Anishinaabemowin: Teachers' Practices in Manitoba

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships among Anishinaabe language and literacies, Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), and *bimaadiziwin* ("a way of life" in the Anishinaabe language) by exploring current Aboriginal language teaching and learning practices. The study is based on the perceptions and experiences of four Anishinaabe language teachers in Manitoba, Canada. It is informed by the author's experiences as an Anishinaabe speaker, a former language teacher, a consultant, an instructor, and a school administrator. The research is based on a theoretical and conceptual framework reflective of an Indigenous perspective to address the research questions: (1) How are Anishinaabe language teachers incorporating IKS and bimaadiziwin into their Indigenous language and literacies programs? (2) What experiences and resources can these teachers identify that would enhance their ability to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin into their teaching of the Anishinaabe language and literacies in the classroom?

In this study, the language-teacher participants identified Anishinaabe traditional teachings, land-based learning, and a variety of other language teaching and learning practices, such as discussing and utilizing humour, promoting healthy lifestyles with students, and using technology, as the main teaching and learning practices within their current Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. The enhanced resources and experiences they identified included the importance of knowing and living one's Indigenous knowledge (IK) and bimaadiziwin, and knowledge of the traditional teachings, such as *minwaadiziwin* (kindness), *maanaji'iwin* (respect), *zaagi'idiwin* (love), *debwemowin* (truth), and *dabasenimowin* (humility). When one can practice these traditional teachings on a daily basis, according to the Elders, one is living a *mino-bimaadiziwin* (a good life). Other teaching and learning practices identified by the language

teachers included, but were not limited to, involvement of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers as the most knowledgeable and experienced people, access to print and non-print language materials, ongoing face-to-face interaction with students, and language immersion programming. The study results revealed that the Anishinaabe language teachers were providing amazingly deep cultural and linguistic foundations within their individual classrooms by utilizing their own IK and bimaadiziwin as the foundation of their teaching and learning practices. The cultural and spiritual nuances embedded in these Anishinaabe language and literacies programs provided deeper cultural and linguistic understandings of teaching and learning practices and insights not previously researched.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Violet N Okemaw. The research project, of which this thesis is part, received ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name, “Anishinaabemowin: Teachers Practices in Manitoba.”

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Without *zaagi'idiwin* (love), *manaajii'wewiin* (respect), *gikendaasowin* (wisdom), *zoongide'ewin* (bravery), gikendaasowin (wisdom), gawegaatisiwin (honesty), and *dabwenimowin* (humility) from everyone, I would have not been able to complete this dissertation.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

I have taken many learning and research paths to explore the research topic covered in this dissertation, *Anishinaabe Language and Literacies: Teachers' Practices in Manitoba.* This qualitative study documents teachers' language-teaching methods and students' learning practices based on teacher interviews, classroom observations, artifacts, and reflections on the researcher's own personal educational experiences. As an Anishinaabe[1] person and educator, I am committed to finding ways to improve the teaching in this field. My own learning and teaching experiences and personal stories embedded throughout this study help me understand the experiences of the selected Anishinaabe language-teacher participants. The study investigated whether and to what extent Anishinaabe language teachers incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS)[2] and *bimaadiziwin* ("way of life" in the Anishinaabe language) in their teaching of the Anishinaabe language and its literacies. I envision that incorporation of IKS and bimaadiziwin can provide students with a deeper understanding of the nuances of Anishinaabe language and literacies than those the conventional Western understandings of reading and writing can afford.

Anishinaabe Language and Literacies

In this study, the term *Anishinaabe language* refers specifically to the Ojibwe[3] language, sometimes referred to as the Saulteaux language or Anishinaabemowin. The Anishinaabe language, one of the main 3 out of 54 Indigenous languages slated for survival (Norris, 2006), is spoken by a large number of First Nations people in Canada and the United States. In Canada, the

[1] A word that originates from one of the ancestral languages referring to Indigenous peoples in Canada or the Unnited States; generally refers to a First Nations person

[2] IKS refers to the knowledge systems of "people and peoples who identify their ancestry with the original inhabitants of Australia, Canada and other countries worldwide" (Wilson, 2008, p. 34).

[3] An Indigenous language, sometimes spelled Ojibway.

Anishinaabemowin[4] is spoken mainly in Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta; there are 30 Anishinaabe-speaking communities in Manitoba (MFNERC; 2009) Henceforth, throughout this research study, I used the term Anishinaabe language or Anishinaabemowin language, except when terms, such as Ojibwe, Saulteaux, First Nations, Aboriginal, or Indigenous are used by other scholars/writers.

In this study, I reference both the oral aspects of the Anishinaabe language and the literacy components discussed and observed with language teachers in the selected classrooms. Aboriginal scholar Jan Hare (2005), in her research, explains that "Aboriginal literacy [is] a way of making sense of the world that is every bit as committed to meaning making as literate traditions associated with school-based learning" (p. 256). Hare further explains Aboriginal peoples' language and literacies in this way: "Their [Indigenous] literacies, which included close readings of landscapes and seasons, must be respected as meaningful ways of life with the potential to persist into the present" (p. 256). Mary Romero-Little (2006) supports Hare's definition and states: "For centuries Indigenous peoples have had their own distinct understandings, forms, and processes of literacy that provided children with many rich and meaningful daily opportunities to acquire the cultural symbols and intellectual traditions of the local communities" (p. 399). In other words, Anishinaabe literacies include traditional knowledges/teachings; an understanding of concepts (e.g., landscapes, weather patterns/global climate change); relationships with the land, environment, and family; land-based education; symbolic expressions; storytelling, legends, place-of-origin stories, including creation and re-creation stories; dance, song, and ceremonies; and conventional reading and written texts using syllabics or Roman orthographies.

[4] An Ojibwe word referring to the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe/Saulteaux language.

Little work has been done in Manitoba to standardize these writing systems, and even less has been done to consider the bigger traditional literacy system discussed above. There are numerous challenges for First Nations language teaching in Manitoba due to the use of nonstandardized Roman orthographies to write in the various Anishinaabe dialects. To teach these conventional literacy skills, many First Nations teachers have created orthographic writing systems in which Indigenous words are spelled out phonetically, but in some classrooms, teachers use a syllabic system that consists of symbols to represent different vowel and consonant sounds in the language.

Context

First Nations Languages in Canada

> *We need to place great emphasis on teaching our languages. We need to have immersion programs in Cree, Ojibwe, Dene, Oji-Cree and Dakota. There are 55 Aboriginal languages in this country; only three are strong. The other 52 are in crisis and some are nearing extinction. Language is the repository to all we are as First Nations People*.
>
> (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2012a, p. 2)

At an educational gathering in Manitoba, Phil Fontaine, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) reiterated that one of the languages with the potential to survive in Canada is the Anishinaabe language (P. Fontaine, 2012). His prediction regarding the loss of many Indigenous languages depicts the critical state of our ancestral languages and the drastic consequences of language loss to the Aboriginal people. Of the 11 distinct Aboriginal language families in Canada spoken by speakers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, only three languages are predicted to survive the next 10 to 20 years (Norris, 2006; University of Calgary,

2010). Aboriginal scholar Ethel Gardner (2004) discussed this loss with regard to her Sto:lo language:

> The purpose of my research is to tell the story of a community's drive to revive its language despite predictions of extinction, to document what this effort means to a community of people who believe that without the language they will cease to be a unique people. . . . Language is central to cultural identity, "how" language enhances self-esteem and pride, which promotes effective social adjustment, and "how" language expresses the world view of its speakers (p. 135).

Mary Jane Norris, in her 2006 report on the state of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis languages, states that

> …of the 976, 000 people who identified as Aboriginal in the 2001 Census, just under a quarter (235,000) said that they had knowledge of, or ability to converse in, an Aboriginal language. Some 21% of the Aboriginal population learned an Aboriginal language as their first language or mother tongue, but only 13% reported speaking an Aboriginal language most often in their home. …information from the 2001 Census indicated that an additional 5% do use an Aboriginal language regularly, if not mainly, at home. This may be relevant for endangered languages where the languages are used less frequently. (p. 198)

Patsy Duff and Duanduan Li (2009) also report the rapid loss of Aboriginal languages across the country. They refer to a 2008 Statistics Canada report, which states that

> …fewer than 30% of Canadian Indigenous people report being able to speak or understand an Indigenous language (often L2) conversationally; even smaller numbers report it as their mother tongue, the language they first learned and continue to understand, or as their current home language. (p. 3)

Statistics Canada (2011) reported regarding Aboriginal languages in Canada that ancestral languages, referred to as mother tongue, were either "spoken most often at home," or "spoken on a regular basis at home" (p. 50, emphasis in original). The Ojibwe language, for example, was noted as being spoken most often at home at least 37% of the time, and it was spoken on a regular basis at home by 33% by the families. The report also stated that all other Aboriginal languages within this study indicated that there was an increase of the languages spoken at home most often and less time speaking the Aboriginal languages on a regular basis at home. In a later study, Statistics Canada (2017) highlighted that:

- In 2015, 260,550 Aboriginal people reported being able to speak an Aboriginal language well enough to conduct a conversation.
- The number of Aboriginal people who could speak an Aboriginal language had grown by 3.1% since 2006.
- The number of Aboriginal people able to speak an Aboriginal language exceeded the number who reported an Aboriginal mother tongue. This suggested that many people, especially young people, are learning Aboriginal languages as second languages (p. 1).

In addition to these national statistics, the *Aboriginal Peoples: Fact Sheet for Manitoba* (Statistics Canada, 2016) claimed that Aboriginal language fluency was greater among people living on reserves compared to people living off reserve. In reference to the 2011 Statistics Canada statistics on Aboriginal languages, lawyer and Indigenous educator Lorena Fontaine (2017) wrote that "the average age of traditional speakers is over 60 years old, with that average increasing yearly" (p. 184). Basically, this means that our languages are now in crisis and that drastic measures need to be taken to retain, preserve, and revitalize the Anishinaabe language and other Indigenous languages.

Since Aboriginal language initiatives in Canada are underfunded, there are very few studies that support a need for teaching and learning Aboriginal language and literacies in Canada. When I conducted an interview with an Aboriginal teacher for a doctoral course assignment in 2010, the teacher commented that in his 30 years as a Cree language teacher in Manitoba, very little recognition and attention had been paid to Aboriginal languages locally, provincially, and nationally. When I undertook the research for that paper, I found very limited literature regarding Indigenous language and teaching practices and the retention, revitalization, and promotion of Aboriginal languages and literacies across Canada. At the time of this writing, very few research studies on Aboriginal language learning and teaching practices in Manitoba have been published.

In a recent conversation at Zhawendaagosiwin (Aboriginal Education Research Forum), long-time Indigenous education scholar Laara Fitznor shared that classification of second-language learning for Indigenous populations still needs to be properly researched and examined (personal communication, April 2016). Based on her understanding, ancestral language acquisition still needs to be researched thoroughly because many First Nations people have different levels of proficiency with their ancestral languages.

First Nations Languages in Manitoba

In Manitoba, there are five seven Indigenous language groups: Ojibwe/Saulteaux, Cree, Ojibwe-Cree (Island Lake dialect), Dene, Dakota, Mitchif and Inuktitut. The Dene, Cree, and Ojibwe-Cree communities are located in the north of the province, the Ojibwe communities reside mostly in central and southern Manitoba, and the Dakota communities are located mainly in southern Manitoba. A recent map of the traditional First Nations community names developed by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC; 2009) shows 30 Ojibwe/Saulteaux, 23 Cree, four Ojibwe-Cree, two Dene, and five Dakota communities in the

province. A provincial survey of all five language groups conducted by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in 1999 indicated that the ancestral languages were mostly spoken by adults aged 35 and over. This data indicate that most young families are no longer speaking their language with their children.

An informal inventory with the majority of band-operated First Nations schools conducted by the MFNERC Language and Culture Team in 2011 reported that the majority of First Nations schools in Manitoba offered language classes as a subject from kindergarten to grade 12, but only one school offered a language immersion program. Currently, there are no First Nations bilingual language programs offered in First Nations schools in Manitoba. Language immersion programs are considered more effective for children who are not learning their language at home. Subsequent studies have shown that immersion language programming can be more effective for learning an Indigenous language, and does not have a negative effect on English language learning. Onowa McIvor's (2009) *Strategies for Indigenous Language Revitalization and Maintenance* cites Aguilera and Lecompte (2007) and explains, "…that immersion language learning can be successful without affecting a student's performance in English" (p. 6). McIvor advocates for "well-educated bilingual and bi-cultural adults who will no doubt contribute in important ways to their nations and society as a whole" (p. 6). In their study, Usborne, Peck, Smith, and Taylor (2011) report that "students in the Mi'kmaq immersion program had higher scores in Mi'kmaq than those in the Mi'kmaq as a second-language program, and that by grade 1, students in the immersion program performed as well in English as those in the Mi'kmaq as a second-language program" (p. 210).

Professionally and personally, I have witnessed few developments or changes in Manitoba related to the retention, revival, or promotion of Aboriginal languages at the classroom, school, or

community levels since the 1970s. Aboriginal language learning appears to be under the radar. Although many First Nations schools in Canada offer language classes as a subject, I could find no research on the success of teaching First Nations languages to student populations as a result of core language programs. Thus, little is known about successful and unsuccessful teaching and learning practices in this sector. If we want students to learn and speak Indigenous languages, there is a great need to research, analyze, document, and publish effective Indigenous language and teaching practices and resources that are linguistically and culturally appropriate.

Purpose

The study aims to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships among the Anishinaabe language, IKS, and bimaadiziwin by exploring current Aboriginal language teaching and learning practices. This study is based on the perceptions and experiences of four Anishinaabe language teachers in Manitoba and informed by my experiences as an Anishinaabe speaker, language teacher, consultant, instructor, and school administrator. I believe that finding out how teachers incorporate IKS, bimaadiziwin, and the cultural and spiritual nuances embedded in the language into their classroom practices will be beneficial to the teaching of the Anishinaabe language and literacies. I examined how language teachers employ these cultural and spiritual nuances in their teaching.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How are Anishinaabe language teachers incorporating IKS and bimaadiziwin into their Indigenous language and literacies programs?

2. What experiences and resources can these teachers identify that would enhance their ability to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin into their teaching of Anishinaabe language and literacies in the classroom?

In the first research question, bimaadiziwin refers to the everyday activities that individual Anishinaabe families are engaged in at home, at school, or within the community. Social activities could include conversing with one another, partaking in meals, and participating in traditional gatherings such as feasts, family outings, and seasonal activities, including berry picking, fishing, hunting, or trapping. Individual bimaadiziwin or everyday activities might also include entertainment interactions, such as accessing social media, watching televised programs, or playing computer or video games.

In the Anishinaabe language, IKS are *Anishinaabe kikendamaawin(an). Kikendamaawin* refers to knowledge, whereas the plural form*, kikendamaawinan*, refers to knowledges. Although the word knowledges is not commonly used in the English language, it is used here to match the Anishinaabe word kikendamawinan and represents teachings and learnings gained from infancy to adulthood. Kikendamawinan are passed on from parents, grandparents, extended family members, Elders, and significant others in the community. I documented experiences, knowledge, skills, resources, and beliefs shared by the Anishinaabe language-teacher participants to find out if and how they incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin within their individual language programs.

Given that many First Nations language teachers live and work within their own communities, they do not have access to readily available documentation of existing language programs, curricula, and resources, and professional development opportunities might not be available to them. For example, many First Nations schools in Manitoba have a limited number of language resources to purchase and utilize within their individual language programs. Lack of

funding towards the development of language resources has resulted in fewer resources for Anishinaabe language programs. Research question 2 explored this issue and queried participants about such material and educational limitations. The participants were also asked to identify resources that would help them improve their teaching and learning practices in order to be more effective in teaching Anishinaabe and to enhance their expertise in integrating IKS and bimaadiziwin into their language teaching.

Significance

Indigenous languages in Canada are in a dire state. As Norris and Jantzen (2002) write, "children speak very few of the endangered Indigenous languages at home in much of Canada; it is therefore reasonable to expect that these languages will be close to extinction within a generation" (p. 35). Due to the residential school era and schooling based on Western ideology, to name a few, Aboriginal people have not had many opportunities in the past to have their experiences validated as "real" knowledge within educational systems. This study illuminates IKS and bimaadiziwin in Indigenous language programs and contributes to the documentation of one of the widely spoken Algonquin languages in Canada, the Anishinaabe language.

The findings of this study add to the much-needed scholarly literature concerning Aboriginal languages and literacies and responding to the findings will potentially contribute to reversing language loss. This study provides insights on what might be helpful to enhance language learning and teaching practices for First Nations students and illuminates further research needs. More specifically, the results of this study provide a deeper understanding of Anishinaabe language-teachers' practices by exploring their cultural, linguistic, and spiritual understandings of IKS and bimaadiziwin and how these constructs are and can be integrated in their day-to-day teaching. The research study results identify language training considerations for Anishinaabe

language teachers, inclusion of Anishinaabe traditional teachings and land-based learning, and development of new resources, to name a few benefits that will be useful to educators of other Indigenous language groups who are grappling with the same questions and challenges.

Niin (Situating Self): My Experiences as an Anishinaabe Language Learner, Educator, and Researcher

Aaniin/Boozhoo/Tansi. Ozhaawashkobinesi-ikwe ni(n) dizhinikaaz. Violet Okemaw kaye ni(n) dizhinikaaz. Omiimiiwisiipiing nin(d) oonjii. Ni nidaa anishinaabem shigwa ni minwendam chiwiichiyakwaa ni wiichi kikinoo'amaakek. Aanishinaa aabiji kitendaakon ki kiikitoowininaan, shikwa kaye okitaatisiik ikitowaak Manitoo kikiimiinikonaan owe giikidowin.

Hello, my Anishinaabe name is Blue Thunderbird Woman. My name is also Violet Okemaw. I am from Berens River First Nation, a small Anishinaabe community located southeast of Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba. I speak the Saulteaux/Ojibwe language fluently, and I am honoured to help and to share my experiences with other language teachers and educators. Our Aboriginal languages are very sacred, and our Elders tell us that our ancestral language is a gift from the Creator.

My beliefs and understandings regarding the importance of situating oneself follow those of other Indigenous scholars, including Evelyn Steinhauer (2002), who writes, "Before data collection is even considered we must introduce ourselves to the community—not just by telling people our name or where we live, but by giving personal information about ourselves" (p. 78). To follow First Nations cultural protocol, I introduced myself in my ancestral language, and in this section I share my cultural upbringing and experiences as a First Nations person who learned to speak the Anishinaabe language as a child and, later in life, taught and advocated for the importance of preserving the Anishinaabe language.

This research is based on my understandings of the Anishinaabe world view. As an Anishinaabe language speaker and an educator with a variety of experiences within First Nations and public education systems, my lifetime goal is: to pass on generational cultural, linguistic, and spiritual knowledges and language learning, as well as teaching experiences and practices with other language educators. I do this by sharing my personal, practical, spiritual, and professional journey from childhood to being a doctoral student and researcher. I will begin to share some of this experience here.

Additionally, this research is an extension of my many years spent learning and teaching Aboriginal languages. The study is based on the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual teaching experiences, practices, and resources of four current Aboriginal language teachers/instructors.[5] I extended my insight, understanding, and awareness of the teaching and learning of First Nations languages, gained from experiences ranging from childhood to my formal education and research paths, by observing, listening to, and conversing with four Anishinaabe language teachers in Manitoba.

In this section, I share my experiences as a child who learned and spoke the Anishinaabe language fluently. I share my linguistic, academic, and personal experiences as a student within First Nations and the public education systems. For example, during my high school years and throughout my teaching career, I valued *(ni) bimaadiziwin*[6], the traditional knowledges[7], and *ni(n)d Anishinaabemowin*[8], specifically, the oral and traditional literacy skills of the Anishinaabe and Cree languages. I also share my classroom language-teaching experiences and describe my school

[5] In many First Nations communities in Manitoba and Alberta, some language instructors are not certified teachers.
[6] "My way of life" in the Anishinaabe language.
[7] Teachings and learnings learned from infancy to adulthood; sometimes the plural form is used; referred to as Indigenous knowledge(s).
[8] "My ancestral/First Nations language."

administrator/educator's role in advocating for the retention, revitalization, and promotion of First Nations language programming within our current educational system(s).[9]

Anishinaabe Language Learner: From Childhood to Postsecondary Education

I come from a small First Nation community located southeast of Lake Winnipeg in Manitoba. The community was originally called *Omiimiiwiziiping*. In Anishinaabe, *omiimiik* literally translates to "pigeons." Apparently, the original settlement was populated with omiimik and, hence the Anishinaabe term was used to refer to the community. My grandmother, *Nookom* Boulanger shared another story about the original name given to the community to my siblings and me. She explained that Berens River was eventually the main settlement, which was named after one of the first chiefs, William Berens, who signed Treaty 5 in 1875. Other people from the community have also used the term *Omememwiziibing.* In Anishinaabe, the term refers to the "little people" and one Elder shared that *memekwesiwak* were spiritual beings who lived by rocks and can only be seen by certain people (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014). Many people from the community have used either one of these place names to refer to the community of Berens River.

Berens River is an isolated community with a population of about 2,000 people. Although the community has a school, a health facility, and some stores, many services are provided by rural towns or by cities like Winnipeg. The school provides only a K–9 education program; therefore, young people have to leave the community to attain a high school education. As I reflect on this now, I am very grateful that *ni niniiki'ikook* (my parents), *ni mishoomisak* and *nookomak* (my grandparents), and the rest of the community immersed my siblings and me in the Anishinaabe language and bimaadiziwin before I left the community. Many young families today, including my

[9] First Nations and public education systems.

own children, did not live this experience. Hence, they understand but do not speak Anishinaabe, Cree, or other Aboriginal languages fluently, and they have a limited understanding of our historical bimaadiziwin. This is a fairly common experience for many Canadian Indigenous families in Manitoba and across Canada.

At the age of 6, I started formal schooling in a one-room schoolhouse along with my older siblings. The classroom housed grades 1 to 8 with approximately 40 students from ages 6 to 13. We were taught by Catholic nuns. This experience was my first exposure to formal schooling and the beginning of assimilation into the mainstream educational system for all of us. In this school, we were expected to speak English only, and our Anishinaabe language and bimaadiziwin were not acknowledged or validated as part of our cultural identity. I do recall conversing in our home language during recess breaks with other students and at other times during the day when the nuns were not present.

During my elementary years, I considered myself to be a very eager learner, but later I realized that there was no connection between my cultural and linguistic background and the curriculum utilized at the classroom level. More recently in my studies on language learning of diverse cultural populations, I was able to clearly relate to similar concerns expressed by other researchers from a Western theoretical perspective. Language theorist Shirley Brice Heath (2002), for example, has written about the negative effects of excluding cultural and linguistic backgrounds of non-mainstream language learners. In her studies with different social, economic, and cultural groups, Heath notes that "schools are biased toward certain language patterns, ignoring the language strengths of students who aren't from mainstream cultures" (p. 74). Aboriginal Knowledge Keepers, scholars, and colleagues, including ni niniiki'ikook, ni mishoomisak, nookomak, and *Okidaatisiik* (Elders), stress the importance of retaining our

ancestral languages and cultural identities because they represent our unique status as the First Peoples of this country. During my years as an Anishinaabe language teacher/instructor, I read and reflected on the writings of mainstream research scholars that related to first and second-language acquisition theories and methodologies and how these could inform me.

I am now aware of the unfortunate loss of cultural, linguistic, and Anishinaabe knowledge and skills during my student years in the mainstream schools. When my siblings and I completed grade 9 in our home school, we attended urban schools away from the community for grades 10 to 12. The culturally and linguistically inappropriate teaching and learning resources and practices utilized by the nuns and other teaching staff during my community schooling continued at the high school level. We were being taught in a language and learning environment that was very foreign to us.

Abiji dash ni gii minwendam e kikinoo'amaagooyaan. (However, I enjoyed going to school). In retrospect, I believe I had a curious mind and an ability to acquire another language (English) to learn these new cultural ways and to succeed academically in this new environment. As a high school student, I knew that some of my academic struggles were related to grammatical and other linguistic structures of the English language. Basically, I was learning in a foreign language, not my first language, in these academic settings. However, during the final years of high school, I experienced acknowledgement, recognition, and validation of my Anishinaabe language, at least linguistically, for the first time as part of my academic learning. In grade 10, for example, I participated in a Saulteaux language exam, and I was able to obtain three high school credits for my language fluency skills. I clearly remember meeting the two language educators from the Manitoba Education Department who administered the testing. To begin the process, they provided instructions regarding the steps I needed to follow for the oral Ojibwe/Saulteaux

language exam. I recall only the last part of the oral language exam, which entailed telling a story in Anishinaabe. I shared with them a couple of stories regarding my experiences as a fluent speaker and experiences related to my years as a high school student within the mainstream system. No writing was required in the exam.

Aapichi ni gii minwendam ekaa ekiikakwenchimikooyaan chi ozhipii'ikeyaan aanish naa kaawin ni kii kashkitoosiin chi anishinaabe'ikeyaan. Ni mishoomis tash ako wiin ni kii waabama e anamitoot gichimasinahikan. O gii gashkitoon kaye chi anishinaabebii'ikat. Kaawin tash wiikaa ni kii kino'amaakosiinaan.

I was very happy that they [the language consultants] did not ask me to write in my Anishinaabe language as I did not have literacy skills in my first language at that time. My grandfather used to read the Bible in syllabics. He was able to write in syllabics, too, but he never taught us how to read and write using the syllabic system.

After my high school experience, I became more interested in furthering my studies in Indigenous languages and literacies at the postsecondary level. I wanted to further study and analyze the linguistic structures of the Saulteaux/Ojibwe and other Aboriginal languages. In my bachelor of education program I focused on Aboriginal languages and literacies, and I continued my studies at the master's level. During my undergraduate and graduate studies, I enrolled in Ojibwe and Cree language courses and took linguistics courses at the introductory and intermediate levels at the University of Manitoba. My goal was to research, analyze, retain, revitalize, and pass on the ancestral languages to the next generation of language speakers and language learners.

Anishinaabe Language Instructor/Teacher and Educator

As a novice instructor in the early 1980s, I prepared and taught an introductory Ojibwe language course from a language curriculum document developed in a postsecondary institution. I compiled and adapted language resources accumulated from Ojibwe and Cree language and linguistics courses I had taken during my university years. During this era, language-teaching materials were very limited, and language-learning theories and methodology based on teaching English as a second language (ESL) utilized a grammar translation approach popular at the time but primarily designed for English language learners from other countries. The pre-recorded language lessons utilized in language classrooms comprised of individual words, phrases, and dialogues, were basically language exercises developed by former postsecondary students in collaboration with their instructors. The Aboriginal language courses taught at the university level also utilized a grammar-based methodology and literacies consisting mainly of written tests, quizzes, and laboratory sessions for reinforcement of listening and comprehension skills. Some communicative language-teaching methods were used as well.

This initial language-teaching experience made me aware of the lack of resources and the advantages and disadvantages of the various second-language learning and teaching methodologies utilized at that time. I thought then that other language teaching and learning methods were needed to improve the Aboriginal language courses at all levels. I now realize even more strongly the importance of Indigenizing teaching and learning practices and resources in order for our Anishinaabe language programs to be successful. At this time, I began to think more about the Anishinaabe way of knowing, being, and learning and how this world view and philosophy can be linked to other second-language teaching and learning methods to teach a First Nations language to

learners of various age groups. This way of thinking is reflective of one's Indigenous mino-bimaadiziwin.

Recently, when teaching a curriculum and methods course at the postsecondary level and incorporating a Western theoretical perspective, I encountered some resistance from First Nations language teachers and instructors when I recommended a wide range of language and teaching methods that could be used in their language programs. I understand that it is difficult for most First Nations language teachers to wholeheartedly apply Western theory to their current language teaching and learning practices, and I now realize the importance of exploring more Indigenous ways of learning and teaching in order for First Nations teachers to see their cultural ways included in their learnings and teachings. In my view, language-teaching methods could be improved if IKS and bimaadiziwin constructs were recognized and incorporated into teaching Indigenous languages.

Given the many language learning and teaching opportunities I have experienced as a child, a student, and an instructor, I recall very few language-teaching methods that were linguistically and culturally appropriate for today's Indigenous language learners. Many different Anishinaabe language learning and teaching experiences and practices need to be provided to secure the ancestral language, a cultural identity, IKS, and bimaadiziwin. One of the unfortunate realities is that many of our young people are now learning their ancestral languages as a second language, a situation that is likely to increase the speed of language loss. Reversing the language losses is an area I will continue to explore.

One of my most memorable teaching experiences was teaching the Anishinaabe language to high school students at our first Aboriginal high school in Winnipeg. Many of the students in this generation partially or totally lost their ancestral language, but were excited to learn or relearn

it because it was still spoken by some members of their families or communities. The administrator of this school was instrumental in ensuring that Anishinaabe language learning and teaching was a priority, and provided some curriculum development time for the language teachers to meet. At this school, the Aboriginal languages team was responsible for coordinating whole-school activities, conducting meetings, and establishing networking with all the teachers in the school. In 2005, as a testimony to our work, Maclean's magazine named this school, Children of the Earth High School (COTE), as one of the best schools in Canada. The school administrator was quoted in the article as saying, "There are also mandatory classes in Cree and Ojibwa. Two cultural advisers make sure the programming is proper and traditional, and provide emotional, spiritual and physical support for the kids" (Maclean's, 2005). This award reinforced for us the value of the linguistically and culturally appropriate programming we were implementing at the high school level.

Unfortunately, many schools today are not able to provide time for curriculum development and research for Aboriginal language teachers as the COTE school did. It is important for school administrators to support the language developmental work that is necessary before classroom teachers can fully implement First Nations language programs. In many First Nations band-operated schools, language resources are still not readily available to language teachers. COTE, for example, developed an Aboriginal languages support document and supplementary language materials, and these resources are still being used by current language teachers in Winnipeg and by various First Nations schools in Manitoba. Development of this type of language documents is a good start, but much more work needs to be done.

Student and Researcher

As a First Nations educator and graduate student in Manitoba and Alberta, I focused on studying and researching Aboriginal languages and literacies during my postsecondary years. As an undergraduate, I had a passion for studying First Nations languages and linguistics. Within time, I was inspired to study our ancestral languages more thoroughly after noticing the importance of the linguistic, cultural, and spiritual knowledges associated with my first language. As a language teacher in the 1980s, I began to apply these newly acquired linguistic skills, language-teaching practices, and other related language experiences to teach learners from preschool to postsecondary levels. I aimed to honour, study, teach, research, and advocate for the inclusion of IKS and mino-bimaadiziwin in First Nations language programs within our province. Later, I pursued Aboriginal languages and literacies studies at a master's level and continued on this research path at the doctoral level.

As a doctoral student, and based on nookom's and mishoomisak's teachings and my learning experiences, I continue to value the importance of researching, retaining, revitalizing, promoting, and teaching our Anishinaabe language and literacies for the benefit of our current and future Aboriginal learners. Having completed the coursework and the candidacy examination, I am now applying the experience I have gained in researching languages and literacies from a Western perspective to researching language and literacies and teaching from an Anishinaabe perspective. In the study, I explored and discussed the understandings and experiences of Aboriginal language teachers in First Nations communities.[10] This study examined Anishinaabe language and teaching practices by conversing with, interviewing, and observing a small group of classroom language teachers.

[10] First Nations reserves/bands.

Additionally, I continue to reflect on and study what Elders have shared with me orally, what Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal scholars have written, and what mainstream language theorists have written from a Western perspective. Heath's (2002) research on how schools need to be more cognizant of the language patterns and language strengths of children who may be culturally and linguistically different from the mainstream culture is similar to the Indigenous language and literacies challenges experienced by today's Aboriginal language learners. Heath wrote that participants in her study brought to their classrooms "different patterns of learning and using oral and written language, and their patterns of academic achievement varied greatly" (p.75). In my opinion, given the growing population of Indigenous students in this country, our educational systems in Canada need to prepare more cultural and linguistic resources to accommodate the different teaching and learning situations they will continue to encounter. To begin this process, this research study focused on current Anishinaabe language and teaching practices and explored language and culture experiences and resources that can be utilized by classroom teachers.

While employed at MFNERC, I have had other opportunities in my current job responsibilities to continue supporting the retention, maintenance, revitalization, and promotion of our ancestral languages. Within the past 19 years, I have been a coordinator and a director, positions that required monitoring of the K–12 academic programming, including overseeing the teaching and learning of First Nations languages in Manitoba with band-operated schools. This long-term commitment to Indigenous languages and literacies has guided me to conduct research in this area.

Miigwech kakina kitinimim ga gii anamidoyek owe ni dipaajimowin. Keniin ni bagosendam onowe gaagii bikikinoo'amaagooyaan chi minosek kakina abinoonjiiiyak koding kewiin nawaa chi nidaa anishinaabemowaat.

I thank all of you who have read my story, Niin - situating self, and hope that my experiences will help current and future language educators pass on the Anishinaabe language and its literacies to the next generation from an Indigenous perspective.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework: An Indigenous Perspective

The most important lesson from my experience of working from an Indigenous research framework within the academy was how the "rules" of the academy and of research do not always allow an Indigenous research framework to flourish. (Lavallee, 2009, p. 36)

Indigenous and Western scholars alike have voiced concerns regarding the challenges associated with developing an Indigenous framework using Western research concepts and practices. One specific challenge is the differing ways of viewing oracy and literacies. In examining cross-cultural approaches to literacy, for example, Street (1993) argues that "literacy conceptualized within a framework that separates oral and literate cultures in a hierarchical manner creates crude and often ethnocentric stereotypes of other cultures" (p. 8). In other research, Street (2006) argues that an "ideological model of literacy" focuses on "knowledge [and] the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identify, being" (p. 2). The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) also recognized the lack of an Indigenous research framework; they commented that, although there has been research on the importance of infusing IKS, language fluency, cultural practices, and land-based lifestyles for academic success, "little attention has been paid to design a theoretical framework" (2000, p. 167).

In this study, I propose a theoretical and conceptual framework reflective of an Indigenous perspective and include my experiences as an educator to address the research questions. In the following sections, I first define an Indigenous perspective reflective of an Anishinaabe world view, then discuss the spirit of the language and symbolic cultural representations of the Medicine Wheel Teachings and the Seven Traditional Teachings that have been adapted through Anishinaabe world views. Finally, I relate the concepts of IKS and bimaadiziwin to my research study.

A Holistic Anishinaabe World View

Terms such as Aboriginal, Anishinaabe, First Nations, and Indigenous are used interchangeably in this dissertation in accordance with terminology used by other authors. In the Ojibwe/Saulteaux language, from an Anishinaabe perspective, the word Anishinaabe, rather than the word Indigenous, refers to the First Peoples of this country. *Anishi* means "to lower (down)" and *aabe* refers to "a human being." An Anishinaabe Elder, Harry Bone, speaking at a Manitoba educational gathering at MFNERC held in March 2012 explained that the lowering down of man (sic) to this earth symbolizes the First Peoples of this country. Edward Benton-Banai, an Anishinaabe spiritual leader and author, also shared a similar creation story of the first Anishinaabe on this earth. Shawn Wilson (2008), another Indigenous scholar, defines the word Indigenous as "the people and peoples who identify their ancestry with the original inhabitants of Australia, Canada and other countries worldwide" (p. 34). The *Canadian Oxford Dictionary* defines the word *perspective* as a "point of view: a way of regarding a matter" (Barber, 2004). The Manitoba Education, Citizenship, and Youth Department (2007) uses the term *Aboriginal perspectives*, rather than *Indigenous perspectives*, and provides this definition:

> The world view of the Aboriginal cultures [is] distinct from the world view of the mainstream culture in Canada. The world view presents human beings as inhabiting a universe made by the Creator and striving to live in respectful relationships with nature, one another and themselves. Each Aboriginal culture expresses the world view in different ways, with different practices, stories, and cultural products. (p. 127)

Dwayne Donald (2009) adds that the provincial education system has made "significant policy shifts in their curriculum documents that require meaningful consideration and exploration of Aboriginal perspectives across subject areas" (p. 4). The Indigenous perspective of this study focused on the diverse but unique philosophies, beliefs, and world views of Anishinaabe/Indigenous populations within Manitoba. Henceforth, an Indigenous perspective inclusive of an Anishinaabe world view, the spirit of the language, traditional teachings, IKS, and bimaadiziwin has been utilized to discuss the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

In describing the world views of Indigenous peoples, the epistemological and ontological components ask "How do we know what we know?" and "What do we believe?" about the nature of reality. Wilson (2008) explains that "epistemology includes entire systems of thinking or styles of cognitive functioning that are built upon specific ontologies" (p. 33); he concludes by saying that "epistemology is thus asking: how do I know what is real?" (p. 33). The connection between thought, language and culture has been explored by Indigenous scholars (Battiste, 2000, 2002, and in Battiste & Barman, 1995); Ermine, 1995; Hare, 2001, 2005, 2012; Kirkness, 2013; Little Bear, 2000; Wilson, 2008) and discussed by Elders[11] from various First Nations at gatherings held in Manitoba and abroad. The world view Indigenous scholar Willie Ermine (1995) suggests is

[11] An Elder is someone who has lived the "Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin" (Anishinaabe way of life) or the Dakota Wichokhan (Dakota way of life). The way of life . . . means something different in each First Nations community. It can also mean something different to groups of people or individuals in each First Nation" (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2003b, p. 5).

"congruent with holism and the beneficial transformation of total human knowledge" (p. 103). Leroy Little Bear (2000) contends that in order to sustain this type of world view, "Indigenous people engage in 'renewal ceremonies,' the telling and retelling of creation stories, the singing and resinging of the songs, which are all humans' part in the maintenance of creation" (p. 78). In support of this world view, Anishinaabe people passed their languages and cultural traditions on from one generation to the next. Ermine (1995) writes that "those who seek to understand the reality of existence and harmony with the environment by turning inward have a different, incorporeal knowledge paradigm that might be termed Aboriginal epistemology" (p. 103). The Métis scholar Elmer Ghostkeeper (2007) describes the world view of the Métis people as "spirit gifting," which means that

> the Great Spirit created other spirits, a three-world universe, and living beings gifted with a spirit, mind, emotion and body. Living beings include plants and animals. They are considered as gifts from the Great Sprit to this world we called "Land." (p. 4)

These inward reflective stances as expressed by these Indigenous scholars and Elders have informed this study.

Judy Iseke-Barnes (2008) emphasizes the importance of one's ancestral language in maintaining personal autonomy by saying that "one strategy for decolonizing is to connect to Indigenous languages and tap into our inner creative life force and inner space that allows us to practice inwardness and to understand our lives through dreams, visions" (p. 137). Thus, the connection to the land is an important part of Indigenous ontology, or world view.

In support of this Indigenous holistic world view, epistemologically and ontologically, this study explored and addressed the research questions from the perspectives of four Anishinaabe language teachers based in Manitoba. In the next section, I present the spirit of the language as

connected to the Indigenous/Anishinaabe world view and as shared by Manitoba, Ontario, and Alberta Elders. I will then introduce the Medicine Wheel Teachings and the Seven Traditional Teachings.

The Spirit of the Language

Relational ways of being and holistic world views are the spiritual connection of the Anishinaabe language. These concepts may support the spiritual connection of the Anishinaabe language. Bone and other Elders from the Turtle Lodge (a place of learning, healing, and sharing ancient Indigenous knowledge (IK) located in Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba, and built based on a vision received by Elder Dave Courchene) contend:

> We are an oral people. We cannot transfer our way of life through written words alone. Sacred law must be spoken and heard. Our way of life is meant to be lived and experienced. Our words are meant to inspire and guide our fellow human beings to follow the path of the heart. . . . This story tells of our human life and journey until our return back to the spirit world. (Bone et al., 2012, n.p.)

At a staff professional development session held by MFNERC in Winnipeg in December 2012, Elder Bone from Keeseekoowenin First Nation shared his knowledge and understandings of five different levels of the Anishinaabe language:

(1) the communicative level of the language and the words fluent speakers use to communicate on a daily basis;

(2) the language used for prayers and ceremonies in reference to the diverse teachings and learnings of the Medicine Wheel and the Seven Traditional Teachings;

(3) the language of the shaking tent, a traditional ceremony still practiced by Anishinaabe people in Manitoba;

(4) the language of dreams; and

(5) the "translated" language that is commonly used in educational contexts.

According to Bone, the language used in the classroom to teach Anishinaabe is merely a portion of the Anishinaabe language that has been simplified to align with English. The literal translations of vocabulary or concepts from Anishinaabe to English do not give the whole meaning. As well, it is known that all languages change over time, but to Elder Bone, this severe kind of change is worrisome. According to Blair and Fredeen (1995), it is worrisome any time a language becomes obsolete due to the dominance of another language.

In this study, I explored the depths of these language levels of the Anishinaabe language that Elder Bone, Indigenous scholars and practitioners, and other Western researchers have discussed. I am aware that many classroom teachers might be utilizing a partial form of Anishinaabemowin to teach the language. However, it is understood that the vocabulary of Anishinaabemowin and the study of other related linguistic structures from a Western world view and interpretation of vocabulary from an Indigenous perspective central to a holistic Aboriginal world view are needed to teach the language.

The spirit of language and the land.

Manitoba Elders have indicated that the spirit of the language is connected to the land. Sandra Styres and Dawn Zinga (2013) researched a *Community-First Land-Centered Theoretical Framework* and concurred that land means "a spiritual and relational place where the world of spirit is interconnected with the world we see and interact with on a daily basis" (p. 295). Further, these authors reveal that "land has traditionally been considered a sacred, healing space where anyone who is connected to a place can find what he or she needs to maintain, sustain, and build a healthy life" (p. 302); "land is considered as the first teacher" (p. 302). The authors conclude that

"land is a spiritually infused place grounded in interconnected and interdependent relationships, cultural positioning, and is highly contextualized" (p. 307).

This study explored whether and how much of the spirit of the language is being imbued in Manitoba classrooms. Are deep spiritual understandings associated with the teaching and learning of the Anishinaabe language? If so, how is this being accomplished? I attempted to answer these questions by using the key research questions when interviewing experienced language teachers and observing their language classes, as described in the methodology section and the final chapters of this study.

Medicine Wheel Teachings

The Medicine Wheel Teachings (MWT) is a model represented by an ancient circular symbol and is utilized by Indigenous peoples in North and South America to represent the holism of their world view. In many Indigenous world views, there exists a holistic model representative of what the Anishinaabe people refer to as one's bimaadiziwin, a "way of life" or "circle of life." This kind of holistic model, where language and culture are inseparable, is found in the philosophies of many Indigenous peoples in Canada and is reflected in their IKS and their bimaadiziwin. Specifically, the MWT model consists of four equal quadrants that symbolize the main aspects of human development: spiritual, emotional, cognitive, and physical; the four different races of mankind; and the four elements of nature: earth, water, fire, and air. Elders from the Turtle Lodge, for example, speak of their relationship with the earth:

> The Red people of Turtle Island[12] have always been an Earth-based people. The close feelings and connection to the land has been a basis for our perspective on the meaning of and understanding of our relationship to life. "The Land is our Mother" is a simple but

[12] The geographic centre of the North American continent.

> profound insight. It is the Earth, who teaches and symbolizes the sacredness of the womb, the woman the life-giver. It is the land that offers understanding of our beginning, our Creation, our oneness with Nature and each other as the human family. (Bone et al., 2012, p. 12)

In my experience working with and observing language teachers, the knowledge, training, and provision of resources to teach using this holistic model vary widely. By working with Anishinaabe language teachers at a grassroots level, I discovered how these Indigenous beliefs and concepts can be understood and can be applied to present-day education.

Seven Traditional Teachings

The Anishinaabe people believe and practice the values of the Seven Traditional Teachings of maanaji'iwin, (respect), zaagi'idiwin, (love), gikendaasowin, (wisdom), zoongide'ewin, (bravery), debwemowin, (truth), gawegaatisiwin, (honesty), and dabasenimowin, (humility), which came from the traditions and teachings of the Midewiwin Lodge[13]. According to MFNERC (2003b), when one can practice these teachings on a daily basis, then one is living a good life (mino-bimaadiziwin).

The Seven Traditional Teachings as noted above are further described by Elder Courchene as a way "to remind us of this way of life [and that] the Creator chose seven animals to bring us Seven Sacred Teachings" (2006, p. 29). He adds that each animal represents one of the teachings: eagle = love, buffalo = respect, bear = courage, *sabe* (helper) = honesty, beaver = wisdom, wolf = humility, and turtle = truth. At Niji Mahkwa School, an Indigenous cultural focused school in Winnipeg, the teachers implement this way of teaching and learning by applying each of the traditional teachings into the school programming and activities throughout the school year. The

[13] The Midewiwin or Grand Medicine Lodge is a ceremony mainly practiced by certain Algonkian and Siouan-speaking peoples (Hallowell, A. I.,1936, pp. 32-33).

classroom teachers and support staff discuss, plan, and develop thematic units for individual programs and organize and participate in whole-school activities with the students. At their annual fall event, for example, students participate in a traditional ceremony and feast by showing respect, love, and humility to one another and others by following cultural protocols throughout the pipe ceremony and blessing of the food (Winnipeg School Division, 2017).

The research and development program staff of the MFNERC researched the Seven Traditional Teachings and involved participation and representation from the five diverse First Nations linguistic groups in Manitoba. Posters of each of the traditional teachings with explanations in the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe language are now available to First Nations schools and to other schools attended by First Nations students (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2003a). Traditional teachings posters are also available in the other four First Nations languages spoken in Manitoba: Cree, Ojibwe-Cree (Island Lake dialect), Dakota, and Dene. Through the lens of these traditional teachings, I explored Anishinaabe language learning and teaching practices with a small group of language teachers. The study results revealed that the Anishinaabe language teachers were providing amazingly deep cultural and linguistic foundations within their individual classrooms by utilizing their own IK, bimaadiziwin the traditional values as the foundation of their teaching and learning practices.

Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Bimaadiziwin

Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have emphasized the importance of retaining, maintaining, and revitalizing ancestral languages, IKS, and Indigenous bimaadiziwin; to help today's learners achieve future success within the Western and non-Western worlds (Archibald, Antone, & Blair, 2003; Battiste, 2002; Blair, Paskemin, & Laderoute, 2005; Blair, Tine, & Okemaw, 2011; Brant Castellano, 2000; Cummins, 1990; Donald, 2009; Fitznor, 2006; Gardner,

2004; Hare, 2005, 2012; Kirkness, 1998a, 1998b; Settee, 2013; Weber-Pillwax, 2001). Additionally, world-renowned sociolinguist Joshua Fishman (1997`) writes about how language is linked to culture. Fishman argues that "there is a partial identity between the two, i.e., the parts of every culture are expressed, implemented, and realized via the language with which that culture has been mostly associated" (p. 24). Many years later and against a backdrop of language loss (Blair & Fredeen, 1995), Indigenous language teachers in western and northern Canada, many of them in remote areas, need to work hard individually and collectively to retain and revive their languages.

In the next section, I explain how IKS are defined and interpreted by First Nations and other scholars. I also explore the connections between IKS in relation to learning and teaching Indigenous languages and literacies.

Indigenous knowledge systems.

In this study the terms *knowledge*, *knowledges*, and *knowledge system(s)* are used interchangeably. Most Indigenous scholars do not use a single knowledge system to explain the diverse groups of peoples in this country. Therefore, in this study, IKS refers to the different types of knowledges prevalent and inherent among the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island. Indigenous knowledge stems from one's earlier cultural and linguistic lived experiences. Therefore, as noted within the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study the importance of IKS and bimaadiziwin as core aspects are instrumental in this study. Unfortunately, many language teachers within First Nations and other schools do not have opportunities or resources to fully implement Indigenous language programming and literacies inclusive of IKS or bimaadiziwin. Laara Fitznor (2006) writes about "The Power of Indigenous Knowledge: Naming and Identity and Colonization in Canada" through the Indian Act of Canada legacies from three different worlds: "the

Eurocentric imposed world, the Aboriginal world and the world in between where there is some overlap or integration" (p. 53). Despite the complexities of these current realities, Fitznor argues that the impact of government policies and the sad realities of racism and prejudices experienced by First Nations people in this country result in many challenges leading to cultural and language loss for many Aboriginal people. According to Fitznor, they have lost "positive connections to their ancestral language" (p. 53), culture, and Indigenous knowledge.

Indigenous scholar Marlene Brant Castellano (2000) provides a comprehensive explanation of IKS using the term Aboriginal knowledge systems. She explains:

> The knowledge valued in Aboriginal societies derives from multiple sources, including traditional teachings, empirical observation, and revelation. These categories overlap and interact with one another, but they are very useful for examining the contours of Aboriginal knowledge. (p. 23)

Brant Castellano adds:

> Traditional knowledge has been handed down more or less intact from previous generations. With variations from nation to nation, it tells of the creation of the world, and the origin of clans it encounters between ancestors and spirits in the form of animals, it records genealogies and ancestral rights to territory; and it memorializes battles, boundaries, and treaties and instills attitudes of wariness or trust toward neighbouring nations. (p. 23)

Brant Castellano (2000) further describes the characteristics of Aboriginal knowledge by referring to knowledge as "personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical languages" (p. 25). She states that "oral cultures are often described as 'preliterate' as if literacy were a form of communication more advanced on an evolutionary scale" (p. 26). Brant

Castellano's work, and Indigenous knowledge shared by Indigenous peoples, refutes this kind of hierarchy because different types of literacies can be experienced within one's linguistic or cultural experiences. For example, Hare (2005) writes about "reading on the land," which can be explained by learning the different functions of local plants as understood by Indigenous people:

> The nature of their literacy, I contend, was a matter of learning to read symbols and inscribe meanings across landscapes within the family, which served as the primary medium of cultural continuity and the context for their literacy experiences. (p. 245)

I used the brief explanations of IKS provided by Indigenous scholars Brant Castellano and Hare to explore how this construct may be integrated into today's Anishinaabe language programs.

Aboriginal scholar Marie Battiste (2000) provides a perspective on IKS by explaining the challenges associated with IKS:

> The first problem in understanding Indigenous knowledge from a Eurocentric point of view is that Indigenous knowledge does not fit into the Eurocentric concept of "culture." In contrast to the colonial tradition, most Indigenous scholars choose to view every way of life from two different but complementary perspectives: first as a manifestation of human knowledge, heritage, and consciousness, and second as a mode of ecological order. (p. 35)

Battiste's interpretation regarding the lack of understanding associated with IKS and the challenge of integrating this construct within mainstream educational frameworks and programs is reflective of current Indigenous language programs. She continues:

> The second problem is that IK is not a uniform concept across all Indigenous peoples; it is a diverse knowledge that is spread throughout different peoples in many layers. Those who are the possessors of this knowledge often cannot categorize it in Eurocentric thought, partly because the processes of categorization are not part of Indigenous thought. (p. 35)

As researched by Brant Castellano (2000) and Battiste (2000), many current education systems do not fully support the unique cultural and linguistic knowledges inherent in Canada's Aboriginal populations. One of the reasons may be because postsecondary training institutions do not currently provide opportunities for this type of teacher training, or school systems may not support these types of directives within their individual schools. Priscilla Settee (2013) provides a comprehensive analysis of IKS. From a more global perspective, Settee describes Indigenous knowledge as knowledge "that has sustained Indigenous communities for millennia" (p. 5).

Balancing two knowledge systems.

As researched by Styres and Zinga (2013), bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges together can be challenging; however, if "two knowledge systems" work together in an ethical manner from a place where both traditions are respected (p. 287), then more balanced knowledge systems evolve. This is the stance, from which I generate my scholarship and work. As an Indigenous researcher, I experienced similar challenges as those mentioned by Styres and Zinga. I wanted to begin my research from an Indigenous/Anishinaabe perspective and then gradually link the Western thoughts to represent the postsecondary institutions' expectations of mainstream research, as acknowledged by other scholars. I gradually found an equitable balance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges. Similar to other Indigenous researchers, I eventually learned how to "walk and talk" in the two worlds, which is not a common experience for non-Indigenous graduate students and scholars.

Bimaadiziwin

> *Mino-bimaadiziwin—Onizhishin owe bimaadiziwin. Giispin mino-bimaadiziyan gakina gegoo imaa giga mikaan ji wiiji'igosiwin. Bizindan. Giga-miinigowiz.*
>
> A Good Life—This life is good. If you lead a good life, everything is there for you. Listen and you will receive what you need. (Elder Zhawanose[14], Hartly White, as cited in Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2003a)

The term bimaadiziwin, a way of life, in the Anishinaabe language is synonymous in the Cree and Ojibwe-Cree languages. There are some dialectal variations in pronunciation and spelling; however, the meaning is consistent across these languages and dialects. Elder Zhawanose describes his interpretation of bimaadiziwin in the quote above.

To my knowledge, bimaadiziwin has not been fully explored or researched in academic literature. This section will reference the few Indigenous and Western scholars in Canada who have begun to use the concept of bimaadiziwin within their scholarly work. Mary Isabelle Young (2005) utilized the term *pimatisiwin*, an Anishinaabe word, spelled slightly differently, in her narrative and explained that the term refers to "walking in a good way" (p. 164). She described how one's ancestral language is linked to one's cultural identity, and noted that the Anishinaabe way of life is connected to the land, spirituality, and language. For Young, pimatiswin mainly represents the rich cultural and linguistic experiences that she experienced in her earlier years with her parents within her home community. Linda Goulet and Keith Goulet (2014) describe the concept of a way of life as the "life force system" and use the term *pimachihowin*, a Cree word, as opposed to bimaadiziwin, to signify the "intentional action or activities of life force beings" (p. 65). Settee (2013) writes that "for Indigenous peoples, land, food and health are key components

[14] Zhawanose or Hartly White is from the Leech Lake Indian Reservation in Minnesota, USA.

of pimatisiwin, from the Cree root word ‘to be alive’ ” (p. 3). She further acknowledges that Indigenous Elders “embody Aboriginal knowledge with their rich life experiences, fluen[cy] in Cree, and remembrances of stories, legends, traditions, and life on the land” (Settee, p. 60). In this study, I discussed the terms bimaadiziwin and mino-bimaadiziwin with the language-teacher participants.

Despite the limited scholarly work on bimaadiziwin, in the following sections, I provide a few different interpretations from an Indigenous perspective and illustrate how bimaadiziwin is linked to the proposed theoretical and conceptual framework and the research questions. First, I define the term based on my personal and educational relationship with Anishinaabe languages and literacies. Then, I share an excerpt from ni mishoomis’s (my grandfather’s) book (Boulanger, 1971) to illustrate how he lived a mino-bimaadiziwin (a good life) and provide examples of the different interpretations of bimaadiziwin by Manitoba authors.

Ni mino-bimaadiziwin.

Anishinaabe mino-bimaadiziwin refers to everyday life experiences, from communicating with one another in the home to participating in more traditional activities like hunting, trapping, fishing, or engaging in spiritual or cultural gatherings/events. Reflecting back on my childhood, I describe below what it was like to be raised in an isolated First Nations community in relation to ni bimaadiziwin.

> Prior to attending any type of formal schooling, *ni niniiki’ikook* (our parents) and *ni mishoomisak shikwa nookomak* (my grandparents) took care of us at home. I remember spending our childhood years in a small trapping, hunting, fishing camp called Charron Lake with other extended family members. At home, the Anishinaabe language was always spoken and utilized at all times, so as a result, all 13 of my siblings, including other

> extended family members who grew up with us, spoke the language fluently. Our grandparents would tell us stories/legends about the tricksters, Wiisakejak, Nanabush or Wiindigo. I clearly remember listening to stories about Wiindigo and being horrified of the possible attacks or scares this trickster would bestow upon us. Later on in life, I understood that these stories/legends were told to us as a form of discipline, and/or to figure out what lessons can be learned from not listening or behaving properly when our parents or grandparents were away. (Okemaw, 2010, p. 4)

This childhood experience is an example of what I understand a bimaadiziwin or mino-bimaadiziwin entails. In an Anishinaabe language program in Manitoba, or elsewhere, a mino-bimaadiziwin may include, but is not limited to, the everyday experiences of students within their home, school, or community. Traditional Anishinaabe language learning and teaching practices might include thanking the Creator for a mino-bimaadiziwin, describing a procedure or providing instructions in the language (e.g., while making bannock or preparing traditional foods), listening to stories in Anishinaabemowin told by community storytellers or Elders, or learning about the different herbal medicines obtained from the land. In the next section, I describe what a mino-bimaadiziwin meant to ni mishoomis.

Ni mishoomis odibaachimowinan **(my grandfather's stories).**

Ni mishoomis, Tom Boulanger, Sr., shared many stories with my brothers and sisters when we were young. Ni mishoomis spent many of his young and adult years as a trapper, hunter, fisherman, freighter, and trader, and he passed on many traditional skills to and shared his lived experiences with my late father, Wilson Boulanger. He was originally from Oxford House, an isolated Cree-speaking community situated in northern Manitoba. During his retirement years, ni mishoomis decided to write about some of the hardships and pleasures of his life and what

bimaadiziwin meant to him. He also shared these experiences with extended family members, other community members, and others from nearby settlements. In his book, *An Indian Remembers* (1971), ni mishoomis talks about one of his many trapping experiences and the tenacity required to this life:

> Another news that I am going to tell about my life in trapping. I am going to mention about animals what I know one time. The animals were very wise. One time I tracked a fisher in the 14th of January. I tracked the fisher about eight miles right in the thick bush. I had a very hard time sometime trying to get through the bush with snowshoeing. After eight miles I found out that he went in a hole. I carried two traps in my packsack. (p. 45)

In another story, ni mishoomis also talks about his ancestors' strong spiritual beliefs of dreams that were shared with him about the land, water, and animals, to name a few, and the connections to a more traditional bimaadiziwin. In his own words, he said,

> When I was a young man myself, I was visiting a lot of times Old Indian men. When they dream of something they believe it. They sometimes dream of animals and dream of different kind of roots, lakes, rivers, rock, muskegs, mud and ground, leaves, water, snow, ice, winter birds, and summer birds, kinds of flies, summer, winter, fall, spring, north wind, south wind, west wind, east wind, kinds of prayers, creatures, and etc. (p. 38)

To further illustrate the concept of a mino-bimaadiziwin within an Anishinaabe world, the following section provides a snapshot of Manitoba life experiences compiled by two First Nations editors, James Sinclair and Warren Cariou.

Manitoba stories of a bimaadiziwin.

In their anthology *Manitowapow, Aboriginal Writings from the Land of Water*, Sinclair and Cariou (2011) reflect on several historical and contemporary interpretations of bimaadiziwin.

Manitowapow is an Anishinaabe word that means “where the spirits dwell.” *Manito* refers to the Creator and *wapow* means “dwelling.” The stories included in this book were written by many Manitoban authors from various linguistic and cultural groups over many years, starting in the 1800s. The stories depict traditional and contemporary lifestyles and realities of Aboriginal people, some of whom may have passed on to the spirit world. Specifically, the anthology is a collection of rich, colourful, diverse experiences. The book begins with experiences, stories, and legends as told by Indigenous leaders: such as the late Chief William Berens from my home community Berens River First Nation; to more current political leaders, Phil Fontaine, Ovide Mercredi, Dave Courchene Sr., and Elijah Harper; as well as spiritual leaders and Elders, such as the late Tabasonakwut Kinew, and Charlie Nelson. The stories range from political challenges to issues dealing with the economic situations of people in Manitoba. An excerpt from my grandfather’s stories reflecting his mino-bimaadiziwin is also included. Lastly, the anthology includes excerpts of writing from a younger generation of writers, all representative of the contemporary life experiences, bimaadiziwin, and realities in Manitoba, such as residential schools.

Having been born and raised in Manitoba and having studied and worked in the province most of my years, I have had the privilege to know and work with some of these authors, educators, and published writers, such as the late Ruby Beardy and Bernelda Wheeler, Joe McLellan, Matrine Therriault, Emma Laroque, Pat Ningwance, Isla Bussidor, and Jordan Wheeler. The late Ruby Beardy, for example, talked about her husband’s residential school experience, whereby he saved a group of students from their burning residence. The residential school era is another unfortunate reality that many Indigenous people across Canada experienced that took them away from their true bimaadiziwin (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). Many students, like Beardy, were required by Canadian government legislation

to leave their families and communities to attend residential schools, which eventually resulted in negative intergenerational impacts on their lives. During this era, many students were not allowed to speak their ancestral languages nor practice or utilize their cultural traditions and values, thus it led to following a foreign bimaadiziwin. This was a very dark time in our history for many families and communities whose children were forced to attend residential schools.

Furthermore, bimaadiziwin is an evolving construct as current writings such as David Alexander Robertson's *When We Were Alone*, which won the Governor General's Literary Award for Young People's Literature, teaches the history of residential schools to children. As well, Wabanakwut (Wab) Kinew, in "Good Boy," for example, writes about the racial tension that is one of the unfortunate realities of Indigenous families currently living in towns and cities. In this poem, he writes about a young Anishinaabe teenager who was wrongfully shot and killed by police (in Sinclair & Cariou, 2011, pp. 384–385).

Based on the context above and specific examples of bimaadiziwin or mino-bimaadiziwin, in this study I inquired about current and future language learning and teaching practices of the Anishinaabe language with four language teachers from four First Nations communities in Manitoba. I explored how extensively IKS and bimaadiziwin and the Anishinaabe language and its literacies are dealt with in Anishinaabe language classes. To throw light on research question 1, I observed, discussed, and documented other examples of a mino-bimaadiziwin as demonstrated and shared by the language teachers. This information will be helpful in developing and implementing future First Nations language and literacies programming (research questions 1 and 2).

Kodag Dibaajimowin **(Another Story): Moving Forward**

In the next chapter, I present the literature review for this study. It provides a brief overview of historical and contemporary developments in policies, strategies, and practices over

the last four decades, as well as scholarly works supporting Indigenous languages and literacies. In laying the groundwork for the research study, it also examines Western language-learning theories to explore how second-language learning and teaching theories may impact First Nations languages. Lastly, the chapter focuses on Indigenous language-teacher preparation and provides an overview of First Nations language-teacher support and training in Manitoba and Canada.

Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

At the time of this doctoral study, very few theoretical or research studies had been conducted on Anishinaabe languages and literacy practices from an Indigenous perspective, Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), or a bimaadiziwin context. Approaches to Indigenous languages have evolved over time. For example, in the 1980s, a linguistic approach to Indigenous language learning and preservation was prominent in Western postsecondary institutions. Previously, during the residential school era, many Indigenous children were prohibited from practicing their traditional teachings and bimaadiziwin and were not allowed to speak their ancestral languages. These reasons and others may have contributed to Indigenous languages not being taught explicitly in educational institutions as documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Final Report.

This review of literature in Indigenous language education provides a brief overview of historical and contemporary developments in policies, strategies, and practices over the last four decades, as well as scholarly works supporting Indigenous languages and literacies. It also examines, for purposes of laying the groundwork for the research study, Western language-learning theories to explore how second-language learning and teaching theories may impact First Nations languages. This literature review also includes Indigenous language-teacher preparation and an overview of First Nations language-teacher support and training in Manitoba and Canada..

Although Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have explored the importance of preserving Aboriginal languages, to date there are very few research studies on learning and teaching practices of the Anishinaabe language at the elementary school level. More research and Indigenous language resources are direly needed in this area, which I will address later in this

dissertation. This documentation provides a foundation for current and future insights into the importance of Indigenous language and literacies programming in Manitoba and across Canada.

Historical Policies and Strategies on Indigenous Languages

In 1969, in a document titled *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, which became known as the 1969 White Paper, Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau said:

> If you no longer speak your language and no longer practice your culture, then you have no right to demand aboriginal rights from us, because you are assimilated with the ruling power. (n.d.)

The federal government's White Paper was designed to assimilate Aboriginal peoples into mainstream society. It proposed to eliminate Indian status, abolish the Indian Act, convert reserve land to private property that could be sold by the band and its members, transfer responsibility for Indian Affairs to the provinces, provide funding for economic development, and appoint a commission to address outstanding land claims and gradually terminate existing treaties (University of British Columbia, 2009). This proposed legislation was strongly opposed by Indigenous leaders across Canada, who responded with policy papers of their own.

In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), later the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), developed a policy paper entitled *Indian Control of Indian Education*, which was later affirmed by the incumbent Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). The policy paper included an Indian philosophy of education, a statement of Indian values, and a description of the role parents were expected to play in the education of their children in First Nations cultures. The paper also noted that culturally and linguistically appropriate curricula reflecting First Nations values were required for appropriate programming. The paper emphasized the importance of Indigenous language retention and instruction:

> Language is the outward expression of an accumulation of learning and experience shared by a group of people over centuries of development. It is not simply a vocal symbol; it is a dynamic force which shapes the way a man looks at the world, his thinking about the world and his philosophy of life. (National Indian Brotherhood, 1972, p. 10)

The recommendations from this Indigenous policy paper reaffirmed the importance of teaching and learning the ancestral languages in schools and the need to train fluent speakers as fully qualified language teachers, teacher assistants, and other support staff. The development of language resources and the need for approved academic credits for language courses at the high school level were other short- and long-term goals recommended in the paper.

Also in response to the 1971 White Paper, the chiefs of Manitoba developed a follow-up paper called *Wahbung, Our Tomorrows*. The introductory section of the paper stated:

> After a century of an educational system that was, in fact, irrelevant to the environment and culture of Indian people, it goes without saying that the Indian has been thereby denied the means to participate in the resources and development of the land. (Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1971, p. xv)

The Manitoba position paper outlined the problems, grievances, and prospects of the Indian people of Manitoba in the areas of ongoing relationships regarding the treaties, Aboriginal rights, land, hunting, the Indian Act, and culture. The paper prioritized "health and social services, housing, education, social development, legal protection, economic development, and Reserve Government" as areas that needed to be addressed by the government. A summary of recommendations was included. Recognizing the importance of preserving First Nations languages, the Manitoba position paper recommended that

> …instruction in the native language for the first few years should have been implemented ages ago. . . . Instruction in the child's own tongue would give the child more security and enjoyment in schools. Learning after all goes far beyond gaining knowledge of the English language. (Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1971, p. 108)

The 1971 Manitoba position paper further stated, "we ask the provincial government to ensure that in schools where Indians are attending the teachers have an opportunity for training in the culture and background of the Indian people so that they may better understand their students" (pp. 193–194). Subsequently, over a number of decades, teacher-training programs, such as Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program (BUNTEP), were established to meet this need. The training was a good start, but these were small programs, and the requirements for all teachers employed in First Nations communities still need to be addressed by postsecondary institutions on a larger scale. A brief overview of Indigenous language-teacher training programs is provided later in this chapter.

Educational leaders like Verna J. Kirkness (1998a, 1998b, 1999), a well-known Indigenous scholar, long-time language advocate, and teacher from Manitoba, continued to advocate in the post White Paper years for the retention, revitalization, and promotion of language programming within the school system(s). Kirkness and her colleague Sheena Bowman (1992) described language and culture as follows:

> Language is the principal means by which culture is accumulated, shared and transmitted from generation to generation. Language evolves from those concepts with which a given culture interacts among its members and with the environment. (p. 102)

Kirkness (1998a) noted that the "key to identity and retention of culture is one's ancestral language" (p. 103). She travelled broadly and witnessed what had transpired with Indigenous people in other parts of the world, such as New Zealand. In 1998 she wrote,

> The Maori people have demonstrated that "language is culture, and culture is language." Maori language is not taught in isolation but is acquired through a natural process. Their approach is part of the total learning process of a child, family, and a community. (1998a, p. 114)

In the mid-1970s, through Kirkness's leadership and dedication to the retention, revitalization, and promotion of ancestral languages, the Manitoba Native Language Bilingual Program was founded and offered in five First Nations communities in Manitoba, including Cross Lake (Manitoba Department of Education, 1975). In 1981, the *Evaluation Report of the Native Bilingual Program* [for] *Cross Lake School* was prepared by the Manitoba regional office staff of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada; it noted substantial results of the program. The report concluded that the K–3 Cree Bilingual Language Program was successful in the sense that "the self-concept of students has improved; their academic achievement is satisfactory" (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, p. 26) and that both the Cree and the English languages were mastered equally. Further, in the executive summary of the report, the evaluation team noted that the "program has been of direct benefit to Indian Education in Cross Lake, and each of the goals and objectives as outlined in the introduction has been realized in part, if not totally" (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1981, n.p.).

However, due to lack of government funding during this era, many First Nations schools in Manitoba resorted to offering First Nations language classes as a subject, rather than continuing to offer bilingual or language immersion programs. As a result, the literature of this era reports the

increasing loss of first languages in Manitoba and across Canada. In Manitoba, many First Nations indicated both a need for culturally and linguistically appropriate language resources to successfully implement language programs and a lack of funding to hire and train language teachers. Indigenous language courses and training were provided by very few education institutions during this time. Red River College, for example, offered a two-year Aboriginal language specialist diploma program. This program was designed to train fluent and nonfluent speakers of Aboriginal languages in instruction, planning, interpretation, and translation for educational and government institutions (Red River College, 2017). Unfortunately, this training program is no longer being offered. However, the college is proposing another language training program with another postsecondary institution for Indigenous speakers to meet the crisis-level language needs of Manitoba communities.

In the 1990s, political organizations such as the AFN and Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC, formerly known as the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood) and other First Nations organizations in other provinces continued to document the devastating loss of Indigenous languages in Manitoba and throughout Canada. For example, the purpose of *The Manitoba First Nations Languages Survey: A Report* (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Committee on Education, 1999) was to "determine the language fluency of all First Nation citizens and to examine the state of First Nations languages within Manitoba's schools and communities" (p. 4). In total, 51 of the 62 First Nations communities in the province completed the household and community/school surveys and reported loss of language by individuals aged 35 and over. The report noted the need for community language planning, development of First Nations curricula, community language programs, certification of training for language teachers and instructors, and ongoing and consistent language programming in schools (pp. 1–2). Very few of the recommendations have

ever been implemented due to the unavailability of language funding at the regional and provincial levels. Unfortunately, within the past few decades, band-operated schools in Manitoba continue to offer First Nations languages as a subject, and currently, there is no evidence regarding an increase in language speakers in the student populations with this type of programming.

In the late 1990s, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996) reaffirmed that

> …only a small number of First Nation people speak First Nation languages. While more than a million people claimed First Nation ancestry in the 1991 census, only 190,165 said a First Nation language was their mother tongue, and 138,105 reported using their First Nation mother tongue in the home. . . . The relationship between mother tongue and actual language use is an important indicator of language vitality. A discrepancy between the two indicates a language shift, since a language that is no longer spoken at home cannot be handed down to the younger generation. (pp. 605–606)

In 2005, the National Task Force on Aboriginal Languages and Cultures (NTFALC) was struck, with a mandate to "propose a national strategy to preserve, revitalize and promote First Nation, Inuit and Métis languages and cultures" (Heritage Canada, 2005 p. i). Once again, the majority of the report's 25 recommendations reflected the financial, training support, and other requirements needed. These included protecting and promoting languages at the national level; status planning for First Nation, Inuit, and Métis languages; language education; a national languages organization / languages and cultures council; translation services for French-speaking First Nations, Inuit and Métis people; an endowment fund, a national projects fund , and an innovative projects fund (Government of Canada, 2005).

In addition to the task force recommendations, the United Nations set out policies and strategies developed to preserve, revitalize, protect, and promote Indigenous languages and cultures. The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) was adopted in 2007 and endorsed by 144 member countries; Australia, New Zealand, United States, and Canada were among those countries opposed. However, in 2010, Canada endorsed the principles of the UNDRIP document, and in November 2015, the Prime Minister of Canada approved the declaration and mandated the Minister of INAC and other ministers to implement it.

In 2016, the Minister of INAC announced that Canada is now in support of the declaration. UNDRIP includes 46 articles. Articles 13 and 14, for example, address the need to preserve, retain, and revitalize Indigenous languages and cultures internationally:

Article 13

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.
2. States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected and also to ensure that indigenous peoples can understand and be understood in political, legal and administrative proceedings, where necessary through the provision of interpretation or by other appropriate means.

Article 14

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language (United Nations, 2007, pp. 21–22).

In 2010, the AFN presented the federal government with a follow-up to its earlier policy paper on education. *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* (FNCFNE) outlined the following topics: statement of values, outcomes since 1972, First Nations learning systems, provincial and territorial learning systems, recognition of First Nations languages and identity, vision statement of lifelong learning, mission statement of education policy framework, objectives, policy implementation recommendations, and outcomes of FNCFNE. The report states that "the revisions and updates incorporated into this renewed policy paper will assist government and First Nations communities in building the requisite policies, programs, services and systems to ensure the future prosperity of First Nations peoples in Canada" (Assembly of First Nations, 2010, p. 3). In recognition of First Nations languages and identity, the policy paper also focused on the importance of preserving, revitalizing, and promoting Aboriginal languages across the country. The policy reiterates that

> First Nations were empowered to collaborate on First Nations languages development in order to directly link language training to the lifelong education process. The AFN's National First Nation Languages Implementation Plan, and the National First Nation Language Strategy Cost Estimate for Implementation were unanimously approved by the AFN General Assembly in . . . 2007 and [in] . . . 2008. (p. 9)

Although most of the documentation to support language programming at the national level was developed during the time periods mentioned above, no additional funds were approved by the federal government to move forward on the implementation plan and to cover projected costs as noted within the above documents.

Despite all the attempts made at national and provincial levels, the decline of language use in First Nations communities is accelerating at a rapid pace due to a number of legitimate reasons. The lack of government financial support for First Nations languages and culture has resulted in the absence of government legislation and policies. Furthermore, the Canadian government has denied the rights and interests of First Nation peoples and put into place policies that concentrate on assimilation through oppression of Indigenous ways of life and languages. Although the residential school era had the biggest impact on the loss of Indigenous languages in Canada, other factors contributed to the ongoing loss of home languages in many families. For example, once formal schooling was introduced at the community level, Westernized provincial curricula were utilized and the students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds were not validated or acknowledged. At these English-language-only schools, many of the teaching staff were non-Indigenous and, in many cases, knew very little about the Indigenous language, cultural traditions, and bimaadiziwin. Sadly, due to these experiences, it has been documented that many parents or caregivers of these families refused to pass the language and traditions to their children. Following the residential school era, many families resorted to relocating to nearby towns and cities for educational, medical, or economic purposes, and this change resulted in less usage of the languages in homes.

In addition, within the past few years, television, iPhones, iPads, and other technologies have taken over the Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and living. Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and organizations have reported that these experiences over the past 50 years

have resulted in the decline of language speakers in Manitoba and across Canada (Assembly of First Nations, 2011; Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, 1999, 2011; Blair, Okemaw, Zeidler, 2010; Fontaine, 2017; Kirkness, 1998a, 1999; Kirkness & Bowman, 1992; Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, 1971).

Since the residential school era, individual K–12 First Nations schools, provincial schools, postsecondary institutions, and community-funded programs in Manitoba and across Canada have offered Indigenous language learning. Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI), for example, has been providing language and culture programing for children and youth. Over the last few years, the youth who have participated in CILLDI's annual language summer camp, for example, have taken pride in their ancestral language and traditions by learning Indigenous songs and participating in cultural activities in the Cree language (Blair, Pelly, & Starr, 2018). In Manitoba, despite the impact of the youth popular culture, some youth engage in singing traditional songs at community gatherings, such as pow-wows, or in ceremonies in their ancestral languages.

Current and Future Policies and Strategies on Indigenous Languages

More recently, the 2015 TRC calls to action provided directives and strategies for legislative protection and implementation of Indigenous languages and cultures at the national and regional levels in Canada. Articles 13–17 of the calls to action on ancestral languages and cultures recommend that governments acknowledge Aboriginal language rights, develop an Aboriginal languages act, establish an Aboriginal languages commission, have postsecondary institutions provide professional and certified training for language instructors, and support name changes for residential school survivors (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 2).

Since the calls for action, the AFN has hired an Indigenous language commissioner and language engagement meetings have been scheduled across Canada. In Manitoba, a group of language advocates and educators were invited to attend a provincial forum to discuss what would be included in the Indigenous languages act. At a national level, the Government of Canada and Aboriginal organizations announced in June 2017 that they would be working collaboratively to develop a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit languages act (Government of Canada, 2017). Further, First Nations band-operated schools were provided with additional funding for language and cultural programming during the 2015–2016 academic year. The federal government invested a total of $2.6 billion over five years for kindergarten to grade 12 First Nations education programs across Canada. Two hundred and seventy-five million dollars of this funding was allocated to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit languages and culture (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, 2017). In regards to recently allocated national funding for Aboriginal languages, literacies, and cultural programming, First Nations education leaders from Manitoba reported that they were offering First Nations languages, land-based education activities, cultural programming, and community sessions, to name a few offerings, during the 2016–2017 academic year.

Scholarly Works and Indigenous Languages and Literacies in Canada

Since the early 2000s, Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars and educators (Archibald, Antone, & Blair 2003; Battiste, 2000, 2002; Blair, Paskemin, & Laderoute, 2005; Brant Castellano, 2000; Gardner, 2004, Hare, 2001, 2005, 2012; McIvor, 2009, and Norris, 2006, to name a few), have continued to report on the devastating loss of Indigenous languages and its effects on young First Nations people across Canada. In this section, I discuss the language research from a sociocultural perspective then I describe language acquisition and second-language learning theories, and Indigenous languages, cultures, and literacies.

Sociocultural Perspective

Indigenous scholar Barbara Laderoute (2005) used a sociocultural perspective of meaning making, based on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1978), to examine Cree children's literacies at home, at school, and in the community. Vygotsky believed that learning occurs when people interact with others and the culture they live in. Western and Indigenous researchers have drawn on Vygotsky's theory of learning through interaction with others and culture by implying the importance of validating, acknowledging, and implementing programming that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for minority and Indigenous students (Delpit, 1995; Hare, 2001, 2005, 2011; Heath, 2002; Laderoute, 2005; Lave & Wegner, 1991). For example, based on Vygotsky's (1978) work, Heath (2002), a sociolinguist, emphasizes the sociocultural perspective of language learning and teaching. In her landmark study *Ways With Words,* Heath (2002) discusses the influence Vygotsky's work has had on teachers and on her own studies of language and culture (p. 74). To further explore language and teaching practices, Heath asks, "How can teachers and researchers work together to learn about children's language experiences at home? And what can this knowledge mean for classroom practice" (p. 75)? In response to Heath's questions, researchers can provide many opportunities for Indigenous language teachers to validate students' home language experiences and engage in researcher-teacher discussions that require reflective and critical thinking for successful language learning. Delpit (1995), another follower of Vygotsky's earlier work, is a sociocultural language theorist who has conducted studies on second-language learners within minority cultural groups. Writing in the African American context, Delpit asserts:

> If we are to truly add another language form to the repertoire of African American children, we must embrace the children, their mothers, and their language . . . we must make them feel welcomed and invited by allowing interests, culture and history into the classroom. We

> must reconnect them to their own brilliance and gain their trust so that they will learn from us. We must respect them so they feel connected to us. Then, and only then, might they be willing to adopt our language form as one to be added to their own. (p. 48)

In this particular study, Delpit strongly emphasizes that classroom teachers should integrate a student's home language and culture into academic programming so that learning and teaching is reciprocal. Given the findings of Heath's (2002) and Delpit's (1995) research studies noted above, current educational institutions need to realize the importance of providing programming that is culturally and linguistically relevant for minority and Indigenous student populations in Manitoba and across Canada.

Following the original work of Vygotsky and other sociocultural theorists mentioned above, Canadian Indigenous scholars, such as Hare (2001, 2005, 2011) and Laderoute (2005), researched Indigenous learners from a sociocultural perspective. Hare (2001), for example, described the historical, cultural, and linguistic aspects within her Cree language research from an Indigenous perspective. She drew on a body of literature that supports the notion that oral language and literacy have been shaped by the social and cultural contexts of one's environment. Hare stated that the purpose of her research was to "broaden the ways we think about literacy by examining Aboriginal peoples' understandings, both on a personal level and within the context of a changing world" (p. 5). Further, she wrote that "western literacy has been limited to conventions of print in official languages, ignoring other symbolic and meaning-making systems" (p. 3). In support of her argument "for a broader conception of literacy which may include [Indigenous] languages, narrative traditions, and the rich symbolic and meaning-making stems of [the] Aboriginal culture" (pp. ii–iii), my study focused on how IKS and bimaadiziwin were incorporated into current Anishinaabe language and literacies programs.

Hare's more recent study on Indigenous knowledge and young Indigenous children's literacy learning identified various themes regarding the role of Aboriginal culture and language . In one of her main themes, for example, the following points were reported by Indigenous teacher participants when asked to consider the role of Aboriginal culture and language in supporting young First Nations children's literacy development:

> They identified a range of cultural practices that children took part in. These included drumming, singing, dancing, picking medicines (e.g. herbs and plants) or berries, fishing and hunting, gathering food and preparing traditional foods. At three of the project sites, it was shared that children take part in cultural ceremonies held in the community. (Hare, 2012, p. 402)

Hare's (2012) dissertation provides a foundation on how the concepts of IKS and bimaadiziwin can impact Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal societies and, more importantly, can provide an integrated approach to the knowledges and skills required for Indigenous language learners. It is from these cultural and linguistic research foundations that I explored Anishinaabe language and teaching practices.

From a more Indigenous holistic point of view, Indigenous Elders have shared the importance of linking language learning and culture together. In response to the question, "What do you think native students and educators ought to know about native education?" Aboriginal Elder Manitopeyes replied, "Good talking and good walking" (Hare, 2005, p. 243). Manitopeyes' message echoes what ni niniiki'ikook and other First Nations people have shared about our ancestral languages and the path to leading a mino-bimaadiziwin. In other words, ni mishoomisak shigwa nookomak and Okidaatisiik from the community knew that education was going to have a big impact on our future lives. Prior to the introduction of formal education systems, Indigenous

peoples, particularly Elders, from Turtle Island knew the many changes that our generation and future generations were going to experience. Hare (2005) confirms that "Aboriginal people are very aware of the changing world, and western literacy was seen to offer a gateway, indeed the gateway, to the newcomer's world" (p. 244).

Following the work of Vygotsky (1978) and other sociocultural theorists, Laderoute (2005) wrote that "language is in itself not only a tool, but also a part of cognitive process; therefore strong language development is desirable" (p. 15). She also states that in later works Lave and Wegner (1991) referred to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, a component of his social cultural theory as the "distance between cultural knowledges, knowledge that is taught through instruction, and the everyday experiential base of the individual" (p. 16). Laderoute (2005) and the other sociocultural theorists mentioned earlier validate and acknowledge the experiences, strengths, and differences that children bring to school daily.

Similar to the above-noted sociocultural theorists' research on the acquisition of second-language learning and teaching (Heath, 2002; Delpit, 1995; Delpit & Kilgour Dowdy, 2002), language and cultural loss are also evident within today's Indigenous student populations. Over the last couple of decades, I have observed First Nations language teachers or instructors in Manitoba utilizing second-language teaching methods reflective of second-language theories and methodologies as well as Indigenized ways of teaching and learning. In addition, based on my many years of working in both the public school system and the First Nations educational system, I can see how language teachers and researchers can collaborate on research studies that would be beneficial for the learning and teaching of Indigenous languages. More specifically, the participants in this research study have shared the importance of collaborating with me as a

researcher by sharing the importance of validating the learners' prior and current IKS, bimaadiziwin, and other cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences.

Following the work of American and British language theorists (Heath, 1983; Street, 1993), Laderoute explains the advantages of attending to social context. The importance of recognizing students' cultural and linguistic knowledges and lived experiences has been reaffirmed by contemporary Indigenous scholars and Western language educator advocates. For example, Hare (2005) and Laderoute (2005) utilized an Aboriginal/First Nations perspective on language and literacies throughout their scholarly work. Both researchers described historical, cultural, and linguistic aspects of Indigenous people in their research studies and explored the potential links between these aspects and Western language theories from a social constructivist perspective. Theoretically, as discussed above, a sociocultural perspective is reflective of Indigenous language learning and teaching practices as shared by four Anishinaabe language teachers from Manitoba.

Language Acquisition and Language Learning

Since the 1970s, Stephen Krashen (1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983) and other second-language theorists have researched second-language acquisition and language-learning methodologies. Krashen is a well-known second-language theorist and has published numerous articles and books on language acquisition and language learning. He writes that "language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. It requires meaningful interaction in the target language—natural communication—in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding" (Krashen, 1981, p. 1). In contrast, language learning is considered to be conscious and "is thought to be helped a great deal by error correction and the presentation of explicit rules" (p. 2). In more recent research delineating the relationship between language

acquisition and language learning, Blair, Okemaw, and Zeidler (2010) suggest that "acquisition is a more holistic [process] in a natural setting that focuses on communication, whereas learning is a more formalized, conscious practice. In Manitoba, many Anishinaabe students have acquired their ancestral languages at home, and the more formal second-language learning takes place within the formal school systems.

Second-language theorist and Canadian researcher James Cummins (1990, 2005) has repeatedly reinforced the notion of interplay between culture and language. The research of Cummins, Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars (Archibald, Antone, & Blair 2003; Battiste, 2000, 2002; Blair, Paskemin, & Laderoute, 2005; Brant Castellano, 2000; Gardner, 2004, Hare, 2001, 2005, 2012; McIvor, 2009; Norris, 2006) has provided a bridge for Indigenous language teachers of Indigenous student populations to strengthen their language and culture programs and to develop resources required for the retention, maintenance, and revitalization of Indigenous languages across Canada. Cummins concentrates mainly on minority students' second-language learning within the mainstream educational system and emphasizes the importance of recognizing and validating the cultural identities of students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Many First Nations students in Manitoba and across Canada are now learning their ancestral language as another language, or as a second language. As a result, these theories of language learning (Cummins, 1990, 2005; Cummins & Danesi, 1990) and second-language acquisition methodology (Krashen, 1981) need to be examined to determine their effectiveness for Indigenous language training, teaching, and learning.

Specifically, Cummins (1984) describes basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) in his research on language proficiency, bilingualism, and academic achievement. BICS was defined as "the manifestation of language

proficiency in everyday communicative contexts, whereas CALP was conceptualized in terms of the manipulation of language in decontextualized academic situations" (pp. 136–137). Following this theoretical framework for conceptualizing language proficiency Blair, Okemaw, and Zeidler (2010) explain in a more recent report, for Aboriginal communities in Alberta, that BICS refers to the understanding of the second language, including carrying on basic conversations. They noted, whereas, CALP "requires at least five years to develop the academic language required to learn the higher level concepts and material in the new language that foster successful school achievement" (p. 5). For example, in Indigenous language classrooms, different thematic units presented throughout the school year usually include basic conversational words, phrases, and concepts, such as greetings, numbers, animals, and seasons. Because there is a lack of research in this field, the current study explored how BICS and CALP may be related to the teaching of oral and written versions of the Anishinaabe language and the higher learning concepts that Elder Bone and other Elders feel are integral parts of language learning.

In exploring the status of second language and literacies of the English language for Indigenous students, in 1990 Cummins presented a report to the Yukon government, *Language Development Among Aboriginal Children in Northern Communities*. In this report, there is no mention of the Aboriginal language and cultural proficiency levels of the students; however, Cummins proposed an educational framework to describe the status of Aboriginal students' second-language experiences and academic challenges. In a subsequent study, Cummins and Danesi (1990) reported the importance of examining the notion of language proficiency, outlining the historical context and current trends of educational policy and practice for Aboriginal children. Although the authors discussed language development, literacy development, the integration of research results regarding school failure and interventions, and future directions for research and

policy for effective English language programming, much more is needed to illuminate Indigenous language and literacies needs.

Cummins and Danesi (1990) drew the following conclusions: (a) language is intimately tied to the sense of identity that individual children develop in their preschool and school years; (b) policies and programs need to revitalize the personal and cultural identities of Aboriginal students and promote confidence in their ability to succeed academically; (c) teachers should strive to communicate acceptance and respect for the culture and language; and (d) the community should be actively involved in the life of the school (pp. 26–28).

In a more recent article, Cummins, Hu, Markus, and Montero (2015) explain the importance of "identity text" and how it links to "identity affirmation" and "literacy engagement" within an academic setting. With Indigenous students, for example, the authors found that, "in situations where language operates as a strong cultural identity marker, such as for many Aboriginal people, identity texts provide opportunity to invoke Aboriginal languages to communicate understandings of their physical and spiritual worlds" (p. 560). Further, the authors report that

> …the multi-modal Aboriginal identity texts created in the context of the . . . project are physical artifacts that begin to unravel the colonizing processes at play in the lives of their authors. Aboriginal identity texts can be viewed as a decolonizing pedagogy. (p. 568)

Indigenous scholar McIvor (2009) writes about the importance of saving Indigenous languages and describes what some Indigenous communities are doing within their individual communities. She reports on effective language-learning methods and some of the challenges faced regarding the survival of the Indigenous languages. McIvor reports that documentation and preservation, curriculum/resource development, language engineering, teacher-

training/postsecondary initiatives, policy development and political advocacy, research, language classes, bilingual schooling, and immersion practices are some of the strategies used for Indigenous language revitalization and maintenance across Canada and abroad.

Overall, based on the current language needs of Indigenous student populations across Canada, Indigenous language researchers and language educators may want to reference Cummins' research and other American and British language theorists mentioned here, so that Indigenous language philosophies and practices and Western language theories and practices can be tailored for Indigenous language and teaching. In regards to Cummins' concluding recommendations, as the researcher, these findings helped frame the exploration and inclusion of IKS and bimaadiziwin in Anishinaabe language and literacies programs with experienced language teachers in this study.

To illustrate the importance of one's Indigenous language among the young generation of Indigenous populations, The Young Women's Circle of Leadership, a summer program offered by the Canadian Indigenous Languages and Literacy Development Institute (CILLDI), has been providing language-learning opportunities for young women from ages 12 to 16 (https://ile.ualberta.ca/). In a recent article on the program, authors Gardner, Blair and LaFramboise-Helgason (2013) report on its positive results, stating, "In this short eight-day program at the University of Alberta, young Aboriginal women explore the Cree language, traditional values, women's roles and leadership, and contemporary skills, such as in drama and digital technology" (p. 25). Blair, Tine, and Okemaw (2011) wrote about the program and said:

> We believe that these young women will be the language warriors of the future. With some considering careers in university level Cree language instruction, academics, or the trades,

> one thing is for certain: Eighteen young warriors have left, keenly aware that they are vital keepers of their language and cultural knowledge. (p. 101)

Language programs such as this one provide models for the young women and men within individual communities and are an important part of future possibilities for the younger generation. While Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars have proposed innovative ways of exploring Indigenous language revitalization, such as this one, there are very few research studies to support the inclusion of IKS and bimaadiziwin in today's language classrooms.

A Brief Overview of Indigenous Language-Teacher Training

Indigenous teacher-training programs operated Canada since the 1970s, such as the Brandon University Northern Education Program (BUNTEP) in Manitoba, Northern Teacher Education Program (NORTEP) and the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) in Saskatchewan, the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) in Alberta, and NITEP Indigenous Teacher Education Program in British Columbia). However, very few of these training programs have offered specific training in Indigenous language education. Examples of Indigenous language-teacher training that are currently being offered in Canada in a select number of universities include Thunder Bay's Lakehead University, the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC), the University of Alberta (U of A), and a few institutions in Manitoba. Lakehead University offers Ojibwe and Cree courses in the Native language minor program and in their Aboriginal languages specialist's certificate. This certificate offers two levels of competence for students with an interest in linguistic analysis and research (Lakehead University, 2009). The certificate program offered at UNBC consists of 10 courses (30 credit hours); the program allows individuals to pursue an interest in First Nations language through a concentrated program of courses on a particular language (University of Northern British Columbia, 2012). Completion of

the certificate requirements could be applied to a First Nations program. More recently, in 2016, the University of Saskatchewan has developed a certificate, which consists of 10 courses as a part of a bachelor of education program. They celebrated their first graduating class in the fall of 2017.

In British Columbia, groups such as the First Nations communities, the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), and the BC College of Teachers (BCCT) developed a program framework for a development standard term certificate (DSTC). This was developed "to provide accreditation to language teachers and also to offer an avenue for language teachers to bridge into regular teacher education programs and complete a teaching degree" (First Nations Education Steering Committee, n.d.). The BC Ministry of Advanced Education reported on the program as follows:

> Aboriginal persons holding a Development Standard Term Certificate (DSTC) in Language and Culture are certified to teach First Nations languages to K–12 students. To qualify for a DSTC students must complete a three-year program that includes: British Columbia College of Teachers academic requirements, course work in First Nations Language and First Nations Studies and a teacher education component delivered by an approved teacher education program at a B.C. University. (University of Northern British Columbia, 2012)

In Manitoba, Brandon University, the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba, and the University College of the North (UCN) offer a variety of Indigenous languages, linguistics, second-language methodologies courses, and other related courses for teachers and/or students who are interested in learning or teaching First Nations languages at the undergraduate and graduate levels. UCN, for example, offers a teacher-training program for teaching the Cree language. Currently UCN offers a 10-month certificate in teaching *Ininimowin* (Cree language) to classroom teachers who are fluent speakers with a bachelor of education, as well as a certificate for

teacher assistants who are fluent in Cree and have been in the classroom teaching Cree. At the Universities of Manitoba and Alberta, a student in a bachelor of education or bachelor of arts program who is interested in learning or teaching Ojibwe or Cree can take courses such as linguistics and First Nations languages at the introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels, and can also enroll in second-language methodology courses within a bachelor of education program.

Recently, Red River College in Winnipeg proposed a joint language training program with University of Winnipeg for an Indigenous language diploma in Ojibwe. The program would "develop grads with Ojibwe language, culture and education competencies needs for teachers (year 1); develop grads with Ojibwe English interpretation, translation, and program management competencies needed for workplace and community (year 2), and revitalize Ojibwe language" (Boulanger, 2017, Manitoba Aboriginal Languages Strategy meeting, PowerPoint presentation).

CILLDI (pronounced "sill-dee") is "an intensive annual summer school held at the University of Alberta whose goal is to train First Peoples' speakers and educators in endangered language documentation, linguistics, language acquisition, second-language teaching methodologies, cultural infusion, curriculum development, assessment, leadership and language-related research and policy-making" (University of Alberta, 2014). This summer institute offers courses towards an undergraduate or graduate programs for Indigenous language teachers and instructors. Every summer, First Nations language educators from across Canada register for a variety of courses to meet their individual needs. Currently only the stand-alone undergraduate certificate exists. The community linguists certificate (CLC) and a parallel certificate are both under construction for the teaching of languages under the Indigenous languages education certificate (ILE) for speakers and instructors (H. Blair, personal communication, November 2017).

In some First Nations communities across Canada, many of the instructors are not certified classroom teachers and do not have a bachelor of education degree. They are employed as language instructors in their individual communities based on their fluency in their Indigenous language. During the 2009–2011 summer institutes, I had the privilege of teaching a curriculum course at the University of Alberta for language instructors across Canada. Although it was a great experience to teach within these summer institutes, at times it was difficult to assess and evaluate the students based on institutional criteria as some of them had very little or no postsecondary training, while others were already enrolled in their undergraduate or graduate programs. As a result of the diverse range of these Indigenous language teachers, we focused on specific criteria based on the groups' experiential backgrounds and their ancestral linguistic knowledge and skill sets to provide a balanced assessment process for the students who required it. A recent development at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, is the new master's in Indigenous languages revitalization program, which is an interdisciplinary program linked with the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Education departments in Indigenous Education (University of Victoria, 2018).

First Nations Language-Teacher Training and Support in Manitoba and Canada

Over the last few decades, there has been very little or no documentation available on teacher training or support provided to First Nations language instructors or teachers in Canada and, in particular, Manitoba. Since the establishment of MFNERC in 1999, staff there has provided a variety of educational support services to the 58 band-operated schools from 49 First Nations in Manitoba. Established in 1998 by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, MFNERC "provides the province's leading education, administration, technology, language and culture services to First Nations schools in Manitoba" (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, n.d., "About").

MFNERC's vision is to: "support First Nations to develop and implement a comprehensive holistic educational system inclusive of First Nations languages, world views, values, beliefs and traditions with exemplary academic standards, under First Nation jurisdiction" ("Mission and Vision"). MFNERC's mission, which reflects the five distinct language groups in Manitoba, is:

- To help First Nations improve education for all learners to achieve: mino-pimatisiwin (Cree/Ojibwe/Ojibwe-Cree)
- To help First Nations improve education for all learners to achieve: honso aynai (Dene)
- To help First Nations improve education for all learners to achieve: tokatakiya wichoni washte (Dakota) ("Mission and Vision").

This educational institution provides excellent curriculum and pedagogy support to band-operated schools in Manitoba, but it does not grant degrees. In particular, the First Nations Language and Culture Program (FNLCP) of MFNERC consist of five First Nations language and culture facilitators (FNLCF), formerly referred to as language specialists, representing each language group. The FNLCFs have been offering professional development workshops, resources, and other follow-up language support for language teachers and instructors at the schools at the local, regional, and provincial levels. The FNLCP team also collaborates with Elders and other community speakers to discuss specific topics and strategies for community language planning and to implement language resources that will enhance language learning and teaching in the school and community. The language team coordinates regional language gatherings and conducts language workshops on resources such as the Before You Know It (BYKI) program, a software program consisting of language vocabulary and phrases co-developed by MFNERC and fluent speakers in each of the five First Nations languages (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2012b). Locally developed First Nations language resources are also displayed at local,

regional, and provincial educational gatherings. The language teachers or instructors are also encouraged to utilize other Indigenous languages curriculum documents developed by Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning and Training or by other provinces. These provincial curriculum documents include, but are not limited to, *The Common Curriculum Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Culture Programs, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit* (Weber-Pillwax, 2000); *Manitoba Kindergarten to Grade 4 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures, Bibliography of Recommended Picture Books/Novels with Suggested Uses: A Reference for Selecting Learning Resources* (2005); and *Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Culture Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes* (2007).

In 2011, MFNERC initiated and completed an informal First Nations languages inventory to determine what programming and materials were available. The results of the inventory indicated that First Nations communities are continuing to offer a range of K–12 language classes in Cree, Ojibwe/Saulteaux, Ojibwe-Cree, Dene, and Dakota. The popularity of offering First Nations language classes as a subject continues to grow, yet very few formal research studies have explored their existence or effectiveness. During the time the inventory was administered, only one First Nations school reported that they had a K–3 language immersion program; no other First Nations schools reported having bilingual language programs. The other band-controlled schools indicated that they taught their First Nations languages as a subject.

At a MFNERC First Nations languages think tank symposium in 2011, Verna Kirkness and other Manitoba pioneers in language education addressed a group of Manitoba language educators and reaffirmed the importance of retaining and revitalizing the First Nations languages in homes, schools, and communities. Issues discussed by a language-teacher delegation included, but were not limited to, leadership involvement and support, Elder involvement, parental involvement,

curriculum development for language instruction, cultural language camps, and language immersion programming (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2011).

More recently, in 2014, the Manitoba Aboriginal Languages Strategy (MALS) was established. The main goal of this initiative is to "revitalize, retain and promote Aboriginal languages for Manitoba" (Manitoba Aboriginal Languages Strategy, September 2015). The co-leads for MALS are Indigenous Inclusion Directorate (formerly the Aboriginal Education Directorate), Manitoba Education and Training, Indigenous Languages of Manitoba (formerly Aboriginal Languages of Manitoba [ALM]), University College of the North (UCN), and the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) under the guidance of the Elders. The Elders represent seven Indigenous language groups: Cree, Ojibwe, Ojibwe-Cree, Dene, Dakota, Mitchif, and Inuktitut. The lead organizations were signatories to a partnership agreement that was signed September 21, 2015. The Elders' role for this initiative is to ensure interconnectedness of the newly established MALS leads and their partners. The lead organization representatives' roles are to ensure organization of the working group meetings, implementation of specific goals, ongoing collaboration, and sharing of Aboriginal language information and resources. From 2014 to 2017, the MALS monthly meetings brought partners together to strategize and develop a work plan for completing the work identified. A target for completion of all the MALS action plans was June 2018 (MALS Terms of Reference, September 2015). This kind of collaborative planning for one province is rare and long overdue.

Since the 1990s, The First Peoples' Cultural Council of British Columbia has been focusing on revitalizing Indigenous language, arts, and cultures in the province. The council's many activities include, but are not limited to, providing funding support; advocacy; ongoing working relations between government and First Nations; developing languages programs and

community resources; information and networking opportunities, hosting education and information sessions, and providing training and archival language and cultural materials (First Peoples' Cultural Council, 2016). One of the unique components of the council's work is their First Peoples Heritage, Language, and Culture Act, which highlights the importance of protecting, revitalizing, and enhancing the languages, increasing understanding and knowledge sharing between governments and First Nations, and heightening the appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity.

Given the sparse research available regarding the teaching and learning of Indigenous languages and literacies in Manitoba and across Canada, it is apparent that scholars have not explored in a comprehensive way how IKS and bimaadiziwin are being implemented from the perspective of language teachers. This is obviously an area needing further research, and this study stands as the beginning of research at a micro level that can inform agencies at a macro level.

Kodag Dibaajimowin: Moving Forward

Moving forward, in the next chapter I present the study's research methodology and methods. I used a qualitative case study with an interpretative emphasis and key ideas from hermeneutics. I explain how I incorporated an Indigenous paradigm, outline my role as the researcher, and describe the research sites and study participants. The data collection section included the pre-interviews, interviews, classroom observations, and artifact collection. An interpretation of the interviews is included in the data analysis section, and the final section of the chapter includes the limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter 3. Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, I present the research methodology and specific methods of my study, which used a qualitative case study with an interpretative emphasis and key ideas from hermeneutics. I also explain the role of the researcher and describe the research sites and participants. The data collection processes include pre-interviews, interviews, classroom observations, and artifact collection. The data analysis section provides an analysis and interpretation of the interviews, and the final section of this chapter includes the limitations of the study and ethical considerations. The study was informed by my sociocultural experiences as a speaker of the Saulteaux/Ojibwe/Anishinaabe language and as a First Nations language advocate and educator.

Methodology

Qualitative Case Study Research

The purpose of interpretative inquiry or qualitative research situated in a constructivist paradigm is to develop a more informed and sophisticated understanding than that which was previously held (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 112). Sharan Merriam (1998) outlined the different types of qualitative research, specifically "basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study" (p. 11). Merriam mentioned that qualitative research is practiced by "qualitative researchers [who] are interested in understanding the meanings people have constructed . . . how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world" (p. 6). During the data collection and analysis processes, I was able to develop an understanding of the teacher-participants' knowledge and experiences and what they knew about teaching Anishinaabe language and literacies from a holistic perspective. Merriam

referred to qualitative case studies as the circle and the heart: “The heart is the focus of the study, while the circle defines the edge of the case: what will not be studied” (p. 25). The heart of my doctoral study is Anishinaabe language and literacies teaching practices, and the circle, or the boundaries are the many beliefs and other understandings of Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin and IKS.

Merriam (1998) described case studies as descriptive, interpretative, and evaluative. My research study has an interpretative emphasis. Since it includes an interpretative component, I listened and observed closely and interpreted what I heard and saw during the individual interviews and the classroom observations. Case studies do not seek to make generalizations; rather, they serve to illuminate general issues (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 54). I did not include an evaluative component; rather, the case study provided a direct understanding of the experiences and practices of the participants in the study. More importantly, I gained a deeper understanding of the learning and teaching practices of Anishinaabe language teachers, a population whose experiences are rarely documented in the literature.

Julia Ellis (2009) defines case studies as the type of research that “often inquires into the experience of individuals, small groups, or larger, more complex groups or organizations” (p. 484). My sample was a small group of Anishinaabe language teachers from Manitoba. I visited with the research participants initially at their schools and in their classrooms, then I interviewed them about the research topic to find out about their thinking and feelings about Anishinaabe language and teaching experiences from a holistic perspective. This process helped me identify the whole-part relationships prior to discussing Anishinaabe language and literacies teaching practices. Ellis, Amjad, and Deng (2011) observe that a wide range of pre-interview activities work well as a first activity in such inquiries to help the researchers understand their participants and the research questions or problems differently (p. 4). In fact, one of the research participants in this study

indicated that she was excited about the open-ended questions that were emailed to her initially, and she asked if she could focus on more than one pre-interview activity. I assured her that the questions from the pre-interview activity would overlap with the research questions in the subsequent interview sessions and that we would have ample time to talk about these other questions.

According to Merriam (1998), a case study is a means of investigating complex social units with multiple variables potentially important to the understanding of a phenomenon. She added that case studies are anchored in real life and provide a rich, holistic understanding that expands readers' awareness. Ellis, Hetherington, Lovell, McConaghy, and Viczko (2012) contend that "researchers cannot confidently anticipate either the important parts of a person's experience or the most relevant larger whole of which the experience is a part unless the interviews are based on using a holistic approach" (p. 491). Throughout the pre-interview activities and when responding to the open-ended questions in the subsequent interview sessions, the participants shared their experiences, beginning with their prior language learning and teaching experiences from childhood to adulthood. These stories provided a holistic view of their past and current experiences as language learners and now as professional language teachers.

Hermeneutics and Interpretive Inquiry

Citing Smith's (1991, 2002) work on key ideas of hermeneutical research, Ellis et al. (2011) discussed the key themes from hermeneutics and the importance of clarifying whole-part relationships. This helped to inform more adequate interpretation aiming for holistic understanding, rather than reducing what is learned to pre-existing categories, and appreciating that the language and history of one's community both enable and limit interpretations (p. 1). In my study, for example, I was able to apply the whole-part relations by focusing on grand research

questions when engaging the teacher participants in the pre-interview activities, then eventually focusing on specific questions geared towards my main research questions. Earlier, Ellis (1998b) suggested that key metaphors from hermeneutics include the hermeneutic circle and the spiral, with each loop in the spiral representing a separate data collection or analysis activity. She noted the importance of "entering the hermeneutic circle in the right way" (p. 3). Some of the data collection and data analysis activities for my study included conducting informal visits to the participants' classrooms and schools, engaging the participants in pre-interview activities, asking open-ended questions, and later, interpreting data collected from all these sources.

Working as a Bricoleur

As a researcher, I worked as a bricoleur incorporating an Indigenous paradigm. Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (1994) referred to the qualitative researcher as a bricoleur, a "jack of all trades," or "a kind of professional do it yourself person" (p. 2). According to the authors, the bricoleur's role is very complex because he or she must work with a diverse range of skills and available materials. The researcher's tasks include, but are not limited to, interviewing, observing, and interpreting participants' behaviour; analyzing documents related to research; self-reflection and introspection; obtaining knowledge of the different paradigms related to the research; and working with competing and overlapping perspectives and paradigms related to the phenomenon under investigation. This latter task was particularly important in my research study because it looked at an Indigenous paradigm alongside a Western paradigm for language teaching. I kept all of these research tasks in mind when conducting individual interviews, observing language classes, analyzing artifact and document collections with research participants, and recording them in my reflective journal. Although I initially felt very uncomfortable in this role, I attempted to fill the bricoleur role with patience, ingenuity, and diligence. As a novice researcher, I used my

professional experience and skill set gained from my former teacher and education administrator positions to fulfill my researcher's role and responsibilities to the best of my abilities. Despite the many unknowns and the complex roles associated with a qualitative researcher, I began to feel more confident with subsequent interview sessions, classroom observations, and visits to the community schools. By the end of the data collection, I felt very comfortable in this work.

Incorporating an Indigenous Paradigm

Wilson (2008) highlights the importance of building a strong relationship with Indigenous people during the research process. He describes the concept of relationality to rationalize the importance of building good relations with people, the environment/land, the cosmos, and ideas. Throughout my research study, I maintained ongoing communication with the research participants, by telephone or email. I did this prior to, during, and after my visits to their school or community. I believe that I developed a very good relationship with all my research participants. Wilson reiterates the importance of having "shared relationships [that] allow for strengthening of the new relationship" (p. 84) and he adds, "…this [kind of relating] allows you to become familiar or comfortable with the person" (p. 84). Prior to conducting the information sessions or starting any interviewing, I conducted an informal visit to each school, including the staffroom, classroom with students, and language teacher. I did this to, in Wilson's terms, 'get to know my participants' "relationships to other people or space [as] an appropriate way of finding out about them" (p. 84). The informal conversations within each site helped me understand the context of my study.

Role of the Researcher

As a First Nations person and former language teacher, I was able to identify with the experiences shared by participants in the study. In this way, I was partially an insider; however, as a researcher, I needed to step back and be a partial outsider. I have my own IKS and lived

experiences of bimaadiziwin that I bring to the understanding of this role. Some of these experiences are included within the “Niin (Situating Self)” section of this dissertation, specifically my experiences related to becoming an Anishinaabe language learner, teacher, educator, and researcher from my early childhood years through to adulthood.

Sandra Weber (1986) discussed a number of important questions, such as “What is the interview in qualitative research? How is it lived by the researcher? How does it become ‘data’? How do we use, abuse, and lose our interviews?” (p. 65). These questions, and others, were thoughts that entered my mind many times prior to, during, and after the data collection activities. Furthermore, Weber reminds me of an interview I conducted in a qualitative research course. I interviewed a participant for a class assignment and found out that I could relate very well to the interviewee’s language-teaching experiences. Several times throughout the interview, I wanted to comment on or judge what was being shared. Likewise, while conducting individual interview sessions with the four research participants for my research study, it was important for me to listen attentively, wait for silent pauses, and not comment on what was being shared by the language teachers. In fact, as I listened to and reviewed the first couple of interview transcripts, I noticed that I was beginning to share more of my former language and teaching experiences with the research participants. Weber referred to this as “other thoughts that greatly contribute to the hermeneutic nature of the interview . . . thoughts relating the other’s experiences and ideas to our own” (p. 69). From these experiences, I learned that I had to refrain from giving my opinions and let the teacher participants provide their explanations for themselves. I kept a dual-entry journal during these participant interviews, recorded my thoughts in a column alongside the participant’s input, and audio-recorded some of my reflections. These processes were useful to me when I transcribed and interpreted the interviews.

In addition, Weber (1986) suggested that interviews offer participants either the risk of revealing what they do not wish to reveal or the potential benefit of gaining valuable insight into their topic (p. 66). At one of the interview sessions, for example, when we discussed Anishinaabe spirituality and Western religions, one of the research participants said, "I don't know if you know this, but I am a Christian." At that moment, I knew that it was not her intention to tell me about her cultural orientation, but she did. As a Christian, Christine appeared very positive towards Christianity and Anishinaabe spirituality. In other situations, there has been tensions between Christianity and Indigenous spirituality in some communities.

In "Closing the Gap Between Research and Practice: Conversation as a Mode of Doing Research," Terrance Carson (1986) wrote about the differences between research and practice. I found the section on coming to the question helpful and relevant to my research study. Carson reasoned that "autobiographical reflection is . . . an important aspect of research in a conversational mode" (p. 76). As a qualitative researcher, I found that my conversations and observations with study participants about their language-teaching experiences and practices were helpful in gaining participants' trust and provided ideas for probing questions.

In "The Analysis of Interview Narratives," Elliott Mishler (1986) wrote about the mainstream tradition of using standardized questions and analysis of interviews. He explained that this process overly relies on standardization: "Essentially, the mainstream tradition has focused almost exclusively on problems of standardization, that is, how to ask all respondents the same question and how to analyze their responses with standardized coding systems" (p. 233) that have been introduced by looking at other stories and anecdotes as a unit of analysis. Mishler referred to an alternative perspective of conducting interviews, suggesting that, "as a discourse between speakers, these problems are brought forward and made central topics for interview research" (p.

234). In my experience, the individual interview sessions provided many opportunities for flexibility, and as a result, the research participants did not feel restricted to answering standardized research questions. For example, three of the four participants used a full interview session to complete the pre-interview activities, whereas one of them only required half of the time, but in total, the same amount of time was utilized by all four participants for both the pre-interview activities and the open-ended research questions.

Research Sites

During the 2014–2015 academic year, I provided information sessions about my research study at educational gatherings held in Manitoba. I asked potential participants to come to an information session where I described my research interests and invited them to contribute to the study. I followed an Indigenous way of introducing myself and sharing my cultural and linguistic background, as well as my passion for my research study, including some of my professional experiences as an Anishinaabe language educator. Following my introduction to the group, I presented details of the study, participant requirements, and the benefits of contributing to the project.

I explored rural First Nations communities that accommodate Anishinaabe language programming in First Nations band-operated schools in Manitoba. Initially, I provided research study-information packages to potential language teachers for whom I thought might be interested in participating in my research study. I have not identified the participating schools to protect the privacy of the teachers who teach in the communities.

The research sites chosen were located within close proximity to Winnipeg, where I live, ranging from about one to four hours of travelling time from the city. Selection of the four schools

was based on the different geographic areas and the availability of Anishinaabe language classes ranging from kindergarten to grade 8.

Participants

Participants in the research study were four Anishinaabe language teachers from four First Nations band-operated schools. I recruited participants at regional and provincial education gatherings, where attendees usually include experienced language teachers who are currently teaching an Anishinaabe language.

With the exception of one, the research study participants selected were certified teachers with a bachelor of education degree or had equivalent education credentials or language-teaching experiences. One of the research participants had a two-year bachelor of teaching certificate, which was the approved requirement when she began her teaching career in the late 1970s. In summary, all language-teacher participants had taught the Anishinaabe language for a period of five or more years and they resided and taught in a First Nations community in Manitoba.

Following the information sessions, I scheduled follow-up meetings with the four selected study participants. Prior to my first visits with the chosen study participants, I sent the information packages to the teacher participants, school administrators and school board, and chief and council. At our scheduled information meetings, the consent letters were signed by the participating teachers and by one of the community leadership representatives. During this meeting, the chief or council representatives who attended from each community asked general questions, and all four communities approved their involvement with my research study. As a follow-up, I offered tobacco or a gift to each participating teacher prior to our first interview session, and this cultural protocol also confirmed their commitment to the study.

The four teacher participants who participated in the study were Christine, Brian, Isabelle, and late Matilda. Christine teaches a combined grade 2 and 3 class and teaches the Ojibwe language as a subject. She has a bachelor of arts and a bachelor of education degree and has about 20 years of classroom teaching experience. Brian has a bachelor of education degree and he has been teaching for 36 years. He is currently teaching Ojibwe from grades 7 to 11. Isabelle has a bachelor of teaching certificate and is currently teaching the Ojibwe language from grades 1 to 6. She has approximately 35 years of classroom teaching experience. At the time of this study, Matilda taught the Ojibwe language to grades 1–12 and had about 25 years of classroom teaching experience. Sadly, in 2017, Matilda passed away due to a long-term illness.

Although each one of the language teachers lives and works in a different regional Ojibwe language community in Manitoba, they knew each other from attending education workshops, conferences, and community gatherings. I anticipated from the beginning a wealth of Indigenous knowledge, bimaadiziwin, and language and teaching experiences among these four study participants.

Methods

Data Collection

I utilized interpretive inquiry methods, including individual interviews and classroom observations (Creswell, 2008). Using a holistic perspective, I invited participants to share their background and current experiences and knowledge in Indigenous languages and literacies, learning and teaching practices, IKS, bimaadiziwin, and locally developed language resources. I reviewed documentation on IKS and bimaadiziwin to help me to construct the open-ended research questions in relation to learning and teaching Indigenous languages. I concur with Mishler's (1986) criticism of a standardized protocol. Thus, I used a nonstandardized interview process that I

thought would be more effective in obtaining and interpreting data in my research study because each participant and context was unique.

Interviews.

Ellis (2006) suggests that the researcher may begin the interview by using "getting-to-know-you (better) activities" for purposes of getting to know the participant as a whole person prior to finding out their experiences with the research topic. Ellis further states that conducting pre-interview activities (PIAs) and ensuring they relate to the participant's life generally, or to the research topic, is a good beginning for researcher and participant. At each of the interview sessions, the research participants willingly shared their lived experiences; their former and current Anishinaabe language and literacy learning; and teaching practices with respect to IKS and bimaadiziwin. PIAs, pre-interview questions, and open-ended questions (Ellis, 2006; Ellis et al., 2012) were conducted with participants and their responses were audio-recorded and transcribed (see Appendices A–C).

The processes employed in the interviews included framing a main question and asking how the participant experiences the topic of interest (p. 12). Open-ended interview questions provide a relaxed atmosphere for both researcher and participants and assume that participants have knowledge or experience with the research topics. Ellis et al. (2013) field-tested the interview questions in their study and reported that they learned to reframe and refocus either their research questions or their interview plans. The processes they employed in their interviews enabled them to acquire a more holistic understanding of their participants' experiences of the research topics and alerted them to important whole-part relationships (p. 2013, p. 11). Ellis, Janjic-Watrich, Marcris, V & Marynowski (2011) write that

> …if the interview provides a facilitative and inviting space for participants to share many stories researchers can learn what a topic is about for participants—what is salient or meaningful in their experiences of the research topic; that is, what is its significance—and can consider a number of whole-part relationships in interpretation. (p. 13)

Ellis et al. (2012) contend that it is the pertinent larger whole that should help the researcher understand why the teacher does what she does and feels the way she feels (p. 491). These authors mention that participants in their study were able to use the PIAs to recall, reflect on, and analyze their own experiences (p. 492).

In general, the interview sessions I conducted with participants had clusters of questions, and by the second or third interview sessions, the questions developed were based on what was topical or meaningful from the previous interview. In regard to consideration of whole-part relationships, one can focus on the question "How do you experience the integration of IKS and bimaadiziwin when teaching the Anishinaabe language with elementary students?" as an example. Here the larger of the whole-part relationships is intended to relate to the teacher's prior experiences with the students, elementary students in general, Anishinaabe language teaching in general, Anishinaabe language-teaching practices in general, teaching in general, life outside of school, or with being a language learner or student herself in the earlier years.

Time schedule for the interviews.

In my doctoral course "Qualitative Research Methods of Education," we practiced analyzing participants' responses to pre-interview questions and to open-ended questions in a research situation. This experience helped me to get prepared for the interview processes. From October 2014 to March 2015, I conducted eight individual interviews and four classroom observations with the four First Nations language-teacher participants from the selected schools.

Prior to conducting the individual interviews, I forwarded correspondence to the participants and their school administrators ahead of time. For the information sessions and the data collection activities, I emailed, faxed, or mailed the proposed schedule that we would follow. The information sessions went as planned, and the PIAs allowed opportunities for the research participants to share their stories, experiences, and artifacts at the first or second interview sessions. At my first interview session, I concentrated on the PIA with the first research participant. In October 2015, I visited the second community, and because it was located about four or five hours west of Winnipeg, I decided to schedule both the information session and the PIA at the same time. I found my session with the second community the most tiring, because I had to start driving at about 7:00 a.m. to conduct the two activities on the same day and return to the city by 10:00 p.m. Since it was late fall when I started to schedule the information sessions and the interview sessions, the highway conditions were also a concern at times. For the other three community schools, I was able to schedule the PIAs and other interview sessions with the research participants on separate days. This shows the complexity of living and working in First Nations communities and the distance that I had to travel for my research work.

The evolving focuses of the interviews.

Throughout my interview visits, I had to refocus and rephrase some of the interview questions from the PIA and when asking open-ended questions. Specifically, when beginning to address First Nations language learning and teaching practices, interview questions were reframed for the second set of interviews most of the time. A couple of times, the participants were comfortable to share more in-depth First Nations language and teaching experiences within the same interview. As examples, the main questions for the first set of interview questions were general and based on the participants' Anishinaabe language learning and teaching experiences,

whereas in the second interview, I focused more on how they taught the Anishinaabe language at the early, middle, or high school levels. Later, study participants were encouraged to discuss if and how aspects of IKS and bimaadiziwin were represented in their language and literacy teaching practices.

Participants' responses to the interview activities.

Overall, the language-teacher participants seemed very eager and enthusiastic to participate in the PIAs and the interview sessions. They were excited to share their ideas, diagrams, and any visuals they had prepared for the PIAs, and diligently followed the proposed schedule and process I had communicated with them earlier. At these interview sessions, the language teachers brought and displayed samples of artifacts, such as objects, craft items, student work, their own drawings, and language documents. I provide more details regarding the artifacts in a subsequent section. At times, a couple of the participants expressed different emotions during the interview sessions because the questions triggered some sad moments, especially if they had attended residential school. As the researcher, I paid very close attention to these emotions, and in fact, one of the participants asked if she could review the entire transcript, and she selected sections that she did not want included as part of the raw data. Hence, I did not include it.

Classroom observations and field notes.

The purpose of the classroom observations was for me as the researcher to better understand and to provide an easier opportunity for the participants to tell their stories about their Anishinaabe language and literacies teaching practices. Visiting the classrooms gave me an opportunity to see the actual physical layouts of the classrooms as described by the teacher participants. In the interview sessions, for example, they described the displays on their classroom walls and how language-learning activities were organized and implemented. I scheduled at least

one or two classroom observations and visits to each language program during the fall of 2014 and winter of 2015.

During the classroom visits, I conducted individual interviews and, if time permitted, observed specific language activities in the classroom for one grade level, ranging from one to two hours, as mutually agreed with each teacher. Using a checklist and taking anecdotal notes, I paid close attention to all aspects of the language lesson, including the specific language-learning outcomes, to learn how all the different parts of the teaching and learning activities fit together to form a holistic Anishinaabe language and literacies program. The classroom observations consisted of a particular lesson or unit that the teacher shared with me, and included activating, acquiring, and/or applying activities. I paid close attention to the children's language endeavours. As well, I focused on the different types of formal and informal assessment activities utilized, and overall how IKS and bimaadiziwin were incorporated into the language activities. In describing the many ways of assessing language programs, the Indigenous Language Institute (2004) states that "keen and purposeful observation is another widely used technique that produced important information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of a program" (p. 14). In a nutshell, I wanted to learn how the Anishinaabe language was taught in these classrooms.

In all the language classrooms I visited, I took photos of language display boards and other language projects or activities to help me remember what I saw and experienced in the individual classrooms. On one side of the language classroom wall in one of the classrooms, for example, a large Manitoba map was displayed with the names of the communities identified in Cree, Ojibwe/Saulteaux, Ojibwe-Cree (dialect), Dene, and Dakota. In one of the schools, the language teacher and students showed me a large art piece posted on the display board opposite their classroom door that had the word mino-bimaadiziwin printed on top of the art piece. In this

school, commercial posters depicting the Seven Traditional Teachings and other traditional teachings were displayed in the hallways.

I documented all of my classroom observations in my field notes, I used a checklist to guide my focus on specific language-teaching practices (see Appendix D), and I took photographs of some of the classroom or hallway displays. Later, I audio-recorded my reflections from the classroom observations, and, if time permitted, I would write up my reflections in my journal. Later, this data helped me write up the individual teacher profiles, classroom observations, and study results.

Artifact collection.

I asked the language teachers to bring artifacts to the individual interview sessions that could be digitally filed in my field notes, as well as documents that gave meaning to their classes and/or demonstrated IK or bimaadiziwin embedded in their Anishinaabe language and literacies practices. We discussed the significance of these items, I photographed some items, and a dated record of all of the items is being kept, as agreed on by study participants. According to Pahl and Rowsell (2010), "artefactual literacy acknowledges that everyone has a story to tell, and they bring that story into their learning" (p. 3). During my visit to one of the schools, one of the teacher participants (Christine) showed me a beaded necklace made by her late mother that she treasures to this day. The gift of beading that was passed down to Christine from her mother is one she now shares with her daughter and grandchildren, along with memories of her mother and her mother's teachings. Christine's stories about her late mother's teachings and her beadwork are values and skills that she feels need to be shared with today's younger generation. She is very proud that both her daughter and her granddaughters bead and make gifts for other family members using the knowledge and skills in traditional arts and crafts passed down to her from her mother.

Data Analysis

I used key ideas from hermeneutics, where appropriate, to analyze the data collected in the study. Ellis (1998) describes the researcher who uses the hermeneutic circle as "one [who] uses existing preconceptions, preunderstandings or prejudices—including purposes, interests, and values to interpret . . . but in the backward arc, one evaluates the initial interpretation and attempts to see what went unseen before" (p. 26). In other words, a phenomenon can be interpreted by examining pieces of evidence that describe it, but the evidence cannot be evaluated without considering the original phenomenon in context—that is, the whole and the parts can only be understood by reference to each other. For instance, I began with a partial understanding of a participant's experience, and after learning more through the interview process, I reassessed my original understanding. My resulting knowledge of the participant's experience developed, and for each of the subsequent interviews, I used the previous knowledge to increase my depth of understanding.

For the data analysis process, I transcribed the PIAs and the responses to the open-ended questions for all of the language-teacher participants. I also revisited my classroom observation checklists and anecdotal notes then I reviewed and listened to the audio-recordings of my reflections. First, using track changes on my Word document, I picked out and documented all the groups of words, phrases, and ideas individually from each of the interview transcripts that seemed like main topics. I later realized this process was going to take endless hours to complete, and I did not know where I was heading with the process, so I decided to start over. This time, I focused on selecting key words, phrases, and ideas reflective of the two main research questions. With the first interview transcript, I typed out the numbers "1" or "2" beside a specific word, phrase, or idea related to one of the research questions. For example, I typed out "RQ1—elders' encouragement"

or “RQ2—concerns about retention” in the margins. These codes allowed me to focus on the main research questions throughout all the interview transcripts.

In a research methods class handout, Ellis (2010) explained the hermeneutic process of analyzing data, which includes identifying the topic of the story, the ideas expressed or revealed by the story, and commonly expressed ideas—motivations, preoccupations, or assumptions—revealed across stories. According to Ellis, these are the themes. Identifying these themes entails asking what each story/anecdote is about—what concern, care, belief, or value is being expressed. I believe I followed this data analysis process that Ellis described in one of our classes and it helped me to focus.

Max van Manen (1984) explored the following questions for data analysis: What is a theme? How do themes come about, and how do themes relate to the phenomenon that is being studied? The initial analysis process entailed writing brief narrative portraits to introduce the participants, then focusing on these narrative analyses to write case studies by showing the whole-part relationships. I then realized that data collected may need to be coded more than once. For example, for the second round of coding, I focused on gathering information pertaining to the study participants’ cultural and linguistic background, credentials, teaching experience with the Anishinaabe language, and other related information for their individual profiles. Once all four of the profiles for my study participants were completed, I utilized narrative analysis (Polkinghorne, 1995) to analyze individual transcripts by identifying themes within cases first, then identifying themes or patterns and/or differences across case studies.

From the interviews and the classroom observations, I compiled, transcribed, and reviewed the interview transcripts, classroom observations notes and checklists, anecdotal notes, and audio-recordings of some of my reflections. All of these documents helped me to develop three main

tables of raw data to work with. The tables contained words, phrases, and information shared by the teacher participants based on their cultural background, interests, work experiences, and so forth. This information helped me develop individual profiles of each teacher participant based on their language learning and teaching practices from childhood to their current positions as language teachers. The other tables contained clusters of words, phrases, and ideas shared by teacher participants, which later helped me to identify possible themes or subthemes for the study findings.

According to Polkinghorne (1995), the researcher collects "descriptions of events and happenings and synthesizes or configures them by means of a plot into a story or stories (for example, a history, case study, or biographical episode)" (p. 12). The narrative data I collected from the four Anishinaabe language teachers were drawn from the interviews, classroom observations, and participant-provided artifacts and documents and interwoven to craft individual case studies. The ultimate goal was to synthesize a working theory of how IKS and bimaadiziwin are incorporated into Indigenous language and literacies programs in Manitoba. I categorized the data into different themes, patterns, and whole-part relationships. Specifically, I discovered words, phrases, and ideas of possible themes that reflect the IKS and bimaadiziwin concepts.

While transcribing the responses provided by each of the study participants, I noticed there were many pauses during the interviews as each participant shared their responses in Anishinaabe then in English, or vice versa, to each of the research questions. These pauses resulted in many ellipses within the completed interview transcripts. On some occasions, the teacher participants would begin the interview in English or in Anishinaabe, then, proceed to translate some of their responses into the other language. This process made transcribing somewhat difficult at times;

however, as I did the transcribing myself, I tried to capture most of their thought processes and ideas in both the Anishinaabe and English languages.

Throughout the data analysis process, I paid attention to these data sources. I noted what each one revealed and meant in this field of inquiry. As well, I continued to review the literature relevant to my dissertation and referenced it alongside the study results.

Limitations

Due to the small number of teachers involved in this study and its focus on the Anishinaabe language, the conclusions do not represent the diverse Indigenous teaching and learning practices in Indigenous language and literacies programs in either First Nations or non-First Nations educational systems in Manitoba or across Canada. Despite the limited number of teachers who participated in this research study and the limitations of teacher self-reporting, the results still provide an extended knowledge, experience, and skillset base in Anishinaabe language and literacies teaching practices utilized by teachers within different regions of Manitoba.

Ethics

I reviewed the ethical practices and guidelines from the University of Alberta Standards for Protection of Human Research of Human Research Participants, and the Tri-Council Policy Statement regarding informed consent and other rights that research participants have within my study. I submitted my application for ethics approval. Following approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Alberta, I sent information and consent letters (see Appendices E and F) to perspective participants and discussed any other letters of consent required by the participants for my research study, such as their First Nations. In the document *Guidelines for Ethical Research in Manitoba First Nations*, external researchers and First Nations researchers

are reminded to follow cultural protocols when contemplating research in First Nations communities. It refers to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS)*, *First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples*, and the *Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP)* principles, stating, "The concept and principles of OCAP should guide research conducted in First Nations communities" (Manitoba First Nations Education Research Centre, 2014, p. 4). With these ethical guidelines in mind, I approached the chiefs and councils of the participating First Nations, and once approved, I followed up with the individual First Nations education authorities or boards to explain the purpose and nature of the study, and I sought approval from the participants' schools to conduct the study. For each of the communities included in the study, I followed the local cultural protocols and other traditional practices mentioned earlier in this section, such as offering tobacco or a gift, being respectful to the leaders, participants, and other community members, and speaking in my language.

Kodag Dibaajimowin: Moving Forward

In the next chapter, I provide a profile of each language-teacher participant, their life experiences within their individual communities, and their teaching backgrounds. I include the language-teachers' contributions and the challenges they have experienced during their language learning and teaching years as Anishinaabe language teachers. The final section of each profile also includes a description of the classroom I observed on my visits. In summary, these profiles will introduce the teachers in the contexts in which they live and work.

Chapter 4. Participant Profiles and Classroom Observations

This study explores how four Anishinaabe language teachers from Manitoba incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) and bimaadiziwin into their Indigenous language and literacies programs. In this chapter I provide some background information about each teacher participant, their life and teaching experiences, the contributions they have made, and the challenges they have experienced during their language learning and teaching years. The schools and communities included in this study are in different geographic locations, mainly in the south and southwestern parts of Manitoba. The biggest community has about 2,000 registered band members, whereas the smallest community has about 70 people registered within their First Nation. Each community is situated adjacent to nearby towns and has year-round access to towns and cities. Driving distances to Winnipeg via provincial highways range from 50 to 300 kilometres. Most of the communities have various facilities and services, such as arenas or school gymnasiums that host rollerblading, ice skating, tennis, volleyball, and hockey for youth and adults. All the communities have band administration offices. One of the communities manages a service station, a fire hall, a restaurant, and a few stores, and another houses a regional tribal council, child and family services, and other health programs

All four of the language teachers who participated in the study had very hectic schedules within their individual classrooms and schools. For example, while I was conducting the interviews in the schools, staff and students would drop in or interrupt the interview process or classroom observation. In subsequent interview sessions, we made sure we met in a quiet area of the school so we would not have too many interruptions from students or school staff. In this chapter, I describe the participants' Anishinaabe language classrooms and programs.

The four language teachers who participated in the study were Christine, Brian, Isabelle, and Matilda, and they chose to have their real names used for this research study. Although each of the language teachers lived and worked in a different regional Ojibwe language community within Manitoba, they knew each other from attending First Nations language education workshops, education conferences, or community gatherings. Prior to the classroom observations, three of the language-teacher participants gave me copies of lesson plans, which mainly included the objectives or student learning outcomes, key terms, concepts or phrases, and lists of student activities, including short questions they were going to review and introduce to the group. The lesson plans were very useful for me as an observer because I was able to gauge what activities the students were doing from the beginning to the end of each Anishinaabe language lesson.

Matilda

Matilda's Story

At the time of this study, Matilda taught in a First Nations community about two and a half hours northwest of Winnipeg in the Interlake area of Manitoba. There were approximately 300 students from nursery through grade 12 enrolled at the school. In addition to providing nursery to grade 12 academic programming, the school offers Ojibwe language as a subject to the students at the early, middle, and high school levels. The school staff consisted of a principal, vice-principal, two resource teachers, local and nonlocal classroom teachers, one First Nations language teacher, and other support staff. In July 2017, this school, along with nine other band-controlled schools, joined the Manitoba First Nations School System (MFNSS), which is the first Indigenous school division in the province.

At the beginning of her teaching career, Matilda left her home community for a number of years to teach in another Ojibwe community. Since many of the families within this community

still spoke the language, Matilda was able to continue speaking her Anishinaabe language throughout her early teaching years. In our February 2015 interview, Matilda said: "I am really blessed to speak my language, even though I was away from my community for many years. I started speaking it again."[15]

Matilda was very passionate about teaching Ojibwe, and she remained very positive about teaching it to the students in her school. Throughout our interviews, she sometimes referred to the language as Saulteaux rather than Anishinaabe or Ojibwe. I noted earlier that these three terms (Saulteaux, Ojibwe and Anishinaabe), are used interchangeably by speakers to refer to the same language group. This is also the case with academic writings. Dialectal differences exist within the Interlake area, including in the communities situated in the southeastern and western parts of Manitoba.

Matilda had about 25 years of classroom teaching experience in total and taught at the early and middle years levels, including high school. For the past five years, Matilda had been a language teacher in her home community and was teaching the Anishinaabe language from grades 1 to 8. Even though she did not feel confident in teaching the Anishinaabe language when she first started, at the time of the interviews she was feeling more confident and excited about teaching the language in her school and community.

The Ojibwe language was still spoken by some of the people in her home community, and Matilda felt that parents who were still fluent in their ancestral language needed to reinforce the language in their homes. She believed that English was spoken more in the homes and the community than Ojibwe. For that reason, Matilda was concerned that there would be ongoing challenges for students within her community regarding the loss of their ancestral language. In

[15] All participant quotes in the dissertation are from transcripts of interviews conducted between October 2014 and April 2015.

reference to the current youth population within the community, she believed that without the language, the students would not have a strong cultural identity. In her view, their language was what made them who they are. Without the language, she said, students will ask "Who am I?"

During both of our scheduled interviews, Matilda reminisced about her childhood years and shared some experiences relating to her role as an Ojibwe language teacher within the school and community. Matilda was raised by her great-grandparents from a very early age, and she commended them for providing her with a solid foundation in her ancestral language and culture. As a mother and grandmother, Matilda talked about the importance of speaking the Ojibwe language to her children and grandchildren as often as possible. Similar to many parents within her generation, Matilda revealed that her children could understand the Anishinaabe language but were not fluent in it. She was particularly excited about teaching the language to her daughter and grandson. During the data collection process of this study, Matilda's daughter was a teacher assistant in the school and assisted with the development of First Nations language materials. According to Matilda, her daughter was beginning to understand conversational Ojibwe and was continuing to develop basic oral and literacy skills at the same time as the students in her program.

Reflecting on her years as an Anishinaabe language teacher, Matilda said that her current teaching experience had been most rewarding for her. Without any hesitation, she said: "Over the last few years of teaching, I realize that I can do it and the main thing is that I don't give up." Until her passing in 2016, she remained positive and enthusiastic about her personal and professional accomplishments as a First Nations language teacher and educator.

Matilda also shared some of the challenges associated with being an Ojibwe language teacher within her community. She said:

> I feel like a lot of people did not believe in me, so I tried my best and I know that I did a good job. . . . I have to be enthusiastic about teaching. I feel alone sometimes, but I have to rely on myself, my inner strengths, to carry on teaching the native language, and every little success means a lot to me.

Matilda also felt it was very important to get support from school administration and the community. In fact, she said that the language program in her community was fully supported by community leadership, specifically from the education director, principal, and vice-principal and, more indirectly, from the parents, Elders, and community people. Matilda had a yearly language program plan and a budget that she accessed from her school administration. She mentioned that she also purchased supplies and materials at second-hand stores in nearby towns and major cities. She appreciated all the support and resources she had been able to obtain from the MFNERC. Matilda hoped that MFNERC would continue to provide school and classroom supports, host local, regional, and province-wide educational gatherings, and conduct professional development opportunities for language teachers in Manitoba. She believed that this type of support allows language teachers to learn new language-teaching skills and provides opportunities for language teachers to share ideas and resources with one another.

In regards to the importance of language revitalization, Matilda said she had noticed some positive changes within her community: “There seems to be a movement in the community. . . . I don’t know if I just noticed it, but it seems that way.” Further, Matilda spoke about the importance of involving Elders in her program and organizing extracurricular language activities for the students beyond the classroom walls so they could interact with the Elders. According to Matilda, Elders had a very important role in the community, in the school, and in her language program. For example, she found the Elders’ reinforcing behaviour was helpful. She expressed her passion in

working with Elders by saying “When we have Elders, life seems to have more meaning, or we are more happy when we have Elders. I love my Elders. We love our Elders in this community. . . . Everybody wants to be an Elder.”

Matilda referred to the Elders as role models in the classroom, school, and community gatherings. She mentioned that in some of the language and culture activities, Elders assisted in disciplining the students. In her own words, Matilda said: “The Elders will sometimes tell them [students] you should be listening and sitting down.” Throughout the school year, the Elders in Matilda’s home community joined the students for day-long language and culture camps at which the students made bannock, started a fire, cooked homemade soups, and prepared wild meat outdoors. At these cultural gatherings, there were many opportunities to hear the richness of the Anishinaabe language and culture in action and spoken between participants.

Matilda was a very busy teacher and was sought after by her colleagues. In fact, while I was conducting the first interview in her classroom there were a few interruptions by students or school staff who dropped in for brief moments to see her or ask questions. The school secretary continuously provided her telephone messages through the intercom. Specifically, at the February 2015 interview session, Matilda indicated that other Ojibwe language teachers from other First Nations schools contacted her now and again to inquire about language materials, resources, teaching and learning ideas, or upcoming professional development opportunities. Based on my school visit observations, Matilda seemed to be always willing to help and share her ideas and resources with other language teachers in Manitoba.

Inside Matilda’s Classroom

Inside her Anishinaabe language classroom, Matilda had displays of various visuals and texts reflecting the many themes she utilized for her nursery to grade 8 Ojibwe language program.

Posted beside the classroom door were grade-level lists and names of all the students who attended her language classes. All the students within this school were scheduled for Ojibwe language classes at different times throughout the week. Inside Matilda's classroom walls, her bulletin boards and posters represented the different themes, such as animals, seasons, family, actions, and other topics she was covering in her Anishinaabe language classes. Some of the visuals posted on the classroom walls, commercially bought, represented bimaadiziwin. Many of the other visuals in Matilda's language program were locally developed materials and resources that she and her teacher assistants had developed throughout the last few years. Some of the language materials were stored in small Ziploc bags, inside plastic bins, or locked inside her storage cupboards. Most of these language materials and resources were kept inside a storage room located inside the classroom. A Smart Board was located on one side of the classroom, which, according to Matilda, was a very useful technological tool for teaching and learning the Ojibwe language. The Smart Board is a large electronic whiteboard that is touch sensitive and is connected to a computer and a digital projector. The Smart Board in Matilda's classroom had a database of language vocabulary and conversational dialogues in Anishinaabe that were developed by a local community speaker or language teacher and uploaded for teacher or student use.

For my first classroom observation, Matilda provided me with a copy of her lesson plan. The lesson plan template included headings, such as subject/course, topic, lesson title, level, lesson duration, lesson objectives, summary of tasks/actions, materials/equipment, references, and take-home tasks. On the day I visited, once the students entered the classroom, Matilda greeted them in Anishinaabe by saying *aaniin* (hello), and they seated themselves in chairs at the round tables. This seating arrangement was located close to the bulletin board and pocket chart that Matilda had set up prior to the language class. As noted within the lesson plan, she started by orally reviewing

specific words, phrases, statements, and short questions in Ojibwe several times. The "actions" vocabulary that she had prepared for the students included words such as *namadabin* (sit down), *nibawin* (stand up) and *ambe* (come here). Throughout this language exercise, Matilda spoke in Anishinaabe; however, when the students did not respond, she would provide the English language translation.

Following the introductory activity, Matilda distributed sets of individual flash card word and phrase strips written in Anishinaabe to all the students. Throughout this lesson, Matilda provided instruction in the Anishinaabe language and also read the word strips in Ojibwe and/or English. She also asked for volunteers to match their sets of action word strips with those that were already located inside the individual compartments of the pocket chart. While this language lesson was taking place, Matilda reviewed the action words and utilized former language instructional exercises in Anishinaabe. For example, she was able to provide prompts for translations that the students were not familiar with. For Matilda, it was very important that the students understand the meanings of individual words, phrases, sentences, and questions in the Ojibwe language, as opposed to just vocalizing them. She reviewed what they had learned with them several times. Overall, the students seemed focused on the different parts of the lesson; however, some of them seemed somewhat restless by the end of the forty-minute class. Towards the end of this lesson, she reminded the students to reinforce the vocabulary they had reviewed and learned in class using their iPads. As an additional resource, Matilda allowed students to practice basic vocabulary using Ojibwe-language-focused software to reinforce language learned in the classroom. The Ojibwe iPad software offers professional quality audio, pictures, and syllabics, as well as a brief history of the Ojibwe people. The software program includes words, questions, and simple questions relating

to greetings, numbers, weather, family relations, and is an example of how new technologies can support language learners.

Christine

Christine's Story

During the timeframe of this study, Christine was teaching in a First Nations school located close to her home community. Christine started teaching in 1994 and has taught the Ojibwe language, mainly at the early and middle years levels, in her home community for 17 years. Later on in her teaching career, she taught in another First Nations school for three years. During the scheduled interviews and my classroom observation, Christine was a homeroom classroom teacher in a combined grade 2 and three 3 class and taught the Ojibwe language as a subject to these children. No other grades in the school were receiving Ojibwe language instruction except for her class. Due to financial constraints, many First Nations schools in Manitoba do not offer language classes to the entire student population. Education funding that is received from the federal government is assigned specifically for the English language instructional program. This funding is lower than for non-Indigenous schools, and has to stretch a long way. Additional funding is direly needed to hire language teachers or instructors in many of the First Nations communities. It was not until 2017 that the federal government began providing additional monies to individual First Nations schools for language and cultural programming.

At the time of this study, there were approximately 65 students from kindergarten to grade 8 enrolled in this school. The school staff consisted of a principal, vice-principal, one resource teacher, local and nonlocal classroom teachers, and support staff. In 2017, this school also joined the MFNSS.

At our October 2014 and November 2014 interviews, Christine shared some positive experiences from her childhood years through to her most current role as an Ojibwe language teacher within her current community. Christine mentioned that she spoke Ojibwe as her first language and did not learn English until about age seven. She said: “The English language was never spoken, so from 0 to 6 years old, that’s how I lived—a very happy childhood because I was with my parents every day, and I was always around my family, my siblings, my aunts and uncles and other extended family.” Christine was fully immersed in Anishinaabe way of life during her early childhood years. She shared many fond memories about her parents, siblings, and home community. As a child, she spent many days outdoors with her father and brothers. Sharing one of these many outdoor experiences with me, she said: “And I remember when I was a little girl following our dad to the stable where there were chickens and he was collecting the eggs that were in the stable, so that is one thing that I remember clearly.”

Similar to her older siblings, Christine attended residential school in a nearby First Nations community, and she remained there throughout her early and middle years of schooling. Christine and her siblings were only allowed to go home during the summer and winter holidays, so they never heard or spoke their language during the residential school years. Recalling her time at residential school, Christine said:

> Each year one of us had to go to boarding school (be)cause we were just like a step ladder in age, one year after another. It was a very sad time for myself as I seemed to be the one who took it very hard every time. . . . I went to a boarding school. I remember the Indian agent coming to get us again. This time he came with the priest in a long black habit . . . or long robe. . . . He would come and gather the children in [name of First Nations community]. [They] always came in two cars. The reasons why they came in two cars was

because there were different denominations already in [name of community]. There was the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian.

The residential school experience was significantly difficult for Christine because English was the dominant language and everything was foreign to her. This traumatic experience was very real for young children all across Canada during this time. Today, Christine commends her parents and extended family members for providing her with a solid foundation in her ancestral language and culture. As a parent and grandparent now, Christine talks about the importance of speaking the Anishinaabe language to today's children. She is especially proud of her older daughter, who has taken her own initiative to learn the language and maintain the traditional way of life. Similar to other parents within her generation, Christine resents the fact that she was not able to pass on the ancestral language to her children and grandchildren. She was raised in an era when the English language was viewed as more important than the Anishinaabe language, and parents believed they were helping their children by speaking to them in English.

Speaking about her early adult life, Christine mentioned that she decided to return to her home community following the completion of her combined bachelor of arts and bachelor of education degree. In total, she has about 20 years of classroom teaching experience. Although Christine left her home community for a number of years to attend residential school, high school, and pursue her undergraduate studies in an outside town and city, like the other teacher participants in this study, she retained enough fluency to be able to teach her ancestral language. To this day, Christine continues to be very passionate about teaching the language and remains very positive about teaching the Anishinaabe language and sharing the traditional way of life with the students in her school.

Christine shared some of the challenges she experienced as a novice First Nations language teacher in the early 1990s in her own community. Before she was hired to teach the Anishinaabe language in her home community, the school offered language classes to the entire student population. During this time, Anishinaabe was being taught by an instructor from a different province. Consequently, according to Christine, the students were learning a different dialect of the Anishinaabe language than their own, and she thinks this was somewhat problematic. Although there are numerous dialects in Manitoba and they are mutually intelligible to some speakers in each community, the people are very proud and protective of their own dialect and do not like to see their community language being interfered with or confused by other dialects.

Christine also noted that the lack of language resources and materials in her school made it challenging for her to teach the Anishinaabe language. She said:

> I had to make my own resources most of the time. They [referring to the school] did not have a curriculum to follow, so I just followed whatever the lady [referring to former language teacher] left behind.

After many years of teaching the Anishinaabe language to the students, Christine indicated that she now has more time to think about her teaching experiences. She reflected:

> When I was working in [First Nation], it was, everything happened inside the building and I always thought to myself . . . I always learned from being outside with my father and mother. . . . I spoke to the principal there at that time. . . . I asked him, 'Is it okay if I do some outside activities to do with our tradition . . . teach them about . . . duck plucking, berries, drying meat . . . ' cause that is how we lived . . . the activities that I learned when I was a kid, and, so I did that and, you know what, it sparked life into me.

According to Christine, it was at this time that she began to implement a land-based component in her Ojibwe language program. As a young child, Christine was raised "on the land," whereby the whole community was involved in berry picking, medicine picking during the spring and summer months, and hunting and trapping during the fall and winter months. In reference to a more land-focused program within her community school, she said:

> Those [land-based experiences] became very important in my mind, when I think back now. . . . Those land-based activities promoted togetherness about Native people, traditional activities. . . . Teachers loved it when we had our traditional teachings. . . . Sometimes we would have them in the school . . . to different yards . . . we had them in my yard one time, where I was born and raised . . . and the activities at my sister's another year, basically out on the land. . . . A few times we had them at the school. It was popular, became a big event. . . . So that is what I left behind in 2005–2006.

Due to the many successes of the land-based language program in her previous school, Christine was determined to implement a similar language-based model in her current First Nations school. Within this community school, she reiterated the importance of maintaining and revitalizing the Anishinaabe language through a more balanced approach combining the traditional ways with today's technology and extending language lessons with land-based learning and other hands-on activities. She passionately articulated this pedagogy, stating:

> I feel very encouraged that the children will be learning the words and learning to talk, finally using the words that they learn, and retaining it. Eventually, they will have meaningful conversations in the language. I see that happening nowadays. We have technology and Smart Boards in place now and different people that have the technological knowledge about how to operate different pieces of equipment.

Christine said that throughout her many years as an Anishinaabe language teacher, this teaching experience has been most rewarding for her. In reference to the students at the early years level, she described the joy of teaching the language:

> And, you know, but in the end, you know, when I went to the little kids area, they were the most sweet little children. . . . They just wanted to learn the language; they were happy with singing that they learned . . . pictures and games in the language. It was just awesome teaching the little ones because they wanted to learn.

Christine saw the potential for young children learning the Anishinaabe language. She was very positive and enthusiastic about her personal and professional accomplishments. She mentioned the importance of working cooperatively with colleagues in a respectful and professional way. She had demonstrated this experience with the language and land-based learning and she remembered it favourably.

Similar to the other teacher-participants' perspectives on the retention, revitalization, and promotion of the Anishinaabe language, Christine said she feels that it is very important to get support from the community and school administration. In fact, she said that the principal in her current school fully supports the language program in her community:

> We have a principal that is really driven, too, that is so encouraging. . . I feel the future is very positive about it. I know we are going to go a long way. . . . She is trying the best to meet the needs that way, being an Anishinaabe person. . . . She is just encouraged by the Smart Board.

Christine recalled that when she first arrived at her current school, she did a lot of the work on her own. However, within the past couple of years, other school staff have been instrumental in helping her out. A few of the school staff have written proposals to fund and help organize the

land-based activities on behalf of the entire school staff and students. The dedication of a team of language advocates is so important, as Joshua Fishman (1997, 2001, 2007) has reminded us, in order to build successful and sustainable language programs.

Christine believes the language program has resulted in improved student behaviour within the entire school. She said: “It’s exciting being the Native language [teacher] with the kids . . . it will turn behaviours. . . . I am not going to give up on them.” This idea of improving student behaviour could potentially be an important claim. In fact, the four language-teacher participants supported this idea of improved behaviour among the students within their individual language programs.

Similar to the other language teachers who participated in this research study, Christine has a very hectic schedule. For example, while I was conducting the first interview in the library, school administrators, staff, and students wanted to meet with her, too. Subsequently, at the November 2015 interview session, we made sure we met after school hours so we would not have too many interruptions.

Inside Christine’s Classroom

Inside her classroom, Christine has displays of various visuals and texts reflecting the many themes from both the English and Anishinaabe programs that she utilizes in her combined grade 2 and 3 class. The students in this classroom are scheduled for Ojibwe language classes at different times throughout the week. Samples of the students’ dual language work representing the topics she is currently covering in both programs are displayed on bulletin boards inside the classroom and on the hallway walls. Similar to the other teacher participants, Christine displays many visuals throughout the classroom and hallway walls, such as commercially bought posters representative of the bimaadiziwin. For example, the “Seven Teachings” poster is posted right outside her

classroom door. Most of Christine's language program materials are stored inside bookshelves, on top of cupboard counters, or inside bins. A Smart Board is located at the far end of one of the classroom walls, and, according to Christine, it is very effective for teaching and learning the Ojibwe language for today's young language learners. These youngsters are eager to engage in these new literacies.

During the classroom observation in November 2014, the students seemed very excited about using the Smart Board as they busily crowded around it when Christine started her language lesson. The other students were seated in their individual chairs in a semicircle. To begin her language lesson, Christine started by orally reviewing specific words, phrases, statements, and short questions in Anishinaabe based on the "families" lesson. Christine did not provide me with a written lesson plan; however, prior to the classroom observation, she did inform me that they would be reviewing terminology from previous language lessons. Throughout the language lesson on family, the students shouted out the appropriate responses in Ojibwe based on the translations and questions asked by the teacher. Christine provided instruction in the Ojibwe language and also encouraged students to respond by asking simple questions, such as *"Awenen awe?"* (Who is this?) pointing to a human figure on the Smart Board. The students would yell out, *"ni maamaa"* (my mother), *"ni baabaa"* (my father), and other family and kinship terms. These kinship terms are English-ized Anishinaabe words using the anglicized wording.

As I continued to observe the students learning the family terms and concepts in Anishinaabe, Christine modelled kindness and patience to the few students who were unable to participate in this oral language lesson for the entire session due to behavioural challenges. She asked for student volunteers to match words, phrases, and dialogues from English to Ojibwe and vice versa. In addition, when asked in the Anishinaabe language, the students seemed to enjoy

drawing outlines of family figures to illustrate family members on the Smart Board using their fingers. They were obviously both understanding and enjoying this language-learning experience.

During the latter part of this language lesson, the students were instructed in English to go back to their desks. At their desks, they were asked to complete an art activity from another theme that they had started within their regular academic program. For a short period of time, the majority of the students focused on the art activity, and later informed their language teacher and me when they completed their art work assignment. Although this art work was completely unrelated to the Anishinaabe language lesson taught earlier, a couple of students showed me their completed art work, then asked me to translate their first and/or last names in Anishinaabe. I willingly translated surnames, such as Bone to *Ogan* and Blackbird to *Makade-bineshii*. They seemed very excited about their newly translated names. They recognized that my presence was connected to their Ojibwe language and drew on my expertise. It seemed that my presence elevated the status of their language and they carried this forward to the art work by writing their names in their Anishinaabe language. Towards the end of the classroom observation, one of the students gave me a drawing of a young girl that she drew for me, which I still keep inside my journal.

In addition to the classroom observation, I toured inside the school with one of Christine's students. We looked at the student work from their English program that was displayed on the hallway walls close to the classroom. The wall had a display of completed booklets from other subject areas and art work completed by the students. Closer to the office area, I noticed a bigger bulletin board with photos and brief descriptions in English and Ojibwe. According to Christine, the entire student population participates in land-based activities during the school year, such as wagon rides and berry picking. Further, after berry picking, the students engage in sorting,

crushing, and preparing the berries to cook and eat with bannock. In addition to the photographs and the brief captions, provincial curriculum outcomes were listed alongside some of the group photos to align with some of the land-based activities. For Christine, it is very important that the parents and the rest of community understand the link between the land-based activities and the provincial curriculum outcomes. To her, this approach confirms the validity of the many language and cultural learning opportunities that can take place on the land. This raises the value of the Ojibwe language learning by affirming that it meets with provincial learning outcomes in social studies, science, and English language arts.

Brian

Brian's Story

Brian has a bachelor of education degree and has been teaching for about 36 years. In his earlier teaching career, Brian worked as a librarian at a First Nations school. It was during this time that he started to realize the importance of integrating First Nations content into the curriculum. He said:

> I had a lot of meetings with the community, who said to me, who continued to say, 'Brian, order some Anishinaabe books, order some Indian material. . . .' Basically (that is) what they were saying, and maybe someday, we will bring the language into the school and that sort of struck me. This was way back in 1979–1980.

Brian is currently teaching Ojibwe language as a subject from grades 7 to 11. He is originally from another First Nations community; however, he has been employed in this First Nations school for most of his teaching career. At the time of the study, there were approximately 627 students from nursery through grade 12 enrolled at the school. In addition to providing a nursery to grade 12 academic program, the school offers Ojibwe to the students at the junior high

and high school levels only. The school staff consists of a principal, two vice-principals, one resource teacher, local and nonlocal classroom teachers, one First Nations language teacher, and other support staff.

Unlike the other language-teacher participants, Brian was born and raised by his parents in Winnipeg for part of his early childhood years, and they eventually moved back to his home community. In our October 2014 interview, Brian mentioned that although he grew up in Winnipeg, they spoke Anishinaabe at home and he did not learn the English language until later on in life. He stated: "I, myself, I am very fluent in the language. I am very lucky to be fluent." He added: "I did not lose my language, I speak it fluently. . . . I am fortunate that I was able to retain my language. That prepared me a lot [for teaching the Anishinaabe language]."

At our 2014 interviews, Brian shared some experiences that illustrated his past and future experiences as an Anishinaabe language learner and teacher. It was during his early teaching years that Brian realized his commitment and passion to teach the Anishinaabe language. Brian recalled this experience from 1989:

> I became a grade 6 teacher and I started to do some work on the Ojibwe language, just creating my own material, and by then already, the library had some books, many books on the Anishinaabe culture, language, the Ojibwe language. I started creating a program to teach my grade 6s, unfortunately nobody else was teaching it, except myself. . . . I had grade 6 all day, so I wasn't able to move around at that time.

This experience of developing his own program has stayed with him for these 30 years and even at that time he recognized how rare and important this experience was. Brian believes in the importance of modelling Anishinaabe traditional values in one's daily life. He said: "I keep an

open mind. I always try to be positive; never try to be negative. It is a hurting thing, I accept what people chose to do or say."

Brian is a very spiritual and community-minded person and is thoughtful about how he is regarded by others. This experience likely stems back to his traditional upbringing during his childhood years in his own community. Brian commended the parents, Elders, and other community members for providing him the support to preserve and revitalize the ancestral language and culture: "I have a lot of encouragement from the parents, from the Elders, who are saying I am doing the right thing, which is really influenc[ing] . . . *Ni wii ji'igook abichi niibiwa* (they help me a lot)." As a parent and classroom teacher now, Brian talked about the importance of speaking and teaching the Ojibwe language and exposing the current generation of students to the culture. He feels very proud of his students, and he spoke about a project that validated the importance of integrating cultural traditions and values into the academic program. Brian shared one success story about one of his students:

> One of my junior high [students] was really interested, a boy by the name of [name of student]. He became very involved [in his studies]. He wanted to learn; he said his grandparents taught him a lot back home. His parents were from [First Nation] and his father was from north. . . . They taught him a lot of the herbs; he knew a lot, he taught me.

Because the student had in-depth Indigenous knowledge and background on traditional herbs and medicines, Brian encouraged him to participate in a province-wide science fair. According to Brian, the student agreed to complete his science research project and he ended up placing first at the Manitoba First Nations Science Fair in Winnipeg. Based on this success, the student entered his science project at the national level. Brian was very proud of the student and said that "he did not place first or second, but he got honorary mention." Due to these kinds of

success stories, Brian continues to work hard at preserving, revitalizing, and promoting the language and culture through his program and school. He supports his students enthusiastically. Seeing his student's motivation and success was very motivating for Brian as well.

In addition, Brian shared some of the challenges he has experienced during his many years as an Anishinaabe language teacher. First, he mentioned that it is mainly the older people and/or Elders in the community who speak the language. Brian indicated that some of the other classroom teachers in his school still speak Anishinaabe. During my school visits, I witnessed some school staff speaking the language in the staffroom and hallways. Second, he mentioned that the Ojibwe language is only being taught to the junior high and high school students, and to Brian that seems "too late—they are used to English. They are shy. Some want to learn their language, but their peers *baabiwak* (laugh at them)." Sadly, this is a practice not only in this community and could be due to the negative stereotypes from the past when people were made to feel ashamed of their language. These kinds of residential school effects need to be addressed through positive awareness campaigns. Brian affirmed that when teaching the Ojibwe language to his students, in some situations it was difficult to provide direct or literal translations of specific terminology from English to Ojibwe. He said: "Yesterday, we could not find a word for witch . . . or Halloween, as in *chipa'ikwe* (ghost woman), and the translation sounded similar to the word *Chippewa*." For Brian, translated terms from English to Anishinaabe may offend or provide humour to words. He added that "[the Anishinaabe] language is so [humorous]; we have lots of fun . . . *Ni moojigidoomin ako . . . ni baa'bi'itimin ago* (we enjoy it . . . we laugh together)." Third, similar to the other language-teacher participants, Brian echoed that the lack of language resources and materials makes it very challenging to teach the Anishinaabe language:

> I made up my own lessons and shared whoever wanted to be part of the Ojibwe program, or culture program. So, as time . . . I also invited them to come in . . . a lot of the Elders only spoke the Ojibwe language, so there again, I had to translate what they were saying. Sometimes it wasn't as easy as I thought. I had to create some English words for some of these traditions that these people were talking about. It became acceptable and it was going into the 1990s already. . . . The school people were participating even though they did not speak the language. They would participate in something [that] we put together.

After almost four decades of teaching the language and cultural traditions and values, Brian now reflects on many positive experiences. He recollected:

> Now it's really going smoothly. The program is more in place. The first time I had a hard time, but now everything is running smoothly. I have my programs, I have other teachers, a committee, a small committee to get together and share. It's a good program now, it's enjoyable. I love doing it. I love my language. I love my culture. I practice it. I am a dancer. I depend on the Creator for a lot of my teachings.

It is evident Brian has become an excellent teacher. In addition to the language program, Brian also spoke about the other cultural and ceremonial activities that the school staff, Elders, and community people have been instrumental in supporting:

> The Anishinaabe teachers and Elders, who would help us, we put together a cultural day. At that time, we would have a mini pow-wow. We would have Anishinaabe musicians. We would have various activities. We would make dream catchers and hang them in the gym for people to see. We would have a table set up for the herbs that we use, the tobacco, the four herbs, sweet grass, sage, cedar.

These four herbs are often used interchangeably in ceremony and sometimes it depends on the availability of the traditional herbs.

Inside Brian's Classroom

Brian has his own language classroom. Inside his grades 7–11 language classroom, he has a display of various posters and texts reflecting the themes and/language lessons he has taught or is preparing to teach to his students for this school year. The junior high and high school students are scheduled for Ojibwe language classes at different times throughout the week. Student work representative of the different themes he is currently covering in language program classes is displayed on bulletin boards. The majority of the displayed work is student- or teacher-developed materials, and a few are commercially bought posters representative of the bimaadiziwin. The "Seven Teachings" poster developed and published by MFNERC is an example of the many posters displayed on his classroom walls.

During the scheduled classroom observation in November 2014, Brian's classroom had displays of hand-crafts and other artifacts, such as traditional objects, beaded moccasins, gauntlets, and dream catchers made by the students or community members. Most of Brian's language program materials are stored inside a small storage room located at the back of the classroom, inside bookshelves, on top of the cupboard counters, or inside medium-sized bins. The Smart Board is located on one side of the classroom walls. At the time of my classroom visit, the Smart Board was not working, so Brian was unable to provide a demonstration of language lessons or units. He was very excited about having a Smart Board. According to Brian, it is a new technological tool to use when teaching the language. He was eager to get it working again and spoke about the importance of technological support and professional development for language teachers.

At the scheduled classroom observation in November 2014, Brian provided me with a handwritten lesson plan. The lesson plan template included headings, such as anticipatory set, objective, student input, modelling, guided practice, and independent practice sections. His preparation was evident, and he used the conventional lesson plan as a guide to teach from.

On the day of the scheduled classroom observation, the language and culture lesson was a review of basic terminology from previous language lessons on the traditional values and teachings of a dream catcher. As one of the introductory language activities, Brian reviewed words and phrases he had written on the whiteboard. Some of the sample words were *kaawin* (no), *noogom* (today), *abidawisek* (Wednesday), some weather terms, and some family terms, such as *ni mishoomis* (my grandfather) and *ni sikos* (my aunt). Brian used a form of standardized spelling for the Anishinaabe terms; however, he also provided the phonetic spellings of individual words in brackets to assist the students in pronouncing the words more accurately. Individually, the students were asked to provide some translations from Ojibwe to English and vice versa. Some of the students seemed hesitant to respond orally to the questions; however, others readily responded in both languages. During this time, most of the students seemed glued to their notebooks and did not want to be singled out. This is not unexpected for teenagers, who may be self-conscious.

During the second half of the language class, Brian focused on the dream catcher lesson. According to Brian, this component of the language program is the inclusion of the deeper cultural understandings of traditional symbols, crafts, and artifacts. At their desks, the students and the language teacher discussed the significance of the dream catcher based on the oral teachings shared by community Elders or from research the students or Brian had gathered from the Internet. According to one legend, the dream catcher originated from the Ojibwe people. It is made out of a willow branch and shaped into hoop, then woven into a net or web. A dream catcher is usually

hung above a person's bed, and one of the purposes is to protect someone from evil spirits or from having bad dreams while they are sleeping.

Throughout this lesson, Brian passed around a dream catcher and asked open-ended and closed questions to the students, who responded by providing their own understandings of the dream catcher through stories told to them by their families or from the teachings, stories, and/or articles provided by the teacher. All of the students' responses were in English; however, when Brian used Anishinaabe, they seemed to demonstrate an understanding of some of the basic words and concepts. Examples of the questions he asked were: "Does anyone have a dream catcher? Do you look after it? Smudge it? Where do you hang it?" During this time, Brian also provided an explanation in Anishinaabe interspersed with English. His code switching made the concepts and knowledge accessible to all the students regardless of their Anishinaabe proficiency.

The majority of the students seemed engaged in the discussions pertaining to the open-ended questions, and Brian provided additional teachings and clarification in English and Anishinaabe on the history and significance of the dream catcher. Throughout the discussion, Brian continued to give brief explanations in Anishinaabe. Teachable moments included discussing words, such as *manaajiiwewin (*respect), in Anishinaabe and providing some examples.

Following the language lesson on dream catchers, Brian asked for all completed worksheets so that they could be inserted inside the individual student binders or folders that he had prepared ahead of time for this class. On one of the tables, completed student work is organized inside various student folders and binders. The students seemed to know which folder or binder their completed work belonged in. According to Brian, most of the language lessons for the individual grades are organized inside the binders and folders according to grade levels and groups. Overall, these grade 8 students were very cooperative and respectful towards their teacher

and each other during the entire Anishinaabe language class. None of the students became unruly or disruptive. They were engaged in the language lesson.

On the same day as the classroom observation, Brian gave me a brief Anishinaabe literary walk and presentation of the language resource materials and artifacts that were displayed on the tables, walls, on top of the counter cupboards, in bookshelves, and inside the storage room. He talked proudly of some of the student work that was posted on the classroom walls. In one of the art displays, a huge circular diagram created by the students consisted of four equal quadrants representing the four colours of the human race and the four directions: *waabanong* (east), *miskwka* (south), *nigaabi'anong* (west), and *giiwedinong* (north). This illustration represented the holistic way of life and teaching that Brian talked about in our interview sessions. Included below this symbolic illustration were photos of local people participating in language and/or cultural events in the school or community.

Furthermore, according to Brian, the students in his language program participate in land-based activities during the school year:

> We have access to picking the herbs around here; sage is here, and sweet grass, those are the only ones. Well, tobacco; we have to buy that . . . but cedar, we trade with Sagkeeng [another First Nation community]. That is how we do that. We also have other sites that we visit, something called Thunderbird Nests. It is a site by the Narrows. We go and visit there; people do ceremonies. We also have another place that we go; it's called Beaver Dam Lake. It's just over here. It takes about a half hour to get there. There they have sweat lodges, a number of sweat lodges over there. We go there and talk about it. A lot do not know what a sweat lodge is, so we go there.

These kinds of cultural teachings and expeditions were an important part of Brian's yearly planning, and Brian seemed very patient with his Indigenous knowledge, skills, and bimaadiziwin. He recognized that not all of his students have any other opportunity to experience or learn about the traditional ceremonies and practices.

Isabelle

Isabelle's Story

Isabelle has approximately 35 years of classroom teaching experiences, and has been teaching the Anishinaabe language for about nine years. She is currently teaching the language to grades 1 to 9 in a First Nations school. Isabelle received her teaching certificate in the 1970s. She is a fluent speaker of Anishinaabe, and she noted that her dialect is very similar to the First Nations language spoken by nearby communities. The community is located in the southern part of the province. As noted in Chapter 1, there are 30 Ojibwe-speaking communities in Manitoba, and depending on the geographic location, some dialectal differences exist within the language. The dialects are grammatically and phonetically similar but have lexical differences. Regionally, the Ojibwe language differs in terms of individual sounds. For example, *Mino giizhiga**n*** (It is a nice day) can be termed *Mino giizhiga**d*** in the southern dialects. In another example, in my home dialect, we say *wiiziniiwinaak* for a table; however, in the south regional area, the term *adoobiwin* is used to refer to a table.

At the time of this study, there were approximately 94 students from nursery through grade 9 enrolled at this First Nations school. In addition to providing nursery to grade 9 academic programming, the school offers Ojibwe language as a subject to the students at the elementary and junior high levels. The school staff consists of a principal, one resource teacher, local and nonlocal classroom teachers, one First Nations language teacher, and support staff. This community is about

64 kilometres northeast of Winnipeg and has a population of about 1,700 people currently registered as band members, and approximately 600 people live on the reserve.

At our first January 2015 interview, Isabelle shared that her strong cultural and linguistic experiences came from growing up in an Anishinaabe world. She was able to share a lot about the deeper understandings and learnings of the Anishinaabe language and culture, which she thinks can be taught to the students. She credited the community she grew up in and the cultural camp and outdoor experiences, such as rice picking, that she experienced with her parents and grandparents for her extensive traditional knowledge and practices. From a very young age, Isabelle observed traditional practices utilized by parents, grandparents, and other community members, and she now brings this IKS and experience to her classroom and teaching. She said: "Children were told to pay attention. . . . I still learned a lot of that stuff. I share with the children as you won't find it in books." Furthermore, Isabelle said she realizes the importance of her teaching and appreciates that many of the traditional practices were modelled during her lifetime.

At our January 2015 interview sessions, Isabelle shared some experiences based on her many years as an Anishinaabe language teacher. First, she shared a dream she had prior to teaching the Anishinaabe language in her current school: "I had dreamed of a room, and there were these little plants all around … *naanaakajidoon weweni ono gitigaanesan* (watch over these little plants) . . . *mii'iwe ji ananogiiyan* (that will be your job)." To Isabelle, the dream was meant to let her know that she would be teaching the language to the younger generation. As she reflected back on this dream on the day of the interview, she shared "how the room was set [up]." Isabelle said she believes and thinks that everyone has gifts that need to be shared: "We have different gifts . . . *kaamiininand Manidoo* (what Creator gives us)." Since Isabelle is close to retirement age, she

mentioned that she may have found out about this gift of teaching language "a little too late." At this stage in her life, she is now thinking about retirement.

Isabelle talked passionately about the importance of preserving and revitalizing the language for the children in the community:

> *Kaa chikishkaagoyaan* (What excites me…) *abinoonchiyak … chi anishinaabemo[waat]* (children to speak the language). We were the ones given the Anishinaabe language . . . *gaawin awiya gi ka bi azhaa . . . gizhbin wanidooyang*; *majii'ikitowaat . . . jiikendamok shigo oko* (children); *oshkiniigikwes* (young girl); that is where they are on their life cycle . . . *Aazha imaa mewizha . . . mii iniwen . . . ka kanawaabadamaan* (that is a good experience). When I see the young people begin to see that, trying to learn the vocabulary, brings into consideration *ki kinoo'amaadiwinan* (the teachings) . . . *biko'aanish abinoonchi chi miinind . . . chi kichi inendang obimaadiziwin . . tepwewin (truth) . . . and chi ka noonaat manidoon* (to talk to Creator).

From a spiritual to an emotional context, Isabelle said she believes that language is central to knowing the Anishinaabe cultural ways and values. She also mentioned that the Anishinaabe language produces good emotions and feelings. For example, she talked about the feedback that she received from her students in her grade 9 class regarding certain words or phrases:

> You can feel a word . . . *nashke kanoonat abinoonjii* (when you speak to a child); *bizaanabin* (settle down). It is in a gentle way. I had a class of grade 9s [who told me] that sounds like such a pleasant word—*ni zagiyaa*. The word is for "love" that one—the Creator—taught the people. It is a mother's love for their child.

Isabelle's gentle caring and love for these youths were evident in her manner with the children, and this *zaagi'idiwin* (love) came from the students.

Isabelle also spoke about some of the experiences that have changed over time. As she reminisced about her previous nine years as an Anishinaabe language teacher, she said she would like students to participate in more land-based and hands-on types of language-learning activities. For example, she would like to bake bannock with the students and provide all the instructions in Anishinaabe. Unfortunately, she is unable to do that in her current school, because the school does not have a home economics room or a kitchen that can allow for students to cook meals or bake. Isabelle mentioned that there are more restrictions within schools that do not allow for language and cultural activities to take place. These types of institutional roadblocks are discussed in Chapter 6.

Isabelle recalled that as a young child she would go pick berries and be away from home for weeks: "My grandmother taught us the names (of) plants. According to her that was the job of the grandparents." Additionally, she shared that people's roles were clearly defined and followed during her younger years. Isabelle spoke about some of her concerns, too. In one instance, she expressed that she was concerned that the young people will eventually lose their ancestral language and culture. She asserted: "Somebody has tell the young people that you have to be fluent." Based on her language-teaching experience, Isabelle noted that the students have a natural way of pronouncing the sounds in Anishinaabe. However, she added that "we have to re-waken it, revitalize it." To Isabelle, the students can develop a positive self-esteem if they are given opportunities to learn their language and culture.

Isabelle noted that these youth have heard a great deal of the Anishinaabe language around them and hence have acquired the sound system of the language. This type of language learners can be referred to as "emergent bilinguals," and this phase is considered to be a very important stage of second-language acquisition. Authors Hinton and Steele (2002), for example, have written

about the master-apprentice program, which focuses on how non-speakers (learners of the language) and speakers (mentors) can collaborate in learning a language in nonformal educational settings to create a new generation of speakers.

Unfortunately, Isabelle does not have her own language classroom in her current school, and she feels it is very important for language teachers to have their own classrooms. In her situation, Isabelle finds it difficult to carry her language resources from one classroom to another: "The good experience is that I had a classroom . . . *omaa ka dakoshinaan* (when I got here), I was able to keep all my stuff there [referring to one of the classrooms]. . . . The kids came; the only classroom I had to visit was kindergarten." She further shared that it is very challenging for teachers to move from one classroom to another, and that it is not very convenient for either the language teacher or the students. According to Isabelle, preparing and setting up language materials on an ongoing basis is very time consuming and can sometimes be very stressful because everyone loses focus, time, and energy within the 45 minutes or hour provided for language instruction. Although Isabelle has taught the Anishinaabe language close to a decade, she stated that there are not enough language resource materials for all the grade levels in the school where she is currently teaching.

In addition to having her own language classroom at one time, Isabelle shared that one of her most rewarding experiences is when she hears the students begin to use the language in the classroom or school. She said: "When your students are beginning to develop the retention of the vocabulary and when they try and speak, that is a good experience."

Like another language-teacher participant in the study, Isabelle also described an experience with two young students in her current language program who had changed their behaviour over the year and had become very cooperative in her classes. With this in mind, she

said she believes that young children want to learn the language. In reference to one of the troubled students in her class, she shared this experience: "When he was in grade 1 or 2, *o gii nakajidoon* (he had the natural pronunciation)" to learn the Anishinaabe language. These examples of emerging bilinguals are very encouraging for her.

Isabelle is very grateful for the strong language and culture foundation she experienced during her childhood years, when the Anishinaabe language was taught in the home, although not at school. She shared her grandfather's words of wisdom and the importance of retaining and modelling the traditional values: "*Nashke oshkaadisiik* (in reference to the young people) . . . that is where we get our health and strength [from]. . . . Once we begin to realize . . . *ji manaajiyak awiya* (to respect others) . . . *kekiin ki kii kikinoamaakoo iwe* . . . (you were taught that, too)." Isabelle has a wealth of knowledge from Elders that she brings with her when interacting with the youth.

Additionally, Isabelle talked about the importance of providing financial and administrative support to the language programs in First Nations schools by providing the funds required to purchase resource materials and allowing for curriculum development time for the teachers. She mentioned that in the 1980s, the school administration from a previous school provided time for her and a small group of teachers to develop First Nations language resources and sample unit and lesson plans. Because this no longer happens, Isabelle said she feels much more isolated.

At our January 2015 interview session, Isabelle also shared some of the challenges and disappointments associated with teaching the Anishinaabe language in her community school. She said she feels very disheartened when students do not have positive attitudes towards learning their ancestral language. In reference to the some of the students' negative attitudes towards learning their First Nations language; she said has heard comments like the following:

> ‘I don’t have to learn the [ancestral language].’ This is the bad attitude that gives me the bad experience. When I look at my program—let’s develop this program . . . so that these children [learn the language] right from the start. We have to work with the youngest ones, so they are proud of who they are because that has a lot to do with it. *Aaniin gaa doodawindwaa . . . chi zhiikendamowaat?* (What happened to them to dislike [learning their language]?)

Isabelle is troubled by the students who have a negative attitude towards learning their ancestral language and wonders what can be done to reaffirm the value of Anishinaabemowin for these young people. The connection between language, culture, and identity has been broken in this instance, and she continues to try to mend it.

Similar to other teacher participants in this research study, Isabelle also knows that it is very important to get support from the school administration and the community in order to have a strong Anishinaabe language program. She mentioned that a school she had taught at previously “had a school board and a superintendent that had a vision, and leadership believed that they had to give support and not only lip service.” Leadership’s role in supporting language programming cannot be underestimated, in Isabelle’s mind. She feels that it is important to try and do the job to the best of her ability. Lastly, Isabelle shared that the entire school, including the staff and students, need to role-model the importance of retaining the language by speaking it more consistently: “This is what people have to consider, if they want successful programs—the settings, curriculum, surroundings, and even the way all staff need to work together.”

In a worried voice, Isabelle said she encourages First Nations schools to learn and teach the ancestral language: “You are a First Nations school . . . *ka kwe anishinaabemowak* (try and speak the language).” She shared this comment about her former and current students: “*Ni gii*

anishinaabemowak ako (I used to speak the language to them." Isabelle also feels that the loss of the ancestral language within her community school is very worrisome because many families do not understand or speak the language anymore. Isabelle and other fluent speakers have confirmed the seriousness of losing the Anishinaabe ancestral knowledge and language. Elder Harry Bone, for example, cautions others by saying, "If you someday you cannot speak the Anishinaabe language, then you will lose your Anishinaabe way of thinking" (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014, p. 69).

Inside Isabelle's Classroom

Unlike the other three teacher participants in the study, Isabelle does not have her own language classroom. Throughout the day, she travels from one classroom to another, and on the day I was there, we were in the grades 5 and 6 classroom. The walls in this classroom had a series of posters depicting First Nations history, world view, and perspectives. For example, one of the maps listed all the First Nations communities in Manitoba according to the five language groups. Other displays on the classroom walls included commercially bought posters and locally developed student and teacher resources in English and Ojibwe on a range of school subjects. Outside the classroom door was a beautiful art piece that the students had completed. To my surprise, the Ojibwe word mino-bimaadiziwin was printed on the top centre of this poster. As I was looking at this art piece, a couple of the students shouted out the word in Ojibwe to me. I did not get a chance to ask them about their understanding of this term because they were getting ready to leave for recess, but the fact that they recited it to me in unison told me they knew it would be meaningful for me. Throughout the classroom and school hallways, I noticed a sprinkle of posters and Anishinaabe language terms, such as *bindigek* (come in) and *ambe* (come here). This signage

in Anishinaabe demonstrates that the language was being used to get information across and to give directives in at least a cursory way.

In February 2015, I observed Isabelle's language class with a combined grades 5 and 6 class. During this 40-minute language class with about 15 students, there were three adults in the classroom: the classroom teacher, the teacher assistant, and the language teacher. When Isabelle and I arrived in the classroom, the students were already at their assigned seating areas. Most of the desks were positioned close together and the students were facing the whiteboard. On the day of my classroom observation, the word and phrase frames shown below in Table 1 were printed on the whiteboard.

Table 1: "W" Questions

"W" Question	Sentence Frame
Andi—Where?	*sakihigan**ing*** *(*to /by the island) *ishkonigan**ing*** (to/by the reserve/community) *Manitou abi**ing*** (to/by Manitoba) *siip**ing*** *(*to/by the river)
Awenen—Who?	
Wekonen—What?	

The first three "W" questions are very helpful in second-language acquisition when learners start to use these questions and can take an active role in their own language learning. Isabelle obviously drew on these basic interpersonal communication tools.

In Isabelle's language class, she briefly reviewed the above question words along with other family terms in Anishinaabe, and then she introduced the possible responses to the students.

For example, the question “Where (did your mother go)?” was introduced in Anishinaabe and the students were provided with literal explanations in English for each of the possible response translations. Isabelle began the language lesson by asking the students to read and repeat the following words: *aandi* (where), *awenen* (who), *wekonen* (what), *aanapii* (when), and *aaniinonji* (how). As she introduced each one, Isabelle would add additional terms in Anishinaabe by providing sample responses to the questions, and she proceeded to ask students for individual responses, too. While providing sample responses to the “W” questions, Isabelle provided more in-depth meanings associated with some of the words. For example, she mentioned that the original term for Manitoba was *Manito abi* (where the Creator sits) and shared some historical information about the province’s original name. This connection between Anishinaabe and their home province validated the language in the eyes and ears of these youths.

During this language lesson, Isabelle continuously validated the responses in Anishinaabe that the students were providing. Eventually, new vocabulary terms, as in place locations, were also introduced and these new terms were repeated by the students. As a follow-up to this language lesson, students were instructed to complete worksheets in the Ojibwe language. For example, one of the questions on the worksheet was *Andi ki maamaa ka izhaat?* (Where did your mother go?). Possible responses to this question included previously taught terms, such as *aakoziwigamig(ong*), (to the hospital), *odenaang,* (to the city) or *wiisiniwiegamigong* (to the restaurant).

Even though she was approaching retirement age, Isabelle revealed that retirement was out of the question right now because she was trying to get as much done in this particular area as possible, which, she said, “is something I have dreamed of . . . *Bagosenimaa Manidoo . . . wiin ni ga miinik mino ayaawin* (I trust that the Creator will give me good health).” Despite this recognition that she was approaching the end of her teaching career, Isabelle saw that there was

still a lot to be done, and her words are another example of the spiritual commitment language teachers feel and their ambivalence about retiring when the preservation and revitalization of First Nations languages is so urgent. Until there is a new generation of language teachers, Isabelle and the other language-teacher participants do not want to leave their programs and students.

In closing, I asked Isabelle, "What best prepared you for work?" Her response was "being innovative and being fluent." Upon reflection, her reply reinforces the kind of commitment, creativity, and skills required to become an effective language teacher. This is the type of teaching and leadership that Blair, Okemaw, and Tine (2011) wrote about in their article *Ititwewiniswak: Language Warriors—Young Women's Circle of Knowledge*. Isabelle highlighted the last five years of her language-teaching career, which allowed her to grow in areas that she may not have been confident in.

Kodag Dibaajimowin; Moving Forward

Chapter 5 includes my interpretations of the findings in relation to the theoretical and conceptual framework and discusses how these findings relate to the literature review presented in Chapter 2. This chapter also illuminates the Indigenous perspective based on Anishinaabe language and teaching practices from the teacher-participants' perceptions. I discuss the participants' responses relevant to research question 1, which included Western language-learning methodologies. In particular, the findings of my research study are summarized, analyzed, and interpreted based on the main themes and subthemes that emerged from the data analysis process.

Chapter 5: Ways of Teaching and Learning Anishinaabemowin: Language-Teachers' Voices

In this chapter, the findings of my research study are summarized, analyzed, and interpreted based on main themes and subthemes that emerged from the data analysis process. As noted earlier, the purpose of this study was to synthesize a working theory of how IKS and bimaadiziwin are, or can be, incorporated into Indigenous language and literacies programming. I explored and documented the learning and teaching practices of four Anishinaabe language and literacies teachers in Manitoba. Two research questions guided the study:

(1) How are the language teachers incorporating IKS and bimaadiziwin into their Indigenous language and literacies programs?

(2) What experiences and resources can these teachers identify that would enhance their ability to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin into their teaching of Indigenous languages and literacies in the classroom?

Because these four First Nations language teachers were influenced by mainstream theories of teaching a second language during their education and training in Western-based institutions, their responses related to research question 1 included both Anishinaabe and Western language-learning methodologies. This chapter illuminates the Anishinaabe language and teaching practices from the teacher-participants' perspectives. I specifically cite the interview transcripts, classroom observation notes and checklists, artifact and document collection discussions, anecdotal notes, and my journal reflections. Throughout the chapter, I relate my interpretations of the findings to the theoretical and conceptual framework and discuss how these findings relate to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. I begin the chapter by first presenting the participants' understandings of IKS and bimaadiziwin and then describing how they incorporated IKS and bimaadiziwin into their learning and teaching practices. In the chapter's third main section, I present the participants'

perspectives on the enhanced experiences and resources they require to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin into their Indigenous language and literacies programs.

Participants' Understandings of IKS and Bimaadiziwin

Since the terms IKS and bimaadiziwin are not commonly used to describe Anishinaabe language and literacies programs in Manitoba, it was important for the language-teacher participants to define what these constructs meant to them before they shared their teaching and learning experiences and practices. Accordingly, this section describes each language participant's personal and professional understandings of the terms IKS and bimaadiziwin.

Based on their responses to the open-ended questions, the participants all seemed to have a very good understanding of the terms. All four participants shared that bimaadiziwin and mino-bimaadiziwin referred mainly to "a (good) way of life" spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and physically. During the interview sessions, the terms bimaadiziwin and mino-bimaadiziwin were used interchangeably. Matilda, for example, said that bimaadiziwin or mino-bimaadiziwin refers to

> a good life, living a good life culturally, like using your Elders, personal experiences, visual [cues], ability to use the language. Where I live, that is the only way I can explain that, like in the community where I work. *Mii'iwe mino-bimaadiziwin niinawind* . . . (that is having a good life to us).

Here, Matilda's understanding of IKS and bimaadiziwin highlights personal and Elder knowledge. This view illuminates that our Anishinaabe oral language includes templates for taking care of self, others, our nations, and the natural world, and suggests that we have an obligation to carry this experiential knowledge forward. According to Matilda, IKS refers to

> how we learn, like, and the other thing is we do not have a written language. It's to me, it's the knowledge that we're given: *dabishgo giinawind gi gii miinigoomin* (like it was given

> to us). . . . Also, how we live, gathering, health care, food, education, natural resource management. We take care of our water. It has to do with . . . how we make decision[s]. *Mii'iwe Anishinaabe bimaadiziwn daabishgoo* (It is just like the First Nations way of life).

Matilda further explained that IKS is embedded within the ancestral language. In fact, she said, "*Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin niinawind nind izhinikaadaamin* (We call it the First Nations way of life) . . . the teachings, we were given . . . *ji bimowidooyan* (to carry)." Matilda also talked about "using our own culture," and she reaffirmed that Indigenous people "are gifted and born with IKS."

Christine described bimaadiziwin as being about taking care of your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs, similar to the beliefs described in the Medicine Wheel Teachings and the Seven Traditional Teachings (Courchene, 2006) and as mentioned in the theoretical and conceptual framework chapter. Christine referred to bimaadiziwin as "life, the life that our Creator gave us." In her mind, the "old ways" or "the Creator's ways" and her Christian beliefs are similar, and life within both perspectives is about living a mino-bimaadiziwin. She said:

> I am talking from the perspective of a native person, and the way the people lived a long [time] ago. I am talking from that, even though I do not follow that [way of life]. That is what I mean by bimaadiziwin, a way of life; it may not be the way [how] our ancestors lived a long ago, it changed over time, because we do not know. We have lost the true bimaadiziwin, the true way of life of the Ojibwe people.

Christine shared an interesting idea about partial knowledge. Based on her personal and professional interpretation, some threads of a knowledge fabric have been lost, dropped, or left behind. She was referring to the many cultural changes that Indigenous people have experienced historically and are still experiencing. While earlier generations, including my own, experienced

living on the land at traditional hunting and trapping grounds, according to Christine, these types of cultural experiences are no longer part of our bimaadiziwin. The current generation leads a very different bimaadiziwin. The residential school era removed children from their homes, and therefore their bimaadiziwin changed because of a different way of living in a new environment. Also, within the past few decades, many Anishinaabe families have moved to nearby towns or cities for educational, economic, or medical reasons. Some families moved to towns or cities to provide their children with more educational opportunities. During these eras, the ancestral languages, traditional knowledge systems, and cultural practices that Christine and the other participants talked about have slowly eroded. This loss of language and culture is well documented by political organizations, educational institutions, and educational scholars (Assembly of First Nations, 2010; Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Committee on Education, 1999; Blair & Fredeen, 1995; Courchene, 2006; Gardner, 2004; Kirkness, 1998a, 1998b; Norris & Jantzen, 2002). Reconstructing these knowledges and the ancestral languages will take a concerted effort on the part of parents, teachers, communities, and Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments.

Christine's understanding of IKS was based on the type of knowledge that can be an integral part of learning and teaching an ancestral language. Reflecting on her early childhood experiences, Christine provided this interpretation:

> We were raised to respect the nature, raised as hunters—not me, but the males in our family—raised as trappers. With that came a lot of knowledge, knowledge about nature, the women about the plants, medicines that they picked. They knew [when] to pick them. I think that is where IK is from—the way we used and collected them [referring to medicinal plants].

In addition to providing her understanding of IKS, Christine said she believes that Anishinaabe people are gifted with, or born with, some accessibility to IK. For example, she said:

> Not everybody can go and get a plant and know what to do with it. And not everybody can go and ask [for] a plant and use it. All have to have a purpose. That is what I know IKS is. We had them [referring to IK and skill sets] a long time ago, the way of preparing hide, preparing fur of an animal and what to do with it. It is not written as it is being learned from us.

Christine described IKS as a natural process of learning about the plants from the environment in her adult years, and she did not see it as being in opposition to what has been documented in Western learning. The idea of using specific plants as traditional remedies is known and utilized by other Algonkian people, such as the Cree and Anishinaabe people. For example, in my childhood years, nookom would pray and give thanks to the Creator to guide her before picking specific plant medicines, which would later be used to remedy colds, arthritis, headaches, and other illnesses or diseases. This spiritual practice was to give thanks for the abundance of natural medicinal plants that were accessible to the Anishinaabe people. This type of experiential knowledge represents one type of IK that the language teachers shared throughout this study, and that scholars such as Brant Castellano (2000) have discussed. In her research, Brant Castellano describes IK as "personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical languages" (p. 25). Other scholars, such as Battiste (2002), Hare (2005, 2012), Kirkness (1998a, 1998b), and Settee (2013), have also written about IK within similar contexts, and their work supports this notion of experiential knowledge.

Brian spoke about bimaadiziwin and mino-bimaadiziwin in ways similar to the other study participants, reinforcing the idea of taking care of self and the natural world. He said:

> Bimaadiziwin, the way I look at it is, how you live, how you look after yourself, things that you take into your body. Hopefully it's positive things, but everyone has their own way of living. And there's such a variety now, bimaadiziwin. There are all kinds of doors to be opened and explored. Some are good, some aren't so good. . . . *Mii'i we kagwe bimindiizhiyaan* (That is what I am trying to follow).

Brian provided a brief definition of what he thought IKS meant. From his experience, the learning and teaching of the Anishinaabe language and culture, such as smudging, dance, traditional ceremonies, and other cultural practices, cannot be taken for granted. With the introduction of Western religions to First Nations communities in Manitoba and elsewhere, Brian is fully aware that some people in his community may now be opposed to these types of cultural practices. This is noted in light of the impacts of historical and contemporary Christian teachings, whereby many families were led to believe that their ancestral ways were evil and that Christianity would lead them to a better way of life (Fontaine, 2017). This is still a dichotomy in many communities for many First Nations people.

Since Brian was not comfortable in using the term IK, he affirmed in his own words his understanding of IKS: "This [IKS] is something new to me. I thought about it . . . using our own culture, the people on this reserve, to share their culture in this school. We dance; we pow-wow. It is here now."

Isabelle explained bimaadiziwin or mino-bimaadiziwin at another level. In fact, she used a different Anishinaabe term for her explanation, similar to the term Goulet and Goulet (2014) used in their research on effective instructional practices for teachers of Indigenous students. For Isabelle, bimaadiziwin also means *bimaaji'iwewan* (to survive); she further stated that the Anishinaabe people were "very self-sufficient peoples" and therefore depended on each other for

their livelihood. Historically, the families' bimaadiziwin would be based on the different seasonal activities for survival. In the summertime, for example, many First Nations families would gather and prepare berries or go rice picking. Other examples of land-based living that she recalled included collecting wood in preparation for curing and tanning moose and deer hides, which would later be used to make moccasins, gauntlets, and other clothing items. During the hunting and food preparation months, the grandparents would take care of the children as their parents would be gathering and preparing food for the year.

Isabelle added that there were also difficult times surviving during the winter months, as it was based on the success of harvesting food during different seasons. Although Isabelle believes that bimaadiziwin is different for today's generation, she talked about the importance of the traditional survival practices during her early childhood years. During the hunting, trapping, or fishing seasons, for example, families would exchange food and goods with one another. To Isabelle, this was what bimaadiziwin was all about—living a good life and following the traditional values of sharing, honesty, and bravery. Furthermore, Isabelle felt that this way of life during her earlier years was unique. She provided examples of how family and community members helped and took care of each other, reinforcing and ensuring that disciplinary expectations were followed. She said there was an understanding of the different roles and responsibilities of older family members. In Isabelle's family, the older siblings took care of the younger ones, and she asserted that children were not allowed to listen to adult conversations. As another example, she talked about an elderly man in her community who would bring a supply of fish to her family, and in return, other foods would be exchanged with him. To Isabelle, there was a lot of "honesty between the families . . . [and] they were fair with each other." The Anishinaabe

belief system and epistemology embedded in these lives as shared by Isabelle demonstrate mino-bimaadiziwin focused on traditional family rearing practices and *pimachi'iwewin* (survival).

To Isabelle, IKS refers to experiences relating to being raised in a very traditional home. When she was growing up in her community, all conversations were in Ojibwe as it was part of Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin. Isabelle said that Elders "had respect for children, and at the same time, children respected the Elders." Elders were highly respected in the communities as they held the knowledge and had the wisdom in leading a mino-bimaadiziwin, which Isabelle observed, experienced, and now models to the younger generation. Isabelle's partial memories demonstrate the need to solidify and refresh traditional roles and expectations within families.

In summary, as shared by the language-teacher participants, mino-bimaadiziwin refers to the importance of taking care of one's physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual needs, whereas IKS was explained as the unwritten and inherent knowledge that was gifted by the Creator to the Anishinaabe people, including the traditional teachings. The participants explained that this type of knowing is embedded within the ancestral language. Specifically, IKS includes knowledge of the physical environment and its uses, such as the plants, animals, water, and the sun that exist within the natural environment. From this context, and as shown in Figure 1, the definitions and understandings of IK and bimaadiziwin are based on ways of "knowing," "being," and "doing."

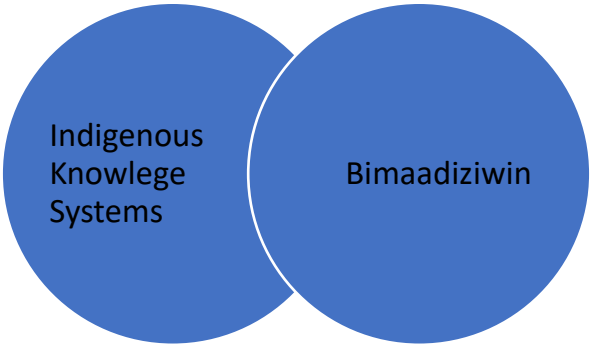

Figure 1: IKS and bimaadiziwin.

It is evident from the above diagram that IKS and bimaadiziwin overlap with one another and cannot be totally separated. Another way of looking at these circular images is as understandings shared by the language teachers. Overall, they expressed that one cannot live a mino-bimaadiziwin without IKS. In this study, it is the fluidity of these two constructs that provides a more meaningful context.

In another context, a Métis Elder at the 2017 National Elders' Gathering held in Edmonton, Alberta, described language and culture as a coin; the two sides of a coin are inseparable, and to be functional, both sides are needed (Ghostkeeper, September 2017). Similarly, in this study, participants' understandings and teaching practices of IKS and bimaadiziwin are an integral part of their Anishinaabe way of teaching and learning; therefore, these two conceptual constructs are inseparable. In the next section, I present the language-teacher participants' perspectives on incorporating IKS and bimaadiziwin into their teaching and learning practices in their Anishinaabe language and literacies programs.

Incorporating IKS and Bimaadiziwin into Language and Literacies Programs

Based on the language-teachers' responses to the two research questions, I identified main themes and related subthemes. For research question 1, the language-teacher participants identified various Indigenous traditional teachings, such as the Medicine Wheel Teachings and Seven Traditional Teachings models, as well as land-based learning, and a variety of other learning and teaching practices, to explain how they incorporated IKS and bimaadiziwin in their Indigenous language and literacies programs. As demonstrated in Figure 2, these are not mutually exclusive categories.

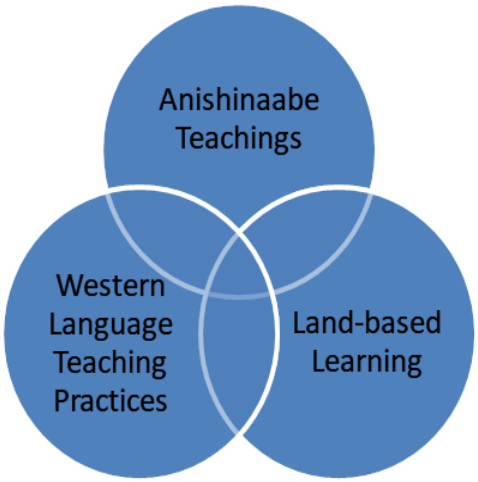

Figure 2: Incorporating IKS and bimaadiziwin.

Separating out research questions 1 and 2 from the data was complicated, and here, too, there were overlaps. As a researcher, it was difficult to organize these themes or subthemes as belonging to either research question 1 or 2, because in most cases, the responses to each of these questions depended on the language teacher's IK, bimaadiziwin, and learning and teaching experiences. Although the categories were separated for data analysis purposes, the circular diagram shown in Figure 2 reflects the holistic approach required to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin by the language teachers when teaching the Anishinaabe language. Specifically, it appears as though the participants' responses were more context based and varied by programs. Although a more Indigenous approach, as opposed to the Western way of teaching Anishinaabe language and literacies, may be more evident in one or more of the Anishinaabe language classes or programs, it is important to note that other non-Indigenous teaching and learning practices were also being utilized in the language programs.

Based on their responses, Christine and the other language-teacher participants are introducing and implementing academic concepts in their Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. This is a prime example of Halliday's (1993) triptych on language learning: that we

learn language, learn *through* language, and learn *about* language. When I reflect on the many language and teaching experiences shared by the study participants and the classroom observations conducted for this study, it is clear that the language teachers demonstrated all of these language-learning phases as noted within Halliday's language theory. That is, Anishinaabe language and literacies are learned in the home or within a school setting, academic concepts are learned or taught to the students in a formal language-learning educational setting, and the meaning of words, as well as the concepts of IKS and bimaadiziwin, is being taught in the classroom. Matilda, for example, mentioned the importance of understanding the deeper meanings associated with certain terminology. While discussing IKS, she reiterated the importance of maintaining and retaining the linguistic knowledge associated within the Anishinaabe language. She concluded this understanding by confirming that Anishinaabe is a descriptive language and that the students in her classroom learned about the language. For example, in the words, *adoobiwin* (table) and *adoobiwinaagan* (plate), the longer term describes the association made with the root word "table" to symbolize the connectedness of the word "plate." Halliday (1993) would say that this learning about language is an important component of language learning, in conjunction with the other two.

The participants' beliefs and thoughts on IKS and bimaadiziwin confirm the findings of González, Moll, and Amanti (2006) whose research is based on the importance of one's lived experiences and valuing individuals' funds of knowledge. These authors feel that "instruction must be linked to students' lives, and the details of effective pedagogy should be linked to local histories and community contexts" (p. ix). Similarly, the language teachers who participated in this study emphasized the importance of the values embedded in traditional practices, such as respect for Elders. For example, when incorporating the Anishinaabe way of life, such as the pow-wow, into his language and culture program, Brian shared that he "had to go great lengths [to go] and see an

Elder, to get permission [be]cause it [was going to be held] inside the school." According to him, any cultural activities such as the pow-wow may need to be discussed and approved by the Elders within the community as they are the Knowledge Keepers and are respected for their IK, experience, and wisdom. He was fully aware and respectful that some community members may not be open to bringing some of the cultural practices, such as the pow-wow, into the school environment. Throughout this process, it is the Elders who advise Brian and other school staff regarding the inclusion of IKS, bimaadiziwin, and following cultural protocols in the community (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, 2003b).

In Brian's language-teaching situation, he is developing and implementing an Anishinaabe language and culture curriculum that he believes will be more meaningful and relevant to his students and the community. Brian and the other language-teacher participants know that they need to adapt, supplement, and develop appropriate curriculum for their context. The need for more locally based curriculum is supported by other Indigenous scholars, such as Donald (2009). In his research, Donald suggests that the existing curriculum needs to be reframed "so that it better meets the needs and priorities of Aboriginal communities" (p. 4).

In the following sections, I present the themes that emerged when I asked the language-teacher participants how they were incorporating IKS and bimaadiziwin into their Anishinaabe language and literacies programs, beginning with traditional Anishinaabe teachings.

Anishinaabe Teachings

All four of the language-teacher participants affirmed that the Indigenous or ancestral traditional teachings, referred to as the Seven Traditional Teachings and the Medicine Wheel Teachings in the theoretical and conceptual framework chapter of this dissertation, were evident in their Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. According to them, these traditional values are

the most important components of learning or teaching the Anishinaabe language and literacies. *Maanaji'iwin* (respect), *zaagi'idiwin* (love), *gikendaasowin* (wisdom), *zoongide'ewin* (bravery), *debwemowin* (truth), *gawegaatisiwin* (honesty), and *dabasenimowin* (humility) stand out as honourable from an Indigenous worldview, yet they are seldom recognized in a Western educational system.

Figure 3: The Seven Traditional Teachings.

At the time of the study, the language-teacher participants each focused on one or more of the traditional teachings in detail, such as *maanaji'iwin*, *zaagi'idiwin*, *gikendaasowin*, *zoongide'ewin*, *debwemowin*, *gawegaatisiwin*, or *dabasenimowin* (see Figure 3). As a researcher, I observed and heard about the teachings from these traditional models, including the spiritual significance of the language. "The spirit of the language" is an Indigenous perspective, which was included as a subsection of the theoretical and conceptual section in Chapter 1. Although the language teachers did not directly refer to the traditional teachings from a spiritual perspective, they were able to incorporate the values, ideas, and concepts from this component of the traditional teaching models. I thought it was very important to mention it here because Elders have spoken of the importance of understanding the ancestral languages from a spiritual perspective. For example,

the Treaty Elders of Manitoba reinforce and confirm the understandings of the spirit of the language in this way:

> One of the seven original gifts given by the Creator is language. Through the sacred gift of language, we are able to communicate with other members of our family, language and cultural group in keeping with the original laws of the Creator. (Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba, 2014, p. 69)

Figure 4: The Medicine Wheel Teachings.

The Medicine Wheel Teachings model, as shown in Figure 4, was displayed on one of Brian's bulletin boards. According to him, the circular diagram represents many Indigenous traditional teachings and beliefs. These include, but are not limited to, the four colours of humankind, the four cardinal directions, and the four seasons. In addition, Brian's students researched and compiled family and community activities and included photographs from school events to further illustrate their understanding of the circular philosophy of IKS and bimaadiziwin. As cited in Chapter 1, these Indigenous traditional teachings are also highlighted by Manitoba Elders such as Elder Harry Bone (Bone, Copenace, Courchene, Easter, Green, & Skywater, 2012)

and *Nii Gaani Aki Inini* (Leading Earth Man) Elder Dave Courchene (2006, and as cited below in Turtle Lodge, 2016):

> The Seven Sacred Laws are important teachings in our cultures as the Original People of Turtle Island. They are ancestral values that inspire our conduct as human beings, and bring us back to a relationship with the Earth. ("What are the Seven Sacred Laws?")

According to these Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, all human beings need to "walk the talk" of these teachings in order to lead a mino-bimaadiziwin.

Although the language-teacher participants did not directly focus on all the teachings or values of the Indigenous models presented in Chapter 1, it was evident that they shared and believed in this way of teaching and learning. Two of the participants, for example, revealed that "sharing" and "forgiveness" were values or teachings that need to be an integral part of learning or teaching Anishinaabe language and literacies. For example, when talking about the importance of sharing, Brian mentioned that it is important to share the knowledge and wisdom gained through life experiences. In reference to sharing knowledge or information with the students in his classroom, Brian said he used a talking stick: "The talking stick is used to allow for everyone to speak without being interrupted." First and foremost, Brian believes that his students have IK that needs to acknowledged and validated, and the talking stick practice provides a mechanism to provide this space. Brian's belief is supported by Indigenous holistic philosophies and programs.

Both Brian and Matilda also spoke about forgiveness. This value is not considered one of the traditional teachings from this model; however, Brian felt that it was just as important as any other teaching or value, and he gave a specific example:

> I forgive those that have caused any harm to me or my family, [or] to the community. I do not hold any grudges. I am sure they would appreciate that, so that's what I do. I forgive

those who have negative feelings towards me. I also try and follow the positive road. *Biizhishik aaniish awiya gi ganawaabamik* (You are always being watched).

Matilda shared that "one needs to forgive." Reflecting back on her childhood years, she said, "My grandfather took a lot of it from the Bible, too . . . Forgiveness . . . *Da ni maajaamagan* (it will pass by) . . . it's only here for today, not tomorrow." Further, Matilda and one of the other language-teacher participants spoke about the importance of incorporating traditional teachings of *gawegaatisiwin* and *maanaajiwewin* in their Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. Specifically, Brian noted that being honest and respectful to the students and to others is very important. He revealed, "I try and be honest with the students. I cannot . . . *ekaa jigii wanamodaa* (lie to them) . . . students know right away if you are not truthful." Similarly, in reference to the students in her classroom, Matilda asserted that we should demonstrate respect to oneself, others, and the land. In particular, she confirmed that *maanaajiwewin* is "what is given to you—gifts, nature . . . we have to take care of it."

In addition to the physical, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of the Medicine Wheel model, the emotional aspect of a human being is also one of the main components in living a balanced life. For example, Matilda mentioned the importance of observing and utilizing the different components of teaching and learning Anishinaabe language and literacies with students, not just focusing on academics. She reiterated the importance of paying attention to students' emotional well-being throughout the school year. Her practice was to allow students, individually or in a large group setting, to share any uncomfortable or unhappy feelings they might be experiencing. As a language teacher, Matilda felt it was important to understand students' feelings and provide emotional support when needed. Further, she recognized that learning a language is complicated and that student support is also essential. If students are burdened with emotional issues, they will

not learn. I believe that the type of holistic learning and teaching model that Matilda and the other language-teacher participants talked about reflects the need to integrate IKS and bimaadiziwin into current and future Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. This idea of supporting the emotional or affective domain of human development is also supported by Krashen's (1981) notion of keeping the affective filter low in second-language acquisition. According to Krashen, students need to learn in a comfortable environment so that they can take risks in acquiring a new language. Krashen believes that children cannot learn in a context in which they do not feel emotionally safe.

Matilda shared that the Elders in her community are very resourceful, and as a language teacher, she modelled kindness and *manaaji'iwin* to the children in her classroom by being gentle and kind to them. Matilda said, "I think by the way I talk to the children. I try and be gentle with them, you know. They listen to me because I watch how the Elders treat them." In her classroom, Matilda shared the different types of teachings that are considered inherent within the students' own cultural and linguistic backgrounds, or bimaadiziwin. For example, she said that one of the young girls in one of her classes reminded other students that "you never wear your brother's clothing" or "you never step over their hat [referring to male family members]." As Elder Dan Thomas explained to MFNERC staff at a traditional ceremony, this traditional teaching has been passed on from one generation to another. This teaching cautions others to be respectful of other people's belongings by not stepping over their clothing. According to this traditional teaching, clothing items worn by another human being are considered to have a spirit or a life, and therefore need to be respected (D. Thomas, personal communication, September 2017).

Further, from a linguistic perspective, the plural endings of specific clothing terms in Anishinaabe, such as *azhigan**ak*** (socks) and *midaas**ak*** (pants) have animate endings, which are

naturally added to the root words. This validates the deeper linguistic and cultural meanings associated with the traditional teachings of the Anishinaabe people, specifically word formations, as expressed by Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers and non-Indigenous linguists. These animate and inanimate designations or markers are an important part of the Anishinaabe and Cree linguistic system and culture (Ahenakew, 1987).

Christine believes that all the traditional teachings are very important. For example, she reminds students to respect and take care of the gifts of life and nature that have been given to the Anishinaabe people. She reflected on this teaching by sharing words she shared with her students: "If you have children someday, they are a gift; treasure them and take care of them. I tell the kids to respect nature, themselves [and] everyone [as well as] things that are provided to them."

Brian gave some examples of traditional teachings that he felt were very important to everyone and that, according to him, will give deeper understandings of bimaadiziwin or mino-bimaadiziwin and IKS. First, he described the importance of *maanaajiiwewin* (respect*)* within oneself and towards others. In reference to his students, Brian says, "I know some of them—*gaawin kwayak ji wiisinisiiwaat* (they don't eat properly). *Ni naanaakajiyaak* (But I watch over them)—something called respect." Brian further stated that he has a concern regarding the well-being of his students. "*Niibawa a aniish [mii'iwe] miinawak* (They are given a lot) to look after themselves and watch what they take. Because there is a lot of negative things in this community also. I am talking about drugs and alcohol. [They] got to make good choices." For Brian, some of his extended teacher responsibilities are exhausting. He noted, "*Aazha geniin ni dani gichi anishinaabew* (I am becoming elderly, too)"; therefore, he felt that he may not be able to accommodate his students' needs at all times. "*Ni ga nawaabamaak aanind* (I watch over some of

them).” To Brian, students need to exercise self-respect as this teaching results in making good choices and living a mino-bimaadiziwin.

It is obvious that the students of these language-teacher participants are learning their ancestral language in an environment that promotes the deeper meanings associated with the Anishinaabe traditional teachings. Although it may be difficult to assess or measure how these teachings are being taught or learned explicitly, during the classroom observations and interview sessions, the language-teacher participants shared examples of student behaviours, knowledge, and skill levels that were reflective of the Anishinaabe language, literacies, and IKS and bimaadiziwin. As well, commercial posters and student drawings representative of the Anishinaabe traditional teachings were displayed on their classroom walls or in other areas of the school, which reflected new IK and the application of these Anishinaabe teachings and learnings to their language-learning experiences.

Land-based Learning

Land-based learning includes prior knowledge known by Indigenous people about the plants, medicines, and animals of the land and respecting the sacredness of the land and particular places. This Indigenous belief about land-based learning is described by Elder Nepinak:

> When a tree is planted, he too clings to his tree roots. That is what he clings to. And when he looks up to the sky that is where he starts learning things from. These big trees say, “Those of you who are small, take care. As I also continue to live my life, I will be taken care of. You will be looked after.” That is where the Anishinaabe person gets his knowledge, from the environment; that is what it is called in English—“education,” “school.” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 23)

Brian explained how he uses the land as a teaching and learning context to impart IK and

mino-bimaadiziwin to his students. During cultural outings, for example, the students gather and pick herbs, sweet grass, and sage at one of the four sacred sites located close to Brian's community. In Brian's program, many language and culture activities are being implemented "on" and "about" the land. The language-teacher participants in this study felt very strongly about the need to incorporate more IKS and bimaadiziwin into their Anishinaabe language and literacies programs through land-based activities. In her grade 2–3 classroom, for example, Christine uses a variety of traditional knowledge and cultural experiences to implement a more land-based focus, whereby the students in her school explore the natural environment. In addition to her class, the entire school population participates in land-based activities, such as berry and medicine picking and preparing hunted and trapped animal meat for traditional feasts and ceremonies throughout the school year. Lastly, through the many stories Isabelle shared with me, it was evident that she full-heartedly supports a more land-based focus for teaching the Anishinaabe language. Isabelle would agree with the words of authors Styres and Zinga (2013): "Land has traditionally been considered a sacred, healing space where anyone who is connected to a place can find what he or she needs to maintain, sustain, and build a healthy life" (p. 302). Styres and Zinga's research validates the type of programming supports the language-teacher participants in this research study are advocating for their students.

Other Language Learning and Teaching Practices

The language-teacher participants revealed a variety of other learning and teaching practices, second-language teaching methodologies, and technology tools to describe how IKS and bimaadiziwin are being integrated in their Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. They shared that visual and performing arts activities, word study, humour, healthy lifestyle practices, the use of technological tools such as Smart Boards, and assessment were integral parts of their

classroom teaching and learning practices. I briefly describe these practices below.

Visual and performing arts activities.

The participants described using various hands-on language-learning activities, such as visual and performing arts activities. In addition, Brian reiterated the importance of including community members as resource people. He said:

> *Dako miinawaa ako ni biinaak* . . . (and I bring them) resource people, like musicians, *omaa ako ni biinakinaak* (I bring them here) . . . gym . . . and they come and share the songs that they know, and invite students to join in. *Niidaa ago gidojikewak* . . . We have all kinds of musicians in this community.

Music can be a powerful teaching tool for Indigenous languages. In another Indigenous language-learning context, stimulating learning activities such as stories, videos, and songs are foundational to Maori classrooms and provide successful language immersion programming. Scholars, such as Kirkness (1998a), McCarty (2008), and May and Hill (2008) have written about the successes of school-based Maori language immersion programming. These programs have been a model for Indigenous Canadians of what is possible with immersion language programming and they demonstrate the effort and commitment required for successful language learning. The Maori example is evidence of what Fishman (1990, 1991) calls the three most essential components of Indigenous revitalization efforts in language: transmission, commitment, and ideological clarification.

Word study.

In addition to the many language and literacies activities Matilda shared, she also talked about the importance of including a "word study" component to teaching and learning Anishinaabe. Anishinaabemowin is a verb-based language like the Cree language. Matilda

believed that root words within the language should be taught properly. For example, she mentioned that two-syllable words, like *mawi* (to cry—present tense) and *gii mawi* (she or he cried—past tense) can provide completely different meanings. In her Anishinaabe language classes, Matilda also allocated time for discussions, so that the students could engage in learning about the deeper meanings associated with individual sounds or words. Elders Bone and Courchene and Indigenous scholars like McLeod (2016) provide good examples of how learning individual words or phrases can provide a deeper understanding of an Algonquian language and its cultural meanings. McLeod documented on Facebook for 100 days—one word a day—the Cree vocabulary he had learned. He later published a book entitled *100 Days of Cree* in which he examined root words in Cree and the etymology of these words. McLeod explained: "The book tries to not only gather some of the classical vocabulary of the Cree language—but also to coin and develop words for contemporary life" (p. xiv).

Overall, the language-teacher participants indicated the importance of teaching root words in Anishinaabe and encouraging student-generated topics that can provide rich language-learning opportunities for students. Matilda highly valued the goal of communicating ideas. Another experience she shared was the identification of topics the students were interested in, and the importance of teaching phrases and sentences in meaningful contexts, not just individual words or sounds, so that students are able to understand and converse in the Anishinaabe language. Matilda mentioned that the students in most of her language classes enjoy learning about animals, as well as the newly developed terminology associated with the thematic units she covered in her unit and lesson plans. For her, language taught in the classroom needed to be useful and meaningful to the students, whom she felt wanted to learn how to communicate effectively in their daily lives.

Humour.

When teaching the Anishinaabe language, Matilda mentioned the importance of using humour whenever possible. Specifically, she revealed that when the students first hear unknown words or phrases in Anishinaabe, the individual sounds may sound awkward and humorous to them. For example, she shared that when she first asked the question *"Ki dagoshinim na"* (Did you arrive?) to the students entering her classroom, the students laughed when they first heard the question in Anishinaabe. Similarly, my 8-year-old granddaughter will laugh when I share words, simple phrases, or questions with her in Anishinaabe that she does not understand. The sounds of the words may seem totally foreign or like gibberish to her, and thus she cannot make sense of what I am saying. Cree people are known for their humour and this also holds true for the Anishinaabe people. Cree and Anishinaabe are cousin languages from the same language family. These thoughts shared by the language teachers regarding the importance of humour in teaching are validated by Indigenous scholar McLeod (2016), who wrote, "I think that it would be hard to talk Cree and learn Cree and to never laugh" (p. 84).

Healthy lifestyles.

In addition to the teaching and learning practices identified by the teacher participants, Isabelle shared that IKS and mino-bimaadiziwin also mean retaining and applying healthy child-rearing practices. For example, she mentioned that grandparents and parents cautioned young women to take care of their bodies by eating healthy foods, and by not inhaling any substances that may form abnormalities in young infants. Based on this teaching and understanding, Isabelle strongly believed that IKS and traditional values, such as healthy lifestyles, can be taught and/or learned in the language classroom. She says, "I do bits and pieces with the kids … values can be incorporated."

Technology.

Brian explained that by utilizing the Before You Know It (BYKI) program, the Smart Board, and other technologies, he was able to incorporate IKS into his Anishinaabe language and culture program. Christine mentioned that the school she teaches at has moved forward in some of their language program activities, which she considers to be "a big step." Technology training on how to use the Smart Board is one of the exciting language initiatives at her school that she spoke about. She said, "We have our own speaker on there [referring to a community member], so that is so encouraging. . . . We just have to keep using it." A fluent speaker from Christine's community prepares, records, and uploads the language texts, such as terms, phrases, and short dialogues, into the Smart Board, which Christine then utilizes for most of her units or lesson plans. Matilda also used the Smart Board, Smart Table, and iPad to teach, and she reiterated the importance of taking advantage of technological resources and tools with today's generation because many families have language fluency and technology at home or within the community. Additionally, Christine shared some positive experiences on how she is able to include Elders and use technology in the classroom and extend these language-learning activities to more school-wide activities for the entire student population. She believes it is important for schools to continue using technology such as the Smart Board to bring the Anishinaabe language alive in the classroom.

Within existing Anishinaabe language and literacies programs, there is a need for more documented research regarding the acknowledgement and validation of IKS and bimaadiziwin practices. In a non-Indigenous early years educational setting, Wong (2016) in a literacy study on "funds of knowledge" recommended that early years educators "consider and acknowledge children's home literacy experiences and the knowledge that they bring with them when they arrive in formal schooling" (p. 167). This view validates Isabelle's belief that the connection

between Anishinaabe learning language and literacies and technologies from home to formal schooling will result in more positive language and cultural learning experiences for Indigenous students. Unfortunately, this practice is not being utilized in some Indigenous schools that are utilizing a Western way of learning and teaching, and there is a need to draw on the families' or communities' existing funds of Indigenous knowledge and experiences. In addition, Wong asks a very important question that may support families' involvement and expertise in Indigenous language teaching and learning: "If formal schooling is to build on the experiences and strengths that children bring to school, then how can what is happening at home be connected to school literacy practices using current digital devices?" (p. 167). With more technology being utilized in homes, the current generation seems to have benefitted from technological tools and applications that provide them the opportunity to learn to speak their Indigenous languages.

Assessment.

The language teachers in this study shared other ways of teaching and learning Anishinaabemowin. To find out what the students had learned, for example, Matilda assessed their comprehension, oracy, and literacies of the Anishinaabe language throughout the day. She used both formal and informal ways of evaluating the students' oral language and literacy skills. As discussed in Chapter 4, while conducting my classroom observation, I noticed that Matilda conversed in Anishinaabe to the students continuously and instructed them to complete worksheets on terminology that they may have covered in one of the thematic units. This kind of authentic use of the language is an example of an immersion teaching method. Matilda's language program was not considered an immersion program, however she did immerse the students in as much language as she could.

In general, very little research has been conducted on the assessment of First Nations languages and literacies, and, as some research has shown, this is partly because many educational institutions have not acknowledged or prioritized teaching of Indigenous languages and literacies, IKS, and bimaadiziwin as part of their teacher-training programs. In general, schools that teach Indigenous languages do not pay particular attention to the acquisition of language and literacies, and they pay even less attention to assessment of children's learning of the Indigenous languages. This is an area that definitely needs further exploration for language programs. Evaluation is a very key part of providing successful instruction in any language.

Enhanced Experiences and Resources Required

This section addresses the second part of research question 2 and describes the enhanced experiences and resources the language teachers identified that would assist them to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin into their Indigenous language and literacies programs. These experiences and resources, as depicted in Figure 5, included one's Indigenous knowledge, traditional teachings, print and non-print resources, face-to-face interactions, language immersion programs, Elder involvement, as well as other teaching and learning practices, such as incorporating student-generated topics into the curriculum. Again, in my data analysis, I noticed that some of the specific experiences and resources identified by the language-teacher participants when responding to research question 2 were similar to the responses they provided for the first research question. Basically, what that means is that some of the experiences and resources listed here may or may not be considered as enhanced activities because specific language teachers may already be implementing them partially or totally. Overall, however, the language-teacher participants voiced the importance of more resources and Indigenous knowledge to support the integration of IKS and bimaadiziwin into their current Anishinaabe language and literacies programs.

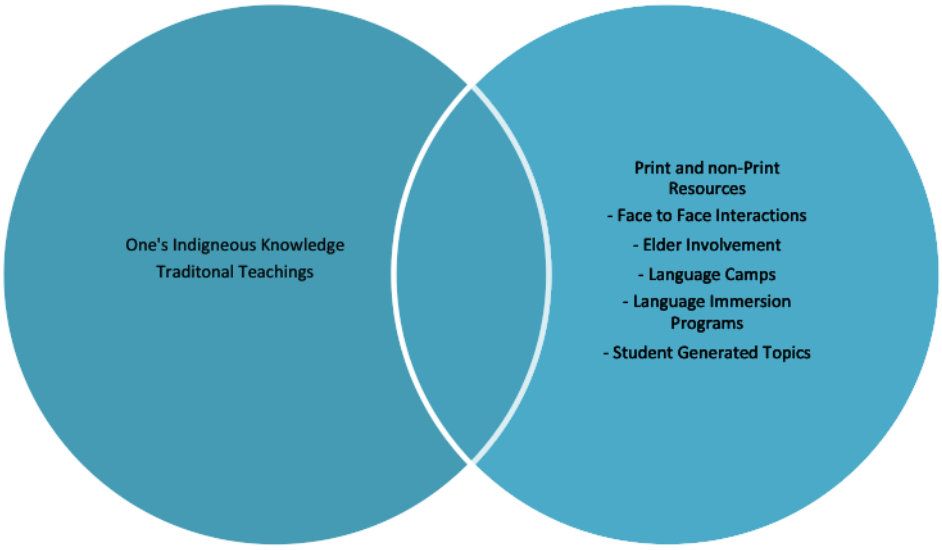

Figure 5: Enhanced experiences and resources required.

One's Indigenous Knowledge: Traditional Teachings

All the language-teacher participants believed that one's individual IK, traditions, and bimaadiziwin have a great impact on the success of teaching Anishinaabe language and literacies to the students. For example, Christine provided many examples of how bimaadiziwin and IKS can be incorporated into her current Anishinaabe language and literacies classes. She said:

> It is so easy for me to incorporate that, those IKS, into what I teach the kids. Again, I go back to the way that I was raised: to know the language, to know the ways, to know the ways of hunting, the way my mother lived. She did the beadwork. She made rugs, willow baskets. She had all that knowledge and it was passed on to her from her grandma. I am able to use those [for my] way of life. It is easy to share that with the children.

Speaking about her Anishinaabe language program, Isabelle said she believes that more traditional teachings can still be incorporated in today's classrooms. She acknowledged the linguistic and cultural background of her upbringing during the early years of her life with her

parents as an asset to her teaching. She recalled some of the values that she was taught by her parents and other extended family members from her home community and said that she is now able to model and share some of these teachings with her own students today. She expressed her thoughts in these words:

> My parents were the ones that [raised me, however] my old aunties and uncles were the ones who lived that way of life, and I was able to live that way of life, too; so now, I was raised like that, I was able to share that with the people of [First Nation] and [First Nation], the children mostly. That is why I became a teacher, to help the children.

Another example that Isabelle mentioned was that young Anishinaabe men and women may not engage in the rites of passage as they would in the past. Isabelle believes that today's young people may be thinking more about graduating from high school and/or planning to attend a postsecondary institution and may overlook this fundamental concept of rites of passage practices. Lertzman's (2002) explanation of the value of these practices is helpful in thinking about Isabelle's concerns:

> Rites of passage are an important part of human development. They mark key times of transition in an individual's life: birth, naming, adulthood, marriage, creating life, becoming an elder, the passing of the body, and being re-born. When these times of transition are marked, ritualized, witnessed, and supported, it creates a kind of experiential map of self-development. Without proper rites of passage, people can become disoriented and lose their way in life's journey. It is as if their life map is incomplete. ("Rites of Passage," para. 1)

According to Isabelle, due to a different bimaadiziwin, the younger populations may now have other future plans and commitments. Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, experienced language teachers like Isabelle, and other Anishinaabe Elders feel that the rites of passage are important for

today's generation because they provide a healthy way of life, or bimaadiziwin, which the academic world does not provide. These are currently overlooked in curriculum, pedagogy and could potentially provide youth with a strong cultural identity.

Involvement of Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers

All the language-teacher participants expressed the need to involve more Elders and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers in their classrooms and schools to ensure that IKS and bimaadiziwin are maintained and taught to their students. However, due to lack of program funding for language classes, many First Nations schools in Manitoba are unable to employ Elders or local resource people throughout the school year. In some schools, other types of language retention, maintenance, and revitalization strategies are implemented to enhance language learning and teaching. For example, since the late 1990s, the MFNERC has been providing technology training and technological language resources to band-operated schools at no cost. For Christine, inadequate funding for language programs creates a lack of support and expertise that are desperately needed in the classroom and school. Christine commented: "We often say we can't continue with the Elder program for the rest of the school year." In her mind, Christine feels that the school and community can maintain, revitalize, and promote the Anishinaabe language because they still have a number of fluent speakers, but consistent funding and continued commitment and dedication are required to move forward.

Print and Non-Print Language Materials

Matilda suggested that more language-teaching resources, like flashcards, books, sample unit and lesson plans, and technological tools, are required to enhance bimaadiziwin and IKS in Anishinaabe language and literacies programming. Matilda commended the MFNERC for providing ongoing training and technology resources to be utilized for First Nations language

learning and teaching in schools. In this day of 21st-century literacies, all language-teacher programs can benefit, not only from the technological tools, but also the ways of thinking about the new literacies. The use of new technologies in classrooms is supported in the research done by Wong (2016). Isabelle also indicated that the Smart Board, individual computers, and other technologies are excellent examples of teaching tools for teaching and learning the Anishinaabe language with the current technologically savvy student population. At one of our interview sessions, Isabelle showed me a sample of student booklets that she developed alongside her students. She noted that her grade 5 and 6 students have access to the technological tools and skills to develop booklets in Anishinaabe by using their own illustrations or Internet images. These student-generated books are meaningful and personal to these students. As seen in Figure 6, one booklet has actual objects taped onto a booklet page that one of the students created, along with printed phrases in Anishinaabe at the top and an English translation provided at the bottom of the page.

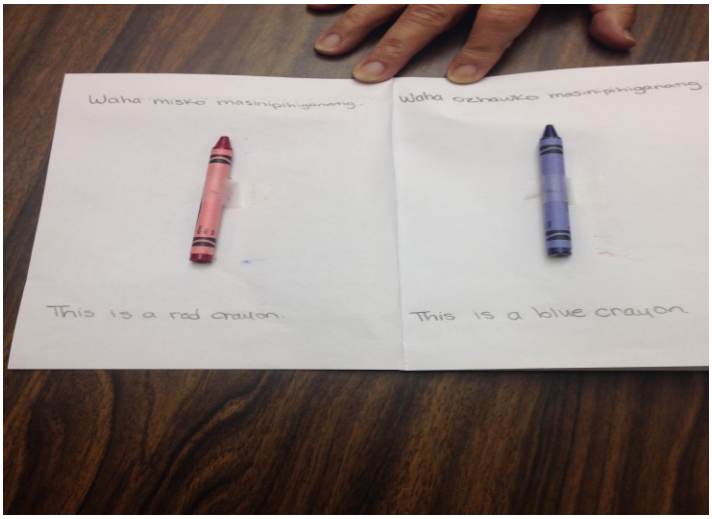

Figure 6: Sample of student-made booklet.

This a great example of student-generated texts. With the lack of bilingual books available for schools and with today's accessible digital publishing tools, having students and teachers construct their own books is a good idea.

Christine suggested that the school invest in more print and technology resources for the schools and communities. She mentioned how excited the students were when the Smart Board was used for their language lessons. On one of my school visits, the language teacher reviewed family terms with the students and provided students with the opportunity to repeat, print, or illustrate the new terminology using the tool bar at the bottom of the Smart Board. She strongly recommended that language teachers utilize the students' creative and technological skills. Brian, too, had a rich collection of print and non-print texts that he developed throughout his many years as a language and culture teacher to enhance his teaching. He showed me individual binders that he had compiled for each of his language classes. Each binder had a collection of language-learning activities based on the themes he implements throughout the school year. These themes include, but are not limited to, everyday conversational topics, such as greetings, weather terms, family terminology, clan animals, and action-oriented words.

Face-to-Face Interactions

In addition to the many print and non-print resources that the language-teacher participants suggested for Anishinaabe language and literacies programming, Matilda reiterated the importance of face-to-face interactions, which basically means conversing with students in the classrooms, schools, and the community on an ongoing basis. For example, Matilda mentioned that she greeted her students in the school hallways by saying *"Gimiwan na"* (Is it raining?) and sometimes the students would respond by saying *"Gaawiin mino giizhigan"* (No, it is a nice day). Matilda also believed that the Anishinaabe language learned at schools needs to be utilized at home and in the

community, so providing the students with tools to initiate conversations is important. In fact, she said that one of the parents mentioned to her that her son was beginning to use family terms in Anishinaabe at home. This approach, along with the "W" questions mentioned earlier (see Table 1), provides the youth with tools for independent learning. This type of feedback, Matilda said, confirmed and validated the many successes she had experienced as a language teacher.

Speaking about her cultural upbringing, Christine commented on mino-bimaadiziwin in this way:

> The way we were raised, it was so nice. . . . The way life is now, it is so different. This generation were not raised like that; now they are grasping [to learn the language]. If they want to know that way [of life], [they continue to look], always searching. Sometimes they will condemn you for that [and say] 'How come you did not show me this. I am questioned on that a lot of times. Makes me think and how come I did not [teach the language to my children]? Why did I not do that?'

Based on what Christine shared, it seems evident that Indigenous youth are looking for meaning in their lives. Without their ancestral language and Indigenous upbringing, they seem to be searching for their Anishinaabe cultural identity. Like many parents of her generation, including myself, Christine felt that teaching them the English language would better prepare the children for more academic success in school. Fontaine (2017, citing Graham, 2007) explains that parents "believed that speaking an Aboriginal language was an impediment to learning but was also an integral part of cultural identities to be eradicated" (p. 189). As the benefits of bilingualism have been made more visible in current times with the success of programs like French immersion and heritage language maintenance, there appears to be more awareness about the possibilities for

multiple languages. The youth see applications like Google Translate on phones and see more possibilities for language learning than perhaps their parents' generation did.

Language Immersion and Cultural Programming

Brian believes that a language immersion program in his school and community would provide better language and cultural learning if it started from the early years (K–4) level. He stated that it would be the most successful for retention and revival of the Anishinaabe language. Immersion learning is what Halliday (1981) calls learning through language. Brian would like to see an immersion program in his school. He said:

> I just want an immersion program. I would like to see it happen from grade 1 to grade 8. Imagine the amount of work that needs to be done. We need a good strong committee, and maybe curriculum developers.

Brian's vision is supported by scholarship in Indigenous language immersion programming (McIvor, 2009). These kinds of programs have been proven successful in New Zealand and Hawaii and are now being modelled in Canada. Brian was very outspoken about how he wanted to maintain and revitalize the ancestral language and cultural traditions: "I want the language to come back here; it is so sad to say that we may have five speakers for the students. I want the language to come alive again *ji bwaa wanidooyang* (before we lose it)." Brian explained his commitment to retaining and revitalizing the language in his schools and community. He asserted, "I have passion for the language that has kept me going. I want it to live on *nanaadok* (in many ways) to include *Kichi-Anishinaabek* (the Elders), the traditions, sweatlodge. *Ji bisindamoowaat* (to listen [referring to students]." Brian noted that he has taken the students to sacred sites and hopes that they will continue to experience the Anishinaabe way of life.

Isabelle shared many experiences that would enhance the incorporation of bimaadiziwin and IKS into current Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. According to Isabelle, language and cultural camps would be a good way to revitalize, retain, and promote the Anishinaabe language and way of life. She would love to take her grade 5 and 6 students to a nearby cultural camp for the summer, so they can experience identifying and picking medicinal plants, preparing and cooking traditional meals, and, most importantly, be immersed in the Anishinaabe language. For Isabelle, this may require not using the English language at all; she says the students would have to communicate their daily needs in Anishinaabe only, similar to a language immersion program. Isabelle felt that this approach may be the only way to learn or relearn the language and the traditions of the Anishinaabe people.

In Winnipeg, Nijii Mahkwa Elementary School follows a similar philosophy. Their programming is based on preserving the language and culture of the community and students; however, academic programming is also an integral part of this school. Too often, language and cultural programming within First Nations or non-First Nations schools are situated on the periphery of a school or educational organization's philosophy, rather than being the foundational elements of the students' knowledge, experience, and culture. Vygotsky (1978) would suggest that culture is at the core of learning, and Vygotskian approaches can have been central to the success of language learning worldwide.

Learning an Indigenous language involves much more than addressing the mental aspect of learning, such as reciting words, phrases, or sentences. According to Indigenous Elders, learning a language is about culture (W. Wakita, personal communication, April 2016), and this Indigenous belief leads towards living a mino-bimaadiziwin, a more balanced life. Based on these study results, I learned that these language teachers seemed to have a deeper understanding of the

importance of the many traditional teachings or learnings from the Seven Traditional Teachings and the Medicine Wheel models. The research findings indicate that these language teachers are incorporating the emotional, spiritual, physical, and mental aspects of learning within their individual Indigenous language and literacies programs. Overall, the main themes and the interrelated themes generated from this research confirm the significance of using an Indigenous model to teach the Anishinaabe language and literacies.

Kodag Dibaajimowin; Moving Forward

In Chapter 6 I focus on four key questions to discuss my personal, professional, and research experiences in relation to the results of this study, and I discuss the study's implications and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations, and Closing Reflections

Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? Who am I?

(Murray Sinclair, as cited in Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2016)

At one of his many speaking engagements, Senator Murray Sinclair, former chair of the TRC, noted the four questions above when speaking about the importance of one's cultural identity and bimaadiziwin. In this final chapter, I use Sinclair's questions to guide me in reflecting on and discussing my personal, professional, and research experiences in relation to the results of this study. First, I reflect on "who am I?" and "where do I come from?" (as shared in Chapter 1: Introduction) by discussing "who am I now?" and "where am I now?" based on my research journey *Anishinaabe Language and Literacies: Teaching Practices in Manitoba* within the last few years. Second, I reflect on "why am I here?" by addressing "why did I do this research?" I conclude this chapter by addressing the question "Where am I going?" by discussing this study's implications for practice and recommendations for future research.

Awenen Niin Zhigwa (Who Am I Now)?

At the beginning of my dissertation, I positioned myself in relation to the many learning, teaching, and research paths that I have taken by sharing my experiences as an Anishinaabe language learner, educator, and researcher over a period of about five decades. I selected a theoretical and conceptual framework that would allow me to discuss some of the experiential and practical knowledge of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, including scholarly work done by former and current Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, and I conversed with and observed four experienced Anishinaabe language teachers in Manitoba. As first, I wondered if I had posed the appropriate research questions in my study; however, as I continued on my research journey I

was amazed at the willingness of the language-teacher participants to share their experiences and provide me with the opportunity to observe IKS and bimaadiziwin within their current Anishinaabe language and literacies programs. The participants wanted to talk about their experiences and perspectives on language learning and teaching. Their beliefs and epistemology emerged as we conversed, and I am now convinced that the findings of the research questions are critical at this time as Indigenous languages are eroding quickly and desperate measures are needed to retain and revitalize the language speakers. Additionally, we are about to have a national Indigenous languages act in Canada, so this research is highly relevant. Equally as important, I now have a better and deeper understanding of how IKS and bimaadiziwin have been, and need to be, an integral component of today's Anishinaabe language learning and teaching practices.

Andi e Ayaayaan Zhigwa? (Where Am I Now)?

To reflect on this question personally and professionally, as stated in Chapter 1, I have reviewed and reflected on my many life experiences, ranging from my early childhood years on my family's traditional land, to formal schooling in my home community, to leaving my family and community for higher education in a large urban centre, to pursuing my doctoral studies in a postsecondary institution. I believe all these experiences have shaped who I am today. As a doctoral student, I felt it was necessary for me to explore these research questions despite the limited literature available on Anishinaabe language and literacies and teachers' practices in Manitoba. In my literature review chapter, I researched historical policies and strategies undertaken on Indigenous languages and literacies since the 1970s, scholarly writings done by Indigenous and non-Indigenous advocates, and teacher-training programs to examine the current language-teacher training and supports provided in Manitoba and across Canada. Since there are very few studies on Indigenous language teaching and learning practices for K–12 programming in

Manitoba or across Canada, unlike other second-language research, I was unable to compare this study with other Indigenous language and literacies practices. Although Indigenous languages are not always identified as second languages in Canada, I reviewed second-language research theories to explore how these theories might contribute to understandings related to the learning and teaching of Indigenous languages and literacies.

The literature review did include what some provinces in Canada are offering for specialized teaching training for language teachers or instructors; however, there are still very few teacher-training programs being offered across the country. In Manitoba, for example, there is only one program, located in the north that is providing language training programming for language teachers. This is troubling, because Indigenous language loss in Manitoba is very rapid. During this study, I found out that numerous language teachers are retiring within the near future, and the schools where they teach may not have plans to revitalize, retain, preserve, or promote Indigenous languages and literacies programming within their communities. As reported in the literature review, Indigenous and non-Indigenous language scholars across Canada and abroad have documented and voiced their concerns regarding the loss of the Indigenous languages for many years.

As noted in the study results of Chapter 5, the language-teacher participants felt that one's Indigenous knowledge and the traditional teachings, as well as other language and teaching practices from a Western perspective, would enhance their ability to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin into their teaching of an Indigenous language and literacies in classrooms, schools, and on the land.

In summary, this study highlighted the need for resources, such as print and non-print language materials, language support documents, sample unit and lesson plans, and human

resources, as well as funding to hire Elders and Knowledge Keepers, so that IKS and bimaadiziwin can be successfully integrated in Indigenous and literacies programs at a more enhanced level. Although Indigenous and Western perspectives were both mentioned as common teaching and learning practices by the language teachers, the spiritual and cultural aspects of the Anishinaabe language were highly valued by the study participants. Due to a lack of research and alternative models, it is understandable that language teachers draw on or utilize language-teaching practices from mainstream teacher-training programs. It is important for current and future language-teaching training programs to expand the linguistic learning context in Manitoba or across Canada. This past year, for example, at an Indigenous language gathering, an Elder reminded me to take into consideration the "grandmother training" of language and culture when discussing Indigenous language training for current and potential language teachers or instructors. He suggested that this type of language training would include IKS, bimaadiziwin, and traditional practices that are not documented and are part of Indigenous oral traditions. The Elder was concerned that these oral traditions of language and culture could be lost if not passed on to the current or younger generation of language learners and teachers. This task, whereby Western educational institutions acknowledge and utilize IKS and bimaadiziwin, remains to be done. Christine, for example, indicated that she had enrolled in most of the Indigenous language classes that were being offered during her postsecondary teacher training, and this Western type of second-language learning and teaching training also prepared her to teach Anishinaabe language and literacies to her students. For Christine, these courses were very helpful; however, none of the other language teachers mentioned taking linguistics or second-language teaching methodology courses as part of their teacher-training programs in Manitoba.

One of the most challenging areas in this research study is that very few, if any, studies have examined Indigenous language and literacies teaching practices. Therefore, it was very difficult to find out how IKS and bimaadiziwin are being incorporated into other Indigenous languages and literacies programs within other schools or communities in Manitoba or Canada. Due to the lack of research literature available on this research topic, a historical to current-day overview of the Indigenous languages movement from the last four decades to examine second-language methodologies and theories from a Western perspective was included in Chapter 2. The literature review chapter, therefore, provided a foundation in terms of "where we started" and "where we are" regarding Indigenous languages and literacies research and programming.

Similar to what has been reported by other scholars on language loss and the revitalization efforts of many schools and communities across Canada, authors McCarty, Romero, and Zepeda (2006) report the drastic loss of language and culture among Native American Indian youth. In this American study, the authors reported that Navajo language teachers found that "caring . . . surfaced repeatedly within their field notes and interviews" with their teacher or administrator participants" and that "Noddings's (1984) concept of 'authentic caring'—that is, genuinely reciprocal, respectful relations between students (youth) and teachers (adults)—useful" (p. 39). The authors explain that the teachers in this study thought that the students did not care about their Navajo language; however, "local Navajo educators in particular were intent on helping students—in one administrator's words, 'get back down to being proud of who you are'—and all were highly motivated to ensure the school and life success of Navajo children" (p. 40).

A present-day study by Nikkel (2006) also reveals that although the children in a northern Manitoba school did not gain fluency in the Cree language bilingual program, the community and parents were very supportive of teaching the language and culture in the school. The study focused

on language learning and teaching and utilizing a collaborative research model conducted by Nikkel (2006) within an elementary school. The "students' language proficiency, attitudes, and academic performance, as well as parent and teacher interviews were analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the program and to explore the program's correspondence to community needs and expectations" (p. ii). Additionally, the study showed that Cree program students had generally positive attitudes towards Cree language and culture, and that the increased time devoted to Cree had no demonstrable negative effects on their academic performance in other subject areas (p. ii). Recommendations from this study stated that (1) teachers need more support to teach Cree effectively; (2) the primary focus of the Cree program should be oral language skills; 3) parental support and engagement in the program (4) continuous and regular formative assessment of the program is desirable and will help the Cree program to develop, especially if teachers and parents are involved in the assessment (pp. 94–96).

Both the Canadian and American studies above illustrate specific research that was conducted with school-age students. More studies are direly needed in this area. These researchers, and others, have shown that language immersion and bilingual language programming may be the most effective way to learn Indigenous languages

Wekonen Owe Ozhibii'ikewewin Kaa Onji Doodamaan **(Why Did I Do This Research)?**

I have always had a passion to pursue studies in Indigenous language learning and teaching at the undergraduate and graduate levels. I believe that as a researcher I have now contributed to an area that requires more research and attention. My study has focused mainly on exploring how IKS and bimaadiziwin are incorporated within today's Indigenous language and literacies programs in Manitoba, and the study results have confirmed the need for a more Indigenous and holistic approach to learning and teaching Anishinaabemowin. As a researcher,

I have appreciated this opportunity to undertake a research study that has deepened my understanding of how Anishinaabe language teachers implement IKS and bimaadiziwin in their language and literacies programs. In summary, this research study has contributed to Indigenous languages research, and it will illuminate the connection and representation of IKS and bimaadiziwin in today's language learning and teaching practices. The intention of this study was to identify Anishinaabe language teaching and learning practices, and the study results support language retention and revitalization for current and future generations of language learners.

Further, this study is a springboard for future research studies to confirm the importance of developing and implementing an IKS and bimaadiziwin foundation in today's Indigenous language and literacies programs. It will be made available to other Indigenous language teachers and advocates because it contributes to the enrichment of language learning and teaching practices by illuminating the experiences of current language practitioners. It will also be a springboard for myself in further research.

Aandi e Izhaayan (Where Am I Going)?

In light of the 2015 TRC calls to action, the recommendations within this chapter align with the directives and strategies for legislative protection and implementation of Indigenous languages and cultures at the national and regional levels in Canada. Specifically, as noted in the literature review of this dissertation, Articles 13–17 of the calls to action on ancestral languages and cultures recommend that governments have "postsecondary institutions provide professional and certified training for language instructors" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 2).

The following recommendations for practice of current and future Indigenous languages and literacies programming and for potential research topics are based on the research study findings with these four Manitoba language teachers, as well as my personal and professional Indigenous language educator's roles and responsibilities in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. In collaboration with the Anishinaabe language-teacher participants, I recommend the following practices for schools, communities, and other educational institutions. Following these recommendations, I suggest future research topics.

Recommendations for Schools, Communities, and Educational Institutions

1. That **traditional teachings** similar to the Seven Traditional Teachings and Medicine Wheel Teachings models or other Indigenous learning and teaching models be an integral part of learning and teaching Indigenous language and literacies in classrooms, schools, communities, and postsecondary institutions.
    a. Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community resource people be hired to support language teaching and learning.

2. That **Indigenous lived experiences be acknowledged and validated** as part of Indigenous language and literacies learning, teaching, pedagogy and curriculum.

3. That **networking opportunities** for language teachers and advocates be an integral part of language and literacies program planning.

4. That **school administrators** provide leadership for ongoing language support and allow **curriculum development time** for Indigenous language teachers, Elders, and other language advocates to develop a First Nations language framework and other language and literacies resources and materials.

a. Additional time be provided to teachers to develop formal lesson and unit plans.
b. An Anishinaabe language framework be developed to assist in providing effective and consistent ways of teaching language in the schools.
c. Development of curriculum resources to include Indigenous language and teaching materials for language teachers and students to utilize to ensure integration of IKS and bimaadiziwin at all levels of language learning and teaching.
d. Professional development opportunities be offered to language teachers to review and adapt, if needed, national and provincial language support documents, such as *The Common Curriculum Framework for Western and Northern Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs, Kindergarten to Grade 12* and *Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes* for Aboriginal languages and cultural programming.

5. That language teachers and teacher assistants or other fluent speakers from the community receive **formal learning and teaching opportunities and support** to teach in language immersion, bilingual, or dual language programs in schools or communities. These teachers would need to learn immersion or bilingual language methodologies and how to employ them in their classrooms, schools, or communities.
    a. Courses could include teachings from Elders and/or Knowledge Keepers, as well as applied linguistics, as required, a range of first- or second-language methodologies, and technological support. Considerations of what is important in teaching Indigenous languages as an additional language or as a second language need to be explored and applied.
    b. Mentor Apprentice Programs to be utilized to prepare a new generation of speakers

and future language teachers.

   a. Other areas of study might include the examination of root word studies, student-interest topics, and other effective Indigenous language learning and teaching practices as found within this research study to be integral parts of current and future Indigenous language and literacies programming.

6. **That Indigenous language usage be reinforced and promoted** at home, within school surroundings and community. Language revitalization activities could include, but would not be limited to:
   a. Establishment of language nests
   b. Adult and young parent language classes in the evenings or on weekends
   c. Dual language programs
   d. Language immersion and cultural camps for families
   e. Community promotion of the language
   f. Language policy in schools for promoting language in all aspects of learning and teachings

Recommendations for Print and Non-Print Language Resources

7. That more **print and digital Indigenous language resources and materials** be developed, published, and made available to all language educators. These resources include, but are not limited to:
   a. Published resources and materials, sample unit and lesson plans, language support documents, and storybooks for all language learners.
   b. Technology tools such as the Smart Board, Smart Table, tablets, BYKI program, and other language-learning applications to accommodate current language teaching

and learning needs.

c. Utilization of students' creative skills to express language and literacies learning.

Recommendations for Formal Evaluation of Language Programs

8. That a formal evaluation be developed and utilized for current Indigenous language programs, including an evaluative component for future language programs.
    a. Evaluation is a very key part of providing evidence of successful instruction in any language.
    b. Since we know that language taught as a subject does not produce any language speakers, there is a need to develop and implement immersion and dual language programming evaluations to document the successes and needs of current and future language and literacies programs.

Recommendations for Land-based Learning

9. That Indigenous language and literacies programs explore and implement **land-based learning (off, on, and about the land)** and other enhanced language-learning programming or activities to support the revitalization, retention, preservation, and promotion of Indigenous language learning and teaching. This might include, but should not be limited to:
    a. Indigenous language learning and methodologies, experiential knowledge, and traditional learning practices reflecting an Indigenous way of life.
    b. Learning and teaching "off, on, about, or through" land-based language-learning approaches (e.g., offering cultural and language outings or camps).

Suggestions for Future Research Studies

As noted in Chapter 2, the literature review, few scholars have explored how IKS and bimaadiziwin can be implemented from the perspective of language teachers. This dissertation has noted Canadian and American studies that were conducted with classroom teachers or school-age students, very few in number, reflecting a dire need for more studies in this area. Future research studies are needed to address the following:

- How can IKS, bimaadiziwin, and/or traditional teachings be further researched, implemented and evaluated within current and future Anishinaabe language and literacies programs?
- How can education stakeholders and Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers collaborate in training and implementation of the learning and teaching of Indigenous languages?
- How can current and future Indigenous language resources and successes of ancestral languages and literacies programming and initiatives be further documented?
- What other teaching and learning practices would support Anishinaabemowin and/or Indigenous language teaching and learning practices?

Since the TRC calls for action, the Government of Canada has reported that language engagement meetings have been scheduled across Canada and that more than one Indigenous language commissioner and that (Government of Canada, 2018, para. 3). In Manitoba, a group of language advocates and educators were invited to attend a provincial forum to discuss what would be included in the Indigenous languages act.

This research study has provided some extended knowledge of learning and teaching practices using IKS and bimaadiziwin as identified by the language-teacher participants, and

provides opportunities for further research and development of Indigenous languages and literacies learning and teaching in Manitoba, Canada, and abroad.

As I conclude this part of my scholarly work, I think about Shawn Wilson's words (2008, as cited by Styres and Zinga, 2013): "If research doesn't change you as a person, then you haven't done it right" (p. 294). For me, this research journey has grounded me in what I truly believe in as an Indigenous language educator. Because I believe in the sacredness of the Anishinaabe language, I have sought out more knowledge with Elders and Knowledge Keepers and participated in more ceremonial gatherings to develop a deeper understanding of the Anishinaabe language, literacies, IKS, and bimaadiziwin. These language and cultural experiences have allowed me to explore my research work on Indigenous languages and literacies from a grassroots level and, equally as important, from a more holistic perspective as traditionally taught by our ancestors.

In describing this language research process, I have had to overcome many researcher challenges, similar to what Steinhauer-Hill (2008) mentions in her language research work. She cites an Elder who shared this understanding:

> The context of Indigenous languages [is] similar to an inductive style of learning. It is about those syllables . . . vibrations . . . that are usually not explained except in our cellular structure. We don't speak in lines. We speak in circular motion thinking around that subject. Our sound system is a neutral pathway to our memory . . . [that] we inherited through our cellular memory. (p. 192)

This resembles the difficulties I had with some of the transcriptions that I included in the study findings chapter as the teacher participants shared many experiences and stories without answering most of the research questions directly. As a result, there were many pauses within the interviews, and sometimes these shared experiences were repeated in a "circular motion," which

prevented me from using the original interview questions naturally. Further, Steinhauer-Hill also mentions that she experienced the "rigor" requirements of the Western university standards as well as the "respect and responsibility of [her] community and people" (p. 210). Based on my own experience, I realize how important it is to follow specific guidelines as set out by postsecondary institutions. However, when a research topic does not have the foundational documentation and scholarly work already done in the field, then it makes the task of completing specific sections of the dissertation very challenging. I concur with Steinhauer-Hill when she says "because many of our resources are living Elders, the requirement to use only published materials is problematic for us. It must be recognized that Elders are the philosophers who establish the framework" (p. 24). One specific example for me during this research journey was trying to locate a theoretical and conceptual framework from an Indigenous perspective. Within this research area, it was difficult to try to build a framework to answer my research questions, as there are very few studies on theoretical and conceptual frameworks of Indigenous languages and literacies to review. For me, this scholarly journey was an organic experience requiring further foundational research. For example, in reference to the application of the Seven Traditional Teachings and the Medicine Wheel models in relation to language and teaching practices, I found no research studies written on these two models. As a result, I based my interpretations on other applications of these two models and on the language-teachers' perceptions, ideas, and opinions, and I utilized my experiential IKS and bimaadiziwin throughout this research. From this research exploration, I was able to build a framework that illuminated the shared Anishinaabe oral traditions and experiential knowledge from living Elders and Knowledge Keepers and experienced Indigenous language teachers. In this study, I attempted to apply a balanced Anishinaabe way of thinking using a Western scholarly focus writing approach.

Next, in examining the type of language programming that currently exists within our educational systems, I conclude that the piecemeal approach to learning and teaching Indigenous languages and literacies has not been successful. We are not creating speakers, and children are not able to speak their ancestral languages today. In fact, many Indigenous language programs in Manitoba and elsewhere have not produced any fluent Anishinaabe speakers, which is really the first level of learning how to speak a language, followed by "speaking to learn" through a different context. This understanding is mentioned in the literature review and is similar to what Cummins' second-language research (1990, 2005) referred to as BICS and CALP approaches. Similarly, Halliday's (1993) triptych of "learning language, learning about language, and learning through language" can inform Indigenous learning and teaching practices as we language practitioners and scholars move forward in this area. Additionally, as noted within the theoretical framework, Elder Bone and other Elders refer to the importance of the different levels of language learning that exist with the Anishinaabe language. We need to consider what this can mean providing full language learning and teaching revitalization from an Indigenous perspective.

Kodag Dibaajimowin: Moving Forward

Lastly, based on the findings and results of this dissertation, I strongly support Anishinaabe language teachers, Elders, and other scholars who have voiced the importance of educating the whole child by focusing on the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of learning, and not just the cognitive aspect. As concluded by other Indigenous language teachers, scholars, and Elders (Bone et al., 2012), and based on my study participants 'and my own perceptions and current language learning and teaching practices and experiences, "learning an Indigenous language is learning about one's culture" (Wanbidi Wakita, personal communication, September 7, 2017). It is through the support and words of these Indigenous Elders and scholars that our languages,

literacies, IKSs and mino-bimaadiziwin can be learned and passed on to the next generation. As a result of this research journey, I now understand that it is our ancestors from the last few generations who have paved the way to retain, maintain and preserve our languages, cultural traditions, IKSs and to model mino-bimaadiziwn for future generations.

Ahaw, ni minwendam owe gagii ozhibiiamaan aanishinaa ni gii ikit e minwendamaan chiwiichiyakwaa ni wiichi kikinoo'amaakek. Aanishinaa aabiji kitendaakon ki kiikitoowininaan, shikwa kaye okitaatisiik ikitowaak Manitoo kikiimiinikonaan owe giikidowin.

I am honoured to have documented my research experiences with other language teachers and educators on how IKSs and bimaadiziwn are connected to Anishinaabe language and literacies. As I have shared at the beginning of this dissertation, "Our Aboriginal languages are very sacred, and our Elders tell us that our ancestral language is a gift from the Creator."

It is truly a gift to be able to research one of our ancestral languages, Indigenous knowledge systems, and mino-bimaadiziwin.

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Appendix A: Pre-Interviews

As part of the initial interviewing process, I plan to follow the steps listed below:

- Provide participants with a choice of seven of the pre-interview activities described in Appendix B.
- Schedule the first pre-interview with each participant.
- Begin the pre-interview by asking the participant to explain why he or she chose a particular pre-interview activity, and provide details of the chosen activity. Pre-interviews will be approximately 1 hour.
- Ask the seven open-ended questions listed in Appendix C.
- Record participant responses to the questions in Appendix C.
- If needed for clarification, I will ask other questions related to the open-ended questions in Appendix C.

Appendix B: Pre-Interview Activities

My topic, *Anishinaabe Language and Literacies: Teachers' Practices in Manitoba*, may include the following pre-interview activities:

- Draw a diagram that illustrates your past and future experiences as an Anishinaabe language teacher.
- Using two colours, draw a picture of how your role as an Anishinaabe language teacher has changed your life.
- Draw a timeline that illustrates the most important contributions you have made as an Anishinaabe language teacher.
- Draw two pictures: one showing a good experience and another showing a bad experience as an Anishinaabe language teacher.
- Draw two pictures: one showing a good experience and another showing a bad experience as an Anishinaabe language teacher.
- Use three colours to make a diagram or abstract drawing that shows the way you experience being an Anishinaabe language teacher.
- Develop a log of how time is spent over the course of a week as an Anishinaabe language teacher.

Appendix C: Open-Ended Questions

As a follow-up to pre-interview questions or activities, the following open-ended questions may be asked to find out more about the learning and teaching practices of Anishinaabe language teachers.

- What did you anticipate the most in becoming an Anishinaabe language teacher?
- How has your experience changed over time?
- In what way did your experience stay the same?
- What has disappointed you the most as an Anishinaabe language teacher?
- What has been most challenging in being an Anishinaabe language teacher?
- What is the most important contribution you have made as an Anishinaabe language teacher?
- What best prepared you for your work?
- What do “bimaadiziwin” and “mino-bimaadiziwin” mean to you?
    a. How do you incorporate these concepts into your teaching?
- What does IKS mean to you?
    a. How do you incorporate IKS in your language program?
- What experiences can you identify that would enhance your ability to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin in your teaching of the Anishinaabe language and literacies in the classroom?
- What resources can you identify that would enhance your ability to incorporate IKS and bimaadiziwin into your teaching of the Anishinaabe language and literacies in the classroom?

- What do you look forward to in the future as an Anishinaabe language teacher?
- What further activity or resource would benefit your work?

Appendix D: Anishinaabe Language Classroom Observations Checklist

Date:

Grade(s): School: Community:

Lesson Plan

Theme/Topic:

Length of class:

Number of

Students: Number of

adults:

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1. Physical Features
   a. Is there ample room for the number of people present? ____
   b. Do learning materials and equipment appear to be adequate? ____
   c. Are work and play areas separated to minimize distractions? ____
   d. Is there a private place in the classroom where children may go if they feel overstimulated?

2. Setting Routines
   a. Are children expected to sit …
      i. on the rug?
      ii. on individual space on the floor?
      iii. in chairs?
      iv. at their desks?
      v. elsewhere?

3. Instruction and Feedback Routines
   a. Is the teacher's use of the Anishinaabe/Ojibwe language understandable to the students? (i.e., comprehensible input)?
   b. Do the students respond to the teacher's instruction given in the language?
   c. Are students expected to respond and practice the new vocabulary, phrases, etc., and produce or repeat out loud in pairs or as a whole group?
   d. When are the students given feedback?

e. Is there an individualized approach to work assigned?
f. Is there a posted schedule which tends to be followed daily?

4. Cultural Content
a. How is IKS taught or displayed in the classroom?
b. How is bimaadiziwin taught or displayed in the classroom?

5. Literacies
a. What are examples of literacy activities that the students are involved in?
b. Is it evident that students are learning a particular conversational tactic of literacy skill?
c. Do the students of this age seem interested in the literacy activities?
d. Are the students taught at their developmental levels, or are all expected to accomplish the same task?

6. Independent Work Routines
a. Are students expected to follow sequenced directions given at a previous time?
b. In what kind of seating arrangement are children expected to work independently?
c. What are the students expected to do when the assigned task(s) is finished?

7. Classroom Interaction
a. Is there time for the students to work cooperatively?
b. How long are students expected to listen and converse in a large group setting?
c. Are there other opportunities for students to interact socially?

8. Materials and Resources
a. What cultural and language materials and/or resources are displayed in the classroom?
b. What literacy materials are displayed in the classroom?

NOTE: Samples of students' work may be copied and returned later to the teacher.

Adapted from "Classroom Checklist for Teachers' Circle of Inclusion Project" (n.d.).

Appendix E: Letter

Date: March 2014
Study: Anishinaabe Language and Literacies: Teachers' Practices in Manitoba

Dear_____:

First, I would like to thank you for your interest and consideration of participating in this study.

The purpose of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships among the Anishinaabe language, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and bimaadiziwin by exploring current Aboriginal language teaching and learning practices. This study is based on the perceptions and experiences of four Anishinaabe language teachers in Manitoba and informed by my experiences as an Anishinaabe speaker, a language teacher, a consultant, an instructor, and a school administrator. I believe that finding out how teachers incorporate IKS, bimaadiziwin, and the cultural and spiritual nuances embedded in the language will be beneficial to teaching of the Anishinaabe language. I intend to examine how language teachers employ these cultural and spiritual nuances in their teaching.

The findings of this research study will add to the much-needed scholarly work on Indigenous languages and literacies, which in turn will add to the identification of effective language and teaching practices and resources for Aboriginal language teachers and students. Aboriginal people have not had many opportunities in the past to have their experiences authenticated as knowledge from an Indigenous perspective. This research will contribute to the importance of First Nations languages research, and will substantiate the representation of IKS and bimaadiziwin in language curricula. As well, the intention of this study is to identify Anishinaabe language teaching and learning practices that will support language retention and revitalization for today's youth. The study will be made available to other Indigenous language teachers and advocates as it contributes to the enrichment of language learning and teaching practices through the experiences of current practitioners.

I will utilize interpretive inquiry methods such as individual interviews, classroom observations and field notes, and the sharing of collected artifacts with study participants. Participants' knowledge and experiences in areas such as IKS, bimaadiziwin, Indigenous language and literacies and teaching practices, along with their expertise in locally developed resources will be explored in the interviews. Participants will asked be asked about resources that could enhance their language programs. Pre-interview questions, pre-interview activities and open-ended questions will be conducted with participants and their responses will be recorded.

All information obtained in the study will be stored safely in our computers and will be destroyed when the research study has been completed. Your real name will not apply in any files.

I anticipate that the results of this study will be shared and used in a variety of ways. In addition to the publication of research papers and books and presentations at research and professional conferences, I believe that the study will impact policies and practices in federal and provincially funded education systems.

The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Faculties of Education, Extension, Augustana and Campus Saint Jean Research Ethics Board (EEASJ REB) at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the EEASJ REB at 780-492-3751.

At the University of Alberta, we must prove that we are being careful and honest about how we treat you in this study. We also have to take good care of the information that you give us. If you have any questions about this, you can contact me at 204-612-5229. If you have any questions about the study, you can contact my supervisors, Dr. Heather Blair at 780-492-0921 or Dr. Ethel Gardner at 780-492-3630.

Thank you.

_____

(researcher's name)

Appendix F: Consent Form

Sample Template for Permission to Use Participant's Information/Work

I understand that a researcher from the University of Alberta is requesting to use my information/work for the purpose of research. Original samples of my work may be photographed/photocopied and returned to me in a timely manner if requested. I understand that images of this work may be used in the researcher's dissertation / research reports / scholarly publications or in presentations at scholarly conferences.

_____I understand that in discussions about the work, a pseudonym will be

used. OR

_____I understand that my name will be included in the caption.

FURTHER,

_____I request return of original information/work/artifact(s) to

□ The address provided below [provide space for address]

By signing below, I consent that my information/work will be used as stipulated above.

_____ _____

Participant printed name Participant signature

*I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time [or specify a date or point in the research process] by contacting the researcher at [provide researcher's contact info and supervisor if student].

This statement must be included in all information/consent letters:
The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines and approved by the Faculties of Education, Extension, Augustana and Campus Saint Jean Research Ethics Board (EEASJ REB) at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Chair of the EEASJ REB c/o (780) 492-2614.