Métis and Ontario Education Policy:
Educators Supporting Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning[1]

Jonathan Anuik and Laura-Lee Kearns

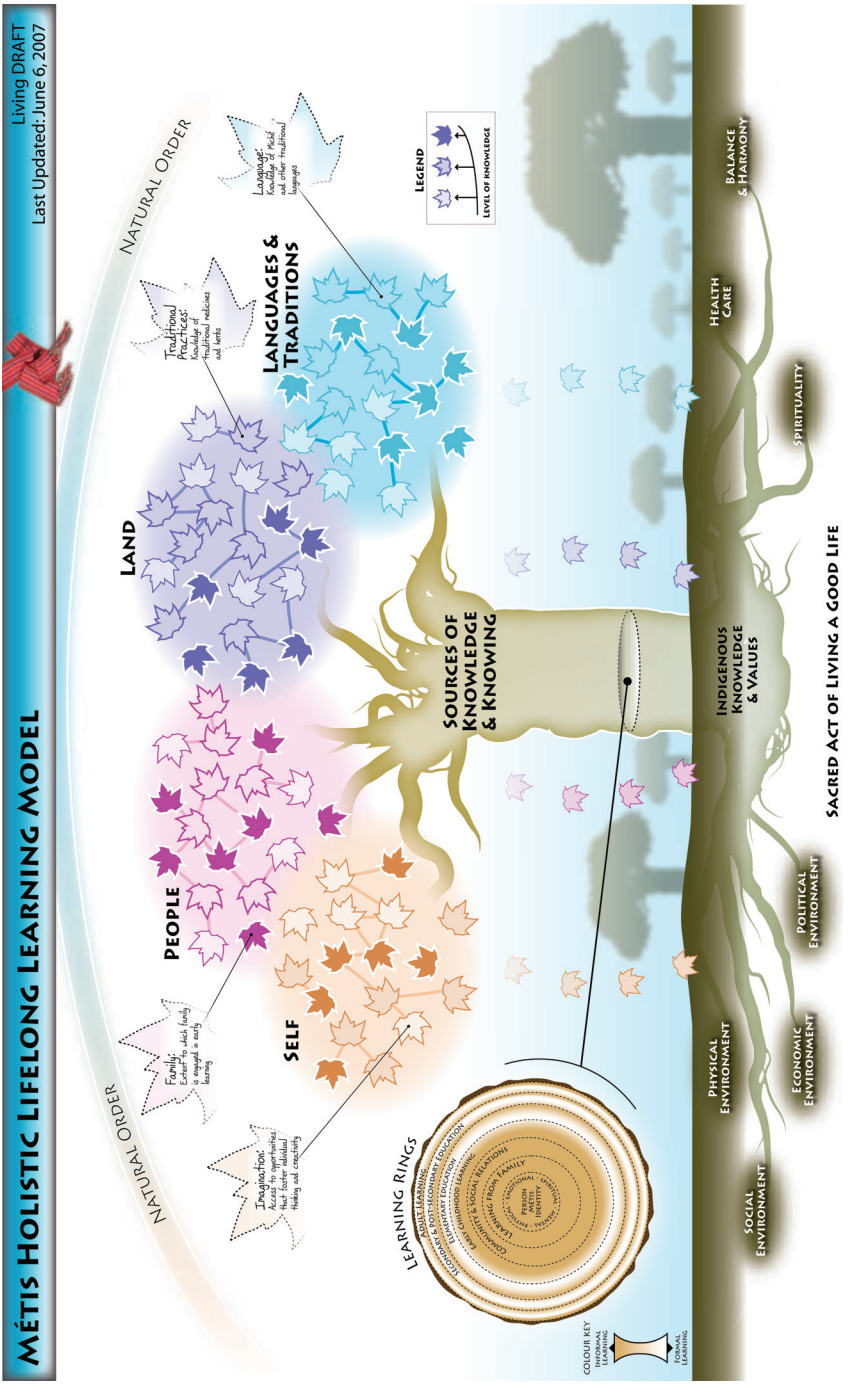
In 2007, Ontario's Ministry of Education published the *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, with Métis cooperating in its development. The *Framework* appeared the same year as Métis published the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model. We argue that those who are engaged in the *Framework*'s implementation understand it as a foundational teaching model. We see some teachers and educational administrators using the teachings of the model to live out the policy in their practices. Integral to living the policy is nourishing the learning spirit of the Métis as set forth in their own holistic model of learning. Three parts of the model that educators, who we profile from our survey and interviews, use in practice are: Self and People; Indigenous Knowledge and Values; and Sources of Knowledge and Knowing. Self and People represents a recognition that educators work in concert with Métis. Indigenous Knowledge and Values are teachings and ways of being in classrooms and schools. Sources of Knowledge and Knowing are roots educators, their students, and the forest of Métis learners carry when they teach and learn. The educators whose stories we share show us how educators responsible for Indigenous education policy mandates need to consider Métis at the school community level. These educators also see themselves as nurturers whose impact is felt by everyone when one reflects on Indigenous spirituality, history, teachings, and language and their affects on students. Finally, educators ask us to recognize identity and self-identification as fluid.

In 2007, Ontario's Ministry of Education launched its *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*, the same year as the publication of the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model, a stylized graphic of a tree (see Figure 1) that represents the learner in relation to a forest of Métis that share teachings about learning. Although they were two separate initiatives, the *Framework* and the Model ask us to recognize the presence of Métis learners in schools. The two items show Métis students, families, and communities have learning systems. To be effective as a yardstick to improve Métis learning in Ontario's schools, educators must understand the teachings in the model as a guide to work with Metis children, youth, families and communities.

The Métis in Canada are one of three distinct Aboriginal groups recognized as having constitutional rights, and the Canadian government recognizes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit as Indigenous people. The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) defines a registered citizen as "a person who self-identifies as Métis, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, and

Cite as from J. Reyhner, J. Martin, L. Lockard & W.S. Gilbert. (Eds.). (2017). *Honoring Our Teachers* (pp. 61-76). Flagstaff, AZ: Northern Arizona University

Figure One. Métis holistic lifelong learning model. (2007). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Council on Learning.



About the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model

The *Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* represents the link between Métis lifelong learning and community well-being, and can be used as a framework for measuring success in lifelong learning.

The Métis understand learning in the context of the "Sacred Act of Living a Good Life," a perspective that incorporates learning experienced in the physical world and acquired by "doing," and a distinct form of knowledge—sacred laws governing relationships within the community and the world at large—that comes from the Creator. To symbolize these forms of knowledge and their dynamic processes, the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model uses a stylistic graphic of a living tree.

The *Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model* is a result of ongoing discussions among First Nations learning professionals, community practitioners, researchers and analysts. For a complete list of individuals and organizations that have contributed to the development of this learning model, visit www.ccl-cca.ca.

Describing the Model

The Métis learner, like the tree, is a complex, living entity that needs certain conditions for optimum growth. As conditions change throughout the natural cycle, so will the regenerative capacity of the tree. The health of the tree, or the Métis learner, impacts the future health of the root system and the "forest" of learners.

Métis people view lifelong learning as part of a regenerative, living system—the "Natural Order" that governs the passage of seasons and encompasses a community (or forest) of learners. Within this organic system, relationships are interconnected, and balance and harmony are maintained.

The tree's roots represent the individual's health and well-being (social, physical, economic, spiritual, etc.) and provide the conditions that nurture lifelong learning. The root base of the tree represents the indigenous knowledge and values that provide stability for the Métis learner.

A cross-sectional view of the trunk's "Learning Rings" depicts how learning occurs holistically across the individual's life cycle. At the trunk's core are the spiritual, emotional, physical and mental dimensions of the Métis self and identity. Intergenerational knowledge and values are transmitted through the processes that first influence the individual's development—learning from family, and learning from community and social relations (represented by the two rings surrounding the core). The four outer rings illustrate the stages of lifelong learning, from early childhood through to adulthood; they depict the dynamic interplay of informal and formal learning that occurs at different rates and stages, as represented by the extent of growth across each ring.

Extending from the trunk are the branches—"Sources of Knowledge and Knowing" such as self, people, land and language and traditions. The clusters of leaves on each branch represent the domains of knowledge. The intensity of their colour indicates the extent of individual understanding in any knowledge domain. The leaves of knowledge eventually fall to the ground, signifying how knowledge transmission enriches the foundations of learning and produces more knowledge (more vibrant leaves).

is accepted by the Métis Nation" (MNOa, n.d., para. 1). National definitions encompass persons who originate from a "Historic Métis Nation Homeland," which includes territories in central and western regions of North America, "used and occupied as the traditional territory of the Métis or Half-breeds as they were then known" (MNOb, n.d., para. 3). Métis were known as half-breeds in some circles, meaning literally the descendants of First Nations and Europeans with mixed ancestry.

For the Métis, learning is a lifelong endeavour. Métis use the holistic lifelong model that incorporates the tree to inform educators that they must nurture learning, cooperate with parents and other community members in education, and understand that to effectively educate Métis students, they must value their Indigenous backgrounds. Métis communities see knowledge generation as a collaborative endeavour, and the image on the model of "leaves of knowledge eventually falling to the ground" signifies "how knowledge transmission enriches the foundations of learning and produces more knowledge" (Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model, 2007, para. 8). Teachers have an impact on the Métis learner and the forest of Métis trees that represent learners who are part of the school community. Education in this model contributes to the Métis community's wellbeing.

Métis expect teachers to nourish the sources and domains of knowledge their children and youth carry, and the Ministry of Education wanted to achieve this objective as it affirms the importance of Métis people and knowledge in the policy framework. The Framework was the outcome of consultation between the Ministry and the Education and Training Branch of the Métis Nation of Ontario. Part of being a good educator is supporting the inclusion of Indigenous practices and knowledge in one's pedagogy and curriculum, and the *Framework* directs schools to include Métis families and communities and support student self-identification, achievement, enhancement of Indigenous curriculum, and support for Métis holistic lifelong learning (Anuik & Kearns, 2014; Kearns & Anuik, 2015).

Legislation, Métis, and Education

Legislation from the British colonial era like the 1857 Gradual Civilization Act and its successor the Canadian Parliament's Indian Act (1876) shifted control over self-identification and membership in nations and communities from Indigenous peoples to the British government and later, the Canadian government. The outcome was the development of two categories: The Indian and the Non-Indian. The outcome for Indigenous peoples was there was only one way to identify, as "Native" or "non-Native" (Anuik & Kearns, 2012, 2014). "Indian" is a colonial construct; there are numerous Indigenous peoples, cultures, and languages across Canada, one of whom is the Métis.

The Indian Act's (1876) creation of a "Native" and "non-Native" binary in the minds of Canadians had an impact unique to Métis. Popular historians focus on Métis leader Louis Riel, his family, and the Red River and Northwest Resistances and argue Métis could not withstand the intrusion of settlers west

and succumbed to the expansion of the Dominion of Canada in 1885. Historians suggest Louis Riel's mental state led him to think of himself as a prophet, a position that impaired his ability to negotiate peace between Métis and the Dominion government in 1885 (Stanley, 1992). The perspective on the writing of history—a grand narrative of growth as a Canadian nation (Stanley, 2006)—and focus—on Riel's leadership ability—resulted in a collection of books that Barkwell, Dorion, and Préfontaine (1999) title a great man of history collection. The outcome: A lack of recognition of Métis as a people because the consensus is Métis dispersed and assimilated into newcomer society (Anuik, 2009; Barkwell, Dorion, & Préfontaine, 1999; Kearns & Anuik, 2015; Miller, 2004). The coverage of Métis in schools is on Riel and his actions in 1885. Since the Canadian government used the term "Indian" to define an Indigenous person, Métis registered as Status Indians became "Indian" or "Native." Newcomers and their descendants believed the rest of the Métis and their descendants chose to assimilate into Canadian society (Kearns & Anuik, 2015).

There is a requirement to inform educators who the Métis are because teachers don't know or only know the consensus in popular history (Absolon & Willett, 2005; Anuik, 2009; Barkwell, Dorion, & Préfontaine, 1999; Kearns & Anuik, 2015). They don't relate to Métis as contemporary Indigenous people because they think Métis as a people ceased to be in Canada after Riel's hanging (Kearns & Anuik, 2015; Miller, 2004). After one corrects this misinterpretation, replacing it with knowledge of a Métis presence as an Indigenous people, one must show how Métis conceive of their learning journeys past, present, and future (Anuik, 2009, In Press) as the touchstone to the practice of Métis holistic lifelong learning in educational policy.

Methods

Our discussion of the implementation of Ontario's Indigenous focussed education policy is part of a larger study we completed for the Métis Nation of Ontario. We investigated how Ontario school boards began to engage with the Ontario *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*'s (2007) initiatives, such as self-identification data collection and changes to curriculum and school and Indigenous community relations, as well as steps to ensure better academic achievement for Indigenous students (Anuik & Kearns, 2012, 2014; Kearns & Anuik, 2015). To collect data on self-identification numbers, curriculum, and other initiatives, we surveyed teachers and educational administrators in Ontario's 76 school boards. The Aboriginal Education Office in the Ministry of Education supported our project and sent a letter to each school board that encouraged their staff to answer our survey. Thirty-three school boards responded to our survey for a 43% response rate. We visited two school boards to see initiatives at the local level and completed five interviews with eight leaders responsible for Métis education initiatives at the school board level. We profile six of them in this chapter and identify them as follows: LM, CC, DS, BT, AM, and VM. In addition to the returned surveys and interview transcripts, we also

refer to reports, promotional material, and any other documents school boards shared with us or that we found online.

We used a mixed methods approach to data collection. The online surveys had open and closed questions, which allowed us to gather statistics and narratives around the work being done. Our questions concerned themes, activities, programs, relationships, barriers, and promising practices relevant to Métis learning in schools and communities. We asked how many students identified as Métis and the availability of Native Studies classes in schools. For our informal conversations on site visits and formal interviews we used semi-structured qualitative research methodology in the format of conversations shaped around a set of questions with an appreciative inquiry style (Pinto & Curran, 1998). We did not want to evaluate with a yardstick to measure progress to a preconceived outcome, and dole out praise and condemnation (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011).

Since we see implementation of the *Framework* for Métis as an opportunity for educators to engage in lifelong learning, we don't see an end to this story (i.e., a day when the *Framework*'s implementation is complete). Our paper is part of an ongoing story of being good educators who nourish themselves with deeper understandings and in turn nourish Métis communities. We want educators to share with us, in a qualitative sense (see e.g., Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009; Merriam, 2002; Olson, 2011), how the practice of the *Framework*'s mandate is exercised at a board and school level. We sought to know how educators can build knowledge of the teachings of Métis learning in the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model in educational practice.

Findings

We use the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model as a matrix to identify the parts of the Ontario *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* relevant to Métis. Participants' insights relate to the trunk and branches of the learner, in the stylized graphic of a tree. We see education policy in the following parts of the model: Self and People, Indigenous Knowledge and Values, and Sources of Knowledge and Knowing. Self and People represents a recognition that educators work in concert with Métis, who are parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, Elders, and respected knowledge holders of the students who attend the schools. Indigenous Knowledge and Values are teachings educators need to use in class. Sources of Knowledge and Knowing are roots they, their students, and the forest of Métis learners carry when they teach and learn. We analyze data with the understanding that an educator is a guide who sees educating as an act of nurturing the learner and the learner's community (First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model, 2007). This relationship is more cyclical than hierarchical. One can be a nurturing guide and be nurtured if one understands learning as a generative endeavour that goes "all ways" and "always" (Ball & Pence, 2006). The educators whose stories we share show us cases they select that demonstrate what they think educators responsible for Indigenous education policy mandates need to consider at the school community level and what educational practices those working in schools have begun.

Self and People

Since a lack of knowledge about Métis exists in schools (Kearns & Anuik, 2015), educators need to work on implementation of the Ontario *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007) with Métis in the school community. The Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (2007) necessitates the teacher self be in relation with the Métis people, and progress to setting such a context "is generally best measured in hindsight," according to one manager. "In the three years our board has been involved in this initiative, if we stop and look at where we started and where we are now—we've accomplished a lot, and there's excitement about where we are going" (LM). Educators emphasize that as a result of their work with Métis, there is a concerted effort to build on accomplishments, raising awareness, critiquing the colonial anchors of the school system, and helping teachers to imagine an Indigenous presence at school. As one Elder said during consultation on the *Framework* implementation, "This is too important not to get right" (LM). Educators observe much of the material in schools is about First Nations, if there is any material at all (Anuik & Kearns, 2012), there is "only a little information on Métis…and therefore, we need to develop those sections further…[with] the support of the Métis…communities" (CC). As teachers work to educate, they have to counteract what they observe as misinformation given to staff about who Aboriginal students are and fill gaps about the knowledge of Indigenous peoples in their school boards (LM, DS, CC, BT, AM, and VM). Misinformation affects all educators, including those who are Métis, because "for the most part we received the same basic information or misinformation that mainstream schools received" (LM). Yet, despite the dominant colonial narratives, many educators show a willingness to learn stories they never knew or had the opportunity to learn.

Indigenous Knowledge and Values

Educators see that to be able to implement the *Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007), they have to seek out and draw on the Indigenous knowledge and values, the trunk on the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model. The model is an artefact of Indigenous Knowledge and Values. The Métis learner is a graphic of a tree, and the student's family and community is the forest in the backdrop. The student's family and community are not in the background—they feel the teacher's impact as much as the student does. The challenge for educators is to locate themselves in the model, to feel a part of a Métis community. To figure out how to locate oneself in the *Framework*'s implementation is, thus, "a community effort" (LM), and educators continually look for nurturing guides in the forest of Métis learners.

When she started work, a coordinator in northwest Ontario recognized she needed kindred spirits who knew the Indigenous knowledge and values as they pertained to the social, political, economic, and physical environments of her school board and the Métis learners who attended the schools. She needed to connect with people—the branches who could share their roots. To nurture Métis

and to help them share, she needed "the support of the community, the Elders gave me encouragement…. Having support was critical, and I had the support of the community, which allowed me to last this long here." She credits Indigenous knowledge and values that she learned and continued to learn, because of her continuous work with those branches that gave her entry to learning about and with Indigenous knowledge and people. Her connections enabled her to move into "a good spot…. [I] love working for the school board." When one works with Indigenous community members, one can help transform "an entire organization and culture, the way people do business, their mindsets and ways of thinking" (CC). Educators at the board level saw it as important to learn more about Métis Indigenous knowledge and values, passing them to the other "selves" in the schools, the teachers, who can pass lessons to students.

For the administrator, teachers must be involved—they are nurturing guides and lifelong learners, branches on the model who endeavour to educate students. Thus, educators are responsible for imparting and nourishing other educators with Indigenous knowledge and values. If teachers are to nourish learning of Métis, administrators and other nurturing guides must help and "get…out of their comfort zone and…think and evaluate what needs to happen with their students" (CC).

To make the *Framework* live, one must seek those branches rooted in Indigenous knowledge and values. Educators need to be connected to Indigenous community members and seek to learn. "Teachers who all really cared and wanted to make a difference, those allies internally who planted the seed and watched it grow" (CC) helped bring forth educational changes. The teachers became branches learning Métis Indigenous knowledge and values to guide their students' learning.

Sources of Knowledge and Knowing

We understand knowledge that can correct the mistaken impression that there are no Métis in Canada exists in the roots of the tree on the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model. Those responsible for implementation of policy need a root that shapes their knowledge and way of knowing. Critical to one's ability to nourish roots in good ways is an awareness of history. Educators recognize when they connect with Indigenous people, the branches on the model, "you have to break down a lot of years of non-positive schooling for a lot of Aboriginal people" (BT).

The superintendent describes the root knowledge in the Indigenous history of education as follows: "a lot of the parents and the grandparents of our students right now…went through negative experiences in the public system, not only residential schools, but the public system in general, and I think there are still barriers there" (BT). The history he mentions includes racism (Absolon & Willett, 2005; Anuik, 2009, In Press; Anuik & Kearns, 2014; Pauls, 1996; St. Denis & Hampton, 2002) and lack of valuing Indigenous peoples and ways of knowing (Battiste, 2013). Métis tend not to see educators as nurturers of their communities.

Métis learners are individuals who are part of a greater collective community(ies). Métis people wish to transmit their own sources of knowledge and knowing to learners and have the larger Indigenous community(ies) valued. They don't want school to interfere or reproduce falsities within those learning relationships, which occur when teachers either ignore or perpetuate misunderstandings about Métis in class (Kearns & Anuik, 2015). Even though "[t]here's a clear understanding that education is important…students don't want to have to compromise who they are in order to get an education" (LM).

Schools did not recognize Métis or value learners and their identities and histories. Schools did interfere with transmission of Métis knowledge. Success in school for Métis learners did become a severing of one's roots and disconnection from one's community (Kearns, 2013a; Anuik, 2009, In Press). Owing to ongoing misunderstandings and lack of presence of Métis, some students struggle, sometimes they feel pressure "to compromise who they are in order to get an education," which is something Métis don't want from school (LM). Nurturing guides within the education system acknowledge this complex history and in their acknowledgement, begin the work to make schools otherwise for Indigenous youth.

Not only did people have negative experiences in school and receive inaccurate and incomplete lessons in Métis history (Kearns & Anuik, 2015), students know in their historical root that "people did not want to identify as Métis" (BT, AM; Absolon & Willett, 2005; Anuik, 2009, In Press; Kearns 2013a). Parents cut off their Métis Indigenous knowledge roots because they believed the knowledge put them in a deficit position, and over time some Métis were made to feel that what they thought and how they saw the world was not knowledge valued by the greater society. Students must be given the chance to figure out why people felt this way—they "need to know there is a history there" (BT). There are stories that help children and youth as "they struggle to navigate life and all that it brings" (LM). Métis students can be given space to tap their historical root to reflect on how history affects them and their understandings of what it means to be Métis at school. The complexity of Métis history and identity and identification needs to be given time to flourish in safe and nurturing spaces.

Owing to silence of Métis, caused by a lack of curricular sources, an absence of recognition of Métis as an Indigenous people, gaps in knowledge of history, and failure in outreach to Métis community members, teachers don't always have access to the roots of Métis knowledge and Métis sources for knowing. Teachers need help to explore with knowledgeable Métis questions like "if you get your [First Nations] status back, do you cease to be Métis?" (BT), and encouragement to investigate "literature…looking at things with a critical eye" (DS) as they try to answer questions relevant for Métis. When they face questions, it "is important for students and teachers to know because I don't think that our teachers have that knowledge, some better than others, but not a full knowledge" (BT).

An area of history that requires further attention is Indigenous spirituality. In the Catholic school system, in particular, one superintendent noted there was a need to understand the relationship between Catholic teachings and strands of

the Métis root of spirituality. Educators and students can find the relationship confusing. There can be conflicts with the braids of Christianity and Indigenous spirituality that pull Métis students. Métis would be nourished if "adults of both faiths…work cooperatively to support them…Young people get that there are strengths from both cultures and want to draw on those strengths to become more resilient and grounded" (LM).

Unless Indigenous knowledge and values shape teachers' sources of knowledge and knowing, which is what the model expects, they are unlikely to connect with the Métis community and make a good impression on the children's education. Since schools need to build from the roots, "we need to continue to utilize the knowledge…and include that" (BT). We need "Aboriginal local histories and local ideas and get more of that into the curriculum, into the school" (BT). Teachers, students, Indigenous community members, and allies can "learn side by side…and [be] good for…students" (LM). Teachers must advocate for local knowledge—they can get at sources of knowledge and knowing, "our leadership" wants to see this happen. The superintendent says school boards must give opportunities for knowledgeable Métis teachers to work in schools. He "would like to see our language teachers continue to evolve.... [A]n increase of at least 15-20% of the teaching staff in this board" as Indigenous "because as our enrolment is declining, our Aboriginal population is increasing, so pretty soon the majority will be Aboriginal, the minority non-Aboriginal" (BT). We need Indigenous educators who have strong cultural identities, and (hopefully) language as a source of knowledge, to help educate all youth in schools, thereby contributing to all learners' funds of knowledge.

Educators look forward to getting the roots "into teachable packages so that you can get this information into the classroom, and that is probably the most difficult part of it" (BT). Teachers struggle with finding and becoming comfortable with Métis sources of knowing and knowledge. They wait for Métis to start, contrary to wishes of educational administrators who don't want to leave one or two Métis expected to be the experts "in all things Métis." Teachers need to be "able to deliver that information and have some sort of a knowledge base" (BT). Teachers need to know where they can find people with Métis roots because Métis see teachers as responsible for nurturing a Métis identity at school. The teacher needs to make children and youth comfortable to draw on their sources of knowledge and knowing. Therefore, the teacher needs to understand how knowing among Métis happens.

Teachers and educational administrators agree. Métis sources of knowledge and knowing help one comprehend Métis educational history, religiosity and spirituality, and their relationship to language when one taps the roots, one can understand how they affect education in a community. To teach history from an Indigenous perspective and include Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in the formal and informal school curriculum helps youth "walk with the pride of this 'who I am'" (AM). When their teachers seek Métis sources of knowledge and knowing to teach, children will "respect it.... [T]hat is something that we have to teach our children.... [T]hese teachings.... [A]re a part of who we are" (AM).

Discussion

The Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model teaches us that any policy that supports Métis must be implemented with the objectives of honoring Métis in the school community by addressing historical wrongs, enhancing the curriculum, and nourishing the learning of Indigenous youth. The teachers and educational administrators we surveyed and interviewed understood these objectives and used the model to guide their implementation of the Ontario *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*. When they saw it, they asked, in one way or another, "how do we bring it all together and walk in society" (AM). "To bring it all together" involves, in part, understanding how Métis see the role of educators. A teacher is a learner—a "self"—who seeks relationships with Métis who hold sources of knowledge and knowing. The teacher "self" works with people in the community to correct a deficient narrative of Métis perpetuated in popular history and too often taken as truth in class. Métis, themselves, can act as guides and help educators find possibilities for engagement with nuanced interpretations of Métis history, people, identity and self-identification, spirituality, religion, and language. Educators recognize they have roots in themselves, knowledge of teaching. The sources and domains of knowledge they have are to help them develop their relationships with Métis students, families, and communities. As educators' roots grow and expand in their capacity to honor and value Indigenous people and students, so do their relationships with Métis, and their roots of the tree are strengthened. The participants in our study share points of entry to stories of relationships our educators have with learned Métis, and they spoke highly of opportunities to learn from educators in the traditional ways that can help teachers as they as they expand their understanding and appreciation. When they look at the *Framework*, they see it as a directive to change schools to recognize diverse learning and knowledge systems in communities and society.

Overall, we looked at how educators in the school system can be seen to be engaged with three aspects of the model, which are as follows: Self and People; Indigenous Knowledge and Values; and Sources of Knowledge and Knowing. We learned educators saw the student "self" and the people in the community as interdependent. The teacher did not only instruct the self—the student—but did have an impact on the entire community, the forest of Métis learners. Each teacher is represented as a "self" who has worked to connect with people. To implement the *Framework*, one must reflect on how one relates to Métis. The learning and teachings are ongoing.

Our participants work to set an Indigenous context in their schools. The objective builds on recognition of the self and people as interrelated. Teachers' acceptance of their connection with everyone in the community enables them to reach out to Elders and knowledgeable teachers who live in accordance with these teachings. Knowledgeable Métis help teachers tap Métis sources of knowledge and knowing in history, religion and spirituality, and language, all in the local school community setting.

Teachers need to nurture students' desire to inquire from Métis perspectives, understandings, and knowledge. Learners see the significance of relatedness; they

are selves in relationship with people in the community. Teachers are nurturing guides who work alongside community members to help learners find their gifts. Relationality remains a foundational principle.

An important lesson is holistic lifelong learning is integral to living a good life in a Métis framework, so teachers and educational administrators' practices have a direct impact on the role they play in contributing to Métis education. In this paper, we suggest there are three philosophies above that guide implementation of the *Framework* in a Métis way. However, the three processes are related in that educators must continually practice them. For example, to find Métis knowledge and get at the sources of knowledge and knowing, they must recognize they are in relation as selves with people in the broader Métis community. They must respect the Métis Indigenous knowledge as curriculum necessary for their students to learn. To get at the sources of knowledge and knowing means they must continuously adopt processes of relationality and respect for knowledge in anticipation of posing new questions for their students to answer.

Conclusion

This chapter is part of a project that involves development of Métis knowledge of holistic lifelong learning (cf. Canadian Council on Learning, 2007; Cappon, 2008) and counters misinformation on Métis within the dominant Canadian historical narrative. Métis students and their families and communities have an inherent capacity to learn (Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre, n.d.) at school. Educated Métis have the possibility of living a good life when their roots are nourished, and they grow strong.

The Ontario *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* is an opportunity to implement Indigenous educational policy by practicing teachings in the Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model. Policy needs to live in the self and the community of Métis. The policy needs to tap Indigenous knowledge—it must find the roots of the knowledge.

In recognizing how educators in our study see themselves in relation with Métis learners, their families, and the school community, the forest on the model, we hope to inspire and honour those who begin the journey to include Indigenous knowledge in schools. As has been documented, the historical relationship between schools and Indigenous people cannot be deemed as part of living a good life in educational terms as there was ignorance and misinformation about Métis. As a result, Métis did not always want to acknowledge their Indigenous backgrounds (Absolon & Willet, 2005; Anuik, 2009, In Press, Kearns, 2013b) because the dominant narratives in schools did not reflect Métis families' understandings and perspectives of their communities, where they lived, or their history, which was rarely told from a Métis perspective (Kearns & Anuik, 2015). We now know educators must consider the experiences of Métis, which are in the roots of learners and their families, when they seek to improve their teaching and include Métis. Every interaction a teacher has with a student is an interaction with the Métis community. Educators must change the way they relate to one another and learn. Educators responsible for the *Framework*'s implementation

have shared lessons from their learning of the practices about connecting to and with Métis community members. We conclude with key recommendations educators can consider and practice as they support the learning of Métis and all Indigenous students, families, and communities. Teachers and educational administrators and leaders can do the following:

- Dedicate staff to form relationships with Métis
- Let Métis share their critiques of popular historical depictions
- Support Métis to develop a presence at school
- Welcome Métis Senators[2], Elders, knowledge holders, and community members into classrooms and schools to help educate staff and learners on topics relevant to Métis knowledge and heritage
- Encourage Métis family members, especially parents, to visit schools regularly, acting as helpers, resource people, role models, and consultants to help improve Métis student attendance, achievement, pride, and academic success (cf. Caracciolo, 2008; Cherubini, 2011)
- Work with community members to build a critical mass of Métis resource people to come to schools
- Create spaces for Métis in schools to share histories, perspectives, and knowledges; all learners must be able to share and learn (cf. Caracciolo, 2008)
- Understand teachers nurture their students and the entire forest of Métis learners (Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model, 2007)
- Hold dialogues regularly, where educators can share their work (i.e., unit plans) in stories
- Evaluate and recognize inaccurate and stereotypical information in curriculum (cf. Caracciolo, 2008; Cherubini & Hodson, 2008)
- Search for accurate resources (cf. Caracciolo, 2008)
- Pay critical attention to evolving definitions of Métis (cultural/legal/local/national) (cf. Caracciolo, 2008)
- Celebrate and include contemporary Métis artists in their lessons, such as David Bouchard, Joseph Boyden, and Christi Belcourt

When people live the mandate in the *Framework*, they nourish and grow Métis students. This paper gathers seeds of hope, and we hope for more possibilities.

Notes

[1]This chapter began as a study commissioned by the Métis Nation of Ontario's (MNO) Education and Training Branch on the Ontario *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*'s (2007) capacity to facilitate achievement and self-identification in Métis students. We thank the MNO for its financial support of our work. We are also grateful to the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ontario Ministry of Education for its encouragement of teachers and educational administrators to respond to our survey and interview requests. We also

thank the educators who invited us into their school communities, replied to our survey, and participated in interviews and conversations with us. We presented an earlier draft of our chapter at the 2015 meeting of the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association in Chicago, Illinois. We thank participants in our session for their comments.

[2]Senators are elected representatives of the Métis Nation of Ontario.

References

Aboriginal Education Office, Ministry of Education. (2007). *Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit education policy framework*. Toronto, Canada: Author. Retrieved from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/fnmiFramework.pdf

Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre. (n.d.). Animation theme bundle 2: Comprehending and nourishing the learning spirit.

Absolon, K., & Willett, C. (2005). Putting ourselves forward: Location in Aboriginal research. In L. Brown & S. Strega (Eds.), *Research as resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches* (pp. 97-126). Toronto, Canada: Canadian Scholars' Press.

The Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws Relating to Indians (1857).

Anuik, J. (In Press). Language, place, and kinship ties: Past and present necessities for Métis education. In P. W. Lackenbauer, M. Rutherdale, & K. Abel (Eds.), *Roots of entanglement: Essays in Native-newcomer relations in honour of J. R. Miller* (pp. 260-288). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Anuik, J. (2009). *Métis families and schools: The decline and reclamation of Métis identities in Saskatchewan, 1885-1980* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation). University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

Anuik, J., & Kearns, L.-L. (2014, March 6). Métis student self-identification in Ontario's K-12 schools: Education policy and parents, families, and communities. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 153*. Retrieved from http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/pdf_files/anuik_kearns.pdf

Anuik, J., & Kearns, L.-L. (2012). *Report on Métis education in Ontario's K-12 schools*. Report for the Education and Training Branch, Métis Nation of Ontario. Ottawa, Canada: Education and Training Branch, Métis Nation of Ontario.

Ball, J., & Pence, A. (2006). *Supporting Indigenous children's development*. Vancouver, Canada: University of British Columbia Press.

Barkwell, L. J., Dorion, L., & Préfontaine, D. (1999). *Resources for Métis researchers*. Winnipeg, Canada: The Louis Riel Institute; Saskatoon, Canada: The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: Nourishing the learning spirit*. Saskatoon, SK: Purich Press.

Canadian Constitution (1982).

Canadian Council on Learning. (2007). *Redefining how success is measured in First Nations, Inuit and Métis learning*. Ottawa: Author. Retrieved from http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/5._2007_redefining_how_success_is_measured_en.pdf

Cappon, P. (2008, May). Measuring success in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis learning. *Policy Options*, 60-66. Retrieved from http://irpp.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/po/whither-the-liberals/cappon.pdf

Caracciolo, D. (2008). Addressing Anti-Indianism in the mainstream curriculum: A partnership model. *Multicultural Perspectives, 10*(4), 224-228.

Cherubini, L. (2011). Using multiculturalism as a "new way of seeing the world": Ontario Aboriginal educational policy according to Foucault. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 13*(2), 1-15.

Cherubini, L., & Hodson, J. (2008). Ontario Ministry of Education policy and Aboriginal learners' epistemologies: A fundamental disconnect. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 79,* 1-33. Retrieved from https://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/pdf_files/Cherubini_and_Hodson.pdf

First Nations holistic lifelong learning model. (2007). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Council on Learning. Retrieved from http://ineducation.ca/ineducation/article/view/196/698

Harrison, N., & Greenfield, M. (2011). Relationship to place: Positioning Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives in classroom pedagogies. *Critical Studies in Education, 52*(1), 65–76.

Indian Act (1876).

Kearns, L. (2013a). (Re)claiming Métis women identities: Three stories and the storyteller. In C. Adams, G. Dahl, & I. Peach (Eds.), *Métis in Canada: History, identity, law and politics* (pp. 59-91). Edmonton, Canada: University of Alberta Press.

Kearns, L. (2013b). "Ontario *First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework*": A case study on its impact. *in education, 19*(2), 86-106. Retrieved from http://ineducation.ca/ineducation/article/view/145

Kearns, L, & Anuik, J. (2015). Métis curricular challenges and possibilities: A discussion initiated by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education policy in Ontario. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies, 12*(2), 6-36. Retrieved from http://jcacs.journals.yorku.ca/index.php/jcacs/article/view/37691/36030

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (2nd Ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Métis holistic lifelong learning model. (2007). Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Council on Learning. Retrieved from http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/5._2007_redefining_how_success_is_measured_en.pdf

MNOa - Métis Nation of Ontario. (n.d.). *Métis Nation of Ontario: Definition of Métis citizenship*. Ottawa, Canada: Author. Retrieved from http://www.metisnation.org/registry/citizenship/

Métis Nation of Ontario. (MNOb, n.d.). *National definition of Métis.* Ottawa, Canada: Author. Retrieved from http://www.metisnation.org/registry/

Merriam, S. R. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miller, J. R. (2004). *Reflections on Native-newcomer relations: Selected essays*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.

Miller, J. R. (1996). *Shingwauk's vision: A history of Native residential schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Milloy, J. S. (1999). *A national crime: The Canadian government and the residential school system, 1879-1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

Olson, K. (2011). *Essentials of qualitative interviewing.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Pauls, S. (1996). Racism and native schooling: A historical perspective. In M. I. Alladin (Ed.), *Racism in Canadian schools* (pp. 157-172). Toronto, Canada: Harcourt Brace.

Pinto, M., & Curran, M. (1998). *Lessons from the field: Applying appreciative inquiry.* Plano, TX: Royal Practical Press, Inc.

St. Denis, V., & Hampton, E. (2002). *Literature review on racism and the effects on Aboriginal education.* Prepared for the Minister's National Working Group on Education, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Ottawa, Ontario. Ottawa, Canada: Author.

Stanley, G. F. G. (1992). *The birth of western Canada: A history of the Riel rebellions* (Introduction by T. Flanagan). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Stanley, T. (2006). Whose public? Whose memory? Racisms, grand narratives, and Canadian history. In R. Sandwell (Ed.), *To the past: History education, public memory, and citizenship in Canada* (pp. 32-49). Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.