarities and differences become apparent in the process where a transfer of learning or insight occurs.

Figure 1 provides a conceptual map for the discussion of how the narratives served to help the Elders look back into Nuu-chah-nulth tradition and make inferences about today and the future in the light of principles they read about in the Umeek Narratives. The Umeek Narratives were the lens through which they viewed the source domain of Nuu-chah-nulth tradition and mapped their reading onto the target domain of their contemporary bicultural milieu. As the Elders make meaning by moving back and forth between cultural domains, the target/source domains can blend as they do in the center of the diagram.

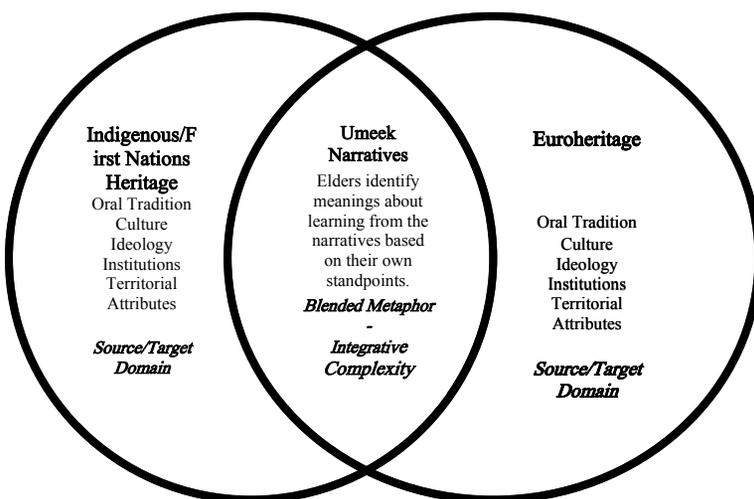


Figure 1. Phenomenological field of metaphoric mapping.

This would lead to metaphoric blending (Fauconnier, 1997) and integrative complexity (Turner & Fauconnier, 1999) requiring skilled phenomenological orienteering (Alverson, 1991), which would be a key to maintaining an adaptive orientation, but also require the ability to move perceptually between phenomenological fields or world views. Phenomenologic orienteering consists of the mapping of salient aspects of figures of speech like metaphors from one domain (e.g., a cultural space) onto another domain (e.g., another social or cultural space). This is a complex activity that requires a high degree of cultural knowledge as well as personal negotiation skills between individuals to arrive at group consensus. In a traditional community where values are generalized, group consensus would be readily achieved. In their narrative analyses, the Elders reflected a level of consensus about learning ideals that suggested cultural consensus.

### *The Narratives*

Nuu-chah-nulth narratives about Umeek are not only history, but living scripts, the renditions of which may vary from community to community. Such scripts could be told from many perspectives and be reflective of contemporary incarnations. In each generation, the archetype is manifest in a socio-historical context. The following version is a synthesis based on two ethnographic versions (Curtis, 1916; Sapir & Swadesh, 1939). The ethnographic versions were generally consistent with the oral tradition that I encountered when I lived in Ahousaht in the home of Teddy George (head chief of the Ohiinismaht, whose people summered in Kelsemaht) and Margaret Charlie Atleo (my husband's grandmother, widow of the third chief of Ahousaht, who was heir to a chieftainship of the Kelsemaht). During night lunches, these two engaged in evening storytelling for the benefit of the young couple that my partner and I were then.

The following story was told in my presence in episodes from time to time. The oral episodes are integrated with the ethnographic versions and organized in a linear fashion for the purpose of textualization. The characters are *Tsatsotatlmé/Umeek* and his wife, his son *Óyephil*, and his father, the wise old man; his rival *Tséihshot/Tsáhwasip* and his wife; the feast witness/spy *Tséitlas* and the *q<sup>w</sup>ayac'iik* (Wolf), the Friendly Stranger. The setting is Vargas Island off the coast of British Columbia in the Pacific Ocean near Kelsemaht.

### *The Story of Umeek*

In the village on the southern shore of Vargas Island in Clayoquot Sound (across the water from what is now the village of Tofino in BC) lived two hair sealing chiefs who provided for their people through feasting rivalries. The younger was *Tsatsotatlmé* (hunting in the margins) and the elder was *Tséihshot* (feast giver). After *Tséihshot* had given a feast of 100 hair seals, *Tsatsotatlmé* felt inadequate and discouraged. In his discouragement, he dreamed that a friendly Stranger asked him why he was sad. As *Tsatsotatlmé* confided in him, the Stranger proposed a remedy. *Tsatsotatlmé* would no longer compete with hair seals but with a new, larger source of food for the village: whales. Whales were the equivalent food and material resources of hundreds of hair seals. The Stranger gave instructions for *oosumch*, bathing purification so that he could learn the new way.

Tsatsotatlmé immediately followed the spiritual bathing instructions to scourge his body with hemlock until it bled, first the left side and then the right, diving deeply into the water like a whale until the fourth time when the blood oozed out of his skin and every orifice of his body. It was the Wolf that encouraged and instructed him, taking him through every detail of the rehearsal of the whale hunt (Curtis, 1916).

The q<sup>w</sup>ayac'iik (Supernatural Wolf) gave Tsatsotatlmé his new name, Umeek (Umik, Curtis, 1915), that "enterprising person," "go-getter," "community provider," "creator of wealth by discipline, training, and following through with anything you set your mind to" (harpooning, fishing, hunting, etc., Atleo, 2004). Umeek learned many towing songs to teach his crew. He kept his learning secret and hid his tiny whale amulet and hunting equipment in a great cedar tree. When Umeek entered the village in late morning after his ritual work, people guessed what he was doing and began to taunt him. His rival Tséihshot ridiculed him in front of the people.

Umeek went to his father and told him of his experiences. He asked his overjoyed father to help him make a canoe and organize a crew. On the third day Umeek and the crew set out. The crew had prepared themselves with *oosumch* but did not yet know what they were hunting. They were amazed when Umeek showed them the tiny, perfect whale amulet, the equipment, and taught them the songs. Immediately they were out on the water, a whale approached them, sounded, and disappeared. The whale drew near as if listening. Umeek instructed the paddlers to wait until he had placed his harpoon before they paddled. Umeek watched the whale until just the right moment to place the harpoon. He acknowledged the whale with a prayer, respecting him, for such are the reciprocities between human and animal beings for they are related.

The great whale turned toward the village on Vargas. The people of the village came out to help tow the whale ashore. Meanwhile, Umeek and his crew went to secrete the equipment. The Whaler asked his crew to help him harpoon a whale every four days.

The first whale was landed on the beach with exceeding great ritual honor as promised. There followed a great feast of meat and blubber at which the father announced his son's new name: Umeek. The people feasted. The rival Tséihshot felt beaten. He did not participate but schemed how to reverse his fortune.

The story goes on to recount how the elder sealer Tséihshot was exceedingly jealous and bludgeoned Umeek on the beach beside the next whale (Curtis, 1916). Umeek's father gathered the corpse, whaling equipment, and amulet and secreted them in a cedar tree whose tannic properties mummified the body and preserved the equipment. Whaling ceased until Umeek's son came of age, and the grandfather began to teach him all that Umeek had told him. As the young man began to assume his father's role, he also heard the q<sup>w</sup>ayac'iik speak. The lad's name became *Óyephil*, one who follows in the traditions (of his father) (B. Williams, Jr., 1997, personal communication) of giving feasts (Arlene Paul, 2000, personal communication). The young man performed ritual in the presence of the body of his father, which held the knowledge of all that had gone before. The q<sup>w</sup>ayac'iik instructed the boy to mimic the whale in the

bathing ritual. Even as questions arose in the boy's mind, the q<sup>w</sup>ayac'iik was there with the answer. On the fifth morning Óyeph1 and his crew went on a whale hunt and he killed a whale. The crew carried the canoe ashore with the young whaler sitting high as their leader.

Tséihshot was not pleased with the people. Tséihshot saw that whaling was viable. He dispatched a feast guest, Tséitlas, to spy on Óyeph1's preparations. Tséihshot intended to kill Óyeph1 even as he bathed in the lake that evening.

That night when they got to the lake, Tséihshot sent the spy back. He sat hidden until Óyeph1 had completed the first part of the ritual, then ran into the water and clubbed him to death. Tséihshot came home, told his spy what he had done, and instructed him to secure the whaling equipment.

That night Tséihshot dreamed that the dead Óyeph1 gave him more instructions about how to pray for success: prayers to the moon chief, the south chief, the sea chief, and the mountain chief 10 times during *oosumch*. As the old chief bathed in the lake, it seemed that the young whaler was with him as his voice echoed in Tséihshot's ears.

Tséihshot and the crew went out and harpooned the first whale. It dived. Tséihshot did not know what to do. Crew members suggested he pray to the whale as they had witnessed Umeek pray. Tséihshot's whaling knowledge was incomplete. One of the crew knew the prayer from previous trips, and Tséihshot ordered him to pray that the whale be more cooperative. The whale turned toward the beach of the village on Vargas Island. The old chief landed with great ceremony, carrying the harpoon and line into the house to be put on display. He called for a feast to announce his new name, *Tsáhwasip*, a harpooner who catches it with one try. He promised his people a regular whale feast.

Tsáhwasip began to wash in the lake frequently. The spy noticed that he did not follow the same procedure as had Óyeph1, using the body of his father. The spy asked why not. The old chief said that he had received special knowledge in a dream. The spy said that Umeek had also come to him in a dream to warn him that bad fortune would come to them if they did not continue to bathe. The spy wanted Umeek's body. Tsáhwasip retrieved the corpse and proceeded as instructed by the spy.

Tsáhwasip complained of the degree of difficulty swimming with the body of the first whaler on his back and asked the spy if he was doing it right. The spy laughed, saying that it was the whale spirit Tsáhwasip was trying to please, not him. Not wanting trouble in the hunt, Tsáhwasip became frightened and begged the spy to tell him more particularly how Óyeph1 had performed the ritual. Tséitlas, the feast guest, complied. Tsáhwasip fully engaged with the task, diving until blood flowed from his ears, eyes, and nose.

Tsáhwasip broke the surface of the lake in triumph. The corpse of the whaler on his back had taken him to the land of the spirits of the dead and revealed to him more whaling secrets: towing songs, how to make floats to keep dead whales from sinking. Tséitlas must have been amazed because he had been lying to Tsáhwasip. He joined Tsáhwasip in the water. The spy toyed with the old chief, replying that if he was going to harpoon whales, he would be working harder, but because he had no such ambitions, there was no need to shed his blood.

Tsáhwasiip, with Tséitlas by his side, entered the village in triumph, instructing crew members to kill 14 seals to make floats from the skins. He gathered his crew to learn the new towing songs and the songs to the Four Great Chiefs. He taught them four of the 96 songs that he had received. They would be leaving in the morning to catch whales. Instead of sleeping, he went out to *oosumch* all night until the canoe came for him in the darkness.

As morning broke at sea, the crew heard a whale spout beside them. Tsáhwasiip fixed his harpoon and then noticed that Tséitlas was not among the crew. A crewmen said that Tséitlas had not come. Tsáhwasiip became of two minds. He wanted to turn back to get Tséitlas. The crew insisted that the whale needed to be harpooned now or they would not come out with him again. Tsáhwasiip sank the harpoon into the whale and it ran seaward. He instructed the crew to pray to the Four Great Chiefs and then the four prayers to the whale. It was to no avail. The wise old man of the crew suggested that speaking to the whale made more sense. Nothing helped. Tsáhwasiip blamed the trouble on Tséitlas. Nevertheless, the crew blamed Tsáhwasiip because he had vacillated when he had discovered the spy was missing and had given the wrong instructions about which songs to sing. These mistakes could prove fatal for all of them because the whale towed them seaward for two days.

Finally, the whale turned back to shore. Tsáhwasiip told the wise old man to place a second harpoon into the whale. The crewman did so and then placed a third, which killed the whale not far from the village. Now they sang the towing songs and brought the whale home. Reaching shore, Tsáhwasiip leaped onto the beach with his equipment and went directly home. He had not lived up to his name. He instructed his wife to bring home his ritual share, the dorsal fin and saddle of the whale, and demanded news of the spy. She said that Tséitlas had disappeared the day they had left.

Desolate, Tsáhwasiip went to sleep and dreamed that the spy was washing in a lake to become a whaler. He regretted not killing the spy too. He told his wife of his tactical error, and she wept for she knew that they could not socially recover from this shame. He covered himself with sea otter pelts and died.

But the knowledge of the enterprise of whaling took on a life of its own and endured after the rivalry. Tséitlas, Tsáhwasiip's spy, fled to to the next village with the corpse of Umeek. From the people of that village, it is said, all the tribes on the West Coast learned how to hunt whales with harpoons. The people of the first village attempted to whale, but people died because their knowledge was incomplete. The wise old man of the crew, the father of Umeek and grandfather of Óyephí, had been a witness to all this. He had taught Óyephí how to succeed. Now that the treacherous braggart Tsáhwasiip was dead, the old man could teach others to whale in the tradition of Umeek in the village on the southern shore of Vargas.

#### *Findings*

Although the Elders had not read this particular version of the narrative before, they engaged animatedly in the interviews because they recognized the elements of the narratives and patterns of the thinking as familiar, as Nuuchahnulth (Atleo, 2001). Using this traditional story and the process of storywork, they could recognize and articulate Nuuchahnulth learning ideology from their cultural assumptions. An example of how the mapping process unfolded

is illustrated by how they compared their understanding of learning through their experience with Euroheritage systems of education and with the socially and behaviorally patterned details of learning in the Umeek narrative. The Elders had been invited to participate in this study for their cultural experience; ability to speak the Nuu-chah-nulth language; experience with Euroheritage learning in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education, local schools boards, through their children's education, reading, providing room and board for students, continuing education for credentialization; and treaty research. They had substantive knowledge about both world views that is needed to move effectively from one conceptual schema to another. The story elicited cultural knowledge and assumptions with which to compare Euroheritage concepts of learning and education. Elders were clear about similarities and differences between the two ways of understanding *learning* (Atleo).

Through the storywork process, the Elders identified four major Nuu-chah-nulth learning themes: prenatal care, grandparents' teachings and care, *oosumch* (the discipline of Nuu-chah-nulth spiritual bathing in sacred sites), and the use of ancestor names. Elders revealed a strategic learning ideology that began by providing a positive prenatal development environment, an early development of personal disciplinary practices, the support of wisdom and insight of Elders' counsel, and the sociocultural capital of ancestor names. These strategies translated into embodied action schemes that were contextually constructed with spiritual help in altered and dream states.

#### *Prenatal Care and Grandparents' Teaching*

Prenatal care and grandparents' teaching were the two most salient themes identified by the Elders as laying the foundation for learning. Many cultural teachings associated with pregnancy, maternal health, and family preparation for childbirth and childrearing had long been relegated to superstition by missionaries and health care practitioners (Kelm, 1999) as the civilizing effects of Euroheritage teachings were to predominate. For example, pregnant women were protected from emotional trauma so that the child would not be injured. This belief would result in a prescription about pregnant women avoiding funerals and lengthy grieving. Only recently has scientific evidence demonstrated the potential for pathological neurological and developmental effects of trauma on unborn children (Clarke, 1997). The incidence of Fetal Alcohol Effects and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAE/FAS) in the Aboriginal community might have been prevented if traditional teachings about prenatal health had not been dismissed as superstition. Adherence to the very teachings that the Elders suggest provided for a resilient and adaptive child that would be open to optimal development (Keitlah, 1995).

The experiences of grandparents were expected to provide examples of successful living and models of activities, attitudes, and behaviors for their grandchildren. Grandparents were expected to know the blueprint for successful pregnancies that would result in healthier, stronger babies who would be ready to learn. Grandparents had the experience, the moral and social right, to provide a running commentary on the parenting activities of the community. Grandparents were expected to provide guidance and evaluate how each generation adapted cultural practices to suit new conditions. The importance of grandparents was not only in the content of their knowledge, but also in the

process of how they thought and conducted themselves in the family and community. Elders represented a repository of lineage experience in the context of other lineages in the community. Elder negotiation of culture and the adaptations of all aspects of life made them living texts that could comment on values, norms, traditions, rituals, and other types of Indigenous knowledge. Not all Elders were knowledgeable about everything, and usually knowledge was gender-specific because not only was there a division of labor, but also some languages had varying expressions for male and female forms of behavior.

#### *Oosumch: Spiritual Bathing*

*Oosumch*, the discipline of Nuu-chah-nulth spiritual bathing, was identified as central to successful learning and achievement. Elders varied in the dimensions of the discipline with which they were familiar, but were unanimous about its centrality to achieving the humility and self-control of learning anything. *Oosumch* may best be understood as a spiritually accessed motivational management model in which synergies and learning for transformation are cultivated. Spiritual bathing can be seen as a ritual activity of purification that cleans the body, mind, and spirit so that the person melds with the environment. Many cultures have bathing rituals as part of their spiritual practices (Arvigo & Epstein, 2003). By becoming one with the environment in which the petitioner immerses himself or herself, the body, mind, and spirit can apprehend and internalize an orientation to the discovery or achievement of a desired outcome from that context. Spiritual bathing may be seen as attempting to achieve a synchronicity and synergy with the environment and the spiritual world that permits individuals to become one with the surroundings and things unseen (Atleo, 2004). The Wolf, the Friendly Stranger, is the spirit helper whom Umeek humbly asks for help as he submits himself to the environment in which the problem exists. The Wolf helps him see a new resource and develop an action plan by which to achieve success for his people.

#### *Partnerships of Husbands and Wives*

The ritual partnership of husbands and wives in the construction of knowledge is a theme usually obscured in the ethnographic accounts, but is prominent in the Nuu-chah-nulth ethnography about whaling and the accounts of the Elders. Husbands and wives cooperated in the interplay of social, spiritual, and material dimensions of the whale hunt. Nuu-chah-nulth marital unions were expected to produce children, but also to be political and spiritual enterprises. As political unions they would bring communities together in feasting and mutual rights and responsibilities that included sharing scarce resources. As a spiritual union they could cooperatively endure the discipline of months of ritual activity that included long periods of abstinence from physical pleasures and endurance of deprivations to create new knowledge through *oosumch* that could be shared with the community. Couples were expected to engage in mutual socialization and became co-producers of social public knowledge.

#### *Ancestor Names*

Ancestor names that were given during rites of passage were identified as landmarks in the narrative context of knowledge production. Ancestor names were cultural scripts for lineage members that formed part of the social rights

and obligations of its members. For example, holding a name is understood as an embodiment of the culturally valued characteristics or attributes that the name represents. In a tradition where a person's words and actions were one, the name and acts were also considered one. Tsatsotatlmé was a person relegated to hunting in the margins where the seals were fewest, whereas Tséihshot had the best territories and was so successful that he was known to be the feast giver. Tsatsotatlmé became Umeek the getter when he learned how to capture whales. Tséitlas, the feast guest, served Tséihshot as a witness but also as spy. When Tséihshot named himself Tsáhwasip and then failed his name, he could not live because his deeds did not live up to the name. Although from an anthropological perspective using names like this may have been seen as associated with "sympathetic magic," contemporarily it might be understood in more psychological terms as a motivational practice that requires a consonance between a person's words and deeds. Ancestor names provided the developing person with a nonprescriptive cultural narrative and script in which to grow and mature. The names provided action schema in which to work, play, and cultivate relationships that were anchored in tradition and lived in the present.

#### *Ritual Sites*

Ritual sites, the territory (Atleo, 2004, 2006), provided a contextual frame for knowledge creation where *oosumch* and other activities such as fasting and quests for visions took place. Models of activity for use in other venues were constructed in sacred sites with ritual activity. In the Umeek story, the whaling ritual is constructed on the lake and then enacted on the ocean. Simulated hunts in which the whaler enacted the role of the whale and his wife the role of the whaler permitted strategic practice that could reduce the risk of the hunt, as would computer modeling today. Grandparents' knowledge for prenatal and lifespan success, cooperative ventures, orienting ancestor names, and simulations in sacred sites were identified as Nuuchahnulth themes for learning.

#### *Embedded and Embodied Learning Strategies: Learning Archetypes*

The learning themes identified were embedded and embodied strategies. The eight learning archetypes in these narratives balanced innovation and conservation in a shifting resource economy. These archetypes are portrayed as providing a multiplicity of options, embedded in history and displaying a plurality of fully functioning models from which Elders can teach and that learners can choose to emulate. The archetypes portray a full spectrum of Nuuchahnulth learning ideology.

An embodied strategy requires a body. A narrative analysis of the observations of the Elders yielded eight learning archetypes: the innovative transformational learner, the collaborative transformational learner, the directed lineage learner, the developmental learner, the cooperative learner, the resistant observational learner, the collaborative resistant learner, and the opportunistic observational learner (Atleo, 2001).

The Nuuchahnulth ancestor names outline the story for Nuuchahnulth speakers. Umeek begins as Tsatsotatlmé (the sealer that hunts in the margins taking great risks) and is ritually transformed into the "enterprising person," exemplifies innovative, transformational learning. He submits himself wholly

to the cultural system of learning practices. With his partner he develops and successfully executes a new vision, thereby demonstrating the promise of the transformation of the local economy from sealing to whaling. His *ha?kum* (wife) works with him in developing the vision and its execution as the embodiment of collaborative transformational learning. Even when Umeek is slain in a jealous rage by the Elder chief, Tséihsoot, the legacy of Umeek and his wife, continues. Their son Óyeph (feasts the people with catches like his father) is the transformers' heir, the directed learner. After his father's death, his grandfather and mother guide Óyeph. He learns to replicate the feats of his father by bringing home whales. For his achievement, Óyeph is killed in a jealous rage just as his father was.

The members of the whaling crew are the embodiment of cooperative learning. Individually and in partnership with their wives, they engage in their own ritual of *oosumch*. They then synchronize with the whaler in the canoe to participate in a consensual action plan, a common vision.

Umeek's father is the embodiment of developmental learning. He learns systematically over time through experience as he loses his son and grandson. He is then coerced into singing the towing songs by the Elder chief to avert disaster during the hunt. It is not until he hears about his son's legacy being successful elsewhere that he reluctantly concedes to his knowledge and becomes the teacher of his people.

Tsáhwasip, the Elder chief, whose new name iterates his claim to "(be so skilled as to) catch whales with one thrust (of the harpoon)," is the conserver, the resistant observational learner. Together with his *ha?kum*, the collaborative resistant observational learner, he only begins to engage in learning to hunt in this new way when their social status and way of life is threatened. Although Tsáhwasip did bring in whales, he was a failure as a learner and a leader in the eyes of his crew who saw his faltering inadequacy and ambivalence in the intimacy of the whaling canoe.

Tséitlas (the feast witness/ritual spy) embodies opportunistic, incidental learning. He lived intimately with Tsáhwasip and his family as their feast guest until he knew all there was to know about whaling and brought the knowledge back to his own village. Moreover, although he may not have planned to learn anything from Tsáhwasip, he nevertheless aided and abetted him, seizing the opportunity as it became apparent.

### *Conclusions and Implications*

In this study an Indigenous learning theory is articulated in a storywork framework that permits the identification of Nuu-chah-nulth ideology about teaching and learning. The story of Umeek suggests that a full complement of learning types and leaders may reside in communities at any time and over time. A range of learning archetypes was found, which suggests that varied types of leadership and learning may be necessary to facilitate various stages of change. From a Nuu-chah-nulth perspective, prenatal care, Elder care and teachings, personal management through *oosumch*, and engagement with ancestor names are the four themes of strategic learning. The story illustrates the many learning archetypes as well as the social and natural environment in which they are enacted over the lifespan and as social capital. This strategic

learning ideology needs to be understood in the context of Nuu-chah-nulth education specifically and Indigenous education generally.

Western schooling has not satisfied Aboriginal learning needs generally or Nuu-chah-nulth learning needs specifically for transformative learning and strategic knowledge. The Indigenous learning ideology identified in this study, which still animates First Nations communities today, seems to be generally absent in Western educational theory and pedagogy as it is applied to Aboriginal educational content. The findings of this study identify gaps between how Indigenous and Western learning theory is conceptualized, which should not be surprising considering the contrasting world views in which they are embedded and embodied and the power inequities. To move to a more decolonized Aboriginal education in Canada, non-Aboriginal educationalists must begin to understand the true nature of the gap in theory and practice. Consequently, research is necessary to delineate more clearly these and other possible gaps in theory, policy, and practice that result in a narrow focus on cognitive patterns of learning from one cultural perspective that denies and distorts the dynamics of learning another history and cultural system.

The metaphorical mapping strategy (Atleo, 2001, 2008) provides a rigorous frame in which to demonstrate that storywork may be seen as a robust technique for deconstruction and reconstruction of oral traditions with bicultural systems and assumptions and then for applying stories as wisdom to contemporary issues across cultural spaces with transparency and integrity.

The findings of this bicultural study contribute to Indigenous learning theory in the discourse of First Nations/Aboriginal education, extend Western learning theory, and promise to challenge current pedagogical practice and curriculum development. Nuu-chah-nulth Elders have articulated learning themes that are at the heart of First Nations' learning capacity. Such First Nations views of learning and learning archetypes have implications for education and policy research by their mere presence. How can First Nations cultural learning archetypes be acknowledged in the classroom, in the curriculum, and in educational policy in public and in First Nations schools? How can the plurality of learning archetypes identified by this storywork be considered in the pedagogical approaches to First Nations research about teaching and learning? How can the presence of First Nations learning archetypes be taken into account in the administrative functioning of rural and remote First Nations band schools; in urban public schools with growing First Nations populations? How can we understand Indigenous time frames that incorporate ancestors into daily learning strategies through ritual activities and names? How can the concepts of phenomenological orienteering, metaphorical mapping, and conceptual complexity aid non-Aboriginal teachers in their practice with Aboriginal students?

This study identifies means by which to claim, celebrate, and remember Aboriginal knowledge through rereading and rewriting First Nations stories about education in a decolonizing methodology (Smith, 1999). This framework can encourage proactive involvement in the revitalization and charting of Indigenous ways of knowing in the context of Western schooling. Storywork can be a vital process of mutual decolonization of Indigenous and non-Aboriginal professionals in education, counseling, life career development,

healing, and social work. First Nations educational successes could now be seen as founded in cultural persistence and legitimate, valued, diverse perspectives. A new negotiation of the social construction of such bicultural spaces where Aboriginal people live, work, and learn can provide more dignified achievement in diversity and public good in Canada and with Indigenous populations internationally.

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